

たつくるん  
イラスト★パセリ

# 異世界の 手引き書 2

Manual of the person from different world

# **Isekaijin no Tebikisho**

*Stranger's Handbook*

## **Book 2: The Empire's Blade**

**by Takkurun**

Info: [Novel Updates](#)

# Chapter 61: The Characters until Now ✖ Contains Spoilers ✖

Zest Gaiyus

Protagonist

A middle aged man, 32 years old, with black eyes and black hair.

He married Bea out of mutual love.

He likes to flirt a lot.

He is a Duke and the 1st Rank Imperial Mage. He became an authority figure inside the empire.

Beatrice Varnam

Heroine

A 16 years old with black eyes and black hair.

A Japanese style beauty who gives the impression of matureness.

An expert of black attribute magic.

She married Zest out of mutual love.

She's a duchess.

As a duchess, she's a popular figure that all the women of the empire admire.

Her portrait is selling like crazy.

Toto

A spirit that Zest and Bea created.

She adores her Dad and Mom.

Her outer appearance is that of a 30cm mini Bea.

Razatonia Varnam

The head of the Frontier Count's Household

A demon-like old geezer with a dark mind

He's also an expert of the dark attribute magic and is feared in the area.

A frightening and always scheming old man

He calls Beatrice 'Bea' and is affectionate towards her.

Sonia Varnam

A son-in-law in the Frontier Count's Household

The refreshment of the terrifying Frontier Count's Household

When he's only with the family he switches to the gentle 'papa' mode.

Normally, he interacts with people while being is the frightening 'Frontier Count' mode.

He's the protagonist's magic teacher and the Magic Division Commander.

Galef Gaiyus

The Knights Commander

The protagonist's foster father

He accepted the protagonist for being his successor, but the protagonist also healed his wife.

He is able to have children now.

He feels a debt of gratitude towards his adopted son and always causes a stir about his successor.

He's a loud man who wears a full-plate armor.

An old man with muscle brains who looks like a powerful bandit.

Celica Gaiyus

The protagonist's foster mother

The Frontier Count's younger sister

Since the moment the protagonist healed her of infertility, she's always doting him.

She's very supportive of his marriage to her grandniece Beatrice.

Her personality is the spitting image of the Frontier Count's, but she intends to be kind towards the protagonist.

Camel

The Gaiyus' Household's butler

An old man who manages the servants

He deeply respects the protagonist who healed madam Celica.

Albert

A male kemonobito

The man called dog knight

Because he's exceptional, he also serves as the Frontier Count's guard.

Since the 'marking incident' he unnecessarily fears the protagonist.

He marries Meril.

He's a faithful dog that is no match for his 'master' Zest.

Meril

A baron's daughter.

He had to separate from Albert because of the difference in their social status.

Zest helps them and they manage to get married.

She's extremely grateful to Zest.

The Emperor of the Grun Empire

A middle aged handsome man with blond hair and blue eyes

Conforming to tradition, he cast aside his name after the enthronement.

He was called 'Sarsesh' when he was a child.

No one calls him by this name now since it's considered a blasphemy.

People call him 'his Majesty the Emperor' or simply 'his Majesty'.

## Empress Natasha

A beautiful woman with blond hair and blue eyes

She has a gentle aura and she looks like a soothing 'onee-sama'.

His Majesty is deeply in love with her and won't really show her in front of the public.

The gardener who fixed his eyes on the empress got killed.

The master chef who complimented her cooking skills got killed too.

If you breathe the same air that she breathes, you'll be killed...

This is the extent of the rumors, which show how much his Majesty cares about her.

## Imperial princess Tsubaki

The daughter of his Majesty and Natasha

She has the name of a flower (1) from the legendary country of Japan.

A 10 year old beautiful girl

She likes the spirit and she admires Beatrice who is the model of it.

## Prime Minister Arc

A man in his 50s

He has the image of a little fatty with brown hair and red eyes.

However, he also acts heartlessly according to his position of a Prime Minister, and he would be capable of murdering his family if that's for the best interest of the country.

He gets along well with the Frontier Count and he visits him every year.

## Imperial Mage Rank 4

Lamia Varnam

A mage specialized in medical treatments; Sonia's wife

Beatrice's mother

She normally works in the imperial capital.

She's a very indulgent 'mama' towards Bea.

Towards her husband she also has a 'spartan' attitude and often gives him aggressive responses.

Bicks

Viscount

The head of domestic affairs

He's the father of the idiotic noble who 'offered' a marriage proposal to Beatrice.

Unknown cause of death

Tanya

A middle aged woman

The shopkeeper of a Western-style clothes store that shows favor to the Frontier Count's Household.

She also opened a shop that sells all sorts of new selection of goods.

Viscount Mark

Media's father

He's a poor man greatly perplexed by his foolish son.

He's grateful to Zest for arranging a marriage for his son, and can't wait to see

the face of his grandson.

## Media

The heir of the Viscount's Household.

He looks like a beautiful girl, but he's a man.

He's a commander of the Maid's Unit.

He married Tasel.

He claims that he would die for Zest's sake.

## Tasel

A former adventurer

She's a woman that looks like a wild, handsome man.

She falls in love with Media and marries him.

She swears of oath of allegiance to Zest since he's helped her making various arrangements.

Count Raiza

The Commanding General of the Empire's Army.

A 43 years old with blue hair.

He has a tough, huge body.

The Emperor acknowledged him when he was young and made him a viscount, then a count.

He has an official position now.

He's the Emperor's right-hand man.

Tarminal Kingdom's side

Harnil

Count

A grandpa who came to the empire as an emissary for the kingdom

???

The royalty who led the kingdom's army.

His name is unknown.

Herman

A male kemonobito.

He opposed the despotic administration in his country and created the Rebel Army.

He admires Albert and he develops an interest for Duke Zest, since he is Albert's master.

He becomes the headman of a fishing village.

Katalina

A cat kemonobito and a legal loli.

She works for Zest as a civil official.

She's the guys' idol.

She's unpopular among the black knights.

The Holy Country of Lilac

Pope Garbera

The top of the Holy Country of Lilac.

He's quite the tactician, but he's open to conversation.

The Sister

A woman who showed up as a messenger.

She speaks an enigmatic language.

She becomes the Priestess of a church on Zest's domain.

## Chapter 62: A Messenger from the Neighboring Country

“Thank you for coming, Zest. I see Bea is doing great too.”

His Majesty said and laughed.

He came to visit us several times, and recently he started to act more like a relative who comes to play every once in a while.

I’m a duke and I’ll be getting married to his daughter in the future.

I’m not planning to deliberately sow discord among us, since opposing each other would be too troublesome.

After all, it was in order to remain allies that I was forced to accept his daughter, Princess Tsubaki, in marriage.....

I can’t trust him unconditionally, but I can rely on him.

“However, the spirit drops are delicious, aren’t they?”

.....Isn’t this the real reason behind your friendliness, your Majesty?

After we greeted each other and done some idle chat, it was time for the main topic.

We were inside the palace's residential area.

Although we could talk about anything, there were certain limits to that too; Nobles are too troublesome and that's a fact.

“To tell you the truth, we are expecting a messenger from Tarminal Kingdom, the neighboring country.....And so I want you to be present to this meeting.”

Tarminal Kingdom.

It was the country next to the Frontier Count's domain. It was a shady country that promoted a doctrine which allowed supremacy to the human race.

At first, the Frontier Count wanted to cause internal conflict in this country, but now it was different.

‘If we get the chance, we ought to start a war.’

All the nobles of the empire were in agreement with this idea.

It seemed we couldn't remain at peace much longer.....

“I can't predict the matters to be brought in discussion, but it is certain that this country is dangerous.....Well, we won't know anything until he gets here, but I'll have you there, just in case.”

The Emperor had a grim expression on his face, as we both drank some black tea.

Just in case.....In short, he was gathering the strongest battle powers as a counter-plan for a possible assassination.

Even if the Emperor would get killed, I would kill the assassin and start a war of revenge, or something like that.

Well, me being there would also mean that it's in order not to let him get killed, but I still have to think about the worst it could happen and prepare.

After we finished talking about this matter, Princess Tsubaki and Empress Natasha joined us for an idle chat.

As usual, Princess Tsubaki was playing with Bea and Toto.

“Bea nee-sama, will you sleep together with me tonight?”

“Yes, we'll take Toto-chan with us too.”

(Tsubaki, you're so lonely.)

.....It seems I'll be free for the rest of the day. Shall I go drinking with Albert?

“It shows on your face, the innocence of the newly-wed.”

“Oh my! Zest is beyond help.”

You two, stop reading into me.

I don't regret anything, all right? I don't.

I left Bea and Toto behind and returned to my room. They prepared a room just for my use inside the imperial palace.

I just went to sleep.....

And so, after 3 days, the messenger in question arrived.

The audience room.

I was standing behind the Emperor, not leaving his side.

It was my place as a duke and as his daughter's fiancé.

The messenger was a slender old man with red hair.

His magical power was concealed.....That in itself was a statement that he was considerably strong.....

“I am the Emperor of the Grun Empire. You may speak.”

With his face still covered, the messenger started his speech.

“My name is Harnil and I’m a Count of the Tarminal Kingdom. I must thank you, your Majesty, for giving this humble old man the chance of having an audience with you.”

“Good. I’ll listen to your matter.”

“Yes. I was entrusted with a letter from my Tarminal Kingdom along with a vocal message.”

He took out the letter from his chest pocket and carried it on both his palms.

Just for precaution, I approached him and took the letter.

It didn’t contain any suspicious magic. I used my observation magic just in case, but everything seemed in order.

I handed over the letter to the Emperor, and he started reading it.

The Emperor wasn’t his usual self.

Normally, he wouldn’t let his feelings show on his face, but now he was

clearly angry.

The nobles inside the audience room sensed that something wasn't right and their faces turned pale.

Before long, the Emperor put the letter aside and started to talk.

“Are you people serious? Do you know about the letter's contents?”

“Even if you ask me this, I have a vocal message to deliver to you.”

The messenger didn't even quiver the slightest bit.

“The letter is authentic. Starting today, our Tarminal Kingdom declares war against the Grun Empire.”

He raised his head and, without changing his expression, he delivered the message.

They are serious.

In this case.....

“A message! An urgent message!”

The gates were violently opened and a worn-out, wounded soldier tumbled into the audience room. His torn figure wasn't suitable for such a room like this.

“What is this? You insolent fellow!”

“How dare you show yourself like this in front of his Majesty!?”

“Guards! Take this guy away immediately!”

These idiots.....

These officials can't even judge the situation.....

“Silence! If it's an urgent message, he can ignore the etiquette. Report!”

As I was releasing my entire magical power to pressure and control my

surroundings, I already took out a sword from my item box.

They already proclaimed war, which means we must apply the war time rules.

“Yes, your Majesty. The Tarminal Kingdom’s Army is attacking the Frontier Count’s domain! The battle has already begun at the Border Fortress.”

After he finished his report, the soldier collapsed.

I knew this guy.....He was part of the Frontier Count’s Army.

“How can this be?....The battle started at the same time with the war proclamation.....”

“We must dispatch our army fast.”

“Gather all the generals.....”

“Silence!”

With a single word, the Emperor made everyone fall silent.

There was no point whatsoever to panic like that.

“Zest, what do you think?”

Why me, your Majesty?....

It can't be helped. We don't have much time.

“The messenger came to declare war against us, in short, the battle has just started. The enemy army's force is unknown to us, that's true, but if we let them overtake the Frontier Count's domain and fight them afterwards it's nothing but a foolish plan. If we lose our elites, all that awaits us is collapse. We must promptly send them reinforcements and gather information, while we create a second battle formation composed of our greatest military force, and drive them away completely.”

He stood up at once.

“As for the reinforcements, I'll take my own army and lead them towards the battlefield right away. I was thinking that maybe it would be best to gather the main army's forces at once and send word to other territorial armies to prepare

for battle.”

“I understand. I’ll do just that. Gather all the army commanders immediately and send messages to the nobles of the empire. The officials must arrange for the supply of materials and the Prime Minister is entrusted with.....sending that messenger’s head back to his kingdom.”

Everyone started to move with the Emperor’s words.

I rushed out of the audience room, found Albert and confirmed with him.

“Albert, we’re at war. How many soldiers can we bring along?”

Albert understood the situation in an instant.

It was all too suspicious from the beginning.

There was no soldier inside the audience room who started to panic when everyone else did.

“In total, 100 soldiers. But if we go back to our territory, we can take another 1000 soldiers.”

It’s good he understood the circumstances.

This time, it was a match against speed, so we had to take only the elites.

“Send a message and tell everyone to start preparing. We’ll only take the most powerful. The rest are going to join the supply unit and line up the supply goods on the main road that goes to the Frontier Count’s domain, so that we’ll run through it at a breath.”

“Yes sir! Immediately.”

It usually takes 3 days to get to my domain by carriage, but leaving that aside and counting only the time it’d take to get to the imperial capital from the Frontier Count’s domain, it would be about 8 days.....

If we only take the strongest soldiers with us, we can reach the battlefield in half the requested time, even less.

If we get there in 5 days, it’ll be just in time.....

The faster we get there, the better the chance to find the Frontier Count’s Army unwounded and fight together with them.

In this case, we wouldn't lose that easily.

As quickly as possible, I must reach the battleground.

This was the only thing I was capable of thinking at that point.

## Chapter 63: Battle at the Border

“Did the scouting unit leave? What about the supply arrangements?”

“Yes sir, weapons and armors are already being transported from the Frontier Count’s castle.”

I was riding the horse at full speed, as I was eating some dried meat.

“Any deserters?”

“None. There are still 1100 soldiers riding, just as planned. No one deserted.”

I drank some water from a water bag.

Two days passed since our departure.

We enter the Frontier Count’s domain and were rushing towards the goods distribution camp.

The original plan was to stop at the Frontier Count’s castle first and then head towards the border, but we found more soldiers inside the castle than we could have expected.

These soldiers were staying behind in order to transport the necessary goods from the castle to the battlefield in the shortest time possible.

From here it'll take us another two days.....Or maybe, we'll get there tomorrow.

After such a long march, with no sleep at all, people would drop out normally.

However, the soldiers following me are those who endured the Frontier Count's severe training.

We made camp for the night at the meeting place, since from here onward the battlefield was too close.

"Your Excellency Zest, the scout has returned."

The black knight brought along a former adventurer.

"I'll start my report: The Frontier Count's Army is in good health. They are confining themselves inside the Border Fortress, resisting the besieging enemy forces."

For the time being I felt relieved.....It was ok, I could make it in time.

They haven't dropped yet, we can still make it.

“The Tarminal Kingdom’s Army counts about 20.000 soldiers. The royalty flag was seen above their stronghold.”

.....The royal family? Should we capture them?

In worst case I’ll have them dead.....But I’d rather have them as war prisoners, if possible...

It’s useless. I can’t put my thoughts in order.

“You did a good job. Are there any sings of enemies in this area?”

“There aren’t. The defense line is well maintained.”

“Understood. Go get some rest.”

After the scout left, I called for Albert.

“Albert, let the Maids Unit go to sleep first. If by any chance a soldier goes to where the maids sleep, kill him.”

“Yes sir!”

“As for the lineup, in the center will be the tent, surrounded by the maids, the black knights and the regular soldiers in this precise order. The former adventurers will sleep on the outside of this circle, since they’re used to camping at night and coping with enemy attacks.”

“What about the Frontier Count’s Army?”

“They will be on the lookout. We can’t take them to the battlefield with us so I’ll just have them work hard here. You should go to sleep too. Tomorrow is the decisive battle after all.”

“Yes sir! Understood!”

Albert left the tent at a quick pace.

I lay down and fell asleep immediately.....It was unknown when I could get some sleep again during this.

The Frontier Count’s Army prepared some warm food for us, so we took it and departed.

I can’t say the fatigue was completely gone.

But I recovered enough in order to fight without problems.

We arrived in the evening.

And what we saw was the Frontier Count's Army barricading itself inside the fortress and the Tarminal Kingdom's Army lined up on the battlefield as much as the eye could see.

"I shall report: The Frontier Count's Army has 3000 soldiers, their morale being very high. They have no problems with the supplies either. They can hold the fortress for one month with 10.000 enemy soldiers attacking it."

I see. Then there's no need to rush foolishly.

"Understood. Ladies! Genlemen! We will now enter the fortress."

The soldiers didn't understand those words, so they were all startled.

The black knights started to grin broadly.....They seemed to have understood.

"Ladies! Gentlemen! We will now assault the enemy army from behind and run straight to the fortress. Don't worry, the black knights and I will be in the vanguard, so you just have to follow us. Easy, right?"

"As I thought."

"Yeah...It seems so."

“I’m so fired up...We’ll jump in the midst of the enemy and break through their lines.”

“Oi, let’s compete and see how many of us can enter the fortress before his Excellency.”

The black knights were excitedly getting ready for battle.

“Good. Don’t speak just yet. We’re about to kick those blockheads’ butts any moment now.....Still, we’ll run straight ahead to the fortress, ok? If you go astray you might get hit by our own arrows, so be careful.”

We were quietly advancing through the forest.

It was evening, the best time for surprise attacks and quick withdraws during wars.

Silently, I waved my hand to signal the soldiers to keep galloping their horses.

Albert and the black knights were following right behind me.

There were 200 meters left until the enemy's rear line.....They haven't noticed our presence yet.

I released my full magical powers and cast 100 light arrows into the sky, then made them downpour on the battlefield.

“What the.....There is magic behind us.....! En.....enemy attack! Enemy attack!”

A few soldiers realized what was happening and tried to warn their comrades, but it was too late.

I shot another 100 light arrows.

“Good. They are disorganized! We'll run through them at once!”

“ “ “ “ “Yeaaaaaaaah!!!” “ “ “ “ “

I was in the lead, galloping my horse and constantly shooting light arrows in every direction.

I had plenty magical power and shot so many arrows that the enemy was beginning to loathe me.

As my magic arrows were reaching the ground, they hit the enemy soldiers' bodies, with about half of them getting stuck in their armor.

They won't pierce it?.....Then what about this?

I controlled the light arrows to fall diagonally from as far up as possible.

Every time I employed my magical powers, 100 light arrows fell from the sky.

I didn't even remember how many times I shot them by that time.

About the time my breathing started to accelerate, I saw arrows and magic spells coming from the fortress and protecting our perimeter.

Haha. Gramps, you understood me well.

"The sky! The fortress is providing covering fire! You'll get killed if you go astray, so follow me!!"

Because of my surprise attack and the covering fire provided by the fortress, the Tarminal Kingdom's Army could not coordinate itself at all.

I was riding my horse, shooting light arrows to places where groups of enemy soldiers were forming.

Just a little further.

We're nearly at the fortress.....

We heard shouts of joy coming from the front.

500 meters until we reached the fortress.

"Come on!"

"Do your best! Just a little longer!"

"Oii, ready your bows!"

In order to live up to their comrades' rooting and support, the black knights wielded their weapons violently, clearing our immediate surroundings.

We'll soon reach it.

The fortress' gates were opening.

Oi, it's too early! The enemies will get inside.....

“Gahahahahaha! I'm just welcoming my son! You guys can go play!”

“Follow the Knights Commander!!”

“ “ “Yeaaaaah!!!” “ “ “

My foster father, Galef, started to wave his spear and assault the enemies.

.....I'm glad you were safe, father.

In those few moments when my foster father, followed by the black knights, was leading the assault on the enemy forces, we finally reached the fortress.

I was relieved. I didn't expect them to assault the enemy.

You were a big help, father.

.....It was too embarrassing, so I didn't tell him that.

We entered the fortress and got welcomed by the cheers of our comrades.

Since the fortress was not so spacious, I looked around me and saw that a lot of soldiers were watching me.....

Well, I have to do it.....I really have to do it...

I'm not really in the mood, but it can't be helped.....

My foster father guided me to a balcony.

It was time for the commander of the reinforcement forces to give his speech.

In order to raise the soldiers' morale, I must say some sensible and smart words.

.....I sighed.....Can't be helped, huh?

I resigned and motivated myself, then started talking in an imposing manner.

“The time you were all waiting for has come. In order to prevent the unnecessary deaths of our brave men, in order to once again fight for the ideals of our Grun Empire, in order to defend the Frontier Count’s domain! Comrades, I have returned!”

Yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!!!

It was a huge success.....

And yeah, I.....ended up giving a homage speech for myself. Sorry about that.

## Chapter 64: Meeting at the Fortress – The Secret of the Frontier Count's Household

“Hohoho. You led 1000 soldiers through a formation of thousands of enemies. You really are reliable.”

The Frontier Count was showing a smile worthy of ‘the last boss’.

We moved to the conference room to hold a strategic meeting.

“And that speech of yours, quite impressive. The soldiers were happy.”

.....I stole the spotlight, sorry.

“Gahahahaha. You took the lead, assaulted the enemy and penetrated their formation! Even though this isn't the typical job for a duke.”

My shoulders were creaking.

Haha, my foster father was way too energetic.

After this short exchange, we moved to the main subject.

“What is the general situation of this war?”

At this point, I was using the seat of honor since my court rank was the highest.

This doesn't suit me.....It feels awkward.

“Both my Commanders, Sonia and Galef, already went wild on the battlefield. And now you're here too, son-in-law-dono. I can't picture us losing anymore.”

“To say it clearly, there's no way this fortress will fall with you inside it, son-in-law-dono. Don't look down on your own strength.”

.....Master is calling me 'son-in-law-dono' too; this is way too awkward.

But they're right.

I still have lots of magical power left, so we might take turns and hail them with magical attacks.

“With son-in-law-dono, Sonia and I together, we could take on about 10.000 enemies. Tomorrow we'll be enjoying a grand fireworks display with our families.”

“It sounds good. We'll leave the approaching enemy soldiers to Galef and

Albert. They'll do the job."

"Gahahahaha, Albert! We'll go wild tomorrow!"

"Yes sir! I won't let anyone get close and return with his life!"

Gahahaha

Ha ha ha ha

Hohoho

.....I brought reinforcements in order to protect this place.

But was I even needed here?

Everyone stopped laughing suddenly.

Hiii!

It's been a while since they made me feel this frightened!

"Lord Zest, thank you for bringing reinforcements, I'll be forever grateful. The Frontier Count's Household pays back its life debts with its own life. Even if you'll become an enemy to the Empire, we will never betray you."

The Frontier Count bowed his head and everyone else followed his example.

“Please stop. It’s only natural to want to save my own family. I don’t want you to be indebted to me.”

Hm? Did I miss something?.....

There’s no reaction coming from them, it’s too embarrassing.....

“Hohoho, you are not greedy, it seems. Well, you must be tired, so you might want to rest a bit.”

When being told that, I had no other choice but to comply.....Did I really get it all wrong?

I saluted everyone and walked, with some difficulty, towards my room.

I’ll go to sleep early today.....

By the time I was falling asleep, the discussion in the conference room was still ongoing.

“.....However, this is a huge help, your Excellency. If we were to continue like that, it would’ve gotten rather dangerous.”

“Indeed, Galef. Now that son-in-law-dono is here, we are saved. He rescued Bea for me and now this.....Life sure is unforeseeable.....Sonia, I am now adding something new to my testament.....Listen well!”

“.....As you wish, father.”

“You must tell to the future generations about Lord Zest’s achievements, about how he bravely responded to the compression and enhancement training in such a short period of time. He saved the eldest daughter of the Frontier Count’s Household. He was the first person to put his life at stake and came rushing to us.....My domain was saved by him and I’ll never forget this favor. If he ever ends up pointing his bow at the Empire, the Frontier Count’s Household is to aid him to finish it. Lord Zest has strong magical powers, so I’m sure he’ll live long. You will listen to this last request and obey it for as long as he is alive.”

“I swear I will forever act according to your will.”

“Hohoho, I can’t possibly write this in an official document though. The head of this household will have to follow the oral instructions by any means. You heard it too, Galef. The Gaius’ Household is the overseer.....You are to kill the heads of this household who reject my will and don’t act accordingly. If the head of the Frontier Count’s Household shows signs of ingratitude, this would only bring about its own ending.”

“Yes Sir!”

“As you wish, your Excellency.”

“Hm.....Because of our debt to him, I followed and protected the will of the First Emperor until this very day, but who would’ve thought that it would change with my generation.....”

“Yes. His will was.....’Observe the conscience of the Empire, and in case the Empire ends up oppressing the good people and those coming from a different world, you have to destroy it. However, if this never happens, you are to be loyal towards it’.....So it was.”

“Right.....That’s why I gave my protection to this summoned stranger...”

“As I thought....The ones who summoned him are.....”

“Hoho, it was the Tarminal Kingdom’s royal mages. Even though the summoning was a success, his death was a certainty. And so, they panicked and came to attack us.”

“I see.....However father, what if.....What if son-in-law-dono will start oppressing the good people and the otherworlders? What will we do then?”

“Gahahahaha, don’t worry about it. He resisted that hellish compression and enhancement training, he has guts. In order to let him live, we made him do absurd things, but he endured it all. Well, if by any chance he ends up doing something like that, I will secretly dispose of him, without the Frontier Count’s Household knowing about it. This is the conviction entrusted to the Gaiyus’ Household.”

“However”

“Still.....”

“But you know....?”

“ “ “He is way too kind, we don’t have to worry about it.” “ “

“Furthermore.....”

“And yet.....”

“Besides.....”

“ “ “He’s surprisingly timid, so we really have nothing to worry about.” “ “

“With him being such a person, I’m amazed he endured that type of training. Such a mysterious son-in-law-dono.”

“You are so right.”

“With ability and guts, that’s how he made it.”

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They found out I was a timid person...

However, it was at a later time that I realized what a recklessly strong sense of duty the Frontier Count’s Household actually possessed.

## Chapter 65: A Fixed Fort

“We have only one simple strategy to follow today. Lord Zest will shoot grand magical spells at random. Sonia and I will shoot what is left of the enemy, but even in this case, if there are enemies who approach the fortress, you will defeat them.....That’s all.”

It was very easy to understand.

A wonderful strategy, Frontier Count.....

“Say, there are still enemies around, right?”

“Yeah, there should be in the areas where Lord Zest is shooting those grand spells.”

Boooooooooom

“.....Like there.”

“.....Right.”

“ “We’re so free it’s boring.” “

Booooooooooom

“Lord Zest’s efforts are not half-hearted.”

“He seems he still has enough magical power left. He’s shouting something, isn’t he?”

“.....Lord Zest, he’s never half-hearted.”

The soldiers protecting the fortress didn’t get any chance to engage in battle.

They were extremely shocked, watching me, the heroic duke, how I continued to release grand spells and shoot them towards the enemy, all by myself.

How can he still go on?.....Could his Excellency defeat the enemy all by himself?

That’s what they were thinking.....

However, the reality wasn't nearly that sweet.....

"Toss it! Lord Zest."

".....Okaaaaaaaaay!"

If I didn't yell in order to motivate myself, I felt like I was going to collapse.....I desperately tried to control my magical powers that started to overflow and pushed them back inside my body.

If I were to be careless even for an instant, the magic spell wouldn't activate.....

With great caution I employed my magical power again.....Good, go!!

Booooooooooom

It landed on the right spot, it seems. My entire magical power was coming out of my body.....My knees are laughing at me, huh?

I beat them and regained my senses; I somehow managed to stand firm.

I consumed a lot of magical power, but the problem was my physical and emotional strength.....or to say, my ability to concentrate..... was steadily decreasing.

I already knew that.

This was.....way too tough.....

“Lord Zest, please shoot one over there as well.”

“.....Yeaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

Damn it! Don't say it so casually like it's the easiest thing in the world.....

I once again forced my almost out of control magical power back inside my body and tried to imagine the explosion.

I compressed and compressed and compressed my magical power in a reckless attempt to employ another grand spell.

My both hands started to shine, but it wasn't ready yet.

I forced myself to make it stronger and smaller.....and I made it!

Over there, you say? GO!!

Boooooooooooooooooom

Good, it was a.....success.....Damn it.....my consciousness is all over the place.....

What the? There's something in my mouth.....I can't breathe.

I die if I don't drink this!?

Somehow.....I drank it up.

What? The ground is close to my face.....Ah, was I asleep.....?

I stood up slowly and shook my head.

I'm all right. Some way or another, my consciousness was very clear.

"Lord Zest, shoot the next one over there."

".....All riiiiiiiiiiiiight!!!"

That day, all I did was to shoot grand spells towards the places the Frontier Count and my master indicated...It was an 'easy' task and I gave my all to complete it.....

Say whatever you like, but I was completely exhausted....

It was because for those exploding range spells I was using an unusual amount of magical power.

Compared to the strengthening and healing magical spells that I use all the time, this one was consuming 10 times the amount of magical power.

In fact, I ran out of magical power a few times.

And each time the Maids Unit was forcibly making me drink some recovery medicine....

That day was torture for me.

Still, it was good enough for defending our base.

Indeed, for self-defense only...

If I were to be outside on the battlefield and fire these magical spells in rapid succession, I'd be surrounded and disposed of pretty soon.

The consumption of magical power was way too unbeneficial.....

My stomach was making strange noises as the Maids Unit carried me to my room.

Thanks...

I was exhausted to such an extent that I couldn't even say that single word.

I collapsed into my bed like I was about to lose consciousness.

The maids wiped my body with a cold hand towel.

Ah, it feels good. Thanks.

Even though I wanted to thank them, opening my mouth was a way too troublesome task.

I decided that I will never ever use exploding magic again.....

I truly believed it.

It looked easy for those around me, but for me it was too much.

This.....was nothing but certain death.....

The maids left the room after they finished cleaning my body.

I'll make sure to thank them later. It feels good now so I can relax and sleep.

“Enemy attack!! Enemy attack!! The enemy has commenced a night attack!”

I heard a sharp noise. It sounded like whipping?

“.....Bring it on! You don't intend to let me rest, huh?”

I jumped up to my feet, enveloped by a very strange tension.

“Where the hell is the enemy!? I'll mince them all!”

“Gahahahaha, Zest is full of energy! Let's go!”

“Follow their Excellencies!!”

“He ceaselessly shot magical spells in that manner during the day, and now he fights so violently with a sword?”

“Lord Zest is not a half-hearted person.”

“This is what you call a night raid? How dare you!? After I’m done with you, you’ll never feel like initiating nocturnal assaults ever again!”

“.....He’s a monster with the sword as well.”

“He’s at the level of our Knights Commander.”

“.....I’m glad he’s on our side.”

“I just decided that I will never oppose the sword and snake flag.”

“ “ “.....Indeed.” “ “

After the assaulting idiots finally scattered, I returned to my room, but...

A maid was waiting for me, smiling.

“Your Excellency, it’s time for the meeting.”

I thought so.....

## Chapter 66: Conclusion

The next day, we decided to fight a defensive battle, in order to preserve our magical powers.

The Tarminal Kingdom's Army started to approach us when the sun went up.

Since I used such flashy spells yesterday, they must think I can't use magic anymore today.

I will take advantage of this misunderstanding.

The fierce battle that started in the morning wasn't going to end too soon.

You could hear the angry shouts of the attacking enemy soldiers as well as the encouraging voices of your comrades, supporting and fighting alongside you.

It was already noon.

The Frontier Count and my master were now fighting back the enemy with uncomplicated magic spells, so it didn't sound like they were firing something big.

They were probably patient.

In that short time they created for us, we rested our bodies. We had to, our comrades were covering for us.

“Your Excellency, the signal.”

Albert informed me.

“Let’s go! Our goal is capturing that showy red flag! Don’t pay much attention to anything else!”

“Follow his Excellency!”

“ “ “ “ “Oooooooooooooo!!” “ “ “ “

The gates opened and we galloped our horses all at once.

“We’re taking the lead, your Excellency!”

I was informed, and a ‘gang’ outdistanced me enthusiastically, running towards our target.

“Hahahaha, to run our horses on the battlefield and take the lead! Ah! I never thought this day would come! Come on, guys, attack!!”

They wielded their spears and assaulted the enemy.

This ‘gang’ made its way through the enemy forces quite easily, advancing at a quick pace.

“Albert, they’re in high spirits, aren’t they?”

“.....Yeah.”

All we could hear was the screams of the enemy soldiers, as the 'gang' kept on advancing, like they were running on an uninhabited ground.

In the face of such a clean assault, the enemy soldiers couldn't do anything, except for falling on the ground with spear wounds all over their bodies.

".....The maids are doing their best."

"They're scary, these maids are scary."

".....What are these maids?"

The black knights were whispering among themselves, but I decided to ignore it.

"You guys, are you really all right with the maids taking all the glory? If they ask me to find them husbands as a reward for their merits, I won't be able to refuse them, you know?"

"Don't lose to them, damn it!"

"Oi! Over there, charge!"

"The maids will eat us! Hurry up and go!"

.....It seems they got psyched, so it's ok.

And so, we finally reached our target.

The showy red flag, the royal flag....We were right beneath it.

The stronghold was protected by a number of fully equipped knights, but this

won't stop us.

“Hahahaha, I found some knights! This is my achievement! I want credit for this!”

“Just a moment ago, we left the maids behind!?”

“Don't day dream, you fool! Hurry up and attack!”

“I don't want to be made fun of by the maids! They'll eat us alive!”

As I was waiting, I also took care of all the enemy attacks coming towards my direction.

It was already our win.

Yesterday, we killed all their elite soldiers in that raid of exploding magic spells.

Their numbers got considerably diminished and it seems that a great number of enemy soldiers ended up running away.....

When I finished eliminating yet another enemy, I heard someone yelling.

“The enemy commander, the royalty is down!!”

“ “ “ “ “ “OOOOOOOOOOO!!!!” “ “ “ “ “

I launched a magic spell as a signal.

Good, the fortress has sent its signal too.

“As of now, we are starting a cleaning up battle! As planned, you'll follow

Albert!”

I instructed them, then took a few soldiers with me and returned to the fortress.

All that was left was to chase after the escaping soldiers for a while; after that it was over.

“Your Excellency, the one who eliminated the royalty is here.”

“I wonder who did it.”

A soldier, riding a horse and carrying a spear on their shoulder, with a pierced head on its end, was approaching.

All the other soldiers let out shouts of joy.....And screams.

“Your Excellency, I took down the enemy royalty. I also have his dagger as proof.”

“.....You did very well. You achieved the greatest merits in this war. Let’s return to the fortress together.”

“Yes sir, thank you very much!”

A lovely maid smiled sweetly as she thanked me.....

The one who killed the enemy’s boss was the commander of the maids unit.

Wearing a maid’s uniform covered all over with blood and a long spear on her

shoulder, this cute maid was the number one figure of this war. So she achieved the greatest merits, huh?.....

Where in the world is my army going towards?.....

I felt a little dizzy, as we entered the fortress and faced the conference room.

“Everyone, we’re back.”

“Ex.....excuse me.”

Inside the conference room were the same old faces.

“Oh, Lord Zest, as expected of your much rumored war maidens. Aren’t they splendid!?”

“Yes, I really thought they were nobles’ children, trained from a very young age in the art of war.”

“Gahaha, should we add such a unit to the Frontier Count’s Army too?”

The same old family members.....

“She is Media, the maid’s unit commander and the person who killed the enemy royalty.”

She bowed her head then held out the severed head and the dagger.

“Yes indeed, this family crest is undoubtedly the Tarminal Kingdom’s royal

family's crest. Do you know his name?"

"It's unknown. He didn't want to announce it to me."

"I see. Good then. You did very well. You can take your time and rest now."

After that, Media left the conference room.

"Well now, our strategy worked out pretty well, grandson-in-law-dono. All that's left now is to take some rest. We won the first battle for now. It will take some more time until the empire's main army arrives here anyway."

"Gahaha, we'll deal with the minor details and the settlement of this fight, so you can go rest."

"They're right. You continuously fired grand spells, after all. Please take it easy, son-in-law-dono."

".....Right. I understand. As one would expect, I am really tired.....I will rest now for a bit. Excuse me."

I bowed and returned to my room.

I took off my armor and collapsed onto my bed.

I indeed suggested the surprise attack strategy and my subordinates did very well.

We had a chance to win this fight before the real, lengthy war started, so we took it.

If they would have grown vigilant against my magic attacks and started assaulting us every day for a prolonged period of time, we would've accumulated fatigue and would've been in real danger.

I'm glad we were able to win with this surprise attack strategy.

It was all right that I didn't bring down the enemy's head myself. It was my subordinate who did it after all.

I really thought that I made all my comrades draw away from me because of my insane magic attack the other day, but during that surprise attack the maids unit clearly stood out, and, what's more, they kept on sending me odd looks.....It actually calmed me down.

Only good things have happened.....But still.....

"Your Excellency, I want you to find me a husband as reward! I am an only daughter so I need the husband to get adopted into my family, all right?!"

I was greatly perplexed by Media's teasing request for a reward.

.....Who should I sacrifice?.....

## Chapter 67: Reward for the Greatest War Merits

“Ladies! Gentlemen! Thanks for gathering here!”

In one corner of the now silent fortress, that was usually used as training ground, gathered all the soldiers occupying a leadership position in the Duke’s Army.

The Frontier Count’s Army was taking care of the postwar matters and affairs.

Since we’ve done a forced march and have fought a series of battles, we were exempted from that, so we could just take it easy for the time being, however...

“In the last battle, the person who accomplished the greatest war merits is.....Commander Media.”

*Rustle*

Everyone started to whisper.

“What she wants is.....a husband, who’ll be adopted into her family.”

No one said anything.....It was more like no one wanted to say anything.

Media was the Commander of the Maid’s Unit and a first-class maid herself.

She could easily handle cleaning, doing laundry, cooking or sewing.

Moreover, she was actually very sweet.

She had a ‘younger sister’ type of loveliness attached to her. You could say that she was a beautiful young woman with light brown, soft and curly hair.

She looked great on the outside.....On the outside, that is.....

Actually, her personality was great too.

She is a very helpful person, so her subordinates adore her.....But only as a Commander.

Even though she’s a noble, she wouldn’t get angry if someone was rude or made a mistake or something.

She has a lot of fans because of her soft way of punishing the others.....But only as a Commander.

That's right, as a Commander she's very loved and appreciated.

"Your Excellency, who will you sacrifice.....urm, send as adopted husband into her family?"

Albert was wearing a still composed smile.

You little...Only because you're already married.....because you have no connection to this, that you look so happy...

"I will decide that now.....Listen guys, you can become nobles, you know? A viscount. Is anyone who wants to become one?"

Everyone looked downward, avoiding eye contact.....

"You fools, what is it that doesn't please you? She's a beautiful girl and has a pleasant nature. Furthermore, she comes from a viscount's family, you know? Isn't it great? Someone must marry her and be adopted into her family."

Albert's shoulders were shaking lightly.

"Your Excellency, as I feared, maybe it's because of that....."

I'm sure it is. Everyone knows after all.

And yet, I wanted to entrust this to someone who didn't know about her.....

Media's sole defect.....If only it wasn't for that, she would've been perfect.....

"Your Excellency.....I want to announce my candidacy."

The sound of people talking all at once could be heard.

“Who, who is that? In the front....Come to the front!”

Everyone present got confused.

“Who is this brave man?”

“It’s God.....He exists!”

“Thank you.....Thank you.....”

“This is great.....Thanks god it wasn’t me.”

Don’t cry, you idiots.

And so, he came to the front.

He was an unpolished man with a medium build and short hair. His exterior appearance was exactly that of a military man’s.

He looked like he was in his mid-20’s.....Yes, this was not bad at all.

“I am Tasel, a former adventurer, your Excellency.”

His low voice sounded really cool.

It seems he’s the type of guy that Media would be pleased with.....Yet, a guy like this was still around?

“I see. So you’re Tasel.....You want to become Media’s husband, right?”

At that point I was fine with anyone.

Since I couldn’t possibly think that someone would willingly marry Media and get adopted into her family otherwise.

Everyone was feeling the same. No one objected.

“Yes. It’s just that.....there is a problem. It would be great if your Excellency could.....”

This is such a trivial matter.

If he’s willing to become Media’s husband, then I would forgive him for almost anything.

But if it's just too much.....Even so, I'd still forgive it.

“Tell me what is it? It's my dear subordinate's wish. I will do everything I can to help you.”

Albert looked the other way, as he started to tremble again.

Yeah, I am trying to force this dear subordinate of mine into accepting this marriage.....So what?.....You're laughing too much, you cur.

And so, with a grave expression on his face, Tasel squeezed out his wish and informed us.

“The truth is.....I am a woman.....”

This corner of the fortress fell silent again.

The sound of the opening gates could be heard from far away. It felt awfully loud.

“.....Tasel.”

He looked like about to start crying.....

“.....Yes, your Excellency.”

I slowly placed my hand on his.....on Tasel’s shoulder.

“Don’t lie to us! I’ll use observation magic, so try and say that again.”

“I am a woman! But even so, even so, I love Miss Media very much.”

Yeah, she’s undoubtedly a woman.....This Tasel.

Tasel had a tragic expression as he started crying.

“Tasel.....So what about it?”

“Tasel, there’s no actual problem.”

My voice and Albert’s voice overlapped.

“ “Media is a man. Congratulations! You will definitely get married!” “

Tasel burst into tears of happiness.....The guys burst into tears of relief, since they were saved now.

The Maids Unit burst into tears of celebration; they were happy for their Commander's marriage.

Albert and I, for some reason, burst into tears too.

I wiped my tears away as I looked up at the sky.

The blue sky was blessing them.....It was blessing all of us.

However, somewhere deep inside me, these words were always present.

‘Where the hell is my army headed towards?.....’

## Chapter 68: A Short Return

“Duke Zest, how can I ever thank you.....for this?”

The man who was inside my office, expressing his gratitude while shedding tears, was Media’s father, Viscount Mark.

The Emperor’s army arrived at the fortress, so I temporarily returned to my domain, however.....

“That...that Media, even though he’s a man, he still acts like that.....I really thought that my household’s lineage was going to end.....That was.....That was...”

Viscount Mark was crying aloud.

“Come on, father, you’re exaggerating.”

“Silence, you stupid son! Stop talking like a woman!”

He's been through a lot of hardships.....His son being like that.

“Ahem. Duke Zest, I would do anything for you. You've done me a favor I could never repay.”

“Haha. Lord Mark, don't say it so carelessly, that you would do anything for me. Saying thanks was enough, I only approved of this marriage, nothing more.”

After Tasel declared that he liked Media, it all became even more difficult.

Tasel was sent out of the fortress, and in the meanwhile, Media refused the offer.

In any case, it was the same as always.....Once he'd know she was a man, he would run away. Those were her thoughts.

When Tasel came back, he realized he got dumped without even being aware of it.

“Miss Media said that she wasn't the kind of woman I thought she was.....”

My head started to hurt.....This was a bad habit for nobles.

“If you want a free translation, it would mean that I am a man! Understood? Think about it properly!”

Yes

“I am not ‘the kind of woman’ you think I am.”

The nobles’ manner of talking could really be tiring.

After that, they both opened their hearts and they all lived happily ever after.

The only worry they had was that Viscount Mark might not recognize the marriage.

“I never thought that I would ever be able to see the face of my grandchild.”

He was overjoyed, so he expressly came to greet and thank me in person.

“Father, I will splendidly give birth to a child, just wait and see.”

“You can’t possibly give birth to anything, stupid son!”

.....Oh dear!

I conferred to Tasel the title of knight.

Even though his title was too low for marrying a viscount, he was a member of the Duke's Army.

Viscount Mark completely agreed; he wanted a successor after all.

"A commoner? It has nothing to do with it. If there's a woman who would marry that guy, there's really nothing I could complain about!"

Yes, these were unmistakably his true feeling.

Afterwards, he continued to thank me, and before long, the viscount went back fully satisfied.

After he left, I went to observe the army's preparations.

We temporarily returned home for precisely this reason.

His Majesty decided upon conquering the Tarminal Kingdom.

Since I went to battle only with my most elite soldiers, I came back to regroup with my entire army.

It was a war of conquest, therefore bringing only the cavalry would be useless.

We had to steadily prepare and march into the kingdom with all our power.

I only finished with the paperwork in the evening.

I returned to my room and went to the bathhouse together with Bea and Toto.

Once the preparations were finished, I would go back to war.....So I wanted to value this time we still had together not matter what.

We left the bathroom, and after we ate dinner, it was time for a make out session.

“Bea, I must go back to the battlefield soon. I’m sorry I’m making you feel lonely.”

“Please don’t apologize. I’m properly waiting for you.....If you return to me safely, I will endure as long as it takes.”

(Dad, I will make sure to protect Mom!)

“Haha, that’s excellent, Toto. Thank you, I leave Bea in your care again, okay?”

I was spending my time in harmony with my lovely family.....This way, I felt I could fight again for a short while.....

Toto was already asleep.

As for Bea.....she fell asleep a moment ago, so I didn't want to wake her up.

I got up from my bed and moved to the table by the window.

I drank water directly from the water jug.

It didn't matter since no one was watching.

However, I was saved this time.....

Finding a marriage partner for Media was not even close to an unreasonable demand.

And yet, I couldn't tell her that it was impossible.

For a noble, in order to receive a good treatment from people, they must fulfill their duties.

There's no future for a noble who couldn't provide a reward for his subordinate.

Eventually, his followers would all abandon him.....However.....This time...

“Tasel saved me in various ways.....”

I muttered to myself as I was alone in the middle of the night, looking up at sky.

## Chapter 69: Quiet Talk – Media and Tasel

Tasel confessed to Media and proposed to her.

This piece of news was circulating among all the army's soldiers.

That Media.....That Media is getting married.

“Media? Are we talking about that Media-sama?”

“Marriage? For real?....”

“Who's the fool.....He's part of the Duke's Army!?”

“Are you saying that someone in the Duke's Army is doing this knowingly?”

The guys were uproarious and the fortress became rather noisy.

“Hohoho, don’t let anyone stand in their way. Lord Zest told me too, you know, that every fool who tries to get in the way will get killed.”

“ “Yes sir!” “

Zest and the Frontier Count.....According to their instructions, the stage for the confession was progressing steadily.

And so, in a room inside the fortress, nonchalantly prepared for the occasion, Media was enjoying some black tea. She got asked to come here by Zest.

“I wonder why he asked for me.....No way, is Lord Zest going to...?”

If you were to ask the man himself, he would let out some sharp words, muttered to himself, rather than directed to anyone in particular.

However, she didn’t dislike that about him. She felt some sort of good will towards Zest.

On the other side, as a former Japanese, Zest understood her.

He treated her like he would treat any woman, he didn’t look down on her. He was the first man who acknowledged her for who she actually was.

Still, she actually knew that Zest wouldn’t do such a thing.

She knew that he was madly in love with his wife Beatrice, so much so that whenever he had some spare time, he would spend it with his wife.

“Haa, I would do anything for someone to fall in love with me like that.....”

She put down the tea cup she had in her hand for what seemed like a very long time.

She suddenly looked at the door and saw a man standing there, looking at her.

“Tasel? What’s wrong? Why are you here?”

“Media-sama, I have something to tell you. Please, let’s get married!”

‘Ah! Not again.’

She muttered to herself.

‘How many times has it been until now.....? I like you, I love you, I want to marry you. But, in the end, everyone is the same.’

The man standing in front of her was Tasel, a former adventurer and the Commander of the Scouting Unit.

Still, he was probably the same as the others.

“Oh my! I appreciate the proposal. However, I am not the type of woman you think I am.....I’m sorry.”

She informed him with her usual speech and smile.

‘.....I am not a woman. I’m sure that once everyone tells him about me, he’ll just give up.’

The man’s shoulders dropped, as he left the room, heartbroken.

The woman silently stared at his retreating figure.

.....Her eyes looked so sad.

How much time has passed?

Duke Zest was yet to show up.....Still, it wasn’t something unusual.

It was normal for a highly ranked noble like him, a duke, to let a viscount’s

daughter wait.

Waiting silently was noble's job as well.

Baam.

The door was violently opened.

Did he finally come?

She put down the tea cup and was about to stand when she felt someone embrace her from behind.

“Eh!?”

She voiced her shock involuntarily.

‘Is Duke Zest...? Why?.....Or maybe? Maybe it's not him?’

She was extremely confused. Nonetheless he approached and whispered to her ear.

“Media-sama, I am a former adventurer. I'm not a noble and I'm weaker than you.”

‘Tasel? Why is he still in this room?’

He hugged her closer, as she was still fighting confusion.

“I know about Media-sama’s circumstances.”

She shook Tasel off and stared at him angrily.

He knows my circumstances? Then why did he come?.....To make fun of me?

Did he come to look down on me for being like this despite being a man!?

She was burning with anger.....But right in front of her, Tasel started to take off his clothes.

“What are you.....”

What are you doing?

It’s what she was about to say, but she grew silent.

No, more likely she couldn’t say anything.

“It’s the first time....The first time I’m meeting someone having the same problem as me.....I am a woman.....But.....”

She looked on, silently.

She looked at Tasel’s body.....She looked at that body which had the characteristics of a woman.

“I am a woman, but I don’t mind having you as a man. I am in love with you.....Do you.....Do you hate me as a woman?”

“.....No way!”

“It doesn’t matter to me that you’re a man. I love you!”

“.....”

“Media-sama, I really like you.”

Tasel approached slowly and hugged Media closely.

“Please tell me.....Do you hate me as a woman?”

Media cried for a long time, as Tasel embraced her and continued to ask that question over and over again.

It was the first time.....It was the first time someone knew about her circumstances, but still acted like this. Tasel still claimed he loved her.

He told her that he'll accept her even as a man. And he was embracing her closely.

It was the first time.

The first time she felt that she didn't want to ever part from him.

Two people entered the fortress' office, which was recently transformed into Duke Zest's room.

“How comes you two are getting along now?”

Zest was wearing the same calm and gentle smile as ever.

They were holding their hands and they both wanted to convey to Zest the same thing.

“ “We are getting married!” “

They said and lowered their heads. That’s when the words which exceeded their expectations got to their ears.

“Congrats. I’m happy for you. And don’t worry, I’ll take care of the fine details. Since I’ll be the mediator, I won’t let anyone complain about this.....You just concentrate on becoming happy together!”

While watching Zest declare that to them then start laughing, they both decided.

That they'll forever follow Duke Zest.....That they'll become his sword and shield.

## Chapter 70: To the Battlefield, Once Again

“Hoho, you came already, grandson-in-law-dono. Bea too, it’s been a long time. How have you been? Good, I hope.”

“Of course. What about you, grandfather? How is your health?”

(Toto is here too, grandpa.)

The Frontier Count showed the two of them a kind smile, one that he would never show me, as he welcomed us.

How comes Toto isn’t afraid to sit on the Count’s shoulder? She sure is amazing.....

I gathered my soldiers and we were going towards the fortress, but I decided to first stop by at the Frontier Count’s castle and give Bea into his custody.

It was because the frontier Count wasn’t a part of the current strategy.

Obviously, my master and my foster father would take part in it, but they wouldn’t be able to leave the skies above the Frontier Count’s domain; they were supposed to protect the border, after all.

And so, the Lord had to remain inside his castle.

Still, he kept on bragging about stuff like how boring the house-watching role was or how he wasn't ready to lose to the young ones just yet.

Even so.....

(Grandpa, this is delicious!)

“Is that so? I have a lot of that left!”

He narrowed his eyes and brushed Toto's hair.....He was extremely indulgent towards Toto, maybe because she looked like a little Bea.

“Listen, Toto-chan, if you eat too much now, you won't be able to eat the dinner later. Be moderate, okay?”

“Hoho, it's all right! Come now, drink some fruit juice.”

(Thank you, grandpa!)

He transformed into a foolish old geezer who loved to pamper his granddaughter.....But, I certainly could leave them in his care without any worries.

This castle, in which Bea and Toto would live for a while, would be held by the Frontier Count.

Only by imagining it chills ran down my spine.....A foolishly looking old

geezer trampling down the enemies, while smiling towards his granddaughter.

“I leave them in your care then. Bea, Toto, I’ll be on my way now.”

“Yes, take care. I wish you good fortune!”

(Dad, take care.)

As I embraced Bea, Toto followed along as well.

She used her entire small body to stubbornly cling to my head and hug me.

“Yeah. I’ll definitely come back. To wherever you are, Bea.....”

I kissed Bea, who was completely flushed then I left the room.

Right at that moment, I decided inside my heart that I would finish this business as quickly as possible.

“Albert, we’re leaving.”

“Yes sir! Everyone, begin marching!”

We were advancing on the road that led to the fortress.

First, we had to meet with the Empire’s Main Army.

After 4 days of marching, we arrived at the fortress.

It was because I brought along infantrymen as well.....Our speed was rather slow.

However, this time we were waging a war of occupation, so the number of soldiers did count. It couldn't be helped.

“Your Excellency, Duke Zest, it's been a long time. I'm Raiza.”

A knight said to me, as he got out of the fortress.

He was a big man wearing an imposing armor and helmet.....His hair was blue.....Ah! It's that man with blue hair!

“Long time no see, Count Raiza. Or, it might be better to say, the General Commander of the Empire's Main Army.”

He was the supreme commander of the Emperor's forces, an army of 20.000 soldiers.

The blue-haired Count Raiza looked like a man in his 40s.

He became famous in his youth as a great military man, therefore, the Emperor acknowledged him. He was a viscount, but his Majesty conferred him the count title and entrusted him with leading the Empire's Army. Count Raiza was such an excellent man.

Also, he was the Emperor's right hand.

“Your Excellency, just call me Raiza. For now, you should rest inside the fortress.”

“No. We'll have a meeting first. If we take our time, the Tarminal Kingdom might make a comeback, and that would be troublesome.”

Raiza bowed his head in assent and silently led us inside the fortress.

We went straight to the meeting room, since I wanted to make our move as quickly as possible.

What was decided during the meeting was that ‘In the invasion of the Tarminal Kingdom, the Supreme Commander Raiza would lead the Empire's Main Army to attack, as I provide the rear guard, as I follow after him’.

They wanted this fight to be the Main Army's turn to shine, so I was supposed to obediently follow; after all, it was I who went all out protecting the fortress not long ago.

The Tarminal Kingdom's main forces were recently defeated, so it was supposed to be an easy victory.

It seemed it was safe even without me providing the rear guard.....

But well, since his Majesty asked me in person, I decided to follow them for now.

We stayed in the fortress for the night and began marching the following morning.

The border with the Tarminal Kingdom was very close, but it would take us 10 days to reach the royal capital.

We would be on the road for a while.....

Just as we expected, we didn't encounter any enemy during the first 3 days.

But as we passed by a few more villages and towns, we still didn't find any enemy soldiers.

We asked the residents about this, and were told that no soldiers were seen around after that time a few days ago when a number of worn out soldiers ran past them.

Deserters?

Did we really force the kingdom into a corner to such an extent?

We sent a few more scouts ahead and increased the speed of our march.

Even so, the enemy soldiers weren't showing up.....It felt a bit weird.

No matter how you looked at it, it was strange.....Did something happen?

We found out the answer once we arrived at the royal capital.

“I have a message for your Excellency, Duke Zest! The royal capital will raise the white flag, but its gates will remain shut and its cannons ready to fire back! However, we want to capitulate, so we’ll send out a messenger!”

Isn't this a trap?.....

I wasn't the only one who thought about that.

However, the next words I heard threw me into an unnecessary chaos.

“The messenger will be a kemonobito man, the current representative of the royal capital! In order for us to capitulate, he asks to be allowed to do so in the presence of Lord Albert!”

“.....A coup d'etat?”

“.....Yeah, most likely.”

Instead of making them fall, I had now to participate in a truly bothersome discussion.....

Dear me!

## Chapter 71: Talks with the Rebel Army

“Your Excellency, Duke Zest, thank you very much for the trouble of meeting me here.”

Inside the Main Army’s tent, a too serious man was lowering his head.

“Lord Raiza, don’t worry about it.....Well now, you say you are the messenger?”

He rushed here right after the announcement.....

If you don’t act fast during a rebellion, things could get really troublesome.

“I’m very pleased to meet you. I am Herman, the current representative of the capital.”

He informed and raised his head. He was indeed a kemonobito.

His ears resembled Albert’s, and he looked like a tall, slender, but fearless dog kemonobito.

First, I silently cast my observation magic.....He looked like the type to show some kind of reaction when lying.

“The current representative?.....So it was a rebellion after all?”

“Yes. Tarminal Kingdom’s royal lineage has died out.”

As I thought.....

However, it’s not excluded that the royal family might have escaped without this man noticing.

I really must get a grasp of the situation here.....

“Albert, call Tasel here.”

“Yes sir.”

“Sorry, you can continue.”

He followed Albert with his vision as he left the room then continued talking.

“As you might already know.....”

And so, he opened up.

The situation here was worse than I had previously thought.....

First, the Tarminal Kingdom had a doctrine that preached the supremacy of the human race.

The human race.....Like back in Japan, where people think that humans are the most superior species and all the other ones with which they interact are considered inferior races.

This kingdom oppressed the kemonobito, the dwarves, the elves, and turned them into slaves.

Were they to oppose the humans, people from their races and families would die executed. So they stopped defying humans.

As he was telling this story, the man started to cry.....

Still, even in such circumstances, they didn't start a war.

The reason for which Tarminal Kingdom resorted to such a policy was the shortage of food they were confronting with.

Their territories contained many wetlands and large rivers.

Thinking about it, their soil should have been really productive.

However, in reality, it was disastrous.....

Due to a despotic administration, the people didn't have enough food.

What was to be done? The solution was to throw away the children and the old.

But if they were to continue that, the number of workers would have decreased and the harvest would have dropped.

Furthermore, the food supply wasn't sufficient to feed the population.

Therefore.....

“The Kingdom sacrificed its royal mages to summon someone from a different world.”

.....So it was this country?

.....I see. It was this country!

I desperately tried to restrain my magical power from revealing my disturbance.

.....It was useless. It leaked out considerably.

Herman’s face turned dead pale in an instant, and he tried to open his mouth to speak, but no sound was coming out.

“Your Excellency, I have brought Tasel.”

Albert returned with the best timing possible.

“Thank you. Come closer, Tasel.”

He approached and I gave him instructions in a low voice.

‘Your top priority is to be alert of the surroundings as you conduct an investigation about the situation here. You can use the knights as well. Go now.’

“Certainly! Excuse me.”

I gave Taser the orders then returned to our conversation.

“I’ve kept you waiting. What happened to that person.....who came from another world?”

“.....Y...yes.”

He told me in brief.

The summoning itself was a success, but the aimed location.....In short, that person never showed up inside the magical formation set up somewhere in the Tarminal Kingdom.

What convinced them that the summoning was a success was the way the magical formation was shining, as well as the state of the casters' bodies. Everything was like in the books.

They were so foolish.....

After that, Tarminal Kingdom ended up being in a position without its summoned stranger and with all its royal mages annihilated.

It was the worst situation for them.

The administration became more and more despotic.....That was the time when someone from the Grun Empire achieved spiritification.

Yeah, that was me.

Once they investigated the incident, they discovered I was the summoned stranger.....However, they didn't have any proof that I was indeed the person they tried to summon.

The Kingdom was driven to a wall.....

“So they decided..... to start a war?.....”

The tent turned as silent as a grave.

He wasn't lying.....I exchanged looks with Raiza and signaled him that this man was telling the truth. Raiza nodded in response.

“So, why does your surrender come with a condition?”

Herman's face looked depressed as he was hanging his head, but my words woke him from his trance, and he straightened himself.

“Despite being a kemonobito, Albert-sama is the Knights Commander in the army of Duke Zest, the Empire's Blade! He is what all kemonobito aspire to be! He is hope! If it is for that person, we thought that we won't be mistreated.....”

Huh? The Empire's Blade? Who's the idiot who named me that.....?

My head hurts. This second name is truly embarrassing.....How dare they?.....

Still, I understood the situation.....These guys were treated very poorly here.

They seemed traumatized by humans.

But it was no good.

“I understand.....But it's no good. You are in no position to add conditions to your surrender, are you? I shouldn't be mistaken, otherwise why would the one in charge come here in person?”

I sighed.

Herman's body was trembling and his face was bitter, but I continued nonetheless.

"I will not allow you to add conditions to your surrender. However, if you do surrender, I will appoint Albert as our correspondent, and I vow on the name of my Grum Empire that you won't ever be treated poorly by us."

The Empire would never accept a rebel army to add conditions to their surrender.

Once it did that, it would become a laughing matter; an Empire with an army that couldn't win against some rebels.

However, in case it accepts the Kingdom's pitiful people, the Empire might as well be seen as tolerant.

It's sophistry, but it can't be helped.....It's all for the nobles and their countries' honor.

Herman lowered his head, finally understanding my words.

"Please, please, look after us! We'll be in your care!"

"Herman, don't worry about it. I swear on my pride as a kemonobito that his Excellency is a person that can be trusted. Besides, his Excellency is a stranger

who came from a different world.....He doesn't think poorly of us, kemonobito. Isn't that right, your Excellency?"

As he continued to talk foolishly, Albert looked in my direction.

.....Haha, Albert became talkative again.

I started talking, my face full of smiles.

"He's right. I even forgave him for trying to seduce my wife on the imperial capital's streets. Even when he wanted to get married and begged me in tears, I helped him. Ah! And that time in the bar with that beautiful woman....."

"Your Excellency! I am very sorry! I got carried away, please forgive me!"

Herman was watching us dumbfounded as we joked with each other, but, before one knew, he started smiling.....while shedding tears.....

“We completely surrender to the Grun Empire.”

He informed us cheerfully.

## Chapter 72: Role-sharing

Herman led us into the royal capital.....urm, the former royal capital.

However, the city didn't look like a capital at all.

The large streets still looked clean, but once you entered the alleyways, you'd be bound to face desolation.

The people were extremely exhausted and the rebel army was in a state that it couldn't be called an army anymore.

They were a group of tired people barely having any weapons.

That was the impression they gave.

First, we confiscated the building that was originally used as the Knights Division's headquarters.

Since the palace burned down, it was useless now, so we prepared the former headquarters of the Knights Division to serve as our temporary headquarters.

It seemed that I would end up living here for a while.....

I wanted to return to Bea as quickly as possible, but I had to finish the things I had to do first.

“Lord Raiza, you were the supreme commander of this war, but the situation has changed. I’ll explain you in details, and if you have questions, don’t hesitate to ask me.”

“I understand.”

“First, about the rebel army. I’ll put Albert in charge of corresponding with them. Next, about the remnant soldiers of the kingdom’s army, you’ll be in charge of their suppression. I will stay here and take care of the maintenance, as well as try to grasp this country’s internal state of affairs. Then…….”

I glanced at Raiza.

He was consenting up to this point.

“Then, I’d like to take care of the diplomatic relations as fast as possible.”

“Diplomatic relations? You mean, announcing the suppression of the former Tarminal Kingdom…….”

Yeah, you’d normally think that.

“It’s no good. The neighbors are a bunch of troublesome people.....They might start a holy war in order to save the oppressed.....or something.”

The Sacred Country of Lilac, a religious country, is sharing its borders with the former Tarminal Kingdom.

It would be really troublesome if they made their move now.

“I see. We must come to an agreement before it gets to that.....”

Raiza nodded in admiration.

.....He’s supposed to be the supreme commander, so I want him to be involved.

Raiza agreed to my proposal and started working without delay.

I quickly finished organizing some stuff, so I was planning to make a sortie.

The army was working admirably, so I didn’t have any words of complaint. I had nothing to worry about.

And so, I began working too.....

My job was.....writing letters.

.....It couldn't be helped; I had to write a lot of them.

I wrote his Majesty to ask for permission to act like a temporary commanding officer of the former royal capital.

I wrote the Sacred Country of Lilac in order to let them know that we'll be patrolling the borders for maintaining public order.

I wrote to various other lords who haven't capitulated yet, advising them to surrender.

I wrote an instructions booklet for the good maintenance of the capital.

And so on...

My head was starting to hurt.....

Especially when I started to write letters addressed to nobles, even I, the writer, didn't really understand the meaning of the things I was writing anymore.

The wording got extremely annoying.

I secluded myself inside the unclean office, until I finished the paperwork.

This was all I did.....I never thought that fighting spirit and guts were needed in order to cope with this job; it was my worst enemy.

This fight I started in the morning only concluded late at night.

I did it.....I finally finished.

I felt the room, quietly sobbing.

The guarding soldiers prepared some lights, so it wasn't too dark inside the headquarters.

I went to the courtyard and took a deep breath, as I rotated my shoulders.

I used some healing magic, but somehow a sense of discomfort still remained.

I did some light exercises then I returned to the office.

It really wasn't the moment to prepare some other room just for my sake.

I asked for the maids unit, and gave them the letters.

With this, it was over for now.....Tomorrow, the scouts will bring some new information that I'll have to organize.....

As I was thinking about the plans I had for the next day, I heard some noise outside.

I walked towards the main entrance, and I saw 10 people who seemed to be citizens. They were surrounded by soldiers.

“What’s with this noise?”

“Yes sir! These people trespassed and tried to steal our food.”

I see.

“I’m sure we delivered you food during the day. Did you not receive it?”

“Haaa? Did you really think that it would be enough? I know you have a lot of food here. The noble-sama even brought maids to the battlefield, after all.”

Are all these people like this.....?

He wore a large grin as he made fun of me.

“We are formal imperial soldiers. Come on, you can just overlook us.....The nobles are causing lots of hardships for you too, right?”

.....Ah! These guys showed up in the middle of the nights, spouting self-

important nonsense.....And they don't even think I'm a noble!

The main army's soldiers who worked as night watchmen certainly said these guys were commoners. But they were actually former imperial soldiers....

“Were you guys part of the Frontier Count's Army before?”

“No, we were soldiers of the main imperial army, but.....”

“Ah! That's enough.....”

As I interrupted his story all of a sudden, the man's face looked displeased.

But once I knew they were from the main army, I had my decision.

“These guys are most likely deserters. Hand them over to Lord Raiza tomorrow, he'll be very happy.”

It happens every year.

Cases of soldiers who steal army equipment and leave the country.

These guys are probably among them.

Furthermore, these fools started to be very noisy once they got tied down.

However, in the end they wanted to negotiate, saying they knew some good piece of information.

“If you have some interesting information, I’ll buy it from you. Now talk.”

I said harshly.

The man who seemed to act as the leader grinned broadly, as he opened his mouth.

“You see.....Did you know that the Frontier Count has a granddaughter called Beatrice? How much would you pay.....for a magical tool containing a picture of her naked body?”

“The situation has changed. Put them in the dungeon. I’ll have them tell me everything as I torture them.”

I want to obtain that.

I must obtain that and keep it into custody.....urm, dispose of it!

I was burning with a sense of duty, as I ran around the city at dawn.

The magical tool I found had indeed a picture of Bea.

Naked?.....She was holding a naked doll, as she seemed to be in the process of changing its clothes.....

For this.....I ran all night in order to find this.....this.....

## Chapter 73: Blessed with a Moment of Peace

20 days have passed since the 'nude-Bea' incident.

The black nights knew how I desperately ran around that night, so they laughed at me, but I took care to train them properly. Other than that, we were living in times of peace, going out drinking with Herman and his men, making fun of Albert and his notorious 'I'm a kemonobito, but I'm herbivorous' saying, at which people usually laugh so hard, that they even lose their breath.

The things were progressing smoothly, with all the regional lords surrendering one after another.

Tasel and Media were riotously taking care of hunting the former administration remnants.

As for me, I was finally able to let the soldiers take turns and train again.

Today, Albert was in charge of training the Main Army's soldiers.

I didn't have any paperwork to do for the day, but I was nonetheless sitting in

my office, when a maid came to visit.

“Your Excellency, his Majesty’s letter arrived.”

Finally. I needed directions for how to deal with this situation from now on, otherwise it could get rather ugly.

I hurriedly opened the letter.

‘I leave it in your care.’

.....I looked for a second page, but I couldn’t find any.

Did he really pass this whole task onto me!? I take it that the Emperor won’t enjoy spirit drops anymore.

He said it’s up to me now....

I was a little troubled when the maid started talking again.

“There’s a letter from the Holy Country of Lilac.”

I really hoped it didn’t only say ‘Understood’ or something like that.

I opened the letter anxiously.

'The God's guidance is equal for all. And His relationship with the apostles is.....'

Is this a scripture? I really don't understand a thing.....

It was supposed to be a letter saying 'yes' or 'no'.....

The Holy Country sure is scary.

Confused, I read the scripture-letter again.

It started to look more and more like a Bible in the form of a letter.

I was in a state of panic when Media came inside the office.

I didn't even notice her.....

I turned to face her, only to see Media wearing a huge smile, while patting her tummy.

"Your Excellency, I am expecting a baby!"

"I see. I see. Congrats. You can take a break from the army and take care of

your body.”

“Yes. Thank you very much. Excuse me.”

She said and left the room.

I see Media is going to be a mother.

Haha.....They were faster than me.....

Well, there’s no need to rush things up anyway. Bea and I will do our best in our own pace.

I walked towards the window and looked at the courtyard.

Tasel was zealously participating in a sham battle.

His opponent was Albert. The battle was violent and it looked pretty impressive.

.....?

.....!?

I opened the window and shouted.

“Pregnant women are not allowed to do sham battles! Bring me that stupid Media!!”

I was almost deceived.....

I thoroughly lectured Media for about two hours, when a maid came into my office.

.....Another letter?

“Your Excellency, a messenger from the Holy Country of Lilac just arrived.”

“.....Understood. Let them wait in the reception room.”

After Media left, I read the letter-Bible again.

.....As I thought, I couldn't really understand anything.

I gave up and walked to the reception room where a brown-haired sister was waiting for me.

“I have made you wait. I'm Zest, the former Tarminal Kingdom's commander-in-chief.”

She didn't have any noticeable features.....but that was a feature in itself. She smiled and started talking.

“I am glad to meet you. I am a sister of the Holy Country of Lilac. I don't have a name since I was already baptized. I hope you understand.”

She bent her knees and put her hands together at her chest.

This must be a custom of this world.

As I thought, there's a bit of Japaneseness blended with this worlds' practices.

"I do. Well then, sister, what business had brought you here?"

She smiled and her eyes glittered as she started talking again.

"Regardless of me having business with you or not, we must never give our blessing to something that goes against the Will of God. The water that flows down will never make it into the sea. If you're asking why, the answer is the God's guidance."

Huh!?

The sister, no longer smiling, puffed up with pride.

Urm.....

The God's guidance.....was the only thing I understood.....haven't I?

## Chapter 74: A Dodge Ball-like Conversation

“I see. That’s some rather deep story you’re telling.”

Ha ha ha

I laughed, but I couldn’t shake the cold sweat feeling.

I didn’t understand a thing from what she wanted to convey.....

I cast some strengthening magic on my trembling hand, as I took a cup of tea and drank it.

I couldn’t taste its flavor anymore, but since my throat felt dry, it couldn’t be helped. I needed it.

“Hahaha. Your Excellency, Duke Zest, you are the sea at sunset.....For the rest of us who cling to God’s pity the night has come, unfortunately.”

Again, she struck me with another puzzling riddle.

What’s that ‘sea at sunset’ supposed to mean!?!.....

This person is unpleasant. I hope she leaves soon.

For the time being, she compared me to something....That has to be a good thing, right?

I selfishly decided that. In any case, there was nothing I could understand, so why should I have even bothered then? It was useless to worry about it anyway.

“That’s much appreciated, sister. Well then, how about we start talking about your business here as a messenger.....Did you bring a letter or the sort?”

She was stunned for a moment then she took out a letter from her breast pocket.

.....Don’t teach the sisters to keep letters at their chests! That place is not a container, you know?

Ah, I see there’s no obstacles in the way, so maybe that’s why it’s the perfect place for her to carry things around, huh?

She handed over the letter and I opened it.

I played to God that this letter’s contents were not some sort of scriptures again.

.....Good. The contents looked decent enough.

It was actually a very polite letter that I haven't seen in ages, and it even started with a seasonal greeting.

Recently, when I think about letters, I remember the scripture.

His Majesty's wasn't any better, to be honest; it only said 'I leave it in your care'.

The name and address were actually longer than the letter's content. I really don't want to read letters like that anymore.

I read the letter that the sister had brought. To make a summary, it said:

'The Holy Country of Lilac is recognizing the former Tarminal Kingdom's lands as the territories of the Grun Empire.

Your actions were not fickle, but rather justifiable. You rescued the people from discrimination among the races, without fighting a war.

Therefore, we will not oppose the Grun Empire. We will be neighbors from now on, so we expect some exchanges.'

These were its summarized contents.

The sender was Pope Garbera, the man leading the Holy Country of Lilac.

There isn't much information to be found about this country, since it doesn't really socialize. It was kind of hard to picture this person.

But, if I were to judge by his letter, he seemed a person capable of holding a proper conversation.

However.....There is a 'however' after all.

At the end of the letter, there was a terrible entry.

'The dispatched sister will create a new church there and she'll be appointed the new Priestess.

She's fully knowledgeable about our doctrine, and she's not a shady person. She's an obedient and honest girl.

Thank you and I leave it in your care.'

It was clear to me that he didn't mean those words exactly as stated.

'I've sent a demoted sister to work as a Priestess there. There's nothing in her head, but doctrines, so she's a great chess piece that won't ever betray us. What if you decide to dispose of her? That'll be a great reason for us to start a war.'

It was more likely like this.

Since he couldn't tear off the former Tarminal Kingdom, he sent in the bait.....Because not having a clear pretext to move and attack would be too disadvantageous.

When I thought about that, it felt pretty much consistent. This Pope is quite a sly person.

The sister was not really a disrespectful person.

All she does is talk about her mysterious doctrines.

If she were to be punished because of that reason, something like this might've happened:

'We must pass judgment on the heretics who don't even understand the doctrines!' .....

The Lilac Doctrine is very understanding of other religious beliefs, therefore it is friendly towards heretics.

However, they follow a fundamental rule: 'If you kill us, we'll kill you too. Since we are not seeking to convert people, you have no right to talk about our faith.'

They are definitely up to disputes.

Realizing the Pope's unpleasant expectations, I sighed deeply and drank some tea.

I must consult the others about what's to be done.

"I perfectly understood the Pope's thinking. You are to become a Priestess, am I right, sister? Do you plan to use the already existing church?"

"To accept donations from my beloved brothers and sisters and use them as a means to study this transient world is disrespectful to our God. The drifting ship floating on the great ocean is relying on God's hem; it's like searching for flowers inside a forest."

You do understand, right?

It was like her smile and her head inclined to the side in doubt, were asking me that.

I didn't get it.....at all.....

“.....Indeed.”

“It’s like praying to God for his benevolence. As for your Excellency, Duke Zest, I pray for your peace and tranquility. Well then, I will excuse myself now.”

She stood up and made a praying pose, before she left the room.

I was left alone and drank up the tea that had already become cold.

“Send someone to tail that sister. And don’t be discovered.”

“Certainly!”

The black shadow that hid itself in a corner of the room disappeared.

He was one of the chosen former adventurers who enrolled my Intelligence Unit.

“For now, we should hold a meeting.....”

I muttered to myself without realizing.

The situation was darker than I previously expected.....and I felt very tired.....

I gathered all the management staff inside the conference room.

Well, they were only Albert and my master for now.

Master just arrived yesterday.

He brought along 200 black knights.

It seems that the Empire doesn't plan on selling this place, after all.

“According to the Intelligence Unit's report, the sister is at the church's site, working on some renovations. I believe she will use that place as a base for communicating with her own country.”

“I see. However, it's really troublesome to use religion as your diplomatic relations.”

“Your Excellency, should we kill her?”

Albert.....you should just shut up.

“For the time being, I want to inform the Emperor and wait for his acknowledgement. As one would expect, my words alone don’t have enough weight in this matter.”

“Indeed. You should probably take advantage of the imperial capital more, don’t restrain yourself too much.”

Master, you are so reliable.

“Then, we will wait-and-see for the time being.....Master, you will stay here for a while, right?”

“Yes, that’s right. And I really don’t mind you using me.”

Good.....I only had to work with muscle brains until now, so I was really happy when he said that.

I had an adviser now.

I really need a few other smart civil officials as my subordinates, otherwise things might get complicated.

The work that needs to be done is gradually increasing after all.

“By the way, Zest. I have something to talk to you about.”

His voice was so low that it felt like it belonged to some sort of creature, crawling at the bottom of the earth, and his eyes were darker than darkness itself.

I felt a burning sensation on my skin as I looked at his pretty much visible killing intent.

Huh? Why did he snap?

Albert! You must.....He's gone.....

That rascal, he dared to run away!?

“I heard you have a magical tool that recorded a naked picture of Bea, am I right? I didn’t raise her to be an immoral person, you know? What did you do to her?”

Master was drawing near, his magical powers shamelessly enhanced to the max.

“Please wait, master. If we talk.....You’ll understand if we talk!”

You'll understand if we talk.

Putting it differently, you'll never understand unless we talk.

His magical power was like a whip, shaving the stone floor. As I watched him approaching me, I thought again for the first time in a very long period of time.

.....I might actually die.

## Chapter 75: Duke Zest's Territory Change

“This is an Imperial Command! Duke Zest is to receive the former Tarminal Kingdom's capital city and half of the kingdom's northern region. The Duke is allowed to name his territory Zest-Gaiyus-Tarminal.”

“I comply to the Imperial Command.”

Haha, I am even allowed to rename the former kingdom as I wish.

‘Zest, let's protect the Empire together! You are the wall!’

That Emperor, he definitely pushed this onto me.

After his Majesty's messenger left, I discussed the matter with my master.

“Master, the Frontier Count is receiving the southern region, right? Let's trade for food.”

“Well, we'll probably have to do that. The north is.....”

Yes, the northern region was not suitable for grain-production.

If you go north from the capital city, you'll only find wetlands and sandy soil, then the sea, if you go further.

Normally, there shouldn't be any wetlands near the coast, but.....

Ah! It falls under the same category as Japan's Kujukuri Beach, maybe. 1

Anyway, it's a very unusual terrain that is extremely rare to find.

When it comes to crops that could be grown in wetlands, that would be rice, but, unfortunately, you can't find it here.

This world's residents aren't stupid, after all.

If they had rice, they would've definitely used it.

"Then, the only thing left is fishing."

"Son-in-law-dono, you'll have to ask the kemonobito to do this job.....Look."

"Aaah! The former kingdom used to discriminate them, so there are no fishermen....."

In this world that hates discrimination to an extreme, there are no highs and lows when it comes to races.

However, some races do hold monopoly over some occupations.

And they are fishing and blacksmithing.

It's not like other races can't do those jobs or anything, but there's such an overwhelming difference in ability that they don't stand a chance.

I've seen some human blacksmiths around here, but there were no fishermen.

Since the sea is filled with all sorts of evil magical monsters, if you're a fisherman who doesn't use machines, and you're not a physically blessed kemonobito, you won't be able to survive.

".....Should I use Herman and his people?"

"That's all you've got left."

Including Herman, the former leader of the Rebel Army, they were all kemonobito.

For the time being, Albert was looking after them as they worked as cleaners and repairmen in the capital city.

I told an otherwise pretty convenient maid soldier to tell Albert to select a few fishermen candidates.

The Maids Unit was formed mostly by nobles' daughters, so they were really excellent.

.....Even though they had muscle brains.

“Then.....all I have left is to search for a civil official.”

Master didn't answer anything this time, instead, he frowned.

Master.....We're doing overtime work today too. You should just give up.

It was already midnight when we finished our work eventually.....I already knew that once you get promoted, your office work is bound to increase, but at this rate, I will certainly die.

Civil official-san.....I'll give you an ample salary, so please come to me!

The next day, Albert and I took Herman and his men and walked towards the coast line.

Out of 1500 people from the former Rebel Army, 300 volunteered for the job.

The rest of them wanted to become soldiers out of admiration for Albert.

.....I pray that the mongrels won't increase with this.

On the way, we encountered some thieves and former soldiers of the defeated army, however.....

“Hahahaha, kill the thieves!”

“Don’t let any of them run away! Stab them to death!”

“It’s been a long time since I last exercised.”

“I’m pregnant, so don’t touch me!!”

Hm?

“Media, you’re not pregnant, you idiot!”

The Maids Unit formed a Death Women Party, apparently.

There was a man among them too, but because his outward appearance was that of a woman’s, it couldn’t be helped.

Media, don’t stare at me like that.....I already told you, I can’t give you a maternity leave.

“Your Excellency, you promised that you won’t treat me like a man.....”

“Then, do you want Tasel to go back to work?”

“.....This is discrimination!”

“It’s called making distinctions, you absolute moron!!”

Media buried her face in her palms, and she collapsed on the ground, but no one was worried about it.

“There’s someone crying loudly over there! Kill them faster next time!”

After two days filled with similar events, we arrived at the coast line.

For some reason, we were greeted by other kemonobito.....Who are they?

“I am glad to meet you, your Excellency. I am acting as chief for these people.”

An old lady.....ahem, a woman kemonobito at a blooming age, prostrated herself in front of me as she spoke.

It seemed that there was a kemonobito village close to here, where people who ran away from the former Tarminal Kingdom’s oppression lived.

There were about 50 villagers, who went finishing and lived rather quiet lives, but when they heard that the kingdom has lost the war and the kemonobito got permission to work, they still couldn’t believe it.

They even sent a few people to check the situation, only to find that the kemonobito were living rather normal lives.

Therefore, they too decided to come out from hiding when they met with us.

Yeah, it does make some sense.

“In this case, why don’t you join us? We came here in order to build a fishermen village. If you don’t want to, we will guide you to the city and offer you other jobs, since they’re plenty. So, what will you do?”

She happily nodded to my proposal.

Many of the cat kemonobito women used to do fishing up until now, so they would rather stay in the village and continue with their lives. They were so grateful that all of them bowed their heads to me.

Obviously, this was great for me too.

I had no reason to refuse them, since all I wanted was a fishermen village that would bring me lots of fish.

I gave instructions to Herman and his men to finish with the village’s foundation and demarcation.

Once it had a rough shape, I would leave it to them.

I had so much work to do that I started to hate it.

Albert was in charge of collecting materials for the demarcation.

.....I couldn't ask him to do complicated things after all.

"Your Excellency, I've finished."

"Albert, don't bury everything! Take some out!"

'Ah!'

.....Don't make such an expression.....

I already told you this was a demarcation, damn it!?

Some similar happenings took place, but nothing I couldn't tolerate.

I'd rather want it to end with this. That would be actually great.

It was already getting dark when we were about to finish.

I'll leave the rest to Herman, who's going to become the village chief.

I was thinking about that when I heard someone quarreling.

"You're wrong-nya. 2 That's not enough to enclose the village with a fence-

nya.”

“Why? 10 logs should be more than enough to do the job.”

“We could only make about 50 planks from one log-nya. And we need about 800 of them for the fence-nya. We need at least 6 more logs-nya.”

“.....I see. Your counting is correct. How did you do it? You have no tool, right?.....Did you write it on the ground or something?”

“That’s not too difficult for a mental arithmetic-nya. I’m good at counting-nya.”

The young girl cat kemonobito said then started to laugh.....

.....I found her! I found my civil official!

“Hahaha, my dear young lady.....Why won’t you come talk to this old man for a second?”

It was dark and my words were sudden, suspicious and somewhat dangerous sounding, so much so that the girl freaked out and burst into tears.

.....Albert, you're laughing too hard.

## Chapter 76: The Birth of a Cat-Eared Civil Official

“I’m Katalina-nya. I look forwards to working with you-nya.”

The little girl cat kemonobito lowered her head energetically in a greeting.

When a asked her if she wanted to work for me as a civil official, she said that she’ll do it with pleasure.

She didn’t have a family, she was all alone in the world it seems.

Because of the previous kemonobito hunting, seeing orphans was not an unusual thing.

I wanted to take her with me and return as quickly as possible, but.....

“Well, well, you are so good at greetings. Do you want some sweets?”

“Woaaa, they look so fluffy.”

“Katalina-chan, call me onee-sama 1.”

“I want to give birth to a child as adorable as this one.”

.....Media, you won’t give birth to anything.

On the way back to the capital city, the Maids Unit wanted to have a picnic so that they could play with Katalina.

These maids have excessive strength, so it’s actually good there are incidents

like these from time to time.

Also, 100 or 200 thieves, if they decide to attack, they are nothing to them.

We got back to the capital city without any other incidents. In order to formally appoint Katalina as a civil official, my master had to test her.

“Zest, you must appoint her immediately. I said immediately.”

Master gave his approval, his eyes a little teary, and she started to work.

Katalina said she was good at counting, and it turned out she was faster and more accurate than both me and my master.

‘This way my workload will be halved.’

My master and I had the exact same thought in that moment.

After one month of work, Katalina completely became our main force.

So much so that the muscle brains couldn’t raise their heads in front of her anymore.

“Why is it that you destroy the training ground every single day-nya?”

“Well, urm.....Sorry.”

“Alcohol doesn’t count as expenses-nya. Your proposal is rejected-nya.”

“Can’t we work something out somehow!?”

“This and this are mistaken-nya. This is.....like this-nya.”

“Oh! Thank you very much!”

“Nya? Sonia-sama, what’s that Mitsurin Company-nya? I received an expenses application from Albert-sama.....”

“Mitsurin Company?.....Ah! It’s a company that manages some bars, where young ladies pour sake for you and the sort.....It’s better for you not knowing about it actually.”

“Albert! Where are you Albert, come out! You dared going there without letting me and master know about it!?”

When Albert’s embezzlement leaked out, the headquarters rapidly turned into a battleground, but it couldn’t be helped.

Katalina’s skills became clear to me, and, now that everyone consented to it, it was a good time to confer her the title of knight.

At any rate, I had a lot of court ranks left for me to use.

I didn’t want to bargain them, but I wasn’t stingy either.

My plan for her was to make her a knight first, then eventually give her the title of baron and have her become my trusted confident.

It was during the celebratory party that an incident happened.

“Nya? I’m 21-nya. I can also drink alcohol-nya.”

With 140cm of height, her body was that of a child’s.....She was very slender.

It was hard to believe she was an adult.

No, it was just that I didn’t check out.

The guys were the ones to snap at this.

“Thank God.....I was actually normal.....”

“I know, right? She has a strange seductiveness.”

“.....She’s legal.”

“She’s someone to admire! I am different from you guys.”

I was anxious that only one gentleman could be found among them, but.....he’s actually the one I must pay close attention to.

Katalina had a lot of fans, and everyone’s excuse for that was ‘She’s cute like my own child’.

If they were to cry out that they loved a little girl, I am confident I would’ve killed them right away.

It’s true that nobles get married really young.

But that’s only for political reasons. If you were to expressly choose to marry

a little girl, you would be treated like a pervert.

However, now that everyone knew she was an adult, the story was different.  
After that, Katalina tasted a storm of confessions.....

The office had long queues of people waiting for some sort of idol handshake meeting.

Yes.....

The guys were thirsty for a normal girl.

Not like the manly women from the Maids Unit, but an actual frail girl who needed protection.

Except for black knights, she was very popular to everyone.

“Ha? I don’t like women who are not at least as strong as the girls from the Maids Unit.”

“She looks like she’d break if I touched her, so no thanks.”

“Adorable? A partner is power! It is something you choose based on strength!”

“I have no interest in women who can’t win against me.”

This was the logic of muscle brains.

I didn’t really understand them, but I could only consent.

The Maids Unit was very happy about this, and I really wanted to press the

question of why!?! Was it really all right for young girls to feel happy about that?

Nevertheless, the Katalina fever started to wane after about 2 months.

Well, I actually expected that.

She could finally relax and concentrate on doing her job now.

Yes, everything was progressing favorably.

She was great as a civil official.

Those who got rejected by her, didn't try to seduce her any longer, but rather were coming to socialize with her in a natural manner.

She was a civil official after all.....and a commoner, so there was no one who despised her.

It was only natural. If they were to make fun of her for being a commoner, without any doubt, the black knights would've started a fight.

I felt relieved that no such 'hero' appeared.

Our work was progressing nicely as well.

The fishing business already started, and the main road was properly maintained.

Isn't my domain perfect!?

Now that the workload was lesser, master and I were spending some fancy time in my office, drinking tea.

Recently, I got the chance to take easy.

This was indeed an elegant time, worthy of a noble.

However, my master's words ended everything.

".....By the way, son-in-law-dono, you are keeping in touch with Princess Tsubaki, right? How are things recently? Do you think she and Bea will actually get along?"

"....."

"Hahaha, there's no need to hide anything. Political marriages are an indispensable part of a noble's life. It's not a grudge, I'm just curious."

"....."

"Son-in-law-dono?"

"Master.....I haven't sent her any letter....."

“ .....

“ .....

“ “.....EH!?” “

It was the moment that confirmed the fact that I completely forgot to treat Princess Tsubaki as a future partner.

## Chapter 77: Quiet Talk: Zest's Wish

.....so it was.'

Good. I finally got this far.

There's still much more to write though.....

*knock knock*

"Excuse me, Master. It should soon be time for a break."

The girl, dressed as a maid, entered the room and started to prepare the tea. I drank some of the tea she prepared then started to talk quietly.

“I finally managed to write until this point. I can more or less grasp the ending now.”

‘The ending’ .....She probably reacted to this word, because her face got distorted.

Was it the handbook that was going to end?

Was it the Master’s life that was going to end?

She probably wanted to ask that, but she remained quiet instead as she stood next to me.

“Since we came to this point, would you like to read a little? I might need to make corrections after all.”

I smiled and handed over the unfinished handbook. Even though she looked a

little disturbed, she took it and started to read.

“What do you think?”

She finally took her eyes away from the handbook and smiled.

Maybe she recalled her grandmother, a person she missed very much.

“Haha, grandmother used to do such things.”

She said and laughed. In these kinds of moments she looks exactly like her

grandmother.

The women I can't meet anymore.....

“It’s interesting! I don’t usually read stories, so I was a little worried I wouldn’t understand, but it was very easy to read.”

“I see. I’m glad you liked it. You know.....this handbook.....I’m addressing it to the people living in my native country.”

I brushed her head lightly, something I haven’t done in a long time.

She looked sad.....and embarrassed.....They really are alike.

“In my native country, there is a platform where many people go to read stories, you know?.....In order to connect to that, I used all my magical powers.....” 1

It’s been already 100 years since I came here.

A lot of things happened.....

“When my fellow countrymen read this, they’ll be able to understand a little about this world. And in case someone comes here, they will know better than allow themselves to be used by the nobles.....they’ll be careful not to get involved in conflicts.....they’ll be able to at least smile and live a quiet life.”

The girl stared at me, her pupils fixing mine.

Don’t make such an expression.....I won’t die too soon.

“Therefore, I want this handbook to be read by as many people as possible.....People who do not usually read novels, might get summoned here too.”

“.....That’s why? So that’s why the contents of this handbook are made to look funny and interesting?”

“Ha ha ha, precisely. If I were to write an instructions book or something similar, nobody would have read it. There is meaning even in looking at it, you know?”

I pray that.....

This book will catch the attention of as many people as possible. I pray that it will spread.

I pray that it will reach my native country, where my fellow countrymen live.

“This is a handbook that cannot look like an instructions book.....Then, what about making it into a tale? This option was not good, since there are many similar stories in my world.....”

There were many light novels and fantasy novels in my world.

And it was impossible to write something that is completely different from them.....But even so.....

“That’s exactly why I chose this writing style.....Please, fellow countrymen,

please realize.....that this is a notification I'm writing with all my might.....”

The girl was silently listening to me.

The moonlight was pale.

And this pale light was illuminating my room, as I kept on praying.

Please God.....It should be all right for me to advise them to such a degree, right?

Please, make sure this handbook reaches Japan.....

1.I find this interesting as a narrative technique. The author (Takkurun) wants us to believe Zest is the one who actually writes the novel and through his magical powers it gets uploaded on ncode.syosetsu for all the Japanese people to see it (and maybe, the future Hero). But that's my interpretation, and you're free to see it as you wish.

## Chapter 78: An Important Gift

“Son-in-law-dono.....If you don't pay more attention to women, you won't be able to live a long life, you know?”

“Your Excellency, I brought the jewels you asked for!”

“Your Excellency, since this place is famous for its perfumes, won't that be a good choice as well for a present-nya?”

“Oh my! It seems his Excellency is busy. And I came all the way here to let him know that the pregnancy is progressing well.”

Media, get out!

My office was currently a fighting ground, and everyone was talking to me as I was desperately trying to write the letter.

Thank you everyone.....But I have to finish this letter quickly, so you must wait.....

“Woooo, such beautiful jewels-nya! Will he find out if I take one for myself-nya?”

“Miss Katalina.....That is a bad idea.....”

“Eh? Lord Albert, how can you even say that-nya? How can you claim that.....”

“Miss Katalina, maybe if you take only one, he’ll think it was an accident or something, so it might be safe.”

“You two, son-in-law-dono can probably hear you talking about this, so try to keep it moderate, okay?”

.....Keep it moderate? No, master, you have to stop them.

Well, I couldn’t say anything, since it was I who was in the wrong this time.

I completely forgot to take Princess Tsubaki into consideration.

But because everyone was collaborating, I could deal with it really quickly; even though there were a few misappropriations and a lot of noise, I decided to ignore them.

While listening to the turbulent and intriguing voices surrounding me, I frantically wrote the letter.

‘After the war, I couldn’t really take any time off.

But now that I finally got a moment of break, I immediately wrote you a letter.

I’ll be very happy if you like the present I’ve sent you.

I want to see you soon.’

I wrote this letter the way a noble would do.

“Albert, hurry up and deliver these. I won’t allow any mistake.”

The cur grinned and saluted, then left the room.

He dares to laugh at other people’s unhappiness.....Shall I reduce his salary?

Well, it’s all right. I’m too tired for this anyway.

I stood up and stretched my body a little.

My right hand and my shoulders were sore.

I decided to take a break and drink the black tea that the Maids Unit prepared for me.

“.....By the way, son-in-law-dono, you did write a letter to Bea, didn’t you?

“ .....

“Are you tired? Didn’t you hear me.....”

“.....”

“Sonia-sama, his Excellency is crying-nya.”

“.....Don’t tell me...”

“I didn’t.....write to her.....”

“ “.....” “

It was the moment that announced that a second fighting scene would surely take place.

That day, late at night, we finished with Bea’s letter-set at last, but we were feeling completely exhausted.

“.....Son-in-law-dono, you are not to forget about these matters ever again, all right?”

“.....Your Excellency, I’m expecting an overtime pay-nya.”

“Your Excellency! If you really are tired, what about holding a sham battle!?”

“Master, thank you. Katalina, you can expect your overtime pay.....I’ll also pretend I haven’t seen the jewel incident.”

Albert.....don’t look at me with those flickering eyes.

There’s no way I’ll fight in a sham battle at this moment.

“It will be all right now. Thank you very much, everyone. You were very helpful.”

I stood up and bowed my head.

At this point, there were only people I could trust inside my office, so it was all right for me to bow to them, even though I was a noble.

I trusted Katalina too, after all.

Just in case, I investigated her past to see if she had any hidden motives or something.

I wasn’t such a softhearted person to unconditionally trust everyone around me.

“Stop, son-in-law-dono.”

“Please stop-nya!”

“Please stop, your Excellency, there’s no need for you to thank your subordinates.”

So they said, with bitter smiles on their faces.

Haha, I was blessed with a great master and wonderful subordinates.

We all went to eat something light and to discuss about the plans for the near future.

It wasn’t very clever for me to act this familiar with my subordinates, but master was part of my family and the other two were trusted friends. That’s why it was more or less all right for me to act like that.

Since Katalina has joined us, the office work’s efficiency has improved considerably.

The people in the old royal capital have settled down, and more and more of them started to talk about what was going to happen with the castle: constructing a new one or repairing the old one!?

“So? Are you going to repair the old castle, son-in-law-dono?”

Master asked me with a serious expression, like he was trying to test me.

.....Oh dear!

“I won’t. if I end up using a castle, the imperial capital would make a huge fuss about it.....Therefore, I will build a mansion on the site of the former royal castle and use it as my home.”

“.....but in this case, you won’t be able to protect it in case of an attack, you know?”

“There’s an expression in my homeland, saying ‘The people are the castle, the people are the stone walls, the people are the moat; compassion is my ally, resentment is my foe’ or something like that.”

These were the words of that famous daimyo 1 from the Warring States period 2.....Or was he a strategist?

Hearing this, my master sank into silence.....However, he was smiling.

“I have Albert to lead the knights and Katalina to think about strategies. I don’t need a castle, because I feel safe with my subordinates close to me.”

Both of them fell silent and looked at me.

“I have no great ambitions, after all. I really don’t want to build a castle and be suspected of treason.”

Yes, since I’m in possession of a very large territory now, there’s the likelihood that the imperial capital will be suspicious of me.

I must be very cautious in order for them not to be too vigilant, otherwise it could get dangerous.

Master already understood these things, so he wanted to make sure I understood them as well.

“I won’t say anything else, my excellent son-in-law-dono.”

Master said and started to laugh.

It appears that I passed the test.

“However.....You are a little too excellent.....”

.....Eh?

“Your Excellency, Duke Zest!! Do you really.....Do you really trust us to such an extent!!?”

“Woooa-nya! It’s the first time-nya.....It’s the first time someone actually acknowledged me-nya! I was always made fun of for being a filthy kemonobito-nya!”

“For us, the Intelligence Unit, these words are much appreciated.....We will die for your Excellency at any time.”

“We, the Maids Unit, swear unwavering loyalty to your Excellency until the end of time!”

Did they somehow multiply?

Ah! The Intelligence Unit is always around.....And the Maids Unit is always waiting to serve.

.....Why is everyone crying?

“.....Son-in-law-dono, there is no feudal lord who holds no castle, you know? They’re crying because you spoke those killing words with such a serious expression; you don’t need a castle when you have such wonderful subordinates.....Really now, don’t cause a rebellion or something, okay? If you leave it to these children, the imperial capital would fall in 3 mere days, you know?”

Master patted my shoulder as he informed me in a low voice.

It was also meant as a warning for me to keep this chaotic place under control.

“.....You people are my castle as well as my own hands and feet. I have great expectations from you!”

“ “ “ “ “Your Excellency.....!” “ “ “ “

As I looked at how my subordinates burst into tears, I started to cry as well.

.....I failed to.....keep them under control.....

## Chapter 79: Reuniting with My Family

“.....And so, you have permission to bring your families here. There will be many other immigrants apart from families, so they will arrive in about a month. You must be looking forward to it, right?”

The Duke’s mansion was constructed on the site of the former royal castle.

This announcement was made in the big square in front of the mansion, and the soldiers who heard it were shouting with joy.

“Finally, I can see my family again.”

“My kid must have grown a little.”

“If my.....If my wife doesn’t hurry, I’ll.....”

“.....My family.....My family.”

One year had already passed since our war with the former Tarminal Kingdom.

We assaulted the enemy nation, then we had to administrate it.....There was no possible way for me to go back.

Since I was offered a new territory, I had to declare it as part of the empire's lands and proclaim a new set of laws; I also had to hire new government officials, repair the damage done to the former capital, but also maintain it.

All the neighboring nobles have already surrendered, but they never left their lands, so I had to call out to them and invite them to meet me and so on.

But it was finally safe to bring our families over. We were already prepared to do the legal procedures.

In fact, I could've called Bea to join me much, much earlier, but....

"I can't be the only one to bring my wife here, when I'm forcing all my subordinates to endure the absence of their loved ones. Nobles and commoners alike love their families dearly, so we will wait and bring all of them together."

My eyes looked pretty much unwelcoming when I spoke those words, which actually caused a huge stir among the soldiers.

My mansion was therefore finished in a flash.

After that, the old royal capital was more or less completely restored.

In fact, the former residents said that the capital has become busier and safer than before, and everyone was very happy with this.

.....So, we finally came to this.....

“Your Excellency, the signboard with the name for the new capital is ready. Please hold the establishment ceremony.”

“.....Yeah.”

Albert reported while showing a broad grin on his face.

“Good-nya. I’m so jealous-nya.”

“Right? I’m really jealous as well.”

The Media and Katalina combo said to me, broad grins on their faces.

Since Tasel was on maternity leave, Media had lots of free time, so she spent it in my office, acting like my escort.

Because of that, she became good friends with Katalina.

“Must I.....really hold the ceremony?”

“Yes, you must.”

“Yes, it is a must.”

“You must-nya.”

I gave up.....It was impossible to run away from this.....

The day of the ceremony, I raised my eyes to look up at the sky.

The leaden clouds.....The birds’ noisy cries so early in the morning.....And one of my shoelaces broke.

A feeling of unrest was building up inside me.

“Your Excellency, please do the greetings.”

As I followed Albert, we arrived at the grounds where the ceremony was about to take place.

The wide square in front of my mansion was packed with hundreds of citizens.

“Your Excellency, Duke Zest.”

“Oh, sister.....I’m sorry, it’s Priestess now, right?”

I haven’t seen this junky sister in a long period of time, but now she called out to me.

“It’s all right, just call me sister. That’s because I’m a mountain colored with countless sprouts.”

“.....Such modest words.”

“Haha, it’s like a bird that gazes at distant heights. But I am not the bird, I actually want to become a fish swimming in a small mountain stream. That is the guidance of God!”

“.....We can only admire God’s thoughtfulness.”

“Ahaha”

“Ha ha ha”

.....I hate it. I don’t understand a thing from what she’s saying.

Katalina was clearly too astonished by this scene.....Stop wiggling your tail, will you?

Albert, don’t draw your sword, you idiot!

“This is a wooden talisman I made for the prosperity of the capital. Please take it.”

“I humbly accept your kindness.”

Hearing this, she took out the wooden talisman from somewhere around her chest region, then turned to leave.

Why does this sister always take things out from her chest region!?!.....

I gave the wooden talisman to Albert, and prepared for the ceremony.

“It’s still.....warm.....?”

Albert said and sniffed the wooden talisman, action that made Katalina draw away from him as quickly as possible.

Eh? Did he only make sure that the talisman was not poisoned?

No, no, I already know that Albert is an extremely serious person.

Uh-huh, I believe him, I really do.....

I ignored the sad-looking Albert, and went up on the stage.

I didn't want people to think I'm the same as him.

"Thank you everyone for gathering here. I've prepared a banquet to celebrate the beginning of a new capital. Today, I will take care of all bar bills; it's my treat for you. Drink as much as you like and make merry!"

" " " " "Yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeaaaaahhhh!" " " " "

"Oi, it's free alcohol, you hear me?"

"His Excellency, the Duke sure is understanding."

"This would've never happened before."

All the citizens scattered; they were happily searching for bars.

All went according to plan.....This way no one will pay much attention to the new city's name.

"Your Excellency Zest, please rest assured. I gave orders to every bar and drinking place so that all those who shout out loud the name of the new capital will receive free drinks."

“You can rest assured this way-nya. Coming from Lord Albert, this sure is amazing-nya.”

Albert didn't even realize she was making fun of him.

That stupid cur, he kept on grinning and nodding to her words.....You really did something unnecessary, damn you!

That day, the name of the new capital was heard countless of times in all the bars and drinking places across the city.

‘Let's toast for the capital city that his Excellency, Duke Zest loves so dearly! Let's toast for <Beatrice>!’

This capital city was named after the Duke's beloved legal wife.

It was expected that he would value this city for eternity; there was nothing to worry about.

The citizens partied until the next morning.

“Why?.....Why did it turn out like this?.....”

I was actually in a dreamy state when I accidentally decided to name this city 'Beatrice'.....

And because of that, the rumors have spread even to the imperial capital, saying 'There's a Duke who named his city after his wife'.....

I also received a letter from Princess Tsubaki, saying 'Where will you use my name?', so I was kind of troubled by that.....

When I meet other nobles now, they never fail to include this into their greetings:

'As expected from your Excellency, no one could imitate your act of naming this city after your legal wife. Ha ha ha'

I completely became a toy, these guys enjoy playing with.....There's a limit even to embarrassment.

As I was drinking sake in my office out of despair, a maid came to deliver a letter.

She brought it to me despite being late at night, so it must be urgent.

I watched as the frightened maid left the room and opened the letter.

It was a strange letter that didn't have a sender or a recipient's name and address.

'I AM ON MY WAY BEA'

I saw the dark red letters that looked exactly like blood, and felt extremely frightened after such a long period of time; I even wet my pants a little.

This.....probably means death.....

## Chapter 80: The Aim of Her Rage

It was the middle of the night. I was in my office, crying, as I finished the cleaning.....

I couldn't have finished it so fast if I were alone.

“Your Excellency, we haven't seen anything. Your Excellency, as well, hasn't seen anything.”

The one who said that was a member of the intelligence unit, who had his nether region wet as well.....As I thought, that thing was really scary.....

I remained silent, as I nodded to him and continued the cleaning.

“How comes you're so noisy in the middle on the night, son-in-law-dono?”

My master came right after I finished with the cleaning. He had great timing.

Once he saw the thing on my desk, his expression altered and he offered his help.

I was thankful to him.....He really is a doting father. When it comes to Bea, he

is always reliable.

For the time being, I'll leave it to my master.

If I don't know the circumstances, I can't think of a solution.

I was definitely not in the right mental condition to be able to fall asleep, but, nonetheless, I went to bed and forcibly closed my eyes.

After a few dubious hours passed, time in which I didn't know whether I fell asleep or not, light could be seen from the other side of the window.

Maybe I did sleep a little.....

As I got up, I realized that a maid was waiting for me with a silver tray in her hands.

Her face was ghastly pale as she held the tray with a letter on it. I took the letter.

.....This was my master's writing.

I opened it with trembling fingers.

'Impossible, impossible.....This is impossible.'

“Ah! Call Albert!!”

Led by the maid, Albert came in an instant.

“Albert, this is a very important mission.”

“Yes sir! I’ll do anything, just give me your orders!”

.....Hm? He just said he’ll do anything, right?

“Take with you the most powerful soldiers among the black knights and maids unit to meet Bea and escort her here! You will use the scout unit for communicating me all the details, without omissions!”

“.....Yes sir! I will do everything in my power to complete this mission!”

Grinning, he saluted me and left the room.

He probably thought that I was doting on Bea and sent him to escort her because I was worried.

.....I will never forget your sacrifice though.

The day slowly passed; it was a day in which not even food managed to pass through my throat.

I wasn’t even able to concentrate on work.

The maids unit was extremely noisy, constantly saying that I acted like that because I missed my wife.

But the problem wasn't this simple.

I forced myself to eat some soup for dinner then returned to my office, trembling, when a messenger arrived.

"Ur.....urgent message! Forgive my rudeness!"

"I don't mind. Speak!"

The messenger tumbled.

There was no need for courtesy in these situations.

"Beatrice-sama will soon arrive! Furthermore, we cannot get close to her carriage. I pray for your Excellency's good fortune.....That's all....."

And then the messenger collapsed.

".....You did well.....He can take all the time he needs to rest. When Bea gets here, show her to my private room....."

I gave these orders to a maid then stood up slowly and walked away from my office.....

I had to make preparations.....

I was waiting inside my private room.

I used an eye bandage to cover my eyes and asked an intelligence unit member to tie my both hands, then knelt down on the floor in a seiza position.

.....I treated myself like a sinner.

I didn't know why she was so mad about, but I had a general idea.

I left my new wife alone for an entire year, so there was no way she was in a good mood.

If I were to try to persuade her that this only happened because of my work, things would've gotten unnecessarily complicated.

This was something I learned from a customer at the time I worked for my Japanese company.

The door opened and someone entered my room.

It had to be Bea, since they didn't knock.

.....I prepared myself for the worst.

“.....Zest-sama? What are you doing?”

(Dad, what kind of game are you playing? Toto wants to play too!)

.....Hmm?

For some reason, her voice was kind.

“Zest-sama, it’s been a long time. I really missed you.”

(It’s been a while, Dad!)

Smiling, Bea untied the rope and the eye bandage.

Toto, as well, had a huge smile on her face as she squeezed my head.

“Well now, don’t sit on the floor. Let’s go to the sofa instead.”

(You see, Dad, I have a souvenir for you!)

.....She’s not mad at all...

What happened? I don’t understand anything anymore.

My mind was in a state of chaos, as they helped me to get to the sofa. When we reached it, Bea and Toto hugged me closely.

“Zest-sama.....I was so lonely.....”

(Yeah....I missed Dad’s scent!)

I was dumbfounded, but as I brushed both their heads, I started to think about this whole situation.

What’s going on?.....Wasn’t she mad at me?

Then what about that letter? What about master’s letter?

What about Albert’s messenger?

My head was spinning.

There was no way I could predict this, nor understand it.

Bea was about to drink the tea the maid prepared for us, when I asked her.

I couldn’t live without knowing this.

“Bea.....Weren’t you mad at me?”

“Mad at you? Why do you think so?”

“Despite being newly weds, we were separated for an entire year.....I was certain you were mad at me because of this.....”

“Well, I am also a noble, and I am proud of my husband, who went to battle for the sake of the empire, so I won’t get angry at you for something like this.”

She was in a great mood when she answered me, her face covered in smiles.....These were her true feelings.

Toto was smiling happily too, as she sat on my shoulder and ate some cookies.

.....Then...

“.....In this case, why were you angry?”

In that moment, the entire world froze.

She began to overflow with such a profoundly dark magical power that could only be described as pitch-black.

Toto, as well, let loose of her overwhelming magical power, which was mixed

with rage and killing intent.

.....Ah! I ended up wetting myself a little.

“Princess Tsubaki gladly accepted a marriage proposal that came from the prince of the country of elves.....”

(Tsubaki betrayed my Dad.....I want to drown her in darkness!)

.....

I employed the entirety of my magical power in order to protect my body, as I watched attentively the way the stone walls and pavement in my private room started to crack.

‘Thanks god it wasn’t me!’

I honestly thought that.....

Princess Tsubaki.....might die.....

## Chapter 81: The Noble's Way

“Despite her having a fiancé, named Zest-sama.....”

(She's making fun of us, Mom.....)

“.....Well, it's okay.....”

I was earnestly caressing their heads as the two of them were in a fit of anger.

Something collapsed behind us.....Maybe the intelligence unit soldier.....Don't die, ok?

Listening to the girls' story, it turns out that:

'The elven prince came to the empire for a diplomatic meeting, but he fell in love with Princess Tsubaki at first sight and proposed to her without any warning.

Even though they explained him that she already had a fiancé, he earnestly requested her hand, promising her that she'll be his legal wife, not his concubine.

Princess Tsubaki seemed that she wasn't altogether against it, but the Emperor, on the other side, was really troubled.

He couldn't discuss this matter with me, so he went to consult with the Frontier Count; that's when Bea overheard them and went crazy.'

Hmm.....It's good and bad at the same time.....

Well now, let's see why she got so angry in the first place?

"I understand.....But Bea, Toto, I am not angry at all. I'm not even sad, you know?"

".....Really?"

(Dad, don't you hate it?)

Their magical power settled down a little.

“If you two even disappear from my life, I would get angry and fight with all my strength to get you back.....However, Tsubaki's marriage with me was a political one.....And I don't really care about it, you know?”

“If Zest-sama says so, then I .....But still, what about our Duke's Household.....”

(Even though Tsubaki got along with me and Mom.....)

Hmm.....

It seems that Bea is concerned about our nobles' honor.

While Toto's concerned about a completely different thing.

I seized Bea's hand and looked her in the eye as I started to speak.

“Bea.....I will do something about our honor as nobles, so don't worry about it. I am actually more concerned about your feelings. Did you really consent to my marriage to her? Would it have been better for me to get married to Princess Tsubaki?”

“.....The noble Bea consented to it. But I, personally.....hated.....it.”

Her face reddened and she hung her head in shame.

I thought so.....Because she is a noble, she couldn't act her according to her real thoughts.

I'm such a fool; being spoiled by such a young woman like Bea.

“I'm sorry Bea, I depended on you too much.....I won't ever make you cry again, I promise .....You are the only wife I need, so I'm determined to never marry another woman.”

“.....Haha, 'You are the only wife I need' you say? It's the first time I'm hearing something like this.”

(Ah! I sure get sleepy after eating sweets....I'll go lie down.)

Toto, you only have to stay silent okay?

Go sleep already!

In this world, I, a Japanese, can't make my opinions known and accepted, even if I do the impossible.

It was precisely because I used to think like that that I ended up depending on Bea.....

But it's true that even if I do the impossible, they won't accept my opinion.

In this case, I'll take measures so that they'll accept it without me overdoing it.

I have to do it solely for the sake of this precious girl in front of me.

That day, I swore to myself once again.

That I would live my life as a resident of this world.....

And that I would protect Bea without hesitation, no matter the means I would have to use.

I kissed her and brushed her hair, and she finally smiled for me.

Yes, I will protect this smile.....

And so, we slowly lay down on top of each other.....

(You had fun last night, huh!?)

“ “Toto, who taught you that?” “

After I punched some holes into Albert, we were walking towards a certain place.

He dared teach Toto unnecessary things.

“We....we.....so..on....a...a.....arri....arrive!”

Perhaps he’s saying that we’ll arrive soon or something.

Such a stupid dog.

“Are you really going to use that.....?”

(Dad, I also want to help!)

Both of them approved of my plan.

.....I must do it. There’s no other way.

This way the Emperor will also consent and the other nobles won't complain about it.

We arrived at our destination, and were welcomed by her.

I will cancel my engagement to Princess Tsubaki in order to live happily together with Bea.

“I was waiting for you, your Excellencies, Duke Zest and Duchess Beatrice.....as well as Spirit-sama. We're meeting for the first time. It's a great pleasure!”

The woman brought her hand together to her chest and made a praying pose.

“Sister, it's been a while. I came today with a request.”

“Oh my, a request from your Excellency.....What kind of request?”

“I am engaged to her Highness, Princess Tsubaki, and I came to you, sister, to hear you preach about it.”

I will make sure to use reason with this junky sister.

.....Will it actually.....work?

## Chapter 82: The Imperial Family's Scheming

“That was rather fast, grandson-in-law-dono. Did you make your move?”

After the junky sister preached for me, I traveled to the Frontier Count's domain.

There was something I needed to confirm no matter what.

“So my coming here was within your expectation.....Well, I, more or less, took some measures.”

I showed the Count the sermon the sister wrote for me; it was enveloped by the Priestess' Blessing.....something similar to a magic seal.

The parchment containing the sermon was inside this seal.

“Oh? A sermon.....Hoho, this can be useful in so many situations.....”

“Yes. But what about the Emperor? What's his real intention after all?”

“The elf prince is a blockhead.....That’s why he wants them to get married.”

As expected.....

I put the parchment away, and the Frontier Count continued.

“Grandson-in-law-dono, princess Tsubaki betrayed you.....Does this anger you?”

He looked at me, examining my reaction.....

“No. This was originally a political marriage. That princess.....or, better said, the imperial family has to be like that, otherwise it’s no good. Precisely because it was in their advantage, that they lowered their heads to me in conciliation.”

“.....It’s good you understand this. Listen, all right? You should never even consider that the imperial family moves based on emotions. You can’t sit at the top of a country and still act with simplicity. You should never trust other nobles apart from your family either. It’s okay to rely on them, but you should never completely open up to anyone.”

He looked me straight in the eyes then continued.

“I left Bea in your care, and if you want to protect her as a noble, you must possess a capacious mind. But that’s only in case you act like a noble.....For a stranger like you this might be rather strict.”

“.....I made up my mind already.”

“Then it’s all right. The Emperor wants to conquer the elves’ country from inside, since that blockhead is the crown prince after all. If he takes the Princess as his legal wife, their child will rule the country after the next king.....That’s about it.”

“Then, what I must do is.....”

“Yes, that would be to cancel the engagement in a skillful manner.....In addition to that.....”

“I have to adopt princess Tsubaki and make her marry the prince.....am I right?”

There it is....

That face!? That’s why you’re scary.....

“That’s right. It will be troublesome if she marries as a princess, since we don’t know if the elven royal family will turn against his Majesty the Emperor in the future.”

“She’s thoroughly treated as an object.....”

The Frontier Count sipped some of his tea.

I drank some too.....My throat was really dry.....

“Right. If she marries as a princess, our empire loses its inheritance rights, so they can easily interfere with our affairs. But in case she marries as the daughter of the hero who achieved spiritification, the man also called the sword of the empire, no one would complain; the spirit gives its divine protection to both our countries after all.....so it’s beneficial.”

“All that’s left now.....is for me to find a reason to cancel the engagement, one that the nobles will find acceptable too.”

“Indeed. You cannot say that you canceled the engagement because of the existence of another proposal. But in case this is the Will of God, then it can’t really be helped.....Spirit-sama also agrees to this, right?”

He smiled at Toto, who sat on his shoulder.

Haha, the Frontier Count’s soft spot was exposed.....

“Yes, everything should be all right.”

“Hoho, grandson-in-law-dono.....You got a perfect score. The Emperor might trust you a little now.”

He said and started to laugh. The Frontier Count was really scary in such moments....

Toto, it's all right, you can try to send him away flying! I won't mind.

I was in the imperial capital, inside the audience room.

I read the parchment out loud in front of his Majesty and the other nobles.

‘This is a sermon on the engagement between his Excellency, Duke Zest and

her Highness, Princess Tsubaki. The river water flows into the sea, praying for the birth of a new life. Every tree in the forest needs light, so we should never try to perforate the rocks. And the reason for that is the Will of God!

Yeah, I don't understand it either.....However.....

“This sermon itself is the Will of God. In our empire, the Frontier Count's domain is blessed with fresh mountain rivers, while the imperial capital is the sea. And on the opposite side of the sea, there's a forest.....In short, the God's Will is for the princess to marry inside the elven royal family and make the light shine on our both nations.”

Toto nodded in agreement.

“The Frontier Count's Household is the rock, and since I have a deep connection with it, I will end up piercing the rock.....in short, this means that I must never marry her Highness, Princess Tsubaki.”

Toto smiled broadly and kept on nodding to my words.

“The spirit recognized the Will of God as well.....In this case, I will cancel my engagement and accept the Will of God. I advise you all to do the same, and approve of her Highness, Princess Tsubaki's marriage with the elf prince.”

“This is certainly something approved by a priest.....Since the God and the spirit spoke their thoughts, this is unavoidable. However, isn't it troublesome for the Duke's Household?”

“There's no such thing.”

“What about letting Tsubaki get married after she's adopted into the Duke's Household?”

“If that's what you wish, your Majesty, then the spirit will become a bridge between our both countries, and it will be an honor for my Duke's Household as well. I must express my gratitude to your Majesty's consideration.”

Yes, this was all a huge farce, since everything was already decided.

I interpreted the sermon as it seemed fit at the moment, but because Toto acknowledged it, it all became real.

It couldn't be helped if the spirit agreed.

As for princess Tsubaki.....yeah, she was indeed part of the imperial family.....She's pretty wicked for a little girl.

The Emperor wishes for me to bond with her.

For the time being, I'll try that once she's part of my family.

While we're at it, I will indeed have connections with the elves' country, but princess Tsubaki will never make a move with only my words.

It will be impossible for me to.....turn against the empire together with the elves.

The Emperor knew this as well, that's why he proposed this arrangement.

And since I was already showing him an attitude of cooperation for the benefit of our empire, he didn't want to force me any further.

.....Or maybe I was being tested? That's one possibility too.

He might have wanted to see if I will make a move for the benefit of the empire.

If I do make a move, then everything is great. But if I don't, then he will offer me his daughter as a concubine.....

Really now, how deep is their scheming!?!...This damned imperial family!

Well, I already decided that I will be loyal to this empire as long as they don't

make a move at Bea.

And they didn't for now.

Instead of making Tsubaki marry me from an inferior position, and probably end up fighting with Bea, it was better, to some extent, for our connection to have a different nature. That's what they most likely considered.

It was all about politics.....and that's really troublesome.....

It's really hard for me to interact with the imperial family for some reason.....

I hope I won't have anything to do with them for a while.....

Therefore, it was decided that princess Tsubaki will get adopted into my family and marry the elf prince.

As for me, I just wanted to return home.....



## Chapter 83: Relaxation

“I know! Let’s go to the sea!”

This was the idea that popped up in my exhausted head after I returned from the imperial capital.

“Your Excellency, there’s no work to be done at the moment, so now is a good time—*nya*.”

“Your Excellency, your black knight guards are ready too.”

“Son-in-law—*dono*, I am free too.”

“Master, you mustn’t come.....”

This was supposed to be a trip for me, Bea and Toto.....Now, these guys are coming too.

Master, don’t glare at me like that, I’m still not taking you along.

The carriage was shaking as it made its way towards the fishing village.

I also wanted to watch the way Herman worked.

Once in a while, you have to get some rest otherwise you’d be ruining your body....or so they say.

After all, when I was in the imperial capital, I was exposed to the Imperial Family’s terrible darkness.....

No, stop it!.....When I think about that, my head starts to hurt.....

I want to forget about Princess Tsubaki too.

She is.....yeah, she’s shocking.....

If she were to actually become my wife, my stomach would be full of holes.....

“What’s the matter? Are you all right, Zest—*sama*?”

(Dad, why don’t you sleep if you’re tired?) They looked at me, their expressions filled with worry.

“Thanks, but I’m good.”

These two were really kind, so much so that my troubled heart was starting to heal.

I proudly brushed their heads.

“Thieves!!!”

“Surround them!!”

“Do it! Kill them all!”

.....The maids unit was full of energy as always.....

Almost all of them have decided upon getting married.....with the black knights.

Only muscle brains children are likely to be born from them.

Will my domain be all right?

I must find some other civil officials too, since I can't let Katalina do everything.

We arrived at the fishing village, and I was amazed by the changes it underwent.

There was a solid fence surrounding the village, and the houses were looking great.

The coast already had a pier, and it all looked like a veritable harbor. It seems Herman went through a lot of trouble to do all this.

“Your Excellency, Duke Zest, it's been a long time.”

“Hey Herman, you did great things here. It looks wonderful.”

Herman felt proud, but he also remained modest.

He did amazing things in such a short period of time.....With this our income should grow considerably bigger.

Sooner or later I might have to make Herman a noble too.....

“Come now, we have made preparations for a welcome party.”

A banquet hall was prepared in the village's central *plaza*.

It wasn't extravagant-looking, but they cooked a lot of seafood-based dishes for us. Everything was filled with emotion.

“I'm very glad you people feel this way. For today, let's party to our hearts' content!”

I greeted and the party started.

“Katalina? Long time no see!”

“Nya? Everyone!? It’s been a long time—*nya!*”

“Well then, look at my trick.....”

“Ha ha ha, I wanna try it too!”

I listened to the soldiers’ merrymaking and drank.  
As one would expect, a duke was not supposed to be noisy like them.

(Dad, you know.....Haha)

“Hm? What is it, Toto?”

She sat on my shoulder and smiled at me.

(Dad, you were mad at that Majesty uncle, right?)

“.....You’re right. Our meeting wasn’t really interesting.”

I can’t hide things from her, it seems.....

(That’s why, you know, I made sure to send him away!)

.....Eh?

“Tototototo, Toto? What did you do?”

(I sent away the uncle’s hair!!)

You sent away.....his hair?

(The uncle had some hair placed on his head, you know? That’s why I sent it flying!) His Majesty.....was actually bald.....even though he’s young.....

“Toto, this is a secret, all right? Do you understand?”

(Yes! I promise, Dad!) She said and followed me excitedly.

I see now, he was bald.....

.....If there was no evidence left behind then there’s no problem.  
However, wigs are extremely valuable in this world, so I bet it was difficult for him.

.....Toto, you did amazingly great!

“Oh my! You were talking with Toto, Zest—*sama.*”

“Hey Bea, are you having fun?”

She came to me, escorted by the maids unit.



(Tsubaki!? She's coming!? Awesome! I had *something* to say to her!)

They were clad in a pitch-black aura and there was no way I could oppose them.

All I could say was 'Yes' or '*Understood*'.

That day, several hundreds of fish washed up ashore; they could be found all over the fishing village's harbor.....

## Chapter 84: It Can't Be Helped, for this Is Training in Homemaking Arts

“Princess Tsubaki.....Urm, Tsubaki will get married into the elf’s family as my daughter, therefore it was decided that she will undergo training in homemaking arts here, on my domain. Everyone.....you do understand, right?”

“Yes sir! We will have her become a daughter that won’t bring shame on the Duke’s Household!”

“It can’t be helped if this is training in homemaking arts–*nya*. I’ll have her become charming enough for a long living elf–*nya*!”

“As for her maid experience, we’ll have her start from a 1000 times practice-swinging.”

“She’ll be entering the Duke’s Household, so she must be able to survive on the foremost lines.”

Do maids really do practice-swinging?

I felt surprise at the excessive motivation the maids and the black knights showed.

I left all the excited muscle brains inside the conference room and I returned to my office.

For some reason I decided to ignore, for it was probably my imagination, the disturbing line ‘*Training equipment for a woman’s charm*’.

“Oh my.....Welcome back, Zest–*sama*.”

(Welcome back, Dad!)

“.....You....you two look like you’re having fun.”

Bea’s eyes lost all their light as she peeled *something* off and stockpiled the *flakes* into a pot.

Toto’s eyes looked unfocused as she stared at empty space, while pouring her magical power into the pot.

Something black rose up from that pot and I think I saw a magical charm inside it. But I might be mistaken.

I opened the letter on my desk and started to read.

*'Grandson-in-law—dono, before she marries, she must be disciplined until the point she understands what happens if she looks down on the Duke's Household and the Frontier Count's Household.*

*I leave it in your care!'*

The Count put an emphasis on the last sentence.

I put the letter away and glanced at the two girls.

They were still working on *that thing*, their smiles constantly present on their faces.

I used all my magical power to strengthen my quivering voice as I began to ask them.

".....What is that you're making there?"

"Zest—*sama*, this is the maiden's secret medicine."

(It's a girls' secret!)

"Then.....it can't be helped."

My office resounded with their seemingly eternal devilish giggling.....

Keep it.....keep it moderate, okay?

The Frontier Count and Tsubaki arrived the same day; we greeted them at the capital's entrance gate. However.....

Since she was a 12 or 13 years old child, I would only try to scare her a bit then let her off.

That was my plan.....in the beginning.....

"Having to come to such a countryside place.....it's a huge bother."

"Yes, this is not appropriate for the Princess."

"Hey you! Don't come too close to the Princess!"

Tsubaki's lady attendants were wearing strong perfume that stuck in my

nostrils.

“Oh my, is this Zest–*sama*? You are not very thoughtful, it seems. I am tired. Don't you see? Well, it can't be helped. You're only good at fighting, after all.”

During those two years we haven't met, Tsubaki completely transformed into a splendidly stupid young lady.

“Grandson-in-law–*dono*, this is serious talk. If you don't educate her, it will get ugly.....Since she's coming from a scheming household, I thought that she would be taught the same, but I was wrong. They only managed to aggravate her selfishness.....”

The Frontier Count showed a bitter face.

You believe that she's part of an imperial family, so she must have elegant skills, but what you see is this mess.

“Albert, send the attendants back. They're a hindrance.”

“Yes sir! Immediately!”

The lady attendants were thrown into the carriage, regardless of their screaming and struggle, and sent away.

I didn't give a damn about the girl who shouted that she was the daughter of a count or something.

Now it was time to deal with the person in question.

Tsubaki was dumbfounded, but I informed her nonetheless.

“Starting today you're my daughter and you will become one who's worthy of being part of the Duke's Household. You can only answer with 'Yes' and 'Understood'.”

“.....Su.....such disrespect! If father finds out about this, you will”

Tsubaki ventured to say that much.

But obviously, the black knights and the maids unit, filled with killing intent, encircled her.

“I am your foster father now, so give up already. His Majesty himself took care of the arrangements.....He expressly sent you here.”

“However, if it’s only about making her your adopted daughter, she could still continue living in the imperial capital.....Those imperial capital nobles are good for nothing. This was supposed to be their job.”

Your Majesty, don’t you think you’re pushing me too far?.....

I’ll discuss this matter with the Frontier Count later.

“Bea, I leave you in charge of her training in homemaking arts.”

“AHAHAHAHAHAHAHA, with pleasure!”

(You stink! Tsubaki, you really stink! We must wash you!) .....Hm? Is it that Toto doesn’t like perfumes?

I don’t really think that Tsubaki stinks.

I saw Tsubaki off as the maids unit took her away, then walked towards my office together with the Count.

It was time to discuss how we were going to harass his Majesty for what he’d done to us.

“I never imagined that Tsubaki could ever become like that. What is the imperial family doing!?!.....”

“I was shocked. She won’t manage to infiltrate the elves country with that attitude.....”

“Yes, that’s impossible. The Emperor is forcing too much onto us. Shall we give him a little warning? What do you say, grandson-in-law–*dono*?”

He grinned broadly and continued with a shivering smile, one that I haven’t seen in a long time.

“This is nothing more than a military training organized by me and grandson-in-law–*dono*. It will take place near the imperial capital. There’s no problem if all we do is train, right? And I don’t really care what the other party will think about it.”

And so, the combined military training organized by the Duke’s Household and the Frontier Count’s Household started and the imperial capital trembled violently; they strongly believed that they were experiencing a rebellion.

## Chapter 85: Training and Education

*'I didn't feel alive until you reported that this was all a military exercise.*

*I'm really sorry I troubled you with the matter of Tsubaki.*

*So please forgive me! I promise that I will keep both the Duke and the Frontier Count's Households in high consideration.'*

Half crying, the Prime Minister brought us this letter.

A great number of nobles already fled the imperial capital, so the palace was extremely busy with remedial measures.

“Grandson-in-law—*dono*, remember that sometimes you have to warn them in order for them not to misunderstand you. You'll learn, sooner or later, how to add degrees to your warning.”

It's easy in case they simply obey, you just take advantage of that.

In case they don't obey, you have to pressure them to, and this is the difficult part.

“Understood.”

“Haha, it would be good for you to learn this while I'm still alive. Anyway, I'll be alive for a little longer.”

“I'm also here, you know, you can rely on me too.”

Frontier Count, master.....thank you.

I'm still inexperienced when it comes to such tactics.

I'll let these two teach me.....what should I do in this situation.

We finished our training and decided to return to our territories; when word of this came out, we were told to hurry up and leave.

“We don't need to *stimulate* them any further. If we stay too long his Majesty might really start preparing to fight back. It's best to keep it moderate.”

“I agree. It'll be troublesome if we can't see through the whole situation.”

They grinned broadly as I told them farewell, then I returned to my domain.

Those two.....It's a huge relief they're on my side.

I wanted to visit my foster father too since I haven't seen him in a long time, but I'll have to postpone it.

I'll make sure to write him a letter.

The return trip was going smoothly until Albert screwed up.

"Your Excellency, he peeked on Tasel!"

"Oi, restrain Media or we're gonna die!"

"Where are the medial soldiers?"

.....What the heck happened!?

According to the beat up Albert, this is what happened.

After giving birth, Tasel was back to work, but because her breast milk was coming out, she entered a tent to wipe it dry.

Then Albert came and, seeing Tasel's back figure, thought that *he* was a man. Therefore, Albert called out to *him*.

Tasel turned around, Albert was astonished, a loud scream could be heard, breast milk flew around...

Such a chaotic scene was unfolding right when Media showed up.

That's when Albert and Media's physical talk started.

*His* face red, Tasel was glaring at Albert.

*His* outward appearance was clearly a man.

I couldn't withstand this dangerous atmosphere where a blushing man stared at another man.

"I understand.....This was an accident, so let it go....."

Media flared up at my half random words.

"If that's the case, your Excellency, what would you do if Albert peeked on Lady Beatrice by mistake?"

“Hahaha, obviously, I would kill him. Without any doubt.”

Albert.....Don't look at me like that.....

“It's a joke. I wouldn't blame him if it was an accident.”

Albert, I'm sorry.....Don't cry.....

You should give him a break too, Media.

“On the contrary, you, Tasel, should feel happy that you were mistaken for a man. And Media too, you should cheer up. Albert is not a peeping tom, I can guarantee you that.”

“If that's what your Excellency says, I understand.”

“.....Yes, your Excellency.”

“Your Excellency.....Do you trust me?”

Tears gathered in the corners of Albert's eyes.

He's such a fool.

“Ain't that obvious? You are not a coward man. And, above all, you are not interested in a mother's milk, am I right? Since you enjoyed sniffing that *junky* sister's chest odor, I bet you like them really small, like nonexistent, right?”

“.....Lord Albert!”

“Such a sinful taste.....”

“Wha!? Your Excellency, that was me checking for poison.....”

Everyone started to laugh and the matter settled peacefully.

.....Or so it should have been.

“Albert—*sama*.....do you really have such preferences.....?”

“Me...Meril!? Why are you here.....?”

Because of his wife's sudden appearance, Albert's hellish experience continued to unfold.

Such fun events kept me entertained as we arrived to my capital city.

Albert and Meril made peace and now were flirting with each other; it was a

little annoying, but I endured it.

I would meet Bea soon as well.

Smiling, I entered my mansion and saw Toto flying towards me to sit on my shoulder.

(Dad, welcome back!)

“I’m home, Toto. Did anything change while I was away?”

I asked her as I brushed her hair.

Brushing her hair was already a reflex for me now. It comes naturally.

(Yes! Mom is educating Tsubaki!)

“.....It’s a relief that Bea is handling this.”

(Mom is in very high spirits!)

“.....I see.”

(Tsubaki’s already at the second jar of maiden’s secret medicine, so she’s becoming a good child!) Maybe I should really ask.

“What is a.....maiden’s secret medicine?”

Toto answered, her face covered in smiles.

(If you scoop it with a special spoon, it will flow into your mouth! It’s impossible to avoid and you can’t spit it out either. It’s a curs.....good luck charm!) .....Just now, did she almost say ‘curse’?

(Uncle Sonia tasted it and said that it exceeded Mom’s former *obento*<sup>1</sup>. He was so deeply moved emotionally that he fell asleep!) Toto, he fainted.....And also, he wasn’t moved at all, you know?

Thanks god that wasn’t me.

I thought, and entered my office.

## Chapter 86: A Lady's Style

"Young lady Tsubaki, don't forget your fighting spirit!"

"With that level of determination you won't become a fine lady."

"You still have 500 left! You have to practice sword swinging for another 500 times!"

"Huuu haaah, ooooooryaa ah ah!"

.....

"Katalina.....What's this uproar outside?"

"Ah, the maid's unit is coaching lady Tsubaki on how to become a fine lady-*nya*."

".....I see."

Do ladies these days really get psyched like that while practicing sword swinging?!

Well, these women are strong, so it's no use to argue with them.

It'll be too troublesome to oppose them, so I'll just leave it to them.

I was doing paperwork in my office while listening to Tsubaki's fighting scream.

My master returned to the Frontier Count's domain, leaving only me and Katalina for the job right now.....

This is.....a chance?

I put my workload away and looked at Katalina.

She's doing a great job for me and her outwards appearance is that of a beautiful woman; there'll no complaint at all.

"Katalina.....it's time.....to do *that*."

She was startled.

She took a short break from her work to look at me hatefully.

“.....Are we doing *that* again—*nya*? I.....urm.....”

Her face was completely flushed as I approached her and told her as gently as possible.

“You don’t dislike it either, Katalina. Am I right?”

“.....Uh! It’s not fair—*nya*.”

Katalina and I moved to the room next to the office.

We made sure no one saw us.....

However, Albert did see something.

He clearly saw us vanishing inside a room all alone.

And then, he ran to make his report.

“Beatrice—*sama*! His Excellency Zest disappeared inside a room with Katalina.”

“.....Well, maybe it’s about work?”

“Urm.....they said something about doing *that* and entered the room. I could smell sweat and heard intense breathing coming from inside.....”

Albert’s over-sensitive sense of smell was something you could really trust.

Even though he sometimes acts in a perverted manner like when he sniffed the sister’s scent, his sense of smell is something you can rely on.

Immediately, Beatrice started running, her favorite bardiche <sup>1</sup> in one hand.

Her bardiche was made of the same jet black material as the black knights’ armors, and the people started calling it fondly ‘*The Grim Reaper’s Axe*’; this weapon was her best partner.

She controlled her boiling rage and erased her presence as she approached the room in question.

If she were to hurry, she might not be able to obtain evidence.

“Katalina.....We’ll move a little faster now.”

“*Nya*!? I.....I can’t move faster than this.....it’s impossible.....*nya*.”

Hearing the voices coming from inside the room, Bea’s magical power

escalated.

This was it.

She smashed the door with her bardiche and jumped inside the room in an instant.

Beatrice took an imposing stance, her whole body clad in magical power, but what she saw was not what she had in mind.

What she saw was Zest and Katalina holding hands and embracing each other in a friendly manner.

“.....What.....are you doing?”

“ “We practice dancing (*nya*).” “

“ “ “ .....” “ “

“I want to soon bestow Katalina with a noble title, but it’s impossible to do so if she can’t dance properly, right?”

“His Excellency is teaching me—*nya*, the quick part is really difficult—*nya*.”

“.....Dancing.....”

“Bea.....what’s the matter?”

“What is your Excellency Beatrice.....doing with that bardiche—*nya*?”

“I’m.....I’m practicing to become a .....fine lady.”

Bea ran away, her face bright red. I saw her off then heard Albert’s shriek from somewhere down the corridors.

Did she really practice for becoming a fine lady?

I decided not to think too much about it and continued with our dancing training.

“I guess it’s time to end for now.”

“Th...thank you very much—*nya*.....”

I felt considerably tired, so I ended our practice for the day.

Katalina’s feet were hurting too.

It's always like that until you get used to it.....It kind of feels nostalgic.

"I know it's difficult for you, but dancing is indispensable. Hold on a little longer, okay?"

"Y.....yes sir-*nya*."

I left the exhausted Katalina behind and returned to my own room.

Albert was kneeling down in a *seiza* position on the corridor with a paper sheet attached to his body on which this word was written: '*Reflecting*'. I didn't even look at him.

That's because I recognized Bea's writing.

I don't want to get involved, you know? She's scary when she's like that.

I entered the bathroom together with Bea and Toto.

Having my back washed clean by Bea was an awfully great service.....

We left the bathroom, and after we finished eating dinner, Bea kept on clinging to me.

(Mom, is today the mating season?)

" ".....It was Albert, right?" "

(Yes!)

This was the moment when Albert's punishment prolonged until the next morning.

It seems he provided Toto with unnecessary knowledge again.

After I firmly re-educated Toto, I lulled her to sleep. That mongrel, he made me do an unnecessary effort.....

After that, Bea and I *enjoyed* each other's company and went to sleep afterwards.

I'll give my best tomorrow too.

I thought, as I gently brushed the already asleep Bea's hair, and fell asleep as well.

In the morning, I woke up, greeted Bea and Toto, got dressed and prepared to

go to work.

I motivated myself to walk to my office and after I finished my work, I had dance practice with Katalina.

And in the evening, after making out with Bea, I went to sleep again.

Day after day passed in such a peaceful manner. However, one day the unexpected happened.

“Zest–*sama*, we made it.....or so it seems.”

(Mom is gonna be a mom! This is great!)

.....It appears that I’m going to be a father.

## Chapter 87: Congratulatory Gifts for the Pregnancy

“A...are we gonna have a baby?”

“Hahaha, yes, Zest–*sama*.”

(Congratulations, Mom, Dad!) “Thi...thi...thi...this is serious! Call the maids unit’s physician.....No, maybe the medical soldiers? Or maybe I should do it? No, call a woman medical soldier!”

“Please calm down, Zest–*sama*.”

(Ahaha, Dad is acting funny!)

“Ha!? Bea, is it really all right for you not to be in bed? Is it okay to move this much?”

“Zest–*sama*, being pregnant is not a disease, you know? I’m fine.”

(Dad, is this the first time you’ll have a child born to you? Even though you’re so good at making them?) “ “ ..... ” “

Toto, please stop.....You’re doing too much damage.

Both our faces turned completely red and we swore that from now on we’ll pay close attention to our surroundings.

“Congratulations, your Excellency. If it’s a boy, I will definitely nurse him!”

“No, no, don’t listen to that your Excellency. Only the maids unit is suitable to nurse him.”

“Your Excellency, the intelligence unit will most certainly train him before the coming of age.....”

“Oh, oh, I will be the one to nurse him!”

Media, you’re no good.....Just give me a break!

The muscle brains started a battle for who was going to act like the baby’s nanny, but I ignored them and began to write some letters.

Each time things happen, you have to write and send letters.

In Japan you make phone calls or send e-mails, but here you must work

yourself harder. It's so troublesome...

I finished writing the letters and wanted to take a short break.....but I couldn't do that.

Nobles from the capital city came in succession to bring gifts and congratulate us.

"Congratulations, your Excellency. With this the Duke's Household is secure. I also have an infant and maybe....."

"Hahaha, this is such a joyous occasion. First, I must start preparing for a banquet. You, sir, will attend it too, right?"

I greeted all the nobles, while trying to avoid their forced flattery.

If I end up saying something to them, it might turn up into a promise or even an engagement, so I had to be very careful.

"Foster father, foster mother, I congratulate you for the pregnancy!"

".....Thanks Tsubaki. Why are you saluting us?"

"Yes sir! It's what everyone taught me!"

"Bring those muscle brains to me!"

My head started to hurt because of Tsubaki's thoroughly military salute.

Why the heck did they teach her!?

When I reported this to Bea, she laughed saying *'Well, well, I did that too when I was little. It's so nostalgic.....Ahaha, this happens a lot with children.'*

Isn't it normal for little girls to dream about their prince charming on a white horse or something? It's definitely strange for them to ride the horses themselves and rampage around.....

I secretly asked Katalina about this too, but she deceived me.

*'I was not born a noble so I don't really know-nya. However, if that's what madam is saying, it must be the truth-nya. In fact, there's no point in opposing her-nya!'*

.....She was right, so I gave up.

Indeed. I decided that I shouldn't feel too troubled about all this; because this is a different world, why shouldn't there be princess warriors here too!?

There are various definitions of what being girly means.....I'll face the opposition saying that this is the Duke's Household's style.

I could finally take a short rest after I finished with the queue of greetings.

I spent this break in my office, looking at the awful scene unfolding in front of me and sighed.

There was a mountain of presents in my office.....

"Katalina, once you finish with the indexing, you can choose whatever you like and take it with you, okay?"

"*Nya!*? I'll do my best—*nya!*"

Since Katalina was in charge of indexing the presents that arrived, my words motivated her considerably.

There were a lot of them, and, honestly, I only needed to know what came and from who, then I'll dispose of most of them; they were just too many.

And I also have to send something back.....

Cloth and jewels, sake and armors, and the sort.

However, there was a pairless shoe and a pair of used underwear mixed with the rest of the presents too.

What the.....Are these guys picking a fight with me?

Katalina threw away a headless doll. The maids unit joined her a few moments ago, and as I was looking at them working, I realized something very important.

They were all crouching.....while wearing skirts.....

I nonchalantly adjusted my position in the chair, but I did so very slowly.

I could not hurry.

With utmost carefulness, I left my body sink in that chair.

Just a little more and the angle is perfect.....Just a little more and I'll be able

to see.....

This was not peeping; this was a conduct in order to assess the work of my subordinates from all sides and angles. I only felt a slight guilt.

I finally arrived in paradise and burned the scene into my memory.

It's great when you see them up close, but a fluttering view offers a different kind of pleasure.

I pinched my leg, in order for the pain to stop my face from getting too gross, and continued to watch over their work.

When I came to my senses, the job was already finished and it was evening.

.....Fuu, it was a wonderful paradise.

I immersed myself into that memory as I drank some tea when Katalina came to report.

“Your Excellency, we finished—*nya!* I would like to have this—*nya!*”

“Ah, I don't mind. You can take whatever you want.....”

.....What? Is that?

She was holding a mysterious piece of cloth that emanated a suspicious aura.

She wanted such a terrifying thing.....No, actually, who was the idiot who sent that as a present.....?

“It's the first time I'm seeing a cloth that makes chests grow big—*nya!* This is the legendary *tits-cloth* that is used to grow huge breasts—*nya!!*”

After that, a battle for the extremely rare *tits-cloth* started.

Katalina and Media's fight lasted for 3 days and 3 nights; this battle swallowed up the black knights too and ended up partially destroying my mansion.

Media was the winner at the end of this fierce battle, and so the curtain dropped over the *tits-cloth* incident.

“.....I'll pay the reparations from your salaries, all right?”

I informed the maids unit as they cleaned up the mess, half crying. Media squeezed her most valuable *tits-cloth*.

“Your Excellency, with this I’ll have huge breasts too……finally……”

She said and collapsed the next instant; she was covered in blood, but she didn’t let go of that cloth.

I checked it with evaluation magic and the thing actually appeared to be an ‘extremely smelly loincloth.

In the end, I couldn’t tell them that……

## Chapter 88: Wisdom from a Different World

“We didn’t go anywhere for our honeymoon……”

“……Honeymoon? What is that?”

(Is that a trip or something, Dad? You said ‘go’ so…)

It was an early afternoon when I said those words all of a sudden. Several weeks passed since the *tits-cloth* incident and the maids unit was still working on the cleaning up.

The time we spent together all three of us after I got married was indeed little.

The war started and I had to stay away from my home, then we had the trouble with Tsubaki……

It seems that this world doesn’t have the concept of honeymoon, but I would really like to do it, together with my family……

“A honeymoon is when two people who formed a new family go traveling together. Well, this time we’ll be three. It is also meant for making memories together.”

“It seems fun! Is this a custom in your world?”

(Can Toto come too? This will be our first trip together!) “Indeed. This is typical in my world. You’re still in a stable period, right Bea? If so, then it’s all right for you to travel, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it’s all right, Zest–sama.”

(Toto is in a stable period too!) ……….I smiled bitterly and brushed Toto’s hair; she clearly didn’t understand a thing.

“Then, how about going to the Holy Country of Lilac? I heard it’s a very famous place for sight-seeing.”

“That’s right. I really wanted to see the Grand Cathedral at least once in my life. And it is also famous for its beautiful places.”

(Cathedral? I want to see it too!)

Oh, this is looking good.

This country really does seem to have sight-seeing areas that are famous among women. Once in a while, Albert proves to be useful too.

All that's left now is to adjust our schedule.....

"Your Excellency, I'm sorry for interrupting your pleasant chat-*nya*."

"Ah, I don't mind. What's wrong, Katalina?"

"Yes. That incident.....Urm, that banquet.....The cleaning up after it has finished-*nya*."

"I see. Thank you for the trouble. That.....was very unfortunate."

"It was the result of a fight between people who wanted the same thing, that *tits-cloth-nya*. I gave up-*nya*."

"Well, it was the prize for helping out, so everyone had the right to have it.....Cheer up!"

She bowed and left the room, but, as I thought, her spirit was very low these days.

Did she really want that *tits-cloth* this badly?.....It was fake anyway.

That incident, that destroyed half of my mansion, came later to be referred to as the 'banquet'.

If word gets out that it all started from a piece of *tits-cloth* and ended up with the master's house being destroyed would not even account for a bad reputation.

That's why I decided to change it into 'a trivial thing that happened during the banquet'.

"Ahaha, a banquet? If this was all a trivial accident that happened during the banquet, then there's nothing to be done."

"Yeah, and we mustn't forget that a spirit resides inside the Duke's Household."

(That chaos was really fun! I wanna do it again!)

"Toto, stop it.....You did the most damage with your magic!"

“That’s right, Toto. You must not do that again!”

(.....I’m sorry.)

Yes.....That one-on-one fight between Katalina and Media became the target of a gamble, and everyone placed bets and had fun.

And, because of the gradually growing excitement or something, the black knights and the maids unit started to fight too.

It was inevitable, since these guys have muscle brains.

The excitement rose even higher and Tsubaki decided to barge in too, but she got beaten full of holes by the maids unit and returned to her seat.

Until this point, it was still all right.....The Duke’s Household puts into practice the same strategy as the Frontier Count’s Household: ‘Social status doesn’t count in a sham battle’

However, wanting to show Tsubaki her strong point, Toto decided to join as well.

.....The world wasn’t quite wrapped up completely in a nuclear flame.....

At best, it was only as powerful as creating just one huge crater.....It was a miracle that no one actually died.

As one would expect, Bea was shocked too.....Except for she wasn’t.

*‘It is common in the Frontier Count’s Household for the vassals to get excited over the master’s soon-to-be-born baby and start fighting, resulting in damaging the house.’*

She inclined her head to the side in doubt, wondering why I was so shocked.....Her attitude shocked me even more than I already was.

The Frontier Count’s Household is scary in so many ways.

Well, after that, I left Katalina and the maids unit in charge for cleaning up after the ‘banquet’.

Toto was supposed to join them too, but the work progressed smoothly anyway, and it was originally a scramble for that *tits-cloth*.

Besides, Toto wasn’t the only one who damaged the mansion. She did launch

the finishing blow though.....

“However.....I can’t believe that Katalina is actually that strong.”

“Yes, her martial arts were exceptional.”

(That *nya*-girl was really strong!)

“Nowadays, she keeps on getting invited to join the soldiers’ training. Will she be all right?”

“She seemed to enjoy it, so I guess she’ll be just fine.”

(She’ll be fine. *Nya*-girl is strong after all!)

I caressed Bea’s tummy as we had that conversation, then realized it was time to leave.

I walked towards my office in order to finish my work for the day.

I put my stuff in order while sending fleeting glances at Katalina. She really looked depressed.

I want to do something for her.....I also want her to make arrangements for my trip too, but I can’t bring myself to tell her that.

Aren’t there any good ways to solve this problem.....

“Katalina.....”

“What is it-*nya*? Your Excellency”

“.....Could you perhaps make a bra?”

“What’s a bra-*nya*?”

“Gather the dwarves technicians-*nya*! There’s no time to make weapons now-*nya*!”

“The maids unit! Bring all its members here to help!”

“Gather the metals needed to make that *wai...wire* thing, or whatever it’s called!”

Angry roars resounded inside my office.....And so, this world made the first steps in giving birth to the bra.

“Is.....is it all right for me to have a trip? I leave the bra thing in your care.”

“ “ “Oh, please, please, take your time!!” “ “

And so, I easily received permission to go traveling.

## Chapter 89: Reasons for Prosperity

“Without any doubt, this is God’s divine command, there’s no other saying than this. On our great earth, where the holy gospels resound today, I saw a beautiful white raven.”

The junky sister recited, her spellbound eyes getting muddy.

Today as well, she was in perfect shape!

“The perch hopes for a waveless sea to send its gratitude to God, and God will create a mountain without undulations. This is God’s wish!”

“.....We offer our gratitude to God’s mercy.”

She nodded and brought her hands to her inexistent chest, taking a praying pose, then continued her junk talk.

“I must transmit that a ‘*bra*’ has to be donated in sign of gratitude towards God!”

“.....I’ll make the necessary arrangements.”

That’s the only part I clearly understood. It seems you can speak normally if you want, can’t you?

I informed the proud junky of my departure then returned to my mansion.

I wanted to receive approval to go visit the Sacred Country of Lilac, so I wrote a letter and left it in her custody. All that’s left now is to wait and see.

I didn’t understand though, did I receive permission or not.....Her answer was like that.....

Inside my office, I made the arrangements to deliver that junky a bra.

Katalina and the maids unit put their lives on the line and completed the bra, which instantly became popular.

Instead of using wire, some former adventurers advised them to use raw materials coming from magical beasts, for they are much easier to use. After that, in a blink of time, it became one of the most popular items among women.

“It’s a hunt for dark wolves! Get ready!”

“My bra is waiting for me.”

“We must at least hunt 20 heads or so, otherwise the order schedule.....”

“For our bras, we have to hunt as many as we can!”

The dark wolf’s tail became very important at this point.

The whip-like tail gets torn in thin, long pieces that are later used instead of the wire.

Since that’s now like the bra’s raw material, the suppression corps’ morale is pretty high.

The dark wolf is a large wolf-type magical beast.

It’s a dangerous magical beast that usually lives in packs and attacks villages and travellers. It’s also a strong magical beast that won’t lose in a 1 vs 1 battle with a trained soldier.

Since they usually move around in groups of 10, it’s typical to make units of 50 to 100 soldiers in order to hunt them.

Since they really are dangerous magical beasts, there’s no problem in getting violent against them.

Rather, if we don’t do that, the people would get anxious. At the present time, this suppression *festival* is getting a lot of high praise.

“I went out for a stroll when I saw one. Ahaha, I was very troubled.”

(That dog, Mom cut it right in half! It was amazing!)

Yesterday, Bea told me with a laugh, while shouldering her bardiche.

Is it all right for a pregnant woman to do that?.....I can’t complain since it was a simple stroll. It was inevitable.

I became extremely busy because of the bra thing and my paperwork increased as well. I put everything in order then returned to my private room.

We had some extraordinary economic results, but the workload increased extraordinarily too.....

I finally returned to my room and informed Bea and Toto about the matter with the sister.

“Then, it all depends on the reply to your letter.”

(I’m sure it’s all right! I’m very excited about our trip!)

Toto laughed cheerfully and I placed her on my shoulder, her ‘home’ position, then drank some tea restfully.

Bea was watching over us, a sweet smile on her face.

“However, that bra is amazing. I never thought you can use something like that.”

(Toto is wearing one too! Do you wanna see?)

Toto, it’s all right, you don’t need to undress. You didn’t need one in the first place.

Still, Bea is amazing.....She already had a D cup before, but now, her arsenal increased without any doubt.

Reflexively, I carefully looked in that direction.

“.....Zest–*sama*? Women understand that glaze, you know?”

(Dad, do you wanna see Toto’s too?)

“S...sorry. Toto, hurry up and put on your clothes.”

It’s no good to glare at a woman’s chest.....I must be careful.....

After I got scolded softly by Bea, I grew a little timid as I went to bed.

As punishment I won’t be allowed to touch anything tonight, so I obediently went to sleep.

You must not glare at a woman’s chest.

I thought I was supposed to have learnt that, but that day in the office I ended up looking at Katalina’s chest.

“Your Excellency Zest, a letter arrived from the Sacred Country of Lilac–*nya*.”

“Th....thank you.....”

She handed in the letter and returned to her desk.

Her chest was filled by a mysterious puff.

.....That's strange.

Breasts don't grow that fast, do they?

Actually, I'm not a specialist when it comes to chests so I can't really say.....

She returned to her work, while shaking her D cups.

"Ha, my shoulders are stiff—*nya*. This is so troublesome—*nya*."

Her face was clearly not that of a troubled person, since it was fully covered in smiles, so I couldn't reply anything to her.

All I could do was continue to inspect the letter.

I didn't even exchange looks with the maids inside the office.

Since they're all women, this topic is not to be touched. There's no way I would inquire Katalina about it.

.....Someone else should do it.

This atmosphere spread like a disease in my office, when my saviour arrived.

"Your Excellency Zest, the sister is here. Will you see her?....."

"Bring her right away!"

I'm saved.....I guess it's about the letter. It doesn't really matter, anything is good now. For the time being, I can't bear this atmosphere anymore.

Albert left and returned with the sister immediately after.

"Your Excellency Zest, excuse me for coming without any arrangements. Thank you for the audience."

The junky sister said and started to laugh; her chest too was now a D cup.....

The situation got worse.....

I won't be able to make a breakthrough in this deadlock situation.....

## Chapter 90: The Pope's Reply

The two with fake boobs were releasing a bizarre air inside my office.

It felt already like a battleground.....

“By...by the way, sister, what business has brought you here?”

“Yes.....The truth is the Pope entrusted me with a confidential letter.”

As always, the junky sister took out the letter from her chest region.

.....Am I really mistaken? The difference between her left boob and right boob is just too big.

Her right boob, from where she took out the letter, seemed to have withered.

“A confidential letter.....It's not going to be very gentle, is it?”

“No, it's not a letter to deceive God.....The spirit who loves the new green leaves is swaying in a spring. In short, it is like a lamb that runs the earth while looking up at the clouds!”

She stopped speaking normally.

She returned to the usual junky sister.....Katalina, don't look at her chest with your mouth open!

I accepted the letter with a vague smile on my face.

“Thank you for bringing this to me, sister.”

“No, I am just a mere pupil of God's who is in a pursuit of knowledge. This is a trial that tests the acceptance of everything.....It is God's benevolence!”

Then, why don't accept your chest size? I really wanted to press this question, but I couldn't.....

The junky was about to leave since she's finished her job here, but Katalina challenged her.

“Sister, why does your chest differ in size—*nya*?”

“ “!?” “

This girl.....She stepped right on a land mine.....

And why is the junky even surprised? The difference is just too big, what did she expect?

“.....God’s kindness is packed inside this. However, I, who am lacking knowledge, can only feel ashamed.....Why?.....Why did God give me such a sever trial?.....”

“Sister.....it’s difficult for you too–*nya*.....”

“.....You.....too?”

“Me too.....I’m taking this trial–*nya*.....”

Maybe because she was surprised, the junky sister talked normally for a brief moment, something that shocked me.

Seemingly wanting to inflict the final blow, Katalina started to grope about her chest.

“That is!?”

“That’s right–*nya*.....It’s bread–*nya*.....”

With an anguished facial expression, Katalina held in her hand two loafs of bread.

Her chest disappeared completely.

“Such a sinful thing to do.....But, even so, God will forgive you! However, one must never waste bread.”

“Sister.....What should I do?”

“That bread is blessed! One must not waste it, instead one must hand it out to starving people. That way it won’t be wasted!”

“Sister!?”

How much longer should I keep watching this low comedy scene.....?

I silently stared at the two women, embracing each other.

In some way, it was a religious preach, so I won’t scold them and I won’t be disrespectful towards them.

But, in reality, I found this whole thing to be annoying.

Still, her entrance caused the two women's bodies to freeze in place.

"Zest-sama, it's time for your break.....Oh my, sister, what happened?"

It was Bea, with her E cup battle strength.

"Such.....such.....power-nya....."

"Oh God.....This trial is just too....."

The two women left the office with staggering feet and ghastly pale faces.

Strictly speaking, it might be a bit disrespectful, but I can't blame them.

*'Those breasts were so big they broke my heart.'*

It would be too troublesome to hear this answer, so I decided to leave this whole thing behind.

"?.....What's wrong with those two?"

"Bea.....just leave them be."

I took out the letter and decided to drink some tea.

Enough was enough.

"I see. So that's what happened....."

(Ahaha, bread is not boobs!)

While drinking some black tea, I finished explaining Bea, who looked rather disturbed, and Toto, who rolled about with laughter, the weird circumstances from before. After that, I looked at the letter.

The first part contained our travel permission, and when I told the two girls about it, they grew extremely happy.

The latter part.....was just as I thought.

*'Our Holy Country of Lilac has many sisters. Since the chest becomes a great obstacle when taking the praying pose, this is a serious problem for us. I already prepared the expenses therefore I want to request that bra thing.....Because of religious reasons.'*

And so, we started to export the bra to the Holy Country of Lilac.

The Duke Domain's high-class item, the *'Spirit's Bra'* became more and more accepted and praised by women.

We could also mass produce other things.....However, the *'Spirit's Bra'* needed the dwarves' cooperation for the mass production, the same dwarves who were in charge of making the black knights' armors.

The ultra-first-class craftsmen we brought from the Frontier Count's Domain had to make minute adjustments to the black wolves' tails.

“Instead of armors, we have to make breasts equipment!?”

At first, the dwarves continued to yell. However

“You must make minute adjustments.....Look, touch this one! If you touch this place, it feels kind of strange.”

“.....It can't be helped if it needs adjustments. Let me see.”

It seems they couldn't win against the breasts' charm.

Since the maids unit were already used to this, from their chain mails' adjustments, so they wouldn't mind being touched by the craftsmen.

After all the touches and confirmations, the dwarves' craftsmen's souls ignited.

“!? They change so much!”

“Oh! This is certainly a drastic change!”

“We must do it right, with feeling and all.”

“Ah? We have a request for armors? Wait for a while, this one comes first!”  
And so, with great effort, we gave birth to the *'Spirit's Bra'*.

.....It was all right since it yielded great profit, but, you know, I kept wondering where my domain was heading towards.

“But I'm so looking forward to our trip! For some reason, my heart is beating so fast!”

(A trip with everyone! Toto is looking forward to it too!) “Right. We'll go to a trip together. First of all, we must enjoy it to the fullest! Thank you, Bea, Toto.”

A was lost in thought for a while, but they were very considerate of me, so I felt grateful.

“The latter part of the letter.....requested the bra.”

“.....Oh my.”

(Will they fill it with bread again?)

We decided to stop making fun of Katalina, instead we started to discuss our trip’s arrangements.

Bea and Toto pressed their wish to go see the Grand Cathedral without fail.

In addition to that, we could also eat rare foods and see pretty fountains. We talked together about all the fun things we would do during this trip.

At such a great family time, a truly inelegant guy intruded. I could feel his presence.

“Your Excellency! Please give us that new equipment that helps training the chest, that bra thing!!”

“Albert, are you gonna wear it?”

“Albert, go home!”

(Will the mongrel fill it with bread?)

Albert stared at us, swinging his tail cheerfully, but later that day, he ended up crying as he got turned into the dwarves’ toy.....

## Chapter 91: The Holy Country of Lilac

“You are very welcome, your excellency, Duke Zest! We, the holy knights troupe, will be your escort and your guide for your stay here.”

The brave looking women knights informed us and saluted.

“I see. I am grateful to the Pope’s concern.”

“Yes sir! Then, we will bring you to them right away!”

The women knights started to arrange the horses, while I waited inside the carriage.

“Even though they are women, the holy knights troupe is quite famous.”

(They’re all so white and glittery!)

This was the holy knights troupe that the Holy Country of Lilac was so proud of.

It was a unit of elite female soldiers only.....I didn’t imagine they would act as a guide and escort for a couple of foreign travelers and even come to the state border in order to welcome us.

Are they really attaching such importance to me?.....Or.....

“Look at the chests of those women from the maids unit.....”

“The Duke’s Army’s maids unit.....We can’t lose to them!”

“They are not shaking even while horseback riding.....Really?”

“What a presence!”

The highly-regarded thing here is actually the bra.....

I enhanced my ears with magic and listened to their talk, but then I decided to flirt with Bea instead.

I was stupid for being vigilant.

For this trip, I made Albert lead the black knights and the maids unit.

I took as few people as I was expected to as a Duke; about 50 people.

It can't be said that it was a very comfortable journey, but that was the situation.

Now that about 50 holy knights joined us, we were a unit of 100 people.....It was rather intimidating.

My trip, however, continued without any problem.

"Your excellency, Duke Zest, we welcome you. The Pope is waiting. Please, if you may....."

We were about to enter the Grand Cathedral when we were told this.

*'Sightseeing? The bra comes first. Hurry up! Hurry up!'*

Or so it seems.

We were now inside the Cathedral, but we could not look around and enjoy it.

We obediently followed the guide.

(Mom, there's a picture on that glass ceiling! Woaaaa.....) Toto seemed to have lots of fun by herself and Bea responded her with a smile.

Indeed, that stained glass was quite beautiful and sparkling.

It was the main accent of this white building and it had a divine beauty.

I didn't want to be made a fool of for looking around restlessly, so I endured it and followed the guide. She stopped the next moment.

"Your grace, his excellency Duke Zest arrived."

"Come in."

Was this room an office? Bookshelves decorated the walls, while the desk was right in the front. An old woman was sitting at it, dressed in priest clothes.

"I'm Garbera, the Pope, thank you for coming."

"I am Zest Gaiyus-Tarminal from Grun Empire. It's a great pleasure to meet you, your grace."

"I am Beatrice Gaiyus-Tarminal, your grace."

(I'm Toto! I love sweets!)

“There’s no one else here. You two should feel at ease. So, Toto likes sweets?.....I’ll make the preparations right away.”

.....What?

Bea’s eyes were round from surprise too.

“What’s wrong? Ah, did it surprise you that I could hear Toto’s telepathic message?”

Pope Garbera continued with a huge grin on her face.

“That Razatonia youngster didn’t tell you anything?”

.....Razatonia youngster?

We were dumbfounded, but she continued to tease us, while preparing some sweets for Toto.

“Well, well, so he forced this onto me.....that mischievous youngster. I bet it was very harsh for you, Beatrice—*dono*, with a grandfather like that.”

“Do, do you know my grandfather?”

“Yes, I know him very well. Even that youngster’s weaknesses. Haha.....He’s like a grandchild to me. Ah, make yourselves comfortable.”

We sat down, our bodies trembling.

It seems that this won’t be just a regular trip.....

“Well now.....about why I can hear Toto’s messages and how I know that Razatonia youngster.....Am I right that this is what you want to hear about?”

“Yes, if you’re willing to tell us.”

“I would like to hear.”

The Pope brushed Toto’s hair and smiled.

“You two, be a little more at ease, I am something like a relative.”

“.....Y, yes.”

“Relative.....?”

Who is this grandma?.....What is she trying to say?

“That Razatonia youngster and that Galef boy are this generation’s Protectors.....I know them very well.”

.....Protectors?.....The Frontier Count and my foster father?

What is she talking about?

“As for why I can hear Toto’s telepathic messages, that is because I am a spirit myself. You didn’t realize that?”

(Ufufu, I knew it right away! Because Garbera has a gentle scent!) Pope Garbera is.....a spirit.....

I was too surprised to say anything.

Bea was completely frozen.....

“I’ll explain you everything.....about the Protectors.....and about me.....You are the masters of a spirit, you deserve to know.”

The Pope placed Toto on her shoulders and smiled.

“We have enough time, there’s no need to rush. ....Besides.....”

She let Toto off and turned to face us with a serious expression.

I gulped down my saliva and stared at the Pope firmly.

“If I don’t receive that bra first, I would be too worried to tell you the story.”

An old hag was rubbing her chest with a serious expression on her face.

.....Isn’t it.....a little too late?

I refrained myself from saying that, and sighed deeply.

Bea’s eyes turned completely white; it was inevitable after all.....I’ll leave her alone for now.

## Chapter 92: The Pope's Confession

"Well, where should I start....."

Pope Garbera drank some black tea then put the cup down.

This old priestess.....is she really a spirit?

"Shall I start with the story about myself?"

I'm sorry for making such a serious face, but would you put that bra away for a second?

.....I can't concentrate on your story.

"I was born maybe about 300 years ago.....Have you ever heard about the story of that hero who saved the people from a plague? That person was my father, and since then, I've always been in this world."

Is it about that guy who achieved *spiritification* before me?

I'm sure I heard about him.....However, she sure had an understanding environment if she could stay as the Pope for 300 years.

"Fufufu, this shape is a temporary one.....My father's relatives and I take turns to work as the Pope. Don't let anyone know, by the way."

The old woman's body started to shine.

Is she transforming!? Is she in fact a very beautiful woman or the sort!?

The light vanished and *it* came into sight.

"This is Garbera's real shape.....What do you think? You're shocked, right?"

"This is....."

"....."

(Hoaaaaaaaa.....)

What came into our sight was a refrigerator.

Its height? About 180 cm; a fair-skinned fridge.....

It has 2 two doors and a simple design.....

This was nothing but madness. The fridge used its two doors as lips in order to speak.

“I have a nice body, with bust-waist-hip measurements as 200cm-200cm-200cm.”

Ah, this is too much! Who made this thing!?

.....Eh?

“Bust-waist-hip measurements? Don’t tell me.....your father.....”

“You figured it out? My father was a stranger who came from a different world.....he was Japanese.”

I never imagined that a Japanese would be part of this story.....

The fridge was flipping its doors and continued talking.

Bea, get yourself together! Your eyes look lost.

“Ah, I’ll go back to my normal way of talking. That was tiring.....Well then, my father created me and then I became a spirit. It was really fun during those days. My father used to carry me on his shoulder and travel to so many different places!”

I used healing magic on Bea and she was starting to recover.

The fridge continued to chat, its doors opening even wider.

Toto wasn’t perturbed.....She was sitting on top of the refrigerator.

“And then? When I put medicine and drinks inside to refrigerate, my father would always compliment me happily saying how wonderful and delicious they became! About that time I met my mother and, after a while, the children showed up. I used to play with them a lot! It was really fun! .....However, my father died.....”

The fridge looked a bit sad.

No, I actually have no idea how the fridge felt, because it didn’t show anything on the surface.....

“Before he died, my father said ‘*Help my children in order to live happy lives*’. That’s why I always stayed here, protecting my father’s children!”

.....I see.

This was that Japanese guy’s last wish.....

“And then, when I heard that a Japanese man came to this world and even created a spirit, I was very happy! I decided then that I will help this person who is a Japanese, just like my father!”

The fridge let out a cold sigh and then continued its talk.

“That’s why I want us to get along! That’s why I made that girl come to your domain. That girl is really strong, so she’s all right by herself!”

“That girl? You mean, the sister?”

I let Bea rest on the sofa, then asked.

“That’s right. That girl.....she is kind of too similar to my father, she’s a little weird, but she’s very strong! I want you to get along well. I also want us to get along well.”

“!? That sister.....Is she your father’s granddaughter?”

“That’s right. She’s the next Pope. You should make friends with her, okay?”

.....Will the Holy Country of Lilac be all right?

“Yes, she’s been taking care of me and I don’t intend to neglect her either.”

The fridge seemed to have laughed? It flapped its doors again.

“I’m not referring to a marriage or something of the sort, I just want you to get along well as friends. You don’t need to worry!”

“I, I see.”

(Dad, Garbera is not lying. She wants to become friends with us.) Toto, sitting on top of the fridge, informed me with a smile.

I wonder if I should believe it when Toto is saying that everything will be all right.....

Become friends with a fridge.....What is wrong with me?.....

“T...then.....I’ll be in your care.”

The refrigerator flapped its doors even more intensely.

“I did it! I’m so happy. Let’s get along well, all right? Do you want some juice?”

“.....Thank you.”

(Toto wants too, Toto wants too!)

The juice that came out from the fridge was indeed delicious.....For some reason, I felt defeated.

After that, Bea came back to life and joined our fun? tea party.

“Oh my, this is the first time I’m eating this, but it’s so delicious.....Pudding, was it?”

“My father loved pudding, so I always carry some with me.”

(Toto wants more!)

I looked at this girls’ party and decided not to think too much about it.

This was a different world.....The exchange diary became a spirit after all. So it wasn’t too weird for a fridge to become a spirit either.

I told that to myself.

About the time the two girls finished their 4<sup>th</sup> pudding, the fridge continued talking.

“Ah, I forgot to tell you about the Protectors.”

Right. The Protectors.

I completely forgot about it.....The refrigerator’s impact was too strong.

She corrected her posture and started to talk, but nothing more than a groan could be heard.

Toto, close the door now! The fridge can’t speak because of that.

“I’ll tell you about the Protectors later. Everyone will meet us in a little bit, so I’ll tell you this story then!”

.....Everyone will meet us? What the heck does it mean?

When I was about to ask her about it, a knock on the door interrupted me.

We saw that light again and the fridge became an old woman. She gave her permission and a woman dressed in priestess clothes entered the room.

“I’m sorry for interrupting your discussion. It is almost time.”

“Already?.....It can’t be helped. Let’s meet again at a later time. I’m sorry but we’ll have to end our conversation here for today.”

Because she was the Pope, she was probably very busy, so we left the room quietly.

The priestess guided us to another room and we decided to rest there for a while.

We wanted to talk about it a little more, and we were in fact quite lucky to receive lodging inside the Grand Cathedral.

It was also arranged for my subordinates to stand-by close to me, so it was no problem at the moment.

We decided to take our time and visit the interiors of the Grand Cathedral.

“However, this was very unexpected.”

“Yes, we must be careful not to say a word about it.”

(Toto will keep it a secret too!)

We have to be careful since this is a great secret that must not be revealed to the outside world.

We talked about this a bit and tried to relax when a priestess called out to me, her face pale.

“I’m sorry for disturbing you, but the maids unit and the holy knights troupe started a sham battle.....”

“.....What?”

It seems that a battle between muscle brains just started.

.....What’s a honeymoon after all!?.....

## Chapter 93: An Enjoyable Spar

They started a spar.....That's what we heard, so we rushed to the training ground, only to see this.....

"Hahaha, the maids unit is so strong! You gained my respect!"

"The holy knights too, it was wonderful how you countered that one blow."

"Ah, I prepared some more snacks."

"Hey! That's mine, you know?"

"Awesome! This bra is awesome!"

The women were holding a fun gathering of some sort.

".....You guys. What about the battle?"

Media energetically turned around and was about to stand up, but I stopped her with a swing of my hand.

"Your excellency, the truth is....."

With an apologetic look, Media sent me a bashful upward glance.

Stop it, you idiot; I don't like men looking at me like that.

"The holy knights troupe kind of teased the maids unit for their appearance.....or something like that."

".....In short, the holy knights asked the maids unit to do their errands and you revolted. The quarrel transformed into a battle and a fun party afterwards?"

Media showed a big smile.

"Yes! As expected from your excellency, you are very knowledgeable!"

"....."

It's a bit frustrating, but I can't scold *her*.....

If it was a duel or a fight, I would've scolded *her*, but I can't do it for a sham battle.

The maids unit is taking care of my everyday necessities.....In short, they're accompanying me now as maids.

They're not guards, like the black knights, so in case they have free time, they're free to use it as they wish.

".....Good. There's no fault in battling for the sake of friendship. Am I right?"  
"You are right, your excellency."

Looking glad, Media brought *her* hands together at *her* chest and bowed repeatedly.

.....I wonder why I feel so annoyed?  
Should I punish *her* a bit, after all?

"Then, I'll join you too. It's for the sake of friendship, right?"

Haha, that Media.....It's been a long time since I knocked *her* down.

"!? Yeey! Please do, your excellency!"

.....Huh?

The maids, together with Media, started to make preparations, looking extremely pleased.

Eh? Why aren't they against it? I thought I was being unreasonable.

"Zest-*sama*, it had an opposite effect."

(Dad, this is more like a reward than a punishment.) "Since you're up against his excellency, fight with the intention to kill."

"Don't die, all right? I can heal you, unless you're dead."

"I'm so glad I joined the maids unit."

"A sham battle with his excellency.....Ahaha.....a sham battle with his excellency....."

What I meant to be a light punishment, turned into a great reward for them.

The holy knights troupe joined us happily as well.

For some reason, the sisters were waiting in line, practice-swinging their maces.....

"This is our sect's tradition!"

A sister informed me when I looked at their practice-swinging, dumbfounded.

Their tradition? Is that so?

Half resigned, I slowly walked towards the middle of the training ground.

“Aaah.....I’m so tired.....”

“You should rest now, Zest–sama.”

(Dad! Media’s flight was so high, it was very funny!) The sparring finished after about 3 hours; I was now relaxing inside a room that was prepared for us.

The sisters, with their fretful priestess clothes, came attacking me with their skirts’ hem rolled up, and that wasn’t a dream.

It was the first time I wasn’t happy at all for seeing underwear.....

I was about to sip some tea when Bea stopped my hand and smiled.

“Oh my, did you remember the sisters? Ahaha.....”

(We could clearly see their panties!)

“.....Is that so? I didn’t even realize.”

Why did I say that!?!.....

“Do you like their priestess clothes? Do the sisters please you?”

(Ah~! Toto must fall asleep now. Good night.)

Toto! Please don’t leave at this point!

“What are you talking about? The only one that pleases me is Bea.”

“.....Is that so?.....Truly?”

I brushed her head as she came closer to me.

“It’s the truth.....And about those sisters, I was just surprised by how different the fight was compared to the usual ones.”

“.....But still, since I got pregnant.....you know.....about that....Zest–sama is not sufficiently satisfied?”

So this is what she’s worried about?.....

For real now, Bea’s the only one for me, so she shouldn’t even worry about it.

“You were worried about that?”

“.....Leave me alone already!”

Her face grew bright red as she started beating me repeatedly.

I can't endure this.....Yes, I really can't.

“Did you know? Once the pregnancy enters the stable period.....It's all right if it's only for a short while.”

“.....I asked.....the maids about this. That's why.....”

Bea's eyes were a little muddy as I kissed her.

I slowly pushed her down on the sofa, being careful not to be a burden on her body.....

“Your excellency! Why didn't you call for us to join the battle too!?”

Bea fixed her dress as she got up slowly, grabbing her bardiche.

I, as well, drew my sword as I cladded myself in strengthening magic.

“ “Albert, come here for a second!” “

Afterwards, the Grand Cathedral resounded with the painful shrieks of a dog all through the night.....

## Chapter 94: A Sudden Notice

“Well now, Garbera, tell me again what you wish me to do?”

“It’s....it’s embarrassing.....”

“It’s not embarrassing. You are so wet down here.....”

“!?! That’s!.....Don’t touch me there.....”

“Come on, say it out loud.”

“.....I want you to.”

“What do you want me to do?”

“.....Defro.....”

“Defro?”

“I want you to defrost me!!”

Seemingly enraged, Garbera was opening and closing her doors with a thud.

She hasn’t defrosted herself in 5 years, so there was a lot of ice gathered inside her.

Since it was so rare to see a bashful refrigerator, I was quite satisfied and decided to help defrost her.

“Oh, you’re skilled. It feels good.”

Delighted, Garbera made her compressor buzz.

I started to understand her emotions better only by hearing the sounds she makes.

.....Though, saying that I grew to understand a refrigerator’s feelings makes my head hurt.

“Good. I’ve finished. Pope.....Garbera.”

“I see. You must call me Garbera when we are alone! And thank you, I feel much lighter.”

The fridge was in a great mood now and we started to drink tea inside her

office.

She called me here, saying that she had something to talk with me alone, but in reality, her business with me was the defrosting thing.....

I was taking a break, drinking the tea that I poured for myself.

It was my first time defrosting a fridge and, somehow, I felt worn-out.

“Oh right. I must tell you why I summoned you here!”

“.....Wasn’t it about the defrosting?”

“Wrong! I have a message from everyone!.....All the other Japanese people are being offered protection, so there’s no need for worry. However, inevitably, out of seven people, four of them are never going to go back. It’s unfortunate.....!”

“.....Eh?”

A message from everyone? The other Japanese people.....?

Not minding my confusion at all, Garbera continued talking.

“Errr.....Here’s a letter explaining all the fine details. Also, the rest of the Japanese people are rather healthy, so everything’s all right.”

The refrigerator seemed to have said something, but I couldn’t understand any of it.

“Excuse me. I need a break.”

I somehow managed to say those words, then took the letter and returned to my room.

I soon as I reached my room, I checked the letter.

*‘First, I want to apologize for letting four of your fellow countrymen die.*

*I’m sorry.....I don’t think that apologizing would solve anything, but I want to tell you the reason why it happened.*

*We, the demon race, welcomed the Japanese with our arms wide open, when the Frontier Count Razatonia sent them to us.*

*Of course, we offered them hospitality.*

*We thought that since we were familiar with the customs of Japanese people, there wouldn't be any problems.*

*However, four of them.....two women and two men, didn't want to accept that this was a different world and ended up taking children and women as hostages.*

*That's why we killed them.*

*As for the other three, they accepted that they came to another world and are now living quiet lives.*

*They live in a sunny private room and have no discomfort whatsoever, when it comes to their necessities.*

*Of course, I assure you that no acts of violence or discrimination were conducted against them.*

*After all, we have no intention to quarrel.*

*Lastly, if you wish to meet them, I will make it happen.*

*Just tell Garbera about it and I will make the preparations right away.*

*The head of the demon race, Neebel.....To the visitor from a different world'*

*.....So, four Japanese people have died.*

*The rest of them.....I can meet if I wish to.*

*I wonder how long I remained in that position.*

*Before I knew it, I molded the letter and sat down, only to feel someone shaking my shoulders.*

*"Zest-sama!? Zest-sama!"*

*"Bea?"*

*With tears floating on her face, Bea was desperately shaking my shoulders.*

*"What happened?"*

*"Don't ask me that! Zest-sama, are you all right? Why did you make such an expression while crying!?"*

.....Crying? Was I crying?

Because of the shaking, I dropped the letter on the floor.

Bea picked it up and her complexion changed.

“So, this is the reason why.....”

“.....Yeah”

I let them die.

Right after I came to this world, my priority was to survive.

It's true that they were nothing more than strangers who got summoned together with me.....They had nothing to do with me.

However, I even forgot about them completely and continued living by myself.

To meet them at this late hour? How should I even face them?

*‘What did you come here for at such a late time?’*

I'm sure that this is what they're going to say.....

I didn't know whether this ferocious trembling was caused by fear or guilt.

Still, I couldn't stop it.

Suddenly, all I could see was total darkness.

“Zest–*sama*, what's wrong? Do you feel responsible for them?”

“.....Maybe that's it. I'm scared, Bea.”

She hugged me and whispered.

“*Fufu*, there's something even Zest–*sama* is afraid of. Why do you feel so guilty? Did you know them?”

“I didn't know them personally.....However, I let them die.....”

“That's wrong. Your life now is the result of your persistence and victory. Besides, relying on someone can make one spoiled. It would be unreasonable for them to demand things from you.”

“.....”

“If you are really bothered about it, you should meet with them. And we’ll think about it together after that, okay?”

“.....Sorry Bea. You have such a miserable husband.....”

Crying, I clung to her body and she started brushing my hair as to comfort me, like I was a child.

“To me, there is only you. Even if the entire continent ends up criticizing you, I will be your only ally.”

She said and smiled, at which point I disgracefully threw myself at her mercy.

I continued to cry in her embrace.....for what seemed like an eternity.....

“Bea, I will meet them.....”

“Yes, and I will come with you. Anywhere you wish to go.”

I finally stopped crying at night; Bea kept on brushing my hair all this time.

She accepted me even though I am such a miserable person.

It made me think about it again.....That all I really needed was Bea.

I could clearly say it to them now, that I abandoned them in order to have her.

For Bea’s sake, I would make an enemy of the entire continent as well.....In case the Japanese people end up becoming a hindrance.....

We were sitting on the sofa just the two of us, looking through the window at the night sky.

The red full moon was shining like it was supporting my determination.

(Dad, Mom. Did you finish the baby play? Toto wants to go to the toilet.....) “Toto, who taught you that?” “

Once in a while, I want to conclude things in a cool manner.

But that aspiration of mine crumbled down in an instant.....

It was all messed up after all!!

## Chapter 95: The Head of the Demon Race

“I am glad to meet you, spirit–*sama*, you two. I’m Neebel, the head of the demon race.”

Inside the Grand Cathedral, in the office, I met with the demons’ chief.

The fridge was here too, but she said she was going to be quiet this time.

.....She was just a refrigerator at this point.

The man was tall and had silver hair; he looked young.

He also looked rather tough, giving the impression of a soldier.

He kept his long hair carefully tied at the back, however he didn’t give off a feeling of weakness.

“Well, first I must apologize to you. Zest–*dono*, I’m really sorry.....”

“No, it’s me who should be sorry.....I apologize for my fellow countrymen’s misconduct.”

After both of us apologized, we had a silly chat.

Without that, we couldn’t get to the real topic.....Well, to the arrangement in this case.

“And so, Zest–*dono*, do you want to meet with them?”

“That’s the plan. I want to confirm their situations.....Also, I feel it’s somewhat my duty.....”

Neebel’s face turned rigid rather quickly.

“You’re worried about their situations? Duty? You’re feeling guilty?.....Or, do you still plan to return them to Japan?”

.....He said frankly.

“Japan is a constitutional country, so you’re right to think so. That is a wonderful world where ethics is a priority. However, this world is different. If you don’t have power, you can’t live. Strength, riches, authority.....If you have none of these, all you can do is obey someone. This is how this world works.”

He's right.....This is the noble's society.

Neebel said, after he sipped some tea.

"It's unfortunate that they got summoned here, but we had nothing to do with it. We offered them protection out of kindness, so we don't intend to receive criticism. Am I wrong?"

".....You're not wrong."

"You neither. But what are you to those people? Their protector? Their parent? Their boss?.....You're just a stranger."

"It's true that.....I'm a stranger to them."

He's comforting me.

You did nothing wrong, or so.....It's only natural to prioritize yourself.

"Haha, that world seems quite gentle. That country called Japan."

Compared to before, his expression now was rather soft.

"Kindness is seen as a virtue there, but here it's sometimes seen as a weakness. Please be careful."

"I'm grateful to your words."

"No, you already know that anyway.....I will make the preparations for you to meet the other Japanese. I had to first verify your reasons, so I'm sorry for taking this long. Also, I need a little more time. If news of this leak out, it can get really dangerous."

He's taking care of me.....Well, well.

He even saw through all my worries.

After that, we decided that I would meet the Japanese people one week after.

As for the place, we decided to use this office, inside the Grand Cathedral.

They will come disguised as pilgrims.

He's being very careful.....I wonder if those who come here from a different world are really in such a dangerous position?

"Zest-dono, I will only say this. We don't intend to oppose you. Our duty

is.....No, I will eventually tell you about this later.....”

What Neebel started to say before he left, stirred up my curiosity.

Duty?.....There must a secret behind it.....

However, there’s no need to force the information out of him right now, I’m sure he’ll explain things to me later.

If he can’t do it now, it means he has a reason for that.

And so, the *interview* with the demons’ chief, Neebel, ended.

As a demonic being, he was extremely different than I imagined, and it seemed we would get along pretty well.

Just to be sure, I will still be vigilant around him, but I’m sure everything will be all right; he said he was an ally.

.....I felt relief.

“Welcome back, Zest-*sama*.”

(Welcome back, Dad! I ate three puddings!)

“Ah, thanks. Toto, your stomach will explode, you know?”

I returned to my room and relaxed.

I placed Toto on my shoulder and brushed her hair.

“Don’t think too much about it. From now on, I think that you should only do the things you can.”

“Ah, Neebel-*dono* said the same. I was supposed to know this already.”

“Come on! You’re not supposed to, you have to know it!”

Bea beat me on my chest repeatedly, and I brushed her hair lightly.

She was also a person who worried lots about me.....

The demons seem to be allies too, so I felt much better now.

“You’re right. I’m all right now. Sorry for worrying you.”

“.....Then, I’ll forgive you.”

(Ah~, Toto feels sleepy~ I’ll go sleep now.)

Toto said those words in a monotonous tone, and disappeared in the bedroom. I kissed Bea and pushed her slowly on the sofa.

.....Good, Albert won't come this time.

Just to be sure, I tied him up and left him in the bathroom, so everything's safe.

"Urm.....do you want it.....here?"

"Is it no good, Bea?"

"It's not that.....it's no good, I'm just embarrassed."

I deliberately took my time to strip Bea of her dress, as her face got even redder.....

(Dad! Mom! This is bad! This is really bad!)

We were half-naked as we just got to the good part, when Toto came flying in her underwear.

What happened? What's wrong!?

Extremely surprised, I was hiding my important parts.

.....Unfortunately, Bea was doing the same.

"Wh...what happened, Toto-*chan*?"

"What's wrong? An enemy attack or?"

Crying, Toto made a tragic face as she started to inform us.

(I'm having a baby.....Toto is pregnant!)

" "Toto, you overate!" "

Toto didn't seem to agree as she continued to pat her stomach, and she cried and cried.....for what seemed like an eternity.....

Of course, it all went to ruin today as well.....I wanna cry too.

## Chapter 96: Let's Go Sightseeing

"Zest—*sama*, it feels really good."

"Right? It's the best."

(Dad! It's so spacious, it's amazing!)

We were going to meet the Japanese people in a week.

And so, we searched for sightseeing spots close to the Cathedral, and we found this.....I never thought they would have an *onsen* <sup>1</sup> here.

Furthermore, it was located in the vicinity of the Grand Cathedral, and it even had an open air bath <sup>2</sup>; this place must be visited.

"You reserved the entire place, so it's quite comfortable."

"Bea, I won't restrain myself when it comes to an *onsen*. I took advantage of my political power."

(Garbera helped too, saying that it's inevitable for a Japanese to act like that!) Yes, Garbera and I joined our forces and made it happen.

Because it was an *onsen*.....They listened to my selfishness.

"Haha, it can't be helped.....Still, this *onsen* is wonderful."

(Yes, it feels so good! Dad loves hot springs. Do you love them more than Mom?) ".....I love Bea more, obviously.....What?"

"Just now, you thought about it."

(Were you troubled to choose, Dad?)

We were laughing and relaxing inside the open air bath.

Since it was an *onsen*, we were all nude.....we weren't even using towels.

Well, I won't let them use any, anyway! I was extremely satisfied, both with the bath and with the splendid view.....

It's not always good to stay in an *onsen* for too long, so, when we felt like it, we went out.

After a short break, we would go back in.....

When we got out, the maids unit entered the bath.

*'This onsen is making your skin beautiful.'*

When Garbera told them this their eyes turn round from disbelief.

If anyone interrupts them, they'll die, I'm sure of it.

Their ominous laughter was quite scary, so we went back in our room and rested.

The place we rented was quite a wonderful inn, popular even among nobles.

And I forcefully got it all for myself.....I do feel a little bad about it though.

The two girls seemed to be very pleased with the *onsen*, so we'll take a day only for bathing; tomorrow we'll go to the *onsen* district and buy souvenirs.

We decided upon that and I finally had one day in which I could be carefree.

However.....Bea and Toto said they wouldn't bath anymore, so I was about to enjoy my forth bath alone, when an incident happened.

".....Media, what are you doing?"

"Your, your excellency....."

At the entrance of the outdoors bath, Media knelt down, crying.

"Your excellency! I want to enter the open air bath too!"

".....Then do so."

"But I want to enter with everyone!"

"Ah, I see."

I seized Media's both shoulders and informed *her*.

"Give up!"

"!? But.....Can't you do anything with your power, your excellency?"

Because *she* was troublesome, I used strengthening magic in order to intimidate *her* but *she* put up with it.....

*She* was really troublesome.....You can't enter the women's bath, it's a

crime, you know?

“Media.....The women’s bath is off limits.....But the men’s bath is mixed, so you’ll have to endure it.”

“Yes! Thank you!”

Huh? She didn’t want to enter the women’s bath?

I saw Media off as *she* hurried towards the mixed bath.

.....What is about to happen?

I was a little anxious as I, too, went towards the mixed bath.

I thought Media wouldn’t feel uneasy in the men’s bath, since it was a mixed one.

Bea said she wouldn’t enter the baths anymore today, so the open air bath was free.

Someone from the maids unit must be here with Media.

With this faint expectation in mind, I entered the mixed bath.

I entered the washing place and was welcomed by the disappointed look of several black knights.

“What’s wrong with you? Making such a face.”

“Your excellency, excuse us!”

The knights stood up and saluted, but I stopped them.

“You can stop. We’re all naked.....There’s no need for it now.”

“Yes, that helps, your excellency.”

“I felt pressed....Can we still enter the bath?”

“You really love this *onsen*, your excellency.....Your body will get wrinkled, you know?”

The knights washed their bodies, noisily.

After we entered the bath, I inquired.

“So, why did you make such faces back then?”

They said, a bit awkwardly.

“We thought that the women finally came.....”

“They tricked you.”

“Why would commander Media do such a thing.....?”

.....These guys are idiots.

How long did they even wait!?

“I understand you.....But you’re idiots.”

“But you have it good, your excellency.....right, guys?”

“That’s right. Bathing together with her excellency Beatrice, right?”

“That’s so great.....your, your excellency! Don’t shoot it, don’t release your magic here!”

“.....I like Toto-*chan* more?.....Argh”

I got rid of two dangerous knights then relaxed in the bath.

Ah.....This is the best.

When I casually looked at the washing room, I saw Media entering it silently.

“Oi, Media. Don’t mind us, and come enter the bath.”

“It’s, it’s okay! I can stay here.....”

Media waved *her* hand vigorously, and because of that, something fell down from underneath the towel *she* used to cover *her* body.

“? .....Re, retrieve that! Retrieve that thing right away!”

The black knights hurried to capture Media and the object *she* dropped.

The thing *she* dropped was.....

“A recording magical tool.....you say?”

Yes.....It was similar to what I gave my foster father as a present some time ago, a tool that records pictures.

Everyone’s glances were directed towards Media.

“Media.....you.....”

“Your excellency.....forgive me. The maids wanted this at any cost so they asked me to.....”

The black knights held Media down and *she* started to cry.

It was kind of a chaotic scene.

A bunch of naked guys pinned down another guy who looked like a woman and, ultimately, made *her* cry.

This is bad, my head is going crazy.

“It was only an attempt, right? I will pretend I haven’t seen anything, you guys should forget about it too. You should instead feel happy that you’re popular among the maids. You should go to some drinking parties and deepen your relationships, all right? I’ll tell Albert about this too.”

As I wanted to run away from this disgusting scene, I declared at once, and, without waiting for their answer, I took refuge into the dressing room.

I didn’t have any interest in watching naked men, after all.

I wiped my body, while thinking about the previous scene.....dear me!

When I returned to my room, Bea and Toto were already asleep.

They were quite in high spirits the entire day, so it was inevitable.....

I looked at their happy sleeping faces, then sat down on a chair and checked my luggage.

Good, it’s all right.

I grinned broadly as I looked at a recording magical tool, which had pictures of Bea entering the open air bath.

“Haha, as I thought, Bea is the best.....This will be a heirloom!”

I was in a great mood as I watched naked pictures of Bea and drank water straight from the water jug.

The real thing is great too, but I really wanted some pictures.

“.....You’re in such a great mood, Zest–*sama*!”

(Ah! Mom's naked pics! Do you have a picture of Toto as well?) I turned around slowly and saw Bea, her expression cold; it was a long time since I last saw that Frontier Count-like smile on her face.

I patted my stomach, which was starting to hurt, as I knelt down on the floor.

This day was going to be very long.....I don't want to die.....

## Chapter 97: It's Been a Long Time

"It's been a long time, your excellency Zest. You look good."

"I'm glad that you are doing well, your excellency."

The ones who greeted me were a Japanese old man and a young woman.

We met again inside the Grand Cathedral's office.

The old man seemed to have lost some weight; he cut his gray hair short too and now released an aura of an old gentleman.

The young woman wore her long chestnut-colored hair tied at the back, and she seemed like a sociable and lovely person.

Her style was good too.....Bea glared at me, so I let the matter drop.

"It's been a long time. I'm really glad that you're safe. You guys can leave after you finish the preparations."

The maids unit prepared the tea, then left the room.

I waited for them to leave and saluted the two Japanese people again.

"Long time no see. You can talk normally now."

The two looked shortly at Bea.

"Ahaha, it's all right. I know that you are Japanese, just like Zest-*sama*, so I won't demand any courtesy from your part."

Bea told them and they seemed to finally feel relieved.

"Ha, well.....that helps. I can't seem to grow accustomed to talking like that."

"Thank you. I'm not really good with formalities....."

The thin old man wore a bitter smile and the young woman.....

"I heard there were three of you. Did something happen?"

"No, no. My wife didn't feel well so I came alone."

"Your wife.....You must be extremely worried."

“I bet it’s just a common cold. She’s old so it’s kind of inevitable.”

“Haha, he says that now, but before we left, grandpa was terribly worried.”

After she teased him, the old man sent a short glance at the young woman.

They seem to be getting along well.

“Grandpa, was it?”

“Haha, I’m like a granddaughter to them. We have no relatives, so we live like a family.”

The old man showed a shy smile when the woman teased him again.

They sat side by side and they truly looked like a family to me.

“.....I’m the only one who lives like a noble now. I abandoned you all.”

I wanted to get rid of my anxiety first.

So I boldly let out those words.

“Zest-san, it wasn’t like that. You abandoned us? Did any of us ask you for help?”

The old man looked fixedly at me.

“I don’t think that you abandoned us. They.....the demons, told us about how you went through all those troubles to become a noble. That is something to celebrate, not to feel bitter about.”

“He’s right. My head was fully thinking only of myself at that time, so I won’t complain about anything. Besides, nobility is impossible for me. I would die from worrying.”

These were their true feelings.....I confirmed it with observation magic.

“I understand.....Then, tell me about your lives now, how are they?”

“The demons are taking care of all our daily necessities. I never thought that, before dying, I would come to a different world.....It was a good present for me before going to the underworld. I even have a granddaughter now.”

“For the time being, we live our lives without worries.....We also don’t have to work, so I kind of gained weight.....”

It's true that they are being taken care of.

Just to be sure, I kept on using observation magic while I listened to their story.

"Then.....You don't need rescuing?"

"Rescuing? Who?"

"Eh? Are there any other Japanese alive?"

.....They're talking the truth. It seems there's no problem.

".....I thought you would resent me."

The two looked blankly at me, and I continued to talk.

"I separated from you all, ultimately became a noble and obtained power. Why won't he come help us? Why is he the only one? Things like that..."

"I see. The ones who died said something similar."

"Ah, those idiots.....Those guys were truly idiots that couldn't have been helped."

.....These were some harsh words.

"We are the victims here, so it's obvious you must protect us. You also must apology to us and offer us compensations! .....Then.....you must teach me magic too, don't trick me!"

"This is just a dream so no matter what I do, it will be all right....Or such."

.....Eh? Were they really that stupid?

I don't even feel like saving those types of people.

"They were so foolish that even the demons felt sorry for them. It's a shameful story, those guys were a hindrance. All we wanted was to live peacefully in this world."

"As one would expect, when you don't have enough understanding abilities, you'd have to draw back. Since this was clearly not Japan, I often wondered why couldn't they try to adapt."

"That's.....I don't know what to say....."

“We are not blaming you, Zest–*san*. We didn’t do anything for them either. If we wanted to live tranquil lives we had to let it happen.”

“He’s right. We couldn’t ask for a stranger’s help. You went through a lot of trouble yourself. Besides, I really can’t live the life of a noble. Living a quiet life is all I’m asking for.”

“.....I understand. In this case, we won’t be able to keep in touch too often.”

“Maybe this is for the best. We want to silently live our lives like dwellers of this world.”

“That’s why there’s no need to worry about us. We’re quite comfortable now.”

The two of them said and laughed.

Their facial expressions were calm and gentle, and they really seemed to have found happiness.

If they start having relations with the nobility, the danger will only increase..... But if they want quiet lives, it would be best if we went separate ways.

“We’ll do that then. I don’t even know your names, but in case something happens to you, please rely on Zest. I will try to solve the problem with as much discretion as I can.”

“Err, my wife and I are okay with it. It is actually better for us this way, since we don’t want to get involved with the nobles. However, my granddaughter is still young, so when we won’t be around anymore, please take care of her.”

“Grandpa?”

The old man stared at me with a serious expression.

“This child will be all alone. Please.....please.....”

“Grandpa, it’s all right! You don’t need to worry!”

The old man bowed frantically, but the woman tried to stop him.

Even so, he wouldn’t stop.

“I’m a noble, therefore I can support one or two women. I’m also entirely devoted to my wife, so you can rest assured. Raise your head now.”

“Thank you very much. I can die now anytime without having regrets.”

“.....Stop it! All you need to do is live a long life, stupid grandpa!”

The young woman was moved to tears, but the old man consoled her by brushing her hair.

He was worried about his granddaughter.....If it's only this, I can surely cooperate.

If they were to forcefully ask me for help, I would've refused them. But this was different.

“It's good while we're still alive, but when we will be gone and you'll be alone, it's going to be tough, you know? It wouldn't be a problem if you could find a husband, but in case you can't, you'll have to ask Zest-san to give you some work to do. If it's only you, it would be easier to guarantee your safety so that you could work, right?”

“It's all right, really! I don't want to get married and I don't want to work! I'm finally living an enjoyable life, so if I start working, I'll feel like I've lost or something!”

.....And here I thought it was a good deal. Will this girl be all right?

“Besides, I like men who like other men! I'm not an object of romantic interest!”

.....This girl is rotten.

After that, the battle between the old man and the *fujoshi*<sup>1</sup> girl continued.

It became ridiculous; I already finished my third cup of tea and was getting kind of sleepy, but the argument hadn't finished yet.

Maybe it would be better to leave this girl alone.....

“Your excellency Zest, we'll be taking our leave now. I wish you the best.”

“Your excellency, thank you for this recording magical tool! I will take good care of it!”

The young woman was very pleased with her present, so she was in high spirits.

Their conflict finally ended and they were about to leave, when it occurred to me.

“Yes, I wish you the best too. I would also like to hear your names.....Or maybe hear the young woman’s name. It would be easier for getting in touch if needed.”

I didn’t have any secret intentions. I was not that stupid to have secret intentions with a *fujoshi* girl.

“.....Zu.....Mari.”

The woman said shyly.

“What was it? I didn’t hear you.”

The old man constantly stared at the ground, he wouldn’t look at me.

The *fujoshi* girl turned completely red.

“I’m Mizuta Mari <sup>2</sup>!! Did you hear it now, your excellency!!”

Hold it, you can’t laugh at people’s names, so just hold it in!

“What is the matter? You are completely red, Mizuta Mari.”

(Look Dad, the *pond* is shaking.)

After Bea and Toto gave me the final blow, I couldn’t hold it anymore.

I burst into laughter, and as the *little pond* got covered in spit, she continued to tremble for what seemed like forever.....

## Chapter 98: A Notification from Home

“Your excellency Zest, a letter arrived for you from Miss Katalina.”

Since the meeting with the two Japanese was over, I took Bea to that *onsen* again in order to enjoy our honeymoon, but once we arrived there, this letter was waiting for me.

This time I made sure to make a reservation. I was in the room I booked, when I opened the letter; I had a bad feeling about it.

*‘Your excellency Zest, I’m sorry for interrupting your fun trip.*

*I thought that it was about time you’d return, so I wrote this notification just to make sure.’*

.....She indirectly told me to go back.

*‘The Imperial Mage, Lamia-sama is coming to visit in order to check on young lady Tsubaki’s training in homemaking arts.*

*“How is Bea? I want to see her soon”*

*That’s what she said.’*

“Bea, it seems that mother Lamia is going to visit our place.”

“My mother?”

(Mom Lamia! It’s been a long time!)

Haha, it’s been a long time since she last saw her mother.

Bea looked really happy, and since Toto become emotionally attached to her last time we met, she seemed pretty happy as well.

Still, she’s coming to check on Tsubaki.....Well, that’s a valid reason.

But I bet her real motive is to have fun during her visit.

Let’s see the continuation. I looked at the letter again.

*‘That’s why, please come back soon.*

*She already knows that you are having your honeymoon.*

*“I don’t need any souvenirs.....I wonder if they have good cloths in that country?”*

*These were her words.’*

Yes, yes. Clothing materials.....I’ll buy some for her.

Well, since I just saw this letter.....maybe we’ll go back tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

*‘About young lady Tsubaki’s training.....ahem, education. There’s no problem with it so you can feel at ease.*

*I am awaiting your return.’*

Stop calling it training <sup>1</sup>, she’s not a horse.

.....Well, she is quite the stubborn tomboy, so maybe there’s no problem in saying that.

“Bea, should we go back tomorrow or so? We have to buy some souvenirs for mother-in-law.”

“Yes! Mother will be pleased with some clothes materials.”

(I feel so excited! It’s been such a long time!)

I finished reading the letter and talked with the two girls.

There’s no need to hurry.

We were planning to enjoy the *onsen* for the day, then go greet Pope Garbera and take our leave, but.....

“You’re going back already? I’ll be so lonely.....”

She was leaking water as she clung to us in tears, so we ended up staying another night.

As expected from another world, she didn’t short circuited herself even though she was submerged in water.

We bid our farewell to the fridge, saying that we’ll visit again some other time, then we got on the carriage.

“You can come visit at any time. You may think of the Holy Country of Lilac as

your own home country.”

The old hag.....ahem, the refrigerator who changed into a human saw us off; with this, our honeymoon was over.

“My dear rival, let’s meet again.”

“Well, I’ll pray that it won’t be on the battlefield.”

“Next time we meet, I’ll chop that arm of yours down! Remember this, okay?”

“Eeh? I’ll beat you at your own game again, you know.”

“.....I’ll definitely catch up with you!”

“I’m looking forward to it. I can still become stronger too.”

These were some pretty hot parting words. But it was nothing more than a conversation between girls.

At the border, the maids unit and the holy knights troupe said their goodbyes.

Some of them started a fist fight, but I ignored them completely.

“Women sure are scary.”

“They’re savage.”

“Why can’t they be a little more intellectual?”

.....The black knights were talking nonsense, but I ignored them too.

You’re all of the same kind anyway, muscle brains idiots.

On our way back, there were a few times when bandits showed up, but the intellectual black knights and the maids unit beaming with femininity scared them away.

All the bandits did was to come in front of us.

“Gya.....It’s the bla...black knights and the Hades unit <sup>2</sup>.....!”

The moment they saw us, they started to scream and scatter.

.....Why don’t they just quit being thieves?

“Zest–*sama*? Can’t we?”

(Dad, can’t we?)

Bea and Toto both leaned their heads to the side in a very lovely manner.

Haha, they're adorable.....

"You're adorable but you're not allowed to hunt the bandits, all right?"

Bea readied her bardiche in such a sweet style, while Toto readied her saw, made of dark magical power, in a very cute way too.

".....Anyway, put those away."

"Understood."

(Okay.)

While I listened to the far away cries of the bandits, I looked up at the sky.

Before I became aware of it, these two girls turned quite warlike.

Well, even so, I'm not too worried about it.....

.....I'll discuss this matter later with mother-in-law.

Looking at the sky, I realized it was raining.

This is rain.....They're certainly not tears.

After an usual incident-filled journey, we arrived at my mansion.

Seeing my home kind of calmed me down.

The one who came to meet us was Kataline.

"Welcome back-*nya*, your excellencies. Lamia-*sama* already arrived-*nya*."

"Katalina, thank you for your hard work. She's already here?"

"Yes-*nya*. I have a message from her for you alone-*nya*, your excellency."

She said and handed over a piece of paper, on which these words were written.

*'I have something to talk with you about in private. Keep this a secret from Bea. I'll be waiting for you in the office, son-in-law-dono.....If you don't hurry.....maybe I'll tell Bea about that time in the bath?'*

That time?

.....That time with her in the bath!?

I burned that piece of paper with my magical power and rushed inside the house.

My stomach hurt so much that I couldn't breathe.....

## Chapter 99: My Mother-in-law's Wish

“Oh my. It's been a long time. Have you been well, son-in-law–*dono*?”

“It's been a long time, mother-in-law. Errr.....You're wearing some very proactive Western clothes.”

Mother Lamia was drinking tea gracefully inside my office.

She was wearing her usual maid uniform.....Is she requested to wear this uniform, that makes her look like an attractive mature lady, I wonder?

Because I was in such a hurry to get here, my legs were trembling like a baby horse's right after its birth, so I applied some strengthening magic on them.

I took a deep breath so that she wouldn't realize it, then sat down in front of her.

“A honeymoon, huh? That's lovely. I'm jealous, you know?”

“Master will go with you right away if mother-in-law tells him to. I want you to tell me your secret for how to preserve a relationship's hotness forever, like you do.”

We started with lip service.

The nobles' customs are strict even inside the family.

*'Precisely because it's family, it's perfect for practicing'* that's what master said.

“You know, son-in-law–*dono*.....”

Finally, we could talk about the main topic.

I drank some tea and prepared myself.

“Did you team up with the Holy Country of Lilac in order to start a rebellion or something?”

“.....What?”

What's with this dangerous question?.....Don't say that the imperial capital believes this!?

“Mother-in-law, that is impossible. Don’t say that the imperial capital is suspecting me of such things?”

“One group of nobles made a fuss about it, that’s all. Still, since this matter couldn’t have been disregarded, I was dispatched here.”

She made a troubled face, as she flapped her iron fan.

That iron fan was so heavy that, when she put it on the desk, the wood creaked.....

“However, dispatching a family member.....a relative to solve this matter it’s not really meaningful.....”

“But.....I was the only one, since I’m an Imperial Mage.”

.....Well, it couldn’t be helped that we monopolized the superior ranks.

If they were to send an unskilled mage, they wouldn’t have won against me.

If they wanted to have the minimum hope of winning, my mother-in-law was the only options.....Besides.....

“I see. So they want me to regard this only as a formality and nothing more.”

“It’s great you understand things fast. You’re not truly suspected. But the formalities are also important.....It’s quite a bother to be honest.”

Mother-in-law smiled sweetly.

They needed someone to formally check things up.

Don’t the imperial capital nobles get tired of thinking only about formalities?

“That’s why, half my work here is already done. All that’s left is to take young lady Tsubaki to the imperial capital with me, but.....how is she?”

“She’s all right. I train.....ahem, educated her strictly. She won’t embarrass us.”

“I see. I’m relieved to hear that. Ah, about that attendant, she returned to her parents’ home. Her parents found out that she did something improper.....It was quite serious.”

“My goodness!”

That attendant.....Maybe one of those followers of Tsubaki from back then?

I believe that she was trained at the Frontier Count's place or something? Just as one would expect.

"Also, it was quite a big uproar when his Majesty's headdress disappeared, you know?"

".....My goodness!"

She glared at me.

It wasn't me! It was Toto who threw away the emperor's wig!

"It can't be helped. But refrain from making too many pranks, all right?"

"I gratefully received your advice, mother-in-law."

She told me with a smile.

In case you want a liberal translation, this is it:

*'I feel rather sick about all this, so I don't care anymore.'*

*'As I thought, you're angry about it. I understand you.'*

Or something along these lines.

Because, obviously, we couldn't say those words out loud, we had to talk indirectly.

I kind of got used to it lately.

After that, we talked about the honeymoon and the souvenirs.....as well as about the current state of my domain.

My fishing village seems to be a hot topic in the imperial capital.

Since there are only a few places that engage in fishing, fish is quite valuable.

I gave her the souvenirs.

After we talked this much, it was quite late.

I could see the sunset from the window.....I wonder if it'll be sunny tomorrow.

We paused the conversation and I let my guard down for a moment; mother-

in-law took that change to approach me and sit next to me.

.....A pleasant smell floated about and my heart started to beat fast.

“Err, son-in-law—*dono*.....No.....Zest”

She talked with an awfully erotic voice, as she twined her arms around mine and sent me an upward glance.

This was quite effective since she looked like an adult Bea.

“What’s the matter, mother-in-law?”

I asked her quickly, in order for me not to be even more perturbed by her chest touching my arm.

Is she tempting me? This is.....But she’s and old.....sister and my mother-in-law for that matter.....

“You see, I have a request from you, Zest.....Will you listen to it?”

“.....If there’s something I can do, then sure.”

I tried to give her a deceitful an answer as possible.

I neither said ‘yes’ nor ‘no’.

My mother-in-law deepened that Frontier Count-like smile of hers, and she looked pretty scary at that moment.

“You’re already this wary. It’s a simple request.....It’s about my hair, you know?”

“.....”

“Hey? What’s the matter? Your face is pale.....I just want you to touch my hair again.”

.....Again?.....She wants me to brush her hair again?

You want the side dish too!? Right, mother-in-law!?

No, it’s different.....It’s not that.....

She’s not really the naughty type of mother-in-law, so it has to be a reason for this!

“Urm, mother-in-law. Your hair?”

“Ahaha, you remember that you brushed my hair once before, right? That time, my hair became smooth and glossy. Maybe it’s a property of your magic? Do it again, please.”

So I did misunderstand?.....

I thought it was strange; this kind of plot, with a woman seducing her son-in-law, only happens in manga.

“All right. I’ll try.”

I started brushing my mother-in-law’s hair, as I imagined it.

That shampoo and conditioner commercial.

I pictured in my mind that image of a moist and smooth.....that vibrant coating on a woman’s hair.

I tried infusing some magical power in my hand as I caressed her, and her hair became more and more beautiful.

.....This is quite interesting.

I continued to brush her hair with both hands, as I observed the effects.

As I absentmindedly brushed her hair, my mother-in-law fell asleep.

Her sleeping face was similar to Bea’s.

I continued to brush her hair, thinking how much alike these two were.

“Oh my, Zest–*sama*. I’m so happy that you get along well with mother.”

(Wooa, Dad and mom Lamia are making children!?)

I turned my head slowly and saw two faces looking at me. They peeked inside the office.

It was the usual black haired girls duo.

“Zest–*sama*.....shall we go for a walk?.....Let’s have a little talk.”

(Ah~ I’m so sleepy. I’ll sleep here next to mom Lamia.) The duo entered the room, talking with an empty tone in their voices.

I wanted to tell them that it was all a misunderstanding.

But, since I laid my mother-in-law down on the sofa and offered her my lap, as I brushed her hair to sleep, I was clearly in the wrong.

.....Good bye everyone. I'm going to get some fresh air.....

## Chapter 100: One Thing after Another

“You’re such a jealous person. There’s no way I’d do such things with son-in-law–*dono*.”

“Hahaha, mother-in-law. Please forgive her already.”

“.....I’m really sorry.”

(Mom, your face is bright red!)

We went for a walk, in order to have our little physically violent talk; what saw during this walk was a beautiful river and fireworks.

Thanks to the pink diamond, the misunderstanding got cleared but, when we got back, mother-in-law started to mock us.

“Bea, there’s no need for you to worry. I only love you.”

“.....Zest–*sama*, I’m such a bad woman. Since I don’t trust my husband.”

“The jealous you is also rather cute, so it’s all right.”

“Zest–*samaaaa!*”

“Say, Toto–*chan*, do those two not see that I’m here too?”

(Mom Lamia, when they get like this it’s impossible!)

Bea and I ended up flirting with each other in a world meant only for us, but one careless word transformed everything into a battlefield.

“But, you’ve never used your magic on me, to make my hair smooth and glossy.....Why only mother?”

“Bea, your hair is always beautiful and glossy anyway.”

“Oh my.....is that so?”

“Yes, it’s true. It’s so vibrant, it overflows with youth.....”

“My goodness! You say that, because I’m old, my hair is all dried out?”

Mother-in-law had veins popping up on the side of her forehead.

She was still here?.....This is bad, it can actually turn ugly.

“Mother-in-law, what are you talking about? Even I, who’s only devoted to Bea, was startled by your fascinating charm.....”

“Zest–*sama*? Did my mother startle you?”

A chilly, dark magical power started to overflow from Bea.

This, I received this blow a few moments ago. I don’t need this again.

“Hahaha, when you’ll become more of an adult, you’ll have that sort of charm too. I’m looking forward to see what kind of woman my cute Bea will become.”

“You always treat me like a child.....I’m going to soon be a mother, you know?”

“That’s why. As there’s still a little time, I want to make full use of it and imprint this cute Bea into my memories.”

“Zest–*samaaa*. It can’t be helped then.”

I brushed her hair gently, then we cuddled close together, smiling.

Good! It worked!

“Son-in-law–*dono*? Perhaps, you believe that you managed to successfully deceive us?”

I raised my head and saw the Frontier Count-like smile on my mother-in-law’s face, as she readied her iron fan.

It’s no good.....That why’s I can’t handle old wo.....young-ish women too well.

She forgave me after I promised that I would give her a bra as souvenir, then finally returned to my own room.

Dear me.....In truth, my mother-in-law only wanted that bra, I bet.

Now, that my mother-in-law was content, she would take Tsubaki with her and leave for the imperial capital tomorrow.

The first stage was already complete.....

I drank some black tea and looked at the bed. Bea fell asleep after I brushed her hair with everything I got.

Toto was sleeping too.....They really look like mother and child, don’t they?

I wanted to sleep too, so I stood up then crawled into bed.

I felt their warmth and was happy that this day was finally over.....

“Zest–*sama*, are you asleep?”

“Bea, did I wake you up?”

“.....I thought I should do something to apologize to you.”

“What are you going to do to me?”

I gently embraced Bea, and was about to kiss her when...

(Dad, bathroom, pee-pee)

.....We could not do it.

The next morning, I changed my clothes quickly and walked towards my office.

Toto got in my way last night so I was quite frustrated, but it couldn't be helped.

I'll ask Bea to do me a favor later.

I was grinning as I waited for my mother-in-law inside the office.

It was soon that mother-in-law and Tsubaki showed up.

“Father, Tsubaki is here to see you!”

“Yea, mother Lamia is going to bring you to the imperial capital with her. Greet her.”

Tsubaki turned to face my mother-in-law and greeted her flatly.

“Aunt Lamia.....”

“Well, well, Lamia is enough, you know? If you call me more than that, I.....don't know what I'll do.”

“Lamia–*sama*, please take good care of me!”

Yes, calling her an aunt is very bad.

Good job Tsubaki, you sensed it.

“Tsubaki–*chan*, Bea used to talk like that too, you know?”

“It’s an honor to be compared to mother!”

Mother-in-law nodded in agreement.....Is it really all right like this.....?

Well, if it is, then great.

Besides, was Bea really like this too once?

“You trainee.....educated her well, son-in-law–*dono*. Well then, shall we go, Tsubaki–*chan*?”

“Yes ma’am! Father, thank you for everything! I’ll be going now.”

“Yes, take care.....Let’s meet again in the imperial capital.”

Tsubaki was taken away by my mother-in-law; she was getting further and further away.

Well, she has to go to the imperial capital before getting married.

.....I really hope that they won’t turn her back into the stupid young woman she used to be.

They left with a carriage full of souvenirs, and I could finally relax.

There’s a meeting with the elf prince at the imperial capital next month, so, until then, I’ll take my time to do some paperwork.

Maybe I’ll start with the work that piled up during the time I was travelling?

It’s been a long time since I did paperwork, so I was quite fast at the time.

After such a refreshing trip, I was moving right ahead with my work.

I was doing well and, by night time, I already finished twice the work load I was planning to do.

If I continue like this, I’ll finish with work in two weeks.....Maybe we’ll go to the seaside or something after that.

As I thought about this plan, a very sad notice reached me.

“Your excellency! This is very bad–*nya*!”

Katalina plunged into the office, her face ashen.

It seems that she settled down to a B cup.

“Katalina, you’re a noble too now. Be a little calmer, all right? I already have enough of this with the maids unit and the black knights.”

I sipped some of my tea.

This one has a good flavor.....It’s a high class tea that I’m drinking today.

“Your excellency! Lord Albert said he is going to marry the sister–*nya!*”

I ended up spurting out the tea.

Getting married to the sister? Albert is?

Just how in the world did they come to this.....? Another troublesome incident?

I was already greatly perplexed when another misfortune fell upon me.

“Zest–*sama*.....What are you doing to Katalina.....?”

(Woaa, older sis Katalina is fully exposed!)

Because of the tea, her shirt got wet and became completely transparent.

And on top of that, Katalina was trembling, her eyes full of tears.....This situation.....

There might be a need for a talk.....again.....

# Chapter 101: The Style of the Duke's Household

“Where’s that stupid Albert!?”

“In the reception room—*nya*, your excellency!”

“Ufufu, take care, my dear.”

After I promised Katalina that I would buy her an expensive blouse, and brushed Bea’s hair with all I got, I rushed out into the corridor.

Toto was sitting on my shoulder.....She plays the role of the overseer.

But it’s not like I would tease that junky sister or something, would I.....?

“Albert, you idiot, what did you.....”

When I stepped inside the reception room, a fairly chaotic scene unfolded to me.

“Sister, I will take responsibility. Let me marry you and take care of you!”

“God.....To take a break from God.....but I was still too inexperienced. But now that it came to this, I will start the fire again with water! And then, the rain will transform into a muddy stream and return to the sea. I must receive God’s divine protection no matter what! We mustn’t wait!”

.....I didn’t understand a thing.

I tried to sort the situation out.

The sister was sitting on the sofa with her clothes ravaged; she was hiding her exposed chest. Albert was kneeling down in front of her, proposing.

.....In spite of everything, I still don’t get it.

“Albert.....please explain.....”

A maid brought some clothes and I asked the sister to go change.

As one would expect, I couldn’t leave a half-naked woman in that state. Besides, if Bea were to see this, other unnecessary problems would occur.

“Yes, your excellency.....The sister came to meet you. She brought a letter for

your excellency.”

“Okay, it’s all clear until now.”

“However, because the sister was very concerned about her chest, I demanded an explanation. I asked her about what she was hiding in there.”

“.....Then?”

“The sister did nothing but mutter things I couldn’t understand.....Like, a sister who talks in the name of God would never deceive the man!.....”

“What did you do then?”

“I suddenly took off her clothes to check whether she.....was hiding something.....”

“.....I see.....”

This sure is a problematic situation.....

Most likely.....that junky sister was keeping something at her chest, and Albert wanted to know what.

She explained it in her own language but Albert misunderstood her.

The sister’s ‘*God talk*’ was probably a bad choice.

Albert revealed this God obsessed sister’s pure and innocent body to the world.....or something like that.

“And after you stripped her, you felt responsible.....right? It can’t be helped that you suspected her. But she’s that sister, you know.....I’m sure there were other means to do this.”

“I don’t know how to answer this.”

“You know, this strictness of yours is a virtue, but you should learn to choose your methods according to your opponent. You’re a noble, you have to learn how to use people, all right?”

“.....Yes.”

“Why didn’t you use the maids unit?”

“.....Please forgive me for acting rashly.”

Albert rubbed his head against the floor.

.....Dear me! He's such a helpless guy.

"Leave the rest to me. You go report the details to Bea, and tell her to come here."

"But"

"It's okay, so go. I'll do something about this. If you feel responsible, just return the favor on the battlefield."

".....As you wish!"

I saw Albert off and drank some black tea.

.....What should I do?.....I can't find a solution.....

I tried to hide my stomach pain through drinking tea, as I waited for the sister's return.

"Zest-sama, I heard about everything that happened. What will you do?"

"I can't really blame Albert for this.....I must cleverly think of a compromise plan....."

Bea came to me, making a worried expression.

It's true that when Albert became suspicious of her, he wasn't mistaken in his conduct.

He wasn't mistaken, but he wasn't precisely right either. This was the problem.

Still, Albert is my cute, trusted servant <sup>1</sup>.....I want to save him.

But this sister is the next Pope, so it'll be problematic if we don't agree upon something.....

I kept on worrying about this, when the sister entered the room, her clothes changed.

It seems that she is wearing Bea's clothes.....Her chest is hollow, but I'm not allowed to look at that.

"Your excellency, thank you for your concern."

“Don’t say that. It is I who should apologize to you. Sister.....Am I too arrogant if I want to live by God’s benevolence?”

The sister sat on the sofa and, after she corrected her posture, she informed me.

“To live by God’s benevolence is not evil. As a tree needs the earth, the water chases after the sea. To say nothing of an act of worrying about your neighbor and wishing for blessings upon another person, this is too in accordance with God’s will.”

(Dad, is this junky verbally impaired?)

The junky sister smiled sweetly.

.....I see. I don’t really get it, but it seems to be working.

“This incident with Albert, was precisely conducted by his concern for me. In short, it was as you said, sister, *‘An act of wishing for blessings upon another person’*. Will God forgive this?”

“Fufufu, God will forgive it. I am inexperienced and imperfect. And since I am imperfect, asking the other person to be perfect would be a wrong reasoning from my part.”

(!Dad, I finally understood what the junky is trying to say!) .....It was the first time I admired her as a sister.

You’re a wonderful person, aren’t you, sister! Your speech is a piece of junk though.

Besides, Toto, will you be a little quiet? Dad is trying his best not to laugh here.

“To your mercy, sister.....and to God’s teachings, I offer my sincere gratitude and respect.”

“Sister, you have my gratitude and respect too.....”

We lowered our heads and the sister responded with a kind smile.

“No, I too didn’t have enough self-control and ended up talking in the name of God.....Please forgive my inexperience.”

The sister made a praying pose, bringing her hands together in front of her inexperienced chest.

I looked in that direction by mistake but Bea still pinched me.

.....Women understand men's looks.

(Dad, do you like her chest? Do you like them hollow?)

Stop it! Bea is looking at me with a terrible expression, so please stop it!

After all, I solved the problem quite cheaply; it only costed me a custom-made bra and some priestess clothes as presents for the sister.

If she were to marry Albert, I would've been suspected of rebelling and a war might've started.....

I saw the sister off; she looked extremely pleased with herself.

She ended up with a custom-made spirit bra, not a mass-produced item.....I kind of feel bad for the dwarves, but it can't be helped.

I returned to my room, thinking about getting some rest, only to see Albert on the floor, waiting in a kneeling position.

"You idiot! How long are you planning to stay like that? Don't worry about the past. And don't do it again. That's all there is to it."

"He's right. What's done is done. Next time do it better."

"I will never forget your kind words!"

Yes, this is good.....I'm quite the kind master.

Albert was shedding tears as he lowered his head, at which point Bea said to him, wearing a kind smile.

"Albert, you have two more times left!"

(Two more times! I'm looking forward to it!)

.....Two more times?

Albert and I looked blankly at the two girls; we certainly heard them say that.

"Our house only allows for three mistakes. That's why, you have only two left, right?"

“ “What happens if there’s a.....fourth time?” “

Albert and I harmonized at which Bea informed us, as she put on a Frontier Count-like smile.

“The fourth time, you will take a walk in a faaar away and hiiiiigh above place. That’s how things were in the Frontier Count’s Household.....Do you disagree, Zest–sama?”

(Woaaa, this looks like fun, Mom!)

This is no good.....Albert begged me with his eyes to refuse Bea’s proposal.

“This is a truly wonderful idea! Let our Duke’s Household do the same.”

“.....As you.....wish, your excellencies.....”

It’s not bad that he managed to say this, while his feet trembled violently.....I can’t oppose her and you know it.

Sorry Albert.....and good luck.....

Compared to a few moments ago, Albert’s never ending cry had a different meaning now.

## Chapter 102: Long Time no See, My Parents

“Gahahaha, it’s been a while, Zest! How have you been?”

“It’s been a long time, father.”

“Father-in-law, it’s been a long time.”

(Dad’s dad! Long time no see!)

One week after the uproar caused by the junky sister wedding incident, we came to my foster father’s mansion, on the Frontier Count’s domain.

We soon have to go to the imperial capital to meet with that stupid prince, and I also wanted to congratulate my foster mother for giving birth.

“Oh, young lady Beatrice.....Bea, it seems that everything is going well with you too. Take good care of that child in your belly, all right?”

“Thank you, father-in-law.”

Despite beating my shoulder with unrestrained force, my foster father was very kind towards Bea.

Discrimination! Ain’t this discrimination?

I healed my shoulder with magic, but he continued to strike it.

“First of all, come inside! We can talk after that. Gahahaha”

I kept on receiving his attack as we entered the mansion.

Even the stone paving at my feet started to crack, but the servants were not surprised anymore.

(Dad is quite sturdy! He’s tougher than stone! Awesome!) I caressed the honest Toto as we entered the house and walked to the reception room.

Here, a long-missed smile waited for me.

It’s been such a long time.....Reflexively, I smiled as well.

“It’s been a while, Zest. How are you? You did not get sick during this time, did you?”

She embraced me tightly.

Ah.....My mother's gentle scent.....It feels like I've come home.

However, my foster father started to show killing intent. Please stop!

As always, he's deeply in love with mother Celica.

"It's been a while, mother. Did you lose a little weight? How's your physical condition?"

"*Fufu*, I'm all right. But because I don't get enough sleep, I also have no appetite....."

She said and laughed, but she looked rather unwell.

I used my healing magic on her as I helped her sit on the sofa.

"Thank you, Zest. I feel much better."

"Mother-in-law, it's been a long time. Afterwards, please show me the baby."

(Dad's mom! Long time no see. You smell good!)

"Oh my, Bea, your belly will start to show soon.....I'm looking forward to it."

With the women's excitement, our nice tea party started.

I distanced myself from them in a casual manner as I wanted to absorb the situation.

"Zest, you will stay here for the night, right? Take your time and relax."

"Thank you, father. I will do just that."

Are you angry that mother hugged me a while back?

The power with which he beat my shoulder now was five times stronger than before.

"Besides, I have something to talk with you about.....So please listen to me."

My foster father informed me, his expression serious.

.....As I thought, this was not just a simple sleepover party.

I finally got to meet my foster parents again, but there was more to this visit than pleasure and fun.

Once we finished eating dinner, I got called to my father's room.

Bea and Toto were with my foster mother, chatting in her room.

I was the only one who got called.

In short, he has to talk with me in secret.....He must have something important to tell me.

"Father, this is Zest. What do you want to talk about?"

I sat on the sofa opposite to him.

My foster father wore an unusual pondering expression.....This must be pretty grave.

"Ah, you might already know this, but you must not tell a word about this to anyone, all right?"

"I know, father."

He drank up a glass of wine and continued to talk.

"To tell you the truth, this is about Celica....."

"About mother? What happened?"

"Yes.....Right. After giving birth, her physical condition isn't quite excellent. You helped us today, Zest. You have my thanks."

"Please stop. There's no need for thanking between us."

".....Yes. You're certainly right. So, about Celica....."

After saying this much, he stopped.

I waited patiently for him to continue.

I guess it's something difficult to talk about.

I wonder how much time already passed? .....At last, my foster father opened his mouth to speak.

"Celica, when she was finally.....finally.....able to do it, I got a little violent, unintentionally, and it all turned into this mess.....She won't let me touch her now!....."

.....?

Eh? This is a lovers' quarrel, right?

"She won't even let me sleep next to her nowadays.....I don't know what to do!"

I stared at my trembling foster father, weeping men's tears.

Stop crying, father.....Besides, there are certain limits, you know?

What are you? A youngster?.....

Still, I do understand him.

If Bea were to become like that.....Only by imagining it my stomach started to hurt.

"Father, you did well to talk to me. As a man, I completely understand!"

"Zest.....You understand me?....."

"Of course. In case.....Bea and I would ever become like that, I would utterly destroy one or two countries in an outburst of anger."

"That's my son.....I am the same. I feel like going to war right at this moment!"

That's a metaphor. It's only a metaphorical expression.

"Father, do you want to try learning to massage? You could give mother a massage and relax her body and mind!"

".....What's a massage? Is it something I can do?....."

Yes, the massage has not yet permeated this world.

For this reason, it should be effective.

I took my worried father's hands, and started to explain.

"It's all right. The massage is a technique for making someone feel calm by gently rubbing their body. Anyone can do it with practice!"

"Only with practice, huh?.....But, I have too much power. I don't know if I can restrain it....."

I see. He does have self-awareness.

In this case, please be a little gentler with me too, father.

But the training comes first.....Good.

“Albert! Where’s Albert!?”

After that, Albert’s shrieks continued to be heard all throughout the night.

My foster father would break him, and I would heal him with magic.

By dawn, Albert’s eyes already lost their light, but a splendid masseur was born.

My very excited foster father assaulted my foster mother’s room early in the morning.

“.....Zest–*sama*, did I help?”

“Yes, Albert. You did well.....Take your time to rest.”

“.....Understood.”

I drank some tea as I watched Albert burn out his flame and pass out.

It is getting brighter and brighter outside.

.....What the heck did I do this whole night?

I wiped away my tears as I returned to my room. Bea and Toto were sleeping next to each other.

I got in the bed slowly and quietly, in order not to wake them up, and took a short nap.

I woke up around noon. Bea and Toto waited for me to wake up, then we walked together to the dining room.

“Zest–*sama*, are you all right? You were late last night, so I was worried.”

(Let’s sleep together a lot today!)

“Yeah, I’m all right. Thanks. Let’s sleep a lot.”

My parents were already waiting for us in the dining room.

They were shiny and smooth.....Did they enjoy it?

Well, it's great that they made peace and everything.....

They were smiling and flirting with each other, and I decided to look away as I finished eating.

I was drinking my after-meal tea when my father whispered to me.

“Oh, by the way, the demons' boss is coming here this afternoon.”

He said it so casually, like he just told me that he'll go to the convenience store.

My body became stiff.

.....You should've informed me about this first, instead of your lovers' quarrel.

I have a bad feeling about this.

## Chapter 103: Neebel, Again

“It’s been a while, you two. I’m glad that spirit–*sama* is well too.”

The demon race’s head, Neebel greeted us with a smile.

Inside my father’s mansion.....in his reception room, we were enjoying another encounter.

“I’m glad that Neebel–*dono* is looking well too. How about them?”

“Yes, they’re good. Especially the girl, who is very pleased with her recording magical tool, doing all sorts of things with it.”

.....The *fujoshi*? <sup>1</sup> What is she doing with that magical tool?

Was it Mari–*chan*? I won’t say her full name though.

We started with the greetings, and continued with a harmless chat.

It was like he was a noble friend of mine who came for an appointment.

We got into the main topic about the time when my tea got cold.

“Duke Zest, I have something to tell you.”

“Yes.....You said something about it last time. Was it about your duty?”

“Yes, I thought that it was about time I’d talk to you about it.”

He took a fleeting glance at us.

Sitting next to me were only Bea and Toto.

My parents were not present from the beginning and the maids quickly left the room after preparing the tea.

“Our duty is to watch over this world. We are its overseers. Duke Zest, what I want from you is your collaboration.”

“Overseers?.....Something like law enforcers or mediators, right?”

“Yes, it’s not too different from that. However, overseer is more accurate. We look out for this world, in order for it not to make errors.”

“And you want my cooperation?”

Neebel smiled and continued.

“Yes, all of you. We did our research and there’s no problem concerning you three. And you also have the necessary qualifications.”

“.....Qualifications?”

“Yes, you are qualified to become overseers only by being the spirit’s masters. Besides, you’re a stranger from a different world who can use light magic. There’s no complaint against you, duke Zest.”

“I see.....”

I looked at Bea and she had a complicated expression.

No wonder she does. I bet my face looks similar right now.

They suddenly tell us to cooperate and become overseers.....To be honest, I don’t even know what that implies.

“I understand. But first, before I give you my answer, I want to hear details about the overseers and about what you need our cooperation for. *Zest-sama*, are you all right with this?”

“Yes, it depends on the contents of your request. There’s a limit to what I can do after all.”

Thanks for assisting me, Bea.

I felt that the conversation was more concentrated on me, so I was rather pressed.

He is under his wife’s thumb.

If Neebel thinks of me like that, it’ll get considerably easier for me.

“Duchess Beatrice, it wasn’t my intention to disregard you. I’m sorry. All right.....The job of an overseer is quite simple. We make sure that a science civilization won’t ever develop here. And, what I want your cooperation for is to not spread the technology of your world in this world.”

I was speechless, for his request was unexpected.

He came to tell me not to let technology grow in this world?

.....I taught them how to make bras, but I guess that was safe.....

“The bra is all right. However, if you were to use technological textiles for it.....then it would’ve been a different story.”

Neebel smiled, and I sensed his dreadfulness more than it was necessary.

“I watched you up until now, duke Zest, but you didn’t teach anyone any scientific techniques. Therefore, I felt relieved. Well, since that refrigerator is a magical tool, that thing is all right but.....”

“If one makes a refrigerator using science?”

“Of course, they will become the overseers’ target.”

I instinctively asked, but Neebel answered me without altering his smile.

I’m saved by my lack of technological knowledge.....Thanks god I’m stupid.....

A war against the demon race is just too bothersome.

“Science and technology.....Can I ask why?”

“That is.....for protecting this world. I still can’t tell you everything but we, the demon race, the dragon race and the spirits won’t allow the development of science and technology in this world. I want you to remember this.”

.....Right, these are precisely the races I don’t want to antagonize.

I’ll just obey for now.

Even without technology, I didn’t have any trouble living my life here.

I also want to avoid pointless hostility.

“I understand. I will cooperate. There’s no advantage for me in opposing you all and propagate technological practices in this world.”

“I agree. I have no interest in that science thing.”

(Dad, who is Science?)

These two didn’t understand what science was in the first place, so they blankly accepted Neebel’s request.

They didn't understand a thing from our talk.....But, they didn't want a fight against the demons.

At least they understood that.

Still, for me, this was a major thing.

The science civilization is prohibited..... Well, they do have magic here so science it's not really needed anyway.

After that, without any problems in particular, we continued with our chat and, after a short while, Neebel left.

So, this is a world in which technology is negated..... or, it might be better to say that it is under close observation?

I must have to investigate this matter a bit.

I was drinking tea in my room as I looked outside the window.

This world's secrets?.....Is it better to know or not to know about them?.....

I asked myself this but the answer was forever hidden.

"Zest-*sama*? Are you going be up late?"

"Bea?..... I'll go to sleep now. Let's go together."

Bea came check on me and we went to bed together.

She hugged me closely and I brushed her hair.

Whatever happens, I will protect Bea no matter what.

Even if the demons.....the dragons or the spirits become my enemies, I will protect her without fail.

I made my resolve, then I hugged Bea. When I was about to fall asleep.....

"Zest-*sama*, this is a serious matter! Your assistance is needed!"

A maid shouted in a teary voice, as she knocked on the door.

"What happened?"

I jumped up to my feet and opened the door. The maid had a ghastly pale face as she informed me.

“The master.....he injured his back inside madam’s room.....The knights’ training tomorrow.....”

.....I thought about saying something cool and get it over with, but then I realized the insinuation.

Father, I told you that there are limits you can’t cross.....

## Chapter 104: Returning Home

“Gahahaha.....Thanks for yesterday, Zest.”

“Zest, you shouldn’t fix him next time, really.....”

“.....Err, try to be more moderate.....father.”

“Let me see.....Take care of yourself?, father-in-law.”

(Dad is alright because he’s very flexible.)

Toto, stop.

Bea turned completely red, so stop already.

I quickly finished this awkward breakfast, then started to make the arrangements for us to go to the Frontier Count’s place, when a maid called out to me.

I wanted to consult with the Count about the affair with the demons, however could it be troublesome for him?

“Young master, merchant Tanya requested an audience with you. What will you do?”

“Tanya? It’s been a long time. Bring her to the reception room.”

“As you wish!”

The maid left after she lowered her head. Still, my interest was picked.

Since a merchant decided to visit me in person, there’s more to this than a simple greeting.

Just in case, maybe I’ll ask Bea and Toto to be present too.....

I took Bea and Toto with me and we walked to the reception room, where a middle-aged woman was waiting.

“Your excellency, duke Zest, your excellency, duchess Beatrice, it’s been a long time. Toto–*sama* is looking good as well.”

As ever, this woman had a soft bearing.

As expected from a merchant, her smile alone is making me feel comfortable.....She's rather skilled.

"Yes, Tanya, it's been. Are you in good health?"

"Thank you for asking. Thanks to you, the business is favorable, as for me, I'm the very image of health itself."

We sat down and started to chat.

I have to do this every single time but it can't be helped.....If I skip this step, other nobles would disagree and I'll become the target of their pricking sarcasm.

"Now.....Come to think of it, your excellency Zest. There's a rumor saying that.....you developed some truly wonderful thing."

She didn't have that soft bearing anymore, instead her eyes were shining brightly.

So, this is her purpose.

"Developed?.....Ah, are you talking about the bra?"

"Yes, about that, your excellency. I would definitely like to be part of it too....."

I see.....Well, it's not like I'm hiding it or anything.

And I don't want to monopolize it either, since people's envy can get scary.

"This request comes from no other than Tanya, therefore, I can't refuse. Right, Bea?"

"As one would expect from Zest—*sama*. It's a wonderful consideration."

(Dad is so kind! Towards women, that is!)

.....Toto? Look closely, Tanya is already an old lady, all right?

Besides, I'm nice towards men too.....Maybe.

"Thank you so much, your excellency. This is nothing but a small present....."

Tanya took out some clothes materials and jewels.

She's quite wicked.....

This is nothing but a *small* present, so it's all right.

"I see. I'll accept it then. I'll leave it to my assistant Katalina to dispatch the craftsmen and take care of the details. I'll write her a few lines, so you can feel at ease."

"Katalina—*sama*, right? Understood. I'm looking forward to it. Thank you."

"This is nothing but me speaking to myself, but a new underwear trial product is under development. It's getting quite busy and we don't have enough hands."

"To receive this extraordinary consideration again....."

"Tanya, I was just speaking to myself. There's no need for thanks."

"Oh my, what have I done?"

Hahahaha, Ohohohoho

We both laughed.

*'This is still a secret, but I'm releasing a new product. If you send some people and pay for the expenses, I'll let you in on this.'*

*'It'll be a great feast.'*

This is a free translation of our previous exchange.

I won't monopolize the production, instead I will involve merchant Tanya and the Frontier Count in order to diminish the risks.

I stand out too much recently.....If I don't reduce my profit, it might turn ugly.

I must distribute the risks as much as I can.

After that, I arranged for a letter to be sent to Katalina, and so the story was over.

I bet that Tanya spent a large amount of money on this not-even-close-to-small present she offered me, but she left this place very pleased with herself.

Well, once she calculated her profit, she must have realized that she'd be in the black anyway.

Merchants have a great sense of smell after all.

It got considerably late, but we, nonetheless, went to the Frontier Count's

mansion.

We left right after we finished eating lunch.

There was still enough time, so I'll take it easy and consult with the Count until evening.

"Welcome home, Bea. How are you feeling? Are you in pain? Right, hurry up and come inside. Toto, you're as cute as ever. It's like I'm watching the child Bea.....Ah, son-in-law—*dono*. You look healthy. That's good."

"It's been a long time, master. I mean, father-in-law."

"It's been a long time, father."

(Am I cute? He said I'm cute!)

I was the only one who was treated rather poorly by my master, but I still followed him inside the mansion.

Recently, Bea's belly had grown bigger, and this is making my master even more of a doting parent.

"The young lady has such a kind smile....."

"Ah, I never imagined that the day when I would see the young lady's child will come!"

"Such a frightening..... I mean, awe-inspiring young lady is becoming a mother!"

I heard the maids' whispers.

You guys have been through a lot of hardships.....Like the exchange diary and the sort.....

Bea felt completely relaxed since she returned to her childhood home.

The maids were taking good care of Toto, so she was all smiles.

"Say, grandson-in-law—*dono*. It seems you have something to discuss with me."

Why am I alone with the Frontier Count in another room.....?

I know that he's not a bad person, but even so he's quite scary.

“Yes. I want to consult you about the matter that the demons’ head, Neebel–*dono* asked me to do.”

“Neebel–*dono*? Was it about technology?”

As I thought, he knows about this.

“Yes. Why do they negate technology.....I mean, surveil it? I would like to know the reason for this.”

“I see.....But, grandson-in-law–*dono*, you mustn’t hurry. I’m sure that Neebel–*dono* will tell you all about it when the time is right. You should stop investigating this matter until then.”

The Frontier Count recited as he stared at me fixedly.

“It’s only natural that grandson-in-law–*dono* wants to know more about this. However, you mustn’t be impatient. You have to wait a little longer.....please.....”

“Wha!? Please stop!”

I never imagined that the Frontier Count would lower his head to me and beg.....I can’t turn him down.

There must be a good reason behind this.

“I understand. I will wait for Neebel–*dono* to explain things properly.”

“You do that. This way I can feel at ease too.”

The Frontier Count smiled like he felt completely relieved.

“Now that you feel relieved, shall we reunite with Bea and the others? After all, she’s visiting her home after such a long time.”

“Hoho, you’re right. Bea will soon give birth to a child.....I’ve sure gotten old.”

The Frontier Count and I walked towards my master’s room.

I guess Bea and the others are already in the middle of a tea party.

The Frontier Count was wearing an unusually kind smile as he opened the door to my master’s room.

What came in sight at that point was a battlefield.....I mean, hell.

“You don’t say.....that Zest–*sama* proposed to you?”

(Mom, what does propose mean? Is it a flower’s seed or something?) “Yes, young lady Beatrice.....I mean, your excellency, the duchess. That’s right.”

My master and Albert were on the floor in a *seiza*<sup>1</sup> position.

Bea was clad in a nostalgic dark magical power that was penetrating cold.

A dog *kemonobito* maid was trembling in front of her.

Then.....

“Grandson-in-law–*dono*.....What do they mean by marriage proposal?”

The Frontier Count wore a pitch-black smile.

It’s been a long time since I was last in such a pinch, and I ended up doing some *markings*<sup>2</sup> again.

This.....is probably bad.

## Chapter 105: Family Council

“Oh, so that’s what actually happened. I was surprised.”

“Hoho, now that you mentioned it, it did happen that way.”

“Really now..... son-in-law–*dono*? Don’t startle us like that.....”

“Hahaha, his excellency is quite the ladies’ ma!.....Ouch”

“Albert, this all happened because you didn’t explain properly!”

I punched him *lightly*, my magical power at full throttle.

His face is twitching, so he’s still alive.....No problems there.

“This time, my brother made troubles for you. I’m sorry.”

The maid Suu lowered her head very deeply.

I thought that she would follow after her brother since he’s become a noble, but she continued to work as a maid, saying ‘*I will pay back our debt of gratitude to the Frontier Count’s Household.*’

“Don’t worry about it, Suu. Albert too.....he’s been through a lot. Besides, he’s my vassal. His carelessness is my responsibility.”

After I comforted Suu, I turned around to face everybody.

“I’m sorry for the uproar I caused this time. Please forgive my vassal for his clumsiness.”

I bowed my head to the Frontier Count and the others.

The misunderstanding got cleared, but it all happened because of Albert’s insufficient explanation.

Even inside my family, as a noble, I have to take responsibility.

“Yougur exgucelengucy, fogur my sague yougu...”

Albert, I don’t understand what you’re saying.

Maybe.....I’m sorry you had to do this for me, or something like this?

“Hoho, since grandson-in-law–*dono* lowered his head to us, I can’t say anything.”

“*sigh*.....Albert. You must serve son-in-law–*dono* with whole-hearted devotion.”

“Guyes sirgu!”

Albert saluted, as he lay sprawled, drooling on the floor.

.....Sorry. Did I use too much power?

I revived Albert with healing magic.

Will this time count as a mistake? I glanced at Bea.

“Zest-sama, I can’t punish Albert after he received *that* from you.....”

(Dad, people would normally die from *that*!) “Thank goodness, Albert! You still have two times left!” <sup>1</sup>

“Yes sir! Thank you for your consideration!”

I successfully forced a good bargain in the end.

The muscle brains are indeed wonderful.

“.....Grandson-in-law–*dono* used a much more powerful technique than I expected. I’m surprised!”

“It was a time when he wasn’t like this.....”

“*Onii-sama*, <sup>2</sup> The loyalty dance! Do it for his excellency!”

I don’t want to be told this by the Frontier Count and my master, the frightening duo.

Moreover.....Is Suu a muscle brain too!?

No way. Besides, what’s the loyalty dance?

Albert nodded and stood up quickly.

It seems that the dance is starting.

“Aaah-oooooooooh!!”

The mysterious dance started with a howl.

It was a strange dance that combined hula dance moves, limbo dance moves and Cossack dance moves.

This *show* continued for nearly one hour.....

“*Onii-sama*, well done! I’m sure his excellency, duke Zest is delighted.”

“Right! For someone like me, this was an impeccable performance.”

Albert wiped away his sweat and smiled happily.

He finally finished! I have no idea how to react to this.....

“Right.....This.....is like *that*, don’t you say, Sonia?”

“.....Yes, right. It’s like *that*, you know, son-in-law-*dono*.”

“.....It’s like you said.”

I cut my way through this by invoking my special move, the ‘*It’s like you said*’ phrase.

The Frontier Count and my master were shocked by my trick.....

“Thank you for your wonderful words! This Albert will forever serve you with loyalty!”

Albert quickly dropped to one knee.

I really wanted to ask him what words was he so grateful for.

“Good for you, Albert.”

“(Dad, what was that dance?)”

As Bea wanted to deceive Albert with a casual congrats, her face now was starting to sweat.

(Mom! What kind of ritual was this?)

“.....*Toto-chan*, it can’t be helped. Let’s go eat some baked sweets!)  
(Yeeeeeeey! Sweets!)

She was completely fooled.....*Toto* is such a simpleton.

Next time I’ll use baked sweets too.

And so, the uproar about *Suu*’s marriage ended safely.

With one exception.....however.....

“Your excellency, Frontier Count, you took good care of me. I never imagined that his excellency, the duke, needed my brother that much.....This is something I can’t entrust to my brother alone. I would like to serve under his excellency, the duke, as well!”

Suu bowed in an elegant manner.

Unlike the knights, her bow was wonderfully graceful.

“With you there I can feel at ease. Bea will soon give birth, so it is rather me who should ask you to do this.”

“.....She could be a candidate for a chief maid. Son-in-law—*dono*, Suu is quite excellent, you know? Take good care of her!”

“She is Albert’s little sister, after all. I want her as my attendant.”

(We did it! Dad, we got another pet!)

Toto, you can’t say that.....

“Suu, I’m relying on you! Please become Bea’s strength.”

“As you wish! Please leave the young lady in my care!”

She lifted her skirt and bent her knee, as she lowered her head beautifully.

.....Precisely this.....This is what the Duke’s Household was lacking.

Still, I’m too used to maids saluting me that Suu’s bow felt rather uncomfortable.

A new vassal, the elite maid Suu joined my household.

I have two muscle brains units, the black knights and the maids unit.

I have a scouting and intelligence gathering unit formed of former adventurers.

I have a *kemonobito* unit formed of the *kemonobito* released from slavery.

I also have Katalina, who single-handedly manages the whole internal administration of my domain. She is in charge of the civil officials.

.....Isn’t my army just perfect?

Since Katalina is training new civil officials, I won't have to work that much anymore.

Now that Suu will lead the maids, their elegance will have a pleasant healing effect.

I won.

At last, I can see my victory.

A fair amount of time passed since I came to this world.

Still, I gradually obtained powerful and relying forces!

As I continued to reflect upon my achievements, I drank some black tea.

I enjoyed the black tea's taste and scent, sitting on the sofa in the room the Frontier Count prepared for me.

Outside the window, the full moon was shining brightly, like it was sending its blessing to me.

"I'm no longer afraid of anything.....Fufu, fuhahahahahahaha!"

As I looked up at the full moon, I let out a loud laugh.

Great military force, great political power; I obtained a position that makes me feel at ease!

I was already quite excited, but my tension further increased.

"Zest-*sama*? We'll be in trouble if Toto-*chan* wakes up. Please be quiet."

"Ah, I'm sorry."

.....Still, I can't oppose my wife.

"And since Toto-*chan* is asleep.....right?"

".....Are you sure, Bea?"

I did it! I really want to hit myself for previously believing my wife was frightening.

Bea smiled gently and I kissed her.

I softly lay her down on the sofa and removed her thin lingerie.....

“Your excellency, duke Zest, this can’t happen. It’s madam’s first childbirth. Please take all possible measures to prevent acting rashly.”

The dog eared ‘*excellent*’ maid peeked through the door and muttered.

.....Suu–*san*.....Not even a little?

It appears that she’s taking *good care* of Bea.....

## Chapter 106: *Quiet Talk* – Suu’s Resolution

“Such an important mission was given to you, *onii-sama*!”

“Yeah, I must meet his excellency, the Frontier Count’s expectations.”

Albert *onii-sama* said, then left the room.

Please.....be safe.....

According to *onii-sama*, this is a mission he must do together with the black knights’ commander.

Why did they give him, a rookie knight, such an important mission?

We grew up neglected for being part of the *kemonobito* race.

Even though discrimination is not accepted, the *kemonobito* were always treated rather poorly even among nobles.

Compared to humans, we can’t be promoted and almost none of us is a noble.

The truth is, we got expelled from our home and barely managed to reach this place.

“Suu, are you here? His excellency, the Frontier Count wishes to see you.”

A senior maid entered my room.

The people from the Frontier Count’s Household treat us normally, even though we’re *kemonobito*.

.....No one will tell us that we’re filthy.

“Yes, ma’am. Where is his excellency?”

“In his office. He seemed to be in a hurry!”

I made an agile bow to my senior and hurried to the office.

I hurried to see his excellency the Frontier Count, the man who employed me as a maid.

“Your excellency, this is Suu.”

“Yes, come in quickly.”

As I knocked the door and announced my presence, this was the reply I received.

He really must be in a hurry.

I rushed inside the room.

“I’m sorry to have made you wait. Is there anything I can do?”

“After this, I’m going to meet with a stranger who came from a different world. I’ll have you serve us in that room.”

“!?!.....As you wish!”

A stranger?!.....So it wasn’t only a fairy-tale!?!?

They do exist!

I tried my best to hide my disturbance as I lowered my head.

“You don’t have to be afraid, Sonia and I will be there too. As well as Albert and Galef, so there’s nothing to worry about.”

“Forgive me. I will do as you wish.”

*Sigh*.....He’s right.....

Since the Count’s strongest forces are gathered together, there’s really nothing to worry about.

.....Still, I’m a little concerned about *onii-sama*.

However, the stranger was even more frightening than I expected.

I was extremely nervous about seeing a stranger for the first time, as I entered the room.

With trembling hands, I finished preparing the tea and was about to leave when it happened.

“Then, if you’ll excuse me—*nya!*”

Damn it! Stupid me! What was that ‘*nya!*’!?

A *kemonobito* using a feline race word.....This could mean that I am courting

the stranger.....

I shouldn't have read that book last night.

But it was so interesting.....'*The Nyan-nyan Great Strategy*'

"So you're a cat!" <sup>1</sup>

The stranger replied to me and I froze in place.

That single line he said.....Isn't this how they proposed in '*The Nyan-nyan Great Strategy*'?!

Still, there's a certain order to things.....But even so, if I look closer at him, this stranger is rather cool.....

I was a little confused at that time and I don't remember much of what happened after.

When I came to my sense, Albert *onii-sama* was shaking my shoulders.

"Suu! Get a hold of yourself!"

"*Onii-sama*, it hurts. Please realize your own physical strength."

"Thanks goodness.....You dazed off and I was worried."

".....I'm sorry. Urm, what happened to the stranger?"

"You don't remember? If that's the case, then let it be. That's for the best."

"But, that person.....he.....urm....."

He just proposed to me by imitating '*The Nyan-nyan Great Strategy*' mature way of doing it.

Such a proposal that made my *kemonobito* heart tickle was not that unpleasant.

"Suu, he's a stranger from a different world, you know? Think about it."

".....A stranger.....Even so, how comes he made such a wonderful proposal?"

That's right. The stranger said that without knowing anything about '*The Nyan-nyan Great Strategy*'.

“Right. He said that without knowing what it meant.”

“.....I see. Understood.”

I understand, *onii-sama*.

He really did propose to me, right?

He didn't imitate the book; he said it naturally 'So you're a cat!'.....Such a frightening person!

He already got a tight hold of my *kemonobito* heart.

“I will do my best to work as a maid!”

“It seems you understood. I'm counting on you.”

*Onii-sama* smiled happily then left the room.

Right, I did understand.

In order to become a suitable woman for that person, I must first do my best to become a first-class lady!

After that, that person.....*Zest-sama*, got promoted steadily.

He became young lady Beatrice's fiancé.....

.....Fufu, that's *Zest-sama* for you.

He can easily deal with *that* young lady, with a smile on his face!

This person, he's almost like the sun.

When I stay close to the young lady, my feet start to tremble; she's a terrific person.

I do understand this, you know, *Zest-sama*?

A marriage with a noble is all about politics.

You only have deep feelings towards me, and no one else, right?

Ufufu, I already know it.

*Zest-sama* was promoted to the duke rank.

He even got engaged to her highness, the princess.....He's such a resourceful person.

That's how a man is supposed to be.

Ufufu, I already know it.

Zest–*sama* participated in the war and founded a domain of his own.

He still didn't call for me.

This is irritating! Come on already!

Ufufu, I already know it, though.

Zest–*sama* is having a child with young lady Beatrice.

.....This is wonderful.

This way, his duty as a noble is safely fulfilled.

Did he do it so that he could come for me?

Ufufu, I already know it.

No matter how long I waited, Zest–*sama* never came for me.

.....Whatever the circumstances, he's just too late!!

I know! He's being considerate of young lady Beatrice, right?

It's okay, Zest–*sama*.

I will talk to her myself!

Young lady Beatrice returned home after a very long time.....Or I should say, I was finally able to meet his excellency the duke.

I must tell her about it.

“Young lady Beatrice, I have something to tell you about Zest–*sama*.”

“Zest.....*sama*? Suu, what's this all about?”

If a mere servant in another household would dare to address him with ‘Zest–*sama*’ instead of ‘*his excellency Zest*’, she would obviously get angry.

I already felt a sense of intimidation.....But even so!

“Madam, please allow Zest–*sama* and I to get married already.”

“.....What?”

“Now that you’ve been blessed with a child, there must be some inconveniences. Having me around would be quite helpful, besides, he already proposed.”

She treated me like a low-class concubine.....Or, maybe like a mistress?

Still, if I can be by Zest–*sama*’s side.....

“Suu? When did he propose to you I wonder?”

“Hii!?”

The young lady was clad in a pitch black overwhelming magical power.

.....Scary.....Awfully scary! I don’t want to die!

Was she always like this? Did the madam always have this outrageous kind of magical power!?

There was nothing I could do but tremble.

I got teary eyes as I continued to tremble when Sonia–*sama* and Albert *onii-sama* jumped into the room.

“What’s with this magical power!?”

“Madam! Are you all right!?”

“You two. Do you know the story about Zest–*sama*’s marriage proposal to Suu?”

“?.....Ah, about that? I know.....”

“Yes ma’am, he used a dreadful pick-up line.....”

“So you did know.....didn’t you, you two!? For the time being, go sit down there!”

“Wait, Bea? Urm.....”

“Madam, this is a misun.....”

“Sit down!”

“ “Yes ma’am!” “

This is hopeless.....Madam’s magical power is getting bigger and bigger.

It's impossible to go against it.....No matter how many lives you have, you'll die anyway.

My *kemonobito* instincts are shouting '*Don't oppose this!*'

"You don't say.....that Zest-*sama* really proposed to you?"

"Yes, young lady Beatrice.....I mean, your excellency the duchess. That is right."

Because of fear and confusion, I didn't really think about the right answers to give.

.....I will die here soon.

The one who saved me from this desperate situation was Zest-*sama*.

"Bea, what happened? This is bad for the child! Come now, tell me what happened."

"Zest-*sama*, you proposed to Suu, right? When did it happen?"

Amazing! He sat there, bathing in that magical power, shaking his knees in a dance of great affection! He's now approaching the young lady!

He truly is the hero's vessel.....Someone like me is not suitable for him.....

"I haven't! What are you talking about, Bea? Come on, calm down."

".....But, father and Albert said you did."

"Master?"

"It's true that something happened which could be interpreted as a marriage proposal, but the Frontier Count instructed Albert to forget about it since it was a mistake....."

"Yes ma'am! His excellency, the Frontier Count instructed me to do so!"

.....Eh? A mistake?

Was that a mistake!? Why didn't you properly tell me these were the Frontier Count's words!?

"Then why did it come to this? Suu, didn't you hear about it from Albert?"

“Yes, your excellency Zest. I haven’t heard about it.”

What’s this all about? *Onii-sama*?

All our eyes gathered on Albert *onii-sama*.

“Albert.....Did you properly.....accurately.....correctly explain to Suu.....leaving no space for interpretations?”

“.....Your excellency Zest. We are siblings! We understand each other even without enough words!”

“*Onii-sama*, do you understand what I’m feeling right now?”

*Onii-sama* turned around to face me.

Maybe because his feet got numb, he walked to me unsteadily.

“I do understand. You’re worried for your big brother, right?”

“No, I feel ashamed for my foolish big brother.”

“.....”

“Didn’t you hear me? I am too embarrassed to even call you my big brother.”

Stupid *aniki*<sup>2</sup>.....You brought me such unthinkable shame!

Your feelings got to me? As if you could ever do that! Stupid *aniki*!

This.....means death penalty for both of us.....

He didn’t correctly transmit an order, and because of a misunderstanding, a vassal caused an uproar about a wedding proposal.....

No matter how you look at it, this means capital punishment.....Mine sure was a short life.

“You see? In the end, it was nothing but Albert’s communication error.....Bea, will you please understand?”

“Urm.....Forgive me, Zest-*sama*.”

“Fufu, you wanted to monopolize me that badly? You’re so greedy, Bea.”

“Uuuugh, please forgive me.....”

“Of course I do! There’s no reason for me not to forgive you. But I do have to punish you. I know! Tonight, you’ll be my lap pillow.”

“Zest–*sama*? This won’t really be punishment, you know? I want to do it too.”

.....Woaa, such a sugary flirt.

Sonia–*sama*’s eye are blank.

It’s true that this was an atmosphere you didn’t want to be any part of.....It makes you want to die.

I emptied my mind trying to resist when the Frontier Count called out.

“Suu, I want to drink some tea. Do the preparations.”

“Is it all right for someone like me to prepare it?”

“Grandson-in-law–*dono* bowed to us and said, didn’t he? That Albert’s responsibilities are his responsibilities. In this case, we can’t say anything about it.”

“.....His excellency Zest did.....”

His excellency the duke.....A hero who didn’t budge an inch in front of that magical power.....

Lowered his head for us?

He lowered his head for the *kemonobito* who made ruckus about a false marriage proposal?

“*Onii-sama*, do it! The loyalty dance!”

*Onii-sama* nodded to my words.....My feelings reached him.

Please offer him the loyalty dance.

This is a dance native to the dog *kemonobito*.

It is a ritual through which the person who dances it, and all his descendants swear to devote their lives to the one they offered it to.

I have to make children soon.

For the sake of being helpful to his excellency Zest.

As long as this person is alive, the *kemonobito* people’s future is protected.

We can’t let this person die.

This person cares for us, a couple of *kemonobito* blockheads.

I want him to have a long life.

I hope his child will inherit his nature.

I pray that the child will inherit his excellency the duke's kind nature and his strong will.

For this reason, I will protect this person and his children.

I will always.....always be by their side to protect them.

I will do everything I can to protect them! Your excellency, this is my resolution!

Still.....

“Your excellency, duke Zest, this can't happen. It's madam's first childbirth. Please take all possible measures to prevent acting rashly.”

Really now, men are such..... As I thought, he might need a mistress!

His excellency was about to remove madam's clothes. He looked at me with a lamenting expression.....

You are not allowed to! Not even a little!

## Chapter 107: Dealing with Suu

“Suu, I want to directly hire you in my household. But first, I must confirm something.”

“Yes, anything.”

After that turmoil, the three of us were now having an interview in a room prepared for us.

By directly employing her, she'll serve into my household.

“Do you wish to get married?.....Don't make such an expression, Bea! It's not what you think.”

“.....Do you want Suu as your concubine?”

Even this Bea, who frowns at me, is quite adorable.

But it's not that.

“No, it's different. I want Suu to be out steward.”

“Ah, in this case I agree.”

“S....steward!? You want me to be a steward?”

Suu was extremely surprised by Bea's consent.

She had a mincing expression on her face.

“Master said.....I mean, I heard it from father-in-law. That Suu will make for the perfect steward.”

“If that's what father said, all I can do is agree.”

“Wait, it's not that! I am a *kemonobito* woman, you know? Someone like me to become a steward.....”

The steward in a duke's household has to attend to highly ranked nobles.

While I'm away, she might also have to get involved in politics.

In short, she will be the head of all the servants in the duke's household, and she'll be responsible for managing my assets.

It's easier to understand when I put it like this.

"Hm? Is there a problem with women stewards?"

"No, there is no such rule."

"Right? Bea, you'll feel safe too with her as our steward, right?"

"Yes, our duke's household has become like a big family."

"Urm.....I'm a *kemonobito* woman, you know?"

Yeah, she does have a complex for being a *kemonobito*!

It's all right, it's all right. You'll work on the domain that freed all the *kemonobito*.

I won't even let his Majesty complain about this.

And it's also for the sake of stability.

"This is my house. You can rest assured because I won't let anyone complain about it. However, stewards can't get married.....That's why I asked."

"That's right.....Won't it be a waste since Suu is so young?"

"No, it won't. This great duty.....I will gladly accept it. *Kemonobito* can give birth until late in life, after all. Until then, I'll devote myself to raising an exceptional successor."

Suu said and lowered her head.

She lifted her skirt a little and bent her knee; her shape was perfect.

I get why the elite maids in the Frontier Count's Household said that '*Suu is only lacking years and a husband*'.

I don't have a servant inside my mansion that I can trust.

But Suu is someone who will never betray me.

She can learn about her job as a steward little by little. What is important is the fact that she won't betray me.

"Good. It's settled then."

I felt relief as I informed them, but Suu asked me to wait.

“There is something I must decline first.”

She was still bowing as she said this.

“I don’t mind. Say it.”

“My maximum priority is Zest–*sama*. After him comes the child and the madam comes last. If you can agree to this, then I’ll accept the job.”

.....Shut! Bea’s releasing a dark aura.

“.....What do you mean by that?”

“Yes. The madam is replaceable. However, Zest–*sama* can’t be replaced. And the same goes for the child.”

“In short, if we are ever in danger.....”

“Zest–*sama* will be my utmost priority. If I can save Zest–*sama* by sacrificing the madam, I will do it.”

The room returned to silence; I had a feeling that only the sound of my trembling body could be heard.

Suu–*chan*, that reasoning of yours is a bit too extreme.....

Bea, what’s with that magical power?.....

Too.....scary! These two are too scary!!

The silence continued for what felt like an eternity, until Bea broke it.

“I will ask one more time. Zest–*sama* is your top priority no matter what, right?”

“Yes, there’s no mistaking it.”

“.....Zest–*sama*?”

“Yes ma’am!”

It couldn’t be helped that I jumped a little.

She startled me.

“Let’s make Suu our steward. I won’t let anyone complain about this.”  
Bea said and smiled, and all I could do was nod in agreement.

She hired her! Are you sure about this? Are you really sure about this?

This is great!.....This is great, right?

We finished the interview and started preparing for our travel to the imperial capital.

I wrote a letter to Katalina, and prepared some documents of the Duke's Household for Suu.

It's been a while since I last did office work.

The Frontier Count and my master were very pleased when they heard about Suu becoming my steward.

"The *kemonobito* Suu is a steward.....Grandson-in-law-*dono*'s domain is so peaceful. No people will rise against his excellency the duke when he cares this much for the *kemonobito*."

"Are you planning a rebellion or something, since you've created such a stronghold? The *kemonobito* people's hero-*dono*?"

They told me, with a dark laughter.

.....You're reading too much into this, you two.

"Will you not believe me if I say that I honestly hired her because she's Albert's little sister?"

"Hoho, such an amusing joke. When it comes to you, grandson-in-law-*dono*, this is not possible."

"That's because son-in-law-*dono* is extremely wary. I bet he considered both his domain's stability and the *kemonobito*'s traits before deciding upon doing this. Besides, he already asked his intelligence unit to investigate Suu and find out if she hides something. Right?"

"....."

"I praise you, grandson-in-law-*dono*."

"You've become quite a noble."

The two smiled happily.

The Frontier Count's Household which never ceases to smile.....It seems that

our relations will continue for much longer.

I remembered this exchange as I finished my office work.

And so, tomorrow we'll depart for the imperial capital.

Still, will Suu be all right?

I understand why she wants to prioritize me.....I'm the head of the household after all.

If I were to say, it was really inevitable, but strangely.....after that, Bea started to get along quite well with Suu.

I can't understand what women think.....

Or perhaps, I can't understand what nobles think.

Well, it's important to have a steward that will never betray you.

The vassals are important too, but I also have to protect my house.

I already feel pity for my children though; they'll go through a lot of hardships.

I put the documents in order and leaned against the chair.

My children, huh?.....I will have children in a different world.

They'll have a lot of troubles for being born as nobles, but at least they won't die unreasonable deaths like common people often do.

Until my children grow into adults, I will found an unshakable household and leave it to them.

I drank some tea as I made my resolve, all alone.

It's rather cold.....I rang the bell and called for a maid.

It was Suu who answered my call.

"Did you call, master?"

"Yeah. Prepare some tea."

She lowered her head gently. She then quickly finished the preparations.

"About tomorrow's trip to the imperial capital. How are the arrangements?"

“Yes. I prepared a thick *zabuton*<sup>1</sup> for madam. I thought it might be more comfortable for her.”

“I see. I leave her in your care.”

“As you wish.”

Suu prepared the tea before my eyes and was about to leave the room.

However, she stopped right in front of the door and turned around.

“Did you forget something?”

“No.....Master, about the matter with madam from last night.....”

“Can I do it if it’s only for a little!?”

I called out, finishing Suu’s phrase.

It can’t be helped, can it? I had to resist my urges for such a long time.

“Master, please use this.”

She said and left the room quite pleased with herself.

She left Bea’s panties on top of my desk.

.....In short, she wants me to take care of myself, by myself.

.....Is that so?

Maybe it was a mistake to make her my steward.....

## Chapter 108: Arriving at the Imperial Capital

“Zest, I’m sorry to have made you come to the imperial capital together with pregnant Beatrice.”

“Thank you for your kind words, your Majesty. I have to meet the guy. He’s Tsubaki’s marriage partner, after all.”

Once we arrived at the imperial capital, a secret meeting with his Majesty was already waiting for me.

I left Bea in our room.

The plan was to bring her along but.....

“Madam is tired. A meeting with his Majesty? Master alone is enough for that. His Majesty and the madam.....There’s no even a need to think about it, I will prioritize madam’s physical condition.”

Suu resolutely declared, so I went to the secret meeting by myself.

.....Well, she did say those words precisely because she worried about Bea.

“Is Beatrice all right? I won’t mind it if she can’t come to the audience either. She’s a pregnant duchess, no one will complain about it.”

“Thank you for saying this. It’s really helpful. As I thought, she really is tired.”

It’s useless.....I’m afraid I’ll burst out laughing if I keep thinking about his Majesty’s wig.....

I pinched my leg in a desperate attempt to fight this urge.

“Of course. Then, the audience tomorrow will be with you alone. Afterwards.....Right, in about two days that guy from the country of elves will arrive. She doesn’t need to show up at the ball, but she should be present when I introduce him to the relatives.”

“A ball?.....I should be escorting Tsubaki, shouldn’t I?”

A ball, really?.....Oh well, it is an important event for this country.

It must be done in a grand manner, in order for his Majesty to save face.....

“You must be present there. You also must be careful for that stupid prince.”

“.....Stupid prince.....you say?”

His Majesty frowned.

What? Is he that stupid? Give me a break, will you?

“I beg of you, don’t kill him, all right? He’s supposed to have escorts, but beware that last time when he visited, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who attended to him got so worn out that he ended up losing a lot of weight.....”

“.....I’m amazed that prince.....is still alive.”

“He’s part of the elven royal family after all. Since they have long lifespans, they treat him like a child even though he’s 20. Besides, it is very rare for elves to conceive.....so, you know.”

“He’s a long-awaited child.....you say?.....”

“Well, the elves always isolated themselves from the others. This time too, they came to visit our empire because of the *spiritification*.”

“I see.....That Ministry of Foreign Affairs was really unfortunate.”

“ “ \*sigh\*.....” “

Without thinking about it, my sigh and his Majesty’s synchronized.

This conversation had many hidden meanings.

First, the stupid prince.

Regardless of the secret meeting, for his Majesty to clearly call him a stupid prince, he must really be stupid.

Moreover, he asked me not to kill him?

This means that he’s such a fool that no one will complain if he gets killed.

Next, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

An isolated country like the country of elves has a Ministry of Foreign Affairs? This is such a laughing matter.

A useless employee, a messenger with the fake title of minister.....

It was his duty to inform the world that the elves celebrated the *spiritification*.

But it all ended up with a marriage proposal.....

That minister either got demoted or.....the capital punishment, if he were unlucky.

In short, as a counter-plan, this time quite an elf will accompany the prince.

This looks rather troublesome.....

“ “ *sigh*..... “ “

His Majesty and I exchanged glances and sighed again.....

“However, their higher ups agree to this marriage, right?”

“Precisely because of this. That stupid prince forcibly made a definitive offer, so they couldn’t possibly have said something to stop him, could they?”

“.....Yeah, it’s impossible.”

“Right?”

“In this case, they’ll make us refuse the offer.....or, they’ll make it look like there was a fault on our end.....”

“I’m afraid so. That’s why I entrusted you with Tsubaki’s training.”

“Education, your Majesty.”

“It’s all right. It was harsh training after all. It’s our responsibility that she became like that.....I do owe you one, Zest. Accept that the imperial family owes you.”

The Emperor stared at me with a serious look.

I never imagined that he would declare something like this.....Was the wig incident too effective?

I’ll give Toto some sweets later.

“I do understand. And I also think it was the right thing to do.”

“I can’t see you as an enemy. I am more or less selfish, but I do want you in my empire.”

The Emperor smiled, then he started to laugh wholeheartedly.

“Hahaha! For the time being, you should get some rest together with Beatrice. This is all the information I have about the elves. Do you have anything to say?”

The Emperor drank up his black tea and I answered him, after I thought about it for a short while.

“Right.....For a stranger like me, my wife Bea is the most important person in my life. If I can provide this wife of mine with happiness, then I will endure anything.”

“.....Understood. I won't forget these words.”

I bowed to the Emperor who nodded with a serious expression, then I returned to my room.

Considering his reaction, I guess he did understand the meaning behind my words.

I walked with a fast pace towards the room where Bea rested.

It was a room inside the palace, specially prepared for the dukes.

“Welcome back, master.”

“Suu, how's Bea feeling?”

“She's resting now. *Toto-sama* is together with her.”

“I see. In this case, prepare some tea for me.”

I sat down on the sofa and drank some of the tea that Suu prepared.

I can finally calm down.

“Master, how did the meeting with his Majesty go?”

Since Suu is my steward, I must explain things to her up to some degree.

She's like a private secretary.....She's making all sorts of adjustments to my schedule too.

“I will go alone to tomorrow's audience. In about two days the elves will arrive. Bea will only have to be present when introducing the imperial family's relatives, so it's all right. I will escort Tsubaki during the ball.”

“Understood. Then, I will make the appropriate arrangements. Master, do you have any other errands to do?”

Now that she asked me, I thought about it, but I didn’t have anything to do in particular.

“No, nothing in particular.”

“In this case, what about buying the madam a present? Did you offer her something lately?”

.....Come to think of it, I haven’t given her anything.

“I heard that pregnancy makes one anxious and irritated. I’m sure that if the madam would receive a present from master, she’ll be very happy.”

“You’re right.....Summon some merchants. I’ll look for something to give her.”

Suu.....She’s wonderfully considerate.

Precisely this.....This is what my household was lacking.

“As you wish. As for the merchants, I’ll ask for Tanya’s staff. We could make her a purveyor to the Duke’s Household.”

“I don’t mind. I leave it in your care.”

Suu lowered her head gracefully then left the room.

She’s simply wonderful.....Is it really all right for me to feel this relaxed?.....

What did I do up until now?

If I knew that a steward would make things this easy for me, I should’ve gotten one earlier.

I drank some more tea as I admired the amazing and excellent Suu.

Since I can’t go shopping in the town, I must summon the merchants here.

It’s rather bothersome to have a high social status.

I should sometimes go out undercover and have some fun.

I ate some cookies as I thought about this.

I had spare time now that Bea and Toto were asleep.

“Your excellency, duke Zest. I am bringing a message from Lamia–*sama*.”

My laid-back spare time was over.

Following the knocking, a woman's voice could be heard.

"Come in."

"Excuse me."

The maid entered the room, lowered her head, then informed me.

"Lamia-sama entrusted me with a letter for your excellency. Here it is."

I received the letter from the maid and confirmed the seal on its back.

Without a doubt, this was from my mother-in-law.

"I will look at it right away. Wait outside the room."

I waited for the maid to leave the room then opened the letter.

I looked at it and its contents made my head hurt.

*'Son-in-law-dono,*

*It's been a long time. How have you been?*

*I'm writing this in a hurry so I'll omit the greetings for now.*

*There are some nobles who are making secret arrangements to destroy Tsubaki's marriage, in order to weaken you.*

*I did destroy some of them, but I can't get rid of everyone involved.*

*You must come see me as soon as possible.....There's something I must consult with you about.*

*Tonight, you should come meet me in my room, alone. You don't want to worry Bea, do you?*

*You should come late at night, all right? And be careful not to be seen!*

*I can trust that maid so you can feel at ease. In case you can't meet me tonight, tell her that you'll send me a letter afterwards.*

*If you can come, then tell her that you understood.*

*Then, I'm counting on you!*

*Your kind mother-in-law'*

.....Kind? .....I'll just leave it at that.

I called out to the maid waiting outside and told her my reply.

“Please tell her that I understood.”

“As you wish. Then, please take this.”

What she handed over to me was a key to a room.

.....Mother-in-law, you want me to use this key to sneak inside a woman's room in the middle of the night?

This situation might cause all sorts of problems.....

I pray that nothing serious happens.....

## Chapter 109: Secret Talk with Mother-in-Law

“Suu, I’ll be away for a bit. However, I’m still here. Do you understand?”

“.....Certainly!”

Suu bowed her head, as I left her inside the room and walked down the corridor.

If it’s her, she’ll guess the meaning behind that.

In order for no one to find me, I erased my presence as I walked towards my mother-in-law’s room.

Bea and Toto are sound asleep, so it’s all right.

I made them an ample massage fused with healing magical power so they won’t wake up until morning.

Although it’s midnight, this is the inside of a palace.

I walked stealthily in order to pass the patrolling soldiers unseen.

I never thought that I would use detection magic at a time like this.....

I somehow managed to arrive safely to my mother-in-law’s room.

I left the corridor and entered a small passage.

This passage that didn’t have any carpets was a secret path used by the palace employees.

I used the key the maid gave me and slipped into the room, trying to make as little sound as possible.

“I waited for you, son-in-law—*dono*. Fufu, did Bea find out?”

“It’s been a long time, mother-in-law. Urm..... will you put something on please?”

Mother Lamia was relaxing in her room.

It was the middle of the night.....so she was wearing night-clothes.....

Some night-clothes that make your heart race.

“Oh my! You panic because of something like this?.....Won't Bea wear some for you?”

She let out a roguish laugh.

She wore a simple dress with a large opening around the chest region; it was quite an erotic view.....

The collaboration between her soft-looking raw materials and chest was wonderful.

Even though her age.....I'll just stop here; I don't want to die.

She finally put on an outer garment, as she told me to sit on the sofa.

I was already tired before getting into the main subject.

“I can't tease you too much cause you're too pitiable. Fufufu, it's been such a long time since a youngster had this reaction, so.....you know, I couldn't help it.”

A youngster?.....I'm in my middle thirties, you know?

If this is young, then my mother-in-law.....

“Son-in-law—*dono*? You don't have the liberty to think about unnecessary things.”

“Yes, mother-in-law.”

Even though you started it.....

“Good! Now.....The nobles are planning to disrespect the elf prince and make you and Bea fight each other. I want to kill them as fast as possible, but this will cause a big commotion.....If we succeed, then everything's good.....but if we don't”

“I'll lose my dignity as a noble. They'll say that someone like me isn't suitable for being a duke.....or something along these lines?”

“In order to prepare for this, they want you to accept a concubine. And it's not only you, son-in-law-dono. They want Bea.....to accept one too.”

“.....If Bea leaves me and makes her own duke's household, my power will weaken considerably.....or something like this?”

So, they didn't give up yet.

With diplomacy as an excuse, they want to split up my duke's household.

Because both Bea and I received the duke's title after all.

It's not like their plan is impossible.....

"The nobles in the imperial capital are making light of me, aren't they?"

"They're all complete idiots who take peace for granted. If you get the chance, you can slice some of them off. His Majesty won't complain if they're lower than viscounts."

This was quite a dangerous talk, but for me, as a high class noble, it was a dreadful situation.

If I continue to allow them to make light of me, they'll take advantage of it.

I must implant some fear into them.....

"Understood. Let's give them a little warning then."

"I got the perfect idiot for this. I left him alive precisely for this situation. Take your time and do what you need."

You made a list of candidates?

You are such a frightening mother-in-law.

As one would expect from the Frontier Count's daughter.....

I made a small pause to take a breath, then drank some black tea.

Since there were no maids around, my mother-in-law prepared this tea.

".....Ahem! Ack! Blech!"

I instinctively spout it out.

Gross.....Hopelessly gross.....

As one would expect from Bea's mother; her awful cooking seems to be hereditary.

Still, how can one even prepare such a gross tea?

"Oh my! Son-in-law-*dono*, are you all right?"

“Blech.....I’m.....I’m all right.”

I covered my mouth with my hand so the damage I received was little.

I took out a handkerchief and quickly wiped my mouth dry.

“.....Such a strange handkerchief you got there, son-in-law–*dono*.”

She looked at me like she was looking at garbage.

Oh, this is kind of nostalgic; she looks just like old Bea.....

Wrong, wrong! What’s this? Why is she looking at me like that?

My mother-in-law’s glance was focused on my hand.

She was looking at the handkerchief I used to wipe the tea.

.....It was a pair of panties.

“Son-in-law–*dono*? That handkerchi.....”

“.....Dear me!? Why is such a thing in my hand!?”

Even for me, this excuse was stupid.

Still, this was my limit.

A noble who walks around concealing his wife’s panties.....would normally be finished.

To say nothing of showing them to his mother-in-law; there’s nothing more I can do but kneel down and beg for forgiveness.

“Those.....are the underwear I left back home, you know? And now you used them right in front of me.....Don’t say! Son-in-law–*dono*!?”

Let me correct it.

There’s nothing more I can do but commit seppuku <sup>1</sup>.

A son-in-law who carries around his mother-in-law’s panties.....Even without thinking about it, this means I’m finished.

“I....I am your mother-in-law, you know? This is.....To Bea this is.....I know! Because Bea is pregnant you gave in to temptation! You’re not serious about it, I’m sure!”

Confused about this situation, mother-in-law's face got bright red.

Similarly to her, I was in a confused state as well.

“Wa.....please wait! Mother-in-law! This is different! I used them without knowing they were yours, so it's all right!”

“.....I know, that's the only thing you can say now.”

“It's different! I didn't know, so it's all right!”

“I...I see! You didn't know, right? It's safe then!”

After that, an unproductive conversation of repeated assurances that everything was all right, lasted for two hours.

I finally exhausted myself and gave up.

My mother-in-law was under the impression that I lied in order to deceive her.

All I could do now was to bring Suu here to explain her what happened.

.....This in itself was hell, but it was still better than becoming a panties thief.

She retrieved her panties, stained with tea, and left her seat.

Today's secret meeting was over, but it appears that I'll receive a letter.

Well, we couldn't have a fair and square conversation after all.....Oh dear!

I somehow passed through these hours when all I could think about was running away.

It was the first time I received such a mental blow.

A short time later, mother-in-law returned with a letter.

“You have inside a list with all the nobles you can erase without problems and today's main topic. You should only check it once you get to your room! All right? You must check it right away!”

The main topic? Did some other major incident happen?

Still, mother-in-law seemed to have received a mental blow as well.

Her face looked utterly exhausted..... Misunderstandings sure are

frightening.

“Understood. Mother-in-law, next time I’ll bring Suu along.”

“?.....Suu? Right, understood.”

We both felt awkward and couldn’t let our eyes meet.

I gave up for now and decided to go back.....I greeted my mother-in-law, then dragged my tired feet to my own room.

Once I returned to my room, I opened the letter.

I really wanted to go sleep now. But the panties thief thingy stuck to my mind.

I can’t possibly fall asleep.....I feel like crying.

As mother-in-law said, the first sheet was a list of nobles.

So, I can kill these guys without any problems, huh?.....

I can’t go slashing at them all of a sudden though; I must first entangle them before cutting them off.

As for the second sheet, it contained something that made my confused head clear up in an instant.

*‘Because he felt danger for his life, the elf prince is putting on an act.*

*His Majesty is suspicious about this too, but because he has no positive proof, he didn’t tell you anything about it.*

*The prince seems to want to speak with you in private, so make sure to make some time for it.’*

Again.....the problems are multiplying.....

So, if he doesn’t act like an idiot, he’ll get killed?

In this case, the elf accompanying him this time.....That guy is suspicious.

Was their objective to kill both the stupid prince and the fake Ministry of Foreign Affairs last time?

And because they failed, this time, they’re making a move by themselves.....

I burned the second sheet of the letter.

It would be dangerous for someone to see it after all.

I stared at the burning letter, placed on a silver tray.

I was worried about the stupid prince, but a prince who acts like an idiot in order not to get killed.....is even more troublesome.

I checked to see if the letter burned completely, then inspected the insides of the envelope once again.

Having done so, I found a small wrap inside it.

There was something else inside too.....Just give a break, will you?

I opened the small package.

It was something wrapped in paper, about the size of my palm.

It was as small as a cigarettes box, but half its thickness; I unwrapped it.

Inside were a note and a piece of cloth.

*'Son-in-law-dono, this is the last time since it's way too embarrassing!'*

Mother-in-law.....I really don't need your panties.....

All I could do at that moment was burst out crying.....

## Chapter 110: Terrifying Nobles

“It’s hopeless.....I’m done for.....”

I took the glass on the table and gulped it down at once.

It was an expensive wine, but I couldn’t taste it at all.

I was drinking out of despair.

Perhaps.....It was a handkerchief with an original design!

I thought about it and checked the handkerchief again. It was useless though.

This handkerchief had three holes and it was made of lace.....

The material between the two smaller holes was thicker.

No matter how you looked at these, they were still panties.

“It helps a little that they weren’t used, but.....”

Still, nothing really helped at this point, that’s what I felt.

But only for the fact that they were not being used before, I thought I was fortunate.

I poured some more wine and gulped it down.

I can’t keep going if I don’t drink.

By the time I opened the third bottle of wine, I heard a knock on my door.

“Who’s the...re? Come in.”

“Excuse m.....Were you drinking? I will bring some snacks.”

She came inside at the perfect moment when I pawed at the ground. She froze in place.

I was so drunk I couldn’t speak.....

It’s been a long time.....since I last drank this much.

“Suu! I don’t want snacks. I don’t need yoww!”

“Master, you are quite drunk.....Water. Please drink this.”

“Water? I don’t want watter, I want shake!”

“Yes, yes, I will go prepare some. But first, drink this, all right?”

She pinched my nose and made me drink water directly from the water jug.

Haha, it’s funny. It’s like I’ve become a glass or something.

“Wow, master. You’re amazing! Come now, drink some more!”

“Buhaaaa! Really? I can drink a lot more, you know?”

And so, because Suu forced all that water down my throat, I was starting to sober up.

Still, her skills were so vivid.

When I came to my senses, she loosened up my belt and put me to sleep on the sofa.

“.....Sorry, Suu. I drank too much.”

“It’s all right. Sometimes it helps change your mood. Besides, that cur.....I mean, my brother. I’m used to taking care of him in these situations.”

She said and placed a wet towel on my forehead.

Ah.....This feels so good.....

It would’ve been perfect if she didn’t call me a cur.

After a small break, my mind felt refreshed.

What I drank before was not normal water, was it?

I never woke up so quickly after a drunkenness like that. Maybe she put some medicinal plants in that water.

I put away the towel and stood up.

I wanted to take Suu to my mother-in-law’s room as quickly as possible.

“Suu, I have something to talk.....”

“Master.....Is it about this?”

An expressionless Suu was holding the panties in her hands, expanding them.

An expressionless beauty is extremely scary.

An expressionless plain girl is comedy material, but when a beautiful girl does this, well, that's horror material.

"The...the truth is....."

I knelt down in front of Suu, who was still expanding those panties, and explained her the situation.

I didn't know why I knelt down.

My body moved on its own.

I finished explaining to the expressionless Suu about what happened, while she continued to tamper with those panties.

I felt like an underwear thief explaining himself to the victim.

".....Master, excuse me but I have to say this."

She prompted me to sit on the sofa, then she started to talk.

"First, master, you are taking Lamia-*sama* too lightly. That person is a true noble. Most likely these are teaching materials."

She fluttered the panties then continued.

"Lamia-*sama* gave you these in order to train you, master. What if these panties didn't belong to Lamia-*sama*, but to some other noble woman? What would you do then?"

"Training.....Another noble woman?....."

"It's not impossible. Your weakness is precisely your kindness, master. And when the other party is a woman, it's just too easy to see this."

"....."

I can't really answer her back.

"If you're a noble, the underwear is much less important when you could have naked women waiting for you. Besides.....did you examine these panties properly?"

"N...No....."

"Please look. Can you see that this part here is rather thick? Most likely inside

is.....”

She said and tore the panties off.

“As I thought, it’s a secret message. Master.....take a look.”

I opened the memo she gave me.

‘*Did it surprise you? You can’t let your guard down, all right?*’

.....It’s settled. This was all my mother-in-law’s training.

Because I panicked too much, she saw right through me that I have no immunity to women.

My master’s training was hell.....But my mother-in-law’s training was mental.

Still, I’m glad I received this training from her!

This dark side of nobles, I will never get it if they don’t teach me.

At any rate, my stomach started to hurt.....Geez!

“Master, you learned something from this lesson.....You have to properly check things for secret messages, you must get used to treating women, and, lastly, you should rely on me more.”

“.....You’re right. I’ll do just that. Ah.....I feel relieved from the bottom of my heart.”

“Fufu, that and one more thing.....You must never take the Frontier Count’s Household lightly. That *Lamia-sama* would never give you her own underwear.”

She said, then placed the panties on a tray and burnt them.

.....Err, *Suu-san*? Your face looks scary.

“When did it happen? How comes *Lamia-sama* got her hands on my underwear.....”

Eh? These panties were *Suu*’s!?

Then, I might have wanted them.

That old hag’s.....I mean, I don’t need that older sister of a mother-in-law’s panties. But if they belonged to a beautiful woman, then the story is different.

“Anyway, the issue has been settled. Madam found out about this too, right?”

He? Madam as in Bea? Where did she??

“Do you need anything from me? Good morning Zest–*sama*.”

(Good morning, Dad. You were found out!)

Bea and Toto came here from the bedroom.

It seems that she observed the situation first..... Bea could deceive me, but Toto is just too frank.

.....Great. Please don't say that you wanted those panties.

Bea's face turned completely red and she informed us, as if nothing happened whatsoever.

“Come now, Zest–*sama*. Let's go eat.”

“You're right. Suu, please take care of it.”

(What will we have for breakfast? Toto likes salad!) “I'll go prepare it right away.”

Suu lowered her head gracefully and left the room.

This girl really is excellent.....I've got myself a wonderful steward.

I admired Suu once again as I drank some more water.

Now that I sobered up, I was quite hungry.

I'll eat with all my might!

“By the way, Zest–*sama*?”

I was in an euphoric mood because of the upcoming breakfast. Bea smiled at me.

“About my mother's underwear.....you might say that I understood.”

(Ah, I must go to the toilet.)

Toto disappeared, as if she ran away from a dark and cold magical power.

Toto, you have some amazing danger sensing abilities.

Take daddy with you!

“In the first place.....why did have those panties? Fufufu, it’s strange, isn’t it?  
Let’s take our time and talk, will you?”

“Please wait. Suu! Suu did it!”

I didn’t do anything wrong! I didn’t do anything wrong!

I squeezed this interior desperate shout to death, and knelt down for the  
second time today.....

## Chapter 111: How to Use the Merchants

“Master, the merchant arrived. What should I do?”

I was finally set free after I frantically explained everything to Bea. That’s when Suu came to ask me this.

When I think about it, wasn’t it Suu’s fault that I had to go through all of this, since she’s the one who gave me those panties in the first place?

“I’ll meet with them right away. By the way Suu, because of you I had to go through something terrible.....”

“I am really sorry for this. Next time, I’ll make sure to prepare madam’s *things*.”

“.....No, it’s not that. Bea would scold me again!”

“Eh? Why is that? Isn’t it natural to want to smell the scent of someone you love?”

I looked at the bewildered Suu, at which point I myself got astonished.

“Perhaps, that’s how it is for *kemonobito*? It is different for humans, you know?”

“Wha!? Is that so!?”

“I see.....I finally understand. I don’t want to discriminate against any races, but it’s like that, you know..... there’s a difference between what each race considers as common sense.”

“I’m surprised.....I really believed that humans felt the same way. Especially Sonia–*sama*.”

.....I found out about my master’s preferences in such a nonchalant way.

“It’s nothing really special about it. It’s just something men want. However, women hate it. You must keep silent about my master’s matter.”

“I did learn something. Then, master, shall we go?”

As I continued to wonder about the gap in common sense between humans

and the *kemonobito* race, we walked towards the room where the merchant was waiting.

From now on, I have to closely examine all the differences between the races, so that this won't happen again.

Now that I think about it, maybe Albert's dance had some sort of meaning too.

I thought about it as I followed behind Suu.

The drifting floral scent was quite pleasant.

She smells really good.....

"I am glad to meet you, your excellency, duke Zest. I am Kalfa and I work under Tanya."

It appears that Suu's scent made me go on a small trip.

But there's no time for this.....

"Kalfa, I'm looking forward to working with you."

"Yes. I prepared some items that might suit your excellency's taste."

The woman started to busily arrange the goods in front of me.

Is she in the later half of her 20s? She kept her red hair in a ponytail and she seemed like a lively person.

Her eyes looked like two big chestnuts and she had the characteristics of a beautiful woman.

"This magical tool is the latest of its model....."

Kalfa introduced me several items but none of them were suitable for Bea.

She was now making a hot explanation about the fire power and the mobility property of a latest type magical tool that I really didn't care about.

"Kalfa, can I ask you something?"

"Ye.....yes sir! What is it, your excellency?"

Kalfa was startled by my sudden interruption and put down the magical tool.

“.....Your shop.....doesn't sell well, am I right?”

“!?”

As I thought, I was spot on.

The stupefied Kalfa turned bright red.

“Damn you Tanya, you want me to do something about this?”

“Er....errr.....your excellency, please take this.”

She handed over a letter from Tanya.

“Tanya told me that your excellency might say this. And if this was the case, she said to give this letter to your excellency.....”

Kalfa looked apologetic as she explained. I asked Suu to prepare some tea as I read the letter.

“Sigh.....”

I involuntarily let out a sigh.

This is what Tanya wrote in her letter.

That I should think of Kalfa as the person in charge of the imperial capital's affairs, instead of Tanya herself.

However, despite her having the right abilities, Kalfa is devastatingly bad at doing business.

If she is to become the person in charge of the capital's affairs, she will increasingly get in contact with nobles.

Could I do something about it? Or something like this.

Still, this wasn't bad for me.

If I train Kalfa to be useful to me, I'll have more chess pieces who'll send me information from the imperial capital.

Besides, Tanya will owe me one too.....

She really put some thought into this.

“Kalfa, are you bad at doing business?”

“Yes, it’s as you said. I can’t do it right no matter how I try.”

She was so dispirited that even her ponytail looked wilted.

“It can’t be helped since Tanya asked for this favor. I’ll teach you the secret business techniques of the Duke’s Household.”

“The secret techniques of the Duke’s Household!? To teach someone like me such incredible mysteries!”

“Yes. However, these secret techniques can’t be taught carelessly. You need to be prepared for this too.”

“Be.....prepared?”

Kalfa hid her chest in a flash.

You’re wrong.....Not this type of preparedness.....

Suu too, stop staring at me like that!

“Once I teach you these techniques, you’ll become the Duke’s Household’s cooperator. You’ll have to help out with various things.”

“Cooperator.....”

“I mostly live on my domain so I don’t really receive much information from the imperial capital. And Tanya will move on my domain soon. You do understand, right?”

“I see. That’s why you need a cooperator.”

She seemed to have understood.

Since Tanya introduced me to this girl, it means that she also had her consent about this.

Tanya herself decided to become my ally and work as the Duke’s Household’s purveyor.

That’s why she sent Kalfa to me.....To make her our strategic link to the imperial capital.

If her employer, Tanya asked her to do this, Kalfa’s answer would be...

“As you wish. I’ll be in your care from now on.”

This was the only answer she could give.

At least she does understand this.

“Good. So, you do understand these types of bargaining..... Then, sales should be rather easy for you.”

“It’s not.....I can’t seem to.....”

And so, it was decided that I will teach Kalfa the fundamentals of trade.

She had to learn how to bargain with nobles and how to do it with common people.

And also.....in a sense, the way you talk as a business person is an art in itself.

Normally, her employer Tanya would teach her these things, but since I’m a noble and a stranger from a different world, I am better suited to do so.

This was the moment when I thought how great it was to have worked in the sales business.

But, this was a job that any noble could do in this world.....The fact that I was a stranger was maybe a coincidence.

“Kalfa, you think too much about complicate matters. In short, it’s really simple.”

“I’m thinking too much?”

For the time being, after I teach her the basics, I will train her little by little.

“You give too much explanations. First, you must concentrate on making your customer talk to you.”

“The customer?.....”

“It is quite tiring to listen to people’s talks. Think about when you chat happily about something for a while, and when you listen to Tanya’s preach for the same period of time. Figuring out which one is more tiring is easy, right?”

“Indeed.....”

“It’s the same with customers. To say nothing of nobles, who are frantic about not losing too much time listening to other’s stories. You get unnecessarily

tired.”

“That’s why my customers……”

She appeared to have a clue about this.

Kalfa had a complicated expression on her face.

“First, you’ll have to make your customers chat happily with you. And then you’ll have to search for keywords in their speech. What do they want, what’s their budget, when do they need the things, who is the decision-maker, and also……why do they need them. Did you look up for these things until now?”

“……No.”

“You have to at least know these things, otherwise your customers will take advantage of you in a business discussion. You start with this first.”

I drank some tea that Suu prepared.

Yes, this is delicious……Is there a trick behind it?

When I prepare it myself, it doesn’t taste like this.

“I see……Thank you very much, your excellency. Please take care of me from now on!”

Kalfa bowed her head and her ponytail swayed in a vigorous manner.

It appears that she comprehended my advice.

This is very good.

It’s the most basics of basics but it seems that this world hasn’t written anything about it.

In this case, I’ll take my time and teach her everything……There’s a long way ahead……

Because it got rather late, I sent her back for today.

I was still going to be in the imperial capital for a while longer.

I also had time to choose the right present for Bea.

I saw Kalfa off after she collected her items then I returned to the office that was prepared for the Duke’s Household inside the palace.

Now, I had to finish my work, after I lost so much time today.

I looked at the mountain of letter on my desk.

This....I must answer to them all.....

About the time I cast the fifth session of healing magic on my right hand, the mountain of letters vanished completely.

I accomplished it.....It was a long fight.

The harshest of them all were the love-letters from various nobles' daughters.....

If they said something like '*I like you*' or '*I love you*', I might've thought they were cute.

It was really painful to decipher their unintelligible metaphorical expressions that didn't make any sense at all.

Wasn't this un indirect form of harassment.....?

When I looked outside, it was already pitch dark.

In the end, I haven't done anything satisfactory today.

Now that I'm a noble.....I see how tiring it is.

I would rather resign than continue to do this.....

I was massaging my aching shoulders, when Suu entered the office.

"Master, an important love-letter arrived. Please check it."

That's enough.....No more love-letters.....

That's what my eyes were saying when I took the letter and looked at its seal.

It was a crown with a tree passing right in the middle of it and a bow with a flower placed at its bottom.

This was the seal of the elves' royal family.....

It appears that the tiring work as a noble is far away from ending.

## Chapter 112: The Prince's Plan

"Master, please check this."

Suu held out the letter.

I received and opened the letter from the elven royal family.

.....I don't want to read it though.

*'Forgive me for sending this letter out of a sudden.*

*I sincerely wish to talk to duke Zest, one of the empire's leaders.*

*There's still a bit of time until I arrive, but once I'm there I'll wait for the opportunity.*

*At this point, the only one I can rely on.....is the hero who achieved spiritification.*

*Please, I'm begging you, meet with me.'*

As I thought, I didn't want to read this.

And because he didn't write his name, I had an even worse presentment.

He wrote it in a hurry and only included the minimum necessary.....That's the impression this letter gave.

"Master, should we dispose of it?"

".....Right. Burn it."

Suu probably guessed the nature of this letter by looking at my complexion, and quickly destroyed the letter.

Dangerous letters can only be burned.

As I thought.....

Does he have a maid he trusts in the elven country.....to send him his letters?

"It seems that Tsubaki's husband is not like the rumors say. He's not stupid.....he's a big idiot."

“My goodness. Master’s troubles are increasing.”

Suu said and grinned.

“You look happy, Suu.”

“Yes. Because he’s a big idiot. I’m looking forward to what extent.”

Just to be sure, she seemed to understand the fact that I called him a big idiot on purpose.

*‘The elf prince is not stupid. He’s a big idiot who pretends to be stupid in order to scheme something in a foreign country.....In short, he’s not an ordinary person.’*

This was the meaning behind it.

“Well, he’s my cute Tsubaki’s husband. Once he arrives, I want to have a long family talk with him.”

“Yes, I will make the necessary arrangements.”

Suu lowered her head gracefully then left the room.

This reason should work as an official stance.....It all depends now on his reason for playing stupid.

I drank up all the tea that became completely cold.

“Foster father! It’s been a long time. This is Tsubaki!”

I finally got a moment of peace, when my door opened with such vigor that I thought it would break.

Tsubaki entered the room.....She saluted flatly, as usual.

“Long time no see, Tsubaki. Let’s take out time as family, shall we?.....You guys can leave. Someone from the Duke’s Household will take care of the rest.”

Hearing my words, the maids accompanying Tsubaki left the office.

Suu entered as to change places with them.

“Tsubaki, it’s all right.”

“Yes sir! Foster father, what is?”

“Suu, are we clear?”

“Yes. There are no problems.”

It's not like I didn't prepare for this, unlike before.

That's because I expected Tsubaki to come see me.

“Tsubaki, playing along is good. What are you and prince planning to do?”

“.....”

“Was I wrong?.....Then, did the prince ask you to do this? He thought about the plan and you cooperated?”

“Foster father, I don't understand what you're talking about!”

“Young lady, there is no need to be cautious of me. I am the Duke's Household's steward.”

Tsubaki kept silent as she alternately looked at me and Suu.

“You knew the prince from before meeting me. However, you couldn't oppose his Majesty's orders. That's why you approved of our marriage.....Or maybe, because of my age, you knew that we would get engaged first.....How much of this was the prince's reading?”

“Err.....urm.....”

“Because of certain reasons, the prince must act like a fool otherwise he gets killed. You knew about this and decided to help him. However, I unexpectedly appeared.....Am I wrong?”

“.....Foster father.....you know this much.....”

“An unexpected fiancé..... Besides, rejecting him was too much of a risk. So, the prince thought about this plan. The stupid prince would propose to you and you would act like a stupid girl, right? You shouldn't take me lightly, you know?”

Tsubaki didn't answer.

She trembled, her face ghastly pale.

“Tsubaki, you're a daughter of the Duke's Household. I want to protect you as much as possible. However, there are things I can't do if I don't know what's going on, right?”

“Waa, waaah”

“I’m not angry. I see, the one you were in love with was the prince, wasn’t it? I will grant you this wish. You can be happy!”

“Waaaaaaaaaah, fa.....fatheer!”

With a dripping nose, Tsubaki clung to me and cried.

Because of her loud crying, Bea showed up too.

Still, Tsubaki cried for what seemed like forever.

“Did you calm down? You really surprised me.”

(Ahaha, look at Tsubaki’s nose! It’s dripping!) Tsubaki stopped crying after about an hour.

Bea wiped her nose clean with a handkerchief.

.....A real handkerchief, all right?

“I never thought that foster father would find out about this..... I will tell you everything.”

Tsubaki, her eyes red, started to talk as she drank some tea.

She met the elf prince about the time she was five.

Even then, the prince was famous for being a stupid prince. He ended up visiting the capital several times for some sort of exchange between the isolated elven country and the empire.

Well, the empire produced a grand hero, the first generation of summoned stranger.

They couldn’t ignore the empire, but they couldn’t send a simple messenger either.

However, if it were for the stupid prince, he could be killed by mistake and no one would complain.....It appears that the royal family used him because of his title.

And so, the two of them met and fell in love.

.....Is this prince all right, falling in love with a 5 years old little girl?

It happens to Japanese people too.....But I can't give you an example of it because it's too indecent.

The elf prince and the empire's princess.

There was no problem with their social status, so they kept in touch through letters.

The stupid prince was different than the rumors portrayed him. He was very kind and affectionate towards Tsubaki.

When they thought about getting married.....I showed up.

After that, it happened like I predicted. The stupid prince wrote her a letter in which he gave her instructions about how to act.....

"I am sorry for everything I've done until now. I lied.....and I....."

Tsubaki's tears began to overflow again.

"It's all right. You tried your best until now.....It was harsh, wasn't it? All this time, what was his Majesty looking at, I wonder....."

Bea wiped her tears tenderly, then hugged her close.

It seems that she was caught in a dream of love rather than being deceived.

.....But for the prince to wholeheartedly fall in love with a little girl...I can't seem to consent to this.

Yet, I'm too afraid to oppose them so I'll just keep it to myself.

"Zest-sama. We'll do something about Tsubaki's matter, won't we!?"

"Yes!"

I can't oppose Bea when she's clad in a pitch black magical power, smiling sweetly like a holy mother.

I reflexively answered with 'Yes'.

Tsubaki exhausted herself from all the crying and Bea took her to sleep.

It's no wonder.

Tsubaki was still a middle school student after Japan's standards.

And yet she desperately worked hard to fulfill her obligations as a noble.....and as a member of the imperial family.

This is intolerable.....The royalty, that is.

They made a child go through such hardships.

I had to kill this rage, that I couldn't let out, with alcohol.

Damn it! I can't even feel its taste.

"Master, please eat something too at least. Otherwise, it'll be like yesterday."

Suu came in bringing some snacks.

She's right.....I haven't eaten tonight.

"Yeah, I'll do that. Suu, keep me company for a while."

"Yes, as you wish."

I drank my wine as I ate some cheese and crackers.

Suu prepared herself a glass and started to drink too.

"Master, nobles have duties."

".....I know that."

"Commoners can't live an extravagant lifestyle. Theirs is a life with low safety."

"Yeah, I already know that."

"In this case, please make up your mind."

"I know."

I drank up all the wine in my glass and poured some more.

"I know that it's tough. That's why I'm here. Please rely on me, master."

Suu's eyes were fixed on me and I could feel her firm determination.

She's right. We'll have to do our best and try everything we can.

I do have comrades who'll help me after all.

"Thank you. I will rely on you."

“This makes me happy. My loyalty is to you only.....for a lifetime.”

She stood up quickly, bowed her head, lifted her skirt and bent her knee.

My faithful.....my precious steward continued like this.

“Please use this. The smell has already infiltrated.”

She held out a handkerchief with three beautiful holes.....

Ah, she was talking about this? .....Right.....

This steward.....She’s probably no good after all.....

## Chapter 113: Study Meeting with Kalfa

“Your excellency, duke Zest, I am counting on you today. This is a small present for you.”

“Kalfa, you don’t have to be this considerate. Suu, prepare some tea.”

“As you wish.”

The meeting with the elf prince was still to come.

For now, while I still had some time, I decided to train Kalfa.

It was something like a study meeting.

“Now, last time I only explained you the basics. Today you’ll put that to practical use.”

“Yes! Please!”

Kalfa’s pony tail swayed energetically.

She felt more like a neighborhood girl rather than a young lady.

She was a very friendly person.

“Even though I said it’s going to be the applied version of what I taught you last time, it’s not really that different. You’ll improve the accuracy of your standard questions and I’ll give some piece of advice. That’s all.”

“I understand the questions part, but what about the advice?”

“It’s about ‘*How can I become the customer’s ally?*’ during the conversation.”

“Become the customer’s ally.....?”

Kalfa blinked her big eyes with surprise.

It appears that she didn’t get it.

“Right.....For example, I want to purchase some goods. I want some magical tool but I’m worried that my wife will scold me for it. Let’s go with these circumstances.”

“This setup happens rather frequently.....I do remember this.”

“How are you going to sell me the magical tool?”

“Right.....Should I talk about the magical tool’s performance and price?”

Haha, as I thought, she went for this.

This is a mistake I made lots of times when I was a rookie salesman.

“Don’t sell anything to such a customer.”

“.....What?”

“As I said, you don’t sell anything to such a customer.”

“Ehh?”

Hahaha, she’s confused now, isn’t she?

Kalfa was so astonished, she looked funny.

“If I am to tell you a bit more, you won’t sell them anything for now. Do you understand?”

“I won’t sell anything for now.....For now?”

“If the customer is worried about his wife, why won’t you persuade her together with your customer? If you ask the customer if sending her jewels, clothes or flowers would work, he’ll answer you. First, you’ll crush his worries.”

“.....I see! This way I’ll become his ally.”

She finally understood.

If she knows about her customer’s worries, all becomes much easier.

*‘I’ll help you solve your problems.’*

These killing words are very useful.

“Are you doing business in order to sell goods? When a noble is your customer, if he or she likes the goods, you can sell them anyway. What you have to do is to enter the nobles’ pockets, right?”

“You’re saying that I shouldn’t get fooled by an immediate profit.”

She’s quite an excellent pupil.

It seems that Kalfa realized what she needed in order to manage her business

properly.

“You don’t really have to present your goods. Your job is to make the nobles buy from you.”

“Yes, your excellency. I won’t forget these words!”

“Also.....Suu, you can bring that.”

“Certainly, master!”

Suu reacted quickly to my words and brought me a box.

“Kalfa, accept this. In case you find yourself in hopeless situation, use it. You heard me? Don’t hesitate to use it, all right?”

“Yes.....your excellency! This is...!”

The object inside the box.

It was a dagger with the Duke’s Household’s family crest.

“I think that everything is going to be all right, but we need precaution just in case.”

“Still, a dagger with your family crest.....”

That’s right. I obviously know this.....the meaning behind a dagger with my family crest.

The owner of the dagger is regarded as an affiliate of the household using that crest.

And if you’re found to use a counterfeit, your entire family will be massacred.

In short, the dagger symbolizes this: *‘If you pick a fight with this person, I’ll be your opponent instead!’*

“I’m planning to give one to Tanya as well, so don’t worry about it. That’s just how much I’m expecting from you. Hold on tight.”

“I...I respectfully accept it!”

With trembling hands, she received the box as she bowed her head.

Since there are no idiots who wish to openly pick a fight against the Duke’s Household, I felt relieved for the moment.

Well, once she uses it, she'll be found out that she works for the Duke's Household, so she won't be able to gather information for me any longer.

Even so, I don't want to abandon her.

"This is your trump card. But if you feel that you are in danger, you must use it immediately. Then, come to my domain! Understood?"

"I will definitely live up to your excellency's expectations!"

Kalfa held the box tightly in her arms as she stared at me reassuringly.

"I do have expectations, but since your death would mean trouble for me, I gave you this. Don't misunderstand me, all right?"

"Certainly, your excellency! I'm very grateful for your consideration."

After this, our study meeting continued until evening, with me teaching her various minor details.

Kalfa seemed to have understood how it worked, as she absorbed my words rapidly.

This way it will be all right to leave the information gathering to her.

It's been a while since I last talked this much and I was rather tired.

When I'm on my domain, I don't receive any information from the imperial capital.

Am I bit too enthusiastic about having a valuable someone to gather info for me?

I sat on the sofa in my office and rubbed my shoulders.

Ah, it hurts.....I'm an *ossan*<sup>1</sup> after all.

I used some healing magic as I took a mouthful of tea.

Shall I go to sleep early today? While I thought about this, I heard the door opening with a clink.

"Albert?.....What's wrong?"

"Your excellency, you seem tired. How about this? Once in a while, secretly going out in the city is great for a change of mood."

Albert is the guards' commanding officer so he doesn't need to knock when entering my office.

He's also allowed to enter my sleeping chambers without authorization.

Some way or another I do trust.....this cur.

"The city, huh?.....Do you know a good place or something?"

"Yes sir! The black knights will escort us as well."

We grinned and exchanged glances.

He's right. Once in a while, I have to reward my subordinates too!

"Good, Albert! It's been a long time so I might as well go with you!"

"Let's go then!"

And so, we decided to go out tonight and make merry.

Even the generals are going rampant.

Why shouldn't the duke do so as well.

Thus, accompanied by my rascals, we arrived at that particular shop.

*'Touch Me Bar – Fluffy Paradise'*

Or so it's called.

"Damn you, Albert.....You have quite the taste."

"Kah.....Zest-sama, it's the first time I'm coming here."

"Albert *aniki*<sup>2</sup> likes the *'Flat Chest Academy'* after all."

"Yeah, that really astonished me."

"Albert-san, you truly love them small."

.....Albert, you're a noble, you know?

Even if you're doing this to seize the soldiers' sympathy.....you're too much.....

Albert turned away to avoid my glare, then he informed.

"Now, let's go inside! The Paradise is waiting for us!"

He forcefully silenced the black knights and we entered the fluffy paradise.

“Oh my, such handsome men! You’re my type so I’ll take good care of you.”

“You’re silent.....Are you perhaps extremely shy?”

“Ufufu, look, you can touch me, you know?”

What came into sight were leg hairs, chest hairs.....and arm hairs, some fluffy *ossans* wearing women’s clothes.....

“Where’s that idiot Albert!! I’ll kill him with my bare hands!!!”

“You’re yelling.....But I don’t hate it, you know?”

“He’s a very shy person, isn’t he?”

“Oh my, you must sit down.”

And so, the fluffy paradise night wore on.....

## Chapter 114: Knowledge is Important

“It seems that you had fun last night, master.”

Suu grinned as she greeted me.

You know about it?

“Thanks to your brother, I had an enjoyable night.”

“I’m glad to hear this. Madam laughed when she heard about it, so I think it’s all right.”

.....Bea knows about this too?

That hell of a shop.....once you got used to it, it was rather fun.

For some reason, we ended up holding an arm wrestling competition with those *ossans* dressed as women. It’s a good memory indeed.

In the end, we stayed there all night and came home in the morning.....

“Did you manage to relax a bit? Sometimes it’s good to do so, Zest–*sama*.”

(Dad, do you like them hairy? Should Toto grow some hair too?) Please stop.....A hairy Toto is horror material.

“Morning, Bea, Toto. The hairy thing was unexpected.”

I didn’t want to argue about that any longer.

No doubt that I was tired.

“Master, the only thing in your schedule today is the meeting with those good-for-nothing nobles. You can take your time and relax.”

“Oh my, this is all right then.”

(Waaai! We can enjoy our time with Dad!)

That was a cruel way of calling them.....Poor nobles.

Well, it’s okay if I handle them casually.

If everyone says so, I’ll take my time and relax!

I sat on the sofa and made Bea sit next to me.

Toto took her usual spot on my shoulder.

“Your belly has grown quite big. Is it painful?”

“No. It’s true that my back is sore.....and I’m feeling ill sometimes. But, it’s not painful. Mine and Zest–*sama*’s child will soon be born after all.”

“Bea.....”

“Zest–*sama*.....”

(Aaaaah!)

As we were about to enter a pink mood, Toto’s powerful telepathic message stopped us.

“Wh....what’s wrong, Toto?”

“Toto–*chan*, what’s the matter?”

(This is bad! Mom’s belly moved just now! Is there something inside it!?)  
Toto’s face turned ghastly pale and she started to tremble.

Hm? Did she not know about it?

“There is a baby inside Bea’s belly.”

“Weren’t you happy about becoming an older sister? What’s wrong now, Toto–*chan*?”

(But Suu told me about it! That a bird is going to carry the baby! And that magical power has gathered inside Mom’s belly!) .....Right, it may be good to explain things to children up to that extent.

“Master, this is what I told Toto–*sama*. Because she’s still young, I thought.....”

“You don’t need to worry. Someone already taught her about child making after all.”

“Toto–*chan*, that was Suu’s kindness, you know? I’ll teach you properly this time, okay?”

(Kindness? I don’t really get it but I understand!) While Bea properly

explained things to Toto, she caressed her mom's belly.

As I gazed at this scene, Suu whispered into my ear.

"Master? Who is the fool who told the innocent Toto such a stupid story....."

"Your brother."

Suu opened her eyes, and as she flew into a rage, she muttered with a conspicuously low voice.

".....Should I end him?"

"He already reflected upon it. I have great expectations from him, so I can't let him die this easily."

"Master.....I will never forget.....master's feelings. Tonight, I'll prepare a new handkerchief for you."

"Forget about it....."

After this conversational exchange, the time to meet with the nobles arrived.

Guys who rubbed their hands together and got close to me, guys who desperately tried to suck up to me, guys who pressed the matter of accepting their daughters into my household in order to learn the good manners.....

Every last one of them is rotten.....

I evaded these nobles' talks as slippery as an eel.

*'I understand. I will consider it.'*

That's how I concluded, sending them away. It was an easy job.

Instead of refusing them, I replied in this manner in order to observe their reactions.

Depending on their responses, I'll decide whether to win them over.....or erase them completely.....

I'm afraid to say but I've become a true noble myself.

When the last noble returned home, it was already dark.

Toto received a health and physical education lesson from Bea and she seemed to have clearly understood now.

(Amazing! Mom is creating a new life!)

Did Bea become some sort of a god?

I glanced at her and she turned away, her face bright red.

.....It appears that she couldn't give Toto a concrete explanation.

"That's right. That's why Toto, you must protect Bea at any cost, all right?"

"Fufu, please take good care of me, Toto-*chan*!"

(Yes! Toto will definitely protect Mom!)

It's better this way.....There's no need for her to understand the process in details.

After this, we finally enjoyed dinner as a family again, then entered the bath together.

The harmony of a family.....The happiness I couldn't find in Japan, I found in this place.

I'm grateful I came to this world.

I believed this from the bottom of my heart, as I got in my bed together with Bea and Toto.

I was falling in a doze, when the presence in front of my door awoke my senses.

"Suu? What happened?"

Suu opened the door quietly.

"Master, I'm sorry to disturb you at nighttime. Please come to this room....."

Bea and Toto were in the bedroom too.....And since they were already asleep, she didn't want to wake them.

I quietly moved to the next room.

"So, what happened?"

"Yes, there are two things. First, a notice that son-in-law-*dono* arrived. Second, a notice from his Majesty the Emperor."

“From the Emperor?”

The one from the elf prince was already planned.

But the Emperor’s notice was unexpected.

*‘Zest, I’m out of spirit drops. Please take care of it.’*

.....Such a demand in the middle of the night?

It’s strange.....There must be something behind it. Think!

However, no matter how much I thought about it, I couldn’t come up with anything.

Am I missing something?

A secret message? Or something like a code?

After I received the letter, I worried about it for more than an hour.

When Suu prepared another round of tea, I finally realized it.....

Don’t tell me.....!?

“Suu, spill some tea on this letter.”

“Eh? Ye...yes.”

Spilling tea on a letter from the Emperor usually meant sever punishment.

While trembling, Suu did as I told.

Having done so, other characters rose to the surface.

*‘The elves’ country is about to break. The king is already gone.’*

These bright red words became visible on the letter that absorbed the tea.

Suu ended up seeing this too.....Her face turned ghastly pale.

The chaos in the elves’ country probably made her remembered *that* fairy-tale.....

“A sign for the devil king’s revival.....Another great war.....”

The story about the empire’s first generation Emperor, the stranger’s fight from long ago.

The devil king first aimed at the elves' country, bringing chaos to the entire world.

Every race has a legend about the hero who defeated the devil king.

"I'm reading too much into this. It's just a coincidence."

I said this, but my voice trembled.

Coincidentally, I am a stranger from a different world too, having a light attribute magical power.

Coincidentally, I achieved *spiritification*.

Coincidentally, the elves' country is in a state of chaos.

.....Three coincidences.

This might not be a coincidence anymore.....

I breathed a sigh as I looked outside the window.

I had the impression that the bright red full moon was telling me it wasn't a coincidence.

"And, master."

".....Is there something else?"

"My brother.....Could you finally forgive him?"

".....Ah."

I forgot that I tied Albert to a tree in the palace's inner courtyard.

.....He's.....still alive, right? It's okay. It's okay.

## Chapter 115: The Outcome of Our Secret Talk

“Good morning, master.”

“Were you able to sleep last night? Don’t push yourself too much, all right?”

“Thank you, master. There is nothing to worry about.”

Because of the Emperor’s letter, Suu turned ghastly pale last night, and I also took great damage.

I wanted to talk about it again, now that the night passed.

“Can you arrange a meeting with the Emperor?”

“An informal one is possible. In the evening, I’ll make plans for you to visit his Majesty’s residential area to discuss young lady Tsubaki’s marriage. This should work.”

It’s perfect.

She truly is excellent at this sort of things.

“Please do it then. Also, write to Katalina and tell her to make preparations as well. And send a secret messenger to the Frontier Count. “

“Certainly! What are the contents of the message?”

“.....The fairy-tale might repeat. He’ll understand.”

“As you wish. I’ll make the necessary arrangements..... What about Lamia–*sama*?”

She probably felt uneasy because I didn’t mention my mother-in-law at all.

But it’s all right.

“I’m sure that Bea will go visit mother-in-law. She’ll tell her then.”

“That’s right. If we make too much of a commotion, it will become suspicious.”

Suu agreed, then left the room.

Today will be a very busy day.....

I entrusted Bea with contacting mother-in-law.

The daughter will visit her mother after a long time.....There's simply nothing out of place with that.

Much less since Bea is pregnant. It is the perfect reason to go see her.

In the meanwhile, I summoned Kalfa.

The pretext.....To choose a present for my pregnant wife who is in a bad mood.

However, the reality was different.

"Kalfa, if I were to ask you to prepare food for me.....How big a quantity can you make preparations for?"

"Food.....If you want it at this time, I can make arrangements for an amount that could sustain his Majesty's entire army for a year."

"You don't have to start gathering right now. I asked just to be sure."

"Understood. You can call me anytime."

In case a war would start, this is essential.

Katalina would take care of my soldiers, and the Frontier Count's army would come to my help as well.

As for the food, I can guarantee a certain amount.

.....Still, the most important thing is whether I can get my hands on it or not.

It all depends now on the meeting with the Emperor.

I took all the measures I could, and I decided to take a nap until evening.

There's a chance that after I meet with his Majesty, I'll rush straight into a meeting with the elf prince.

I must rest when I get the chance.

As I fell in a doze on my chair in the office, I felt Suu shaking my shoulders.

"Master, it is time. Please get ready."

"Understood.....What about Bea?"

I asked her as I rubbed my eyes.

“Madam said she will return after dinner. It’s been a while so she stayed longer to chat, I figured.”

I see.....But this is my mother-in-law’s way of protecting her.

I must send her another present later.

I washed my face and changed clothes.

For the time being, I am meeting the Emperor, so wearing ordinary clothes is no good.

I put on my black military uniform and walked towards the imperial family’s quarters.

“Oh! Zest. I’m glad you look good.”

“Yes, your Majesty. I’m relieved you look the same.”

A retainer maid of the imperial family guided me to the room where the Emperor was waiting.

The Empress is not present.....Is there a reason for that?

Once the maid prepared the tea and left the room, the smile disappeared from his Majesty’s face.

“Since you hurried to come see me.....does it mean that you got the meaning of the letter?”

“Yes, it’s about the fairy-tale matter, right?”

“Ah, such a bothersome story. Were you able to arrange somehow your end and the Frontier Count’s?”

“It depends on how settled we are when it comes to the elves. Should time and circumstances permit, I could involve Lilac as well.”

The Emperor’s face was bitter but he made his decision having no other choice.

There are all sorts of rumors about the Holy Country of Lilac, so it’s not really all right to involve them, but.....

“It’s better than losing…….”

“We still don’t know if a war will start, do we?”

“Yet, supposing the worst is necessary. The elf prince will arrive soon as well. He’s truly an amazing guy.”

“The elf prince? What on earth is he coming here for?”

He dares to feign ignorance…….

After I asked that, the Emperor looked at me reproachfully.

……Did he find me out?

Does he know that I consider the prince to be a very sharp person?

Or maybe he’s only suspicious.

“Enough with that. Let’s take our time until he arrives.”

“As you wish.”

*‘You knew about it, right?’*

*‘I don’t understand.’*

If you wanted a free translation, this is what we talked about.

After I chatted with the Emperor for a few moments, that guy finally arrived.

I felt the presence of two people outside the door.

“Excuse us. The eldest son of the elf king, Mars–*sama* is here.”

“Enter.”

The door opened with the Emperor’s words.

A young man with long silver hair entered after the maid.

He had long, thin slit eyes and a slim physique.

He gave the impression of a beautiful youth……Still, his ears were long.

His outward appearance would fit perfectly in a Japanese idol band.

“It’s been a long time, your Majesty.”

He sent a fleeting glance at me, but the first one to greet is always the

Emperor.

“Prince Mars, I’m glad you look good. Well, sit now.”

Prince Mars did as the Emperor told him and sat on the sofa.

I casted some magic to check him out as I stayed vigilant.

The maid prepared more tea, and once she left the room, his Majesty began to talk.

“Prince Mars, this man is Duke Zest. Did you know him?”

“You are.....It’s a pleasure to meet you, I’m Mars.”

“Nice to meet you too, prince Mars. Or, I shall call you son-in-law–*dono*.”

It was a greeting full of smiles, but I didn’t let my guard down not even one bit.

This prince Mars.....He’s quite formidable.

I prepared myself in case he would stand up at any moment from that sofa where he sat so comfortably.

“Now.....that we finished with the greetings, let’s get to the main topic. Prince Mars, you have some magnificent acting skills.”

“I was frequently impolite towards you, so I must humbly apologize.”

He stood up and propped one knee to the floor.

My vigilance ascended in level.

From that position, it was possible to attack the Emperor.

“Son-in-law–*dono*, sit down on the sofa right away. In that position, you’re too close to his Majesty.”

I unleashed my magical power, as I warned him strongly.

It’s not like I swore absolute loyalty to the Emperor, but if prince Mars would do it in this situation.....

Without any question, I’ll be made an accomplice.

“What’s wrong, son-in-law–*dono*? Sit down on the sofa.”

“.....Yes sir! As...as you wish.”

He sat on the sofa, his face sort of stiff.

After I confirmed that he did what I said, I restrained my magical power.

“Zest is prone to worrying. But he doesn’t have ill will towards you, prince Mars.”

“Your Majesty. I apologize for my son-in-law’s discourtesy.”

“Hahaha, that’s because he’s your son-in-law. Don’t worry about it.”

“Thank you for your consideration.”

Good. A splendid monkey show.

*‘Prince Mars, if you get cocky, I’ll kill you!’*

*‘You understand who is superior here, don’t you? You’re a prince, you say? Your country is in a state of chaos, so that title means nothing to us. You’ll be treated like nothing more than Zest’s adopted son.’*

That was the hidden meaning behind our exchange.

Prince Mars seemingly understood it, so he quietly sat down on the sofa, his body trembling.

“So, what’s the situation like in the elves country?”

His Majesty took a mouthful of tea, then asked the prince.

His answer was, in all honesty.....obliquely above my expectation.

“Yes.....My father, the king is already dead.....The Prime Minister seized the power. He plans to.....”

He probably did it in order to motivate himself to continue.

Prince Mars stroke his face with both hands, then informed us.

“The Prime Minister plans to revive the legendary magic science. That abominable devil king.....He intends to become the king of magic science!”

So by devil king.....they meant the king of magic science.....?

So this is how it is...

The room become completely silent.

Even the Emperor was speechless.

My heart was thumping as well.

In this tensioned room, the sound of violent knocking reverberated.

His Majesty returned to himself and started to speak.

“What! What’s wrong!?”

“This is Tsubaki! I’m coming in!”

The answer to the Emperor’s question was a simple *‘I’m coming in’*.

With a thick sound, the door collapsed.

“Prince Mars! I’ve come to save you!”

Exactly like a hero from legends, Tsubaki stood there with a smug face.

The Emperor and the prince froze in place in a second, as I started to beat Tsubaki, being careful not to break her neck.

“You stupid girl! What the heck are you doing!? You came to help him? You fool! You made it worse instead!! In the first place.....”

“Zest, Tsubaki can’t hear you anymore, you know?”

“Fa...father Zest.....Tsubaki is spouting foam and she’s cramping.”

I looked at my feet and saw that Tsubaki’s eyes turned white.

“You dare falling asleep!? You stupid daughter!”

“Zest, she most likely fainted.”

“Tsubaki.....Tsubaki.....”

This chaos continued until the Empress arrived, alarmed by the noise coming from this room.

.....I might die from worrying too much.

## Chapter 116: Enemies and Allies

“Your Majesty, I am truly sorry for this.”

“Zest....You have all sorts of hardships.”

I intended to apologize for Tsubaki’s rudeness, but the Emperor was sympathetic towards me.

We both looked at each other and dropped our shoulders.

If it were my real daughter who did this thing, it would be over simply with me scolding her.

However, it’s a different story if the one who did it was the Emperor’s real daughter who got adopted into another family. That’s why I beat her like that.

“I left *that* in the Empress’s care. Shall we continue?”

“Let’s do just that.”

The Empress transported the white-eyed Tsubaki to another room.

She’s resting now so I kind of felt relieved.

I drank some sweet tea, perfect for my exhausted body.

In reality I was in the mood for wine, but I endured it.

“Now, prince Mars. How much power and influence does the Prime Minister have?”

“Yes. High elves.....In short, what you call here nobles, about 30 percent. But the problem is, there are a few of them who have incredible influence.”

I see, 30 percent, huh?.....The rest of them are sitting on the fence, waiting to choose a side, huh?

“What do you specifically mean by incredible influence? And how many do you have on your side?”

My question made prince Mars’s face go stiff, but he answered nonetheless.

“Yes! The Prime Minister has the high officials in the internal administration

and one of the three generals in the military affairs on his side.”

He straightened his back as he answered.

Stop it.....I don't need any more muscle brains, and you don't have to be this nervous.

“I see. He has that much power.....Then, what about your side?”

“That is.....For the time being, I have no one.”

“What? I believe I heard that you said you have no one on your side at this point.”

“Your Majesty, I think I misheard it too.”

“Because I had to act like a fool in order to preserve my life, you know.....”

I understand his reasons, but zero help is kind of embarrassing.

The Emperor held his forehead in his hands too.

“What about the queen's faction? The queen should have a great deal of influence, doesn't she?”

“As expected from your Majesty. I admire your wisdom.”

I nonchalantly sucked up to the Emperor, but the prince's words made me lose face.

“Urm, the queen.....my mother is on the Prime Minister's.....”

The prince's words seemed apologetic, and the Emperor and I both took deep sighs.

“In the end, the Prime Minister's faction is about 50 percent. Still, it seems that there are many people left who would at least listen to our story or even join our side. Maybe there are not so many who seriously think about the devil king's revival, after all.”

“Yes. If Zest is saying this, then, does it mean we have a chance to victory?”

“Let's assume that the elves' army has about 5000 soldiers. Half of them, 2500 soldiers, no matter how powerful the elves are.....they don't stand a chance against me and the Frontier Count. Besides, if we use my reputation as the hero who achieved *spiritification*.....”

“We can politically corner them.....”

The Emperor closed his eyes and thought about it for a moment, then told us his decision.

“Good. In the worst case, we’ll start a war. We’ll move with the goal of saving the prince in mind. I entrust the contact with the demon race and the holy country to Zest.”

“As you wish. I will first contact the demons and confirm this with them. They surely have information, and hostility from their part is too dangerous. After that, we’ll arrange an urgent marriage ceremony.”

“Yeah. We’ll go with that. We now have a good reason to intervene in the elves’ country’s affairs.”

“Understood.”

“Your Majesty, father-in-law, thank you.”

Prince Mars lowered his head deeply, and so, our discussion was mainly over. However, the Emperor broke the ice after all.

“By the way, Zest, how much a military force can you mobilize?”

You’re going to ask this, aren’t you.....?

I don’t really want to answer.

“500 black knights, 200 soldiers in the maids’ unit, 500 adventurers, 2000 *kemonobito* volunteer soldiers. I can mobilize as much in the first stage.....”

“About 3000 soldiers!? What about a maximum mobilization?”

“3000 in the first stage.....”

“If I mobilize the *kemonobito* in reserve as well, I can possibly gather another 5000 soldiers.”

The *kemonobito* on my domain live normal farmer lives.

Still, in case of emergency, almost all of them volunteered to become my soldiers.

“This way, you can win the war all by yourself.....”

“7000 *kemonobito*, the elite black knights and the war maidens?.....Just where in the world is father-in-law going towards?”

The Emperor and the prince had shocked expressions on their faces.

For some reason, they seemed to understand each other.

“See? Zest is scary, isn’t he? Even if I change his domain, there is no one else but him who could rule a place full of *kemonobito*. He’s way too troublesome.”

“I sympathize with you, your Majesty. Furthermore, that Holy Country of Lilac is his neighbor?”

“If they treat Zest coldly, even that country could become his enemy. He can already become Emperor.”

“That’s.....what can I say....”

They both let out a sigh.

Gimme a break!

“I have no intention to stand at the top of the empire. My hands are full with the current position anyway.”

“I’m thankful he has this kind of personality.”

“Indeed, he’s more like your right-hand man.”

“Yeah. But you mustn’t take him lightly, you know? It’s certain that he’s satisfied with his current position. However, if you make the mistake to snarl at him, he won’t make do without inflicting back a massive injury.”

The Emperor laughed, then continued.

“Zest, supposing I do something to Beatrice, what would you do?”

Hahaha, the Emperor likes to joke around.

“Such an interesting joke, your Majesty. But.....in case that becomes true, I’ll erase every corner of this empire.”

“See? He’s serious about it, so you must be careful too, prince Mars. You mustn’t touch Bea....your mother-in-law, okay? You’ll perish if you do.”

“I will definitely not show disrespect towards mother-in-law!”

Prince Mars shook his head with such vigor that his neck might come off.

The Emperor's feet were trembling too.

Your Majesty, this is just a play, right? It was just to teach the prince a lesson, right?

Hmm? Was I wrong.....?

"You do just that. Assuming you never touch his wife, this guy is very kind towards his relatives. For your sake.....or, better say, for Tsubaki's sake, he's cooperating right now."

"Yes. Thank you for your advice."

Yes. As I thought, he only wanted to warn the prince.

He warned him about how to handle me.....

Well, I do believe that I would kill this prince if he ever does something to Bea.

And so, the Emperor was about to end today's discussion.

However, he couldn't do it.

Because the door opened slowly.

"Dear. Tsubaki cried herself to sleep. What in the world happened to her!?"

The Empress entered the room, her usually gentle face had now a shade of wisdom.

"Then, I'll excuse myself, your Majesties."

"Excuse me."

We both sensed danger, so we greeted them with superb timing.

I ignored the Emperor who seemed to ask if we were going to leave him like this.

In order to save myself, I sacrificed the Emperor.....

"Wait, you two. Zest, you're her foster father and prince, you're her future husband! You're not unrelated to this!"

"Forgive me!"

“I agree with you.”

“Ku ku ku, you made her angry, Zest.....”

“You, my dear, are the number one reason why I’m angry! Don’t laugh! Show some remorse instead!”

It happened so that, I was left with a precious experience after today; the Emperor and I both knelt on the ground in a *seiza* position.

To women.....Or better say, to the wife, even the Emperor has to kneel down and explain things properly.

## Chapter 117: Education and Training

“Then, your Majesty. I shall excuse myself.”

“I shall excuse myself too, your Majesty.”

“Yeah. I have put you through trouble. Take your time and relax now.....”

I was *thankful* to the Empress’s talk, that lasted until morning.

I tried to ignore the numbness, as I dragged my feet to my room.

The prince was in the same situation as he came along.

“Father-in-law, could you use your healing magic on me too.....”

“Don’t behave like a spoiled brat. What will you do if you can’t withstand something like this by yourself!? It seems that you need some education.”

Seriously, if it were my master, he would’ve suddenly attacked him with offensive magic.

I am kind, so I won’t do that.

The prince kept silent as I placed a special bracelet on his arm.

“Err, father-in-law? This is.....”

“It’s all right. It’s a special bracelet I received from my master. It helps you store magical power. It’s a magical tool that inflicts pain if you don’t maintain your magical power above a certain level. Use it without reservation.”

I heard the prince’s happy voice, as I hurried to my room.

Become strong, son-in-law—*dono*.

Because I took the prince with me, who was walking like he was a newly born deer cub, it took a lot of time to get to my room, but we finally arrived.

“Welcome back, master. This person is?”

“Yeah, he’s my son-in-law..... Prince Mars.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m Suu, the steward of the Duke’s Household.”

“I’m Mars. I’ll be counting on you.”

Suu quickly lifted her skirt a little and bowed her head.

The prince was trembling.

“For now, prepare some tea for us. Ask Bea to come here too.”

“As you wish.”

I sat on the sofa as I watched Suu cheerfully making the preparations.

The prince was desperate to cope with the situation as he stood there.

“Son-in-law—*dono*, there are only relatives here. You can relax.”

“Yes. But .....

The prince sent a glance at Suu.

Well, he might feel a bit uneasy.

“I told you. There are only relatives here. I’m asking just to make sure, but do you hold something against *kemonobito*?”

“No, I’m not an advocate of race discrimination. I also have nothing against *kemonobito*. I’m sorry for this misunderstanding.”

He said and lowered his head.

That’s good. It appears that he might not need an education after all.

“There’s no problem then. This is a good opportunity.....so I’ll give you this, Suu. She is my trusty steward, so when I’m not around, you must treat her like my representative. Do you understand, prince?”

What I gave to Suu was the dagger I received from the Emperor when he invested me with my court rank.

The proof of being a noble.....Normally, this is something you would never give to others.

“Eh!? Master, this is!”

“She’s your representative!?”

They were both astonished, in different ways, that is.

Suu was shocked for being recognized as the Duke's Household's number 2.

The prince was startled by the word 'representative' for some reason.

"Why are you even surprised!? I value the excellent people around me. I do not care even a bit about race and gender. And I don't discriminate among the people who devote themselves to me. I'll keep counting on you, all right?"

"Yes, yes! As long as I have this life.....No, even in the afterlife I'll always be loyal to you."

She somehow frightened me with her last words, but I ignored it.

I'm used to these weird moods from Albert, after all.

"I see.....So this is father-in-law's faithful retainer. The Emperor will make use of this too."

Maybe the senses in his feet came back to him, since the prince became more chatty.

"You should find yourself a trusted retainer too! There are limits to what you can do by yourself. You still have some time, so you have to do your best."

"Yes, I will never forget these words!"

Yes, I .....said something rather good.

Satisfied with myself, I drank some tea, when Bea entered the room.

"Zest-*sama*, welcome back."

"Ah, Bea. Did you enjoy the reunion with mother-in-law?"

Bea sat next to me and I stroked her belly.

For some reason, the prince was glaring at Bea.

"Mother-in-law Beatrice, my name is Mars. I never expected that my mother-in-law will be such a peerless beauty.....Should I feel delighted that we became family, or should I resent the unbearable misfortune? Your sublime hair is like the dusk and....."

"Son-in-law-*dono*, that's such an energetic greeting. Do you want to die?"

He knelt in front of Bea, as he greeted her ecstatically, and I caught hold of his

head.

“Albert!!”

“Yes sir!”

Albert was waiting on standby outside the room. Seemingly delighted, he entered after he heard his name.

Did he sympathize with the prince or something?

“Albert, son-in-law–*dono* wishes to train. Make sure to be a suitable partner for him. I’ll be joining you later as well.”

“Yes sir! I’ll teach him plentifully in the Duke’s Household’s style.”

We both grinned, but the unexpected happened.

“Zest–*sama*.”

Bea smiled sweetly.

The prince showed a huge smile as well, covering his entire face.

“A shameless person who would try to seduce his mother-in-law needs a thorough education. I will contact my mother as well.”

And so, it was decided that the stupid prince needed some education.

He seems to be weak against women.

While we still have time, we’ll firmly educate him.

3 hours passed since the prince’s screams started to be heard from the training ground.....

Albert would beat him senseless, then I would heal him, and then Albert would beat him senseless again.

It all became like a festival when the black knights and the maids’ unit joined us too.

However, the light in the prince’s eyes was starting to fade.

Should I end it?

When I was about to say it, *she* joined us as well.

“Foster father, where is the idiot who dared to sweat talk my foster mother!?”

The completely armed Tsubaki thoroughly trained the prince.....

Tsubaki.....wasn't very lady-like, when she hit her fiancé with a gauntlet.

“Oh my, this looks like fun. Toto-*chan*, let's join them too.”

(Waaaai! Since Dad is here, we can also get serious!) The scariest of them all, ended up joining the training.

I pressed my hands together in prayer, as I employed all my healing magic.....

## Chapter 118: Second Book – Epilogue

“As I said, it was a misunderstanding, father-in-law.”

Prince Mars appealed to me frantically.

His clothes were full of blood.

.....Of course, it was his blood.

“Misunderstanding or not, you did try to seduce Bea. It can’t be helped now, can it?”

I grinned at him and readied my long sword.

The edge of my sword was rather chipped but I still went on with it.

I can still cut one or two of his limbs with it if I use my strengthening magic.

“That’s it! That is what you misunderstood!”

He shook his head, half crying.

What now.....

“I did not make advances at her. That was the elves’ style of greeting.”

“Ooooh, greetings, you say?”

I threw away my long sword and stared at the prince.

With an expression of relief, he then continued.

“This is a natural greeting among elves, father-in-law.....As I thought, you won’t deny it, would you?”

The stupid prince had a smug face now.

It seems that he still doesn’t understand it.

“I’m not well-known when it comes to elven customs. And even if what you’re saying is true, I don’t really care. But, if by any chance, you lied to me, you’ll need to be punished. In short, no matter how I look at it, you still need training.”

I held out my right hand and Bea gave me her favorite weapon, the bardiche.

The prince's smug face froze in an instant.

"Come now, let's train you good. From now on, we'll go with a real-life combat style, okay?"

"His excellency is going to fight for good?.....The black knights unit, go protect the madam!"

"Zest-sama, with that weapon you can go all out and it won't break."

(Waaa, I can clearly see his magical power. Dad is amazing as usual!) Listening to Albert, Bea and the other's voices, I reopened the prince's training.

"You did great, master."

I finished with the training and returned to my room where Suu welcomed me.

She was wearing the trousers suit I prepared for her yesterday.

As one would expect, a steward wearing maid clothes might be just too troublesome.

I changed my clothes which were sullied by blood, and I was enjoying now my tea time.

"Suu, is it normal for elves to sweat talk women as a form of greeting?"

"What? Is that true?"

She looked at me blackly as she prepared the tea.

That's right, is it not? It's the first time you heard something like this too.

However, she kind of looks now like a beautiful woman disguising herself as a man.....This is rather good.

"Just in case, look into it a little."

"As you wish. If he tries to seduce madam when master is away, it'll be too troublesome, right?"

Don't say that.

At this point you must skillfully deceive me.

Bea and Toto were enjoying their bath together.

I wonder if Albert will soon come back with the prince on his shoulders?

I drank some tea as I thought about that.

Which reminds me, this kind of tastes different.....Even though it's nothing but normal tea.

I drained my cup of tea and ate some backed sweets when they arrived.

“Your excellency, I brought him back.”

“Good work. Albert, care to join me once in a while?”

“Right. Then, I will have a cup as well.”

“Water.....Please, water.....”

The prince looked like he was shipwrecked in the desert or something, as Albert carried him on his shoulder.

Albert sat on the sofa and drank the tea that his sister prepared.

Oi, Albert, don't blush.

Why do feel so nervous, she's your sister?

“This is delicious. It's the first time I'm drinking such a delicious tea, young lady.”

“*Onii-sama*, did you hit your head or something? What are you thinking, making advances at your own sister?”

She flew into a rage and Albert froze in place.

Even you.....What the heck are you doing?

“I bet he only wanted to compliment you, Suu, since you changed beyond recognition. Right, Albert?”

“Yes! That is precisely so!”

I honestly don't want to start another round of training right now.

I will pretend this never happened.

I successfully deceived them by force, so I could now talk about the main

topic.

“So, how is son-in-law–*dono*’s true strength?”

“Yes. Honestly, it’s below the maids’ unit. Maybe, against the former adventurers’ scouting unit, he could barely win in a fight.”

The prince hanged his head in shame.

Or maybe, he was just too tired that he couldn’t move anymore.

“In this case, Albert, you’ll train son-in-law–*dono*, so that he can fight at a certain degree. If he’s assassinated at this point, it’ll be all over. He’s just too weak.”

“So-sorry, father-in-law. I’m more skilled in using my head.....”

Yeah, he does have a talent for scheming.

But that’s only for the standards of an isolated country like the elves’.

“Then, prove me your intellect and devise a plan right now. How do you secure your safety?”

“Yes! With father-in-law and your family’s power.....”

“Rejected. Do you want me to take along my family and all my followers and march into the elves’ country?”

The prince fell silent.

“Besides, since I’m the hero who achieved *spiritification*, I might be safe. But, you won’t, you know? If you’re assassinated, everything will be over. We won’t be able to help you then.”

“Then, what about asking the demons for help?”

“That is also no good. They have no reason to help you. Moreover, if the family who committed a mistake like this is still a royal family, they have instead a good reason not to help you.”

“But, that was my mother.....the queen is responsible for.....”

Well, I do understand his feelings.

“As royalty, for you to take back your country.....you need the demons to

acknowledge you. What they really want is stability. Do you think that they'll support someone like who, who might get assassinated at any moment?"

"That's.....It's exactly like you said."

The prince bit his lip in frustration.

Did he finally understand what a dangerous situation he was in?

"You must at least become a king who can protect his own body. In times of peace, there's no problem with being weak, but this is an abnormal situation. If you're not a strong king, you won't be able to bring order in your country. Tsubaki is able to protect her own body, and she can also fight. All that's left now is you."

"Yes. But, can I even do it?"

"It's not about being able to or not. You have to do it. You want to marry the woman you love and take back your country, don't you? Find your resolve already!"

"Understood, father-in-law. I'll be counting on you!"

He said and bowed. The prince's eyes now looked somewhat different than before.

I will survive this.....His eyes showed such determination.

*Fufu*, did I also have these eyes when master trained me?

I'm getting nostalgic.....

"You can feel relieved. I will definitely make you a good enough fighter. That's because I don't want my daughter to become a widow too soon.....First..."

When I was about to continue, the door opened violently without any knock.

"It's an emergency! A swarm of dragons is approaching the imperial capital! Per imperial command, his excellency, duke Zest is to be summoned at once!"

Out of breath, a soldier plunged into the room.

His face looked grim.

In fairy-tales, the dragon is an animal who could destroy an entire country all

by itself.

A swarm of such dragons, which only appear in fairy-tales, was heading towards the capital.

That's how the '*Messengers of Judgement*' which remained in the history books of the empire since unknown times, came to us.

# Credits

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