

Spoiler Warning This SS takes place after the conclusion of the Alicization arc, which will not be completed until around volume 15.

There is but one ultimate way

Sword Art Online: Gaiden X2 May 2010

Caution

This short story edition contains a lot of information that has not yet been published in Dengeki Bunko [Sword Art Online]. Be careful of spoilers.

This day's event was completed in the predawn between 2 and 5 a.m (laughs). The contents are...as always, Kirito-shi and as always, Asuna-san and as always, Lyfa-san and as always Lizbeth-san and as always Scilica-san and as always Sinon-san and as always Yui-san and as always Alice-san. Well, Alice is not always.....

In this SAO work, the heroines kept increasing as the story progressed, but the structure of the story didn't let protagonist Kirito-shi to come up with a clear answer, if I tried to find a conclusion to the situation, it'd only be in this form. Was what I thought as I wrote this short story.

This time too, as I re-read the script..... I felt it was terrible in various ways. But, well, I can't stop thinking that it was, in a sense, the meaning of the SAO series (laugh).

The Web version 『Alicization Arc』 introduced «Subjective time acceleration», and that idea was later used in the 『Accelerated World』 series. The protagonist Haruyuki-kun is also surrounded by an increasing number of girls, but Kirito-shi has a different personality, in different situations and draws different conclusions. I look forward to continuing this series in the future.



As I woke up from the bed, the gentle sun shone in through the white lace curtains at the window. This itself is a very ordinary scene without any problems or drastic changes. Just as I was ready to continue my deep sleep, my eyes that were about to be closed suddenly opened like a boom. ———— Hold on ... Hold on a minute!

This... this... this is too weird.

First of all, this bed is unusually large and soft.

I —— Kirigaya Kazuto should only be using a foam filled single bed in my bedroom.

But now, my back felt like it was coated by the highest grade of soft feathers. Even as I moved my left hand, it did not touch the wall that should exist. What covered me was not my ordinary fluffy blanket, but a smooth and soft silk one.

Also, the ceiling was inexplicably high, and I had no idea if the decorations were of the western style or Japanese style. In addition to that, a beautiful classical chandelier hung there in place of LED lights.

Finally, coming in from the gaps of the window covered by heavy curtains at the other side of the room —— It was so large, maybe it was a twin window —— was the light of the winter sun at a low angle.

Isn't this the middle of summer?

At the end of August, the summer vacations will just end in a few days, so I was filled with anxiety and despair, giving up, when I faced the facts: just yesterday morning, I had to withstand being scorched by the violent sun, I recalled forcing myself to climb out of bed in that condition.

However, at this moment, I was in this unfamiliar luxurious room, and it was incredibly cold, such that if I was not well covered by the blanket, I probably wouldn't stand the cold. No matter how I looked at it, this is winter, a winter morning... what on earth is this...

At this time, I finally remembered.

Yesterday morning, I woke up in the middle of the heat, drowsily brushed my teeth and changed my clothes. While considering doing my summer homework, and reluctantly walking to the table, I received a phone call from the person who was the one responsible for the RATH development department —— Higa, and the content was an official statement. The blockade in UW had some problems, and he wanted me to help solve the problem. Thus, on that ridiculously hot day, complaints came out of my mouth. However my heart was lively enough, as I took my bike straight to RATH's branch in Roppongi, following the instructions on the screen to go into the STL. Without even bothering to find out the circumstances, I Dived in —— and woke up in that room.

In other words, this is probably a room in the building in UW's *Among the Stars* «Cardina», capital of Centoria. As long as I have used the STL, I was still a little afraid of the effects of the time acceleration function, as my memory before the Dive would be a little fuzzy. If I wanted to forget, why not simply forget even more things... for example in the real world, the fact that there were three days before summer vacation ends...

...While having these thoughts, I decided to get up before saying anything, then stretched my body wide.

Then, as my hands and fingers reached out, they met a soft and warm object, causing me to be taken aback slightly.

I slowly looked to my right.

There, with her left cheek buried in the large pillow, having a peaceful expression, and making gentle sleeping sounds, lay a chestnut haired girl. It was possibly a face I had more memories of than myself, it was Asuna, Yuuki Asuna's.

What on Earth happened?

After being called by Higa, the only person Diving should have been me. Even if after that they encountered a problem and Asuna Dived in as well, why would we be sleeping on the same bed?

But before going into that, I needed to confirm something else first.

I carefully turned around gently, this time to my left.

Suddenly, a radiant golden light pierced my eyes.

Even though the sunlight in winter was weak, it still reflected the brilliant glorious hair of gold radiantly. With similar colored eyelashes and translucent white skin, the girl lying in a posture face to face with Asuna on the right — Alice, the Integrity Knight - Alice Synthesis Fifty.

This situation was beyond my understanding. However, it was just the beginning of the shock that heaven delivered.

On Alice's other side, there was yet another person's figure.

I opened my eyes and mouth, and slowly moved my line of sight upwards.

There, asleep and curled up like a cat, was a aqua-colored short haired girl, the ice sniper, Sinon, Asada Shino.

If this is the case, maybe... ma-y-be——

I turned the right to face Asuna's direction.

Underneath the silk blanket, with her face facing upwards, in an upright sleeping posture was the yellow-green haired, pony tailed girl, the Green Swordsman, Lyfa... my little sister, no, actually my cousin sister, Kirigaya Suguha.

.....How big IS this bed?! Was what I asked myself in my heart.

Even if five people slept on top, there was still some extra space, so I wouldn't be surprised if the bed was about 8 tatami (or about 4 square feet). It would be really troublesome to change the sheets of a bed of this size.

At this moment, something pressed against my right foot.

Based on my angle of sight, it wasn't Asuna —— as I forced my brain to stop thinking, shifting my thinking pace to a slower gear, I raised my head again, to look at my feet.

Using my foot as a pillow, with pink hair covering the freckled face of the girl, was the master blacksmith —— Lizbet, Shinozaki Rika.

And beside her, with her tea colored hair falling to both sides, a delicate girl sleeping with a small feathery dragon clinging to her chest, the beast tamer —— Scilica, Ayano Keiko.

It wasn't 8 tatami, it was more like 10 tatami. The Arabian royal family was probably the only people who would think of using this kind of bed in the real world.

Despite being in a virtual world like UW, even those with administrative privileges would have no way to arbitrarily create items, so this bed would still require a woodcutter to cut the wood, then combined together by a carpenter, finally getting manufacturer to set it up before it could be called a bed. This should be extremely troublesome work.... just how much would this bed have cost?

While I was engaged in thoughts escaping reality, this time, covered by the blanket between me and Asuna, in the one meter space there, something slowly moved.

This source slowly climbed to my chest starting from my stomach, and from the edge of the blanket a head emerged.

8 years old, a young girl with gorgeous flowing dark hair, with her sleepy eyes, moved closer to look at my face, then blinked, smiled and said,

"Good morning, Papa!"

"En... Good morning, Yui."

If this bed was 10 tatami, then the room must exceed 30 tatami.

An hour after I woke up, me, Asuna, Yui, Alice, Sinon, Lizbet, Lyfa, Scilica and Pina, a total of eight people plus one, sat together in a circle at the table in the southern part of the room.

Now, the girls stayed in the kitchen together to prepare tea and Siral water. While drinking the citrus drink with a familiar taste, I asked aloud,

"Hey, where are we?"

It was Alice who replied,

"Based on the visible scene outside the window, we should be in the north of Centoria's outskirts, in what used to be the private territory of the «Aristocrats» of this area."

After talking in an unchanging resolute tone, she pulled her golden hair closer to one side, while moving her teacup closer to her lips.

"Er... em... I've never came here before, moreover, we secretly crossed the border to this place, we will be locked in prison..."

After I said this, Lyfa opened her eyes wide and said, "Whoa, really harsh, Onii-chan can live for a few years in a secure place."

"Ahaha, it is indeed like this, but challenging the rules and making the GM angry is a special ability Kirito is proud of."

After Asuna's comment, everyone laughed together.

Although it is kind of late to say this after everyone woke up on the same bed, all seven girls were dressed in white pajamas of similar design, so the situation now was full of an immoral feeling. Even though the clothes texture looked very thin, because there was a strong heater, the room was quite warm. Even I merely wore my ordinary black cotton pajamas.

If I was not at the table, it would have looked like a beautiful impressionist painting.

But even so, I couldn't say "Now everything is up to you" and then escape out of the windows.

No... perhaps it was a situation that occurred by force... Even though I was afraid of my own foreboding, but something had to be clearly confirmed. I finished off the Siral water that was

now lukewarm in one gulp, then put the cup on the table. Everyone's attention was drawn to me. After clearing my throat, I finally asked this question,

"...That... this situation is really...? I totally did not know that everyone Dived in here together..."

Suddenly, the girls began exchanging glances, thus I understood.

They had already finished talking, and know why this happened.

In my heart, the fear I had of the foreboding earlier worsened.

Ahem, Lizbet cleared her throat, then said,

"Then... I shall explain everything clearly."

"S-sorry to trouble you."

"This all began because.... Summer vacation is nearing its end."

"Aha?"

In my surprise, I opened my eyes and thought — Indeed, to a student, it was a most dazzling summer holiday.

Three days more till it ended.

There's no need to mention the problem, no, the tragedy, as everyone would know it.

I completely agree with these words, but what does this have to do with our situation?

"...Ah, it's like this... because the summer vacation is about to end, so we should do our final activity together, so we visit the UW together?"

I tilted my head, speculating in my mind.

"This is a great idea, but couldn't you have just told it to me in the beginning?"

The girls all shook their heads together, then Lizbet opened her mouth and said,

"That is, the problem is not as simple as you think, Asuna and I are in our third year, this could be our last summer holidays!"

Indeed, of everyone here, the eldest would be the 20-year-old Alice, followed by the 18-year-old Asuna and Liz. Sinon and me are 17, Scilica and Lyfa are 16, and the youngest is of

course Yui. If I included the years I spent in UW, I would probably be at around Alice's age. But in the real world I was only high school second year student.

Liz pointed at me with her finger, then continued.

"Our third year's summer holidays are about to end, this means... emm... A stage in our life is coming to an end! If we use MMO terms, this means we are in the second round, which means we need to start on the long and difficult training period."

— *University students or members of the community may have the right to talk about this*
— was what I wanted to say, but I could understand what the problem was now.

"Oh, oh... maybe."

Seeing me nod, Liz forcefully stared at me, and said in a calm voice,

"You should understand during next year's summer holidays."

In short, I looked at the calendar, while thinking "After this summer holidays ends are the exams."

Suddenly a thought came to me.

After that Liz blushed for no apparent reason, and looked down. Upon seeing this situation, Sinon used her cold tone, and continued to explain,

"Even though I'm only in my second year, I can understand Liz and Asuna's feelings, after all, I intend to get a job. Even... even considering the real world, we need to start looking at reality. I'm not saying I hate or don't want to grow up, but if it went on like this, another problem will surface."

"P-problem?"

"Yes, it is, what to do with our «Alliance»?"

"Ah? Alliance?"

Hearing this unfamiliar word, once again my thoughts went astray.

Is it an ALO association? But I've never heard of it...

Sneaking a look at me while I was like that, Sinon said,

"Abbreviation — KKA, the official name is Kirito Kataomoi Alliance."^[1]

"....."

—In this kind of situation, being able to respond appropriately was a skill I have never practiced, so I could only stand there frozen, but thinking about it, this may be one of the only solutions...

On the other hand, for Sinon to say these things... I should say I'm not surprised that it was Sinon. With this level of willpower, it isn't surprising that she is GGO's strongest sniper.

Sinon's face maintained her grim expression, she spread both hands wide and said,

"Even though it is a little too late, but to be honest, me and Liz, Lyfa, Scilica sneakily created the alliance together, protecting Asuna and you. After all, no one was confident they could fight against Asuna confidently."

At this point in the speech, Asuna who sat on my right, suddenly became 80% shy, and the remaining 20% formed an expression I didn't know, as her head shrank down, and to my left, Alice, behaving like a knight, suppressed her feelings, so that other people could not read her expression as she drank her tea.

The one who opened her mouth after Sinon was Lyfa. In contrast to Sinon, her face was red, and using a muzzled tone she said,

"T-that... I'm satisfied just being by Onii-chan's side. But while we were in ALO, while I was with Liz and Sinon drinking tea, everyone had a pensive look. Even just staying by your side was difficult, and one day will come, where you have to go for further education or get a job. And slowly leave our small circle, then go less often onto ALO. The environment around us would gradually change... and finally... it is possible that even this feeling would disappear... right?"

Suddenly, Lyfa's eyes had tears, and even I felt my chest tighten.

Scilica, next to her, faced downwards as she held Lyfa's hands, and started to say,

"W... we also know that there is no easy way to solve this, but didn't want it to be like "we can't do anything about it" just before ending."

At this time... sometime while we were crying together, Alice said,

"There isn't only one real world."

"Eh....."

I looked at the knight's face once again, a faint smile seemed to emerge on her white cheeks. Her originally drooping eyelashes moved upwards, as her cobalt blue eyes looked at me.

"——To me, the real world or UW, both are reality, and in reality we can't change the flow of time."

"Th-this... this truly is....."

"I directly went to see Asuna, bowed and begged to her, to give them... no, "us" a chance to live in another reality, so that even in the real world, dazzling memories that last a lifetime will remain with us. And, if possible, also give us something that can be solid proof."

Alice's words were too difficult to understand, so I could only listen naturally, and finally faced Asuna, the girl I met the earliest, and the one I had many adventures with, who lifted her head, and used her hazelnut colored eyes to look at me.

".....I'm quite worried, and have thought a lot, but... me and Kirito, Alice, Sinon, Lyfa, Liz, Scilica, as well as Yui, if everyone can be happy... If this kind of thing really exists, then I would reach out my hands... and give it a try....."

"Everyone... together."

In front of me mumbling to myself, Lizbet used the tone she started with to continue,

"Because of this, everyone Dived together into UW using 6 units of STL."

After she smiled vibrantly,

"All of us can get married to you together because of this world!"

And Yui who was still sitting in my lap, suddenly turned around and said to me,

"Even though I'm a bit reluctant, since the ethics and rules in the real world do not apply to this place, this is not being unfaithful, Papa."

For a few moments, all I could do was hold my mug as I sat slumped on the chair. I didn't even think things this deep, and couldn't tell apart clearly if this was reality or a dream made up by the STL.

But I can't sit like this forever, so I'd best raise my head, and say,

"That... all in all, can you first start confirming beginning from the simplest facts.....?"

"Please ask," was what Sinon answered.

"Based on what I know, the marriage system in UW... That, how do i say, shouldn't it be a one husband one wife system?"

Alice was the one who answered.

"That is correct, but third ranked knights and above are not subject to this restriction, in addition to your, what is it... «Account»? Your authority should be even higher than the emperors."

".....I see."

Nodding, even I discovered I had nowhere to run to.

I clumsily looked at the seven girls sitting at the table one by one, then used my most serious expression and voice, and slowly said,

".....Memories... eh, that... to tell you the truth, I really don't have that kind of qualification... but I am very happy for your feelings, even though this matter is too sudden, I still have no idea how to organize my feelings properly, but if it is good memories, that, marriage kind of thing, even needs, then there is not enough time... the problem is that Dive time should be past noon, if everyone wants to rush home at night, then about four or five hours still remain, should I hurry to get my clothes, or should I borrow the establishments?"

As I made this remark, I finally felt my heart's consciousness.

Marriage in UW, compared to the marriage between players in the ALO system, the weight of representation was completely different. But in another reality, the real marriage, if by doing this, the girls would get dazzling memories that would last their lifetime, then I——

"...First of all, let's all go to the largest church in Centoria! I'll take..."

As I said that halfway and was getting up, Asuna pulled at my sleeve.

".....?"

"That... Kirito, I think there is no need to hurry."

"Eh, but we only have less than five hours left..."

"That, That is... I forgot to tell you at the beginning... but..."

Asuna continued,

"Right now, UW has an acceleration of 10000 times, so we have the remaining time of fifty thousand hours left, so..."

Yui finally said,

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"Two thousand and eighty three days, which is about five years and eight months."

(End)

References

1. [↑](#) Kataomoi means unrequited love.