

## Story 55 Femme's Reappearance

Start of chapter 3

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"Eh? <<Ash of Feniche>>.....?"

Lightly shaking his red hair, Souji Alkasha put the tea before the girl sitting on the sofa. The girl was the master of the mansion Souji worked in.

"That's right, it seems it will be revived soon."

"Hee, is that the information from Count Narios that came a while ago?"

"Ee."

In the noon of the day, Count Narios, who held intimate business relationship with Crowtail, came to the mansion Souji worked in to have business talk with the mansion's current master, Yoyo Yatsugi Crowtail.

The talk advanced smoothly as they each exchanged profitable information. Among them, the thing that piqued Yoyo's interest was <<Ash of Feniche>>.

"<<Ash of Feniche>> is the old feathers of the bird of fire, the lord of 【Asanath Volcano】 in the south, that is peeled off at the time the bird rejuvenate, right?"

"Ee, it is said that the peeled off feathers would immediately turned to ash. The firebird, Feniche, itself has not been seen for several years now, so its ash is a considerably rare material."

"I see. I also heard that things created from that ash have almost permanent durability and would not deteriorate. That's why, the weapon and armor called <<Feniche Series>> are sold expensively."

Normally, the firebird, Feniche, was living inside the volcano, no, the magma. Following that, it went out of the volcano once in several years to laid egg somewhere. However, the probability of the egg hatching was so low, around one in several thousand, even one in several ten thousand.

Also, the immortal bird called Feniche itself died every 20 years by being wrapped in flame that came out of its own body. As-is, it died only to be revived after a while. The flame that was used by Feniche once every 20 years was called <<Flame of Reincarnation>> and just as the name stated, it immediately began to bud a new life after the bird died.

In other words, although it was said to be dead, the Feniche itself didn't completely disappeared from this world. With this as the reason, the birds that have low risk of extinct had a really low birthrate. And naturally, the number of Feniches only increased every time an egg hatched.

However, the number of Feniche that had been confirmed were only three. Following that, even though Feniche was said to be immortal, that was only referring to the natural lifespan. They certainly could be killed by external factors.

In the past, a lot of people came to **【Asanath Volcano】** for Feniche hunting, and the hunting of Feniche was also recorded in history.

Thus the Emperor, who judged the already rare Feniche must not extincted, forbid hunting Feniche to all over the world.

Those who still hunting it would receive severe punishment, thus everyone stopped the hunting due to unable to go against the Emperor. The only thing permitted was to gather the ash that appeared on its revival day that was once in 20 years. And only the ash.

"Looks like the year is just right, huh."

"Seems so. Count Narios also said that he wants to see at least once in his life."

"Doesn't Ojou-sama think so too?"

"I am, I indeed am want to see it at least once, but I am not as enthusiast about it as Count Narios."

"Well, it will only be a great nuisance to the Feniche after all."

"That's right. There's no way one will find it pleasant to have others invading his dwelling and took a fragment of him."

"Normally, such people would be driven away, but the Feniches are cowardly in nature. I also heard that the Feniches would soon run into the magma if they perceived human's presence."

"Fufu, and indeed normal human would not chase after them into the magma."

"Ahaha, but I also want to see the firebird, Feniche, flying gracefully in the sky at least once."

Souji imagined that the appearance of a huge bird like Feniche soaring in the sky would be so charming, so eye-catching. Though not as zealous a Count Narios, he wanted to see the Feniche.

Thus as he thought so, the door of Yoyo's study where the two were was opened with a slam.

"I have heard it, Souji Alkasha! So, let me realize that dream of yours!"

The person that appeared was seen by Souji and Yoyo with cold expressions.

"Wh-What's with you two! I, Femme D Dresoj, have come here, so react a little!"

To be noted, they did react. They thought another problem had come..... they wanted to droop their shoulders.

Beside Femme was an expressionless beauty, wearing maid uniform, who bowed her head. She seemed to say *long time no see*.

The one who first entered after the door opened was a blonde girl named Femme. She had kidnapped Yoyo before because she wanted Souji to become his subordinate in exchange for Yoyo's safety. At that time, it resulted in Souji made her cry.

Next, the woman with light-blue hair whose emotion couldn't be seen was Testarossa, and although her external appearance was completely of a human, she was a <<Mechanical Doll (Automata)>>. A weapon-type that held high combat prowess.

The two were defeated by Souji's magic and Yoyo overlooked them with a condition that they would not trouble Yoyo and Souji again. Since then, Yoyo and Souji didn't hear anything about her, so the two were relieved because they thought she had given up on Souji, but it didn't seem so.

With a big sigh, Yoyo reluctantly moved her lips.

"You, you used magic to come here again, huh. Didn't I say it before? You must not do it again."

Yoyo's glare made Femme's shoulders trembled slightly and,

"I-It's not like there's other way! A-After all, you wouldn't let me enter even if I come to the entrance. So I can only reach here using magic."

Femme's magic was 『Transparency』 magic. Its effect was strong that she wouldn't be found out once she becomes transparent, even her existence couldn't be felt. Moreover, it was a cheaty ability that even made those she touched transparent too.

"Haa, looks like you are mistaken about something."

"Heh? Wh-What do you mean?"

"If you come normally as guests, then you won't be treated unkindly no matter who you are."

"..... is that so?"

"That's why, please come formally from the entrance the next time you come to visit. The thing that happened before didn't matter for me."

"Eh, ah, that..... um..... thank you."

"..... a great joy."

Shyly, Femme said her thanks. Testarossa also had guessed Femme's feeling thus she muttered so. However, once Femme came to her sense, she grits her teeth, pointed at Yoyo and said,

"Th-That thing doesn't matter! Souji Alkasha!"

"..... what is it?"

"Fufufu, do you want to see it? The appearance of flying Feniche, I mean."

"Eh? Ah, indeed. Well, though I said I want to see it if possible...."

*Fufufu*, Femme laughed that even her shoulders shook. She somehow scarily eerie.

"Then, I will let you see it!"

Not only Souji, Yoyo also opened her eyes wide due to those words. That was natural. After all, the currently confirmed Feniches were only three in number. Following that, it was forbidden to hunt them. That's why it attracted their interest when she said she would let Souji see it.

"Can I ask how are you going to do it?"

"Oh my, so even the absolutely perfect, present master of Crowtail is interested in it?"

Femme said so that obviously mixed with a feeling of superiority. However, Yoyo didn't mind her and answered,

"Ee. I am thinking about confirming whether you are all bark with no bite."  
"W-Who is all bark with no bite!"

Apparently, Yoyo actually minded it a little, so she revenged.

"Good grief, you are as impudent as usual. Okay, let me hear your words."

Femme raised her index finger and began to talk, boastingly.

"Fufufu, actually, I have found it a long time ago!"  
"..... can I ask what is it?"

When Souji asked so, Femme, with sparkling eyes, said,

"Feniche's egg!"

She made an astonishing declaration.

## Story 56 Femme's Information

*Clink clink*, sound of silverware could be heard. It was the sound of knife and fork touching the plate. It rang out well inside the silent room.

Following that, after carrying the glass and poured the drink into her small mouth, Femme exhaled in satisfaction.

“Haa~, it is very delicious, Souji.”

“Thank you for the praise, I am glad that you enjoyed it.”

Femme was eating lunch together with the mansion's residents in dining room. After Femme came and talked, it was already lunch time, so she was invited to eat lunch together because she was already in the mansion.

Incidentally, Souji exerted his skill to make the lunch. Thus Femme was in a trance before Souji's skill.

“Nee, Souji. Won't you be my butler?”

“I am sorry, but can't you stop making poor solicitation to my butler?”

“I am asking Souji! Overly restraining women are hated, you know.”

“Ara, there's no problem with that. Souji likes to be restrained after all.”

“I-Is that so!?”

..... *is that so?*

..... そうなの？

Souji instinctively asked himself inwardly.

“Ee, he continues to advance even if it is difficult and able to endure pain several times stronger than an ordinary person could. Rather, only restraining him would not satisfy him.”

*Oh? Don't tell me, Ojou-sama is just returning the provoking words?*

“Eh!? Souji is a masochist!?”

*No no, I am someone with normal inclination.....?*

“Yes, he is. That’s why, I am the only one in this world that capable of satisfying him.”

Souji was quite happy even without experiencing such a thing, thus his cheeks cramped. Right after him, Femme began to bite her fingernail.

“Th-This is unexpected..... I never thought Souji is someone with that inclination. I-I wonder can I become a sadist? What do you think, Testa?”

“..... great effort needed.”

Testa answered in robot-like manner.

“I-I see! It is for the sake of obtaining the greatest butler after all! Souji! I am going to become a great sadist, so serve me!”

“..... I never like such a thing.”

“Ehh!? Wh-Why!? It is an S, you know!? Are you trying to say that there are various kind of sadist!? What should I do, Testa!?”

“..... study is necessary.”

“No, no, Testarossa-san too, please don’t add anymore unnecessary thing! Rather, I am not an M! I am indeed able to endure pain due to the training, but that is just something similar to by-product of the training itself!”

The appearance of Yoyo holding her laugh came into Souji’s view when he desperately said those excuses.

“..... Ojou-sama, is it that fun to make fun of me?”

Apparently, Yoyo didn’t said those as refusal of handing over Souji. She made fun of Souji to lighten the mood in the dining room that was now filled with laughter. The other employees were certainly laughing happily.

If he strained his ear, he could hear the newly hired accountant, the five years old Eu, was asking her mother, Shee, about M and S. Following her, the energetic maid, Ninthe, was also asking Souji’s mother, Kaina, about it.

(Th-This is bad! Setting Eu aside, if Ninthe becomes stained by it-!?)

As long as it was something fun, Kaina would choose it even if she would be targeted by her son. If this keeps up, the pure Ninthe would be poisoned by the pervert, Kaina. However, he was also worrying about Yoyo, Femme, and also Testarossa, so his mind was in a mess.

Anyway, he desperately made excuses and finally solved the misunderstanding after ten minutes had passed. He had thought he was making fervent speech while sweating for a really long time.

The maids returned to do their own works after the lunch ended. Four people were now inside the study, sitting on the sofa, resting.

Maybe because Yoyo was satisfied by the thing that happened during lunch, she was now looking at Femme while smiling.

“Femme, the words you said before is true, right?”

“Of course. There’s no way I would tell a lie.”

“..... the truth.”

Testarossa supported Femme’s words.

The words he told them was about her having found an egg of Feniche. She told them that she was brought along by her father in her childhood to a place and she found Feniche’s egg.

At that time, she was together with Testarossa, and the two were playing, away from her father. At first, she thought of it as just an ordinary bird’s egg and left it as it was. However, after some studying, she came to understand that it was an egg of Feniche.

However, Femme wasn’t interested in animal, so she didn’t come again to look for it until now. Then, when she arrived in Yoyo’s mansion using 『Transparency』 magic, she heard the talk about Feniche from the study by chance. Thus she presented herself when she heard Souji said he wanted to see it.

By the way, her reason to come here was to duel against Yoyo. The prize of the duel was of course Souji, but Yoyo refused by saying it was a hassle. Depressed, Femme started yelling, thus feeling it couldn't be helped, Yoyo invited her to a lunch to improve her mood.

"But, was the one you found a real Feniche's egg?"

"There's no mistake. The volume of information saved inside Testa is vast. Testa had compared that egg with the feature of Feniche's egg and she told me that it was indeed an egg of Feniche."

Femme's partner, Testarossa, was a truly excellent <<Mechanical Doll>>.

"Besides! Though I lost before, Testa is capable of defeating Souji if she is equipped with her strongest equipment!"

"Fufu, that is impossible."

"What did you say!?"

"My butler is the strongest after all. Right, Souji?"

"I am if it is something Yoyo-ojousama wished for."

Actually, he could not easily declare that he was the strongest. After all, he could not envision his victory if he fight for real against the previous head butler, Balmunk.

Balmunk served Yoyo's father. He was now living along with Yoyo's father, away from the mansion, in 【Hi no Kuni】 where Yoyo's mother was.

He was a middle aged man that taught Souji what a butler was, but his non-standard power that could be felt even made Souji paled.

In the past, when Souji was going around the world with Balmunk for training, on a certain day Balmunk said he was going to get the ingredient for meal and dived into the sea. After one hour, Balmunk returned while grasping the tail of a fish so huge that it was even much bigger than a whale.

That fish was a deep-sea fish that lived 1,000 meters under the sea surface, it was the king of carnivore in the deep sea. It was already weird that he only needed to dive for only one hour, but Balmunk was also unhurt even after killing the king of deep-sea which honestly made Souji scared of him.

There's also another legends of Balmunk that deviated from common sense, but Souji sealed those memories until far into the future because his confident would plummet every time he recalled it.

With that person's existence, he could not easily said he was the strongest, but he thought he would answer so if it was something Yoyo believed in.

There's existed a special relationship between him and Yoyo. Souji had lived in this mansion since childhood. Souji lived here together with his mother who was working in this mansion. Souji was a reincarnated person, previously a japanese named Asakura Souji. He died when he tried to save a girl in an accident though he didn't know whether the girl was saved. When he regained his consciousness, he had became a baby in this world, 【Orb】 .

Even when he was still in Japan, Souji liked to do houseworks such as cooking and washing, so he didn't feel any resistance to take care of someone else. That's why when he first met with Yoyo and she said, "Be my butler," Souji wanted to become a butler. Thus he became Yoyo's butler.

Of course that was not the only reason. At that time, when he seen Yoyo's lonely expression, Souji thought he wanted to help her and it was probably his main reason to become her butler. And since then, once Yoyo became the current master when she was nine years old, he too came to handle various works to help her.

Maybe because she felt the bond between the two, Femme made an annoyed expression as she puckered her mouth. Femme herself was a royalty and titled noble of 【Holy Kingdom, Lavahha】 , but no matter how one looked at her, her appearance and age were could only be recognized as that of a child.

"Whatever! After all, I will someday take Souji away myself!"

"..... planning for capture."

*No no, Testarossa-san, it isn't a hunt so please don't use that expression.*

"Fufu, do it if you think you can."

"I will surely do it! Hmph!"

"..... for the love of, anyway, Femme-san, though I want to continue our previous conversation..."

“Ah, now I remember there’s such a thing.”

“Can you tell me where did you found that Feniche’s egg?”

“Fufufu, I will tell you so be my...”

“I refuse.”

“Mu..... tche~.”

Though Souji was doubtful whether it was okay for a royalty and titled noble to sulk like that, he was more interested in their current talk so he wanted to hear it if possible.

“It is impossible for me to come to serve you, but I will answer it if you have other request, you know?”

“I~ see~, then, can I ask for one thing?”

“As long as it isn’t something unreasonable..... Ojou-sama, it’s okay, isn’t it?”

“Ee, I won’t complain if Souji decided to grant it.”

*Gli-nt*, Femme’s eyes shone towards those words. Laughing with *fufufu*, she seemed to think about something bad. Seeing Femme’s expression made Souji thought he was being too rash.

“I accept it. Well then, Femme-san, I have heard your request, so may you tell me the location of Feniche’s egg now?”

“Ee, even though it is a little far from here, there’s no need to worry as it is still in this 【Dolkia continent】 .”

### Story 57 Target : Cespeach

Amakawa Mayuki and Hoshimori Sheila had arrived at 【Brasch】 , a city several kilometers away from where Souji lived, 【Moriarte】 .

These girls were Japanese summoned into this world as the Hero. Sheila herself was a half-foreigner, and the two lived in Japan when they were summoned to 【Orb】 .

The reason for their summoning was an imperial command from the Emperor, who was grieving from the tyranny of the Demon race, to 【Rashtia Kingdom】 . The excellent summoner of the kingdom ended up summoning the two girls along with a boy.

However, although the three of them went to 【Zoan continent】 to subjugate the Demon race, the Demon race that they must subjugate had already been destroyed by a boy.

Thinking that the boy's appearance was the same as her childhood friend, Asakura Souji, Mayuki left a letter and left the Kingdom to look for him, accompanied by Sheila. Thus they met an excellent information dealer that told them the boy's features were of Souji Alkasha along with the place where he lived in. That's why they were currently advancing towards 【Moriarte】 , the town where Souji lived.

"Say, Sheila, did you hear?"  
"Eh? What is it?"

While walking, Mayuki called out to Sheila by her side. Mayuki is a beautiful girl with straight, long, black and glossy, beautiful hair whose smile truly suited her. Her height was rather small, 146 centimeters, but her two swellings that were the symbols of womanhood and always bathed in attention from the men keep swaying as she walked.

On the other side, Sheila has brown and wavy, short hair. Her irises are blue, displaying her foreign bloodline. The two were still teenagers, but their looks are definitely of beauties.

"It's nothing, but it is said that a festival will soon be held in a town in the south."  
"Hee, what kind of festival?"  
"It seems to be the day of revival for a famous kind of bird."  
"Bird? Revival day? What does it mean?"  
"Nn~, I wonder! Me not understand!"

Seeing Mayuki was laughing cheerfully, Sheila also smiled.

"More importantly is THAT! We will soon meet with that person!"  
"Yes!"

The two keep walking on the road, approaching their destination. But immediately, a girl caught Mayuki's attention.

The girl was talking about something to a man with intensity capable of snapping someone's head off. However, the man shook his head, and the girl drooped her shoulders, depressed. Immediately, as if she had given up, the girl immediately go away from there. Worrying when she looked at the girl's back that exuded regret, Mayuki approached the man.

“What happened?”

“Eh? Wh-Who are you?”

Naturally, the man was surprised from being abruptly talked to.

“Ah, sorry. You can call me Mayuki. I am just being curious about the conversation you had with that girl from before.”

“Ah, I see..... to tell you the truth, that girl’s mother seems to be infected by a nasty disease.”

“Huh..... ah, are you a doctor?”

“Eh? Ah, I am. For now I am working as a town doctor....”

Apparently, that girl came to ask for medicine’s prescription from this doctor. But, when he told her he didn’t handle such a medicine, the girl immediately turned to ask for him to order it. However even though he could order it, the ingredients of the medicine the girl needed were something rare, so much time would be needed before the medicine could be obtained.

Hearing that, the girl said that it would be too late for her mother, so she was going to look for it in other towns.

“Eh? That’s..... but, it is dangerous for that child to go outside alone!”

There were bandits and dangerous creatures outside of the town. It’s possible that she would lose her life. Thus Mayuki ran after the girl in a hurry.

“Ah, Mayuki-san!”

After slightly bowing her head to the man, Sheila ran after Mayuki.

Immediately, Mayuki caught up to the girl and called out to her.

“Hey, please wait!”

“.....!?”

The girl turned around and saw Mayuki. Large drops of tears flowed from her big, round eyes with nut-brown irises.

The girl was puzzled because she was suddenly called out to, thus Mayuki gently asked her.

“Your mother is sick?”

The girl only nodded.

“Can you tell me the detail?”

Mayuki, along with Sheila who had caught up to her, asked the girl for the detail.

What Mayuki heard from the girl could be summarized as below.

The girl's name is Mill. One day, her mother collapsed. It was a fatherless family, so the doctor judged that Mill's mother was too exhausted from always working until late at night.

Mill was relieved when the doctor said her mother would be better after rest for a few days. However, one day, two days, even when it was on the third day, her mother's condition didn't improve. Rather, her temperature raised and rashes begun to appear. Moreover, although the normal rashes were red in color, her were dark blue.

After the previous doctor examined her, he said that it was a very rare disease called [Blue Cold]. Long in the past, a lot of people were infected by it, but the number of occurrence gradually faded as the time passed. And now it was a disease that almost no one infected by.

Thus no one have the medicine at hand, and there's no way for a doctor's office of a small town to have the medicine prepared in the stock.

If it was a big town or a capital, the infected would probably be cured by the doctor or healer there, but unfortunately there's no such a thing in this small town.

This [Blue Cold] was divided into three stages. First was the appearing of ordinary cold-like symptoms, then the temperature would be raised along with the appearing of blue rashes in the third day. After a day, there would be a radical decrease in physical strength accompanied by consciousness beginning to become hazy.

Three days later, the rashes would completely cover the body, and the skin turned blue. And after several hours, the infected would be dead. A frightening disease it was.

“That’s..... eu.”

Sheila muttered so with trembling lips. She never thought it was such a scary disease. With a serious face, Kaori talked to the downcast Mill.

“Can you bring me to your mother?”

“Eh?”

“It’s okay, right, Sheila?”

“O-Of course!”

Mill couldn’t conceal her puzzlement as she looked up at the two’s faces. Mayuki did her best to keep smiling to soothe her and said,

“After all, we might be able to help you!”

Seeing hope in those words, Mill’s expression brightened.

Afterwards, guided by Mill, Mayuki and Sheila walked on the town and arrived at a house. A splendid house made of stone that looked nice under the sunlight. Mayuki came to respect Mill’s mother who did her best in this fatherless family.

Entering the house, there was a kitchen on the left, and on the right were two simple beds. A woman was lying on one of the beds.

The face that could be seen outside the bedding was still red due to heat, but the rashes had not spread there. However, when Mill raised a part of the bedding and seeing the mother’s arm, the two were at a loss for words.

Her arm was blue and life couldn't be felt from it. Though the color blue could also appeared when one was bruised, the arm was completely blue, no other color remained. One would agreed if it was said to be frostbite.

"Do you understand something now, Sheila?"

Mayuki was relying on Sheila's <<High-vision>>. Sheila's eyes could see through everything, roughly understanding the condition of the things she seen. Therefore, she was currently seeing on how much danger Mill's mother was.

Sheila had acted before Mayuki asked her and still silently observing Mill's mother. Following that, she quietly opened her mouth.

"This..... is indeed a nasty disease."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. It weakened the energy inside the body, and worsen the blood flow. But, there's no rampaging of magic thanks to her not having <<Magic Core>>. Other than that it really is just a disease."

"I see..... can Sheila cure her?"

"Eu..... sorry. Sheila's power can only heal injury."

Sheila was depressed and feeling apologetic. Just like Sheila, Mayuki also carried special power in her body. It could be called as the benefit of arriving into this world.

The girls were summoned into this world, 【Orb】 , through ritual of 【Summoning Brave Souls Vessels】 . Inside each of their body was the 【Heroic Spirit】 of a hero that was once lived in this world. Following that, the 【Heroic Spirit】 's power could be used by Mayuki and the other two.

Sheila's <<Hi-vision>> was also one of the power from the 【Heroic Spirit】 .

"I see, so we need the medicine eh."

"Un, Sheila thinks we must go right now towards a big town because there might be a medicine there...."

What Mill chose to do was correct. It was the only method she could choose. However, it was too dangerous for a girl as young as her to go outside alone. After all, the public order in 【Orb】 wasn't that good.

The gap between rich and poor was big in this world, so there were a lot of bandits. Most of them were people incapable of using magic because the current state of the world made preferential treatment to magic-user.

"Nn~ but we don't know whether there's a town that have the medicine, right?"

"Eh? Th-That is right..... but...."

"What is the medicine's name?"

"The medicine..... rather it is a food that becomes a wonder drug."

"Food? What kind of food?"

"<<Cespeach>>."

"..... Sheila, do you know it?"

"Ah, yes. Sheila read it on a book when we were still in the castle."

"Really? When?"

"Umm..... wait, didn't Sheila and Mayuki-san studied it together...."

Having come to this world, Sheila studied to learn the common sense of this world. Thus while she studied, Sheila seen that name in one of the book.

"Ah.....ahaha, b-but, I am not good at study."

"I-Indeed, Mayuki-san is always sleeping eh...."

Giving up, Sheila leaked a sigh. Mayuki scratched her head with *oopsie* feeling.

"S-So, what kind food is <<Cespeach>>?"

"It is a kind of fruit. If Sheila is not mistaken, it grows in this 【Dolkia continent】."

"Oh! Then, rather than looking for a town that have it, it will be better if we look for the tree, right?"

Mayuki said so to Mill, but Mill wore a gloomy expression.

"Wh-What's wrong?"

"Mayuki-san. <<Cespeach>> is indeed can be found, but it would be impossible for her to do it alone."

"Eh? Why?"

“The problem is the place where <<Cespeach>>’s tree grows.”

“The place? J-Just where does it grow?”

“It grows at a place called 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 in the north.”

“Hee, is it nearby?”

“We can arrive there in one day if we hurry, but...”

“Yosh! Let’s go!”

“Ehh!? I-Is it really okay?”

“Un! After all, from the current condition of Mill’s mother, we still have about three days left, right? Then, let’s hurry!”

“B-But..... how about Asakura-san?”

“Of course troubled people take priority.”

“..... fufu, it is Mayuki-san-ish. Sheila agrees.”

Sheila was defeated by Mayuki’s pushiness while Mill was still stiffened in astonishment.

“Listen, Mill. We are going to get that <<Cespeach>>, so wait for us, kay?”

“Eh..... b-but..... is it really okay?”

“Don’t worry, don’t worry! It is bad for a child to hold back, you know!”

Seeing Mayuki’s radiant smile, Mill began to cry.

“t-..... th-..... thank..... you....”

Mayuki quietly patted Mill’s head and,

“Yup, we are going to return quickly. Till then, do your best to nurse your mother.”

“U-Un!”

“Good girl!”

Mayuki happily rustled Mill’s hair because of Mill’s good reply.

“Well then, let’s go, Sheila!”

“Okay!”

Thus the duo hurriedly went towards 【Sacred Mountain of Shinju】 , aiming for <<Cespeach>>.

### Story 58 The Family's Trip

“Umm..... everyone, what's with those luggages?”

A strange spectacle currently unfolded before Souji. Just several hours ago, Femme D. Dresoj and her <<Mechanical Doll>>, Testarossa, had suddenly appeared.

Souji's interest piqued when he heard Femme's story. It was about the firebird, Feniche.

The revival day of Feniche was approaching, thus an event called Revival Festival would be held in the town in the south.

However, it was difficult to actually see a Feniche. And Souji himself wanted to see a Feniche flying in the sky at least once if possible.

Thus Femme told Souji that she once found a Feniche's egg in her childhood. After hearing the egg's location, Yoyo agreed to look for the egg for fun because she also has a work to do around that location.

The ones going there were of course Souji, Yoyo, Femme, and Testarossa, the four of them or so it should be....

“..... why are mother and the others coming too?”

That's right, in front of Souji were his mother, Kaina, Ninthe, Eu and even Eu's mother, Shee, enthusiastically making a complete preparation for long distance travel.

Apparently, Kaina told Yoyo that they wanted to go too when Kaina and the others heard about it.

“..... can we, Ojou-sama?”

“Ee, it's not like we are going there for the egg.”

“Eh?”

“Isn't it Souji's task to search for the egg?”

It was indeed Souji who said he wanted to see the egg, but...

“Th-Then, what about Ojou-sama and the others?”

“We are going to 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】. The mountain will turn beautifully red in this season so we are going to enjoy ourselves watching the autumn leaves in the mountain foot. Souji, you are going to run around into the mountain to your heart’s content.”

“Haa....”

He was not a wild creature that loved the mountain, but it was indeed easier for him to move alone. Bringing this many people into the mountain would only make it difficult to keep an eye on everyone of them and possessed risks.

“Ease your mind, Souji! After all, I am the one who is going to guide you!”

*..... ah, I forgot Femme is also here.*

“..... by the way, Femme-san, you said that the egg is in the deepest part of 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 , right?”

“Nn~ I wonder..... I think it isn’t that far. After all, there are a lot of unwanted bunches there, so I didn’t enter it that deep.”

“It is good if that’s true.”

Her answer wasn’t a satisfying one, so Souji prayed that the egg would be found just around the hillside of the mountain. As for the reason, 【Sacred Mountain of Shinju】 was where abnormal creatures lived.

Souji had once came there in his training journey, and the strongest impression he got was, that was a really troublesome place.

However, because it was that kind of place that he could understand the Feniche would be able to laid the egg in peace. After all, 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】’s main characteristic was its thick forest thus it was rarely entered by people, moreover there’s no creature that would aim for the egg there.

“The rumor also said it is about time for the egg to hatch, right?”

“Ee, it is said that the time the egg hatches is at the same day as Feniche’s revival day.”

Yoyo moved her slender lips and explained so.

The revival day was nearby, so was the time for the egg to hatch. The timing was just right, a lucky thing for Souji.

However it wasn’t a sure thing that the egg would hatch. If it didn’t hatch once the revival day come, the egg would turn into sand, returning to the ground.

Therefore, even if the egg was found, it didn’t mean Souji’s wish to see Feniche soaring in the sky would be fulfilled. But, there’s still the possibility it would, so Souji wanted to at least try it.

“Souji, is the preparation done?”

“Certainly. I have also prepared the carriage.”

Actually Kaina had prepared a carriage herself. But, he was asked to prepare one where all of them could board on it.

“Then, let’s go.”

It became like a picnic with a lot of people, and Souji was lightly sighing as they went out of the mansion because he was somewhat worried about what might happen.

The carriage Souji prepared was a huge carriage that was specially designed to carry a lot of people. Furthermore, two horse with strong built were used to pull it.

Inside the carriage were seats that set up in right and left sides while the middle was the space where one person could go through, creating similar feelings to that of a bus. The roof itself was made to be sturdy, so there’s no need to worry if there was a rain.

Souji himself was the coach of this carriage. The eight people with Souji included moved in quite a fast speed.

While the carriage moved towards the destination, Ninthe's voice that sound like she was having fun could be heard from the carriage's interior. After all, it was the first time she has an outing with everyone.

Eu herself was being excited as she looked at the flowing scenery. Yoyo was in her own world, reading a book. *Won't Ojou-sama got dizzy....?* Next, looking at outside scenery, Kaina said,

"Haa~ this scenery make me want to gulp Hanazake~."

*Oy, mother, don't you even think of taking turn with your son even a little?* Souji secretly thought so, but he concluded that there's no way Kaina would think so.

"Fufu, it's been a long time since I travel along the land."

Putting a hand on her cheek, Shee smiled in nostalgia.

"Hee, so you had it. Well, sometimes it is good to relax, right~"

*Oy, mother, aren't you always relaxing every day?* Was what he wanted to say, but he stopped his retort because he needed to focus on the rein.

Then, Eu approached to where Ninthe and Souji were.

"Nee, Onii-chan, how much longer till we get there?"

Eu asked how much time needed to arrive at their destination.

"Hmm, with this speed, we will arrive in around four to five hours."

"Fuwa~ it is that long?"

Souji nodded to answer Ninthe's question.

"Ee, so please enjoy the scenery. Also, please tell me if you want to pick the flower."

“Eh? Why flower? Does Eu-chan know?”

“..... perhaps it is because Onii-chan likes flower.”

Souji hesitate whether to answer the two.

“You two don’t know about it? Picking a flower is the slang used for relieving yourself.”

Femme explained so to the two. Then, when Femme saw the two tilted their heads saying “Relieving?” and “Slang?”, she thoroughly explained it after saying, “It can’t be helped eh.”

(Hee, looks like she is good at taking care of other huh.)

Souji murmured a praise when he found an unexpected side of Femme. Immediately, Testarossa sat beside Souji.

“..... umm, do you have business with me?”

Souji was perplexed because she was just sitting there without saying anything.

“..... assist.”

“Heh? A-Assist? Ah, ahh~ you mean you are taking shift with me on reining the horses?”

“..... joint work.”

Though Souji felt joint work wasn’t the right words, it seemed Testarossa wanted to help him because she thought it would be too exhausting for Souji alone to do it.

Maybe because Testarossa is a doll, it was hard to read her emotion. However, Souji honestly felt it was wonderful that she was capable of worrying.

“I am thankful for your consideration. However, there’s no need for you to do so. I have trained to be able to do it if it is just five hours after all.”

“..... an astonishing butler.”

“Ahaha, I am also astonished by Testarossa-san, you know?”

“.....?”

“Because Testarossa-san is so human even though you are a <<Mechanical Doll>>.”

“..... objection. Testarossa is not a human.”

“I know, but you have heart.”

“..... heart?”

“It is. To be able to think and worrying about other make you no different than human. Almost everyone put their self as their main priority. It is especially true in this world. However, Testarossa-san is different. You are very pure, you look straight towards the people and pay attention to their needs. That is something very human.”

“..... understanding..... impossible.”

Testarossa was looking down, hiding her face.

“I am sorry if I made you confused. I will apologize if I hurt your feelings. So, please just think of it as thoughtless words of a foolish butler.”

“..... it is not unpleasant.”

“Ahaha, I am happy to hear that. Ah, look, isn't your master in trouble now?”

Looking at Femme, she was puzzled because Ninthe and Eu keep questioning her one after another. It was nice of her that she did her best to answer them, but she was asked with “Why?,” for her answer that wasn't understandable. Children always like to continue questioning like that, so even Souji had times when he was troubled by them.

“Please go to her.”

“..... say if tired.”

“..... understood.”

Souji was feeling good as his heart warmed because Testarossa is a truly kind-hearted doll.

“Nee~ Souji~, don't you have snack and alcohol~?”

*Ahh, I know. This is my mother. I won't cry. I will absolutely not cry. But, somehow my eyes feel a little hot now.*

Immediately after his heart was touched by the warm, he felt that his heart was now buried under the iceberg because of his own mother.

**Story 59 Sacred Mountain Shinju**

【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 . It was a mountain that represented 【Dolkia continent】 , a lush green mountain located in the north of <<Nockles region>>. In the current season, the abundant green trees were turning red. And the scenery attracted a lot of tourists to visit the mountain.

However, 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 was originally designated as a dangerous place because of a certain reason. And the reason was the existence of the things living in 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 .

“Fuh, I wonder if that thing really here, right, Jingo?”

Thick eyebrows and plump lips. Following that, having a good body build with height exceeding two meters..... a man.

That’s right, those words might made some thought it was a woman, but it was indeed a man that said those words. With short, spiky hair, his forehead was exposed. However, somehow the hair at the back of his head was long, creating a sense of incompatibility as it was tied with red rubber. A man that could be said as unique.

“Humph, I hear you so don’t turn that sweaty face here! If the others see this they would thought, *ah they are getting along so well even though both of them are male, maybe they are in that kind of relationship, huh!*

The man called Jingo was backing away when the bulky man’s face drew near, his gesture was completely showing his rejection. Jingo’s hair is black, but there’s some blue making it darkblue in some place.

He didn’t maintain his hair so it looked like an explosion. His appearance was perfectly like an evil thug because his gaze seemed to glare at whoever he looked at.

Moreover, his height didn’t even reach 170 centimeters, so he really looked like a hoodlum compared to the big bodied man.

“nmou, there’s no need to be that embarrassed. After all, we are linked by the red string of fate!”

“Linked your ass! Rather, this is just a job! And you are simply a partner in this job! So, don’t come any closer! I’ll really leave you, you monster!”

“Ara! How can you! It’s cruel for you to call me a monster, Jingo! Even though I love you so much!”

“Don’t say something that can be misunderstood! To begin with, we were only going to the same dojo, nothing more than that!”

“Huff huff huff...,” Jingo was running out of breath after he grandly declared that, but the big bodied man was blushing.

“How nostalgic..... I missed Jingo when you are still small. Aa, if only I eat you and make you mine at that time.”

“As if, you foool!”

“Fufufu, just kidding. The inside of the mountain is rather dark, so I tried to playfully lightened it.”

*Gakkuri*, Jingo drooped his shoulders.

“Ah, but if Jingo said you want my chastity, then I..... will do my best!”

The thick face winked at Jingo which made him feeling premonition of death, thus he took even more distance.

“Fufufu, I am shy after all.”

“Y-Your joke doesn’t seem like a joke, so please stop, it scares me....”

“Oh my, what a useless child to say that. But I understand, I will take you to an inn after this job is done and the two of us will....”

“Who’s going with you! I will absolutely go to another inn!”

“How awful! You are so cruel! At least say different room!”

However, Jingo indeed felt that his chastity was in crisis by being at the side of this big bodied man, so it was natural for him to go to different inn than different room.

“Ahh, for the love of! Let’s quickly find the thing requested and return, Zenji!”

The big bodied man is Zenji. Being called by his name, Zenji raised his hand and happily said, “Ye~s.” Jingo walked ahead and took out a paper from his pocket.

“Seriously, I wonder if that something egg really is in this creepy place.”

“Nn~ the commission said so. However, it had been confirmed by a trusty information dealer, so it must be somewhere in this mountain.”

“A~a, I want to return quickly and dip in hot water.”

“Ara, that’s sound good. Then, I will w-a-s-h Jingo’s back.”

“I will send you flying to the sky if you do that.”

When Jingo raised his voice, the two gasped as they noticed something.

“See~, they come out..... the inhabitants of this mountain.”

Jingo turned his gaze towards a direction, raising the corners of his mouth happily. There, translucent, spherical objects were floating in the air.

“Zenji, don’t attack them. They are my preys!”

“Oh moi, a battle junkie as usual. Lo-ve-ly!”

“D-Don’t blowing in my earrrrr!”

Jingo’s shout echoed inside the mountain.

After several hours passed, Souji’s group arrived at the foot of **【Sacred Mountain Shinju】** .

There, the female group were absent-mindedly gazing at the superb scenery.

Spreading before them were a mountain where numerous trees had their leaves turned to either red or yellow. It made Souji think that he wanted by all means to photograph such a scenery if he was in Japan.

Tourists who were doing sketching could be seen everywhere. A lot of tourists were gathering to see this scenery from the mountain foot.

Most of the tourists were people born from household with high social status, thus owning exquisite, artist-like artistic sense.

Moreover, there were shops opened in this mountain foot, doing their best to attract customers with specialties such as <<Shinju Manjuu>> and <<Shinju Brooch>>.

Naturally, the mountain could be climbed, but no one could be seen trying that as far as Souji could see. After all, here was the boundary of safety area. The mountain foot was a normal place with little to no risk, but the danger increased drastically once one entered the mountain.

Thinking he would soon entering the mountain made Souji feels a little melancholic, but the group has come here, so there's no way he would stop Yoyo's group of females from enjoying watching the autumn leaves.

"Well then, Souji, I am going to gather information here. So, you do whatever you want."

Souji got permission for free activity from Yoyo. Yoyo herself was an information dealer, so she gathered information of special products from various places which would be useful for business talk.

"As you wish, Yoyo-ojousama."

"The others too, you can go around. There's a lot of shops here."

Ninthe and the others raised high-spirited voices at Yoyo's words. It was especially true for Ninthe and Eu because it might be the first time they were seeing this autumn scenery while sightseeing. Their faces were filled with excitement.

"Ninthe, it is dangerous to run!"

Kaina admonished Ninthe, who seemed to almost knocked against someone, and Ninthe stuck out her tongue with, "Oopsie~." It was indeed very cute, but just as Kaina said, Souji also wanted her not to be too excited. He didn't want her to be a lost child.

Eu was pulling her mother's hand as she looked at the shops with sparkling eyes. For Eu, she was more interested in the shops than the autumn leaves. She was a child so it was something like snack before flower.

"Then, Ojou-sama, I am going to enter the mountain along with Femme-san and Testarossa-san."

"Ee, take care."

"Certainly. Ojou-sama too, never let that necklace go."

"I know."

Before her chest was the tag of the necklace. It was something endowed with Souji's magic so that he can perceive Yoyo's crisis. Moreover, it was a truly convenient item as Souji will be able to instantly teleport to the place where yellow crest carved on the necklace is.

Souji separated from Yoyo, walking towards Kaina's side.

"Mother, I hope you are not cut too much loose. Especially, I prohibit mother from things like alcohol."

"M-My~, Souji. I am someone like a leading teacher here, you know? A teacher would not do something stupid like drinking in the middle of work, you know~"

..... *it stinks of lies....*

What Souji thought couldn't be mistaken. After all, her action was obviously suspicious. Moreover, she seemed to have forgotten that she demanded alcohol on the way here.

Although he unconsciously leaked a sigh, Souji looked away from it because he also had things he wanted to do.

"Let's go, Femme-san, Testarossa-san."

Thus, he entered 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 accompanied by the two.

## Story 60 Ominous Soul Tribe

Around that time, Mayuki and Sheila were also steadily approaching 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 . On their way to 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 , the two boarded a carriage which in turn made the two smiled as they would arrive earlier than they had expected.

Mountain that had been dyed in autumn could be seen in the distance. Guessing the conversations of the people riding on the carriage, their objective was to sightseeing. The people inside the carriage were either aiming for the autumn sight or the specialty products, but Mayuki and Sheila weren't. The two were going to 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 to acquire the fruit called <<Cespeach>>.

Once they obtained the fruit, they must quickly return to Mill's place. They had assumed the round trip would be two days, so they only have one day to search the fruit. Otherwise, Mill's mother would be dead from the disease.

From the information, Mill's mother will still have several hours after the three days had passed, but that depended on the person in the end. They had heard the case where the patient passed away after only several minutes after the three days had passed.

Therefore, the two wished that the carriage would go faster. The time to search for <<Cespeach>> will increase if they arrived even a little earlier, and if they can quickly find it, they would be able to return quickly thus the probability of saving the life of Mill's mother increased too.

“Excuse me, Mayuki-san.”

“What is it, Sheila?”

“What should we do once we arrived at 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 ?”

“NN~ do you know where <<Cespeach>> tree grows?”

“No, Sheila isn't.”

“I thought so. So first, we gather information. It is good if there's someone well informed about the mountain, and because I heard there's a lot of tourists, there's surely someone who knows about it.”

Mayuki was quite an optimist, but it was indeed correct for them to gather information first. They might come to a completely different place and waste the time if they blindly entered the mountain.

In other case, they would only lost the time if their searching range wasn't narrowed.

“It seems there are shops there, so don’t worry, we will surely find it.”

It felt like Mayuki was reassuring herself. She didn’t want to think that they can’t find the fruit. It was because Mayuki had told Mill to wait for her. It’s her policy to protect a promise that she made.

Following that, Sheila was thinking of supporting such a Mayuki.

Without stopping, the carriage ran straight ahead as if the two’s wish was transmitted to it.

Having entered the mountain, Souji was walking behind Femme and Testarossa who were his guide. Walking on the road where fallen leaves spreaded, his feeling calmed by seeing the autumn scene.

Normally, Souji would be busy with works, but he began to think that it wasn’t bad to peacefully walk around the mountain.

(Well, I would be happier if this mountain isn’t a dangerous one though.)

Walking, the path forked into two. The right was descending, while the left one ascending. And of course, they choose the left one.

“By the way, Femme-san.”

“Nn? What is it?”

“Femme-san is the eldest daughter of Lord Dresoj, a royalty and titled noble of 【Holy Kingdom Lavahha】 , right?”

“Hee, so you know. What about it?”

“I heard Dresoj clan is a distinguished family of doll-user. It even has private school to train doll-user.”

“..... you really know it well, Souji.”

*Well, I think it is very natural to look for the details of the person who attacked us, was what Souji thought, but he didn't say it. Ehehe, Femme was laughing because she was pleased that Souji knew about her then said,*

“Well, even though it was called private school, it was more like a dojo. In the beginning, we are family of doll-maker and produced <<Mechanical Doll(Automata)>>, but the number of doll-user had decreased, thus it was decided to train the doll-user. Souji must also had known it, but <<Magic Core>> is needed for someone to become a doll-user.”

“Ee, the master's magic power is converted to the doll's magic circuit thus the contract, right?”

“That's right, however not everyone has <<Magic Core>> and it isn't good if there's no talent for it. Therefore, our house is looking for people that can become an excellent magic-user to train them.”

“I see. Then, am I also able to make a contract with <<Mechanical Doll>>?”

“Eh? What? Are you interested?”

Stopping, Femme turned around and pressed on Souji.

“Ah, no..... it is because I am also a magic-user, so my attention was slightly caught.”

“Wha~t, how boring. If you are really interested, then I would have make you my apprentice and train you this instant.”

“Ahaha, Femme-san is a spartan-type eh.”

“Of course! The teaching would not be forged into the person if it was done gently and slowly.

The person needed to desperately move on even if he feels it was hard.”

Souji was truly impressed by Femme's words. It was because the words were the same as the one Balmunk said to him in the past. In fact, between one that hurt the body and one that gently learnt from a person, the former's speed was far faster to be engraved into one's body.

“Besides, even if I look like this, I had a hard time when I was making a contract with this child.”

“Is that so? I have never thought Femme-san would have such difficulty because you looked like a genius to me....”

“Hear me, Souji, no matter how much talent one has, it's not something ordinary for someone to be able to make a contract with a doll. It wasn't something easy because if one could not aligned with magic circuit, not only the doll, the person itself will be receiving the load that created at that time.”

Souji had indeed heard stories about that. Among those, there were one where the doll became out of control and killed the contractee before it.

“That’s why, no matter how talented a person is, a contract with a doll is a life-threatening thing. Well, there’s also monster-like doll-user who contracted with multiple dolls though.”  
“Was there such a person?”

Morrow, for the first time Souji saw a shadow casted on Femme’s face, then she only answered with “Well there is.” Souji was slightly interested in it, but he decided to change the topic because it seemed to be something that shouldn’t be asked about.

“Now that I think of it, how long have Femme-san and Testarossa-san been together?”  
“..... hmm, I think it is almost seven years now....”

Strong, deep emotions could be felt from Femme’s words. However,

“..... isn’t it eight year?”

Although the mood could be felt to be slightly stiffened, Souji didn’t butt in with “Well, one year isn’t that much of an error.” But Femme blushed and,

“I-I-I-I know! I-It’s that, you know! I am just testing if Testa remember about it!”

A terrible excuse. To begin with, as a doll, it was impossible for there to be a mistake in her memory as long as she isn’t broken. However, a doll is very innocent.

“..... a test. Is Femme assured?”

She didn’t suspect Femme at all. Conversely, Testarossa began to watch out for Femme to test or give her a question at any time.

Not backing away, Femme gave out various questions such as their past actions. Following that, Testarossa correctly answered without any confusion.

With her cheeks cramped, Femme said, "As expected of Testarossa!" and she continued to bring out questions to hide her mistake.

(Even though she is a noble, this part of her is the same as a normal girl.)

Yoyo was the same. Although normally she behaved gracefully, she would act just like someone her age in an unexpected moment if she was with people she liked. When the mood somehow became peaceful, Testarossa halted and stood before Femme to guard her as she looked ahead.

Souji understood why she did that.

(A~ah, they came huh....)

Thus when he silently stared at the shadow of a tree, floating objects appeared from there. As the size..... rather, their outward appearances were of rat. However, the things that differed them from a rat were them being translucent ----- and as big as a human.

"Both of you, please stay back."

Souji moved before the two, facing the translucent rats.

"I-I remember that these things would come out..."

"Ee, Testarossa-san, please protect Femme-san."

"..... acknowledged."

Receiving Testarossa's agreement, Souji outstretched his right hand towards the translucent rats.

"This mountain's inhabitants..... Ominous Soul tribe, also a race called Spirit or Phantom. It is well-known that nothing other than magic would be effective against these guys. That's why, ..... devour them, white flame."

White flame rushed out from Souji's right palm. The flame expanded and like a big creature, it opened its mouth.

As it was, it swallowed the translucent rats.

(Normally, it would be ended with this....)

Suddenly, several translucent animals came out of the ground.

(That's why this is troublesome.)

This Ominous-Soul tribe was the race that lived in this 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 , an existence that capable of becoming completely ethereal.

And although they cannot hit human nor use magic, they were equipped with a special ability.

“Ah, wait, don't come here! Testa, use magic gun and-..... wait, they are also behind us!?”

Cat shaped Ominous Soul tribe appeared behind Femme. Testarossa hurriedly covered Femme, but another Ominous Soul tribe members abruptly appeared from their feet. Following that each of them had an Ominous Soul tribe touching their body. Thus instantly, Souji inwardly said *Oopsie~*, and thinking.

Their power, to those they touched-----

“Nyah, myat wiith this!”

Femme's appearance suddenly changed to a cat with three colors for fur.

That's right, those they touched would turned into the kind of animal that touched them. Moreover, the victim wouldn't be able to use magic while the worn clothing would be transformed into the animal's specification.

note : my english side for neko-go (cat language) is still in beginner level-nya~

## Story 61 Encounter Between Yoyo and Mayuki

People called this power of Ominous-Soul tribe as 『Innocent Mischievousness (Innocent Joy) 』 . The reason, it was unknown when the victim would be returned to normal. Moreover when the victim turned back, the clothing worn would be disappeared for some reason..... in other words, the victim becomes naked.

Souji had also received this baptism the first time he came to this mountain. He became a pig, and loudly laughed at by Balmunk. Moreover, it was hard for him to turn back, and he turned back when he was walking down the mountain which made him unable to forget how panicky he was at that time.

The painful gazes of people nearby remained in his mind through his life.

“..... kon.”

Somehow there's a super cute small animal. Its external appearance was of a fox, and the aura it carried made Souji understood that it was Testarossa-san. Moreover, the way she tilted her head as she barked was cute, so it wasn't weird that Souji unconsciously wanted to pet her.

Souji immediately took the two animals, no, the two people and dashed to escape. It would be bad if even Souji was transformed into an animal here.

Naturally, the Ominous Soul tribe chased after them, but he obstructed the chasers by skillfully controlling the white flame..... however, more appeared from ahead now.

“Ah~, there's no other way eh. Although I will be exhausted using this..... become my desired image, orange flame.”

Orange-colored flame appeared and covered his body. Without covering the eyes, it looked like an armor of flame. Femme was astonished by his transformation.

As he was, Souji steadily walked forward.

“Nyah! W-Wait a sec, Souji!? There's a lot of things mya want to ask, but first, here they come-nya!”

Just as Femme said, all of the Ominous Soul tribe members came to attack. Thus they touched Souji body..... not.

As for the reason, although the Ominous-Soul tribe touched the orange-colored flame, they couldn't pass through and touched Souji's skin like they did with normal clothing. They were obstructed by the flame.

Their ability couldn't be used if they didn't touch the other's skin. That's why Souji chose to do this. The Ominous Soul tribe were creatures that weak against magic, thus they were incapable of passing through magic.

Seeing that, Femme in Souji's arm has her ear twitching and asked.

"Just mywat happened?"

"Ah, so you indeed curious about this, cat-Femme-san?"

"Nya, mywat's with that way to call mya!"

*Fushah*, Femme growled, but rather than scary she looked cute. After a little apologizing, Souji explained the reason to her.

Morrow, Femmed moved her small head in a nod as if saying, *I see*.

"I remember that Femme-san had came here before, right? So, how did you dealt with these guys' ability?"

"At that time, I used my 『Transparency』 magic to move around-nya."

"Aa, I see. Eh? Then, why didn't you use it before?"

Immediately, *puih*, Femme faced away then said,

"..... i-it's nyot like I can't use magic due to panic-nya!"

"Now that I recall. Femme-san, you said something like you forgot about the existence of Ominous Soul tribe, right?"

"..... Souji's character is quite evil, nya"

She was likely to forget the tribe's existence due to being too captivated by the surrounding scenery. Thus she forgot that the tribe were attacking in group, became panicked, and it turned to this. As he thought, Femme was a naive one.

Even now, Souji continued to walk calmly while being guided by Femme and taking caution to the Ominous Soul tribe members floating on his surroundings.

Having reached the foot of 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 , Mayuki and Sheila immediately went to gather information. They discovered that there were a lot of stores and tourists in the mountain foot.

The two were trying to look for someone who seemed well-informed, but a particularly beautiful woman entered Mayuki's view. With raiment-like veil on her head, a beautiful woman that exudes transparent and mysterious beauty.

(Ha~ what a beautiful person~.)

Moreover, the woman's hand was pulled by someone that seemed to be the woman's child, a cute little girl that made Mayuki instinctively wanted to hug her. The two were wearing maid uniforms therefore they were standing out.

The other people, especially the men, were turning around to look at her again everytime she passed them. However seeing their clothing, no one try to put their hand on the woman because they judged she was working under a noble.

"If Sheila isn't mistaken, they are from Star Jellyfish tribe."

"Eh? Sheila knows about them!?"

Mayuki displayed her surprise because Sheila knew the woman's race.

"Eu..... Mayuki-san, we learnt it before in the castle..... right?"

"Eh..... ah,ahaha..... sorry."

Mayuki hung her head in shame because of her limited knowledge due to hating to study.

“But, she really is beautiful. Ah, the people over there are also wearing the same maid uniform, Mayuki-san.”

“Eh, wh-where is it?”

Sheila told her, thus Mayuki turned her gaze and there were indeed a red-haired woman wearing the same maid uniform accompanied by a child around 10 years old by her side. The two left Mayuki a different impression from the previous two, but there’s no mistake that the one she saw were a beautiful woman and a cute little girl. Just seeing the child smiling from ear to ear as they bought food from the stall made one smiled.

“Ha~ it is that, right~ the one those beauties and cute children worked under is someone they really love.”

“Mayuki-san means..... the employer is a m-male?”

Sheila muttered so while slightly taken aback, but Mayuki only hummed with “Nn~,” then

“I wonder~, but it is that, right! It will be a harem if the master really is a male!”

Mayuki’s nose somewhat puffed from a slight excitement and said so.

“Ha-Harem..... w-well, that wouldn’t be weird because polygamy seemed to be allowed in this world..... but, Sheila has a complex feelings about it..... eu.”

Sheila blushed either because couldn’t really agreeing about the circumstance of this different world or just due to her being embarrassed.

Even Mayuki felt it’d problematic if the person she liked had several women working under him. However, Mayuki wasn’t as opposed to it as Sheila. It was because she was rather dense herself.

Due to those sights for her sore eyes, Mayuki entered one of the shops in high spirit. A lot of cinnamon were piled up inside, and a truly nice aroma drifted from there.

Then, she approached to ask the male worker inside about **【Sacred Mountain Shinju】** , but at the time was going to ask, a person with soft, shining blonde hair approached right beside her.

Mayuki's gaze naturally turned towards that person's profile. Apparently, the girl was going to buy <<Shinju Manjuu>> sold here, but Mayuki was speechless when she saw the girl's appearance.

(..... beautiful....)

She could only thought of her as nothing but beautiful. Looking from the side, the girl has black irises like Mayuki even though her hair was blonde. Her nose was high while her skin was smooth, but her face was surprisingly small.

More importantly, even Mayuki, a woman, was jealous on how the girl's blonde hair was shining, receiving the sunlight. Mayuki had heard the expression "just like a doll", but it was indeed the strongest impression she got from the girl. Moreover, from the girl's appearance, she seemed to be a teenager just like Mayuki. Even Sheila was staring, speechless.

(Such a girl a exist..... the thing I can win against her....)

Mayuki observed the girl's whole body, but she paid most attention to a certain part. It was the surprisingly flat chest.

(Eh..... huh? C-Can it be..... a trap!?)

Only this kind of knowledge was Mayuki well-informed about.

"..... excuse me."

Receiving the manjuu from the shopkeeper, the girl turned to look at Mayuki and slightly bowed. Following that, the girl immediately turned to leave, her appearance was of a truly picturesque girl.

"Fu-Fumuu..... what a dreadful, this different world is.....!"

"Sheila is sure that girl will be even more beautiful once she becomes an adult."

"Me too. The thing she must fight is the male hormone!"

".....?"

Sheila tilted her head, not understanding Mayuki's words, but Mayuki immediately called out to the shopkeeper.

"Welcome. How about one of this manjuu?"

"Un, thank you, uncle! Let me have one!"

"M-Mayuki-san is buying it!?"

"Un, after all, it is impolite if we are just asking for the information."

"Ah..... so that's why."

"Besides, it smells good!"

"..... I see."

Sheila drooped her shoulders because she thought the last one was Mayuki's real reason.

Mayuki bought <<Shinju Manjuu>>, then they each ate one.

The faint saltiness was just right. Following by the enchanting stew-like object that was peeping from the inside. Moreover, a lot of meat juice flowed in just one bite, as if they were continuing to eat a small river.

In addition, because it was small that it was possible to eat it in one bite, one would be able to eat many of them. Enjoying the deliciousness of the manjuu, Mayuki asked the storekeeper about <<Cespeach>>.

"Ah? <<Cespeach>>? Misses, you came at a li~ttle bad season for it."

"Wh-What do you mean?"

"The season for <<Cespeach>> had ended, I wonder will there be any even if you enter the mountain?"

The storekeeper frankly said so, but although in a blank surprise, Mayuki still held her hope.

"Th-Then, we won't be able to take any <<Cespeach>> if we enter the mountain now!?"

"Nn~ I wonder. Maybe there's still one or two left, but I can't say anything because there's no one that come to harvest <<Cespeach>> recently. More importantly, do you want to buy one more?"

The storekeeper's words that was recommending his manjuu didn't enter Mayuki's ears at all. Following that, Mayuki turned her face towards the storekeeper and declared one thing to the surprised storekeeper.

"Please teach me where I can find <<Cespeach>>!"

### **Story 62 Feniche's Egg, GET!**

"Phew~, looks like they finally give up."

The Ominous Soul tribe that had been following Souji couldn't be seen anymore, they might have given up and disappeared because they understood that their attacks were useless against Souji.

However, there's the possibility of them appearing again if he let his guard down, thus he continued to be vigilant even while the orange flame covering his body was deactivated. It was a wise decision to deactivate it when there's no need for the magic because it'd only consumed his magic power to continue using it.

Cat-Femme and Fox-Testarossa jumped from Souji's arms onto the ground and began to walk with their own legs.

"Say, Souji, can your magic cure this-nya?"

"No, it is impossible."

"Eh? Nywy?"

"Apparently, this transformation cannot be cured by magic."

Actually, Souji had tried to cure someone who was transformed into an animal in the past, but even the effect of green flame could not return him to normal.

"Ny-Nyaooo~...."

"That's also the reason a lot of people keep a distance from this mountain."

"..... kon."

*Testarossa-san, please don't make such a cute bark. Or else I will inadvertently hug you.*

There's a battle between instinct and reason inside Souji where he did his best to support his reasoning.

"Maa, I think you will return to normal soon...."

"Nn? Nywy? Do you have some kind of method-nya?"

Souji was hesitating whether it'd be okay to tell them. The time for one to return to normal was completely random, and he even heard there's someone that didn't return to normal for more than a day. In addition, they'd be naked once they returned to normal.

If he told them those, there's a high possibility they would tell him to descend the mountain. If so, he might not be able to return to search for the egg.

Yoyo's work required her to gather other information tomorrow too, so he cannot continue to casually being here forever.

Thinking so, Souji thought it was the best decision for him to finish this task quickly then descend the mountain.

"Don't worry. It isn't something harmful, so how about enjoying this situation for a bit? Besides, your current appearance is really cute, you know?"

"Eh..... ny-nyat's so? H-Hm~mph..... w-well, whatever-nya. I am a broadminded woman after all-nya, I will endure it for now-nya."

"As expected of Femme-san."

Femme was blushing, but Souji only thought she was embarrassed from being in animal form, so he inwardly apologized.

"Then, Femme-san, didn't you say that the Feniche's egg is in a branch of a big tree ahead?"

"Nyat's right. It should be nyere as long as nyo one moved it-nya."

"Well then, let's quickly finish this."

"Nya? Nyomehow, haven't nya became more motivated-nya?"

"Ahaha, just your imagination!"

Souji laughed to deceive her and moved ahead, but he didn't notice that Femme was staring at him in doubt.

Guided by Femme, Souji finally arrived before a big tree where the egg was. The size made it more suited to be called a gigantic tree than a big tree.

A thick trunk, the tree firmly rooted on the ground, expressing that it wouldn't shake even if it was hit by a typhoon. The radius of its girth was at least ten meters.

Following that, a dense autumn colored leaves could be seen if one looked up. Even each of the branches were as strong as a normal tree's bark.

A lot of bird-nest like things could be seen on the branches, and it looked like some had eggs inside them.

"U~n, which is the one with Feniche's egg among those?"

"Nymm. Nyat's..... which one was it-nya.....?"

Cat-Femme tilted her head as she recalled her past memory. That's action was unendurably cute. Souji was desperately suppressing the impulse of patting her, then Fox-Testarossa opened her mouth.

"..... direction, two o'clock. The third bird's nest..... kon."

As expected of Testarossa the <<Mechanical Doll>>. Her memory couldn't be compared to a human. Thus having confirmed what she said, there was indeed several bird's nests in the direction of two o'clock. All of the nest amounted as four, and the third from the trunk might be the place where Femme and Testarossa found the egg in the past.

"Both of you, please wait here."

「お二人はここでお待ち下さい」

Saying so, Souji splendidly jumped from a branch to another, climbing the tree. Thus he arrived at the bird's nest Testarossa pointed at and became wide eyed.

As for the reason, although there's indeed eggs in the bird's nest....

(..... aren't these too many?)

That's right, there were more than ten eggs inside the big bird's nest. Moreover, each one had the size of a ten kilogram rice bag making it hard to carry even one. In addition, all of the eggs have similar shape and color. After all, the Feniche's egg would change its color to assimilate with the surrounding when it was laid. A kind of mimicry.

In this case, it was by some chance was laid nearby another egg, so it changed its color into that of the nearby egg. Moreover, the size was similar to the other eggs which made Souji sighed due to the difficulty to discern it.

For the time being, Souji entered the bird's nest and tried to touch the egg directly. All of them were warm, he could feel the lives inside of them.

"For now, I can do nothing but search for the real Feniche's egg huh."

Thinking so, Souji outstretched his right and left hand, then

"Project what recorded, blue flame."

Blue flame spouted from both of his palms and covered the eggs. This flame had the effect of projecting the memory carved in objects in form of fire-screen.

Appearing before Souji was blue flame, projecting the pasts of the eggs. Of course these were the moments of them being laid. By seeing these, he could see which was Feniche's egg for sure.

On some of the eggs' memory, a bird with a very beautiful, crimson feathers appeared on the blue flame.

(A Feniche!)

Even though it was just an image, Souji was excited by the bird's appearance. It was a dignified and beautiful appearance that was similar to the phoenix he knew at the time he was in Japan. He inadvertently gulped while watching it.

The projection ended there, and Souji steadily approached one of the egg. It was a little bigger than the other eggs once he looked carefully at it. Next, Souji quietly touched it.

It was almost the time for Feniche's revival day. And although he didn't know whether this egg would hatch or not, Souji's hand that was touching it indeed felt the pulse of life. Souji created orange flame, gently held the egg, then let it float on the flame. As-is, Souji return straight to where Femme and Testarossa were, below, while moving the flame.

"Is that the egg of Fenyiche-nya?"

Femme indifferently said that, expressing that she didn't really interested in it.

"Eh? Didn't Femme-san seen it before?"

"Nya'm. But, it still hadn't do any mimicry at that time-nya."

*I see*, Souji thought. Perhaps not that much time had passed since the Feniche laid the egg at the time Femme found it. Thus she was able to judge it being Feniche's egg because it still had not done the mimicry. As for the reason, Feniche's egg at the beginning had flame-like pattern, a beautiful sight that was appropriate for a bird of fire.

"..... identifying. Conclusion, Feniche's egg..... kon."

"..... now that was said, I forgot that Testarossa-san can identify it."

It would have been suffice if he took along Testarossa than going his way to use blue flame to check it. However, Souji thought it was a good thing because he could see Feniche's appearance even though it was just an image.

"Well then, let's return to where Ojou-sama is."

When Souji was about to move from the place,

"————— wait."

A man's voice stopped Souji's advance.

### Story 63 The Seemingly Unavoidable Battle

Two people appeared before Souji. One was a big man while the other one was smaller than Souji, a black haired boy with a sharp look.

“Do you have any business with me?”

「何かご用でしょうか？」

Souji replied as calm as possible. He had somehow guessed the situation from the two's atmosphere, but he wanted to hear their story for now.

“Ahh, that egg is Feniche's egg, right?”

“I am sorry, but this is a Grand Eagle's egg, you know? See, this egg doesn't even look like a Feniche's.”

“Ara, a gentle-m-a-n!”

The big man's body suddenly wriggled. Following that, the man was blushing for some reason, and Souji feels a chill on his back from the dangerous gaze the man used to watch him.

“A-Anyway, I don't even know if a Feniche's egg would really be in this place. But, isn't Feniche lived in volcano?”

Souji tried to deceive them by saying so, but the black haired boy's eyes turned even sharper.

“Han! Don't try to lie! We know it, you know? We know that the Feniche's egg have the ability to mimic and assimilate with its surrounding.”

Souji inwardly clicked his tongue.

“It had likely to mimic the Grand Eagle's eggs over there. Beside, unfortunately for you, this freak here is capable of distinguishing the Feniche's egg.”

“Mou! It’s too cruel to call me a freak! Ah, but somehow I feel a throb inside of me when you call me that! So-Something is awakening inside of me!”

“Don’t awaken that kind of dangerous thing! Rather, look at them! They are looking at us as if asking whether our relationship is more than a friend! There’s no way it is! Me and this thing are just partner at work, I am absolutely normal!”

The boy desperately explained those to Souji’s group who looked at them coldly.

“Ah, no. I..... I think it’s okay. I have known that such a thing existed in this world, so I feel that I can understand it.”

When Souji said so to comfort him, the boy was at his wits’ end.

“Wroooooong! I really am normal! My dream is to become a Papa and surrounded by a lovely wife and a lot of children of mine!”

“Yup, I will do my best.”

“Not youuuuuuu-!”

Shouji’s shoulders drooped as he didn’t know how to deal with this sudden *manzai*. It was an interesting banter, but although it was Souji who started this, he didn’t have much time to waste here.

“Ohom! Then you are saying this is a Feniche’s egg that you are looking for?”

Morrow, the boy also cleared his throat once and pointed at the egg.

“Yeah, the Feniche’s smell is exuded by the egg after all.”

“..... you mean that person can smell it?”

Souji’s gaze turned towards the big man.

“Aa, this thing has dog-like sense of smell. How is it? Isn’t it disgusting?”

“Why!? How is it disgusting..... but, this kind of abuse might becomes a habit.”

“Excuse me..... I understand that your have an intimate relationship, but the conversation....”

“Wh-Whose relationship are intimate!? Stop it, just stop! It makes my body itches.”

“Aran! Then, let me scratch it for you! Come on, take off you clothes now!”

“D-Don’t touch me you freaaaak!”

“Buheshinh!” (Boo Hey sing + gasp at the end~)

The boy punched the man’s cheek and the man’s head was flung sideway. However, the man immediately flung it back with a tremendous momentum and tried to press on the boy again while his nose was bleeding.

“Oy, freak! Don’t come to me! So-Someone, help meeeeeee-!”

Souji seriously wanted to ask whether it was okay for him to go home now.

The displayed *manzai* didn’t make Souji but Femme to speak to the two, irritated.

“Hey! Just mywhat do you want!?”

The cat that speaks all of sudden made the two people surprised. But the boy immediately put his hand on his chin as he understood the situation.

“Is that your companion, red hair? She seems to have been pranked by the Ominous Soul tribe eh. Well, that kind of companion can only be a burden.”

Maybe because she was hurt by the black haired boy’s words, *fusha*-, Femme raised a snarl at him.

“My-Mywhat’s with this person! Th-There’s nyo way I am a burden, nyight!?”

“Han! But it is the truth that you don’t even have the ability to go against small fries like the Ominous Soul tribe!”

“ My-Myawhaaaaaaat!? Souji, I hate that guy-nyah!”

Souji wanted to retort because Femme suddenly said so, but he kept silent or else Femme's wrath would be turned to him.

"Maa maa, please calm down, Jingo. Excuse me, mister red hair over there? We can pay you with a lot of money, you know?"

The big man proposed so.

"I see. But, what if I refuse?"

"Ara, let's see~, it will be troublesome. I mean..... you will be troubled by it."

At that moment, hostility gushed out from the boy called Jingo and he immediately cut the distance between him and Souji.

(Fast-!/? Besides, his footwork-!/?)

The boy's speed was just like the wind, even the fallen leaves on the ground were flung into the sky when he passed them. Instantaneously, Souji moved Feniche's egg, floated by the orange flame, to shield him.

Jingo's eyes opened wide in surprise as he put strength in his legs in panic. Then as he was, he slammed the brake and after a step, he fell.

Following that, he glared at Souji before him.

"Bastard, isn't that egg important to you? How can you turn it into a shield"

His complaint is justified. No one would have thought Souji will use the egg to protect himself.

"Ee, it is indeed important. I came here just to get this egg after all. But, aren't you the same?"

"Huh?"

"I made the egg as a shield because I thought you wouldn't want this egg to be damaged."

"Then, what if I didn't stop and continue my attack?"

"No, I don't think you will do that."

“..... what’s your basis?”

“It is because a peculiar atmosphere is transmitted from you two. That’s the proof of someone powerful. Though I look like this, I’ve experienced a lot of thing in my travel which honed my ability to observe. Therefore, I knew that you would not make a mistake like attacking this egg and you will surely stop yourself without fail.”

“..... so you mean that you seen through that I won’t attack the egg and I also have the ability to stop my charge?”

“Indeed I am. Besides, you are a practitioner of <<Fire Field (Hi no Hira) Style>>, aren’t you?”

“-!?”

Not only Jingo, the big man was also surprised.

“..... you know about this?”

“Ee, I have an acquaintance who is also a practitioner.”

“..... I see. But how did you know?”

“It is because I saw how you moved your legs, you know? Isn’t that..... <<Flying Step>>?”

Immediately, Jingo and the big man’s eyes narrowed.

“Jingo, it seems he is not an ordinary person, see? Let me help you....”

When the man was saying so, Jingo raised his hand and the man stopped talking. From what could be seen, ferocity was oozing from Jingo’s eyes and his lips were curved up wide. Seeing that, the big man shrugged his shoulders, expressing *good grief*.

“A~Ah, it came out. His battle spirit....”

“Battle spirit?”

Souji asked back and the man answered.

“Well, this Jingo here is simply a battle junkie.”

“Ahh..... that’s another kind of a troublesome person.”

“Stop talking! Oi you, what are you called?”

“..... if you want to know, how about you name yourself first?”

“Mu? Oh? Then, let me.”

Quite an obedient battle maniac here.

“I am Jingo Toudou! From 【Hi no Kuni】 !

The black hair and iris were the characteristics of someone from 【Hi no Kuni】 . It was a country with culture similar to where Souji lived in his previous life, Japan. The name was written in kanji, the only different was that the given name written first and the family name was written later.

“Then, it’s my turn. My name is Zenji Aomine. Let’s get along~!”

*If possible, I don’t want to get along with someone from that side though.*

“Now, say your name! You must introduce yourself too!”

“Don’t want to. It is not like I have the obligation to introduce myself just because you introduce yourselves, is it?”

“Mugu! D-Damn youu....”

Though it was just an argument, Souji’s words that were denying the conversation flow made Jingo and Zenji’s cheeks cramped.

“Ahaha, I was just kidding. As for me, I am Souji Alkasha.”

“This mya is Femme D. Dresoj-nya!”

“I didn’t ask you, you damn cat!”

“Myawha-!? Souji! I really hate that guy-nyah!”

Souji patted Cat-Femme’s head to calm her down as he said *okay okay*. “Funya~,” Femme leaked that as she closed her eyes, pleased. Following that, Souji put Femme and Testarossa on the floating egg and said, “Please wait here for a sec.”

The girls affirmed it by nodding their small heads.

Then, when Souji turned towards Jingo,

“Don’t you think it would be the best if this can be solved with a discussion?”

“As if you can say that. It isn’t like you will hand the egg to us.”

“Well, it is as you said.”

“Besides, I want to fight you.”

### **Story 64 Win by Escaping**

The battle seemed to be unavoidable. Souji leaked a helpless sigh and steeled himself. Noticing change in Souji’s atmosphere, Jingo made a happy smile.

(His previous <<Flying Step>>..... it’s a rather high leveled one. Though it didn’t change that I don’t know how proficient he is in <<Fire Field Style>>....)

Souji was quietly observing Jingo. He was a martial artist with short stature. However, when Souji observed him, he judged Jingo to own a rather high combat prowess from how stout his neck and arms was.

(Although it’s been a long time since I fought against <<Fire Field Style>>, now then....)

When Souji made a slight forward movement, Jingo charged to him as if pulled by Souji. He was indeed fast as he didn’t make any wasted movement.

“Here I come, ORAAAH!”

Reaching Souji’s bosom, Jingo released an air-cutting kick. Souji avoided it within a hair’s breadth, but the wind pressure Jingo’s kick generated was too terrific, which made him instinctively step back.

Without wasting the rotating force from his kick, Jingo released another kick one after the other. It was lightning-like vigorous attacks.

Souji lightly moved his body and splendidly avoided those abundant variations of kick.

“Tch! Aren’t ya good at avoiding! Then, how about this-!”

Jingo jumped to the sky, rotated his body, then his right leg was wrapped in yellow light.

“<<Hinohara style, Whip>>-!”

Jingo released a kick in mid-air. Morrow, the yellow aura that was worn to his leg expanded and come to attack Souji.

Souji moved back from his spot to evade the aura. The yellow aura hit the place where Souji was before and the ground was gouged. The pain from being hit directly by it must be unbearable.

Inside the scattered dust, Souji was concentrating on Jingo, who was coming towards him from the sky. Jingo then thrust his right leg as he fall and the aura worn by his right leg draw a track as he descend with tremendous force.

“<<Hinohara style, Spear>>-!”(RIDER KIIICKKKK!!)

It was a straight attack, so Souji once again easily avoided Jingo’s attack. However, the cracked ground where the kick pierced told how powerful the kick was.

“Good! You are really good at evading. But isn’t it about time for you to attack?”

“..... you are right. Then....”

Jingo looks excited because he thought Souji finally became serious. However, Souji suddenly turned on his heel and get on a branch of the gigantic tree. Following that, he took an egg from its nest and throws it to Jingo.

“Okay, please catch it.”

“Heh? Ah, wa-wa-wa-, wh-what-!?”

Jingo caught the suddenly thrown egg by reflex. After he spat a breath,

“B-Bastard! What do you mean by this!?”

Immediately, Jingo heard something coming towards him from the sky. It was-----

“Kllllllllllllh!” (a screech, deal with it~)

It was the incoming of a huge, eerie bird whose anger clear to be seen.

“Wha-!? Isn’t that Grand Eagle!”

Just as Jingo said, it was the huge bird whose length easily exceeded five meters.

“Ah, please be careful. Grand Eagle is a rather fierce creature. Especially if it comes to protecting its egg, it won’t even fear death.”

“..... HAAaaaaaaaah!”

Jingo was astonished as he noticed the egg in his arms. Following that, Souji reached the ground, raised his hand and speak with a radiant smile.

“My apologize, but I don’t have any more time to play around here.”

After he said so, he ran away from there, along with Femme and Testarossa who were on the orange flame-wrapped egg.

“Oi, wait you bastard! Are you going to run away!?”

“Eh? I am, anything wrong with it?”

“,..... hah?”

“Listen, there’s something called winning by escaping in this world. Besides, it will be better for you to worry about yourself in this situation.”

Souji pointed at the keep appearing Grand Eagles in the sky.

“Jingo! Get away from egg now!”

Zenji's words made Jingo said, "That's it!" and he tries to throw away the egg,

"Ah, for your information, you must not break the egg. These guys are the type that hold grudge after all."

Souji's words made Jingo completely halted his movement. Following that, Souji fled from the scene while raising his hand, expressing "Bye then."

"Sooooooooouji Alkaaaaaaaaaasaaaaaaaaah!"

A roar-like voice comes from behind him, but Souji ignored it as he only looks at straight ahead.

Around that time, Mayuki and Sheila were battling against the Ominous Soul tribe who lived in  
【Sacred Mountain Shinju】 .

"Mayuki-san! It went to you!"

"Okay, Sheila!"

Just as Sheila said, a bear type Ominous Soul tribe was charging straight toward Mayuki.

"I~ have prepared for it!"

Mayuki put his right palm on the ground. Magic power flowed from Mayuki's right hand into the ground.

"Tree Summoning-!"

Cracks appeared on the ground and one tree appeared from it. However, the tree didn't have any leaf, just like a withered tree.

“Spirit Warding Tree!”

The Ominous Soul Tribe that faced against Mayuki was inhaled into the summoned tree. Even the other Ominous Soul Tribe's members in the surrounding were drawn to the tree.

Inhaling the Ominous Soul Tribe's members, buds appeared on the tree and beautiful flowers were blooming.

Sheila approached Mayuki with a relieved look.

“As expected of Mayuki-san! That's the natural enemy of Ominous Soul tribe, right?”

“It is~! This tree is <<Spirit Warding Tree>> after all! So it has the ability to do that!”

Spirit Warding Tree Mayuki summoned looked like a withered tree in the winter, but it absorbed the surrounding energy bodies to be able to grow big.

The two had examined about various things before coming to 【Sacred Mountain Shinju】.

Resultantly, the two gladly judged that the Ominous Soul tribe wouldn't be a problem if Mayuki is there.

“Sheila, stay close to me!”

“Y-Yes. But, doesn't it seem they have given up?”

As Sheila said, the other Ominous Soul tribe's members had ran away from there, giving up, after watching their comrades inhaled by the tree.

“Arara, how disappointing.”

“But it's better like this because we can search for <<Cespeach>> at ease now.”

“Yup! Then, let's go now! We will soon arrived at the place told by that uncle!”

The two were taught about the location where <<Cespeach>> trees grew by the uncle of a shop in the sightseeing spot in the mountain foot. However, they were also told that its harvest season is almost over, so they might not be able to obtain the <<Cesspeach>>, thus the two were in hurry.

Mayuki and Sheila moved at a quick pace and they finally reached the slightly cleared place. There were a lot of trees which should be the <<Cespeach>> trees the uncle told them.

“Please! Even if it’s only one left!”

“Mayuki-san..... let’s look for it!”

“Un! Let’s immediately----.”

With a sudden snapping sound, something small was rolling and mowing down the big tree at their left side. Mayuki and Sheila halted as they watched the rolling object. Then, the thing stopped after knocking against a tree.

“Ouch....”

It was a person whose face distorted from the pain, holding his head.

“Eh..... who?”

Immediately after Mayuki muttered that, loud roars came accompanied by a strong gust. The two heard sounds of wings flapping from the sky.

“M-Mayuki-san! Please look up!”

“Eh..... uwah! What are those birds-!”

There were huge, eerie birds in the direction Sheila pointed at. There were five of them flying in the sky. Now, one of them was charging towards the rolling person from before.

“Tch! Damn itt!”

The person appeared to be a boy with black hair and irises just like Mayuki’s. The boy immediately got up and jumped to the sky. However, another bird was rushing towards his current location.

“Don’t think it would work again!”

A yellow light was wrapping the boy’s right leg, then it expanded and hit the bird’s face, blowing it away.

Following that, the boy rotated and using similar move, he aimed at the bird coming from the ground.

“A-Amazing...”

“Y-Yeah. But, that is not magic, right? I can’t feel any magic power after all.”

Magic power couldn’t be felt from the boy. But although they didn’t know what was that yellow light, they understood that the boy was the owner of a considerable skill from how he was not using magic.

“Oraah! Three more left! Come!”

The boy with sharp look throws provoking words towards the three birds in the sky. Morrow, the three birds were rushing simultaneously.

“Keh! Three at once, eh!”

The boy turned on his heel and entered the narrow opening between the trees. However, there was the place Mayuki and Sheila have business with, so the two became pop-eyed. The birds flew, mowing down trees, chasing after the boy.

“Wa-wawawawait, stopp! Don’t fight there!”

Mayuki instinctively shouted. After all, it would be a disaster if they fought there and crushed the <<Cespeach>>. There might only one or two left, so she couldn’t let it be wasted by their battle. However, the boy keeps moving forward with the tree-destroying birds behind him.

Mayuki and Sheila tried to run after them, but the boy suddenly jumped to the sky. After rotating, the boy released a heel drop towards the ground. In addition, he was using both legs.

Both of his legs were wrapped by the previous yellow light and at the moment they descent, the light clumped and fall to ground, attacking the three birds.

“Take thiiiiis-! <<Hinohara style, Axe>>-!”

The mass of light collided with the ground, giving birth to a large blast. The impact was a powerful one, as if a typhoon had come. The blast destroyed the ground and made the surrounding trees fly.

In the center of the attack, the three birds were rolling on the ground from the shock wave, crashing against rocks and gigantic trees, then they became silent.

Mayuki and Sheila braced themselves so they wouldn't be sent flying, defending their bodies from flying trees, soil, etc. After the blast calmed down, Mayuki and Sheila were stiffened and at loss for words from the unfolding spectacle of the surroundings.

“N-No way....”

A crater was created in the center of the magnificently mown down <<Cespeach>> trees. Panicky, Mayuki was confirming whether there was still safe a <<Cespeach>> tree around, but there's none within her view.

“E-Eu..... wh-what should we do..... Mayuki-san?”

Sheila was flustered and puzzled. Mayuki's body trembled, her gaze moved towards the boy who was soaking the feeling of victory at the center of the crater, then she approached him with loud footsteps.

### **Story 65 Falling for the Innocent**

“Huff~ hehe, Those shitty birds had underestimated me. I am Jingo Toudo of <<Hinohara style>!”

There, his partner, Zenji Aomine appeared.

“Ah geez~, you turned this place into this state. Don’t you know this location have cultural worth?”

“Hen! Like I care! It’s those birds’ fault for attacking me! It was only a self-defense move.”

“It was an excessive self-defense though..... wait, ara?”

“Ng? What is it?”

Zenji noticed something as he looked at the something behind Jingo, thus Jingo turned his head. What they saw was a girl, coming towards them.

“I wonder who?”

“Who knows, wait, isn’t she coming here?”

“How can I know?”

The two simultaneously tilted their heads, but after they were convinced that the girl was indeed coming towards them, the two waited for her.

The girl then stood before Jingo. Her body was trembling, but Jingo didn’t know why. Then, suddenly, the girl raised her face. Anger could be seen in her eyes, piercing Jingo. Following that,

*PACCHliiiiiinh! (S-S-S-Slap!)*

Such sound rang from Jingo’s cheek. The abruptness and power included made Jingo fell to ground.

“I-It’s hurtsss!?”

Rubbing his swollen red right cheek, Jingo looked up then stand up.

“O-Oi! Bitch! Why did you do that!?”

Morrow, the girl pointed her finger at Jingo and answered him.

“It’s because you are at fault!”

The girl's words made Jingo stiffened as he didn't understand what she meant.

Mayuki could not hold her anger. And of course the boy didn't know that Mayuki and Sheila were looking for <<Cesspeach>>. He was only running away, how could he know it would result in the destruction of <<Cesspeach>> trees.

But he was the one causing the destruction of <<Cesspeach>> trees, so Mayuki just instinctively vented her anger.

The boy looked up and naturally resentment could be seen as he recalled how his cheek was slapped. However, he didn't raise his hand on Mayuki, the boy didn't approach her and only shouting.

"The heck is my fault! Rather, who are you, oi!"

The boy that said thug-like words made Mayuki regained her senses. She pulled back her hand and cast her gaze down.

"..... I-I am sorry...."

"Say your name..... wait..... eh?"

Mayuki that suddenly let a humble apology made the boy taken aback.

"B-But..... that's..... uu...."

He didn't know anything. But Mayuki could not forgive him. Even so, Mayuki herself was confused as she also thought it was too much of her to have slapped the boy.

After some thinking, Mayuki thought what she did was an unjust thing which made her cheeks red in shame. She keeps apologizing as she took glances at the boy.

However, seeing Mayuki's current appearance made the boy look as if his head was struck by thunder, and now he was slightly blushing as he watches Mayuki.

“Cu-..... cute~....”

“..... eh?”

「カ.....カワイイ.....」

「.....へ？」

The boy muttered something, but Mayuki didn't catch it so she looked could only watch him. Morrow, steam coming from the boy's head and he immediately turned his back to Mayuki.

“N-Nothing!”

Sheila came to the side of dumbfounded Mayuki. Also, from the boy's side, a big man was approaching him.

The already calmed down Mayuki told her reason for slapping the boy. The boy was listening with his back against Mayuki, and the big man was the one being Mayuki's talking partner.

“Ng~ I see. Indeed this vicinity is the place where <<Cesspeach>> grows..... but it is splendidly destroyed now eh.”

“Ugh....”

The big man's words made the boy grimaced as he felt guilty from what he had done after hearing Mayuki and Sheila's story.

“Th-There's no helping it. You two didn't know about it and besides, I slapped him hard..... ah, umm, is it still hurting?”

When Mayuki moved to face the boy, the boy panicked and took a distance.

“O-O-O-O-Of course I am okay! Th-thethethere’s no way that kind of attack would be enough to hurt me!”

“Attack..... what are you saying, Jingo?”

The big man sighed in amazement.

“Jingo?”

“Ah, yeah. Sorry for being late, but let us introduce ourselves.”

With that, Mayuki and Sheila were told that the big man is Zenji and the black haired boy is Jingo. Following that, Mayuki and Sheila were also told that these two came from country that used kanji for name. And then, Mayuki and Sheila also told the two that their names are also using kanji.

“Hee, so you are Mayuki Amakawa. Then, does it mean the two of you are also from 【Hi no Kuni】?”

“About that...”

Seeing her hesitating, Zenji breathed out, relaxed and speak to her.

“It’s okay. You seem to have a reason for it, so I don’t want force you to tell me that. But, because our names used kanji, I will be happy if we can get along~.”

“I-I see.”

Mayuki looked at Zenji and tilted her head.

(He is a man but his tone is like a woman’s.....? Ah, is it because he is an okama(transvestite)?)

Mayuki was neither accepting nor rejecting such a thing. Nonetheless, her interest sparked as it was the first time she seen an okama.

“But please forgive us. Jingo rampaged without knowledge of your circumstance.”

“Ah, no, it’s okay already. Besides, I don’t think it can be helped in that kind of situation.”

“Hem! In the first place, that won’t happen if that fellow didn’t pass me the egg.”

Remembering that made Jingo trampled the ground.

“Ah, umm...”

“Ng? Is something matter?”

“About that fellow he said..... is there someone else beside you two?”

“Ee, there was a little while ago. The two of us came here to complete our work, but that boy took the thing we need before us.”

“Aa, even remembering it irritate meeee! I will make sure to teach him a lesson the next time we meet!”

Jingo loudly declared that with his fist thrust up high. Somehow, Mayuki became interested towards the person that irritated Jingo. It was someone capable of playing Jingo around, so he must be someone strong.

Thus she asked Zenji about that person.

“Let’s see. He is quite the gentlemen.”

“H-Hee.”

Mayuki’s cheeks cramped as she felt dangerous atmosphere from the blushing, eyes sparkling Zenji.

“In addition, that boy is probably a servant from somewhere. Right, Jingo?”

“Ahh? Like I know. This is the first we come to this continent after all. Like we know the situation of richies here.”

“You are right. I wonder just who is that red haired boy.”

Mayuki turned her head to Zenji as if pulled by his words. “Eh? What?” Was what asked by the wide eyed Zenji. However, because Sheila also shared similar expression to Mayuki, Zenji asked again with, “What is it?”

“Th-Th-That red haired person..... is he a butler?”

“Heh? Ah, mm~ I wonder. But I am certain he wore tail-coat.”

Tilting his head, Zenji said what he knows. Mayuki felt her heart throbbed. She persuaded herself in her heart with, "No, not yet," and "there's still no proof to it." However, she was already convinced about it.

"A-About that person..... d-do you..... d-do you know his name?"

Her serious gaze made Zenji feels he must not lie here, so he slowly moved his mouth after a big gulp.

"I-I think he said Souji Alkasha?"

All connected----- that was what Mayuki felt.

Following that, she instantly faced Sheila whose eyes were also moistened and gave her a big nod.

That's right, he is here, he is nearby. The one they are looking for is nearby. Moreover, they were told not much time had passed since Jingo and Zenji met Souji.

They might be able to meet him if they descend the mountain now. However, she must not act on emotion here.

After all, Mayuki and Sheila had promised Mill to look for <<Cesspeach>>. However, they could not get it at the place they were taught. It was necessary for them to look for other way, but they wanted to meet Souji while they were also wanting to find <<Cesspeach>> which made Mayuki troubled.

At that moment, "..... ah," Jingo let out a small voice.

"We don't know if there's any <<Cesspeach>> left and we also don't know if there's another place it grows or sold, but I heard an information dealer with strong connection to merchant appeared at the foot of this mountain. Right, Zenji?"

"Eh? Aah, we heard that when we were looking for information. A beautiful lady capable of obtaining anything. Sigh~, won't she just exchange her body with mine."

Though she instinctively wanted to retort at Zenji's last mutter, Mayuki was more interested at the thing Jingo said, so she faced him. After a twitch, Jingo's face blushed and he continued his story while looking away from Mayuki.

"W-Well, it is just my assumption, but an information dealer with strong business connection should know something about that <<Cesspeach>> thing..... though it's only what I thought..... okay."

"Jingo-san!"

"Uweeeeh!?"

Mayuki grasped Jingo's hands with her own. Jingo was surprised with wide opened mouth.

"Th-Thank you very much! I will now go to find and ask the information from that person! Once again, thank you very much!"

Jingo only watched the fully smiling Mayuki with sneaking glances.

"W-Well, that's, it's possible you would've obtained that fruit if I hadn't destroyed the trees here, so there's no need for gratitude."

"No, it isn't! I am really happy! Thank you!"

Mayuki did her utmost to bow, expressing her gratitude. Jingo was truly embarrassed with her cheeks boiling, so he only gave a cough to answer her.

"A-Also."

"?"

"That's..... hmm. There's no need to use honorific to call me. We are about the same age after all."

"..... un, okay! Then, I will call you Jingo-kun from now on!"

"Hauh!?"

Jingo suddenly crouched while clutching his chest which made Mayuki worried about him. However, "It's nothing....," he said while waving his hand. When she looked at Zenji, he shrugged his shoulders expressing *good grief* and said, "He is okay."

Following that, Mayuki and Sheila decided to descend to the foot of the mountain as fast as possible to look for that information dealer. Mayuki once again waved their hand to Jingo and Zenji, and said,

“Let’s meet again, Jingo-ku~n! Zenji-sa~n!”

Sheila bowed to the two, then she and Mayuki left that location.

### **Story 66 Mysterious Quake**

After Mayuki and Sheila left, Jingo was staring at his hands while blushing.

“..... you fell for her?”

“Nahagh!?”

Jingo looked as if having his stomach punched.

“Wh-whawhawhawhawhawhawhat are you saying, Zenji!?”

“Good grief..... seriously, Jingo, you are acting just like someone in love since before.”

“Wh-Who is fall for who! I-It’s not even funny....”

“Mayuki-chan.”

“Ugh!?”

“Big-breasted.”

“Hagh!?”

“Loli.”

“Gahagh!?”

Jingo collapsed and was convulsing on the ground.

“Sigh~, her level (her looks etc) is indeed high. Even the other girl called Sheila is an equally attractive girl..... oh my?”

“Wh-What is it?,” Jingo asked while trying to stand up, unsteadily.

“Well, wait a sec~. I am certain Mayuki-chan and Sheila-chan were quite interested in the story about that red-haired boy, weren't they?”

“..... ah!?”

With a shudder, Jingo's body stiffened.

“Moreover, not only Mayuki-chan, Sheila-chan also seemed to be happy when they heard the red hair-kun's name.”

“.....”

“Maybe..... they are red-haired-kun's girlfriends?”

*Bakiiiiih*, the ground cracked. It could be seen Jingo had stabbed the ground with his fist.

“Fufufu, what are you trying to say, Zenji? Isn't it impossible for that innocent, unspoiled, and lovely Mayuki to be in love with that cowardly and gloomy schemer Souji Alkasha?”

Jingo said so as calmly as he could, but it was obvious that he was shaken,.

“Jingo..... just how far are you going to praise Mayuki-chan. Also, you quite hate red-hair-kun eh.”

Zenji shrugged his shoulders then raised his index finger.

“Ah, there's also that. If..... it is only if, what if Mayuki-chan is the one who one-sidedly loved Souji-chan?”

“..... h-hwhaat?”

“But not knowing anything about red-haired-kun, thus she was cheated?”

“..... fufufu, so~ that's~ how~ it is....”

Dark aura was exuded by Jingo. Following that, *bishih*, he pointed towards Souji who was surely still around this mountain.

“How dare you to cheat such a pure girl! I will surely open her eyesss! Wait for me, Mayukiiii-!”

Zenji was enjoying looking at Jingo, who declared such outrageous words.

(ah~, this is why it is fun to be with him~.)

At that time, Souji, accompanied by cat-Femme and fox-Testarossa, descend the mountain; they were once again attacked by Ominous Soul tribe coming from their surroundings. Reluctantly, he once again used orange flame to protect himself just like at the time he climbed the mountain.

“By the way-nya, just when are we going to return to normal-nya?”

Even if Femme said so in displeasure, Souji himself didn't know. Besides, it was Souji who must watch himself the most when that time comes. After all, naked beauties of a girl and woman would appear before him when they return to normal. And it was possible for very unpleasant rumors to appear if someone see them which resulted in him being punished.

That's why Souji thought, he must hurry to return to Yoyo because it would be better to entrust the two to her, while watching the huge egg before him.

Suddenly, the ground began to shake. It was a strong quake that made Souji instinctively halted his advance and brace himself.

“Myah!? Myawhat is this-!?”

“..... kon!”

Even though they didn't fall because their legs were firmly on the ground, Femme and Testarossa also felt how big the quake was.

The shaking stopped after a while, and Souji was observing the surroundings. Thus he noticed that the Ominous Soul tribe had vanished before he was aware of it.

(..... what is this? Quake like that shouldn't have happened according to the information.....?)

There's no volcano nearby, so eruption shouldn't be the cause of that shaking. Then, at the time he was thinking whether it was caused by cluster movement, Femme and Testarossa, who were walking ahead of him, were suddenly wrapped by smoke.

Having caught off guard by that quake, Souji had let his guard down. And naturally, the things that appeared before Souji were,

"..... eh?"

".....?"

There were the stark naked Femme and Testarossa. Femme's body was still developing, but her skin was smooth and white. Her two hills were more splendid than Yoyo's, but they might still be small if compared to other girls at her age.

Next is Testarossa. Her body was something that can only be expressed as splendid. Normally, it was unnoticed due to being hidden by her maid uniform, but her womanly charm is a high one.

(U~m, setting aside Femme-san, Testarossa's hidden knoc-..... wait, me, what are you thinking!?)

Noticing Souji was watching them in silence, Femme blushed and let out a loud scream. The high-pitched voice pierced Souji's ears which made him grimace.

"Ah, sorry-!"

Souji panicky turned his back towards the two and with, "Open the storage! Purple flame," purple-colored flame appeared on his right palm. The flame transformed into door-shape and opening that door, Souji took out two maid uniforms from inside.

“P-Please wear this!”

“..... thank you.”

Testarossa didn't show any pretense of being shy and walked towards Souji. She received the uniforms and passed one to Femme. Femme instantly went behind the tree to change.

After a while, there was the dead-glaring Femme and expressionless Testarossa in maid uniform.

“..... do you know what I want to ask?”

She was obviously fuming. Perhaps she had seen Souji's reaction and thus she judged Souji knew that might happen when they returned back to normal.

If not, there's no way he had prepared the maid uniforms for the two to use.

“Umm....”

“..... did you see?”

“P-Pardon? What do you mean?”

“..... -dy.”

“eh?”

“Like I said! My body!”

Femme, who was blushing as she looked up at him, said that, and that made Souji incapable of making any excuse. It was because Femme and his eyes met.

After a while, he answered, “Just a little.” It made Femme blushed as if she was a boiled octopus.

“Testa, punishment.”

“..... entering punishing mode.”

“Eh? T-Testarossa-san? Why is there punishing mode inside a <<Mechanical Doll>>? Eh..... why are you turning behind me..... T-Testarossa-san? M-My right arm can't be turned that wa-agggghhhhh!”

*Mishi mishi*, sounds of bone cracking could be heard. It was possible for Souji to escape from here if he seriously tries it, but he decided to endure the pain because it was necessary.

“Wa-!? This time is the head, no, don’t! If my head turned any more than this-----.”

*Gokih*, an unpleasant sound rang and Souji collapsed on ground.

“Hmph! That’s natural for you have seen a maiden’s skin! In addition, you didn’t say about that thing! This will be a loaned favor!”

*Then, how about solving it with that punishment?*, but Souji didn’t say that. After Souji got up while rubbing his neck, he apologized to the two. Though Femme’s cheeks were still dyed in red, she was able to somehow say she would not pursue it here.

When Souji was relieved and patting his chest, Femme began to talk about the previous quake.

“That quake, rather than a natural one, it’s feel like something was crawling inside ground, isn’t it?”

“Inside ground..... Don’t you know that no underground people lived here?”

“I know that. I don’t mean those underground people, but there must be another creature, right?”

“Another creature..... is it? For example?”

“Hmm, what if it was a giant mole?”

“..... from the way it shook, it will certainly be an extraordinary, fantasy-like, giant mole, right~.”

“Wh-What’s with that tone! I am only saying a what if! Don’t look at me with that cold gaze!”

*Geshih*, his leg was kicked. It was rather painful. Though he was certainly holding himself from making a fool of her too wild imagination, he failed at it.

“Does Testarossa-san know something?”

“..... ground heat risen.”

“Eh? Ground heat?”

The words of Testarossa saying that temperature inside the ground has risen made Souji thought something was indeed underground. Something huge was moving about inside the ground, thus the terrestrial heat went up due to friction.

(Or it's may also be..... a normal climatic abnormality?)

Abnormal and common-sense defying weathers happened about several times in a year. There were similar to guerrilla downpour, tornado, hail, and also earthquake. Souji was incapable of explaining such phenomena as he was not a pro at this. As such, he could only think of it as a regional earthquake.

Naturally, it wasn't a regional one as the entire continent had also shook from the previous quake. Following that, another quake occurred.

"I-It's also a huge one now!"

"Y-Yeah, Please be careful!"

It would be troublesome if the surrounding huge trees were to fall, so Souji watched over not only himself but also Femme and Testarossa's surroundings. But he was relieved because he could leave it to Testarossa to protect Femme who was near her.

The earthquake last longer than the previous one, but silent finally returned.

"Thank god. Just what was that? Ah, is the egg sa-!?"

Femme shouted as she remembered the egg, but there's no problem because Souji had wrapped the egg with orange flame around the time he was being punished by Testarossa. Femme sighed in relief after seeing that because it was something they had went through great troubles to obtain the egg. Souji's group of three was going to do a little searching for the cause of the quake. They were able to do it because they didn't have to hurry to entrust Femme and Testarossa to Yoyo anymore.

They looked around, but they didn't find the thing that seems to be the cause. And at the time Souji thought it was indeed not caused by living creature but an abnormal weather, he heard screams from the distance.

There's not only one or two, but there were a lot of screams.

"Wait! The direction of these screams is-!?"

It was natural for Femme to be worried. After all, the direction of the screams was the place Souji's group headed to. In other words, it was the foot of the mountain, the place where Yoyo and the others were.

Presently, Souji didn't perceive any danger towards Yoyo. In Yoyo's hand was the necklace with tag where crest made of yellow flame carved, which was something Souji gave her. By wearing that, Souji could feel if Yoyo is in danger. Also, he could teleport to where the crest was, another usefulness of yellow flame.

(There's still no danger on Yoyo-oujosama and the others for now. But I should hurry.)

Souji assumed that there was the possibility of a sudden change in situation, so he immediately transforms orange flame into cloud-shaped. Then he gets on it.

"Hop on, you two, hurry!"

"Eeh!? Y-You can get on top of that thing!?"

"..... an astonishing fact."

The two were surprised, but they were forced to ride it after Souji urged them to hurry and told them he will explain it on the fly. Following that, it started to float. Femme landed on her bottom just like Ninthe when she first experienced this, but Testarossa was the same as always.

"Please hold on tight because I will use its full speed!"

Souji flew towards the foot of the mountain on the kinto-un-like cloud.

### **Story 67 Souji and Mayuki's Arrival!**

Mayuki and Sheila also felt the quake and puzzled by it. Having met Jingo and Zenji, they weren't able to get the <<Cespeach>>, but they got a nice information from Jingo.

It was about the appearance of an information dealer whose strength in thing related to commerce in the foot of this mountain. As such they might be able to find information about where to get <<Cespeach>> if they asked that person.

However, the information that got more of Mayuki's attention was how Souji Alkasha was nearby. She thought of meeting him by all means if he truly was in this mountain, but it's more important to get information on <<Cespeach>> and obtain it to cure Mill's mother.

After hearing Jingo's story, Mayuki and Sheila were running to the foot of this mountain, but the quake occurred as soon as they were about to reach it.

They wouldn't mind it if it was just a normal quake, but the shaking was just so strong that they could not move. Moreover, the Ominous Soul tribe who were attacking them since a while ago had completely disappeared right after the quake occurred.

"Sheila, what do you think about this?"

"Sh-Sheila doesn't know..... eu."

If even the book-lover and smart Sheila didn't know the cause of the quake, then Mayuki thought it was impossible for her to know the truth, so she stopped seeking for answer. Mayuki herself knows that she wasn't the thinking type. She was the type that moves before thinking to obtain the result. Though there's no way to tell if the result obtained will be a good one by moving first then thinking.

It was the truth that Sheila felt impatient against Mayuki who moved by intuition, but Sheila thought Mayuki wouldn't be Mayuki without that.

"Shall we go quickly to the mountain's foot for now?"

"O-Okay."

Right when the two were about to move, another quake occurred. Moreover, it was longer than before, and they heard scream once the quake stopped. The screams came from the direction of the mountain's foot. And they were able to see what happened on the mountain's foot from the gap between the trees.

Straining their eyes, they were able to see that something big was attacking the tourists. Although Mayuki thought it might be some kind of attraction, such a feeling couldn't be felt from there.

Besides, when she thought that big thing was the cause of the previous quake, Mayuki turned toward Sheila,

“Let’s hurry!”

And she moved out at full force.

The people in the mountain’s foot were in chaos. It was because the peace had been abruptly destroyed. The ground shook grandly, and the people lightly screamed as they were surprised by the scale of the shaking, the first quake.

It was unforeseeable quake for everyone, but they were relieved that no one was injured. However, the situation changed when the second quake occurred. When the people seen cracks suddenly appearing on ground, a gigantic, loss for words-worthy creature appeared from inside the crack.

Its body was so huge that one needed to look up to see its face, and there were huge wounds which sewed just like someone undergone operation on its body. Its right was also sewn and the same black string was also sewing its mouth. Its skin was pale green in color.

Above all, the most surprising thing was the gigantic creature was humanoid. Seeing its appearance reminded Yoyo of the thing called golem, a humanoid made of rocks. But seeing it has flesh, she could only see it as a person no matter what she thought of it.

Yoyo didn’t have any information about the humanoid living creature before her. She had never heard nor seen any human with green skin like that creature.

Well, on its body were things that made the already astonished Yoyo becomes even more astonished. Drill could be seen equipped on both of its hands, which she guessed as the things used to move underground.

Above the ground, the giant moved while raising loud footsteps, as if trying to trample the nearby people. Raising screams, the tourists were frantically escaping. Fortunately, it was slow and thanks to that, no one was hurt by the giant. However, a little girl fell when she was running away. The giant caught up to her and slowly raised its foot. The one seeming to be her mother ran up to her in panic. However, the giant's foot was already about to reach her.

"Eu-!"

Yoyo moved her gaze to the nearby Eu to urge her, and maybe because she had guessed what was Yoyo trying to say, discharge phenomenon released from her body with buzzing sound.

"Go! <<Petrifying Lightning>>-!"

The lightning went from Eu's body towards the giant. It was Eu's magic, a current capable of petrifying the object it touched. Yoyo had guessed that Eu's magic would be useful here.

The current strike straight at the giant's foot, but what petrified was only the giant's foot, it didn't successfully petrified the giant's whole body and depriving its movement. It might either because Eu's magic wasn't strong enough or the giant was just too big thus the effect reduced. As such, the giant's foot keeps approaching the mother and child.

"No-!"

Yoyo regretted that she never thought such a situation would occur; she could do nothing but shouted that. At the moment the giant's foot was about to crush the mother and child-----

"----- Tree, Restraint-!"

A high-pitched voice suddenly resounded. Following that, ivy-like things appeared from ground and immediately twined on the giant's body, restraining and depriving its movement. *Fwoosh*, a black haired girl rotated its body in the sky before landing. Then another girl with brown hair stood behind her.

"I won't allow any rampaging! Mister unknown giant!"

A black haired girl. She was someone Yoyo seen before. A girl Yoyo encountered when she bought <<Shinju manjuu>>. Yoyo remembered her because of her beautiful hair and impressive, attracting black eyes. The brown haired girl was also there at that time.

"Sheila! Escort the two to safe place!"

"Understood, Mayuki-san!"

Their names were known from that conversation. The girl called Sheila went towards the mother and child. Helping them to stand up, she tried to bring the mother and daughter to where Yoyo was.

The girl called Mayuki was glaring at the giant and when she squat and about to put her hands on ground, another earthquake occurred.

Mayuki inadvertently lost her balance. The escaping mother and daughter along with Sheila also stopped so as not to fall by supporting each other.

The shaking grew even stronger and suddenly, cracks appeared on ground just like before. However, it ran along as if to surround the girl's group. Following that, two more giants appeared.

They were giants, and their bodies were indeed in a miserable state just like the first giant. One is a giant without right arm (black skin) and the other one was a one eyed giant (blue skin). There were three giants in total. A force that made everyone speechless.

Being surrounded by giants, Mayuki's group was stiffened as they held their breath. The one eyed giant turned towards Sheila and the mother-daughter pair, swinging down the club-like weapon in its hand.

"N-No, you don't!"

Mayuki once again tried to put her hands on ground, but the restrained giant behind her shook its body, tearing and pulling apart the ivy. Thus it regained its freedom.

"---- eh!?"

Mayuki never thought the giant would be able to slip out that easily, so she panicky turn around to confirm it. When she did, she found the giant's foot approaching her and panicked. She immediately jumped sideway and succeeded in evading it, but Sheila's side was still under crisis.

Though they tried to quickly run away, the club swung down by the giant was faster. As they were, Sheila and the mother-daughter pair would-----

----- in but a moment, surprisingly, the giant's club disappeared. No, not only the club. It could be seen that the arm used to hold the club had also disappeared.

Everyone surrounding the giants was dumbfounded, just standing as they didn't understand what had happened. However, Yoyo's group know the person that created this situation. A black shadow descent from the sky and landed before Sheila, then he declared to the giant before him.

"It's not good to be violence towards girls, right, mr. giants?"

It was the entry of Yoyo's reliable butler, Souji Alkasha.

### **Story 68 Reunion with Childhood Friend**

Souji manipulated the white flame that appeared from his left hand and swallowed the giant's arm along with the club. However, the giant only silently glaring down at Souji, judging he was a threat, as if it didn't feel any pain at all.

“Devour it, white flame.”

Right after he muttered that, the white flame moved above the giant, opened its mouth, and swallowed the giant as it was.

“Now then, please hurry and escape!”

Souji took a glance at the mother-daughter pair and the brown haired girl behind him. The mother-daughter pair said, “Thank you very much!” and hurriedly escaping from there. However, the brown haired girl was only absentmindedly watching Souji.

He didn’t know why the girl didn’t move away from there. Souji had never seen her before. In other words, she wasn’t an acquaintance or so he judged, but the remaining two giants were now approaching the girl from behind.

“No, you don’t! White flame!”

Souji instantly manipulated white flame towards the approaching giants. The flame easily caught up because the giants were slow. Following that, the flame devoured a giant’s upper body followed by its lower body.

(One more, huh.)

Souji took a glance to confirm the remaining giant. However at that time, someone fell from the sky towards the giant’s head.

*Slash*, the giant’s neck was cut by that person and its head falls. Everyone except Souji was surprised by it. It was because the one who did that was a woman in maid uniform.

“As expected of Testarossa-san!”

Souji called out the person’s name. Next, the orange flame floating in the sky was moved towards Yoyo. Femme was riding on it. Testarossa had jumped down from orange flame towards the giant. It was likely to be an order from Femme, but she was indeed a <<Mechanical Doll>>.

Held in her hand was the sword used to slash the giant, though it was unknown where did she retrieved it. It was a rather surreal appearance because how she was wearing maid uniform. However, for some reason, the decapitated giant was still moving.

(Strange. Wait, the previous giants also didn't bleed..... can it be?)

Souji was holding a doubt because no blood gushed out when white flame wounded the giants. Even blood couldn't be seen on the decapitated giant. However, he could see machine-like structure inside the decapitated head.

(So that's it!)

Souji noticed the giants' identity, and now he know there's no need for him to hold back.

"It's the end! Devour it, white flame!"

White flame flew towards the giant at a terrific speed. Moving vertically and horizontally, it made the giant disappeared. Now, the three giants had disappeared with only the decapitated head remained.

Souji deactivated white flame and turned his gaze towards Testarossa.

"Thank you for the help, Testarossa-san."

"..... release work mode. You seem to be okay."

"Ee, even though it was unexpected, it is good that no one dies...."

"Sou-kun.....?"

Ending his sentence, Souji heard the mutter that was previously a daily thing for him. And at the moment he turned to face the source,

"Sou-kuuuuuuuuuuuuuun--!"

"Heh? Uwapph!?"

His vision was suddenly covered in dark. Following that, the feelings of softness and warm were spreading on his face.

(Wh-whawhawhawhat is this-!?)

Moreover, a pleasant, sweet smell tickled his nasal cavities. Feeling relieved by the smell, an unknown excitement ran through Souji's mind.

While thinking just what this was, Souji stood firmly, bracing himself from falling to the ground.

“Sou-kun Sou-kun Sou-kun Sou-kun Sou-kun Sou-kun Sou-kun!”

Souji frantically tried to think what this “Soukun” was, but didn't have any recollection about it. There's only one person calling him by that, a truly familiar person, but he excluded that as it was an impossible thing.

However, this warm was indeed from someone hugging him, moreover this softness....

Thinking so made him unconsciously grinning, but he instantly felt a black aura behind him which made him freeze. He knew this aura even without seeing it. Judging his life would be in danger if this situation continued, Souji hurriedly separated himself from the woman.

Blushing while hiding that he felt good with all his might, Souji turned his gaze towards the woman.

————— and time freezes.

It couldn't be helped that Souji was feeling that this was inside a dream. That's how impossible the spectacle in his view was.

A bright, sun-like smile. A lot of time had passed since he seen this smile. Souji knew a girl who had such a smile.

However, his circumstance had made Souji unable to see the girl's smile anymore. Well, actually, he had seen it several times in his dream after reincarnated here. Even there, the girl had the same attracting, unchanging smile. The one she was smiling at was the snappish Souji. It was his memory as Asakura Souji.

As such, he thought it was a dream when he sees the girl before him. It was because of the girl who smiled while rubbing her face.

“..... Mayuki.....?”

His mutter made the crying girl relaxed as she tried to put a smile. Following that, a truly familiar and nostalgic voice entered Souji's ears.

“It's been a long time, eh, Sou-kun!”

Here was unmistakably Souji's childhood friend, Amakawa Mayuki.

“Sou-kun-!”

“Uotto!?”

「想くんっ！」

「うおっと!？」

Mayuki once again hugged him, and this time he firmly caught her. Her face was right before him, and Souji could feel the same huge breasts on his chest. However, Souji couldn't enjoy that feeling. Rather, he was greatly confused, wanting to know what's with this situation.

またも真雪に抱きつかれて、今度はしっかりと受け止める。彼女の顔が自分の顔の近くになり、相変わらずの巨大バストがソージの胸にその感触を伝えさせているのだが、ソージはその感触を楽しむことはできない。むしろ頭の中は盛大に混乱が起こり、事態を把握し切れずにいる。

There, with the same black aura, Yoyo approached the two with frozen expression.

そこへヨヨが、こちらも相変わらずの黒いオーラを噴出しながら、表情を凍らせて近づいてきた。

“..... Souji?”

“Hya, Hyaes!”

「..... ソージ？」

「ひゃ、ひゃいっ！」

Souji reflexively separated and took a distance from Mayuki, then he looked at Yoyo.

バツと反射的に真雪を剥がして距離を取ると、ヨヨに対面する。

“You two seem to get along very well, but is it suffice to make you hugging intimately?”

“N-No, I am not the one doing the hugging!”

“Ara, you seemed to be happy though, was it just my misunderstanding?”

「ずいぶん、仲が良いみたいだけれど、抱きつくほど親密なのかしら？」

「い、いや、抱きついたのはオレじゃなくてですね！」

「あら、それにしても嬉しそうだったけれど、私の勘違いかしら？」

The words she used were just like ice knife pointing at his neck. He felt the coldness along with the danger to his life.

Judging anything he says would be treated as excuse and deteriorated the situation, Souji turned his gaze to Kaina to beg for help..... However, the person concerned was approaching the giant's head and now curiously examining it.

言葉の端々にまるで氷でできたナイフを首元に突きつけられているかのごとく、冷やっとする体感とともに命の危険を悟る。

これは自分が何を言っても言い訳にしかならず悪化の一途を辿るだけだと判断したので、ソージはカイナに視線を向けて助けを請う.....が、当人はどこにいるかという巨人の頭に近づき興味深げに調べていた。

“Curiosity over the danger on her son-!?”

「息子の危険より好奇心優先っ!？」

Souji reflexively shouted so due to his mother's behavior. Then he tried to ask the other adult who was Eu's mother, Shee, but she was holding her cheeks in embarrassment.

思わず母の行動に叫んでしまったソージ。こうなったらここはさらに大人の考えができるユ一の母親であるシーに助けを求めるが、彼女は困ったように頬に手を当てて、

“Ara ara, Souji-kun, he is that kind of playboy? Yup, Eu, don’t lose!”

「あらあら、ソージくんったら、結構手が早いのかしら？ うん、負けちゃダメよユー！」

It was useless. She was splendidly unhelpful. Moreover, Eu shown her eagerness and said, “Though Eu doesn’t understand, Eu will do her best!”

There’s nothing else he could do beside turning his gaze to his last hope, Ninthe, but

ダメだった。彼女は見事に助けにはならない。しかもユーも「な、なんだかわからないけどがんばるの！」と意気込みを表していた。

仕方無く最後の希望であるニンテに視線を向けたが、

“Surely, she is Souji’s lover-something.”

「きっとアレはソージの愛人か何かね」

Femme said such a dreadful, untrue information.

恐ろしいことにフェムによって偽りの情報を流されていた。

“Ah, what is a lover?”

“What I mean, Souji comes to her times by times.”

“?”

“He is a pervert that’s seeing women. A perverted butler.”

“Waiiiiiit-! Femme-san! Wh-Whawhawhawwhat are you saying! Moreover, you involved the pure Ninthe!”

「あ、アイジンって何です？」

「つまりはね、ソージはああ見えて節操がないってことよ」

「？」

「女と見ればむしゃぶりつく変態よ。変態執事よ」

「ちよっとおおっ！ フェムさん！ あ、あああなた何を！ しかも純粋なニンテまで巻き込んで！」

This was a truly terrible situation.

これは由々しき事態だった。

“What!? You watched the naked me and Testa as if you were licking us!”

“I can feel maliciousness from your words though!?”

「何よ！ アタシとテストの裸を舐め回すように見た癖に！」

「何か言い方に悪意があるんですがっ！？」

He admitted that he seen them, but he didn't have the memory of licking. However, two people twitched when Femme's words entered their ears and they, Yoyo and Mayuki, gripped his collar. The spectacle was just like the winner raising his trophy. With cheeks cramped, the two looked up and speak.

確かに見てしまったことは認めるが、舐め回すように見た記憶は無い。しかしフェムのその発言を聞いた二人の人物の耳がピクリと動き、ガシッと二人であるヨヨと真雪に襟を掴まれる。

まるでかつあげされているかのような光景である。そして彼女たちは頬を引き攣らせ、目を吊り上げながら言う。

“What was that mean, Souji?”

“Care to explain, Sou-kun?”

「どういうことかしら、ソージ？」

「説明してもらおうよ、想くん？」

*What's with this pandemonium.....?*

これ何て修羅場.....？

It was the day Souji cursed the god for the first time in a while.

ソージは久々に神を呪った日だった。