



四

井戸正善

illustration : lack

呼ばれた者 殺戮者

S u m m o n e d S l a u g h t e r I V

Summoned Slaughterer

Arc 12-13

by Ido Masayoshi

[Novel Updates](#)

Translation Group: [Infinite Novel Translations](#)

Epub: [Trollo WN/LN EPUB](#)

Arc 12: The end of the elves

Chapter 99 – Discovery

Five days passed with him proceeding in the direction, he was told by the one-eared rabbitwoman.

It took him further three days to leave the area, where the beastmen live. Once he came out from between the trees, the surroundings took the appearance of being a broad expanse of various woodland. He occasionally climbed a tree to check his bearing.

“Around here...?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi noticed that the trees in the surroundings had changed.

The atmosphere of the forest has changed as well, from a dry atmosphere filled with brightness and clarity to a damp and humid atmosphere, which is gloomy due to the overgrowing number of leaves. Also, the clear air, which allowed one to see into the distance without obstruction, transformed into something that appeared to be misty, before he noticed it.

The number of trees having moss on their surface has become big and there are even those, growing different weeds from within their cracked rinds.

“... This appears to be inferior in sleeping comfort.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who laid down after climbing on a tree's branch to take a break from advancing through the forest at night, harboured thoughts like it's unpleasant with the moss sticking to it while having no feelings of tension.

“Hmm? What the hell's this?” (Hifumi)

In the sight of Hifumi, who headed deeper into the forest from early in the morning after spending one more night, a strange swelling, located on a tree, was reflected.

Once he tries to get close quietly, he discovers a life-sized wooden doll having been placed in a sitting posture, as if entrusting its back to the trunk, close to the base of the tree.

He grabbed the doll, which was covered in moss all over, but as it has been firmly stuck to the trunk, it's not moving even an inch at the level of just pulling it lightly. It's completely like a Buddha statue, which was created by cutting it out of one part of a large trunk.

“All things considered, it's quite the elaborate craft.” (Hifumi)

The slender-faced doll with its closed eyes was an elder having an expression with deep wrinkles engraved, however he had a beautiful form, which definitely would have peeked the interest of women in his person during his youth. And, the reason why Hifumi paid attention to this doll is its ears.

“Elf? No, the wood carving of an elf, huh?” (Hifumi)

The pointed ears have a size, which is more than twice that of humans. They are extending longly and narrowly while growing towards the back.

Coupled with having a beautiful shape, they are a characteristic of elves, he heard from somewhere.

“However, a wood-craft sculpture... that's a refined pastime for dwellers of a fantasy.” (Hifumi)

Without clearing the moss he understands the feel of the material to be obviously wood. The minute way of crafting makes one believe that someone is sleeping. Even for Hifumi, who has no deeper interest in art, it was to a level of making him gaze at it for a while.

What came flying alongside a sound of fast movement was a long arrow.

The arrow, which passed the flank of Hifumi who moved his body sideways in a smooth, unhindered motion, pierced into the damp ground and blew up a small cloud of dust.

“At least greet me first. You are quite the rude fellow.” (Hifumi)

“Tsk!”

Someone clicked their tongue due to Hifumi’s state of not being perturbed in the least, but they shoot another arrow from up in the trees.

Even as he is attacked by a literally rapid firing of 2-3 shot arrows, seeing that he grasped the enemy’s location with the first assault, those couldn’t hit either.

Smoothly avoiding the arrows, it ends once he hides behind a tree and holds his breath.

“Come out! For a human to intrude our forest, you will regret that!”

The enemy disqualifies himself as sniper as it seems that they are the type, who lets their blood easily rush to their head.

Getting annoyed with the opponent’s crude way of doing things, Hifumi launched a cross shuriken using only his wrist from within the tree’s shade.

“Ah!?”

The sniper, who sustained a wound on their shoulder, fell from the tree unable to endure.

He drops with a crushing sound on top of the leaves, which accumulated on the moist soil.

At the time Hifumi rushed over, the enemy took out a knife and tried to take a fighting stance, but the point of the katana, which Hifumi drew, was by far faster and it was pressed against the throat as if being sucked in.

“Uguu...”

The enemy, who looked at the nearby katana shedding an ominous light within the dim forest, gulped with their sight being drawn onto the blade.

Being slightly taller than Hifumi, the enemy has long, slender and well-proportioned limbs, though they aren't frail by no means. The elf, with a hair style of slightly quirky, long blonde hair being tied and flowing down the back, had androgynous features having good looks and almond eyes.

And, just like that doll, the elf has the characteristic long ears.

“You are... an elf?” (Hifumi)

Due to Hifumi scrutinizing them without reservation, the elf spits out, with a displeasure expression,

“What about it? As human, who intruded into the elves' forest without permission, do you think you will be safe as it is?”

“If entry isn't allowed, build a gate at the entrance and set up a door bell.” (Hifumi)

The elf's expression turns increasingly grim due to the belittling words.

“Oh well, with your words I understood that this place is the elves' home.” (Hifumi)

“Bastard, what business do you have with us elves?”

“I only came to see elves. If I can observe the place where you live, that will be even better, but my destination is further inside.” (Hifumi)

“Do you intend to go to the demon races’ place, bastard?”

The elf, who opened his eyes in surprise, raised his voice.

“That’s right. I ran into one of the demon race or whatever in the city. Thus I thought I might as well pay my respects to his boss.” (Hifumi)

Due to Hifumi saying that he wants go for a visit since he was told it was something like hell, the shocked elf says,

“The demon race has been currently sealed deeper inside due to our, the elves’, secret art. Since it’s coming apart a bit, the weaklings are pouring out, but...”

If it’s according to the details mentioned by the elf, the demon race is restricted in their coming and going because of the barrier, which has a shape of enclosing and sealing them in the elven forest, being deployed by the elves. Previously the dwarf Thorn has called them “the demon race, which is hostile to humans.” As result of those, having weak magic power, leaving the forest as they hate suffering the effects of the barrier, there are some, who got close to human cities.

Zebul, who was killed by Hifumi, likely was the type, who was able to blend in between people without being discovered.

“Why are you doing something this troublesome?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi tilted his head to the side due to the elf completely acting as if they were applying the seal to protect the world.

“That’s simple.”

The elf says as if spitting out.

“The demon race is a race that originally separated from the elves.

Something like allowing such blockheads to be free would be the disgrace of us elves.”

“Even if you are going as far as calling them blockheads, you are just sealing them without even destroying them.” (Hifumi)

Which reminds me, Zebul’s ears were long too, Hifumi recalled while mentioning his doubts.

“That is...”

Watching the elf averting his look, he concludes the elves likely don’t have the strength to destroy the demon race, if it’s in genuine combat.

“Such things got nothing to do with humans! Leaving that aside, it’s forbidden for anyone but elves to enter past here.”

“Though you are taller than me, you are a guy spouting childish things.” (Hifumi)

“Don’t call me childish!”

Did the elf forget that a blade is pressed against his throat? The kick in order to hit with the shoe sole was avoided by Hifumi stepping back.

Seeing that a distance opened up, the elf draws the knife this time and took a stance by holding it in a backhand grip. Probably due to the pain of a shuriken being stuck in the elf’s left shoulder, he clenches his left fist while frowning.

“This time I won’t lose!”

“Saying “this time” at the moment of fighting is overly optimistic, but... aren’t you glad? Reinforcements came.” (Hifumi)

Even as Hifumi shrugged his shoulders, several elves appeared from within the forest's depth.

“Shiku, what are you doing with a human?”

The male elf, who was in the lead, turned his bow, which was drawn to the limit, towards Hifumi and shouted at the elf, who has prepared his knife, in that state.

“B-But...” (Shiku)

“Since you told me you would be able to do it, I let you, a child who can't use anything but weak magic, go on patrol and yet...”

The elf called Shiku dropped his shoulders with an expression like a scolded child. The following female elf began to cast healing magic touching Shiku.

“Child, you say?” (Hifumi)

“As you heard.”

Due to Hifumi's question, the elf, who yelled, faced Hifumi with a loathsome expression.

“Follow us. We have been told by Zanga-sama, who is the leader of us elves, to bring you human along since you have entered the forest. Don't do anything strange. Usually we elves don't tolerate something like a human entering the elven forest.”

“Hoo?” (Hifumi)

Despite having arrows pointed at him at point-blank range, Hifumi is looking at the elves and arrows in front of him while holding the katana loosely without taking a particular stance.

“That’s not the attitude you welcome a guest with.” (Hifumi)

“Don’t get full of yourself just because you were more or less able to fight with a child as opponent... ah!?”

Once Hifumi waves his left hand, the bowstring is cut by a shuriken.

The bowstring, which reeled violently due to being snapped, injured the arm of the elf holding the bow and let the arrow drop with a *plop*

“I don’t like your guys’ attitude. That’s why I won’t accompany you.”
(Hifumi)

“The likes of a human wants to ignore the summoning of Zanga-sama!?”

Hifumi laughed as he watched the elf raise an angry voice just like before while shedding blood from his arm.

“First, I don’t know that guy. There’s no point in obeying an unknown guy, right?” (Hifumi)

“Think about the truth of the matter”, Hifumi laughs.

“Ah right, then you might as well try with force, how about that?”
(Hifumi)

“I told you. Do you believe the likes of a human can win against elves!?”

The elf, who healed his wound with magic, drew the knife at his waist.

However, what came flying first is wind magic.

“That’s something I’ve already seen.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi boldly hit the approaching wind blade from the side with his palm.

Making a sound of *pan* as if being repelled, the wind blade scatters.

“W-What have you...”

The elf, who released magic from the rear, floats an expression of shock.

“I see. You guys are even able to use healing magic without requiring a wand.” (Hifumi)

Come to think of it, the guy, who called himself one of the demon race, didn’t use a wand either, Hifumi remembered.

As Hifumi is thinking Hmm, I see, he is mercilessly attacked by the elves’ spells.

Not using fire magic in the vicinity is probably because they are paying attention to the forest’s trees.

He slips through the fired wind blades and pellets as if whirling around in a dance.

“Stop moving around.”

Once Hifumi got hold of the knife, which was thrust out by the elf, with his fingers, he turned over his wrist abruptly and stole the knife.

And then he threw that knife.

The knife deeply penetrated into the left eye of an elf, who just now was about to fire a spell.

The instant the dead elf collapsed, the elf, who had his knife stolen, died with a single slice of the katana as well.

“4 left.” (Hifumi)

Once he sees the sudden turn of events, Shiku drew back while being unable to stand up due to surprise and fright.

“What’s up? Where did your vigour from a while go?” (Hifumi)

“Hi...”

Once Shiku met Hifumi’s gaze, he gave a short scream.

“W-Wait!”

In order to cover for Shiku, who had a tear-filled expression, the female elf, who previously used healing magic, stood in the way spreading both her arms.

“It’s our defeat! Can’t you please overlook the youth...?”

“That’s fine.” (Hifumi)

While answering, Hifumi suddenly started to run.

Passing the female elf sideways, passing Shiku sideways, he presses onto the two male elves, who stood further back.

“Eh?”

The two, who had been sniping Hifumi with magic from afar, aren't able to do anything with Hifumi abruptly appearing in front of them.

Hifumi bisected them altogether with the katana, he swung in a reverse shoulder slash. (T/N: Can't explain it well but imagine it as bisecting one of them from left shoulder downwards and then the other from the right shoulder downwards)

“If you don't attack, I won't kill you. But...” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, observed the surviving elves, which are dumbfounded.

“If you are hostile, I will cut you.” (Hifumi)

Due to his words Shiku's body is trembling in fright with him only leaking foam from his mouth.

Sighing, Hifumi asked Shiku about his age, but being nothing but scared, Shiku is unable to answer.

Instead the elf woman replied that she's 16 years old.

“This child is an orphan and I'm taking care of him... This child attacked you, I suppose. I will apologize as well. Please, forgive him.”

“If that's the case, will you listen to my request as his foster parent?”
(Hifumi)

The elven woman gulped due to Hifumi's words. Speaking of something a young man could want from a woman, she can mostly imagine it. However, she has no strength to oppose him either.

“U-Understood...”

“Then I leave the guiding to you.” (Hifumi)

“He?”

Hifumi, who sheathed the katana he wiped with a paper, dusted off the dirt from his hakama.

“It’s the way to the location of the demon race. If you got, get going quickly.” (Hifumi)

“Y-Yes!”

Once the elf woman made Shiku, who is still in a daze, stand up by lending her shoulder, she tearfully abandoned her comrades’ corpses as they are and walked in front of Hifumi.



“For us this forest is a place that gives us blessing. It’s also a graveyard for the sake of welcoming us in our last moments.”

The elf woman, who introduced herself as Puuse, explains the reason why it’s a grave taboo to damage the forest.

“The act of damaging the forest is the same as damaging the way of life as elf, is what we are taught from childhood until becoming an adult. Even a child that has no parents is no exception.” (Puuse)

Puuse is walking while carrying Shiku, who finally lost consciousness.

Losing both parents as child, Shiku was raised by his grandfather since then, but a few days ago that grandfather died as well.

“Well, I understand you calling it a blessing, but what do you mean by it being a graveyard?” (Hifumi)

“The bodies of the elves, who grew up in this forest, begin to petrify

once they reach a certain age. If that happens, they snuggle up to a tree, they decided themselves, and accept their death by being assimilated with tree.” (Puuse)

“That’s why this forest is also called a graveyard by the elves”, Puuse says.

“... Sometime ago I saw a finely-made wood-crafted doll of an elven elder.” (Hifumi)

“Those were probably the remains of an aged elf.” (Puuse)

“I don’t know. Why do living creatures turn into wood?” (Hifumi)

“That’s something I don’t know either. It’s been like this for a long time, is the only thing I know.” (Puuse)

Moreover, with their bodies beginning to turn into plants around the age of 100, the elves will stop to move in about a year. After that they will be completely integrated into a tree in approximately half year. It was different to the image of longevity, Hifumi held.

As their growth is fast, they will grow taller until the height of an adult in around 12 years, though their physical ability falls behind.

As Hifumi is puzzled about this mysterious mode of life, which was very different from their appearances, Puuse shyly asked him “Is it fine for me to ask you this time?”

“Why are you heading to the demon race?” (Puuse)

“It’s because they seem to be powerful. I have an objective beyond that as well.” (Hifumi)

Even Puuse, who listened, understood that it was a non-committal reply while thinking about something else, but she didn’t ask any further.

At this time the figure of the elven elder, whom he had seen being fused with the arbour, floated within Hifumi’s mind.

“I decided. Let’s go to your village first.” (Hifumi)

“W-What’s your goal?” (Puuse)

“Something from the story just now is on my mind. The important elf will be there, right? I found something I want to ask him.” (Hifumi)

No matter how you look at it, being assimilated into a tree is weird, Hifumi assessed.

Even though it’s a fantasy world, it’s stuck in my mind. I want some answers until I can agree with it.

“I still have time. There’s no problem to at least drop in on the way. For that reason, we will change our destination.” (Hifumi)

Puuse wasn’t able to decline that.

Chapter 100 – Welcome To The Jungle

“Oh.” (Hifumi)

While walking through the forest following Puuse’s guidance, Hifumi discovered the same thing he saw not long ago. It was the figure of an elf entrusting their back to a large tree.

It’s a different person from the one he saw first. The elf still hasn’t completely changed into a wooden figure.

Once Hifumi got close without listening to Puuse’s shy restraint, the left eye of the sitting elder elf opened.

“You are conscious?” (Hifumi)

“... Human, eh? I was able to see something unusual just before my death...”

The elder elf, who talks in a fragile voice, was a male. Wearing a plain attire as if he has wrapped himself in a cloth, he is sitting in a cross-legged posture.

Most of the visible part have transformed. Around one third of the mouth on the right and the right eye in the face had turned into moss-covered bark.

The voice, which leaks from a gap in the slightly opened mouth, seems to be really strained.

“Is it painful? Are you seeing properly?” (Hifumi)

“What a barrage of questions.”

The elder elf, who spilled a laughter as if leaking air with a “fufu”, shifted his attention to Puuse, who is standing behind Hifumi.

“Puuse, huh...? The one who brought along a human is you?”

“E-Excuse me.” (Puuse)

“There’s nothing to apologize. I was able to have an interesting encounter in my last moments. Human, do you want to ask something?”

Returning his sight onto Hifumi, the elf muttered “I don’t have much time left.”

“My body will gradually stop to move. The tree-turned parts don’t feel anything, be it getting wet or cracking.”

“Even my hunger vanished before I realized it”, the elder elf explains.

“A gentle death, huh?” (Hifumi)

“Fufufu... Human, it’s different.”

The elder elf turns his eyeball in a circle. His gaze turned towards everything in visible range.

“I can watch like this, but it’s only in the range of my eyeball’s movement. I wonder how far it will become.”

“Fuufuu”, his breathing goes roughly.

“My breathing-is slowly-getting painful. It’s not-a gentle sensation. What is certain-is me gradually heading towards the approaching death. Undoubtedly, if it’s like this and even if I stop moving completely, I will probably survive-for a while. Without seeing, without hearing and unable to move.”

“That probably doesn’t mean that it’s not scary”, he says.

“Even my tears aren’t flowing anymore. It seems I’m going mad due to the despair of being unable to handle my own death.”

“Such a...” (Puuse)

Puuse has become speechless with a pale face due to his fear towards death, she heard of for the first time.

“The ones, who were unaware of it, isn’t only you. It’s an unapproachable law, created by someone, for anyone facing death, but that’s wrong.”

Without anyone knowing the truth, they vanish into the forest believing to be visited by a gentle death.

“The result of that is this. Therefore, I’m grateful-for being able to talk to someone. And, human.”

“What is it?” (Hifumi)

“Please-kill me. Any more and I will cease being a living creature. I don’t want to taste dread...”

“I see. It’s fine, I guess.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi readily accepted his request and drew the katana from his waist.

“P-Please wait! Something like killing him...” (Puuse)

“You are a cruel fellow.” (Hifumi)

“Eh?” (Puuse)

“I was told something unexpected”, Puuse raised a voice of surprise.

“It’s as the human says, Puuse. For the current me death is a salvation.”

“Such a...” (Puuse)

“I want to examine the corpse.” (Hifumi)

The elder elf smiled within the range of being unable to change his expression due to the words of Hifumi, who prepared his katana.

“If I can die, it’s fine for you to do as you like afterwards. Human, your name is?”

“It’s Hifumi.” (Hifumi)

“I see, Hifumi, huh...? You have my gratitude.”

“See ya.” (Hifumi)

Holding the katana above his head, the katana, which was brought down head-on, divided him into two separate halves up to the head with its marvellous sharpness.

Moreover, the head drops sideways due to a horizontal slash.

The head, which was split into two parts, tumbled down from the neck stopping its breathing.

“C-Cruel...” (Puuse)

“What’s cruel is the state inside his body.” (Hifumi)

Using the point of the katana, Hifumi pointed at the cut end of the head, which fell to ground, up.

“Uuh...” (Puuse)

While somehow enduring the stuff swelling up from within her throat due to the gruesome view, Puuse timidly turns her sight.

Hifumi examined it carefully from point-blank range while squatting.

“Even the head’s contents have mostly transformed. So, what’s this?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who had seen the interior of humans many times, knitted his brows due to the appearance as if an entire part of the components was created to be replaced by wood.

Moreover, there’s another part Hifumi doesn’t understand.

“Do you know what this white thing is?” (Hifumi)

“I don’t know. It’s the first time that I saw this, but...” (Puuse)

What Hifumi saw was a sticky white something, which clung thickly to a part which was on the verge of changing to wood within the head.

Once he tries to lightly scoop it up with his finger, there are sticky strings drooping.

“I don’t know this. It might be something characteristic to elves.”
(Hifumi)

Wiping his finger with a paper, Hifumi stood up and muttered in a small voice,

“It would be best, if I could see the contents of a still safe fellow though.” (Hifumi)

“Eh? What did you say?” (Puuse)

Hifumi, who saw Puuse’s look of not having heard it, is intently glaring at Puuse’s head while staying silent.

“Did something happen...?” (Puuse)

Feeling something frightening from his gaze, Puuse asks nervously.

“No, it’s nothing. Rather than that, let’s hurry up.” (Hifumi)



According to Puuse’s explanation, the barrier for imprisoning the demon race deep within the forest is apparently created with the elves’ mana in a special location, where a magic square was drawn, just past the village.

“In the end it won’t work unless we pass through the village?” (Hifumi)

“Please, I’d like you to have peaceful talks in the village.” (Puuse)

“That depends on you guys’ behaviour. I don’t have a playful mind to attempt being on good terms with hostile fellows.” (Hifumi)

On the contrary, questions are rapidly released by Hifumi. Even though Hifumi knew about it once he entered the elven forest, perception magic for the sake of protection has been set up close to the barrier. He realizes that it’s unclear whether it has been done by elves, beastmen or humans.

As he only met accidentally with Shiku in the midst of his patrol, it was Puuse’s group, who came to welcome him upon Zanga’s order.

While having such conversation, the village came in sight.

Two elves, holding bows, are standing in front of the simple wooden gate.

“Ah, we arrived...” (Puuse)

Puuse believed that it would turn into a quarrel, if she guided him there just like that, but they ended up arriving without her coming up with any idea in the end.

“Wait! Stop!”

The two elves, who stood watch at the gate, call out to them.

“Human, huh? We were told you would be coming, but why Puuse... and on her back Shiku? What happened?”

“Let me see... Since it will be too long to explain, I want to lead him to Zanga-sama’s place first.” (Puuse)

“Is that so? Please take the human along since I will carry Shiku to his house.”

Lifting up Shiku, who was still unconscious, one of the elves leaves.

“W-Well then, it’s this way.” (Puuse)

While being relieved that she was at least able to avoid a critical situation without resolving the unacceptable circumstances in any way on purpose, Puuse continues to guide him.

All of the houses as far as the eyes can see are one-story houses, which were build with wooden planks and some ivy and twigs. Without having anything door-like, slightly dirty clothes are hanging at the entrances similar to a sign curtain hung at shop entrances.

“Zanga-sama’s house is over there.” (Puuse)

The building, pointed at by Puuse, is two times bigger than the other ones. A simple door, which was made with a board and not a cloth, was installed at the entrance.

Hifumi, who stopped and watched it for a short while as he had some feeling of discomfort, noticed that building to not have any windows. The other buildings have openings, although those are merely hollowed out, for the sake of letting skylight in, but those can’t be seen in that build at all.

Without realizing that peculiarity, Puuse stood in front of the door and called out towards the building’s interior.

“Zanga-sama, it’s Puuse. I have brought the human.” (Puuse)

“Ah, thank you. Come and enter.” (Zanga)

A hoarse voice of an old woman resounded from inside.

“Since we got permission, please go ahead.” (Puuse)

Being urged on by Puuse, who opened the entrance by detaching the whole board, Hifumi steps inside without hesitation.

The building seems to have only one room. A bed, which was a cloth covering a pile of dried grass, and a low wooden table are visible.

With the entire building having no windows, only a small flame, faintly swaying in a place, similar to a sunken hearth, in the middle of the one room, is dimly illuminating the inside.

“So you came, human-san. Look, it’s fine for you to sit down over there.” (Zanga)

Sitting in the centre of the room, the old woman points at the opposite side of her across the sunken hearth. Skilfully breaking a thin branch with only her right hand, she fed it to the fire.

A cloth, similar to the bedding, is covering a pile of dried grass at the designated spot.

Hifumi, who sat down without reservation, looked straight at the old woman. Equal to the elves, who were reduced to arbour and whom he saw in the forest, she has well-regulated features. Her face, carved by deep wrinkles, can be even regarded as similar to annual tree rings giving her the impression of having lived for many years.

“Puuse, you can go now. Since I will talk with our guest, return to your other work.” (Zanga)

“Yes. Then, excuse me.” (Puuse)

Once Puuse leave, the old woman sighs and throws a small branch, she held in her right hand, into the fire again. Suddenly approaching the fire by getting on her right knee, the aged face of Zanga shines more vividly than the swaying flame.

“Although you seem to be quite old, your body still moves?” (Hifumi)

“... By that way of speaking, it looks like you know what will happen to an elf at their final moments, eh?” (Zanga)

With her talking about the details, Hifumi knows, in order to confirm, he nodded indicating that Zanga was correct.

“The elves, you know, live in this forest since long ago. They died in this forest... no, were absorbed into large trees... Seen from a human’s standpoint, what do you think about this?” (Zanga)

“It’s abnormal.” (Hifumi)

“Fufu... Hihihi.” (Zanga)

Zanga was happy and laughed due to his direct and denying words.

“Abnormal, huh? I guess that’s true. Something like there being no other way but to only wait for oneself becoming unable to move is strange.” (Zanga)

“Did you especially invite me to ask me that?” (Hifumi)

“No, not at all. I only tried asking you because I was worried about this a bit.” (Zanga)

“That”, Zanga pointed at the katana, Hifumi laid aside.

“What made the elf pass on some time ago was that sword, right? I want to be killed in the same way, too. I can’t make such request to another elf.” (Zanga)

Elves absolutely won’t do anything like injuring their brethren. They seem to have established the concept that all of them should die in the

forest, with the exception being death by sickness or accident.

“By the looks your transformation hasn’t yet started, though... no, your foot and the left hand, huh?” (Hifumi)

“Keen insight, eh...” (Zanga)

“As you surmised, my left foot and left hand have already stiffened and I have lost the ability to move them”, Zanga says.

“I had a weak body since back then though. While obediently secluding myself within my house, I ended up dragging on my long life before I realized so myself. However, I wondered whether I should disappear into death by leaving to the forest, if this progressed a bit more... even though it’s shameful, I got scared.” (Zanga)

Zanga laughed with a feeling of self-mockery, but that laughter settled down before long.

“Therefore, human guest, I want to die before that happens. Death isn’t scary. Waiting for death while unable to do anything, that’s scary.” (Zanga)

“Well, it’s fine, I guess. However, is it fine, even if the villagers die as result of that?” (Hifumi)

“... What do you mean by that?” (Zanga)

“You don’t know?” Hifumi glared at Zanga.

“I don’t particularly mind killing you. I don’t care either way. But, the other elves, who would become aware of it, will probably try to avenge you. I don’t have a spirit of self-sacrifice to be done in easily due to that, is what I’m saying.” (Hifumi)

“... I wonder if you can’t wait for one night. I will explain to the villagers.” (Zanga)

After hesitating for a short while, Zanga said that and promised Hifumi to make sure that no harm comes his way. Even if there was someone causing harm to Hifumi and if that someone had the tables turned on them, it would be up to Hifumi to do as he likes, she says.

“I will prepare a bed. Apart from that, as exchange for listening to my request, isn’t there something I can do for you, I wonder?” (Zanga)

“Why are only you among the elves scared to enter the forest?” (Hifumi)

Zanga quickly averted her look due to Hifumi’s question.

“Well, there’s no point even if I hear it. It will be fine, if you stay silent until your death. There is nothing I want to request from you. I heard everything I wanted to hear from that elven woman.” (Hifumi)

“Is that so...? Thank you. If you head right after leaving this place, there will be a small house. Since Puuse’s home is next to it, it would be good, if you greeted her. I will arrange for a meal as well.” (Zanga)

“No, it’s unnecessary because I have food.” (Hifumi)

“I see. If that’s the case, see you tomorrow. Please come to this place tomorrow.” (Zanga)

“Since I have to resolve myself for death”, Zanga regained her smile once again.



Inn the appointed hut, Hifumi, who rested on dry grass, woke up after sensing a presence stepping inside.

The time is still before dawn.

“Who is it?” (Hifumi)

What came leaping into the sight of Hifumi, who pulled the katana towards himself swiftly and took a stance of nukiuchi, was that young elf Shiku.

“H-Human!” (Shiku)

Due to him awkwardly calling out while being afraid, Hifumi doesn't release his stance.

“It's a smart move to attack someone while they are asleep, but you are far too unskilled at erasing your presence.” (Hifumi)

“I-It's different! Puuse-nee-chan is in great trouble!” (Shiku)

“Puuse? Ah, that elven woman, huh? ... I don't care.” (Hifumi)

Hanging the katana at his waist, Hifumi sat down on the grass bed.

“Such a thing! I beg you, please save Puuse-nee-chan!” (Shiku)

“Putting that aside, wouldn't it be better to hide?” (Hifumi)

“Eh? ... Au!?” (Shiku)

The pellet, which came flying from behind Shiku, grazed Shiku's shoulder without hitting Hifumi.

Wind blades, mixed with stones of various sizes, come flying one after the other. The cloth, hanging at the entrance of the hut, has been torn to pieces.

Him having fallen down at the moment of receiving an injury bears

results. With the exception of the shallow cut on his shoulder, Shiku has sustained no injury worth mentioning.

However, the building, which has suffered damage in succession, is very unlikely to last any longer.

The walls are riddled with holes and the pillars are shaking grandly as well.

“U-Uwah!” (Shiku)

Watching the roof collapsing at last, Shiku clung to Hifumi.

Seeing the hut collapsing completely and getting enveloped in a cloud of dust, the elves, who cast the spells, raised laughters.

“Hee, the likes of humans. You will pay for the crime of having killed our brethren with your life.”

Laughing foolishly, the elves can hear someone’s voice with their ears.

“Crime, eh...? I don’t have any intention to go along with your revenge game.”

The cloud of dust vanished in an instant and above the collapsed hut a large, dark disk was rotating.

And, the one who stood on top of it was Hifumi.

Shiku is clinging to his waist.

“Though I didn’t have any intention to do this either.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi thrust his hand into the round dark magic, which absorbed the roof and the dust, and took out the kusarigama.

“Let’s reply with a big service, if you want to kill me.” (Hifumi)

While whirling around the counterweight attached at the end of the chain, he tightly grasps the sickle with his right hand.

“Use you magic steadily. It’s going to be an enjoyable contest of strength between fantasy and martial arts.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi slowly took one step forwards.

Chapter 101 – Why We Thugs

“You’re a hindrance.” (Hifumi)

“Gyan!?” (Shiku)

Hifumi sent Shiku, who clung to his waist, flying with a kick.

Without a single glance at Shiku who’s rolling on the ground, Hifumi who held the kusarigama, began to advance again.

His stride is slow but powerful releasing a pressure of it being unstoppable by anyone.

“If it is Darkness magic...”

“Don’t falter! Shower him with spells and arrows!”

At the same time as the voice resounded, stones, wind blades and even compressed water currents are aimed at Hifumi.

“Uuh-oh. Those are intense.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi avoids the spells, which come flying, as if performing a light dance.

The elves can’t conceal their irritation due to Hifumi moving left and right and brandishing his kusarigama while being surrounded by 10 of them in a semicircle.

“Match your timings with your companions!”

“Too slow!” (Hifumi)

What Hifumi threw wasn't the counterweight but the sickle part.

“Gyaa!”

The sickle deeply pierces into the nape of an elf's neck getting only stopped by the collarbone.

The elf, who widely opened his eyes in shock, without time to pull it out, was dragged towards Hifumi.

“Yo-to*” (Hifumi) (T/N: Exclamation for pulling/reeling in something. No idea for an equivalent in English)

While pulling out the sickle with a light yell of encouragement, he tears the neck.

The elf whose limbs were flapping about, dies having his entire body shredded by wind magic while getting used as shield.

Hifumi threw the body, which lost its strength, at another elf.

“Uwaah?”

“Holy cow!”

Next, spells with arrows mixed in-between come flying at Hifumi who plunges towards the clamouring elves.

Hifumi who was directly assaulted by spells and arrows being hammered out without a single break, is naturally unable to dodge all of them. The cuts on his cheeks and arms are slowly increasing.

However, Hifumi is laughing.

“Yes, that’s right, good! Resist me desperately! Aim for my life! For the sake of protecting your own lives! For the sake of protecting someone else’s life!” (Hifumi)

Closing in upon a single elf as if sliding upon scattered sand with a *thud*, he drives his fist which tightly grasped the counterweight, into the elf’s face with all his power.

Throwing the grasped counterweight over his shoulders, he crushed the face of another elf as well.

“Fufu... fufufufu...” (Hifumi)

Wiping his cheek with a finger, he feels hot blood wetting his fingertip.

“Imagine the instance of your deaths and you will be definitely able to savour the actual feeling of being alive. To begin with...” (Hifumi)

Storing away the kusarigama, Hifumi draws the katana at his waist.

The light of the sun slightly peeked through the gaps between the trees and faintly shone onto the katana.

“At the time you avert your eyes from death, you guys likely won’t die in a decent way.” (Hifumi)

Due to Hifumi laughing while dyeing the elbows of both his arms with the blood of the elves and himself, the elves shuddered to the degree of even forgetting to release their spells.

“Oh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi turned the point of his katana towards the remaining elves.

“Did you decide to surrender and accept your own deaths? Killing wooden dolls is boring as well though.” (Hifumi)

While enjoying the tingling feeling originating from the pain of his wounds, he takes a stance with the katana being carried on his left shoulder.

“Don’t screw around!”

There are 7 elves remaining. An elf who concluded that it was plenty to overwhelm him, shouted.

Once again a volley of spells is fired.

Even for Hifumi it’s impossible to avoid all the fast bullets which are invoked far quicker than any spell used by humans, and thus he gives up on that.

Lowering his stance, Hifumi who moves forward as if sliding, doesn’t decrease his speed even while getting struck in the stomach by stones and cut at the shoulders.

“How lukewarm!” (Hifumi)

“Giyaaa!”

Using the momentum of running through, he bisects the elf who gave directions, with a slash diagonally from the shoulder.

With a short scream the elf’s body split in two parts and dropped to the ground.

“Fuu~...” (Hifumi)

He’s already covered in wounds all over, but his expression is cheerful.

“Is that human... invincible...?”

Hifumi pouted due to the words muttered by someone.

“How rude. I will be at a loss with something like invincibility. Battles make my heart tremble since I might die.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi who took a stance of holding the pommel against the left side of his hips, approaches the next elf in one bound and kills them with the force of a thrust similar to shooting it out.

Pulling out the katana, he closed in on another elf while receiving a barrage of countless pebbles, made with Earth magic, with his back and chopped off the elf's head while turning around.

“4 left, huh?” (Hifumi)

Swinging the katana, he clears away the blood on it.

“Don't you have any other magic? Please show me some more.”
(Hifumi)

“Kuu... This!”

What one of the elves released was a fire arrow.

“You!?”

Hifumi perceived the other elves' surprise in a corner of his sight.

Being people who live within the forest, they mostly don't use fire magic, or rather, they probably can't use it.

“That's good.” (Hifumi)

He deliberately evades the fire arrow at the last second.

The scorching heat of the arrow chars his right side and the dougi turns black.

“He survived inevitable death. It’s such a feeling, right?” (Hifumi)

The katana which Hifumi thrust out, pierces the chest of the elf and its point stabs through the elf’s back.

“Su...ch a...”

The elf’s hoarse voice is blended with blood. The katana slides out at the moment the elf collapsed.

The blood, which is dripping from the point, falls to the ground.

“3 more to go.” (Hifumi)

His murmur is small. However, all of their ear’s have surely heard it as death sentence.



Before the attack on Hifumi there was movement at the house of the leader Zanga.

“I’m going to intrude.”

The one who came entering with a brief comment as warning for form’s sake before dawn was a man called Laboras (T/N: Raborasu <<) who unifies the men of the village.

He was quite different from the image of an elf. With a tall and muscled body build, he was a giant who's good at handling knives, however, contrary to his appearance, he was also good at using magic.

“What is it Laboras? It's quite sudden, you know.” (Zanga)

“Who of us is sudden?” (Laboras)

Laboras who sat down opposite of Zanga with the sunken hearth between them with an air of familiarity, emitted a dangerous aura from his entire body.

“I heard you allowed a human to enter this village.” (Laboras)

“Indeed, I did. Or rather, it might be better to say that I had him come here.” (Zanga)

“... I want you to tell me why you did such thing.” (Laboras)

“It's something personal.” (Zanga)

Zanga throws a twig into the sunken hearth as the fire grew weak.

“It's something that has nothing to do with you.” (Zanga)

“What do you need a human for? Moreover, is it something that requires to give him shelter to the point of lending him the village's vacant house?” (Laboras)

Laboras' voice gradually becomes lower.

“... What's making you so frantic?” (Zanga)

“I’m... not.” (Laboras)

Laboras put strength into his fingers, which are grabbing his own knees.

“I intend to respect you as our leader. I believe that you are keeping the villagers together well. If it’s your words, there are many who will listen to them, too. But...” (Laboras)

Laboras, who paused, raised his right hand and two male elves who seized Puuse’s both arms, came entering from outside.

“If you broke a law, I don’t intend to forgive that.” (Laboras)

Puuse was apparently hit badly a dozen times, her left cheek was swollen and large drops of tears ran down from both her eyes. Seizing both her arms is in order to make sure that she doesn’t heal herself with magic.

“Puuse...! You, what are you thinking to raise your hand at your own brethren!?” (Zanga)

“I don’t call someone who has violated the laws, a brethren.” (Laboras)

Once released by the hands of the men, Puuse walked unsteadily and crumbled down on her knees next to Zanga.

“Puuse, are you alright?” (Zanga)

“I-I’m very sorry, Zanga-sama...” (Puuse)

As Zanga wondered what she was apologizing about, Laboras raised his voice which was blurred by his rage.

“We found the corpses of the people who left to greet the human together with Puuse.” (Laboras)

Hearing the situation from Shiku who woke up, Laboras investigated close to the barrier on the wastelands’ side. There he discovered the corpses of his brethren who were devoured by wild animals.

“That’s probably the result of them attempting to treat him violently while ignoring my instructions. I believe that to be regrettable, but isn’t that fine as you can say that they acted against the law?” (Zanga)

“If the opponent isn’t a human, that is.” (Laboras)

Laboras opened his eyes widely and glared at Zanga.

“That alone isn’t the issue.” (Laboras)

Summoning Puuse as the person who’s aware of the circumstances, Laboras had her explain the situation. What he then heard from Puuse is,

“Shiku heard vague talking voices. Breaking the law, they started a conversation with a brethren heading towards death and of all things killed him before he could welcome a gentle death! I called Puuse for the sake of asking her about that!” (Laboras)

Beating Puuse who didn’t reveal the matter in question out of fright, Laboras forcibly extracted the information out of her.

“... Leader Zanga. The human, you invited, killed our brethren and even broke an important law of this village. Do you really think that even this will be finished with ‘it’s a personal matter?’” (Laboras)

Laboras removed his gaze from Zanga who pursed her mouth, and glared at Puuse who has broken down crying.

“At least Puuse has committed the crime of having dishonoured the death of her brethren. In accordance to the laws of the village, this person

should be banished into the forest.” (Laboras)

“... She likely only happened to be present at the incident caused by the human by chance. Isn't that a bit too much?” (Zanga)

While placing her right hand on Puuse's back, Zanga lined up words in Puuse's defense.

However, Laboras was unable to agree to either of them.

“It's regrettable, but I have no intention to listen to your words. Tomorrow morning I will explain the circumstances to the villagers and that will likely result in you being removed as leader. ... Soothing the villagers by showing them the human's corpse, it will probably be also necessary to demonstrate the strictness of the laws by banishing Puuse.” (Laboras)

“You, do you plan to kill that human?” (Zanga)

“Of course. That being a foreign body, it's a disaster. There's nothing else left but disposing of it quickly.” (Laboras)

“I wonder, if you will be able to.” (Zanga)

“Even the people moving under my leadership understand the importance of the laws. For that reason they have also agreed to get rid of the human.” (Laboras)

As Laboras' words revealed his confidence, Zanga answered with a sarcastic smile.

“That's not what I mean. I've asked you whether you can win against that human with the village's men.” (Zanga)

“Are you telling me that we are falling behind against a single human?” (Laboras)

“I guess the lot who went to greet him, died because they fell behind.” (Zanga)

For a short while the room was wrapped in silence, however Laboras

suddenly stood up.

“Anyway, in the morning we will carry out Puuse’s banishment and your dismissal upon the consensus of the villagers. Until then both of you aren’t allowed to leave this house either.” (Laboras)

Leaving the two men who brought Puuse, behind as guards, Laboras went away.

“... As usual, he immediately escapes once he gets defeated by arguments, that guy.” (Zanga)

“Zanga-sama...” (Puuse)

“Look, I will wipe away your tears. Since you have such a cute face, isn’t it a waste to mess it up with tears?” (Zanga)

She grabs one sheet of cloth off the pile nearby and gently wipes Puuse’s face.

“By now I have no interest in the status of something like leader but unexpectedly I ended up getting Puuse and that human involved...”
(Zanga)

“I’m really sorry”, Zanga gently brushed Puuse with her still movable right hand.



Shiku, who pricked up his ears in front of Zanga’s house, learned of Puuse being banished and ran in panic to Hifumi’s place to request his assistance.

It was himself who told Laboras the truth, but by no means did his thinking reach the conclusion of even Puuse having to take the blame. Even if he talks to someone from the village, they likely won’t forgive Puuse, once Laboras tells them that she broke the law.

If it's a human who possesses that much strength, he might be able to rescue Puuse and take her to somewhere safe, he judged.

He was scared of meeting that dreadful human. He wasn't able to suppress the trembling of his knees as he recalled Hifumi's smile at the time he killed Shiku's brethren, however no other good idea came to his mind. He doesn't believe that he can win against the men who remained as guards, if it's only himself.

And, Shiku who sought his assistance, and the assassins who were sent by Laboras, arrived at the hut where Hifumi is staying in, at the same time.

And now, Shiku who once again ended up fainting, came to his senses at last.

“... Huh?” (Shiku)

In the visual field, he saw in his absent-minded state, heaven and earth were upside down.

“Agh, ooouuch...” (Shiku)

As the current situation was inverted, he apparently fainted being hit by a trunk of a tree.

Twisting his body in a squirming motion, Shiku who finally returned to a sitting posture, recalled the situation before he lost his consciousness.

“T-That human is....!?” (Shiku)

In front of his eyes there's the completely broken hut. On the opposite of that there are several corpses being scattered about.

“Uubuh... Ueeeh...” (Shiku)

Shiku who ended up looking directly at something sticking out from a corpse, which had its body cut in two, threw up until his stomach became empty.

Pulling himself together, he searched for the figure of Hifumi in order to not look at the corpse, but he saw the back of someone doing something while crouching down while being in fact surrounded by those corpses.

The strange attire which had a beautiful deep blue colour, was riddled with holes all over and was dyed by some deep red stains.

“W-What are you doing?” (Shiku)

Resolving himself and getting close, Shiku notices that Hifumi is holding an arm of someone and his white face becomes blue.

“... The reason why you elves get assimilated and turn into arbour is this after all.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi who cut a corpse's finger into two, thrust his finger in front of Shiku after running it across the cross-section.

A white sticky something is clinging to Hifumi's fingertip.

“What's... this...?” (Shiku)

“Don't know. What I understood from examining some of the people who were cut apart is only that it's little-by-little accumulating at the ends of the fingers and feet.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi built a hypothesis upon the autopsies up until this point, but he believed in it with almost no doubt.

“There's something in your food, your drinks or possibly in the air drifting through this forest, however it probably quickens the transformation by accumulating within the body. Since the way of dying

is by the mucus arriving at the head, it piles up in the body starting with the limbs and at the time of your death's it even enters the head. No, it accumulates there." (Hifumi)

As result of transforming from the tips of the limbs and having the head encroached last, the body changes while the senses are still clear. It's a viciousness as if it is for the sake of causing complete dread.

"Th-Then, the people, who turn into arbour and are absorbed by the forest, will..." (Shiku)

"Their bodies' functions will slowly cease and they will die. It's probably quite painful." (Hifumi)

"Such a..." (Shiku)

Shiku who dropped his shoulders as it was 180° different from the custom which formed a belief that it was a nice thing, finally remembered Puuse's and Zanga's situation.

Quickly raising his face, Shiku faced Hifumi and exclaimed,

"Help! At this rate Puuse-nee-chan will get banished!" (Shiku)

"Hmmm..." (Hifumi)

Hifumi who scrubbed both his hands which touched the corpses with a paper, grabbed a corpse which lost both hands and feet, and tossed it into the broken house.

"I'm not particularly interested." (Hifumi)

Hifumi easily refused Shiku's teary request.

Chapter 102 – The Kids Aren't Alright

“I wonder, what shall I do...” (Zanga)

Muttering that in a small voice, Zanga has no real care about what happens to her as, putting the method aside, she had planned to die anyway, but Puuse who was declared to be exiled was completely haggard.

The guards had disappeared from the room a little while after Laboras left, though they were likely waiting outside.

While having her back gently caressed, Puuse got exhausted from crying and fell asleep.

Watching her sleeping face with its swollen face, Zanga was disgusted at her own powerlessness while thinking *if only I was good at healing magic.*

“Really, in these matters I'm only a leader in name ~nee.” (Zanga)

She looks at the door where Laboras exited.

Before long the day will dawn.

In a distant place she can hear screams and the sounds of things clashing.

“They are at it, eh...? Will that human be alright?” (Zanga)

Which reminds me, I didn't hear his name, Zanga smiled. Just how scared of transforming and dying am I?

“N... nh?” (Puuse)

“You woke up? Sorry, but can you handle the treatment of your wounds by yourself?” (Zanga)

Puuse, who was painful to look at with the traces of her tears, silently nodded and cast healing magic targeting her swollen face.

Even after the swelling slowly subsided and her originally slender chin and white skin returned, Puuse's facial expression didn't clear up.

“Puuse. It was my bad judgement for having you go meet him ~nee. I considered that he might have been injured in the wastelands since he's a human, but...” (Zanga)

“For that reason there was no other choice but to send Puuse who is good at

healing magic”, Zanga apologized.

“That’s already in the past... Besides, if you look at it differently, I survived while the others got killed by that human.” (Puuse)

Zanga averted her look as it was painful for her to see Puuse’s expression of forcing a smile.

“It looks like that human man is currently getting attacked. Now then, I wonder what will happen to this village and us as result of that...” (Zanga)

Even while saying that, Zanga believes that no matter of him having the strength to come here while surviving the wastelands, he will likely end up getting ganged up with offensive magic while being attacked by a large number of people.

“That...” (Puuse)

Puuse lifted her head shyly.

“Even if he won, I don’t think the situation will change for the better, however... rather than that, is Shiku alright?” (Puuse)

“I can’t really say ~nee... I don’t think that Laboras is together with that child though. He will most likely be surprised once he gets to know about your situation, Puuse.” (Zanga)

“Even so”, Zanga revises her thinking.

“With me just inviting a single human, it has turned into such an unfathomable situation.” (Zanga)

If Puuse really gets banished, I will also leave the forest together with her, Zanga decided in her heart.

Even Puuse who is bad at offensive magic will probably be able to escape if I sacrifice myself when we get attacked by beastmen.

“If I’m not allowed to do at least this much...” (Zanga)

“Zanga-sama?” (Puuse)

“It’s nothing. Anyway, for now we can’t do anything but wait.” (Zanga)

As the fire of the sunken hearth was about to die out before she realized,

Zanga tossed in a twig.



“What happened here!?” (Laboras)

Laboras, accompanied by several of his followers, searched for Shiku to ask him about Hifumi’s deeds for the sake of Puuse’s denunciation, but since he wasn’t at home, he reluctantly headed out to kill Hifumi.

What he witnessed there were the figures of his comrades who had been minutely dissected by Hifumi.

“Uwaa...”

“Ugu-gueee...”

Even the followers he brought along are vomiting unable to bear it or are holding their mouths shut due to the dense stench of blood and the terrible scene.

Being dumbfounded for a short while, Laboras raised a loud voice at Hifumi who is continuing his work while ignoring Laboras.

“You bastard are the human who was dragged in by Zanga! What are you doing to our brethren, to our friends!?” (Laboras)

“Ah?” (Hifumi)

Turning around, Hifumi’s hands are once again dyed red.

“Human...”

“What a cruel thing to go this far”, as one of the followers mutters that, all of them shiver.

“Did you guys also came aiming for my life just like these fellows?” (Hifumi)

“If that’s the case, you are very welcome”, Hifumi took out a bottle filled with water from his darkness storage and started to care-freely wash his arm.

“What the hell did you do to our brethren...!?” (Laboras)

Hifumi doesn’t even turn his look at Laboras who says that in a low voice as if suppressing his anger.

“I assembled the parts in a good mood. I tried to examine those guys’ bodies.

Look!” (Hifumi)

What Hifumi threw was the small white lump of the pinky from before.

“What’s this?” (Laboras)

“That guy’s.” (Hifumi)

Ahead of where Hifumi is pointing at is the figure of an elf which had its hands and feet cruelly chopped into small pieces.

Laboras’s sight swam for an instant, but his look immediately returned to Hifumi.

“There was a similar white lump in 3 feet and fingers before. You can’t call it bones. Besides, the number of bones in the hands and feet was the same as the other guys.” (Hifumi)

“So, what about it!?” (Laboras)

“I’m investigating the cause for you guys gradually changing once you got old. You not interested in it? How you will die? To what manner of dying you will be exposed?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi points at the scattered corpses.

“It might be your fate to die like that if you throw yourself into combat. It’s like that for me, I guess. But, how about if it isn’t related to combat? If you were lucky enough to survive?” (Hifumi)

“We can return to the forest! We will become a part of the forest as people of the forest! It’s different from you humans!” (Laboras)

“Yea, true.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi discarded Laboras’s frantic objection indifferently.

“Rather than that, try looking at this.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi began to walk quickly and stopped next to a pool of blood which was located at the root of a tree.

Of course it was created by Hifumi diligently carrying over corpses.

“Do you see that only the part close to the trunk of the tree has become slightly white?” (Hifumi)

“White... what’s this?” (Laboras)

Once Hifumi stabs a tree branch he picked up into the blood pool and pulls it back up in front of the elf who is tilting his head to the side, the branch is entwined by white strings, similar to a spider web.

“At first I wondered whether it originally was a component that exists within the blood of you elves, but it doesn’t seem to be the case. The blood pool over there hasn’t changed, right?” (Hifumi)

As Hifumi says, an identical pool of blood had been created in vicinity while leaving some open space in-between. It’s a puddle giving off a dark red colour where one can’t see a change similar to turning white in particular. As Hifumi prepared a controlled experiment in high spirits while recalling the scientific experiments at school so far, he nodded in satisfaction as he got the main gist of the situation.

“It’s nothing but a hypothesis.” (Hifumi)

The elves’ looks gathered on Hifumi who began to talk while giving such preface.

“One of the reasons is that after you entered the area of the elves the kinds of trees growing here and the atmosphere is unusual. But the cause is this tree which is composing the forest in the vicinity of the village, I guess.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi slaps the trunk of a large tree standing next to the pool of blood.

“I don’t know whether it’s from the trunk or the leaves, but if you accumulate components of this tree in your body, it will likely change your bodies’ composition to something similar to a tree by becoming solid within your body. I guess the flesh and blood which composed your body originally gets corroded by it.” (Hifumi)

Once he finished talking in a way of obviously persuading himself, Hifumi surveyed his surroundings by turning around.

“So, what do you think? Do you guys choose to die by turning into a tree? Will you end your lives and become mere lumps of meat just like these fellows by clashing with magic and drawing your weapons here? Or, will you run away from the curse of this tree before it’s too late?” (Hifumi)

No one is able to return an answer to Hifumi's words.
Looking at each others' faces, they are simply talking with each other noisily.

"You bastard are..." (Laboras)

Only Laboras trembles in fury due to his brethren being flustered by the words of the human who was to be their subjugation target, due to the cruel manner of his brethren' deaths and due to Hifumi toying with their corpses.

"Do you intend to cover up your crimes by lining up incomprehensible theories!?" (Laboras)

"Are you unable to... no, unwilling to understand your mistake?" (Hifumi)

While giggling, Hifumi tossed away the branch he was holding.

"Don't avert your eyes from death. It's something everyone, without fail, will experience. There's no need to be scared of it." (Hifumi)

Drawing his katana, Hifumi takes one large breath.

"Hey, choose. Will you persist in your obstinacy to fight here? Will you calmly review your own circumstances?" (Hifumi)

Several elves quietly took a distance due to those words.
That matter is irritating Laboras as well.

"Don't you weaklings have no pride as people of the forest!?" (Laboras)

"Don't talk such rubbish." (Hifumi)

Hifumi bluntly tells the enraged Laboras while baring his displeasure and composure.

"Pride or such is a dream bringing people close to death. Thanks to your guys' stupid '**law**' the chance to face death was stolen from the elves." (Hifumi)

Hifumi showed an expression of ecstasy while gazing at the charm of the hamon.

"Dying is something that completes one's character. Did they follow their way of life? Or, was it filled with unhappiness? Was it an unnatural death in the middle of their aspirations or did they achieve something?" (Hifumi)

He calmly shifts his attention to Laboras who glares at him and puts strength

into his muscled body which is unlike that of normal elves.

“Your desires, your objectives and your future comes to an end once you die. What’s left is a completed life. Being killed is something that completes that life.” (Hifumi)

“Therefore”, he prepares the katana by aiming at Laboras’ eyes.

“Let me bestow that end upon you, if you so desire.” (Hifumi)

“This human is...”

Half of the followers are gradually withdrawing while the other half is waiting for Laboras’s judgment.

Laboras who had the looks of his comrades gathered on him quietly took the knife at his waist into his hands.

Hifumi laughs.



When Shiku observed the state of Zanga’s house from the shades of a tree, the two elves in front of the entrance stood there listlessly.

Shiku who moved his lips with a *monyumonyu* while lowering his eyebrows frantically performs a chant within his mouth.

“S-Sleep...” (Shiku)

His magic is at a level where Shiku might be able to barely use hypnotism magic. On top of requiring a chanting time to the degree of making an elf yawn, it hasn’t much of an effect on a completely awake opponent, however it will somehow work on opponents who are only standing around absent-mindedly.

“I-I did it.” (Shiku)

Confirming the two guards sliding down to the ground after leaning their backs against the wall, he quietly enters the building.

There he found the figures of the leader Zanga and Puuse sitting next to each other.

“Shiku? You were safe?” (Puuse)

“Puuse-neechn...” (Shiku)

Shiku who lost strength in his knees sits down weakly.

“Excuse me for telling Laboras about the human after he asked about it...”
(Shiku)

Puuse snuggles up to Shiku who sheds large drops of tears in a rush.

“It’s alright. I healed the injuries by myself, okay?” (Puuse)

“B-But, I was told that Laboras will banish you, Puuse-nee-chan...” (Shiku)

Noticing Shiku who has a pale face quivering, Puuse comforted him by hugging him reassuringly.

However, her words aren’t coming out smoothly.

It’s because she’s truly scared of being banished.

“Shiku, do you know what that human is currently doing?” (Zanga)

“Yes...” (Shiku)

Shiku corrected his posture upon Zanga’s question.

“I don’t quite understand, but he spoke about comprehending the reason why elves get absorbed and absorb or something like that. However, many adults were killed...” (Shiku)

“Come again!?” (Zanga)

Zanga raised her voice which was unusual for her.

Due to the two staring at her in surprise, Zanga dropped her half-risen hips and gazed at the small fire in the sunken hearth.

That gaze seems to be looking in the far distance.

“The things that human is pondering about is something I didn’t understand well either. Don’t tell me, it’s because of our conversation... So, did you hear that reason?” (Zanga)

“Umm, I don’t know whether it’s really true or not, but bad stuff is entering one’s body from the forest’s trees or something like that...” (Shiku)

The explanation of Shiku who honestly didn’t understand half of it either is ambiguous. Puuse who was listening next to him was only cocking her head in puzzlement, but Zanga was able to grasp it.

“I see. It’s because I lived for a long time.” (Zanga)

Zanga who laughs with a *hi hi* slowly speaks to Puuse and Shiku.

“You know, as child I was afraid of the forest. I practically never left the house.” (Zanga)

“The reason I heard is that you complied with the location which was decided in order to listen to the stories of many villagers at all times, but...” (Puuse)

“That is, well, an excuse in concern of my dignity. It’s story which was used to cover it up. In truth I had only become afraid of the forest.” (Zanga)

“In spite of being an elf”, she laughs at herself.

“Being afraid of the forest, you say. What’s this about?” (Shiku)

Zanga muttered a small 「Will they let me speak, I wonder?」 due to Shiku’s question.

“You guys also saw it in the forest, right? The manner of an elf’s death, that is.” (Zanga)

Once being told, Puuse recalled the elder elf who begged Hifumi to kill him and gulped.

For Shiku it was faint due to his half-awake state, but he has vague memories of it.

“Me too. When I was younger than Shiku is now, I saw it in the forest. The figure of an elder elf heading towards death. ... And in addition to that it was my grandmother’s death.” (Zanga)

“Fuu~”, she exhaled.

“My grandmother, you know, told me that it was painful and agonizing and that she wanted me to give her relief, but... the me who was nothing more than a small child couldn’t do anything. In the end I ran away from grandmother while she continued to call my name.” (Zanga)

“And then it reached the point of even feeling disgust towards being an elf, unable to get rid of my dread of the forest”, she says.

“However, if what the human has said is really true, I will be saved a little bit

as well. If it's really because of the forest's nature and not because I'm an elf..."
(Zanga)

Breathing out once again, Zanga turned her look which was fixed on the fire towards Puuse and Shiku.

"I wish for that human to survive. I want to talk with him once more." (Zanga)

Those were, in short, the same words as if desiring the death of her brethren.

Chapter 103 – Dare

“I want to ask you one thing.” (Laboras)

While grasping the haft of the knife tightly, Laboras asks without drawing the blade out.

“Why did you come to this forest?” (Laboras)

“I heard that the demon race is deep within this forest. I came to visit them.” (Hifumi)

“You plan to meet the demons, huh?” (Laboras)

“That’s what I said.” (Hifumi)

Hearing Hifumi’s reply, Laboras swiftly draws his knife.

“That means there’s even less reason to let you leave this place alive.” (Laboras)

While having a stance of aiming at the eyes with his katana, Hifumi doesn’t move.

“The demons are dangerous. I don’t know what you intend to do, but even though we are imprisoning them on behalf of this world, you are only bringing unnecessary turmoil.” (Laboras)

Laboras kept his left hand free to use magic while holding the knife in a backhand grip in his right hand.

The five elves who saw that change, similarly set up their bows and knives.

“Get out of my sight, you weakling who want to escape! The ones who are to stay here are only the elves who have the resolve to protect this forest and world.” (Laboras)

Having started to retreat bit-by-bit, the elves stopped their feet. Hifumi is also waiting to see which choice they will make.

“For me... impossible.”

“For me as well.”

One after the other two elves ran away, however the remaining three elven youths readied their weapons.

“The actors have assembled. Let’s begin?” (Hifumi)

“Don’t talk such crap!” (Laboras)

The beginning was a magic attack by Laboras.

Several tens of fist-sized pellets which had sharpened points assault Hifumi in succession at a speed similar to a machine-gun.

Taking a stance with his legs in a L-shape, Hifumi evades those while using the katana as support to shift their trajectory.

Although Hifumi dashed forward swiftly and greeted with a thrust, Laboras roughly repelled it with his knife.

“Humph!” (Laboras)

Laboras drives his free left hand into Hifumi’s abdomen with the momentum of the swung knife.

Kicking the ground at the moment of being hit, Hifumi who became unsteady used the force of being struck to take some distance.

Once again they face each other at the same distance.

Due to the sudden close combat, the surrounding elves are unable to give cover or to do anything else. Even though they have readied their spells and arrows, they have no choice but to watch attentively.

“You are quick and you are even able to hit me, huh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi fixed his stance once again.

The hit abdomen is painful to the extent that I can at least expect a bruise though it’s unlikely to have reached as far as my internal organs.

“An incompetent person who completely relies on magic isn’t fit to act as mediator between men. It seems that you avoided it skilfully just now, but next time that won’t work.” (Laboras)

Changing his hold of the knife to an overhand grip, Laboras takes a stance of curling up his back.

Holding out the knife he held in his right hand, his left hand supports in a style of enabling him to release magic at any time.

“It’s a different stance. However, it looks like you are familiar with it.”
(Hifumi)

“Indeed. This is an elven technique we have fostered in this forest. It’s at a different level in skill, weaponry and magic in comparison to you lowly humans.” (Laboras)

Making sure to slide his feet, Laboras slowly closes the distance. Hifumi doesn’t miss the instant Laboras shifted his sight. A wind spell burst open underfoot the spot where Hifumi moved away from with a single step.

“... Avoided, huh?” (Laboras)

“Don’t leak such easily detectable signs. It’s a kill-joy.” (Hifumi)

“Humph... do it!” (Laboras)

Upon Laboras’ command arrows and spells attack Hifumi all at once. Their speed is much faster than that of the elves who attacked Hifumi a while ago. The power is higher as well. Hifumi avoids them by shifting his body and repelling them with his katana, but in a style of matching the saturation attack, Laboras adds attacks with his knife and wedge-shaped stones with a perfect timing.

“You are doing nothing but avoiding!” (Laboras)

Laboras increases the speed by stacking up even more attacks. Hifumi, who knocked aside the thrust out knife among those blows with his bare hand, turned around and ran off.

“Are you running away?” (Laboras)

“Certainly not.” (Hifumi)

Swinging his arm which was wounded by the knife, Hifumi steals the sight of an elf with his blood.

“Ugh?”

The elf, who tried to fire an arrow, faltered only for an instant due to his abruptly dyed red field of vision. That became this man’s final moment. Alongside the wooden bow he grasped in his hands, his body was bisected

into two parts at the waist in a flash.

“It’s only vaguely, but...” (Hifumi)

As result of their companion being killed by the opponent who was showered with a saturation attack, they unintentionally cease their attacks.

“The style of the archery is harder to grasp than the magic. No, it’s the other way around. I reached the point where I can somehow understand the magic.” (Hifumi)

While saying that, he struck the wind spell approaching from behind with the hilt of the katana and scattered it.

“... You bastard, are you really a human...?” (Laboras)

Due to the subdued voice of Laboras who spilled drops of sweat, Hifumi answered with a smile,

“That’s obvious. You, me, you guys will die if we are cut by a blade. We are normal people. Just like him.” (Hifumi)

He points at the corpse which had its body split in two.

“That’s probably why we get thrilled by killing each other, because starting over is not possible.” (Hifumi)

Without minding his injured left hand, Hifumi grasps the katana tightly with both hands and assumes a hachisou* stance. *(T/N: google 八相 to see pictures. I explained it in some chapter beforehand but I forgot where and can’t be bothered to check through over 100 chapters. :p)*

“I will kill you here by all means.” (Laboras)

“I see. Do your best.” (Hifumi)

Once again the magic attacks concentrated on Hifumi who muttered that as if it was someone else’s problem.

Different to before, Hifumi lets the spells go past while running around as he pleases. He slips through the spaces between the lined-up elves just like a whirlwind.

“Auu!”

“Guaaa?”

The elves in all directions raise screams and collapse in fountains of blood. While being hindered by their brethren making them unable to take aim, three more got killed.

Suddenly noticing something, Hifumi pushed the back of an elf.

“Eh...? Eh...”

The elf didn't comprehend what was done to him for an instant, but once he lowered his look due to an intense impact, he saw a large wedged stone piercing into his own chest.

“Why...?”

Once the dead elf collapsed without even understanding the reason, Hifumi's smiling face was reflected in the sight of Laboras who released the spell.

“L-Laboras-san!?”

An elf, surprised by the friendly fire, shifted his attention from Hifumi to Laboras and was instantly killed by the katana stabbing directly into his heart. Laboras fires one stone after the other at Hifumi with magic while including his companion, who got skewered, in the line of fire.

While pulling out the katana, Hifumi, who decided to use the corpse as shield and kicked it flying, dashed in an extremely forward-bent posture, as if falling, by drawing out the power of his knees.

He doesn't head towards Laboras, but to another elf.

“D-Don't come!”

Although he tries to face Hifumi with magic in panic and fright, he is too slow. As he tried to finish him with a reversed diagonal shoulder slash, Hifumi fell onto his back this time.

At the moment the elf felt relieved with a “I'm saved,” his entire body was riddled with holes by the stone bullets, similar to finely sharpened shells, fired by Laboras.

“Tsk.” (Laboras)

“Don't sweep away my prey from the side.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi pouted at Laboras who clicked his tongue due to Hifumi avoiding his shots.

Laboras doesn't reply.

Facing Hifumi who stopped his feet, he approaches him with the knife in his hand while roaring.

Similar to his strong body, which doesn't suit the image of elves, his knife is also thick and solid.

In contrast to that, his attacks are precise without any gaps.

"You are quite skilled." (Hifumi)

The thrusts are accurately aiming at the vital spots and the blended-in slashes are swung in order to close possible escape routes. Hifumi, who deals with those while handling the spells from the surroundings, is slowly retreating while getting more and more small gashes.

However, Hifumi doesn't take the initiative.

And, Hifumi has a composed expression.

"Fast. But, those attacks are too straightforward." (Hifumi)

At that moment, the elves including Laboras saw something unbelievable. The katana wielded by Hifumi counters all of the knife thrusts with its point. The thrust are met with thrusts.

Countless sparks violently revolved between those two.

"I can't believe that you are doing this!" (Laboras)

Although Laboras frantically raises the speed of his thrusts, Hifumi calmly follows up on that.

"Easily readable attacks won't work." (Hifumi)

The tempo accelerates accompanied by creaking metallic sounds.

"Guh, this!" (Laboras)

"That won't do." (Hifumi)

Laboras, who grew impatient, unleashes a thrust entrusting the weight of his entire body into it with a force to break through Hifumi's defence.

However, Hifumi passes alongside the flank of Laboras who pitched forward

without meeting the attack.

“Ah?” (Laboras)

Laboras stumbled a step or two forwards as the impact he expected was missing. His knee was stepped on by Hifumi from the side.

Losing his balance, Laboras forcibly twisted his body without collapsing obediently and swung his knife.

But, his outstretched arm is sent flying after getting cut by the katana.

“Damn iiitt!” (Laboras)

“Shut up.” (Hifumi)

The throat of Laboras, who raised a scream after having lost an arm, is torn open by the blade which pierced into it in a smooth and unhindered motion. Laboras, who spilled hot blood from his mouth and throat, died while glaring at Hifumi.

“L-Laboras-san is...”

There still one young elven man alive.

“U-Umm...”

Throwing away the bow he held in his hands, the elf just bows while only breathing out from his mouth as he is puzzled whether he should beg and what kind of words he should use.

Hifumi approaches the elf, who fell to his knees, while holding the katana in his hand.

“I-I give up...”

“You had a chance to choose.” (Hifumi)

“Therefore this is nothing but the outcome of your choice”, Hifumi swung his katana downwards.



Once Zanga raised her face due to the sound of the sound of the wooden door being lifted, the bloodstained Hifumi stood there.

“... Did you come to kill me?” (Zanga)

Puuse and Shiku are nestling close to Zanga on both her sides.

“If you still believe that you want to die, I won’t mind.” (Hifumi)

The knife, thrown by Hifumi, pierces into the ashes of the sunken hearth.

“This is... Laboras’ knife.” (Zanga)

Intently staring at the knife which she had sometimes carefully maintained, Zanga had seen it several times in the past.

“Laboras is dead... so, do you yearn to exact your revenge upon the elves who were hostile towards you?” (Zanga)

Puuse’s and Shiku’s bodies stiffened.

“Not really.” (Hifumi)

“... You aren’t angry? This elf village attacked you, didn’t it?” (Zanga)

“I will kill if I’m challenged. If that doesn’t happen, I have no hobby of going out of my way to kill weaklings either. Rather than that, I prefer to go visit the demon race. I will have you guide me there at noon after I got some sleep.” (Hifumi)

When Hifumi turned on his heel, Zanga extended a hand in panic.

“P-Please wait.” (Zanga)

Zanga, who got up vigorously, is supported by Puuse.

“I heard from Shiku. He told me that you discovered something about the final moment’s of an elf.” (Zanga)

“About that, huh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi explained what he told the elves from before.

Explaining the accumulation of something that entered their bodies and the way it changes by slowly hardening from the extremities of the body, Puuse’s face turns pale. But, Zanga listened while nodding.

“... Finally I’m able to understand, the reason for my strangely long life.” (Zanga)

Zanga tosses a twig into the fire of the sunken hearth which was about to

vanish and blows at it with a “Fuu~” Politer than usual, she lowers her body softly.

“I didn’t go outside much since I was small. I didn’t get too close to the forest either because I was scared. If that “something” from the forests’ trees is the reason, then I can understand why my transformation has been slow. Now that I think about it, I have a feeling that those, who spent a lot of time in the forest, died early as well. However, even if I say that now, it cannot be helped anymore.” (Zanga)

Zanga shed tears while talking.

She only weeps while enduring the pain with a dishevelled expression.

“While living with the blessing of the forest and being called the people of the forest, we were getting killed by that very forest... It can’t be something that empty... Grandma...” (Zanga)

What kind of emotions did her grandmother, she ended up abandoning in her childhood, bear, I wonder?

Her mental state, which was burdened with the despair of having abandoned her and the despair of her grandmother not having had a peaceful death; just how heartbreaking was it? I’m not even able to imagine it.

“Zanga-sama...” (Puuse)

Looking at Shiku and Puuse who is uneasily calling out to her, Zanga roughly wiped away her tears with a cloth at her side.

“Hii hi... I ended up showing you something embarrassing. Human-san, I have a single request.” (Zanga)

Standing up, Zanga bowed towards Hifumi who is looking down on her expressionlessly.

“Since I will recruit those who want to leave this village, can you please take us, including me as well, to some other place?” (Zanga)

“Za-Zanga-sama?” (Puuse)

The shocked Puuse raises her voice, but Zanga remains in a state of bowing.

“As leader of the elves of this village I only want to popularize this attempt.

One day the elves will be imprisoned by this forest. No, they already are, I think.” (Zanga)

“Didn’t I tell you that I’m going to the demons?” (Hifumi)

“It’s fine if it’s after you come back from there. Also, gathering the interested people of the village will take time. I know that I’m making an unreasonable request, but I will do anything for it.” (Zanga)

“That’s my duty as leader”, Zanga looked at Hifumi.

“Aren’t elves good at magic though?” (Hifumi)

Zanga laughed with a “Hya Hya” due to the sudden question.

“They are. It’s my strong point. Puuse is quite skilled at healing magic, too.” (Zanga)

“Is that something which you were taught by another race?” (Hifumi)

“I don’t think so. It might be possible... No, I guess there’s no other choice but to do it, if that’s your wish, human-san.” (Zanga)

Hearing her answer, Hifumi placed a hand on his chin and groaned.

“... If that’s the case, I will have you do it.” (Hifumi)

“Further talks are after I come back”, leaving those words behind, Hifumi went away.

“Zanga-sama, I will accompany you. ... I have also become scared of this forest’s scenery...” (Puuse)

“Are you sure? It’s not like you have to force yourself to leave the forest since you are still young.” (Zanga)

Puuse softly shook her head while smiling.

“It’s my way of thanking you for teaching me magic, Zanga-sama. Even though that method will be some kind of challenge, something like not helping you is impossible for me.” (Puuse)

“I-I will help as well! ... Magic is difficult, but...” (Shiku)

Stroking Shiku’s head, Zanga murmured a “Thank you.”

“Somehow it got exciting, didn’t it?” (Zanga)

Although my brethren got killed, I guess I’m truly cruel, Zanga thought within her mind.

Chapter 104 – To Feel The Fire

City Arosel

After being annexed by Fokalore due to Hifumi's shocking invasion, the people are passing their days without any major chaos.

Even the guild of the adventurers who are living in this city was managed as it was up until now, with the exception of Hifumi having killed several of its adventurers.

Reshi who is the master of the guild's branch is also doing his job as usual. At the time when Arosel was taken from Vichy by Orsongrande, there were some among the adventurers who were defamed to have attempted to protect themselves by buttering up to Hifumi of Fokalore. However, once everybody started to actually feel that life was getting better than it was in the time of belonging to Vichy, those rumours completely settled down.

But, Reshi was more troubled by the grave problem now than he was back then.

“Hmmm...” (Reshi)

What has been piling up on top of his desk are reports and testimonies from the adventurers belonging to Arosel's guild. They are documents which were collected by the guild's staff.

Many of those are arguments among the adventurers themselves, snatching of prey and such. Those were common frictions one might even call daily occurrences, however what is reported in the divided documents is something that hasn't been seen until now.

According to those documents, there are monsters which haven't been spotted so far.

According to those documents, large specimen, which have more than twice the usual size, were observed.

According to those documents, the groups of monsters decreased while the individual's power went up.

“What's this about, I wonder...?” (Reshi)

Reshi stroked his white beard.

If pushed to say, Arosel was one of the cities which has too many mouths to feed. After their allegiance changed, it has shown an immense growth as stopover on the road towards Fokalore. The number of adventurers who are coming and going as escorts increased as well.

It was the common knowledge of adventurers that monsters aren't very powerful close to places with many people. Do the monsters avoid those places because there are people there? Did people build their cities in places with weak monsters? No one knows about the truth by now, but presently that's how it is.

Reshi's current understanding after reading the reports is that this balance is rapidly deteriorating. There is a considerable number of victims, who were attacked by those irregular monsters, among the common citizens and adventurers.

Should I request the cooperation with other guilds or the country? As Reshi was hesitating about making a decision about this point, he heard the sound of knocking.

"Enter." (Reshi)

"Excuse me."

A single male staff member enters the room and gives his greetings.

"A messenger from Lord-sama has come, but..."

It's probably not my imagination that he looked slightly pale at the moment he took Lord into his mouth, Reshi thought. This staff member is the only person who was personally present at the adventurer killing when Hifumi was in Arosel.

"A messenger from Earl Tohno, huh...? Of course we have to meet them, I suppose. Let them in." (Reshi)

"As you wish."

"Don't let anyone enter afterwards until I tell you that it's fine." (Reshi)

Nodding a second time, the staff member leaves.

Before long two women appeared in front of Reshi.

Walking in front is a girl with unkempt red hair. A woman with a bit more set

red hair is standing behind her.

Due to their roles being similar to one being on her first mission and one being the first one's care-taker, Reshi absolutely wasn't able to imagine what kind of business these two might have with him.

The girl smiles broadly.

"I'm the Military Director of the Tohno* Earldom, Alyssa." (Alyssa) *(T/N: author called it Hifumi Earldom, changed that ... also Alyssa refers to herself with "boku", which is a male pronoun, just for your information.)*

"Nice to meet you. I'm called Miyukare and am acting as Alyssa-sama's exclusive military advisor*." (Miyukare) *(she used "civil official specialised in military affairs", that sound like a brain fart to me, so used something more proper :p)*

"I'm honoured to meet the two of you." (Reshi)

Alyssa's introduction wasn't polite at all, however Reshi faces her with a smile without daring to touch that matter. First of all, his maximum priority is "to not provoke troubles."

"There you go, please take a seat in the sofa over there." (Reshi)

"Thanks!" (Alyssa)

Alyssa sat down obediently and Miyukare quietly stood behind Alyssa after bowing. Their roles are certainly a leader and their aide, but with Alyssa's appearance of restlessly looking around the room, all of that impression is ruined.

"Does black tea suit your taste?" (Reshi)

"Yea." (Alyssa)

Miyukare firmly watched the sight of Reshi personally pouring the black tea. And, Reshi pours the black tea while being fully aware of that. *Holding unnecessary suspicions isn't a good policy.*

"Here you go. So, is there anything you wish to speak about with me?" (Reshi)

"Ummm... it's about the monsters." (Alyssa)

Reshi felt shaken within his mind, but due to his many years of experience he

was able to successfully hide that.

“Monsters, it is? They are our, the adventurer’s guild’s, main target.” (Reshi)

“Isn’t anything peculiar about those monsters?” (Alyssa)

“Anything peculiar...” (Reshi)

He recalls the documents which caused him headaches not long ago. However, he isn’t given the time to think it over carefully.

“The numbers of strong monsters increased or such, you haven’t head anything like that?” (Alyssa)

It can’t be helped, Reshi, who smiled bitterly, stood up quietly, grabbed the documents from his desk and spread them in front of Alyssa.

“This is a collection of reports about monsters which became large or ferocious and monsters who were seen for the first time. Even though I have the intention to, there are some points which are troublesome to deal with.” (Reshi)

Quickly scanning through the documents, Alyssa handed them over to Miyukare in her back.

Miyukare’s red pupils read through the documents with a speed similar to leaping.

“... Alyssa-sama, it seems there’s no mistake about this.” (Miyukare)

“Yea, after all?” (Alyssa)

Although lord and retainer don comprehending faces, Reshi can’t follow.

“Do you know something about this?” (Reshi)

“You see...” (Alyssa)

“Please let me handle the explanation.” (Miyukare)

Stopping Alyssa, Miyukare handed back the documents to Reshi.

“Not only in the territory of Fokalore, the same state of affairs can be observed in all of Orsongrande and even in Vichy and Horant.” (Miyukare)

Miyukare told the surprised Reshi that it was something not only

independently discovered in Fokalore but in all of Orsongrande Kingdom.

“I see. As expected of what Hero-dono said. Others don’t have such keen insight.” (Reshi)

In reality it was the outcome of all of the finer parts being moved by Caim’s orders, but neither Miyukare nor Alyssa mention anything about that.

“If necessary I will have someone deliver these documents after transcribing them.” (Reshi)

“That’s not necessary. I have memorized the main points of their contents. Rather than that, there’s something important to talk about.” (Alyssa)

“... Let’s hear it.” (Reshi)

The one who addressed Reshi, who put down the documents and corrected his seating posture, was Alyssa.

“There are suspicions that someone has strengthened the monsters. From the fact that it’s extending over such wide scope while leaving an influence regardless which country it is, there’s a low possibility that it’s someone belonging to the countries Vichy, Horant and of course Orsongrande as well.” (Alyssa)

“... A being similar to a demon lord who appears in fairy tales. Isn’t it possible that it’s a country on the other side of the wastelands?” (Reshi)

“Earl Tohno has left in order to investigate them.” (Alyssa)

“That story was true!” (Reshi)

Reshi, who unintentionally raised his voice, glossed it over by coughing and saying “Excuse me.”

The matter of Hifumi having left towards the wastelands, and moreover by himself, reached him as rumour, however Reshi was one of those who discarded most of it as mere gossip.

“If I may speak frankly, given that the witnessing of powerful monsters and the number of actual encounters has risen, I wondered whether Lord-sama has brought up consultations with other countries, but... it seems that everyone, who is working as central figure of Fokalore, is looking far more ahead than

people like us.” (Reshi)

Listening to Reshi’s words, Alyssa and Miyukare looked at each others’ faces.

“There is something we’d like to request from you.” (Miyukare)

“What may that be?” (Reshi)

Reshi listened carefully due to Miyukare’s remark.

“I’d like you to make the adventurers aware of it, about the matter of fiendish monsters increasing in number and about the possibility of a mastermind existing somewhere.” (Miyukare)

“... Isn’t it possible that this will trigger chaos?” (Reshi)

“If it brings whoever is hiding in the shadows into the light as result, that will be fine.” (Miyukare)

“If we know who it is, Hifumi will finish them off.” (Alyssa)

“Oh!”, for some strange reason Reshi could comprehend that.

“... I got it. I shall circulate the information little-by-little starting with those I’m able to trust. I’d like you to leave it to me to deal with the finer details. Would that be alright with you?” (Reshi)

“Of course, that’s no problem.” (Alyssa)

Once Alyssa and Miyukare exited the room after thanking for the black tea, Reshi entrusted his body fully to the back of the sofa.

“What’s happening...? While I’m still alive the world is changing in various ways, it seems.” (Reshi)

Reshi tasted the black tea he poured for himself, but it had gone completely cold.



Dawn in the elven village was greeted with an uproarious atmosphere. Many corpses are scattered in a part of the village. Among them, there is the cruelly massacred body of Laboras who rallied the men of the village under him. Even those, who didn’t leave their houses in fright while hearing the turmoil, are gradually emerging from their houses once the sun begins to rise. Gathering

with their friends in panic once they see the terrible scene in front of their eyes, they begin to discuss at various places without reaching an answer.

Zanga, who foresaw such situation, instructed Shiku and Puuse to make an announcement that there will be a meeting to explain the circumstances to the villagers. Then she personally volunteered to act as Hifumi's guide while using a wand to prop herself up.

“Eh...? Z-Zanga-sama!”

At the edge of the village, in a different direction from the place where Hifumi entered, there's a sturdy hut which used big logs although being small itself.

“The magic squares have been set up in that hut”, Zanga explained while mixing in a 「Sorry for disturbing」.

The elves, who were on duty to use their mana for the sake of holding up the barrier, are quite surprised.

“W-Why here...? Eh, moreover together with a human...?”

“Stay calm. This person, well, won't do anything if you don't do anything to him.” (Zanga)

Probably, added Zanga in her mind and then sat down on a chair located in the middle of the hut she led Hifumi to.

“It's been a while since I last breathed the outside air ~nee. This might not happen overly often either, but...” (Zanga)

The elves judged Zanga, who suddenly showed a lonely expression, as odd, but apart from that their wariness has increased due to the human they have seen for the first time.

Their vigilance was blown away by a brief comment of Zanga.

“For just an instant, we will make a hole in the barrier.” (Zanga)

“W-We can't do such thing!”

A single elf raised his voice, but Zanga waved her hand while laughing with a “Hya Hya.”

“It's not you guys who will do it, but me. Even though I may appear to be like this, I was the best elven magician back in the old days. I was completely unable

to use offensive magic though.” (Zanga)

“If it’s related to protecting something, it’s better to not look down on me”, Zanga looked joyfully at Hifumi.

“Human-san, around when will you come back?” (Zanga)

“Don’t know. But I memorized this place here.” (Hifumi)

“I see. ... Then I will make my request once you came back.” (Zanga)

Countless scripting, similar to symbols and characters, are lining up within several magic square-like circles and squares.

“Heave ho!” (Zanga)

Zanga, who stood up by using the wand, sits down in front of a magic square while being supported by the elves.

“If you walk for one minute along the path on the other side of this hut, you will encounter the barrier. Since the barrier will be raised open only for the path for about 3 minutes, go inside during that time.” (Zanga)

“Got it.” (Hifumi)

“Human-san, I didn’t hear your name yet.” (Zanga)

“Could you tell me?” Zanga asks.

“It’s Hifumi.” (Hifumi)

“Hifumi-san? It’s a strange-sounding name ~nee. But, it’s a good name. Hey, Hifumi-san, why did you deliberately come to meet the demons this deep in the forest? Even you probably understand, but they are aggressive and will likely attack you.” (Zanga)

While asking that, Zanga turned her look towards the magic square.

“... There isn’t enough fighting in this world. There isn’t sufficient killing with the life on the line, that whittles down one’s life force as if setting one’s soul on fire. Someone has to ignite a spark.” (Hifumi)

“So, that means that the demon race will be the trigger for that.” (Zanga)

Although Zanga is laughing with her shoulders trembling, the elves in the

surroundings are baffled while thinking *aren't they talking about something outrageous, though I don't quite get it.*

“Well, then it won't do, if we don't struggle desperately for survival either. Even if we abandon the forest, the elves have pride. There's no way that we will perish this easily.” (Zanga)

Due to the words of Zanga, who started to focus her mana while facing the magic square, Hifumi turned his back on her.

“That's fine. You won't be able to enjoy life much unless you don't know when it will end.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi began to walk outside the hut.

I will be able to observe the techniques, magic and anything of the demon race, his feet hurry to advance with a feeling of impatience.

“I wonder what kind of fellow I will be able to meet first?” (Hifumi)

Taking out the katana, he affixes it on his hips.

“I pray for there to be a good *demon king candidate.*” (Hifumi)

His monologue vanished into the wind without being heard by anyone.

Chapter 105 – Crawling

Advancing through the path which had only the small, simple undergrowth trimmed, he arrived at the barrier's location right away.

“This is the barrier, huh?” (Hifumi)

Above the path, there is a hole to the degree of him being able to pass if he cowers a bit.

Hifumi touched the barrier with a finger, but except a feeling similar to going a bit numb, it had a sensation like plastic which got cooled down.

“It looks like it would break if I hit it, but... well, I leave that for later.” (Hifumi)

He passes through the hole speedily and without delay.

Once Hifumi adjusts the place of the katana on his waist, he walks ahead, not slowly but neither hurried.

The forest continues even when he goes through the barrier, however compared to the forest where the elves live, Hifumi felt that the air has obviously become clear. Though it's natural, but there are no elven corpses on any of the trees.

“Shall I try going straightforward?” (Hifumi)

The path continues towards outside the forest in a distance.

He tried asking Zanga and Puuse before passing through the barrier, but the two didn't know how the demons live their lives or what's life like on the other side of the barrier.

Hifumi decided to walk ahead by following the path “for some reason or another.” *If there's a path, there has to be someone using it*, was the level of his care-freeness.

And after he walked for around an hour, the trees became too sparse to call it a forest and he became able to see far ahead. The forest's parts became vague and before him realizing it the visibility improved.

“A city... huh?” (Hifumi)

With the forest ending, grey walls, appearing to be made out of stone, can be

seen far ahead after following the path.

Is it because there's still quite a distance? It's yet not clear whether there are people or not, but there's a place where a part of the wall is heightened. Hifumi judged that it might be something like a watchtower for the sake of guarding or a gate.

“For the time being I will go there...” (Hifumi)

Just in the midst of saying that, Hifumi swiftly dodged and rolled on the ground.

Right next to his side, a beast with the same physique as Hifumi cuts through.

“A monster, eh?” (Hifumi)

At the moment he got up, Hifumi is already grasping the unsheathed katana in his hand.

The monster and him face each other.

It was a monster with an appearance similar to a leopard possessing a flexible body. Without any intention to hide its sharp claws, it is tightly and powerfully grasping the ground.

Due to the opponent being a monster which displays its intimidation by snarling, Hifumi stepped forward with his right foot and took a stance as if thrusting the katana at his opponent.

“It seems to be stronger than the monsters around Orsongrande.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi wasn't able to sense its presence until it came quite close for its surprise attack just now.

If its speed had been a bit higher, he might have received damage from its first attack.

“Leopard, eh? It might be different from beastmen, but I wonder how?” (Hifumi)

Once he swings the point of the katana as if luring it, the monster makes a growl as if it was irritated.

In the middle of their confrontation, when Hifumi suddenly raised the katana in an overhead position, the monster, judging it as opportunity, leapt on him with its blank claws.

“Oh?” (Hifumi)

It was faster than Hifumi had expected.

While letting the forepaw, which was precisely aimed at his neck, go past by advancing forward diagonally, he hit its jaw with the pommel.

“Gyan!”

The monster, which whined as it was unable to endure, tries to take a distance by dashing in a circle.

However, Hifumi has predicted that and presses forwards in a straight line.

When he gets right in front of it, it opens its large snout in order to attack him.

“Conversely, that is your weak point.” (Hifumi)

He thrusts the katana towards the throat of the monster while pushing the pommel with his waist.

The thrust, which put the blade sideways, pierced even the medulla oblongata while experiencing only little resistance.

“Guu...”

The monster tried to strongly snap at the katana’s blade, but that was the extent of its opposition.

“Heave-ho.” (Hifumi)

Pressing his foot against its forehead, Hifumi pulls out the katana.

Placing a paper on the blood-smeared katana, he wipes it clean in one go.

The blade had rubbed against the sharp fangs, but it has already regained its original radiance.

“I see. Even if you put the demons aside, the monsters are strong as well, eh?” (Hifumi)

I might be able to enjoy myself with something else besides my original objective, Hifumi breathed out through his nose.



“Does that mean that it’s possible for a demon king to appear?” (Imeraria)

“There are such rumours among the people on the streets.” (Adol)

Prime Minister Adol avoided the affirmation of Imeraria's question.

"... Isn't it possible to verify the truth? Or are there some problems?"

(Imeraria)

"No, there are no problems." (Origa)

The other person who is present at this place opened her mouth. Origa was visiting the castle for the sake of helping in the research of the sealing magic. For the period of several days in this place, she has taken and been staying at an inn in the capital.

All of her just 5 attending soldiers are women. The security measures are strangely weak-levelled for the wife of an Earl. Though there is the incident of her instantly killing the thugs who were hired by young nobles who have grudges against Hifumi and moreover her crushing those young nobles in one night, she made sure to abstain from interacting with other nobles. And the capital's nobles, who felt her to be eerie, don't approach Origa either.

On the other hand, since she is the feudal lord's representative of Fokalore, which was at the forefront in regards to industry and commerce, merchants and craftsmen come visiting her without interruption for the sake of greetings and studying.

Without discrimination, Origa dealt with those commoners and at times she even taught them valuable techniques for free.

"The hero's wife isn't an ordinary person after all."

is her reputation, but although nobles and commoners mean that in different ways, it didn't take long for it to spread widely.

Of course such talks have reached Imeraria's ears as well. However she doesn't touch that topic.

"You saying that there are no problems must mean that there's some reason. Could you please elaborate?" (Imeraria)

"Your Majesty, that way of talking to me is unnecessary. If my husband is Your Majesty's retainer, then I, who am his wife, shall serve Your Majesty as well."
(Origa)

Due to Origa making that statement smoothly, Imeraria was disappointed that "she doesn't really mean it", but she was at least able to make sure that

this wasn't revealed on her face.

"I'm someone showing proper respect towards Hifumi-sama. I believe it should be the same towards you who is his spouse. So, would you mind answering my question?" (Imeraria)

"My husband is currently investigating the person who is behind those strengthened monsters. In addition, our Earl Tohno feudal army intends to give instructions in combat techniques to each nation and area without sparing any efforts." (Origa)

"Is the idea of teaching those combat techniques originating from Hifumi-sama?" (Imeraria)

"Even to foreign countries... that will also depend on whether it will become act which serves the interests of the enemy..." (Adol)

Adol shyly expressed his worries towards the details Origa talked about as if they were something wonderful.

Origa's reply which confronts those worries begins with a smile.

"Foreign countries... Vichy and Horant are learning techniques from us. Even if they turned against us, for argument's sake, it's very possible to deal with them." (Origa)

"H-However, in case they aimed at another place than Fokalore..." (Adol)

Once Adol mentions the matter he fears once more, Origa's laughing intensifies.

"Do not worry, Your Excellency, the Prime Minister." (Origa)

Her tone is filled with confidence to the brim.

"Even in such case we will have the privilege of helping out with at least "sufficient resistance."" (Origa)

She doesn't talk about winning.

Neither does she say that Fokalore will suppress them.

She just guarantees "to resist" them.

"... Then, let's deal with it in each territory. Watching the state of affairs, we will dispatch war potential from the country at any time." (Imeraria)

“At the time of doing that, the Tohno Earldom will also cooperate with you at full power.” (Origa)

Imeraria and Origa smile while looking at each others faces.

“So, let’s continue the magic research.” (Imeraria)

“Yes, let’s do that.” (Origa)

Standing up together, the two headed towards the reference room while the sounds of their heels resounded.

Having been left alone, Adol sighed into the silence.



Hifumi, who slowly approached the place which appeared to be a city, noticed a battle raging in its vicinity.

Getting close to a distance so that he can watch the situation, he takes up position in the shade of a tree.

“Demons, eh?” (Hifumi)

Against the backdrop of the wall, around 30 demons are struggling against the same number of wolf-type monsters.

“Oooooohh!”

A remarkably tall demon shouldered a big long sword of approximately the same length as himself and dove into the pack of monsters leading the charge. While rotating like a spinning top and brandishing his shouldered long sword with the momentum of dashing, he tore the monsters into shreds.

With the other demons adding fire and lightning spells, the monsters, who were just overwhelmed by the pressure, fled in all direction once their numbers decreased to less than half in the blink of an eye.

Without recklessly chasing, the male demons quickly confirm the damage and walk towards the direction of the city while being vigilant of the surroundings.

Once Hifumi looked in the direction of their heading, he discovered a door, which appeared to be the entrance, at one part of the wall.

He ponders while having folded his arms.

“Their fighting strength is high? Shall I call out to them from here? Or shall I

do so after taking a look at the city?” (Hifumi)

Even if I entered the city just like that, it will require much effort to search fellows, who are capable in fighting, one by one, Hifumi made a bitter expression.

“Hearing that there are several strong guys here... mm?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who noticed the threatening air, swiftly took out his kusarigama. The wolf monsters, which were earlier repelled by the demons, have apparently switched their target to Hifumi next.

A pack of around 10 of them surrounds Hifumi.

“I see. The monsters in this neighbourhood are skilled at erasing their presences.” (Hifumi)

If it means that they can ruthlessly compete with such monsters, the average fighting strength of demons might be high, Hifumi leisurely assessed while swinging the counterweight of his kusarigama.

“Bufu!?”

The monster which had suddenly the tip of its nozzle hit by the iron counterweight, faints in agony while sprouting blood.

Making sure to jump over their comrade which had suffered the attack, several monsters assaulted Hifumi all at once.

The sickle, grasped in his left hand, strikes the face of one of the monsters among them.

Going through its eyeball, the sickle which destroyed the brain gets stuck in the skull.

Wielding it as is, Hifumi struck another monster with the corpse by throwing the sickle. In exchange he reeled in the counterweight and threw it at yet another monster.

Hifumi, who had killed 3 monsters in one swoop, advances unarmed and kills the monster, whose nose had been bashed in the beginning, by stepping on its head.

“... Alright.” (Hifumi)

Feeling the feedback, Hifumi stood against the back of a tree without

touching the katana at his waist.

Compared to the leopard monster from a while ago, they are weak.

“Hurry up, it’s not my hobby to kill frail animals, but...” (Hifumi)

Once he looks at the remaining six monsters, it seems that they still have the will to fight. They might have judged that the level of threat fell with him having become unarmed.

“I will entertain you if you want to play.” (Hifumi)

The six monsters simultaneously leap at Hifumi, who put up his right hand in front at half length.

Grabbing the forepaw of one of the monsters which came biting at him with its snout open, he throws it at another monster.

Dodging by swiftly drawing back his foot from one which came to claw at his knee, it came into a conspicuous spot under his feet and he kicked its throat.

Being surrounded by trees in a circle, Hifumi seized the neck of a monster which came jumping at him and slapped it into the trunk of a tree.

With a wet sound of the skull being crushed, it makes a beeline of blood once Hifumi removes his hand while dropping to the ground.

Another monster comes snapping at him, but straightening the middle finger and the index finger, Hifumi hooks its lower jaw with them.

Having its jaw dislocated by the force of its own leap with a *wobble*, it cocks its head in puzzlement and fold just like that.

The last monster aimed its fangs at his neck from behind Hifumi.

Hitting the back of Hifumi who had willingly stepped back, its balance crumbled and it dropped to the ground. At that moment Hifumi struck the area around its heart.

Coughing up blood, the monster ceased moving.

“Phew...” (Hifumi)

While correcting his dishevelled dougi, Hifumi breathed out.

“... So, what’s your impression after observing the battle?” (Hifumi)

Turning around, Hifumi throws those words at a large tree.

“I was noticed, huh? You have a higher ability than I heard of those called

humans...”

A man with long ears, who seems to be a demon, appeared from the shadows of the large tree.

“So, do you want to play with me as well?” (Hifumi)

“You are quite belligerent. However, I will pass on that for now.”

When Hifumi muttered “Is that so? How boring”, the male demon offered a suggestion to Hifumi.

“Human, you don’t have any inclination to work for our country, do you?”

“... Ha?” (Hifumi)

Arc 13: The demons are within a cage

Chapter 106 – Sweet Sacrifice

The demon's world was a more confined place than Hifumi had expected.

With the elven barrier being powerful, there are sometimes openings which can be located. But it seems to be rare to discover those at a level where demons are able to pass through them.

“Demons, who discovered such holes by accident, impulsively exit the barrier or those amongst the demons possessing high amounts of mana temporarily expand a hole to dispatch spies and soldiers though returning is in both cases difficult”, the male demon called Phegor (*T/N: >> Fuegoru <<*)* explained to Hifumi. (*T/N: the name is フェゴール which is close to ベルフェゴール which would be Belphegor, a known devil.*)

Phegor who is working as aide of the king continues to explain while showing fatigue on his face which had taken on an ill-looking, grey skin colour.

“If we increase the antagonism between elves and humans, won't that lead to the barrier weakening as well, is what we thought, but...” (Phegor)

Phegor looked at Hifumi, who is walking next to him, with a fleeting glance and put his breathing in order.

“Far from our imaginations, the elves show no signs of leaving the forest and the humans lost their contact with the forest, too. Obstructing us with a solid barrier as usual, it has turned into a situation where the resentment of all demons is about to explode.” (Phegor)

“So? Why did you get in touch with me?” (Hifumi)

“That is...” (Phegor)

While scratching his skinny cheek with his index finger, Phegor examines Hifumi's expression.

“I want to hear about his methods and strengths to get out of the elven forest and reach this place by himself. And, I want to request him to help us, is what I

thought.” (Phegor)

“Aren’t you hostile towards humans as well?” (Hifumi)

“Essentially that’s true, however...” (Phegor)

Sighing deeply, Phegor shakes his head.

“Currently our hate towards the elves who are imprisoning us in these lands is far more overwhelming. It’s probably also because our contact with humans has been scarce for a long time, but as it isn’t even possible to fight the elves as distinct enemies, more resentment than expected has accumulated.” (Phegor)

“I understand you!” (Hifumi)

Phegor, who was startled by Hifumi suddenly raising his voice, was also surprised by Hifumi being all smiles.

“After all, once you identified your enemies, you won’t be able to settle down unless you can fight them squarely. Something like glaring at each other as each side is apart from the other without killing and being killed, that’s boring!” (Hifumi)

From then on until they arrived at the city of the demons, Hifumi monopolized the conversation.

“I’m not particularly saying that the criterion of superiority or inferiority can only be found in killing each other, but since anything’s fine, be it using your head to scheme or spending time on setting up traps, one should fight to the bitter end once confronted. Even if there’s a cease-fire by putting up a wall between both parties, that period of time is naturally a phase to prepare the next strife.” (Hifumi)

Phegor faced Hifumi, who was unexpectedly enthusiastic, with a question.

“The ones called humans, do they all have such way of thinking?” (Phegor)

If that’s the case, won’t fighting with the humans turn into an extremely disadvantageous situation from the very beginning even if the demons break through the elves? Phegor felt uneasy.

However, that gets quickly denied.

“Though it’s disappointing, there probably aren’t many guys who think like

that. No, they are quite rare, I guess.” (Hifumi)

“Though that’s from my experience up until now”, Hifumi muttered while looking bored.

“Therefore, considering even such parts, the demons who are trying to advance things systematically are really nice. If the humans were aware of that, more of them would reach the point of thinking about fighting and you as enemies. Well, in one region they are preparing accordingly though.” (Hifumi)

The “one region” Hifumi added caught Phegor’s interest, but he isn’t able to interject while Hifumi is talking excitedly.

“So, once you demons break through the elven barrier, what do you intend to do?” (Hifumi)

“We still haven’t decided anything concrete, however I think that after we plundered the land where the elves reside and gathered intelligence for a while to expand the hegemony of the demons, we should be able to decide on a plan. Hearing your story just now, we are stronger than them, is what I thought.” (Phegor)

Hifumi didn’t particularly say anything about this cautious approach. Although he believed that Phegor would say a lot more radical things, he decided to accept it for the time being.

“Therefore, human. What I want to request from you, more than being a war potential, is to provide us with as much intelligence about the elves and humans as possible. What we desire the most is information about the situation outside.” (Phegor)

The city of the demons. The wall visible from a distance has a height of around 4 meters and a complex structure of having been formed by carefully cut stones.

Due to Hifumi looking at it with great interest, Phegor explained,

“Monsters come attacking us regardless of day and night. Although we might be called demons, there are also some who don’t possess fighting strength. Because of that, the people of previous generations frantically built this wall.” (Phegor)

“The soldiers patrolling on top and the watchtowers at various places are essential in their stationing for the sake of making sure that no flying monster types are approaching”, he explained.

Hifumi nodded only slightly towards Phegor who is talking in a somewhat bragging manner.

“It’s Phegor. Since he is a guest, send a notification in regards to that.”
(Phegor)

Greeting the person who appears to be a gatekeeper, they pass through a narrow, gloomy side gate where two people side-by-side barely fit through. The gatekeeper stared at Hifumi in wonder, but he didn’t say anything in particular.

“Normally there aren’t many people entering and leaving except when it’s about dealing with monsters.” (Phegor)

There is an additional large gate, but except for the time when many soldiers have to enter or leave all at once, only the gates for people and carriages seem to be used.

“Although he didn’t answer, is it fine for a human to enter the city?” (Hifumi)

“... First off, I want you to listen to the story of the king. The king is far more wise than someone like me. He has deeply thought about the future prospects of the demon race. I want you to judge after that.” (Phegor)

“King, eh.” (Hifumi)

The faces of the kings of Swordland and Orsongrande, he killed, and of the king of Horant, who was friendly in contrast, rise to the surface of Hifumi’s mind.

(Well, even if the top is no good, there are still ways to go if those below are better.) (Hifumi)

After looking at Phegor’s face, Hifumi nodded.

“Got it. Let’s go meet him.” (Hifumi)

“Well, then let me guide you.” (Phegor)



Zanga wore down her mind for the few minutes it took Hifumi to go through the barrier and collapsed right at the spot when she restored the barrier to its original state.

“Z-Zanga-sama!”

“Good gracious... I’ve completely declined. There’s nothing more disgraceful than this.” (Zanga)

Zanga, who laughed with a “Hya Hya”, corrected her posture while saying “Heave-ho” and informed all elves at this spot,

“Since there isn’t much time left anymore, I will keep it brief.” (Zanga)

The sound of someone gulping could be heard.

“I will leave this forest. Some people will probably follow me.” (Zanga)

“It’s fine for you guys to do as you like as well”, when Zanga said that, the elves threw countless questions at her.

As her voice couldn’t be heard through all the noise mingling together, Zanga waved her right hand and they calmed down.

“Since I’ve told everyone to gather, it will be explained there. The barrier will also be fine for a while since I did my best. Rather than that, could you help me a bit with standing up?” (Zanga)

Zanga, who got up being held by two people, began to walk while propping herself up with the wand.

“Come along. It won’t do if you miss the agreement over the end of the forest elves. You guys have to properly see it with your own eyes, too.” (Zanga)

The elves chased after Zanga, who quickly left walking at a pace one wouldn’t expect of an old woman who had trouble standing up, in a rush.

And, at the beginning everyone showed a reaction that they couldn’t believe the story about the last moments of elves which Zanga and Puuse explained to them in the opened meeting of the elves.

Zanga, who considered that reaction to be only natural, talked about her experience of having abandoned her grandmother. Next Puuse talked about the elder she met together with Hifumi.

And after that several elves timidly talked about the things they ended up seeing of the way their acquaintances and relatives, who broke the law, died. Some among them burst into tears due to fear and regret.

“Ah, after all ~nee...” (Zanga)

“W-What shall we do?” (Puuse)

Zanga simply laughs due to the as-expected chaotic state. Puuse is anxious and in a state of being unable to stand it.

“Well, there’s no particular need for all of us to go together.” (Zanga)

Everyone’s looks gather on Zanga due to her remark.

“Even if I tell you that the forest’s the reason, there will probably be some who won’t believe it no matter what. If you really want to stay here, I have no intention to force you otherwise. Even if I’m called the leader, I’m just running away after getting scared in the end anyway.” (Zanga)

There are some who direct glaring looks at Zanga who makes an irresponsible remark.

“But you know, I don’t think that’s the only problem.” (Zanga)

Alongside a sigh, Zanga turned towards the direction of the demons.

“That human-san will undoubtedly lead the demons out. It’s necessary for us to resolve ourselves until then deciding what we want to do.” (Zanga)

“Eh? Lead out?” (Puuse)

“Hifumi-san told me so. That man, having clear values within himself, has likely judged it to be interesting if demons and elves clash directly and is aiming for that.” (Znanga)

“But, who will gain a profit from that? If the demons are able to leave the barrier, they will attack the humans...” (Puuse)

As Puuse was unable to comprehend, Zanga gently stroke her head.

“I’m certain that he isn’t looking at something like personal gains or losses. His eyes were as if he is looking at something far, far more distant.” (Zanga)

Puuse was uncomfortable in reacting towards Zanga who muttered “If I was

about 80 years younger, I might have been charmed by him.”



The figure of a human being led by Phegor caused a commotion among the people of the city, but by limiting it to watching from a distance, there was no one who came to start a conversation with him.

Except one.

“Phegor! What’s this!?”

The one who came shouting all of a sudden was the giant whom Hifumi had already seen before.

It is the man who was mowing down the pack of monsters by brandishing his longsword at the time he watched the city from outside.

“Beleth (*T/N: >> Bereto <<*), he is the king’s guest. Abstain from rude behaviour towards him.” (Phegor)

Beleth laughed scornfully at Phegor who reprimanded him calmly.

“Haa! The king’s aide-dono, without even presenting a decent breakthrough solution, finally fell to the degree of relying on a human!?” (Beleth)

Corresponding with his huge body, his voice was loud as well, but as Phegor seems to be accustomed to it, he doesn’t show any nervousness either.

“I have nothing to say to a bastard like you who doesn’t comprehend that the situation won’t get any better with a brute force approach. If you believe that tactless frankness is a virtue, it will be fine for you alone to be like that.”

(Phegor)

Due to Phegor stating this bluntly towards Beleth, who is two heads taller than him, without taking a single step backwards, a woman approached.

“Oh my, oh my, what’s wrong you two?”

Her height is about the same as Hifumi’s? With the long ears identical to elves which make it immediately apparent that she’s a demon, the woman was a beauty who had a pale grey skin. Possessing blue, close to light blue, hair and likewise coloured eyes, she wore a robe with a slit that highlights her rich bust and boots with high heels.

“Vepar (T/N: >> Ueparu <<), huh?” (Phegor)

Phegor obviously showed a bothered expression, but ignoring him completely, the woman called Vepar looked in Hifumi’s direction.

“Oh my, a human being in this city, how rare... mmh?” (Vepar)

Hifumi, who was looking at the state of the demons’ city while disregarding the conversation between Beleth and Phegor, looked at Vepar’s appearance disinterestedly.

Vepar gets directly in front of Hifumi and takes a long hard look at his face.

“You... what’s with the colour of your eyes. Besides...” (Vepar)

Vepar, who intently gazed at his face with a serious look, quickly lined up next to Hifumi and when she tried to closely embrace his left arm, he escaped.

“Aww, how fast. Although you are a human, your physical ability is high. I’m very interested.” (Vepar)

“It didn’t feel like hostility, but... what are you?” (Hifumi)

Receiving the look of Hifumi assessing her vigilantly with narrowed eyes, Vepar folded her arms in a pose that her breasts were pushed up and her body trembled.

“Those eyes, they are great!” (Vepar)

Hifumi looks at Phegor and points at Vepar.

Phegor bowed slightly and said 「Sorry」.

“That person is a soldier ranking fairly high even among demons... I will inform you about him properly later on.” (Vepar)

“Vepar! You!” (Beleth)

Due to Vepar trying to snuggle up to Hifumi as soon as there’s a chance, Beleth bellowed while sweating.

“Ara, how may I help you? I’m busy right now, you know?” (Vepar)

“Busy, you say!? Is it that fun to cuddle with someone strange like a human!?” (Beleth)

“Being able to say “like”, are you that much more remarkable than a human?”

(Vepar)

Beleth, having a finger pointed at him in order to provoke him, blushes and becomes heated up to a degree that it looks like steam is rising up from him.

“At the very least I’m able to kill this midget with one hand!” (Beleth)

“I wonder?” (Vepar)

Inclining her head to the side, Vepar directed a sidelong glance at Hifumi.

“I’m sensing a far more dangerous and powerful aura from that gentleman though.” (Vepar)

Beleth faced Hifumi with a look full of rage.

Hifumi remains silent.

“Beleth. I told you before, but he is the king’s guest.” (Phegor)

“... Tsk! Phegor, if that guy messes up in some way, call me right away!”
(Beleth)

Vepar stuck out her tongue towards Beleth who walks heavily in the other direction while heaving his shoulders angrily and going bow-legged.

“I hate vulgar men. Putting that aside, Phelgor, is he going to the king’s place? I will come along as well.” (Vepar)

“... Don’t do anything unnecessary.” (Phelgor)

Phelgor, who gave her a short warning, called out to Hifumi and they began to walk once again.

Behind him Hifumi and Vepar are walking side-by-side.

“... That Beleth, he is calm at strange aspects.” (Vepar)

“That’s right. It’s truly regrettable.” (Hifumi)

“Ara, did you plan to start a fight with a demon down in the middle of a demon city?” (Vepar)

Hifumi only turned his gaze at Vepar who showed an unnatural surprise.

“How is that related to anything?” (Hifumi)

A chill travels down on Vepar’s spine. Her body trembled with a shudder, but

her mouth smiled.

Chapter 107 – Not Afraid

“Origa-san, you married that man after all...” (Hela)

Putting her elbow on the counter, the Orsongrande’s capital’s guild staff member Hela exhaled from her nose with a puff.

Doing this job for more than 20 years, she remembered about Origa, who became a slave before Hela realized it and the young man, who had slaughtered adventurers in front of her eyes. That Origa married the young man who had now become an Earl.

“Even Kasha-san...” (Hela)

The two who had always hunted monsters together and who even served the same master after becoming slaves. *I wonder how it feels to bereave the other part as one of a pair who knew each other so well*, she thought while twirling her red hair through her finger.

The story Hela heard was that Kasha lost her life in the battle with Vichy. *I thought she was plenty strong, but I guess she was swallowed up by the madness of the battlefield.*

What does Origa feel as her friend?

“Whatever, even if I think about it, I can’t help it anyway.” (Hela)

As staff member of the adventurer guild she knows many people who lost their lives due to an error in judgement or being in a slump. *It’s good if they come back, even if it’s only as corpse. There are also countless people who were judged to be dead after having not returned or who ended up getting eaten by monsters.*

People who were close to her, people who she didn’t know too well and people who leave or come wandering in, as far as Hela knows she has met them as adventurers. There’s also plenty people where she can’t even remember their faces anymore.

“Be that as it may, today I have spare time.” (Hela)

Since the capital has many people, one might consider that there’s many adventurers as well, but unexpectedly that’s not the case.

Given that there's few monsters in the suburbs where the most people live, those are areas where, against expectations, the main body of the adventurers doesn't earn much.

The majority of them are country bumpkins who were merely attracted by the big city, veteran fellows who are gathering expensive equipment and tools to go on an expedition and people who want to secure a certain level of convenient life.

The information about the brutalization of the monsters has come in, but that incident hasn't spread its influence as far as the capital yet.

“Ara, it fits well that you are free right now.” (Origa)

“Ue!? O-Origa-sa... sama!?” (Hela)

The one who came calling out to her who was just about to doze off was the person who had come to her mind a bit earlier. The dress she is wearing and which was carefully sewn by using a high-quality-looking fabric was an attire far more noble-like than one could imagine.

Showing an impish smile, Origa greets Hela.

“It's been a while. I'm relieved that you don't seem to have changed. Besides, there's no necessity to attach -sama to my name. It's not like I'm a noble.”
(Origa)

“T-Thank you.” (Hela)

Even if she says so, generally, if you marry a noble, it's a custom to treat them the same like a noble. Seeing that even beloved concubines are treated with quite the politeness, it wasn't like Hela could talk to her like a friend.

And even without that, with Origa regularly visiting the royal palace and occasionally staying there for several days, the story, that she is close to Queen Imeraria, was something many people in the capital knew of.

Being the wife of the hero and being on friendly terms with the queen, she cannot afford to not treat Origa as important person. She has ability and authority at her back after all.

“Ah, right, so Origa... -san, what kind of business do you have with me?”
(Hela)

By no means you plan to act like a fake adventurer this late in the game, do

you? This almost slipped out of Hela's mouth but she held back on the frivolous talk.

"It's information gathering. You know about the monsters' transformation towards ferocity, right?" (Origa)

"Ah, so it's about that?" (Hela)

Grabbing the documents which were piled up nearby with a "Heave-ho!", she spreads those out on the counter.

Reports of various types are written on the parchments. They seem to be documents for the staff members to look through.

"I haven't heard of it much in the vicinity of the capital. It's at a level of adventurers who have gone on an expedition having seen those occasionally. Thanks to that it hasn't become such a grave matter around this area." (Hela)

"Is that so...?" (Origa)

Origa replied with a serious face while looking through one after the other document.

"Is there something bothering you?" (Hela)

"Someone might have orchestrated the brutalization of the monsters behind the scenes. There's such a talk as well." (Origa)

"No way." (Hela)

Hela laughed.

The general understanding of monsters is that they form groups in the same way as wild animals and that this behaviour is something unrelated to being controlled. Even guild staff members, who are deeply involved with monsters albeit indirectly, have no differing knowledge.

"It might not be a laughing matter. For example, how do you explain this?" (Origa)

Extracting one paper from the bundle of documents, Origa quietly held it out to Hela.

"Eh..." (Hela)

The following is written on the report: “En route heading towards the direction of Vichy from the capital, a certain adventurer group was attacked by something similar to a human-shaped monster and two adventurers died. The survivors were forced to retire as well.”

It was a document which Hela saw and ended up putting to the pile of similar reports.

“Are those demons or new types of monster? At any rate, I believe that the work of the adventurer guild won’t proceed with the usual monster subjugation.” (Origa)

“Paying attention to peculiar information, contact the castle if something happens”, Origa requested Hela to pass that message on to the capital’s guild staff members.

“... Origa-san, do you know something?” (Hela)

“I haven’t yet grasped the circumstances, but it will be alright.” (Origa)

Once Hela asked while having cold sweat, Origa showed a smile.

“There’s a hero-sama in this world after all.” (Origa)



While the demons were continuing the offence and defence with the monsters, they constructed this city which was enclosed by a strong wall. As they polished their combat techniques, the magic each of them possesses and their special skills, they dreamed of some day leaving this small world.

For that reason, they emphasized on their unity with their friends in this area and built a stable system of monarchic rule. The battle with the monsters also serves as training for their revenge against the elves who are just beyond the barrier.

Originally the demons were hostile towards humans and beastmen, but being imprisoned in the barrier for a long time and as the generations changed, their hostile spirit towards humans and beastmen faded as there were extremely few opportunities to get in contact with either. All of their resentment was turned onto the elves.

The cylindrical space, which was created by the barrier, is plenty large to ensure food by hunting and gathering. Many monsters settled in here and the demons,

catching those and eating them, had no issues if it was only about surviving. However, the definite existence of a barrier certainly inflicted stress upon the hearts of the demons.

“Saying all that, this is the current situation of the demon race.” (Phegor)

“I see, I understood it properly. Thanks.” (Hifumi)

Along the way, Hifumi, who grasped the demons’ situation to a certain extent due to Phegor’s explanation, thanked Phegor honestly.

At first Phegor didn’t feel overly comfortable with disclosing the distress of the demons, however Hifumi, accepting the details as they were, didn’t react as if looking down on the demons nor did he behave cautiously.

It might be good for him to know about it as background information, he judged.

“You are a strange one. Just when I wondered whether you have a more dangerous gaze than ferocious monsters, you express your thanks without hesitation. I wonder what’s going on in that head of yours.” (Vepar)

“I ain’t strange in that regard at all. Don’t stare this way too much. It’s sickening.” (Hifumi)

“Wow, how sharp-tongued.” (Vepar)

Due to Vepar walking while laughing with a pleasant, high-pitched tone and asking “What’s weird?”, Phegor reprimands her to cut it out.

“We have reached the castle. Since there are fellows who idolize you, have a bit awareness of the looks in the surroundings.” (Phegor)

“How foolish. Even if they yearn for my smoothed outward appearance, it’s only troublesome. Overdoing it with their own niceties, they are yet unable to become my friends because they yearn for me.” (Vepar)

“As usual, you always have something to say...” (Phegor)

The place they reached could be called a white castle. It was a building made out of warm, solid, white stone.

It’s much smaller if compared to the royal castle of Orsongrande. Although it also has a height of around a 4-storey building and with it having the impression

of being clean like the Himeji Castle, it gives an exactly opposite impression for being called the castle of the demons for Hifumi. Those were his thoughts.

“We don’t like overly exaggerated and gaudy things. However, I believe this castle is adequately beautiful.” (Phegor)

Phegor explains proudly while Vepar yawns.

“Even if we wanted to be pompous, there’s simply not enough materials and space. Well then, let’s go, human-san.” (Phegor)

Vepar tried to nonchalantly take Hifumi’s hand, but smoothly evading the outstretched hand, Hifumi advanced towards the castle gate on his own accord.

“If there’s something to talk, let’s finish it quickly. I’ve become hungry.”
(Hifumi)

“Mmh, geeze.” (Vepar)

Neglecting Vepar who was swinging her fist in frustration, Phegor also headed towards the castle gate.

“Then let me treat you to a meal after the talk with the king. I definitely want you to savour the cooking of the castle’s dining hall. Come on, this way.”
(Phegor)

The job of being the king’s aide seems to give a person quite the high ranking after all. In spite of him guiding Hifumi who’s a human, the gatekeepers, who saw Phegor’s face, opened the heavy-looking double-door gate without saying anything.

Once passing through the castle gate, a path, with a stone paving laid out, is stretching out directly ahead. It continues straight to the entrance of the castle which was wide open.

There are demons who seem to be soldiers on patrol in the surroundings. Seeing Phegor, they stop and give a small bow.

“It’s been a while since I came to the castle.” (Vepar)

Vepar, who caught up, muttered.

Generally there are many facilities for the army and standby areas in the city for the sake of dealing with the outside invaders, the monsters. It appears that she

won't approach the castle usually as she has no particular business here either. Phegor, taking along Vepar who is spouting information Hifumi couldn't care less about, climbed the stairways without hesitation and led Hifumi to a single room.

"Could you wait here? I will come back once I talked with the king." (Phegor)

"Got it. It will be even better if there's something to eat." (Hifumi)

Laughing unintentionally, Phegor promised to have someone bring a light meal and left the room.

"So, why are you remaining here? Go and do your job." (Hifumi)

"Ara, isn't it bad to leave our important guest alone?" (Vepar)

Once Hifumi sits down on a sofa, Vepar, who sat down next to him without leaving any space between them, smiles sweetly.

"Which reminds me, there's a kitchen in this room where simple drinks can be prepared." (Vepar)

Saying that, Vepar swiftly prepared a drink, which has an aroma similar to coffee, and placed it in front of Hifumi. Holding a cup with her own share in both hands, she once again sits down next to him.

"There you go?" (Vepar)

Extending his left hand, Hifumi took the wooden cup. Once he breathes in the rising, hot steam, he senses a mixture of a coffee aroma and a smell similar to dried firewood. The mysterious scent is tickling his nasal cavities.

"I wonder whether humans don't drink it much. Drying a tree with a nice aroma which can be harvested around here, it is made by pouring hot water onto it after roasting the wood until it turns pitch black. Although there are people who dislike it, I like it very much since it has a soothing aroma." (Vepar)

While Vepar is talking, Hifumi drinks a mouthful. The taste is just like coffee, but because its aroma is different, it feels like a completely different drink.

"You are quite unusual after all." (Vepar)

Vepar, who has drunk a mouthful as well, put down the cup and laughed.

“Usually one would be more cautious and wouldn’t drink something even if offered. In spite of drinking that without any hesitation...” (Vepar)

Vepar’s sight turns towards between her and Hifumi.

There she saw Hifumi firmly grasping the suntetsu with his right hand. Its sharp, pointed end is obviously aimed at Vepar.

“Do you plan to attack me with this small weapon if I make some odd move? Good grief, I’m not even sure if you are simply cautious of me or if you have faith in me.” (Vepar)

“It’s different.” (Hifumi)

“Eh?” (Vepar)

Hifumi, who gulped down another mouthful, exhaled with a “Fuu~” to let the heat flow out.

“I have no intention to attack you. I plan to kill you.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi’s gaze firmly captures Vepar’s eyes.

“Something like being too cautious of food and drinks is oppressive and I won’t do that. I generally realize if there’s ill will in play. If by some chance I was done in by poison I missed to notice, that would just mean it was my limit up to there.” (Hifumi)

“Then, this is?” (Vepar)

Pointing at the suntetsu, Vepar tilts her head to the side.

“If you are hostile, I want to kill you without fail, I guess? It’s not my hobby to spend time on tormenting someone. Although it’s at a level of you getting killed by me in the instant you consider harming me, that will also be my biggest pleasure. I won’t spare any effort for that cause. I’m more afraid of being unable to kill than dying.” (Hifumi)

“And, even if you did me in with poison, I would be able to savour the satisfaction of getting my revenge in an instant”, Hifumi said and drunk the rest remaining in the cup.

Vepar held her arms as if embracing herself and entrusted her body into the

back of the sofa. And, flapping her feet like a child, she displays a joyful expression.

“Though it’s about killing someone else, you haven’t a shred of hesitation if you deem them as your enemy! Although it’s me saying this, I do believe that I understand the charm of my own appearance. Are you able to even kill such a young woman, I wonder?” (Vepar)

“I don’t particularly care.” (Hifumi)

With only those words, Vepar was convinced that Hifumi had already killed a young woman.

“You are wonderful! I want to see your appearance as you are fighting with someone by all means.” (Vepar)

He noticed that Vepar used the word “someone” and not monster, but Hifumi didn’t go out of his way to say anything about that.

At that point Phegor returned.

“Thank you for waiting. Since the king was as gracious to grant us some time, I’d like you to come, but... Vepar, why are you grinning broadly?” (Phegor)

“It’s nothing. Leaving that aside, I will take care of him. Since it’s probably the first time he came to this city, I will show him around various places.” (Vepar)

“That will save me the trouble.” (Phegor)

“Yes, leave it to me!” (Vepar)

Phegor felt uneasy about Vepar recklessly getting close to Hifumi, but since Hifumi’s reaction doesn’t seem to be unfavourable, he decided to leave it to her.

And, advancing to the floor further above by Phegor’s guidance, they entered through a remarkably large door. In front of Hifumi, who stepped into the hall-like room, there was the figure of a boy who spread both hands and stood up from the throne.

“Welcome, human! My name is Agathion. I’m the king ruling this city of the demons.” (Agathion)

Agathion, who swiftly descended the 5-ary stairs, had a whole-faced smile on

his face which had a grey skin tone characteristic for demons. He walked up to in front of Hifumi without any hesitation.

There were several soldier-like people within the room, but none of them tries to stop him.

“I heard from Phegor. I never expected a human to pass through the barrier and to arrive at this city! This will certainly be a momentous meeting which will remain recorded in the history of the demons. For the present I shall welcome you!” (Agathion)

“Is it good to have absolutely no vigilance like that? I still haven’t said that I will cooperate with you. I might become your enemy.” (Hifumi)

“That’s fine.” (Agathion)

Agathion, who showed a slight darkening on his face, lowered his gaze.

“It’s alright for you to be our ally or enemy. No matter which way you choose, it will cause the “change” desired by me.” (Agathion)

Due to the unforeseen development, Hifumi pursed his lips and stared at Agathion.

Chapter 108 – Purple Haze

“Don’t you think that it’s far more sound to put in great effort and gain a future for the demons on the battlefield rather than a destiny of perishing in a closed world like this?” (Agathion)

Agathion chose a separate room with a lounge suit, and not the throne room, making it possible for him to sit opposite of Hifumi.

With the reasoning that Hifumi isn’t even a demon, let alone a retainer, there are matters which Agathion deemed acceptable to discuss while sitting on the throne, but there are also matters which shouldn’t be talked about in front of many retainers.

And, his first statement was a bombshell announcement at the level of making Phegor jump up vigorously.

“K-King! That is...” (Phegor)

“Calm down and listen up, Phegor. Aren’t you in front of a guest?” (Agathion)

Beaming with a refreshing smile, Agathion crossed his legs and raised his eyes to the ceiling.

“After all, the state of resentment accumulating in this miniature garden can’t be expected to be normal. Since it’s too lonely for us to give up and rot away, it would be best if it goes smoothly after trying to do something about it, otherwise it’ll be the end of the demon race. And I think that’s fine.” (Agathion)

Correcting his posture, Agathion suddenly gulped down around half of the coffee in the cup.

“Pheew. Human-san, what is your name?” (Agathion)

“It’s Hifumi.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi is drinking his second cup today as well.

“More or less I became a noble in a human country. However, I’m in the process of touring this world.” (Hifumi)

“That’s great. I’m very envious. It’s a very fantastic story.” (Agathion)

Once he tells the maid, who was nearby, to bring some sweets, Agathion smiles at Hifumi.

“Although I’ve never seen them personally, there are dwarves and beastmen in addition to humans and elves as well, aren’t there? Did you happen to meet them, Hifumi?” (Agathion)

“I did. I met with many beastmen before coming here. There are dwarves amongst the bunch I got to know before that. There are the elves, too.” (Hifumi)

“Oh, you encountered the elves as well... but that’s only natural since you should have passed through the place of the elves if I go by what you’ve said.” (Agathion)

Vepar is sitting next to Hifumi as if it was the usual. Though it’s an impossible situation for a retainer if it was a human country, Agathion doesn’t seem to mind it.

“What were your impressions of the elves? They hate the demons after all, don’t they?” (Agathion)

Hifumi addressed Agathion, who is somewhat excited, with a serious look.

“I had the impression that they feared the release of you demons. Somehow they treat you as “enemy of the world.”” (Hifumi)

“What! Just what the heck did we do!?” (Phegor)

Agathion only nodded in silence, but Phegor got indignant. According to their story, the time where the demons confronted the humans and elves continued for a long time and finally the demons were sealed in this place after being pushed into it by the elves. Since that’s a story from several generations ago, the demons were amassing resentment for being imprisoned undeservedly as result of a past they have no knowledge of. On the other hand, the elves’s side, which is the one doing the sealing, was able to succeed in maintaining the barrier as “act of justice.”

“After all, just the elves have to be defeated by any means necessary! King, shouldn’t we accomplish our revenge by seeking Hifumi-dono’s cooperation here?” (Phegor)

Vepar makes a face as if being fed up with it due to Phegor roaring intensely. And, Agathion also has a look of not being too enthusiastic about it.

“Mmh~ ... What do you think, Hifumi?” (Agathion)

Watching Phegor who stood up, Hifumi smiled due to the question of Agathion who pondered while moving his mouth with a *monyonyonyo*. (T/N: *Though not easy to express the words, he has a feeling of being vexed by that, originates from 2chan, no idea for an English counterpart*)

“Fighting is a good thing. Even if you clearly know your enemy, I believe it to be proper to also regard your further ambitions. But you know...” (Hifumi)

“Is there something bothering you? Are the elves incredibly powerful or such?” (Vepar)

For the first time Vepar has a seriousness reflected in her eyes. Usually she is absentminded, but she is also in a position of having to look after the lives of many soldiers. Even she has no intention to expose her subordinates to danger pointlessly.

“I killed several elves, but they weren’t that particularly strong either. I saw the battle with the monsters and the demon wielding a large sword, thus as far as I know the demons are superior in regards to fighting strength, I guess.” (Hifumi)

“I don’t know your individual abilities though”, Hifumi changed the topic completely.

“Won’t the barrier vanish or become weaker in a while?” (Hifumi)

“Oh? Why do you think so?” (Agathion)

Agathion bent himself forward.

“The majority of elves will leave the forest. I don’t know about their destination, but they became aware of meeting tragic deaths if they stayed in that forest. For them the forest is nothing more but a target of fear, I suppose.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi talked about the forests’ characteristic of being the cause of the elves dying by changing into arbour without concealing anything. Once he mentioned

that he dissected elves in the process, Phegor's and Agathion's grey faces became pale, though Vepar listened closely.

"I see... our enemies will be gone before we realize it, is what you mean, eh? Far from swinging our fists at them, our targets might be gone before we can even clutch them, right?" (Agathion)

While rolling about on the sofa, Agathion groans.

"Ah~ I give up! I thought we would be able to solidify the unity of the demons one way or the other by having them vent their stress if it's a battle." (Agathion)

"If you want to fight, it's fine to do so though." (Hifumi)

"... What do you mean?" (Agathion)

Agathion was laying face-down while clinging on the cushion, but he turned one eye towards Hifumi.

"That's simple. It's fine if you aim for someone else than the elves. There are others as well, you said so yourself, didn't you? There are dwarves, beastmen and humans as well. Aren't there other races, not just the elves?" (Hifumi)

"D-Does a human propose to fight with humans...?" (Agathion)

"I don't think that something to be surprised about." (Hifumi)

Hifumi lifted the edges of his mouth.

"Humans are constantly fighting amongst each other, aren't they? However, as the details of the battles had a fixed style, they haven't grown up." (Hifumi)

Hifumi stood up and clapped Agathion's shoulder.

"If you are going to rampage anyway, think about doing it on a larger stage. If you want to make the name of the demons known, it's just right to at least target the whole world and not only the elves." (Hifumi)

"Hmm..." (Agathion)

"If you are going to be hated anyway, you don't have to hold back against anyone, right? If you are unable to live in the elven concession, you have only two choices: remain here or search for a dwelling in a distant place." (Hifumi)

Placing the katana at his waist, Hifumi put his finger on his hakama and fixed a

crease.

“Where are you going?” (Agathion)

Hifumi, who turned around while opening the door answered Agathion’s question,

“Depending on your guys’ answer, I will decide whether I will cooperate with you or not. I plan to stroll around the city for a while, therefore it’s alright if you call me again once you came to a conclusion.” (Hifumi)

“Ah, then let me guide you through the city!” (Vepar)

Chasing Hifumi who left the room, Vepar swiftly stood up and ran off.

“King-sama, please excuse me~” (Vepar)

“Yea, teach him about the things which can be enjoyed in the demons’ city.” (Agathion)

The door is closed with a small sound.

The standing Phegor faced Agathion and kneeled.

“My king, it was obviously careless of me to have brought that person along.” (Phegor)

“No, it was good that I heard the stories from an outsider after all. You did well to find him.” (Agathion)

Once Agathion made an exaggerated nod, Phegor stated his feelings of being sorry while unable to move his body.

“The elves’ place is dangerous, huh? If we assume that it’s really true that the barrier will vanish... it doesn’t look like we have overly much time left to care-freely ponder about things. It appears I have to make a large decision, Phegor.” (Agathion)

“Oh king, you are great. All of the demons will follow that decision.” (Phegor)

Agathion looked up to the sky due to Phegor who answered with completely clear eyes.

“Aren’t you just putting me under pressure with that?” (Agathion)

Agathion, who sighed “Well, it’s fine”, expressed his own thought in a small

voice that couldn't be heard by Phegor.

“Fighting with humans and beastmen, eh? Anyway, even if it's only a single opponent, it's something I want to begin with a proper victory.” (Agathion)



Having suffered a close to a half dead injury by Origa, Balzephon defeated the strengthened monster while barely escaping alive.

Dismantling the magic tool which was embedded in the monster, he lost consciousness for a long time after forcing it into his own chest resolutely.

“... Uuh...” (Balzephon)

How dazzling.

He intended to mutter that at the beginning when he opened his eyes faintly, but what came out from Balzephon's mouth weren't words but only groans. He doesn't know in what kind of state he is.

While his mind was confused, his sight finally became clear.

“Guu...” (Balzephon)

He rises his body sluggishly while exhaling.

Apparently I'm surrounded by trees.

The sunlight, which spilled through the branches with their thickly grown green leaves, seems to have woken up Balzephon.

“...?” (Balzephon)

He eagerly recalls the situation until the point he lost consciousness. Although he should be covered in wounds all over his body, he doesn't feel any pain.

Realizing that his field of vision is unnaturally high, Balzephon timidly looked down at his body.

“Uuuuuuuuu...” (Balzephon)

He unintentionally leaked a moan.

Having trained properly, he should have a firm physique, but on top of his body being covered in muscles all over he has changed into a giant. Hair grew thinly on his whole body and his clothes were tattered and torn.

While being confused, he looks at his limbs one after the other. His feet and arms have become as thick as logs and were wrapped in muscles which were as hard as rock. His nails are massive and sharp, matching small knives.

“A-A monster?”

Once he turns around due to the voice he heard all of a sudden, there were two men, who appear to be swordsmen wearing armour, and a robed woman, who seems to be a magician. They looked at Balzephon with surprised faces.

“Uuu...” (Balzephon)

“Have you ever seen such a monster!?”

While retreating 2-3 steps, the magician tells the two men to escape.

“No, it will be lucrative if we can sell it to the guild as it is a new species. A human type is troublesome, but we will be able to manage one way or the other if it's only one.”

Once one of the swordsmen drew his sword, the other became silent and prepared his weapon likewise.

“Geeze! Protect me properly, will you!?”

As the woman set up her wand while cursing, the two swordsmen are slowly closing the distance to Balzephon.

In the time the adventurers talked amongst each other, Balzephon calmly observed the humans in front of him while leaking a groan and hot long breath since he wasn't able to properly close his mouth due to the grown canines.

“Uu...” (Balzephon)

His brain doesn't work. His mind is simply dominated by a violent urge.

“Hee, it looks to be afraid. Is it the first time it saw humans?”

One of the swordsmen laughs foolishly while closing in.

Balzephon shook his sharp, grown nails.

(I want to kill.) (Balzephon)

A voice as if he had clearly heard that reverberated in his mind.

At that moment Balzephon had a feeling as if his body was controlled by

something. When he suddenly noticed that, one swordsman sprouted blood from his throat while writhing.

“Maden! Fuck!”

The other swordsman comes attacking with his sword raised overhead.

“Gaah!”

Raising his voice completely like a beast, Balzephon’s arm stretches out. The sharp nail was faster than the sword which came swinging down. The swordman’s eyeball was pierced.

“Ga...”

The swordsman, who dropped his sword without even raising his voice due to the pain and impact, had his head cut by the nails even more and was killed quickly.

“A lie...”

Forgetting even her spell chanting, the woman closely hugged her wand and trembled.

What was fortunate for her was that Balzephon didn’t attack. Balzephon himself was bewildered by his own actions. Staring at his bloodstained hands, he stood stock still.

The woman, who left the scene slowly, desperately ran away while carrying the deaths of her companions in her confused mind.

Afterwards the woman, who returned to the city while barely escaping alive, reported to the guild. Catching sight of the “fiendish human type monster” which sometimes appears in Orsongrande and the vicinity of Vichy, it causes many victims.

As many of the victims were adventurers, several guilds, which are located in the Vichy direction of Orsongrande, finally requested support from Fokalore.



“Good grief, they are forcing troubles onto an old man.” (Reshi)

Arosel’s guildmaster, Reshi, who arrived in Fokalore at last by using a carriage from Arosel, rubbed his waist which had a tingling pain because of the long

sitting in the carriage.

“It’s been several years since I came to Fokalore, but it changed quite a bit.”
(Reshi)

He, who came several times to Fokalore, which was past the national border, as adventurer in his early days, was surprised by the rate of growth of Fokalore which has been evaluated as “more of a city than the capital” and was completely different from the past.

Establishing wide roads and laying out rails in the middle of them, rail wagons blaze through at great speeds.

There are also many people walking. Even Reshi, who is proud about his vigour in relation to his age, is feeling sick by the crowd of people.

While taking a rest sometimes, Reshi stopped for a bit in front of the feudal lord’s mansion he finally reached.

“Well then, what to do...?” (Reshi)

He remembered that the girl, who previously visited Arosel’s guild, called herself military director.

He has felt awkward to request a fight from a girl who has no more than a fraction of his age.

However, it was something they decided as guild.

“If I name myself Reshi who is the one in charge of Arosel’s guild, will I be able to meet with Military Director-dono.” (Reshi)

“Yea, if that’s the case, please try asking at the reception after entering inside.”

A soldier, who is at the side of the mansion’s entrance, pointed inside as if it was something usual.

Once he entered inside as he was told, he saw the figures of staff members who are noisily and busily dealing with the inhabitants of Fokalore.

While he thinks *I’m sorry*, Reshi called out to one of them.

Being told to wait for a moment, he was led to a room on the second floor after around 5 minutes.

“Thank you very much for waiting.”

He waited in the room for several seconds. Then a single man appeared in front of Reshi.

“I’m called Caim and I’m working as civil official in Earldom Tohno. Since the Military Director is out of office currently, I shall listen to your business in her stead.” (Caim)

Talking in a calm voice, his expression lacks any emotions as he makes his greetings. He is expressionless as if he had a mask on his face.

“I’m called Reshi, the guildmaster of Arosel’s guild. Please let me excuse myself at this occasion for suddenly visiting.” (Reshi)

“So, what’s your reason for deciding to come to Fokalore?” (Caim)

Caim, who sat across of Reshi, got straight to the point from the start.

“I was previously visited by the Military Director. There was mention about the human type monster in our conversation at that time, but since the victims are centred around adventurers in the last few days, I came immediately visiting thinking that I might ask you kindly for assistance.” (Reshi)

“A human type monster? I see...” (Caim)

“I really want to move towards its extermination, but this monsters is extremely powerful. While it’s disgraceful, there are currently no adventurers who can deal with it.” (Reshi)

Even while being bewildered by Caim’s looking directly at him with a serious look during his statement, Reshi explained everything about the damage caused by the monster without hiding anything.

“I grasped the situation.” (Caim)

“Then...” (Reshi)

“Let’s attach a large number of guards to merchant groups and the travelling of important people. By dispatching soldiers from Fokalore as well, we shall increase the guard duty on the highway.” (Caim)

However, Caim doesn’t mention the coping with the monster itself at all.

“B-But, if we leave it alone as is, the damage will further...” (Reshi)

“Our Lord, Earl Tohno exceedingly hates himself and his own things being used in a beneficial way. Let us help in order to solve the problem. However, we won’t do it in the shape of sending soldiers to cooperate with the guild.” (Caim)

No emotions are shown on Caim’s face who stated that. As Reshi is looking for his next words, Caim continued further,

“... But, if it’s unrelated to the guild, we will be able to move upon our own judgement.” (Caim)

“E-Excuse me, but I wonder if this method doesn’t have dangerous aspects...” (Reshi)

Based on the incidents occurring in an area close to the national border of Vichy, Reshi conveyed his worries that if they mobilized their troops, it might end up triggering an unwanted stimulus.

“I wonder if it isn’t fine if we simply convey the request to the guilds in the surroundings, but...” (Reshi)

However, Caim’s answer surpassed the category of Reshi’s understanding.

“While keeping the enemy army in check, we will deal with the fiendish monster. It’s a two-fronts strategy. It should become a good exercise.” (Caim)

“I-In that case, a conflict will occur once again and also...” (Reshi)

“There’s no problem even if it turns into a war. Rather, our Lord wishes for that. And, naturally we abide to his wishes. A vicious monster is a wonderful thing. If it turns into a war, it will be even more wonderful.” (Caim)

Reshi became afraid of the man in front of him. This time is similar to the time when Hifumi showed up and sent one adventurer after the other into their oblivion.

“Thank you.” (Caim)

Due to Caim bowing abruptly, Reshi didn’t get the meaning.

“Because of the information you brought, we will be able to head into even more battles. And we will be able to wait for our feudal lord’s return while growing even further.” (Caim)

Reshi wasn't able to say anything else anymore.

Chapter 109 – Unchain My Heart

“With such long talks, I’ve become hungry.” (Hifumi)

Listening to Hifumi grumbling “In the end I missed out on eating something at the castle”, Vepar pointed in the direction of the bustling city.

“Over there’s a delicious restaurant. Since you can get there private rooms which are intended for people like me, who are earning adequate money, we will be able to eat some food at ease there. My stomach’s empty as well. Let me treat you!” (Vepar)

“Well, then I will take you up on that.” (Hifumi)

At the restaurant he entered after following Vepar’s lead they were shown into a big private room located furthest inside as she was well known or rather as could be expected.

Vepar, who sat down right next to Hifumi in a casual manner even though there are ten seats in the private room, confirmed whether there was anything he didn’t like and quickly ordered several dishes he had never heard of.

“Is this kind of order fine with you, I wonder?” (Vepar)

“Even if I hear about the details and portions, I won’t know them anyway.” (Vepar)

“Well, I guess that’s true as well. It’s fine for you to get a second serving if it’s not enough.” (Vepar)

Once the waiter left the room, Vepar turned her look at Hifumi who is next to her.

“Why did you think of getting the humans involved in the fight between demons and elves?” (Vepar)

“It’s something else.” (Hifumi)

“Eh?” (Vepar)

“*Getting the humans involved* isn’t my aim. *Getting all of the races dragged into it* is my goal. My target is to drag this entire world into wars.” (Hifumi)

As water was carried in before the meals, he is able to moisten his mouth lightly.

“This world’s people should clash with each other far more desperately. They should give and take lives far more earnestly. That’s what I believe. Thus I’m moving in order to make that happen.” (Hifumi)

Once Hifumi’s words ended, silence protruded the private room for a while.

“T-That means, you want to destroy this world?” (Vepar)

Hifumi returned a smile in response to Vepar who asked that timidly.

“That’s not it either. Wars will make everybody get “serious.” For the sake of fighting. For the sake of surviving. For the sake of regaining. Revenge and self-preservation, ambitions and restoration... there are many aspects, but probably everyone will become serious about it. Only that will allow this world to advance.” (Hifumi)

“It’s not like I’m saying it, but... weren’t you told that your head’s messed up?” (Vepar)

“Not really.” (Hifumi)

With the sound of knocking resounding, the waiter enters the room and lines up one dish after the other.

The waiter cuts up a lump of meat, which was covered by some sauce and has steam rising from it, with a swoosh and places the slices in front of Hifumi and Vepar. Something which was roasted with salad and some paste product gets lined up on top of the table making it cramped.

“Ooh, it looks quite appetizing.” (Hifumi)

Picking up a knife and fork, Hifumi immediately stuffed his cheeks with meat. The taste of the sweet and sour sauce and the deeply flavoured oil mixes and spreads within his mouth. The meat was tough but Hifumi stuffed it into his mouth with gusto without minding that.

“It’s a wonderful manner of eating.” (Vepar)

While saying that, Vepar also eats small-cut pieces of meat enjoying its deliciousness.

“It’s a nice restaurant. The taste and the quantity are satisfactory.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi called out to the waiter who brought drinks once they had eaten around half of the dishes on top of the table.

“Eh? T-Thank you very much.”

The waiter was surprised for an instant due to being addressed by a human, but even while being bewildered, he returned his gratitude to the compliment which was given with a thin smile.

“You are unrelated to demons and humans after all. With only talks like spreading wars, I wondered whether you would be hated by humans, but...”
(Vepar)

“For humans and demons it’s probably only natural to have a favourable impression of a guy if he puts in earnest efforts into his own role.” (Hifumi)

He wipes his mouth in one go with the clothes which were provided in a stack.

“I like fellows who put in great effort into improving somehow, unrelated whether they are my enemies or allies. The folks in my territory and my wife are putting in great efforts to improve the society in the country and not just in the territory.” (Hifumi)

“Oh, you are married. I wonder whether it’s fine to have dinner in such place then?” (Vepar)

Hifumi looked with serious eyes at Vepar due to her teasing words.

“They stir the world. I only give instructions without moving myself. Besides, it’s not necessary for me to yield the fun parts to someone else like that.”
(Hifumi)

He drank up the pseudo-coffee.

“If I were the one to move, there would be too many fellows who would scheme unnecessary things. Just like that child king.” (Hifumi)

“... Agathion-sama is called the smartest king within the successive generations? The matter of dealing with the elven forest had been decided for a long time, this late in the game... no way, is it possible that you will do something?” (Vepar)

Hifumi sneers at Vepar who says “Impossible, you talked in such friendly way with him.”

“The ones called statesmen fuss over “titles.” If they have those, the people will follow them... is what they are believing. If it’s for a just cause, they will be called resolute and not running wild albeit they are doing something daring.”
(Hifumi)

“A just cause?” (Vepar)

“For example, since there was evidence that the humans and elves were collaborating and trying to destroy the demon race, he will make a move in order to avenge the long-lasting grudge, or such.” (Hifumi)

“If the barrier falls, he will sell it as outcome of his own efforts and explain it as first step of him destroying the humans and elves”, Hifumi explains.

“Evidence, you say...” (Vepar)

“If there’s a corpse of a human in the demon’s city which should be isolated, that’ll be plenty, I think?” (Hifumi)

Even Vepar grasps that Hifumi is the candidate for that corpse. Since even demons, who are strong at disguising themselves, return to their original forms once they die, there will be plenty persuasive power if it’s an obvious corpse.

The corpse candidate laughs.

“Well, I wonder what that smart king or whatever will do?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi’s glance asks Vepar *And what will you do at that time?*



Although there are fluctuations due to things like marriages and such in the unit, where women who are good at magic play a central role, led by Vepar, it’s a group of the best demonic magicians with around 100 members in it. With the adjoining combat-orientated unit led by Beleth being centred around men, the antagonism triggered by their bipolar dispositions has been continuing from long before Vepar was inaugurated as captain. However, being sick of that sweltering structure, Vepar basically made sure to

not oppose Beleth and his subordinates. She is always leaking to the surroundings that it's bothersome to do so.

“Unh~...” (Vepar)

Vepar's working place is close to the city's outer wall. Beleth's working place is in the completely opposite direction with the castle being between them. Vepar, who was chased out after she tried to have a deep talk with Hifumi in the same room once she led him to the inn, quietly sat at her own desk after having reported to the castle.

“Just when I pondered whether you are doing your work properly for a change... you have abandoned processing the documents. What are you worried about?”

The one who called out to her had approximately the same stature as Vepar, but compared to Vepar's voluptuous body, she was a young woman with a slender build. On top of her vividly green one piece she is wearing a grey mantle with a hood attached.

Her indigo blue, sleepy eyes are staring indifferently at Vepar who is prostrating on the desk.

“Please do you work seriously once in a while. With most of the documents carrying my signature recently, there are rumours swirling around that there had been a change in commanding officers.”

“Bennia, take my place if you want to. It's not like I particularly like such tiresome title.” (Vepar)

“Since you were recommended, put in some effort to show deference to those people who referred you.” (Bennia)

The woman called Bennia flatly retorted to Vepar who is looking at her bitterly.

“... What will you do if there's battle between fellow comrades within this city, Bennia?” (Vepar)

“What are you talking about all of a sudden? Do you plan to cause a rebellion?” (Bennia)

“Just tell me.” (Vepar)

Bennia felt something due to Vepar having a serious look, unlike before. She clears her throat once.

“Although you lack sincerity, you won’t do something mistaken, Captain, is what I believe. If you side with either party, me and the other unit members will follow you, Captain.” (Bennia)

“... That is, even if you will have to kill you own comrades?” (Vepar)

“There will be plenty of reason to do so, I believe.” (Bennia)

“Even so, it’s a very unsettling question”, Bennia knitted her eyebrows.

“Please tell me what you are planning to do.” (Bennia)

“There’s a human in this city, but... stories appeared that Agathion-sama might use him as sacrifice for the war.” (Vepar)

With a sigh blended in Vepar talked about the situation at the time she reported to the castle.

Hearing that story, Bennia tilts her head to the side.

“It’s strange. For that king-sama to talk about something vague like “might” and not an order.” (Bennia)

The order always descends from the top. Even if he consults with someone, at the most the decision changes in around two to three aspects with the other party being Phegor. That was the impression which all of the demons’ soldier held of their king.

Of course none of them think that it’s wrong.

“It looks like he wanted to see my reaction. Totally out of character my back ended up sweating.” (Vepar)

“Why such... no way, did you fall in love with that human?” (Bennia)

“Mm~ ... though I didn’t intend to. I won’t deny that I was charmed by him. However, that’s not the reason.” (Vepar)

Drinking the coffee made by Bennia, Vepar exhales a hot breath.

“The human... he is called Hifumi. It looks like his attitude doesn’t differ

towards demons and humans, you know. Though it's not like I have seen it actually in front of my eyes. But he says that the demons, elves, humans and beastmen should fight for their lives to improve this world. Good grief, it's crazy, isn't it?" (Vepar)

While her talking became gradually rapid, Vepar giggled. Even Bennia can't tell from her expression whether it was tinged with amazement or anxiety.

"You want to betray the king for such a madman, you say?" (Bennia)

"It's not that I want to betray him. However, I believe that it's a mistake to simply kill him. Though I think that we can't avoid fighting with the elves, I wondered whether it isn't possible to get along with him and the people under his influence without having to fight them." (Vepar)

"War depends on the people furthering it, but something like the possibility of war eventually becoming a way to decrease the enemies is just stupid", Vepar shook her head.

"Did you tell the king that?" (Bennia)

"There's no way I can say that to him." (Vepar)

At the time she reported to the king, his aide, Phegor, was standing next to him. He glared at Vepar who tried to open her mouth regarding the king's suggestion.

"I'm not afraid of demotions and getting fired. However, if I was recognised as enemy of the king by Phegor, it wouldn't end with me simply losing my life." (Vepar)

"So?" (Bennia)

"There might be no other choice but get along with and approach Hifumi indirectly. It seems that Beleth sees him as his enemy as well. I will try to do my best by myself. If I can avoid unnecessary fighting, the number of deaths will decrease." (Vepar)

Bennia bowed her head due to Vepar standing up and telling her that she is going home.

“Please order us as you like without holding back. We are the king’s retainers, but the words that we will follow your judgement are no lies, captain.” (Bennia)

“I see. Thanks.” (Vepar)

Of course Vepar doesn’t know about her expression hidden within the mantle’s hood at the time she said “Good Night” and left.

And also not about Bennia heading towards the castle afterwards.



Zanga’s journey was far more lively and successful than she assumed at first. Not just Puuse and Shiku, people like those who were usually close to Zanga and those who were good at magic and who engaged in the maintenance of the barrier; many people are advancing through the forest in a line. They have already left the forest which is next to the elves’ village. The elves were very excited by the things like the horizon and the wastelands which entered their visions once the trees became sparse.

“Zanga-sama.”

“What?” (Zanga)

Zanga is making steady progress although she is supported by her wand. Puuse, who is burdened with large luggages, places her hand on Zanga’s back and suddenly turned her voice at Zanga.

“I get that we have to leave the forest, but where do you plan to go?” (Puuse)

“Ah, which reminds me, at the time of talking about that you weren’t there due to the preparations.” (Zanga)

“Sorry”, Zanga talked while recalling the details she told the villagers.

“I thought of trying to go to “that city where beastmen and humans work together” I was told by that human, no, by Hifumi. If they were able to make a city like that, they might let in elves as well, right?” (Zanga)

Puuse inclined her head to the side due to Zanga laughing with a “Hya hya.”

“Will it go that easily?” (Puuse)

“If it’s about that, I have the necessary measure.” (Zanga)

Zanga took out something from the back of the mantle she wore.

“... A letter, is it?” (Puuse)

“Well, it looks like a letter of introduction, I guess. It seems that Hifumi-san changed the structure of that city. I guess you can't call it definite, but don't you think that a little bit of hope has appeared?” (Zanga)

“I-I guess so... oh?” (Puuse)

Since Puuse had truly difficulty to deal with Hifumi, she became worried instead when she was told that it was a city changed by him. That Puuse discovered someone being there on the road ahead. She gives quick instructions to her comrades behind her with hand signals. According to the arrangements, all of them slowly came to a halt with simple hand gestures.

“What happened?” (Zanga)

“It looks like someone is ahead in front of the road. It's around 3 people.” (Puuse)

“I will go make sure”, leaving the heavy luggages behind, Puuse slowly approaches the figures.

At the moment she got close enough to identify them, she sees two of them standing up and discussing something. The other one stays sitting.

“You are, humans! ... Aren't you? You are somehow different...”

“B-Beastmen...” (Puuse)

Realizing that it's beastmen looking this way with their heads tilted to the side, Puuse faltered for just a moment, but once she became aware that all three of them are children, she became concerned in reverse.

“We are elves. You are, tiger beastmen and a bear beastman.” (Puuse)

“Elves, it's the first time...” (Olra)

The beargirl, who is dumbfounded, was Olra, the daughter of Salgu who was killed by Hifumi, but she still doesn't know that her father had already been killed.

“I’m the elf, Puuse. All of us are on a journey. So, what are you doing at such place with just you children?” (Puuse)

“Ah, I’m called Malfas. Riedel... my younger sister has been injured...” (Malfas)

Puuse turns her look at the other tigergirl.

The girl, she thought to be sitting, was apparently cut roughly by something around the area of her knee. Having been given only simple treatment by just wrapping it with a blood-soaked cloth, her eyes were filled with tears due to the pain.

“How terrible! Wait a moment.” (Puuse)

Once Puuse rushed over to her, she squatted next to her and matched her eyesight with Riedel.

“Hello.” (Puuse)

“Hello... onee-san, who are you?” (Riedel)

“I will introduce myself properly afterwards. Stay still for now.” (Puuse)

After a short chant, the mana, which was poured down along Puuse’s hands which she held over the wound, is tinged with a heat which got gradually warm and Riedel’s wound closes up little by little.

“Amazing...” (Riedel)

While Riedel was getting excited with sparkling eyes forgetting about the pain, the wound finished closing up completely.

“With this, it’ll be alright. Since the recovery doesn’t go as far as recovering the lost blood, take it easy.” (Puuse)

“Onee-san, thank you!” (Riedel)

Following Riedel, Malfas and Olra thanked her as well.

“You guys, you are travelling together although you are from different tribes, eh?” (Puuse)

“We want to rescue Olra’s father. Although he has gone to the humans’ city, he hasn’t returned yet...” (Malfas)

“We were in the middle of travelling as we said that we would meet up with

him.” (Olra)

“I see... Ah, perhaps your father might be at our destination.” (Puuse)

Puuse remembered the story she heard from Zanga.

“What destination is it?”

“I was told that it is a city where humans and beastmen leave peacefully together. We are en route heading there.” (Puuse)

“That’s how it was. If that’s the case, do you want to go together with us?”
(Zanga)

Due to the invitation by Zanga who came close-by to check the situation unnoticed, the beastchildren faced her.

After a short discussion, the three of them bow their heads together.

“Honestly, we got lost as we don’t know the way. Please take care of us.”
(Malfas)

When Malfas said so, Zanga nodded.

“Sure thing, no problem. Although it’s not the influence of a certain somebody, it’s irrelevant whether you are elves or beastmen. Children are to be protected by adults.” (Zanga)

Like this, the children of the beastmen race decided to head towards Swordland led by the elves.

Chapter 110 – Kick In The Teeth

In the end, after the majority of the elves abandoned and left the forest, the remaining elves lost the ability to keep up the barrier.

Those with a high amount of mana decided altogether to depart from the village at an early stage following Zanga.

While watching the barrier growing gradually insubstantial, the remaining elves were in a situation of observing one another to check each other's state.

Proclaiming their pet theory that upholding the barrier is an act of justice, those, who approved of it with a passionate attitude, are unable to state 「I will also leave」 just by themselves. While gauging the timing when they should comply once someone starts to talk about it in their minds, they passed their days loosely.

Even if the barrier vanished, the demons wouldn't leave their own dwelling, would they? Won't they choose to remain in their place as it's peaceful location?

Such wishful thinking, that lacked any basis, started to slowly spread.

However, that pipe dream didn't last long.

“Oy, that is...”

At the place where the man who was collecting in the forest pointed was the direction of the demons' settlement.

Ahead, where the opened up path leads to, a gloomy place with forest trees on either side can be seen.

“Those are... d-demons?”

Someone, who came walking down the path, was faintly visible.

With their walking pace being slow, the two elves lying in wait prepared to release their magic.

“... Huh?”

It didn't take much time for the elves to notice that the one, whom they saw moving leisurely at the beginning, was close to being unable to walk and thus only moved slowly.

There was no mistake that the one who turned up was a male demon with a

grey skin, but his condition could only be described as a misery.

With his left eye crushed, blood flows down his cheek similar to tears and he drags along his right leg which has a large wound on it. His flanks are soaked with blood as well and while sweating profoundly on his forehead, he desperately takes one step after the other.

The demon with his whole body covered in wounds finally noticed the elves. He held out his right hand as if grabbing for something.

“H-Help...”

With not only his right eye being opened widely, but also his left eye, which was crushed missing even a visible shadow, the elves didn't see him as anything but a strange monster and not a demon.

Although they heard his word, they hadn't the composure to think about its meaning.

“The human is...”

“He seems weakened! Let's get rid of him right away!”

The demon's muttering was drowned out by the voice of the agitated elf. Both elves cast wind and earth spells each.

As the demon, who was barely able to walk, shouldn't have any leeway to avoid those, his body was cut up by the wind blades and his whole body was hit by pellets.

The demon, who was turned into an old rag, rolled back being blown away and stopped moving just like that.

“We did it...”

“But, why was he covered in so many wounds?”

“Rather than such a thing, we have to inform everybody! At last the barrier vanished! Since it seems that the demons are weaker than we thought, we might be able to hold out somehow if we face them together!”

One of them is inclining his head to the side, but the other one appears to be excited by having killed an enemy. He ran off towards the village.

“Ah, oy!”

Although the one who was left behind tried to call out to him, his friend was already too far away.

“... Something like the demons being weak, could it be such too convenient state of affairs?”

And something was the reason for the demon to be injured this much. He eagerly wrecked his brain over it, but the corpse in front of him couldn't provide the answer he was looking for.



The one who created the origin by stirring up a chaos in the city of demons were visitors in the dead of the night.

There was a single building close to the business district where Hifumi lodged at in the demon's city. With almost no people coming and going, it's nothing but an inn.

As if having an inn in the outskirts, it's a lodging used by some demons with high social standing in case work got late or such. It's not a private but a state facility.

Having filled his stomach, Hifumi lied down on the bed after he had simply wiped his body.

“... They are unexpectedly fast.” (Hifumi)

In the dead of the night when everyone was asleep Hifumi abruptly opened his eyes and muttered this.

Hifumi sensed an intent to kill as if tingling on his skin approaching himself. While pulling the katana to his side, he slightly breathes out with a “Fuu~.”

“I wondered whether I could use that woman, but this was out of my expectations.” (Hifumi)

Showing a wry smile, he sits up.

The presences of two people are on the other side of the door.

However, there's no sign of them charging in.

Hifumi, who patiently watches the door, sat on the bed while wearing the katana at his waist.

The enemy is likely checking the situation inside the room. For a while they are beyond the door and silence drafts about.

“Step aside!”

Hearing a voice Hifumi recognised, the door flew open. Since the door, which was split right in halves, came flying towards him, Hifumi evaded it by rolling off the bed.

“Hifumi, are you alright!?” (Vepar)

“Vepar, eh?” (Hifumi)

The one who called out to him from the opened, or rather vanished door was Vepar whose light blue hair was dripping with sweat and slightly disordered.

“Is your invocation of magic fast? I mostly know the invocation if it’s the magic from other folks, but I didn’t actually realize that your magic goes as far as blowing away a door, Vepar.” (Hifumi)

“That’s because of my special trait, but this isn’t a situation to have such carefree chat.” (Vepar)

Vepar, who grabbed Hifumi’s arm with an astonished face, left towards the hallway as is. The pathway has become flooded with water. Two demons have lost their consciousness after getting hit by a wall of water.

“You haven’t killed them?” (Hifumi)

“... Forgive me. Even with this I’m crossing quite the risky bridge here.” (Vepar)

Vepar, who is running through the dark hallway, had a bitter expression.

“As I will explain later, follow me for now.” (Vepar)

Vepar’s subordinates seem to be waiting at the edge of the city.

“It looks like the king intends to create an opportunity for the demons to go on a foreign campaign by treating you as advance detachment sent by the humans.” (Vepar)

“Well, I think that’s a good idea. It’s not like the hostile opinion towards humans became weak, right? That being the case, this would likely be plenty to stimulate such situation.” (Hifumi)

“You know... aren’t you aware that he is aiming for your life here?” (Vepar)

“As of yet, no.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who runs while his hakama waves, stroke the mouth of the sheath gently with his fingers.

“It’s still not a battle that makes me tingling all over. Even though he is aiming for my life, there still hasn’t come anyone to wager their life. Aiming for my life with such an attitude, that’s a joke.” (Hifumi)

Vepar wasn’t able to say anything else to Hifumi, who leaked such complaints instead, anymore.

By chance, would it have been fine even if I didn’t rescue him? Such thought was swirling in her head, but it’s not like she wouldn’t go if that was the case.

“With having you killed, the demons certainly will join hands and set out to fight with the humans. However, you can’t say that this will be a battle necessary for us demons to survive. Going as far as expressly digging up hatred that has almost disappeared, in my humble opinion that’s exposure of many of my brethren to danger.” (Vepar)

The place they finally arrived at was one of the entrances of the city. In front of the gate around 15 female demons waited.

“Captain, this way.” (Bennia)

The one guiding Vepar by raising her hands is Bennia.

“Bennia, how’s the situation?” (Vepar)

“There are no problems. Just as planned.” (Bennia)

“Planned?” (Vepar)

Vepar was puzzled.

The movement this time was hurried. With Vepar having only moved the subordinates she could call out to, it’s unrelated to such words as planned or scheduled, it’s something unforeseen.

“Yes, just as planned. For you to move in order to protect the human is just as it was expected by the king and Phegor-sama, Captain.” (Bennia)

“Bennia!?” (Vepar)

Vepar, who tried to interrogate her, was suddenly hit hard by a fist which came flying from her side and rolled on the ground while raising a cloud of dust.

“Good grief, for you to support the likes of a human. I don’t like that Phegor fellow, but I won’t approve such bad smelling acts.” (Beleth)

Beleth, who looked down on Vepar, says while swinging his tightly grasped fist.

It wasn’t like Vepar lost consciousness, but she wasn’t able to stand up as she had a cerebral concussion.

“B-Beleth, why are you here...?” (Vepar)

“You still don’t get it?” (Bennia)

The one who returned an answer was Bennia.

“Captain, you were chosen as victim who was killed by the human. Since you will be able to become the cornerstone to unify the demons, it will be a honour.” (Bennia)

“You have always thought about the people who don’t have any fighting strength, Captain, therefore even they will fight for your revenge”, Bennia declared with a serious look.

“Well, it will be us who kill you, Vepar, and the human though.” (Beleth)

Beleth, who drew his large sword, turned towards Hifumi.

Having listened to their talk, Hifumi is smiling all over his face.

“... What are you smiling for?” (Bennia)

Due to Bennia saying “this is the scene where you should beg for your life”, Hifumi returned “Foolish talk.”

“The situation is the best I could ask for. The demons are relatively powerful, thus I was thinking that I should adjust you in some respects.” (Hifumi)

“Adjust, you say?” (Beleth)

“Want me to rephrase it? It’s thinning out.” (Hifumi)

Due to Hifumi stating that frivolously without even drawing his katana, Beleth

lost his cool in an instant.

“You will thin me out, you say!?” (Beleth)

“Oh, you got it properly. Let me praise you for that.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi plays with a silver coin he took out from his pocket.

Though the coin drew a parabola, it hit Beleth’s trained chest.

“I will kill you!” (Beleth)

“Go for it. Try to kill me.” (Hifumi)

The large sword, which was brandished heartily to cut open his waist, hit air without touching Hifumi.

The kick of Hifumi who jumped up caught Beleth’s face. Beleth, who shook and swayed only a small bit, braced his legs and hit with his sword.

“Gaaaa!”

“You are a sturdy fellow.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who smoothly jumped into Beleth’s back, still hasn’t drawn the katana.

“I have seen your battle. You are strong.” (Hifumi)

“Of course! I’m here for the demons to become the winners. There’s no need to be acknowledged by someone like a human.” (Beleth)

Drawing back his foot, Beleth threw his large sword with all his strength. In order to evade the large sword which came flying while rotating in circles, Hifumi largely leaps to the side.

Beleth’s fist, which swooped down there, hit Hifumi’s cheek.

Just like Vepar, Hifumi’s body flies away.

However, Hifumi made one revolution on the ground and stood up calmly.

“Phooey.” (Hifumi)

Spitting out saliva with blood mixed in, Hifumi twisted his neck jerkily.

“... What did you do?” (Beleth)

“I was simply sent flying while taking your fist directly to the face.” (Hifumi)

Ignoring Hifumi’s mumbling “The reason for it to become like a whip is

because the body stiffens” to explain the structure of the body and its mechanics, Beleth and Bennia were dumbfounded.

“Well then, I guess the lecture is done around this point. You won’t use it anymore anyway.” (Hifumi)

He drew the katana.

“Let’s start.” (Hifumi)

The instant Hifumi raised his voice, Beleth put himself on guard. However, what Hifumi attacked with wasn’t a throw of the katana but the throw of a stone he took out from his pocket.

“Aah!?”

One of the female demons encircling him in the surroundings screamed.

“W-What have you done...?”

“I only hit her with a small piece of metal. She tried to use magic after all.” (Hifumi)

Due to those words, Bennia and the female demon unit step back.

“I pay attention to the surroundings in front of me. I have that leeway.” (Hifumi)

Beleth, who grasped his fist to the degree of blood seeping through, faces him with a stiff smile.

“At least make me loose that leeway. Come attacking desperately.” (Hifumi)

Without even returning any words towards that provocation anymore, Beleth unleashes a series of fist swings.

While it seems for others that he is hitting the katana, Hifumi warded them off and fell back in a circle.

“Can’t you get close at this speed!?” (Beleth)

The fists of Beleth, who increases the number of hits even more, reached the point of grazing Hifumi’s sides and shoulders.

They should be hitting the katana’s blade, but it’s at a level that Beleth’s muscles are injured only lightly.

“You are a truly sturdy fellow.” (Hifumi)

“You won’t be able to pierce through my muscles with such thin sword!”
(Beleth)

The human in front of me is skilfully dodging, but I will be able to overcome his resistance soon, Beleth, who is convinced of that, stepped forward powerfully to raise the speed even more.

Hifumi, who placed his left hand on the backside of Beleth’s knee in order to catch him, drew the knee towards himself alongside a yell of 「Heave-ho」 in order to boost his spirit.

“Uo!?” (Beleth)

With a wobble, Beleth loses his balance and his left fist hits air. In that moment the katana’s point was thrust from the defenceless side and pierced into the side of the neck.

“If the muscles are no good, it’s only natural to aim for places where there are no muscles... oops, he died, huh?” (Hifumi)

The body of Beleth, who collapses, sank into the pool of blood he had created himself while having his eyes open widely in surprise.

“Such a...”

“Beleth-san is...”

It seems that Beleth’s strength was something they put in that much of trust. The female demons can’t hide their surprise.

“... ku!”

Among them only Bennia began to move calmly. Understanding that she would have no chance to win in a direct confrontation, she inhaled her breath with all her might. Noticing something, Vepar shouted.

“Close your ears!” (Vepar)

Immediately following, Bennia, who opened her mouth to a degree mismatching for her small face, triggered a scream accompanied by a vibration which hasn’t any sound wave or voice attached to it.

All the people in the surroundings have covered their ears. Some among those who closed the ears are in agony and there are also people who have fainted after shedding blood from their ears.

“This was intense...”

Hifumi, who discarded the katana and plugged his index fingers into the ears, leaks.

Although he avoided a direct hit, his vision is distorted due to the vibration as it looks like his brain has been affected.

“Die!”

Hifumi didn't hear that voice well, but he saw Bennia rushing over and aiming her sharp claws at his throat.

Getting annoyed with the shaky field of vision, Hifumi closed his eyes and took a step forward by himself.

“Eh?”

Due to him closing the distance unexpectedly, Bennia is unable to cope with it. Getting hit with Hifumi's head-butt on her forehead as is, her knees trembled.

The body of Bennia which somehow doesn't collapse was vigorously thrust away by a front kick of Hifumi.

After that he pierces her to the ground with the large sword which was thrown by Beleth.

“Guee.” (Bennia)

As the dull blade bites into the bones of her waist, Bennia, whose body was folded in half, spurt out blood and groans from her mouth at the same time and died.

“Ah~... It's troublesome if it's sound. There's no way to defend against it completely.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who shook his neck, picked up the katana.

“Well then, I have to clean up the rest.” (Hifumi)

Listening to the words muttered by Hifumi while he was confirming whether

there's a chip in his katana's blade, though he knows there won't be any, all of the women in the surroundings were frozen stiff and unable to move while being drenched in cold sweat.

Chapter 111 – Dancing In The Moonlight

Hifumi stabbed the katana expressionlessly into the female demon, who received the “pebble” thrown by Hifumi and on top of it suffered the yell of Bennia, and killed her with that.

The katana’s point, which pierced into her heart as if being drawn in, hasn’t lost its radiance though it has blood trickling down once it’s pulled out.

“Well then.” (Hifumi)

Throwing away the paper he used to wipe the blade, Hifumi looked at the remaining female demons without paying attention to the flickering in his eyes.

“How about you guys?” (Hifumi)

“H-How, you say...”

One of them unintentionally opened her mouth. Hifumi directed his sight at that woman.

“Hii...”

“That one died because she was hostile towards me. That one and that one as well.” (Hifumi)

The ones Hifumi pointed at were the woman, who was stabbed to death just a moment ago, the fallen Beleth and Bennia, who showed a cruelly two-folded posture, those three.

“So, what will you do?” (Hifumi)

“I surrender!”

“M-Me too!”

One after the other the female demons raise their hands. There were some among them who held weapons as well, but freeing both their hands by throwing those away in a panic, they appealed that they have no hostile feelings.

“Y-You guys are really just talk, so...” (Vepar)

“Demons are sturdy after all.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi praised Vepar, who finally managed to raise her body, and nodded his head.

Hifumi tried to head over to Vepar’s location, but suddenly he stopped and surveyed the other demons.

“Is there anyone who can heal wounds with magic amongst you?” (Hifumi)

Silently two of them raise their hands.

“Well, then it’s fine for you to heal Vepar. It will let you earn some points.” (Hifumi)

The two, who don’t understand the meaning of what they were told, look at each other.

“This Vepar will be the next demon king. It’s your chance to get promoted right away.” (Hifumi)

The one who reacted to that is Vepar but Hifumi pretended to notice that.

“What are you saying all of a sudden...” (Vepar)

“It’s just what it means.” (Hifumi)

Sheathing the katana into its scabbard, Hifumi turns around while adjusting its position.

“That’s because the king here wishes to fight with me it seems. There has to be an heir if the king dies, right?” (Hifumi)

“Do you think that you will be able to kill the king? If you won by some odd chance, it would be only natural for you to become the new king.” (Vepar)

“Well, that’s no good.” (Hifumi)

“It’s the same reason why the current king, Agathion, is no good either”, Hifumi states.

“It’s no more than my intuition, but that king is strong. He is smart as well. It mustn’t be allowed for someone who sticks out like that to obtain the world. Even if it happens through fighting, it will basically become peaceful once that’s finished. Falling into stagnation, the people will live their lives without any

desperation. The reason to strive hard for the sake of survival will vanish.”
(Hifumi)

Hifumi hits the pommel with a *pon*

“It’s best if the world’s powers are competing with each other as much as possible. And, while living in a range where they are able to get in contact with each other, they will fight with each other by literally risking their lives. They should ponder how to outwit their enemies in all kinds of situations.” (Hifumi)

“But, why me?” (Vepar)

While receiving healing from the two responsible for it, Vepar glared at Hifumi.

“That’s easy. If it’s you, you won’t abandon or run away from the demon race. I don’t approve of the demons dispersing. For the sake of being able to fight to the bitter end, the demons will have to frantically use their heads to achieve peace and stability.” (Hifumi)

“You are just the right person for that”, Hifumi laughed.

“... I knew that you were an exciting man, but it’s far more than I imagined.”
(Vepar)

“I will consider those words as praise.” (Hifumi)

“Just in case, let me ask, where are you going” (Vepar)

Vepar, who recovered to a degree that she could finally stand up, called out to Hifumi who set out.

“Of course, to the place of the fellow who is aiming for my life. ... Ah, true, that’s right, it would be best if I brought him a present.” (Hifumi)

Once he smoothly draws out his katana, the demons start to take some distance nervously.

“Don’t be so scared.” (Hifumi)

Floating a wry smile, he cuts off Beleth’s head with a *thump*.
Everyone saw Hifumi, who grabbed its short hair and left while leaving the word “Well then” behind, silently off.

“Umm... You will become the king, Captain?”

“You are able to say that without shame though you tried to kill me just moments ago, eh?” (Vepar)

“T-That was due reluctantly following orders!”

Hearing the words of the little girl who cast healing magic on her, Vepar sighed.

“Well, it’s fine. I won’t be able to be happy-go-lucky anymore now that it has come to this.” (Vepar)

Wiping off the dust sticking to her clothes, Vepar fixed her appearance. Although her skirt was torn at the time she was sent flying, she doesn’t mind that.

“Though, it’s annoying that the story is advancing at an unknown place. You guys, do as you like. Hide yourselves somewhere if you are afraid. Follow me if you care about the fate of the demon race.” (Vepar)

Half the demons at that place followed Vepar who began to walk to chase after Hifumi.



Hifumi’s pace became gradually faster and at the time the castle came into view he began to run.

“H-Human!?”

“Stop, stop!”

The two guards in front of the gate stood in the way of Hifumi who came running from the dark city which waits for daybreak.

Notwithstanding, Hifumi, who raised his speed to another level instead of easing up on it, yelled,

“I will kill you if you stand in my way! I won’t if you let me through!” (Hifumi)

Unintentionally, due to that voice, one of them jumped to the side. The guard, who looked in the direction of his colleague while regretting having jumped aside, was able to closely watch the shocking scene of Hifumi’s sword

attack, which was released by drawing the katana from his waist and attacking in the same stroke, cutting his colleague and the large, wooden front gate altogether.

The soldier, who was cut in two without time to raise a scream, tumbles onto the castle's ground together with the door.

“Well, let's go on an eager rampage, shall we?” (Hifumi)

While looking at his katana, he mumbles as if addressing it.

As one could expect, groups of demon soldiers gathered due to the castle's gate making a loud sound where one wouldn't object to call it a thunderous roar.

As each of them were grasping their weapons or preparing to release their spells, carelessness wasn't present.

A chill travelled down Hifumi's spine with a *shudder*

“Oh, how scary!” (Hifumi)

Contrary to his words, his expression is full of smiles.

What started the battle was someone releasing their magic.

The fireball, which has the size of around an armful, passed the side of Hifumi who evaded by simply taking one step. But he hasn't the leeway to watch its destination.

With very practised moves several soldiers came charging with their weapons held in front while combining it with magic.

“Not bad, but!” (Hifumi)

The spearhead, which suddenly approached him, was sent flying by Hifumi cutting the spearhead including the forearm of his opponent with one swing by his katana.

What remained was the sword.

Without hitting Hifumi at all, it finishes with them simply missing each other.

“Gyaaa!”

“Uwaa...”

Finishing off the demon, who lost his arms, by piercing his throat, he turns over the katans with his wrist and slays two soldiers, who stroke and missed, in succession.

Furthermore he runs towards the group which shoots spells at him after surrounding him.

“This!”

“Vanish!”

The entire body of Hifumi, who is pressured by a gust of pellets, is hit. While repelling only those pellets which would hit fatal spots with his katana, the demons, who panicked due to Hifumi still approaching, created a huge fireball reaching around 1 m in diameter by releasing their spells simultaneously.

“Fuu~!” (Hifumi)

While exhaling, Hifumi swung the katana he held overhead downwards. The lump of fire, which was cleanly cut in two, wraps just the katana in heat and vanishes like mist.

“I got fairly used to its anti-magic property as well, I guess.” (Hifumi)

Even while suffering small wounds all over his body due to the pellets, Hifumi isn't out of breath.

“Are you still able to do anything, I wonder? The woman in the grey mantle had an interesting skill.” (Hifumi)

Bennia's yell was a kind of magic manipulating sound, but Hifumi treated it as a gag.

However, his evaluation of her for scheming to compensate for its powerlessness is fairly high.

“Please show me a lot more. I will will be able to grow with that.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who set up his katana as if aiming at their eyes, licked the blood streaming down his cheeks with his tongue.

The number of demons gathered in front of the castle's gate is above 30. 3 people have already been turned into corpses. It still doesn't change their advantage in numbers, but Hifumi is overwhelmingly above them in spirit. Fluently moving as if performing a dance without showing any fatigue, the swaying and fluttering hakama seems to be inviting the demons.

A person close-by closes in upon Hifumi while holding their weapon. As he stabs the blade into their belly, he breaks the back of their hand with the pommel and smashes their head before the dropped weapon can hit the ground.

The female demon, whose wind blades were scattered one after the other by the katana, is unable to do anything but getting frightened of Hifumi, who approached in front of her eyes. Her thin neck was severed without any resistance.

A man, who tries to throw his sword and thrust his knee at Hifumi, is pierced in the heart while dumbfoundedly watching his own knee bending in the other direction.

A demon, who tried to combine their magic with his colleague once again, suddenly discovers his colleague collapsed facing up while shedding blood from both their eyes. Having both his eyes pierced by the katana in the same way due to being petrified in surprise, his skull was crushed.

The wild party of blood continues further on.

The garden in front of the gate, which is generally open during daytime and used as place of relaxation for the common people, has ivies surrounding the boorish stone wall. Various flowers bloom there depending on the season. A pure white flower, which is releasing a faintly sweet scent during the current period, is blooming, but its scent was drowned out by the stench of blood as if being choked.

Hifumi, who plentifully inhaled the scent of that flower, slowly breathed out through his mouth.

“Well, isn’t there still more than half of you remaining? That’s nice. I will be able to enjoy myself even more.” (Hifumi)

Wiping off the blood with a paper, Hifumi returned the katana into its scabbard and became unarmed.

Once he relaxed his joints with a creaking sound by entwining the fingers of both hands, he caught the spear of an enemy who saw this as a chance and pulled it towards himself.

The male demon, who had his body dragged along, tries to stop it by bracing his legs, but the force of the spear, which was thrust out by putting his body’s weight into it, isn’t stopped easily as that was guided by Hifumi as well.

At the time he finally came to a halt, he was kicked by Hifumi’s toes in the

nether region. Falling to his knees while bubbles foamed at his mouth, his skull, which was at a handy height, is crushed by Hifumi's elbow.

Hifumi, who broke the head of the man, who collapsed while spouting a nosebleed, by stepping onto him, began to dash once again just like that.



“That's it. That man's strength is considerable, but that sword is a miracle.”
(Agathion)

Agathion, who looked down at the spectacle from a window of the castle, muttered while watching Hifumi's state.

Phegor stands at his side.

“That is amazing. It broke the fireball's magic into pieces.” (Agathion)

Phegor nodded with a serious expression at Agathion, who turned around while raising a laughter as if he was enjoying an exhibition.

“I dare say that he surpassed the forest of the elves due to the power of that weapon. We should also pay attention to his physical abilities, but even if he invades into the castle in worst case, we will be able to kill him easily if we use the strength of the king, I guess?” (Phegor)

“Phegor.” (Agathion)

Phegor is seized by Agathion's sharp look.

“I'm not very fond of gambling. I dislike words such as “probably” can win.”
(Agathion)

“Excuse my rudeness.” (Phegor)

“Although I feel like it's a bit wasteful, let's use the hall's device?” (Agathion)

Agathion muttered after worrying over it for a while.

“Please wait. No matter how powerful he might be, there's still an overwhelming number of soldiers left. Even if he trespasses into the castle, I will be there as well. Even if you don't move yourself...” (Phegor)

“That's pointless, Phegor. You don't even believe yourself that the soldiers will be able to manage somehow, do you?” (Agathion)

“Try looking”, Agathon urged him on to observe the situation in front of the gate with his gaze.

Having already decreased the number of demons to a degree of it being close to an annihilation, the number of people, who have fallen, is twice that of those who are still standing.

“Yes, my liege! That guy is interesting. He is killing my soldiers while unarmed. If he wasn’t a human, his war potential would be high.” (Phegor)

Agathion, who laughed while clapping his hands, suddenly stood up.

“Phegor, I don’t permit for you to fight him by yourself. Just as I told you moments ago, I leave the hall’s device to you. I have to prepare myself to welcome him.” (Agathion)

“... At your will.” (Phegor)

Agathion leaves the room, where you can see the main gate which turned into a battlefield, without even making any footsteps. Two maids followed him. Seeing him off, Phegor dropped his look onto the battlefield once again.

“Hifumi, huh? For the sake of the demon’s prospering... for the sake of the king’s dearest wish, I will have you become a stepping stone.” (Phegor)

Spitting out words he didn’t intend for anyone to hear, Phegor quietly left the room in order to to operate the device as wished by the king.

Chapter 112 – Livin’ La Vida Loca

The time Vepar’s group arrived at the gate was when Hifumi’s figure had already vanished into the castle. Hifumi’s spirit was simply uplifted by the battling. He knows that the time for that game was short.

“Ueeh, oeeh, oeeh...”

“Cho...erororo...”

The healing magician girl who followed Vepar, vomited with all her strength abruptly once she saw the terrible scene and one of the girls, who was right next to her, joined in.

“Get your act together.” (Vepar)

Vepar, who shrugged her shoulders while saying “Good grief”, calmly surveys the gate’s vicinity.

Not a single living person is around.

Without regards to whether man or woman and their age, all of them were equally visited by death.

“He went at it quite flashily.” (Vepar)

“Captain, did that human go inside? To where the king is, inside the castle?”

“I guess so.” (Vepar)

Vepar answered the question of her subordinate, who had a pale face although she hasn’t thrown up, with a sigh mixed in.

“Anyway, he seems to plan on installing me as new demon king once he brings down the current king.” (Vepar)

“... Is he sane?”

“Don’t ask me.” (Vepar)

Folding her arms, Vepar twists her mouth in the shape of ^.

“However, his eyes were serious. I don’t know what he is thinking, but that was the expression of someone who has seized the outrageous act of killing the

king as realizable target.” (Vepar)

“If there’s a problem”, Vepar raised her eyes at the castle and even her subordinates, except the two who were still vomiting, likewise looked up at the area around the king’s private chamber.

“It’s whether the human can win against that king, right?” (Vepar)

Everyone nodded at Vepar’s words.

The demon soldiers know why he continues to reign as king although he looks like nothing more but a young boy.

“Gee, ueeh”

“spits out Somehow I have a disgusting feeling within my mouth. I want to rinse it out.”

The mood, which should be gloomy, didn’t become too tense thanks to the girls.



While Fokalore’s army is showered with cheers by a crowd of people, they form lines by the city’s large front gate and leave.

The expressions of the soldiers, who are donning battle gear on their bodies and held weapons such as swords, spears and some of them even kusarigama’s, were smiling faces tinged with nervousness.

They number 500. But even then it’s no more than less half of the soldiers serving as regulars in the Tohno feudal army. Only this earldom possesses the financial leeway to uphold such a large-scaled standing army, which is a money sink, with the exception of each nation’s capital.

“Do your best!”

“Please annihilate the monsters and their-likes!”

“Come back properly!”

Even bold scolding was mixed into the high-pitched encouragements. It was completely like being overwhelmed by waves of sounds.

The soldiers, who left the city, formed lines with accustomed movements, matched their faces alongside the highway and looked at the person in the

front.

“Well then, move out!” (Alyssa)

“””Yes!””””

Advancing at the lead, from atop an open-air carriage with no canopy, Alyssa stretches her small body as best she can while shouting and received a reply with many voices overlapping.

Beside Alyssa Miyukare is riding with her on the carriage, which began to advance slowly, as her advisor. The soldiers start to move and in their backs the carriages of the supply unit, carrying goods, follow.

“For the time being it would be good to head in the direction of Vichy, right?” (Alyssa)

“Yes, I already gave the coachman the order. It’s alright for you to comfortably sit down, Alyssa-sama.” (Miyukare)

Miyukare smiled while holding out a cup filled with tea to her.

“Thank you.” (Alyssa)

Seeing the face of Alyssa, who returned a smile, Miyukare frantically suppressed the thump within her nose and grabbed the documents placed nearby.

“While marching towards Vichy like this we will clean up the monsters. Basically the main purpose is to secure the safety of the highway and its surroundings, but... in the end by emphasizing the pressure onto Vichy, a war will break out if the situation explodes. If it doesn’t, we will restrict the entry and leaving at the border in the name of security measures at the garrisoned forces. Those are all Lord-sama’ orders.” (Miyukare)

“There’s nothing specific written, right?” (Alyssa)

While pouting, Alyssa adjusted the position of the short sword which is hanging at the back of her hips. With the carriage’s vibrations making a stir, it’s difficult to sit.

“This is also the “homework” assigned to you and me, Alyssa-sama. But, if we work together, an operation of such level can be completed without difficulty.”

(Miyukare)

“Yea, I count on you, Miyukare-san.” (Alyssa)

Miyukare, who barely manages to keep up a poker face, faints within her mind. Alyssa showed her a bright smile, but once she turned her sight towards the walking lines of soldiers, her look became serious.

As people are gathering in Fokalore, a great number of people is necessary for security and maintenance of public order. Given that there are that many people who have turned up looking for work, there was no particular problem in regards to replenishment of personnel.

The elites, who repeatedly practised and studied, have been assigned to their respective fields of expertise.

Although it happened that sometimes some lost their lives due to incidents in the city and the battles with monsters, there was no substantial influence due to that and the Fokalore feudal army became huge.

And, after several battles, it's a military operation after a long time. On the platform wagons, which are being used as usual, Prulfras has installed a new type of spear throwers he himself named to be of satisfactory quality.

“... No one wants to die. It's sad for people you know to pass away after all. But even so, it's possible to restrain that way of thinking by accepting that it's inevitable.” (Miyukare)

Alyssa's look faced towards Miyukare.

“What is Hifumi-san aiming for? What did you think when you heard it for the first time?” (Alyssa)

“... Honestly, I thought it to be a simply troublesome matter. I considered it an absurd action like running to beat a horse in the name of practise.” (Miyukare)

“Ahaha, that example is funny.” (Alyssa)

The laughing Alyssa unfastened the scabbard with the short sword from behind her hips and drew it out in front of her eyes.

“Hifumi-san, you know, stares at his katana when he got free time. Did you know?” (Alyssa)

Turning over her wrists, light is reflected in a momentary flash.

“Previously I asked him why he is staring that fixedly at his katana.” (Alyssa)

It was at the time Hifumi was maintaining the katana after meditating and finishing his daily practise. Alyssa planned to have her meal together with the three of them, Origa included, but at the moment she entered Hifumi’s room, there was a man and his katana standing in the room shrouded in a silence that was painful.

“I have imagined the time of my death, he said.” (Alyssa)

“Ha?” (Miyukare)

Unintentionally raising the tone of her voice, Miyukare blushed.

“I also asked the same thing when I heard it for the first time.” (Alyssa)

Alyssa laughed delightfully.

“And there Hifumi-san said *It’s only natural to accept getting killed if you are killing others yourself.*” (Alyssa)

Alyssa, who giggled for a while, wiped her tears with a finger.

“I told you before, I experienced something cruel at the time I was a soldier of Vichy to the degree of wanting to die.” (Alyssa)

“Yes, I remember.” (Miyukare)

“At that time I was terribly afraid of dying. There were also things I wanted to do and delicious things I wanted to enjoy. I thought that all of it would come to an end once this pain ended.” (Alyssa)

The carriage sways grandly as it runs over a pebble.

In contrast to Miyukare whose balance crumbled a bit, Alyssa lightly half-rose to her feet and cushioned the impact.

“But now I’m living earnestly without regrets until the time I die, as I was told by Hifumi-san. Of course I don’t want to die. At the time I decided to follow Hifumi-san, I didn’t think that far ahead though.” (Alyssa)

She gently strokes the scabbard of the short sword.

The scabbard which had been polished to the degree of blackening just like Hifumi’s, had a blackness making somebody believe that its darkness erased the

lustre purposely.

“Most likely it’s important to live to your fullest to have a good death, too, I think that’s what Hifumi wants to convey to all of us. The words are *to kill each other* as is, but since it’s the easiest thing to understand, let’s simply kill each other. I think that’s how it is. ... It’s a nuisance to others though, as you say, Miyukare, I guess.” (Alyssa)

Miyukare noticed that the questionable light visible within Alyssa’s resembled that of Hifumi.

“... Then I shall lead my life without regrets as well. I will put in great efforts to live while upholding my pride towards whoever it is.” (Miyukare)

“Right? Even this odd life will undoubtedly be enjoyable.” (Alyssa)

For the soldiers following in the back it didn’t appear as anything but two women calmly chatting, but only the veterans reliably felt the somehow frightening mood they already experienced before.



Hifumi had cuts and burns all over his body. Both his arms and legs were plastered with bruises as well.

And yet, he daringly walked forwards holding the katana with his right hand while the point of the katana and his fore-bangs were dripping with blood. If Origa or Vepar saw that, they might have judged it as lovely appearance. With his hakama having holes all over, his skin is showing at his sides and the right shoulder.

“No one’s here... no, they are only hiding, huh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who openly entered the castle through the door as if luring them, proceeds onwards while feeling the looks of several people.

Although the owners of those looks aren’t attacking, they are filled with plenty of hostility. They are probably comrades of the lot I killed outside.

“Why are you looking at me quietly? If you want to kill me, you should do so, right?” (Hifumi)

“I’d like you to stop provoking the soldiers.” (Phegor)

It was Phegor who made an appearance in the dark hallway ahead. The smile he showed during daytime has vanished. His look is piercing in order to not oversee even one of Hifumi's moves.

"You, eh? Agathion, whom I've seen during the day, sent quite the violent greeting. I'd like to thank you for that." (Hifumi)

Hifumi planned to thank for that honestly, but Phegor took it as sarcasm.

"... Such an insincere remark. You have been invited by the king. Follow me." (Phegor)

"Are you going to participate as well?" (Hifumi)

"Although the night has been filled with such amusements, isn't that boring?" Hifumi laughed.

"You are quite calm, human. But, even that will only last until you stand in front of the king." (Phegor)

Hifumi pondered whether he should kill Phegor who walks while having his back turned towards him, but he thought *it's fun just like it is now. In case Vepar really shirked away from the king's seat, it might be necessary to place Phegor on the king's throne instead.*

The mental state of Phegor, who walks while stepping firmly on the stone floor with a hard sound resounding, can't be read from his expression.

His innermost thinking was complicated.

He has absolute trust in the strength of the king. Moreover he has prepared a trap.

For Phegor, who knows the human's strength to some degree, the appearance of the king is unnecessary. That's what his honest impression is.

However, the strength of Hifumi, shown in front of the castle's gate, deviated from the strength Phegor knew of humans.

(If I don't steal that weapon by all means necessary...) (Phegor)

If that's the king's wish, he will throw down his life at any time.

However, I cannot afford to not live up to the king's expectations.

He properly knows from the footsteps that Hifumi is following him.

Coming out from the not-so-long hallway, Phegor arrived at the targeted place.

Magic lights are shining all over in the cylindrical room which became a hall with

up to 3 floors. The swaying lights produced a fairytale-like atmosphere.

“Yea, this is wide.” (Hifumi)

He heard Hifumi’s impression, but Phegor didn’t return any words. Rather than that, Phegor is worried whether the device will work as intended or not. And, inside the hall, there was also the figure of Agathion who was seated on the throne placed on a platform.

“You did well to come here, Hifumi.” (Agathion)

“It’s still too early for good morning, I guess” Agathion showed a smile, but he doesn’t stand up like he did during the day. He looks down on Hifumi while leaning on his elbow as if showing that he is the one ruling.

“Yea, thanks to you I was able to spend my time enjoyably. Let me thank you for that.” (Hifumi)

“That’s great. If I hear that, they float up in my mind as well.” (Agathion)

While talking with each other, Hifumi naturally steps forward. He passed Phegor’s side. Hifumi wondered whether something would start there, but being disappointed by Phegor as he turns nothing but his look at him, he concentrates on Agathion who is in front of him.

“Since long ago.” (Agathion)

At the time Hifumi came close to the centre of the hall, Agathion began to talk about something.

“Right, a number of our people of a previous generation created a village you can’t even call a nation. After the time they eagerly strived to survive in this barren area, the demons reached the point of using tools and weapons. Until then they were yet another race that had overwhelmingly powerful magic and physical abilities. In fact that was sufficient for a long time until we were outwitted by the elves.” (Agathion)

“I see. Hearing that the demons from long ago didn’t use weapons, I thought it was a misunderstanding seeing the actual situation here, but now I got it.”

(Hifumi)

Hifumi, who stopped, shook the katana he held in his hand.

“But you know, it doesn’t change the fact that the demon’s strength lies in magic. Sometimes those endowed with muscle strength, like Beleth, appear as well, but the powerful magic, we were supported with as special trait since our birth, can’t be copied by other races. It’s our power.” (Agathion)

Standing up, Agathion spread both his hands.

Hifumi looks at him wondering whether he intends to release magic, however he can’t see any sign of that.

“Like humans. Right, just like you. If we have powerful weapons, we will be able to fight properly. However, without relying on that, we are able to fight with just our strength. We are able to use such a powerful magic after all. For example, strong barrier magic like Phegor.” (Agathion)

“What?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who expected offensive spells to be hurled at him, looked in the direction of Phegor at those words.

Phegor was simply standing there with both his arms loosely dangling.

However, Hifumi noticed that the sky in his own surrounding had changed.

“This sensation is...” (Hifumi)

He saw a faint membrane gradually surrounding the vicinity.

“Phegor’s barrier magic is the same as what the elves are using to imprison us or even stronger. Originally he isn’t able to extend it to such a degree though.” (Agathion)

“I’m grateful.” (Phegor)

Agathion replied with a generous waving of his hand towards Phegor who bowed his head. And he chuckles as he watches Hifumi who was locked up by the barrier.

“It somehow seems that this weapon was endowed with powerful abilities. However, no matter how sharp it might be, it’s meaningless if it isn’t able to reach its opponent.” (Agathion)

At Agathion's sign Phegor erased another deployed barrier. It was the assembly of stones which are usually holding the ceiling with a barrier supporting the hall's ceiling.

Removing the fixing installations in advance, the stones, which were supported by Phegor's barrier, begin to crumble while being pulled by gravity.

Naturally large stones are falling one after the other onto Hifumi who looked up at its state from directly below.

While the broken stones are scattering with a thunderous roar and a cloud of dust, the debris is piling up within the cylindrical barrier.

“Powerless, isn't he? That human.” (Agathion)

Agathion's laughter mixed with the violently reverberating sound until the last piece fell.

Chapter 113 – Heart Of Mine

Hifumi, who lifted his eyes at the several rocks coming falling, pondered for an instant, *shall I absorb those with darkness magic just like at the time of the attack in the elven village?*

However there are no poles and boards like last time. While looking at the stones approaching with a speed that will literally squash him, he thought *how wasteful. It's too profane to simply toss the large-scaled trap, they expressly used to aim for my life, into darkness.*

And unconsciously Hifumi's body leaps.

Kicking off the barrier next to the ground, his body slips through the rocks aiming for the gaps in-between them by matching the timing of their fall.

Rather than the rocks, his visual field is completely zero due to the previously fluttered-down cloud of dust, but he moves his body by groping around with his intuition.

Due to the rough surfaces of the the rocks his hakama got torn even more and the scratches on his arms increased as well, however he was aroused to a degree that he didn't feel any pain.

“Tsk!” (Hifumi)

His cuff was caught by a rock he grabbed to hold onto it.

Naturally he has no time to release it and retrace his steps.

Finally changing the direction of the stone by hitting it with his foot from atop in a forced stance, he succeeded in running aground by making sure to lie down on top of the stone.

His heart is beating loudly due to the quick appearance and disappearance of death's abyss, but his fight still hasn't ended.

Crushing down together with the stone, Hifumi, who circulated the impact by taking a defensive stance while clinging to the stone with his whole body, held his breath within the risen dust.

“My king. For caution's sake, I shall examine the corpse.” (Phegor)

“I leave it to you.” (Agathion)

Sitting on the throne, Agathion gave his permission to Phegor's proposal with an exaggerated nod.

"Then..." (Phegor)

Once Phegor released the barrier, the rubble, which was locked up within, spilled out alongside sand and a cloud of dust.

Phegor, who is estimating that Hifumi is likely at death's door even at the faint chance that he survived somehow, puts up his guard and draws the knife he always carries around, however his pace shows no wavering.

"Well then, once I move the debris out of the way..." (Phegor)

By no means is it a good thing to use magic that causes an explosion within the castle. If it's Vepar, she will likely wash it away with a water current, but Phegor, who isn't overly strong at that, decided to choose the method of pushing up the debris with earth magic.

It's just to confirm the cruelly smashed corpse of the human by looking below the stone. It's fine to leave the clean up to someone else later.

At the time most of the scattered dust had calmed down, Phegor concentrated his consciousness to the front to use magic while grasping his knife.

"Yoo." (Hifumi)

What was thrust out was the face of Hifumi, who had closed his eyes, and the point of the katana, which didn't lose any of its brightness.

"What!?" (Phegor)

Although he shouldn't be able to see within the cloud of dust, Hifumi's thrust accurately aims at Phegor's heart.

However, even while being surprised, Phegor was able to react.

Swinging his knife, he was barely successful at grazing the katana's point which lunged at him in a straight line.

Even so he isn't able to completely kill its momentum.

The cold blade pierced into Phegor's right breast.

"Gu..." (Phegor)

Phegor, whose lung got penetrated, grasps the bare blade even while enduring the pain and spitting out a vast amount of blood from his mouth.

“I was careless, but... I will suppress you at least this much...” (Phegor)

“Mu?” (Hifumi)

Although Hifumi still hasn't opened his eyes, he felt the presence of the same barrier as before. He didn't understand the aim, but although he decided to take some distance temporarily, he can't pull out the katana.

Even while having a rib broken by taking a frontal kick in order to thrust him away, Phegor doesn't release the katana. On the contrary, he curls up his body and embraces the katana. Tossing away the knife as well, he grabs the katana's guard.

Phegor laughed.

“I will likely die very soon, but it will probably be impossible for you to confront the king if you don't have this sword. Oh foolish human who goes against the king, you will die in this place. I will look after this sword until I have confirmed that.” (Phegor)

Unnoticed the vicinity of Phegor, who closed his eyes, is enveloped in a barrier.

Hifumi, who took some distance after letting go of the katana, breathed out through his nose.

“Splendidly done, Phegor.” (Agathion)

Agathion nods in satisfaction.

“I shall convey your resolve to all demons. As central figure of the demon races' revival and the attack against the humans and elves, I shall remember you properly.” (Agathion)

Phegor doesn't seem to have the leeway to return any words anymore, but receiving Agathion's words with a smile, he bows his head.

While the lord and his retainer were having this passionate exchange, Hifumi took out a water bottle from his darkness storage and completely basked himself in water.

Having washed his eyes as well, he finally regains his sight.

“So, did you finish your little chat?” (Hifumi)

“Haha, you are quite composed, human.” (Agathion)

Although he is feigning laughter, Agathion's face has a cramp.

“Composure? It ended incompletely without me giving the finishing blow. It can't be helped that I'm angry.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who hatefully stared at the barrier that is secluding Phegor, brushed off the dust off his hakama.

He brushes up his wet hair.

“Something like the enemy dying unnoticed is the worst. Not feeling the moment a life is stolen with these hands is a disgrace as opponent who fought them. It's the first time for me to have such unpleasant feeling after a battle while fighting in this world.” (Hifumi)

“Besides”, pointing his finger at Agathion, Hifumi opened his right eye widely.

“Although it's nice to be an unconcerned spectator as well, are you able to resolve yourself to fight? Don't act half-heartedly. This time I definitely want you to struggle for your life.” (Hifumi)

“Humph, it won't become a struggle. It will finish with an one-sided torture.” (Agathion)

Before finishing speaking, Agathion fired an ice spear and a fireball.

“Oh, how fast.” (Hifumi)

However, compared to the gaps between the rocks he passed before, it was slow.

While taking a stance with his legs in a L-shape, Hifumi dodges the lump of ice, which grazes his hair, with a sway of his head and avoids the fireball by walking.

“As expected, your physical ability his high as well. But, how about this?” (Agathion)

Agathion made numerous pellets appear above his head.

With each of them having the size of a fist, those are giving off a lustre making one believe that their hardness is completely like metal.

“I'm outstanding among the demons for my strength in magic. I'm especially skilled at earth magic.” (Agathion)

“Enough of the tedious chattering.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi takes out a suntetsu and grasps it tightly within his right hand.

“What’s important is whether it will reach me. Isn’t that right?” (Hifumi)

“As you said. The answer to that will appear right away!” (Agathion)

The pellets approach with a speed similar to bullets.

They number ten. With no regular arrangement, there were differences in each of their speeds.

If he is hit by even one of those, he won’t escape a serious injury. A magic attack, which will likely instantly kill him if one of them hits in a bad spot, assaults Hifumi.

However, Hifumi began to run fiercely.

“Great! There is such strong magic! This is definitely a different world! It gives the feeling that this is fantasy indeed!” (Hifumi)

From the three pellets which came flying first, he avoids two and hits the last with the suntetsu.

He intended to break it, but the pellet, which was harder than Hifumi imagined, hit the wall with just its momentum reduced.

His hand, holding the suntetsu, has become numb.

At that moment a partially delayed pellet hit the pinky of his hand holding the suntetsu and broke the bone at the fingertip.

“Ouch!” (Hifumi)

Although he exaggeratedly raises his voice in pain, he doesn’t release the suntetsu.

“That’s it! This is the kind of battle I wanted!” (Hifumi)

Dodging another attacking pellet, he bends backwards and strikes it with the suntetsu.

Looking at Hifumi who is laughing loudly while shedding blood from his broken finger, Agathion frowned wondering whether Hifumi had gone mad.

Phegor won’t last long either. In order to get quickly rid of the lunatic in front of his eyes. Agathion created even more pellets.

Even so, Hifumi keeps on advancing with his feet.

He is shot without collapsing while avoiding one or two, but he doesn’t take any

large damage.

Hifumi runs up to the stairway leading up to the platform where Agathion is standing.

A pellet hits his forehead, but shaking his head, he dampens its force. However, even if he avoided a direct hit, he was largely cut at his forehead.

“I reached you.” (Hifumi)

Although Hifumi was shedding blood at many places, he looked down on Agathion.

He swung his suntetsu sideways aiming at the scruff of the neck of Agathion, who was befuddled as if having forgotten to attack, due to the violent strike.

“Aah?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who felt a weird feedback, looked at Agathion who should be spouting blood.

The boy who had half of his entire neck gouged out looks up at Hifumi while giggling.

“How regrettable.” (Agathion)

Even though he is missing his throat, Agathion talks without any change to before.

The cross-section, which should have laid bare the bones and flesh, just showed something like a white sand without even a single drop of blood flowing.

“My body is different to you normal living beings.” (Agathion)

Agathion’s left hand, which was held out in front of Hifumi’s face, burst open.



“What’s this!?” (Imeraria)

Imeraria tightly grasped the letter she had read.

Sabnak, standing next to her, doesn’t say anything.

The one who gave Imeraria an answer was the kneeling Prime Minister Adol.

“In title it’s “the protection of the citizens and the cleaning up of the monsters who became atrocious”, but...” (Adol)

“Prime Minister, do you believe that 500 soldiers are necessary to

exterminate the monsters? No, even if you don't believe it, the statesmen and citizens of Vichy will doubtlessly take it as an application of military pressure.”
(Imeraria)

Imeraria, who was at the end of her wit's while sitting on the throne, breathes a sigh.

“I understand that it's strange to blame anyone in this case. If I were to ask whether someone made a mistake, it would definitely be me. With the absence of Hifumi-sama who headed to the wastelands and with Origa-san being in the capital as well, I ended up being careless.” (Imeraria)

“... With those two currently not being present, just who the hell is handing out the instructions?” (Sabnak)

Adol replies to Sabnak's question,

“According to the intelligence of the knight order, it looks to be the girl holding the position called Military Director, but... do you know her?” (Adol)

Of course Sabnak as well as Imeraria know that person.

“Alyssa-chan, eh...? She is energetic, but she shouldn't be a child who does too unreasonable things. Why are you glaring at me, father-in-law-sama?”
(Sabnak)

“Don't say you made a move on her before or something like that...” (Adol)

“T-There's no way I did that.” (Sabnak)

Adol glared at Sabnak who is denying while shaking both his hands, but noticing how Imeraria's look became stern, he hung his head in a panic.

“Good grief... Rather than that, there's no doubt that Alyssa-san is commanding the army, as Sabnak-san has said. Though I can't really imagine that.” (Imeraria)

“As we are talking about Hifumi-san here, it's also possible that he issued the orders far in advance. It's not only her either. Since it looks like the civil officials, who were released from slavery, have remained in that territory as well, Hifumi-san's political foundation in that territory is firm.” (Adol)

Not just within the kingdom but even including other nations, Fokalore is

supported by stable economic strength and there isn't any political disorder due to the distinct chain of command.

“A territory within our kingdom being this good in shape should originally be something to be delighted over. But, as for me, I don't feel like raising both my hands in joy.” (Imeraria)

“Besides”, Imeraria smooths out the letter, she ended up crushing, with her palm.

“With the fact of them having a connection to the civil officials, who will return to their territories after having learned in Fokalore, and the soldiers, who are transferred to all nations, it's probably fine to think that Fokalore is aware of the military and economical information of many territories within our kingdom.” (Imeraria)

“Such aspects are always researched by civil officials after all”, Imeraria murmured.

“Hifumi-sama has a character of getting completely absorbed in battle, but it looks like he is cleverly and cunningly controlling those aspects as well.” (Imeraria)

Due to Imeraria showing a vague expression making it difficult to distinct whether she is praising Hifumi or labelling him as dangerous person, Sabnak and Adol looked at each other and changed the topic in a hurry.

“At any rate, what are they aiming for with the military movements during the absence of their feudal lord, I wonder?”

“Good grief. Although the exchange with Vichy has finally increased and the vicinity has become stable.”

Sabnak cocks his head in puzzlement due to Adol's question. However, for some reason Imeraria showed an expression understanding all of it.

“It's simple. “That “stability” and “peace” are states not desired by Hifumi-sama.” (Imeraria)

The looks of the two men focus on Imeraria.

“Hifumi-sama undoubtedly wants to throw this world into chaos and disorder.

He likely won't be satisfied until blood-stained battles occur all over. And he intends to enjoy how me and the leaders of the other nations cope with that state of affairs." (Imeraria)

"That is, how to call it...?"

"For that gentleman this world is likely very boring. Therefore, by stirring up things here and there, killing and causing instability, he is trying to change this world into an interesting shape for him." (Imeraria)

While Sabnak and Adol carefully listen to Imeraria's conjecture, they nod with serious expressions.

"... He will likely trigger a fierce war in a not so distant future. Adol-san, I think it will be difficult, but please work out the budget. Sabnak-san, please work on the training and preparations of the soldiers jointly with the knight order." (Imeraria)

"Certainly!" (Adol)

"Her Majesty the Queen, do you mean that Vichy will turn into a battlefield?" (Sabnak)

Imeraria slowly shook her head in answer to Sabnak's question.

"No. Most likely Hifumi-sama will bring a far more powerful and troublesome opponent along. From the wastelands or... from the other side." (Imeraria)

In the direction, where Imeraria shifted her focus at, lies the wastelands. *Just what is that man currently seeing, what is he experiencing and whom is he killing?*

"Send a compulsory order from the capital to all the territories bordering the wastelands. Please station the royal army at all of those territories. I don't know where the fight will start. Let's get ready as much as we can." (Imeraria)

Sabnak bowed deeply towards the order which was announced with a dignified voice.

Chapter 114 – Under Pressure

“Ahaha! How about it? You were surprised, right?” (Agathion)

Agathion swings the left arm which previously vanished up to the elbow. The torn and tattered cross-section has a rough feeling similar to the white sand wall at the neck.

Hifumi even saw the left forearm bursting open, but he didn't understand the theory behind it.

While protecting his throat and face by placing both arms in front at the moment he was repelled, he went flying to the back. However, the damage he received was serious.

“Magic, huh...?” (Hifumi)

“Yes, that's right. It's beyond the imagination of the human you. How was the explosion of pure mana? I wonder how it feels to have both arms broken and in tatters?” (Agathion)

As Agathion says with sneer mixed within, both arms of Hifumi are bloodstained from the tips up to the elbows.

The sleeves of the dougi have become short as if they had been forcibly torn off. The exterior of the forearms, which he had put in front of him to protect himself, has the skin ripped up even though the bones themselves are fine. With the muscles having snapped, he can't move the arms up to the elbows.

“It's the first time. For me to get done in this far.” (Hifumi)

“Oh, you are unexpectedly calm about it. I believed you would cry about it a lot more though.” (Agathion)

“How regrettable”, Agathion shook his head.

While repairing the gouged out throat, the left arm begins to grow little by little as well.

It's only natural, but Hifumi's state isn't something that can be fixed spontaneously. The dripping blood doesn't stop.

“It looked like you were breathing though.” (Hifumi)

“Am I?” (Agathion)

“It’s fake though”, Agathion laughs.

With an assembly of raw materials transformed into a substance of mana, he is just maintaining a fake human shape, but nevertheless he is reproducing breathing and palpitation.

“Even if things may appear this way, I was a normal demon once before.”
(Agathion)

“Due to a magic failure caused by me manipulating my unique magic, my entire body ended up getting rearranged by that magic and transformed me into a substance, but you won’t understand anyway even if I explained”, Agathion talks about the further details.

“Well, if you knew about me not being able to get killed in a normal way... let’s finish this, shall we?” (Agathion)

Phegor will likely die any time now, too, Agathion averted his look. In that moment Hifumi once again fiercely ran up to Agathion as if not feeling any pain.

“Huh? Have you become desperate?” (Agathion)

“That’s no fun”, Agathion shoots pellet after pellet. Hifumi, who eluded those rocks by forcibly bending his body, held out a jet black blade from his right arm.

“Ue!?” (Agathion)

Agathion, who unintentionally made a shrill and nervous voice, had the regenerated left arm cut at the shoulder by the black blade while still not comprehending the state of affairs.

“W-What’s this!?” (Agathion)

“I wanted to test it out, but it seems to have gone smoothly.” (Hifumi)

The true identity of the black blade was something changed into the shape of the darkness storage’s outlet simply created with darkness magic.
It’s thin to a degree that one won’t be able to see it if looking from the side. And since it doesn’t penetrate living creatures it’s possible to use it as physical

weapon if it works properly, he thought.

“Just right if it’s usable.” (Hifumi)

While pressing on with a brute force approach, the strange sword attacks of Hifumi continue.

Agathion tried to pin down the blade, which struck him diagonally from below upwards, but had his right forearm cleaved arbitrarily.

Moreover Agathion evades the diagonally downward-swung slash of Hifumi by taking a half step back.

“Oh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who is heaving heavily while losing blood, noticed something odd.

“Why is there are need to avoid? If it’s a body changed into a substance by mana anyway, there’s no problem even if it’s cut, right?” (Hifumi)

“F-For some reason or another! I just got startled since you used strange magic!” (Agathion)

Hifumi calmly observed the attacking pellets and cut them down.

He has become used to the speed and trajectory of Agathion’s attacks.

Stepping even further in, Hifumi points the blade at the torso and face after the limbs.

It was at the time he slashed for the 4th time.

“Uh-oh!” (Agathion)

Agathion raised his voice and dodged the slashing attack by bending his body. Accordingly Hifumi’s movements come to a halt.

“... What happened, human? Are you gradually hitting your limit?” (Agathion)

Agathion ridicules Hifumi in order to provoke him, however Hifumi’s shoulders are trembling.

“...?” (Agation)

“Fukukuku... Hahahahaha!” (Hifumi)

Although Agathion was puzzled, he once again placed around 10 pellets in mid-air, but at that moment Hifumi burst into laughter.

“W-What is it...?” (Agathion)

Suddenly ceasing his laughter, Hifumi stared at Agathion with a serious look.

“From now on I’m going to kill you. If you can kill me before that, it will be your win.” (Hifumi)

At the moment Agathion knitted his eyebrows asking “what are you saying this late in the game?”, Hifumi’s fierce attack began once again. However, unlike before, he is persistently wielding the blade while aiming at the chest.

“Gu!” (Agathion)

Agathion barely averts the slashes and thrusts, which are approaching him many times over while aiming at his chest, by sacrificing his arms.

While staying silent, Hifumi swings his right hand which had transformed into a blade.

Within the long exchange of blows, Hifumi’s blade cleaved open Agathion’s chest in a straight horizontal line. However, Agathion showed a smile.

“What bad luck. At least my chest was cut.” (Agathion)

However, Hifumi doesn’t reply to that.

Hifumi, who was struck by pellets hurled at him from the front as counter-attack, had the joints of both his shoulders broken and even his right hand blade vanished from the tip of his arm which dangled loosely.

“See, it’s my win...” (Agathion)

Hifumi, who doesn’t stop even then, pins down Agathion left foot by stepping on it and thrust his head into the armpit of the still remaining left arm.

“Eh? What are...” (Agathion)

“Ooooh!” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who roared a war cry, raised his body and was able to forcibly throw up Agathion’s left arm.

Originally it’s a move to stab a dagger into the part which has no armour by opening up the flank of the opponent with the body, but the aim this time is another.

“Wh-Wha!?” (Agathion)

The chest wound, Hifumi had caused before, opens up by force. In there something red with a diameter of around 10 cm, just like a gem buried in sand, is pulsating.

Agathion, who noticed that it had become exposed, spoke in a way of behaving as if he had the leeway even while becoming pale.

“Oops! You got to see my heart, how embarrassing.” (Agathion)

“I found it. This pulsation was what I was looking for. It’s also what you frantically protected.” (Hifumi)

“Uguu... But, well, you likely can’t move both hands anymore. How regrettable.” (Agathion)

“That’s not really a problem.” (Hifumi)

Sweeping the foot he stepped on, Hifumi thrust his face into the chest of Agathion who toppled over while facing upwards.

“N-No way... stop...” (Agathion)

Ignoring the pleading, Hifumi opens his mouth widely and his teeth sink into the heart.

“Aaaaaahhh...” (Agathion)

Forgetting to use magic, he beats Hifumi’s shoulder and back with his left hand.

However that doesn’t last for long either.

Crunching on the hard surface and the soft inside, Hifumi’s front teeth bit into the heart mercilessly.

“Phooey.” (Hifumi)

Once he spit out the objects he held in his mouth, fragments smeared with a red fluid were thrown onto the ground.

A syrupy and sticky red fluid spills out from the remaining heart and is absorbed by the surroundings which has taken the shape of sand.

Agathion died while his eyes were wide open in terror.

“... At last he shed blood, eh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi has also lost a considerable amount of blood.

Losing strength in his knees, he sat down on the ground with a thump.

“Ah, it was close.” (Hifumi)

Even while sending the arms flying and gouging out the throat at the time he fought with Agathion, he didn't have the actual feeling of stealing life. But now, with him having been basked in the fragrant liquid after biting into the pounding object, he finally obtained a sufficient amount of that sensation.

“Yea. Stealing the lives of living creatures which can use words is a good feeling after all.” (Hifumi)

He earnestly muttered within his dimming consciousness.



“... Huh? Has he died, I wonder?” (Pheres)

“Pheres, have a look.” (Njal)

“No way. You go, Nyal.” (Pheres)

With pebbles and sand spreading and a pile of debris rising in the centre, that, which ought to be a hall you could even call impressive, has lost its shadows. The ones peeking at the situation from the left and right side of the entrance are the two demon girls who magnificently barfed in front of the gate after following Vepar.

In the hall itself, there is Phegor, who has fallen to his knees and is pitching forward as if about to fall while being pierced by the katana, and the figure of the king, who collapsed with a pale face and red blood shedding from his chest on a platform visible inside the hall. Next to him was the figure of the human who was sitting as if watching over the king.

And, none of them even twitches.

“Wouldn't it be better to wait for Captain Vepar...?”

“But, won't she be even more upset if we didn't save them although we could?”

Vepar valued the two girls, who are able to use healing magic, highly. They are brought along at every opportunity for the sake of rescuing wounded people who appeared during battles and in accidents during practise.

Bennia, who was the vice captain, summoned those two to the attack site because she feared there would be too much evidence left behind at the actual site if injured people emerged in a counter-attack, but Vepar truly thought that it would be the best if there are no wounded or casualties.

As result of that, the two girls haven't grown in regards to combat at all. Stating it bluntly, they were useless on scenes with no wounded and at the front-lines where there's no time to heal.

“... Let's try to get close, just a bit?”

“Got it.”

They have been ordered to assist in bringing the chaos within the castle to a close by Vepar. Listening to people, who have watched the situation while hiding within the castle, they were ordered to heal the survivors' injuries if necessary and to check the state of affairs in the hall where Hifumi was supposed to have headed.

Pheres, who is only one year older, timidly approaches Phegor and Nyal follows behind her.

Both of them are holding knives as an excuse of arms and are wearing capes with a flare skirt. However, they don't really know how to use either.

Grasping the knives tightly with both hands anyway, they walk forward while somewhat silencing their footsteps by standing on their tiptoes although they wear boots with heels.

“Uwaaa...”

Phegor, who has died while clinging to the katana within a puddle of dried blood, has his face hidden and his expression can't be seen.

“Phegor-sama isn't in a state that he can be healed or such, is he?”

As one would expect, no matter how good one is with healing magic, it's impossible to resurrect the dead.

“Hey, if it's this sword...” (Njal)

What Njal pointed at is Hifumi's katana which has penetrated into Phegor's body.

“It's the sword that human had, right?” (Pheres)

What Pheres pointed at is the figure of Hifumi who is sitting down with his back turned towards them.

“Yea. I saw it as well. At any rate, this is an amazing weapon...”

At the time when Njal quietly extended her hand towards the katana, Phegor, who opened his bloodshot eyes widely, lifted his face which had lost all its blood.

“You bastard are...” (Phegor)

He probably can't see with his eyes anymore. Did he hallucinate that Njal, who is standing in front of him, is Hifumi? Opening the hand which grabbed the guard of the sword, he stretched it out towards Njal.

“Higyaaaa!” (Njal)

In front of a situation similar to a dead having started to move, Njal raises her voice into a scream and Pheres isn't able to move either as she has become stiff.

However, repelling the stretched out hand of Phegor by kicking it from the side, it doesn't reach Njal.

“The barrier was finally broken, huh?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who was the one kicking, looked down on Phegor who feebly collapsed.

“H-Human?”

“You were alive...”

Without listening to the girls, Hifumi grabbed the hilt of the katana which was stuck in Phegor's chest and pulled it out in one go.

“Uaaa...” (Phegor)

Does he still feel pain? Holding down the wound from the extraction of the katana, Phegor groaned deeply.

“Well, it's great that you survived. I'm able to finish you with my own hands after all.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi swings down the katana, he had raised overhead with the force of

pulling it out, with his right hand.

As he had apparently already lost a lot of blood, not much of blood flowed even when the head was cut off.

Phegor's freshly severed head rolled up to the feet of Njal and she sat down while unable to stand up out of fear due to his extremely gruesome expression that gives one an impression of his feelings of resentment.

Being hit by her knee when she did so, Phegor's head rolled in the direction of the day after tomorrow.

Once Njal raised her eyes, there was the figure of Hifumi who is cleaning the katana with a paper.

“T-Than-n...” (Njal)

At the moment Njal, who thought that she had been saved, tried to somehow muster her voice to thank him, the katana was thrust before her eyes.

Remembering the katana, which had a beautiful lustre as if just having been washed, easily beheading Phegor before, Njal gulped down her spit while trembling.

“So, you are the next opponent?” (Hifumi)

She thought that she had been rescued, but it seems to be somehow different.

Even Pheres who is next to Njal and can't do anything but watch the situation unable to say anything, this late in the game regretted while thinking *it would have been alright even if we had simply ignored the dispatch order by Bennia.*

Chapter 115 – Demon Days

After the battle the other day the slums, which is the beastmen part of Swordland, mostly regained their stability.

Without any particular problems occurring even when a considerable number of humans influxed, it increased the exchange between the races, albeit slowly. Since people can't survive if they don't eat, bartering and business transactions develop into agreements.

Those like the carpenters, who interacted with the beastmen from the start, and also the humans, who were vigilant towards the beastmen in the beginning, got naturally used to them.

“Reni!” (Helen)

One day Helen rushed like a storm towards the location of Reni who was dozing off after lunch.

“Uhyaa!” (Reni)

Jumping up to her feet due to the loud voice, Reni falls over backwards, alongside the chair, having been overenthusiastic.

Sitting down on the floor after making one revolution, she wiped off the dust on her loose hair with a *pon pon*.

“Oouch... What's wrong that you are in such a hurry?” (Reni)

“T-The elves came!” (Helen)

“Elves?” (Reni)

Helen drops her fist on the head of Reni who's still half-asleep.

“Ouch!” (Reni)

“Did you snap out of it? A group of elves has arrived at the entrance to the city.” (Helen)

“If that's the case, how about we have them stay at the recently completed building for the time being?” (Reni)

Once Reni replied while rubbing her head and eyes, Helen shook her head.

“It’s not the slums’ entrance but the city’s! It looks like they have been confronted by the humans at the city’s entrance! Gengu-san is gathering everyone to prepare for battle, but he wants us to decide what we will do, Reni.” (Helen)

“What we will do, you say...” (Reni)

“As I said!” (Helen)

Reni is astonished because Helen grasps her shoulders and shakes them, but Helen, whose body is trembling, doesn’t have any composure.

“Shall we drive away the humans and receive the elves, do we ignore them for the sake of safety or shall we join up with the humans and drive away the elves?” (Helen)

“Yee~a... There’s that as well, but it will become problematic if the humans and elf-san’s get along well and become our enemies, right?” (Reni)

“Ah...” (Helen)

Helen, who for some reason considered it to be natural for humans and elves to be antagonistic towards each other, dropped her rabbit ears and had her face flush bright red due to Reni pointing it out.

“For the time being, let’s have a look. Hifumi-san also said to judge after hearing and seeing what kind of person the other party is.” (Reni)

“Won’t we get attacked by both sides if we turn up there just like that?” (Helen)

“I see... ah!” (Reni)

Helen hides her anxiety after seeing Reni smiling broadly who has been struck with some kind of idea.

“What are you planning?” (Helen)

“Let’s try imitating what Hifumi-san did.” (Reni)

(That definitely won’t be anything decent, will it?) (Helen)

While Helen is hesitating whether she should stop her, Reni rushed out of the house.



“Hello~” (Reni)

The elves and the group of the 3 beastmen around Malfas have assembled on the wastelands' side. And the human soldiers have lined up at the city's entrance with their swords prepared.

Since it's not like they want to wage a war at all, they simply continue the stand-off without setting up an encampment and without either side sending a messenger in a partially strained atmosphere. Suddenly the voice of Reni, who appeared, resounded.

Reni, who came out of the hole that connects the slums with the outside and which hadn't been blocked in the end, took along several beastmen like Helen and Gengu and casually walked over in a trot while carrying a large basket in both hands.

The human soldiers put themselves on guard and show nervousness due to the appearance of the beastmen, but ignoring that, Reni approaches the elven group defencelessly.

“Oh my! Isn't that a lovely sheepgirl-san?” (Zanga)

Zanga, who was at the head of the elves, calmed down the elves who were showing signs of tension when she saw that figure coming closer and welcomed her with a friendly smile.

“Hello, sheepgirl-san. Oh, something smells nice.” (Zanga)

“It's refreshments. How about tasting it?” (Reni)

Muffin-sized baked sweets were carelessly put all over into the basket held by Reni. Especially the children of the elves are getting fidgety with the faintly appetising aroma drifting around.

Even Reni, who is holding the basket, has a bit drool leaking from her mouth.

“Well, then let's enjoy it without holding back.” (Zanga)

Once Zanga picked up the backed sweets which was placed topmost, she bit a mouthful off it without hesitation. Chewing it in her mouth while being moved to tears, a refreshing sweetness spreads out.

“That's indeed delicious. It's been several decades since I last ate such

delicious and tasty sweets, I think. Hey! Although you brought it to us at great pains, it's no good if you make such a face, sheep-san. Do you want to eat together with us?" (Zanga)

"Yes. Thank you." (Reni)

"Ah, I will take some as well!" (Helen)

Once Helen, who stretched out her hand unable to control herself, grasped the biggest sweets, Reni put down the basket and started to eat as well.

"Is it alright for me to join as well?" (Zanga)

"Yea. Everyone, please eat as there are plenty!" (Reni)

Even the elves, who observed the situation while being cautious, stretch out their hands into the basket one after the other after being relieved seeing Zanga's state.

Though sugar was rare and couldn't be obtained in Swordland, the healthy ones among the beastmen were able to gather fruits in the wastelands. The female beastmen group, which heard about a simple sweets recipe from Hifumi, created a paste similar to jam, which doesn't use sugar, and learned to use fruits instead of sugar by mixing the paste into batter made out of flour.

The elves were able to eat fruits in the elven forest as well, but they haven't been able to often encounter such elaborately baked sweets.

Smiles spread among the elves who ate the baked sweets.

"It's delicious." (Malfas)

"Yea. It's tasty." (Riedel)

Malfas, Riedel and also the beastgirl called Olra are stuffing their cheeks with baked sweets and are smiling.

Being treated with tea the other beastmen brought as well, a tea party began in the wastelands in the blink of an eye.

"Hey, delicious sweets will make everyone smile and it becomes possible to get along with each other. Just like Hifumi-san did." (Reni)

"Well, that's true I guess." (Helen)

Due to Reni bragging proudly with a smile, Helen thought *thanks to that*

Hifumi Swordland was divided to a degree that it's impossible to mend though, but she hesitates to mention that in the current atmosphere.

“Oh, sheep-san knows Hifumi-san as well?” (Zanga)

“Is he an acquaintance of you, too, elf-obaachan? We were taught various things by Hifumi-san and created a city for beastmen and humans.” (Reni)

“Reni-san brings together the beastmen, who were oppressed like me, and is presently acting as representative of the city. Helen-san over there also assists in mediating between humans and us beastmen as assistant representative.” (Gengu)

Helen stops him by saying “stop, that’s embarrassing”, however Reni explained the current situation while smiling bashfully.

“The humans, who are gathered in front of the gate, look like they hate beastmen although it’s regretful... But, there are plenty of human-san’s in our city who are good friends with beastmen.” (Reni)

“I see, I see.” (Zanga)

“Although you are young, you have it difficult”, Zanga nodded several times over, but once she finished to eat baked sweets, she called over Malfas’ group.

“The city you were looking for was the one here. How nice, eh? If it’s sheep-san’s city, you will definitely be able to live there safely. By chance your father might be there as well.” (Zanga)

Zanga roughly stroke Malfas’ head with her bony fingers.

“Huh? The elves won’t come in?” (Reni)

“Oh, does the city of sheep-san accept elves as well?” (Zanga)

“Of course!” (Reni)

Reni hit her chest with a thump.

“We want to create a city where any kind of person can live happily. Although our fellow beastmen in the wastelands are still continuing to be hostile towards us, our city is something great where everyone’s cooperating. In the beginning we received various help from Hifumi-san, but... even so, we want to live by

relying on our own strength from now on.” (Reni)

“I see. It might be fun to help with that too.” (Zanga)

“Puuse-onee-chan, let’s go together! Puuse-onee-chan’s magic is amazing. She heals wounds in the blink of an eye!” (Riedel)

Riedel has remains of the sweets smeared around her mouth as she is eating one baked sweets after the other, but pulling Puuse’s hand, she talks about Puuse’s magic in excitement.

“Wounds are gone in the blink of an eye!? That’s amazing!” (Gengu)

“Kya.” (Puuse)

Once Gengu pushed forth his face in agitation due to the remark about magic he had never seen before, Puuse unintentionally leaked a small scream.

“I-I’m sorry.” (Gengu)

“You have a scary face.” (Helen)

“How cruel! I was born with this face.” (Gengu)

Puuse encouraged Gengu, who dropped his shoulder being heartbroken after having been told that flatly by Helen, while smiling wryly.

“Everyone, let’s get along, okay? Moreover, the city Hifumi-san helped out with. I’m slightly curious.” (Zanga)

Upon Zanga’s decision, all of the elves decided to live in the slums. Just when they suddenly started a tea party, the elves headed to the slums. The humans, who were watching them from the city’s entrance, couldn’t do anything but see them off without understanding what had happened.



“You did it quite flashily.” (Vepar)

Vepar, who was finally able to calm down the castle, ordered her own subordinates to clean up the area around the castle gate and turned up at the hall.

A mountain of debris and corpses being scattered around. Seeing her two subordinates trembling, she made a brief comment with a sigh mixed in.

“It wasn’t me who made the ceiling fall. How rude.” (Hifumi)

“Everything else was you though, right? If you compare the matter of having killed the king with the issues of the ceiling having collapsed, the latter is in the range of being trifle.” (Vepar)

“It’s great. With this you can become the ruler. The ruler of the demon race.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi drew back the katana which was aimed at Njal.

Pheres rushes over as Njal, whose thread of tension was cut, collapses weakly.

“Might be... so. However, there are plenty others who strongly desire to climb in rank. I might not reach it, you know?” (Vepar)

Due to Vepar saying it jokingly with a bitter smile mixed in, Hifumi licked his lips while sheathing his katana into its scabbard.

“That’s good news. In other words, that means you will become king if I kill even more.” (Hifumi)

“... Haa. Why do you want me to ascend the throne to such an extent?” (Vepar)

“You are similar to a fellow I like.” (Hifumi)

Vepar raised her eyebrows due to Hifumi’s words.

“I’m jealous. Someone resembling me won’t be a good woman.” (Vepar)

“That’s true. That person is the princess of a human country... now she is the queen, huh? Just like you, that person has frantically done her very best to protect the people in her surroundings. That’s something I’m unable to do.” (Hifumi)

“Therefore”, Hifumi hit the pommel of the katana with his finger.

“Fight. Show me how you can rise even further from here on by destroying each other’s important things, by risking your lives to fight with each other and by scheming in a clumsy way. By doing that you guys’ world will become something very nice.” (Hifumi)

“... You are crazy.” (Vepar)

“Can you endure waiting to understand why until results appear? If everyone thinks like me, this world will definitely become something absolutely boring.”
(Hifumi)

“Well then”, Hifumi closed in on Vepar and stood in front of her.

“Were you able to resolve yourself?” (Hifumi)

“... Got it. I will do so until you leave the territory of the demons. It’s something someone has to do sooner or later anyway. Might as well be me who knows the the circumstances. That will decrease the sacrifices.” (Vepar)

“That’s right. It’s good like this. Having said that, let’s have the people work a bit more for the sake of chasing me out.” (Hifumi)



The notification that the king had been killed by a human was intentionally conveyed only to the influential demons right away.

The people, who were in the castle, and those, who had returned home, hurried in panic to the entrance of the city leading their close subordinates.

“The scoundrel, who killed the king, is running around all over the city, but he will likely escape outside the city sooner or later.”

That’s the contents of the information.

The king has no children. If they get the achievement of having gotten rid of the sinner, the possibility of them becoming king isn’t zero even if their pedigree isn’t regarded highly amongst the demons.

Especially considering the people who are forming factions in the current occasion, rather than mourning over the king’s death, they saw it as nothing but their biggest chance.

However, although they intended to be calm, they weren’t. That’s because there’s a human at the level of being able to defeat the king or are they able to win against that human as they are? They didn’t turn their thinking in that direction.

And there is a point they should consider in doubt.

“Why was such important information delivered at dawn like this?”

A king’s death. Moreover if he was killed. Far from announcing it officially, it

should be obvious to gloss it over with a different cause of death or to conceal it in any way from the beginning to the end. A certain demon proposed to a noble who is his lord.

However, that opinion has been easily shelved.

“This time’s message was from Vepar. There’s probably no mistake as it has her signature, too. That person is after all just a woman. She is likely confused by the sudden turn of events.”

“But, will she do something like expressly sending a signed letter if she’s confused...?”

“Cut it out! Using the time for something like worrying in hesitation, do you intend to let the king’s seat get away? Anyway, for now we will concentrate on arresting the criminal or killing them.”

The people with the same objective leave through the open gate one after the other.

“Search for the criminal. He shouldn’t have been able to escape very far yet...”

During the time each group meets up and decides their destination, the opened, large front gate suddenly closed with a loud sound.

Even the sound of *don* signalling the affixing of the bolt can be heard.

“Wait! Why have you closed the gate!?”

“The enemy went outside! What are you thinking to close it this late in the game!?”

The people, who were literally shut out, roar towards the gate one after the other.

“If it’s the enemy, he’s here.” (Hifumi)

On top of the gate, where the guards are usually patrolling, a single human is standing.

“Thanks for going to work early in the morning. I seem to be the human you are looking for.” (Hifumi)

Jumping down nimbly, Hifumi opened the mouth of the katana’s sheath.

“And, goodbye.” (Hifumi)

The sunlight, which started to make its appearance, is reflected by the smoothly drawn katana.

“Now then, it’s the end of your journey. Let’s compete with each other to our hearts’ content.” (Hifumi)

Chapter 116 – The Beautiful People

Faster than anyone could raise their voice, a first victim appeared.

It's that demon, who mainly gave an opposing advice towards this hunt, shielding his lord willingly with his body against Hifumi's thrust.

"Guha... p-please r-run a-aw-away!"

The man, who received a thrust into his chest with the power to make his body float for an instant, pleaded even in this situation desperately to his lord to escape.

But, his stupid lord was only bewildered.

"Ua..."

"Too slow." (Hifumi)

While getting panicked due to his subordinate being stabbed in front of his eyes, he was easily beheaded by Hifumi who came in front of him.

"W-What have you..."

In the next instant the man, who witnessed his lord's perishing with an anguished expression, has his face split in two from the temple by the katana and grey matter gushes out from within.

"Pheew~..." (Hifumi)

While sending the blood and brain fluid flying by swinging his katana, Hifumi deeply breathed out.

And then he inhales air through his nose.

"The air outside is pleasant. Previously I wasn't able to breathe normally due to the dust." (Hifumi)

The stench of fresh blood is drifting into the chilly air of dawn. There were many people who ran away chaotically due to the sudden murder, but that will result in them having made the right judgement in the end. Although they will encounter later on bitter experiences due to being blamed by Vepar for having cowardly run away from a single opponent and will be sent

to their sinecure, they will at least have long lives.

The unlucky ones were those who decided to stay in that place to fight.

“It’s only one opponent! Shoot him with magic to death from a distance!”

Someone, who was riding a horse, shouts while pointing at Hifumi.

In response to that, fireballs and lumps of earth were released from all four directions at Hifumi one after the other.

“Demons are better at magic than humans after all, huh? The speed is higher.” (Hifumi)

Even while admiring the spells, he avoids the magic attacks by smoothly swaying his body. Compared to the high-speed pellets fired by Agathion, these spells are quite slow.

Hifumi, who scattered an attack of a wind spell which came at him directly from the front with his katana, rotated the katana in his hand and sheathed it into its scabbard.

“Do you plan to surrender at this point in time?”

When he was mocked by some demon, Hifumi replied while looking bored,

“Are you an idiot? There’s no way for me to do something like surrendering to opponents I can defeat, is there?” (Hifumi)

While hitting the pommel with the palm of his left hand with a *pon pon*, Hifumi grabbed the dagger, which stuck out from the opened darkness storage, with his right hand.

“As it’s been a while since I yearned for some dagger practise, keep me some company.” (Hifumi)

The dagger, which was produced by the dwarf Prufas, who’s currently in Fokalore, taking 3 days and 3 nights by using Hifumi’s katana as reference, is close to a wakizashi (*T/N: in this case ko-wakizashi, see tool-tip*) in its appearance, but its blade is thick and slightly curved giving it a boorish impression.

The wakizashi, Alyssa possesses, was forged by the excited Prufas after he was harshly reprimanded and urged to improve it by Hifumi who saw this dagger. Even while criticizing it severely, Hifumi carried it with him since he considered

its sturdiness, although that adds to its weight, as its good point.

Holding it in a backhand grip so that the blade is facing outwards, he puts forth his right foot and sets up a L-shape stance with his legs while holding his left hand at his waist.

“That’s a bluff...”

“Don’t mind it! Keep on attacking!”

The magic attacks focus on Hifumi once again, but they don’t hit him all the same.

Someone, who got impatient due to Hifumi evading everything completely, ordered his subordinates to charge in.

“At least cut him, even if it’s only once! If we can create a situation where I can finish him off, I promise that you will be promoted as much as you like!”

Despite hesitating only for an instant because of the scene where numerous spells are flying about, all 5 subordinates raised their voices and rushed in due to those words.

They frantically dash onwards while holding spears and swords in their hands.

“Look properly at your opponent. Otherwise you won’t hit them.” (Hifumi)

Avoiding the sword of the man, who came running at the lead due to his fast feet, by stepping aside, he slides the dagger into the nape of the neck in a smooth, unhindered motion and kills that man.

Knocking down the approaching spearhead, he pins it down by stepping on it.

“Ah!?”

The soldiers, who ended up releasing his spear, fell forward with his current momentum and it turned into a situation of him himself having his throat stabbed by the dagger simply held out by Hifumi.

The remaining three stop their feet out of fear due to the first two spurting blood out.

Someone’s fireball crashed into the back of one of them with a roaring sound and he was blown towards the front as if flying.

His face, which is warped in surprise and pain, is caught by Hifumi’s left hand and slammed into the ground.

Hifumi steps forward without spending a glance at the soldier who died after convulsing once.

Nevertheless, the remaining two stood while grasping their weapons tightly. Although it was an act changing it into a situation where they couldn't back out of, it was also equivalent to not having an opportunity to raise to a higher position in the narrow, caged-in world of the demons. Without any war either, their social rank is decided for most of their lives at their birth.

What fell into our laps at that point is the great event of avenging the king. If we contributed to it, even without delivering the finishing blow... Betting on the gleam of hope, both soldiers prepared their respective sword and spear even though they were trembling.

Depending on one's point of view this might be a moving tale. Their figures of entrusting the future of their families and themselves into a personal command might be seen as beautiful if watched by people in the same position.

However, Hifumi doesn't respect such things.

"Die, you idiots." (Hifumi)

Breaking the spear with an elbow strike, he stabs the dagger into the crown of the head. Then he kicks the wrist of the opponent, who held a sword, from below. Having released his sword, the soldier's head is seized and Hifumi's fist, which grasped the dagger as is, determinedly bashed into the soldier's chin. With the head making a full circle, the soul leaves the body in an instant due to the destroyed cervical vertebrae.

"Even if you acquire the strength to fight at the front, don't stand on the battlefield with a scared mug after going with the flow without figuring out how to compensate for the lack in wrecking your brains. It's irritating." (Hifumi)

Hifumi was truly angry.

It's not like I hate people who can't fight. Cooks, civil officials and farmers, if they live their lives while giving it their best, that's a good thing, I think.

But I hate uneasy fellows who are simply fighting by swinging their weapons without even scheming how to win and without putting effort into surviving while exposing their bodies at a place of battling.

"Besides, have you understood anything about your *raison d'être*?" (Hifumi)

The one Hifumi pointed at is the noble demon who ordered the charge of the demon soldiers who became silent corpses now.

“I-I was born having prestige amongst the demons...”

In the midst of him saying that, Hifumi rushed over and hit him resolutely. The noble, who fell off the horse, holds his cheek while spitting out several teeth and wheezing unable to breathe as he apparently hit his back.

“It doesn’t seem so. It’s your role to let soldiers die for the sake of victory, right? But, thinking about what you should do to kill me, your enemy, in the end, no matter what methods you use, it’s a commander’s duty to use the lives of his soldiers for that goal, isn’t it?” (Hifumi)

That’s why Hifumi evaluates Imeraria, who was able to order her subordinates to not start a fight, while rejecting to surrender herself to revenge not once but even twice for the sake of creating a situation where she is able to definitely kill him, highly.

She will come to definitely kill him in a composed manner. For that reason she utilizes the maximum of her thinking and standing even if she doesn’t have fighting strength herself. That was Hifumi’s desired “way of humans.”

“There is also someone who continued to give her best to achieve her revenge while being in a position unable to do so by herself as slave.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who placed his foot on the back of the noble, who tries to run away while grovelling, slowly increased the foot’s strength.

“That person became slightly weird, but she continued to forge herself for the sake of getting revenge with her own power. She continued to put in great efforts to obtain power, even by discarding her pride, while being greedy to become strong.” (Hifumi)

“Gueeee... p-please stop...”

The noble, who can’t properly speak due to the pressure on the solar plexus while listening to the grinding sound of the spine, pleads in a feeble voice.

But Hifumi puts even more strength into his foot.

The noble is already desperate to just breathe. He is unable to do anything but grasping the ground while opening and shutting his mouth.

“You guys’ king was powerful. Even Phegor or whatever schemed to kill me. Even that woman called Bennia or such aimed at my life by using her own technique to the maximum of her ability.” (Hifumi)

Due to the pressure of Hifumi’s foot the nobles back began to cave in. Several ribs have already broken and were apparently stabbing the internal organs. Leaking blood from his mouth, the noble begs for help while shedding tears.

“I will kill you. I will kill all of you who are outside here. I thought about leaving behind some of you while considering the war potential of the demons, but I quit that notion. Even if I leave them alone, they probably won’t be able to stand in for Vepar’s role.” (Hifumi)

With the sound of water leaking and a scream as if he ran out of air, the noble used up all of his strength.

“Next it’s you guys’ turn.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who changed his hold of the dagger into an overhand grip, counted the number of remaining people by letting his look circle around. There are 33 people remaining.



“I’d like you to explain to me what this is about!?”

The messenger from Vichy raised his voice in the tent set up for Alyssa who is the commander of Fokalore’s feudal army.

Alyssa, who is sitting in front of him, looks directly at the howling middle-aged man in puzzlement.

Miyukare, who is standing behind the chair Alyssa uses, is trembling with a vein popping up due to the rude behaviour of the messenger, but she endured it with a clenched fist thinking *currently Alyssa has the lead role*.

“I did explain to you, didn’t I?” (Alyssa)

Due to Alyssa tilting her head to the side with a ? floating above it, the messenger isn’t even able to hide his irritation.

“It’s not about the comment “Because the monsters are powerful, we came to exterminate them” as I heard as explanation by director-dono at the

beginning.”

“But, there’s no other reason.”

“Do you really think that I’m able to believe in such a reason!? Although you have lined up with a large army at the national border, do I have to even tell the unknowing you how much uneasiness you are spreading amongst the people of each city-state compromising Vichy!?”

Once the messenger strikes the table with his palm, the cups shake and the baked sweet jumps into the air from its plate.

Alyssa grabbed that baked sweet before it fell down and tossed it into her mouth. As these were specially made by Caim, Alyssa loved those baked sweets dearly.

“But, there’s no other reason for us to come here besides that.” (Alyssa)

After chewing with her mouth, she drinks the tea which was lukewarm. It was personally poured by Miyukare for the sake of Alyssa who isn’t very good with hot things.

“In reality we defeated several monsters already. Although the soldiers’ training is held at the same time as well, that’s according to Hifumi-san’s instructions. I think it doesn’t cause any kind of problems though? The ones being troubled about the monsters are the city’s residents and you as well, ojisan, I believe?” (Alyssa)

“Gu... however, it’s a talk about whether it’s necessary for the army to have such scale...”

“Oji-san.” (Alyssa)

The gaze of Alyssa, which became narrow as if zooming in on him while being unsuitable for her own age and face, held a pressure to the degree of even stopping the talking of the messenger who had passed half through his forties.

“Even if there’s the possibility of some of my comrades dying, you believe it’s a good thing to decrease the fighting strength by decreasing the number of people because of minding other people?” (Alyssa)

“That is...”

“I have already experienced being killed by people I considered to be my comrades, but an injury close to death is exceedingly painful. It’s saddening and unbearable. Rather than some of my comrades suffering such a thing, I will think about ways for my comrades to return alive, even if they scare or anger someone. That’s my choice.” (Alyssa)

Alyssa thanks Miyukare for adding some tea. During that time the messenger is sweating while struggling to choose his words.

“We have come here following the intentions of our feudal lord, Hifumi-san. He has given the order to subjugate the monsters while considering the benefits of everyone. But, if you dislike that, it can’t be helped, right?” (Alyssa)

Alyssa tilts her head in contemplation and matches her sight with Miyukare. Seeing Miyukare nodding, the messenger believed that his arguments finally got through, but reality isn’t that soft.

“You oji-san’s aren’t doing anything to deal with the monsters and are just voicing your discontent and grumbling at us, who are risking our lives to survive. Let’s decide who’s correct with skill, huh?” (Alyssa)

Alyssa laughs pleasantly, but due to the conclusion going beyond his expectations, the messenger’s face exceeds being ghastly pale and has already become white. *It’s different when it’s that dreadful feudal lord, but for a young little girl to make such forceful statement, he couldn’t believe it.*

“S-Such an absurd...”

“Neither Hifumi-san nor me have said anything strange. It’s simply a very important and simple talk.” (Alyssa)

Facing the messenger, who is shedding sweat like a waterfall and who has become small on top of the chair while being in panic, Alyssa told him slowly while chewing her words.

“If there’s something you desire, you have to obtain it with skill.” (Alyssa)

“Though it feels strange for me, who received help and education, to say that”, Alyssa’s laughing voice could be heard by the soldiers who are outside the tent.

Chapter 117 – No Reason

Entering the slums of Swordland, the elves were each assigned a house for their families. It has been scheduled for them to be given a job according to Reni's group's decision as well as the wishes of the people themselves after a few days.

The humans harboured feelings of fearfulness towards the elves, but as they were simply existences "whom they know of but had never seen before" for the beastmen, everyone had a keen interest in the new immigrants.

Having been assigned a slightly larger one-story house together with Puuse and Shiku, Zanga officially accepted the role of being the mediator of the elves from Reni.

Zanga's group, who had been called to the workplace of Reni, was told about that role for the first time when they had a preparatory meeting about the future from now on while enjoying some tea.

"I'd like you to teach magic to us beastmen as well." (Reni)

"Magic, you say?" (Zanga)

"Yes. There are people among the humans who can use magic. I heard that elf-san's group is able to use magic even more skilfully." (Reni)

After pondering for a while while having her eyes closed, Zanga looked directly into the eyes of Reni.

"... What do you plan to do by learning magic?" (Zanga)

"I want us to have the power to protect everyone in this city." (Reni)

No hesitation can be seen in Reni's expression as she gives that immediate reply.

"Fufu... okay, I got it, I got it." (Zanga)

Bursting into laughter, Zanga faced Puuse who was sitting next to her.

"Puuse, teach them magic together with the women who can't do manual labour." (Zanga)

“Understood.” (Puuse)

Zanga turns a strict look at Reni who is jumping for joy with a 「Hooray」 due to that exchange.

“But, you know, sheep-san. I have been living for a long time, but I never heard something like a beastman being able to use magic. You don’t know whether you will be able to learn it or not, do you? It might become a fruitless effort. Do you still want to do it even then?” (Zanga)

“Of course.” (Reni)

Nodding strongly, Reni grabbed the hand of Helen who was close-by.

“After meeting with Hifumi-san, the two of use have been taught many various things, studied and are now able to live in the city somehow. However, there are still many beastmen and humans who are on bad terms with us. Although I want to invite our mothers as well, I think that it’s still difficult to do so.” (Reni)

“But”, Reni continues while breathing roughly through her nose.

“Even if it’s only in this small city, we were able to create a place where beastmen and humans can live together peacefully. From now on it will be together with elf-san’s group as well. Am I able to do anything to protect this city... since I won’t know if I don’t attempt as I’m not overly smart either, I will give it at least a try.” (Reni)

“Now that I remember, even the stuff like studying, Hifumi made us do, has its use, right?” (Helen)

Helen, who squeezed back the hand of Reni while looking embarrassed, recalled the time when she could study with the other beastmen and everyone while being confined in the inn. Now that she has risen to a position with responsibility the reading and writing of characters as well as the partial knowledge about calculation was a very priceless treasure.

The beastmen, who flowed into this city from being purchased by Hifumi and who haven’t originally lived in the slums, are generally able to read and write while a part of the beastmen like Reni is also able to calculate. At certain points their administrative throughput became even better than the city centred

around the humans. However, not knowing of someone to compare with, Reni's group believed that there are still many problems.

“We will know whether it's possible or not once we try it.” (Reni)

Reni has included that detail in her calm calculations as well.

As result of abuse among beastmen, there are even quite a few injured people who can't properly walk. They harboured emotions of shame for not being able to contribute to the growth of the city. Hearing the words from those, who are helping with Reni's official work, and those, who are doing things like tending to stores where they can work without having to move around, it was a worrisome aspect for Reni in particular as she didn't know what would be good to do about it.

If beastmen are able to use magic, it will probably become possible for them to play a support role with long-distance attacks and healing the injured on the battlefield with healing magic. If they gain a little confidence by being able to contribute to the city by fighting to protect it, won't that calm their hearts? Reni wonders.

“Sheep-san... no, it's wrong if I don't call you Reni-san.” (Zanga)

Fixing her seating posture, Zanga bowed fully while facing Reni.

“Thank you very much for giving us elves, who lost their home, roles and a place to stay at. Please take care of us as we will be useful for various things besides magic.” (Zanga)

“Same for me, I look forward to work with you.” (Reni)

Zanga, who shook Reni's small and soft hand, got anxious in her mind while showing a smile.

(What has Hifumi-san done to such a charming, little child... I don't understand what that man is thinking, but I want to protect these children...) (Zanga)

Although that's something vain to say for me who has abandoned her village, while smiling bitterly in her heart in self-mockery, Zanga firmly grasped the hand of Reni with her deeply wrinkled hand.



The demons, who ended up confronting Hifumi, have been slaughtered one

after the other starting from those, who were close to Hifumi, regardless of their status.

The dagger, which is wielded along a sound of cutting wind, slashes through the demons' throats and thigh arteries, pierces their eyes and gouges out their hearts.

A vast amount of bloodstains remain here and there on the way towards the elven village from the demons' city.

The demon soldiers, who are running away in the lead, have already diminished to only three people.

With them being split apart from their own groups, they remained to the bitter end in order to escape without minding their own appearances while their comrades were done in.

However, they haven't failed to notice Hifumi's pursuit.

"Ah!"

Someone fell by pitching forward while voicing a short scream.

The soldier, who crashed into the ground starting with his face due to the momentum of running, has the dagger sticking out from the back of his head. At the time of falling he had already died.

"Heave-ho." (Hifumi)

Recovering the dagger by pulling it out while running past, Hifumi examined the blade of the dagger while keeping the remaining two in his field of vision.

"Well, I guess that's normal." (Hifumi)

Discovering several small nicks in the blade, Hifumi grumbles quietly.

The dagger, which hasn't received a divine protection, has a sharp blade to bring out its cutting ability. Given that this part is brittle, the clinging grease will kill its edge and the blade will be damaged as well if one kills several tens of people, even if he mostly aimed at the soft throats and eyeballs.

"I guess it's still usable for piercing, but... oh well, it will probably be fine."
(Hifumi)

Tossing the dagger into his darkness storage, Hifumi, who became unarmed, raised his speed even more.

The remaining two knew that beyond this point the elven barrier would stretch

out. If they went in that direction, it would turn into a dead end for them. However, the current situation was that they couldn't do anything but run away straight ahead until here. Even while checking each other with a look, they wondered whether the human would come their way if they escaped by dispersing left and right.

“Haa, haa... It looks like that human threw away his weapon. He isn't holding anything in his hands anymore.”

Once one of the demons said so after having looked behind with a glance, the other also turned back for just an instant and confirmed Hifumi's state.

“You are right...”

“Won't the two of us be able to somehow manage if that weapon is gone?”

The other soldier thought about that suggestion while running.

The figure of the human, I had seen with a glance before, has a small size compared to career soldiers like us if I think about it calmly.

If he has decided to abandon even his weapon which is able to cut to a terrifying degree and if it's successful for either of us to pin him down, the victory will be likely decided with only that much.

“... Got it. Let's stop while matching our timing. Please dispose of him somehow after I have restrained that guy.”

“Roger.”

“Let's start right away as long as we have stamina remaining”, the soldiers implement their idea immediately.

“Let's go... now!”

The soldier next to him drew his sword while turning around while the soldier, who made the suggestion to intercept, released a fireball.

The soldier fixed his grip of the sword while judging *I will aim at the chance of him faltering due to the fire, huh?*, but far from faltering Hifumi raises his speed even more.

“What!?”

“Too slow.” (Hifumi)

Avoiding the fireball by jumping, Hifumi hit each of the two's faces, who are dumbfounded, with both hands.
Making a muffled sound, one each of both's eyeballs rupture due to the impact.

“Gyaaa!”

“Guu!”

The soldier, who cast the magic, moreover received a kick at the moment of landing and his right leg was roughly torn to pieces.
The soldier, who barely resisted by not releasing his sword, desperately swings his sword within his narrow field of vision.

“Okay, it would have been great if you had done so from the beginning if you are able to fight.” (Hifumi)

While avoiding the sword, which is repeatedly swung vertically and horizontally, with movements similar to swaying left and right, Hifumi smiled slightly delightfully.
Deciding to ignore the pain of his eye for the time being, the soldier focussed on dealing with the danger currently in front of his eye.
Although he is tired from having run, he still plants his legs and loins firmly.
Kicking off the hard ground, he stepped forward to overpower Hifumi with strength.

During that time the other soldier ran away while moaning in pain and limping, but without turning his eyes that way, Hifumi stands in front of the soldier who displayed his ability and intent to fight.

The demon soldier, who is one head taller, swings down the sword he held over his head with all his might and moreover wields it sideways even when his previous strike has been avoided.

Letting that slash go past by lowering his stance, Hifumi chased the hand holding the sword while straightening his body and struck it.

“Unu?”

With the brandished sword's speed being raised, the body of the soldier, who missed his chance to stop the sword, makes a full turn.
Grabbing the exposed back of his neck, Hifumi pulled him with the soldier being in a state of looking up.

“See you.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who just saw that the soldier’s head was at a place littered with stones, trampled down on the demon’s forehead with all his strength and smashed his head.

Scattering grey matter, the soldier died after several convulsions.

“Well then, there’s one left, but... mm?” (Hifumi)

The ears of Hifumi, who tried to go searching for the survivor while wondering whether he is still alive, heard the sound of a horse’s hooves hitting the ground.

“Haa, that was nice. They caught up...” (Hifumi)

Aren’t they used to mounting a horse? It was Pheres, who had a worn-out expression, and the one who was riding while clinging to her hips was Nyal who had the katana thrust in front of her eyes before by Hifumi.

“Hey, get off.” (Pheres)

“My butt hurts~...” (Njal)

Continuing after Nyal who descended from the horse while complaining incessantly, Pheres got off the horse as well and bowed her head towards Hifumi.

“We came to deliver a message from Captain... Vepar-sama.” (Pheres)

“T-This...” (Njal)

Receiving the parchment timidly held out by Njal, Hifumi checked its contents on the spot.

It contained thanks mixed with sarcasm for the matter of him having cooperated at the time of her ascension to the throne and for the situation where she was going to be killed by her subordinates who had temporarily become hostile towards Vepar, like Pheres and Njal.

And it continues with her recommendation for him to depart from the demons’ territory in the following sentence.

“*Sigh* A thank-you-letter and a recommendation for departure has been lumped together.” (Hifumi)

The two girls waited patiently even while being scared until Hifumi finished

reading.

Folding the document, he tosses it into his darkness storage.

The girls stare in wonder due to the rare darkness attribute and his speed in invoking the spell.

“I understood Vepar’s point. Since I planned to leave anyway, there’s no particular problem with that.” (Hifumi)

Nyal showed an easily understandable expression of relief due to Hifumi’s words while Pheres assessed Hifumi with a yet still tense expression.

“Let me tell you something nice. The barrier imprisoning you lot doesn’t exist anymore.” (Hifumi)

As she has a honest nature, Njal floats an expression full of joy, but Pheres’ is still stiff.

“Why do you know that?” (Pheres)

“I heard it in the elven village. If you ponder about it normally, it’s probably because they have escaped while taking the lot, who maintains the barrier, along... The wind is blowing from the forest. The barrier likely doesn’t function anymore.” (Hifumi)

“Are you a friend of the elves? Because you are a pawn of the elves, you have killed this many demons...” (Pheres)

Pheres gaze is resting on the demon soldier who had been killed before.

“I have nothing to do with them. Demons, elves, beastmen and humans, if they become my enemies, they will be killed. You too, will you also draw your weapons in front of me? Will you aim for my life with magic if you are able to use magic besides healing magic?” (Hifumi)

“... I will pass on that. I don’t want to square off against a person who seems to be laughing even while making an enemy out of the world. However, I will express my gratitude for the matter of you having rescued Vepar-sama. Thank you very much.” (Pheres)

“You were also in the group who ambushed her though.” (Hifumi)

“I wasn’t aware that she was the target. Although I was unable to do anything

at that time, I have the intention to properly serve Vepar-sama from now on.”
(Pheres)

Bowing once, Pheres matched her sight with Hifumi’s.

“I have no other talent but healing magic. Thus I’m unable to fight with you. However, I’m capable of saving my comrades.” (Pheres)

“I see, that’s something valuable. Go for it, it will be fine if you help Vepar.”
(Hifumi)

“There’s something I don’t understand. What’s your reason for assisting the rise of Vepar-sama while having killed the king and this many demons?”
(Pheres)

Voicing out her question, Pheres looks at him properly and trembles only a bit.

In her back Njal clutched Pheres clothes with an obviously frightened expression.

“It’s tuning.” (Hifumi)

“Tuning?” (Pheres)

“The one called Agathion? That guy was strong. He was a fellow who was able to give permission to a plan, which put the life of his subordinate at risk, without a single change in his expression. If that person appeared on the world’s stage, he would probably finish off the elves, beastmen and humans one-sidedly. But, if it’s Vepar, who considers her comrades, including her own strength as well, it will become the best balance if she forms an alliance with the beastmen considering the number if it’s the humans, the size of the group if it’s the beastmen lot and the wisdom of the elves, but... anyway, I was able to tune things for the sake of a long battle with this.” (Hifumi)

“It was difficult, you know”, with Hifumi looking in the far distance, Pheres began to tremble for a different reason.

“Long battle, you say? You don’t mean...” (Pheres)

“I thought that I’d like you to go to war with the guys who are able to fight. It’s no good if the fighting strength is too overwhelmingly biased. It will

somehow finish with all of it being occupied and that's boring." (Hifumi)

He places the katana, he took out from his storage, at his waist and adjusts its position.

"The demons won't be able to suppress their desire of wanting to leave once they learn that the barrier vanished. Humans seem to instinctively have feelings of fear and rejection towards demons, elves and beastmen. Beastmen like to fight to begin with. If there are still cities of elves and beastmen, they have to fight the foreign enemies and win to keep that fragile relationship." (Hifumi)

"I was able to prepare the stage", Hifumi nodded in satisfaction.

"W-Why are you doing such thing...?" (Pheres)

"Hmm? I have no particular reason. However, it's because I will be able to enjoy the battles if it turns out like this. If everyone is fighting for dear life, this world will develop as result, too. If it develops, the battles will become even fiercer. That feels pleasant, right?" (Hifumi)

Pheres can't say anything anymore due to Hifumi's reply.

"If someone somewhere pulls the trigger hereafter, the battles will probably spread slowly from there. I have moved in order for it to turn out like this. That means, from here on it's the preparatory phase. I don't know how long it will last though." (Hifumi)

Swallowing her saliva with a gulping sound, Pheres bid farewell in a hurry, mounted the horse in panic, pulled up Njal placing her in the back and galloped towards the castle.

"Well then, let's get ready myself as well, I guess?" (Hifumi)

He headed in the opposite direction of Pheres. Facing the residence of the elves, Hifumi set out.

Chapter 118 – Candle In The Wind

When the elves who remained in the forest returned with arms to the site where the demon was, the corpse of the demon, which should have been there, had vanished.

“E-Eh...?”

“Oy, there’s nothing like a demon around here, is there?”

Hearing the story that a demon appeared and moreover that it was defeated by merely two elves, the elves, who braced themselves and came along, glared at the two who previously met it.

“No, no! It’s the truth! Right?”

“Yeah, it was without a doubt a demon. We killed it with our magic. There’s no mistake in the location either. Look, there are still bloodstains remaining, right?”

At the place, he pointed at, black remains, which can certainly be considered bloodstains, were scattered on the path which was evened roughly. If one looked closely, the bloodstains indistinctly extended towards the forest as if the corpse had been dragged along.

“... It’s continuing over there.”

“Let’s check it out. It will spell troubles if the demon is still alive and has escaped. Since there’s no doubt that it’s wounded seriously, we will finish it off with everyone launching their magic at it once we find it.”

The eight elves who were at this place agreed to that suggestion. They advance while being cautious of the surroundings and covering for each other.

With the remaining elves being specialised in magic, they had confidence in being able to resist even if the demon came. However, there’s actually none among them who has real experience in fighting. Cornering the demons, the elves locked them up in that place is a story from long before they had been born.

“That is...!”

When they advanced for around 5 minutes, one of them pointed at the dim vicinity where the space between the forest’s trees became fairly narrow. There they saw the back of someone doing something while squatting and squirming.

“No, the blood has...”

The leading elf tried to tell them that it was different from the demon he had seen for himself, but three elves immediately invoked magic misunderstanding it as enemy approach.

“Take this!”

“Demon! Come out!”

While throwing abusive language at it, they released wind blades, a lightning attack and a stone pellet spell.

All of the spells hit something and burst with a fierce sound.

“Alright!”

One of them yells while clenching their fists.

In the next moment they hear a voice different from their comrades.

“What’s “alright”? Idiot.”

No sooner than the voice finished, the head of one of the elves, who released the spells, fell down with a “plop.”

The cut elf himself had his life ended while wearing a surprised expression wondering about his sight suddenly spinning around.

“U-Uwaaah!”

Surprised by the abrupt death of his comrade, the one who raised his voice into a scream is a young elf who released a spell just like the beheaded and fallen elf.

A katana pierces the chest of the young man, who looks at the tumbling head, as if being sucked into it.

“Ue...?”

As the katana is pulled out with a short sliding sound, the young elf presses his hands on his gaping wide chest, however large amounts of blood ooze out between his fingers.

Once the young man collapsed due to blood loss, the remaining six took distance in panic.

“A-A human...?”

The one who attacked wasn't a demon but Hifumi. *(T/N: In other words, the worse option of the two)*

Wiping his katana with a paper, Hifumi stands up openly while being displeased.

“On top of interrupting someone's experiment, you even destroy the experiment's body.” (Hifumi)

What was held up by the katana was the corpse of the demon which had turned into a ragged dust cloth due to serving as shield against the magic attacks.

“Experiment, you say?”

Hifumi, who discovered a fresh demon corpse at the wayside, noticed that the trees in the surroundings were different from the demon's area as they had the peculiarity of the elven forest and apparently decided to test whether there's an influence by those trees on the blood of the demon whose ancestors are similar to the elves.

Pulling the corpse along, he threw it down at a place dense with trees.

Since the one he was working on while squatting hadn't much blood remaining anymore, he tried to cut open the body's front in order to make the change easier to understand.

However, since the elves, who turned up in a group, suddenly fired spells at him, he ended up throwing the corpse as shield out of reflex.

“Even though I went as far as operating on it at great troubles, this happened. The wind blades and stone pellet were still alright but the lightning attack burned it. Like this it ain't usable anymore.” (Hifumi)

Once the elves looked properly at the corpse, they saw that the skin had been cut open, the breastbones had been snapped off and the abdomen had also been cut open crosswise as the internal organs were smoldering and raising

smoke due to being burnt by the lightning attack.

“Uegeeeeeehh!”

Someone vomited unable to endure it any longer and triggered two more to spurt out the contents of their stomachs.

“Something like that...”

“There had been three spells. Who’s the last one?” (Hifumi)

“Judging by the direction of bloodthirst, it’s either you or you”, he points at them one after the other.

The gazes of the remaining elves gathered on the man who released the lightning attack.

“You, eh?” (Hifumi)

“Please wait! I-It wasn’t me but someone else!”

The man’s words weren’t able to stop Hifumi’s motion.

Entrusting himself to his anger, the katana, which swooped down like lightning from a stance of being held above his head, cleaved open the lips and nose starting from the middle forehead, slid through the breastbones and tore open the abdomen in a single vertical stroke.

“Aaah...”

Although he has a bloody face and eagerly picks up the spilling intestines, Hifumi looks down on the man in front of him, who is looking with a face full of desperation as his guts are slipping out between his arm, with cold eyes.

“The experiment has ended due to you elves. You wasted my time pointlessly.” (Hifumi)

Once he cut apart the trachea and carotid artery by thrusting only the point of his katana into the throat of the man, Hifumi wiped the katana with a paper and threw that paper away.

Even the remaining elves decided to abandon the forest at this moment.



There are unexpectedly many people who want to meet with Origa, who is

staying in the capital, as she is called the wife of the hero. Every day written invitations to evening parties and such arrived at the inn she is staying at from nobles and merchants.

Although she has sent a reply to pretty much all of them, each and every one was refused by Origa. Just showing up at the evening parties carried out by the royal palace, she finished the greetings without dancing and left in the middle of those.

From the standpoints of genuine nobles they were targets of contempt as noble, who had risen from commoner status, and his wife, who was formerly a slave, but with them being close to the queen and having this many military achievements, there existed a definite number of people who highly evaluated her stance as wife even amongst the nobles, since she stuck to her reason for refusing which was 「I want to refrain from participating until my husband returns safely」.

“Honestly said, it’s just because it will be annoying.” (Origa)

“... You have described it quite frankly.” (Imeraria)

Sitting opposite of Imeraria, Origa, who was tilting her cup with tea in it, wore a light blue dress which carried plenty of elegance for a noble of the kingdom if going by appearance. It even happened twice, thrice that she had been stopped by the surroundings as they greeted her wondering whether she was the daughter of some noble household or the heir of some unknown noble.

“I have decided to use my time for the sake of my husband. Something like forming deep connections with nobles all around isn’t what my husband wishes for. Besides, it looks like there are also many unpleasant fellows who look at me with filthy eyes.” (Origa)

“Considering all that, you were apparently able to attend the evening parties at the royal castle.” (Imeraria)

“Ah, there are people to whom my husband was indebted. As my husband can’t do it himself currently, it is the task of his wife to carry out his social obligations instead.” (Origa)

Putting down the cup, Origa smiled sweetly.

“I’m very thankful to you, Your Majesty, the Queen. I was able to meet

Hifumi-sama thanks to Your Majesty. I gained the power to exact my revenge after breaking out from a helpless situation.” (Origa)

“Oh? The other party, who deceived you, Origa-san, has already...” (Imeraria)

“Yes, I killed him.” (Origa)

The maid, who prepared a second serving of tea shivered with a start due to the word “killed”, but as she continued her task in a manner as if she hadn’t heard anything, Imeraria decided to console her afterwards as she caught on the maid’s startling at the edge of her view.

“However, the people who ordered that are still alive.” (Origa)

“... If the one your words are pointing at is Viscount Hagenti, he disappeared to the public execution ground.” (Imeraria)

Origa opened her eyes widely due to Imeraria’s remark.

“Did you give the order for that, Your Majesty?” (Origa)

“Yes, of course.” (Imeraria)

How unexpected, Origa was surprised within her mind.

Since the time Origa acted as adventurer in the capital, the evaluation towards Imeraria had the image of her being naive as statesman, if one traduced her, and gentle, if one said it elegantly.

She familiarly gets in touch with commoners and carries out charity for the poor. She might be splendid for a person who possesses wealth, but it’s inevitable for her to be evaluated as somewhat “dreamy” as royalty, she assessed.

“It’s only natural to put priority on the country’s interests in my decisions once I turned into a queen being responsible for this country while losing my status as princess who simply waited to be married off somewhere without holding any responsibilities whatsoever... I still feel somewhat out of place, however I believe that I’m aware of being in a position I ought to accomplish.” (Imeraria)

“That’s something wonderful.” (Origa)

Origa, who hid her surprised expression with a smile, praised her while putting together her hands in front of her chest and placing her thin fingers

onto each other.

“However, it’s not only a single man at the rank of Viscount who is the other party for the revenge mentioned by me.” (Origa)

The figure of Origa, who restrained her mouth with a “Fufu”, seems to be lovely even seen from the eyes of Imeraria who is a woman, too. She understands the young noble men who want to call out to her as they don’t know her true nature.

“It’s Vichy itself. Even the matter of them taking up arms against Hifumi-sama is inexcusable, but it’s obvious that it’s Vichy who influenced the corrupt nobles of Orsongrande from behind the scenes. My final objective is for everyone from Vichy’s Central Committee to be turned into corpses.” (Origa)

From completely talking like a dreaming maiden, Origa changes her words into a murky, dark desire for revenge.

“Then it’s your order for the army led by Alyssa-san to be currently at the border to Vichy, Origa-san?” (Imeraria)

In contrast to Origa, Imeraria doesn’t feel like smiling. Having a dubious look turned at her, Origa smiled once again.

“That was ordered by my husband. Given that the monsters became powerful, he apparently told them to carry out a large-scale extermination operation to eradicate them once the preparations have finished.” (Origa)

“Then revenge towards Vichy means...” (Imeraria)

“You have heard from my husband. As the country is unexpectedly tenacious it’s difficult to cause its downfall with a simple attack from outside.” (Origa)

Even Imeraria, who has studied history, nodded while saying “Indeed” towards that statement.

“The reasons for a country to perish is the great number of internal problems. The country will be attacked and overthrown or absorbed at the point it lost its unity due to exhaustion from things like antagonism and epidemics.” (Origa)

In fact Orsongrande has a history of having annexed several small countries in its past as well. Several of those left behind became city-states forming Vichy,

however Imeraria recalled that there were some people who used the occasion of financial collapse due to famines and statesmen mismanaging according to the kingdom's records.

“But, the current Vichy is heading towards a friendly exchange with Fokalore. I believe they are on the whole doing that to maintain their stability as group of city-states, however...” (Imeraria)

“Ah, only one place is continuing to be against it as they consider the entire structure as faulty since it's a nation. That's a commendable aspect as well.” (Origa)

“... What are you planning to do?” (Imeraria)

Imeraria, who recalled having some knowledge about the nation which is opposing according to Origa, asks while having a bitter smile.

“I simply sent a letter. Of course I also got the permission to do so from my husband while receiving advice from him. Let's have the privilege of watching as spectators while continuing our research on sealing magic?” (Origa)

“I will return to the research then”, in the end Imeraria wasn't able to ask about the contents of the letter due to Origa standing up.