

異世界  
迷宮で

7

ゲームを



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Isekai meikyuu de dorei harem wo

(異世界迷宮で奴隷ハーレムを)

Slave harem in the labyrinth of the other world

Shachi Sogano

(蘇我捨恥)

Story Description:

A man was about to commit suicide and decides to search for a way to die in the internet, but then he found an odd site that asked a lot of questions and had a point based system that allows you to create skills and abilities for a character. He took interest in it and when he finished setting his character he was asked "You will now be transported to a world with the settings you choose, coming back is not possible, do you still accept", Then without thinking much of it he pressed YES and he find himself in another world with the skills and abilities he choose to have.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Transation source can be found here: [Link](#)

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## Chapter 169 : Liberty

\*

“Because tomorrow will be the initiation ceremony at the Empire Liberation Society, we will only be going to the labyrinth early morning after which we will be having the rest of the day off.”

During the dinner, I announce tomorrow’s schedule. I heard from Baron Ester that the appointed day for the admission courtesy would be tomorrow. The admission courtesy doesn’t require anyone but me to be present, so it’s better for the four of them to take a day off.

“Thank you very much. A day off, huh?”  
“That’s right. What do you want to do, Roxanne?”  
“What do I want to do.....”  
“What’s this ‘day off’?”

When Roxanne was brooding over it, Vesta asks. Which reminds me, it was my first holiday when Vesta joined us.

“Tomorrow, we will be going to the labyrinth before the breakfast after which you’ll be able to spend your time freely.”  
“Such a thing. Is it alright?”  
“It’s necessary to refresh yourself every once in while.”  
“Thank you very much.”

Vesta bows.

“Although it’ll only be half a day, please do whatever you like to do.”  
“What I like to do?”

Following Roxanne, Vesta pulls a contemplating face, too. After learning of the day off all of a sudden, she seems to have gotten confused. Unlike two certain someones.

“As for Sherry, it must be the library or the liberation society’s reference

room, right?”

“Yes. It’s rare, so I would like to go to the reference room, I think.”

“And Miria will be fishing?”

“Yes, desu.”

I didn’t even need to hear from these two.

Miria’s face is gleaming already.

She seems to have started fishing right away.

“I will be spending some time shopping and rest of the time leisurely at home, I think. To be honest, though, I would like to go the labyrinth.”

In a way, Roxanne is the same as them, huh? That she wants to do the usual.

Even though it’s a day off, Roxanne wants to spend the time in the labyrinth.

Having rest is better than spending the day off in the labyrinth, isn’t it?

“The initiation ceremony will be around noon, so it’ll be possible for us to go to the labyrinth together in the morning for a bit.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Do you want to partake in boss hunting? If it’s Roxanne and me, we should be able to go to a somewhat higher floor.”

On 22nd floor or below, only two monsters appear in the boss room.

While Roxanne takes on one, I can finish off the other.

There’s another option; borrowing the Estoc of Petrification from Miria, that is.

I’ll be using Durandal, of course.

Even though Roxanne’s objective is to train.

From the standpoint of experience points, I should better use magic and not bring Durandal out but there’s no need to be fixated over it.

I won’t be able to earn that many experience points anyway.

“Black Diamond Tuna, desu.”

“Black Diamond Tuna should be on Haruba’s 22nd floor but I’m not sure if we will be going that far. Quratar’s 17th floor should do.”

Suggests Miria but I’m not sure if we should take on Black Diamond

Tuna.

In the boss room, there'll only be two monsters. However, outside the boss room, we will have to take on a large number of monsters.

22nd floor may be a far cry for two people.

It'll be foolish to Warp directly to the boss room or the waiting room. And I'm not even sure if I can do it for I haven't tried it yet. So we will have to walk to the boss room from a nearby small room on the floor.

With Roxanne, we can avoid the monsters on the way. However, there'll be situations where we won't be able to avoid confrontation. Because there'll be two of us, I don't want to go to an excessively high floor.

"Quratar's 17th floor should be better for training, I guess."  
"If we chance upon a lean tuna or a fatty tuna, I'll gift it to you."  
"Nn. Fishing..... Nn. Black Diamond Tuna....."

Miria looks troubled.  
Even though I said that I would gift it to her, she didn't seem to hear it. If we decide in favor of Black Diamond Tuna, will Miria be tagging along? Does she rate a fish monster higher than a day off?

Currently, the Cape Carp floor is still unexplored. However, isn't there a difference between entering the labyrinth and taking a day off? Isn't there a big difference? However, Cape Carp doesn't drop any ingredient.

There's a pleasure in catching an ingredient by one's own hands. Isn't watching a seine catch fish frustrating? It'll be dangerous if it's a monster, though.

"Miria, how about you come with us?"  
"You won't be able to go fishing before the sunrise anyway, so how about you enter the labyrinth for a while and go afterward?"  
"Go, desu."

Upon my and Roxanne's suggestion, Miria decides to join in. It's kinda sad to explore the labyrinth on a day off, though.

Oh well. Since they want to do it of their own will, what can I do?

Vesta is the only one left.

She tilts her head.

She has yet to decide, it seems.

“Vesta, isn’t there a place you want to visit?”

“A place I want to visit?”

“Like a place you wanted to visit in the past but you couldn’t?”

“If there were, I would have visited in the past. No, there’s no such place.”

Vesta declines my suggestion.

How come?

If you don’t want to visit, that’s fine but there’s always a place one wants to visit.

Ah, right.

Like my late grand father’s house.

I always wanted to go there but I can’t go now. Rather, I don’t know where to go.

“Ah, did I make you recall unpleasant memories?”

“No, not at all.”

“There was a place I wanted to visit in the past, but.”

“Umm, it’s alright, really. I don’t want to go there now.”

I’m a little curious now but she says it’s alright.

So I can’t delve too deep.

“Is it perhaps Stella?” (TN: ステラ Can also be translated as Steela/Steeler or Steala/Stealer. If it is required at some point in future, I’ll change it)

Although I intended to withdraw, Sherry cuts in.

She read the mood.

“It is, indeed, but I don’t want to go there now.”

However, Vesta shakes her hands and declines.

“Stella?”

“There’s a temple in Stella that buys slaves. If you have enough money, you can buy your freedom by yourself. However, if you don’t have money, you can take refuge in the temple. They will buy you through the donations from others.”

Explains Sherry.

I see. So there is such a place, huh?

Like a sacred shelter from the middle age called asylum.

It seems to be a refuge temple.

“Therefore, there’s no need now.”

Vesta declines, flurried.

So, if she said she would like to go to Stella, it would mean she wanted to be freed from me?

In the past, when she became a slave, she wanted to go to Stella.

If one goes to Stella, they can be freed from slavery.

Actually, won’t their status be that of the temple’s slave?

One benefit of such an arrangement is tax.

“I don’t believe you’ll run away, so don’t worry.”

“Yes, I’m grateful that I was purchased by such a kind master. I would like to work for you all my life.”

“Please don’t.”

Thus far, I let everyone do as they please on their day off. It’s fine, isn’t it?

Sherry should be conscious of the reason, at least.

Even if you run away but you don’t have a way of earning money, it’s futile.

Even if you successfully escape but you don’t have a way of gaining freedom, you’ll revert from a slave to a thief.

If it’s Roxanne, she can enter the labyrinth.

But I can’t imagine Roxanne running away.

Sherry can somehow manage, too, being a Master Smith.

However, if she planned on escaping, she wouldn’t tell me about Stella.

“I-I think I would like to go to the labyrinth, too.”

“No, it would serve no purpose if all of us went together. Vesta, you should rest. Or you can tour Quratar or the Imperial Capital.”

“Then you rest at home in Quratar. Later, in the afternoon, let’s go to the Imperial Capital together.”

Roxanne suggests Vesta.

“Yes, I think I’ll do just that.”

With Vesta agreeing, everyone now has their plan set.

For the time being, I don’t have anything in particular for Vesta to do. I will find something soon.

The next day. It’s hot right from the morning.

It may be the hottest day this year.

Over the buckets surrounding the bed, there was not the slightest of cold air. All the ice had already melted.

I’d rather spend such a day entirely inside the labyrinth which doesn’t tend to be hot.

Even if I complain, nothing can be done about it.

After entering the labyrinth early morning, buying bread and miscellaneous ingredients, I return home.

Even though it’s not that late in the morning, the sun is shining hard on the town of Quratar.

“It’s so hot today.”

“Yes. I have already instructed Miria, so it’s alright.”

If she went fishing on such a hot day, she would definitely try to jump into the water.

Roxanne seems to be well aware of Miria’s behaviour.

By the way, the concept of bathing in the sea doesn’t seem to exist in this world.

Besides, there’s a risk of monsters appearing.

“Since I’ll be away, I’ll give you guys some money. I’ll hand out a bit more this time – 10 silver coins.”

I hand money to everyone after the breakfast.  
The lodge, where Sherry will be going to, is expensive, so she needs more allowance.

Since it won't be appropriate to increase just Roxanne's and Sherry's allowance, I increase everyone's equally.

"Thank you very much."

When I hand 10 silver coins to Roxanne first, she receives with pleasure.  
The order is inviolable.

"Roxanne buys something for others all the time. This time, you should buy something for yourself."

"Okay."

Although I handed out equally, there doesn't seem to be any dissatisfaction.

"The lodge seems to be expensive, so it may not be enough, Sherry."  
"Thank you very much. It's alright."

Sherry puts the silver coins away in her Item Box.  
Since Master Smith's Item Box can hold ten of the same item, it'll take only one row.

In any case, I'm going to the lodge, too, in relation to the admission courtesy.

If something comes up, I'll manage it.

"Please use this money to cover for fishing tackle and other necessities.  
After we leave the labyrinth, I'll take you to the fishing tackle shop."

"Yes, desu. Thank you, desu."

Strictly speaking, I should be paying for the fishing tackle myself for I will be eating the fish Miria catches, too.

But Miria isn't demanding that.

I'll buy her a new fishing rod soon.

"Vesta will be getting, too. Please use it freely."

"It's so much. Is it really alright?"

"Use it as you like."

“Thank you very much. It’s my first time holding so much money.”

An owner has to provide for their slave’s food, clothing and shelter. So there shouldn’t have been an opportunity for Vesta to carry money.

“Well then, I’ll first take Sherry to the lodge. Sherry?”

“Excuse me. Can you please wait a moment?”

Sherry vanishes into another room.

Judging from the situation, she seems to be preparing the papyrus and the writing instrument.

She purchased those with her allowance.

She didn’t flush all her money in the drinks.

“Vesta, if you want to leave right now, I can drop you at the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“No, it’s alright. I’ll go there on foot.”

Vesta intends to walk to there.

Now that I think about it, I always use Warp between the Adventurer’s Guild and home.

I wonder if she knows the way.

Because it’s a straight road, it should be alright, no?

“I kept you waiting.”

“Let’s go then?”

“Please take care.”

After Sherry returns, the three of them see us off.

In the lodge, we meet Sebastian right away.

“You-Michio-sama, Sherry-sama, welcome.”

The angle he bows his head to is too deep.

He seems to remember our names. Or is it perhaps because I was supposed to come here today?

“I would like Sherry to use the reference room. Is it alright?”

“Certainly. For I have to call the person in charge, please wait a moment.”

Sebastian gestures a man. The man leaves in quick strides.

Although he's not running, he's pretty quick.

He disappears in no time.

“Do we need something?”

“Not at all, nothing in particular. If you need parchment, writing implement or meal, just order it; I'll have it arranged right away.”

I have parchment with me.

Are 10 silver coins enough then?

“But we brought writing implement.”

“If you have one, that's better. Do use it, please.”

Upon Sherry's enquiry, he gives a 'carry on' kind of 'OK'.

He's honest.

The man, who left earlier, brings a woman along.

He really is quick.

As for the woman, she's trotting.

“Sherry-sama here wants to use the reference room. Guide her.”

Sebastian orders the woman.

The woman bows to Sherry.

“Certainly. Then Sherry-sama, this way, please.”

“If you need me for something, just call for me.”

“Okay.”

I see Sherry off.

The woman turns around and leads.

Sherry follows behind her.

“Because today is the admission courtesy, I'll be back later.”

“Very well. We'll be waiting for you.”

I give Sebastian a heads up and return home.

Since we are a party, Sherry will be aware of my direction even if we separate.

The lodge is supposed to be private. Can't its location be figured out this way?

## Chapter 170 : The Emperor

\*

From the lodge, I Warp to the living room of the house. When I return home, Miria had the fishing gear lying on the table. She doesn't seem to be negligent in respect of preparations.

“Does it seem to be usable?”

“Yes, desu.”

Oh well. It's not like it was kept unused for long. It's not something which will become unusable in such a short period of time.

Roxanne is sitting relaxedly next to Miria. Vesta can't be seen; she seems to have left.

“Has Vesta gone already?”

“Yes. I had her keep the key. Will we be returning home by noon? Or should I have told her to meet up at the Adventurer's Guild?”

“It's fine.”

Because we are a party, meeting up won't pose any difficulty. That it allows you to track the direction of the party members is really convenient. Its function is to allow a party to reunite if they separate in the labyrinth. Such a thing hasn't happened thus far. Is there a possibility of it happening in the future?

Leaving the fishing gear at home, the three of us – Roxanne, Miria and I – enter the labyrinth.

Quratar's 17th floor.

I have worked together with Roxanne, Sherry and Miria, these three, as a vanguard, so there shouldn't be any problem.

“Then let's head to the boss room.”

“Please avoid places with numerous monsters as much as possible. It would be better if we focused on the boss battle.”

I justify the instruction of avoiding the monsters on the way.  
Or did I make it more obvious instead?  
Like a cowardly worm clinging, afraid of being caught.

“Understood.”

Roxanne has seemingly gotten it.  
She leads the way.

Even if we come across five monsters, us three can take care of them without any issue. However, there's a possibility of us receiving attacks. More like I than us.  
Therefore, places with numerous monsters must be avoided.

Avoiding the monsters and hunting the boss?  
Is there such a thing even possible?

We advance while kicking the monsters on the way about.  
With the three of us, there's no problem.  
For we intend to retry the boss battle, there would come a time when we would be unable to find a way around if we kept avoiding the monsters, allowing them to crowd.

By the way, unlike usual, I finish the monsters petrified by Miria with magic.  
Since I'm fighting mainly with Durandal, I don't need to recover MP.  
For this reason, I have removed Grand Wizard and Jobless.  
With the basic magic of Wizard, which I kept as First Job, I take what was left of the monsters out.

When I go to the initiation ceremony, I'll switch the First Job to Adventurer.  
They may verify my Intelligence Card.

As the Black Diamond Tuna didn't get petrified, I finish it off with Durandal.  
So, is the effect of Abnormal Status Resistance Down, which I always use during the boss battles, that great?  
Perhaps because I didn't cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down, the boss didn't get petrified until I took it out.

While glancing sideways at Roxanne, who was taking on the tuna from the front and lightly dodging its attacks, and Miria, who was attacking from diagonally behind the boss, I tidied the accompanying monster up.

What part of it was training?

Even the boss couldn't make for Roxanne's practice.

It was rather stress release.

If it weren't for that, I wouldn't come here on my day off, would I?

The first boss drops lean tuna.

I had already selected Cook for the sake of dropped items.

This isn't a boss that requires us to give our all, so there's no need for Gambler.

"Lean tuna, desu."

Miria looks delighted with lean tuna.

She's learning Brahim properly, huh?

"We'll be having fish sanmai for tonight's dinner. I'll be using this lean tuna. Whether it'll be a fish sanmai or not depends on our catch."

"Master's dishes are always delicious, so I look forward to it."

"Catch, desu."

Putting the lean tuna in the Item Box, we take second round.

Miria petrifies the second boss.

Even without Abnormal Status Resistance Down, the boss can be petrified satisfactorily.

The boss drops lean tuna.

Third boss neither gets petrified nor drops fatty tuna.

Fourth boss doesn't get petrified but drops fatty tuna.

Petrifying the boss seems to be difficult.

"How about having fatty tuna for the dinner the day after tomorrow?"

"Day after tomorrow, desu."

Miria accepts my proposal.

We'll be having fish soup tonight.

So she has no complaints in regard to the day after tomorrow.

Until we secured four fatty tunas, we stay in the labyrinth. Since two fish suffice for one meal, we have enough for two meals. For we have plenty for the day after tomorrow and another day, it's enough.

If it's kept inside the Item Box, it won't rot.

“Although it may be early, should we leave it at that?”

“Understood.”

“Okay, desu.”

Miria shouldn't be dissatisfied, right?

For she'll be able to go fishing now.

“What do you want to do, Roxanne? Do you want to go to the Imperial Capital right away? Or do you want to go after sending Miria off to fishing? Either way is fine with me.”

As for the Imperial Capital, if I first take Miria to the fishing tackle shop, then drop her at the fishing spot and then go to the lodge, that'll make it two trips.

So, when do I take Roxanne and Vesta to the Imperial Capital?

“I'll go together to the fishing spot. There'll be luggage, that's why.”

“As for the luggage, Miria and I will somehow manage. Right, Miria?”

“Manage, desu.”

When I glance at Miria, she repeats.

“Will it be fine?”

“Yeah, it'll be fine.”

“Then I'll take your word for it. Vesta should be home by now, too, so I would like to go to the Imperial Capital right away.”

“Got it.”

After leaving the boss room of Quratar's 17th floor, I Warp us from the small room to home.

“Welcome back.”

Vesta, who had already returned, receives us.

“We’re home.”

“Did it go alright?”

“I won’t ever partake in a dangerous activity on my day off. Do you want to go to the Imperial Capital then?”

“Yes.”

With Vesta having tagged along, the four of us move to the Imperial Capital.

The place is the wall inside the library.

Because this place is close to the fishing tackles shop.

“If you go this way, you’ll find the Adventurer’s Guild. Since the Adventurer’s Guild is located in the shopping area, let’s meet up there before heading back.”

After stretching my arm out and indicating the location, I exit from the library.

On the opposite side is the fishing tackles shop.

I learnt of the direction to the fishing tackles shop from Sherry.  
On the opposite side of the library is the posh area.

The Empire Liberation Society’s lodge seems to be in the same direction as the Imperial residence.

It’s a good location.

“Understood.”

“Day off is good, isn’t it?”

“Thank you very much. I’ll be going then.”

“See you later.”

I see Roxanne and Vesta off.

Having parted with them, the two of us, Miria and I, head to the fishing tackles shop.

Miria didn’t take as long a time as Roxanne does shopping. She bought only hooks.

She seems to be anticipating her time fishing.

Actually no, it might be due to Roxanne not being here to translate that she couldn’t talk about fishing gears.

Although she can speak Brahim somewhat, talking on a specialized subject is a totally different ball game.

Actually, there's no knowing whether Roxanne would be able to translate technical terms or not even if she were here.

Since she bought hooks of different sizes, does she plan on catching different kinds of fish?

They may also be spares.

Even if one breaks, she'll be able to carry on.

"This hook costs 20 Nars. This one costs 30 Nars."

"These?"

"Yes, desu."

I receive the hooks from Miria and pass them to the clerk.

"4 20-Nar-hooks and 2 30-Nar-hooks. Since you're a valued customer who purchased the recommended set the other day, I'll give you a special discounted price of 98 Nars."

Miria's goods have been purchased at 30% Discount. However, because we don't have to buy fish to eat, it offsets that.

Miria takes out 1 silver coin to pay and puts the returned 2 copper coins back in.

The hooks may seem expensive. However, if you consider that it's nobles' hobby, they aren't that expensive.

I leave the fishing tackles shop, return home, pick the fishing gear up and Warp to the seashore off Hafen.

Because Hafen is in the north, is that why it doesn't feel as hot here as in Quratar?

Still, the temperature isn't low enough to keep her from jumping into the water. However, that Roxanne has already instructed her, she won't.

"Don't stray away from here till I come pick you up."

"Okay."

After telling her not to wander around, I move to the lodge in the Imperial Capital.

I appear in the lobby of the lodge.

In the lobby, there are people gathered at the end of a long corridor.

Is there some meeting taking place?

Sebastian comes out from inside and meets me.

“We were waiting for you, Michio-sama. Ester-sama came but has left on account of an urgent business.”

“Is that so?”

“He should be back before long.”

“What has everyone gathered for?”

I point my gaze to the crowd and enquire.

The man, who was with Sebastian this morning, can also be seen in the crowd.

Is this staff assembly? Are they on a break before the afternoon assembly?

Although Sherry isn't there, the woman who was with Sherry is.

“What about you, Michio-sama? Ester-sama will also be joining, too.”

I've been made to join.

Sebastian leads me to where the people are gathered.

“Arrived.”

Midway, someone's voice resounds.

Sebastian starts running.

In a blink of an eye, the leader of the gathering stands up.

Someone has arrived.

The gate at the end of the corridor slowly opens.

Which reminds me, that gate is for the staff's use.

The members aren't allowed to use it. Will Ester be coming from there?

Both sides of the gate slowly swing open, facing outward of the lodge.

It's a Japanese-style gate.

For some reason, the main gates in this world open inward.

So does the one at my house in Quratar.

Therefore, it's a rarity to see a Japanese-style gate.

It's my first time seeing one.

When the gate opens, Sebastian and everyone behind him bow.

Ah

I was late.

Whatever. This gate is for the staff's use anyway.

Is the person someone who is superior to even Sebastian, the General Secretary?

Are they the Chairman of the Empire Liberation Society?

The atmosphere feels terrible.

People are lined up on the either sides of the gate.

So they are someone great, after all, huh?

Close to the gate, Baron Ester and the Duke of Harz can be seen, too.

I'm the only one who has yet to bow.

I wonder if it's bad.

However, it's too late for me to do it.

It's just the atmosphere.

From the crowd, two people, Baron Ester and the Duke of Harz, come over.

What is it? Why are the two coming here?

Surprising.

"Sebastian, don't discuss the details."

"Okay, Ester-sama."

"Well then."

Ester exchanges a few words with Sebastian and halts in front of the gate.

The two, he and the Duke of Harz, move to either sides of the gate, face toward the centre and bow.

When the two bow, three men come out of the crowd at the other end and approach.

The one leading them is a thin, stern-faced, middle-aged man.

He seems to be an Earl. However, for even the Duke to bow, the other party doesn't seem to be so simple.

Behind the middle-aged man is another one.

The Emperor, Gaius Principus n'Impera | Male | 39 Years Old  
Adventurer Lv41  
Equipment | Orichalcum Sword | Sacred Silver Meshwear | Sacrificial  
Misanga

It says that he's the Emperor.  
Someone great, indeed.  
The Duke is bowing, too.

What do I do?  
I know that he's the Emperor only due to Appraisal. If I bowed in a flurry,  
it would look suspicious.  
However, will standing straight look appropriate?

I should have read the mood.  
Reading mood.  
Since I'm in the back, I'm safe. Or so I want to think.

The three people enter the lodge following which Baron Ester and the  
Duke of Harz enter, too, after which the gate shuts close.

Sebastian steps forward before the Emperor and receives him.  
Even though he's the Emperor, he's wearing a casual tunic.  
As for the Sacred Silver Meshwear shown by Appraisal, he must be  
wearing it underneath his clothes.

"Gaius-sama, excuse the discourtesy of my receiving Gaius-sama in  
such a place."  
"No problem. We are well aware of the Empire Liberation Society's rules."  
"To witness the admission of Gaius-sama is such a great joy which this  
lowly one can't bear. I'm extremely happy."  
"From now on, please take care of Us."

Sebastian is talking with the Emperor.  
If this is his admission, then he was not a member.  
I did hear that the current Emperor isn't a member.  
I didn't hear wrong.  
Wasn't it the appointed time and place?  
Hello, does anyone remember?

“Oh, Michio came, too, huh?”

Baron Ester finds me and speaks.

I wanted to complain but I swallow the words down.

“.....Yes, just now.”

“Just in time. It may have upset them but it shouldn't have offended them.

“Haa”

I don't want to even think about offence.

Because I know that he's the Emperor.

“In the society, official position isn't relevant.”

The Emperor doesn't plan on introducing himself, it seems.

Even if he introduced, how would I approach to talk?

Should I keep pretending that I don't know he's the Emperor?

“This person?”

When the Emperor sees me talking with Ester, he interrupts.

Strange.

The vibes coming from him aren't that of finding faults.

Reading mood.

“He's Michio who's scheduled to partake in the admission courtesy.”

“Michio here.”

Even Baron Ester is speaking respectfully. As you would expect.

I read the mood and greet him respectfully.

Albeit not deeply, I bow my head.

“Michio? Our name is Gaius.”

Well, well.

That's a funny first-person there.

For him to say 'Our name is Gaius'...

## Chapter 171 : Initiation Ceremony

\*

“Then let’s head to the room.”

I don’t know whether he read the awkward mood or not; however, Baron Ester offers me a way out.

He quickly starts walking and leads.

I am grateful to him.

I quickly follow behind him.

I can feel a strange pressure coming from behind me.

Four people – including the Emperor, the Duke and the Earl – have tagged along, too.

Sebastian and the other staff members seem to be staying behind.

The initiation ceremony will seemingly be held with these members. Even the party members don’t seem to be present.

Will the initiation ceremony be held together with the Emperor?

Ester goes upstairs to the third floor, walks down the corridor and opens the first door.

I enter, determined.

It is but an ordinary room.

After I enter, the four behind me follow in as well.

“I am glad you were able to join, as I expected, without any issue.”

“Yes.”

When the Duke comes in, we exchange a few words.

Following in right after him is the Emperor.

From a glance, you can tell that the Earl, who was standing next to the Emperor, is a stern warrior.

Is he the Emperor’s guard?

In contrast with his abundant moustache, the hair on his head seems desolate.

If viewed from the top, it would probably look like a bar code. He has a tall stature. He will be able to look down on everyone excepting Vesta.

“Alright then, now that everyone is inside, the initiation ceremony and the admission courtesy will be conducted for Gaius, Carlos and Michio as soon as the preparations have been completed.”

Ester, who preceded us in the room, turns around and faces everyone. However, was it really necessary to call my name in the last? The other guy, beside the Duke, seems to be a new member, too. Since he entered the lodge with the Emperor, he must be an official.

“Please take care of me.”

The Emperor bows.

“Please treat me well.”

“I-I will be in your care.”

I have no idea as to whom the Emperor was addressed to; however, since the other guy followed suit, I go along and greet, too.

“Gaius and Carlos have joined as second rank while Michio first rank. The initiation ceremony requires a minimum of three members as witnesses. Today, in addition to myself, Bruno, who is the referrer of Gaius and Carlos, and Brocken, who is the referrer of Michio, are present.”

“Bruno here.”

“Brocken here.”

Following Ester’s introduction, both the Duke and the Earl proceed to stand next to the Baron.

So the Earl was the referrer?

Unsurprisingly, the Emperor has joined as a higher rank than me. I am glad.

“Then you three wait in this room for a while.”

Done with the greetings, Ester moves to the next room. Wait a moment.

Why am I being left behind with the Emperor?

And there is another man, who may be an official, with the Emperor.

I gaze at them with pleading eyes; however, the Baron and the Duke vanish into the next room.

Oh well. Unless they know about my background, there is no way for it to be a trap.

Even the Earl leaves the Emperor behind and goes ahead.

Let's be positive.

And look at it from another perspective.

The ratio of the nobility has decreased from  $4/6$  to  $1/3$ .

Considering the fact that the Emperor is not supposedly a noble, all the nobles have disappeared from the room.

“Is Michio from the human tribe?”

“Indeed. Pleased to meet you.”

Impossible.

I am speaking with the Emperor.

“Casual language is fine. It is a rule of the lodge to communicate on equal terms. People around Us only use courteous words. I am eager to learn of the words spoken on the streets.”

It is because you are the Emperor your majesty that people use courteous words.

“I-I understand.”

“So then, are 《you》 from the human tribe?” (TN: Addressing someone of lower status)

That second-person is awkward.

“That's right.”

“You are considerably younger in that case. How old are you?”

“I am 17 years old.”

He will know my age if he looks at my Intelligence Card.

The server had better not read it.

“Are you joining at this age? That is extraordinarily excellent.”

“No, it is not much.”

“Disappointing. Truly disappointing. When modesty exceeds limit, it becomes immorality. Be considerate of other members and others who were not admitted.”

I have been rebuked by the Emperor.

He is right. Since there would be people who were rejected even though they wanted to join, I cannot assume the air of superiority in front of those people.

As the Emperor said, huh?

He seems to be an upright person by nature.

“I see.”

“Because We were admitted after growing old.”

“That is still great.”

“It may seem an excuse but the day is too short for Us to earnestly enter the labyrinth. We tend to be busy with various matters.”

That is obvious.

You are the Emperor, after all.

On the contrary, I want to ask as to why do you even enter?

“Really?”

“Although Our official position is confidential, We have a duty of raising an heir.”

Ignoring We, Our and Us for a moment, is that the reason as to why he intends to keep it a secret?

For the time being, it seems better if I don't know.

I don't know.

I don't know that this person is the Emperor.

“An heir?”

“Because there are teachings from Our ancestors which We have to pass on to Our descendents.”

I wonder.

It sounds like Uesugi Youzan, the benevolent feudal lord from Edo period.

‘The state is inherited from one’s ancestors and passed on to one’s descendants; it should not be administered selfishly.’ That guy. Because the state is transmitted from the ancestors to the descendants, the rulers cannot do as they please is what I have heard.

Didn’t you want to say ‘Our state’?

“I don’t really get it but it sounds troublesome.”

“We could not enter the labyrinth earnestly after Our eldest child grew up to the age of 15 and became an adult. It has been a decade.”

He will be able to enter the labyrinth when the crown prince reaches the age when he can take over.

Mortality rate of infants in this world seems to be high.

Until he ensures that there is a successor, he cannot do as he pleases.

As per Appraisal, the Emperor is 39 years old.

If his child was 15 years old 10 years ago, then he must be 25 years old now.

Huh?

Doesn’t this calculation seem off?

“Are you having suspicions?”

“You look too young for that.”

“You can say that. It was Our duty.”

Did you procreate at the age of 14?

Including one year of pregnancy period, he must have procreated when he was 13 years old.

Even if it is assumed that one turns adult at the age of 15, he procreated when he was 15 years old.

When an emperor turns 15 and becomes adult, does he receive a sex partner?

I am envious.

Actually, I am not sure whether I should be envious or not.

I have heard that having sex as a duty is toilsome.

T-There is no reason for me to be envious.

“Is that so? But why are you joining after getting old?”

“If We don’t exterminate the labyrinths, there is no meaning to Our life. Because Our child needs to grow to adulthood, we have to do it in their stead.”

The Emperor gives a heroic justification.

Being an emperor doesn’t seem to always be good.

Even the Duchess, Cassia, is like that. The nobles in this world seem to have noble thoughts.

Is everyone here like that?

“Shall we begin then?”

When I was puzzled after learning of his heroic resolve, Ester comes back.

Nice timing.

“Are we starting?”

“Everyone, wear this.”

The Baron is carrying white clothes.

And is wearing one himself.

It is an oversized T-shirt.

According to Appraisal, it seems to be called Dalmatic.

“Dalmatic?”

“It is commendable for Michio to recognize it. It is an equipment handed down in the society. It is required to be worn on the occasion of admission courtesy.”

Ester passes me the Dalmatic.

“I think I saw it somewhere.”

“It is the equipment one of our Wizards wears.”

“Ah, so it was that, huh?”

The Emperor and the other man are conversing.

Like I speculated, the other man is one of the Emperor’s officials.

Since he said ‘one of our Wizards’, are they both part of the same party?

Can other party members join, too?

“Put this on and head to the next room.”

“Baron, We heard that it is unusual for more than one person to join at the same time. Is that true?”

The Emperor asks Ester.

“That’s right. This is the first time more than one person are joining at the same time ever since I became the president.”

Okay, now that is something important.

Baron Ester seems to be the Empire Liberation Society’s President. As a President, he is more than qualified to judge.

“As We thought, it is unusual, huh?”

“There are not many talented people appropriate for admission. There may almost be no precedent of three joining at the same time. As for you two, as you may be aware, it is a custom for the Imperial Guard to join together with the Emperor. It happened in the past, too.”

The other man is the Imperial Guard?

Since he is the one chosen from the Imperial Guards, he must be strong. As you would expect from an emperor. They need to be guarded at all times.

There are no guards with the Duke and Baron here.

But they do have Sacrificial Misanga, so it should be alright, no? I don’t care about the Duke, though.

“Uh, alright then. As for the order of joining, Michio should be first.”

After pondering over something, the Emperor announces.

“Because of Our occupation, we are not used to respecting others. We often look down on our companions. That is not supposed to be good. We want Michio to be admitted first, so that We respect him as Our senior brother 《senior》. This way, Our arrogant heart may soften up a bit. It is unusual for three to join at the same time, so this must be a kind of guidance, certainly.”

No, wait!

Even though what you said is absolutely wonderful.

Try to put yourself in the shoes of the person being respected.

My heart will not soften.

The Emperor must be aware of the situation of the person being respected from his experience.

Because it is natural for the Emperor to be respected, is that why he can maintain composure?

“Admirable resolve.”

Ester appreciates him.

“Is that so?”

“The order of joining will be Michio, Gaius and Carlos.”

“That is good.”

The order has been decided.

As if it were an Imperial decree.

The Emperor’s proposal must not be denied.

Actually, the Guard Carlos is in the last, after Gaius.

Is it unacceptable to show respect to a guard who accompanies you at all times?

Why don’t you have your way with your officials?

“Well then, once you have finished your preparations, come over.”

“Okay.”

Since I can’t help it, I put the Dalmatic on top-down and move to the next room.

It is quite dark inside the neighboring room.

Only two thin candles are lit.

The two candlesticks are on a long and narrow table lying on which is a white cloth. Both the Duke and the Earl are on the other side.

Both of them have the Dalmatic on.

Ester goes to the other side and positions himself between the two.

“Close the door, please.”

“Understood.”

Upon Ester’s request, the Emperor’s guard closes the door. The light

from the previous room vanishes, making the room even darker.

The atmosphere feels occult.

Only the candlelight is illuminating the surroundings dimly.

“Michio, step forward.”

“Okay.”

Upon the Baron’s instruction, I step forward to the front of the table.

At the same time, the Duke moves.

He shifts to the side of the table and puts equal distance between me and the Baron.

“We will now hold Michio’s initiation ceremony to the Empire Liberation Society. The referrer will address the referred.”

“I, Brocken, a member of the Empire Liberation Society, recognize the strength and the character of this person named Michio. I recommended him as I found him suitable to be a member of the Empire Liberation Society. Michio will bring new ideas and competition to the Empire Liberation Society. He will probably become a force in exterminating the monsters and the labyrinths.”

“I, Ester, confirmed Michio’s ability. If there is a person who objects his admission, come forward.”

Even if you say ‘a person who objects’, it is my first time meeting the people here beside the examiner and the referrer.

This speech is probably a part of the courtesy.

“Michio’s admission can be deemed unobjected.”

After waiting for a while, the other witness, the Earl, speaks.

Summing it up was his role, it seems.

“I acknowledge Michio’s admission to the Empire Liberation Society. Michio, repeat the words of oath after me.”

“Okay.”

Is there even such a thing?

“I promise that as a member of the Empire Liberation Society, I will not neglect putting effort and devotion in exterminating the monsters and the

labyrinths.”

“I, Michio, promise that as a member of the Empire Liberation Society, I will not neglect putting effort and devotion in exterminating the monsters and the labyrinths.”

“And I swear not to leak any internal information of the Empire Liberation Society.”

“And I swear not to leak any internal information of the Empire Liberation Society.”

I repeat Ester’s words and take the oath.

I don’t have any reservations about the content of the oath.

“The initiation ceremony is now over. Welcome to the Empire Liberation Society.”

“Yes.”

“After the initiation ceremony for the remaining two people has been conducted, the new members will partake in the admission courtesy. You will have to confess one of your embarrassing sexual secrets. This courtesy is essential in order for you to reborn as a strong member of the Empire Liberation Society.”

Do we have to go so far as to partake in such a courtesy?

Confession will raise sense of solidarity which will enforce sense of belonging to the society, huh?

This initiation thing.

I have a lot of secrets.

“A secret?”

“Now that you have joined the Empire Liberation Society, it is against the rules to expose secrets. Because it will not leak outside this room not matter what kind of confession it is, rest assured. As for the referrer, because they are often close, it is possible to have them leave if you wish. As for the two in the back, think over what you will confess during the initiation ceremony.”

“Very well.”

“Okay.”

The Emperor and the Guard answer.

Are you going to make even the Emperor confess?

Should I rather reveal that I came from Earth?

If I reveal that secret here, I can have only the Emperor, the Duke and the people here know about the secret without it leaking outside.

It may come in handy if something happens at some point in future.

However, they might consider it a joke if I said I came from another world.

Or if I revealed that I can cast magic even though I am an Adventurer.

It is possible to be verified without moving out of this place.

If I showed it in front of them, they would have to believe it, no?

“I have gotten tired of hearing confessions of not being able to stop masturbating. Keep in mind that until I recognize your confession, you will have to keep going.”

So It is like that.

It will not be acceptable if it is not an embarrassing sexual secret?

I wonder if something related to Sex Maniac would do.

There is a merit in sharing a secret with the Emperor or the Duke; however, exactly what kind of secret, it is difficult to decide.

If there is a research institution in the Empire's infrastructure relating to fighting against the labyrinths, it may be sent there as research material.

Confessing a normal secret should be fine.

## Chapter 172 : Initiation

\*

Thereafter, the Emperor and his guard perform the initiation ceremony. Except for the Earl taking the Duke's place by the table, everything, even the speech, is the same.

These are prescribed lines.

"Since it will be Michio's admission courtesy now, do I excuse myself?"

After the guard's initiation ceremony, the Duke asks.  
It is better not to let my referrer hear my embarrassing secret.  
It is better to have less people listen, of course.

"Can I request so?"

"I understand. Then, I will leave my seat."

The Duke simply moves to the neighboring room.  
He leaves just like that.  
Is it because of the rule?

"Then, Michio will reveal his embarrassing sexual secret first. Everyone, myself included, don't laugh; listen seriously. However, if you judge that his secret isn't enough of a secret, reproach him. Michio, here."

After the Duke went out, Ester reiterates inside the room which had gone back to being dimly lit.

"Okay."

Ester urges me to the other side of the table.  
Inside the dark, only the edges of the table are visible because of the candlelight.

I can faintly discern the appearance of the audience comprising four people.

It is a good setting to make a confession.

"Begin."

Ester, who had moved to the other side, instructs.  
Then, which secret I should share?

“Once, there was a pretty female clerk at a shop in the neighborhood. When she returned the change, she would always clasp my hand gently. I was certain that the girl was interested in me. Thenceforth, I would always buy from that shop and line up in front of that girl. I would always pay in large denomination even if I had small denomination available. Later on, I heard from people that she was a clerk responsible only for returning the change. Was this story different from what you usually hear?”

That was a terribly embarrassing misunderstanding.

“So trivial!”

“We didn’t get it. What was it about, really?”

“It couldn’t be more trivial.”

The Baron, the Emperor and the guard evaluate it.  
It didn’t receive good reviews.

The Emperor probably doesn’t understand what ‘change’ means.

“Wha.....t do you mean? Don’t tell me that the girl clasping your hand means.....”

One of them seems to be stuck at a strange part.

“I didn’t get the lining up before the girl part; however, he was certainly going to propose marriage because of the misunderstanding.”

Ester interrupts.

They don’t even understand lining up at the cash register!  
As for proposing marriage, it was a different feeling.

“No, it didn’t go that far.”

“That won’t do. Confessing because of a misunderstanding, getting dumped, returning home disgusted and the following series of events; if it didn’t go to that extent, it cannot be called an embarrassing secret.”

“Then, I will talk about the time when I visited a town for the first time and asked a kid for directions. Afterwards, a warning was floated about to

be careful of a pervert who calls young girls over.”

I share another account because Ester had refused the first one.

“It wasn’t an interesting story.”

“For the sake security, it is necessary to call for people to be cautious.”

“I didn’t understand it well.”

This, too, gets denied by the three.

“It is alright. When I visit a town, I always keep the emblem with me and have a member of the knight order accompany me, so there is no problem.”

So, is one of them fine with it?

“In the town, whenever I see a woman waving her hand to a person behind me, I think she is waving to me which makes my heart start pounding.”

“Still not enough.”

“I was once taken care of by a woman, who I thought was somewhat beautiful, so I expended every possible valuable I had in order to present it to her. However, she told me that she had already accepted another man.”

“It wasn’t embarrassing at all.”

It didn’t pique Ester’s interest.

Even though one of them said, “that’s sad.”.

“While standing in front of a brothel, troubled to enter during the working hours, I loitered for a long time.”

“It isn’t enough.”

“I understand that feeling.”

Of course, it was the Earl who understood the feeling.

“After especially sending Brocken away, it should be something you don’t want Brocken to hear, no?”

Ester suggests.

A big one that I don’t want the Duke to hear?

Should I talk about 'that'?

'That' one.

"Cassia, Brocken's wife, is quite a beautiful woman. In fact, I fell in love with her."

"This one. This is what I wanted to hear."

"We saw her, too. She is remarkably beautiful even amongst the elves. She is a considerably beautiful woman."

"I have never seen her. However, am I lucky to not have seen her?"

"I have never saw her either. Is she really that beautiful a woman?"

This one seems popular.

This one, huh?

"Of course. To the point that I want to make her mine."

Ester confirms.

"No, not to that extent."

"If you admit it right now, I will approve of your admission."

"We will also maintain silence in front of the Duke regarding this matter."

"It is alright. Nobles' relationships are only superficial; they are shallow in actuality. It is a political marriage, after all. She will give her heart to another man before long."

I am curious about the Earl's opinion.

Is it based on his own experience?

"Just a bit."

"I can't call this level of secret a confession."

"I feel inclined to accept it, though."

The Earl seems inclined to accept it.

Ester isn't budging.

Should I share another story?

"My party members comprise four female slaves and I do all four them at the same time."

"Those four certainly are pretty. However, it is common to do your party

members.”

“C-Common.....”

Ester doesn't seem amused but one of them certainly does.  
Is it because they were declined from doing it?

“It isn't to the extent of keeping it secret from Brocken. How about we allow Brocken in and denounce it together? Right, Carlos?”

“Of Course, I do all four of them equally every night.”

“Open the door.....Wait!”

In the midst of threatening about letting the Duke back in, Ester stops.

“Four, everyday, you say?”

The Emperor confirms it himself.

“That's right. Is something wrong?”

“I-Is this what you call youth?”

“However, to do it everyday just because he is young...”

“For Us, it wasn't until We were 17.”

“Four girls.....everyday.....”

“But it is difficult doing it more than once or twice these days.”

“It isn't about having to do it. It is about wanting to do it.”

The jury are whispering amongst themselves.

“I object. I object Michio's admission.”

The Earl raises his voice.

An opposing faction seems to have emerged.

“Didn't you say awhile ago that it is fine to accept his admission?”

“I have changed my mind.”

“But the story shared just now.”

“Is this inevitable?”

“Certainly.”

The jury continue to discuss.

The discussion seems to be advancing in a positive direction.

Except for one person.

“What is the color of your blood?”

Sensing his disadvantage, the Earl screams at me.

“However, as you would expect, since having two rounds with all four of them is too much, I do it only sometimes.”

“S-Sometimes, you say!?”

“Only sometimes?”

“Do it only sometimes?”

“Explode!”

I can hear it, you know.

Of course, the last remark was from the Earl.

To do it, you need to be able to get an erection.

Bastard, you won't have a single strand of hair left.

You think it's that easy?

There is a very few (strands) to begin with.

To this Bastard, even hell may only be lukewarm.

“Calm down.”

“Gununu.”

“Calm down and let's wrap it up.”

“Alright then, Michio's admission has been accepted. With this, Michio is a legitimate member. Now that you have reborn, work hard.”

Ester announces the decision of the entire group.

Has it been settled? Is there no need to continue?

It is all thanks to Sex Maniac that I can do all four of them everyday.

“Is it over?”

The Emperor's guard opens the door following which The Duke enters.

“We heard something terrifying.”

“Was it that big a secret?”

“Rather than a big secret, it was a dreadful secret.”

The Emperor and the Duke converse.

It wasn't dreadful, really.

“Gaius’ admission courtesy shall be next. What do you want Bruno to do?”

“It doesn’t matter. There is nothing you will be hearing that will trouble Us.”

The Emperor’s admission courtesy starts next. The confident Emperor doesn’t send the Earl, who recommended him, out. If he sent him outside, it would mean that it was a secret he didn’t want him to hear.

Removing the referrer can be good or equally bad.

“Then, begin.”

“We prefer a woman’s chest to not be big. A small and pretty chest is the best. As a matter of fact, Our father 《lord father》 liked women with big chest. When We were a kid, all the personnel he employed, from the wet nurse to the maid, had big chest. Our preference is perhaps a reaction to that. We are sick and tired of big chested women.”

The Emperor reveals his taste in women. And even the late Emperor’s preference. He must be the late Emperor for he was his father.

“That is just personal liking.”

“For a secret, it is a weak one but it can be classified as a sexual secret.”

The Baron and The Duke shoot it down. The Duke seems to like big breasts like the late Emperor. I don’t think Cassia’s chest can be called small. To add to it, I think she is the type that looks slender in clothes.

“What are you saying? It is a fact that the women with small chest are the best. Good grief, small girls are the best!”

Hello, Police? (TN: Different in raws. Had to make it sound funny)

“When We were a kid, we used to hide in the corner of the room. Once, the attending maid stepped on us unknowingly. At that moment, We got sexually excited for the first time.”

“That is very interesting.”

“That pain felt great. Ever since that time, whenever We see a woman’s

feet, we get excited a little. If possible, we want to get stepped on again.”

He is totally M, isn't he?

Plus, he loves small breasts.

I can't let him meet Sherry.

Actually, I don't think Sherry's breasts are that small.

“Can't you order the attending maid?”

“They weren't willing to do it.”

He answers the question.

Who asked that?

Well, that was scary.

He is the Emperor, after all.

“It will be difficult considering Gaius' position.”

“It can't be helped. We are thinking of digging a hole in the maid's passageway and hiding there next time.”

Pervert, eh?

“Is this good enough for a secret?”

“Right.”

“I will recognize it.”

It seems to be popular with the jury.

He has totally reached the level of a pervert, though.

I have unexpectedly learnt of the Empire's secret.

Because of the big chest loving late Emperor, the Emperor has turned into a small chest loving M.

I feel like I have violated the Empire's privacy.

“If you are that into it, there are shoes, too.”

“Michio doesn't accept it?”

“No, it isn't like I don't accept it. However, if you like it so much, you should try high heels.”

High heels don't seem to be common amongst the women in this world.

I have never seen them wearing those.

However, if he wishes for a woman to step on him, then it has to be with

high heels.

An older woman in tight suit, wearing glasses.

Breathing sweetly, eyes piercingly cold.

A harmony between sensibility and sensual pheromones.

Unbearable!

“Hmm, high heels, huh?”

“It is a high-tier equipment for female Wizards.” (TN: Since the job was named Wizard from the outset, we will keep using it whether it be for a male or a female)

“We have seen it once. It is said to increase magic power. To be stepped on with it certainly seems powerful.”

The three nobles discuss.

So, there are high heels in this world, huh?

Are there shoes that increase men’s magic power, too?

Like tall wooden clogged sandals?

[Tengu](#)’s magic power increases, too, when it puts those on.

“High heels. With that. Certainly.”

The Emperor mutters.

He seems to have realized the merit of high heels.

“Did you get it?”

Did he understand it or did he get it wrong?

“We were mistaken. But how do We wear high heels? Do We have to hide in the labyrinth, too?”

It is troublesome. I give up.

“Please stop. It is dangerous.”

The guard stops him.

It is better to stop him right now as it will be dangerous to hide in the labyrinth.

Having said that, it would be dreadful to decline the Emperor if he asked face-to-face.

It carries grim prospects.

“We will find a method in the future. As expected of Michio. It is worthwhile for Us to respect you as Our senior brother.”

I have received respect for something weird.  
It isn't something I would like to be respected for.

“Michio will suffice as his mentor when he tries it in the future. What do you say?”

Ester confirms with me.  
No, I don't want to guide him on such a weird path.  
In the first place, it isn't about whether I want to or not.

“W-Well.”  
“Good. Gaius' admission has been accepted. Now that you have reborn, work hard.”

Now he will work hard at it, too.  
“Please take care of Us.”  
“Lastly, Carlos. Bruno is your referrer, what would you like him to do?”  
“It is alright.”

There is nothing suspicious left for the policeman Earl, to hear now.  
Or so I thought; however, Carlos' confession drew the barcode Earl in.  
I want to keep my distance from him.

As for the guard's secret, I can't expose it anymore.  
It is the rule of the Empire Liberation Society, after all.  
Even if it weren't a rule, I wouldn't abuse a warrior's mercy.

With such an Emperor, guard and Earl, is the Empire in safe hands?  
It has been corrupted.

## Chapter 173 : Dwarf Killer

\*

“All the members’ admission has been accepted securely. The admission courtesy is now over.”

Ester declares the conclusion of the admission courtesy for all the members.

Is it finally over?

It was longer and more tiresome than I thought.

In particular, mentally.

“Gentlemen, congratulations on your admission.”

“We seek the power to exterminate the monsters and the labyrinths.”

The Earl and the Duke line up next to the Baron like before.

The Earl welcomes us properly.

I also straighten my back.

I don’t want to stand next to the Emperor, though.

“For those who have joined safely, I will be teaching you the hand sign.”

“Hand sign?”

“It is a sign to show you are a member of the Empire Liberation Society.

You can use it when you need help from a member and you aren’t sure whether that person is member or not. This is the hand sign.”

Ester forms a cross with his hands in front of his body, the palm of his left hand against the back side of his right upper arm.

Is there such a sign?

“Is this good enough?”

The Emperor mimics it.

“Stretch your right arm. Like this.”

“Is it done like this?”

I give it a try.

“When I am not acquainted with someone and I want to recommend them to the Liberation Society, I show them this sign and see their reaction.”

Which means that I should have seen it already.  
When I look at the Duke, surprised, he nods.

“I did that, too.”

I seemed to be tested as well.  
I don't remember when he showed it to me, though.  
It is a pretty difficult to understand sign..  
If you didn't know whether the person is a member of the society or not, you would feel unease since it would be unwise to leak the secret of being a member.

“When someone shows you this sign, you return the same sign to them. When you are called for help, respond positively. I want you to support within your ability for the sake of camaraderie amongst the members.”  
“I understand.”

For the time being, I should nod.  
It is possible that I may need help.  
I doubt, though, that I will be using it much.

“However, it is strictly prohibited to abuse it.”  
“That's right.”  
“Also, there is a general meeting held every winter. Although there is no obligation for first and second ranked members to attend, I would like you to actively participate.”

Will there be such a troublesome general meeting after becoming a member?  
Oh well. I expected such a thing.  
And there is no obligation to attend.

“We have heard it is held around the same time as the lords' conference.”  
“That's right. It is convenient since we gather at the same place and many of us are members. You can drop at the lodge and enquire from the clerk

about the exact date.”

“Will it be difficult to participate for Us?”

The Emperor interrupts.

Is there such a thing as the lords’ conference?

Many from the noble circle seem to be the members.

I guess there are many nobles, like Cassia and the Emperor, who have a sense of duty toward defeating the labyrinths.

The nobles’ children create parties when they are still infant; however, only the rest of the members enter the labyrinth, forging purely the cultivation.

Only the children of the nobles and the rich can become Wizards. It is also the reason why the nobility and the affluent are stronger.

The nobles seem to gather for the lords’ conference. At the same time, the members, who are part of the Empire Liberation Society, meet.

Via [Field Walk], they can gather anytime; however, since they will already be in the Imperial Capital for the lords’ conference, it will be convenient.

It is a convenient schedule.

The lords’ conference must be held in the Imperial Capital, of course.

However, the Emperor tends to seemingly be busy at that time.

Come to think of it, he would most likely be the organizer of the lord’s conference.

There would be various reports to listen to.

Being an emperor is difficult.

“Although it will take a while, if you break through 45th floor, the breakthrough examination will be conducted. Visit the lodge and inform the Secretary.”

“Breakthrough examination?”

Oh, there was that, too.

It is decades ahead, though.

“Then, does Brocken need to add anything?”

“If you are able to challenge beyond 50th floor, you should inform the

secretary of the labyrinth you enter.”

The Duke adds to it.

It doesn't concern me.

As a member of the Empire Liberation Society, it will be easy to gain recognition if you defeat a labyrinth.

If the Emperor were to defeat a labyrinth, no one would doubt even if they didn't know as to which labyrinth he entered.

“Is there anything Vice President Bruno wants to add?”

The barcode Earl, the policeman, seems to be the Vice President of the Empire Liberation Society.

Will this organization be alright?

“Nothing in particular. The Empire Liberation Society welcomes new members. Let's work together and hone our skills in order to eventually exterminate the monsters and the labyrinths.”

“With this, the initiation ceremony and the admission courtesy comes to an end.”

The President and Vice President concludes it.

Someone opens the door brightens the room.

It really seems to be over, finally.

“Bring the clothes you borrowed over.”

The Earl, who had taken off the Dalmatic, quickly calls out to us.

I take the Dalmatic off and hand it over to the Earl.

“Now then, let's move to another room and have a toast. All the members, come.”

Ester shouts after taking the Dalmatic off.

It is time for nomenclature. (TN: Drinking + Communication)

It is that, after all, huh?

21st century Japan had it. This world seems to have it, too.

“Because We lack time, excuse Us.”

“It is alright.”

The Emperor and the Earl talk while he was handing the Dalmatic over.

“Although it tends to be a big banquet, we will only be having a light toast today.”

The Duke comes beside me and explains the Emperor’s and the Earl’s conversation in private.

I see.

Indeed. Since the Emperor is busy, he won’t have time for a big banquet. Our gracious Emperor.

“Is that so?”

“Because Michio has joined safely, I want to host a small banquet at my house. How about in around 10 days’ time?”

“Sure.”

“Then, in the evening 10 days from now, come along with all your party members.”

While following behind Ester after leaving the room, I talk with the Duke.

He recommended me, after all. It would be impolite if I refused. It isn’t like I have a reason to refuse in the first place.

“I was waiting for you. Did the initiation ceremony end without any problem?”

After we pass through the corridor and descend downstairs, Sebastian was waiting.

“It has finished.”

“The room has been prepared. This way, please.”

Sebastien guides us quickly to the room.

The General Secretary opens the door to the room following which all the members go in.

It is the same wide luxurious room we used when I first visited this place. If the Emperor is going to be present, it will of course be this magnificent room.

Ester moves to the other side of the table.

The Duke also leaves me side.

I wonder if the other side of the table is for high ranked seats.

The three nobles are on that side.

The new members are on this side, huh?

There really doesn't seem to be any special treatment for the Emperor. At the very least, the Emperor is seated in the centre while I at the edge.

"Dunkel for myself. Ask Brocken and Bruno for what they would like. And one each of Dwarf Killer and Stark Seltzer for the new members."

Baron Ester is seated in the centre at the other side of the table. Well, he is the President, after all.

"Certainly."

Having received the orders, Sebastian leaves the room. Is there such a drink called Dwarf Killer?

"As for the new members, if you can drink alcohol, drink Dwarf Killer. If you can't Drink Stark Seltzer. Take it home with you if you don't want to drink."

It is said that dwarves drink alcohol in place of water. This one seems to be able to waste dwarves. It is very strong, I guess.

The new members' bullying doesn't seem to have ended with just the confession.

"Stark Seltzer?"

Even though Stark Seltzer is an alternative to Dwarf killer, one who doesn't drink alcohol should still be careful. It is part of the new members' bullying, surely.

Sebastian returns soon after and serves the drinks. I am sure both the Dwarf Killer and the Stark Seltzer had been prepared beforehand. Is bullying the new members a custom?

"This is Dwarf Killer and this one is Stark Seltzer."

Two small jars have been placed in front of each of us.  
It isn't bisque but a glazed jar.  
It has a luxurious feeling to it.

"We still have work to do after this."

The Emperor picks Stark Seltzer up.  
The guard, too, pick up Stark Seltzer.  
They won't be able to do their job if they are drunk, I guess.

"Same for me, too, then."

"Why!? Why is nobody trying Dwarf Killer? Don't remove the cork yet."

When I pick Stark Seltzer up, Ester warns.  
I knew I wouldn't be able to avoid drinking it.  
It is Dwarf Killer, after all.  
It must be lethal for humans.

Maybe the name is just for show and it isn't that strong?  
Or, is Stark Seltzer perhaps the new members' bullying in actuality?  
Is it possible to be direct here?

"If you remove the cork, drink it in one gulp."

"You should shake the jar before drinking it."

Instructions on how to drink it were given by the Baron and the Duke.  
Shake the jar?  
The Duke is so brutal.

"Then, to celebrate the admission and the future of the new members.  
Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

The President toasts with everyone.  
I remove the cork and pour some in my mouth.

It is carbonated water.  
It really was carbonated water all along.  
Bubbles pop inside my mouth.

It is quite strong.

It feels like cheaply sold Cola imported from America.

But it tastes like water, not Cola.

It contains no sugar.

It is merely carbonated water.

“Gaius should know about it; however, Michio, did you know about it, too?”

As I drank Stark Seltzer without a surprised expression, Ester asks.

“I didn’t know about it but I drank something similar back in the days. It wasn’t as strong as this, though.”

“Although it is the same spring water, it is certainly stronger than the rest.”

Does the carbonated water spring out naturally?

At any rate, they would perhaps mock the person who drank it for the first time.

It is mischievous no less.

“Should I have chosen Dwarf Killer, after all?”

“Dwarf Killer is a strong liquor, too. I have never heard of a person who can drink the jar in one gulp. It won’t be easy for dwarves either.”

Whichever drink I chose, it would be a trap, huh?

So evil.

“We have heard a story that a dwarf downed Dwarf Killer in one go. We would like to meet such a brave person if they exist.”

“I don’t know either. There is no one amongst the elves who can.”

The Emperor and The Duke don’t know anyone either.

Just because they can drink doesn’t make them that great.

It just means that they don’t have that many dwarf acquaintances.

“Don’t tell me that Sherry ordered it.”

I confirm with Sebastian.

Perhaps, Sherry is drinking Dwarf Killer in the reference room.

I would be troubled if she drank such a strong liquor and acted violently.

“Sherry-sama said that Dwarf Killer might affect her work and said that just water would be fine.”

Might, she said?

It is her day off, though, not work.

Well, her water may not necessarily be H<sub>2</sub>O.

It is a reply that can be taken in more than one ways.

“As expected of senior brother. You know such a bold person.”

“Not really. I don’t know whether she can drink it in one go or not.”

“It is on the level of ‘might affect her work’.”

I knew someone would delve in it

However, I have a bad feeling about letting the small breast loving M Emperor meet Sherry.

“I wonder about that.”

“Will it be bad for Us to meet her?”

“Sebastian, can you please do me a favor and check if Sherry is free.”

Because the Emperor started being disquieting, I ask Sebastian.

Albeit rotten, he is the Emperor.

I would be troubled if he felt offended.

I can’t not change my attitude.

A wise man changes his mind, a fool never. A fool puts on a 《new》 face. A splendid person reforms his attitude, a person who isn’t fixes but the appearance.

I didn’t order her to come here.

If Sherry declines on account of being busy, no one will raise their brows.

A competent General Secretary must surely be able to read the mood.

“Did you call for me?”

Despite that, Sebastian brings Sherry right away.

I should have expected the General Secretary to be on the Emperor’s side.

And it was fast, too.

I wonder if he hurried her up.

Nothing particularly changed as I take a look at the Emperor.

Be glad, Sherry.

It looks like you didn't pass the Emperor's small breasts exam.

The Earl guy would be like 'Jesus! Lolita no touch!'

"Ah. Sherry, do you know of a liquor called Dwarf Killer?"

"Yes, it is famous amongst dwarves. Even when I used to drink together with my grandfather, I didn't drink that liquor as much. It is a delicious liquor that burns your throat."

Didn't Sherry's grandfather pass away a long time ago?

Yet they used to drink together?

I have heard that this world doesn't have any minor drinking prohibitive law.

Is the phrase 'burns the throat' used to describe how good a liquor is?

"This one here is Dwarf Killer. Do you think you can drink it?"

"I don't think this quantity will have much of an effect."

"Th-Then, do you want to try it?"

I hand it to Sherry.

You rejected it in the reference room because you were afraid of the effect. Just how much did you plan on drinking?

"Is it alright? Isn't it an expensive liquor?"

"Drink it in one gulp."

"Then, I will accept it with thanks."

Sherry removes the cork and swills the liquor down directly from the jar.

As if I quenching her thirst with water, she chugs it down just like that.

## Chapter 174 : Dere Phase

\*

“Ooh!”

The Emperor is surprised, too.

In front of the Emperor, Sherry easily downs a jar of Dwarf Killer.  
So daring.

Is she still sober?

Was it a strong liquor?

“Are you alright?”

“Yes, this quantity isn’t much.”

Because it’s a small jar, the quantity can’t be much, certainly.

Still, she drank it like she was drinking water.

Was it actually water, perhaps?

Thinking so, I receive the jar from Sherry; however, it was genuinely alcohol.

“It’s great.”

“Yes, it’s a great liquor. Is it 30-year-old Russo? If it weren’t that aged, it wouldn’t make you this mellow.”

“As expected of Sherry-sama. This lodge does have 30-year-old Brightest Russo.”

Sebastian approves Sherry’s taster capability.

Does strong liquor make you mellow?

“Wonderful. Would you like to taste Ours, too?”

The Emperor shows her a jar.

“‘Ours’?”

“This.”

While Sherry had her head tilted, the Emperor personally offers the jar.  
Because I didn’t say anything, is that why I didn’t receive yet?

Should I have received at least once?

Is it fine for Sherry to receive personally from the Emperor.

It should be fine for it's not known that he's the Emperor.  
Sherry receives a famous brand of alcohol from the Emperor.  
To a third person, the scene appears grand.

I wonder if the person concerned, Sherry, realizes it, too.

"Still, if I drink this much, I may get a little drunk."

That's why you should have declined.

"There's no problem with getting drunk a little. Go ahead."

I push Sherry, flurried.

You can't not drink his alcohol. If he asked, it had to be done.

".....Okay."

After glancing at Sebastian, Sherry uncorks the jar.  
Is Sebastian's opinion more important to her than mine?  
In crucial times, you seek an elderly for help.  
Unfortunately, however, the other party is the Emperor.  
Sherry drinks the Emperor's liquor with ease.

"Ooh. Can you still go on? Carlos."

"Yes."

The guard presents a jar to the Emperor which he, once again,  
bequeaths to Sherry.

I don't think he's intentionally exaggerating it.

That's just how he is.

Sherry downs the third jar.

"Is it alright to drink this much?"

"I'm feeling good a bit. I've gotten a little drunk, I think."

Upon the Emperor's enquiry, Sherry replies soberly.  
A drunk would never say they're drunk.  
They remain cool headed to the end.  
When you're drunk, do you become intellectual?

“Still, it took you three rounds to get drunk. Marvellous. If you’re ever troubled, you can visit Us.”

“Okay. Thank you very much?”

She answers questioningly.

I must say, even if we visit, you’ll just turn us away.

Literally.

“Well then, although it’s regrettable, we have to get back to official business.”

“I guess.”

The Emperor gets up from his seat followed by the guard.

Even though it’s such a place, Sherry won’t step on the Emperor, right?

On the other side, the three nobles stand up, too.

“Well then, Michio, we’ll be going, too.”

“See you in ten days.”

“Bear in mind that you’re not perfect, so work hard as a member.”

The three speak to me.

The Earl does harbor ill intentions.

Will these three nobles be returning with the Emperor?

Well, they did come together, so it shouldn’t be surprising.

“Well then.”

“Alright then, senior brother, see you sometime.”

Nope, I don’t want to.

The Emperor’s group leaves the room.

Should Sherry and I have seen them off, too?

“Gaius-sama, thank you for today. Please bestow this place with your royal visit again.”

Sebastian accompanies them to the end and offers valediction before sending them off.

As you would expect, all the staff members of the lodge are together with him.

“‘Royal visit’?”

“It just means visit again.”

Fortunately, it's a word which Sherry doesn't understand.  
What's more concerning is that all the staff members are bowing.

“As expected of Master. Your Brahim language is superb.”

She's definitely drunk, isn't she?  
For Sherry to sound like Roxanne.

“Really?”

“But that gate is odd.”

While I was thinking so, she points out.  
Because she's drunk, is that why?  
Or because it's a Japanese style gate?

“Well, it does look unusual.”

“A gate normally opens inward. If not, it wouldn't be of use in defense.  
The reason being, if a door opens inward, it can be blocked by something,  
making it difficult to be forced open immediately from outside.”

“Is that so?”

Is that the reason as to why front gates open inward?  
Then, the reason as to why Japanese gates open outward must be because  
it's peaceful there.

However, even in Japan, a temple gate opens inward.  
In Sengoku period, the temples were military installations.

Then, why does a modern Japanese gate opens outward?  
Because it's convenient.

Imagine the main gate of your house.  
If it opened inside, shoes would be an immediate nuisance.  
And it would eventually turn into a rabbit hutch.

“If you think about it, it must be important to have it open outward  
rather than inward.”

Sherry continues to contemplate.  
I see.  
The Emperor did walk in from outside.

The lodge must be located somewhere the Emperor can walk to.

The library is close by the Emperor's Imperial residence, too. In other words, it's important to have it open outward. This must be the reason as to why the location of the lodge is private.

"Is the other party the reason as to why the lodge isn't invaded?"  
"But how important is this other party?"

It would be bad if it went on any further.

"It was my bad to have you called."  
"Noo, I was happy that Master called me."  
"Really?"

In order to change the topic, I offer her an apology. I wish you had declined.

"Ah, excuse me. Can you please give me a minute?"  
"What is it?"

Well awake, Sherry trots away.

"Although I was doing work, I unfortunately got a little drunk."

Sherry talks to the woman who had returned after sending the Emperor off.

She's the same woman who led her to the reference room. The work she's talking about must be the same from awhile ago.

"Is that so? It's alright."  
"No, no, Sherry-sama. That alcohol was a royal gift."

Sebastian interjects.

"Royal gift?"

Therefore, it wasn't wrong.

"What's this work you were talking about?"

I enquire, changing the topic.

"Yes. There is a plethora of reports in the reference room sent by the members who have successfully subjugated the labyrinths. Most of them

comprise a single papyrus. They are required to be copied to the parchment. Since I have already read them, it's easier for me to copy them, so I accepted the part time job of a transcriber."

Such a job, huh?

If a report were on papyrus, it would crumble over time. Therefore, they seem to transcribe it on the parchment. So she's a copier, huh?

"You were doing such a thing?"

"I did something selfishly. I'm sorry."

"It's fine."

"But I have gotten drunk a little."

If she were drunk, there would be a risk of mistake while copying.

"It was I who made Sherry drink the alcohol. That being the case, I'm the one in the wrong."

I cut in and stand before the female staff member.

If it's tiny Sherry, I'll be enough to cover her.

Sherry huddles close and hides behind me.

She's so close that she's touching my back.

Sherry quietly holds my arm with her hands.

Somehow, she looks so cute.

"There's no issue, of course. Then, I'll have Sherry-sama's luggage brought here."

Says Sebastian and instructs the female staff member.

The woman bows and departs.

"Is that fine, Sherry."

"Yes."

I receive Sherry's consent.

After taking a while, the female staff member comes back.

The woman hands a rucksack to Sherry.

"Your luggage has been put inside. And this is your remuneration for

transcribing. I skimmed through it, your work was meticulous. Thank you for today.”

“Thank you, too.”

She receives the luggage and some silver coins as remuneration. As for the time she took, was she verifying the work performed? Even if it had been transcribed, if it were illegible, it'd be useless. Sherry carries the rucksack on her back and hands me the silver coins.

“Because it's the remuneration of Sherry's work, Sherry should be the one to keep it.”

“Are you sure?”

“You did this on your day off, after all.”

“Thank you very much, Master.”

A smile blooms on Sherry's face.

This is bad.

She's so cute.

Sherry looks a bit different from her usual self.

Is it finally her dere phase? (TN: Dere = lovestruck)

Or, is it because she's drunk?

“Then, let's return home?”

“Yes.”

Because she was looking so cute, I bring her back home.

It was just the two of us, of course, when we return home.

It's probably the first time I'm alone with Sherry.

Moreover, it's her drunken dere phase.

Sherry is bolder than usual probably because she's drunk.

The moment we step into the house, she throws her arm around my neck.

Tiny Sherry stretches her back as much as she can.

Without a moment's delay, I take her to the bed.

Sherry's hesitant yet honest voice is so lovely.

After enjoying without Sex Maniac, I select Sex Maniac and indulge in it once again.

She slightly reeks of alcohol; however, it's within permissible limit.

After we enjoy each other, Sherry begins to quietly let out sleeper's breathing.

I produce some hot water, wipe my body and move to the Imperial Capital Adventurer's Guild.

Roxanne and Vesta are there, huh?

I head into the two's direction.

While I was walking on foot, I find the two rushing out of a distant shop on the street.

There's still quite some distance.

Roxanne starts running in the lead.

"Master, thank you very much for today."

Roxanne's dere phase is on 24/7.

So pretty.

"Thank you very much."

No sooner, Vesta catches up.

Vesta, who's taller than me, is pretty, too.

I feel so even more after having enjoyed the tiny Sherry.

"I took a bit more time. Did it go okay?"

"It was okay. Us two, Vesta and I, fully enjoyed our time around here."

"Yes, it was fun."

The two of them enjoyed their time, too, it seems.

"Were you and Sherry together at home?"

Roxanne figures it out.

Busted.

"Ah. Sherry drank a strong liquor, so I put her to sleep."

"I'm glad that Master got to enjoy himself, too."

Totally busted.

When you're in a party, you can find out other members' direction. So inconvenient!

"Do you want to return immediately or do you want to visit more

places?”

I sound like a trash husband who's offering her wife compensation after having an extramarital affair.

And then she extorts dresses and jewellery.

However, it doesn't end at just that.

“It's alright.”

“Then, let's return ahead of time and prepare the bath?”

“Yes. I'll accompany you to the labyrinth. We can also fight monsters stronger than Black Diamond Tuna.”

She accepts the compensation with an added condition of the labyrinth. Engaging in a boss battle isn't required, though, to recover MP.

“Because the member constitution is different this time, it'll be a fresh take.”

Because she had nothing to do, I take Vesta along, too.

Better three than two.

Vesta unfortunately gets caught up in the backlash. However, like I said, it'll be a fresh take, so it's fine.

I heat the bath while partaking in the boss battle; after which, the three of us go and pick Miria up.

When we move from the forest to the shore, Miria was, once again, surrounded by people.

She's completely reigning as a legendary angler.

She distributes some and brings the rest home.

There's plenty for us to have fish sanmai tonight.

“There are shrimps, too, huh?”

“Fish exchange, desu.”

“Did you exchange it with fish?”

“Morning catch, desu.”

The other party seems to catch fish only. However, this morning, they caught shrimps, so they exchanged it.

Excellent sized shrimps are in the basket.

There are no less than five.

“Can I fry the shrimps?”

“Entrust, desu.”

Although tartar sauce can't be made immediately, it's alright.

“Also, there are some fish which should be deep fried.”

“Alright, desu.”

“Then, I'll leave rest of the cooking to Miria.”

“Yes, desu.”

After leaving rest of the dishes to Miria and putting the luggage down, I leave for shopping.

I buy bread, eggs and vegetables.

When I return home after buying the cooking ingredients, Sherry had just woken up.

“I'm sorry. I seemed to have slept.”

“It's alright. There's no problem, right?”

“Yes. After sleeping for a while, I feel refreshed. I'll help Miria with cooking.”

Sherry doesn't snuggle to me like she did earlier.

She goes to Miria curtly.

Her dere phase seems to be over.

I have Vesta help me with the cooking.

While Vesta makes the bread crumbs, I fry the lean tunas and the shrimps.

It's tuna cutlet.

Although it's fish, it tastes like meat.

After deep frying for a bit, I boil water in a pot, then add wine, fish sauce and dragon skin.

I put the tuna cutlet and the fried shrimps where I was boiling and drop a beaten egg.

It's fish cutlet [tamago toji](#).

Even though there's no sauce, it'll suffice.

## Chapter 175 : Stocking

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“It has a tender taste.”

“It’s delicious. It’s mellow and soft outside while it has ample volume inside.”

“Wow, desu.”

“I think It’s nutritious and delicious.”

The tuna cutlet tamago toji seems to be popular with the four.

“This-the idea of putting egg on it is innovative. It’s delicately made. As for whether it’s delicious, It’s hard to say as I’m not used to eating it.”

“So it’s no good?”

“No, we can tell that it’s delicious because we’re used to your cooking. Generally, however, the dishes here are crudely made.”

Sherry critiques in detail.

So, is it a compliment or is it not?

One thing is certain, though, that her dere phase has ended.

She has refreshed after having slept for a while.

A dwarf’s liver is strong, surely.

Actually, if it’s a dwarf we’re talking about, every cell of theirs probably breaks the alcohol down to Acetate which is then probably consumed in the Citric Acid Cycle of Mitochondria.

Ethanol is broken down to malignant Acetaldehyde, which may be a cause of hangover, which is further broken down to Acetate.

Via the process, Acetate becomes strong Acetyl Co (Coenzyme) A. Acetyl CoA is broken down to Glucose which produces Pyruvate. When it enters the Citric Acid Cycle, it generates a large quantity of energy.

In short, liquor becomes fuel, literally.  
Terrific.

However, I do understand that tamago toji is delicate.

The egg in tamago toji is claimed to add rather delicate flavor than a strong taste.

I distribute the dragon skin soup.

Compared to tamago toji, the fish soup made by Miria and the fish saute made by Roxanne under Miria's directions are quite simple.

I can even infer the materials used from the taste.

These dishes are mainstream.

Because the four of them are used to eating my dishes, they're able to appreciate tamago toji.

That's probably it.

It's complicated.

"Which reminds me, was there any interesting shop in the Imperial Capital?"

Amidst self-analysis, I throw a topic to Roxanne at the dinner.

"Yes, there was an interesting shop. Right, Vesta?"

"Yes, I think it was an interesting shop."

The two, Roxanne and Vesta, nod.

"Hee, what kind of shop?"

"Fufu, it's a secret."

Roxanne smiles, amused.

"S-Secret?"

"Yes. I think it'll be better if you don't know for the time being."

Even Vesta maintains it as a secret when I try to ask her.

Why can't you tell me?

Since you said 'for the time being', do you plan on telling me some other time?

Although I have no idea, they seem to have enjoyed their day off.

"Did you find any interesting information in the reference room, Sherry?"

I try to enquire Sherry.

Since she has rested, she shouldn't be drunk, so it should be alright.

“That's right. Step Increase in Damage skill. It should be considerably useful.”

“Step Increase in Damage?”

“Yes, a skill that deals more damage with 2nd attack than 1st, 3rd attack than 2nd and so on if you attack the same monster. Even if attached to a stick, it effectively applies to magic just as well.”

“Sounds useful.”

The damage source of our party is Durandal and magic. I have enhanced other weapons; however, it has but little significance. Durandal can't be enhanced any further for it doesn't have any empty skill slot.

But Sherry isn't aware of that.

Therefore, I'm grateful that it increases the magic damage, too. Presently, I can't take a monster out in a single blow. It'll be even less likely the higher I advance up the floors.

“To tell you the truth, I knew the existence of Increase in Damage skill; however, I wasn't of the impression that it would be of use. After all, it's best to attach it to a powerful weapon. If attached to a Copper Sword or the likes, you can't expect the damage to increase much.”

“Houhou”

“The person who submitted the report had the skill attached to an Orichalcum Spear. Also, they subjugated the labyrinth. It's incredible that they cleared the labyrinth without relying on magic. I had no idea it was such a great skill.”

And why didn't you inform me of such a skill till now? So, its effect increases if the weapon is strong. Even if it were attached to a Copper Sword, it wouldn't produce good results. However, if it's attached to an Orichalcum weapon, it'll be able to dish out considerable damage. So much so that even the last boss can be slain.

“Last, huh?”

“They said that the last boss battle was scary.”

“Because the last boss has the ability to destroy the equipment.”

Had the Orichalcum Sword with Step Increase in Damage skill been destroyed, it would've been all over.

You can have someone take on it from the front while you attack it from behind; however, that's walking on a tightrope.

It would be synonymous to stepping on thin ice.

“Apparently, a Damascus Steel Spear can yield great effect, too. It was written that they obtained the Orichalcum Spear from the Empire Liberation Society. Step Increase in Damage skill seems to be rated highly in the Empire Liberation Society.”

If attached to a weak weapon, it wouldn't produce good results; consequently, it would be rated poorly.

Sherry was of the same thought.

Because there are many members in the Empire Liberation Society who use powerful weapons, is that why this skill is rated highly?

Moreover, since the information doesn't leak out of the Empire Liberation Society, the high rating couldn't be passed on outside.

“Step Increase in Damage, huh? Should I ask of Luke?”

“To attach Step Increase in Damage skill, you need a Bee Monster Card and a Kobold Monster Card. If you only used a Bee Monster Card, it would grant Increase in Damage skill. If it's fused with a strong weapon, Step Increase in Damage skill will make a clear difference and vastly improve the effect.”

“Got it.”

The higher the damage of the weapon, the more dominant the Step Increase in Damage skill.

In order to attach the skill, a Bee Monster Card will have to be fused simultaneously.

“Very well.”

“Aren't you mistaking the Bee Monster Card skill with Anaphylactic Shock?”

“Ana what?”

When a bee stings, its poison creates Antibodies. When it stings the next time, the excessive Antibodies cause Immunoreaction. That’s Anaphylactic Shock.

When stung a second time, the damage is higher than the first time. That the skill granted by a Bee Monster Card deals more damage with 2nd than 1st, 3rd than 2nd and so on, it must be owing to the poison embedded into the enemy.

“If you have noticed, the poison of a bee inflicts more damage the second time compared to the first time. During the first attack, the bee produces reserve toxin in the body. During the next attack, it triggers.”

I explain to Sherry who had gotten over her dere phase. With this, she will respect me a bit. If I mentioned Antigen or Antibodies, she wouldn’t get it.

“Un, I haven’t heard such a thing. In the first place, there’s no explanation as to why a Bee Monster Card grants the Increase in Damage skill.”

Nope, it was of no use. Oh well. That’s just how it is. Furthermore, there’s no guarantee that the poison of this world’s bees is the same as Earth’s.

“Is that so? As expected for master.”

Roxanne is my only heartmate.

“Shell, desu.”

“What do you mean, Miria?”

“xxxxxxxxxx”

“It’s same as the poison of a shellfish. If you eat it the first time, the symptoms aren’t apparent. However, when you eat it a second time, the symptoms are potent. It may even prove fatal. Miria says that it’s her first time hearing the reason behind it.”

Roxanne translates.

Which reminds me, the shellfish in this world is poisonous. Unless it's a dropped item, it can't be eaten.

Does the shellfish cause Anaphylactic Shock?

Miria directs a respectful gaze at me.

It didn't work on Sherry but it did on Miria.

"If it's the same in case of a shellfish, then it may be true."

Oh, I kinda pass.

Sherry nods, too.

"Ana, Ana, desu."

"It's Anaphylaxis."

"Anaphylaxis, desu."

You don't have to particularly learn it

Actually, it was translated into Brahim.

Oh well. It's Miria we're talking about. She'll forget it by tomorrow.

After the dinner, I take bath with everyone.

There's still some time left for the day.

I can challenge the limits of Sex Maniac.

I should let Sherry have a break.

"Master, would you please go ahead to the bedroom?"

When I step out of the bath, Roxanne requests.

Why?

Even though changing clothes with everyone is fun in its own right.

To be surrounded by four extreme beauties changing into their clothes.

My heart is throbbing.

Getting out of the bath, I move to the other side. I can just undress them again.

I can't help but imagine Roxanne's bulge struggling under the white nightgown.

I can't help but imagine Vesta's big fat lumps, covered.

I can't afford to miss it even a single day.

“.....Got it.”

While my heart was shedding tears of blood, I accept.  
After changing into my clothes, I head to the bedroom.  
Will I have to keep sulking in the bed?

It won't do.  
I'll have to punish them.

“Master, may we?”

Roxanne's voice chimes after a while.

“O”

First off, I reply appropriately.

“Excuse us.”

The door opens. Four girls enter.  
The four of them line up beside the bed.

“O?”

On top, the four are wearing the usual negligee dress camisole.  
Nothing new.  
However, on their legs, they're wearing something black.

“How does it look?”

“OO?”

“Today, when I was with Vesta, we found a shop in the Imperial Capital.”

“OO”

The four girls have black stockings on.  
It's knee high.

It's stocking.  
Black legs extending down the hem of the camisole look sexy.

“It was a nameless shop but it had such a thing.”

“OO. OO.”

I get close and check it.  
The fabric is nicely thin.

It's see through yet not bare.

It's fantastic.

"It's highly expensive but it's not durable that's why it's not common."

"O. O?"

"Yes, you can touch it."

When I look up at Roxanne from below, she permits me.

When I touch, it was smooth and \*subesube\* silky.

It's unbearable.

"OO"

"I'm glad that I decided to buy it."

"OO. OO."

I wanted to stroke her cheeks but I control myself and slowly stroke.

From her calf to her knee to her thigh.

While I was stroking, the hem of her camisole gets disordered.

There's.....garter belt.....

The stocking was hanging off the garter belt.

There was no gum (elastic) in this world, so the stocking would obviously hang off the garter belt.

Just like the stocking, the garter belt is black, too.

Between the two is the white 'absolute territory'.

Should such a thing be permitted?

Should such a wonderful thing exist?

My heart throbbing as if in a bewitching garden.

Like a man stranded in the forest of Shangri la.

A beautiful space painted by night.

A heavenly orchard chokingly brimming with sweet, mellow fragrance.

Eat.

Eat.

Eat.

With the tenor saxophone playing sweet blues, there's nothing but insatiable lust.

I lose myself as if possessed.  
With no sense of time, I dig in like a baby.  
Lost completely, I indulge in eating.

I select Sex Maniac. I wonder, however, if I really need it.  
I do. With the assist of Sex Maniac, I can go for a second round.  
I bench Sherry during the second round.

The next day. I visit the Imperial Capital after having the breakfast.  
Like you guessed, I have a business at the shop which Roxanne and Vesta found.

From the Adventurer's Guild, I have the two guide me.

“Here's the shop.”

Bathing in the yellow sunlight is a compact clothing shop.  
There's a nameless shop on the street.  
Rather than order made, it seems to be pret a porter.

“Alright. Each of you may buy one piece of clothing you like.”

“Are you sure?”

“It's okay.”

I let the four of them choose.  
Honestly, it would be cheaper if they bought only stockings but I can't say that out loud.

Although I want to compensate Roxanne and Vesta for what they spent out of their small allowance, I want to spend money discreetly.

“How may I help you?”

The clerk with overjoyed face greets us.  
Because he's sure to sell four garments at the very least.  
I take him to the side while the four of them were choosing.

“There seem to be stockings in this shop.”

“Yes. The durability is a concern but it's a prototype at this stage. As far as the fit and the texture is concerned, we can take pride in it.”

I touched it and it certainly felt good.

“Can I have one?”

“Which size?”

“Ah, normal would do.”

“Very well. One would be 500 Nars.”

It's expensive.

It would be 2,000 Nars for four.

For they didn't have 30% Discount, Roxanne and Vesta had to use up all their allowance.

Shouldn't I be glad?

I am.

“I'll pay the money at the end.”

“Very well.”

I order one stocking.

I'll have to take it to the lodge later.

If I pass it to Sebastian, it'll reach the Emperor eventually.

I must share this unspeakable joy with his majesty the Emperor, too.

## Chapter 176 : Increased Attack

\*

After I order a stocking, the four girls return.  
The four of them have yet to choose any clothes.  
For now, let's hear the state of affairs.  
First up is Roxanne who has a ghastly expression about her face. Pass.

“There is hardly any of small size.”

Next up is Sherry who's complaining. Pass.

“XXXXXXXXXX”

Miria is muttering something. Pass.

“There aren't many of big size. Which one do I choose?”

Vesta seems to be troubled as well.

I pass Vesta, too.

Huh?

Should I first go to Roxanne, after all?

“What do you think? Found anything good?”

“All the dresses are of high quality. It will be difficult to wear them inside the labyrinth.”

“It will be fine to wear such clothes. We have been invited by the Duke again. ”

“Thank you very much.”

It really is a luxury shop, like I suspected, even though it is small.  
Well, it is alright to choose such clothes if you like to wear them.

“By the way, what was Miria saying?”

“Apparently, she is looking for clothes which can assist her in catching fish.”

What the hell kinda clothes are you looking for!?  
Actually, this kind of clothes may be available in this world.

Or, there may be clothes applied with fluorescent paint.

Thereafter, I decide to observe quietly.

Amongst the four, Vesta is the first one to select clothes.

Is that because there were fewer choices?

The dress is an extravagant one-piece.

If it is this one, it will do.

If she chose one for the piano recital, it would be embarrassing.

Unfortunately, however, the dress Vesta chose doesn't receive Roxanne's approval.

It has been adjudged bad for reason unknown and returned.

Nevertheless, the direction they are going in isn't wrong. The four girls take their time choosing clothes and finally decide on one after trying them on.

"It really looks good on you."

"Yes, thank you very much. Then, I think I will take this one."

Roxanne finally selects her dress.

"Are you guys fine with yours?"

"Yes."

Sherry and Vesta seem to have found the clothes they like.

As for Miria, she seems to have given up searching for clothes designed to lure fish.

"Then, I would like to order these, please."

"Okay. Since you are buying the clothes in bundle and, umm, since it's your first time as my customer, it will be 8,750 Nars as a special service."

30% Discount worked, huh?

It would be 1 gold coin if it weren't for 30% Discount.

It does seem to be expensive.

After the girls receive their respective clothes, we leave the shop.

I'm holding the bag which has the stocking I bought.

"Thank you for such expensive clothes."

“Because you guys looked good in them.”

This much is okay since I am not troubled with money.  
And, if the four girls get to dress up, it will make me happy.  
I can enjoy this and that (and that).

“Master seems to have gotten something, too.”

“Yeah, it is just a...”

“Just a...?”

Roxanne is probing.  
A stocking is for women, after all.  
She probably knows what is inside.

“Sherry received liquor yesterday, so it is just a ‘thank you’ gift.”  
“Really?”

I wonder if she bought that.  
Giving a stocking as a ‘thank you’ gift in return of liquor sounds weird.  
However, truth is stranger than fiction.  
The one I am giving it to is unexpectedly a pervert who exceeds the  
common sense.

I move from the Imperial Capital Adventurer’s Guild to the lodge.  
“Thank you very much for this pleasant surprise, Michio-sama,  
Roxanne-sama, Sherry-sama, Miria-sama and Vesta-sama.”

Sebastian comes to greet us.

“I wasn’t able to see the shop yesterday, so I came to have a look.”  
“Yes, as you please.”

“Also, when Gaius visits, I would like you to give this to him.”

I pass Sebastian the bag with the stocking inside.  
Because I passed to him what I bought from the shop, Roxanne would  
believe that I didn’t gift it to a woman.  
Sherry can testify that Gaius is not a young woman.

Oh?  
Wasn’t his name not mentioned in front of Sherry?

“This is?”

“This is a ‘thank you’ gift for the liquor Sherry received yesterday. It isn’t anything suspicious.”

On a second thought, it really is suspicious. Sebastien will surely check it since it will be given to the Emperor; however, the content is merely a stocking. It isn’t an explosive or a cutter or poison.

“I understand. I will keep it.”

“Tell him to ‘work hard’.”

Whether the Emperor will get it or not by just receiving the stocking, I am not sure.

So, I left him a hint.

As for the meaning of ‘work hard’, the Emperor needs to figure it out himself.

The Emperor will perhaps think of how to get stepped on.

“This way then, please.”

Thereafter, Sebastian guides us to the shop.

The outstanding equipment were not there but they seem to have been replaced with several other equipment.

New products seem to arrive about every 6 days.

It would be troublesome to check everyday; however, it will be fine if I drop by once every week, no?

When I look at the new equipment in front of me, there was a Staff of Increased Attack.

It has the Progressive Increase in Damage skill attached to it.

It is the skill Sherry mentioned.

“This wasn’t here the last time I came.”

“Yes. It is an equipment that came recently. It is called Staff of Increased Attack. I recommend this staff if there is a Wizard, from beginner to high level, in the party.”

I don’t think there would be a beginner in the Empire Liberation Society, though.

Oh well. It can also be used as a present, I guess.

“It is certainly a good as staff.”

“Conditions apply, though, as It would be problematic if anyone beside the party members of the society members used it.”

“Ah, so it really is like I thought.”

Looks like it can't be used as a present.

If I used an excellent weapon that has Progressive Increase in Damage attached, I could figure out how Progressive Increase in Damage works.

That's why only the party members of a society member can use it.

Is it in place to safeguard information leakage?

I don't think it would be wrong, though, if it were made public.

However, not everything can be shared.

Since it is rarely seen around here, is it perhaps to inhibit equality?

It is preservation of a secret society's secret.

I am afraid I would be secretly disposed of if I leaked the secret.

I have to do my best to be careful.

Rather, if I didn't know the circumstances, 'the Staff of Increased Attack seems to be a good weapon,' is what I could blabber outside.

It will be bad if I don't pay attention.

I better instruct the four of them.

“Still, it is a considerably popular piece of equipment. I believe it will be sold within 10 to 20 days and I don't know when I will be able to get one again. What do you think?”

Is that the pace which it sells here at?

It does look like it will be fine if I visit once every week, after all.

“I still don't have any point.”

“So, it is like that?”

The Staff of Increased Attack really is a good weapon but I cannot purchase it now.

I tell Sebastian I will visit again and leave the lodge.

Upon returning home, we put the clothes down.

“About that staff, don’t leak the information about the Empire Liberation Society even by mistake. Everyone needs to be careful.”  
“I see. We will be careful.”

Only Sherry responds.  
Miria and Vesta don’t seem to have gotten a hint.  
As they tilt their neck, thinking hard.  
Roxanne doesn’t say anything but she isn’t the sort that speaks thoughtlessly outside.

In the evening the same day, I receive a word from Luke about the successful bid on a Kobold Monster Card. I decide to pick it up in the morning the next day.  
Because I bought a Kobold Monster Card 5 days ago, this will be a second.

By the way, after the bath, the four girls put the clothes we purchased today on.

It’s a lovely silk one piece. Brilliant.

What do you think, though?

What kind of a man do you four think I am?

What if it gets wrinkled?

It’s a soft silk one piece. It feels good to touch.

It feels great to touch and hug.

I enjoy it without minding it getting wrinkled, of course.

This kind of a man I am.

“This is the Kobold Monster Card.”

I receive the Kobold monster card at the Merchant’s Guild.

“More Kobold Monster Cards to spare will be better. Can I count on you to buy the next one at 5,000 Nars?”

“Certainly.”

I place the order for a Kobold Monster Card.

I won’t be bothered no matter how much it costs.

“I was forced to use a Misanga of Sacrifice. I want you to go for a

Caterpillar Monster Card same as before.”

“The labyrinth seems to be going in good direction. That is great.”

“I guess it is better to have a spare.”

“As you wish.”

To tell the truth, I will be selling the Misanga of Sacrifice in the lodge.

It won't be a spare.

I already have a spare.

“Also, I want to procure a Bee Monster Card.”

I come to the main point: the Bee Monster Card.

“Bee Monster Card?”

“That's right.”

“Even though the fused skill of a bee monster card isn't popular, it still sells for a high price.”

From the fact that Sherry didn't know about it, you can tell that this skill isn't popular.

It would be so if the weapons with this skill attached, exhibited at the auction, were weak.

Therefore, the price shouldn't be high.

However, if it is fused with a strong weapon, it will be another story. Those who know bid high on it.

Like the Empire Liberation Society members.

Therefore, the price of a Bee Monster Card is high.

There is, of course, no way I can tell him that a Bee Monster Card is useful.

Because I would breach the confidentiality of the Empire Liberation Society if I did.

“Is that so? Well, I was asked a favor by an acquaintance.”

“I have a sword fused with a Bee Monster Card, would you like to see it? I purchased a lot some time ago from a certain place. It was a pile of stock that didn't sell, though.”

When I come up with an appropriate excuse, he clings onto it.

But it is a skill that won't work with weak weapons.

How do I decline him?

“They intend to fuse it with a weapon they use, it seems. They will give up after failing a few time.”

“Is that so? Then, it cannot be helped. It is called Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack by the way.”

Damn!

Since it is called ‘Increased Attack’, the skill must be Progressive Increase in Damage.

Same as the Staff of Increase Attack back at the lodge.

Earlier, Sherry said that Damascus Steel would be fine, too.

Whether it will be of use to our party or not, I will not lose anything if I get it.

There shouldn't be a problem in selling it at the lodge.

How do I secure it?

“Since there is nothing to lose, should I recommend it to them? They may accept it. There is a chance since they seem to mostly fail.”

“Can you, please?”

“It is a Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack, after all.”

Because I want to fuse it with the Sacred Spear, I want a Bee Monster Card.

As it doesn't seem to be a card that can easily be procured, I should take this opportunity to order another one.

Procuring Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack sounds good, too. It is rather to sell at the lodge than to strengthen our party.

“Based on the price of the swords and the monster card, it should be 200,000 Nars, so I would like to receive at least 200,000 Nars; however, since it is an unpopular skill, how about 180,000 Nars?”

“180,000 Nars? I will convey the offer to them.”

If Luke himself fought inside the labyrinth, he would realize how helpful Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack is.

He would fall for such a trap if he worked only as a broker.

“As for the Bee Monster Card, I think it will be difficult to get one within 5,000. It will cost a little more.”

“How about 5,500?”

“Then, I should be able to obtain it soon.”

“Go ahead with that then.”

After placing the order for a Bee Monster Card, I leave the Merchant’s Guild.

The acquisition of the Bee Monster Card turned out to be rather quick. Two days later, when I finished exploration for the day and returned from the labyrinth, I found a note from Luke.

“Master, there is a message from Mr. Luke. It says that he has managed to successfully acquire a Bee Monster Card at 5,500 Nars.”

Roxanne reads the note out.

It was quicker than even the Kobold and the Caterpillar Monster Cards?

The successful bid is exactly 5,500.

I knew it would be so.

“I should be able to make it there in time, right? I will be heading out for a while.”

“Okay. Please take care.”

I was seen off as I left the house.

I [Warp] to the Merchant’s Guild.

Luke shows up immediately after I call for him.

“Here is the Bee Monster Card.”

He takes out the monster card after we move to the meeting room. It is genuinely a Bee Monster Card.

“Indeed.”

“I managed to win it easily this time because there wasn’t much competition.”

You raised the bid to 5,500 even though there was no competition? I wonder if he has noticed that he is contradicting himself.

I am pretty sure he managed to get it immediately after I placed the

order.

“Then, wouldn’t 5,100 have been fine?”

“N-Nope, because the competition wasn’t zero.”

“Will the next one cost the same?”

“It may take quite some time, though.”

There is that matter of buying the Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack from Luke after a few failures.

Luke will be the one troubled if it takes time.

As for me, I have already gotten one Bee Monster Card. The second one will only be a spare.

“Then, I would like the next one within 5,300, please.”

“Certainly.”

Because it was pathetic, I cut it down to 5,300.

Luke will deal with it himself.

If you don’t want to, don’t do it.

## Chapter 177 : Progressive Increase in Damage

\*

I leave the Merchant's Guild and return home.

While the dinner was being prepared, I have Sherry fuse the Bee Monster Card.

“Can't this be fused with an accessory?”

“A Bee Monster Card can be fused with an armor, too. If fused with an accessory or an armor, it grants the Progressive Decrease in Damage skill. It can reduce the damage if you receive a number of attacks from the same monster.”

“I see. Then, is the spear better, after all?”

Progressive Increase in Damage is a skill which increases the damage of an attack.

If I attached it to an armor, it wouldn't 'up' (increase) it.

Sherry performs the Monster Card Fusion.

With neither complaint nor unease, Sherry grabs the Sacred Spear and the two monster cards \*chacha\* quickly.

She casually chants the skill incantation. The Monster Card Fusion succeeds effortlessly.

“It's done.”

“Ooh, as you would expect.”

What remains in Sherry's hands is a spear.

Sacred Spear of Increased Attack | Spear

Skills | Progressive Increase in Damage | Empty | Empty | Empty | Empty

It's a Sacred Spear of Increased Attack.

It possesses the Progressive Increase in Damage skill.

It's said to increase the magic damage, too, so it'll be handy.

However, the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack wasn't of as much use as I thought.

Why?

Even though it was made with much effort.

When I went to the labyrinth with the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack the next morning, it didn't shorten the duration of battles.

So, is Progressive Increase in Damage not as effective as claimed? That shouldn't be it.

Thus far, there hasn't been such a thing.

Or, is Sherry's knowledge perhaps lacking and it doesn't apply to magic? That shouldn't be it either.

Sebastian recommended a Staff of Increased Attack.

At least, it puts off the doubt.

As for the reason, isn't it because the number of attacks required to take a monster out isn't much to begin with?

It takes 10 odd spells to finish a monster on the 26th floor off.

To reduce this number of spells by 1, the rate of increment has to be so much so that the power doubles at around 30th spell.

I'm not sure if the rate of increment of Progressive Increase in Damage is that high.

Let's assume that the number of attacks a person needs to take a monster out is 100.

If the power doubled after 30 attacks, how many attacks would they need to finish that monster off?

After 30 remains 70. With the power having doubled, it will at least get halved.

30 plus 35 gives 65.

Since the power will increase further in the latter half, they may even take it out in 60 or less attacks.

If they finished a monster, that requires 100 attacks to be taken out, off in 60 attacks, then Progressive Increase in Damage would indeed be a fairly useful skill.

Although the ease of its use is questionable, it's on par with the 2x Attack Power or 2x Intelligence skills.

If the number of attacks required were 150, 200, 300 or more, Progressive Increase in Damage would probably exceed 2x Attack Power or 2x Intelligence.

Although the effect is more pronounced if attached to a strong weapon, it isn't rated highly in general. Does that perhaps mean the power doesn't get doubled even after 30 attacks?

Considering the power difference between Durandal and a Copper Sword, that I can't turn a Lv26 monster into smoke even with Durandal unless I attack quite a number of times, a person who needs to attack a 100 times shouldn't be uncommon. Actually, I must say that I'm lucky.

I wonder if the rate at which Progressive Increase in Damage increases the power is slow.

If so, 10 odd spells won't be effective in reducing the number by 1.

So, as to why the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack didn't shorten the duration of battles, it must be because the time I take to finish the monsters off is already short.

Really short.

Or, the reason as to why Progressive Increase in Damage is popular amongst the Empire Liberation Society members is perhaps due to the fact that most of the members fight on higher floors where the number of attacks required to take the monsters out will naturally be high.

For instance, a monster that requires 200 attacks to be taken out can be taken out in 100 attacks with a Progressive Increase in Damage weapon. A person who can take the monster out in less than 200 attacks will rate 2x Attack Power or 2x Intelligence highly. However, a person who takes the monster out in more than 200 attacks will rate Progressive Increase in Damage higher than 2x Attack power or 2x Intelligence.

Commonly, people take on the monsters that can be taken out before Progressive Increase in Damage kicks in; therefore, they don't rate it highly. By the same token, the Empire Liberation Society members rate Progressive Increase in Damage highly because they attack the monsters until it shows its true effect.

For the Empire Liberation Society members, it may be normal to attack 200-300 times.

In how many attacks do the Empire Liberation Society members, who challenge higher floors, take the monsters out?

From that, the effect of Progressive Increase in Damage can be deduced. Also, how many attacks does it take to reduce the number of attacks by one?

How many magic attacks will a monster need to be taken out for the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack to be of use?

Someone who's good at maths should be able to calculate it with ease. It feels like a geometric series or an arithmetic series sum formula.

I should've learnt it diligently.

If we assume that the first attack inflicts 1 damage and the damage multiplies sequentially, we should be able to calculate the total damage inflicted by 'n' number of attacks using the formula.

I don't know, however, whether the damage increased by Progressive Increase in Damage follows an arithmetic series or a geometric series. If the damage were to increase by 3% with every attack, it would be 1, 1.03, 1.06 in case of an arithmetic series.

If it were a geometric series, the power of the third attack would be 1.0609.

If it were a geometric series, the power would become unimaginable as the number of attacks grew.

That being the case, I wouldn't be able to compare the effects with the number of attacks being small.

In any case, the effect won't be apparent with 10 odd attacks.

The number of attacks required for Progressive Increase in Damage to kick in seems to be several times of mine.

Is that the reason as to why the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack was of no use?

However, magic remains a concern, too.

Another possibility is that Progressive Increase in Damage applies to a

single target spell, not an area of effect spell.

This will perhaps not be that serious.

There shouldn't be any reason for it to not apply to an area of effect spell if it applies to a single target spell.

Another concern is whether it carries over with different spells or not. This one will be a serious concern.

Other Wizards can cast only one spell.

So, there's a possibility for it to not work for just me.

I can cast three spells.

Grand Wizard's magic, the magic set as the skill of Jobless and Wizard's magic.

If I cast three spells, will Progressive Increase in Damage recognize second and third spells as second and third attacks?

Or, does it perhaps recognize fourth spell and fifth spell of Jobless as second attack?

At this rate, it'll be pretty difficult for the damage to increase.

Or, there's another possibility that Progressive Increase in Damage ceases to carry over every time the spell count resets.

If it's that, it'll be miserable.

“Umm, did the attached skill yield good results?”

Sherry enquires.

It's available to anyone with the eyes to see that the duration of battles didn't shorten.

You didn't have to ask.

Or, were you pointing it out?

She must be pointing it out.

Oh well. I understand, but.

“Ah, probably. The number of attacks is too small. If a monster isn't strong, it may not produce good results.”

Therefore, it can't be helped.

“Is that so?”

“As expected of Master.”

Even though I don't look remotely like Johnny Depp, Roxanne's attitude is same as ever.

Anyways, I won't be able to check the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack until I reach higher floors.

Is it really impossible like I was afraid?

When the number of attacks using the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack decrease compared to the number of attacks using the Sacred Spear, only then will I be able to deduce the effect of Progressive Increase in Damage. Therefore, I can't afford to not know the number of attacks using the Sacred Spear.

However, Progressive Increase in Damage has now been attached to the Sacred Spear.

Because I can't just switch it on/off, the experiment can no longer be proceeded with.

What do I do?

What should I have done?

Do I keep it at least?

“Roxanne, can you please guide us to a place with few monsters? Ideally, only a Gummi Slime. Or, one more monster with a Gummi Slime.”

“A Gummi Slime? Understood.”

“It doesn't need to be immediate. Keep that in mind, please.”

I ask of Roxanne.

This being the 26th floor, there may no longer be lone monsters.

On the 1st floor, however, there were only lone monsters.

However, we should still be able to encounter two monsters occasionally.

“There's exactly one each.”

Roxanne guides us to a group of a Gummi Slime and a Cape Carp. So, a lone Gummi Slime is impossible, after all, huh?

“Thanks. Then, I'll be experimenting a bit on the enemy. I'll ask of you to hold the Gummi Slime back from the front, Roxanne, but don't attack it much.”

“Okay.”

Roxanne bolts.

I follow after without casting spells.

“Miria, Vesta, take only on the Cape Carp, don’t meddle with the Gummi Slime. Sherry, too, unless it fires a magic attack, you’ll be on the standby.”

With the exception of the sprinting Roxanne, I issue the instructions. The three of them will mainly be taking on the Cape Carp. The remaining Gummi Slime will be the experimental subject.

After Roxanne stands in front of the Gummi Slime, I shoot an Aquaball. I attack just the Gummi Slime with the Aquaball. Since Intermediate Fire Magic is currently set as the skill of Jobless, I can only shoot Grand Wizard’s Aquaball.

I have the option of attacking the Cape Carp with the magic of Jobless and Wizard but I decide against it. Neither am I launching physical attacks using the spear. The reason being, the modus operandi of Progressive Increase in Damage is not yet known.

If I attack only the Gummi slime with Grand Wizard’s single target spell, I believe that the effect of Progressive Increase in Damage will carry over.

If it still doesn’t carry over, then Progressive Increase in Damage doesn’t apply to magic contrary to the information. However, I don’t want to think that.

Although I used Grand Wizard’s single target spells occasionally, the number of magic attacks required to take the monsters out didn’t decrease; however, it may still be concluded that Progressive Increase in Damage increased the power of the spells by a fraction of a spell.

I might as well use Wizard’s Waterball; however, if I did that against the Cape Carp that’s resistant to Water magic, the number of attacks required to take it out would increase anyway.

For there’s no knowing as to what may happen inside the labyrinth, I’d better not lengthen the duration of the battle.

Besides, I don't attack a Cape Carp with Waterball in normal course. I could count the number to an extent but it would contain errors. I can't undertake a controlled experiment now that I don't have the Sacred Spear in my hands. Using the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack, even if I obtain the results, there would be no point.

I attack only the Gummi Slime with only Aquaballs. I diligently attack just one monster with single target spells.

"Did it, desu."

Even though Miria has petrified the Cape Carp, I only attack the Gummi Slime. Miria and Vesta subsequently attack the petrified Cape Carp. You don't have to particularly attack it.

Since there's no knowing as to what may happen inside the labyrinth, isn't it okay to inflict some damage? However, when petrified, doesn't its defense power increase? There's an option of handing Durandal to Vesta. Should I?

It can't be said with certainty that there's not even 1 in 10,000 chance of it affecting the results of the experiment. So, I guess not.

Eventually, the Gummi Slime collapses in 11 Aquaballs. This is more or less in line with the usual count. Using the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack made no difference. It may be concluded that Progressive Increase in Damage didn't decrease the number of attacks.

I pull Durandal out and finish the petrified Cape Carp off. It has no relation whatsoever to using area of effect spells or using the magic of Jobless, Grand Wizard and Wizard simultaneously. As before, the power doesn't seem to gain a fraction of a spell with 10 odd attacks. Oh well. Nothing can be done about it. That's probably how it is.

Since the skill is called Progressive Increase in Damage, the damage should increase with the number of attacks.

If the power could gain a fraction of a spell after 10 odd attacks, what would happen at 101st attack?

On the contrary, if the power settled at as soon as 101st attack, the damage would gain a fraction of a spell a lot earlier.

If Luke the broker used the Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack himself, he would figure out that it's useful and revise his offer.

However, I'm not sure if a Damascus Steel Sword of Increased Attack will be of use on lower floors.

Since the monsters appearing on lower floors are few, all the members of a party can jointly knock them down.

Consequently, the number of attacks per person will be 1/6th.

If a total of 300 attacks are required, each person will attack 50 times which is not much for Progressive Increase in Damage to reduce.

Hence, it can be concluded that 2x Attack Power is more useful.

Regardless of public secrecy of the information, appreciating Progressive Increase in Damage is in the core of the Empire Liberation Society members.

“Was that so?”

“Did you understand what that was?”

Having comprehended, Sherry asks me.

An important part of the findings of an experiment is to discuss what was understood and what couldn't be.

## Chapter 178 : Beef

\*

In the end, I have no choice but to conclude that the Progressive Increase in Damage skill isn't efficacious if the number of attacks is insufficient.

However, since I don't know the details, there is nothing I can do about it. A few days later, having still not figured anything out, I arrive at the boss room of Haruba's 26th floor.

There are only two doors, one in the front and one at the back. It's the waiting room.

"Waiting room, huh?"

If I proceed to the 27th floor in this state, I will be at an even more loss than I already am.

Or, the number of attacks may perhaps reduce when I go to the 27th floor.

Or so I think; however, the HP doesn't decrease sharply going from a Lv27 down to a Lv26 monster, so the reduction in the number of attacks cannot be absolute.

I cannot help but think of Progressive Increase in Damage showing effects already.

Now that it has come down to it, I should stop thinking.

Since I cannot see any effect, I cannot take it into consideration.

Thinking of not thinking...

Is called thinking.

(As per Diamond Wisdom Sutra)

I seem to have gotten one step closer to enlightenment.

"The Cape Carp boss is called the Curve Carp. Its weakness and resistance are same as a Cape Carp's. Its weakness is Fire magic. Because its magic is strong, I must prevent it from casting at all costs."

Sherry briefs as if talking to herself.

It is Sherry's duty to stop the boss completing the incantation. Vesta will take care of the monsters accompanying the boss using Durandal.

Now that I think about it, I can come back to the 26th floor if I want to observe Progressive Increase in Damage.

Well, it isn't like I won't be able to figure out Progressive Increase in Damage if I am on the 27th floor.

It isn't like I would be forced to go to the next floor if I cleared the boss. There shouldn't be any problem even if I clear the 26th floor.

Because the door to the boss room opened quickly, I get ready to enter. I take out Durandal and hand it to Vesta. I add Seventh Job and select Gambler.

I enter the boss room. Smoke gathers in the center of the room as three monsters appear.

The two monsters accompanying the boss are a Gummi Slime and a Cape Carp.

I wait while Miria and Vesta take their positions.

Miria seems to be dealing with the Cape Carp.

When Miria was a Diver, she had the benefit of the Anti-aquatic Strengthening skill.

However, since Miria is no longer a Diver, she no longer has the advantage of Anti-aquatic Strengthening.

Still, it doesn't stop Miria from playing with her favorite - fish - huh?

It would actually have been better had Vesta, who has Durandal, taken care of the Cape Carp.

The chance of a Cape Carp using magic is higher than that of a Gummi Slime.

It would have let Sherry focus more on the boss.

If it is just this, it should be fine, no?

The Gummi Slime is unexpectedly a physical attack type monster. It crashes and bites, and apparently has a chance to digest. It is a little different from a physical attack, I think.

It is necessary to be careful of the Cape Carp's magic.

After shooting a barrage of three Fire spells, I cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the Cape Carp.

I hit the boss during the cooldown period of the spells using the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack.

Because I attached a skill to the Sacred Spear, the theory dictates that I should only use physical attacks. I will, of course, not bother.

The Curve Carp is a common carp with a large curved body. It is curved like a crescent moon, its head looking at its tail. Although curved, it doesn't seem to be doing that as a maneuver to get out the line of magic. Its body really is curved.

Can it really attack with its head facing its back?

While I was thinking that, it tries to squeeze Roxanne with its belly.

It is nimble.

Roxanne evades it using her Rapier and shield.

A blue magic formation floats under the curved body of the parried Curve Carp.

Sherry rushes and thrusts her spear to cancel the magic.

Since it isn't good at physical attacks, we need to watch out for its magic, huh?

No need to worry about its magic, though, for we have Sherry to leave it to.

"Did it, desu."

Furthermore, Miria successfully petrifies the Cape Carp.

With this, there is next to no chance for us to be defeated.

Should I attack with only the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack now? Is what I thought for a moment but I decide not to do that either.

There is no benefit for me in doing that.

Usually, inside the labyrinth, new monsters may join if a battle prolongs.

You would be in big trouble if you were caught between two groups of monsters.

This is one of the patterns (ways) of losing your life inside the labyrinth.

However, inside the boss room, no new monster comes out normally. (There seem to be monsters that can summon other monsters.)

I can engage in a drawn out battle even against a small number of monsters unless my stamina runs out.

Progressive Increase in Damage will definitely shine in the boss battles.

However, even if I defeat this boss with the the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack, I don't have anything to compare it with.

Hence, I abandon the stupid idea of attacking it with only the Sacred Spear of Increased Attack and apply Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the Curve Carp.

As for the boss, Miria easily petrifies it.

At almost the same time as the Curve Carp getting petrified, the Gummi Slime turns into smoke.

It wasn't Vesta's Durandal but my magic that finished the Gummi Slime.

Did the power somewhat increase because of Progressive Increase in Damage?

I'm thinking of such things again. Regrettable.

I have no choice but to abandon judging what I don't understand.

I have no choice but keep silence on stuff I can't talk about.

"The monster native to Haruba's 27th floor is Moloch Taurus."

While I was tidying the boss up with Durandal, Sherry informs.

"Moloch Taurus?"

Going by its name, it seems strong.

I don't understand it well but it sounds cool.

"Although it can use magic, it basically is a power fighter. It seems to take pride in its ramming attack, so be very careful. It seems to be resistant to Fire which makes Water its weakness."

"The exact opposite of a Cape Carp, huh?"

"It seems so. It is perhaps better for you to use Lightning magic."

"Right."

A Cape Carp has resistance against Water magic and weakness toward Fire magic.

A Moloch Taurus is the exact opposite of it.

The monster that will appear the most on Haruba's 27th floor after the Moloch Taurus is the Cape Carp.

It is troublesome for the weak and the resistant attributes to be inversely related.

If I used [Aqua Storm] to defeat the Moloch Taurus, then I will need more time to defeat the Cape Carp; if I used [Burn Storm] to defeat the Cape Carp, then I will need more time to defeat the Moloch Taurus.

Like Sherry said, it is better for me to use Lightning magic here.

Should I set Basic Lightning Magic as the skill of Jobless?

I set the skill and move on to the 27th floor.

"This way."

We advance under Roxanne's guidance.

The first group we come across comprises two Moloch Tauruses.

I cast a barrage of three spells – [Aqua Storm], [Thunder Storm] and [Water Storm].

Water magic is effective against the two Moloch Tauruses but I can't change the skill of Jobless now to match the opponent.

The Moloch Taurus is a monster with a cow's head.

In other words, it is a cowman. Or, maybe a cow that walks on two feet?

Since it is a cow, two horns are growing on its head. It also has a sturdy body.

However, even with that, it doesn't look scary.

Because it has black and white mottles.

Black and white mottles.

Is the Moloch Taurus a Holstein species?

It shouldn't be strange for it is a cow. Actually, shouldn't it be strange for it is a cowman with black and white mottles?

Although it has a scary face, its two tone color is strangely charming.

I will, of course, shoot it with magic without mercy.

Roxanne and the girls close in on the Moloch Tauruses without them getting paralyzed.

Because I only shot one Lightning magic, it is understandable as to why they didn't get paralyzed.

Roxanne and Vesta take positions in front of the cowmen while Miria attacks from the side.

Oh.

The monster's movement has stopped after Miria's first attack.

"Did it, desu."

And what's more, it seems to be petrification.

Miria's attack is more efficient than my Lightning magic.

Since her Job is Assassin, it can't be helped.

The four girls encircle the remaining one.

I catch up and thrust my spear in.

With it surrounded by all the members, it should be an easy win, right?

So I thought but the Moloch Taurus steps forward.

One step, two steps; its walking pace turned into lightning fast speed.

Gaining control of over its stern body, it strikes.

It is a speed that can be classified as teleportation.

Or, does it look faster due to the hypnotic effect induced by the black and white mottles?

Can it even hypnotize using the black and white mottles?

Can hypnotism and super speed be shabby? Never!

I don't know what I'm saying but its attack seems terrifying.

Roxanne lightly takes half a step back.

She dodges the cowman's charge by a hair's breadth.

Could it be dodged?

Furthermore, the Moloch Taurus stretches its arms out; however, Roxanne knocks them with her Rapier.

Miria launches a delayed attack.

The cowman's movement ceases.

It seems to have been paralyzed.

Before the paralysis could wear off, I try to deliver the killing blow with magic.

Following the petrified Moloch Taurus, the paralyzed one turns into smoke.

Whether Progressive Increase in Damage worked or not, I have no idea since there is no data to compare with.

“Was that the ramming attack? It was terrifying.”

In spite of the black and white mottles.

It was on a higher level for a ramming attack.

“You are right. It may be a bit dangerous to look away even for a moment.”

But it would be dangerous just as well even if you looked at it.

We have someone more terrifying here.

Well, as far as Sherry and I are concerned, we can attack from a distance.

We exchange glances to console each other.

“Watch carefully, desu.”

Can you deal with it if you watch it carefully?

“I don’t think it is that strong since we can just collide and be done with it.”

Vesta is terrifying, too.

Vesta is even bigger than the cowman.

The shock from the collision may perhaps not be that strong for her.

Even if it were a cow woman, Vesta would be bigger.

In which sense, I cannot say.

Even though I didn’t say it, I can feel Sherry’s cold stare. It must be my imagination.

Without looking at Sherry, I watch the monster vanish.

When the Moloch Taurus turns into smoke and dissipates, there was red meat left.

It is boned rib.

It was showing as boned rib when I use Appraisal.

I have bought it from a butcher shop before.

Is this boned rib cow meat or cowman meat?

Can cowman meat be called beef?

Since it is a monster we are talking about, delving into it is useless.

Like goat meat? Pork boned rib meat? Or white fish? I have already gotten used to the monster drops.

Even though it is somewhat humanoid, it is still a monster, after all.

Moreover, there is no blood dripping off it since it is a drop item.

Let's get this tasty stuff.

“Even though a cow doesn't leave meat behind, a cowman does?”

“Yes, desu.”

I receive the boned rib and put it inside my Item Box.

“Does a Moloch Taurus drop any other ingredient?”

“A triangular boned rib. It seems literally to be a rare drop. People say that it doesn't exist as it has never been left behind.”

Sherry replies to my question.

There seems to be a rare ingredient, too.

Triangular boned rib, eh?

It is a superior rib.

Thereafter, we continued to explore the 27th floor; however, a triangular boned rib never dropped.

It does seem to be an extremely rare item.

As for fighting a Moloch Taurus, whether it is due to Progressive Increase in Damage or not, I can do it.

“Does a triangular boned rib really exist?”

“It is supposed to. However, it is difficult to differentiate by appearance.”

“It is?”

“Even butchers refrain from buying triangular boned ribs to avoid troubles which makes more and more people believe that it doesn't exist.”

Sherry teaches me.  
That's a vicious cycle.  
People won't quite believe unless they see it with their own eyes.  
If they cannot recognize it by appearance, will they believe whether it is truly a triangular boned rib or not?

Like I still cannot trust the effect of Progressive Increase in Damage.  
So, I cannot comment on people.  
Although people know that alcohol and cigarette are bad for health, they still consume those.

The poison contained in cigarette and alcohol is indiscernible. Its continuous use damages the body over a long period of time.

I don't know whether the people of this world realize the risks of alcohol and tobacco.  
As for Sherry, she doesn't think that liquor is harmful for a dwarf's body. Unless she notices chronic effect, she won't believe me.  
Honestly, whether liquor is bad for a dwarf's body or not, I don't really know.

When I bought wine for cooking, I asked Sherry twice if she wants liquor but she refused saying that it isn't necessary.  
Because I don't understand what kind of effect liquor has on a dwarf's body, I cannot recommend it much.  
It isn't my concern if the person themselves want to drink but I cannot force them to drink.

As far as triangular boned rib is concerned, since I can use Appraisal, I should be able to tell.  
Even though I don't have spare points to select Cook, it should drop sooner or later.

## Chapter 179 : Labyrinth Subjugation

\*

We break through 26th floor of Quratar's labyrinth.  
The monster native to Quratar's 27th floor is Scissor Lizard.  
That and the monster of the 26th floor, Cape Carp, I have already fought in Haruba's labyrinth before, so there shouldn't be any problem.

A Cape Carp is weak against Fire magic which a Scissor Lizard is resistant to; however, since I won't be staying in Quratar's labyrinth for too long, it is fine.

In any and all cases, the conditions aren't as severe as Haruba's 27th floor.

After fighting a few times on Quratar's 27th floor, we immediately move to Haruba's.

I will mainly be using Lightning magic on Haruba's 27th floor similar to Quratar's 27th floor.

2 Moloch Tauruses and 3 Cape Carps show up. With this combination, [Thunder Storm] will be the most effective.

That there are 5 enemies, at least one of them will get paralyzed within the first two spells.

On the group of 3 cowmen and 2 carps, I pour [Thunder Storm], [Thunder Storm] and [Fire Storm]. Luckily, 3 of them have gotten paralyzed this time.

For Wizard, I have decided to use Fire magic.

Although the Moloch Tauruses have Fire resistance, my experience tells me that it is better to defeat the monsters in order when there is a large number of them.

It would perhaps have been more effective; however, based on the results of paralysis and petrification, I will change my pattern.

"Did it, desu."

One of the remaining two gets paralyzed with the next [Thunder Storm]

while Miria petrifies the remaining one.

With this, the battle has come to an end.

Well, there is a chance for paralysis to naturally wear off; however, all of them eventually die without anyone regaining consciousness.

“Next, we will continue straight from here. There may be a small number of monsters, though.”

We resume exploration under Roxanne’s guidance.

I ask Roxanne if it is possible for her to guide us to a place with a lot of monsters.

It isn’t convenient, however, since I gave priority to exploring.

Two Moloch Tauruses appear next.

I cast a barrage of [Aqua Storm], [Thunder Storm] and [Water Storm].

This time, however, only one of them gets paralyzed.

What’s with that!

The fewer the number of monsters, the more troublesome it seems to get.

Actually, the degree of difficulty doesn’t increase when there is a fewer number.

The problem is the efficiency.

Call it labor, call it cost performance or call it balance of return; the larger the number of monsters, the better.

It feels so good when so many monsters stop moving.

In extreme case, a barrage of 3 against 5 monsters will paralyze 3. It is the same as a barrage of 3 against 2 monsters paralyzing 1.

It can recover from paralysis. I can finish it off faster with Grand Wizard’s [Aqua Storm], so it isn’t completely same.

“Did it, desu.”

Out of the two, one gets petrified.

It would be nice if the remaining one got paralyzed; however, it is extremely difficult.

If there were five, one won’t matter; however, that there is just one, it will be hard.

“Here it comes.”

Before it could get paralyzed, Roxanne issues a warning.  
There was nothing like a magic formation under the cowman's feet.  
The Moloch Taurus suddenly charges.  
It is a ramming attack.

Was the warning for this?  
She really grasped it well.  
Roxanne pulls back half a step and dodges the cowman's ram.  
She's reliable.

After its ramming attack was over, everyone concentrates their attacks  
on the stupid black and white mottled cow.  
I thrust my spear in, too.

“Did it, desu.”

Miria seems to have inflicted petrification once again.  
There is a merit even in a fewer number.  
When there are 5 of them, it is nearly impossible to petrify all of them.  
It is usually over by the time Miria petrifies 2-3.

Since both of them have been petrified, it is Durandal's turn.  
I add Seventh Job and select cook.  
With Durandal, I finish the Moloch Tauruses off.  
The monsters turn into smoke and dissipate.

Oh, a triangular boned rib!  
When the smoke vanishes, there was a triangular boned rib left behind by  
the last Moloch Taurus.  
Finally, huh?  
It is the first time dropping after all the Moloch Tauruses I have hunted  
thus far.

“Yes, desu.”

Miria brings the boned rib dropped by the first Moloch Taurus over.

“Please.”

Vesta picks up the triangular boned rib.  
So, this is a triangular boned rib, huh?

It looks no different from a normal boned rib.

It is merely a piece of meat.

I kinda understand the reason as to why the butchers tend to be reluctant to buy it to avoid the troubles.

I can differentiate it, though, because I have [Appraisal].

However, even if I said that this is a triangular boned rib, how would I explain if I were asked?

What would I do?

“Is that possibly a triangular boned rib?”

While I was a little puzzled, Sherry asks me.

Is Sherry able to tell that it is a triangular boned rib?

“You can tell?”

“Nope. Well, if it is a triangular boned rib, it shouldn’t be able to be put in the same space as a boned rib in the Item Box.”

I see.

Is that how you can tell them apart?

Same items can be put in the same space in the Item Box. Different items cannot be.

A boned rib and a triangular boned rib should consistently be treated as different items.

Sure enough, the triangular boned rib occupies a different row from the boned rib when I put it inside.

It occupies a new row where there was no item.

“Oh, so it was like that, huh?”

Oh shit!

I should have said from the beginning that it was a triangular boned rib.

It could have added to the appeal of my intelligence.

Nah. Although it could add to the appeal of my intelligence...

I don’t have to disguise myself as having a good head.

I am smart without having to disguise myself as one.

Probably.

Sherry saw me puzzled as I was hesitating while putting it inside my Item Box.

In Sherry's eyes, I must have looked like an idiot who didn't notice that it was a triangular boned rib.

Her eyes look a little cold.

I hope it is my imagination.

Damn!

It is so annoying. However...

With the Item Box, the butchers should be able to deal in it. But not all customers have the Item Box. So, it really is futile, huh? They cannot deal in something limited to Explorers and Adventurers. Even with the Item Box, if they don't have a boned rib, it won't work.

By the end of the day, I only got one triangular boned rib. I attached Cook several times and defeated the Moloch Tauruses; however, it still didn't appear again.

A triangular boned rib seems to be rare even amongst the rare ingredients.

It should rather be called a premium ingredient.

The next day, for the dinner, I roast the triangular boned rib simply with salt and pepper.

I don't know how to make Kalbi sauce. Even if I knew, I wouldn't find the ingredients.

Although I roasted it merely with salt and pepper, the triangular boned rib is surely delicious.

Is this a premium ingredient, after all?

"Thank you for this delicious food."

"Certainly, a normal boned rib cannot even compare to it."

Roxanne and Sherry like it.

"Delicious, desu."

"It is triangular boned rib."

"Triangular boned rib, desu."

Did you like it as much as the last night's whole fish for the floor

breakthrough celebration?

Oh well. She will forget it since it isn't a fish.

“Is it alright for me to be allowed this kind of luxury?”

“Because it doesn't seem to drop much, it may only be for today.”

Vesta likes it; however, there is no more premium ingredient left. Thereafter, I fought for several days on Haruba's 27th floor but I haven't received even one triangular boned rib.

If I always select Cook and use Durandal to kill the Moloch Tauruses when they get petrified, will I be able to get one someday?

It might be different if I always had Cook on; however, it will be difficult.

There are other skills that I want to spend the bonus points on. I could temporarily select Cook for one full day; however, getting one per day would be worthless.

Assuming I want to eat one everyday.

Also, I will lose the chance to eat it when I move on to the next floor. Luxury is an enemy.

“Triangular boned rib, desu.”

Miria picks up the triangular boned rib and brings it over. With this, we 3 have in total.

Triangular boned rib hardly ever drops, really.

“You really can tell if it is a triangular boned rib or not.”

“Different color, desu.”

“So, it was like that, huh?”

I receive the triangular boned rib and put it inside my Item Box. Miria seems to be able to tell the difference between a boned rib and a triangular boned rib. I will never be able to understand the difference. Honestly, I would like someone who understands the difference between a boned rib and a triangular boned rib to teach me who can differentiate via Appraisal.

I thought Miria wouldn't remember the word triangle boned rib but she actually did. It is unbelievable.

It shows as to how much she liked the triangular boned rib.

I want to give her a choice: which one would she like to eat more? This or the fatty tuna?

“Because I heard that it is really difficult for a triangular boned rib to drop, I thought there would be fewer yet we got this many. It really is great.”

Sherry is not directing her white eyes at me, so it can be considered a good thing, I guess.

Which reminds me, all the triangle boned ribs dropped when I had Cook on and Durandal equipped.

It might not have dropped had I not have Cook selected.

“It is naturally because of Master. As expected of Master.”

Roxanne trusts heavily.

“Really? I think you are amazing.”

Vesta's trust, in comparison, is light.

“Th-Then, let's go to the next one?”

“Uhh, I am sorry.”

Roxanne apologizes when I said that we should quickly get back to hunting.

“What?”

“I have lost the monsters.”

“Lost?”

“Yes, their positions and numbers.”

Roxanne seems confused herself.

Is such a thing even possible?

It is the first time she is at a loss.

Is it the sign of a powerful monster appearing?

“Ah, the labyrinth may have been subjugated.”

Sherry informs us.

“Subjugated? Speaking of subjugation, what happens when a labyrinth gets subjugated?”

“When the last boss of a labyrinth has been defeated, no new monsters spawn. The monsters that aren’t engaged in battles seem to disappear. The labyrinth itself seems to stay in the same state without monsters for several days. During that period of time, it is possible for you to come out but you cannot go back in. When you use [Dungeon Walk], you return to the entrance no matter where you try to go to.”

When a labyrinth has been subjugated, it doesn’t seem to disappear all of a sudden.

I wonder what would happen to the people inside if it were to disappear suddenly.

The labyrinth remains for several days but the monsters don’t spawn. That’s why Roxanne wasn’t able to detect them.

“Really? Should we move to the first small room with [Dungeons Walk]?”

“Yes.”

I select Explorer, which I no longer use, and invoke [Dungeon Walk]. After a while, the black wall of [Dungeon Walk] manifests.

However, it feels like there is a bug in the movement.

Is it okay?

“Dungeon Walk surely is acting funny.”

“Because Dungeon Walk of all the parties is leading to the same exit, I think it is taking some time.”

“Is that so?”

I am convinced by Sherry’s explanation.

So, there is no problem, is there?

Oh well. Not going isn’t an option anyway

We will be able leave the labyrinth soon.

Over time, the movement of Dungeon Walk should stabilize as well. I don’t know when will it happen, though. Also, there is even a possibility

of it getting worse.

As per my observation, the movement magic itself is behaving suspiciously.

I'd better not use [Warp].

If the labyrinth has been subjugated, I won't be able to go back in once I come out.

I resolve myself and step into the black wall.

After a moment's lag, I appear outside in the forest.

It is the corner of the forest where Haruba's labyrinth is located in.

What Sherry said seems to be true.

The entrance to the labyrinth seems to still be there.

The four girls come out following me.

In the vicinity of the entrance to the labyrinth, there seem to be some people.

"Michio-dono."

Gozer is here, too, and he calls out to me.

"By any chance, did Gozer-dono get the last boss?"

"It was merely a young labyrinth with fifty floors. I couldn't be defeated by it."

Gozer seems to be the one who subjugated the labyrinth.

As you would expect from the most elite party of the order of Harz knights.

"That's great. Congratulations."

"No, no. it is also thanks to Michio-dono's support."

I am glad I was able to be here just in time for the labyrinth's subjugation.

Had I not come out after a long time, 'Where is he? What is he doing?' would have happened

I am glad I didn't use [Warp].

"This labyrinth has been subjugated successfully by the order of Harz knights. Thank you for your cooperation, everyone."

They are probably Gozer's party members.  
They greet the people who came out behind us.

"Two labyrinths are still left within our territory; we shouldn't lose focus."

"Ah-oh well."

Is it possible to get the instruction as to which one of the two should I go to?

I wonder which one of the two I should enter from now on.

Which one should I go to?

"I cannot recommend any one of the remaining two to Michio-dono. Since there are only two, we will somehow be able to manage with just us knights."

"Ah, you are right."

"In order for the Duke to enter this labyrinth, we cleared every room with the monsters on every floor. In these parts, Tare's labyrinth is the only one remaining. Bode's labyrinth is scheduled to be cleared next; however, the exploration there isn't progressing."

One of the most dreadful things about a labyrinth is the small room brimming with monsters.

Since it was the labyrinth the Duke entered, the order of knights would definitely eradicate these dangers.

As it turns out, I seem to have been entering a safe labyrinth unbeknownst.

## Chapter 180 : Progress Management

\*

“Gozer, you seem to have done it.”

The Duke comes out of the labyrinth.

Cassia is in his party.

If Cassia were going to enter, you would have to make the labyrinth safe and clear all the monster filled rooms.

However, if the Duke were going in on his own, you could just leave him to rot somewhere.

“Ha, thank you very much.”

“Oh, Michio-dono was inside, too?”

“Yes.”

“You came out quicker even though my party hadn’t advanced deep inside.”

The Duke stands in front, blocking me from seeing Cassia.

You are in the way, Duke.

Now that I think about it, I used [Dungeon Walk] to get out of the labyrinth quickly.

However, I shouldn’t be able to use [Dungeon Walk] if I am truly an Adventurer.

The parties without an Explorer have to walk to the entrance in order to come out.

“I was coincidentally nearby.”

Well, Sherry can be thought of as an Explorer, too.

I am concerned about something else.

There is an Explorer who stands outside the labyrinth by the entrance.

Because I entered the labyrinth directly via [Warp], the Explorer, who stands by the entrance to the labyrinth, didn’t see us enter.

Well, it isn’t like he keeps watch 24 hours, so I should be able to manage it, somehow.

He cannot be here in the evening, surely.

A little worried, I look around but I don't know as to which one is the entrance Explorer and which one is the guide Explorer.

He is perhaps no longer here.

Now that the labyrinth has been subjugated, there is no need for the Explorer to guide through the labyrinth.

His foremost task should be to go back to the Explorer's Guild and report. There is no need to be worried about unnecessary stuff in front of the Duke, is there?

"You have done us a favor, Michio-dono. You have our thanks."

"Not at all."

"If possible, I would like you to enter the labyrinths in this territory from now on."

"We have already talked about it. Michio-dono should enter a labyrinth of his choice."

Gozer stops the Duke from speaking his mind.

As expected of Gozer.

"Is that so? Well, that's fine."

"It will be more convenient for your Excellency this way."

I wonder as to how it will be more convenient for the Duke.

Am I a pig that you are pasturing?

Are you going to eat me after I get fat?

"Nope, it is something else. I would like Michio-dono to become a noble as soon as possible."

The Duke explains.

He hopes that I will become a noble this way.

He said the same thing back when he recommended me to the Empire Liberation Society.

I don't get as to what merit the Duke has in my becoming a noble.

Doesn't he have more allies?

Besides, troubles annoy me.

“Can I even reach that high?”

“Well, I am not saying right now. Then, look forward to the dinner.”

When I inquire further about nobility, the Duke interrupts, pretending to not have heard it.

The Duke invited me to celebrate my enrollment in the Empire Liberation Society.

I have no choice but to hope for Gozer’s intervention.

“Then, I will be in your care.”

I turn toward Gozer and greet.

“Oh well. You won’t be asked of anything too unreasonable.”

I wonder if it is Gozer giving up.

“I will be in your care.”

I press Gozer, reminding him again.

“W-Well.”

“Then, I am returning this emblem. I will be in your care”

“I-I will keep it safe.”

I deem it acceptable since Gozer has nodded.

I take out the emblem of the order of Harz Duchy knights, which I was keeping in my rucksack, and hand it to Gozer.

It isn’t necessary anymore as I don’t have to enter the labyrinths in the territory of Harz Duchy.

I return the emblem and leave.

I return home at once.

“Sherry was right; the labyrinth was exterminated.”

“That’s right. As expected of Sherry.”

“Not at all.”

Everyone surrounds the table.

And takes their seat.

“Then, the problem is, what to do from now on.”

“True.”

“For the time being, is it fine to enter Quratar’s labyrinth?”

Since we have lost Haruba’s labyrinth, it having been subjugated, we need to think of where to go next.

We don’t have the option of not entering the labyrinth.

Considering security, money and other such things.

I have settled in this world, after all.

As for the labyrinths under consideration, the very first one should be Quratar’s labyrinth.

Above all, it is close by, safe and I have already entered it.

Not to mention, I have already cleared the 26th floor.

In Haruba’s Labyrinth, they diligently cleared the monster filled rooms for the Duke to enter.

I would like the next labyrinth to be so, too.

Safety comes first.

In the future, I will have to deal with the monster filled rooms; however, I will think about it when the time comes.

For now, I prefer leveling up and acquire new skills ‘safely’.

Quratar’s labyrinth is convenient.

Monsters don’t seem to accumulate there because a lot people frequent that labyrinth.

However, because there are too many people, I can’t consider Quratar’s labyrinth as our main hunting ground. That shouldn’t be problem, though, at the 27th floor.

The more we move up to higher floors, the less the people.

“Yes, I think it will be better.”

“As first option, it will be best to go to Quratar’s labyrinth.”

“Yes, desu.”

“I think it will be alright.”

The four girls seem to be fine with it.

And it doesn’t look like Sherry is going to suggest another labyrinth.

“Then, in Quratar’s labyrinth, I intend to move up a floor every 2 days.”

“Every 2 days...?”

However, there is an issue in case of Quratar's labyrinth. There is a guiding map laid out for Quratar's labyrinth. If I feel like it, I can move up to as high a floor as I like. Moving rapidly up, if I got caught in the moment, there would be a risk of falling into a precarious situation.

I must move up to higher floors cautiously. In order to make Haruba's labyrinth our main hunting ground, we explored Haruba's labyrinth and moved up the floors slowly. Having said that, I think I am worrying too much about our current situation.

Thus far, I have never had any difficult battle. That I haven't obtain any benefit from the painstakingly attached Progressive Increase in Damage skill, it is probably due to advancing too cautiously. Our party should be able to fight on higher floors. But how do I confirm that?

"After we have fought for two days, let's discuss whether it will be fine to move up or not."

After a certain number of battles, I will have no choice but to discuss and take a decision. It would be too anxious to decide after observing the situation for a day. What if all went smooth on the first day?

And three days would be too long to observe our situation. I can confirm it to some extent in a day. After observing for one full day, the second day should be enough to decide, no?

"I don't think two days are needed, though."

In my opinion, Roxanne's opinion is aggressive, so I cannot rely on it.

"I won't suggest us to advance everyday and subject ourselves to continuous strain."

"Is that so?"

"I agree. Two days will be fine, I think."

I can rely on composed Sherry.

“Sherry thinks so, too? Then, I will rely on you.”

“Okay.”

“You need to notify by all means if you feel even slightly uneasy. First, we have to advance safely. You needn’t hesitate, thinking that you would be slowing us down. Rather, you should feel proud that you warned us of the danger beforehand.”

“Understood.”

If everyone is doing fine and you are the only one feeling uneasy, you will find it difficult to say it because it will look like you are holding others back.

I make it clear so that it doesn’t happen.

“Because there is a guiding map for Quratar’s labyrinth, we will probably not celebrate breaking through a floor; however, since we will be eating fish regularly from now on, rest assured.”

“Okay, desu.”

We can have a whole fish every time we move up a floor in Quratar’s labyrinth; however, if I said that, Miria wouldn’t feel motivated to advance.

I’d better get rid of all the concerns.

“I will be relying on Vesta.”

“Yes. I think it will be alright.”

But I cannot rely on Vesta too much, can I?

The attacks from the monsters will get stronger, too, but Vesta will never say that herself.

That’s what I feel after observing her thus far.

“Is Roxanne fine with it, too?”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Then, shall we go to Quratar’s 27th floor?”

After I explain the basic policy, we move to Quratar’s labyrinth.

“There don’t seem to be many people here. It should be fine even if we

don't head too deep in.”

Roxanne informs me once we appear at the entrance to the 27th floor. Like I thought, there don't seem to be many people on the 27th floor even in the daytime.

With this, Quratar's labyrinth should be fine.

That day and the next day, we fought on Quratar's 27th floor. Originally, we were on Haruba's 27th floor. So, there was no problem even with Quratar's 27th floor.

“Does it look alright to move up to the next floor?”

I try to ask at the second day's dinner. It is still not two full days since we moved from Haruba on the first day; still, it should be enough.

“Of course, with Master and us, there won't be any problem.”

Of course, I knew you would say that, Roxanne. I knew it already.

“I don't think there is any problem with the current level.”

“Yes, desu.”

“I think it will be alright.”

As expected, prudence policy isn't an option.

“Then, tomorrow morning, let's move up to 28th floor.”

If Haruba's labyrinth weren't exterminated, it wouldn't be surprising if we found the boss room of the 27th floor by now. So, there is no problem with proceeding to the 28th floor.

The next morning, we grab the map, enter Quratar's labyrinth and break through the 27th floor.

We battled against the Scissor Lizard boss, Mother Lizard. It was an easy victory.

Thanks to it being early morning, we didn't have to wait to enter the boss room.

“The monster native to Quratar's 28th floor is Cyclops.”

“If I remember correctly, its weakness is Wind magic?”

“Correct.”

Cyclops, huh?

Because I have been entering two labyrinths till now, I have managed to fight a variety of monsters on lower floors.

It would be impossible if I only entered Quratar’s labyrinth.

I would have to reach the 33rd floor to fight 33 different monsters.

Actually, wasn’t Quratar’s 33rd floor monster the Drive Dragon?

Then, what about the 44th floor monster?

Nah, it is different.

Because the bosses prior to 34th floor appear as monsters on the subsequent floors, the 44th floor monster will be the White Caterpillar of 11th floor.

Won’t it be a problem?

I will have to fight against the boss after moving through the floor.

Oh well. This much cannot be avoided.

“Since we will be entering just one labyrinth, will it be fine to partake in the boss battle twice?”

I ask for their opinion if it will be fine to fight the boss twice to gain more experience.

If we are going to hit a wall while moving up a floor, it will most likely be the boss battle.

Whether it would be fine fighting the boss of a higher floor or not, we’d better judge it carefully.

“Yes, that’s a good idea.”

Roxanna would say so.

I knew it already.

“Really?”

“Isn’t it be better to just retake the boss battles rather than observing the situation for two days?”

That’s unreasonable.

Is what I thought but it is an amazing suggestion.

Exploring, reaching the boss room, defeating the boss, moving up to the next floor; it is a method valid only if you don't have a guiding map.

I am reluctant to use this method.

There is a guiding map in case of Quratar's labyrinth.

There is no reason for me to use the same method as when I don't know the location of the boss room.

If it is just about deciding whether to move up the floor or not, isn't it better to retake the boss battles like Roxanne said?

But there is a practical problem. We will get less experience since I bring Durandal out in the boss battles.

So, how should I decline it?

"Ah, umm"

"You are right. That was a blind spot. What you said would indeed be better."

Sherry is still supportive.

I guess it will be so if you look at it objectively.

"Yes, desu."

"I think it will be alright."

These two girls are totally useless.

"Isn't it only the boss battle that is difficult?"

"You cannot say that nothing unexpected will happen in the labyrinth at all. It isn't only the boss battle that matters."

"If you find the boss battle difficult, then you can expect the next floor to be difficult, too. Isn't it better to make the call earlier?"

Roxanne and Sherry argue.

I see.

So, the reasoning behind retaking the boss battle is to catch early warning signs?

She has convinced me.

"Understood. During the boss battles, I always hand the sword to Vesta.

If we can fight adequately without it, we will retake the boss battles.”

“Yes, there will be no problem, of course.”

“Does that mean we will be fighting with normal equipment? That sounds good, too.”

Roxanne is confident. Albeit puzzled, Sherry nods her head, too.

It is inevitable.

So, let's try it.

I wonder as to how it will turn out.

## Chapter 181 : Dinner Party

\*

We will retake the boss battles in Quratar's labyrinth without Durandal.

It will help us know our limits ahead of time. It won't be bad that way. Besides, I can save time if I retake the 27th floor boss battle for two days from today.

All's grist that comes to the mill. (TN: Everything that is received or obtained is put to use)

"Are there any monsters nearby, Roxanne? We will fight if they are close; if not, let's go back to a lower floor."

"This way."

There are.

I try fighting Lv28 monsters.

I launch Wind and Lighting magic on three Cyclopes and defeat them.

There doesn't seem to be any problem.

"Because I will only be using magic during the battles, let's try the 23rd floor boss battle."

If I am to partake only in the boss battles, I cannot bring Durandal out. Because I will be fighting without Durandal, it will be better to try it on a lower floor.

The number of monsters accompanying the boss increases after the 23rd floor.

"Understood."

Roxanne obediently complies.

We move to the 23rd floor and head to the boss room.

En route, we kick the monsters away without any problem and arrive at the waiting room.

After getting ready, we enter.

Thus far, during the boss battles, I have been using Durandal as well as

up to Seven Jobs.

Managing bonus points after adding Seventh Job was, as you would expect, difficult; however, I was able to make do, somehow.

Because the notion of not using Gambler was scary, I removed Wizard.

Between Gambler and Wizard, I chose Gambler as it was more useful in the boss battles.

It would be great if the boss could be neutralized via petrification.

Although the duration of a battle would lengthen to some extent if I removed Wizard, the chance of petrification would increase if the battle were to prolong.

“I will rely on Sherry for Incantation Interruption. Miria, take on the free monster.”

“Okay, desu.”

“It will be fine if you initially take on only one monster.”

A Jelly Slime, a Gummi Slime and a Clamshell appear. I cast Lighting magic and Wind magic on the three.

As for the skill of Jobless, I didn't have time to change it, so I left it as Basic Lightning Magic.

I decide against using Earth magic, which the Clamshell is weak against, as it will be ineffective against the other two.

Miria thrusts into the Gummi Slime.

Between the Clamshell and the Gummi Slime, I would prefer if the Gummi Slime were to get petrified first; therefore, her choice is correct. I am not sure, though, if she thought it that far.

If the Clamshell were to get petrified successfully, the strategy would be to leave the petrified Clamshell and move immediately to the boss.

Since she wouldn't understand, I didn't instruct her. Miria is allowed to do as she likes.

Roxanne hasn't issued any instructions either.

Miria strikes before I could even cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down.

So, there would be such an issue if I let her charge without waiting, huh?

I have failed.

Since I can use Lightning magic, it would perhaps have been better had I started with Abnormal Status Resistance Down.

“Did it, desu.”

After I cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down, Miria petrifies the Gummi Slime with the second strike.

I apply Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the boss.

Thanks to its resistance having fallen, the boss gets paralyzed by my Lightning magic.

With the boss no longer able to move, Miria petrifies the remaining Clamshell with ease.

“Err, somehow, it was easy.”

I tidy up the three petrified monsters.

“Since we have been fighting on higher floors, this much is to be expected.”

“You are right, I guess.”

“But it hasn’t been that long since we cleared the 23rd floor.”

After I approve of Roxanne’s opinion, Sherry questions.

The effect of Gained Experience 20x, perhaps?

But how?

I don’t think our level has increased much.

“Well, if I remember correctly, the battle wasn’t that difficult when we were on the 23rd floor last time.”

“It wasn’t?”

“This much is fine. Let’s move up in order.”

I dodge the question appropriately and proceed to the next floor. While partaking in the boss battles, we move up to the 27th floor. We defeat the 27th floor boss without any problem.

“I didn’t bring the 28th floor map. What would you like to do?”

Roxanne enquires as we arrive at the 28th floor.

“It should be fine if we observe the situation by battling the 27th floor boss today and tomorrow.”

“I don’t think the 27th floor is a problem for us anymore.”

“This is the first time I am fighting repeatedly using magic, after all.”

“Oh, that’s true, too. I understand.”

Roxanne seems to have understood.

I am glad.

We retake the 27th floor boss battle.

However, after retaking the boss battle, I feel that the boss battles are easier than normal battles.

Because the boss battle takes place in a closed room, the battle tends to be close ranged right from the start.

There is almost no chance for us of receiving area of effect magic attacks. In case of normal monsters, if they spotted us from the other end of the cave, we could receive magic attacks before we closed in.

If they were large in number, the monsters would fall back to the second row which would allow them to use magic attacks.

The 27th floor boss battle is limited to three enemies.

Roxanne takes on the boss and dodges its physical attacks fully.

It must burden Roxanne considerably; however, it should be fine since she doesn’t object.

Sherry must be nervous because she needs to concentrate on keeping the boss from using magic.

Miria and Vesta don’t have any added burden.

Considering the limited number of monsters, the boss battles may be easier.

Miria’s performance is especially outstanding.

The monsters are mercilessly getting silenced thanks to Abnormal Status Resistance Down.

As for the petrified monsters, if I have MP, I can finish them off with magic; otherwise, I can tidy them up with Durandal. I can do as I please.

I can use [Dungeon Walk] to move to the small room in the vicinity of

the boss room and head to the boss room. In case there are monsters close to the entrance of the 28th floor or there are people inside the waiting room, I can kill time fighting normal monsters. There is not the slightest oversight.

In case we do encounter a problem, we have no contact with other parties.

I never met anyone while exploring Haruba's labyrinth.

Even in Quratar's labyrinth, there is rarely anyone coming to a cave deviated from the route to the 27th floor boss room.

Nearby the boss room, the number of people expectedly increases.

Thus far, Roxanne has been skillfully avoiding them.

Roxanne the great.

"It will soon be evening."

"Then, let's call it a day?"

"Understood."

As per Roxanne's accurate body clock, we call the hunting off. I am not sure, though, if it is her body clock or something else.

"Isn't Roxanne tired?"

"Nope. Isn't it the same as usual?"

When I ask her if she is tired after retaking the boss battles, she replies me with a 'why especially today?' face.

"Ah, because it was different since it was only the boss battles."

"Thank you for caring. It isn't particularly different."

Be it a boss attack or a normal monster attack, it is one and the same for Roxanne.

She dodges both with ease.

"Is everyone alright?"

"No problem here."

"Yes, desu."

"I think I am alright."

I ask the other three girls. There doesn't seem to be any problem.

Other than Roxanne, everyone seems to be fine.

However, it isn't a topic that can forcibly be drawn out.

So, I decide to return home quickly.

“The Duke of Harz invited us for tonight's dinner. Let's head back home and change into the clothes we bought the other day.”

I invoke [Warp] and call the black wall forth.

From Quratar's Labyrinth, we move to the house.

When we return home, there was a note from Luke.

“Master, there is a message from Mr. Luke. His bid on a Sheep Monster Card seems to have succeeded.”

Roxanne checks.

Sheep Monster Card?

“Sherry, which skill does a Sheep Monster Card grant?”

“It grants the Sleep skill to weapons and Sleep Resistance to armors.”

“Sleep?”

I should attach it to Miria's equipment since it falls under the abnormal status category.

I should attach it to the Estoc of Petrification.

“Inflicting the abnormal status of sleep is relatively easier. If fused together with a Kobold Monster Card, it grants the Hypnosis skill. However, it gets cancelled upon receiving an attack. I think it will be better to to attach it to Roxanne-san's sword first.”

Sherry suggests.

Should I attach it to Roxanne's sword then?

I do have a spare Kobold Monster Card.

I acquired two Caterpillar Monster Cards, too, recently.

So as to make a Sacrificial Misanga to sell.

Sleep seems to get cancelled if the target receives an attack.

When the Beep Sheep sent me to sleep, I woke up when I received an attack.

It should be the same even when a monster falls asleep.

Even if Miria sends a monster to sleep, it will immediately get undone because she will continue to attack until the monster gets petrified. It would be pointless if you attacked in order to petrify it but woke it up instead.

Sooner or later, it will get cancelled by my magic.

“Is it possible for magic to not cancel sleep?”

“It isn’t.”

Of course.

It would be same as petrification if it didn’t get cancelled by magic.

Wouldn’t it be too good?

Even though Miria, being an Assassin, can send them to sleep quickly, it wouldn’t make sense if she woke them up herself immediately after.

Sherry’s advice is logical.

Her suggestion doesn’t seem to be stemming from her apprehension toward fusing it with the Estoc of Petrification which contains multiple skills already.

As for roxanne, there is a possibility of her fighting two monsters at the same time. To have one of them falling asleep will be great.

Even though my magic will cancel it right after.

Like Sherry said, should I attach it to Roxanne’s sword?

There will an option to sell it at the lodge if I find something worth buying there.

“Got it. In any case, it will be for tomorrow.”

I will go to the Merchant’s Guild tomorrow since I am visiting the Duke’s place tonight.

I prepare the amber necklaces while waiting for Roxanne and girls to change into their dresses.

Eye candies. Eye candies.

After they change into their dresses, we move to the Bode castle.

The dinner at the Duke’s place seems to be a normal one, just like last time.

There is no challenge to a duel for Roxanne, unlike last time. It really is

just a dinner party.

I was cautious to some extent; however, there doesn't seem to be any unreasonable request.

Still, I haven't dropped my guard.

However, I can feel the distance between Cassia and the Duke getting closer.

He held her hand a moment ago.

F\*\*k you.

What a show off.

“Michio-dono provided great help in extermination of Haruba's labyrinth.”

At the end of the meal, the Duke expresses gratitude while drinking his wine.

I am drinking herbal tea.

Dwarf Killer seemed to be prepared, too; however, Sherry chose herbal tea instead.

“Not at all. I got to fight in such a good place.”

That's right. It was a safe labyrinth.

For the Duke's safety, all the monster filled rooms had been swept clean; however, I don't know if the Duke was aware of that or not.

There is a possibility that Gozer, the man of the world, did that behind his back.

“Thank you for your help in Haruba.”

Gozer quickly interrupts upon hearing that.

Is that to prevent me from blurting out something unnecessary?

The Duke didn't know, after all, huh?

“Then, a victory party for the order of knights?”

“It isn't anything of that sort.”

I ask Gozer but he denies.

According to Sherry, there is no victory celebration neither any festival held by the town.

It seems to be a light toast hosted for subjugation of the labyrinth.

Because there are labyrinths everywhere, it is not like it will be safe after defeating one or two.

There are two more labyrinths still left in the territory of the duchy. There may also be labyrinths that haven't grown to the point of opening their entrance.

"It is our obligation, after all."

One more reason: defeating the labyrinths is duty imposed on the nobility.

Tax is collected for the purpose of maintaining the order of knights. It is natural for them to be required to get rid of the labyrinths.

"Indeed."

"This? Victory celebration? Not at all."

The Duke seems to have a different idea. Hopefully, it isn't a strange one.

"What?"

"In four days time. Michio-dono, I am thinking of hosting a small victory celebration in four days."

"Your Highness, that."

Gozer tries to put a stop to it. The Duke shakes his head, showing his determination. He seems to be determined as Gozer's restraint proved ineffective.

"Four days later, Michio-dono, I would like you to stay overnight."

"Stay overnight?"

"I will prepare a room, of course. It may get a bit late at night. It won't be as grand a party, though; there won't be many people. You five have to come."

The Duke speaks fervently. What do you plan on doing?

Don't tell me he will stab us in the back? There is no way that will happen, is there?

He could do that, you know, if he really wanted to.

“Got it.”

It will be inappropriate to decline such an enthusiastic him.

I accept the invitation.

He took care of me on various occasions.

It was an unrequited care, though.

## Chapter 182 : Hypnosis.

\*

“This is a souvenir for you.”

As I was leaving, the Duke gave me a souvenir.  
Jars of Dwarf Killer.

Two of them.

It seems to be the same stuff as they had in the lodge of the Empire Liberation Society.

Did he get it from the lodge?  
Is this stuff from the same brewery?

“Thank you.”  
“It will be good to drink on a special occasion.”

The Dwarf Killer was probably prepared for Sherry.  
The Duke also saw Sherry drink at the lodge.  
Was he upset that Sherry had not drunk the Dwarf Killer during the dinner?  
That’s how a Japanese person thinks, but maybe that’s not the case here?

What will he do when we come again in four days?  
Hmmm.  
Well, he wouldn’t have given it to us as a souvenir had he wanted to use it again in four days.  
There won’t be any in four days?

“Then, I’ll see you again.”

I passed the jars to Sherry, and we returned to the house.  
Since I didn’t prepare the bath today, we just wiped our bodies with hot water before sleeping.  
I didn’t skip my enjoyment before sleeping, of course.

After breakfast the next day, I went to the Merchant’s Guild.  
I called Luke at the reception desk, and went to the meeting room.

“This is the Sheep Monster Card.”

“Sure.”

I paid the successful bid amount of 4,300 Nars and received the Sheep Monster Card.

“Also, a broker came to make an offer after my successful bid yesterday. He has a Sheep Monster Card; he’d like to offer for 5,000 Nars.”

“Another one?”

This kind of thing happens as well?

Making a successful bid means you want that monster card.

If you have leftover cards, then you can sell them to someone who has made a successful bid.

I can succeed in fusion, though, with just the monster card I bought.

“It’s not a bad deal since you won’t have to pay me the commission.”

Even with a bid of 4,300 I have to pay 500 Nars to Luke as commission. The total is 4,800 Nars, so if I’m offered one for 5,000 Nars then it’s only a 200 Nars increase.

“Then, there’s nothing in it for you?”

“I do this as a standard service.”

Maybe he will get a kickback?

Brokers don’t work for free, after all.

Should I accept a 200 Nars increase then?

“So, that’s how it is, huh? I will buy the card then.”

“I can wait till you’ve tried to fuse this card before I answer them.”

“It’s fine. I’ll buy it no matter if I succeed or fail.”

“I understand. I’ll prepare it today. Please come again tomorrow morning.”

I let him know I’ll buy it, and then leave the Merchant’s Guild.

Next, I went to the lodge and the weapons shop, and checked to make sure there wasn’t anything valuable.

I have no choice but to use a Rapier?

I purchased a Rapier and a Steel Sword from the weapons shop before

returning.

When I returned to the house, I passed two monster cards and a Rapier to Sherry.

Sherry fused them without worry.

“A Rapier of Hypnosis? As expected of Sherry.”

It seems that a Rapier that is fused with Kobold and Sheep Monster Cards is called a Rapier of Hypnosis.

The [Hypnosis] skill is attached to it.

“Thank you.”

“Then, this is for Roxanne.”

I passed the Rapier of Hypnosis to Roxanne.

“Even though I already had a Rapier.”

“That one wasn’t too good. Please use this one from now on.”

“Yes, Master. Thank you very much.”

Roxanne accepts it with gratitude.

It couldn’t be helped because there were no skill slots on the Rapier Roxanne had used up until now.

“Vesta, take this.”

I handed the steel sword which I had bought for a 30% discount to Vesta.

“Is it good?”

“It’s a good piece of equipment with the chance to strengthen it little by little.”

“Okay. Thank you.”

Vesta gladly receives it.

Both of them seem pleased.

Roxanne is looking at her sword with rapture.

Is she that happy?

“I’m glad you like it. It’s thanks to Sherry as well.”

“It’s because Roxanne is from the wolfkin tribe.”

“What do you mean?”

“There’s a theory that you can use really strong beast attacks against sleeping demons, so the wolfkin tribe have a really strong desire for weapons that cause sleep.”

Sherry informed me in a quiet voice when I tilted my head. A sleeping demon will be woken up if you attack it, will there be more damage if a [Beast attack] is used? [Beast attack] is the skill of the Beast Warrior job, which is the racial job of the wolfkin tribe. The incantation required is long, but it’s possible to use it anyway against a sleeping target.

It’s probably a good match up to have a Beast Warrior with a weapon that causes sleep. That must be why the wolfkin tribe has a strong desire for a weapon that causes sleep. Sherry knew this and it may have been part of the reason she recommended the Sheep Monster Card for Roxanne’s weapon.

It’s good.  
I quietly pat Sherry’s head.

Miria has the role of causing abnormal status in our party. If Sherry hadn’t said anything, the [Hypnosis] skill might have been put on the Estoc of Petrification. Roxanne wouldn’t have complained, but she might have been bottling up inside. It’s best to have used it on Roxanne’s sword first.

“Well, shall we go to the labyrinth then?”

Roxanne who was looking longingly at her sword jumped up, and we went to Quratar’s 27th floor. We left the small room and headed towards the boss room. Just as I thought of it, Roxanne starts heading in a different direction.

“Here. There’s some nearby.”

There seems to be a demon nearby.

We've stopped on the way to hunt.

It's a Cape Carp, two Scissor Lizards and a Black Frog.

[Thunder Storm], [Dirt Storm], and [Sand Storm]. I launched a barrage of three spells.

We aren't at the boss, so I don't have Gambler active.

Instead, I am using Wizard.

The other four start running as well.

Roxanne runs holding her Rapier of Hypnosis.

Miria charges straight at the Cape Carp on the right.

Roxanne takes on the two Scissor Lizards in the center, and Vesta is taking on the Black Frog on the left.

Roxanne pierces a Scissor Lizard with her Rapier.

The demon's movements did not stop from the first blow.

My lightning magic didn't stop any either.

Roxanne avoids the swing of their scissors and then launches a counter attack.

It's also useless?

The first Scissor Lizard was stopped by my next lightning magic.

Roxanne focused her attacks on the other.

Its scissors swung down weakly.

It seems to have fallen asleep.

It's asleep.

It's still standing, but it's hanging its arms and head down.

That's how it is?

Roxanne attacked the Black Frog which Vesta was fighting next.

We don't know how long the paralysis and sleep status will take to wear off.

It's best to pay attention to the demons that can still move.

"I did it, desu!"

Miria's taken care of the Cape Carp.

Miria squeezes between the petrified Cape Carp and the sleeping Scissor Lizard.

She skillfully got to the far side of the opponents.

“Thunderstorm.”

I gave a warning that I was using magic.

Calling out the name of my magic makes me feel like I have 8th grade syndrome, but the purpose is a warning.

It would be difficult for those nearby if it wakes up.

The Scissor Lizard wakes up when it is hit by my magic.

It lifted its head and its scissors.

Actually, because I hit it with a barrage of three spells, it just fell over. Both Scissor Lizards are defeated.

We concentrate our attacks on the remaining Black Frog.

The frog's movements are stopped because of Miria's attacks.

She doesn't say anything, so it seems to be paralysis.

Paralysis is enough.

The two remaining demons are defeated by my next barrage of three spells.

The demons are totally annihilated.

Sleep proc'd once. I wonder how useful the Rapier of Hypnosis will be.

I'm not sure yet since I don't know how often the effect will proc.

There was only one paralysis from my lightning magic this time as well.

Sometimes, that's how it is.

“You're right Sherry, things will be easier with sleep.”

“Yes.”

“It's too bad we can't use Beast Attack.”

When I spoke to Sherry, Roxanne also joined the conversation.

“It's because we also need recovery.”

“Yes. Please leave the recovery to me.”

I needed to keep Roxanne's job as Shrine Maiden, so it can't be helped.

Roxanne doesn't seem to fuss about not having Beast Warrior at least.

“Is it hard to work out which demon to attack?”

When sleep procs, it becomes a little complicated to work out which demon to attack.

My magic cancels the effect as well.

“There’s no problem.”

I’ll just leave it to the vanguards?

After that, we repeatedly fought the boss on the 27th floor until evening. Sleep seems to be similar in frequency to the paralysis caused by my lightning magic.

But Roxanne is only fighting one demon. [Thunder Storm] attacks all demons. The chance of sleep might be higher than my paralysis.

It’s easy to see they’ve fallen asleep when they droop their heads. On the other hand, it’s bad because my magic can wake them up immediately.

There’s good points and bad points.

Even so, our war potential has gone up.

“We’ve repeatedly fought the boss of the 27th floor again. Does everyone think it’s fine if we go against the boss of the 28th floor tomorrow?”

“Of course, there is no problem.”

“I don’t think there’s any problem.”

“Yes, desu.”

“I think it’s safe.”

I checked with them at supper, but there were no cautious opinions. It’s decided then.

Sherry’s just started to drink some Dwarf Killer, but she’s not drunk yet, so there shouldn’t be any problem with her judgement.

The time after supper was wonderful, since Sherry emptied two jars of Dwarf Killer, and Roxanne had been in a good mood all day.

I used Sex Maniac during the night, so I was in a good mood as well.

I’m glad.

I have this place to come back to.

The next morning, we entered the boss room of Quratar’s 28th floor.

There are two Cyclopes and a Silver Cyclops for our first run. After using [Abnormal Status Resistance Down] on the Cyclops Miria was facing I used two [Thunder Storm]'s. Wind magic might be better, but I'm using lightning magic with the aim of the abnormal status effects.

One Cyclops was paralyzed by the lightning magic. Sadly, it's the one Miria is taking on, but that's to be expected since it's the one I used [Abnormal Status Resistance Down] on. After two more lightning spells, I put [Abnormal Status Resistance Down] on the boss.

Roxanne was taking on the boss. I think it might be difficult to put the boss into the sleep state. Even though we fought the boss on the 27th floor many times yesterday, it was never affected by sleep. Like sleep, the effect of paralysis from my lightning magic is also rare.

Normally, these effects are probably rather rare until the effects of my [Abnormal Status Resistance Down] and Assassin's [Abnormal Status Chance Up] effects combine. Since we haven't seen any benefits on the bosses and we've been fighting them for a while, Maybe it was a bad decision to attach sleep to Roxanne's weapon? Well, it's done now.

"I did it, desu!"

Miria left the paralyzed Cyclops, and petrified the boss. Miria's effect is still quite large against the boss. Things are still getting harder, though. We can't relax.

The Cyclops which Vesta was taking on was paralyzed by lightning magic, and the Cyclops that had been paralyzed previously begins to move again. Roxanne thrusts her Rapier of Hypnosis into it. The Cyclops shuts its eye and hangs its head.

Sleep.

The effect of [Abnormal Status Resistance Down] shows again, it's a single blow.

"Thunderstorm."

I gave a warning, and shot lightning magic.

This warning.

Has a reason.

It's different from 8th grade syndrome.

Sleep getting cancelled by my magic attacks is quite troublesome.

The Cyclops wakes up.

As the Cyclops wakes up, he becomes silent at once because of Miria.

Miria petrifies it. Only one is left now.

It seems like there's no problem fighting against the boss on the 28th floor either.

The boss fight just seems like a wait until Miria's petrification proc's.

At least, until the 33rd floor.

The demon on Quratar's 29th floor seems to be the Moloch Taurus.

We've already seen the Moloch Taurus while exploring Haruba's 27th floor, but it will be the first time seeing the boss.

We'll have to be careful.

The Lv29 Moloch Taurus doesn't cause any problems for us.

Only the battle time is slightly longer.

I still can't understand if the skill [Progressive Increase in Damage] is effective.

It might be effective, but I don't know.

Since I can set Jobless's skill to Intermediate Water Magic, which is Moloch Taurus's weakness, it becomes easier to explore the 29th floor.

But I'm not sure if there is additional benefit.

The combination of demons on the 29th floor is different to other labyrinths.

Using lightning magic would be quite convenient as well.

Especially, if paralysis proc's when there are a large number of demons.

We hunt through the morning, and then I go to the Merchant's Guild after breakfast.

When I call for Luke, he comes out at once.

“The other party is waiting at the guild shrine. I'll leave after I've introduced you, so feel free to make a deal as you wish.”

Oh. The guild shrine.

It's where you examine your monster cards after you've bought them.

I'll have to pay 100 Nars to use it.

That makes the total price increase 300 Nars.

## Chapter 183 : Capacity

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“You seem to be the one who purchased the Sheep Monster Card this time. Thank you very much.”

When I arrive at the guild temple room, the Armor Merchant, who was waiting there, bows.

This Armor Merchant seems to be the one who sold the Sheep Monster Card.

From his greedy expression, he seems to be a vicious man.

“Not at all. It was for my own convenience.”

“But the Monster Card Fusion is immensely difficult.”

When I return an appropriate greeting, the Armor Merchant’s face distorts repulsively.

Because I won merely one, the Monster Card Fusion would surely fail; you think so, don’t you?

But it has succeeded already.

I can’t say that out loud, however.

This way, I won’t have to lie. I’ll let him believe that it has failed.

Sherry won’t complain either.

I shrug and look at Luke.

“This man here is an Armor Merchant like me. He acts as a broker at the auction. It would be foolish if the guild temple were used twice, so I have decided to use it today. This friend here is an Adventurer. He wishes to have the Sheep Monster Card.”

Luke introduces me and the Armor Merchant.

If Luke purchased the monster card from this Armor Merchant and I took it over from Luke, the guild temple would need to be used twice.

When I buy, I don’t need verification; however, it’s normally a necessity.

That I’m transacting directly, it’ll ‘supposedly’ save me some cost.

“I look forward to working with you, dear customer.”

“Likewise.”

“With this, I’m off.”

After Luke finishes introductions, he leaves the guild temple room.

Does he really have some business?

Or, is it not necessary for him to be present?

“To tell you the truth, I own two Sheep Monster Cards. What do you say about two?”

After Luke leaves, the face of the Armor Merchant distorts even more as he approaches me with an offer.

“I can give you the second one for 4,900 Nars.”

I see.

So, Luke left in consideration of what this man might have to say.

Transacting directly because it would be wasteful if the guild temple were used twice must be this Armor Merchant’s proposition, too.

His implicit objective must be to sell a second card.

I cannot imagine this Armor Merchant approaching me with a deal wherein he would incur a loss.

There must have been a kickback for Luke, no?

A 100 Nars kickback?

Nah, there’s no reason.

If he returned 100 Nars from 5,000 Nars of the first card to Luke, what additional benefit would he have in selling the second one for 4,900 Nars?

If Luke’s kickback were 200 Nars, the profit of this Armor Merchant would be divided.

How could it be?

How could this greedy Armor Merchant let his profit be divided so easily?

If it comes to Luke’s kickback being 300 Nars or more.

Is it possibly about same as the commission of 500 Nars?

For Luke, there doesn’t seem to be any profit in introducing me over bidding on it and transferring it to me.

Having said that, this Armor Merchant must have persuaded him.

“It won’t be bad to have two cards.”

I pretend to be lost in thought while observing the expression of the Armor Merchant.

If it includes a kickback, there may be more room for it to go down.

“Then, how about 4,800 Nars?”

“More.”

“I’ll give you the second one for 4,700 Nars.”

“Alright then, I’ll buy it.”

I might get an even better price if I acted some more; however, it’s good enough as is.

If I went too far and he pulled back from selling the second one, I would be troubled.

The reason being...

“Thank you very much. Then, since you’re buying the second card together with the first one, I’ll give you a special price of 6,790 Nars for two.”

Alrighty!

Because it was increased to two cards, 30% Discount was effective. Taste your own medicine, doctor.

Before he could say anything, I pay him the amount and 2 silver coins to the staff member of the guild temple.

Urged by the staff member, the Armor Merchant hands over the two cards.

He confirms right away that the Sheep Monster Cards are genuine. After verification, I put the monster cards inside my Item Box.

“Thank you for the business today!”

Amidst the Armor Merchant’s cry, I leave the guild temple room. It might be problematic if I used 30% Discount too much; however, it’s fine for now.

I flee back home.

“Welcome back.”

“I have obtained a Sheep Monster Card. So, what should I do now?”

Upon returning home, I consult with Sherry who was the only one left in the living room.

Roxanne and the rest are doing cleaning and laundry.

As for Sherry, she'll be performing the Monster Card Fusion now that I have returned.

“Which equipment should it be fused with, is that what you mean?”

“That, too, but there's another option. Keeping it unused, that is.”

When the Rapier of Hypnosis was used yesterday, it occurred to me. Sleep can be cancelled by magic; therefore, its compatibility with our party, the main constituent of whose attack is my magic, is low.

Impudently speaking, it'll only be a stopgap.

An immediate resort in an emergency situation.

Presently, however, I don't think there's any danger.

“That's right. If there's no absolute need to keep it, fusing it with an armor will be effective, too. After all, it'll soon be the Beep Sheep floor.”

Beep Sheep, that uses the Sleep skill, is the boss of Quratar's 4th floor. Because the bosses start showing up (as normal monsters) after 33rd floor, the Beep Sheep should show up on Quratar's 37th floor. At the rate of 2 days per floor, it'll be pretty soon.

However, I don't think it'll be that easy for us to advance.

We may hit the wall around 34-35th floor, don't you think?

I won't know until I'm there.

So, the idea of keeping it unused isn't bad.

“Then, let's leave it as is.”

“Yes, it's a good idea.”

The Kobold Monster Cards are in balance, too.

So, I decide to keep the Sheep Monster Cards in hand.

For two days, I enter the labyrinth and partake in the 28th floor boss battle.

The boss battle is a good experience, too, isn't it?

There won't be any issue even if we proceed to the next floor. Incidentally, at the dinner, I find out that the prudence policy didn't go down well.

“Sherry, which is the boss of the 29th floor?”

“The Moloch Taurus boss is called Boss Taurus. Same as Moloch Taurus, a Boss Taurus is resistant to Fire magic and weak against Water.”

“Boss Taurus?”

The boss is called Boss? Isn't it obvious?

However, it'll show up as a normal monster on the 62nd floor.

Even though it's called Boss.

“Because its blows are intense, Roxanne-san will have to dodge well.”

“Okay, it's fine.”

Roxanne nods confidently.

Although it'll be our first time encountering the Moloch Taurus boss, I don't have to be worried for Roxanne will be keeping it company.

The next morning, we enter the 29th floor boss room.

In the first boss battle, two Cyclopes show up beside the Boss Taurus. The Moloch Tauruses didn't come out this time.

After applying Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the cyclops, which Miria was confronting, I cast two Thunderstorms.

The movements of the two Cyclopes cease.

Oops!

Even the cyclops that was applied with Abnormal Status Resistance Down seems to have been paralyzed.

“Roxanne-san, a little more to the front.”

Sherry makes Roxanne advance.

“Okay.”

“You, too, Vesta. Around there.”

“Understood.”

Since the Cyclopes have been paralyzed, there is no need to wait for the boss.

However, it is necessary for Sherry to take a position where her spear will be able to reach from once the paralysis wears off.

I leave this area to Sherry.

And cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the boss.

Roxanne stands in front of the Boss Taurus.

Roxanne lightly wrings her body and dodges the swinging low monster. The Boss Taurus, too, is a bipedal cowkin just like a Moloch Taurus. Its shoulders are stern.

Its whole body is covered in dark brown fur.

Regrettably, it doesn't have black and white mottles.

It's swinging its arms furiously; however, Roxanne is dodging it in its entirety.

“Did it, desu.”

While the boss was engaged with Roxanne, Miria petrifies it.

There seems to be some way to go before petrification passes for a boss. I thought I would be able to notice if the boss were petrified, it being brown; however, I wasn't able to tell at all.

It cannot be distinguished from paralysis by sight.

It's Miria's first time seeing it, too, so how can she notice petrification? Actually, it becomes 'white' upon petrification.

However, its color is still brown. It hasn't changed.

Even if a black and white Moloch Taurus were to be petrified, I wouldn't be able notice at all.

It will turn white in some places. Probably.

Miria attacks the remaining monster next to the petrified cyclops that had been applied with Abnormal Status Resistance Down.

Before Miria could inflict abnormal status, it dies to my magic because I didn't cast Abnormal Status Resistance Down on the remaining Cyclops. As the boss had already been petrified, I slaughter it with Wind magic which is the weakness of a cyclops.

After the two Cyclopes, I shoot an Aquaball at the Boss Taurus.

“Sherry, does a Boss Taurus drop an ingredient?”

“Yes. A Boss Taurus drops three varieties of items. Apart from roast, it drops whey and, very rarely, chuck flap.”

“Really?”

So, it drops a rare ingredient, after all, huh?

And three varieties at that?

I remove Gambler, select Cook and finish the petrified boss off.

Since I have removed Gambler, Abnormal Status Resistance Down should lose its effect; however, it has no relation to petrification which has already been inflicted.

The cowkin turns into smoke.

When the smoke dissipates, a lump of meat was left.

It's a roast.

Failed?

Nope, a roast is already enough.

It may be an extremely rare ingredient that hardly ever drops just like a chuck rib; a premium ingredient, that is.

The drop rate of which doesn't increase even after using Cook's Rare Ingredient Drop Rate Up.

If that's how it is...

Then, will whey ever drop?

Oh well. I can't judge the tendency from just one attempt anyway.

“It's said that a roast cannot be differentiated from a chuck flap.”

“It's unlikely for a chuck flap to drop at first attempt. It should be a roast.”

Although it's merely a lump of meat, I can tell it's a roast because Appraisal is displaying so.

If I keep telling them not to hold high hopes, they won't hold high hopes.

“I guess.”

Sherry judges calmly.

I put the roast in my Item Box.

As a third party, I can judge whether it's a roast or a chuck flap by

putting it inside my Item Box.

However, my Item Box has limited capacity.

If it were any other drop than roast, it wouldn't enter.

Actually, if it's about entering, there's the space where taken off equipment are put in.

Well, as far as taken off equipment are concerned, I can select Explorer after leaving the labyrinth.

And then, before entering the labyrinth, I can take out the equipment and remove Explorer.

It's bothersome, though.

How should I go about it?

If I am to retake the 29th floor boss battle, there's an option of selecting Cook.

With Cook, I can use its Item Box and take advantage of Rare Ingredient Drop Rate Up.

However, it'll be too tight for me to add Seventh Job.

The number of items needed to be kept in the Item Box will continue to increase in the future.

It's a pain that Adventurer's Item Box has a fixed capacity of 50 types of items x 50 units.

At the moment, my Adventurer job is Lv42, so it's profitable for me; however, it won't be the case in the future.

Or, will it perhaps be 51 types of items x 51 units when Adventurer hits Lv51?

It's impossible.

I haven't heard such a thing.

If the capacity of Adventurer's Item Box increased onward from Lv51, it would be widely known.

"Then, let's move on?"

"The monster native to Quratar's 30th floor is Half Herb. While it's weak against Fire magic, it's resistant to Wind, Earth and Water magic."

Ah, we will face a new monster if we move up.

A new monster will drop a new item.

More space will be needed to put it in the Item Box.

Well, I can keep other items than cooking ingredients in the rucksack. But that'll lead to another topic.

So, I have to keep all the items in my Item Box.

Because the equipment are out of the Item Box, there's capacity.

When I leave the labyrinth, should I select Explorer then?

Or, do I add Seventh Job and select Cook permanently?

Because the 29th floor boss drops rare ingredients, I have temporarily selected Cook; however, it'll be better to select Explorer which I'm accustomed to.

So, should I incline toward Explorer?

But what would happen when the number of items needed to be kept in the Item Box increased? After all, Explorer is only an expedience outside the labyrinth.

The capacity of Adventurer's Item Box is probably fixed and it's about to reach its limit.

Oh well. Let's think about it when the time comes.

## Chapter 184 : Half

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“This way.”

When we move up to the 30th floor, Roxanne guides us.

It seems to be close by.

After following her for a while, we come across a group of two Half Herbs and a Moloch Taurus.

Three monsters, huh?

Because it's our first battle on the 30th floor, Roxanne has led us to a place with fewer monsters.

Even though it's a group of three, because it's the 30th floor, it can be considered a small group.

After the 32nd floor, the maximum number of monsters in a group will increase to six.

We may hit the wall around there.

Never did I believe that I would be able to breeze through to the 37th floor.

I welcome the monsters with two Lightning spells and a Firestorm.

The movements of the three cease.

This time around, all of them seem to have been paralyzed.

Is such a thing even possible?

A Half Herb is weak against Fire magic while a Moloch Taurus is resistant to Fire magic.

A Moloch Taurus has weakness against Water magic while a Half Herb has resistance to Water magic.

I have to make do with Lightning magic on the 30th floor; however, it worked wonders this time.

Still, a Half Herb has resistance toward too many attributes.

It is resistant to Earth, Wind and Water magic.

To think that it's called Half...

A Half Herb is about as high as an average human's waist. From its name, I had already guessed that it would look like some kind of herb.

So, is it called Half because of its height is half of a human's?

For a herb, though, it's pretty large.

Roxanne and the girls rush over to the stiffened monsters. While they were en route, one of the Half Herbs had regained movement; however, it gets paralyzed again after the second barrage of three spells. Roxanne and Vesta attack the stiffened Half Herb.

Miria runs through the side of the Half Herb. Shouldn't she attack the Moloch Taurus? Sure enough. After I cast Firestorm, Miria aims at the Moloch Taurus.

Sherry, too, passes through the Half Herb's side; however, she halts a bit short and thrusts her spear in from the rear. Because Sherry's duty is to cancel the skills using her Incantation Interruption spear, her action is the right one. While attacking, Vesta goes around bit by bit.

Roxanne and the girls severely stab at the Half Herb in front of them. I don't think the paralyzed monster has fallen asleep. Thus far, there has been no instance.

Even if it fell asleep, it wouldn't be able to be distinguished for it cannot move due to paralysis. Even if it fell asleep and woke up after receiving an attack, it wouldn't be able to move for it's paralyzed. However, I wonder if it had fallen asleep earlier.

"Did it, desu."

After I launch another barrage of three spells, Miria petrifies the Moloch Taurus. At the same time, the paralysis of the Half Herb begins to wear off as it starts moving. However, Roxanne immediately attacks it after which its leaves droop.

It has fallen asleep.

The Half Herb has properly been inflicted with the abnormal status of sleep.

Oh well. It's a monster, after all.

In the first place, monsters tend to originally be asleep or so I've heard.

"Thunderstorm."

Issuing the warning, I launch another barrage of three spells.

Even if the Half Herb wakes up, Roxanne is standing in front of it while Vesta and Sherry are encircling it.

Subsequently, it gets paralyzed as is.

Did it get paralyzed right after it woke up to the first Lightning spell? Or, did it wake up to the first Lightning spell and got paralyzed by the second?

In either case, it will have to suffer.

"Did it, desu."

Miria petrifies the Half Herb that has been under the effect of paralysis from the outset.

Next, I take care of the monsters with magic.

All three of them collapse.

The Half Herb turns into smoke and dissipates.

What it left behind is a slim stalk.

When I use Appraisal, it says ephedra.

Is this the Half Herb drop?

"So, it's an ephedra."

While Vesta picks it up, Sherry informs.

Sherry seems to know that it's an ephedra.

"Did you say ephedra?"

"An experienced Herbalist can produce an all purpose pill using an ephedra."

An all purpose pill can recover HP and MP, heal injuries and cure diseases. It may even remove abnormal statuses. That's why it's called all

purpose.

It's a terrific medicine to be honest.

As for removing abnormal statuses, it's a chance.

It's not an absolute.

However, it doesn't warrant it to be looked down on.

Abnormal status inflicted by a strong monster tends to be strong.

Poison inflicted by a lower ranked monster can be removed 100% with an antidote pill; however, poison inflicted by a higher ranked monster may not be removed even if you consume an antidote pill.

If you make a mistake, you can easily restore HP with an all purpose pill.

A higher ranked all purpose medicine can remove abnormal statuses without fail.

I have already received a lecture in this regard from Sherry-sensei before.

Can I make an all purpose pill?

An all purpose pill is a lower ranked all purpose medicine, after all.

I select Herbalist.

I put the ephedra, which I received from Vesta, on my palm and invoke Create Crude Medicine.

The ephedra on my palm turns into two pills.

It's an all purpose pill.

And, there seem to be two.

I had my doubts for it supposedly requires one to be experienced; however, I somehow managed to do it merely with Herbalist Lv6.

To produce an all purpose pill, does one perhaps have to be a Herbalist Lv5 or more?

To keep my failures from being public, I should have invoked Create Crude Medicine privately; however, that I did magnificently well, I'm glad.

Oh well. It can't be helped.

"Is this an all purpose pill?"

"So, you can make it."

“As expected of Master.”

Roxanne compliments calculatively.

I probably need to level Herbalist up before I'm able to produce a higher ranked all purpose pill.

So, is it better to level Herbalist up?

If an all purpose pill requires Herbalist Lv5 or more, the next one should need Lv10 or Lv15.

Considering the efficiency, leveling it up after the next material item appears won't be a bad idea; however, I won't be able to show off in front of Roxanne and the girls.

Also, if impossible became possible within 1-2 days, there would be a risk of Sherry delving deep into it.

Although reaching Lv50 will be difficult, Lv10 or Lv20 can immediately be managed.

I should level Herbalist up for a while.

How about adding a Seventh Job?

It'll be painful to spend bonus points to add a Seventh Job just to level a job up.

Can I not remove Wizard and select Herbalist in its place?

Because I have already done the boss battles without Wizard, fighting normal monsters shouldn't be out of question.

Besides, the magic attributes of Wizard aren't effective against the monsters of Quratar's 29th and 30th floors.

Lightning magic of Grand Wizard and Jobless plays the main role.

So, removing Wizard is a viable option.

“Then, let's return to the 29th floor? Because there'll be a change in the constitution of magic, please be careful.”

“There'll be a change?”

“A little, yes. It has to do with the floor incompatibility.”

Sherry, as expected, nibbles; however, I successfully deceive her.

Hence, I move back to the 29th floor and fight employing the dual attack system comprising Grand Wizard and Jobless spells.

Although the duration of battles has increased, it's satisfactory, isn't it? The more the battle lengthens, the more Miria's petrification proc's. There's paralysis, too, for I'll be using Lightning magic.

During the boss battles, I can simply replace Herbalist with Gambler. Depending on the situation, I can switch it to Cook, too. If you asked me whether it's bothersome, I would say it is; however, it can't be helped. Thus far, it doesn't feel too unusual.

Because I have Herbalist selected, I'm producing all purpose pills as and when I receive an ephedra.

I can keep it in the space of my Item Box.

Or so I thought; however, whey drops three times during the boss battles.

Speaking of whey, it's a rare ingredient.

After I leave the labyrinth, I'd better select Explorer.

"Yes, desu."

Like a Naive Olive's dropped item, olive oil, it's a liquid packed in a thin film.

It's a mystery liquid left behind by a cowkin.

"Is it perhaps milk?"

"It's whey. It's richer than milk; it's a valuable item. It's absolutely delicious; however, not many drink it as is. If it's added to a soup, it becomes extraordinarily tasty."

Explains Sherry.

I thought it would be milk since it's dropped by a cowkin, that drops roast; however, it seems to be a seasoning.

I can perhaps make white stew with it.

After receiving it from Miria, I carefully put it inside my Item Box, so that it's thin film doesn't get torn.

Another Boss Taurus dropped a chuck flap.

However, it wasn't during today's hunting.

Even after one full day of hunting, not many chuck ribs have dropped.

Nothing can be done about it, though.

“Let’s call it a day?”

“It seems to be a little early, though.”

“It’s because we have been invited by the Duke again.”

“Which reminds me, you did mention it.”

Although not a single chuck flap has dropped, we call it off a little early.

Whey, on the other hand, has dropped plenty.

There are many in my Item Box.

It’s probably Cook’s contribution.

“I haven’t heard of any such thing as an overnight victory celebration gathering. Will it be alright?”

Sherry expresses her concern.

Is there a possibility of it being a trap?

The Duke’s manner of speech did seem unnatural.

According to Sherry, there’s no such thing as an overnight victory celebration gathering.

I’ll go, nevertheless.

The reason being, it’s difficult for me to decline.

If it’s just this time, it cannot be suspicious; however, if he invites again, it can be considered a trap.

Unless I cut off all the ties, I won’t be able to decline all of his invitations in the future.

I want to maintain a good relationship with Cassia and Gozer.  
With everyone but the Duke.

“If he wanted to kill us, he would have poisoned the food last time and be done with us; therefore, it’ll be alright.”

I have visited the Duke’s place numerous times yet nothing has happened thus far.

Nothing fatal, at least.

Therefore, it should be alright.

The only nuisance to me is the attention; however, with Gozer there, the worst can be avoided.

To visit the Duke, I finish hunting ahead of time.  
From Quratar's labyrinth, we return home.  
And go straight to the bedroom.  
After all, we'll be staying overnight.

I cannot afford to make 'noise' in the room borrowed from the Duke.  
And, I don't know as to what kind of room it'll be.  
There may be separate rooms arranged for males and females.

Now that I think about it, what would I do if they didn't prepare beds  
for Roxanne and the girls.

Damn.

There's a possibility for they know they're slaves.  
Since they invited me as a guest, they must've prepared the minimum,  
right?

Well, if it does happen, I can simply return, no?  
Oh well. I'll see when the time comes.  
For now, I drain myself dry once and head to Bode after getting ready.

"The leader is in the office."

When I arrive at the lobby, the member of the order of knights informs  
me.

Curt.

Same as usual.

They always respond this way. No change.

The mood doesn't suggest that there's going to be a celebration.  
Or, did they let me in on my own because they're busy with the  
preparations, perhaps?  
I'm always let in without permission.

"Come in."

When I proceed to the office and knock, comes Gozer's voice.  
I enter.

"Michio here."

"Ooh, Michio-dono. You've finally come."

There's the Duke, too, unsurprisingly.

"I was waiting."

"Well then, Gozer, we're executing Operation SE-2." (TN: セ二号作戦 If you guys have better more accurate more specific version, do tell me, please)

"Eh? Wha-?"

Gozer greets us with bewilderment.

What the heck is Operation SE-2?

Gozer doesn't seem to know either.

It must've been arranged for beforehand.

"That' is Operation SE-2."

"No way. That?"

"We're executing it tonight."

"Wha-okay."

Gozer seems to be aware of the operation itself.

He just didn't know that it would be executed tonight.

"I'm afraid to tell you, Michio-dono, that there's an emergency."

"Haa."

What's the emergency?

Until now, I didn't notice any change at all since I came here.

Even from Gozer's looks.

"I apologize for not circulating the emergency summons. Excuse my incompetence."

Gozer rushes out of the office.

Emergency summons?

What's happening?

"Then, let's have dinner?"

"Ah, emergency?"

"No, no, don't mind it. We still have some time."

It doesn't seem to yet be the time to rush.

Even though it's an emergency.

Will it be alright?

But then, they wouldn't be moron enough to circulate the emergency summons in front of us if they were to assemble warriors against us. Don't you think?

They would've arranged for it earlier if they intended to.

"Is everything alright?"

"I'll explain the situation later. Follow me, please."

The Duke leaves the room.

Roxanne and Sherry look at me. They didn't get it either for they have their heads tilted.

So, it really is incomprehensible, huh?

Even Gozer didn't get it.

Since there's no helping it, we follow the Duke.

There's an uneasy feeling; however, they wouldn't do it so openly if it were a trap for us.

The explanation seems to be on the other side.

The Duke proceeds to the usual dining room.

Is it really going to be a dinner?

"Thank you for coming. I was waiting."

Inside the room is Cassia, dressed up.

For a Duchess, it may be a casual wear.

The dressed up Cassia looks so beautiful.

The not dressed up Cassia must be beautiful, too.

The dinner has already been prepared.

Beside her, there are other people inside the room.

"I apologize. An urgent matter requires Gozer to attend to it. I and Michio-dono will be having dinner in the conference room. Send the meal for seven people over, please."

The Duke speaks to Cassia.

"Eh? Ah.....okay."

Cassia gets taken aback but she recovers right after.  
She instructs the servants in the room.

Now that I think about it, Gozer recovered immediately, too.  
After living together with the Duke, they seem to have steeled their  
nerves.

There must be no end to his capricious actions.

## Chapter 185 : Operation

\*

“Sorry for much \*batabata\* ado.”

The Duke leads us to another room.

It's a conference room which is neither small nor large.

It'll be enough for us to dine.

“Not at all.”

“We'll be having dinner here. I have various things to explain.”

You could explain in the previous room, too, you know?

It's a mystery to me as to why you had to switch rooms.

Now, all the dishes will have to be brought over again.

That's worker abuse, Duke.

“Is this about all? If so, please leave.”

With all the dishes having been brought over, the Duke instructs the servants.

“Here's the drink.”

“Thank you for the work.”

“Then, we'll take our leave.”

The servant, who was carrying the pitcher, bows and leaves the room last.

Inside the room are the Duke, Cassia and us only.

“Here's the drink. Please enjoy yourself, everyone. It's just the herbal tea, so rest assured.”

“Okay.”

I take a seat.

The Duke and Cassia are across the interposed side of the  $\sqcap$  shaped table.

On one side are I, Roxanne and Miria.

On the other side of the table are Sherry and Vesta.

“Umm, what is this about?”

Sitting abreast the Duke, Cassia enquires.  
So, Cassia isn't privy to this matter either.

“Sorry for the trouble, Cassia, but it's necessary.”  
“Don't tell me.....is it that?”

Or, is she?  
Cassia seems to have gotten it.  
The Duke nods exaggeratedly.

“Sorry.”  
“Not at all. I knew this day would come someday, so I had resolved myself.”

It seems to be a shock to Cassia.  
Is it something bad?  
Like punishing the guests?  
When Cassia droops her head, the Duke turns toward us.

“There is a custom pertaining to the conference rooms. Once inside, no one leaves until the conference is over. In this case, it's the dinner. I hope you don't intend to leave, Michio-dono, everyone, before the dinner is over.”

“Is there such a custom?”  
“It's to ensure that a decision is reached by all means.”  
“I see.”

No one is to leave until a decision has been reached, huh?  
Is this the election of the pope or something?  
Where they perform the test of endurance.

“Strategy meetings are conducted, too, sometimes.”  
“Strategy meeting?”

If no one leaves, the information won't leak outside until the meeting is over.  
It'll be perfect for a strategy meeting.

“Before further explanation, let's have dinner first? Cassia?”

“Okay.”

You want us to eat?

Oh well. After having come this far, there’s no point in being defiant.

“Everyone, please.”

He urges Roxanne and Sherry who were perspicuously anxious.

The reason as to why they are silent is because they cannot question the Duke ahead of me.

Miria, who jumps at the fish, evidently doesn’t care.

“Does Michio-dono know that a noble may lose their title if they fail to subjugate a labyrinth in their territory?”

The Duke faces me and asks.

“I don’t.”

“If a labyrinth or the monsters run rampant, no one can live there anymore, anyway. Even if one has the title of nobility, it’s worthless. So, it’s natural for them to be stripped of their title.”

When someone defeats a labyrinth, they receive the title of nobility. By the same token, if someone is unable to defeat a labyrinth, they cease to be a noble, huh?

It’s a harsh system of reward and punishment.

Better yet, candy and whip.

“It’s about the Earldom of Selmar.”

Cassia murmurs.

The Earldom of Selmar. In other words, Cassia’s home.

I have been there.

Is it in danger?

So the state of emergency has nothing to do with us or the Duke but the Earl of Selmar.

“Ever since the current Earl came in power, not a single labyrinth has been subjugated. At this point, he hasn’t lost his nobility; however, he is on the verge of losing his peerage.”

“Is it that bad?”

“Currently, the elven titled nobility comprises a Duke, a Marquis and two Earls. Regardless of whether he loses his peerage or loses his nobility, as an elf, I cannot turn a blind eye to this situation. My bad that this matter has no relation whatsoever to Michio-dono.”

The elven titled nobility includes: the household of the Duke of Harz, the household of the Marquis, Cassia’s family – the Earl of Selmar, and one more Earl.

Being Cassia’s family, it needn’t be mentioned that the Earl of Selmar is an elf.

The Earl of Selmar is an exceptionally ugly, plump man.

“Although we aren’t on particularly good terms with other races, it cannot be termed as discrimination. However, as an elf, I cannot hand it over. I hope you understand.”

If the peerage of the Earl of Selmar were taken over, there’d be a risk of the elven titled nobility shrinking.

I get it.

Because only a noble may have the honor.

In other words, they want me to enter a labyrinth in the territory of Selmar.

However, I’m so busy I would even welcome the help of a cat.

Even though the elven nobles cooperate with each other, everyone is supposed to take care of the labyrinths in their own territory.

There are two more still left in the territory of Harz Duchy.

Otherwise, the labyrinth may become considerably tough.

When a labyrinth opens its entrance, it has 50 floors after which it grows bit by bit.

If it’s left unattended, allowing it to grow nicely, losing peerage won’t be unlikely.

If you think about it, the risk will only increase.

So, is that the emergency situation?

He cannot ask me to go by myself and defeat a labyrinth.

The Duke is aware that I'm a 20s floor Adventurer.

The Duke cannot be this absurd.

Eh?

You don't mean that, do you?

By any chance, has Gozer been kept away from the strategic meeting for this reason?

"O-Oh well."

"I have decided to overthrow the Earl of Selmar."

"Although he may beg his way out, it'll essentially be an invasion."

It's different.

He plans on overthrowing the Earl of Selmar.

Like overthrowing government? Or hijacking?

Lending a hand will certainly not end at just that.

In this world, the labyrinths born one after another.

A system of continued labyrinth extermination will have to be established.

After present subjugation of the labyrinths in the territory of Selmar, if the extermination weren't continued, it would lead to the case of the current Earl of Selmar.

It's a matter of fact to eliminate the root cause.

Are you really going to overthrow?

If the matter of removal were brought up with the Emperor, it would be rejected on the grounds of rivalry. If the scandal leaked out, it would be terrible.

That's the way how it is in this world, it seems.

It feels like a military coup.

I don't understand as to what reason the Earl of Selmar has for not defeating the labyrinths.

Or, the reason may be inconsequential.

Overthrowing the Earl of Selmar may win people's hearts.

In the absence of results, you change the head. For instance, national

team coach in case of soccer.

It is terrible to be fired, not metaphorically.

Furthermore, the Earldom is Cassia's home, the Earl her relative.

When I try to observe Cassia's state, she was resolutely putting up a front.

Did she know this would happen?

Which reminds me, she did say that she had resolved herself.

“Therefore, I want to borrow Michio-dono's strength.”

It isn't about entering the labyrinth in the territory of Selmar.

What is it then?

“Michio-dono once visited the Earl of Selmar together with me.”

“Yes.”

“There was a curtain there with my emblem imprinted.”

During the audience with the Earl of Selmar, there was a curtain with the emblem of the Harz Duchy hanging behind the Earl.

That one?

“Indeed.”

“Can you move there via Field Walk?”

Geh

He intends to use me as a penetration corps?

Even though it's the invasion of the Earldom of Selmar, in this world, the armies needn't march to the enemy territory.

Even if it were the Imperial Capital, one could move there via Field Walk.

“Despite the appearance, the Earl of Selmar is an extremely prudent man. In order not to let the Adventurers trespass inside the castle, the shield cement seems to have been abundantly used. Although he doesn't exterminate the labyrinths, he's proficient at defending himself. You might think it'd be difficult to invade; however, if it's Michio-dono breaking into the castle, it'll be a different matter.”

Have you been devising a plan for such a long time?

It was all for this day that you indebted me with the referral to the

Empire Liberation Society.

“In other words, a vanguard?”

As an Adventurer who is supposed to break into the castle of the Earl of Selmar, I will be the first to enter.

An unconditional spearhead.

Can also be called a suicide corps.

“The Earl of Selmar may have guessed; however, I cannot wait day after night after day. There may be guards on the lookout to some extent but it won't be to the extent of posing a danger. In order not to have the operation leaked outside, meticulous caution has been exercised.”

Even Gozer was informed just today.

Even if the tactics were leaked outside, it would be of no use unless the exact time of the decisive action were known.

“Is there no other Adventurer who is able to enter the castle of the Earl of Selmar?”

“I cannot say there's no one else; however, if I relied on someone unreliable, the Earl of Selmar would sniff the operation out.”

If the Adventurer, who was asked to break into the castle, had a connection with the Earl of Selmar, they would leak the information. Or worse yet, betrayed.

It would be less likely if they were a neutral party like me.

“It has already come to light that I'm an Explorer, some sort of countermeasure must have already been taken.”

“There's a possibility; still, it won't have any effect on the emblem in the castle. If push comes to shove, you're allowed to produce the proof of trust between the household of the Duke of Harz and the household of the Earl of Selmar. With this, you won't be attacked unknowingly.”

So, you intend to use the proof of trust for a completely contradictory purpose?

Nasty.

“Is it alright to use the proof?”

“It’s an extremely last resort. You should be able to deal with the minor injuries by yourself. Better yet if you use it in front of a member of the Earl of Selmar’s household. This household and the household of the Earl of Selmar have a deep bond of trust.”

“Trust, huh?”

More like selfishness.

However, it doesn’t absolve the household of the Earl of Selmar.

Do you want to remove the current Earl of Selmar and replace him with a substitute Earl?

“In the worst case, I and Cassia will make a run to the emblem in the castle of the Earl of Selmar. You don’t have to be worried about it being of no use.”

“Won’t you need an Adventurer to do that.”

“The Adventurer who came here with Cassia has seen the curtain, too. I just cannot use them this time.”

“It’ll be troublesome, huh?”

After the marriage, there was an Adventurer who came with Cassia. For when she needs to go back home.

In other words, they’re someone on the Earl of Selmar’s side.

If they were sent as a vanguard, there’s a likelihood of their betraying.

“If you accept, I’ll reward you within my capacity. You may decline, of course. I’ll guarantee you freedom of choice. However, if you decline, you’ll be confined to this room until the execution of the operation.”

Is that why you led us to this room?

With there being a custom of no one leaving the conference room until the conference is over, no one will suspect even if we don’t come out for a long time.

“After I have moved to the other side, what then?”

“During the first transfer, you’ll take a few Adventurers of the order of knights there. After that, you’ll have to make a few more round trips. However, I don’t intend to have Michio-dono fight. As an elf, I’ll do what an elf has to do by myself.”

“Just transfer?”

“There’s always that 1 in 10,000 chance, so I cannot guarantee you safety. Please bear that in mind.”

Does the Duke want me to help him or decline him?

But then, if it were fail-safe, not taking it up would rather be better. It would be dangerous, don’t you think?

Like the Duke said, even if he’s aware of the risk of invasion through the emblem curtain, it’ll be impractical for him to deploy a defense unit there at all times.

If he had such a war potential, he would put it to use in the labyrinth. If he did, he wouldn’t be in the situation where he could be removed.

However, there are other methods available, too.

When no one is deployed, the room can be filled with the poisonous gas. Firewood can be set ablaze in front of the curtain, so whoever came out would fall into it.

A sword can be set in front of the curtain, so whoever came out would be pierced.

However, because it can allow one to escape in a contingency, they won’t do such a thing.

Still, it’s not absolutely safe.

I’d better decline him.

If I accepted, I would be invading Cassia’s home.

“It’s a noble’s obligation to exterminate the labyrinths. Because he didn’t perform his duty, there’s no other choice.”

When I try to observe Cassia’s state, she speaks decisively.

“In case Michio-dono declines, I’ll have to invade from the front which will result in casualties in the household of the Earl of Selmar.”

So, he requested me because he was concerned about Cassia? Is there no way out?

“I ask of you, please.”

“I understand. The moment I came here, I had already boarded the sailing

ship.”

With Cassia asking of me, I have no other choice but to accept.  
Provided there's no sword set up in front of the curtain.

## Chapter 186 : Arrangements

\*

“I am grateful. As expected of Michio-dono. Just as I expected.”

I agree to the role of vanguard for the invasion of the Earl of Selmar’s castle upon which the Duke is pleased.

I am not doing this for you, Bastard.

It is for Cassia’s sake.

B-Bastard, It isn’t for you.

Sherry’s face suggests her unease; however, she doesn’t plan on interrupting.

Probably because the other party is the Duke.

“Oh well. I will take care of it, somehow.”

In order for Sherry to hear, I speak optimistically.

Roxanne doesn’t seem to be worried at all. Maybe because she has confidence in me?

Has she never had a thought that she is overestimating my ability?

“The sortie will be tonight, so I cannot offer you sake; however, you can eat and drink until you are full.”

Is this what staying overnight was for?

I admit, though, that his preparations are good.

Since there is no sake, it will be impossible to sortie while drunk.

Is this why he didn’t arrange for the Dwarf Killer this time?

There is no helping it.

Should I at least eat to relieve the stress?

“Your Highness, Gozer here.”

After having indulged myself in eating for a while, a knock comes from outside followed by a voice.

It is Gozer.

The moment Gozer left on account of emergency, the Duke created all

sorts of troubles for me.

It really isn't good for me when Gozer isn't around.

“Gozer, is that you? I will open the door. Don't enter.”

The Duke stands up and heads to the door personally.

Does it mean if he enters the conference room, the meeting will come to an end?

Speaking of which, till when are we not allowed to leave?

Will we be on house arrest until the operation has been executed late night?

The Duke opens the door.

On the other side of the door is Gozer standing alone.

“Operation SE-2 is progressing smoothly 'just according to keikaku'. About 80% of the personnel have already been contacted. They have begun assembling here.”

Gozer reports in low voice.

I could hear him well, though.

He receives the report with his chest filled with pride. The Duke is after all a Duke.

Even if it is rotten, it is still a sea bream.

“Since the plan was a sudden occurrence, it might be difficult to get in touch with everyone. 80% would suffice.”

“However, there is one problem.”

“What is it?”

“Well...”

Gozer hesitates while looking toward me with a complicated expression.

Apparently, it is something he doesn't want the outsiders to hear.

“It is alright. Michio-dono has agreed to lend us a hand.”

“Michio-dono has?”

“Michio-dono has visited the Earl of Selmar's place before.”

He didn't tell Gozer that he dragged me there, it seems.

Had he told Gozer, he wouldn't have given me that dubious look.

"Is that so?"

Gozer looks at me with the eyes that contained pity.

As if the man of the world has found a companion.

I'm certain that Gozer is subjected to the Duke's manipulation everyday.

"So, what is the matter that is troubling you?"

"Actually."

Since Gozer's voice was low, I didn't get much of what he said thereafter.

It was full of names.

Someone went to someplace. That's how it went.

There appears to have been a slip up while circulating the emergency summons.

A miss? An accident?

"Then, it would be better to start ahead of schedule."

"I guess."

"As soon as the minimum number of people has assembled, we will execute the operation. Excluding Michi-dono, that would be 44."

"I understand."

With a decision having been made, Gozer leaves.

The Duke closes the door and returns to his seat.

"I am sorry. There was a need for a small modification to the tactics. It may start earlier."

"Did something happen to my younger brother?"

When the Duke sits down, Cassia asks.

Apparently, Cassia managed to hear her younger brother's full name in Gozer's report which was full of full names.

"Nope, nothing happened to him."

"Really?"

Cassia heaves a sigh of relief.

“Cassia’s younger brother is her cousin. He is next in line to become the Earl of Selmar.”

The Duke looks at me and explains.  
He is her cousin even though she said younger brother?

Naturally, Cassia’s cousin means he is a member of the Earl of Selmar’s household.

He meets the qualification to succeed the title, I guess.  
Even though he said he would invade the Earldom of Selmar, he doesn’t seem to be intent on destroying it. He plans on merely reshuffling the top. Or, installing a capable person as a puppet, perhaps?

“He will be the next Earl of Selmar?”  
“For that, I have to have him participate this time by raising his army. However, when an Adventurer from the order of my knights visited him, there were other people together with him. It would have been better had they been unrelated; however, they were someone connected to the Earl of Selmar. For what reason would a member of the order of my knights visit a relative of the Earl of Selmar? Any smart person would figure the reason out.”

“And, due to that, you want to have it carried out as soon as possible?”

Since there is a likelihood of the other side noticing it, we need to start earlier before they get the chance to prepare, huh?  
Since even Gozer didn’t know the exact time of the decisive action, I don’t think Cassia’s cousin knew either.

Since he didn’t know, he could accidentally be with anyone at that time. Isn’t the Duke’s unpredictability responsible for this?

“As an insurance, I planned on waiting till they fell asleep; however, that option is no longer available. As soon as minimum preparations have been done, we will break into the Earl of Selmar’s castle. Onward from this point of time, there shouldn’t be any significant problem . For it is night, there shouldn’t be any audience taking place. Also, since the territory of Selmar isn’t far from here, you don’t have to be worried about the time variation.”

It would have been better had we invaded late at night as we would have had to face a small number of people due to the most of them being asleep.

The earlier we start, the more the risk; however, it is still better than the information leaking.

There doesn't seem to be any need to consider the time difference with the territory of Selmar.

“Your Highness.”

For a second time, comes a knock on the door followed by Gozer's voice.

“Gozer?”

“I bring news.”

“Are the preparations done?”

“Everything is ready.”

Once he heard that, the Duke draws his Ocihalcum Sword.

After lightly nodding toward me, which surprised me, he opens the door.

On the other side of the door, there are two more men beside Gozer.

One is a knight whom I have met before.

“It has been a long time.”

“T-This?”

The other man is already surprised.

If you see the Duke holding the sword the moment the door opens, you will of course be surprised.

The man looks at Cassia as if asking her something but Cassia shakes her head.

“I will go straight to the point. I would like for you to become the next Earl.”

You haven't even discussed it with him beforehand!

He is going to persuade him right here, it seems.

In other words, this poor soul, who has been brought over, is Cassia's cousin.

Were the talks supposed to be held tonight?

In order to avert the uproar since it would be a hit or miss?

Unfortunately, he cannot declare that he is in conflict with others.

There is a chance that he would refuse after the talks were held. He must be worried that the information would leak to the Earl of Selmar if he refused.

Or worse yet, instead of refusing, he pretended to be helping and betrayed at the last moment.

So then, did he choose not to discuss it with him beforehand?

He won't have the opportunity to inform the Earl of Selmar if he discusses it with him right now.

If he opposes, he can be restrained until it is over.

And, even if he tries to double-cross, he won't have the time to prepare.

“Are you.....going to kill the Earl?”

He squeezes these words out as his face turns pale.

His face really has turned pale.

All his blood seems to have drained.

Without saying a word, the Duke nods exaggeratedly.

“You knew this would happen eventually, so pull yourself together.”

Insists Cassia, calling out to the man.

“That.....but-”

He knows it well.

Is it such a disgraceful matter for a noble to not be able to subjugate a labyrinth?

Is it natural for them to be overthrown?

By the same token, the Earl of Selmar must be expecting this.

He must know he is in danger since it is natural for him to be overthrown. Nah. Had he had enough war potential, he would have put it to use in the labyrinths already.

“I hope you understand.”

“However, if you do such a thing.”

“Even though it is unofficial, I have received the approval from the elven

supreme delegate council. As for why it is unofficial, it is only because the Earl of Selmar is a member, too. Rather, it is on request of the council. If the number of Earls diminished, it would be troublesome for all the elves; however, everything will work out if you become the next Earl.”

He had already set the groundwork, it seems.

The invasion doesn't seem to be for the Duke's selfish reasons.

“With this, there is room for talks.....”

“You can consider yourself elected by the council. If you form an alliance with me, the damage will be kept to the minimum. Do you accept?”

“Y-Yes.”

The Duke forcibly makes him accept it.

It is more like a threat since he is holding his sword.

“You must not forget your responsibilities as a noble.”

With her cousin having been forced, Cassia talks to him.

Is she trying to comfort him?

“Then, until the operation has been executed, I would like you to stay in this room.”

“I will summon warriors, too.”

“Unfortunately, we don't have much time. To relieve you of your worries, I will have you work fully once we are inside the castle.”

The Duke refuses his offer.

It is logical. There would be a risk of the Earl of Selmar getting the wind of it if he summoned his companions.

Also, he seems to be making him join nominally.

He might perhaps have been a hindrance.

“Everyone will soon be gathered.”

One of the knights comes running in and reports at the entrance to the room.

“We will be heading out soon.”

“Okay.”

After having received the Duke's reply, he heads back.

"Then, this marks the end of today's meeting. You will be able to leave the room but only afterward. Cassia, can I ask of you to keep watch over the people gathered here who were with the Earl of Selmar during our wedding? They will soon notice the abnormality."

"I will go to the castle, too."

"Of course you will; however, not as a vanguard. For now, the priority is not to let the information leak to the opposition."

"Understood."

The Duke first takes Cassia out of the room.

She will possibly not participate in the battle since he asked of her to keep watch.

It would be harsh on her if he made her invade her own house.

"Should we be going, too?"

"Michio-dono, everyone, here."

Gozer beckons us.

We follow behind him.

The room we have been led to is the same room where Roxanne had the duel before.

There are a lot of people in the room.

The air is different from how it usually is inside the Bode castle.

The air is tense.

Isn't it expected? We are invading, after all?

For light, instead of candles in lanterns, [braziers](#) are being used.

"Let me explain the tactics in a simple manner. First, you will move to the castle along with the people assembled here. This time, we will be taking down the Earl of Selmar alone. You will approach from the front and announce that. It will reduce the resistance from the Earl's side. If the resistance weakened, the achievement would be credited to you."

The Duke turns to the next Earl and explains.

He does want to minimize the use of force, it seems.

It would really leave a bad aftertaste if you raised your hand against your

own. Also, this way, it will be easier for Cassia's cousin to act. The resistance from the Earl's side will surely weaken if a member of his own family turns against him.

"I will do my best."

Although he appears stout hearted, I am not sure as to how much influence can this man, whose position I don't know, demonstrate.

"Availing that opportunity, Michio-dono will make his move after which will be my turn. I will make quick inroads and seize the control of the castle."

He hasn't told him about moving to the emblem or, for that matter, given any other detail.

I wonder if he still doesn't trust this relative of the Earl of Selmar fully

It has been decided that I will take with me a group the order of knights Adventurers.

After visiting once, the order of knights Adventurers will be able to move to the emblem by themselves next time.

Grabbing the chance created by the commotion instigated by this man at the front, the control will be seized in one fell swoop from the back.

"Very well."

"If you are content with using simple equipment, you can use the ones prepared here."

"Thank you very much."

The man leaves the place, accompanied by a member of the order of knights.

"Would Michio-dono like to use these equipment?"

"No, I already have some in my Item Box."

I have the sword, gloves and hat inside my Item Box. I am wearing a hard leather armor. It is a precaution for contingency.

"Alright then, you can wait here for a while."

The Duke tries to depart with Gozer.

“Wait, please. I would like to accompany my Master during the first transfer.”

Roxanne stops them.

“Roxanne, you will?”

“Yes.”

Without thinking, I nod and answer.

“What do you mean?”

The Duke halts and enquires.

“The place where Master is going is not absolutely safe, is it?”

“Yes, you may be right.”

“I won’t let Master go to that kind of a place alone. I will go with him and protect him by all means.”

Roxanne continues to speak.

Even though she has been silent ever since we came here.

She is bold.

“But the number of people.”

The Duke seems to be at a loss.

It may not be easy for him to change the tactics on a whim.

If I took 5 Adventurers first, we could take 36 people next.

However, if Roxanne joined, we would only be able to take 30 people next.

This is a chance, nonetheless.

I can propose the idea I have.

“Then, how about I go on scouting before we execute the operation?”

“Scouting?”

“If there are people lying in wait, we will be able to find out once I go. It will be fine if it is only Roxanne and me. Also, it will allow Roxanne to rest at ease. With this, there will be no change in the tactics.”

I take advantage of Roxanne’s suggestion.

The purpose is for us to go alone.

There is no need to stupidly move to the emblem via [Field Walk].  
If we go alone, I can use [Warp].

There will be no problem in moving even to the throne room.  
I can move there via [Warp] even if they have shield cement applied to  
the walls.

Even if they have trap devices set up around the emblem, there will be no  
problem if I enter from somewhere else.

## Chapter 187 : Delivery

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“But that-”

When I suggest to go on reconnaissance alone, the Duke’s expression turns bitter.

Even Gozer didn’t have complete information regarding this day, even the next Earl wasn’t told anything about the plan until later, just so as not to let the information leak. How can he allow only us to have our way? If I were intending to betray him, it would be when I move to the emblem with the Adventurers.

Just this is what the Duke, who isn’t an Adventurer, cannot do.

“It will be fine to initiate the operation immediately after we return. And, if we don’t, you can abandon the operation as it would mean that we failed.”

“It will be dangerous.”

“The danger is all the same. Besides, if we fail, you will be able to walk away without losing any of the Adventurer knights.”

I explain the merit to the Duke.

“I don’t plan on using Michio-dono and then throw him away.”

“I know that.”

“There is a possibility that they will be on lookout.”

“It may be possible for us to take care of it. Also, it won’t take much time to go back after I come back. Even if the Earl of Selmar found us, he wouldn’t have the time to prepare in order to intercept us.”

It means that I will be making three round trips, though, instead of two. Won’t it take more time?

I have no choice but cheat my way through.

“If the guards find you, they will remove the emblem.”

The Duke points out something which I didn’t think about. Because I was intending to use [Warp], I didn’t plan on moving to the

drop curtain.

However, since the Duke doesn't know that, he probably believes that I will enter through the emblem.

If the guards were on lookout and they saw someone appearing out of the Harz Duchy emblem, their first action would be removing it.

“Then, I will be the only one to return.”

“It is alright. If we go on reconnaissance first, I will be safe, too.”

Roxanne, nice cover.

“I won't have the time to betray you or plot anything since I am just going there and coming right back. And, if I do betray you or we don't return, you can simply abandon the operation.”

He must be concerned about my betraying him, so I have to quash his concerns.

“You are right. Then, I will send someone with you. It is just in case since we don't know as to what is going on at the other side.”

The Duke seems to be inclined toward preliminary reconnaissance, too. However, we have no other choice but to go alone.

I won't be able to [Warp] with someone else.

“If something really were there, more people going there wouldn't be a good idea. It would also put constraints on us. Therefore, it would be best for us to go alone. It would also be easier for us to cooperate if we did. The more the number of people, the more the damage. We wouldn't be able to do our best if we were to worry about others; especially, if the others were the Duke's capable people. It would be putting the cart before the horse.”

“I see. Err, very well. Then, I will have Michio-dono and his party go on reconnaissance.”

I have received the Duke's permission.

What a relief.

We will now be able to go ahead safely.

After having given permission, the Duke leaves without issuing any other instruction.

Since it will only be us, I pass Roxanne and the rest their equipment. Roxanne and the others' equipment are inside my Item Box. Because I expected something like this would happen.

No way.

The jackets and Platemail aren't inside my Item Box. Roxanne and the girls had taken them for maintenance after we left the labyrinth, so they are still in the room.

I didn't expect something like this would happen.

Although the swords and hats are inside, the other equipment are very few.

As for the body equipment, there is only Alba inside.

I cannot put it on, though, since it is a Wizard equipment.

Roxanne is Shrine Maiden, isn't she?

Or, should I borrow the equipment from the order of knights, perhaps?

Well, Roxanne and the girls will most likely be fine even without the equipment.

The Duke is concerned about the danger; however, I am not that worried.

Especially, since we won't enter through the emblem.

Besides, it is equally possible for us to not get found by the guards, isn't it?

If the room were lit with braziers like the ones here and there were a lot of people on lookout, we would most likely be discovered; however, I cannot bring myself to entertain this possibility.

I could believe it if he knew about the day of the decisive action; however, if he had capable people at his disposal, he would send them to the labyrinth rather than having them stand guard every night.

If they were focused on the emblem, they would miss when someone appeared out of a dark corner.

Even if the guards were on lookout, they wouldn't necessarily be inside but keeping watch inside from the entrance, so I'd better [Warp] to the wall opposite the entrance.

The problem is, what to report when I return. That there were guards but I managed to slip past them when they were looking the other way?

If there were a sword pointing at the emblem, I could just kick it away and return.

The problem would be when there were guards on lookout along with the trap. I would have no choice but to deal with the guards.

However, the trap is supposed to be a substitute for the guards, so the likelihood of the set (both) isn't much.

The problem is, what would I do if the emblem were removed? It will be a pinch for although I can move via [Warp], it isn't possible with [Field Walk].

If I moved the first time, it wouldn't be possible for me to say that I cannot move again.

How would I cheat my way through that?

One solution would be to flee, never to see the Duke and the others again.

If it went well, they could just come to the conclusion that we were defeated.

However, it would differ from the testimony of the Earl of Selmar's side.

If it would differ anyway, shouldn't it be better to just scurry away if we were found by the guards?

Even if they removed the emblem after that, there would be no problem.

The problem is, how would I falsify the conflict in the testimony afterward?

Because someone may visit during the day, they will most likely not remove the emblem which is a symbol of trust.

If they were to remove it, they would remove it at night when no one should be coming.

However, there is a possibility that they forgot to remove it tonight.

If I insist that the contact person is lying to deceive us, the discrepancy in the testimony can be restricted to tolerable limit.

If the guards were kicked out of the way, everything would be solved

even if the emblem were removed.

There would be no testimony if the guards were defeated.

The future will take care of itself.

It would be assumed that they died after removing the curtain.

In other words, if the emblem were removed but the guards were absent, there would be no choice but to catch someone from somewhere and make them out to be the guard.

My thoughts have been quite dark for a while now.

It cannot be helped.

I cannot think of any other way.

Lending a hand to a military campaign is such a thing. The Duke, Cassia, Roxanne and the others understand that, too. Although I am sad, this is a war.

“Everyone, take these.”

“Okay.”

I hand everyone a weapon and hat since I have those with me. I also prepare Durandal.

“Where we are going now, there is a room with a drop curtain. I would like to check what is going on in there. However, if someone is in there, run away. I would like to avoid the battle as much as possible. If I draw my hand, it will be the signal to retreat.”

After ensuring that no one was around, I issue instructions. If someone heard us, they would find the instructions of moving to the emblem curtain via [Field Walk] and checking around ridiculously strange.

As for the battle, I will engage depending on the situation. If it is unavoidable, I will be the only one to engage.

If they were keeping watch on the emblem from outside, I would quietly return.

“All the preparations required should be done soon. Is everyone ready?”

Finally, the Duke stands up in the innermost part of the room where the equipment were arranged.

“It looks fine.”

Gozer, who is standing next to the Duke, says after the clatter calms down.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I will have you know the details of the operation. This operation is just; it has received the approval from the All Elven Supreme Delegate Council. Negligence and cowardice is a crime against peace and prosperity; it will never be permitted. The objective of this battle is to make amends, so don't falter. Fight bravely and secure a noble victory. The future rests on your shoulders. For the glory of the households of the Duke of Harz and the Earl of Selmar. Ladies and gentlemen, I expect you to put earnest effort.”

The members of the order of knights shout in unison. Is the Duke capable of delivering such a motivational speech? It is surprising and unexpected. However, it is to be expected of a duke.

“Then, we will scout first.”

We proceed to the innermost part. Inside is a large drop curtain. It must be in order to use [Field Walk].

“Michio-dono, please move carefully. I would like you to think about your own safety first. I will shoulder all the responsibility no matter what happens.”

“Yes.”

I am pretty sure he wanted to say a lot of things. I am glad he didn't. Having been encouraged by the Duke, I stand in front of the curtain. There are a lot of people preparing for the operation inside the room. Due to it being noisy inside, there won't be any problem with chanting the skill incantation.

Using [Field Walk] incantation as a disguise, I cast [Warp]. I move to the Earl of Selmar's castle. It is the audience room which has the emblem.

The room I arrive at is dark.

It is different from the Bode castle. It is pitch dark with no sound.

I am grateful that there is no one standing guard; however, I cannot see a thing.

I don't even know if the drop curtain is here or not.

“No one seems to be here.”

Roxanne reports in a low voice.

Is Roxanne able to tell if someone is here or not by the smell?

Unlike contemporary Japan, there is no infrared surveillance camera or recorder microphone here.

We don't have to worry about getting discovered if there is no one around.

“Curtain, desu.”

I hear Miria's whisper.

Apparently, Miria can see it.

“Is there anything strange or suspicious about the curtain?”

“Not, desu.”

I am not sure whether I entered through the Harz Duchy emblem or not but there is no helping it.

Since it seems fine, I decide to head back.

I remove Durandal and disband the party.

There is no need to chant Party Formation incantation if I do it here.

There doesn't seem to be any guard or trap in this room.

The Earl of Selmar doesn't seem to be alert.

We were unnecessarily cautious.

He would put them to use in the labyrinth if he could afford to deploy guards.

“Michio-dono.”

“It looks alright.”

Once I return to Bode, I tell the Duke, relieving his worries.

At almost the same time, I receive Party Invitation.

His preparations are excellent.

“Really?”

“Well then.”

This time around, I chant [Field Walk] incantation and go back to the Earl of Selmar’s castle.

One of the party members is holding a lantern.

The room brightens up a bit. So, no one is here, after all.

Roxanne and the girls are safe and sound, too.

Strangely, however, they are on the side of the room, not by the drop curtain.

At this point, though, I don’t think anyone would mind it.

I head back to the Bode castle shortly after.

“Then, I will be going.”

“I am expecting a lot from you.”

“Leave it to me.”

When I come back, Cassia’s cousin, the next Earl, was ready to embark.

I change back to moving via [Field Walk].

Because he is supposed to approach from the front, he will move to the lobby.

It is his duty to instigate commotion.

“Michio-dono, I will be heading out next, please.”

As soon as the Adventurer disbands the party, the Duke calls out to me.

Five people, including the Duke, line up in front of me.

“Okay.”

I chant Party Formation incantation and invite the people in front of me one by one.

It really takes quite some time to add five people.

Meanwhile, several other parties had moved already.

Those were the parties with Explorers.

Did the Explorer create a party beforehand and invite the Adventurer, whom I took with me, once they came back in order to transfer immediately?

Like this, the time needed for preparation can be reduced.

The tactics for the operation seem to be precise.

“Disband the party once we are there. I want you to stand by. Or, you can come back here with your party members. They should stay in this room.”

The Duke gives me the next instructions.

By party members, he probably means Roxanne and the girls.

There is no reason for them to stay at the other side.

It would get dangerous there if the Earl of Selmar launched the counterattack.

After assembling the party, I move back again to the Earl of Selmar’s castle.

The room is bright and a little noisy.

The pitch dark and quiet room, which I was in before, seems like a lie now.

After I disband the party, the Duke vigorously storms out of the room.

The other parties seem to be deploying sequentially, too.

I have no idea as to what is going on outside the room.

I don’t even know if there is a battle taking place or not.

Nevertheless, since he has deployed considerable forces, he can advance prevalently.

The mobility is overwhelming.

The Adventurers are a great power.

With this many Adventurers, the might of the order of Harz knights is absolute in this world.

For the Duke has left, I create a party with Roxanne and the girls.

The Duke’s army has already left the audience room. We are merely passersby.

There is no one paying attention to us.

Availing this lucky chance, I quickly create the party.

It gets done immediately for there was no need to chant incantation.

“I still have some work. Roxanne, everyone, you will head back and wait there. I will take you back right now.”

If I gave them a choice, Roxanne would insist to remain here with me.  
So, I force them to evacuate.  
It will be safer there than here.

When I return to the Bode castle, Cassia was inside the room.  
She seems to want to go there as well.  
Instead of a dress, she has attired herself in the battle gear.  
Unfortunately, another Adventurer seems to have been assigned the task.

Cassia and her party moves.  
I, too, move back to the Earl of Selmar's castle immediately after.  
I wonder as to how many times I have moved.  
Four?

Cassia's party was about to leave the audience room.  
As they were about to leave the room, they suddenly stop.  
The Duke enters from outside.

“Cassia, it is alright. The operation is progressing smoothly. Oh, you have made it back, Michio-dono? Thanks to you, Michio-dono, there have been no major losses to our side as well as the Earl of Selmar's.”

The operation seems to be progressing smoothly.  
This can be said to be the most crucial stage.  
However, it looks fine.

The Duke has a young woman following behind him.  
Her overwhelming beauty is engendering an elegant air.  
Is she one of the women working at the Earl of Selmar's castle?

She is a beauty that resembles Cassia.  
Like Cassia, she is extremely beautiful even amongst the elves.  
Somehow, she looks slightly younger than Cassia.

“Rutina!”

Shouts Cassia after seeing her.

## Chapter 188 : Rutina.

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Cassia called out to the girl the Duke brought out.  
She is called Rutina apparently.

“Cassia-ane, sama.....”

Rutina spoke one word, and then cut off her words in vexation.  
She is probably one of the people originally from this castle.  
It seems she considers Cassia a sister, but it is more enemy than friend  
right now.

Rutina’s stubborn expression is showing that.

“I am glad you are safe.”

“.....Nope.”

She is unharmed, but if you are asking if she is safe then I doubt she is.  
Cassia hugs Rutina tightly.

It’s fascinating how the two beauties resemble each and stand out above  
everyone else.

It is a beautiful scene, but it is not the right time to think like this, right?

“Your Excellency.”

Gozar came over.

“How is it going?”

“We have almost taken control of the whole castle, there was no  
resistance. However, we can’t find the Earl.”

“No one knows where he is?”

“That’s right.”

The Duke and Gozar are talking.

It looks like they can’t find Selmar’s Earl.

Maybe he happened to be out on trip today by chance.

Because they decided on today on a whim.

“It is not like I can’t do anything if he disappears, but it’s troublesome.

It is also a disgrace for a noble to run away from his castle. Use everything we have to search for him.”

“Understood.”

It is easy for Adventurers to get away in this world.

You can go somewhere good.

I will run away instead of hiding, but it looks like he can't do that?

How dishonorable is it to escape?

But since he already neglected his labyrinth suppression duty as a noble, I don't think he cares about his honor as a noble.

Or is it not related to this?

“I am sorry, but we can't find the Earl. Do you have any idea where he is?”

The Duke asks Rutina.

Maybe he's hiding with the firewood?

I want to strike a war drum while the Duke gives commands.

While doing one, two, three hits.

“I don't know, and I would not tell you even if I knew.”

Rutina responds plainly.

Rutina is a heavenly beauty.

“.....Cassia, do you know any places where he could be hiding?”

“Let me see. There is a room to store firewood in the winter season, and the bedroom is connected to it.”

“Ane-Sama!”

Rutina protests, but Cassia is a friend of the enemy.

Was there really a firewood shed?

“I hope you didn't forget your responsibility as noble.”

“But.”

“You know what's been going on while you live in luxury.”

Rutina hesitates from Cassia's argument.

It seems Rutina understands that the labyrinth subjection is not advancing at all.

“Gozar!”

“Yes.”

The Duke sends Gozar to check it out.

“When father inherited the title he tried his best. But, he didn’t manage to get any results and changing the leadership of the knights became a common thing. Then, that big group of thieves ran wildly and we lost some capable subordinates. At that time he even drank sake in order to run away.”

It seems that the Earl had reasons for the slow subjugation..  
Can’t he just switch out with someone else?

“Was he cornered that much?”

“If only I had more power.”

“It’s alright. There’s nothing you could have done.

Cassia embraced Rutina’s head to console her.

“It’s not like I want ane-sama’s sympathy.”

Rutina brushed the hand away.

She is quite aggressive.

She is glaring at Cassia with beautiful deep blue eyes.

It’s as if she is holding back her tears.

“Your father wasn’t suitable to become Earl in the first place. He avoided fighting scenes, and didn’t want to enter the labyrinth. Because he was the youngest brother, he wouldn’t normally become the Earl, and he might have lived freely. But because my father and the next youngest brother fought each other, this is how things turned out. Because of the conflicts of my father I want to apologize to you.”

It looks like Cassia’s father and Rutina’s father are brothers.

In other words, Cassia and Rutina are cousins.

That reminds me, the next Earl called Cassia big sister as well.

Is it family tradition of Selmar’s Earl house for cousins to call each other brothers and sisters?

“Enough already. Go ahead and kill me.”

Rutina swung her golden hair and faced the Duke.  
He is going to kill her?  
It is one of the top five words that I don't want the beautiful elf to receive.  
But now is not the time to think about it.

“There is no need to go that far, if possible I would like resolve this peacefully.”

Like I thought, the Duke doesn't intend to do that.  
It is enough to just defeat the Earl.

“Don't talk nonsense to me after coming this far.”  
“I would like you to waive your inheritance rights.”  
“I am the daughter of the Earl, and I can't abandon that. Assuming my father was removed, it is natural that I will inherit the title after him.”

It is like this after all.

“The next Earl has already been decided. We need to do it as soon as possible.”

“I have the inheritance rights. The next Earl after my father should be me.”

I have trouble following them, but it looks like it will be hard for Cassia's cousin to become the next Earl when Rutina is still around.  
Looks like the branch family can't take the title when there is a direct descendant.

When Rutina abandons her rights, the title of Earl can move to the next family.

If the Earl is removed like this, Rutina would be the next Earl.

“That is not acceptable. Unfortunately, the high elf representative council does not recognize you.”

“That can't be... Even the high elf representative council.....”

“It is natural after the labyrinths have been left to grow here, and it isn't something that can be solved just by Selmar's Earl losing his title, it is a betrayal against all elves. Of course, his daughter will not be allowed the right of succession, and there is the matter of you being too young. “

That reminds me, Rutina was 15 years old when I appraised her.

She is young.

And she is Villager Lv2.

Low.

You want to say her abilities as Earl is unknown because she is 15 years old?

And she is Villager Lv2 as well.

The subjugation of the labyrinths in the territory is not advancing, so it is necessary to immediately put things in order so that the subjugation advances as fast as possible.

People will feel uneasy without a leader with some experience and achievements.

However, the high elves representative council doesn't leave good impression.

Is it like an evil council ruling from behind?

Or is that just my own point of view as a third party?

Apparently Selmar's Earl is a member, and probably the Duke is as well.

Or rather, isn't my presence here not needed anymore for a while now. It is not like I can interfere.

But I can't leave since I was told to stand by here.

And I don't want to go outside the room since I don't know what is going on outside.

"That's why, I told you to go ahead and kill me already."

Rutina insists strongly.

There is no need to worry about succession rights if he kills her.

"It turned out like this after all, but I can't do that."

"Rutina, even if it's just to take revenge on us who are your parents enemies, please live on."

"I will not kill you. I will have you become a slave."

The Duke interrupts Cassia who was trying to persuade her.

"A slave?"

"Michio, do you know about legitimate succession names?"

Despite Cassia's question, the Duke starts talking to me.

"I have only heard the name."

"The nobility comes with the family name and legitimate succession name which give you the succession rights. Anharth in my case. This can be shown using the intelligence card, which isn't a problem. If you lose your legitimate succession name, you will lose your succession rights and nobility. The legitimate succession name is that kind of thing. And the legitimate succession name is lost if you become a slave."

"And that's the need to become a slave."

The Duke's name is Brocken ▪ Nord Brown ▪ Anharth.

Similarly, Anselm is part of Rutina's name, I wonder if that's it.

I believe Baron Easter has something attached to his name as well.

Cassia is Anselm just like Rutina, so she has succession rights for Selmar's Earl and not the Duke.

"It is possible to select the next successor regardless of the succession rights, but it is an emergency now. The direct descendant will be given priority when Selmar's Earl is overthrown."

"That's why you need to lose your succession name."

"It is still the same thing. I will not become a slave. I didn't commit any crime. You shouldn't be able to make me a slave without my consent."

Is it possible to make someone a slave without his consent if he doesn't commit a crime?

Probably someone with the thief job can be forcefully made a slave.

If not, the person need to give his consent.

I have thief job.

Is it possible to make me a slave without my consent?

"You know yourself I can't do that. You don't have the ability to fulfill your obligations as noble, and you don't have any other way, what kind of future would your younger brothers and sisters face? It is not a problem that can be solved with your death. If you became a slave there would be no need to hunt for the rest of your siblings. It can be explained that you have taken responsibility for things as a noble. That will be the best for

your younger brothers and sisters.”

“C... coward.”

The Duke attacks her weak point, he really is cowardly.

Her younger brothers and sisters are hostages?

There's no way of changing that her father the Earl will be dethroned, but her younger brothers and sisters are different.

Parents eat sour grapes and children lose teeth, it is called something like this.

Kuranosuke Oishi's eldest child Chikara committed harakiri together with him, but it is said that the government demanded that the remaining orphaned siblings go into service.

It is similar to this.

Rather, wouldn't Rutina's younger brothers and sisters have no home to return to if she abandons her rights?

“They will not be able to use their succession name until they become of age at 15 years old, but depending on their older sister's action, there is possibility for the younger brothers and sisters to become Selmar's Earl in the future.”

Seems it is useless for biological children to claim rights when they are minors.

You just have to deal with Rutina somehow?

The Duke is quite nasty.

He didn't confirm whether her younger brothers and sisters will have the right of succession or not.

Perhaps it wouldn't work without it.

Like Komon Mito who adopted his older brother child and gave his own child to the adopted child of his older brother, because after the real father adopted a child, a child was born to the grandfather, the child became the legitimate child of the father, and Tooyama no Kane became the adopted child of the adopted child of the father.

Being noble seems to have its troubles.

The Duke did mention the possibility for siblings though.

He is not telling a lie.

“I also think that will be good, Rutina.”

“.....I understand, just do as you like.”

Cassia also tries to persuade her, and Rutina finally gave in.  
It is a big thing to have obtained a hostage.

“Michio.”

“Yes?”

“If it is good with you, can you accept her.”

When I thought the matter was finally settled, the Duke suggest something outrageous.

“What?”

“Michio, you’ve done us a great favor this time, I believe she will make a great prize.”

“W... what absurd thing are you talking about?”

Cassia was the one to object.

It is expected of course.

Expected?

So you agreed on the matter of her becoming a slave.

Oh, was it acceptable if she became your possession?

“Michio seems he have abilities that me and others can’t comprehend. Probably in the near future he will defeat a labyrinth, and join the ranks of nobility. If this happens, you will be able to make a lot of achievements even as a former noble.”

The Duke tells Rutina.

For what kind of reason does the Duke evaluate me so high?

It’s an overestimate.

Did he happen to see me using magic inside the labyrinth by any chance?

“A labyrinth?”

Rutina looks suspicious.

Her eyes were looking to evaluate me.

“It is the result of what the adventurers of my knight’s order tried to do. It is impossible to move to Palmasque without recovery medicine as we thought, and you also need to rest at Tare while using recovery medicine. He certainly has an ability that is far superior to my knight’s order adventurers, and we can’t measure how much strength he has.”

“Oh really?”

He probably tried to go to Palmasque himself.  
And he compared it like that.  
In fact, it is even hard for me to go to Palmasque without recovery medicine or Durandal.  
It doesn’t look like he saw me using magic, I’ll settle for that.

“I don’t think she is a bad reward, Michio. As you can see, she is a beauty that resembles Cassia.”

What does he mean by that? This Duke.  
Is he simply praising her?  
Possibly, did he see through how fond I am of Cassia?  
Was I looking at Cassia with such eyes?

“N..no. Ah, no. It is not like that.”

Both Rutina and Cassia are beautiful women.  
There is no doubt.

Or did you even ask Baron Ester?  
That reminds me, the laws of the Empire Liberation Society don’t allow the leak of information that they obtained there to the outside.  
Because the duke is a member of the Empire Liberation Society, he would not mention it outside even if he found out.  
Maybe just some gossip got out.

## Chapter 189 : Motive

\*

Somehow, the Duke is aware of my having the hots for Cassia. Thinking back, the Duke has been excessively flaunting his relationship with Cassia a lot lately. He really has figured it out?

“Since she is of noble birth, she has undertaken the ordeal to become a Wizard. She will be quite useful. And, if you do get a Wizard, Michiodono, the day when you defeat a labyrinth will draw even closer.”

While I was sweating deep in thoughts, the Duke enlists the benefits of having Rutina.

He probably thinks that I am having trouble deciding if I should accept Rutina or not.

That’s right. At the moment, the focus is Rutina.

Should I have Rutina as my slave?

I would like to have Rutina, of course. I do want to get her. And make her my possession. Not merely for the battle strength of my party, though.

I don’t know as to how much the battle strength of my party will increase if I get a Wizard. There is already me, after all. On the contrary, since he believes the battle strength of my party will increase if a Wizard joins us, it means the Duke doesn’t know I can use magic.

It is fortunate that the Duke hasn’t seen my using magic.

“Wouldn’t it be better for the Duke to keep her?”

I don’t understand as to why the Duke is being so expedient. It needs to be investigated.

First of all, even if he needs to go so far as to turn Rutina into a slave,

there is no need for him to let go of her.

Even if he does, there is no need for him to give her to such a complete stranger as me.

“After overthrowing the Earl, would I keep his daughter who fell into slavery?”

He returns my question with his.

Enslaving the daughter of someone he ousted himself.

His reputation will get tarnished, certainly.

I can see where the Duke is coming from.

“It would indeed be bad.”

“It wouldn’t be that bad. Just that I and the members of my household are not allowed to. It applies to Cassia, too.”

Even Cassia isn’t allowed?

Since Cassia isn’t denying it when I look at her, it probably is true.

“Still, it doesn’t mean that it has to be me.”

“Being a noble daughter, she has a fiancé, of course; however, we cannot leave her in his care. If he enslaved someone who, until yesterday, was his fiancée, what sort of rumors would spread?”

It looks terrible in more than one ways.

Which would be better? Enslaving the daughter of someone you ousted or enslaving your ex-fiancée?

Well, it could work if they shared pure love.

“If she has a fiancé, doesn’t he has something to say?”

“The household of the Earl of Selmar will find a suitable candidate from within their family to be his fiancée. For them, it would be better than the daughter of a disinherited predecessor. Also, they have probably never met.”

They haven’t met yet?

Pure love story is out of question.

Such is the engagement of nobles, huh?

He won’t have any objection either, I guess.

“Is there no one else?”

“Since she has a fiancé, I cannot simply hand her to others. If they were inferior, her fiancé would lose face. The nobles and her own family are out of question. Furthermore, since I cannot hand her to a noble, I cannot hand her to other influential or ordinary commoners within her territory either.”

From the viewpoint of Rutina’s fiancé, it would be disgraceful for him if she were to become a slave of an acquainted noble.

As for the Duke, he cannot own Rutina. Also, he understands how difficult it would be to hand her to someone else.

However, am I not a commoner, too?

“You are right. It may certainly not be a bad choice to entrust her to Michio-sama.”

Cassia interjects such words.

Is that even possible?

I have received Cassia’s approval.

“I guess. Ordinary commoners have their own share of disadvantages compared to nobles. However, there will be fewer problems for an Adventurer who doesn’t belong to an order of knights. The reason being, they can freely run away from the territory. If I am not wrong, Michio-dono is a freeman.”

“Yes.”

“A freeman has the direct appeal right granted by the Emperor. Although it is a nominal right, it is honored, nonetheless. Even if a noble tried to meddle with Michio-dono, over having her as a slave, you would be able to exercise the Emperor’s direct appeal right.”

“The Emperor’s direct appeal right?”

Does such a right exist?

However, it gives the vibes of [Sakura Sogoro](#), so I’ll pass.

He was executed for directly appealing to the Shogun against the feudal domain’s tyranny.

Oh well. Since it is a right here, I won’t be executed for appealing, at least.

But how does the Duke know that I am a freeman?  
Did he research to that extent?  
I did show my Intelligence Card once to the Earl of Selmar's subordinate knight. I wouldn't be surprised if he checked it later.  
Or, maybe Gozer concluded that when I had a duel in front of him?

“Even if such a case were brought up with the Emperor, they would rather decide in favor of the noble than an unknown freeman.”

I don't know the Emperor nor does he know me.  
The Duke, too, knows that very well.  
Because it isn't known to the public, is it a trap?

“In other words, it is possible for a noble to have something to say.”  
“It is necessary as just a pretext warrant. Such a thing won't happen for it is equivalent to picking a fight with the household of the Duke of Harz.”  
“I see.”

That's true.  
Because it is the Duke's decision, no one will object.  
A power that could oppose the Duke of Harz would have no relation to this matter in the first place.

When the time comes, the Emperor's direct appeal right will act as a deterrent.  
Besides, if the matter is brought up, I will test as to how much of an acquaintance I am to that hentai Emperor.  
This conversation has grown unnecessarily long.

“As for the condition of entrusting her to you, I would like Michio-dono to defeat a labyrinth. I would like you to become a noble as soon as possible. When someone newly becomes a noble, they cannot tell right from left. However, with a former noble's daughter, you won't have to face such a situation. If you like, you can force all the bothersome tasks on her.”

The Duke adds a strange condition.  
The usual push for nobility, huh?  
It is troublesome.

More than that, will it be fine to force her?

“To me, he is the enemy of my father. I cannot bring myself to join him.”

Rutina speaks.

Forcing her doesn't seem possible.

No, maybe Rutina's mind has already been pushed to the brink?

“Still, it is better, Rutina. You will be able to live freely.”

“Ane-sama.” (TN: Elder sister)

“It would be harsh there even for me. Still, it wouldn't be as harsh as fatal hostility from elves.”

It doesn't look like the Duke has an ulterior motive in rejecting her. And, it looks like I will be in his faction if I become a noble.

“I don't think it would be as such.”

“Is Michio-dono aware of the Lords' Assembly?”

I have heard to some extent.

In an assembly, the more people you have in your faction, the better, right?

If every decision is based on majority vote, it will of course be better to have more people.

Whichever world you go to, you will always find some form of parliament.

“Politics is power, power is numbers, isn't it?”

“Ho, you do know, huh?”

Politics is power, power in numbers, numbers is money; is what I wanted to add.

In this world, however, I don't have to be bought with money like in Japan.

There is no need to use money for elections here.

“What if I don't move according to your expectations?”

“If a person whom I personally recommended to the Empire Liberation Society defeated a labyrinth and became a noble, he would belong to my faction in the eyes of other nobles.”

Oh, really?

I try to threaten him a little but he threatens me back.

If you recommend someone to the Empire Liberation Society, you become their guardian, it seems.

If you find someone with potential and recommend them to the Empire Liberation Society, they receive support from the Empire Liberation Society and defeat a labyrinth; consequently, you gain yourself an affirmative vote of a backbencher.

That he recommend me to the Empire Liberation Society, did he foresee this?

He is unexpectedly a politician.

First of all, even if I became a noble, the freedom of my actions would be considerably restricted.

Whatever I did, it would be taken as if I moved per the Duke's instruction. If I did something idiotic, I would be considered a separate entity.

Second, it would be impossible for me and Rutina to revolt against the Duke.

If I did, I will be treated as a traitor by everyone.

If I tried to form an alliance in the assembly, they might not trust me due to betrayal.

Even if I went my own way, I would never be able to break away from the Duke no matter how many years passed.

Most of the nobles who belong to the Duke's faction likely carry the same risk.

That may be the extent of tolerable limit as a duke.

To begin with, I will probably need a lot of help from the Duke at first. And, at the same time, I will be taught as to how things work in the Duke's faction.

I wonder if I will be able to manage it.

"In the first place, will I be able to defeat a labyrinth?"

"If a Wizard joins your party, it will not be a problem. Of course I am not telling you to do it right now."

The Duke hasn't seen my using magic, after all.  
Also, since there is already someone in my party who can use magic, it wouldn't get as strong as Duke thinks it will even if a Wizard joined.  
We must be able to reach the 50th floor, at least.  
It is quite difficult.

Frankly speaking, I don't want to become a noble.  
If I became a noble, it would only add to my troubles.  
There is also the risk of their investigating my birthplace.  
I don't want more troubles.

But I want Rutina.  
I want to obtain this beautiful elf that resembles Cassia.  
This dignified and elegant lady. I want her.  
Honestly, Rutina can be my three bowls of rice. (TN: Must be some proverb. I know this note didn't help much)

Right now, this chance is hanging in front of me.  
Should I sell my soul to the devil or not?  
Actually, who says it is the devil?

Since I didn't want to become a noble anyway, there would be no reason for me to mind being a backbencher if I were to become one.  
Besides, I have no issue with being considered part of the Duke's faction.  
Also, I can push all the bothersome tasks to Rutina.  
I have the approval of the faction's leader, after all.

"I, too, would like to ask of you. Please accept Rutina."

I have received Cassia's approval, too.  
I have to accept her, no?  
Have I ever declined any request from Cassia thus far?

If there were a problem, my information might reach the Duke and Cassia through Rutina.  
However, since Rutina seems to have hostile intentions toward the Duke, it should be fine.  
And, even if it weren't fine, I could remove her from the party and have her stay at home.

Her level is low anyway.

Rutina can partake only in household activities.

If it is inside the house, I can expect great performance of her.

I'd like to ask outstanding performance of her.

“O-Oh well.”

It won't end unless I accept.

If my information leaked to Cassia and the Duke, there would always be the option to silence the Duke.

However, I couldn't possibly kill Cassia.

I would have to silence her with something else.

“Ooh, as expected of Michio-dono. Just as I expected.”

I don't want you to expect anything of me.

“I can have a peace of mind now.”

Or rather, isn't it complicated for Cassia to be thanking me for taking Rutina in as a slave?

It isn't envy.

However, is such a reaction appropriate?

“Let's see. I would like Michio-dono to be her owner for at least two years.”

“Two years?”

“Two years; or rather, pay her tax for two years, at least.”

Ah, I see.

So, it was like that, huh?

Of course that was it.

How could I misunderstand.

Although she has become a slave, it isn't like she has become a sex slave.

There is no excuse for me to do as I please with her.

Although I have her, it isn't like she is my possession.

She is only temporarily under my custody.

I will have to protect her since she is under my custody.  
In order to remove her legitimate succession name, she has to be turned into a slave and released immediately.  
That is why it was easy for Cassia.

Why two years? Because the tax in the very first year of slavery differs. That she is a slave now, her tax will have to be paid.  
Is it required as a formality?

“Wouldn’t it be better to release her immediately.”  
“It could be seen as rigged if that were the case.”  
“Would there be a problem if it were seen as such?”  
“This is a message to all the nobles who have been neglecting their duties, particularly here. I cannot deny that there is an air of tension amongst the elven nobility. It was precisely this air that led the Earl of Selmar to leave the advancement of labyrinth subjugation alone.”

Punishing a crime to set an example for others, huh?

“And, because of that, I cannot release her unless I pay a 10,000 Nars tax.”  
“As for releasing her, it is up to Michio-dono whether you want to or not. As far as I am concerned, I will ask of you the favor of releasing her.”  
“There is no obligation to release her?”  
“Of course. I hope you be strict with her. If she proves troubling, I wouldn’t care if you sold her to another party.”

It doesn’t look like she has to be released immediately.  
I have no idea whether Rutina likes me or not.  
And, it doesn’t look like I can ask her.  
The fait accompli strategy will be effective, I guess.

## Chapter 190 : Spark

\*

The Duke lifts Rutina's hand and operates her Intelligence Card. Rutina obeys acquiescently. The hostage has been taken.

“Rutina.....”

Cassia murmurs sadly. It must be hard for her watching her cousin fall into slavery in front of her.

“Alright then, your social status has been changed to a slave. With this, your legitimate succession name should have come off. Later, accompany Michio-dono to a Slave Merchant he is acquainted with and have the name of your owner updated.”

“Anyone I am acquainted with would do?”

“It doesn't concern me.”

I am not the owner yet, it seems. Because the purpose was merely to remove the legitimate succession name, is there no need for subsequent verification? Or, is he not able to do that?

Knights possess a skill called Intelligence Card Operation; however, they cannot write wills or release slaves. For the Duke's job, Holy Knight, is an advancement of Knight, he probably has the same restrictions. Transferring ownership is perhaps limited to Slave Merchants.

“Well then, take care of me. I will refuse any order that benefits the Duke. Other than that, I will do my best.”

Rutina comes and greets me. The greeting seems diligent. For the time being, at least. She shows me her Intelligence Card.

Rutina | ♀ | 15 years old | Villager | First Year Slave  
Owner

Her legitimate succession name is no longer there.  
And, she seems to have lost her family name, too.

Will I lose Kaga if I become a slave?

The owner field is empty.

“I will be relying on you.”

“If you have the capability, I will keep in mind that I am a slave.”

If I have the capability?

I wonder what she has in mind.

“Your Highness.”

The moment Rutina finishes her greetings, Gozer barges in.  
That energy, though. Has the Earl of Selmar been caught?

“You found him?”

“Yes.”

“Michio-dono, let’s call it a day here. Today’s operation was successful thanks to you, Michio-dono. I would like you to take her with you. Although she doesn’t have anything with her, she should be alright. I don’t mind if you take her home together with your party members. Cassia, too, go back to Bode.”

Cassia protests to the Duke, shaking her head slowly yet largely.  
He doesn’t want her to witness the execution of the Earl.  
Is it the same for Rutina?

“This is my duty.”

“I-I understand.”

Cassia seems to have accepted not to witness the execution.  
It won’t be a good sight to see.

“Michio-dono, please visit the Bode Castle again tomorrow morning. By yourself, Michio-dono. It is already late tonight and I don’t know as to how much time it will take. Later in the morning would do.”

“I understand.”

“Alright then, Gozer.”

The Duke takes Gozer with him and leaves the room quickly. He probably thinks Cassia or Rutina could cause trouble if he took his time.

“Well then, shall we return?”

I invite Cassia.

“Right.”

Cassia nods, her face full of grief. A beautiful woman sunk in sorrow can look good. As for Rutina, she keeps staring at the Duke’s back until he leaves; however, she doesn’t show any sign of sadness. A beautiful woman drowned in anger can look good, too.

“My Lady.”

“I am alright. Let’s go back to Bode.”

A woman, who may either be a maid or a guard, addresses her again; upon which, Cassia replies firmly. I chant Party Formation incantation and invite Rutina to my party. She joins the party without expressing any resistance. Following after Cassia’s party, I return to Bode with Rutina.

“Master!”

The moment I appear inside the Bode Castle, Roxanne rushes immediately to me. Because I went to the battlefield, she was worried. I didn’t do anything, though. I am still not sure whether there was a battle or not.

“Nothing happened here, right?”

“Yes.”

“I see. For free Adventurers, it is common to have slaves, eh?”

Rutina derives an interpretation on her own and agrees with it by herself.

It may be understandable for her to know that Roxanne is a slave because she called me Master but how does she know that the three behind Roxanne are her partners?

“Master, she is?”

“I will explain once we return home. It is time to call it a day.”

Since Cassia is here, I will have to put the explanation off.  
I calm Roxanne down who is staring suspiciously.

“Rutina, don’t get discouraged because of today. Live strongly.”

“Of course.”

“Do your best patiently. Eventually, you will be able to make a comeback.”

“Make a comeback? Do you really believe that?”

Rutina cross-questions Cassia.  
It really is useless, after all, huh?  
Rutina seems to be aware of that.

“It is fine. I plan on availing every chance I get. You don’t have to worry.”

“Michio-sama, please take care of Rutina.”

Cassia gives up and bows to me.

“Yes. Rutina, we need to move. Are you ready?”

“Plenty.”

“Alright then, Rutina. Farewell.”

“Likewise, Ane-sama. I hope you live a long life.”

Rutina behaves obstinately.  
Well, she cannot show weakness to the people who killed her parent, the Earl, right away, can she?  
She requires time.  
Time should heal her.

We return home.  
While chanting [Field Walk] incantation, I cast [Warp].  
Although I end up showing [Warp] to Rutina, it cannot be helped.  
Since the house walls have shield cement applied, I cannot go in without

[Warp].

I can use [Field Walk] to go to Quratar Adventurer's Guild but it will be troublesome to walk from there.

[Warp] and [Field Walk] look similar, so she will probably not notice.

Is my daily life going to be risky from now on?

It is already quite risky.

“Miria, can you please get a [kandelaar](#)?” (TN: A Dutch word. Candelabrum in English)

The living room is pitch dark, so I have to rely on Miria.

Since it is late, I won't be able to explain anything.

Although I said late, it would be early evening in Japan.

The lifestyle of this world is quite healthy.

“Yes, desu.”

Although I cannot see, I can tell she has brought it since I can hear \*gasogaso\* rustling sound.

I am getting used to the dark, though.

Still, getting used to it isn't enough to enjoy it without lighting it up.

“Pass it to Vesta. She can light it.”

“Yes, desu.”

“Wait, be careful.”

“I think it will be alright.”

I hear Vesta's voice.

I sorta know Vesta's location.

She gives off a feeling of intimidation for she is large.

I am not sure about the location of the other members, though.

Nevertheless, being party members, I know their general location.

Wouldn't it be bad if Vesta blew fire in this situation?

Shouldn't she blow in the direction of the wall where there is no one?

Will it really be alright?

I would have used [Fire Wall] had Rutina not been here.

It isn't like the risk would be less if I used [Fire Wall].

If I did, I would be the only one safe since I can specify the location.

That's all.

Such a cruel way of thinking.

Before long, the corner of the room brightens up.

It is farther than I thought it would be.

A flame extends from top to bottom.

Putting the kandelaar down, Vesta blows the fire downward.

I see.

Like this, there is no risk of blowing the fire on others or the wall.

It is absolutely fine.

"Then, everyone, sit down."

Now that it has become bright, everyone takes a seat around the table.

Where should I start from?

"Excuse me."

Rutina sits down as well.

Because five of the six seats are already allotted, only one seat is left.

The one next to my left.

"She is Rutina. A lot has happened and she has now been entrusted to me."

"You should say it clearly that you have been bestowed a prisoner of war."

Rutina unexpectedly interrupts.

Will it really be fine?

"Prisoner of war?"

"No matter how modestly you put it, I am just a war trophy."

"War trophy!"

That's a cruel way of putting it.

"I am Rutina who lost miserably in tonight's battle. It has been decided that I will be Michio-sama's war trophy. Everyone, you can consider me your junior. Please treat me well."

Rutina greets everyone just like that.

I feel like my reputation has been damaged after she said she is a war trophy.

Even though she stated a fact.

“Is she a slave, too?”

“That’s right.”

I answer Roxanne’s question.

She is not a sex slave, though.

“You don’t need to worry as I don’t plan on becoming the number one slave.”

Rutina brings up a strange topic.

What does she mean by not intending to compete with Roxanne?

Or, does she mean she isn’t satisfied merely with being the number one slave?

Roxanne looks at Rutina with a subtle expression.

In the first place, does Rutina know who the number one slave is? Because Roxanne spoke first, does it make Roxanne the number one slave?

“Well, I don’t plan on making any changes.”

I will have to support Roxanne here.

It would cause a huge trouble if Roxanne and Rutina got on bad terms.

“In the future, I want to play an active role in the Lords’ Assembly. It is my dream. I thought I completely lost it because of that man; however, it still seems possible. I want to rather go for that than becoming the number one slave.”

How can you choose another route simply like that?

At least, she didn’t suggest that the number one slave is a crappy job.

By ‘that man’, she probably means the Duke.

“The Lords’ Assembly?”

“It is an assembly where the nobles gather to enact laws.”

Explains Sherry; upon Roxanne, muttering that.

“A lot happened and it was decided that I will become a noble by defeating a labyrinth and leave that work to Rutina.”

“.....There is no doubt Master will be able to defeat a labyrinth one day.”

Roxanne’s face somehow has a dark expression about it.

Nah, it must be due to the dim lighting from the kandelaar.

Which reminds, I feel like I told Roxanne that I don’t plan on becoming a noble.

I didn’t change my opinion for Roxanne; however, wouldn’t it seem as if I changed it for Rutina?

Quite so.

I said I don’t intend to become a noble.

However, it was a lie.

“Do you have any problem with entering the labyrinth?”

Trying to close the topic, I ask Rutina.

“Earlier, my father told me I don’t have to, so I formed a party when I was young. Everyone except me went to the labyrinth; however, it didn’t help much. I believe I can change my job to Wizard if I gain more experience. Until then, I will have to trouble you. Once I am a Wizard, I can be of some help, I think.”

What do you mean it didn’t help much? Didn’t it help you a little?

It brought you to Villager Lv2. Probably.

The Hero job, for which you must defeat a thief on your first battle, is impossible for her.

“We will form a party first but I cannot let you enter the labyrinth until you become a Wizard.”

It would be unpleasant if my secrets came out after going to the labyrinth.

I will have to keep watch on her until I am confident that I can trust her.

I come up with an excuse to not take her to the labyrinth.

“You don’t have to worry. I won’t stab you or run away.”

Although it was merely an excuse, Rutina says something strange.

Roxanne is staring at Rutina with a complicated expression about her face.

Since she mentioned killing and running away, it must be on her mind. I need to consider all that.

“If not me, do you plan on stabbing the Duke?”

“If I ever get a chance, even I don’t know what will become of that man.”

I should better not let her come close to the Duke. It will be dangerous. I would be happy if the Duke’s meddling lessened.

However, since it is her dream to be active in the Lords’ Assembly, I seem to have been given the role of her supervisor.

“It will seriously be difficult for me to live if I escape.”

It will be tough because a slave would turn into a Thief if they ran away.

Especially, since she was an earl’s daughter until tonight.

I don’t have to worry about her running away.

“It is just that. In the first place, even if I stayed with the Earl of Selmar’s household without being an earl, I will be treated as a potential seed of fire. Besides, I am not so conceited as to believe that the revival is possible single-handedly. That said, I think the current situation is much better. I can upset the plot that man has written. I can only be grateful to Michio-sama.”

Roxanne’s expression softens up a little after Rutina expresses her gratitude to me, huh?

“Is she one of the Earl’s staff?”

“That’s right.”

“Really?”

I answer Sherry’s question without adding anything else. Sherry also knows about the Duke’s plan to overthrow the Earl. I believe it wouldn’t be appropriate if we delved deeper into the matter in front of a related party. Considering the operation succeeded, she could really be considered a war trophy.

“Since she hates the Duke, it is unlikely for her to expose the secrets, isn’t it?”

“I wonder what you are talking about.”

“Err, it is just that I don’t want to expose the party strategy and skills to a third party.”

I have been asked directly.

There is no need to fear about the information leaking to the Duke when she hates him that much, right?

She wouldn’t say she will expose it even if she intended to expose it; however, it is somewhat reassuring.

“I won’t consider actions which may benefit that man. However, the information may be helpful in the future at the Lords’ Assembly.”

I don’t know whether I should feel relieved or not.

She may use the information as a bargaining chip.

Roxanne’s expression seems to be becoming fiercer.

“Still, I was a member of the execution team, too.”

“There is no point in holding a grudge against a commoner warrior who was made to participate.”

Is she treating me as a commoner warrior?

That’s true, though.

Rutina seems to be the type that says clearly what she has on her mind.

Roxane, too, is glaring clearly at Rutina with an intense look.

Isn’t that a spark flying between Roxanne and Rutina?

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mranon: Roxanne, show her the power of number one!

## Chapter 191 : Doze

\*

“It is already too late tonight. Let’s take it slowly tomorrow.”

Because the mood has been getting terrible, I decide to wrap the talk up. It will be better to do it later.

“I understand, Master.”

Roxanne responds with a smile.

Immediately after, her expression turns back into the grim one. She isn’t angry at me, though.

I am worried about the relationship between Roxanne and Rutina.

“Even though it is time to sleep, we only have one bed. All of us sleep together. Will Rutina be sleeping in the bed with us?”

“It is alright. As I am a slave, I am resolved to sleep on the floor.”

I invite her casually but she declines.

She has the same dodging ability as Roxanne’s.

In actuality, we have two beds conjoined side by side.

So, it won’t be much of a problem.

Actually, if I separated them, each bed could accommodate three, no? Nah, I don’t need to go that far.

It is possible for her to give up sleeping on the floor.

It is a cruel method, though.

“Since I have an extra blanket, I will give it to you.”

Roxanne seems to have approved of my idea.

“I guess. Miria, can you bring the extra blanket?”

No answer.

“Miria?”

Roxanne calls out to her.

She seems to have dozed off.

“Has she fallen asleep?”

“Miria, go and bring the extra blanket, please.”

“XXXXXXXXXX”

After Roxanne wakes her up, Miria leaves the room while muttering something.

The words she uttered half-awoken didn't sound like Brahim.

“Such behaviour in front of Master.”

“It is such a time, so there is no helping it.”

I calm Roxanne down.

Provoking her more than she already is would be a bad idea.

It is unavoidable to fall asleep for it is so late.

It has made even Sherry sleepy.

Vesta, too, is on the verge of drifting off to the dreamland.

It may also be due to her body temperature going down, though.

Miria returns with a blanket.

Because there is lighting from the kandelaar this time around, I can see her clearly.

“Sorry for the trouble, guys. Well, let's go and sleep then?”

“Yes, desu.”

“Here, have this.”

I receive the blanket from Miria and pass it to Rutina.

I can order her to sleep in the bed, too; however, since she herself wants to sleep on the floor, I will let her.

“I don't think it is a good idea to give her special treatment.”

“Although you said special treatment, in actuality, she is sleeping on the floor. It is fine for the time being.”

“Is that so?”

Going to the room on second floor while holding the kandelaar, Roxanne voices her opinion; to which, I tell her I don't see any problem. Even though I said that, will it be alright to leave it as is for now? Besides, if I bought her a bed, I would be giving her special treatment.

It cannot be helped.

“Leaving that aside, do you think we can trust Rutina?”

“Trust her?”

“If I take her to the labyrinth, she may learn about various things. That’s why I cannot have her go to the labyrinth right away.”

“I see. So, is that why you acted different from usual?”

I explain the reason as to why I cannot take Rutina to the labyrinth immediately.

Roxanne didn’t notice, it seems

I am glad the misunderstanding has been clarified.

“How much can we trust her? I cannot tell based on just today. However, she seems to be holding a grudge, so it is unlikely for her to be a spy.”

Sherry gives her composed evaluation.

I am unsure as to how much she has grasped the situation; nevertheless, she seems to have gotten relatively close.

So, there really was a possibility of her being an assassin sent by the Duke, huh?

“A spy?”

“A person who is sent in to investigate the internal conditions.”

“I won’t allow such a thing.”

Roxanne seemed to not know the word spy.

Sherry puts her heart into explaining.

Spies and rebels seem to be subversive existences who are unrelated to the commoners in this world.

Or so I thought; however, Sherry knows about the spies well.

Should I say ‘as expected’?

“We will observe her carefully for the time being. Let’s sleep for now; I am really sleepy.”

Since it has gotten too late, I put a rest to it without thinking deeply over it.

Everyone slips into the bed.

Even though it is supposed to be a goodnight kiss, we do it under the light.

I don't get to enjoy it for long, though.

Everyone is sleepy.

My eyelids feel heavy, too.

Miria drifts off to sleep while I take my time kissing Vesta.

I should make some noise, or sing maybe, so no one falls asleep.

Vesta always kisses passionately and swirls her tongue.

I leave Miria at what could be called a mere greeting.

I am feeling a little lonely.

Sherry, too, finishes shortly.

I go somewhat crazy while kissing Roxanne.

As expected of Roxanne.

She is the finale, after all.

After parting our lips, I put the kandelaar light out and kiss Roxanne again in the dark.

I regain my consciousness as I feel Vesta stirring close by.

Amidst a vague euphoria, I wake up.

But I feel like sleeping again.

I know it is early in the morning; however, I continue to sleep as is.

It has been a long time since I last went back to sleep after waking up.

This may be the first time ever since I came to this world.

As it is, I may not even be able to enter the labyrinth.

It gets dark early, too.

Roxanne kisses me as soon as I wake up.

I see.

So, this is the reason as to why I wake up early and don't go back to sleep, huh?

Did Roxanne go back to sleep, too, when I dozed off in the morning?

Or, did she wake up, lie next to and keep watching me?

In either case, I am grateful.

“Good morning, Master.”

“Good morning, Roxanne.”

I greet Roxanne normally.

Everyone seems to be up.

Earlier, I woke up to Vesta’s movement in the first place.

I claim the last night’s share as I kiss the three girls for a long time.

Vesta appears to be normal.

I receive Vesta’s assertive tongue service.

After kissing plenty, I change into my clothes

“The sun of the new day is already up.”

When Roxanne opens the window, the sunlight shines inside the room.

Have I been asleep for so long?

“We can’t help it today. Let’s have breakfast first.”

“Okay.”

Everyone moves to the first floor.

Rutina was standing in the living room when we go downstairs.

She seems to have had already woken up.

“Good morning.”

“Morning, Rutina. We are going to make breakfast now. Do you want to make something, Rutina?”

“No, I have never cooked before.”

Rutina proudly sticks her chest out.

Seems to be voluminous in its own right.

Doesn’t it?

Since she was an earl’s daughter, is that why she hasn’t cooked before?

“Oh well. I guess you will learn after helping out for some time.”

“But I would like to devote myself eventually to the Lords’ Assembly.”

“In this house, everyone cooks together, everyone eats together.”

Roxane cuts in.

She doesn’t need to devote herself fully to the Lords’ Assembly.

She should have enough time to cook, too.

“Helping out would do until you are able to cook by yourself.”

“I understand.”

It seems to have settled for the time being.

“I will now be going out to buy bread and other ingredients for breakfast. Later, I will buy you shoes. Also, I will give you one piece of equipment. What about weapon? Is there a weapon you prefer to carry?”

Rutina isn't barefoot; however, she is wearing gauzy shoes seemingly made of fabric.

They are probably slippers used for walking inside the Earl of Selmar's castle.

She needs different shoes if she is to go out.

As for the weapon, when she becomes a Wizard, she will use either a spear or a stick; however, a stick would be difficult for a Villager.

Before that, wouldn't there be rumors of a majestic Wizard carrying a stick.

Because I am not sure myself, I leave it to her to decide.

“Is it really okay for me to carry a weapon?”

“It is okay as long as you don't have strange ideas.”

“Then, although I am not sure if I can use it well, I would like a one-handed sword, please.”

“One-handed sword?”

I go and get the equipment from the store room.

“I will practice a little for when I get to have an audience with that man.”

I could hear Rutina muttering as I was exiting the living room but I pretend not to have heard it.

I bring out Hard Leather Shoes from the store room.

As for the sword, Scimitar would do since she won't be using it inside the labyrinth.

When I return to the living room, everyone was silent.

The mood seems a little edgy.

Is it really impossible for the girls to get along with each other?

“Here, take this.”

“Okay.”

“Put the shoes on, so you can come with us. We are going to the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“I understand.”

I have her change shoes and head to downtown.

While shopping, Rutina keeps looking around restlessly.

She probably didn’t go outside the castle much.

Or, has she never visited Quratar before?

“Is it your first time visiting Quratar?”

“Yes, it is the first time I came here.”

“You can go and have a look around whenever you have time. However, since there is a labyrinth here, a monster may appear.”

“I will be careful.”

Even though I said a monster may appear, I have yet to see one.

With so many people around, it being the centre of Quratar, the monster can be tidied up immediately after it appears.

Besides, I move via [Warp] between home and the Adventurer’s Guild.

Even if one appeared it would probably be a Kobold Lv1.

Quratar’s residents wouldn’t have any problem.

However, it could be difficult for a Villager Lv2 Rutina.

“Since there isn’t much for you to help with, it being breakfast, you can simply observe for now.”

After returning home, we prepare breakfast.

I make a ham egg style dish.

Cooking such a simple dish for the breakfast is easy and quick.

“Did Michio-sama make this?”

“Master’s cooking is delicious and wonderful.”

Roxanne replies before I could.

“Do freemen cook their own food?”

“Well, we don’t have people to do it.”

“Is there a reason for not getting a slave responsible only for cooking?”

What might she be suggesting?

“There is none.”

“I have heard that you cannot make a delicious soup unless it is boiled well for several days.”

“There are a few techniques to make it quick.”

The dishes that nobles eat are as such, after all.

A chef works there full time and serves meals all day.

I don’t want to bring the common sense of nobility here.

Once the breakfast was ready, we take it to the table in order to eat together.

I distribute the soup, which Miria and Sherry made. Although I put the bowl in front of Rutina last, she doesn’t complain.

I start eating after finishing up with the soup.

“I am grateful for the toil and tribute of everyone. I receive this with love.”

Rutina is the only one to mutter something.

Is this a prayer before eating?

I should have expected something like this from nobles.

However, her prayer didn’t have a gentle ring to it.

Rutina tries the ham egg style dish.

“How is it?”

“Yes, it is delicious.”

I ask for her opinion. It doesn’t seem bad nor does it seem so-so. It seems as if she ate something good.

Furthermore, the way Rutina is eating looks beautiful.

Elegant, versatile and fluent.

There is nothing uncouth, at all, about the way she holds the knife.

I wonder if she has refined manners because she was an earl’s daughter.

What about the Duke and Cassia?

I couldn't observe them closely.

Actually, I couldn't observe Cassia closely.

As for the Duke, I am not interested in the way he eats.

As far as Rutina is concerned, there shouldn't be any problem even if I observe her closely.

And, It isn't like I have any ulterior motive.

I watch her carefully from the seat next to her.

The sight of Rutina eating is so elegant.

I don't think the way Roxanne and the girls eat is crude; however, there is a visible difference.

Smart, beautiful and graceful.

To the point that I want to eat her.

"After the breakfast, I will be going to Bode."

I will be visiting the Duke's place; however I said Bode because I am not sure as to how sensitive the subject would be.

"Okay."

"I will leave the rest to Roxanne."

"Please leave the rest to me."

After I was done eating, I head to the Duke's place.

It won't be a problem to entrust cleaning and such to Roxanne.

The Bode Castle is peaceful today compared to yesterday.

You cannot tell that something happened at all.

"Is the Duke inside?"

"Yes, he is in the office."

I enter inside as if nothing really happened.

Does the member of the order of knights at reception not know about the incident?

Ah, the person who was mobilized last night would most likely not be working in the morning.

When I knock on the door and enter the office, the Duke was buried

within the papers.

Gozer isn't here.

“Oh, Michio-dono. Sorry, I ended up staying up all night.”

The Duke greets me with a dispirited expression.  
He is clearly lacking sleep.

“You look tired.”

“I must send these documents to the concerned people as fast as possible.  
This is the only work I cannot delegate to my subordinates.”

“No wonder.”

“I would have asked you to come early had I known it would be like this.”

The Duke comes over with unsteady steps and sprawls himself on the sofa.

Didn't he know he would need to complete paperwork beforehand?  
Or, did something happen?

“Where is Gozer-dono?”

“Gozer was helping me out until a while ago. Was it until an hour ago?  
Not sure. Maybe it was until two hours ago?”

His memory seems to have already become shabby.

“If you are busy, then-”

“No, I am alright. How is she?”

“She isn't entirely upset.”

“In actuality, she is an obedient and kind girl. She is just being adamant  
right now but she will calm down with time.”

Will she really calm down over time?  
Also, is she really 'just being adamant'?  
I wonder.

Isn't it natural for her relatives to see her in good light?

The more I think about it, the less I get it.  
Meanwhile, the Duke turns silent.

When I look at him dubiously, he had his eyes closed and neck bent back.

Is he asleep?

Is it fine for him to be defenseless in front of someone else?  
It would have been dangerous had I brought Rutina with me.

“Duke.”

“I am alright. As for her...”

He doesn't seem to want to admit he dozed off.  
Thereafter, I talk to the Duke without break.  
The discussion ends properly.

The Duke seemed absent-minded till the very end. I wasn't able to clearly understand what he wanted to say.  
The purpose I was called here for was to talk about Rutina.  
I thought he would ask me to make promises but he didn't.  
I don't think he would remember what he said even if he did.

Can't I use his hand to sign contracts?  
For example, a contract to make Rutina a sex slave?  
I didn't do that, though, but warned him that Rutina bears a grudge against us and it would be dangerous if she were allowed to approach.  
Whether sleep learning is effective or not, it remains to be found out.

After reporting to the order of knights that I visited diligently, I return home.  
Because I asked them to send my regards to their leader, it will reach Gozer.

“I am home. Wha-”

When I arrive at home, Rutina was crouching on the floor, her head lowered.  
Did something happen?

Dogeza?  
Nope, since she is receiving me, it must be [mitsuyubi](#).  
Also, Roxanne seems to be standing in the back, satisfied.

“I was wrong.”

Rutina takes the initiative and apologizes.  
Did something happen here?

To be more specific, did she do something?

What exactly did you do, Roxanne?

## Chapter 192 : Lucky Charm

\*

When I returned home, Rutina was doing a dogeza.  
I didn't see her as a woman that would ever do that.  
Roxanne must have done something.  
I wonder what she did.

“W-What is this?”

“Well, after we had an honest talk, Rutina finally came to an understanding.”

Roxanne is smiling.  
It looks like they had a T-A-L-K.  
Did you talk properly? Or did you drive her against the wall?

“My eyes have opened thanks to Roxanne-ane-sama.”

It doesn't look like there is a heavy feeling of emotions coming from Rutina's words.

“That is really good.”

Unless you are hiding your displeasure.  
What did you really do, Roxanne!

“Because she explained the reasons logically, it looks like Rutina came to an understanding.”

Sherry explains on behalf of Roxanne.  
Looks like Sherry is taking Roxanne's side this time.  
Since it's Sherry, I guess things really did happen in a logical manner, instead of forcing the logic on her with torture.  
It would be harsh if I didn't forgive her.

“D-Do your best, desu.”

“It will be alright, I think. Most likely.”

Miria and Vesta seem a little intimidated.

“W-Well, stand up.”

“Yes, I will reform myself from now on and devote my mind and heart completely to Michio-sama. Please treat me very well.”

I asked Rutina to stand up.

I feel like her eyes are dead.

I would be troubled if she became a broken doll.

“Take care of me as well. Are you alright?”

“I am alright.”

Was she shaken because of Roxanne’s shadow just now?

She doesn’t look fine.

She might be suffering from trauma.

What did you really do?

“Ah! Rutina, we’ll stay home today.”

“I think it will be alright to take her to the labyrinth.”

Roxanne makes a suggestion.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“Rutina understands how terrifying it will be if she leaks information.”

Sherry said a terrifying thing so casually.

What did you teach her?

“B-Be careful, desu.”

“I think you need to pay attention.”

I have a feeling that Miria and Vesta are frightened.

“There is absolutely no way I will leak secret information.”

Rutina’s statement is full of conviction.

Rutina gives off a diligent feeling.

Or is it a feeling full of fear?

“It is alright. A slave who can cause harm to Master doesn’t exist.”

I look at Roxanne, but she only nods and smiles.

In the first place, Rutina hated the duke, but didn’t ask me to do anything,

right?

“If Roxanne says so.”

“Yes. Aren’t you glad, Rutina.”

“Thank you very much.”

Rutina bows her head.

The sensation from her talk is amazing.

“Well, do your best.”

“If I become a Wizard by participating in the labyrinth... n-no. I will do my best for Michio-sama’s sake.”

Rutina corrected her remark after a slight look from Roxanne.

I am pretty sure Roxanne got the Wild Animal Tamer job.

Nope, she didn’t.

It will be alright to take her to the labyrinth like this, right?

“Then, I’ll be counting on you.”

“Okay.”

“It is not ‘okay’.”

“C-Certainly, Michio-sama.”

Rutina corrected her words again when Roxanne spoke to her.

However, this level of subordination isn’t really necessary.

Even Roxanne and the others reply with ‘okay’ or ‘yes’.

“I wouldn’t have said anything if she had the mental readiness from the start, but in this case, I need to shape her first.”

Roxanne explains the reason.

I-I see.

It is quite hard to object.

Well, I guess it’s fine?

“If we are going to the labyrinth, then what about protective gear?”

“You can choose from the store room. Follow me, Rutina.”

“Please take care of me, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

Rutina suddenly sticks closely to Roxanne and leaves the room with her. She has been fully trained.

Eventually, I might probably be hearing things like 'Miria-san'.

“What happened?”

“Nothing in particular. She was taught to understand the right and wrong of things.”

I asked Sherry an abstract question when Roxanne left and she gave me an abstract answer.

When I looked at Miria, she averted her eyes.

Seems like Roxanne and Sherry did nasty torture, after all.

Aside from Roxanne, did even Sherry approve of that?

It was surely dangerous to leave her in her previous condition.

I think Sherry felt uneasy as well.

I assume everything turned out alright.

Rutina returned with Roxanne after a while as I waited.

Rutina strengthened herself with protective gear.

“Next is Sacrificial Misanga. I will tie it on your left ankle.”

As for Sacrificial Misanga, it is inside my Item Box, not the store room.

But I am losing space in the Item Box because of that.

Since it is expensive, I can't help it in this case.

“Um, Sacrificial Misanga?”

“That's right.”

“Umm...”

Rutina looks at Roxanne, seeking help.

“It is alright. Master thinks very deeply about his companions. That's why I said he is a great person.”

She wasn't seeking help but approval?

With Roxanne's approval, Rutina nervously lifted the hem of her dress up.

She has been wearing the same dress since she came last night from the Earl of Selmar's castle.

Or rather than a dress, it has a feeling of luxury nightgown.

It was a good timing.

When Rutina lifts her dress, I see her white ankle under the hem of the long skirt.

Oh.

White.

Pure white, slender, and smooth legs.

Tender and smooth milky coloured skin.

I can't tolerate this.

Beautiful.

Beautiful and bewitching.

I feel that something might be different.

I don't think it is simply a matter of being raised elegantly because she was born a noble.

In her exists an absolute beauty that separates her from the others.

A pure white that is not soiled by anything.

I've only seen the ankle and I'm going this far. What will happen if I see the upper areas?

Unfortunately, the long skirt hem is clinging tightly to her, firmly hiding the rest.

I want to tear it and check her out.

I want to make her mine.

I must make her mine.

I must make her mine immediately.

I must make her mine at all costs.

Because it wasn't decided that she would be mine, it makes me think about it even more.

I will make her mine. I will make her mine. I will make her mine.

If I manage to own Rutina, I will be happy. I will be happy. I will be happy.

As a practice for that time, I wrap the Misanga around her pure white skin.

"I have to buy you clothes as well. It will be clothes that commoners

wear, though.”

Rutina’s dress doesn’t really have any strange appearance. But she may not be able to move easily inside the labyrinth. Well, it’s not like she’s the vanguard.

Oh, right. That reminds me, is it necessary to make her defeat a monster bare-handed?

I will let her do that tomorrow.

She will learn by observation today.

“No, I-Um...”

“It is alright if you receive it with appreciation.”

“O-Okay.”

Rutina’s elegant legs shiver for a moment.

It seems Roxanne has persuaded her.

I tie the Misanga silently.

It will be difficult to help Rutina.

Things exist in society that we are not allowed to touch.

Even so, I want to feel Rutina’s legs.

I gently touch her soft and gentle skin.

How good it will be to hug this skin tightly in the bed.

I want to hug her.

I want to hug her until she is broken.

“Is the Misanga fine?”

“Thank you very much. Also, umm...”

“This.”

Rutina hesitates and then takes something out from her dress.

It has something that resembles a pocket.

“A gold coin?”

What she took out was a gold coin.

It is not special, just an ordinary gold coin.

I looked at it, but there was no mark.

That's normal.

"It was sewed on to this dress."

Was she afraid of it getting discovered because I suggested changing her clothes?

And she took it out herself before that happened.

If she kept quiet and got discovered later, what type of scolding would she receive from Roxanne and Sherry?

Scary.

"Hmm. Is that so?"

"I always keep one with me because my deceased mother told me that you never know what sort of things may happen."

It is an excellent teaching.

And looks really helpful.

A single gold coin may not help in the long run, though.

On the other hand, it's not possible to carry several pieces.

"It might be possible to buy yourself back if you had a white gold coin."

"Ehh..."

"You don't have one?"

Should I do a physical checkup here?

"I am not carrying any. And I have never seen a white gold coin as you can expect."

"I see. Well, even I carry only one of them."

"Eh?"

"You want to see it?"

Because her answer was doubtful, I decided to show it to her.

Didn't Roxanne teach you not to doubt your master?

I take the white gold coin from my Item Box, and pass it to Rutina.

I am using one line in my Item Box even though I have only one white gold coin.

This is also a reason why my Item Box is crowded.

But I can't help it since it has double the value of 50 gold coins.

“Is this a white gold coin?”

“Is it fine that you’ve brought a gold coin along?”

“Because that man said it will be alright, there is no problem.”

Surely, the Duke said I can take her back.

But he couldn’t have done a physical checkup at that time.

A white gold coin aside, the Earl’s house finance wouldn’t go down because of one gold coin.

“In case someone is sold as a slave because they are troubled with money, they sometimes sew money to their underwear. It will become the slave’s possession this way.”

There also seem to be such cases according to Sherry.

And Rutina didn’t get the Thief job either.

It is being considered as her money, not the house money.

“That settles it. You can take care of it.”

“Ah, is it dangerous holding a gold coin while naked? I will keep it for you inside my Item Box then.”

“Uhh... you will not take it?”

Rutina asks anxiously as I was returning the gold coin.

“Did you expect I would do that?”

“I don’t know anything about this case. Usually, a slave is not recognized as the owner of their clothes. The underwear is recognized as the slave’s belonging, though. So, the slave’s master prepares something appropriate and the clothes are sold with the slave. Even in the case from before, the money became the slave’s belonging because it was kept in the underwear.”

Sherry explains to me calmly.

“Is it considered my stuff even if I don’t take it?”

“I think the chance of that is big.”

The teaching of Rutina’s mother seems to be slightly insufficient. Actually, since her mother told her to stick it on her body, it is Rutina who is wrong for not putting it in her underwear.

“I wouldn’t know if you kept silent.”

“But just now, you told me you will take off my clothes.”

I didn’t say I will take them off.

“You can’t always stay in the same clothes; you will have to change daily.”

“Y-You are right.”

“You could have done it again and put it in your underwear secretly.”

“But...”

Ah, that’s right.

I don’t know what Roxanne would do if she got discovered later.

“It would be like my trust in Master isn’t enough.”

She will receive a scolding even without getting discovered.

“Because I am not sure who this belongs to, it is fine for this gold coin to belong to Rutina.”

I declare.

This gold coin belonged to Rutina from the very beginning, so I declared it is fine for Rutina to own it even if it belongs to me now.

Will Rutina get the Thief job if she hides it inside her underwear?

In the first place, if they took something that belongs to a slave, wouldn’t the owner get the Thief job?

I already have the Thief job, though.

I wonder if there are people who own slaves that have the Thief job or something similar.

Aren’t there two?

Right, there is Thief and Bandit.

“Is it really alright?”

Even though I put it in a way even an idiot can understand, Rutina asks reservedly.

“It is alright.”

“Okay, thank you very much.”

“Do you want to hold onto the gold coin?”

“Yes, because it is a lucky charm that my mother gave me.”

She didn't really teach her about keeping a gold coin on her body, but actually gave her one?

This gold coin doesn't look like it was the property of the Earl of Selmar's house. It really belonged to Rutina.

I would surely have gotten the Thief job had I taken that.

Because she originally owned it.

## Chapter 193 : Memory

\*

“Alright. Then let’s go to the Labyrinth.”

After Rutina’s equipment got readied, we [Warp] to the labyrinth.  
I warped directly to Quratar’s 22nd Floor.  
I consider Rutina but don’t go in from the entrance.  
An admission fee would be taken at the entrance.

“Umm, where are we?”

When I warped to the labyrinth, Roxanne was confused and not Rutina.  
I wonder if she figured it was not the usual floor because of the smell.  
Rutina, doesn’t seems to be confused.  
Was she disciplined to this extent?

“It is the 22nd Floor. Area attack magic will not be cast here.”

“I see, you’re right.”

“I would like a small number first please.”

“I understand.”

How will it feel for Rutina who was the Earl’s daughter until yesterday to suddenly fight.  
Is it slightly cruel?  
Although being Villager Lv2 doesn’t mean she will die immediately, what hurts will hurt.  
There is the possibility her heart may get broken if she receives attacks many times.

First will be a field trip.

It would be good for the field trip to be on as high a floor as possible.  
Still magic will be flying even if she is observing from behind.

The 23rd Floor will be difficult since the monsters there use area attack magic.  
Area attack magic can’t be avoided.  
In another word, the 22nd floor is the most suitable floor for the field trip.

“Rutina, have you been to a labyrinth before?”

I ask Rutina directly.

Since Rutina has the explorer job as well as villager, she should have entered labyrinth.

The only jobs she has are Villager and Explorer.

Because Explorer is Lv1, she most likely only entered and did not fight.

“I have not.”

“Eh? Never?”

I asked again with a loud voice unintentionally.

“Please forgive me.”

“Ah, don’t worry. It is not a particularly bad thing to have never entered.”

“I am grateful that you would say so.”

Rutina apologized peacefully.

There is no need to be scared in the first place.

It doesn’t look like I traumatized her either.

Did she forget she entered one?

She is Lv1 after all.

I don’t see any reason to hide it either.

Or perhaps, there is another way to get the explore job without entering the labyrinth?

“Today you will mainly observe here. Look at things, and get used to the labyrinth’s atmosphere.”

“Thank you, I understand.”

“I intend on having Rutina fight tomorrow morning. The lower floors are crowded now. So it will be better tomorrow morning. And there is the need to buy clothes.”

I made an excuse so it doesn’t look like I am giving Rutina special treatment.

I wish to let everyone fight equally hard.

No matter how I say it, will it still be special treatment?

It can’t be helped.

It is obvious that I brought her against her will.

I want to treat her carefully if possible.

“Yes. I will do my best.”

Seems Rutina will try her best.

“If we go from here, there are some close by but there seems to be a lot of them.”

Disregarding me who was nervous, Roxanne searched for the enemies. It doesn't look like she wants to say that we should go buy the clothes and head to Vale's labyrinth immediately.

“Do you know that you can't move directly to a labyrinth using [Field Walk]?”

Meanwhile, Sherry asks Rutina.

“Eh? Is that true?”

“As I thought, you aren't aware of it?”

No wonder.

Rutina didn't know that I can't move to the labyrinth by [Field Walk]. Then it was not a trap that she wasn't surprised even when I used [Warp] directly to the labyrinth.

It was a blind spot.

Sherry is amazing for noticing that.

“To the right, there is low number of monsters.”

“Right it is.”

“Do not tell anyone that Master can teleport to the labyrinth directly.”

After Roxanne informed me, she warned Rutina.

If she doesn't know that traveling directly to the labyrinth is a unique ability, could she carelessly reveal that information?

“Y...yes.”

“If I find out that you have been careless, you know what will happen,”

“...yes, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

It seems Rutina is suffering from trauma after all.

Unfortunately there is nothing I can do for her.

“Then let’s go?”

“Yes.”

With Rutina, we started moving into the labyrinth.

Advancing, a monster appears.

Two Clam Shells.

“Because the monsters on 22nd floor doesn’t cast area effect magic, you can wait here.”

After casting [Dirt Storm] and [Thunder Storm], I explained to Rutina. I didn’t change the jobless skill from thunder magic yet. We’ll probably move straight away on this floor anyway. Because I needed to use Alchemist, I had to remove Wizard.

Dust danced, and lighting glittered.

Magic attacks the shellfish.

The clam shells became hardened, but Rutina didn’t.

Both of them simultaneously.

“It is fine not to move.”

Miria looks at Roxanne for instruction, and Roxanne made a decision. I didn’t expect such a situation.

While the monster you are fighting are paralyzed, the time waiting is wasted.

When Miria comes close and attacks there is a chance it will turn to stone.

But there is a chance the paralysis disappears by the time she reaches the other monster.

Rather, it may be good to move around behind the monster using this chance.

Though it is not that dangerous a monster, so we don’t need to do that. Rutina nodded her head in admiration.

I release the next magic attacks.

Once settled, I launched the next one.

The clam shells fell down without having the chance to move again.

“Is that magic? Magic is certainly great. Though I was surprised we had someone who can use magic. I will also have this power too.”

Rutina’s thoughts have slipped slightly somewhere. She really didn’t know anything about fighting monsters, is it really possible like that?

“From now on, it is okay to go to a place with many enemies.”

Because Rutina didn’t make noise, I gave Roxanne an instruction.

“Understood, this way then.”

Roxanne takes the lead.

Rutina is not surprised that Roxanne is taking the lead.

I saw a group of 5 as we turned the corner.

Two Clam Shell, a Kettle Mermaid, a Rub Shrub, and a Rroll Troll.

Did they suddenly increase too much?

It was me who said anything will be fine though.

Since there are four kinds of monsters, Roxanne should have known there is at least four.

However, most of the time the monster will fire magic if it falls behind to the second line.

Because I would like Rutina to feel tension instead of being carefree in the rearguard, the fact that the monster formed two lines to shoot magic is welcome.

They often settle in one row if there is four.

With 5 they will have a two line formation.

I see, five is good, right?

Should I say as expected from Roxanne instead?

Even though it’s fine, I’d look bad if I didn’t give some directions.

“There is a high chance the monster in the back row will cast magic so be careful.”

After casting two [Thunder Storm], I warn Rutina.

“I understand.”

Rutina tightens her grip on her scimitar.

The scimitar is not participating in the battle though.

To get used to it, I wouldn't mind if you tried attacking with a spear.

Contrary to Rutina's determination, the monsters are still itching to attack.

The majority of them got paralyzed by the first magic group though, three of them stopped.

Is it because I used two lighting spells?

Furthermore, another monster fell to the second magic barrage.

The last one also stopped before arriving near us with the third magic barrage.

Only one of them managed to restart, and is heading our way.

That one along with all of them, got cleaned up with the fourth magic barrage.

Weak.

These guys are so weak.

There was no need to cause fuss over two lines.

Thinking about it, do the monsters on the 22nd floor have half the hp compared to monsters in higher floors?

When increasing from the 22nd floor to the 23rd it was a problem since it doubled at that time, but going back to the 22nd it will be the opposite.

I became unsatisfied by the 22nd floor without even noticing it.

I should rather rejoice with the absolute power I have.

Aside from that, what should I do regarding the field trip?

It will be a problem if she considers the labyrinth as an easy place.

Although I don't mind to stop using thunder magic or remove grand wizard, should I really give ourselves a handicap?

“Ah~, Well we are used to fighting on higher floors, so for this floor it turned out like this.”

“I understand. That's why it is amazing.”

“What should we do?”

Because we received a compliment when I tried to make excuse, I consulted Roxanne.

“Let me see. Showing this kind of easy battle will not be useful for sure.”

Teacher Roxanne is harsh as expected.

“It will be a problem if she thinks that labyrinths are like that.”

“If she is foolish not to recognize this much, I will not be sad once she is done in by the monsters. You must understand that much, Rutina.”

“Y...yes, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

Strict without Mercy.

“I think it is good to raise it little by little, there is no need to fear area attack magics.”

“If it is the 23rd floor there is no need to mind area attack magic that much. At least, there is no possibility of continuous casting.”

Sherry seems to approve that opinion of going to a higher floor. Come to think about it, area attack magic didn't come that easily when we first entered the 23rd floor.

Gumi Slime is the only monster capable of area attack magic in Quratar's 23rd floor, if Roxanne chooses the monsters carefully, there will be no problem.

“Although I can't say it's certain that there will be no continuous casting, you should expect some risk once you enter the labyrinth.”

I don't know if Roxanne is saying that to be nice or not. Is it really alright to try the 23rd Floor?

Although I wanted to see how things go until her level rose a little, once villager becomes Lv5 she will go back to being wizard Lv1 either way.

“Come to think of it, you will become a wizard.”

“Of course.”

Rutina puffed her chest with pride. I want to rub them.

“There is a trial in order to become a wizard, do you know what is it?”

“I don’t know, because I was a child. Um, I am really sorry.”

Don’t you know about it?

It is fine even if you don’t know though.

Is she apologizing so Roxanne doesn’t get angry?

“I heard someone takes you along to the labyrinth, and gives you a suicide pill to kill the monster in front of you. It is so terrible that it causes the children to scream.”

Sherry teaches me.

It is child abuse.

It may even cause a trauma.

Is that the reason why Rutina has explorer Lv1?

As for Sherry, she doesn’t seem to be proud of knowing that.

She is not puffing her chest.

Nope, nothing is there.

She is thinking I want to rub them.

It’s true, I want to massage them.

Those eyes are master abuse.

“Th...then you are fine going to the 23rd Floor?”

“Yes.”

Because Rutina said she is fine, we move to the 23rd floor.

I could also do a boss battle if it’s to show her a severe fight, but because there is a chance of her receiving a sudden attack, it will not be good to hurry and do a boss battle.

A good thing about a boss fight is that we will not receive area attack magic though.

Since only two monsters come out at the 22nd floor battle, it is possible to shut them out.

I guess there is no reason to do the 22nd floor boss battle, right?

I can show her a severe boss fight if I fight Boss Taurus on the 29th floor, but there is the danger of receiving magic along the way to the boss room, so it’s better not to go immediately.

In case of a boss battle, I am worried about getting consecutive attacks by

chance.

The first group we met on the 23rd Floor, was a formation of 1 gumi slime and 3 clam shell.

Only one gumi slime?

Although I didn't give an exact order, Roxanne's choice is quite nice. Though it could be a coincidence.

The four girls started to run.  
Rutina is left confused behind.

"Because the monsters on the 23rd floor can use area attack magic. It's not good to wait for them, we will intercept them. I will move slowly since I am casting magic."

"Eh? Casting magic? Aren't you an adventurer?"

Rutina is getting more confused.  
It looks like she didn't notice I was the one using magic.

"Come on!"  
"H...Y..yes."

Hearing Roxanne's voice, Rutina got panicked and ran after the four of them.

Teacher Roxanne is strict after all.

## Chapter 194 : Great Hero

\*

“Did it, desu.”

The only Gummi Slime gets petrified by Miria with ease.  
We didn't receive any area of effect magic attack either.  
As you would expect when there's only one monster.  
I finish the remaining Clamshell off with magic.

“We close in on the monsters as soon as we find them. This is the basic tactic when fighting on higher floors.”

“Yes, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

“There are a few monsters on the 23rd floor that use area of effect magic attacks, but you don't need to worry about them.”

While I was tidying up the petrified Gummi Slime with Durandal, Roxanne lectures Rutina.

You don't need to close in on the 23rd floor monsters like Clamshell and Kettle Mermaid; however, there's no harm even if you do.

Roxanne can select her opponent.

It helps.

With the lecture finished, Rutina looks at me as if wanting to ask something.

However, I choose not to say anything.

If there's no need to hear it, it's better not to hear it.

“Then, please find the next one, Roxanne. It'll be fine if it's a place with a lot of Gummi Slimes.”

“Ah! Yes, I'm sorry.”

“Nah, it was actually better since it was her first time.”

Finding a lone Gummi Slime was really out of consideration by Roxanne.

Half of Roxanne is gentle.

It'll be scary going to higher floors without Rutina receiving her first

area of effect magic attack.

I should let her experience an area of effect magic attack while she's on the 23rd floor.

It's not necessary, though, to take it on the 23rd floor if her level increases.

Half of me is gentle, too.

Isn't letting her receive an area of effect magic attack not kind? Besides, in order for her to take an area of effect magic attack, I will have to take one as well.

It can't be helped.

If she is going to enter the labyrinth, she will have to receive one eventually.

The next group of monsters comprises 3 Gummi Slimes.

The five of them, including Rutina, start to run.

Rather, since it's her field trip, isn't it okay for Rutina not to run?

Or so I thought; however, isn't it important to let her get along? Also, it would be rather dangerous to retreat.

What if there were a pincer attack from the monsters on the opposite end?

I start running after casting two [Thunder Storm]s.

I shouldn't use Lightning magic if I want them to use an area of effect magic attack; however, it will be better to wait until Rutina levels up.

Even though she will go back to being Lv1 after reaching Lv5.

There's no other way but to be (Lv1).

Because one of the monsters drops out of the line, the vanguards confront two Gummi Slimes.

Roxanne and Vesta stand in front of the monsters while Miria attacks from the side.

The Gummi Slimes' status changes rapidly between sleep, paralysis and petrification.

At the end, I give the decisive blow with my magic.

In any case, it seems our party depends on inflicting abnormal status.

“S-Somehow, everyone is amazing.”

Rutina gets shocked.

The shock is probably due to Roxanne’s and Miria’s performance. It can’t be helped if it’s Roxanne.

“Well, you can use it as reference. But only as a reference.”

It’s unreasonable for you to use that as a reference.

“Can I really be of any help? My confidence is dwindling down fast.”

“It’s alright. There’s the difference in equipment, too, after all.”

“It’s exactly as Master said. You should do your best as much as possible.”

Was there a need for you to follow up, Roxanne?

I feel an absurd swing (in behavior).

“In any case, you can only do what you are able to do. You’ll be alright, I guess.”

“Do it, desu.”

“I think you’ll be alright.”

Sherry’s and Miria’s follow up can’t be considered a follow up. Especially, when someone were to hear Vesta’s response objectively, it would seem greatly irresponsible.

“Y-You’re right. I’ll become a Wizard, too.”

“You’ll become one eventually. No need to get impatient.”

“Yes, thank you very much.”

If Rutina’s level goes up, she will probably be alright.

She has become Villager Lv3 after the last battle.

She will soon reach Villager Lv5.

Now that it has come down to this, I should inspect Rutina every time while fighting on the 23rd floor.

The area of effect magic attack is hardly coming in.

On the other hand, Rutina is gradually beginning to calm down.

Even though it’s a field trip, her eyes are fully fixed at Roxanne during the battle. It won’t be a good idea to use her as a comparison.

Roxanne's rate of dodging the monster attacks is insane. Up till now, she has never received an attack. Her rate of evasion is probably 150% even when she is doing it poorly. Because of her ability to dodge the attacks from two monsters simultaneously, an extra 50% has been added.

If all the monsters lined up in the front, Roxanne would be bound to receive an attack; however, that cannot happen on the 23rd floor. They fall to Lightning Magic, and the battle with the Kettle Mermaids and the Clamshells tends to be short. Nevertheless, I feel that Roxanne could evade five Gummi Slimes on the 23rd floor if she tried

“Did it, desu.”

Miria petrifies the Gummi Slime without holding back. The large Vesta, dual wielding 2 two-handed swords, looks reliable, too. I can't help but understand as to why Rutina lost her spirit. Should I make her fight forcibly? Since it's a field trip, it's fine.

“.....Would I really be fine?”

“It may look difficult at first; however, since the opponent isn't that difficult, Rutina should be able to do it once you're used to it. Let's do our best for Master together.”

“Yes, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

Not missing Rutina's inaudible complaint, Roxanne encourages her. Is this a self-development seminar? That's the feeling it gives, at least. Suppress weakness into dependence. Should I add something, too?

“That's equally impossible. No one expects you to go to that extent.”

I advise her secretly while Roxanne was in the middle of the battle.

“Really?”

“Because that's not a standard. Even I cannot hold a candle to her.”

I'm on top of the list of party members doing a poor job during the

battle.

Or, do I not appear bad?

It's because I'm recovering MP thanks to the petrified Gummi Slimes that I haven't been discovered.

She must have been surprised when I hit them with Durandal on the previous floor.

Is this much really alright?

There's no need to be this reserved.

“Understood.”

“My level is sufficient for direct battle. It's better for one to do what they can.”

“Yes, thank you very much, Michio-sama. I will try my best.”

I have perfectly brainwashed her to take advantage of her weakness. I'm dirty.

I feel somewhat guilty, but it's inevitable.

I hope she goes into the right direction.

Rutina has reached Villager Lv4.

It will be better to stay on the 23rd floor till she levels up to Villager Lv5. Why don't you hurry up and become a Villager Lv5? I'm waiting.

Ooh

I have been checking Party Job Settings repeatedly, and at last, I catch the moment.

The moment when my Hero job turns Lv50.

Hero, is it?

It's not like I particularly wanted to experience this moment.

Because my jobs would increase once Hero reached Lv50.

Great Hero it is.

I'm happy to see it grow so much so soon while it has been away from me.

Still, I wasn't particularly expecting it.

Great Hero is an advanced job for Hero, huh?

Like I acquired Adventurer upon reaching Explorer Lv50, I have acquired

it upon reaching Hero Lv50.

Great Hero Lvl

Effects | Large Increase in HP | Large Increase in MP | Large Increase in Strength | Large Increase in Endurance

Large Increase in Intelligence | Large Increase in Spirit | Large Increase in Dexterity | Large Increase in Agility

Skills | Overdrive | Item Box Operation

As you would expect from the advanced job for Hero. The effects are incredible.

It's a feast of Large Increase effects.

I can have high expectations of it.

I wonder why it has Item Box Operation skill.

I wonder why.

I wonder why a Great Hero is able to use the Item Box.

I want to protest to the Great Heroes.

Are you making fun of the Item Box?

Are you mocking the hard work the Adventurers put in to get the Item Box?

Nah, it's fine because I'm using it, too. It's a big help.

Since I'm running out of slots in the Adventurer's Item Box, I'm rather grateful.

Great Hero is an amazing job.

If Great Hero had Overdrive and Basic Fire Magic, it would be even greater.

As for Overdrive, judging by the name, it's probably an upgrade for Overwhelming.

I add Seventh Job and select Great Hero Lvl.

Initially, I decided to remove Hero; however, since Great Hero is low level, I decide to keep it in use.

That's why I have increased the number of jobs so as to keep using Hero, too.

“Did it, desu.”

Luckily, Miria petrifies a Gummi Slime as soon as the battle starts.  
It's Durandal's turn.

I put the items inside and take out the holy sword.

By the way, I seem to be able to put many items inside Great Hero's Item Box.

It doesn't seem to be level dependent like Explorer's but Adventurer's 50×50 Item Box.

I haven't counted it yet, but it appears to be so.

Assuming that, is having Explorer Lv50 or Adventurer a prerequisite to acquire Great Hero?

It would really be a difficult to get job if there were such an additional condition as that.

Like leveling up Swordsman in order to get the advanced job for Monk?  
Well, there's no need to worry about it right now.

While wielding Durandal, I invoke Overdrive and strike the petrified monster.

The Gummi Slime dies in one blow.

Whoops

One hit?

The monster turns into smoke and dissipates.

The attack power might have increased.

Is Overdrive a skill that raises speed and attack power for an instant?

I think it increases the speed in same manner as Overwhelming.

It wasn't clear, though, because the monster didn't move.

Did I get faster?

I look at Roxanne and the girls, but they aren't surprised at all.

Was the increased speed my imagination?

Not necessarily. Maybe because they know about Overwhelming?

Because of that, nothing seemed unusual to them?

“Eh? That speed.....”

Rutina is truly surprised.

The speed did seem to increase like Overwhelming.

If it increases attack power, too, then Overdrive is totally a rank above Overwhelming.

However, the MP consumption may be higher just as well.

“Oh, this?”

“It’s not standard.....”

Oh, right. I told Rutina that my level is sufficient.

“Of course it’s to be expected because it’s Master.”

I receive a follow up from Roxanne-sensei.

If it can be considered a follow up, that is.

In the next battle, I test if the magic power increases or not.

Upon invoking Overdrive, when I see the approaching monster and the five girls in slow motion, I get ascertained that the speed does increase. The magic power increases as well.

However, the magic invocation speed doesn’t.

It doesn’t look likely for me to cast a fourth spell in the state of Overdrive. It would simply be the strongest if it were possible.

So, using Overdrive to boost magic power seems complicated, huh?

“No worries. When I become a Wizard...”

Rutina mutters during the break between the battles.

She’s optimistic.

Her response to Roxanne’s follow up is pretty good.

And finally, Rutina levels up.

To Villager Lv5.

She has acquired the Wizard job.

Actually, Rutina has acquired two jobs: Wizard and Forest Ranger.

Because the Duke had Forest Ranger job, too, it seems to be a racial job for elves.

There’s nothing special about its effects and skills.

So, there’s no need, I guess.

“Rutina, try to cast [Breeze Storm].”

I set Rutina's job to Wizard Lv1 and tell her to cast a spell.  
Quratar's 23rd floor is a bit of a nuisance.  
The Clamshells and Kettle Mermaids have weakness against Earth attribute, but the Gummi Slimes don't.  
Because a Clamshell is resistant to Fire attribute, and a Kettle Mermaid is resistant to Water attribute, it will be better to use Wind magic here.

It will be fine for me to defeat the Clamshells and Kettle Mermaids with my magic.

As for Rutina, she should focus her magic on the Gummi Slimes.

"Ehh, th-this..."

Rutina opens her eyes wide in surprise.  
It seems to have gone well.

"Is Rutina finally a Wizard?"

"That's right."

I answer Sherry's enquiry.

"I'm glad for you, Rutina."

"That was fast."

"As expected, desu."

"I think it's amazing."

The four girls congratulate her.

"Y-Yes, thank you very much, everyone. However, I've heard that I cannot become a Wizard unless I visit the guild."

"It doesn't matter because it's Master."

"But I only just joined the party. I thought it would take a considerable amount of time before I became a Wizard."

"Because it's Master."

"As to why it took such a short time, it's probably because Rutina is amazing."

Wait, wait.

For now, I curb Roxanne's remarks.

Don't point everything to me!

Even if it was thanks to Gained Experience 20x.

“So, I did have the power like I thought. Okay, thank you very much. Right, I can use that sparkling magic now.”

By sparkling magic, she probably means Lightning magic.

“Ah, that would be difficult in Rutina’s present condition.”

“Is that so?”

“You have to chant the incantation which floats up in your mind when a group of Gummi Slimes appears next.”

“Oh, that reminds me, there has been no incantation thus far.”

She has noticed something inconvenient.

“Err, that also is impossible for Rutina, I guess.”

“I-I see.....”

Actually, it’s already quite impressive that you can use magic now.

## Chapter 195 : Snail

\*

I convinced Rutina that she will be able use glittering magic eventually.

“This is the weapon for a wizard. Use this inside the labyrinth.”

“Yes.”

I pass her the Damascus stick.

Again, I asked Roxanne to quickly find the next monsters.

It's better to make her test it this time.

The next monsters are Two Gumi Slimes, a Clam Shell and a Kettle Mermaid.

It is just right.

Using wind magic is fitting for this combination.

“Okay. Try saying it.”

“Yes. To seize the Aroma of the wind, put military power against the foe <<Enemy>> in place, jet, [Breeze Storm]. ”

The four girls began to run, and Rutina started to chant.

Was it an incantation like that?

I didn't know since I never used it.

It seems Rutina doesn't have a problem with Brahim Language. She was taught the precise words since she was the Earl's Daughter. Its seems that Brahim is used when there's a conversation between nobles.

Matching my magic with Rutina's, I cast two thunder spells. There's no incantation resonance problems so far. I wonder if it was fine because I have incantation omission? It will probably work out, but I am feeling relieved now that I've actually tried it.

“Your physical condition?”

“I don't feel any problem.”

I asked, but I don't believe one elementary magic will dry up her MP. I was able to use it normally when Wizard was Lvl. I'm ready to give restorative medicine mouth to mouth when her MP is not enough.

"You will feel sick if you used too much magic, so be careful."  
"Oh I remember hearing that before."  
"Others can't understand this sensation, so you need to watch your health. It is necessary not to spend too much and save for emergencies, but no need to go that far right now. We also have restorative medicine."  
"I understand."

Rather, go ahead and spend too much.  
It will be good if you use it too much and depend on restorative medicine. She must depend on it.  
I'm prepared for it.

I chased the four girls after casting another two thunder spells. It seems that Rutina hasn't cast another one. It may be necessary to discuss with her how frequent she needs to cast. Even if Rutina used magic, if I don't reduce the number that I cast it will be wasted.

Because of limited MP, Rutina won't be able to use magic every time. Basically, when there are several monsters I cast as much as I can, against a group should I make her cast once or twice? Or maybe three times against a group?  
I will need to confirm it by comparing how many I cast.

It will have to wait until we arrive on the 29th Floor. It is good for now. However, will this arrangement work or not?

As we ascend the floors, I must alter it every time. Rutina has just become a Wizard and I guess her level will rise fast, with this we'll be able to clear floors in a crazy speed. There is also my Great hero level as well. We will use different magic depending on the combination of monsters

attributes.

In conclusion, there is no need to make arrangements now. Whenever the level is raised it will be a mess, in order to prevent the mess I should control it so it doesn't go out of order. If Sherry notices, it will be troublesome.

It should be fine if I think about it later after I advance more. For harder battles, even if I manage to finish it one spell faster it will be plenty. No need to fuss over it right now.

“Thunder Storm.”

Because Roxanne made the Kettle Mermaid sleep, I issued a warning. Rutina looked back, puzzled. This cannot be the first time I issued a warning. Because I said that I don't need the incantation, was she wondering about it for sometime?

“.....”

However, without asking anything Rutina rushed forward. No no. It's fine if you ask me. No one will get angry. Because you probably have a reason.

The opportunity for the defendant to give an explanation. I will not steal the right of trial from everyone. I run after Rutina. This monsters group fell without Rutina casting any magic.

“When a monster is in the sleep state, it can wake up when I use magic, so I use the incantation in order for the vanguard to hear.”  
“Understood.”

I give Rutina an explanation at the very start. If there is anyone that wants to say anything it will be Sherry, but she seems busy.

“Does incantation resonance really mean resonance due to the incantation?”

Sherry muttered something.

“So, what do you think about magic after using it?”

“Yes. Now I can be helpful in spite of my poor abilities.”

“I expect much from you.”

“Thank you very much.”

Rutina bows her head.

I didn't need to particularly give an explanation?

She seems rather desperate, and worried she will do poorly.

Consideration is really hard.

“You only use magic once, is it hard using magic several times?”

“No. But I think that I'm gradually getting used to it.”

She seems to be thinking about it in various ways.

Her level will go up while she gets used to Wizard.

I guess that is also good?

Actually, Rutina used magic twice against the next group.

The MP she used before is probably not restored yet.

“How do you feel?”

“It's slightly tiring, but I can still go on.”

She still doesn't regret being born, so she can still go on.

Even after the MP decreased, is it still within the limit?

“Don't over do it. Get enough rest.”

You can over do it.

Rather, I want you to push yourself to the limit.

“I am sorry that I can't help much.”

Is the reason for the apology because you feel a little depressed?

But then, is it difficult to lose MP and need to take restorative medicine by using elementary magic spells?

But having said that, I can't force her to take it either.

“It will be like this at the start. You’ll get better once you get used to it.”  
“Thank you very much.”

Afterwards, Rutina hardly used any magic.  
More like she didn’t try to use magic, may be because of her MP limitation.  
She’s really not forcing herself.  
She sometimes casts twice.

“It doesn’t look like the battle time got shorter even with Rutina casting magic twice.”

After the two magic spells, Sherry speaks while picking up the item.  
Oops.  
Are you seriously counting?  
It would be fine if you focused on studying the incantation resonance though.

“Ah~. We will be going up eventually. It is better not to think about it now.”

“I am sorry. I didn’t check the cast numbers.”  
“Getting used to it comes first now. Forget about anything else.”

I came up with a follow up because Rutina apologised.  
She might notice her level going up quickly if she counts.  
Though the number of spells needed to defeat monsters will not decrease that much by leveling up once or twice.

However, it’s certain that the time is decreasing in some aspect, but I don’t know when it happens.  
I can also run away to the higher floor when her level goes up.

“However, even if I cast twice it doesn’t compare to one spell from Michio-sama.....”

Rutina noticed a strange matter and got depressed.  
Over used her MP?

“Ah~. the Magic I am using is kinda special. You will be alright.”

I am using a two spell barrage in fact.

In order to shorten the combat time on the 23rd floor, I need to cast two thunder spells to do some damage.

One basic magic spell from the low level Rutina can't be compared to it.

Sherry knows about this.

Though I didn't explain it properly.

Rutina shouldn't be able to guess that.

But she will be able to notice it soon.

"Is that true? Can you teach me how to do it?"

"You will not be able to use it."

"Really?"

Rutina feels down, but I can't help it if you can't use it.

"You should consider the number of magic when we reach higher levels. With this speed we are aiming at the level we're currently at, therefore it's still quite sudden for you."

It will be fine counting later.

After her level increases far enough.

"I understand."

"Thank you as well, Sherry."

"It's nothing."

I thank Sherry, and continue hunting.

I cannot complain when I am not sure what she is investigating.

When I check after the battles, Rutina became Wizard Lv4.

Her level is increasing at a good speed.

When Rutina used two wind spells against a Gumi Slime, it seems to reduce my thunder spells by one.

An almost good result this time?

I thought she might be able to match me when I use one thunder spell if she uses one wind spell since it is the weakness of the Gumi Slime, but I guess it is due to our level.

I am glad there is no illogical difference.

At this rate, will the number go crazy and one of her wind spells

become equal to one of my thunder spells?

But still, I don't believe her single wind spell will ever equal two of my thunder spells.

Three of her wind spells equaled one of my thunder spells at the start.

How about 4 wind spells for 5 of my thunder spells? Or 5 wind spells to 6 thunder spells from me? There will be many various differences if I investigate it.

I can only hope it becomes like that.

Will it be fine if we advance like this?

“Area attack magic doesn't happen very much on this floor, you want to go up one floor?”

I asked Rutina.

We haven't received any area attack magic from Gumi Slimes yet.

But that is expected as they didn't get to fight at all.

Because Rutina's level keeps going up, it will be good to go up another floor.

“Higher floor?”

“You will be alright, Rutina. If we ascend another floor soon, you will get used to it faster.”

“Understood. Roxanne-ane-sama.”

It will be fine if Rutina refused, but Roxanne forcefully decided.

It is not good to force her though.

I don't know if Area attack magic will come flying if we stayed on the 23rd floor, but will it be fine if we go to a higher floor.

We move to the 24th floor.

I took the opportunity while changing the floor and changed the effect on Jobless.

I changed it from Hero's medium intelligence increase to Great Hero's great intelligence increase.

The job effect is level dependent.

When I set explorer's item box operation as jobless's skill, the item box size became the level of jobless and not explorer, so the effect will follow

jobless's level and not the original job level.

Great hero's great intelligence increase doesn't even compare to hero, but what will happen when I change jobless Lv48 medium intelligence to great intelligence increase?

It is better not to change it often while fighting.

But it will not become a problem when the floor changes.

"Quratar's 24th floor monster is Tur Turtle. Because it's weakness is earth magic, use [Sand Storm] instead of [Breeze Storm] when there are many."

"I understand."

"Then, Roxanne. It will be fine with several monsters right from the start."

After explaining to Rutina, I ask Roxanne for guidance. The explanation itself is secondhand information from Sherry. It can't be helped if I don't have anything else to add.

"That way seems to have many Tur Turtle."

Roxanne keeps advancing like this. As for the monsters that appeared, there were 3 Tur Turtles. 4 Girls started to run. Rutina didn't run and it seems she started to cast magic.

I cast two [Thunder Storms] as well. Even though I want it to cast area attack magic after going to the 24th floor, it should be fine since there is three of them. I left Jobless's skill as thunder magic.

After the lighting glittered, the dust danced. Because she has to use an incantation, Rutina invokes magic a little slower. Is only one of them paralyzed?

There is a dilemma that the number of monsters that get paralysis gets less when fewer monsters appear. I'd rather use the thunder magic when against a group with more monsters.

When I think about how it will be easy to use area attack magic, it doesn't really matter.

The remaining two Tur Turtles got paralyzed on the next two spells.

“Did it, desu.”

Miria turned one of them to stone soon after that.

But, since only one got petrified this time, I cleaned all of them up with magic.

“I have never seen glittering dust before.”

Rutina said after the battle ended.

When I fought the Clam Shell group on the 22nd floor, I used a combination of earth and lighting magic.

It was the same combination this time.

That's probably it.

“Ah~. Right.”

“Can you tell me how to do that?”

Should I call her unexpectedly sharp? Or she didn't understand it before?

It is troublesome to explain.

“Huh? Only the principle. ”

“Will I be able to do that as well?”

A more difficult question.

“Ah~ that could also be impossible.”

This reminds me of a story from long ago.

## Chapter 196 : Bottomless

\*

“Is... that so?”

As she learns that she cannot use the same magic as me, Rutina gets depressed.

Since a Wizard cannot cast two spells simultaneously, it cannot be helped.

She has no choice but to give up.

I have no way of following it up.

“It’s alright. Just being able to use magic is helpful in its own right.”

Roxanne-sensei, this cannot be considered a follow up.

“O-Oh well, it’ll be fine. Roxanne, next please.”

I assign the next task to Roxanne.

If she’s occupied, she won’t be able to ‘follow up’.

Roxanne guides us to the next group. It comprises two Tur Turtles and a Gummi Slime.

Since there are three, I strike them down with Thunder magic. (TN: We have been using Lightning and Thunder interchangeably. It will now only be Thunder)

Because the three get easily paralyzed right after we encounter them, Miria doesn’t get a chance to petrify any of them.

Maybe because I have Large Increase in Intelligence set as Jobless effect, the number of spells I need to cast hasn’t increased even though we’re on a higher floor.

Actually, I should rather be relieved since it hasn’t decreased.

Against the next group of three Tur Turtles and two Gummi Slimes, I use Thunder and Ice magic.

It’s about time we encountered a monster that would use an area of effect magic attack.

“Did it, desu.”

However, before we could receive a magic attack, it ends with Miria showcasing her brilliant performance.

Three of them have gotten petrified.

With Miria having petrified three monsters, my next Thunder spell wipes them out.

I assumed that the monsters would be more active if I reduced the number of Thunder spells; instead, did my not delaying them only served to increase Miria's preys?

“Is this chunk of ice perhaps Ice magic?”

Rutina asks after the battle.

Ah, right. Was this her first time seeing my Ice magic?

“That's right. Rutina will soon be able to use it.”

“But I thought only a Grand Wizard would be able to use Ice magic.”

“That's right. Therefore, Rutina will be able to manage it, somehow.”

Rutina gets surprised when I tell her that she will be able to use it, somehow.

Although she is a Wizard now, she will be able to use it once she becomes a Grand Wizard.

So, it's not a lie.

“It's okay. You'll be able to use it.”

“Do you mean to say ‘after a long time’?”

“Since Master said it's okay, it IS okay.”

Adds Roxanne.

“Y-Yes, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

“Well, I mean to say ‘before long’.”

The reason as to why I believe Rutina will become a Grand Wizard quickly is owing to Gained Experience 20x.

On a side note, she's a Wizard Lv5 at the moment.

“Err, was that pikapika sparkling and glittering magic perhaps-”

“Thunder magic.”

“S-So, it really was like I suspected, huh? Then, saying that I’ll be able use it ‘before long’.....”

I wonder if she really understands what soon means. Rutina is feeling depressed because she thinks it will take a long time. So, I tell her that she will be able to use that pikapika sparkling and glittering magic before long.

Rutina seems to be aware that a Grand Wizard can use Thunder magic. It isn’t strange for her to know about Thunder magic since she already knows about Ice magic.

Leaving whether she has seen it before or not aside.

Why is it that she didn’t know it was Thunder magic until it was mentioned?

“By any chance, have you never seen Thunder magic?”

“I thought it would be a magic with an even louder sound.”

Sound?

Speaking of which, I have heard about ‘raimei’ being thunder and ‘inadzuma’ being lightning.

Since it is accompanied by thunder, it is appropriate to call it [Thunder Storm].

It may be unrelated to Brahim, though.

It may probably be normal for her to have never seen thunder since she was an earl’s daughter.

That she were sheltered in the castle, she would only hear the sound.

Rutina doesn’t answer my question whether she has seen thunder before or not.

“If you mean ‘gorogoro’ rumbling sound, it’s not possible unless it’s a Thunder magic of an even larger scale.”

“Really?”

“Is that really so? Since it is magic, you should be able to produce just the sound.”

Because I babble something out carelessly, Sherry nibbles. That was dangerous, wasn’t it?

My superficial knowledge has gotten exposed.  
When will I be able to talk carelessly in this world.

“The thunder’s main body is what inflicts the damage to a monster. It’s only sparsely necessary to produce the sound.”

Although the sound is part of the attack, the core of Thunder magic is lightning.

And the paralysis is thanks to electricity.

“So, that sound is only an attachment.”

“Rather than an attachment, it’s the result of lightning.”

“The sound is a resultant?”

“Thunder magic is basically thunder; you can hear a pachipachi crackling sound if you listen carefully. If it were on the same scale as natural thunder, it would probably produce baribari ripping sound.”

“So, it’s like that, huh?”

What a relief.

I have somehow managed to convince Sherry.

“Somehow, both of you are amazing.”

Rutina’s query has successfully been diverted.

Thanks to Sherry.

“At times like this, it’s better to leave them alone.”

I can hear you, Roxanne.

“Understood, Roxanne-ane-sama.”

“Ignore, desu.”

“I think it’s alright.”

That was harsh, Miria, Vesta, and for no real reason.

After having wiped two groups out with Thunder magic, we encounter four Tur Turtles and a Clamshell next.

Because there are four Tur Turtles, I cast [Dirt Storm].

Oh

Not only that we don’t get hit by any area of effect magic attack, the

monsters die quickly, too.

It was fast also when I used Wind magic against the Gummi Slimes on the 23rd floor.

Rutina doesn't get to cast any spell this time as well.

In other words, my magic power has gone up.

It's most likely thanks to Large Increase in Intelligence set as Jobless effect.

It's also thanks to the rising level of Great Hero and Rutina's Wizard; however, the effect of Jobless is the most potent.

On the 23rd and 24th floors, the number of Thunder spells I cast - 2 - hasn't changed; however, the number of Thunder spells and the spell of an attribute the monster is weak against combined seems to have changed.

Whether the damage required to defeat is equivalent to 0.1 spell or 0.9 spell, the number of spells required will round up to 1; hence, the difference will be 1 spell wide.

It may also have to do with that.

I steal a glance at Sherry; however, she doesn't seem to be paying attention.

Has she not noticed?

Or, does she not feel the need to meddle at this point?

Now that I think about it, Sherry knows that I can adjust the magic power, too.

Earlier, I adjusted it on a lower floor to beat a monster half-dead in order to acquire a job.

She may think it is the same as that time.

Do I not need to mind the reduction in the number of spells and Rutina leveling up?

That's it.

It's part of an experiment.

It's purely an experiment.

Let's go with that.

Nothing can be done regarding the change in magic power.  
I resolve myself and continue hunting.  
You can say that I've become serious.

Rutina becomes a Wizard Lv7 shortly after.  
As expected, leveling up is faster on the 24th floor.  
We have yet to receive an area of effect magic attack.

“Area of effect magic attacks aren't coming in on this floor either. So, how about we move up a floor since you've gotten used to it?”

I propose to Rutina.

“You're right. I think I have gotten a little used to it. The suffocation due to casting magic has gone. I think I'll be able to do it. However, I'm not sure if it's okay to move to a higher floor.”

It's simply because your level has increased.  
Well, that's fine, too.

“.....”

“Ah, n-no. I would love to move to a higher floor.”

When Roxanne glares at her, Rutina corrects herself.  
It doesn't look good going to a higher floor.  
Is it okay to move, but you don't want to? Or, is it not okay to move?  
I want her to take responsibility for her own words, not someone else's.

“That's right.”

When she corrects herself, Roxanne nods.  
It's not good to pressurize her.  
If she feels danger, I want her to actively oppose.

Oh well. Since Rutina said it's okay, it should be okay.  
We move on to the 25th floor.

“Quratar's 25th floor monster.....was it Cape Carp or Black Frog?”

“It was Black Frog.”

“If I'm not mistaken, its weakness.....was Fire attribute?”

“Yes.”

I brief while Sherry follows up.

I'm pathetic.

Nah, I was just confused as to which one was where.

If the 25th floor monster is Black Frog, the 26th floor monster will be Cape Carp. Probably.

“Therefore, if there is a large number of Black Frogs or Gummi Slimes, cast [Fire Storm]; if there are more Tur Turtles, cast [Sand Storm]. It's Sherry's duty to collect the information about the floor monsters and their weaknesses. Sherry is very knowledgeable and smart. From now on, I will have Sherry brief.”

I use this opportunity to leave the briefing to Sherry.

I cannot lose more face than I already have.

That's wrong way of putting it. It's called 'right man for the right job'.

I know that the 26th floor monster is Cape Carp.

Maybe.

I also know the ones on 27th floor and up, of course.

After all, we have been fighting all these monsters all this time.

“Okay.”

“I understand. [Fire Storm] it is.”

Somehow, both Sherry and Rutina have gotten it.

“Then, take us to a place with fewer monsters, Roxanne.”

“Okay. This way then.”

We proceed under Roxanne's lead.

The group we come across comprises two Black Frogs and a Tur Turtle.

Since it's a black frog, Rutina should be able to recognize it.

The five girls start running.

After casting two [Thunder Storm]s, I follow after them.

Since there is small number of monsters, Thunder magic would do.

Why is Rutina not casting a spell?

Is she preserving it?

Oh well. There are only a few enemies anyway.

If it were me, I would cast [Fire Storm] regardless.  
Is she conducting herself elegantly as one would expect from an earl's daughter?  
Don't be greedy.

"Did it, desu."

Was two too few? This time, Miria petrifies both of them.  
As expected.  
Don't be greedy, though.  
The Estoc of Petrification is thirsting for blood.

On the next group, Rutina uses magic.  
She seems to be able to cast [Fire Storm] without any problem.  
We continue to hunt on the 25th floor.

"Be it 23rd, 24th or 25th floor, the number of spells doesn't seem to have increased."

Asks Sherry when I finish almost all the monsters off with my Thunder magic.  
Even Miria cannot petrify all the monsters all the time, I guess.

Fuck.  
Or so I thought; however, she doesn't seem to be accusing me with cold eyes.  
She appears to be asking me genuinely.

"It's a little experiment. I'll be carrying it on for a while."

Right. Experiment.  
Even if my magic power changes, there won't be any problem.  
It's an experiment.

When Rutina's level increases and the number of spells decreases, I'll call the experiment off.  
Perfect, no?

"Is that so?"

Sherry withdraws easily.

She understands the importance of an experiment.

However, Roxanne is looking at me with an astonished expression. Again? This feeling.

Hey Roxanne, your heart is a bit too loud.

“Roxanne, next.”

I ask of Roxanne, who doesn't seem to understand the importance of an experiment, to guide us.

We continue with the hunting.

We'll keep at it until Rutina reaches Wizard Lv10.

We'll continue even after she reaches Wizard Lv10.

We advanced to the 24th floor when her Wizard turned Lv4, 25th floor when it turned Lv7; therefore, it should be fine to advance to the 26th floor when it turns Lv10.

However, thus far, we haven't received any area of effect magic attack.

It won't be a good idea to move to a higher floor just yet.

We may receive one if we stay on the 25th floor for a while.

If Rutina's level goes up and the number of spells cast changes, It'll be enough reason to end the experiment.

To be specific, it (the number of spells) will decrease.

Come on, batch (group of monsters)!

“Here it comes.”

Roxanne warns.

A blue magic formation manifests under the Black Frog's white abdomen. Rather than the number of spells decreasing, comes in an area of effect magic attack.

Water dances around us.

My body gets squeezed tightly as I feel slight pain.

Albeit light, it's pain nonetheless.

Besides, it's momentary.

It's not to the extent that I cannot bear it.

The damage shouldn't be heavy either.

Has the area of effect magic attack on the 25th floor always amounted to only this much?

Or, maybe it's the effect of Great Hero's Large Increase in Endurance.

I counterattack with a [Fire Storm]; immediately after, the frog collapses.

"How was the monster attack? Are you alright?"

I confirm with Rutina.

"Yes. If it's just that, I can probably go on."

"Great. Are you sure?"

Rutina didn't seem to receive heavy damage.

Well, she had Plating applied on her.

Also, Rutina seems to be gaining confidence.

"As expected of me," is what she was muttering.

"I don't think we need [Area of Effect Heal]; what should I do?"

Enquires Roxanne.

I didn't receive much damage, so I don't need recovery.

It's probably the same for Roxanne, too.

As far as Rutina's recovery is concerned, Monk's Heal would be better than Area of Effect Heal.

"Can you cast one for now? It's our first for today, so it should be fine."

"Understood."

Because I don't have Monk selected at the moment, it'll be difficult to change jobs and cast Heal.

Therefore, I ask of Roxanne to cast [Area of Effect Heal].

"D-Did no one receive enough damage to require recovery?"

"Well, that's probably so."

I re-apply Plating on Rutina.

"Because it's a party with a Dragon Knight."

"I've indeed heard about the stability of a party with a Dragon Knight. Does that have to do with the damage getting reduced? Then, was that

also the reason for my receiving less damage?”

Damn you, Sherry. After Rutina finally gained some confidence, you pushed her down again.

# Credits

Transation source can be found here: [New](#) and [Old](#)

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