

# 戦司書 荒縄の姫君

*Tatakau Sisho to Aranawa no Himegimi*

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スパダッシュ

Tatakau Shisho  
vol.6 - Fighting Librarians and the Straw  
Rope Princess

by Yamagata Ishio

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# Contents

〔序章〕	姫君の希望	情熱	10
〔第一章〕	空の鯨	鐘の音の怪物	21
〔第二章〕	少年とある諦めについて		51
〔第三章〕	理由なき人助け	殺人	115
〔第四章〕	老人の夢	その犠牲	155
〔第五章〕	鬱黒蜥蜴	追いつめられた鼠たち	211
〔第六章〕	光の花	ノロテイの世界	258
〔断章〕	楽園	継承者	296



*Enriko*  
エンリケ

武装司書の協力者。かつては神溺教団に属していたが、ノロティの働きで離反した。

## 楽園管理者

神溺教団の総帥。  
正体は謎に  
包まれている。



*Nolety* ノロティ

武装司書見習いの少女。  
格闘戦を得意とし、最近著しく成長している。

*Dark* ダークキット

ノロティが出会った謎の少年。武装司書を強く憎む。



## **Overseer of Paradise**

The leader of the Indulging God Cult. His identity is shrouded in mystery.

## **Enlike**

Collaborates with the Armed Librarians. He once belonged to the Indulging God Cult but detached from it thanks to Noloty.

## **Noloty**

A trainee Armed Librarian. Adept in melee combat, she has considerably grown lately.

## **Arkit**

A mysterious boy Noloty met. Loathes the Armed Librarians.

# 戦司書 荒縄の姫君

Tatakai Shisho to Aranawa no Himegimi

characters

Ireia イレイア

武装司書。武闘派の  
実力者だが、普段は  
優しいおばさん。



武装司書

Hamyut's  
ハムユツツ

パントーラ図書館  
館長代行。冷酷で  
極めて好戦的。  
投石器を操る。

Mint  
ミンズ

武装司書。粗野だが  
勇敢な性格の男。



Armed Librarian. A considerable martial artist. However, she's usually a kind old lady.

### **Minth**

Armed Librarian. Has a rough yet gallant personality.

### **Hamyuts**

The Acting Director of Bantorra Library. A cruel and aggressive woman. Uses a sling.

# Prologue: The Hope and Passion of the Princess

The opponent was moving fast; much faster than the opposing Armed Librarian Minth Chezine. While keeping his opponent at bay with a handgun, he retreated. His opponent specialized in close combat. Getting close would be disadvantageous.

“Shit!”

Minth’s opponent avoided his shots. The rubber bullets grazed her dark-brown hair. She avoided them not to the side or below, but kept on straight ahead. Tilting her body extremely forward, she leapt ahead.

“Tch!”

Minth stepped back but the distance between them became three meters. He was forced to decide whether to retreat further or engage her in close combat.

He chose the latter and threw away his handgun. He raised the wooden sword held in his left hand and slashed at his opponent.

Enlike Bishile, who was watching the two fight from the side, muttered to himself. *Even though it’s futile, you have to make some distance.* Minth didn’t have a good chance to win in close combat.

They were in Bantorra Library during dusk. This was part of training ground behind the main building. Inside a simple ring enclosed by fences with a radius of around 300 meters, Minth and his opponent were conducting real combat training. Enlike watched over their fight.

Minth excitedly swung down the wooden sword in his left hand. Just as he was about to get a direct hit, his opponent stopped her movements just before and lay on the ground.

It was uncertain whether Minth’s eyes could follow her next move. She rotated her body with her two hands as the axis. Her feet sled a few centimeters on the ground. Her heels hit him accurately on his ankles. Both of his feet were swept away and his body floated in air.

She rotated her body once more. Spreading both legs, she clamped down on

Minth's torso.

Their bodies rolled on the ground. The next instant, Enlike spoke.

"That's enough. Noloty won."

They both suddenly stopped.

Noloty Malche ended up straddling Minth as he collapsed with his face up. She grabbed Minth's left wrist with her left hand. Her fist was stopped just as it was about to strike.

If this was a real battle, fists would have rained down on him without giving him any chance to escape. This was the form of Noloty's certain victory that once even felled the Monster Zatoh. Once the current Noloty has assumed this position, escape would be impossible.

"This makes it nine wins and nine losses. It's a tie."

Noloty said and grinned. Minth complained to her as she was atop his stomach.

"No, it's nine wins, eight loses and a tie. I'm ahead by one."

"You're still saying that?"

Enlike lent Noloty his hand and she got off Minth. He then stood up.

"Enlike stopped us too soon then. It was a tie."

Enlike was fed up with it. Minth dragged their fight five matches ago forever. Hating to lose wasn't bad, but he was too persistent.

"No, that was my win."

Noloty pouted her lips.

"No, I had a secret plan for reversal."

"What is it? Please show me."

"Even if you tell me to show it to you I can't, it needs to flow with the fight."

Although they just ended their fight, the two were energetically arguing.

"That can't be."

“It can.”

“Liar.”

“Oh, so it reached that point eh?”

The tired Enlike interrupted the two.

“I don’t mind which of you won.”

Minth was still dissatisfied.

“...That’s not good at all.”

“You’re stubborn as well. Oh well. Let’s end it here for today.”

After he said so, Noloty also made an unhappy face. *Even though I can still continue...* she wanted to say.

“If you still have the energy to spare go run. Ten laps around the island at your full speed.”

“Yes sir!”

Saying so, Noloty jumped over the fence and ran away. Seeing her jump over Bantorra Library’s wall, Minth plunked down on the ground. Enlike stopped the training because he knew fatigue had caught up to him.

Nine months have passed since Noloty and Enlike met. During that time, Noloty grew strong beyond recognition. She was a different person from when they first met.

Her supervisor Mirepoc was no longer able to be her sparring partner. She ended up asking Enlike and other Armed Librarians to have real combat training with her. Weren’t they already at the situation in which an active Armed Librarian wasn’t able to compete with a trainee?

“She sure got strong.”

“Because Noloty made great efforts.”

Enlike revealed his honest impressions. Currently he was in charge of the trainee’s practice. The only one of them to come under his rigorous coaching was Noloty.

“But shit, this is making me angry. Losing to her feels ten times as frustrating as losing to other guys. I’ve lost my confidence.”

Minth was still vexed. *Since his ability is meant for intelligence and support, fighting isn’t his forte. He shouldn’t mind it that much,* thought Enlike.

“Frankly speaking, I have no idea why she’s still a trainee.”

Minth said.

“It’s a problem of human nature. It seems people like Mirepoc and you have acknowledged her, but other people still think of her as an unreliable girl.”

“Certainly.”

Enlike made a small sigh. Although Noloty was lacking nothing in ability, her promotion to an Armed Librarian was being postponed. Ireia opposed it, and Hamyuts and Mattalast weren’t in favor either.

He could understand them. She didn’t know how to doubt people and hated killing. As long as she couldn’t grow out of her naivety, she was unfit to be an Armed Librarian.

“Well, her promotion’s close. At the end she is strong enough for an Armed Librarian. If we’re talking about her personality even the Director or Mokkania were more of a problem.”

Minth said and smiled.

“That’s true.”

Enlike answered with complicated feelings. She really wanted to be promoted, but becoming an Armed Librarian would put her in more danger. He felt worried and could simply not be happy about it.

“Well then.”

Minth rose up.

“I’ll get going.”

“Already?”

“Yeah, time is pressing. I now have to look for a spy in Rona.”

Minth's ability was known as Sacred Eyes, allowing him to see a person's soul and state of mind. It was the best ability to use when looking for traitors and spies. For the fight against the Indulging God Cult, he flew around the world without a moment's rest.

"Sorry for asking you on such busy times."

"What're you saying, this was great for relieving my stress. Call me again if you need to."

Saying so, Minth walked away.

Enlike left the training ground and headed back home. He rented a humble apartment at the downtown of Past God Bantorra's Island. He ended up getting treated as an irregular staff member of Bantorra Library. His salary was about the same as a normal librarian. It was less than that of an Armed Librarian and even of a trainee.

If evaluated only by his strength, it wouldn't be weird for them to give him enough money to play around for a year. But Enlike had no complaints. Because he told them the following himself.

*If you were to give me a high salary, my troubles would only increase.* Since he planned on leaving Bantorra Library at some stage, he didn't want to get too deeply involved.

"Enlike-san."

Someone suddenly spoke up to him at the Library's courtyard. He noticed the Armed Librarian Ireia was sitting on a bench. Apparently having finished her work, she was busy knitting elegantly.

"Thanks for your hard work. Could I talk to you for a while?"

Ireia moved her plump body to the bench's edge. Enlike sat down.

"I've seen Noloty. Unbelievable. She became that strong."

"Since she's fighting against me every day, it would be weird for her to not grow stronger."

Ireia smiled wryly.

“Why won’t you frankly praise her sometimes?”

Enlike averted his gaze and snorted.

“I’ve been serving here for a long time. I’ve raised many children, but I’ve never seen one who betrayed my expectations that much. It’s all thanks to you, Enlike-san.”

“No, Noloty got strong by herself. That’s all.”

Enlike truly thought so. Out of all the trainees he taught, only Noloty was able to keep up with his hellish training.

“She’s been the most passionate child around from a long time ago.”

Ireia said while still knitting. Come to think of it, she was also in charge of teaching the next generation. It was her who brought up Noloty up until she became a trainee.

Enlike voiced a doubt that he wanted to ask about since a while.

“By the way, why does she want to become an Armed Librarian?”

“Oh, you don’t know? So you also don’t know about her origins and all that?”

“We haven’t really had personal talks.”

Ireia smiled bitterly.

“You should speak to each other more. Why are you strangely distancing yourself?”

“Leave me alone.”

Enlike became sullen.

“So, Noloty-san came from the mountain region in the southern frontier. She said it’s a small village where they did nothing but raise goats. Enlike-san, prepare to be surprised. I will tell you something amazing.”

Ireia sank into silence for a bit.

“That girl was her village’s princess.”

Enlike was surprised. Noloty, a princess? He couldn’t imagine it at all.

“Unbelievable, right? I thought it was a lie for a while. But when Minth looked

at her with his Sacred Eyes he saw that it wasn't."

"Why an Armed Librarian then?"

"That girl ran away from home. She said that she wanted to leave the village no matter what."

"They're probably worried about her."

"Probably. When you ask her about her hometown, she makes a really troubled face."

Ireia smiled.

"So why an Armed Librarian?"

"Since she ran away from home when she was little, she was in trouble because she had nowhere to go. She heard that by getting into an Armed Librarian school she could receive food and education, so she rode on that chance."

"That's it?"

"That's not all."

Saying so, Ireia began laughing.

"I remembered something funny. It's from when I asked her why she wanted to become an Armed Librarian.

She said it was because she never lost in a fight at her village."

Even Enlike was dumbfounded.

"So she thought she could become an Armed Librarian..."

"Unthinkable. I thought it would truly be impossible. I told her that she should quit for her own good."

"...But she didn't?"

Ireia smiled wryly.

"She was the only child who didn't listen to what I said in the last ten years. She truly troubled me."

He could understand why. Looking at Noloty, she frankly never listened to

most of what other people told her.

“I’ll say this clearly, but Noloty-san has nothing like some talent that can’t be found anywhere. There are plenty of talented children around her.

But, at some point, all these talented children were surpassed by that girl.”

“ ... ”

“She truly is a mysterious child. She managed to make the impossible possible before we even noticed. I’m the most senior among the Armed Librarians, but I’ve never seen a child like her.”

“Then someday she will surpass both me and you.”

Enlike said half-jokingly. However, Ireia did not deny it.

“I want to say there’s no way, but... I don’t know that child’s limits.”

How stronger will Noloty grow from now on? Will she be able to safely work as an Armed Librarian?

He certainly was anxious for her, but at the same time had some expectations. Noloty possessed something no other person had. He didn’t know what, but she had it.

Was thinking this only due to Enlike’s bias?

At any rate, the day she would be promoted to an Armed Librarian approached by the day.

And then, in December 18, 1925...

Noloty Malche has died.

# Chapter 1: The Sky Whales and the Chime Monster

## Part 1

The sound of dull, oppressive bells rang throughout Past God Bantorra's Island.

All Armed Librarian who heard this bell stopped their work and put their highest priority on gathering. These were the bells that rang during times like the Monster's attack and Mokkaania's rebellion.

The normal librarians evacuated slowly. The trainees lead all visitors to a safe place. Slipping between them, the Armed Librarians ran towards the conference room that was their meeting place.

Enlike alone stayed sitting in a chair at the lobby. He gazed at them with empty eyes. Ten days have passed since he heard of Noloty's death. He kept just sitting the whole time without listening to anyone.

*Why am I here? Enlike thought. I have nothing to do at this place anymore. Since Noloty died, there's nothing to connect me to Bantorra Library anymore.*

But he still kept sitting there. His eyes wandered through the people running around. He was looking for the figure of Noloty who couldn't be there.

How many months ago was it? They have played chess here before. There were some playing tables scattered in the lobby for the guests that needed to kill some time. Since Enlike had a lot of free time, Noloty taught him.

"Umm, you have four more minutes."

Only Noloty was talking. Enlike stayed quiet and glared at the board. There was no rule in chess that allowed one to take pieces by glaring at them, though.

Enlike moved the knight. He was at a position where he could aim for both the bishop and the rook simultaneously.

"Oh, that's a good move, so I'll escape here."

Noloty moved her rook back. Enlike took the bishop. At that time, Hamyuts

who was watching from the back spoke.

“Just where would that count as a good move? Noloty, you could have had checkmate by moving the queen to f7.”

Noloty made a face that felt as if she was saying *why are you saying unnecessary things?* Enlike unconsciously let out blue sparks from his body.

“Hamyuts, is Noloty good at this game?”

“Not at all.”

Cold sweat ran on Noloty’s cheeks. Enlike stood up.

“I remembered I have some errands to do. I’m going home.”

Noloty hurriedly grabbed his sleeve.

“Umm, if you got tired of chess, will you do darts next? You know how to play darts?”

“I don’t.”

“I’m not good at it either, but won’t you play? Come on, Mattalast-san will teach us.”

She could hear Hamyuts murmuring behind her.

“It isn’t easy babysitting that kid.”

Yes, that happened. Noloty invited Enlike to play with her at something. He had no one to invite him to play anymore.

Was it about a month ago?

Enlike also taught the trainees during that day. His entire training regimen was made of real combat. The trainees could freely attack Enlike and he could freely attack them back. Since he did not get hurt even when being hit by attacks, it was a training method possible only for him.

When he was about to leave Ireia spoke with him.

“Haven’t you softened lately, Enlike-san?”

“Yeah.”

At first, he would make attacks that could kill in the worst-case scenario. Now

he settled on making attacks that would cause heavy injuries at worst. Ireia chimed in.

“Don’t hold yourself back, Enlike-san. You can do whatever you want except killing them.”

“I know, but... I’m sorry.”

Unusually, Enlike apologized frankly.

“Oh my, what’s wrong?”

“I’m worried for Noloty.”

Recently, it seemed that the other trainees complained to Noloty about the training being too hard. *Why don’t they talk to me? Those spineless guys,* thought Enlike.

But since it was for Noloty he had no choice. He started going easier on them.

“Oh my... so it can’t be helped.”

Ireia said and smiled. Enlike sighed in relief. When Noloty was troubled, he was troubled as well.

But there was no longer anyone to trouble Enlike.

This happened three months ago. It was the time when the man called Volken took Olivia and ran away.

Enlike didn’t think that man betrayed them for the Indulging God Cult. He didn’t look like a cowardly man.

He didn’t know much about the person called Olivia. He heard that eventually Volken had been killed. Just what was his goal?

Anyway, after the two have disappeared, something strange happened with Enlike.

His memories that were taken away by the Cult were suddenly restored.

His late parents as well as his village that was erased during wartime. He retrieved only a part of his memories, but Enlike was still able to find out about his personal history.

Enlike's memories were not the only ones to return. The memories of his comrades eaten along with him by the Monster were also restored. His comrades have died, but their memories were still alive within Enlike.

“So you came from the Principality of Meliot, Enlike-san.”

Noloty unexpectedly shared her sentiments.

“To be exact, the west of Meliot. It now gained independence and became the Kuler Region.”

Mattalast corrected her.

“What about it now?”

Enlike asked. The hometown in his memories was wrapped in war without any end in sight. He lost both of his parents due to that. He was probably caught by the Indulging God Cult afterwards.

“The war is over. The new government's also doing pretty well. It's now at peace.”

“I see.”

Enlike said and smiled. He only had a fragment of a memory about his hometown. Even so, he was happy to hear everything was at peace there.

“Do you want to go back, Enlike-san?”

Noloty asked. However, Enlike shook his head.

“It doesn't have to be right away. I'll return after the fight with the Cult is over. Besides...”

He closed his eyes. He wasn't to only one to retrieve his memories. The memories of his comrades captured at the Monster's island also returned.

There were also war orphans like Enlike among them. There were those who were trafficked. There were also those we lost their position as False Men due to some blunder and were turned to Meats. They were already dead, but their memories lived inside Enlike.

“I'll have to go to the other guys' hometowns as well. I will travel around the world.”

“So it’ll be a world cruise.”

Noloty said in a carefree manner.

“Yeah. Not bad... a world cruise, huh.”



For some reason, Noloty watched him with excited eyes. He could not understand their meaning and kept chatting. Time passed and Noloty left her chair to go to work. As she did, Mattalast suddenly poked Enlike.

“What’re you doing?”

“Invite her.”

“Who?”

“Invite Noloty. Ask her ‘won’t you come with me?’ – wasn’t that the flow there?”

“What flow?”

“...Really, sometimes you’re so...”

Mattalast seemed troubled. Though Enlike had no idea why.

Nonetheless, he thought that inviting Noloty for a trip around the world wouldn’t be so bad. But time passed and he didn’t breach the subject.

And now, the person he wanted to invite was gone.

It’s not that he was in love.

He didn’t think of any grand things like wanting to unite with her or be together with her his whole life.

He just thought that if Noloty was alive and happy it would be good.

He wanted her to become stronger. Strong to the extent she could protect both herself and her happiness. Enlike wanted to protect Noloty and the Library until she could be strong enough.

Then, after defeating the Indulging God Cult and seeing Noloty grow into a fine warrior, he would leave Bantorra Library.

One day, if he could live in some town and hear about her good health once or twice a year, he wanted nothing more. He thought that would be fine.

If he wishes for too much it would come crashing down. *I mustn’t wish for too much*, Enlike thought.

But if even that was too much of a luxury, what should he wish for?

“...Enlike-san.”

Mirepoc stood in front of his eyes. She seemed like she wanted to say something. *Did she come to console me? Or to encourage me? How kind of her,* thought Enlike.

“Why?”

Enlike said.

“Why am I alive? Why was it Noloty and not me who died?”

Wasn't her turn supposed to be much later and mine much earlier? But she still died and I'm alive. Why?”

“ ...”

Mirepoc said nothing. It was as if all the words she wanted to say have been sealed.

Enlike recalled Relia. He was the first person to show him a smile. He died. He was turned into a human bomb and died idly.

He recalled his comrades. They were killed both by him when he was foolish and by the hands of the foolish Ganbanzel.

He also recalled Qumola. The girl who he might have loved died at his hands.

Then, Noloty died.

All of them were people who should have lived. All the people who should have lived died, and yet Enlike was alive.

“Why did everyone die and live me alone?”

Based on the order I should be next. Also, based on who I least care about dying, it should also be me.

So why am I alive? I'm alive but everyone else died. Why?”

Mirepoc said nothing. She kept looking for words.

“I just don't know anymore. Because I'm stupid. I can't understand it. No matter what.”

Mirepoc made up her mind and started talking.

“Enlike-san, you’re...”

“Don’t talk to me. I can’t understand anything.”

Mirepoc was probably trying to make him fight. She probably came here to tell him to fight to avenge Noloty or to fulfill her dying wish.

However, he had no intention of answering those words.

“I can’t understand anything. So I’ll be going.”

Enlike rose up and started walking. The people around avoided him and made a path for him.

“Please wait! Enlike-san!”

Mirepoc stood in front of Enlike. Her eyes seemed to be telling him not to go. He ignored that and kept walking.

At that moment, a loud voice echoed in the hall.

“Stop, Enlike!”

At this loud voice not only Mirepoc, but everyone in the lobby stopped in place. The one to raise his voice was Mattalast. He stood at the lobby’s entrance, panting.

“Mirepo, stop.”

“But!”

Mattalast shook his head.

“In two more seconds you would have died.”

Mirepoc took a step back. Mattalast’s prediction was probably right. Even Enlike himself didn’t know what he would do. He might have killed the unfamiliar woman in front of his eyes.

“...Enlike-kun.”

Enlike and Mattalast glared at each other. A few moments later, Mattalast opened the way.

“Please go, Enlike-kun.”

“I will do so. I am indebted to you.”

Enlike passed by him and went for the exit. He heard Mirepoc's voice behind him.

"Did the monster revive?"

He could then hear Mattalast's voice.

"No. It's been born."

Hearing his voice, Enlike left the Library.

The sound of bells was still echoing throughout Bantorra Library. Just like it did ten months ago.

Ten months ago, the Monster created by Ganbanzel attacked this place. Now, at the same place, with the same chime in the background, a new monster was born.

It was much more of a monster than before. It was a monster that would crush any and all that would stand in its way.

Bantorra Library shook as the battle began. Among everyone, only the monster was calm.

"I see, so he's gone."

Hamyuts muttered after receiving this information from Mirepoc. She was in the Acting Director's Office on the top floor of Bantorra Library. She left the command of the gathered Armed Librarians to Mattalast. They were probably discussing their countermeasures in the assembly hall downstairs right now.

Hamyuts did not join the meeting. She was thinking by herself.

"Well, can't be helped about Enlike-kun. We'll think about it later. More important are our current enemies."

Mirepoc nodded. Behind her strong expression and her tightened lips there was the color of fear that could not be hidden. The biggest threat was now approaching Bantorra Library. Hamyuts had no intention of scolding her for this expression as cowardice.

A radio was left on the desk. The voice heard from it was that of the Ismo Republic National Broadcast's announcer.

“We will cease regular broadcast and instead have a special news program. Please listen to this broadcast for a while. I repeat, we will now cease regular broadcast...”

The announcer raised his voice as if he was shouting. Ever since that morning, their national broadcast was wrapped in confusion.

“But, no, umm... just what is happening? What is going on with our Republic of Ismo?!”

Mirepoc’s hand turned off the radio.

“Director, what have you been thinking about this whole time?”

“I’ve been reviewing the battle we had until now. Mirepo, I’d like you to help me.”

Mirepoc nodded. Hamyuts started talking.

“It all started with the Allow Bay Naval Assault Incident. This was the start for us Armed Librarians, but the Indulging God Cult had been probably secretly preparing for about 20 years before that.

At the time, we had no information about the Cult. Although we had amazing battle strength, we didn’t know where we should attack. From the point of view of information warfare we were defeated by an overwhelming margin. Is that correct so far?”

Mirepoc nodded.

“The first branching point was the Dragon Pneumonia Incident at Toatt Mining Town and the Monster Incident. They were tiresome battles, but we Armed Librarians were able to grasp some information about the Indulging God Cult.

It wasn’t much information, though. We found out the identity of Cigal’s subordinates, the origin of the goods arriving to the monster’s island, the structure of their organization and such.

However, we were able to get a small amount of information due to those. Based on the result, the Cult should have not made this attack. Because they’ve lost their biggest weapon which was their secrecy.”

It was still all correct so far. Mirepoc nodded again.

“The second branching point was the battle with Mokkania.

Failing to get rid of me there was the Cult’s biggest blunder. The fact that we lost Mokkania and Feekiee was also important, but we still managed to keep our losses to a minimum.

With that, the battle’s progress was heavily inclined to our favor.”

“After that we turned to the offensive.”

“Indeed. Until then we were attacked, but it became our turn to attack them.

Using the information we were able to obtain, we started attacking various places. First, Luik assassinated the slave merchants in the Principality of Meliot. They were gathering kids that would turn to Meats.

Old Ireia and her group raided a facility meant to raise warriors.

Kyasariro and Gamo obliterated the Cult followers who tried to steal the Ever-Crying Magic Blade Acharai.

And you have defeated Charl Strite, the self-proclaimed Lascall Othello who collected the followers’ Books. Even only taking the main ones into account, there are still a few more.

Ever since Mokkania there was no attack from the Cult. We have been unilaterally attacking them. Right?”

“I believe there is no mistake.”

“Another person to play an active part was Minth.

The Indulging God Cult had spies all around the world.

The Guinbex Army sent supplies to the Cult. Ismo Republic’s economical world was a source of revenue for them as well. Newspaper companies incited the populace against Armed Librarians. We even had a spy among us Armed Librarians. Minth found each and every one of them and erased them thoroughly. It was a great achievement. If we had to choose three people who’ve contributed the most to this fight, it would be me and Minth, and perhaps one other person or so.

You missed the matter of Volken for some reason, though.”

“...Volken?”

“Oh, you’ve erased your memories, right. Really, why did you think of doing such a thing, idiot.

So, the fourth branching point was the mysterious event that happened with the Meats.

One day suddenly Meats all around the world have regained their memories and started rebelling against the Indulging God Cult.

Lots of them asked for the Armed Librarians’ protection. There were also facilities destroyed at the hands of Meats forming a mob. That further accelerated the collapse of the Indulging God Cult.

We don’t know about the remaining strength of the Cult at present. However, it is headed for destruction. Supposedly.”

“I don’t believe there’s any other conclusion.”

“The Cult should have no spare energy left. Then what does this mean?”

Hamyuts once again turned on the radio. The announcer was raising his voice just like he did before.

“I will report it again.

Today at dawn, the government of the Ismo Republic announced severing of all relations with Bantorra Library, and at the same time declared war!

The navy has already commenced an attack on Bantorra Library. I repeat, this is not a false alarm! The Ismo Republic started a war against Bantorra Library!”

Mirepoc and Hamyuts exchanged glances.

The Ismo Republic. It was the world’s largest country with the territory of the entire continent to the east of Bantorra Library.

They were a developed democratic state. Using their economical might made by their abundant lands and resources, they were focusing their efforts on the development of science and technology.

Ismo was the world’s most advanced country in every aspect. That same Ismo

now waved the banner of revolution.

Four years ago, the Armed Librarians fought against Guinbex Imperial Army and were victorious. However, Ismo's military might was more than double than that of the Guinbex Empire. They wouldn't lose to them, but they were also not an opponent they could fight with no losses.

"There were no signs of this happening. Ismo also cooperated in our fight against the Indulging God Cult."

Mirepoc nodded.

"Mint should have already gotten rid of all spies. The Cult's hand should not have been able to reach the Ismo Republic anymore."

"Then how did the Cult manage to influence Ismo?"

The pair sank into silence. Hamyuts once again switched off the radio.

"No matter how much we think we can't reach an answer. But since the enemy is coming, our actions are already decided."

Mirepoc nodded. The Armed Librarian sent to meet the enemy has already sortied. It was because of him that Hamyuts and the rest could be carefree and listen to the radio.

He was one of the four Armed Librarians said to rank in power after Hamyuts. Second Grade Armed Librarian Bonbo was already flying eastward.

"Well, thinking about it, it's always been like that. We just can't understand the Indulging God Cult.

Because of that they're the Indulging God Cult. Am I wrong, Mirepoc?"

## Part 2

300 kilometers to the east of Bantorra Library. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but sea with no sign of the Island around.

The weather was clear, there was no wind, and the waves were low. It was the perfect condition for a naval battle. According to Mirepoc's report, the 3<sup>rd</sup> fleet of the Ismo Republic's navy was about 50 kilometers ahead. There was less than an hour until contact.

Armed Librarian Bonbo Tartamal was flying in the sky by himself.

'Bonbo-san, there is an estimated of 45 minutes until contact. Is everything in order?'

Mirepoc's thoughts were sent to him. Bonbo exhaled deep, warm breath.

His left hand held a large paper bag. Inside were potatoes deep-fried in corn oil.

'No. Something terrible has happened.'

'What's wrong?!'

While stuffing his cheeks with the sliced potatoes, Bonbo replied in his thoughts.

'I've forgotten to take a drink. If I eat any more it will get stuck in my throat and I will die.'

Saying so, he pushed even more potatoes into his mouth.

Bonbo Tartamal. One word to describe his appearance could be "fat". It's not that he was fat when compared to Armed Librarians who always exercised; he was more than fat enough even for a normal person. His stomach looked like one of a woman who was ten months pregnant. His arms, fingers and legs were also plump and soft like first-class ham.

His white shirt was wrinkled all over. Although it was winter, he rolled up his sleeves up to his elbows. His black pants rubbed his shining knees.

He wore round glasses on his face. The thin eyes behind them were smiling as

he gazed at the other side of the sea.

‘Is forgetting a drink a serious incident?’

He understood that Mirepoc was astonished.

‘Can’t you just drink some sea water?’

‘That’s like telling your comrade to die.’

‘How about just stop eating?’

‘Being hungry is much worse than dying.’

Mirepoc frowning at the other side of the Thought Sharing appeared in front of his eyes.

‘Anyway, I will review the enemy forces. Three gunboats, seven cruisers, fifteen destroyers, twenty torpedo boats, and they also have two aircraft carriers with 150 airplanes.’

‘Is that all?’

‘It is one of the Ismo Republic’s nine fleets. It seems like this is the extent of the forces headed your way currently...’

‘Understood. Then I’ll be enough by myself.’

‘Currently we cannot understand the reasons for their attack. Report any information you find with the highest priority. Investigating the cause takes precedence over defeating them.’

‘Yeah. After all, if those Ismo people fight with me they will all die.’

At that time, a formation of birds were flying alongside Bonbo. Were they birds of passage? Bonbo turned around and followed them with his eyes for a while.

‘I will now sever the Thought Sharing. Good luck.’

‘Wait. If you say it like that I won’t get any motivation.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Unless you say “Please do your best for me, Bonbo-san!” with a cute voice I won’t have any motivation.’

There was silence for a while.

‘A message from the Director. It seems to be “Do your best Bonbo. I love you”.’

‘Can I just come back?’

The Director probably burst into laughter in the Acting Director’s Office. Mirepoc was probably also laughing.

‘I will now sever the Thought Sharing. Good luck. Also take care of your health.’

This time it severed for real.

“Mirepoc sure is amusing. My health, ha...”

Saying so, Bonbo smiled.

What he rode was not an airplane. It was also not a flying boat or a blimp.

Flying while surfing the waves of the wind was a humpback whale.

Its total length was about thirty meters. Its black body rejected the sun’s rays.

Bonbo stood on top of its head. Fifteen other whales formed a square formation behind them.

Whale-User Bonbo. He was a unique Armed Librarian that could not operate in the Labyrinth. Because his ability was too large-scaled there were not many places where he could fight, so he was normally assigned to monitor the ceasefire between the Guinbex Imperial Army and the Principality of Rona.

A herd of whales traversed the blue skies. This grandeur and fantastic sight would fascinate everyone who could see it. It was said that contrary to his uncouth appearance, Bonbo was the most beautiful Armed Librarian.

“Can Armed Librarians even be healthy? You become an Armed Librarian because you don’t need your life.”

Bonbo smiled. It wasn’t a normal jesting smile, but the nihilistic smile of someone who had made some resignation.

“My stomach is full and the clouds are pretty. It wouldn’t be so bad to die today. Don’t you think so, everyone?”

All the whales in the formation spouted salt water from their back at the same time.

He could see more than forty armadas on top of the sea. Although he was facing them all alone, his face reflected neither despair nor carelessness.

It was natural. He was the man who once sank a third of the Guinbex Imperial Army's navy. Even if he was facing the world's strongest navy of Ismo, they were like small boats to him.

The battle began. Ismo's navy took the first move. Fighter planes sortied one after another from the aircraft carrier. Their aim was obviously Bonbo himself.

Bonbo dodged. He concealed himself inside the mouth of his whale. Bonbo's fighting strength by himself was not that high. He wasn't confident he could avoid the rain of machine guns.

The guns now aimed at the whales. The fighters were obviously winning in the maneuverability department. For the whales it was a pain like getting pricked by a needle, but it still wasn't good for them to keep tanking the shots.

Another problem was that the whales had no way of shooting down the fighters. Their only way of attack was with their bodies. Smashing the planes dancing around in the air was much like the foolish action of trying to eliminate bees using a knife.

"Hmm."

Laying sprawled atop the whale's tongue, Bonbo snorted.

The formation of the whales changed to a line. They spread out and lined up. Then they headed for the sea surface as if falling into it. When fighting against Bonbo in the ocean airplanes had no meaning. Because they couldn't act there.

Descending to the sea was not an evasive act. It was a charge. The waves produced by the fifteen whales became an attack by themselves. Several small transport ships were capsized.

Just waves alone could obviously not defeat the main force of battleships. The whales dove deep and then resurfaced. They began ramming the battleships from below.

Two ships were sunk. Even those who barely avoided capsizing would probably take some time to recover their ability to fight. But the whales were not unhurt. The shock of clashing with all of their power made them bleed. Some of them even cracked their skulls.

Even Bonbo was not unhurt. His fat body bounced around inside the whale's mouth. He nearly fell into the whale's gullet.

"I really don't want to die by getting eaten by my own whales."

Bonbo muttered and recovered his posture.

The whales did not falter. They set on a second charge. However, before that they had to avoid the enemy's counterattack. Torpedoes assaulted the submerged whales. Their power, speed and accuracy surpassed those of the Guinbex Imperial Army. All as expected of the most scientifically advanced country in the world. He won't be able to beat them easily like before.

Bonbo's fight continued.

*Can we win?* Hamyuts asked herself.

The Republic of Ismo was the world's largest country. They had more than twice the troops of the Guinbex Imperial Army that they fought before. They were certainly not an opponent they could beat easily. Still, the word "defeat" did not come up to Hamyuts's mind even once.

The number of their formal personnel was less than a hundred. Including the trainees they would not even be 300 Armed Librarians, but their fighting power exceeded that of a single country. No matter what scheme the Indulging God Cult was trying to use, it was impossible to surpass the Armed Librarians' war potential. She had no reason to think of defeat.

"..."

Although she didn't, she still had a bad feeling. She felt like everything only started – no, like nothing had started yet.

"Director. We've prepared the attacking forces."

Without knocking at all, Mattalast entered the office. She entrusted him with all of the subordinates and kept thinking inside her office for a long time.

“Report.”

“There is probably someone controlling the Ismo Republic from somewhere. If that’s our enemy, we will have to crush the Republic of Ismo itself.”

Mattalast said this radical idea.

“In short it’s a blitzkrieg tactic. Our specialty.

We will dispatch eight people. They will be deployed in pairs, striking the government offices, the congress, the national defense headquarters and the navy headquarters simultaneously. After gaining complete control, we will assume temporary control of the state and issue the army an order to return.

If we do that there will not be any citizen casualties. It’s violent but probably the quickest way.”

“ ...”

Mattalast thought that he could probably get consent immediately. But he saw Hamyuts making a strange face as she was intently thinking.

“What’s wrong, Director?”

After thinking for a while, Hamyuts replied with a still slightly hesitant voice.

“Understood. For the meantime start with that action.”

Mirepoc sent her thoughts. They could hear the sounds of the Armed Librarians downstairs starting to move after receiving the orders.

“Director. Why did you hesitate?”

Mattalast inquired. Since she delegated command to him she shouldn’t have been bothered by that.

“I just feel like something’s off.”

“What is?”

“The Ismo Republic is a democratic state. I don’t think it’s the kind of country where the president can just issue orders for the army to deploy right away.

I feel like the enemy’s using some other means to move them. Something we can’t even imagine.”

“That’s unlike you. Don’t you believe in taking swift decisions?”

“Yeah.”

Hamyuts thought for a while.

“Mirepo. Could you get out for a while? I want to speak with Matt alone.”

Mirepoc was surprised. It didn’t reflect on his face, but Mattalast was probably surprised as well.

There was a secret between Hamyuts and Mattalast. However, they were usually extremely cautious to not let anyone smell the existence of such a secret.

Mirepoc went out. Hamyuts confirmed that she was not eavesdropping them with her Sensory Threads.

“What is it, Director?”

“This isn’t at the level where someone’s controlling the Ismo Republic. Doesn’t it seem as if the entirety of Ismo joined the Cult?”

“Do you think the secret was leaked?”

Hamyuts nodded.

“Does that mean the Overseer of Paradise exposed Heaven?”

“You can’t tell what an idiot would do when cornered.”

Mattalast shook his head.

“Impossible. Even the Indulging God Cult needs to protect the secret.”

“The Armed Librarians are villains affiliated with the Indulging God Cult... what if that was the information he leaked?”

“Impossible. And even so it probably wouldn’t come to the decision to fight against us.”

Mattalast smacked Hamyuts’s shoulder.

“You worry too much, Director. There’s just some smart person in the Indulging God Cult that managed to do that. That’s it. It’s no different than usual.”

Saying so, Mattalast left the office. She heard him tell a joke to Mirepoc on the way out.

However, Hamyuts felt strange. It was probably her woman's intuition.

She felt as if she was about to lose. No, more precisely, she felt as if she was about to die.

Nevertheless, she didn't feel anything like exhilaration. Hamyuts experienced an unknown, bizarre feeling.

Half a day passed since then. Mattalast's ideas were betrayed in a bad way.

Two Armed Librarians were flying an airplane headed to the presidential offices. They were part of the attacking forces dispatched by Mattalast. Their names were Luik and Gamo.

"Is this an illusion?"

They were above the west coast of the Ismo Republic. Luik muttered at the visible sight beneath their airplane.

"Does that mean Volken was alive? Did he create that illusion?"

But that was not possible. While they haven't excavated Volken's Book, they confirmed his corpse. However, the sight was shocking enough to make them think so.

"Shall we make sure?"

Armed Librarian Gamo, in charge of piloting, answered. He tried to make the airplane descend. Luik hurriedly stopped him.

"Don't do that. We're not like Bonbo or the Director."

There was a line of vehicles that looked like a flock of ants from the sky. They were pushing on eastward towards the west coast. They were tanks, transport trucks, self-propelled artillery; all sorts of vehicles used by the military. They were all carrying fully armed soldiers.

Did the world really have so much tanks? They couldn't even see the ground from the sky. There was no doubt that all tanks belonging to the Ismo Republic were assembled here.

“Are they going to the Library?”

“Probably.”

A chill ran down Luik’s spine.

No matter what kind of a foolish war you take part in, you use only half of your forces for an attack. It’s absolutely impossible to throw your entire army in. If you lose, your very country itself will end. And even if you win, it will be self-destruction by allowing other countries to invade.

Full deployment. That means the Ismo Republic chose its own destruction.

“Gamo, hurry up. I was born in Ismo.”

“Me too.”

“Hurry up. Our country’s about to be destroyed.”

Luik thought to himself. *Gamo probably feels the same.*

*This isn’t at the level where there’s some mastermind somewhere. Something unbelievable is happening.*

“Full... deployment?”

Receiving this news, Hamyuts rose up. Mirepoc, conveying the thoughts, also paled.

“Are they insane?”

“They can’t be sane. Ismo lost their minds.”

Hamyuts spat out. In addition to their nine fleets, they deployed all ground and air forces. That wasn’t a number that could be suppressed by Bonbo alone.

Hamyuts spoke to Mattalast at her side.

“Sortie out. Take ten people with you. I’ll let you choose them!”

“Roger that!”

Mattalast started running as he heard the orders.

“Mirepo. Notify everyone in Bantorra Library. Cease all normal duties and return immediately. Got it? Cease immediately, return immediately!”

“Everyone?”

“Don’t ask the obvious. Everyone is everyone. Understood?”

During the fights with the Indulging God Cult, some of the Armed Librarian forces were left in reserve. It was the same even when fighting with Cigal or searching for the Monster. The Library stopped functioning only during the Monster’s raid and Mokka’s rebellion, and only for a short while. Even then, Armed Librarians outside the Library didn’t receive any orders to fight.

The Armed Librarians were in full deployment for the first time. This meant that the greatest fight with the Cult was about to begin.

“...It’s noisy.”

Enlike Bishile muttered this around the same time. He was at the port of the town known as Bujui in the west coast of the Ismo Republic.

The harbor was full of confused passengers. Sailors were hurriedly loading their luggage onto ships or flying boats. Here and there he could see men in military uniforms. They were yelling words such as “national mobilization!” or “martial law!”

A woman bumped into Enlike’s shoulder and collapsed. He started walking without even sending a single glance at her.

“Hey you, do you have an entry permit?”

“Move aside.”

He pushed the staff member approaching him like someone who brushed off a fly.

Taking no heed of the confusion in the town, or the war of Ismo Republic against the Armed Librarians, he kept walking.

He had no luggage. He only had a single Book inside his pocket.

It was Noloty’s Book.

# Chapter 2: Regarding the Boy and a Certain Resignation

## Part 1

Lascall Othello – the one who manages the Books of the Indulging God Cult. Enlike didn't know this name, but had somewhat figured someone like that would exist.

He heard that he had been killed by Mirepoc. However, if he was directly told that Lascall was still alive, he would believe it. The Cult's darkness was probably much deeper than what the lower grade Librarians like Mirepoc and the rest thought.

Just before Enlike bid farewell to the Library, he appeared in front of him. He had the appearance of a boy in mourning clothes. A smile floated to his thin, noble face. It was an emotionless smile like that of one who drew a picture with no artistic quality.

"I have hesitated a little over who should be the one to inherit this Book. There were many people who connected their hearts with Noloty-sama after all. However, if I had to choose one, Enlike-sama would undoubtedly be the most suitable one."

Lascall Othello left Noloty's Book in front of Enlike. He didn't reach for it. He didn't want to touch the evidence for Noloty's death.

"Oh, are you not going to touch it?"

Lascall smiled.

"...What's your goal?"

"I have no goal. I merely carry Books and grant their tales a continuation. I simply want for you to continue Noloty-sama's story. I am neither enemy nor ally."

Enlike believed his words. And even if he was an enemy, it had nothing to do

with him.

“Is there something I can do?”

“...Oh my.”

“I don’t mind. I don’t hate the Indulging God Cult anymore. Is there anything I can do?”

Lascall’s face seemed troubled.

“I see, Enlike-sama has indeed lost everything. However, even an empty person can still inherit a story.

Noloty-sama’s last wish did not come true. You will be able to grant it for her.”

“...Noloty’s last wish...”

If that was true he had no choice but to do it. Only Noloty could make him move. Enlike pulled out a handkerchief and wrapped it around her Book. Then, he put it in his pocket. It contained the moment that he didn’t want to ever feel again for the rest of his life, if possible.

“What should I do?”

“The place is to the north of the Toatt Mines. It is ten kilometers farther from the place where Noloty-sama had lost her life. The ruins of her unfulfilled story are located there.

You will naturally understand what to do if you go there.”

Lascall said so and turned his back. While leaving, he suddenly uttered further words.

“Besides, we have had a deep relationship, Enlike-sama. At first I have carried your Book, and twice entrusted you with a Book.”

“Twice?”

“You should have knowledge of it.”

Saying so, Lascall vanished. He didn’t reach the answer immediately, but it was Qumola’s Book he received when he was the Monster. He couldn’t help but laugh at himself. Enlike had already received the Book of a girl he loved twice.

He passed through Bujui and walked to Toatt Mining Town. He was headed for the place of Noloty's final battle.

He didn't read the Book in his pocket. He couldn't face Noloty's death – it was too scary.

Soon he approached Toatt Mining Town. Enlike prepared his resolve and touched the Book. He knew that Noloty came this far.

“Toatt Mines?”

Noloty raised her voice while inside the Acting Director's Office. This happened when she was called by Hamyuts to receive new orders.

“Yeah. That's quite the memorable place.”

The unforgettable Dragon Pneumonia Incident of Toatt Mining Town. This was where she fought to the death with the human bombs and Cigal Crukessa. It was much more memorable for Hamyuts herself.

“But still, using bio terrorism again... it somehow feels intentional.”

Noloty looked at the document she was handed. It came from the Cult's underling killed by Minth a month ago. He possessed a document written in cipher. It was finished being decoded just yesterday.

The document's contents were orders to assassinate the Armed Librarian appointed to Toatt Mines. The attacking method was planned to be an indiscriminate bacterial attack. They were even going to involve citizens to kill a single Armed Librarian. This way of doing things was just like the Indulging God Cult. The document was signed by the Overseer of Paradise.

The specific attack method was unknown. The only thing written was that it would accompany the person known as Arkit Chroma.

“Just what is the enemy thinking about? What will attacking that kind of place at this stage will accomplish?”

Hamyuts tilted her neck. Noloty was also confused. There was no strategic value there and the Armed Librarian in charge wasn't an important person.

“Is it possible the Indulging God Cult lot can't do anything else right now? If true that's so boring.”

Saying that, Hamyuts plunked down on her chair.

“And so, I’m entrusting this job to you. Do whatever you’d like.”

Hamyuts’s way of issuing orders was usually like this. She would make the orders and then let each individual judge by themselves how to act. Wasn’t trying to make people grow by inducing them to think simply bothersome?

“Understood. I will do my best!”

Saying this, Noloty received the document.

“I won’t be giving you any orders. Operate according to your own judgment.”

After reporting to her supervisor Mirepoc, this was the answer she received.

“Is that fine?”

“You will soon be equal in rank to me. Until when will you have to listen to my orders?”

Noloty, somewhat disturbed, nodded. This was the first time Mirepoc clearly talked about a promotion. As she grew, the two have started opening their hearts to each other.

“I’m happy to have more comrades. Ever since Luimon died I became alone and there were no people close to me in age.”

“...Yes.”

Noloty was at a loss for a reply. There was another person of the same generation as Mirepoc besides Luimon. It was the traitor Volken.

He was a person who made everyone think that literally anyone else but him could ever betray them. That same Volken stole the Spinning Doll, purposely killed Vizac who was only stalling him, and even took Renas along, killing her for some unknown reason. It was a hard-to-believe incident.

Noloty also received a shock, but Mirepoc was far beyond that. When she heard of his betrayal, she hit the wall, broke her desk, cried, shouted, cried again and cursed Volken as much as she could. Everyone wondered how come Mirepoc, who was part of the elite, knew such words.

Afterwards, she ran into the Labyrinth without any restraint, and when she

returned she cleanly forgot about everything. It seemed that she drank the water of Argax. And when Noloty asked her about the situation...

“What have I been thinking about?”

She said and tilted her head. But Noloty was the one to ask that.

Even Noloty, thickheaded as she was, noticed Mirepoc’s feelings for Volken. It was a fleeting, unrequited love. What kinds of terrible things would have happened if they were closer than that? Noloty imagined it and shuddered.

She parted from Mirepoc. There was one more person to greet her.

“So you’re going alone?”

*As expected*, thought Noloty. That person would make that sort of response. Enlike showed her a far too obvious worried look.

Enlike cut connections with both the Indulging God Cult and the Armed Librarians. He was there only for Noloty’s sake. If the Armed Librarians would fall to danger, he would throw away his life to fight. Otherwise he would train Noloty. He always said the following.

“Is there any danger for you to die?”

“Yeah... if I were to die you would become sad.”

“Yeah. Me dying would be a lot better.”

“...How troubling.”

Noloty scratched her nose.

“Don’t be. You shouldn’t feel troubled about that.”

But telling her to not be troubled only caused her to worry even more.

“Understood. Thank you, Enlike-san.”

Being told so, Enlike was embarrassed. He was a person hard to deal with.

He was still reluctant. He tried getting Noloty to tell him she wanted to rely on him or wanted to take him along.

“I’ll be going alone. That’s what’s been decided after all.”

Noloty refused. She threw herself into the world of fighting out of her own

will. Enlike was not so. He became strong only because he was coerced by the Cult. *So I can't let him fight*, she thought.

“I will definitely come back.”

She had to grow stronger. If she didn't, Enlike would tie himself to the Library forever. The reasons for Noloty to grow stronger just grew by one.

She had a rapid growth after having met with Enlike. Perhaps the reason for that was right there.

Then, Noloty headed for her final fight by herself. She had no way to know about her own death.

Enlike, reading the Book, removed his finger from it at that point. Just like the past Noloty, he stepped into the area of Toatt Mining Town.

Just like the other city, Toatt Mining Town was also in disorder. Even the smoke that always came out from the mines stopped now.

He entered the town and walked with a fast pace. The reason people moved aside to let him pass was not because he was a strange man with transparent hair. Enlike was projecting from his entire body a sense of danger that even a normal citizen who knew nothing could sense at a glance.

His destination was not here. Enlike tried passing by. At that moment, his feet stopped.

There was a woman on the outskirts of town. She pulled a trolley around, probably selling bread. She was looking fearfully inside a cabin.

She found corpses inside. There were corpses of four men. Enlike stood next to the woman and confirmed this.

“Are you from the Armed Librarians?”

The woman started talking to him.

“No.”

“Then, are you... from the ones who did bad things here before...”

“That's also wrong.”

The frightened woman seemed a bit relieved. It seemed she had some

dreadful experience during the Dragon Pneumonia Incident. Perhaps she had lost a person dear to her.

Enlike looked at the corpses. They were killed a while back. That this hadn't been taken care of until now was probably because all of the Ismo Republic was in disorder.

They were all killed by a bladed weapon. Seeing the size of their wounds, he could understand it was a sharp weapon at the most long as a one-handed sword. Their guns fell beside them. They were sniper rifles with long barrels meant for long distances. The size of the bullets was not normal. They were especially powerful guns for those that could use Magic.

Seeing the basics, he rose up.

“What is it?”

Enlike spoke to the woman.

“Nothing will happen here anymore. Everything ended already.”

He said and started running. The place Lascall Othello told him of wasn't here. It was only one checkpoint.

He touched the Book with his fingertips again. He confirmed everything that happened in this town from beginning to end.

When she came to Toatt Mining Town, the first thing Noloty did was visit the Armed Librarian office. A new Armed Librarian was supposed to be stationed there after Luimon's death, but she couldn't see him anywhere. There was a note left inside the messy room.

“I'm on an independent investigation of the Cult. I'll join you later”

“Oh no...”

Noloty said. They were supposed to investigate together, but it seemed like he didn't want to be with her. Anyway, she had to start the job by herself.

She first scanned over the official documents of the mine management. She tried finding something interesting in them.

After a while, she heard a knock on the door. Several men and women stood

outside.

“Did you bring what I asked for?”

Noloty said and they nodded.

“Five antibiotics, disinfectants and sprays, and an infection preventing tent.”

They were doctors. Noloty arranged and gathered them before coming to Toatt Mining Town.

“We’ve brought only the minimal medical instruments, but is that really fine?”

“Yes. For the time being we need to prevent the circulation of the infection. I have other doctors waiting in Bujui. When we identify the bacteria spread by the enemy they will prepare medicine there.

More importantly, did you tell other people before coming here?”

“Just as you’ve told us, we didn’t even talk with our families.”

Noloty nodded and handed them scraps of paper.

“Please wait there until I give you orders. Until then please don’t come close to here.”

The doctors left all the medical instruments in the office and left.

“Well then, it’s time for me to move as well.”

Saying so, Noloty also left the office.

She found a point of interest in the mine management records. A certain medical research team was said to be staying at Toatt Mining Town. They were under the pretense of researching the health condition of those working at the mines, but the timing was suspicious. Besides, they sent a request to enter the mines but were rejected. This was also unnatural. Noloty decided to go after them first.

But were they really the Indulging God Cult? Did they really feel they won’t be suspected with that level of camouflage? During the Dragon Pneumonia Incident sixteen human bombs have infiltrated without being noticed. Compared to that time, it felt much more childish and sloppy.

Noloty went to the inn where the medical team was lodging. She couldn't find them. She spoke to the innkeeper.

"They have stayed here since a while ago. Anyhow, this place has a bad atmosphere. They said they were going to research lung disease."

"Did they do anything? Like give you a medicine or an injection?"

The innkeeper started thinking.

"They made me drink a test drug. It appeared to be a medicine where nothing would happen if I were healthy but there would be some response if I'm sick. But nothing has happened."

Noloty paled in delay. *However, he drank the medicine almost a month ago. What did it mean that nothing happened since then? Anyhow, let's try to get in touch.*

"Did they say where they were going?"

"They said they were going to the mines."

Hearing this was enough. Noloty left the inn.

Noloty walked along in the main street where muddy Books went back and forth. As far as she could see there was nothing strange with the town's people. It didn't seem like they were attacked by any bioterrorism. If that medical team was indeed from the Indulging God Cult that meant they didn't do anything for nearly a month. What did that mean?

While thinking of this and that, she received Mirepoc's Thought Sharing.

'Noloty, are there any results?'

'There are some suspicious people but I don't really understand anything yet.'

'I see. We do have some results here. The Cult seemed to have progressed in their research of the Deep Blue Curse a while back.'

'The Deep Blue Curse?'

'Of course you know of it. If you don't I'm going to subtract points.'

Noloty nodded. During the Dragon Pneumonia Incident, the Armed Librarians took some countermeasures against biological attacks. She had the information

about diseases that might be used for an attack inside her head.

The Deep Blue Curse. It was a magical weapon created by a Magician of ancient times in order to destroy an enemy country. Books that described the means to produce this disease were stored in the Library's Third Sealed Archive under strict guard.

The most prominent trait of the disease was that it infected the soul. Even if contracted, there will be nothing abnormal to be found in the body. The symptoms will manifest in one's mind.

The first symptom was a light lethargy. Next to come are melancholy, persecution complex and the like. As the disease progresses, the patients start being harassed by visual and auditory hallucinations. During the final stage, they are seized by unimaginable despair, and everything in their line of sight is dyed in deep blue. The disease got its bizarre name from them muttering "blue, blue" as they die.

It had a tremendous infectious capacity. Just inhaling the breath of a sick person would cause infection. If there was only one infected person, it would probably take about two days to spread to their entire town.

'Mirepoc-san... that disease has pathogens made by monsters.'

'Right. You've remembered it well.'

Mirepoc praised her. Noloty was somewhat happy.

The pathogens of Deep Blue Curse were created inside the body of a certain Magic Beast. It was an artificial magical creature known as the Gloomy Lizard. It was said to be a huge ugly lizard covered in black fluid. That creature's bodily fluids and blood contained the pathogens.

'We have no positive proof, but the possibility is high. Please be careful.'

'Understood.'

Saying so, the Thought Sharing was severed.

Noloty looked around her and thought. If the enemy planned on attacking with the Deep Blue Curse, how will they do so? They should scatter it all over the town as soon as possible. No matter how infective it is, it will take over a

day for it to spread. If the Armed Librarian escaped during that time it would lose all meaning.

At that moment, the mines' chimneys were reflected in Noloty's eyes. She started running.

## Part 2

She pushed her way through the miners and normal librarians to enter the mines. She ignored the guards standing at the main entrance and ran inside. She didn't have the leisure to do anything like ask if the medical team was there.

As she entered the mines, a roaring sound made her body shake. Under her feet was a mining ground. Jackhammers and pulleys were operated in order to excavate the Books lying deep underground. Above were the power reactors needed to move all of the machinery. Without stopping for a second, Noloty ran upwards.

She conjectured that the medical team was from the Indulging God Cult.

Giving the townspeople medicine to drink was a preliminary preparation for something. And they will act after finishing their preparations. The most suitable place for them to spread Deep Blue Curse from would be the mines.

A chimney pierced through the middle of the mountain. The smoke blowing out from the power reactors went through it and covered the entire town.

By using this smoke to spread the pathogens, it would probably take less than 30 minutes to cover the town.

Her guess had been right. Noloty found a collapsed person halfway through the path to the power reactors. From his clothes he appeared to be a mining engineer. He was breathing; he was merely asleep.

"Sorry, I'll take care of you later."

Saying so, she ran ahead. She then shouted while running.

"Wait!"

Her angry shouting drowned out the drilling sounds and probably echoed through the entire mines.

Perhaps surprised by Noloty's voice, the white-clothed men standing in front of the power reactors opened their eyes wide.

She shuddered for a second. She truly just made it in the last second. One of the men was about to open the chimney's door. Putting the pathogens inside there would cover up the town in no time.

“An Armed Librarian!”

The white-wearing men all drew out their guns at the same time. With that Noloty was able to assess their capabilities.

She had three enemies. Among them, only one used bodily reinforcement Magic. He was a giant holding a conspicuously long gun. Without paying any attention to the other two, she charged straight at the giant.

They shot their guns all at once. However, Noloty evaded only the giant man's shot. Ordinary people couldn't follow her speed.

The fight was settled in an instant. That instant showcased the difference in fighting capabilities between Noloty and the three men.

She threw away the giant man's gun using her palm. Then she used her elbow to strike his solar plexus. She could feel the impact penetrate through his armor of muscles and strike his internal organs. Noloty had spent her youth hitting people. There was no mistake she would be able to finish him like that.

The giant collapsed facing forward. His remaining comrades were no problem at all. She finished them both as gently as one handled raw eggs.

“Alright.”

Noloty weakly clenched her fist. She hated killing people, but didn't hesitate on hitting them.

And at that moment, she felt a strange presence. She took her eyes off the three men and looked around.

“...!”

She found the figure of a person from behind the power reactor. It was small – a child. She didn't have the time to confirm whether it was a boy or a girl.

That was because the giant man took his gun and headed for them.

Just before the shot she kicked the barrel up. At the same time she leapt to

the side and grabbed the child.

“Shit!”

She either went too easy on him or he was just that tenacious, as the giant man rose up. He directed his gun at Noloty and the child.

The second bullet was shot. Noloty made a gamble. She struck her fist straight ahead without evading. A sharp impact transmitted through her fist. Noloty’s fist, protected by the hard straw rope, reflected the bullet. It grazed the giant man’s foot.

Perhaps realizing the difference in strength between them, the giant started his escape. He held his two collapsed companions using both arms and ran to the exit.

“...”

She needed to chase after them and finish them off. However, Noloty didn’t. It would risk the child she was holding. She also couldn’t just leave the child there. The enemies weren’t limited to only those three people.

Noloty concentrated all of her senses to search around her. She gazed around, listened to any sounds, and concentrated on her sixth sense. She was looking for the small discomfort known as murderous intent that would be felt just before an attack.

At this time, if Noloty was even a bit careless, she might have died. Even Luimon was killed by a bomb, for example. Even normal people could kill Armed Librarians in cases where they were completely defenseless.

“...!”

She reflexively threw away the child she was holding. The child rolled on the ground and hit the wall. A knife fell from their hands.

Noloty’s stomach suffered a small cut. She felt slight dizziness. It was a poisoned knife.

“...Right, there’s no way an ordinary child would be here.”

She looked at the child again. She couldn’t tell clearly because of the hat he wore low on his head, but it was probably a boy.

The dirty overall he wore was cute in a child-like way.

“Hey, what’s your name?”

Noloty asked. The boy tried to escape without answering. She caught him immediately. She collapsed him face down and pinned him down from his neck.

“...Gi-Gian!”

The boy called somebody’s name. At that time, another man came out of the shadows. He was probably hiding till then. He held a grenade in his hand.

“...Come on, kill us together!”

The boy told the man. The man grasped the grenade tightly with shaking hands.

“Kill! Kill her!”

“I...”

The man pulled off the grenade’s pin. He then threw it towards Noloty.

“I, I can’t do it!”

“You idiot!”

The grenade rolled besides Noloty. She let go of the boy and took it. She grasped it with all of her strength, destroying the detonator and the gunpowder. The man who threw it ran off at full speed.

She ended letting go of the boy. Now released, he stood far from Noloty. He held a bottle in his hand.

The boy grinned. He threw the bottle at Noloty’s feet. Without any time to think she grabbed it with her hand. There was a black liquid inside of it.

“I did it!”

The boy raised a cry of joy. This bottle probably contained the pathogens they had tried to spread. The lid was open. Thin smoke rose from inside of it.

“I did it, I did it, ahahahahahaha, ahahahahahaha!”

If this bottle contained the pathogens for the Deep Blue Curse, Noloty had already been infected. There was no remedy for that disease. She then

muttered at him.

“...You got me. It’s my loss.”

The boy’s face distorted. It was too broken of an expression to call it a smile. He kept clapping his hands and laughing.

Noloty looked at the bottle’s label. Sure enough, the words “Deep Blue Curse” were written on it.

When she saw the boy stopped laughing she asked him a question.

“Say, can you tell me before I die? Why did you attack this place?”

“Hahahahahaha, it didn’t matter where. It could be anyone, I just had to kill you! Serves you right, serves you right Armed Librarian!”

The boy kept laughing.

“What’s your name?”

“This is your punishment, Armed Librarian. Punishment for your crimes!”

“I asked your name, boy.”

The boy said his name as if it hitting her with it.

“I’m Arkit. Remember, the one to punish you was Arkit Chroma!”

“I see. So you were the mastermind.”

Saying so, Noloty took the bottle to her mouth. She drank all of the Deep Blue Curse pathogens in one gulp.

“Ugh, tastes horrible.”

While saying this, Noloty picked up the lid and closed the bottle. Arkit opened his eyes in blank amazement.

“There’s no cure for the Deep Blue Curse... but have you not known that a preventive medicine has been completed?”

She put the bottle in her pocket.

“Biological attacks are scary, you see. We have at least some measures against it. Most diseases will not work against Armed Librarians.”

The befuddled Arkit's face was contorted in sorrow. In the next moment it turned to anger as if bursting apart.

“Waaaaah!”

Screaming with an insane voice, he started running. He raised both of his fists and tried swinging them at Noloty's stomach. As not to kill him, she struck his face with her open palm.

The collapsed boy grabbed his poisoned knife. He swung it clumsily and charged at Noloty.

She knocked off the knife and hit his face. His hat fell off at that moment. Below it was the boy's unhealthy, pale face.

“...You!”

Shouting, Arkit charged at Noloty. He didn't even know if he was trying to hit her or grab her. She seized his arm as he ran recklessly. Arkit kept using his other arm to hit her stomach and chest.

While being beaten, Noloty picked up Arkit's hat and then set it gently atop his head.

Until now Noloty had been making great efforts so she could fight strong enemies. Therefore, she had no idea how to act against weak enemies.

Noloty kept receiving his frail fists until he grew tired and could not move.



Mining engineers and the security guards started gathering from below. Noloty made them go back. She wanted to speak with him alone. The existence of the Indulging God Cult was a secret for the general public after all.

“So you planned this?”

Noloty asked. She did feel some sympathy for Arkit, but she would not forgive him.

“Die.”

Arkit answered.

“I hate that kind of selfishness. You were going to kill a lot of the townspeople. Don’t just go and die by yourself. I’m quite angry.”

Arkit snorted.

“Don’t screw with me. I didn’t involve any of the townspeople!”

“Even though you were going to spread the Deep Blue Curse?”

Arkit spat on Noloty’s face. She wiped it off silently.

“Don’t lump me in with them. I was going to infect only Armed Librarians.”

“Why?”

“I made the townspeople drink preventive medicine. Only the Armed Librarian didn’t drink it.”

Noloty recalled what the innkeeper told her. So was that the so-called test medicine? He was probably not lying. A person who was still shouting for her to die wouldn’t lie now.

“So your own target was Armed Librarians.”

Her anger towards Arkit lessened. But it still didn’t change the fact he was her enemy.

“I’ll have you come to the Library with me. We have to ask you about plenty of things.”

Saying so, she pulled Arkit’s hand. Then, he picked up the knife at his feet and directed it at his own chest.

“What’re you doing?!”

Noloty grabbed his knife. Arkit struggled, but her hand didn’t move. At the next moment, he opened his mouth wide. He was about to bite off his tongue. Noloty quickly thrust her fingers inside his mouth.

Arkit bit down on her fingers.

“O-ow, ow, stop, it hurts!”

Her fingers creaked. It was somewhat painful. While biting her fingers, Arkit trying stabbing his chest with the knife. Noloty hit his head and shouted.

“I told you that you can’t do it! Don’t just go and die!”

Arkit hung his head, breathing hard. After staying silent for a while, he suddenly opened his mouth. Contrary to his frenzy just now, it was a terribly calm voice.

“Please stop it.”

“...Huh?”

Noloty replied. Arkit was staring at the knife that fell to the ground.

“Please finish it.”

“Finish what?”

“If I die I don’t mind not fighting. I can also stop hating. So I want to die.”

Nothing answered him but silence. She was shocked at the fact that such words came from the mouth of a boy who appeared to be around ten years old or so. It was something that an old person who spent decades of hatred would say.

“So you want to end it all?”

“If I win it will be over. The same if I die. But if I keep living I have to keep fighting. I want to end it all.”

While speaking, Arkit kept staring at the knife. He had an expression that was despairing to see. The boy’s innocent face was painful to look at.

His expression overlapped with that of Enlike in her mind. When she met him

he was living only so he could die, and so it seemed somewhat similar.

“You can’t.”

Noloty’s words this time had a slightly different meaning than before.

“You can’t die. That’s no ending.”

Arkit sobbed quietly. In a short amount of time the boy was angry and then broke into tears. *He is a child after all*, Noloty thought. Adults were not so open about their feelings.

She then had a certain premonition. If she lets this child die she will feel horrible regret. Her anger had vanished before she noticed it. She couldn’t stay angry at a child who did nothing but cry.

After Arkit stopped crying, the two exited the mines while holding hands. There was no need to stay there.

*Where did his followers go? Seeing how they ran away, they’re probably not coming back. Such heartless guys*, Noloty thought.

*What will we do now?* she started considering. *For the time being, I’ll stop him from committing suicide. The moment I take my eyes off of him he will probably immediately do it.*

“Say, what can I do for you?”

“...About what?”

“How can I make you not kill yourself?”

Arkit, who had been crying until now, widened his eyes.

“Die.”

This voice sounded like he spit it out from the very depths of his stomach. His face regained the expression full of hatred he had before crying.

“If you do so I’ll feel better. I also won’t kill myself. So die.”

“How horrible.”

Noloty sighed.

“I actually want to kill every last Armed Librarian. But there’s no way I’d be

able to. So I'd like to kill at least one if possible. So die."

Arkit kept spitting out curses. It didn't seem like the boy was made to fight against his will. He hated Armed Librarians from the bottom of his heart.

A food vendor walked next to Noloty. She bought one hotdog and tried giving a half of it to Arkit. He shook his head, however, so she had no choice but to eat it herself.

"I don't want to die, you know."

"So just kill me."

"I don't want to do that either."

"Then let me kill myself. Why are you keeping me alive?"

"I have no reason. I don't want to let you die."

"But why! Shit!"

After spitting these words out, Arkit once again fell silent. The two kept strolling around the town's streets while holding hands. *We probably look like we get along well from the side*, thought Noloty.

"If you can't die then kill someone else. Doesn't matter which Armed Librarian it is."

"I can't do that. Like I said, I won't kill or die nor will I let you kill yourself."

"What's the matter with you! I can't understand!"

He started crying again. He probably felt humiliated getting his hand pulled and walking around with a person he wanted to kill.

"Really, what am I supposed to do..."

Noloty was utterly perplexed. She couldn't think up of any way to keep him from committing suicide. Why did it trouble her so much? Such unreasonable thoughts surfaced to her mind.

However, Enlike was thinking while reading the Book. *The one creating problems for Noloty was only herself. Any other Armed Librarian would let Arkit kill himself without any hesitation. That alone would have solved the problem. At the end Noloty was the one to create problems all by herself.*

“Suicide is bad. So don’t do it.”

“Shuddup. I don’t care. Die.”

“How horrible. Listen to me.”

“I have no reason to listen to you. I don’t want to hear anything from an Armed Librarian!”

“But if you won’t listen we can’t do anything.”

“I don’t care! Die, just die!”

He was completely unapproachable. Noloty decided on trying to change the subject.

“Then, what can I do to get you to listen to me?”

Caught off-guard, Arkit was confused.

“I’ll do anything that I can do for you, so at least listen to me.”

“Anything you can do?”

“I won’t do just everything you tell me to, though.”

Arkit distorted his lips as if mocking Noloty.

“Become my minion. If you’re my minion I can at least listen to what you say.”

“...Okay.”

“Huh?”

Arkit was the one surprised. Even Enlike reading the Book was surprised. Noloty was completely calm.

“Is that fine?”

“I mean, I have no choice. I can’t think of anything.”

Arkit stayed with his mouth agape for a while.

“No, thinking rationally it is not good at all, or a bit strange... It’s really strange and not good at all... but there’s no other way...”

Noloty cocked her head while covered in cold sweat.

“Are you stupid?”

She was deeply pierced by these words she didn't want to be told. But she had no way to reply.

“Well, that seems to be true...”

“You're really stupid.”

Arkit spat out. However, his expression lost its edge. Since he was flabbergasted by Noloty he seemed to lose his desire to die.

“I feel like that's how it was before...”

“Huh?”

“Nothing. It's my business.”

Saying so, Noloty sighed. When she met Enlike nine months ago it also happened like that. She didn't know why, but it seemed to be her fate getting involved in this sort of business.

However, she hadn't noticed that this was essentially different from the previous incident. She saved Enlike because Hamyuts ordered her to. This time she was acting on her own.

Noloty would have probably tried to save Enlike even without Hamyuts's orders. She was that kind of girl in the first place. Therefore Enlike was saved.

She was a girl who acted on her own will and was a nuisance to others. It was all the more bad because she didn't notice she was causing troubles for other people.

*Why is she doing this sort of thing?* Enlike couldn't help but think. What was her reason to save both Arkit who had no connection to her and Enlike whose life was worthless?

Enlike turned back time and started reading Noloty's past.

## Part 3

From the beginning of her teens and until she was eighteen years old, Noloty was in Librarian School. Funded by Bantorra Library, it was a school meant to raise Armed Librarians. There were no tuition fees. People who needed it received financial support.

It was a privileged environment, but in exchange their youth years would be hard. In addition to regular studies there was harsh battle training. Because those who didn't have satisfactory results would be kicked off immediately, the children had to spend even their scarce free time on training. After a month the amount of students was halved. Among the remaining children, only one in hundred would become an Armed Librarian.

In the same day as her thirteenth birthday, Noloty's training of fundamental martial arts had been completed. It was the time to start their Magic Deliberation. The children started learning their preferred abilities.

On that day, Ireia visited Noloty's school. She has served there as the chief executive for teaching her juniors for nearly twenty years.

Ireia spoke to the children in a friendly manner.

"Although there is nothing wrong with using guns, you should be able to fight even without them."

One of the students nodded. He immediately went to the instructors in order to receive advice on how to train his body.

"I think that you are aiming for a much too strong ability. How you use it is more important than how strong it is."

The student told this started thinking. Ireia was teaching one child at a time in this fashion. Hearing what kind of ability they were going to use, she gave them adequate and detailed advice.

She came to Noloty. Seeing she had straw rope wrapped around her arms, Ireia made a puzzled expression.

"What do you use this rope for?"

Noloty answered nervously.

“I use it to protect my fists’ bones.”

“A good idea. But it makes handling things hard, does it not? Unless you are careful your gun or sword will slip.”

“No, I don’t hold anything.”

“Oh my, how rare in this day and age. What kind of an ability do you use?”

“I don’t have any special ability. I fight using only my fists.”

Ireia tilted her head, confused.

Fighting unarmed would make one weak. Needless to say it couldn’t beat guns or swords. Even holding a single stick would be stronger than fighting barehanded. No matter how well-trained, the human body could not become as hard as steel.

In addition, those who are strong barehanded will still be strong no matter which weapon they use. No matter one’s reasons, fighting unarmed shouldn’t even be a choice.

“Why are you fighting barehanded?”

Noloty struck her palm. She wanted her to ask that.

“Because it’s easier to hold back while barehanded. I can go easy on people by attacking not with my fists but with the heels of my palms, kicking with my heels, striking the area around the calf and such. I can also grab and subdue them or twist their joints – I have many ways to beat people without killing them.”

“I see... so that what this is all about.”

Saying so, Ireia grabbed Noloty and threw her. Since she was among the most physically powerful among the Armed Librarians, Noloty’s body flew away like a ball.

“Why are thinking of going easy on enemies when you cannot even beat them?”

Ireia said to the collapsed Noloty. At that moment the other children spoke in.

“Noloty’s weird. She says that even if she becomes an Armed Librarian she doesn’t want to kill people.”

“A strange child. Then, why did she want to become an Armed Librarian?”

Ireia tilted her head. Enlike also felt the same. She wanted to become an Armed Librarian but did not want to kill people – Noloty embraced this inconsistency ever since she was a child.

Even when the kids around laughed at her and Ireia was angry at her, Noloty didn’t abandon her unarmed combat. And the price for that had not been small.

A few years later, Noloty went to see the results sheet affixed to the bulletin board.

Her grades were in the fifth place from the bottom out of fifty people. Everyone except Noloty that were below forty left the Librarian School.

Her chosen subject’s grades have reached the standard. Her motor skills and reflexes were close to the top. However, those didn’t have any meaning if she didn’t grow stronger in battle. Fighting unarmed was far too big of a handicap.

“Noloty.”

One of the students came to talk with her.

“The principal told you to come to her office.”

Noloty hung her head. There was no way she wouldn’t know what she wanted of her.

“I’m sure you’re aware of it, but what we’re doing here is not charity work. We’re not just raising children, but raising Armed Librarians. We spend a lot of money on that.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

In front of her was the principal of the Librarian School. Noloty was handed a notice that her scholarship will be discontinued. The fact that it wasn’t an expulsion was probably done out of kindness.

“It’s not impossible for you to stay at this school. But you probably cannot pay the tuition fee. If you still aim to become an Armed Librarian you will have to

borrow money from the Library.”

Noloty nodded. It was impossible for her hometown to give her money no matter how she thought of it.

“Is that fine? It’s an amount you can pay back if you become a trainee, but if not you will be in debt for decades.”

“I will become a trainee. No, I will become an Armed Librarian.”

“For you it’s...”

The principal was hesitant. She couldn’t tell a student it was impossible.

“I have something to ask. You once used a mock gun to fight against Rolatza, right?”

Rolatza was the person who got the top grades. Although she later became a trainee, she made very little progress afterwards, gave up and became a normal librarian.

“I heard that you were dominant at that time.”

That was true. It wasn’t that Noloty couldn’t use guns and swords. Rather, she might have even been better at handling them than the other students.

“I’ve always wondered. Why won’t you use weapons? Why do you purposely create a handicap for yourself?”

“I’ve thought of trying to use them. But then I thought it wouldn’t be good.”

“Why?”

“Even when using weapons I ended up looking for ways to hold myself back. If it’s a game using a mock gun I can fight with my full power. But, if I do image training with battle in mind, I just can’t fight like that. So in the end I’m stronger when unarmed.”

“So you hate killing people that much.”

“Yes.”

“If you become an Armed Librarian there will come a day where you have to kill. The job of an Armed Librarian isn’t just diving in the Labyrinth.”

“There will never be a time where I have to kill. That’s why I will become stronger.”

“Why did a child like you think of becoming an Armed Librarian?”

“...For my hometown. If I do not become an Armed Librarian it will be destroyed.”

“Then you have even more reasons to use weapons. You have no leeway to think about your enemy’s wellbeing.”

“No. Both the enemy and the village are of the same importance to me.”

“...I don’t get it.”

The two sank into silence for a while. Before long, Noloty raised her hung head and smiled.

“Don’t make such a face. Everything will be fine. I just have to make more of an effort than before, so it’s not a big deal at all.”

“Not a big deal? Even your training now is going to be harsh.”

“It’s fine. No matter how hard it is, it will all be fine. Because I will be the only to suffer.”

Saying this, Noloty smiled. The principal muttered.

“This is the first time I’ve seen a student smile when their scholarship is terminated...”

“...”

“I see. If you can keep smiling even while suffering you are welcome to stay in this school. However, if you become unable to smile please quit.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Noloty said and smiled sweetly.

“I just have to make more of an effort than before” – Noloty put these words to practice.

She kept training in every spare minute. However, since days only had 24 hours, she reached her limit. Therefore, Noloty worked on improving the quality

of her training.

She asked stronger Armed Librarians or trainees to help her with real combat training. Noloty was the kind of person who grew stronger by losing. She was beaten and defeated again and again. She challenged in order to be defeated and fought in order to be beaten. Getting injured on her entire body, she grew stronger little by little.

She trained her fist to be able to scrape bones. She ran and ran until she collapsed and couldn't move. She conducted Magic Deliberation until just before her mind fell into chaos. With that much sacrifice, Noloty was finally able to raise her grades to the standard of the other students.

Still, her promotion to a trainee, let alone an Armed Librarian, was still far away.

On a certain day, she met someone. It was when she was hitting the ground on Bantorra Library's backyard in order to temper her fists. The student called Volken came to speak with her.

During that period, Volken as a student was the talk of the town. He, who was said to be a genius comparable to Mattalast and rumored to become a future Acting Director, had refused promotion to become a trainee.

That same Volken spoke with Noloty now.

"You're Noloty-san, right?"

She knew who he was with a single glance, but he apparently didn't know much about her. Volken was an elite with a bright future ahead and Noloty was simply mediocre.

"There's something I'd like to consult you about. Do you have some time?"

"I don't mind if it's me you want, but..."

"I probably have no one but you to consult about this."

*I wonder why,* thought Noloty.

"You might be aware of this, but I declined becoming a trainee. It's about the reason for that."

Saying this, Volken drew out a Dancing Blade and made it fly. It floated in air and returned to his hand. It was extraordinarily fast. He will probably be able to become an Armed Librarian even with just the power of the Dancing Blades which wasn't his original ability.

"I'm afraid of killing people. I heard that you're also worried about the same thing."

"You're afraid of it?"

"Yes. I have the resolution needed to die in battle. But I'm still not ready to kill. Therefore, I can't go out to a real battlefield yet. How do you think I can gain the resolution to kill people?"

Noloty certainly had similar worries. She now understood why he came to consult her.

"I will probably not be able to help you. Please ask other people."

But after saying this, Noloty hung her head. Their problems were fundamentally different. Volken wanted to become able to kill people, but Noloty did not.

"Is that so..."

Volken probably did not understand the reason for her refusal. At that moment, another person joined the conversation.

"What are you doing? If you're looking for advice let me join in."

It was Armed Librarian Mattalast. He spoke in an easygoing manner.

"It's probably something you wouldn't understand, Mattalast-san."

Volken said. Noloty interjected at that point.

"No, I believe that Mattalast-san would understand it better."

"Is that so?"

Volken was somewhat surprised.

There was a reason Noloty said this. Mattalast was a kind person. He connected with any person, whether they were his friends or not, without any discrimination. But at the same time, he was dreadful enough to kill his enemies

without wavering. Volken probably needed that sort of attitude.

Volken spoke to Mattalast of his situation.

“I see, so that’s why.”

Mattalast thought for a while.

“You’re probably overthinking this. Killing people isn’t that hard.”

“But it’s not like I want to become a murderer. If an Armed Librarian loses their human heart they will become worthless.”

“That’s true. You should just be yourself.”

Saying this, Mattalast drew his gun and pointed it at Volken.

“The thing needed to kill people... is simply resignation. You don’t need to hate them. You don’t need any resolution either. Just by giving up, people can kill their brethren.”

Volken was probably not the only one whose heart stung hearing those words. Rather Noloty was the one to receive a shock by that.

“I don’t want to kill’. Most people think this. Leaving aside exceptions like the Director.

So they give up. They give up on the desire to not kill anyone. It’s not difficult. Giving up on something is much easier than the opposite.”

“Giving up...”

Volken thought for a while as if holding something in his grasp.

“If possible it’s better to not give up. Because it’s better for people not to die than the opposite. However, giving up is also necessary.”

Noloty who stood on the side also heard Mattalast.

Give up not killing anyone. Those words fell heavily inside her head.

“By the way, is this girl a fan of yours, Volken?”

Mattalast brought up Noloty as a topic. She became sullen.

“N-no, I’m a student.”

“Ah, I see. So you’re both a student and his fan. Sorry for interrupting.”

Saying this, Mattalast started leaving. Noloty was troubled. If she denied it too badly it would be rude to Volken.

“Mattalast-san, don’t make fun of Noloty-san.”

“I did make fun of her, but not of you.”

“I say, you...!”

“I’ve found an interesting kid in today’s harvest.”

Mattalast cackled and Volken sighed. Meanwhile, Noloty kept hearing the words “give up” in her mind.

Noloty studied techniques and tactics by reading the Books of past Armed Librarians.

While seeing the people inside the Books killing other people, she thought of Mattalast’s words again and again.

*Give up on not killing people... can I even do that? If I don’t, will I even be able to become an Armed Librarian?*

As time passed only her debts were accumulating.

One day, one of her juniors came to talk to her. It was Mirepoc who quickly turned from a soldier to a trainee.

“Noloty senpai.”

“You don’t have to call me that... No, you really don’t have to. You’re the one above me in rank, Mirepoc-san.”

“Right... yeah, that’s true. I understand, Noloty-san.”

Mirepoc seemed to be a bit hard to speak with.

“I came to complain a little. About your attitude.”

“What?”

“You seem to not want to kill people. People like Mattalast-san and Volken-san have praised you as a kind person because of that, but I don’t think so.”

It was a sudden complaint, but Noloty didn’t feel uncomfortable. Mirepoc was

probably volunteering to take that thankless role for Noloty's sake.

"I believe that's only escapism. You're neither brave nor kind.

Because even if you don't kill someone, other people will. Even other people find killing unpleasant. It just seems like you push this unpleasant job on other people."

"...That's right."

"So why?"

While answering, Noloty smiled only very slightly.

"Because if I don't kill, at least one person will stay alive, right? So it's better that way."

"I can't believe you."

Mirepoc said.

"You really are stubborn. I now understand why Ireia-san's troubled."

But Noloty's heart trembled while hearing this. Not killing people... she wondered if she could persist in this ideal.

After many efforts, Noloty gradually increased her grades. But that path was slow. Even when she dove into the Labyrinth for real combat training she had made a blunder. She got lost and when she was surrounded by Guardian Beasts she had been rescued by Ireia. Noloty faced her at the entrance to the Fifth Labyrinth.

"I thought you were getting better lately, but this again?"

With a friendly smile, Ireia reprimanded her.

"What are we going to do with you?"

"I will get stronger."

"You always say this."

"I have nothing else. I will get stronger."

Ireia spoke to the other students.

"We will finish here for today. You all can go back. Noloty-san will stay

behind.”

It was usual for her to be mad at Noloty, but this time something felt different from usual. Ireia had an expression that seemed as if she had made some decision.

“I have told you this again, and again, and again, but this is impossible for you. Even in the unlikely chance that you become a trainee or an Armed Librarian, you will definitely die. Are you not going to make any decision?”

“I’ve made it. I’ll become an Armed Librarian.”

“I see. So I have made a decision, too.”

At that moment, Noloty made a huge leap backwards. Ireia did nothing; she was standing quietly. Yet Noloty couldn’t help but withdraw.

“I like you. Therefore, I don’t want to see you get killed at the hands of some trifling enemy.”

Noloty froze. She started running as if she was being whipped.

“Please die.”

Ireia’s charge was more terrifying than the attack of a tank. Noloty avoided her protruding arm. She felt as if the wind pressure created by the attack gouged some of the meat on her face.

Was she serious? Those doubts disappeared immediately with Ireia’s assault.

Noloty ran while brushing against Ireia’s side. She won with her reflexes and leg speed. She was now only escaping.

It was meaningless. One glare from Ireia could manipulate the flow of time. Noloty’s legs started slowing down. Her head got grabbed and she was turned around. She was held up with her back against the cold wall.

Noloty hit Ireia’s stomach and face with her fists. Her lips were cut and she started bleeding from her nose. Yet her heavy, hard body did not move.

“Great punches. How regrettable.”

She gathered strength to her fingers holding Noloty’s head. Noloty kept hitting her. She did so determinedly. While being beaten, Ireia waited for

something.

“...guh!”



A short scream that did not form any words leaked from Noloty's mouth. A

tremendous explosive sound resounded inside her head. Even if someone beat a bass drum next to her ear it would be much quieter. It was the sound of her skull cracking.

“Noloty-san.”

Ireia released her hand. Noloty’s body collapsed. Gently catching her, Ireia carried her on her back.

“Even when you were on the brink of death your fists still lacked the drive to kill.”

Noloty could not answer in her present condition.

“The problem is not that you are stubborn or anything like that. It is as if you do not even listen to other people’s advice. Even using force does not change you.

What are we going to do with you? What can be done with a child like you?”

Just like that, Noloty was brought to the hospital wing.

Even when her skull was healed, the ringing in her ears did not stop. A storm was brewing inside her head. It was so loud that she couldn’t even sleep at night.

Voiced were mixed in the sounds of the storm. They were the voices of the many people she had met so far. ‘What are we going to do with you?’ ‘That’s only escapism.’ ‘I’m scared of killing.’ ‘Noloty senpai.’ ‘It means a debt.’

“Shut up, please be quiet...”

Noloty muttered so at the insects flying on the ceiling.

The ringing didn’t stop. They kept whispering to her. ‘...fight against Rolatza...’ ‘Don’t forget, Noloty.’ ‘Great punches. How regrettable.’ ‘I think that is miserable.’ ‘You don’t need hatred.’ ‘The world.’ ‘Even Ireia-san was shocked.’ ‘You still don’t have the resolution to kill.’

“I know it, so be quiet!”

Noloty said to the ringing. She covered her head with the blanket, but the voiced echoing in her head only grew louder.

“You’re too loud, please, really, be quiet...”

At that time, she noticed there was a sound outside the window. It wasn’t the ringing or an auditory hallucination. It was the barking of a stray dog.

Noloty got up. She went outside with her body swaying and walked towards the dog.

‘It’s simple. Don’t think too hard about it.’

She heard a voice inside her head. The dog at her feet was howling.

‘Just give up. Give up on not killing people.’

She heard a voice inside her head. She noticed for the first time that the devil’s voice wasn’t eerie, but a sweet, gentle voice.

The dog was loud. She couldn’t kill humans, but had a feeling that she could kill this dog. Normally she couldn’t do it, but right now she could.

If she could give up with this dog, she could probably also do so with people.

So...

“ ... ”

However, some time passed. The dog ran away at some point. Noloty stood still in place. She certainly did think of killing it, but her body didn’t move.

“...Ahaha.”

Noloty laughed and leaned her body listlessly on the wall. Her back slowly slipped down and she sat on the ground.

*This is impossible, thought Noloty. I will probably never feel this way again. Even at such a time I couldn’t kill a single dog. It seems like killing people is impossible for me.*

By thinking so she felt better. As her doubts cleared, the ringing also grew quieter.

“Thinking of it, it really isn’t a big deal.”

Noloty muttered. She was the only one to worry about her not killing people. It was only a matter of her worrying, trying to make an effort and solving it. It

really wasn't a big deal at all.

*Then let's give up. I will no longer hesitate.*

Noloty looked up at the starry sky and smiled. She noticed for the first time that the stars were beautiful that night.

And just like that Noloty gave up on killing people. She gave up on giving up.

Enlike couldn't understand it. He gave up on not killing people without a moment's hesitation. He couldn't believe Noloty was unable to give up.

Just saying she was kind wasn't enough of a reason. Did she have an important reason for why she could not kill?

He once asked Noloty that while she was alive. Enlike thought back to that time.

## Part 4

“You don’t want to kill people?”

It was about two months after they met. The two of them finished training and started a conversation.

“Yes. Not killing anyone is the most important thing to me.”

It certainly was. But there should also be times where she couldn’t do so.

“Let me ask this. What will you do against a brutal enemy?”

“I won’t kill them.”

Noloty answered without hesitation.

“If you let them leave and they come to fight again what will you do?”

“I will fight them again. And I will win again.”

“No matter how many times it happens?”

The troubled Noloty replied.

“...I will look for a way to settle things without fighting. If I think hard I will find some good method.”

“You’re very patient, huh.”

Enlike then thought to himself. *Perhaps the reason Noloty doesn’t want to kill people is similar to my own. Maybe she once killed a person and felt bound by regret?*

“Have you ever killed someone?”

Noloty’s face froze.

“Only once.”

*I knew it*, he thought. However, the reason for her answer was different from what Enlike had expected.

“You’ve seen it too, Enlike-san. It was the Monster Zatoh.”

“Him?”

He was a possessor of the Book-Eating ability who once attacked the Library. He was the owner of Enlike's body.

"Zatoh's soul is as good as dead. And more importantly, I beat his body in full intention to kill him. I killed a person. It was shameful. I ended giving up."

Noloty said with a voice as if she was suppressing the pain from old wounds.

"I'm the one who killed him. Also, even if you'd killed him he's not the kind of person you should feel bad about."

"I know that. But I still didn't want to kill him."

"That kind of guy..."

"What if, but really only what if... What if he could live a normal life and gain happiness? It's impossible, but what if?"

Enlike was a little angry.

"Do you realize who you're talking to? We were all killed for Zatoh's sake."

"...I'm sorry, Enlike-san."

Enlike regretted bringing up this topic. Making Noloty remember painful things felt to him as painful as being stabbed.

"Let's drop this subject."

"Yeah."

However, in the end he couldn't stop himself from asking.

"Why do you hate killing people that much?"

"Umm, how do I say this, it's hard. No one would understand it even if I told them."

"Try me."

"So... this world actually belongs to me."

He couldn't understand her. If it was a joke it was slightly amusing.

"From where to where?"

"All of the world's countries, people, seas, mountains, cities... all of them."

Even you, Enlike-san.”

Enlike put his fingers to his forehead and thought. Noloty smiled wryly.

“See, I told you that you wouldn’t understand.”

“Sorry, I really don’t.”

“Yeah, but that’s how things are. Because the world belongs to me, I don’t want to kill anyone. As long as there’s someone that can be saved, I will save any kind of person.”

He couldn’t understand her. Looking at Enlike frowning, Noloty made a troubled smile.

Without any answer to his doubts, Enlike kept reading the Book.

Noloty became Arkit’s underling. Even she thought it ridiculous, but she had no choice. More importantly she considered what to do from now on. Walking around Toatt Mining Town, she started speaking.

“What will we do now?”

“...We will kill Armed Librarians.”

Noloty sighed as if saying *‘not this again’*.

“I can’t really do that.”

“Aren’t you my underling? Do it.”

Arkit was unabashedly angry.

“Even so, it’s a bit...”

He spat on the roadside and then made another order.

“So think of a method to attack Armed Librarians.”

“I can’t do that either.”

Arkit hit Noloty’s shoulder.

“Then you aren’t an underling at all!”

Noloty talked back.

“I am!”

“How?!”

“I told you I’ll become your underling earlier. So that’s what I am.”

“...Just scam off already.”

Arkit probably developed a headache. Even Enlike who read the Book could understand how he felt. Noloty basically didn’t care at all what other people told her.

“I will help you with anything not related to defeating Armed Librarians. Isn’t there anything else?”

“No. I have nothing else but fighting against the Armed Librarians.”

Arkit said clearly. That way of saying this made her feel uncomfortable. Children should be playing and studying. Not fighting.

“Every day I think up battle plans and do the Magic Deliberation, that’s it.”

“Magic Deliberation?”

Noloty was surprised. You would normally undergo Magic Deliberation only starting at thirteen. Undergoing it at a time when one’s spirit was still immature would lead one falling into chaos and losing their life.

“What’re you doing? It’s dangerous.”

“I know.”

Saying that, Arkit took off his hat. She didn’t notice it before, but his head seemed to have some scratch-like scars. It was the evidence that he failed his Magic Deliberation and nearly got his mind to an abnormal state.

“That’s strange.”

“The Armed Librarians are the ones who’re strange. But since I’m doing that Magic Deliberation to kill you lot I have no choice.”

“You didn’t use your Magic in our battle now.”

“It’s still useless. I still need to make it grow so I can kill you Armed Librarians.”

“...You can’t do that.”

Killing Armed Librarians. This child mouthed these words countless of times.

*Unforgivable*, thought Noloty. *Enlike-san and his friends... Mokkaia-san and the human bombs... and also Arkit. The Indulging God Cult takes people who shouldn't even fight and involves them in combat.*

*How cowardly. If they want to fight so much then why don't they fight using their own powers? Using other people is the worst way to fight.*

"Say, why don't we go have some fun?"

"Huh?"

Arkit wasn't sure if he misheard her.

"Let's stop fighting and go have fun. I'll take you along."

"What're you even saying?"

"There's nothing in Toatt Mining Town but if we go to Bujui there are a lot of parks and museums so it'll be fun. Let's go."

"I don't get you..."

"Just play and forget everything. If you give up fighting everything will be better. Since I'm your underling I will help you forget. So let's have fun."

Arkit hit a wall with his fist.

"Die."

*No, huh?* She sighed. *How can I release this kid from the Indulging God Cult? I'll have to think it through carefully*, thought Noloty.

*Besides, just what is he in the Cult?* The men who ran away were Arkit's subordinates. But she didn't think he had the sort of power to command them.

There was another strange matter. During the fight inside the mine's reactors, one of the men pointed his muzzle at Arkit. *Was it to silence him? No, couldn't be.* That was from before Noloty secured him.

Arkit was given subordinates, made to fight, and yet was supposed to be killed. Something was strange.

Lost in thought, Noloty suddenly felt uncomfortable.

“...Stop for a second.”

She grabbed Arkit’s shoulder. She felt some murderous intent directed at them.

She couldn’t see any enemies around them. Noloty recalled the gun held by that man from the Cult. It was a sniper rifle.

If the enemy’s aim was to snipe them, stopping in place was bad. She purposely stopped in order to make them attack. The enemy then took Noloty’s invitation. While she pulled on Arkit’s hand a bullet could be heard traversing through air. After a delay of about half a second a gunshot could be faintly heard from the distance.

Arkit grinned.

“...My subordinates, huh.”

Noloty looked to the direction the bullet came from. There were no people on the roof where the sniper was supposed to be. He had probably already escaped.

“I thought they were completely useless, but apparently they’re not.”

Arkit hadn’t noticed who they were aiming for. Now she couldn’t let him die all the more. The Cult had been unmistakably trying to kill him.

“If you die I will become free. And then I will not kill myself. That is the best method.”

“I’m sorry to tell you, but those people can’t kill me.”

Arkit clicked his tongue.

“I got an idea what we can do now.”

“What is it?”

“We’ll go to Kachua’s place. If it’s him he’ll be able to beat you. Also, he will tell me what to do next.”

“Kachua? Who’s that?”

“Our leader.”

Hearing those words, a single person emerged in Noloty's mind. The enemies' boss – the Overseer of Paradise. He was a mysterious person one could not find the name of no matter how much they investigated him.

“Where is he?”

“He's close. Kachua has many hideouts, but he's always on the northern mountain of Toatt Mines.”

“I see. I'll come as well. I'm your underling after all.”

“How are you my underling?”

Even if this Kachua wasn't the Overseer of Paradise, there was still plenty of value in going to meet him. She will beat him and stop Arkit from fighting.

An enemy and an ally, a boss and an underling. The pair with this strange relationship embarked to the north of Toatt Mines.

At that point, Enlike stopped reading the Book. He left Toatt Mining Town and went northward.

Lascall Othello had said – What Enlike needs to do is lying there.

One hour passed since Noloty and Arkit have embarked. A single incident occurred in Toatt Mining Town at that time. Neither Noloty nor Enlike who was reading her Book knew anything about it.

Four men assembled inside a small deserted house in the alleyways. One of them was nervously biting his nails. He was the giant man who failed at sniping Arkit. His name was Uspa. He was one of the few remaining warriors of the Indulging God Cult.

“Since you've failed, what will we do now?”

“Shut up, go away.”

Uspa didn't even give his comrades a single glance. They were utterly useless. They had zero fighting capabilities, so they could only be used for chores.

*How could you leave everything to me,* Uspa cursed the Overseer of Paradise. *If I had just one more warrior we could have managed somehow.* However, every person that came to mind was one that had already been killed by the

Armed Librarians.

Uspa chewed his nails. He grew more and more angry.

This was the final secret plan left for the Indulging God Cult. The Overseer of Paradise said that he entrusted it to Uspa. If he were to succeed, they will be undoubtedly going to Heaven. However, at this rate, never mind going to Heaven, even the Indulging God Cult itself was in danger.

And at that moment he heard a scream from the outside. Uspa pulled his gun. However, seeing the face of the man who held a bloodied sword, he put the gun away.

“It’s been a long time, Uspa.”

“It’s you, Dalton?”

Uspa called the man’s name. He one was of his comrades; a man who had joined the Indulging God Cult lately. He accomplished the grand feat of killing the Armed Librarian Vizac.

He had well-combed blonde hair and a shapely nose. Even his fox-like sharp eyes weren’t unsightly at all.

He wore a red flashy muffler on top of his coffee-colored suit. He was a man with a stylish appearance to whom a sword didn’t fit at all.

“Since I’m here it’s all going to be just fine.”

Dalton spoke in a strangely delicate tone of voice.

“A strange girl got in our way. She captured Arkit and took him with her without killing him. What’s the deal with her?”

Dalton grinned.

“It’s Noloty. So that’s how it turned out. Well, to be honest, thanks to that child I’m saved.”

“Huh?”

“It means things were settled without you killing Arkit.”

Uspa tilted his neck. Their orders have been to assist Arkit’s terrorism. Then, when it was about to succeed, they needed to kill him. That’s why Uspa tried to

snipe him.

“Oh dear me, did you not get the orders? I’m really glad I came here.”

Saying this, Daltom slashed his sword. Blood started spurting from Uspa’s neck.

“You’ve already served your purpose. Since it seems like you won’t be of any use from now on, please die.”

Daltom left the four corpses and went out.

“But Noloty... how troubling of you to do that. Should I ask the Overseer of Paradise for instructions?”

He started running. Just like Noloty and Arkit, as well as Enlike much later, he was headed north.

It was now ten days after Noloty’s death, December 28.

80 kilometers to the north of Toatt Mines. On a mountain where dry, cold wind was blowing, there was a small shack. There were no villages around. The only ones who came here were climbers who challenged the wintry mountain.

The fireplace was burning inside. Next to it, a monopod rocking chair was swaying.

An old radio was placed on a small table at its side. A voice mixed with background noise was broadcasting special news.

“I will continue the report. The Republic of Ismo’s government declared full mobilization! Both the judiciary and the parliament are silent about this declaration that completely ignores the constitution!”

The one listening to the radio was an old man. He was and also thin. He probably didn’t even weigh 50 kilograms.

He was more than seventy years old. Only his eyes stayed sharp in his wrinkle-filled face. People once said that his eyes were like those of birds of prey.

His hair had a strange color. At first glance it seemed white, but some very pale green could also be seen. When he was young, his hair had been deep green like the color of a conifer. This uncommon color was the proof of him

possessing a Magic Right by birth, as there was a connection between one's hair color and their Magic Right. Volken, who had a bright green hair, had a similar ability to him.

Suddenly, the old man noticed that he forgot to use his ability. There was no point to it since no one was around, but he made it a habit to always keep his figure hidden.

He activated his ability. The figure of the old man changed into a bizarre being that couldn't be remembered.

His title was the Overseer of Paradise. His name was Kachua Beeinhaus.

He was the initiator of the rebellion as well as its leader. The entire fight of the Indulging God Cult was born from within this old man's mind.

"It has been a long fight."

Kachua muttered while listening to the radio. He leaned his head on the backrest and thought back upon his fight with the Armed Librarians.

During the last forty years Kachua created countless plans and collected pawns. And he used all of them freely.

Cigal and Ganbanzel. The two True Men who've challenged Hamyuts were sadly defeated.

The Armed Librarians probably thought they won in these incidents. But Kachua did not treat them as losses. They might have killed Hamyuts if they were lucky. That was what he expected of them. When people he had known would lose did indeed lose, it didn't go against any of his expectations.

Winkeny had also been defeated. But it was actually a happy mistake. The pawn that was supposedly thrown away made an unexpected move. The achievement of him erasing one of the two strongest people was enormous.

After that, the counterattack of the Armed Librarians also went just as planned.

He didn't care how many of his subordinates died. They were a distraction to conceal the one and only method to ruin the Armed Librarians. They were nothing more than sacrificial pawns. The Indulging God Cult seemed to be

losing, but if a defeat had been planned, it was no defeat at all.

Finally, at the end of their sacrifice, the trump card was completed.

The radio at Kachua's side kept shouting.

"We have received a statement about this war from the Acting Director of Bantorra Library, Hamyuts Meseta!"

'Ismo Republic is our, the Armed Librarians' best allies. But now, you have taken the wrong actions with an evil intent. For the sake of the world, for the sake of Ismo's good citizens, the Armed Librarians will crush this evil intent. The Ismo Republic will probably then return being our closest ally.'

I cannot help but feel relieved at this statement. Thank you Hamyuts Meseta!

But do we really have to expect the defeat of our own army?!"

"How easygoing of you, Hamyuts."

Kachua mumbled.

While commanding the fight against the Armed Librarians, he always had a chess board at his side. He likened the pieces to the Cult and the Librarians and used them to grasp the state of the war. But that board was not there now.

He had no need of it anymore. The fight between the Indulging God Cult and the Armed Librarians was being settled. He declared checkmate the moment his trump card had been completed. All that remained was waiting for the destruction of the Armed Librarians. No one could have possibly imagined it; the Armed Librarians have already been defeated a while ago.

"Kachua-sama."

At that moment, he heard a voice from behind. Since it was familiar, Kachua was not disturbed.

"Oh, is it Lascall? What happened?"

"It is nothing to do with business. I merely came to chat."

The one who appeared from inside the floor was a blonde boy wearing mourning clothes. He held a stone dagger in his hand.

"How are you feeling as of now?"

“...As expected, I’m filled with emotions.”

Kachua said and threw some wood into the fireplace.

“It was dangerous. To be honest, I cannot be proud of my victory. The very final part was entrusted to fate.”

“You were the one to enjoy good fortune. Isn’t it fine to hold your head high?”

“Thank you. I will receive your praise.”

Saying so, Kachua once again threw more firewood. His old bones felt the cold.

“Thinking back, it has been strange. Hamyuts and Mattalast, Ireia and Yukizona... There were plenty of shining stars, plenty of powerful people like them, but no one had pursued me. Until the very end none of them moved outside my plan.”

Kachua closed his eyes.

“Only one person, Noloty Malche, had acted outside my expectations. How mysterious. That girl, who had nothing but a kind heart, was the only one to come after me.”

Lascall did not make any response to indicate he was listening. Kachua kept speaking to himself.

“Our trump card, Arkit Chroma... Letting him meet Noloty was my biggest crisis.”

“You have done well to avert that crisis. It is admirable.”

“My, it is rare of you to compliment. Is something the matter?”

“These are my true feelings, Kachua-sama.”

Saying this, Lascall bowed and then disappeared into the floor.

“Well then, let us wait. The destruction of the great Bantorra Library grows near.”

Kachua said and again turned his ears to the radio.

# Chapter 3: Mercy and Murder without a Reason

## Part 1

The number of Bonbo's enemies had been halved. A large number of the battleships on the sea have capsized.

The whales were not unhurt, but Bonbo was already convinced of his victory.

However, he was puzzled. Not by the enemy's fighting capabilities. The Ismo Navy was indeed the world's strongest, but they weren't stronger than what he expected.

He was puzzled due to the enemy's behavior.

"Aim at the sea surface!"

A whale peeked up from the sea. At the same time, the surrounding battleships aimed a concentrated attack at that direction. The commanders' loud voice reached the ears of Bonbo who stuck his head out from the whale's mouth. He made the whale fly to the air to avoid the attack.

Further attacks from airplanes came from above. The whale sunk into the sea again while raising waves.

Normally, an army would be said to be annihilated if it lost 40% of its forces. Losing half of it was complete destruction. With so little left over, organized attacks would become nearly impossible. Thinking that they must give aid to their soldiers still alive, they shouldn't be able to continue fighting after losing half of their forces.

Bonbo had already defeated more than half of them. Nevertheless, the enemy did not slow down their assault.

"Shit!"

Bonbo was impatient. They were not his only enemies. He had other enemies to take care of the moment he leaves this place.

He heard that Mattalast sortied out. However, he knew that he would not be

able to protect against the fleet.

100 kilometers to the northwest from the waters where Bonbo was fighting, the single Armed Librarian squad lead by Mattalast clashed with the Ismo Republic Army.

Mattalast and the rest jumped off from the airplanes piloted by trainees. They couldn't just attack the fleet from the front like Bonbo. They had no choice but to land into each battleship and use guerilla warfare.

Mattalast lightly landed atop the gun barrel of the main battery.

In his left hand was the gun called the Soprano and in his right hand he held a short rifle about fifty centimeters long. It was Mattalast's private-use rifle that he named the Tenor.

Outwardly it didn't look like a special gun. Judging by its size, it was a gun that even women could use. But it was actually a monstrous gun with power like a tank cannon. It didn't have the weight to suppress the recoil nor the sights to improve aiming. It was a gun impossible to control without overwhelming physical strength and marksmanship.

Mattalast rapid-fired his rifle. The bullets all hit the gun barrels equipped to the battleship. Even the main battery under his feet was destroyed and incapacitated in a few shots.

His aim was to destroy the weapons and engine. It was much faster than sinking the bulky battleship.

The enemy began their counterattack. The sailors were armed with heavy weaponry. It was the kind of weaponry unneeded on a battleship. It seemed that they were prepared to take on Armed Librarians.

Mattalast lightly dodged their shots. However, the troublesome thing was the recoilless guns that kept firing. He jumped off from the gun barrel to the deck. However, just before he did so, a cannonball exploded nearby.

"...gh."

The fragments and the hot wind made him frown. Even Mattalast, who could evade any kind of attack, was weak against attacks like this.

In addition, further surprises came from the sky. They were bombs dropped from the same army's carrier aircrafts.

He incapacitated the battleship while frantically evading their attacks. His comrades were fighting on the other battleships.

Mattalast grinded his teeth. He didn't have enough time. Even while they were doing this other fleets were advancing towards Bantorra Library.

Even securing the win here would only be a local victory. The Ismo Republic Army was spreading out and approaching Bantorra. By the time they will defeat half of their enemies, the other half will have already reached the Library.

"Kysariro!"

Mattalast kicked the deck and leapt onto the neighboring battleship. One of comrades he brought along with him was fighting there. She was a young woman called Kysariro. Mattalast spoke to her while kicking the sailors around.

"Kill all of the crewmen of this ship except one person."

"Huh?"

"At this rate even if we win we will make no progress. Capture someone and ask them about the reasons for this attack."

Kysariro nodded hesitantly.

"Leave one. As long as he's alive and able to speak, it doesn't matter if he's wounded."

His bullets accurately killed the sailors. Kysariro followed his lead.

More than fifty airplanes were flying in the skies of Bantorra Library. Ismo's bombers headed for the center of the island. Their aim was the aerial bombing of the main building of Bantorra Library.

Since the Armed Librarians didn't anticipate air fights, they only had a few fighter aircrafts in reserve. They were forced to intercept the attack from a disadvantageous position.

"Shiiit, there's no end to them! Where's the Director?!"

An Armed Librarian named Tzamal was shouting. He carried a cannon with a gun barrel over five meters long on his shoulder and bombarded the skies.

“Shut up and fight! Don’t rely on the Director or Big Sister Ireia!”

The Armed Librarian named Hony answered him with an angry roar. Originally they were not Armed Librarians who fought on the frontlines. The protection of Bantorra Library was left to all Second Grade Armed Librarians.

Most of the fighter crafts were shot down and fell into the garden or plaza. But it was not perfect. A crashing airplane destroyed the building. There were also places where the incendiary bombs created a fire.

“Oh no!”

He let one aircraft approach. It dropped dozens of bombs from the sky. However, just before hitting the ground, they all fell apart instantaneously. On Tzamal’s hand was the Memorial Weapon Shlamuffen. The Ever-Laughing Magic Blade could instantly mince everything that entered its effective range.

“Was it annihilated?”

Hony said. However, his expression wasn’t bright. They were able to protect the Library. However, if Ismo were to extend the range of their attack to the downtown there’s no way they would be able to defend it.

Another formation flew to attack. The fight of the Armed Librarians kept raging on.

Inside the Acting Director’s Office, with the sounds of battles echoing from nearby, were three women. They were Hamyuts, Ireia and Mirepoc. In order for her to take command, Hamyuts couldn’t participate in battle. Mirepoc was also indispensable. And Ireia, who wasn’t suited for drawn-out battles, was retained as a trump card.

Ireia stared out of the window and gnashed her teeth at the disappointing fight. Mirepoc also couldn’t hide her unrest. The only one to stay calm was Hamyuts.

“Did anything come from those we dispatched to Ismo?”

Mirepoc shook her head at Hamyuts’s question. There was still time until they

arrived at Ismo and commenced their attack.

A trainee came running into the office.

“The six Armed Librarians and nine trainees dispatched to Guinbex have all returned safely!”

Hamyuts gave instructions immediately. Three of the Armed Librarians were to deal with the fighters aiming at Bantorra Library, while the remaining ones will go to the downtown to help evacuate the citizens.

Armed Librarians who have been dispatched to various parts of the world were returning one after another. However, there were also some that were yet to come back.

“Mirepo. Please contact Yukizona again.”

Mirepoc silently activated her Thought Sharing. But she shook her head to the side again.

“No good. I can connect but there’s no reply. I believe he is the midst of battle.”

Hamyuts clicked her tongue.

“Weird. Just who is he fighting?”

First Grade Armed Librarian Yukizona Hamlow. Along with Hamyuts, Mattalast, Ireia and Bonbo, he was a man who was one of the five strongest Armed Librarians. He was in the Present Management offices but they haven’t received any contact from him.

“I will keep the connection until there’s a reply. Please wait by.”

“Stop. Try it again after a while. Take a break for five minutes.”

Since Mirepoc was exchanging her thoughts with people all around the world, she did start looking fatigued. Mirepoc was essential for the Armed Librarians. They had to use her carefully.

“Hamyuts-san. Minth-san is also yet to return, huh?”

Ireia, who was silent for a while, opened her mouth. Her expression was sharp. Her spirit, as one who used to be praised as the strongest Armed Librarian,

was only sharpened as years went by.

“Old lady, you were fixated about Minth since a while ago. What’s wrong?”

“Minth-san was supposed to cull the spies hidden in Ismo.”

“Yeah.”

“Weren’t we too naïve?”

“What do you mean?”

Mirepoc asked back.

“Perhaps our spy was overtaken by spies.”

“Impossible. Minth-san couldn’t have been a traitor.”

“During the incident with Volken everyone said the same. Especially you.”

Ireia stared at Mirepoc with a gaze that felt like it could cut.

“Minth-san did not see through Volken’s betrayal. On the contrary, he said the Volken being a traitor was impossible. His power isn’t perfect, but him not noticing anything about Volken’s behavior is unnatural.”

“...”

Hamyuts was silent. Only she knew the truth about Volken there.

Clapping her hands, she called out to the other two.

“Let’s stop this, old lady. This is not the time to doubt each other now. Let us wait until Minth returns.”

“Understood. I’m sorry, Hamyuts-san.”

At that moment, the lamp of the telegraph atop the desk lit. It was a direct telegram from the President of the Ismo Republic.

“Oh, here are some news. I wonder if it’s from Luik and Gamo.”

“I’ll try to contact them.”

Saying so, Mirepoc closed her eyes.

A few tens of minutes ago...

The presidential offices, which were the symbol of the Ismo Republic, were

filled with the sounds of gunfire and shouting. The ones who were fighting were the two Armed Librarians dispatched there, Luik and Gamo.

Luik charged. He broke through walls with his body, kicked the trees in the garden, and knocked off even the guards attempting to stop him as he ran forward determinedly.

“You’re in my waaay!”

His ability was to strengthen his body. It was a truly simple power that only made his body hard. He just ran around without any technique and destroyed whatever came in his path.

“Strange... their defenses are thin.”

Gamo finished off Luik’s leftovers with a gun. The soldiers at the presidential offices weren’t much different from normal guards. Did they not predict the attack of the Armed Librarians here or did they not care if this place fell? Gamo hesitated.

“Luik! Leave it for later. We’re going in.”

“Sure thing.”

The two rushed inside. They had complicated feelings upon treading into the symbol of their native country with dirty feet. They entered the president’s room, but there was no one inside the vast room. The desk was collapsed and the contents of the drawers were scattered around.

“Did he escape?”

“No, he was here until fifteen minutes ago.”

Gamo decided this judging from the smell. He was an ability user who could sharpen his five senses to their utmost limit. There was no way he wouldn’t be able to distinguish bodily odors.

He put his ear to the floor. He could feel a vibration.

“He’s right there!”

The pair rushed to four rooms over. There was a locker in the corner of the room labeled “second secretarial office”. When Luik kicked it lightly a scream

rose from inside.

Out of the locker came crawling out an exhausted man with unkempt hair and a dirty suit. He was the president of the Ismo Republic.

“...Is it him?”

Luik made a small voice. Gamo felt the same. He saw his face in newspapers countless of times. They saw him not only once or twice. But was he really the president? This kind of unsightly, mediocre man? The president tried hurriedly standing up.

“No, I didn’t mean to run away...”

“Then what?”

Luik grabbed his hair and made him stand. Gamo restrained him and then asked a question.

“Mr. President. We are Armed Librarians. Do not be afraid. More importantly, I would like to ask you the reason you started this war.”

“I-I didn’t start it. I didn’t order anything.”

“Who did?”

“I don’t know. Everyone suddenly started acting on their own. I’ve tried to stop them but no one listened to me. I’m the president but no one listened to me...”

The president said with an expression like he was about to burst into tears any moment.

“Do you have any idea who might be the mastermind? Is there anyone with such political authority that you can’t interfere with their actions?”

“None. You defeated those guys known as the Indulging God Cult, haven’t you?”

He said while shaking his head.

“...How did this turn out like this? It has nothing to do with me. I have nothing to do with that moldy religion. Please do something, Armed Librarians. Haven’t you helped us with a lot until now?”

Luik sighed.

“Hey, Gamo. Let’s try someone else. We didn’t manage to get anything out of him.”

“No, wait!”

The president clung to Luik.

“Please escort me. You’re Armed Librarians, right?”

Luik and Gamo glanced at each other. They had no time to take care of him.

“Well then, let’s go to the broadcasting station. Please tell the populace that the army’s movements were not made by the president’s will.”

“Got it. So write a copy of my speech. If newspaper reporters will come I will need to use my manual for answering questions, pick a suit, adjust my appearance...”

At that part, Luik hit the president from the back. He easily collapsed to the floor and lost his consciousness. Gamo looked down on him in silence.

“For the meanwhile let’s contact Mirepoc. Even though we don’t have any huge information.”

“We can send a telegram to the Director.”

Gamo and Luik started running. Luik glanced back and muttered.

“I’m voting for a different party the next elections.”

Gamo then replied.

“...If there *is* a next election.”

Hamyuts and the rest listened to the information sent by Luik and Gamo with a sour expression. They have suppressed the president. However, it had no effect.

“Does that mean there’s no mastermind and the ones fighting now are all the followers of the Indulging God Cult?”

Ireia said. If that was true then the situation was much worse than expected.

The believers of the Cult should have been around ten thousand people at the

most. Among those, only about five hundred people could use Magic – these were their estimations. Does that mean they have vastly underestimated them?

“It can’t be. If there were that many followers, us Armed Librarians would have lost a lot faster.”

Hamyuts shook her head.

“Let’s try thinking about the fight so far. We have fought in the Ismo Republic countless of times. It means they let us kill Cigal, Ganbanzel and Lascall Othello.”

Mirepoc then stated her opinion.

“Is it hypnotism? Are they controlling the entirety of the Ismo Army using some method?”

“I have no idea if it’s hypnotism or whatever, but I can’t think of anything else.”

However, controlling the behavior of people was difficult. Even among the Armed Librarians which gathered talent from all around the world there was no one with the ability to control people.

Besides, with that many people? Even by using the Spinning Doll Ückück it would be impossible to control even a thousand people.

So how did they control the army? Hamyuts and the rest couldn’t even guess.

## Part 2

On the sea to the east of Bantorra Library, Mattalast ran inside a battleship and thoroughly killed every moving being that he saw. Some of the survivors got in the way of his attack.

He returned to the deck. Kyasariro caught and restrained a single sailor. He probably was a Private that carried cannonballs.

“Interrogate him immediately. We have no time to spare.”

Saying so, he instructed Kyasariro to let go of him. The sailor, now free, tried escaping, but Mattalast seized him. He drew a gun from his pocket. That gun was also easily taken away from him.

“He seems to have sticky fingers. We need to let him reflect a bit.”

Saying so, Mattalast grabbed the sailor’s index finger. And he grasped it with his entire strength. His fingertip, with its concentration of nerves, became like a wrung-out dust cloth. His bones were broken and mixed with his flesh.

“Oops, I reversed the order of things... I’ve tortured him before my question. Oh well. We don’t have the time anyway. Please forgive me.”

Mattalast said while calmly looking at the crushed finger. Perhaps a too painful sight for a woman, Kyasariro averted her gaze.

“So, question time. Why are you attacking the Armed Librarians?”

“...We won’t... forgive you... Armed Librarians!”

The sailor groaned, covered with cold sweat.

“Hey now, you were the ones to attack us first. Should I next break two or three fingers?”

Mattalast put his hand on the sailor’s middle finger. He glared at him and raised his voice.

“We can’t forgive... the Armed Librarians... they can’t exist... in this world... we will kill... the Armed Librarians.”

“There’s no reason for you to say such a thing.”

Mattalast crushed his middle finger. The sailor squirmed in pain.

“We have no time. Just say it. Why are you attacking the Armed Librarians?”

“...”

The sailor stayed silent. He didn’t look like he was about to lie. He was thinking about an answer.

“What’s wrong? You don’t even know why you’re fighting? Did someone order you to? Were you asked to do so by someone? Or do you want to go to Heaven?”

He asked but received no response. The sailor seemed to be truly hesitating. Their reason to fight, and the reason they had to kill the Armed Librarians...

“Uh, umm, uh...”

He acted strange. Something was occurring in his mind.

The expression of the sailor changed hectically. He burned with fear, surprise and anger. *Is it a multiple personality disorder*, wondered Mattalast. Several different emotions tried taking control of him.

“...Because No...”

He carefully listened to the sailor’s words.

“Because Noloty died.”

“...What?”

“Because Noloty died you will also die. All Armed Librarians must die!”

The sailor shouted. Mattalast was stunned.

“By Noloty you mean the trainee Noloty? Do you know her?”

Mattalast called. The face of the shouting soldier suddenly became befuddled.

“Noloty... I don’t know her. Who is Noloty?”

“Just what are you saying?”

The sailor vacantly opened his mouth. His face became frozen as is. Drool

spilled from his mouth, his eyes became blank, and he fell backwards. Mattalast let him go without understanding any of it.

“By Noloty they mean our Noloty...”

He called towards Kyasariro who was standing behind. She made a small nod. It was a rare name, so they didn't know anyone else.

“Since Noloty died they will kill all Armed Librarians... is what he said.”

“He certainly did.”

Mattalast pondered. That was what the captured sailor said. The chances of him just happening to know Noloty were slim. Everyone who was fighting right now was probably thinking the same thing. However, what did Noloty have to do with it?

“Oh, didn't you know that Noloty was Ismo's princess?”

Mattalast feigned his composure by cracking a joke. Kyasariro slightly raised one hand.

“...Umm, I'm not sure if it's even relevant, and it might just be confusing, but...”

“Just say it. I welcome anything. We can't be more confused than we are right now.”

Kyasariro spoke hesitantly.

“I was a bit close to Noloty, so I've heard something once. Noloty said a strange thing.”

“What was it?”

“She said that the world was hers. I don't really get it, though.”

The pair glanced at each other on the background of gunfire and cannon-fire echoing around the battlefield.

“So, does that mean that, uh, Noloty was the incarnation of God?”

“There's no way...”

The two stood stunned for a while but then remembered their current

situation. This was a battlefield. They had to fight.

“I don’t get it, but we should report to the Director for the time being. I’m waiting for contact from Mirepoc.”

Kyasariro spoke to Mattalast as he was about to rush away.

“Oh, what great timing. Here’s Mirepoc’s Thought Sharing.”

Kyasariro pointed at her forehead. She was exchanging her thoughts with Mirepoc who was at Bantorra Library.

“...Huh? That’s not possible? What?”

While sending her thoughts, Kyasariro seemed confused about something.

“But that can’t be. I mean, it’s impossible.”

Kyasariro paled. Mattalast had the intuition that a crisis was coming. The greatest crisis that might destroy Bantorra Library was coming.

The sailor was thinking inside the darkness of his consciousness.

*Who was Noloty Malche? When did I hear that name? Why did I start hating the Armed Librarians?*

Thinking about it, it was three days ago. He was loading his cargo at the port. At that time, something cold hit his back.

Turning around he saw a vagrant standing there. He held a black bottle in his hand. Looking at his trousers, they were dirty with some black liquid.

“What’re you doing!”

The sailor kicked the vagrant away. While rolling on the ground, he smiled.

“Yes, with that I will be going to Heaven.”

The vagrant started laughing while seeing the black stains. The sailor tried rubbing his fingers on the stain and sniffed. It was a lizard-like smell.

“With this you will also start hating the Armed Librarians. Everyone will hate them. Everyone, everyone, everyone. Since Noloty Malche died, eeeveryone on Ismo will hate the Armed Librarians.”

Thinking that this was no decent person, the sailor decided not to get

involved with him.

“Well then, I have to keep going all over the place. Here and there. I’m so busy.”

*You’re creepy, just go away,* thought the sailor and continued loading the cargo.

*Oh yeah. It was then that I started hating the Armed Librarians. At first it was only me. But after a day or so everyone shared my feelings. All our great soldiers, as well as politicians, started telling us to defeat the Armed Librarians.*

*That vagrant did something to me. Just who is Noloty?*

*But even so, I hate the Armed Librarians. I simple hate them.*

The battleship the sailor was on was sinking. Embracing his worries and hatred, he was being swallowed by the sea.

Kachua was thinking alone inside the shack. *I wonder how the war is going.* He had no way to learn of the situation except by relying on the radio.

*The biggest flaw of my plan is that I cannot see the collapse of the Armed Librarians with my own eyes.* Thus Kachua thought. *If possible I would like to see it.* Bantorra Library was the place where he spent his youth. The Armed Librarians used to be his comrades. He wanted to burn their ruin into his eyes.

“Will Lascall Othello not come? I would like to ask him how things are going.”

No voice answered him and only the sounds coming from the radio kept reverberating inside the shack. Kachua leaned his body on his rocking chair.

“I wonder what Hamyuts is thinking about?”

He muttered. Did she conjecture he was using hypnotism? Did they think that the Ismo Republic was actually under the control of the Indulging God Cult?

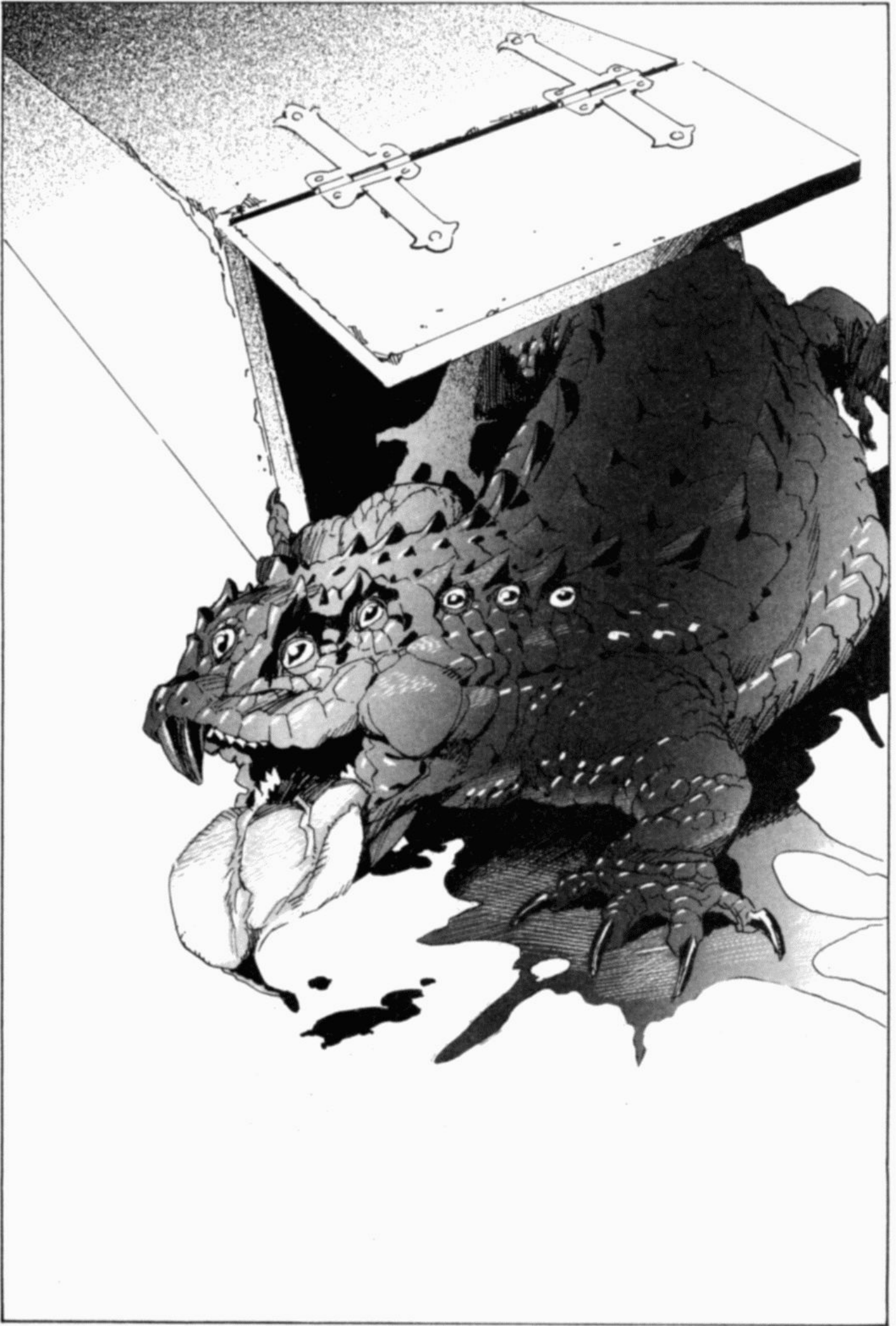
Both missed the mark. No matter how much she racks her brains over this, she shouldn’t be able to understand how his outrageous plan worked. Only a genius could have thought it up and only another kind of genius could set it into motion. Without such a plan they would not have been able to destroy the Armed Librarians.

In one of the corners of Kachua's shack was a single box. It was about the size of a coffin but was somewhat wide. It was made from the rare metal known as Divine Bronze, the toughest metal in the world that Hamyuts's sling was also made of.

The lid attached to the side of the box opened with a dull sound. An extremely eerie creature came out of it.

Its appearance was something between a crocodile and a lizard. It had eleven eyes all the way from its pointed nose and up to the middle of its back. Its dark-green body was wet and slimy with some sort of ink-like liquid.

"Oh, did you want to breathe some fresh air?"



Kachua called at the creature. It was an artificial creature created by advanced Magic that was known as the Gloomy Lizard. Its bodily fluids were the pathogens of the Deep Blue Curse.

“After you walk around a bit please return to the box. We can’t tell what would happen. Please stay in a safe place.”

Just as Kachua told it to, the Gloomy Lizard walked around the shack. After soiling the floor with its black sickly liquid it returned to the box. Watching it, Kachua smiled happily.

Thirteen days ago, Kachua received news while inside that same shack. Daltom was the one to send them. It was a report about the current situation of Arkit Chroma.

Arkit fell into the hands of Noloty.

When he heard this, Kachua became speechless. He unintentionally stood up and then fell down on the chair again. He looked for words to abuse Daltom in front of his eyes, but his head became blank and he couldn’t find any.

“No no, Overseer of Paradise-sama, it is bad luck.”

Daltom said and cackled.

*What were you doing?* Kachua felt the urge to kill the incompetent man in front of him. And this man also killed Uspa and the rest. *Who asked you to do that?*

Daltom was a person who had joined the Indulging God Cult very recently. Kachua didn’t rely on him from the very beginning. He was one who joined the Cult just for the size of the reward and had no interest in Kachua’s ideals.

However, he didn’t think he would be this incompetent.

“So, what are we going to do?”

“Shut up. I am trying to think now. Be quiet.”

Saying so, Kachua grinded his teeth.

*Unbelievable. Why Noloty? Mirepoc would be fine. Even Mattalast. I wouldn’t mind even if it were Hamyuts. That would actually be convenient.*

*But only Noloty is no good. That girl is absolutely the worst option. Why was Noloty the one to come out of all Armed Librarians and trainees?*

Luck has abandoned him. He could not help but feel so.

“Oh, but let me just say that if you intend on ordering me to kill Noloty-chan I’d like you to withdraw that. Fighting against that girl right now would definitely be my end.”

Daltom said and laughed. Feeling nauseous at the sound of his laughter, Kachua was thinking.

*We must erase Noloty. Is there any warrior who could do that? Is there any warrior that can secretly deal with her despite her sudden growth?*

No name rose to mind. Originally there were not a lot of warriors who could stand up against the Armed Librarians. Even the few remaining warriors will probably not heed to Kachua’s orders.

The fierce attack made by the Armed Librarians for the past half year made the False Men despair. Followers were being killed one by one and maintaining the organization became difficult.

If that was not enough, they were dealt another heavy blow. It was the incident wherein Olivia restored the Meats’ memories.

The False Men were shocked at the Meats’ rebellion. The existence of the Meats was in a sense a symbol of the Indulging God Cult. They had no chance to beat the Indulging God Cult. The followers who have seen that scrambled to run away from the Cult. The remaining people were only the few who’ve truly sworn their loyalty.

How miserable was the present condition of Kachua who plotted a rebellion against the Armed Librarians in order to establish a new world order?

There was no longer any pawn who could kill Noloty in the Indulging God Cult.

“What about you? Former First Grade Armed Librarian-san.”

Daltom said while laughing. Of course Kachua also thought about making a move. But it was also difficult.

Kachua wasn’t a monster like Ireia. In his old age he didn’t have the

confidence that he had the power to beat Noloty.

With his ability he will be able to perfectly conceal himself. He will probably not receive Noloty's attacks. However, if he doesn't beat her in one blow and Noloty comes to learn of his location, it will probably be his loss.

His chances of winning were 70%. No, if he took into account the speed of Noloty's growth, it might be only 50%.

"Impossible. We have to promptly finish her without Arkit noticing. As I am now I cannot do it."

"Then what will we do? If you don't think of anything I will not be able to move."

Kachua grinded his teeth. *Is it impossible?* At this rate he could do nothing but stay seated and wait for his defeat.

*Don't give up. Think. And manipulate.* Kachua kept thinking while scolding himself. He desperately resisted against the scene of defeat rising to his mind.

Before long, he spoke to Daltom as if squeezing out words.

"I have a plan. If it fails there is nothing else. Daltom, I will have you do some work for me."

Daltom nodded and he started telling him about the final strategy.

Kachua did not know if his plan was possible. Even if it succeeds, Noloty and Arkit might not move as expected. But he still had no choice but to bet on it.

For the first and last time, it appeared that everything was left to fate.

While walking north, Enlike touched Noloty's Book.

Thirteen days ago, Noloty was also walking on this road. It was a dangerous wintry mountain, but when Noloty went it was safe. There was fortunately no snow so the pair was walking smoothly. Their goal was to meet the man known as Kachua.

She had actually wanted to contact the Armed Librarian in charge of Toatt Mines before leaving. However, she couldn't find him no matter where she looked. Having no choice, Noloty took off without saying anything.

At that moment, she received Mirepoc's thoughts.

'Noloty. Can you still not reach that person?'

'Yes, I can't find him at all.'

'Because for now we have all the necessary information, we will probably manage some way or the other later. Seems like you'll be the one to solve everything this time.'

Mirepoc said. She was slightly angry but probably not at Noloty.

'So, what will you do? Shouldn't you come back already?'

"Uh..."

Noloty reflexively opened her mouth and mumbled. She hesitated about how to report about Arkit. If she talked about it Mirepoc would definitely tell her to let him die. Also, she would be mad at her.

'Umm, it seems there's some guy named Kachua. I'm going to investigate him.'

'Then I'll arrange reinforcements. I'll go talk to the Director.'

'Uh, wait a minute...'

She could feel Mirepoc being disappointed from the other side of the Thought Sharing.

'You're thinking of something unnecessary again.'

'...'

'I don't know what you're thinking but just do as you please. You're not going to listen to me anyway.'

'Umm, but...'

'I will call you from time to time. Call for help as soon as it becomes dangerous. Understood?'

Saying so, Mirepoc severed the connection. Or so she thought, but it was connected again.

'Say, haven't you heard of Kachua before? Not in the Indulging God Cult but

somewhere else.'

'Huh? I have no idea.'

'I see. Well, it's a common name...'

The Thought Sharing was severed. Noloty trying thinking. She couldn't remember that name though.

First Grade Armed Librarian Kachua Beeinhaus had retired forty years ago. It was not particularly strange for the two to not know that name.

"...What're you doing?"

Noloty was sending thoughts while walking. Arkit called to her from behind.

"Ah, sorry. It's over. How about you, are you tired?"

"..."

Arkit kept walking without answering. Since he's been that way ever since they set off, Noloty didn't mind.

They were ten kilometers to the north of Toatt Mining Town. Half a day passed since they left. Reaching Kachua's hideout that she heard about from Arkit would take less than a day using her own feet. However, by taking Arkit along with her, it should take about two or three days.

Noloty had heavy luggage on her back. Arkit only held a stick. However, he was the one to be tired. *He probably grew up in the city and has no stamina*, thought Noloty.

*But I don't really mind. We can just talk while walking.*

"You were probably talking about killing me."

Arkit said.

"That's not true."

"You're lying. Armed Librarians are always like that."

Noloty sighed. No matter what she said, he would always call it a lie.

## Part 3

As the sun sank they set up camp. Arkit sat down on the ground completely exhausted and next to him Noloty stretched the tent and lit fire. She poured plenty of warm black tea and offered it to Arkit.

“It’s cold and the air’s dry, so if you don’t drink a lot you will ruin your body.”

“...Yeah...”

Arkit received it obediently, probably because he was tired. *He’s so cute like this*, thought Noloty. *I wish he’d always be tired.*

While seeping the sweet black tea, Arkit spoke.

“We might be killed.”

“Huh?”

“Kachua might kill us. If I bring you along Kachua will be angry.”

The Indulging God Cult never forgave traitors. It was quite likely.

“Then I’ll beat Kachua.”

Noloty said confidently. However, Arkit snorted and laughed.

“I don’t know what’ll happen to you though.”

“Huh?”

“You’ll be killed by other Armed Librarians. Since you became my underling you are also a traitor. There’s no way they’d forgive you.”

“No, I think it’s fine though...”

They would definitely be mad at her, but will probably not kill her. Even at worst they will only demote her.

“...But...”

Noloty held her head.

“I don’t want to get demoted... I didn’t even pay back my loan yet... Ugh...”

Seeing her troubled, Arkit laughed.

“Feels good. Just die, you Armed Librarian. Having an idiot do stupid things and die for them is the best.”

His happy laughing eyes sent a curse at Noloty.

*Those eyes... I thought we would be able to talk happily but they reject it all. His eyes think of nothing other than fighting and killing.*

*A child shouldn't have eyes like those. No, no one should.*

The next day was clear.

“Wow, look at the sky!”

Since they got far from the dirty Toatt Mines, the air suddenly felt good. Noloty was looking up to the heavens in high spirits, and Arkit lowered his gaze. His eyes still thought only of battle.

“...Let's go.”

The pair started walking. Noloty found all sorts of things along the way and spoke to Arkit. Grass wet with dew, migratory birds flying in the sky, a white fox peeking from afar... but none of those moved Arkit's heart. He never responded to Noloty in a child-like way.

*I want to somehow make Arkit smile. If he smiles something will change in him,* Noloty thought.

They approached a river. Noloty looked for a spot from which Arkit could also cross it. As they came to a rocky area, the both of them gasped.

A large school of salmon filled the river. They jumped from the water to land on the rocks, hit them and jumped again. Pushing and shoving each other through the rocky area, they were aiming upstream.

“...Amazing.”

For the first time, Arkit let out a child-like voice. One salmon was blown away by its peers and landed at his feet. He picked it up. The salmon struggled, slipped from his small hands and fell. Arkit tried picking it up again. Noloty lent a hand. They returned the salmon to the river.

Arkit looked at Noloty with a surprised face.

“Even Armed Librarians do good things.”

He muttered unexpectedly.

“That’s obvious.”

“...Unbelievable.”

Arkit’s hatred of Armed Librarians seemed to be deep.

“Shall we go?”

Noloty said and started walking.

That day also turned to night. Noloty paid close attention to the surroundings while setting up camp and making fire. They had to be careful of things like wolves and bears, and the Cult’s followers that disappeared somewhere might also show up to attack.

Noloty put the roasted ham on a slice of bread and passed it to Arkit. He began to eat it restlessly.

The meat’s fat began bubbling up on the frying pan. Noloty wiped it off using bread and ate. Its saltiness made it delicious.

Arkit looked at Noloty’s meal.

“It looks good.”

“So eat yours too.”

She gave him the half-eaten bread and the frying pan. Noloty cut another piece of bread, spread salt and began eating.

Arkit seemed to have trouble eating it as he stuffed his cheeks.

“Say, Arkit. What kind of a person that Kachua guy is?”

“I don’t know him well. I only met him recently.”

“...I see, only recently.”

Saying so, Noloty soaked her bread in black tea.

She had a guess about what Arkit was for the Indulging God Cult. The Armed Librarians already knew about them.

Those who were allowed all their desires and pursue happiness with all means were known as True Men. The people known as False Men served the former and were used by them. They seemed to be working together in order to reach the place known as Heaven.

In the past, they fought True Men Cigal who accumulated money. Ganbanzel sought strength. There was also Parney who wanted fame.

Arkit was probably also a True Man. Was his happiness the killing of Armed Librarians?

“Say... do you also want to go to Heaven?”

Arkit, who finished eating his bread and started sipping the sweet black tea, rounded his eyes in puzzlement.

“Heaven?”

His way of saying it made Noloty also widen her eyes.

“You don’t know it? Isn’t it the place you guys want to reach?”

“Want to reach, where?”

“As I said, Heaven. It’s a place you go to after you die.”

“What are you talking about?”

“About the Indulging God Cult.”

Arkit tilted his head.

“Indoljing... is that some kind of religion?”

Noloty could not believe it. As far as she could tell by looking at his face he really didn’t know. He wasn’t a child good at lying.

“Don’t you know Cigal Crukessa and the like? They should be your comrades.”

“I don’t. Where was that guy?”

“He was the person who spread Dragon Pneumonia in Toatt Mining Town last year.”

“Wasn’t that just some antigovernment organization? Why are they my comrades?”

“But he was a True Man from the Indulging God Cult...”

Her cup was blown away. The remaining tea covered Noloty.

“Don’t say such bullshit! As if those guys would be my allies! Don’t screw with me Noloty!”

“But it’s true...”

“They’re the worst! Didn’t they involve a lot of people up to the point they almost died? They’re even below Armed Librarians! Don’t lump me in with them!”

Arkit was truly angry.

“Sorry. I get it. I won’t say it again.”

“...Good then.”

Saying so, Arkit went inside the tent. Before that, he turned around and asked.

“Who were those guys you said?”

“The Indulging God Cult.”

“What is the most important person there called?”

“A True Man maybe? No, maybe the most important there is the Overseer of Paradise?”

“...Overseer of Paradise.”

Arkit entered his sleeping bag. After that he didn’t say anything until he fell asleep. Noloty also decided to sleep in preparation for tomorrow.

Inside her sleeping bag she was thinking. *Arkit doesn’t know about the Indulging God Cult. So he’s just a person being used by them just like Mokka-san and Enlike-san.*

Even so, she still had some doubts. Just what were they using him for? He only made a sloppy terror attack. Furthermore, even if Arkit wasn’t there it would probably not affect the plan at all.

New questions were born inside of Noloty. Just who was Arkit?

The third day came. Arkit had even less stamina than she thought. She planned on arriving during that day, but it was most likely not going to happen.

While walking, the pair was blocked by a big rock wall. It was impossible for Arkit to climb over it. They couldn't see any way to pass it either to the left or the right. Having no choice, Noloty carried him on her back.

"I think it would be scary for you, so don't look down."

Saying this, Noloty began climbing the rock. *There's no way she'd be able to climb it alone*, Arkit worried while on her back. They would be in trouble if he got scared. They reached halfway through the rock and Arkit was quiet. Noloty was relieved and hurried ahead.

*But still, just who is Arkit? What's the aim of the Indulging God Cult?* Noloty was thinking while climbing. No ideas came to her. It was probably useless for her to think of this anyway. She had no choice but to beat up that Kachua guy and ask him.

While thinking of this, they reached the summit. The rest seemed to gently slope down so Arkit should probably be fine walking on his own legs.

When she took Arkit off her back, her heart skipped a beat. At some point without her noticing he held a knife. It was the one she used to cut the bread and ham the other night. Even that kind of knife would be enough to cut her carotid artery from behind.

She forgot that Arkit wanted to kill himself. She also forgot that he said that he would be satisfied with killing an Armed Librarian in exchange for his life.

"U-umm, I'd like you to not do such things."

"...You really are stupid."

Arkit said, returning the knife. He probably thought that Noloty was angry. Which was obvious. Everyone would be angry. It wouldn't even be strange if she were to kill him.

But Noloty was different.

"Please stop that. You really scared me."

Saying so, she put the knife away.

“I really can’t get you.”

“Huh?”

“What is it with you? Why aren’t you mad? Is something wrong with your head?”

She couldn’t understand what he said. She didn’t even think of becoming angry.

“Really, why’s a person like you an Armed Librarian?”

Noloty felt vexed at these words. Strictly speaking she wasn’t an Armed Librarian, but she decided to not mention it.

“Yeah, but I’m doing my best... and I’m also quite strong.”

“That’s not what I meant...”

Arkit lowered his pained gaze.

“Since there’s someone like you in the Armed Librarians, why did you do such a thing?”

“Huh?”

“Or maybe it’s still like that even with people like you? Killing people without any reason and buying their lives with money?”

Noloty was speechless.

“...What are you talking about?”

Arkit didn’t reply. From that moment on, followed by the sun setting, them eating and then going to sleep, he didn’t say anything and didn’t reply to any words.

Noloty kept thinking inside the tent lit by lamplight.

Armed Librarians killed people without any reason and bought their lives with money. It was the first time Arkit let his true opinion be known.

“Arkit, is all this for revenge?”

She spoke to the boy sleeping next to her. She knew that he was awake.

“Yeah. The Armed Librarians killed all those who are important to me without

any reason.”

“Who, when?”

No reply.

The Armed Librarian certainly did fight as their job. They also killed people. But there shouldn't have been people who were killed for no reason. There were some exceptions, though.

“Was it the Director?”

“No. The one who killed them wasn't Hamyuts.”

That seemed right. She was abnormal, but she wouldn't fight any unrelated people. He would probably not come to hate the Armed Librarians because of Hamyuts.

Besides, Hamyuts is supposed to be known as a protector of peace to the general public. She prevented the invasion of the Guinbex Empire, monitored the peace agreement between the countries, and resolved numerous terrorism incidents. Without knowing her personality one would think she was an ally of justice.

“So who killed whom?”

Arkit didn't say anything.

“If you don't tell me I can't understand.”

“Who said I want you to understand?”

Although Arkit slightly opened up, he still refused as stubbornly as ever.

“The Armed Librarians do fight as their job. They also kill people. But that's only when there's nothing to do but kill.”

“Liar!”

Arkit's shout echoed in the silent wintry mountain.

“...Why even you started saying things like that? I thought that you'd be able to understand...”

Then she only heard silence. However, Noloty knew that at the other side of

the darkness he was crying. She got out of the sleeping bag and gently put her hands on Arkit's body.

Noloty kept stroking his body until he stopped crying.

"...Did you calm down?"

She called out to Arkit who turned his back to her. When she saw he stopped crying, she removed her hand.

"Why are you doing all this?"

"I don't have a reason. I just don't want to let you die."

"Liar. There has to be something. You're just trying to use me."

"No. The ones using you are the Indulging God Cult."

"Kachua's no liar."

Their opinions just couldn't mesh together. Noloty couldn't compromise. The Armed Librarians weren't bad. Noloty believed so.

"I'm not lying. You really are important to me. These are my true feelings."

"No. You want to use me. You're actually planning something deep inside you. I'll never believe what someone like you says. I'll never listen to what someone like you says."

"...So, if I prove to you it's true, will you believe me?"

Arkit sank into silence as if he was caught off-guard.

"I will not use you. I act only for you. If I'm able to prove that, then believe what I say and listen to me. That's what I mean."

Arkit made a small nod inside his sleeping bag.

"Then I'll prove it. I haven't decided how to do that, but I will. Because I'm serious. Good night."

Noloty also turned her back to Arkit. And she then tried to sleep.

"If you're serious I should be able to know. I'm not wrong. The Armed Librarians are the worst. If you can't understand that, I can't believe in you."

"..."

“Kachua understands. So I believe him.”

She made no reply. Noloty just closed her eyes and fell asleep.

She was now able to understand what the man called Kachua did to Arkit.

Arkit had someone close to him killed. His family, or perhaps his friend, she didn't know.

And that person was probably a follower of the Indulging God Cult.

Kachua approached Arkit and explained the situation to him while concealing the information about the Indulging God Cult. Thereby he induced him to hate the Armed Librarians.

But even with that there was something she couldn't understand.

What was the Indulging God Cult trying to make Arkit do?

Each buried in their own thoughts, the pair sank into sleep. Late at night, when dawn was approaching, a figure appeared close to their tent.

He was the Overseer of Paradise, Kachua. He stood motionlessly in a place about ten meters to the side of the tent.

# Chapter 4: An Old Man's Dream and Its Sacrifice

## Part 1

No matter how strong the Ismo Republic was, the Armed Librarians were the strongest. Even if the Ismo Republic would be destroyed, Bantorra Library would not. All Armed Librarians thought this way.

However, that conviction crumbled away in a single day.

There were signs of that happening. However, everyone turned their eyes away from them. People tended to avert their gazes from what they feared. They decided they didn't see what they didn't want to see. The Armed Librarians were no exception to this.

"Can you still not get in contact with Yukizona?"

Hamyuts grew impatient. Being unable to contact one of the five strongest during this emergency was unthinkable.

"It's the same. It seems like he's in the midst of battle without any leeway to reply."

"Who is he fighting anyway? Is Ismo also fighting the Principality of Meliot?"

"I don't know. There are also no other Armed Librarians in Meliot and no other person I can use my Thought Sharing on..."

Hamyuts hit her desk.

"What is he doing?"

An old aircraft was flying at a place 2000 kilometers to the west of Bantorra Library. Piloting it was the Armed Librarian who had been assigned to the southern border. He had no airplane that could fly back to Bantorra Library. Getting means of transportation took time, and so he was delayed.

"But if I go, what will happen here?"

That Armed Librarian muttered. He wasn't very strong. He could understand this from the fact that he was removed from the conflict with the Indulging God

Cult and appointed to the remote location at the southern border.

At that moment, he found ships in the horizon. Since he could see them from that distance, they were quite large. Furthermore there were many of them. It was probably a battleship fleet.

When he tried approaching, he was surprised at their numbers. Perhaps it was a country's entire fleet – no, it might have been even more than that. Circling the skies, he saw their flags fluttering in the wind. They were the allied forces of the Guinbex Empire and the Rona Kingdom.

“Thankfully you’ve come to the rescue, huh.”

He sent a signal to the aircraft carrier that held fighter airplanes.

‘I’m an Armed Librarian. Requesting permission to land’

He thought of abandoning his shabby plane and switch to a newer model. Still, he was thankful. After all, three years ago they were two countries at war and now they were getting along to offer rescue.

‘Please land’

He was delighted at the response that came from the battleship. He rotated his airplane and flew directly at the carrier. Until that very moment, he didn’t notice anything unusual.

The next instant, his aircraft greatly tilted. The right wing broke and the plane entered a tailspin. He hurriedly jumped out of it and fell into the sea.

The moment he raised his head he saw—

The ships’ guns were attacking him from all directions. No matter how many Armed Librarians were there, they couldn’t have avoided it. Much less while in the sea.

The last thing he heard was a voice of delight. It was the voice of the sailors who were happy from the bottom of their hearts at the death of an Armed Librarian.

“Huh?”

Mirepoc put a hand to her head. People who used Thought Sharing tended to

make this gesture a lot.

“I received another Thought Sharing. They’re connected to me.”

“Another user of Thought Sharing? I wonder who that is.”

Hamyuts tilted her head. Mirepoc soon realized who. One of her seniors back when she was part of the Guinbex Imperial Army had this ability. She was acquainted with him.

‘Mirepoc Finedell, right?’

The sender of these thoughts said.

‘I’m sorry. I’m busy at the moment. Briefly state your business.’

‘I see, so it will be brief. Listen well.’

Mirepoc felt somewhat disturbed.

‘...What do you want?’

She had a feeling that she heard the sound of laughter from the other side. She felt goosebumps.

‘Die, Armed Librarian.’

‘...What are you saying?’

This time she clearly did hear laughter. He purposely sent a scornful laugh through the Thought Sharing.

‘Originally we would need formal documents, but since you will be destroyed anyway there is no need for that. Our great Guinbex Empire made a military alliance with the Rona Kingdom and the Principality of Meliot to declare war against the Armed Librarians.’

*Don’t be fooled, thought Mirepoc. This has to be a lie. The Indulging God Cult is just trying to confuse us.*

“What’s wrong, Mirepoc?”

Hamyuts called. Mirepoc hesitated. Since it was an obvious lie, it was fine not reporting it. Since it was impossible there should be no need to say it.

“I think this is an utter falsehood, but...”

After that foolish preface, she started talking.

Ireia was speechless. Mirepoc couldn't stop her body from shaking. Even Hamyuts – the same Hamyuts that found fighting the best pleasure – couldn't smile at that time. She stood up, her face frozen with shock.

Meanwhile at the Principality of Meliot...

The center of the country had a large mountain. It was said that inside of it the Present God Toitorra had been slumbering for the past 2000 years. At the bottom of this mountain was the representative agency of one of the world's Overseers just like Bantorra Library – the Present Management Agency. That place was now wrapped up in battle.

The ones fighting were the First Grade Armed Librarian Yukizona and his partner Yuri.

The fact they didn't return was not because they had disobeyed orders. It was because that if they returned, all the enemies there would head for Bantorra Library.

It was an unbelievable situation. The Principality of Meliot gathered their whole army and assaulted the Present Management Agency where Yukizona was. He received contact from Mirepoc countless of times. However, he didn't even have the leisure to connect to her Thought Sharing and inform her of the danger.

Halfway up through the frozen mountain, a black haired beauty stood on a cliff. Her tall body was wrapped in a white coat. She held machineguns in both hands. Originally they were guns fixed to be the ground that needed to be used by two people, but she was dual wielding them by herself.

“Kh...!”

A rain of bullets mowed down the advancing armies. However, the bullets only bounced off the tanks that were attacking from behind.

“Yuri. Hold out!”

The whisper-like voice of a man said from behind. This voice, which seemed like it shouldn't be heard among the explosive sounds, was received by Armed

Librarian Yuri.

“Understood, brother!”

She answered to the voice coming from behind. Her big brother, Yukizona, hid behind the cliff she was protecting.

She lowered one of her guns and threw the bombs at her feet. After flying high, all of them hit every tank precisely. She used hand grenades, fire bombs, and tank cannonballs – every throwable weapon she could get her hands on. However, there were few remaining.

Shells fell close to the pair. Yuri shouted while covered in the shockwaves.

“Brother, are you fine?!”

“Ten more seconds.”

Tanks were crammed everywhere below. This sight reminded her of Mokkaia using his ability to create herds of ants. It was in a completely different scale, though.

Yuri kept firing her machinegun. And at the moment she threw her final bombs, her brother’s voice echoed.

“Yuri. Get down.”

“Yes!”

Yuri flopped backwards. In exchange Yukizona rushed up the rock. He was tall and slender just like his little sister. He wore a thick coat, fur gloves and a soft fur scarf. In addition, the lower half of his face was covered by a thick mask. Only the upper half was exposed to air.

From his right hand that was covered in a white glove something black was swirling around.

Swinging this hand as if mowing the enemies down, the black thing ran through the air.

How could one describe it? There was no natural phenomenon similar to it. If forced to put it into words, it would be something like a curse with color and form, or perhaps a black tidal wave floating in the air?

Along with a sound like that of scratching glass, the black wave mowed down nearly half of the troops packed together. At the same time, their movements stopped.

His ability was named Decay Wave. Any metal that touched the black wave he emitted from his hand would rust and break down. Whatever couldn't rust would dissolve. Trees, clothes and food would all rot away. Flying objects would fall, moving objects would stop, and will never move again.

And when those who were alive were touched, they would grow miserably old. All the young people who protected the Principality of Meliot became old men who couldn't even move their legs.

“...Ah.”

When Yuri saw the sight ahead, she instinctively averted her eyes.



It was a far too cruel of a power, so Yukizona didn't participate in the fight against the Indulging God Cult until now. He was given the easy job of protecting the Present Management Agency, effectively sealing his ability.

“Our fight isn't over. Let us go to the Present Management Offices.”

“Yes.”

Just as he rushed ahead, Yukizona's feet tangled. Yuri caught him from behind. He made a small cough.

“Brother!”

Yuri put her hand to Yukizona's chest. An orange light shone there, and his coughs subsided. Her ability was made only in order to cure her sickly brother.

Yuri could understand – her brother's body would not hold long enough until all the enemies were destroyed. Even when it was Yukizona, it was impossible for a single man to take on an entire country.

Ismo, Meliot, Guinbex, Rona. With them, half the world became their enemies. And they had no idea how other countries will move.

Once, the Armed Librarians overthrew the Guinbex Empire with no losses. However, that victory came about from the blitzkrieg tactics using their six elites. The amount of enemy forces was five times compared to that time. Moreover, this was an all-out war in which the difference in numbers was truly apparent.

The destruction of Bantorra Library. These seemingly impossible words were about to become reality.

The annihilation of the Indulging God Cult seemed to be close at hand just a few days ago. Was there ever a more brilliant reversal in all of history?

Scouts sent to the south have brought information. The entire armies of Rona and Guinbex were already nearby.

“Old lady, I leave the south to you. Take about five people with you.”

Ireia nodded.

“Understood. I leave this place to you, Hamyuts-san.”

However, Hamyuts shook her head.

“I’m also going. We can’t get stingy about our forces anymore.”

*What will we do here?* Mirepoc was about to ask when Hamyuts turned around to her.

“I will leave all command to Mirepoc. I’m delegating all of it to you until I return.”

Mirepoc shook with astonishment. It was no less of a shock from when she learned that the entire world was rebelling against them. It was impossible for her, a newbie with power below that of a normal Armed Librarian, to take command of all of them.

*I can’t.* Mirepoc swallowed these words that rose up to her throat. Everyone else was taking part in this impossible fight. She had no excuse for being the only one to not to do so.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take full responsibility.”

“Hamyuts-san. I will arrange the aircraft and the people to take along. You come quickly too.”

Ireia exited the room first. Mirepoc thought that Hamyuts would also leave, but for some reason she didn’t appear to move. She stood in place with her arms crossed as if worrying about something.

“Say, Mirepo. This doesn’t really have to do with this fight, but can I say something?”

Hamyuts’s voice suddenly lost its sense of urgency. Mirepoc was confused.

“Yes, what is it?”

“Am I smiling?”

Mirepoc was slightly dumbfounded. She fixedly looked at Hamyuts’s face. She was not smiling. She had downcast eyes as if she was worried about something.

“You’re not smiling.”

“I see. How strange.”

Hamyuts said. Thinking of it, there was something strange about her today.

When there was a battle she would definitely start smiling. Hamyuts smiled as strongly as her enemy was strong. Nevertheless, today she was not smiling at all.

Had she feared defeat? No, that's wrong. Rather it was like she desired defeat.

Hamyuts held her chin and thought.

"I wonder why I'm somewhat strange today. Even though there's no way I wouldn't have fun, or rather this should be most enjoyable to me... I wonder why."

She kept thinking for a long while. Mirepoc then called out to her.

"Umm, Director. Please leave as soon as possible."

"Oh, sorry. I have to go. There's a battle after all."

Hamyuts rushed away hurriedly. She jumped out of the window and landed in the backyard. Then she ran towards the airport behind the Library building.

"Is Hamyuts-san still not here?"

Ireia stood at the airport. She already gathered all of the troops that would accompany them. The Armed Librarians headed for the battleships, as well as the trainees that would take them there, were already lined up.

All of them had the uniform expression of suppressed fear. However, they could not allow themselves to lose their composure.

It was because Ireia was in front of them. She was even more reliable than Hamyuts or Mattalast. Why was she so reliable? Certainly she possessed fighting capabilities that surpassed Photona and were on par with Mattalast. But that was not the reason.

Everyone there all knew Ireia from when they were little. Ever since they became aware of their surroundings, they equaled Ireia with "the strongest". This imprinting hadn't disappeared even now that they were adults.

Regardless of how strong Hamyuts was, Ireia was special.

A figure jumped down from the office's window. She ran to Ireia's side.

“Sorry I’m late.”

Ireia nodded and then shouted.

“Let us go!”

She disregarded Hamyuts and gave up orders. She was the only person who could do such a thing.

They could no longer afford to sortie far away and make an ambush. The battlefield was the sea a mere 50 kilometers away from Bantorra Library. They were surrounded by enemies so they could only beat the concentrated armies. They had no other choice.

The Armed Librarians leapt off the fighter planes. Hamyuts also followed at the end. It was no longer a situation where she could leisurely attack from a long distance.

She stretched her flexible sling as far as she could. She kicked the anti-aircraft guns and broke them off along with their pedestals. She tied the guns with her sling’s string. She then swung them around with a war cry.

Hamyuts abandoned both distance and speed. She destroyed the battleships only using her strength.

Ireia was the same. She stopped the time of the bullets heading for her, and while kicking apart the sailors trying to hold her back, she struck the main gun battery with her hand.

A voice like the roar of some large animal leaked from between her clenched teeth. The floor at Ireia’s feet started warping due to the load it received. The physical strength of the strongest Armed Librarian was enough to twist off the battleship’s gun with bare hands.

This weapon, meant to shoot bullets, became a bludgeoning weapon instead. With her face all red, Ireia swung the down gun barrel. The ship shook violently. She attacked again.

Just before the ship was capsized, Ireia threw the gun barrel away. It pierced the deck of the neighboring ship like it was a joke.

The two monsters rampaged through the fleet.

Six hours passed since Hamyuts and Ireia sortied out. Mirepoc was also in a life-or-death struggle.

A massive quantity of maps had been spread on the desk. Mirepoc was looking at the maps of the world, of Bantorra's surrounding ocean, and of Past God Bantorra's Island.

Here and there were red circles on top of them. She also added scribbled next to these circles. The maps were dyed in deep red at the points of battle.

'Reporting in! One of Ismo's fleets took a large detour and is charging from the south!'

'I know. I sent Kyasariro-san southward.'

Mirepoc used her Thought Sharing to the utmost and kept in contact with the various Armed Librarians. She was thinking desperately and issued orders.

*Thinking of it, Kyasariro-san reported something earlier. It was about something strange Noloty had said.* It might have been something important, but Mirepoc couldn't afford to think of it right now.

At that moment, she could hear the sounds of bombing. The assembly hall in the eastern part of the building was burning. Even the trainees could no longer spare any people. She sent a message to the students, who weren't even qualified, to extinguish the fire.

She received the thoughts of Hony, who was shooting down the bombers.

'Mirepo! I can't hold back the new enemies! Send our forces this way!'

'I can't! We don't have enough people anywhere!'

The current defenses on Bantorra Library were far too thin. There were only a couple dozen formal Armed Librarians.

However, the forces defending the oceans were even more insufficient than at the Library. Mirepoc looked at the maps. Bonbo and Mattalast's group were protecting the east, while Hamyuts's and Ireia's groups was defending the west. However, detached forces slipped by them and came to attack the Library one after another.

The defense was at its thinnest at the south. Separate fleets from the Ismo

Republic took a detour there to attack Bantorra. There was only one Armed Librarian in charge there. Kyasariro, who fought on the eastern side of the sea, assumed several battles.

‘Kyasariro-san, how many can you hold back?!’

‘It’s impossible Mirepo, it will never stop!’

She complained while fighting. She was as powerful as Volken, but it was impossible for her to take on the fleets by herself.

She stepped into a battlefield and scattered the sailors around. She destroyed the engine room and blew up the rudder. However, the other ships that Kyasariro didn’t fight on kept advancing towards Bantorra.

This repeated from a while ago. She had no way to stop them.

‘Send reinforcements. At this rate they’ll reach Bantorra.’

‘I can’t. Please handle it somehow.’

‘Even if you tell me that...!’

‘The situation is the same all around! Please do something.’

‘It’s absolutely impossible. Please do something!’

The Thought Sharing disconnected. Having no choice, Kyasariro kept fighting.

Mirepoc disconnected all her Thought Sharing. She glared at the maps that turned out completely red. She clenched her teeth and worried for several minutes.

Then, she grabbed the world map and the map of the great sea and threw them off the desk.

Mattalast was covered in seawater and heavy oil. He had scratches not only in one or two places on his body. However, there were only a few fleets left to be destroyed. At that moment, he received contact from Mirepoc.

‘Mattalast-san, how’s the situation?!’

‘I need probably 20 more minutes. After that, I plan on going south and sinking the eighth fleet.’

'20 more minutes... understood. Please withdraw.'

Mattalast stopped his movements without thinking. He couldn't understand her order.

'What do you mean?'

'I'm reducing the warfront. We should concentrate the spread-out forces. We will meet the enemies in the water 30 kilometers around the Past God Island.'

'...Retreating that far back?'

He just couldn't comply with that order. That was Bantorra Library's final line of defense.

'We are inferior in numbers. It was a mistake to disperse our forces.'

'Is this your decision?'

'...Yes.'

Mattalast thought.

'Understood. I will withdraw.'

How could they retreat while they were winning? *What a nasty fight*, thought Mattalast.

He had no idea... that numbers were such a fearsome enemy.

Everyone living on the Past God Island was evacuated. In case of an emergency they were supposed to be evacuated to Bantorra Library. However, this time the Library was in danger. There was no choice but to gather them at places like hospitals, which couldn't be called shelters at all.

"I'm hungry..."

Two days have passed since they were evacuated. A small girl whined. The mother holding her admonished her.

"Please hold on. The Armed Librarians will soon do something."

Every time an explosive sound was heard, people shrank their bodies. The spirits of those people exposed to the bombing was starting to reach their limits.

“Why did this happen?”

“Please wait quietly.”

“Who’re the bad people here? Who needs to die to end the war?”

The mother looked at her child’s face. She suddenly started saying strange things.

“Who’re the bad people? Hey, mommy. Who are they?”

## Part 2

North to the premises of Bantorra Library were shabby lodging facilities that were not normally in use. At the moment, the Meats who escaped from the Indulging God Cult lodged there. They had nowhere to go, so they were temporarily sheltered by the Armed Librarians. Although they have recovered fragments of their memories, it would still take some until they were able to live like normal human beings.

They were people who wished for the destruction of the Indulging God Cult more than anyone else.

They watched the bombing outside with a blank expression. One person then spoke.

“Is the Indulging God Cult winning?”

“I don’t know.”

“Will the Armed Librarians be destroyed?”

“I don’t know.”

They silently watched the battle.

Under Mirepoc’s instructions, the warfront was diminished. By allowing their enemies to approach, the attacks on Bantorra Library grew in intensity. But still, by fighting in concentration, the war situation was gradually approaching fifty-fifty.

Bonbo alone took over the east. Hamyuts and the rest were protecting the west. Mattalast made it in time to aid against a fleet that broke through the south.

They were able to defend themselves. Although they were fighting all of the world’s countries, the Armed Librarians would not lose. Mirepoc embraced this wish.

She sent her thoughts to one of the Armed Librarians headed west.

‘How is the west?’

'Seems like we're going to win, but it's tiresome.'

Mirepoc immediately guessed the situation.

'It's Ireia-san, huh.'

'Yeah.'

*As I thought*, Mirepoc clenched her teeth.

"Clad! Please rescue the old lady!"

Hamyuts shouted. She just sank a cruiser by striking it with an anti-aircraft gun wrapped by her sling.

The Armed Librarians all made a great leap and moved to the next battleship. Ireia was fighting there.

"Ireia-san, are you alright?!"

Her fellow Armed Librarians rushed to her. Ireia was gasping for breath. Blood was flowing from all over her body. She has been using her ability to control time in order to defend against bullets for a long time. However, her defenses were weakened throughout the long fight.

If she was in her golden age she would have probably stayed unharmed. But even Ireia couldn't do anything about the decline of her stamina.

Hamyuts checked her using her Sensory Threads. She understood that she was approaching her limit.

'Director, please make Ireia-san withdraw. Let her rest for three hours. Please hold out in the meanwhile.'

"Oh my, don't be unreasonable, Mirepoc."

Hamyuts faintly smiled. They were already barely able to defend. And yet they probably had no choice. At this rate Ireia would collapse. They could do nothing but fight knowing fully well that one or two ships will slip by them.

Hamyuts rushed over to Ireia.

"Old lady, get back."

"I cannot. If I retreat now, Past God Island will be attacked."

Saying so, she was ready to keep fighting. However, no matter how determined she was, she couldn't recover her stamina.

"It's an order. I won't allow even you to go against it, old lady."

Their plane that was on standby in a place far from the battlefield approached. It was coming to pick up Ireia while avoiding enemy attacks.

"Kh..."

Ireia was still trying to fight. Hamyuts held her back.

"Leave this place to me, old lady."

"I can't leave this place to you lot. Watch this, Hamyuts-san!"

Ireia shook her off. Her war cry echoed over the ocean and she opened her eyes to control time.

Even Hamyuts was amazed at this sight. Half of the fleets sailing on the sea stopped their movements. Simultaneously Ireia lost her consciousness.

"Amazing, old lady. I admire you."

Hamyuts lifted Ireia's heavy body and leapt onto the airplane.

"Carry her safely to the Library, understood? I won't forgive you getting shot down."

The trainees nodded. Hamyuts jumped off and resumed fighting.

She focused on aiming for the ships that weren't stuck. *We can defend against them like this.* Hamyuts was convinced of it.

The aircraft was going to reach Bantorra Library in about ten minutes. *I hate my weak body.* While thinking so, Ireia felt the airplane's vibrations.

"We are going back, huh..."

"Ireia-san, please don't think of pushing yourself. Your battle right now is to rest."

A young trainee said to Ireia. Given his age, he was probably a student of her student. It seemed that she had gotten so weak she even had to be admonished by such a child. Her sight darkened. Her head hurt so much that she could

barely think.

The plane got off in the airport behind Bantorra Library. The trainee tried to support her body. She shook his hands.

“Go back to the battlefield. Don’t mind me.”

While saying this, she walked towards Bantorra Library. The trainees flew back.

On her way back, she saw the destroyed building. *I will not forgive those who have hurt my Bantorra Library.* Anger and hatred slightly restored some of her exhausted body’s strength.

“...Haah, haah...”

*It should be safe inside the Library. I shall rest there. I also have to help Mirepoc. I have to go quickly. Let us hurry,* she thought, but couldn’t run anymore.

Suddenly, a figure approached her.

“...Oh, it is you.”

The fugitives from the Indulging God Cult approached Ireia.

“Do not worry. We will not lose. We have people to protect after all.”

They probably couldn’t hear her weak voice, so they grew even closer.

“Please go back. Your battle is to stay in a safe place.”

Because she overused her powers, she couldn’t see very well. Therefore, Ireia couldn’t notice until the very end. Their eyes... and what they held in their arms...

The Armed Librarians who protected Bantorra Library shouted at Ireia. They scrambled to rush towards her. Mirepoc forgot all about her Thought Sharing and tried jumping out of the window.

But still Ireia couldn’t notice.

Until the very end she only thought of protecting Bantorra Library.

The fugitive closing in on Ireia... what they held in their arms were Bantorra

Library's excess bombs. Although they were supposed to be released from their fate, they once again became human bombs.

"Kill... the Armed Librarians."

Several dozen human bombs took Ireia out along with them. Only one person was obviously not enough to destroy her heavy, sturdy body.

At the east coast of Past God Island, Bonbo's whales rampaged on the sea's surface. His fellow Armed Librarians started covering him from the coast.

Suddenly Bonbo noticed. The state of the coast was strange. There were also people that weren't Armed Librarians there. Furthermore, they were a hundred people or even more.

*What are the guys at Bantorra Library doing? Can they not evacuate the citizens?* Just as he was about to curse, he noticed a further abnormality.

"Die...!"

"Kill...!"

The people on the island yelled towards the Armed Librarians. They were throwing stones at them.

"Die Armed Librarians!"

"Kill the Armed Librarians!"

These changes have occurred even inside the hospital that served as a shelter. The people there didn't tremble at the sounds of the bombing anymore. They merrily stared at the ceiling, and every time they could hear an explosion they would clap their hands and cheer.

"Mommy, the Armed Librarians are dying."

"Yeah, they're dying."

The young girl leaned out of the window and looked at Bantorra Library. Her eyes were filled with hatred and great joy.

Voices kept echoing from the radio. People all around the Ismo Republic listened to the announcer's voice.

"The armies of Guinbex and Rona are drawing near Bantorra Library! We have

received information that the Library's main building has already been attacked! We have not received any report from the Armed Librarian side!

What is going to happen with the Armed Librarians? Did Hamyuts die? How many Armed Librarians died? When will the Armed Librarians be destroyed... no, excuse me."

The announcer became excited. He could not understand what he was saying.

"Although this is unconfirmed, we also have information that the Principality of Meliot's army started pursuing the Armed Librarians... no, we have information that Armed Librarians are being slaughtered... no, this is wrong, no..."

The sounds of the radio were becoming increasingly choppy. It didn't sound like any sort of broadcasting anymore.

"Currently, the Armed Librarians are being cornered, the Armed Librarians, are approaching annihilation, our country, no, our, the, a, Armed Librarians, Armed Librarians, kill, kill, Armed Librarians, die, Armed Librarians, kill, kill, die, die, diediediediedie! Kill the Armed Librarians, kill the Armed Librarians! Die! Die! Die! Yesss, yesss, the Armed Librarians will be destroyed! They will be destroyeeeee!!!"

The broadcast stopped. It never resumed.

All countries of the world became their enemies – even the Armed Librarians acknowledging this have been too naïve. All people living in the world became their enemies.

The movements of the Armed Librarians protecting Bantorra Library stopped. They saw the scorched field and the ruins that remained. They were all waiting for the moment they could confirm Ireia's safety.

They didn't know how she could do it, but they were all looking for the figure of Ireia who was surely able to miraculously survive this.

They mustn't get upset by the death of their comrade. Grieving was out of the question. But even though the Armed Librarians were taught this, only now was the exception.

Because the one who died was the very person who taught them this.

“This can’t be, Ireia-san...”

*Someone, please say something.* So Mirepoc thought. She couldn’t think anymore. *Someone tell me what to do.* While thinking so, she stood stock-still. Even if a bomb fell near her she would not come to her senses.

During that time Mirepoc didn’t notice that the lines of defense were broken one by one. Even if she did, there was nothing she could have done about it.

The battleships which Ireia stopped started moving again. Hamyuts and the rest weren’t able to respond to the unexpected situation. *No way, did Ireia die?* All the Armed Librarians were shocked.

“What happened?!”

“Where’s the contact from Mirepoc?”

Hamyuts scolded them.

“Don’t stop, keep fighting!”

She kept swinging her sling. Without needing to think of it, Hamyuts understood that Ireia died. And she also understood that defense would now become impossible.

“...We have... to fight.”

Muttering this, Mirepoc returned to the office. Bombers were flying through the skies as if they owned the place, dropping bombs.

“Have to fight...”

Mirepoc muttered. She returned to the office and held her head. They couldn’t even keep up the last line of defense anymore.

So she had to make a decision. Mirepoc hesitated. But if she won’t make any decision the situation will only get worse.

There was a single weapon inside the office. The authority to use it was also left to Mirepoc. *Do I have to use it?* This weapon that they thought they would never use...

Mirepoc hesitated and finally abandoned all thought. She held the final

weapon – the Spinning Doll Ückück. Then, she sent her thoughts to all Armed Librarian around the Past God Island.

‘Give up all defense lines! All Armed Librarians currently engaged in defense, please return to Bantorra Library!’

The many thoughts replying to her made her head hurt. Mirepoc was also tired. Her vision was darkening and she felt as if sparks were scattering inside her head.

‘I will invoke the Mist Film Barrier to defend Bantorra Library. Abandon all defenses and come hole up here!’

Voices of objection and doubt were being sent to her. She ignored them all and transmitted again.

‘My orders have the same authority as the Acting Director! Comply with them right now!’

Just before she was about to sever her Thought Sharing, she heard Mattalast.

‘Understood. Your decision is correct.’

The Spinning Doll Ückück was inside Mirepoc’s hand. This delicate doll had the power to protect Bantorra Library embedded inside of it.

“Is this all we can do?”

Mirepoc could still not shake off her doubts.

The Armed Librarians abandoned their battlefields and returned to Bantorra Library. They gasped at the current state of its premises and became speechless at Ireia’s death.

The Spinning Doll’s barrier had not yet been activated. A thousand years ago, the low-level Armed Librarians of that time have embedded their powers into that barrier. If activated, a hemisphere made of light would be erected with a radius of a kilometer, with Bantorra Library in its center. They would be able to protect almost the entire area.

The only people able to freely enter and exit would be the ones inside the barrier when activated. She had to wait until her comrades all returned.

Mattalast arrived. Bonbo's whale made an emergency landing in the training ground. Hamyuts and the rest have also returned by airplane.

"...Your decision was correct. You were a perfect commander."

Hamyuts encouraged her. However, Mirepoc felt ashamed. *Would this really be the result of a perfect commander?*

"It's about time to invoke the barrier. If we wait any longer, it will also allow our enemies in."

Mattalast said. All of the Armed Librarians who've fought in the surrounding waters have returned by now.

"But there are still people yet to return."

"It can't be helped. Let us make them work outside the barrier."

But just as Mirepoc nodded and extended her hand...

"Wait a bit, Mirepo."

Hamyuts held back Mirepoc's hand. She felt something with her Sensory Threads. After a little while she could see an aircraft from the window. It emitted smoke from its rear and was headed their way while tilting.

"It's fine. Activate the barrier."

Mirepoc nodded and did so. The winged doll seemed to be tired of waiting as it started to dance. A thin film of light was released from it. It spread widely and covered the vast grounds of Bantorra Library.

The bombs from the sky were stopped, blocked by the barrier of light. The only thing flying in the skies right now was the tilting, worn-out plane.

"Did someone come back?"

Mirepoc asked Hamyuts. It was probably one of their comrades piloting it.

"I really forgot about him now that I think of it."

Hamyuts started running. Mirepoc and Mattalast also followed her.

The airplane failed landing and burst into flames. Just before that, its crew jumped out and rolled on the ground. The blood-covered man rose up.

Mattalast ran up to him and lent him his shoulder.

“Are you fine?”

“Sorry I’m late. I was attacked by Rona’s army so I couldn’t come back. Mirepoc tried contacting me countless of times but it was too noisy so I couldn’t reply.”

The one to return was Minth. After he was dispatched to Rona he abstained from contact for a while. Mirepoc was busy with command and so she forgot about him.

“Let’s talk later. We need to treat you.”

Mattalast said. Minth’s face was paling due to his excessive bleeding.

“No, we’ll talk first. I found out the enemy’s plan.”

“You found out... what do you mean?”

“I’m saying that I found out how the Indulging God Cult’s controlling people.”

Minth’s body shook and collapsed. But he still continued talking.

“It’s only a guess but there’s no doubt. Because we’ve had a hint.”

“What hint?”

Hamyuts asked him.

“...Do you remember Renas Fleur? That impostor Renas. She was the key.”

The three people were surprised at the sudden name.

“It’s a horrifying plan...”

Saying so, Minth became exhausted and lost his consciousness.

Ten days before the great rebellion shook the world...

Kachua stood alone in the mountain north to the Toatt Mines. The time was the middle of the night approaching dawn. He walked around looking for Noloty and Arkit for two days, and now finally found them.

Arkit was sleeping inside the tent. The final, incomplete trump card of the Indulging God Cult was asleep.

If he is able to complete Arkit as a weapon, the whole world will turn into the enemies of the Armed Librarians. All of the world's armies would besiege Bantorra Library and all of the people in the world would act to kill the Armed Librarians.

However, that trump card was in Noloty's grasp. If she is not eliminated they couldn't win.

"...What will I do?"

It would probably not be impossible to assassinate her. However, he couldn't choose to do that. Arkit most likely already became attached to her. If he kills her now, Arkit's worst hatred would be directed at the Indulging God Cult.

"Noloty, huh. A strange girl."

The information about all Armed Librarians was contained inside Kachua's mind. Not only their fighting capabilities and history, but he also knew their personalities, interpersonal relationships and potential.

However, only Noloty he wasn't able to properly gauge. At first, she seemed to be a girl whose only redeeming feature was her kindness. Her growth was excellent, but she lacked something essential. He thought that she was of low importance.

However, that same Noloty took their Monster away. Kachua's expectations were fully betrayed. He thought that it would be impossible for Enlike, who tired of living, to choose to live.

He couldn't understand it. Did she only appear to be foolish and was actually an able person? Or was she a natural con-artist? Or perhaps it was only a coincidence she saved Enlike and she really was a foolish girl?

"Is there no other way but to contact her?"

Kachua muttered. In order to complete Arkit, he couldn't avoid going through Noloty.

At that moment, she appeared like a gust of wind. She got out of the tent and ran at dreadful speed. She tried grabbing Kachua's illusory body but slipped through him and stopped. She stood in place and immediately retreated. She

stood in front of the tent Arkit was sleeping in as if protecting it.

Noloty was looking for Kachua. Probably aware that she couldn't find him with her eyes, she was trying to sense him with her entire body.

"Wait, Noloty Malche. I only came here to talk."

By saying so, Noloty relaxed her vigilant stance.

*Well then, this is the critical part.* Kachua's old body shivered.

Both Noloty that slept inside the tent and Enlike who was reading her Book felt a presence outside.

Noloty woke up with a start and leapt outside. Her attack that she thought would land a final blow slipped through his body.

She returned to the tent and looked at the enemy again.

Noloty could see a strange phenomenon. Although she was seeing her enemy, she couldn't remember his form. *I understand he's the enemy, but how and where from should I attack?*

"Wait, Noloty Malche. I only came here to talk."

The strange enemy said. Putting herself on guard, Noloty was unsure whether or not to believe him. He might be luring Noloty away so he could target Arkit. She couldn't lower her guard.

Still, she decided on listening to her enemy's words for the time being.

"Even if I tell you to not be so cautious it will probably be unreasonable. However, could you not come a bit this way?"

Saying so, the illusory man walked in the other direction.

"Why?"

"I don't want Arkit to hear this. This is why I chose to come at night."

"I can't trust you."

"I see, so I will do this."

At that moment, the illusion standing in front of her disappeared. And about five meters next to it appeared the figure of an old man.

“My ability is manipulating the perception of people. Right now I dispelled it. If you are anxious you can come and touch me. You will understand that this form is no illusion.”

While hesitant, Noloty approached step by step. As she did, she could clearly see the small stature and wrinkled face.

She extended her hand and touched the man’s face. The feel of his dry skin was definitely transmitted. He was not an illusion.



“Who are you?”

The old man answered.

“Leader of the Indulging God Cult – the Overseer of Paradise. My name is Kachua Beeinhaus.”

Noloty gulped. She forgot she had to defend Arkit for a second.

The enemy leader, the Overseer of Paradise. If she were to beat him right here and now, the long fight with the Indulging God Cult would end. She clenched her fist. There was an old man in the perfect distance to receive that fist were she to strike with it.

But Noloty did not hit him. Even she couldn't understand why.

“It is somewhat shameful. For you see, it has been forty years since I let any person see this form.”

Saying so, Kachua turned his back to Noloty and started walking. She ended up following him without thinking. He was full of openings, but she couldn't attack him from the back.

The two moved to a location away from Arkit's tent.

“It hurts to keep standing. Please excuse me.”

Kachua sat down on the ground. Noloty stood while looking down on him.

“What did you come here to talk about?”

Sitting cross-legged, Kachua's upturned eyes looked at Noloty. She could see that his eyes were definitely laughing.

“We should have nothing to talk about in this current situation. I ran away but showed myself. The topic should be obvious.”

“...What?”

“The Indulging God Cult surrenders to the Armed Librarians. This is what I came to convey.”

Noloty was astonished. Seeing her face, Kachua chuckled.

“...Why?”

As she was barely able to say that, Kachua raised his voice and laughed.

“Why did I come this time? Do you not know? We are already losing to you.

Half a year ago was Mokka's rebellion. That was our final plan. Since it failed, we now have no means with which to fight you.”

“That's certainly true, but why didn't you surrender earlier?”

“A fight is not something you can give up immediately. At that time we still had many pawns left. We were also raising a new generation of warriors. Volken was also in the palm of my hands. If I were to say we should surrender my subordinates would have not consented.”

“...”

“Besides, I still held a sliver of hope. Do I not have some way with which I could keep on fighting? By thinking this I could not surrender.”

Kachua laughed with self-deprecation. Noloty had no idea if he was truly laughing or just faking it.

“All of my subordinates died. I also made up my mind. Therefore we are talking now.

Will you believe me, Noloty?”

Noloty said nothing. Whether or not she believed it, the conversation was too heavy for her so she couldn't judge it probably. *Will Mirepoc contact me?* She thought. *I want to hear opinions from Mirepoc or the Director.* However, her wish did not come true and it all fell on her shoulders.

Enlike, who was reading the Book, knew it was all a lie. But Noloty of that time didn't know. *Don't believe him, attack him,* Enlike called out to her. However, the records of the Book would never change.

## Part 3

After a while of silence, Noloty spoke.

“Understood. I accept your surrender. Please accompany me to Bantorra Library and reveal all of the Indulging God Cult’s secrets.”

“I do not mind. Of course we will do that. However, I first have a favor to ask.”

“Is there anything else?”

“I would like you to conclude our fight. No... I would like you to clean up after my mistake.”

“...What do you mean?”

Noloty had a bad feeling. *Don't say it*, she nearly mouthed.

“I would like you to kill Arkit Chroma.”

She didn't think it would be something this stupid. She recalled his terror attack at the Toatt Mines. Noloty somewhat understood the goal of that plan.

No matter how you would think of it, it was a plan that couldn't succeed. Also, there were the actions of the subordinates after Noloty stopped their attack. It all lead to Arkit's death. That plan was made in order to kill him.

“Why does Arkit have to die?”

“I had another reason to hesitate surrendering. That was Arkit's existence.

We sought power. As you know, we have dirtied our hands in heretical deeds. As a result of that, we have created a horrible disaster.

That is Arkit.”

“...”

“A power is sleeping inside him... the power to transplant his soul into other people.

If it were to activate, all the people around him would receive his hatred. They would all start to violently hate the Armed Librarians just like him.

Furthermore, that hatred is not limited only to the surrounding people. It would spread throughout the entire world like an incurable sickness. If that happens I would not be able to do anything. Not even Arkit himself.”

“ ...”

“I thought that using this power would lead us to defeat the Armed Librarians. However, it is not a power to be used for battle. It would destroy not only the Armed Librarians but all people around the world.”

*Does such a power really exist? Impossible. It is beyond what people can do.*

“It is incredibly unlikely, but he might be able to control his power. However, that would also be meaningless. We will be destroyed before he would find how to do so.

If we were wiped out, the only thing that would remain is the disaster brought forth by him.”

“...This can't be true.”

“Do you understand? We are already cornered. There is no choice but to kill him.”

“Does Arkit...?”

“He obviously does not know.”

Noloty was worried whether this story was true or not.

“Even if what you said is true, there is one strange part.”

“What is it?”

“Why can't you kill Arkit yourself? You've killed countless of people. You're not one who would hesitate on killing.”

“...What a cruel thing to say, Noloty. No, it might be my just desserts...”

Kachua sighed.

“I thought of killing him. But I could not. Arkit is my final remaining subordinate.

Could you believe it? Even I cannot do it. To think I had these kinds of

feelings...”

“...”

“The attack on Toatt Mines was my final act of mercy. If he was to continue his hatred I wanted to at least have him die in a fight. You can laugh, Noloty. I could do nothing but give him that sort of mercy.

Come now, laugh Noloty. Laugh at this old man.”

But she couldn't laugh.

“And after laughing, listen to my request. If you cannot do it, please call someone else. End it by your own hands.”

Noloty hesitated.

*Is this old man's story true?*

If it was, would she be able to kill Arkit?

“...As I thought you are hesitating, Noloty.

You are thinking that you do not want to kill him. You are thinking of keeping his existence a secret and trying to save him somehow.”

It was exactly so.

“If so, I have no choice but to do this.”

Kachua pulled out a small knife. Its blade was only about as big as a middle finger; a knife unsuitable for a fight.

“I will bet on my life. Read the truth about the Indulging God Cult from my Book.”

The knife hit his neck. At that instant, Noloty's hand moved. She grabbed Kachua's thin wrist. The knife stopped just before his carotid artery.

Kachua widened his eyes in astonishment. In contrast to his expression that seemed to see through everything, he now had the face of someone who was surprised from the bottom of his heart.

His wrist creaked. The knife slipped and pierced the ground.

“Don't, screw with me...”

The one standing there was not the Noloty he knew. It was the Noloty no one knew who clenched her teeth and glared at him with anger.

“Don’t screw with me. Why, why is it always this way?!”

She released Kachua’s wrist. Then, her fist hit the ground.

“It’s always like this. Everyone always, always urges me to kill and to kill!”

Noloty was pounding the ground. Her accumulated anger burst inside her. She had no other outlet for her anger except the ground in front of her.

“Is not killing so bad?! Is dying that good?! Why is it aalways, aalways like this?!”

Noloty shouted. She glared at Kachua with anger.

“I don’t want to kill. I don’t want to let anyone die. But everyone wants to die. Why is that?!”

Kachua intently stared at this Noloty. They were almost like eyes of someone who feared what he couldn’t understand.

Not even once during Kachua’s long life had he ever been as surprised as this time. The moment when he came to know of Heaven... the moment when Hamyuts let him go... the moment when Winkeney succeeded in controlling Mokkaania... even his shock at those events paled in front of what happened here.

During that moment, Kachua truly intended on dying. He could do nothing else but bet on his life to move Noloty. He realized that and readied his resolve. He was simply that much cornered.

Therefore, the shock he received was great. If she said she didn’t want to kill Arkit he could understand. She was that kind of girl. But what reason would she have to not want to kill him?

He couldn’t understand Noloty’s way of thinking. She was outside the framework of his knowledge.

Perhaps having relaxed, Noloty stood up. Then she spoke to Kachua.

“I refuse killing Arkit. If you want to clean up, please use a different way.”

Kachua furrowed his brows.

“What should we do?”

“Tell Arkit the truth. Tell him what the Indulging God Cult has been doing until now. Tell him the Armed Librarians aren’t evil. Tell Arkit about everything. Then he will stop hating us.”

“...Do you think this will settle everything?”

“You said his power can infect other people with his hatred. So if he doesn’t hate anyone his ability shouldn’t be able to activate.”

“...I wonder if this will go well. But I have no choice but to listen to you. I am the loser after all.”

Kachua said and smiled.

“That’s not all. There’s also another thing you need to do.”

“What?”

Noloty touched Kachua’s face with her fist.

“Apologize to everyone.”

“To everyone?”

“All the people you’ve hurt! To Enlike-san, to the released Meats, to your comrades killed by the Armed Librarians, to everyone!”

“Apologize, huh. For me to apologize...”

“You can’t possibly atone for it. But at least apologize.”

Kachua started laughing. Noloty couldn’t understand why.

“I see, that is also a possible line of thought. No, I am surprised. I’m truly amazed by your way of thinking.”

“Why are you surprised? It’s natural.”

“Your saying so definitely makes it seem that way, but I have never thought of it. Apologizing, huh...”

Kachua kept laughing. Seeing him like that, she felt fear at this old man for the first time.

*I feel bad*, thought Noloty. *This man is weird. There's definitely something wrong with him that can't be seen on the surface.*

"Well then, we should wake up Arkit soon."

Suddenly looking away, Noloty saw the other side of the mountain getting faintly lighter. She finally noticed that morning was approaching.

Arkit came out of the tent. Seeing Kachua, he seemed suspicious. Noloty was surprised; did that old man not show Arkit his true form?

"Who's that?"

Saying this, he took a step back. Kachua approached him.

"It is not unreasonable for you to not understand who I am. After all I never showed you myself."

"Are you possibly..."

Kachua invoked his ability. He transformed to the illusory figure Noloty first saw.

"Kachua, why're you here...?"

"I came to meet you."

Arkit rushed up to Kachua and clung to him.

"Sorry, I couldn't do it. I wasn't able to kill any Armed Librarian. I'm absolutely useless."

Kachua gently stroked his head.

"The one who needs to apologize is me. Because there are many things I have concealed from you."

Kachua started talking. First he told Arkit of the Indulging God Cult's existence; their mortal combat against the Armed Librarians; the ability budding inside of Arkit; and the fact that he was going to kill him.

Arkit interjected *you're lying!* many times through it all. He couldn't believe any of it.

There were so many things to consider. He now knew the identity of Kachua,

the one who he had believed the most of all. Furthermore, that very Kachua had tried to kill him. And most importantly he came to know that the Armed Librarians were not evil.

It felt like having your footing crumble down under your legs. When Noloty saw that around the middle Arkit stopped even nodding, she wondered if she did an even crueller thing than killing him. He had told her that fighting was everything to him. That meant he lost everything other than his life.

After hearing the story to its end, Arkit murmured.

“Who are you?”

He thrust Kachua away. His light, old body stumbled.

“You’re an impostor. You’re not my Kachua. You’re an impostor Noloty brought from somewhere. It has to be that way!”

“You probably do not want to believe. But that is the truth.”

“I won’t believe you!”

Noloty interjected at that point.

“Arkit. He’s real.”

“Shut up!”

Throwing a tantrum, he also thrust Noloty away.

“All adults are liars, I won’t believe anymore, I don’t want to see your face. Go away!”

He started pounding Noloty’s stomach. At that moment, her shoulder was patted from behind.

“Noloty. Let us leave him alone.”

*You’re one to say*, thought Noloty. But having no choice, she left Arkit. She went a bit down the mountain and stopped at a place where she could see the tent from.

“...”

Noloty found Arkit’s figure. He sat down listlessly. She couldn’t tell his

expression from that distance.

*Will he reconsider now?* But at his current state he might also be at a loss and kill himself. Although she was the one who invited him, her heart ached.

“Are you worried about Arkit, Noloty?”

Kachua said. A faint smile was still seen on his face.

“Obviously.”

“He will not die. He was moved by his hatred for the Armed Librarians. Since it all collapsed, he should not have the mental energy left to suicide.”

*What a horrible way of saying it,* thought Noloty. *It's like you're seeing through him.*

“Don't you think he's poor? It's your fault.”

“My fault, huh? Yes. That is true.”

“Don't you feel responsible?”

“What responsibility do I have towards him?”

Noloty shuddered at his way of speaking.

“Who do you think that boy is?”

“He is Arkit. Our most important final pawn. Our only possibility to kill the Armed Librarians.”

Noloty felt nauseous. Earlier he said that he couldn't kill Arkit because he was too dear to him. She didn't think that was true.

“But you're only thinking of Arkit.”

“Huh?”

“This is the end of a long battle. It is disappointing that you are not even a bit happy. Or do you not care about the Indulging God Cult at all?”

“That's not it...”

Noloty spoke ambiguously. Now that he said it, she knew he was right. However, the important thing was who will become happy. That was far more important than who won.

Kachua raised a laugh from the back of his throat.

“Well, it is fine. In the first place us the Indulging God Cult was not much of an enemy to you. I was intending to do my very best, but you Armed Librarians are truly hard to chew.”

Perhaps tired of standing, Kachua sat down. Looking at him like this, he was nothing more than an exhausted old man.

“I was supposed to know the strength of the Armed Librarians, but it seems my evaluation was too naïve. Thinking it was the same as fifty years ago was not good. Far from being like fifty years ago, perhaps the Armed Librarians of the present are the strongest in history.”

“...Fifty years ago? You can't be...”

Hearing that, she suddenly remembered. She once heard the name Kachua. Fifty years ago, he was the First Grade Armed Librarian who served as the sixth Acting Director before the current one.

“Oh, you seem to know me. Even Photona wasn't acquainted with me.”

If Mirepoc hadn't told her this, she would have probably not noticed. She didn't want to think that the enemy leader was once an Armed Librarian.

“I have met with Ireia once when she was a ferocious and sweet girl. When, finishing up matters without fighting Ireia as she was at the time was most fortunate.”

Kachua laughed in a jesting tone.

“Why did an Armed Librarian go to the Indulging God Cult?”

“Hmm. Do you want to hear that? Yes, should I leave my testament since it is a good chance?”

Putting his hand to his chin, Kachua thought for a while. Then, he started speaking while looking at the sky.

“The reason is my dream. I dreamt of a new world.”

“...Your dream?”

“When I was in Bantorra Library, I have always felt everything I did was in

vain. Carrying and managing the Books was in vain. Do you not think so as well? We are all involved in stories that already ended. We do nothing to contribute to people's happiness.

I wondered if I could have a job that was more meaningful for the happiness of people. I was young. I believed that I could achieve something big."

"Making people happy?"

These were words that should have never come out of that man's mouth.

"Yes, Noloty. Do you not think this world has fallen into unhappiness? Peace is full of deceit and conflict brings about tragedy. There is sorrow without end but happiness is like an oasis in the desert.

What makes people happy? Neither love, friendship or justice can give people perfect happiness. They are too weak.

I thought and finally found it. The thing that could give people the perfect happiness."

"The Indulging God Cult?"

"Indeed."

"It's the worst. You don't mind making plenty of people miserable for the sake of one person."

"That is only one aspect of the Indulging God Cult. The essence of the Cult is bringing people's Books to Heaven. Protecting Heaven, where the perfect happiness lies, and guiding people there."

She heard of the place called Heaven. It was the delusion of the Indulging God Cult.

"Noloty. Why do all people become Books and are stored at Bantorra Library?"

"Because Past God Bantorra decided so."

"Exactly. But Noloty, did we forget we also have power? Humans possess the power to overturn the Gods' axioms.

All people become Books and are stored at the Library. We have the power to

overturn even that axiom.”

She thought him insane. People certainly had the power to change the world. But could they make the sun rise from the west? Could they reverse gravity? It was a challenge beyond the mortal domain.

“My dream is the creation of a new Bantorra Library. Then I will purge all of the Armed Librarians clinging to the orders of the Library that was already gone from this world. Then, we will become the new Armed Librarians.

I have betted my life on that dream.”

“A new Library?”

“A Library that collects all Books and selects only the valuable ones among them to go to Heaven. It is not difficult at all. It is the same as what the Indulging God Cult is doing right now.

Blissful people will ascend to Heaven. This is not limited to True Men. As long as they’re happy, they are all worth enough to go to Heaven.

Those who bring happiness to people will also go to Heaven. They also do not need to be False Men, as long as they’re kind-hearted people who wish for happiness. Meaning, people just like you.

Then, the souls of those valuable people will continually taste the perfect happiness in Heaven. Forever.”

“Me, go to Heaven?”

“My evaluation of you is high. You have saved Enlike. You have also tried to save Arkit. Even as your enemy I fully understand the righteousness in your heart. The Indulging God Cult needed people like you.”

She never felt so unhappy at being praised.

“Do you not think it is marvelous? Kind people like you can go to Heaven and attain happiness. And those who have lost their righteousness, those who made people unhappy, will be thrown away to the cold Library.”

“Both you and your subordinates seem to be the worst people, though.”

“Indeed. However, I required power. In order to win, I had to gather vile

people such as Cigal. The Indulging God Cult actually was an organization overflowing with love and kindness, but I have defiled it. I regret this fact.”

Noloty couldn't see any so-called love and kindness in the Indulging God Cult.

“There's another thing you should regret. Just how many people do you think you've made unhappy?”

“Hehe, the sorrow I have caused pales in front of the eternal Heaven.”

She always thought that man was unpleasant. Now she roughly understood why.

A person who doesn't think of people as people appeared in front of her. Hamyuts was also like that, and so was Zatoh. However, they were both different from Kachua.

She had the feeling Hamyuts did have some love in her. She had the feeling Hamyuts felt some twisted love for fighting and for her enemies. She loved killing and loved whoever she fought to the death with. But this was different than that.

Zatoh also had a human-like heart. He felt pleasure at trampling people and joy at controlling them. If one thoroughly investigated the dirty aspects people can possess, they would end up with someone like Zatoh. But this was also different.

This old man was looking down at people from above. Whether he was immersed in some superiority complex or just thought of himself as some great being, he was of a different domain. He was like someone from a higher plane.

No matter who suffered or died due to his actions, he thought it had nothing to do with him. It was the ultimate irresponsibility and the worst kind of apathy.

“But, that was all in vain.”

“Obviously. There's no way you could destroy the Armed Librarians. Also, there's no way the dreams people like you have would come true.”

“That is right. However, I could not help but attempt it.”

Kachua spread his arms and started speaking loudly.

“That is a dream. Even if you are told it is impossible, you will not give it up. Even if you think your whole life will be in vain, you cannot stop it. Once you have dreamt, you can do nothing else but push on until your life is wasted.”

His old eyes sparkled as if he was young.

“And dreams go hand in hand with sacrifices. What does not require any sacrifices cannot be called a dream. Otherwise it is nothing more than a trivial, half-hearted yearning. Is it not so, Noloty?”

I was not able to treat this dream as a half-hearted yearning. I have brought along countless of sacrifices.”

Noloty could understand that his words were no falsehood. He faced his dream more sincerely than anyone else.

Therefore, this old man was hateful and unpleasant.

“If this is true it might be amazing. But just where is that so-called Heaven?

There isn't one, right? If not, that's nothing but a delusion.

If the place called Heaven exists show it to me.”

Kachua scratched his head and smiled.

“It is troublesome for you to get stuck on that point. You see, Heaven right now is at a place I cannot reach. Only a few selected people can go there.”

“So as I thought it's just your delusion. How stupid. What a waste of my time.”

Noloty frowned, but Kachua looked happy for some reason.

“However, Heaven does exist. It certainly does.”

*Should I beat him up?* Thought Noloty. *If I talk to him any further I'll go crazy.*

At that time help arrived. Arkit came walking towards them. However, he stopped at a place quite far and raised his voice.

“Noloty, come here!”

Kachua urged her to go ahead. Although she was worried he might run away, Noloty started walking towards Arkit. Kachua intently stared at her. He could not miss even a single instant of what was about to happen next.

*What's Kachua thinking about?* Noloty had no way of guessing.

*I have barely reached this far.* Kachua thought this while calming his beating heart.

Arkit was approaching perfection. Although it was a very close call, the plan to destroy the Armed Librarians was heading towards success.

*It was truly dangerous.*

If Noloty would postpone dealing with Arkit it would all be over. As expected, she intended to try and solve it by herself without mentioning him to the other Armed Librarians.

If she were to receive Mirepoc's Thought Sharing it would all be over. The Armed Librarians would gather at this place, and his plan would probably be spoiled. He was also lucky to avoid that.

He also deceived Noloty well. She doubted him, but should now partly believe in him.

His plan changed drastically, but the end result will be as he thought.

“ ... ”

Noloty and Arkit were conversing. He couldn't hear their words.

Arkit having the power to destroy the world... that story was false. There was no way a single person could possess that outrageous power.

However, that he was their trump card was true. The victory of the Indulging God Cult rested on his shoulders.

There was only one thing needed to destroy the Armed Librarians.

It was for Arkit to keep on hating them.

# Chapter 5: The Gloomy Lizard and the Cornered Mice

## Part 1

One night passed since the activation of the barrier.

Tanks were running on the roads. Even the spacious main street of the town was too narrow for the groups of tanks lined up. They kept passing through, crushing the surrounding fences and outdoor lights and destroying all building standing in their way.

None in town made a single click of their tongues or voiced a single complaint. If the Armed Librarians were to die – those hateful, hateful Armed Librarians – they were fine with them breaking whatever they wanted.

Airplanes were dancing in the skies.

They were so many airplanes that even the wide sky seemed cramped. Even though they already blew the entire island to smithereens, they still had had enough bombs to load onto them.

Ships were clustered in the waters surrounding the island. Looking at them from the sky, it would appear as if a black belt enclosed the island with twice its area. There were not even one fifth of the total forces among the soldiers on the island. No matter how one crammed them, no more would be able to fit. The remaining soldiers held their guns with sweaty hands and awaited orders.

Looking from atop rooftops or from the shadows of alleyways, the inhabitants were sending them gazes as hot as lava. It was as if they were watching their heroes.

*Destroy the Armed Librarians as soon as possible. Burn that awful building which sullies us just by existing, that building that prides itself with the history of 2000 years, burn Bantorra Library into ashes.* They were watching the invaders with eyes that seemed to say just that.

“...Uooooohhhhhh...!”

The people on the island raised an especially loud cheer. The Magic Combat

Unit was getting ahead of the tanks and heading for the Library. The Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult weren't the only ones to be training warriors who used Magic.

Coming from behind the mixed forces of the three countries, the Magicians of the Magic Agency also formed a line and advanced.

The only thing that stood in their way was the barrier covering Bantorra Library. When that barrier will be destroyed... it was clear to everyone there that when that happens, the end of Bantorra Library will come.

The Magicians started reciting the chants needed to break barriers. The warriors started attacking it. They were trying to destroy the barrier with overwhelming numbers.

The inside of Bantorra Library was in panic. They treated the injured Armed Librarians and gathered all those who could still fight. Mirepoc's decision to hole up inside was perhaps too late. More than half of the survivors were wounded, and a quarter of them lost their ability to fight.

"...Sorry."

Merciful gunshots reverberated to those they decided would not be able to survive.

All Armed Librarians received an immeasurable shock due to the death of Ireia who protected the Library for forty years. It was perhaps even larger of a shock than if Hamyuts were to die. Ireia was undoubtedly a symbol of "the strongest" in Bantorra Library.

However, morale was high. The Armed Librarians were getting worked up because they lost those they could rely upon. It was the same as a cornered mouse who found the courage to bite the cat chasing it.

The door to the Acting Director's Office opened. Supported by Mirepoc, Minth came inside. After extensive treatment he regained his consciousness a little while ago.

"I can walk, it's fine."

Minth tried entering the room, and as he stumbled Mattalast lent him his

shoulder.

“Don’t push yourself. You’ve hurt your arteries.”

A cloth meant to stop Minth’s bleeding was wrapped around his thigh. The entire area under his right knee was stained with blood. If it were not bound with cloth, his blood would probably still be spewing out.

However, the Armed Librarians couldn’t spare the time to worry about such an injury.

“Minth, yesterday you told us you understood the truth about this incident.”

Hamyuts gazed at him and said.

“Yeah. That’s why I came back.”

“Um, Minth-san. Does that mean you betrayed us?”

“Idiot, what are you saying? Listen to what Minth’s telling us.”

Hamyuts rebuked Mirepoc. Minth sat down on the floor as if he lost all power.

“There is no need to explain about my ability now, right?”

There was no way the Armed Librarians wouldn’t know about it.

His eyes were named Sacred Eyes. What kind of a person was the one in front of him? Was he good or bad, who did he love or hate? Minth could tell all this with a glance. By reading into subtle changes in emotions, he could also tell whether someone was lying or disturbed.

“While heading here, I saw some people getting attacked. All of their souls were full with unbelievable hatred. It was violent and simplistic. They were thinking that as long as the Armed Librarians were to die they didn’t care what happened next.”

They already knew that. But Minth’s eyes should have been able to read through them even further.

“It’s hard to explain, but the shape of hatred is same in every person. Sorrow at their loved ones being taken away, hatred close to being suicidal... that kind of shape.

It's impossible. Hatred also has many other forms. Men have one, women have one, old people, young people, they all have their own forms. But all those who are attacking us have the exact same shape to their hatred."

"And?"

"From now on is only my guess. Do you remember Renas Fleur?"

They all nodded, wondering if she even had any relevance to all of this.

"They produced the fake Renas using a technique that transplants the memories from a Book into a person and so "revives" a dead person. But I've wondered whether that technique had any utility value.

Even if human souls are transplanted, one cannot transplant Magic Rights. Even if you'd transplant the Director's personality you'd only be a crazy woman. It can't be used to produce warriors.

Or so I've thought."

"And?"

"Should it be the opposite? This is not a technique to make a mere human into a warrior. Isn't it actually a technique able to make warriors into the enemies of the Armed Librarians?"

They transplanted the soul of someone who hates the Armed Librarians to all the people in the world and made them attack us."

That logic seemed sound. However, it was only the first step in their reasoning. The question was how the Indulging God Cult managed to accomplish that.

Hamyuts was gazing outside the window. On the other side of the whales Bonbo set afloat, the enemies have filled up the island.

"It doesn't seem like someone caught them one by one and performed some trick on them."

Minth nodded.

"It's probably something that activates automatically. A technique where by seeing something, or perhaps hearing something, that personality would be

transplanted to them on the spot...”

“There’s also another problem. Why does it not work on us Armed Librarians? If a personality of someone who hates Armed Librarians would be transplanted into us we would all commit suicide.”

Mattalast said.

“Now that you mention it, Ismo’s President was also normal.”

Mirepoc held her head.

“The normal librarians also don’t seem to become our enemies. There’s probably some condition. Something that makes it so one would not be affected.”

Hamyuts said

“It’s probably not some small trigger like seeing something or hearing something. There’s some power able to affect souls at work...”

With this, all clues were present. A power that affected souls and spread explosively. It did not affect Armed Librarians and even with normal people there were some who received it and some who didn’t. The four people started thinking. However, time passed with no answer coming to mind.

“I have no idea. We have too few hints.”

When Hamyuts said this, Mattalast suddenly had a flash of inspiration.

“I remember now. There’s another clue. It’s beyond our understanding, but... it seems like Noloty is related to that plan.”

This was the first time Hamyuts and Minth heard of this. Mirepoc did hear about it before. However, distracted by the fighting, she forgot all about it.

“What do you mean, Mattalast?”

“Even I don’t get it at all. It’s just that one of our enemies said her name.”

At that moment, Mirepoc raised her voice.

“I know!”

The gazes of the other three focused at her.

“Affecting the soul, spreading explosively, and not affecting Armed Librarians... I’m not sure how Noloty’s related to this, but all the conditions match!”

“What?”

“It’s the Deep Blue Curse. The Indulging God Cult used the Deep Blue Curse to plant the seeds of hatred in the entire world!”

Radio broadcasting was ceased. With that, Kachua lost all means with which he could find out the situation at Bantorra Library. But he wasn’t worried. The fact that the Library’s destruction was already decided hasn’t changed.

Was there anyone who was able to realize even one part of his plan? They would most likely be able to think of the idea of transplanting souls, but probably not relate it to the Deep Blue Curse. Thinking that far would be an accomplishment.

The Gloomy Lizard was pacing aimlessly inside the cabin. Wetting the floor with its black bodily fluids, it raised a depressed groaning. These fluids contained the pathogens of the Deep Blue Curse.

“Do you hate them?”

Kachua called to the Gloomy Lizard. It breathed out a black fog from its mouth.

Originally, those infected with the Deep Blue Curse would fall into melancholy and die. However, the improved Deep Blue Curse produced from this lizard was different.

Even if contracted there will be no melancholy. They will be captured by hatred instead. They would hate and hate the Armed Librarians until they couldn’t stand it.

The entirety of Kachua’s plan was made in order to create this Magic Beast. All of the plans he made to raise Arkit, send him into battle, and rescue him from Noloty, were all in order to perfect it.

No, that was not all. Even the entire battle made by the Indulging God Cult was for this Magic Beast’s sake.

'...I hate...'

The Gloomy Lizard exhaled. These words could be faintly heard through the air.

"You hate them, right? Then keep on hating. More Armed Librarians would die the more you hate them."

Saying this, a gentle smile rose to Kachua's lips.

It all began when he met a single Magic scholar. Kachua was looking for able scientists and Magicians from all around the world. Starting with Charlot, researchers who deviated from the proper world gathered at Kachua's side. The Meats originally served as guinea pigs to them. Using them as materials for the Monster or turning them into Human Bombs was nothing more than a secondary use.

Among all the geniuses he gathered, Kachua focused on one Magic scholar. He was a heretic scholar who tried combining Magic with science. Furthermore, after knowing the man's personality, it was obvious why he couldn't work in the center stage of science.

"Kahahahaha, you make me do some good research hahahahahahahaha."

This Magic scholar, named Bada, did not stop laughing even for a moment when he spoke.

It was not that he made his inquiring mind work until exhaustion and thus fell into darkness; ever since he met Kachua he was wholly broken. He was a man who seemed to obtain an abnormal brain in exchange for his failed humanity.

His research, which was about the revival of people, didn't seem like it would become useful for battle. However, Kachua always felt that he was about to grasp something important.

Coming up with the way of using it happened a long time after he met him.

"Using Deep Blue Curse to transplant hatred! Kahahaha, you've thought of a wonderful thing hahahaha!"

Even knowing that it would be impossible, Bada approved his proposal. His research from then on was remarkable.

He easily succeeded in reviving humans, and furthermore was able to realize transplanting of a human soul into an animal.

Transplanting a human's hatred into a Gloomy Lizard, it would also be transplanted into the infected persons through the pathogens for the Deep Blue Curse. Even Kachua, the person to hit upon this idea, couldn't believe it actually came true.

A certain day after completing the proper technique, which was a month after Mokka's rebellion, Bada suddenly committed suicide. It didn't seem like he was at a loss, nor did he want to ascend to Heaven, and Kachua couldn't understand the reason for his suicide even after he read his Book.

After this came Kachua's work. He began looking for hatred that would destroy the Armed Librarians. He first tried using suggestion on Meats so they would hate them. However, even transplanting those Books' souls into people, no favorable outcome was reached. Small amount of hatred would just get negated by their original personality.

Kachua tried transplanting the pure, strong soul of a warrior who knew of his intentions. That also did not work. He had neither the sense of duty nor the proper objective.

What he needed was hatred. It had to be strong, pure, and morbid. It had to be not an artificial product, but true hatred.

Then, Kachua found – Arkit Chroma.

Meanwhile at Bantorra Library...

“There's no cure for the Deep Blue Curse.”

Hamyuts said while staring out of the window.

“Even if there was, it doesn't seem like it would have been useful. It would be impossible for us to inject it one by one with these numbers.”

Together with Mattalast, they both sighed. They understood their enemy's plan, but could not find any measure against it. They only made a slight advance inside the total darkness.

“More importantly, what are you planning to do now, Director?”

“The Armed Librarians outside of Bantorra are investigating a facility of the Indulging God Cult again. Until they are able to do something we will defend this place.”

“But how long can we do so, I wonder?”

Hamyuts leapt out of the window. Mattalast also followed her. Before leaving, she was ordered by Mirepoc to assist Minth’s’ treatment.

She could see the entirety of Past God Bantorra’s Island from the roof. Seeing the gathering of the three countries’ armies was also a spectacle.

“About how long will the barrier hold?”

“Probably about three days. But we have to beat the Magician Unit who’s trying to break it.”

“Once we finish our talk we have to go. Attack with all those who can still work.”

Mattalast nodded.

“After defeating the Magician Unit, what’s next?”

“There will be plenty of other people. Even if we defeat the Magicians, they would be able to break the barrier using brute force.”

The tanks and bombers kept their attacks without stopping. The time when the barrier would run out was approaching.

“We can probably hold out one month. Until then, we have to do something.”

Was it possible? Even though they weren’t able to think of any measures, the time remaining was far too short.

“We have no choice but to do something. Staying inside for a whole month...”

Just as he said this, Mattalast paled.

“What’s wrong?”

He leapt off the roof and ran to the annex. Hamyuts released her Sensory Threads and tied them to him.

“Director, we might have been had.”

Mattalast spoke to her through the Sensory Threads. He rushed inside a warehouse at the annex. Hamyuts could also feel what was inside there.

“...We were idiots. We forgot what we absolutely need for a siege battle.”

Hamyuts couldn't deny his words. Even though it was the first time they faced a siege, just how clumsy were they?

They forgot the thing most essential for a siege. Even though all castles throughout history would collapse without it, how could they have forgotten? They needed *food*.

Everything in their warehouse was burned. In the confusion someone who became their enemy probably burned it all.

“Really stupid of us... what will we do?”

Hamyuts started smiling. She was smiling at both her approaching death as well as her foolishness.

“Can't we just steal something?”

They returned to the office and explained the situations. After they did, Minth spoke readily.

“Can we? We are surrounded.”

“Using your Sensory Threads you should at least know if there's food around, Director. Stealing it would be troublesome, but we have to do it so we wouldn't lose.”

“That's true, but...”

Mirepoc tilted her head. Hamyuts then flapped her hand and spoke.

“I hate that.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Do you think we can do such an ugly thing? We are the proud Armed Librarians who have protected the world for 2000 years. Will we just turn into bandits and look around for food at the end? That's no joke.”

“I should be the one to say it's no joke. If you don't want to do it, I will. I don't mind resigning from this place and go back to being a robber.”

“You’re also stubborn. I’m telling you that I don’t like it so listen to me.”

Mirepoc shook her head to the side.

“I also agree with Minth. Director, I’m slightly disappointed.”

“...Oh my.”

Hamyuts was surprised the two people objected. Mattalast also nodded and seemingly agreed with them.

“We will do all we can do. For now, we have to defeat our current enemies. Mirepoc will stay in the rear. All other people who can move will go. We will attack with all of them.”

Bonbo created a formation of whales in the sky. The ones to hold their weapons and gather on the ground were not only the Armed Librarians and trainees. There were also some normal librarians who weren’t able to become Armed Librarians. There were also those who intended on fighting despite not having any fighting capabilities.

They did not need Hamyuts’s orders. Not only did they not need poor orders against the army corps that were prepared to fight to the death, it would probably be harmful. Hamyuts watched them all in silence.

The subordinates continued their preparations for combat with grim expressions. They handed out small arms, loaded ammunition and formed lines. While sitting on the roof and watching this, Hamyuts let out a chuckle.

She knew it. They would not win.

“Are you happy, Hammy?”

It was then that Mattalast spoke to her.

“Oh, is that how it seems?”

“Anyone looking at you would think so. You look really happy.”

“Perhaps. This is quite the complicated feeling.”

Hamyuts had been waiting for someone who could kill her. Since now it was about to happen, there was no way she wouldn’t be happy.

Ever since she defeated Mokkania and the Indulging God Cult was heading to

destruction, she gave up, thinking her defeat was impossible. However, it seemed like there was still hope.

“I never thought it would come up to this. I thought the Overseer of Paradise was an idiot, but I’ll revise my evaluation. That old geezer is quite something.”

Mattalast made a face with complicated feelings. He was the closest man to Hamyuts, but it was different for her.

“Say, what’s the cause of my defeat?”

“I can’t really say. Even if someone other than you was the Acting Director they would have probably been unable to evade this loss.

But if I have to say, there was one thing.”

Mattalast gently touched Hamyuts’s head.

“The Overseer of Paradise is a man who looks forward. But you’re one who waits for things to come to you. You were always waiting for someone to come and kill you.”

He tousled her hair.

“Hammy, you’re a girl waiting for her prince charming. A girl who dreams and believes someone will bring happiness to her. If I have to state anything as your cause of defeat, it would probably be that.”

“I see. That’s certainly true.”

Hamyuts held her knees and looked at Mattalast.

“I think I understood why I wasn’t feeling up to it.”

“What is it?”

“It seems that a bride always feels some depression before her wedding. She’s hesitating like, should I really marry this person? She thinks of all the men she knows and doesn’t feel well.

I think it’s like that.”

“The depression of the waiting room, huh? Well, can’t be helped. It means to stop being a dreaming girl and turn into an adult.”

“Yeah, but I definitely have a person in mind.”

“Did you recall someone?”

Hamyuts nodded sweetly.

“If I am going to be killed, I want it to be someone like Colio.”

Mattalast released his hand, and then slowly left.



## Part 2

During the same time, Enlike was walking in the mountains with Noloty's Book in his pocket. He passed through such places as where Arkit cried and where Noloty and Kachua spoke with each other without looking back. His destination was the spot 80 kilometers to the north that Lascall Othello told him about.

"Enlike-sama, have you looked through Noloty-sama's Book?"

That same Lascall now appeared in front of him.

"I haven't read everything."

"It is very well that you have read it. The tale I have entrusted you has been conveyed. The conclusion will arrive when you reach Noloty's feelings that she could convey."

"Is Arkit the one she wanted to convey them to?"

"Indeed."

"Did Noloty die for Arkit?"

"Indeed."

Enlike clenched his teeth.

"Why? Why did she have to die for a boy just a few days after meeting him?"

"Because Noloty-sama was absurdly Noloty-sama."

Lascall's figure vanished. Left behind, Enlike put his fingers to his pocket. He was scared of reading. He felt as if he would die too by reading.

Yet he touched the Book. In order to inherit Noloty's tale, he started reading the moment of her death.

In December 18, on the mountain during dawn, Noloty faced Arkit. His face was wet with tears and he seemed exhausted despite only having woken up. However, he apparently had the will to talk with her.

Arkit then spoke.

“Was Kachua’s story true? That I might destroy not only Armed Librarians but the world.”

“I don’t know. It might not be, but it also might be true.”

Noloty had no choice but to answer like that. She didn’t think that Kachua told them everything, but she couldn’t tell what was a lie and what was true. The only thing that was clear was that Kachua was trying to have him killed.

“If it’s true, what am I going to do from now on?”

She didn’t know that either. How would people like Hamyuts and Ireia deal with a person who might destroy the Armed Librarians? Will they really kill him, or will they let him live?

“Your position is too difficult. It’s not something I can deal with by myself.”

“I see.”

“More importantly, what do you want to do? That’s what important. Your position can change with your feelings.”

“I...”

Arkit hesitated. And then he smiled faintly.

“I might be a bit happy.”

A chill ran through Noloty’s body.

“Why?! You don’t have to fight anymore. Didn’t you already understand the Armed Librarians are not bad people?”

“I only realized that the Indulging God Cult are bad people.”

“But the Armed Librarians...!”

At that moment, Arkit grabbed Noloty’s hand. He stopped her words.

“Noloty, what’s up with you? Do you still want to save me even if I destroy the world?”

He strongly grasped her hand. She then answered.

“Yes. Nothing’s changed.”

“Is that how you really feel?”

“Even though we came so far you still doubt me? If I didn’t feel like that why would I say all this?”

Arkit stayed silent for a while as he covered his face.

“Did you realize why I hate the Armed Librarians?”

“Huh?”

“I already said it. If you understood my reasons I would stop fighting.”

She had certainly asked him. She knew the reasons for his hatred. Someone important to Arkit was killed. And then Kachua incited him to think the Armed Librarians were evil. Therefore, when he realized the truth about Kachua, he should have stopped his fight.

“So as I thought you didn’t get it, you don’t know why I hate the Armed Librarians.”

At that moment, the ground at Noloty’s feet shook. She realized her own strong dizziness when her knees buckled down and she collapsed at Arkit’s feet.

Green stains appeared on her palm that was grabbed by Arkit. The moment she realized it was poison her face was on the ground.

“If you would have done it I planned on stopping. I really thought of ending it all.”

“...”

“Even you didn’t manage to stop me.”

Her lips were numb and did not move. Arkit grabbed Noloty’s body and laid her on her back.

“This is my Magic Right. It’s the ability to put poison into anyone I touch with my hand.

It takes about a minute to kill and thirty seconds to make the person unable to move, so it’s useless. I could only do this to you.”

“...uh...”

Her eyes trembled. She couldn’t see Arkit’s face. She could only hear his voice.

“Do you remember what happened four years ago? The Guinbex Imperial Army fought against Rona. The Armed Librarians intervened and fought against Guinbex. I was born in the Guinbex Empire.”

Noloty couldn't reply.

“Guinbex was at fault in that war. Everyone says that and I'm also aware of that. But I can't forgive the Armed Librarians. I can't forgive the Armed Librarians since they had Mokkania Fleur.”

“...”

“Mokkania killed all the troops of my home country, leaving no survivors. He even killed all of the noncombatants.

Did you know, Noloty? There was a music corps in the army. They comforted and encouraged everyone's tired minds. The Guinbex Empire gathered kids like me and made them into a music band.

You probably didn't know this. On that day, a concert for the soldiers was being held.”

“...uh...”

A voice leaked from Noloty's mouth. Without paying it any heed, Arkit kept speaking.

“I had a fever that day so I didn't go. Therefore I was the only one to survive. All of my band friends were killed by Mokkania.”

Noloty moaned. She knew of that incident.

*I was so stupid*, she cursed herself in her mind. She knew of that incident. However, she had forgotten about it.

“What I can't forgive is not only the fact they were killed. The Armed Librarians paid some reparations to my friends' families. I can't forgive that. I thought that if I had died I would have become money as well.

What I can forgive even less is the Armed Librarians having said they protected peace. The people who killed my friends said they were allies of justice. Do you think I can forgive that, Noloty?”

She tried moving. However, her body didn't listen to her.

"After the war was over, everyone forgot about the Armed Librarians' killing. No one said they did anything wrong. No one spoke about me and the rest at all.

All the adults around didn't say anything. They only said that it couldn't be helped, that Guinbex was at fault, and settled everything like that. No matter what I said, no one listened to me."

"..."

"I'm not wrong, am I? But no one had acknowledged me. They all feared the Armed Librarians and ignored my words."

Arkit stepped on Noloty's chest.

"You're the same. You couldn't understand. I wanted you to. I wanted someone to tell me that I wasn't wrong!"

He put his body weight on top of Noloty's body.

"Only Kachua understood me. So I will never listen to you."

He kicked her.

"Serves you right to suffer. You're at fault, you get it? You're at fault!"

Arkit stepped on Noloty's face. He kicked her body and spat on her. Since Noloty couldn't move she was left helpless. But even if she could move, perhaps Noloty would resign herself to receive that treatment anyway.

Without any of them noticing, Kachua approached. He held back Arkit who was busy kicking Noloty.

"Let us stop here. She was being desperate in her own way."

"Kachua..."

The man grinned.

"I understand your feelings well. I have also decided to fight. I will give up at another time."

"..."

“What will you do, Arkit? My nature is as you have heard. Will you still follow me?”

For a short while, Arkit and Kachua stared into each other’s eyes. Then, Arkit slowly nodded with his head.

“Let’s go, Kachua.”

Saying so, he tried walking away. At that time, Kachua returned to Noloty for some reason. Then, he whispered into her ears.

“Noloty. To tell you the truth, it all went just as planned. When I showed myself in front of you I have expected it would all happen like that. You cannot sway Arkit’s hatred.”

*Were you lying?* Noloty shook with anger, but her body did not move.

“This world is my chessboard. I fully control both enemies and allies. You were truly a hard-to-control pawn. However, the world is interesting because there was such a pawn.”

Despite having finished her purpose, Kachua did not kill Noloty. Accompanying Arkit, he simply took his leave.

*Dammit*, she thought.

Grinding her teeth, trying to hold on to her dimming consciousness, Noloty glared at Kachua’s back. However, she fell into darkness.

Since Noloty lost her consciousness, she couldn’t know of what happened afterwards. So Enlike couldn’t, either.

Arkit stopped in place. He turned around and looked towards the collapsed Noloty.

“Do not mind Noloty.”

Kachua said.

“She is still alive. She will probably be back on her feet in about two or three hours. Or do you want to kill her?”

Arkit shook his head to the side. He then spoke.

“I wonder if Noloty hates me now.”

“Why are you thinking of that?”

“...Yeah, she definitely hates me. She will obviously come to kill me as soon as she opens her eyes. Let’s go quickly, before she wakes up.”

Arkit tried walking. However, after he took one step he stopped again and turned around.

“...But, if she doesn’t hate me, what should I do?”

“Arkit. Noloty is also an Armed Librarian. Well, strictly speaking it is not true yet, but she is still an Armed Librarian.”

“I know. I understand that! But...”

Tears welled up in Arkit’s eyes.

“I can’t kill Noloty.”

“No matter what?”

“If she ends up hating me and comes to kill me, I’ll kill her. But if... if that idiot says some stupid thing like ‘I want to save you’ while approaching me with a stupid face, what should I do?”

Arkit clung to the hem of Kachua’s clothes.

“Say, Kachua... Noloty hates me now, right? But if not, what should I do? If that happens, I wouldn’t be able to hate her...”

“...Arkit, let us go already. You should think about this carefully.”

He took Arkit’s hand and made him walk. The figure of Noloty grew smaller behind them.

While looking at Arkit holding his tears, Kachua started thinking.

What he needed was Arkit’s hatred. And it had to be pure.

His hatred towards the Armed Librarians was probably still pure. However, it was mixed with the impurity known as Noloty. If he is not able to remove her, that hatred will not be complete.

The first way was to have Arkit be killed by an Armed Librarian. His intention was to use Arkit’s regret when he would have the tables turned on him just

before victory to complete his hatred. However, that failed when Noloty appeared.

His next plan was to have Noloty kill Arkit. By being betrayed by someone he connected with, his hatred should have stirred up. But that also failed.

He also hoped that Arkit would cut off his feelings by himself. But in the end, he could not abandon his feelings for Noloty.

What was going to happen from now on was his final plan. He conveyed the arrangements to his subordinate. Now he could only wait for things to happen.

On the rocky surface of the far mountain, a single man stood. He was the warrior of the Indulging God Cult, Daltom.

“Hmm, you’ve done well, aren’t you amazing Kachua-sama?”

Daltom was watching what happened with the three people using binoculars. Noloty collapsed and Kachua went away with Arkit. It all went according to the plan Kachua had told him.

He removed his binoculars. He removed the sword at his waist and checked the condition of the blade. The decorative blade had neither a single chip nor any mist on it. Retrieving his beloved sword to the scabbard, Daltom kept waiting.

This was the final job to complete Kachua’s hatred – that would be accomplished by erasing Noloty.

Daltom had to be the one to realize it. As Noloty was now even Kachua could easily kill her. However, it would have no meaning if it wasn’t Daltom killing her.

“The fact I’ve killed Vizac doesn’t guarantee my ascension to Heaven. I still have much more work to do.”

While saying so, Daltom observed Noloty fixedly.

“Besides, how could I let Noloty-chan have such a fun life?”

He kept waiting for the right time to come. Noloty could not notice the evil intent surrounding her.

Was it about thirty minutes? Noloty woke up from a voice echoing in her

head.

‘Noloty, what’s wrong, please respond!’

It was Mirepoc’s Thought Sharing. Noloty tried responding. However, she couldn’t concentrate enough. The voice of her mind did not reach Mirepoc.

‘Please respond. You’re alive, right? You’re around the area of Toatt Mines. What’s happened? Respond!’

Noloty had to tell her about Kachua. However, she simply couldn’t send her thoughts back.

‘I will send you aid immediately. It will take some time but I will go as well. You can’t die until then, Noloty!’

She severed the Thought Sharing.

While breathing roughly, Noloty was thinking. *I was so stupid. I can’t forgive my stupidity.*

She said that she wanted to protect Arkit. And yet she didn’t even try thinking of his feelings. Even though she should have realized it if she thought seriously about it. If only she thought about it, it wouldn’t have turned out like this.

“...gh...!”

She moved her body. By putting her hands on the ground, she raised her body, exhausted herself and collapsed again.

*Get up. Stand. Go.* Then, she will be able to once again go after Arkit. She couldn’t forgive herself for being so stupid.

Noloty raised her body countless of times and collapsed countless of times. She crawled and advanced towards the direction Arkit left.

While seeing her, Enlike who was reading the Book started thinking.

*That’s enough. Don’t go. Go to sleep. If you go you will die, and I will lose everything.*

*Why are you standing? Even if you don’t do it, no one will blame you. Even Arkit, who you’re trying to help, doesn’t want you to come.*

*It’s always like that. Even though no one asked you to, you try to save people.*

*Even if you're made fun of, even if you're bothering other people, you still try to save them. You try to save people so much that you burden yourself with worries, doubts, and unneeded hardships.*

*There's no reward in the end; the only thing waiting for you is death.*

*And yet you stand up. Why, Noloty?*

At that moment, Enlike jumped to Noloty's past. He read the memories of her days in her hometown before she decided to become an Armed Librarian.

Islands of various sizes were floating on the southern sea of the Guinbex Empire. This area was called the southern frontier. It was regarded as a place unsuitable to live in from ancient times, and so was almost completely detached from the state of affairs in the world. But even there people were living.

There was an island that was especially large even within the archipelago. This island, covered in mountains and crags that made it hard to live on, was Noloty's homeland. Dwelling between mountains, they lived while raising goats and growing wheat.

Noloty was her village's princess.

There was nothing at all princess-like to be had at that poor village. It only meant that she was a descendant of the people who had founded that village. Like all other kids, she made her living by harvesting wheat and sewing clothes.

Having lost her mother early on, Noloty lived with her sickly father. They lived with the help of the other villagers. The only benefit of her being born as a princess was receiving a bit of help from the villagers.

However, Noloty was a strangely cheerful child. She was the village's biggest tomboy, and the leader of the children who had never lost in a fight.

Her cheerfulness was completely mysterious to the other villagers.

The village was heading for ruin. It was self-sufficient ever since ancient times. However, as the economics of the outside world started developing, when currency began spreading everywhere, that village also began to change.

The villagers learned the taste of luxury goods such as alcohol and tobacco.

They sold the goats that produced their precious milk, sold all of their stored wheat, and bought alcohol.

The more their lives grew gradually poorer, the more their hearts became wild. And since it became so, they bought even more alcohol to drink. Since they had no education, no matter how much they were explained about the harms of it they wouldn't listen. They simply kept indulging in it.

The one who got angry at that was Noloty's father, the village chief. He frantically tried to persuade the villagers to return to a healthy lifestyle. Noloty also followed suit. She beat down those who bought alcohol and attacked the ships of merchants who came to sell them.

Gradually both father and daughter became estranged from the villagers.

Eventually, her father also died. Noloty became truly alone in the world.

When Noloty became ten years old, something that destroyed the village even further appeared. It was the Armed Librarians.

A new mine was found in the southern frontier. Bantorra Library urged the village to move away. The Acting Director Photona himself came and dealt with the negotiations.

Photona bought land on another island and presented it as a new place of residence. The Armed Librarians would handle all of the arrangements for the immigration. They would also take care of all expenses both for that and for their new lives. Furthermore, they would pay them a far too large amount of reparation money.

There would be no obstacles for their new lives. The new place was supposedly more plentiful and would be pleasant to live in.

However, the villagers wasted their money. They delayed the immigration and used money only for temporary pleasures. The village was overflowing with needless objects and money vanished as if it grew wings.

"I did everything I could do. You should accept the results of your deeds by yourselves."

Photona left with these words of contempt.

The only thing left was even more poverty. The village was driven to the wall.

Noloty preached to the adults.

They no longer had the money to relocate and start their new lives. So she said they should leave the village. There was work in the city or at the mines. *Let's throw away the land we lived in and work in the outside world*, she said to the adults.

However, no one lent their ears to Noloty's words. In the past they might have heeded the words of their princess. However, since she was an orphan with no one to rely on, no one would listen to her.

"There's no choice. We are useless people after all."

Wasting their money was not the only thing that made the villagers poor. They resigned themselves to be useless at whatever they did. They despaired that they were inferior to the people of the outside world.

It might have actually been so. No one had persecuted or discriminated them. They actually received warm hospitality. The reason they were headed for destruction was only their foolishness.

The villagers began to desire their own destruction. They started saying that it was fine for both their village and its residents to become extinct.

Noloty resisted that notion. And so before long, the villagers started hating her.

Simply keeping their distance from her at first, they started actively alienating her. Noloty became unable to even live from day to day.

One day, she saw desperation in front of her eyes. A couple was trying to kill their child. They couldn't feed her. Even if they fed her and she grew into an adult nothing good would come out of it, so they tried culling her.

Noloty's temper exploded. She kicked the father, punched the mother, and swung a stick to break all of their furniture. She was caught by other adults, shook them off and ran away. She left the village.

While hearing people shouting curses at her back, the princess went away from her village.

## Part 3

Since she had nowhere to go, Noloty began to wander towards the mines. Although the miners were puzzled by the sudden appearance of a girl, they didn't talk to her.

"...I'm sure I have seen her somewhere."

While walking, she saw a familiar face. It was a man with a youthful face yet also the white hair of an old man. He was the Acting Director of Bantorra Library, Photona.

Noloty said her name and the name of the village she came from. When she told him she ran away from home, Photona's face fell.

"I know about the circumstances of that village. But we will not involve ourselves in it. We have no obligation to care for them."

Noloty scratched her head.

"Right... yeah, it's because it's their fault."

Photona was somewhat confused at Noloty being so strangely carefree even after she was driven out of the village.

"Come with me. I will at least find some place for you to work in."

Saying so, Photona started walking. Noloty stared at his back. He was the most important person of the outside world.

*What if... Noloty thought. If I become about that strong, and become the most important in the world, what will everyone think? Won't they perhaps think that we are not useless? They would probably think that they can live in the outside world.*

*Even if I work in the mines from now on, they probably wouldn't think anything of it. They would just think that this girl who ran away started living like a normal person. So what can I do to save the villagers?*

She grabbed the hem of Photona's clothes.

"I want to become an Armed Librarian."

As Photona turned around to face her, she felt something like a hot wind coming from him. It was what one would call a sense of intimidation.

“Since you have uttered those words, I will not give you any allowance or pity. If you spoke with only superficial feelings, I will give you time to take that back.”

“I don’t need that.”

“You need to be prepared to fall into hell.”

“Yes. I will.”

Photona was puzzled. He was dubious whether she understood the meaning of his words.

“So you could triumph over the villagers?”

“No. It’s for their sake.”

Noloty said calmly. She spoke with no enthusiasm or sorrow. She had an expression as if it was all just natural. In fact Noloty didn’t even think of suffering.

“...Come. I will refer you to a Librarian School.”

She aimed to become an Armed Librarians for the villagers of her hometown. She fought bare-handed so that she would not kill her enemies. These were her inconsistent origins that made everyone around her perplexed. It was because Noloty always lived for the sake of others.

*Why? Enlike asked. Why did she live for others without seeking any reward?*

*Didn’t that accomplish nothing but hurting her? What did the villagers do for you? What did Arkit do for you?*

*How could you have been smiling while living like that?*

It couldn’t be explained by her strength. She went too far with her kindness. Enlike just couldn’t understand Noloty’s feelings.

At that moment, a voice spoke to Enlike while he was reading the Book. It was undoubtedly a hallucination. It wasn’t real, yet he definitely heard it.

*It’s very simple, Enlike-san.*

*Basically, it's because the entire world belongs to me.*

Lying on the ground, Noloty grabbed the soil around her. She desperately moved her body and tried applying strength to her legs.

She stood up. That extraordinary idiot stood up. If she misses Arkit and Kachua she will not be able to meet them again. She could save that boy only now.

Noloty started walking northward to where they left.

'Noloty, you're still alive, right? Armed Librarians are heading for you.'

She received Mirepoc's Thought Sharing, but she still couldn't reply to it. Nevertheless, Noloty kept moving her legs.

'Where are you? Send me your thoughts. If I don't know where you are I can't send you help.'

Mirepoc's impatience was transmitted from the other side.

'The reinforcements are walking to the north of the Toatt Mines. But we don't know your exact location. Respond, Noloty!'

While listening to the Thought Sharing, Noloty was pondering. *What should I do? What can I do to make Arkit stop fighting?*

*I'm stupid, so I have to think about it a lot more than other people. So think. Think.*

Noloty was a hopeless, weak fool. She couldn't do anything. However, she was also not weak enough or stupid enough to not be able to do anything.

*Walk. Catch up. Think.* Noloty advanced while fighting against the dizziness attacking her brain.

"...Sh..."

Her limit arrived much earlier than Noloty's thinking. Perhaps spreading the poison further due to her walking, she lost her sense of balance and wasn't able to stand. She cursed in her mind her weak, pathetic body.

"...Shit..."

While crawling, Noloty made a decision. She decided what she would do

when she caught up to Arkit.

Arkit said that if her feelings were real he would stop fighting. So it was simple. She would just show him it was all real.

She will tell him that if he truly hates the Armed Librarians he can kill her first. And if his hatred isn't enough to kill her, he should throw it away. Noloty would make Arkit weigh her life against his hatred.

He might choose her death. And if he abandons his hatred, he might get killed by Kachua.

*But I have nothing else to do. So I will do that.*

"...Shit!"

She decided on her course of action. She was determined. However, her body wouldn't move. She just couldn't advance forward. Noloty weakly clenched her fists. Right now she could do only that.

At that moment, she heard someone's voice.

"Oh, good!"

Noloty's collapsed body was lifted up.

"You're lucky I found you so fast."

Since her eyes were blurry, she couldn't see the other party. But their voice was familiar. *Who's that?*

"Don't worry, Noloty-chan. Please be grateful. I ran at full speed from the mines after all."

She understood from those words – it was the Armed Librarian in charge of the Toatt Mines. She wasn't able to find him from a while before. *Where was he until now?* She was full of doubts, yet happy he came.

"I have to go... san... to where..."

"I know. You want to go after those two to the north. Leave that to me."

Saying so, the Armed Librarian started running.

"Since I'm here, there's no problem at all. I will blow away that geezer and

rescue Arkit-kun.”

Being assured at those words, Noloty entrusted him with her body.

“Thank you, very much... Daltom-san...”

Armed Librarian Daltom grinned while looking at Noloty’s face.

“I don’t need any gratitude. Leaving that aside, you’re heavier than expected.”

Noloty couldn’t see his smile. Even if she realized his smile was full of malice, she would probably not have been able to do anything in her present state.

Daltom ran while holding her body. It only took a few minutes to catch up to Arkit and Kachua.

Arkit widened his eyes in surprise. Kachua stood in front of him to guard him.

“Well then, we’ve caught up, Indulging God Cult.”

Daltom lowered Noloty to the ground. He then drew out his sword. Kachua took out his knife and the two glared at each other.

“...Daltom-san, please be Kachua’s opponent, he’s the old one.”

Saying this, Noloty turned to Arkit.

“Noloty, you’re angry at me, right?”

“...Quite angry, yeah.”

Arkit’s expression filled with fear and sorrow. But it had no hatred.

“...Come here, Arkit. I have something I must tell you.”

Noloty took a step forward. At the same time, Arkit took a step backwards. *I have to tell him that while I’m angry at him I’m not going to kill him*, thought Noloty.

At that moment, she heard a voice from her back.

“Well then, it’s time for me to clean up. After all, here is a traitor to the proud Armed Librarians.”

Daltom spoke strangely. *What is he talking about?*

Just when Noloty was about to turn around...

She felt something hot at her back. That heat penetrated her body and reached her chest.

A blade wet with blood sprung out from her chest. Noloty looked at it in blank amazement.

“...Why?”

A spurt of blood flew along with her words. Without any answer from Dalton, silence fell. Arkit tottered ahead, approaching Noloty.

“No, that’s wrong! Noloty isn’t a traitor, it’s me you need to...”

The blade was removed. Having lost its support, Noloty’s body fell forward. She held her wounds. Red blood gushed out from between the gaps of her fingers.

“Noloty wanted to... this can’t be...”

Further sword attacks were aimed at Noloty on the ground. With her spine and ribs being torn to pieces, blood spurt out of her nose and mouth.

Arkit’s screaming resounded from close by.

*What’s going on? Why am I being killed?* Noloty couldn’t understand anything. She could only understand that she wasn’t able to protect Arkit.

*Run away,* she wanted to tell him. However, blood accumulated in her chest and no words came out. She couldn’t do anything for Arkit as he clung to her. *Someone please protect this child,* she wished in her heart. But since she had no Thought Sharing ability, her mind’s voice reached no one.

“So, prepare yourselves, Overseer of Paradise and Arkit.”

The words she could hear came from Dalton. They all sounded so far away.

Her consciousness was dimming. Inside of this, Noloty somewhat calmly accepted her own death. Dying was scary, but now that she approached it, it wasn’t as scary as she had thought it would be. She lived a long life with death close by. Perhaps that was why she paralyzed her fear towards it.

However, dying would be troubling.

*I couldn't protect Arkit. I couldn't give any hope to my hometown. Mirepoc will be mad. And Enlike will be sad. I don't want that. I especially don't want Enlike to be sad.*

*But what can I do?* Many things came to her mind, but they all passed without an answer.

Living was truly hard. However, dying was even harder. She wasn't able to die without making anyone angry or sad. Until the very instant her consciousness ceased, Noloty never even once thought of herself.

*Enlike started thinking. How stupid. Even though you never thought of yourself... you only thought of others, but you weren't able to make anyone happy.*

He simply wanted for Noloty to live. That was his happiness. If Noloty considered him, she should have just stopped thinking about other people and lived for herself. Because she didn't know that, it turned out like this.

In the end it was all very simple. Noloty wasn't smart at all.

Arkit clung to Noloty's body collapsed on the ground. Kachua watched him from behind. He was barely suppressing the smile that was about to appear on his face.

Arkit bawled. He probably even forgot his friends that were killed by Mokkaia. Daltom started laughing at that point.

"Well then, you come first. Prepare yourself, stupid brat."

He held his blood-stained sword aloft. Arkit stared at Daltom with insane eyes. Just before swinging down, Daltom exchanged looks with Kachua.

Kachua lightly nodded. Daltom also nodded back.

"Armed Librarian... You... Noloty... I won't forgive you!!!"

The blade sent Arkit's head flying away without any resistance.

Kachua was waiting for this very moment. The moment where Arkit's hatred would be completed.

There was only one way to do so...

Having an Armed Librarian kill Noloty.

The head, etched with a seemingly horrified expression, rolled on the soil and stopped at Kachua's feet. He stroked it lovingly.

A few minutes have passed. Noloty and Arkit – Kachua was waiting alone near their corpses.

The one he waited for came unexpectedly late. The boy holding a stone dagger appeared behind Kachua.

"I have been waiting for you, Lascall."

"Splendid work, Overseer of Paradise."

Saying this, Lascall Othello walked next to the two corpses.

"Wanting to exterminate all of the Armed Librarians... I have perfected this tale of Arkit's. Come, Lascall, pass along his Book to me."

"...I shall."

But while he said this, Lascall didn't make any move with his stone sword.

"Is something the matter?"

"No, I was simply lamenting the fact that this boy's story was filled with falsehoods."

Lascall said and smiled.

"However, no matter how many falsehood it contains, it is a person's story. So I will only grant it a continuation."

While saying this, Lascall bent down. Then, he produced a single Book, and handed it to Kachua.

He touched Arkit's Book. Kachua finished reading it and nodded in satisfaction.

"A hatred of wonderful purity. With this, it seems that the destruction of the Armed Librarian has been decided."

He stowed Arkit's Book with great importance inside his pocket.

"I am very happy, but by the way, what about the gentleman over there?"

Saying so, Lascall pointed at a certain corpse nearby. In a place slightly far from Noloty and Arkit, Daltom was dead. His heart and kidneys were penetrated from behind.

“I do not care about that. Change it into a Book for the time being.”

“Oh, although he was supposed to go to Heaven?”

“It is unnecessary. Since victory has been determined, I no longer need to entertain such trash. You can also take the Books of people like Cigal, Uspa and the rest and dispose of them.”

“Understood, Overseer of Paradise.”

Lascall bowed.

“Come, rejoice along with me, Lascall. The splendid moment is approaching. The old world shall be destroyed with the Armed Librarians. It will be the birth of a world filled with love and happiness.”

Kachua started laughing while spreading his arms. With his head still bowed, Lascall sank into the ground and vanished.

And now, at Kachua’s side in his quiet cabin was the weapon that was destroying the Armed Librarians.

The remodeled Gloomy Lizard uttered words along with its black breath.

‘...I hate... the Armed Librarians...’

The lizard breathed. It released a black fluid full of its hatred from its skin.

‘Die, all of you... if you all die... it will be over... die... when you die, my revenge will end...’

“You hate them, huh?”

Kachua spoke with his face all smiles.

‘...Hate... I hate... Noloty died...’

The Gloomy Lizard raised a sorrowful voice.

“...Noloty’s... died... she died...”

Kachua transplanted Arkit’s soul that he received into this Magic Beast. The

Gloomy Lizard became a weapon that could spread hatred all around the world. By spreading its bodily fluids to the world, the Armed Librarians would be destroyed.

Kachua smiled happily. He was happy because the Armed Librarian would be completely annihilated just like Arkit wanted.

“I must be grateful to Noloty.”

Kachua mumbled. She sympathized with Arkit from the bottom of her heart and conveyed it to him. And that completed his hatred.

*I know. I will take Noloty to Heaven. She was a much better person than people like the vile Daltom.*

At that moment, Kachua suddenly heard a voice.

“Oh.”

Was it the voice of thunder? But it was not loud enough for that.

Kachua opened the window and looked outside. The gray clouds were not thick enough for it to start raining.

“Hmm, so you have come as I thought? But you were surprisingly late.”

Kachua sat calmly on his rocking chair. Enlike was coming. But even that was of little importance to him.

Warriors lined up in two rows at Bantorra Library’s courtyard. Hamyuts led them out slowly to outside the barrier. She turned around and spoke.

“You need no encouragement. Nor any words of gratitude. Since you are prepared for a death or life battle, you have no need for that.”

The Armed Librarians nodded as if saying that was obvious.

“Then, I will give you orders as the Acting Director. They will probably be my last ones. Be good children and listen quietly.”

Mirepoc, who did not join the attacking unit, looked from the Acting Director’s offices.

“While I am inhuman, I do love you. Therefore I order you. I will be in the lead. I will charge ahead, I will open up escape routes, and I will dash into the

midst of the enemies. My final order is one and only, you cannot die before me!”

The Armed Librarians cheered. Hamyuts’s order gave them even more desperate energy to consume on top of their determination for a death or life battle.

However, her order had another meaning. *Don’t get in the way of my death.* That was what Hamyuts was saying.

Hamyuts leapt and crossed the barrier. As if he was her accompanying shadow, Mattalast’s black body jumped ahead. The whales in the sky cried. The Armed Librarians on the ground grew excited.

The final battle began.

# Chapter 6: The Flowers of Light and Noloty's World

## Part 1

80 kilometers to the north of Toatt Mines – that was the current location of Arkit, who was destroying the Armed Librarians after being turned into a Magic Beast. That was what Lascall said. So Enlike had only one thing to do; he had to convey Noloty's feelings that weren't able to reach their target.

He didn't think of protecting the Armed Librarians. He also didn't think of saving Arkit. He only thought that he had to convey her feelings.

He started looking for Kachua's location. He walked around the mountain while shooting indiscriminate lightning attacks. He expected some reaction from Kachua, but the surroundings remained silent.

Just when Enlike started feeling tired, he found a single shack. He had no doubts Kachua was inside.

"Wait a little bit more, Noloty."

Saying this, Enlike started digging in the ground with his hands. After digging down to the depth of his elbows, he put Noloty's Book inside. He tore off several dozens of his transparent hairs and he marked the spot by tying them to the grass.

There was probably going to be a fight. He didn't want to involve Noloty's Book in that.

That was all he did to prepare for battle. Enlike started walking straight ahead to the hut.

Assessing the situation and confirming his tactics, healing his fatigue and then moving on to attack... Enlike had no need for such prudent decisions. He simply advanced ahead.

Just before the hut got in the range of Enlike's lightning, an old man came out of the door. He shot a lightning strike directed at him without saying anything.

*Enlike. The boy who took the body of the Monster and surrendered to the*

*Armed Librarians*. Kachua had completely ignored him. He wouldn't be able to interfere with his plans and there would be no harm done even if he doesn't erase him. He wasn't useful for either side. He recognized him as an unnecessary pawn forgotten at the edge of the game board.

Kachua didn't think of it as a battle that would bring everything to a finish. It was simply cleaning up something that he had postponed until now.

Enlike was headed for the hut. Just like those who have been encroached by Arkit's soul, he knew not of withdrawing, but simply advanced without thinking of surviving.

He fired lightning. But Kachua did not move.

"It is useless."

This was the place he had chosen as his last base and he was wary. There was no way he would leave such a place with no defenses.

A small silver doll was in Kachua's hand. It was one of the two that the Great Magician Charlot possessed – the Spinning Doll Ückück, possessing the Magic Rights of Meats inside.

"Spinning Doll Ückück, activate the Shiny Snow Barrier."

Lights began twinkling around the small hut. The thousands, tens of thousands beads of light were dancing.

The lightning strike touched the snowflakes of light. It scattered like a blue flower. At the same time, a band of light shot from the snow. Enlike's stomach was scrapped off by the light.

It was the strongest fortification that could only work in this place and only once. Its defensive power was inferior to that of Bantorra Library's Mist Film Barrier.

The band of light assaulted Enlike. No matter how quick he was, even he couldn't completely evade it.

"Don't scatter around! Gather here!"

Bantorra Library's downtown. Mattalast was shouting at the place which used to be the embassy of the Ismo Republic. He fired both of his guns at the same

time.

His hat flew somewhere long ago by some blast. Both his suit and shirt were torn, so his toned upper body was exposed from within his clothes.

Both bullets entered the barrel of a tank's gun. The bodies of the soldiers inside were hurled up by the ensuing explosion. At the same time he turned around. He blocked the attack of a bayonet-wielding Magic warrior coming from behind.

His bullets ran out. He threw them away unhesitatingly. He stopped the bayonet with one hand and with a kick he smashed his opponent's neck. He casually fired the stolen gun randomly and threw it away.

“Are you still reloading?!”

A trainee threw the Tenor at him from behind. He picked up Mattalast's pistols and filled them with ammo. In the meanwhile Mattalast ran around the enemies and shot.

“Don't get up! Focus only on defense and support!”

Mattalast shouted towards the trainee. It was probably an absurd order to him. Devoting himself to defense among the gunfire that flew around like swarms of bees already took his utmost efforts.

The attacks coming from all directions missed as if they were predetermined to do so. The innumerable possibilities of the future opened before his eyes. Mattalast chose the best future among those.

However, since his Predictive ability was only able to see two seconds ahead, he was unable to see the victory of the Armed Librarians.

Bonbo's whales leapt on the coast. They squirmed around, crushing sand, people and ships. The sandy beach was dyed by overflowing oil, human blood and whale blood.

Bonbo was trying to reduce the enemy forces even slightly. However, even his whales paled in comparison to the enemies filling the sea around.

“Do your best, do your best you guys...”

Bonbo mumbled. A battleship's gun pierced through a whale. Filled with

regret at becoming unable to fulfill his master's orders, the whale blew salt water mixed with blood from his back.

The figures of the raging whales on the beach now only looked as if they were squirming in their death throes.

The Magicians assembled from the entire world all flocked to the main gate of Bantorra Library. By matching their voices and chanting, they were attempting to make a hole in the Barrier.

The elite troops of each army were gathered in order to protect them. Even though they were acting insanely, they haven't lost their tactical judgment. The Armed Librarians attacked them.

"That person!"

Tsamuro raised his voice. He could see a senior Armed Librarian that he knew from his trainee days attacking. He had retired due to his old age and became a military advisor to the Army of Rona. A mere shadow of himself during his active duty, he moved sluggishly and shot his gun.

Tsamuro dodged that and aimed for his out-of-shape opponent. He unconsciously hesitated to kill. The bullet hit his elbow and tore off his arm. It was an injury that should have made him unable to fight. But his opponent did not stop. He kept shooting the gun with his remaining hand.

"You idiot!"

Leaping from aside, Minth's sword decapitated his former comrade. Seeing the rolling head, Tsamuro showed a shocked expression.

"Minth, I..."

"Shuddup and fight! We're fighting! Fighting!"

Driven by fury, Minth swung his sword. Tsamuro followed him, suppressing his tears.

Kyasariro fought one-against-one using her guns. None of their opponents were people the Armed Librarian didn't know. They were Ismo's famous genius warriors. They were men who were scouted by the Armed Librarians countless of times but refused.

The enemies came attacking, weaving their way through the gunfire. Kyasariro couldn't evade them.

Hony came to save her. He cut in from the side and swung his hammer.

If they were normal enemies, that would kill them in a single blow. But they weren't normal.

The one to attack had been Honu. However, the moment when the enemy's head was crushed, his bayonet pierced Honu. Even though the accelerating enemy lost his life, he still thrust his bayonet through the chest.

The soldiers cheered at Honu's death. They paid no heed to the death of their comrade.

People all over the world rejoiced at the death of Armed Librarians. The Armed Librarians who fought to protect the world received a large shock from that.

Hamyuts kept fighting in the enemies' midst. Even her fellow Armed Librarian couldn't come any closer.

She took out no stones from her pocket. She had enough ammo in her surroundings. The mountain of rubble and tank fragments became bullets and flew around.

Machinegun fire came from airplanes. Incessant bombarding came from the tanks deployed around. But even those didn't hit Hamyuts. No human eyes could follow the speed of her movements. They could barely understand she was even there.

However, as long as the enemies kept their indiscriminate attacks, they would end up hitting eventually.

If she grows exhausted and loses her speed, they might even be able to aim and hit her.

*How wonderful*, admired Hamyuts. They concentrated their fire on her despite her stamina running out and her unshapely struggle. Will this become her end? The long-awaited moment was approaching.

*So I will continue fighting. I will wield even more of my full power and shave*

*away at my life.*

*When I become unable to move, my answer will arrive.*

Roars reverberated throughout the cold mountain. Four lightning shots that could turn an elephant to cinders were shot. However, they were all obstructed by the snowflakes made of light and dispersed in vain.

Enlike advanced. If he could not reach with his lightning, he would just grab his enemy and roast him directly. He walked simply aiming for that.

He didn't bother defending himself at all. He left everything for his super regeneration and kept advancing even while receiving fatal wounds countless of times.

"Gh... bh..."

His stomach pierced, Enlike spouted blood from his mouth and nose. He was not immortal. If he is destroyed irreversibly, he will die. Enlike kept advancing as if he didn't know this.

Kachua watched him mockingly.

*As I have thought he is a trivial pawn. He has no plan or any prospect of victory, but merely walks ahead. He has tremendous fighting power, but that is all.*

A beam of lightning weaved its way through the snowflakes of light to attack Kachua. However, the one standing in front of the hut was not the real Kachua. The lightning passed through the illusion and destroyed the hut's floor.

"Hmm, so you penetrated the Shiny Snow Barrier. I wonder if I neglected its defensive capabilities by raising its offensive capabilities too much."

Kachua muttered. Another lightning passed through the barrier and reached the hut. That also hit far away from his real body.

"Although I have weakened, I still have some confidence in my ability to defend and escape. Even if I didn't have my Shiny Snow Barrier, you would have still not been able to kill me."

As he said this, a band of light shot from all directions penetrated Enlike. His body was demolished to the extent that he couldn't move no matter how much

vigor he had. He put his hand to the ground for the first time.

“Enlike. Killing me is useless at this stage. The unleashed Deep Blue Curse can no longer stop. No matter what anyone tries to do.”

“...”

Because Enlike stopped, the Shiny Snow Barrier also stopped its attacks. His blood-covered body began regenerating.

“Please cease this. You have no reason... both for fighting and for existing. What you should do is disappear quietly.”

“Don’t talk.”

Enlike said while spouting blood.

“The Armed Librarians will be destroyed and the world will be reborn. There is no place for you in my desired new world.”

“Don’t talk.”

“Oh, right. I thought of returning Noloty’s favor. Let us take her Book along with yours to Heaven. You will probably have some place at some corner of that oh so vast and unfathomable Heaven.”

“I’m telling you not to say anything!”

Enlike put strength into his torn legs.

“No matter what you think, I won’t forgive you. Don’t speak. Don’t think. Don’t dream.

You killed them like insects, so die like an insect!”

Enlike stood up. As if waiting for that, the band of light started attacking him. The light shot from all directions once again pushed him to the ground.

It was underground, at a depth beyond any help. None of the sounds of the atrocities above ground could reach this place. At the deepest part of Bantorra Library, the place that was called the First Sealed Archive, a lone boy appeared.

He was a pretty boy who wore black mourning clothes and had blonde hair. He held a stone dagger in his hand.

No humans could enter this place. They could reach up until the level above it, the Second Sealed Archive where the Books of the Acting Directors of history were stored. This archive was protected by a barrier made with the ability of erasing cause and effect. Even the act of breaking through the barrier was rejected by the barrier itself.

The only ones who could enter were the World Overseers and the one related to them, Lascall Othello.

Lascall Othello walked between bookshelves made of blue stone. He passed through the Books from the Paradise Era that were stored on these bookshelves.

“The Overseer of those who have Passed, Bantorra-sama.”

He passed through the bookshelves and stood in front of a small lock on the other side. It was a copper-colored lock that was also used as the symbol of the Armed Librarians. Lascall Othello spoke to it.

“If the Armed Librarians were to be destroyed, the history of Bantorra Library would also come to a close. What do you think of this?”

Originally, speaking to this lock held no meaning. The Overseer of the Past Bantorra was ordered by the World Creator to become a phenomenon that turns people’s souls into Books and represent the concept of the past. The copper-colored lock was merely a symbol of that.

Just as expected from a lock, it was silent. After several tens of seconds, Lascall bowed deeply.

“Please forgive my rudeness. It is obvious the future is not under your control.”

A clink came from the lock. Telling whether this represented Bantorra’s will or was just a coincidence was impossible.

“Indeed, the World Overseers have stopped involving themselves in the stories of man. Even if the world of man becomes hell, even if man is eradicated, as long as it was by the choice of man, we will only accept it.”

Saying this, the figure of Lascall sank into the floor.

“Be that as it may, worrying for the Armed Librarians is an action unbefitting of me. Perhaps this is a seam in my functions caused from my continuing existence of more than 2000 years.”

The figure of the boy in mourning clothes disappeared, and silence returned to the First Sealed Archive. Even if Bantorra Library is destroyed, even if all people disappear, this peace will never crumble.

Even Enlike’s super regeneration was approaching its limit. The band of light intercepted his lightning attack as he was collapsed. He scattered lightning from his body in all directions to protect himself. Even though he used all of his ability to defend himself, and although he had super regeneration, his body was still continuously injured.

*How beautiful,* admired Kachua. It seemed as if Enlike in the center was a flower spreading around blue and white pollen. The red blood spewing from him from time to time also gave a nice contrast to those colors.

He advanced several centimeters every several tens of seconds. Enlike was crawling. He advanced towards his hated enemy, Kachua.

Looking at the flower that bloomed only once in human history, Kachua averted his eyes from the voice coming from behind him.

The Magic Beast of destruction came out of its box and came there crawling.

“Oh, Arkit. What is the matter?”

At that moment, Enlike stopped moving. The Shiny Snow Barrier also stopped its assault, and the flower of light returned being a tattered man.

“Is that... Arkit...”

Enlike said with a broken voice. Arkit looked at him from Kachua’s feet. He could certainly feel some human intelligence in it despite its form.

He breathed out of his mouth. A voice could be faintly heard from that breath.

‘...Who’re you...’

Enlike strained his voice. There was something that he had to convey to Arkit.

“Arkit... Daltom, the one who killed Noloty... was Kachua’s subordinate...”

The mouth of the Magic Beast emitted voice that seemed like a rotten wind.

‘...Why do you think that...’

Kachua chuckled from his throat. Enlike probably held the hopes that the battle would end were he to say this. He probably didn’t know... Kachua watched the two of them converse silently as if he knew there was nothing to worry about.

“Why? Isn’t the object of your revenge Kachua?”

‘...I don’t know who you are... but Kachua will probably kill you...’

Covered in blood, Enlike smiled.

“That’s right, Arkit.”

Enlike started moving again. His lightning roared, the snowflakes danced, and the flower of light bloomed.

“Arkit. Go back inside.”

Kachua put the Gloomy Lizard inside the box, closed it and locked it.

Bantorra Library’s town already became nothing more than ruins. A wild beast was running through these ruins. And wild beasts were the most dangerous when wounded... Following that saying, Hamyuts Meseta continued her outrage.

The blood flowing from her head blocked both her eyes. She could see only using her Sensory Threads.

The frontline of the enemy was partially destroyed. It was already impossible for them to fight in an organized manner. They didn’t even defeat even a single percentage of their enemies, but they crushed all forces swarming to the Barrier.

The sounds of battle reverberating at Past God Bantorra’s Island were already sporadic. Almost all of the Armed Librarians have retreated into the Barrier.

The Armed Librarians’ tactic was an offensive-defensive battle. After launching an attack, they would hastily retreat, and then attack again. Their

goal was to prevent their enemies from making an all-out attack.

And so their target has been achieved. However, Hamyuts kept fighting.

Machinegun fire aimed at Hamyuts from the side. Just before she could dodge, they were destroyed by gunfire coming from behind them.

“Hammy! Retreat!”

It was Mattalast. He came there without any support to rescue Hamyuts by himself.

However, Hamyuts didn't pay him any heed. She didn't lend her ears even to her confidant.

“Our allies are withdrawing! We'll reorganize and attack again! Retreat!”

*Ah, shut up. Don't get in my way, Hamyuts muttered in her mind. I still want to fight... and to get killed.*

*No, wait. This isn't how I do things. Retreating like Mattalast said is the proper decision.*

*I must resist my defeat. I need to combine my wisdom and power in order to win, using any and all means. If I don't do so it'll be meaningless.*

“Retreat, Hamyuts!!!”

*But I will have nothing left after this. This will be the greatest fight against the Indulging God Cult. It might be the last time. If I don't achieve death here, there might not be another chance.*

*If I end up surviving, what will I do? Will I keep on waiting again? Will I just keep waiting with no aim or hope?*

*If I defeat the Indulging God Cult no people who can kill me will remain. Even Olivia and Enlike are too small of a hope.*

*I'm sick of waiting. I have only now.*

“Hammy! Hamyuts! ...Shit!”

Giving up on persuading her, Mattalast left. Hamyuts saw his back and thought to herself.

*Thank you. And... I'm sorry.*

The Magic Beast was thinking while confined in the box. Since Arkit's soul dwelt in it, it of course thought of Noloty.

*When I lost her I noticed for the first time... I like Noloty. Of all the world, I like only her.*

*She probably hates me. I betrayed her and kicked her down. And it's my fault she died. She probably died thinking that she shouldn't have had anything to do with me.*

*Noloty dying was also part of Kachua's scheme. But I don't care about that. The only important thing is that Noloty died.*

*The target for my hatred is no longer just the Armed Librarians. I hate them, as well as the Indulging God Cult, and everyone else. I did nothing and yet everything was taken away from me.*

*So, Noloty. It's fine hating me already. You don't have to say things like 'become happy'.*

*You're the only one who tried to stop me. And now you're gone.*

*So I don't mind destroying the world.*

Enlike stopped. He didn't stop of his own volition; his body ignored all of his orders.

Both of his legs were torn from his thighs. His left arm was the same. Half the skin of his face was torn off and his skull was exposed. Yet Enlike was still alive. His heart beat and his lungs kept breathing.

However, he couldn't move any longer.

"Enlike. You have fought well."

Saying so, Kachua stepped up to him. Not with his real body, naturally. The real Kachua stood inside the cabin.

"But as I thought, you cannot win. You and I are too different."

Enlike tried saying something. He spat some red chunk out of his mouth. It was probably one of his internal organs.

“You are a chess pawn. I am the player. You only think of defeating the enemy in front of you, but I think of winning or losing on a much wider scale. It is not that I excel and you are inferior to me; our very existence is different.”

Enlike replied while spitting blood.

“I really am... not good in chess.”

“The difference is in our outlook. The world you can see is much narrower.”

“...Kachua. Are you saying that you control everything in the world?”

“I do not say I can control it all. But I am fighting while overlooking the entire world.”

Enlike grew silent for a while.

“...There is one thing you can't see.”

Kachua made a strained laugh. *Well said.*

“Is it love?”

No reply came.

“Is it people's hearts?”

Once again, no reply came.

“Something like courage perhaps?”

Kachua mocked Enlike. Those who came in front of him often spoke of such things. They thought they could defeat him using the power of their hearts or their unshakable feelings.

However, the chessboard Kachua was viewing also had people's hearts in it. His game controlled their very wills.

“All wrong. I don't know anything about such hard concepts.”

“Then, what is it?”

“Something much simpler and easier. Because you only think of difficult things you haven't been able to notice it.”

Enlike raised his remaining hand. His fingers were pointed not at Kachua or at himself, but at the heavens.

“The sky.”

Kachua looked up. Without him noticing it became extremely cloudy. The black clouds looked as if it was already night.

“Toatt Mines have no rain. The land keeps the clouds away, and the rainclouds coming from the west mostly flow to the north.”

A light flashed inside the clouds. It looked like a cheap gas lamp, just like the light of the Snow Barrier.

“My ability is lightning. I recently noticed that I can also do things like this.”

The sky sounded as if it broke apart. That was far closer to a natural disaster than it was Magic.

“How terrific, Enlike.”

Kachua muttered.

The sky split apart. He could hear the sound only for a split second. The thunder by itself destroyed Kachua’s eardrums.

The next moment he closed his eyes at the blue light. Then, Kachua’s body entire body was engulfed by lightning.

The thunder echoed far away from the Toatt Mines to all towns surrounding it. People spoke of that sound that seemed to signify the end of the world for a long time to come.

Kachua had his final thoughts. *What Enlike killed is only me. My dream will not break. I was already prepared for my death and entrusted my dream to my successors. If the Armed Librarians are destroyed, they should be able to create a new world.*

*Arkit’s hatred will no longer stop no matter what.* Thus he was convinced.

## Part 2

An hour passed since the lightning strike. Time simply passed without anything happening.

Both the hut and the plants around it were burning. Kachua's body, now a charred and twisted corpse, was crushed by the collapsed hut and in the process of turning into ashes that can't be thought of as a person.

Even collapsed, the hut kept burning and soon only left behind a small fire. Only the box made of Divine Copper in which the Gloomy Lizard was confined stayed as it was.

Soon Enlike stood up. Even his super regeneration required that much time until he was able to stand. With unsteady steps he walked away from the hut. He dug out Noloty's Book that he buried and then approached the hut again.

"...Arkit."

He twisted off the box's lock. The Magic Beast inside survived without any changes to it. The fact the box was so sturdy was probably Kachua's final failure. Were the lightning strike to kill Arkit as well, it would probably be the end of the Armed Librarians.

Enlike started talking to the reptile.

"Do you still hate the Armed Librarians?"

'...Hate...'

Arkit formed words.

'...I don't care about anything... not about the Armed Librarians or anything else... just disappear...'

"Yeah. I also think like that."

It didn't mean he outwardly agreed with Arkit. Even for Enlike the Armed Librarians were something he had nothing to do with. Since Noloty was gone, he no longer cared if the world got destroyed.

Noloty was the world's treasure. No matter how long the world goes on,

another girl like that will never be born. Noloty's death was enough of a reason for the world to be destroyed to both Arkit and Enlike.

“However, even if we think that way, Noloty won't forgive us.”

‘...Noloty...’

“Can you believe it, Arkit? There's a person who would forgive you betraying her and being cruel to her. There's an idiot that, even though you wanted to destroy the world, still wanted to save you. I can't believe it. You probably don't, either.”

‘...You're lying...’

“Did you know? Everything in the world belongs to her. Both you and I belong to Noloty.”

Saying this, Enlike placed Noloty's Book near the Magic Beast's nose. Her memories were transmitted to Arkit. He now knew of the question that Noloty wasn't able to pose to him.

He soon formed words again.

‘...Noloty's life, and my hatred, which is more important...’

No tears could come out of Arkit's eyes anymore. If he could cry he probably would have.

‘Even if... you didn't ask you should know the answer... she's such an idiot... I can't understand her at all...’

“Yeah. She really is an idiot.”

‘I wonder if she would still say that... don't hate... how stupid... you still say those things...’

Arkit's soul wept.

‘...I got it... I'll listen... to what you said...’

When they first met, Noloty told him: she wanted him to listen to what she said.

She became his underling just so he would listen to what she said. She went along with him to Kachua for that too. And she was also killed for that.

Thinking back, that's all the fight until now was.

At that moment, all infected people around the world simultaneously regained their sanity.

Near the summit of Toitorra Mountain, Yukizona and Yuri were being cornered. The light-weighted mountain soldiers were clambering up the cliff with a gun in one hand. Yukizona no longer had enough power to wipe them out.

Just as he was trying to make his worn out body release a wave in full power one more time...

"Brother, wait with the attack!"

Yuri, who was watching the outside, said.

"The enemies' attacks stopped."

"...What?"

She looked below the cliff. Despite attacking them disorderly just a while ago, the soldiers now seemed awkwardly flustered. Even from afar it was clear they fell apart.

"What happened, is the war over?"

Yukizona looked down. One of the soldiers attached to the cliff raised his voice.

"It's Yukizona! An attack's coming!"

The soldiers all ran away with great confusion. There were also those who in their desperate attempt to climb down fell. With his hand clad in a black wave, Yukizona watched them in blank amazement.

Bantorra Library was also wrapped in confusion. Everyone was befuddled by the fact the enemy's attacks suddenly stopped. Several Armed Librarians were sent as scouts to gauge the enemy's situation.

"Is it over?"

An Armed Librarian muttered. He stopped gathering ammunition in preparation for the next attack.

“Don’t stop, you fools! Prepare for the next attack!”

Minth said.

“But they stopped attacking.”

“I just don’t get what’s going on...”

Saying so, Minth dragged his legs and ran to the town. He looked at people’s souls using his Sacred Eyes. No matter where he looked, he couldn’t see the shape of hatred anywhere.

Bonbo came down to the office where Mirepoc was waiting.

“Mirepo, what do we do? Should we take this opening to attack?”

Mirepoc shook her head.

“I don’t know what we should do...”

“What about the Director? Where did Mattalast go to?”

“I’m sorry, but please look at the current situation. I have no idea what’s going on.”

She tried sending her thoughts to the Director and to Mattalast. At that moment, other thoughts were sent to Mirepoc. It was the Magician who could use the same Thought Sharing ability as her, her senior from the Guinbex Imperial Army.

‘Mirepoc, what’s going on? Have we attacked Bantorra Library?’

Before, he sent her a proclamation of war full of hatred. But now he was confused and scared.

‘Why are we fighting the Armed Librarians? Please respond. What’s going on?’

Mirepoc replied in her thoughts.

‘You were all being controlled. And that has now ended. Please convey this to all armies. The war is over.’

Her thoughts cut off. Having lost all tension, Mirepoc plopped to her chair with a thud.

The war is over. Without them even knowing why it began and why it ended, it was over.

Hamyuts was running in the midst of soldiers who were running away. Having lost both the power and the intention to resist, she mowed them down just as if they were dry grass.

“Hamyuts!”

Mattalast finally came after her. He grabbed Hamyuts’s right hand that was swinging her sling, wrapped it around her neck and threw it away.

“Calm down, it’s over! The war’s over!”

He embraced Hamyuts who was still trying to struggle with all of his power. Even though she was trying to shake him off, he didn’t let go of her hand and neck.

“It’s over! Stop this!”

“...It’s over?”

Hamyuts’s movements stopped.

“What’s over? It’s over? Why?”

“I don’t know. Anyway, it’s over.”

While breathing heavily, Hamyuts muttered weakly.

“...No way.”



The wet body of the Magic Beast started drying. Its slimy body started cracking like dry ground. Enlike was watching it happen.

*Is it over?* he thought. *I have no way of knowing what happens around the world, but it's probably over.*

"...Arkit."

Enlike muttered. Arkit's body was slowly crumbling apart.

On his face was Noloty's Book. After he turned to sand and disappeared, Enlike extended his hand to the Book.

As his fingertips touched it, the memories began flowing into his head. It was the memory of a small event during Noloty's student days.

Noloty was gazing at the starry sky from the hospital garden. Her head that was broken by Ireia still hurt. The dog that ran away was still howling somewhere. However, her heart was clear.

"Noloty-san, you have to rest."

The one to speak at that moment was Ireia.

"Oh, sorry. I'll go back soon."

Saying this, Noloty kept gazing at the starry sky.

"So you've made up your mind. And it's bad for me."

Ireia could read this from Noloty's expression.

"...I'm sorry. I gave up on giving up."

"I have also given up. No matter what I say to you, it will be useless."

She said and sat next to Noloty.

"So, why? If you say you have no reason I will be worried about your head in a different meaning."

"My reason, huh... well, I can't say I don't have one..."

Noloty thought for a while, and then said.

"In short, it's because this world belongs to me."

Whenever she said this, everyone was surprised and stunned. Ireia also made such an expression.

“Who decided that?”

“I did.”

“No one will think that way.”

“It doesn’t matter.

My clothes also belong to me, but they don’t think that way. A king thinks of all his country’s citizens as his, but other people don’t think that way. So it’s fine.”

“But you can’t make the world act according to your will.”

“That’s also fine. It’s not like I can make my belongings do what I want either. When my legs hurt I can’t run, and when my alarm clock doesn’t work I end up being late. But my legs are my own and so is my alarm clock.

So even the things that don’t work the way I want them to are mine.”

Ireia tried running this twisted logic through her head.

“Oh well. You are fine that way.”

Noloty clapped her hands and seemed happy. There truly were only few people who could understand her. Ireia spoke to the rejoicing Noloty.

“...So, is there anything good here? If the world really is yours.”

“A lot of things. Or rather, there’s nothing else but amazing stuff.”

Noloty rose up and spread her hands.

“Because if someone becomes happy somewhere it all belongs to me. I believe that having such good things is amazing. I find this world extremely important. Irresistibly precious.”

“Are both enemies and allies precious to you?”

“Yes. Any and all people. Because all of them belong to me.”

She made no exaggeration. Noloty truly believed these words.

“Have you ever thought that this brings you trouble?”

“I have, but it can’t be helped. Since the world belongs to me, I have to do something for it. I’m so stupid and weak that I there’s almost nothing I can do, though.”

Noloty made a somewhat lonely smile.

“But having trouble is not a big deal for me at all. If I’m the only one to suffer then having another person be happy equals it. So if two or three people become happy I’m actually making a gain.”

“Is that fine? You are going to stack up hardships.”

“It’s fine. Everyone’s happiness belongs to me after all. Everyone is much happier than I am suffering.”

Ireia shook her head with a wry smile. She was probably thinking that trying to convince such a girl was useless.

“Why do you think the world belongs to you?”

Noloty replied while smiling.

“My daddy said so.”

Noloty spent her childhood at her hometown along with her father. She lived while watching the back of that powerless man who tried protecting their village.

Before long her father became ill. What did he think about when he left such a young girl behind? He probably thought of her and the villagers’ the miserable lives.

He left nothing for his daughter’s sake. So those words were probably some minimal encouragement. Embracing Noloty with his sick body, her father spoke thus.

“Do you pity yourself?”

“...I dunno.”

Her father spoke strongly.

“Do not do so. No matter what’s taken away from you, even if you have nothing left, don’t pity yourself.”

Half of these words he spoke to himself. He was a man who had been unable to attain anything of value and lost everything.

“Don’t live just giving up on everything and hugging your knees. You can go anywhere. You can do anything. I approve you.”

“Okay. Got it.”

Noloty strongly nodded. Ever since she was young she never doubted her father’s words. For the world he was probably a pitiful man, but for Noloty he was her one and only father.

“Understood, Noloty? If so, then this world belongs to you. Live while thinking that.”

Live strongly. Have a big heart.

What her father wanted to say was probably something like that. However, Noloty believed in her father’s words much more strongly than he thought she would.

“Got it, daddy. Everyone belongs to me.”

Noloty interpreted her father’s words literally. Without doubting in his words even once, she lived according to them.

It seemed impossible. The reason for her to have the outrageous notion that the entire world belongs to her, the source of the power that held back the world’s destruction, were the words of a middle-aged man who had nothing.

Noloty was an unbelievable fool. A huge, extraordinary fool that had no equal in this world. And because of that she saved the world.

If Noloty and Arkit had never met each other, what would have happened? He would have been killed by Daltom according to plan and the Armed Librarians would have been destroyed.

If Noloty had given up on saving Arkit, what would have happened? Arkit’s hatred would not disappear, and the Armed Librarians would have definitely been destroyed.

If she had regretted her attempt to save him for a single moment, the Armed Librarians would have probably been destroyed. She would have been unable

to put an end Arkit's hatred.

In short, it was all due to Noloty's power. If she weren't there, the world would have been destroyed.

"Do you understand about Noloty now, Arkit?"

Enlike muttered to the lump of earth left behind after the Gloomy Lizard had vanished.

She truly was a foolish girl. She was weak, unreliable, and always, always caused people to worry about her. She never realized just how worried people were for her.

If she made a decision she would never go back on it, never listened to what people said, always bothered them and caused nothing but troubles.

However, Noloty was the ruler of this world. She had no crown on her head, no title, not even a plot of land the size of her fist, and not a single retainer. And yet she was the princess. Although she could control no one, she owned the entire world; a foolish, weird princess. Even if no one would acknowledge it, Enlike will.

"Understand, Arkit?"

There was a country in the world whose only law was to not be unhappy and always smile. It was the places Noloty's hand could reach, the places Noloty's figure could be seen at; it was Noloty's country.

"You and I are the Noloty Country citizens."

Saying so, Enlike turned his back to the ground. He wanted to go away, yet his feet did not move. Now that Noloty's wish had been fulfilled he had nothing to do. He had nowhere to go.

Enlike simply stood in place.

The long fight against the Indulging God Cult has ended. But what was left behind after it?

The battle did not produce anything. None of the people involved became happy. Those who were meant to live in peace died, and dreams meant to be fulfilled were broken.

Did this victory have any meaning? Nothing would have been lost had it not begun.

The tears that were exhausted after Noloty's death returned to Enlike's eyes. He cried by himself under the cold, cloudy sky.

Thus the war was over, and only hell was left behind. That was the only result of Kachua's war meant to spread Heaven in the world.

An officer of the Ismo Republic ran to a corner of Bantorra Library's downtown.

"Is anyone there? Did anyone survive?!"

There was no one to reply to or hear his orders. The commander ran around town with all his subordinates no longer among the living.

A tank soldier was groveling next to him. He crawled around while holding his right shoulder with a bloody left hand.

"My hand's gone, it's gone, my hand's gone! Where is it?"

Even if he could find his right arm he could probably not return it to how it was. The soldier couldn't understand even that.

Around him were probably his comrades. A soldier sat next to an overturned tank. He was shouting towards the surroundings.

"There's still someone under it! Save him, someone save him, someone lend a hand!"

Human feet poked from under the collapsed tank. There was no way the soldier pinned under it was still alive. The other soldier tried alone to move the tank helplessly.

A child came walking. It was a child who lived in peace on Past God Bantorra's Island.

"Daddyyyyy, daddyyyy, daddyyyy... waaaaah!"

Was he ran over by a tank, killed in a bombardment, or was killed by the Armed Librarians? Probably no one could tell in that chaotic battlefield.

Armed Librarian Kyasariro stopped the bleeding of her comrades. Minth came

shouting at her.

“Are you stupid?! Leave the Armed Librarians for later! Even you leave them alone they won’t die!”

“But-”

“...I’m fine, let me do it myself later...”

An Armed Librarian spoke listlessly. Kyasariro followed after Minth as if she was pulled by her hair.

The Armed Librarians who could still move scattered all over the place trying to desperately rescue people.

*I wonder why... killing a person takes an instant, yet saving one can take many minutes and even hours. It’s so unfair,* thought Kyasariro.

All the remaining False Men gathered in one hideout. Tablets wrapped in paper were placed before them. They were not aiming for Heaven. They were the people who dreamt of Kachua’s wishes coming true. They were supposed to succeed his dream after the destruction of the Armed Librarians.

Kachua was not only a cruel and unjust person. Only his dream was his true intention.

“Were our ideals defeated?”

“We have had a nice dream.”

“Yes, a nice dream. Too bad.”

One among them started faintly laughing.

“What, are you satisfied thinking that way?”

“What?”

“Heaven is now only ours. I will go first.”

Saying so, the man picked up a pill and drank it down.

“Should I also go so fast?”

The remaining people drank the pills. One of the two remaining people spoke.

“Will we really be able to go to Heaven?”

“We will. We definitely will.”

The other man drank, and one person remained.

“But I wonder where Heaven is?”

He drank the last pill. Leaving neither a will nor a Book behind, they all disappeared from the world.

Hamyuts was sitting inside the ruins. Both her hands and her body were covered in blood. She was staring at the sky with an engrossed face.

“This can’t be...”

She ended up surviving again. Why was that? Although she kept fighting so far, she still survived again.

Cigal and Mokkaia who managed to drive her to the verge of death... Enlike with whom she was supposed to fight to the death... Vend Ruga and Olivia who made her afraid... and the one she wanted to be killed by, the one who embraced his love, Colio Tonies.

*They’re all gone. They all left me behind. And it happened again.*

“Is there no one? At this rate I’ll grow old, become a granny, and then die. Is nobody’s coming? Won’t anyone come for me?”

Hamyuts simply muttered.

“Please come, someone, come to kill me...”

Lascall was muttering in some unknown place. He was holding held the stone dagger in his hands and overlooking the entire world with sensory organs humans did not possess.

“The long, painful fight has reached an auspicious end. Nevertheless, how did we reach this state of affairs?”

Lascall closed his eyes.

“No matter where I look in the world, I cannot find a single cry of joy, nor a single smile.”

Lascall was speaking to himself in that place where no one could hear him.

“Even if it brings nothing forth, and no matter how vain it is, as long as it is the story of a human, I will keep granting it a continuation.”

Lascall’s figure disappeared.

“However, it is all in vain. It is oh so futile. Will the day to raise voices of joy and smiles at each other never come?”

A year before the battle was settled. There was a certain small incident a little before Toatt Mining Town’s Dragon Pneumonia Incident and without any relation neither to the mortal combat against the Indulging God Cult nor to Noloty’s death.

A pupil was called into the principal’s office of a certain Librarian Training School in Rona. He was a thin boy with brown skin.

“This isn’t a big deal, but your hometown...”

“Is this about Big Sister Noloty?”

The intelligent-looking boy immediately grasped the principal’s intention. He was worried about the strange girl who had recently become a trainee.

“How’s the village? Did it go according to Noloty’s wishes?”

The boy shook his head.

“Although she left, nothing will change. They will only keep slowly cornering themselves.”

The principal’s shoulders drooped.

“It’s fine. At the very least I’ve changed. If Big Sister Noloty can’t change anything, then I will.”

“Are you...?”

The boy nodded.

“She is much more stupid than me, but I admire her. So I will definitely become an Armed Librarian.”

A year later, the Armed Librarians were saved by Noloty and by a single man that she had saved. One could say that she saved the Armed Librarians singlehandedly. Hamyuts, Mattalast or any of the other Acting Directors in all

history were all truly far from this kind of achievement.

The boy's dream will probably come true. After all, the one he admired was the best Armed Librarian in history.

## Fragment: Heaven and the Successor

Five days passed after the war was over. Noloty's Book and a letter from Enlike explaining the truth about the incident reached Bantorra Library. With that, the Armed Librarians knew that their fight against the Indulging God Cult has ended.

Two months passed since then.

Two people went down Bantorra Library's Sealed Labyrinth.

"Step back."

The one coming to attack them was a four-headed snake. Mattalast shot its four heads accurately using his Tenor.

Minth was looking from behind.

It was as expected from the Guardian Beasts of the Second Sealed Labyrinth. Minth, who was watching from the side, couldn't even lend a hand in battle. After blowing off the four heads, Mattalast drove the fifth shot into the heart at the base of the snake's neck.

He nimbly loaded his gun and turned around to Minth.

"Well then, let's go."

As he said this and started walking, Minth spoke to him.

"Say, Matt. Do we really have the time to do something like this?"

The fight against the Indulging God Cult ended. However, the Armed Librarians were extremely busy. Recovery of the devastated island; helping reconstruction all over the world; discussing the problem of responsibility about the war; and the reorganization of Armed Librarians and normal librarians. They were far more busy dealing with the war's aftermath than during the war itself. The two were somehow able to squeeze a little time between that work that didn't let them have a moment to rest and came down there.

"Actually, it's something that should have been done immediately. No matter how busy we were I shouldn't have neglected it for two months."

Minth followed Mattalast who kept walking ahead.

“Let’s hurry. If the other Armed Librarians know of this it will be troublesome.”

After passing through the Second Sealed Labyrinth, they arrived at the Second Sealed Archive. It was the place that stored the Books of the various generations of the Acting Directors. No human being could step beyond the Second Sealed Archive. It could actually be called the deepest part of Bantorra Library.

“Well, we’re here. Good grief, no matter how many times I dive in here it’s tiring.”

They arrived at the door to the Second Sealed Archive. Mattalast put his hands on the double door.

“Shall we enter, Minth?”

Minth’s feet stopped without thinking.

The only one allowed to enter the Second Sealed Archive was the Acting Director. No matter what reasons they had, other Armed Librarians were not allowed to even touch the door.

Since Mattalast was Hamyuts’s confidant, there was still a chance it was allowed for him. But there was no way Minth could enter.

“What’s wrong, come quickly now.”

Minth spoke.

“Say, Matt. Why me? I just don’t get it.”

Mattalast hid his eyes under the hat.

“There are three reasons. The first is your power, the Sacred Eyes. There is no other ability more suited for this work than that. No one other in the world possesses such a rare ability.”

“...Next?”

“It doesn’t seem like that from the way you look, but you actually have a sharp mind.

You think of all sorts of things to yourself, so you have quite some brains, right? You grasp the situation, understand it, and know what you need to do. You have a good mind.

Well, we'll overlook the fact that you get hot-headed during fights for now."

"And the third reason?"

"The final reason is that you are a kind person.

You feel joy at other people's happiness, and you are sad at their misfortune. Although you're not skillful at handling things around you, and sometimes you're too stubborn, fundamentally you're a respectable person. That's rare for an Armed Librarian.

This is the most important part. It's the most important thing to being human, but it's also important for undertaking this job."

"..."

"If you don't do it I will. But no matter how I'll struggle I won't be as good as you. You probably understand this."

Minth looked at Mattalast. If the three points he explained were the conditions necessary for the job, then he certainly was better than him. Although it wasn't at the level of Sacred Eyes, Mattalast also had an ability to see through people. And he was smarter than Minth.

However, Mattalast had an important flaw.

"I get it, Matt. You certainly are too cool-headed."

Mattalast nodded. And he then opened the door.

"I already decided this when I have met you for the first time. You are the only one who can succeed this job."

A heavy sound echoed in the silent Labyrinth. The pair stepped into the Second Sealed Archive.

There were few Books inside the spacious Archive. They were the Acting Directors of history, people who had authority corresponding to that of Mattalast's, and the successive generations of those working in the Present

Management Agency. Finally, there were also the miners and normal librarians who have read the aforementioned Books.

However, Minth had already heard that this was not everything. The Books of the successive generations of the Overseers of Paradise were also stored there. Most of them went to Heaven. However, there were also not a small number of Overseers of Paradise who have refused going there.

After finding out the truth, Minth could understand their reason for refusing access to Heaven.

The two passed between the bookshelves and advanced deeper.

Minth saw the thing that was ahead.

“This is...”

It was in front of the closed door that led to the First Sealed Archive.

Its appearance was that of a tree. It wasn't big. Since it could not reach the ceiling of the Sealed Archive, its height was probably around five meters. The trunk was about as thick as Minth's thighs. It was colored a brown close to grey much like an old tree. *If I grab it I could probably tear it off*, thought Minth.

At the end of its richly grown branches were leaves like those of a cypress. They were all made from a material resembling glass.

“It's surprisingly small, huh? I also thought this way when I first saw it.”

Mattalast said. Minth couldn't reply. Was there anyone who could stay calm after seeing this? Even those who passed the hell-like war two months ago.

“Is this Heaven?”

“Yes. It is the place the Books of the True Men and False Men arrive at. A gathering place for the happiness of this world. The thing that takes the name of the God the Indulging God Cult worships. The root of all evil is this Heaven.”

Minth raised his clenched fist above his shoulder without thinking. However, it did not reach ahead but simply trembled vainly in air.

“Stop it, Minth.”

“...Shit!”

His fist hit the floor. Vibrations echoed in the Sealed Archive.

“Minth. Since you came so far you can’t turn back. Even so, I will ask you just in case.”

“...Ask whatever you want.”

“Kachua’s foolishness destroyed the Indulging God Cult. Rebuild it and bring peace to this world again. You are the only one who can do that.

Minth Chezine. I appoint you to be the next Overseer of Paradise.”

Although there was no wind underground, Heaven’s branches swayed. The glass leaves made a sound as if they were twinkling.

“Do you accept it, Minth?”

After a while of silence, Minth spoke.

“Don’t underestimate me, Matt.”

“...”

“I got it. You’re saying I have no choice but to accept it!

I accept! Because only I can do it!”

The branches’ tremors ceased. God – no, the thing the Indulging God Cult were calling God – stared down at the birth of its new subordinate.

The mortal combat with Kachua has concluded. But it was not the end of anything.

That was because nothing in the world has changed. It simply returned to how it was before.

The fight was over, but the story was still ongoing.

# Afterword

Hello everyone. This is Yamagata Ishio.

I deliver to you the sixth installment of the Tatakau Shisho series, “Tatakau Shisho to Aranawa no Himegimi”. It also turned out quite long this time, but I hope you will enjoy it.

Just the other day I appeared on Shueisha’s internet radio show. The voice actors Tanaka Hirofumi-san and Hirohashi Ryou-san hosted that program named “S-Radi Wide Shueigumi”. We’ve introduced the Tatakau Shisho series and shared a bit of inside talk and such. I’ve talked poorly, but I hope all of you who’ve listened enjoyed it.

The recording was very amusing. The two hosts read passionately from Tatakau Shisho and frequently voiced their impressions at the good parts. There were also times that I almost exposed future developments. Also, midway through the show Tanaka-san and I ignored the subject of Tatakau Shisho and started getting excited about Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure, making Hirohashi-san leave us behind.

I am willing to come again anytime, so please call me if there’s another opportunity. Since I was able to use it as writing material for the afterword, this helped me as well.

Since there are surprisingly not a lot of opportunities for people to hear their own voice, it seems that most of them are surprised by the gap between their mental image and reality.

Even I, when I tried listening to the radio program I appeared in, was surprised to find out I was talking slowly.

Since the two hosts were speaking with a nice tempo, I sounded all the more slow. Even though I think that normally I speak somewhat fast.

Or rather than talking slowly, I often have strange pauses in the middle. It feels as if I speak without any order but simply talk while thinking. I noticed

while listening that I there's something like some weird stress accumulating. I listened to the radio while making complaints such as "there's no time so just talk quickly!" or "the listeners don't want to hear about that".

The person I was complaining about was me, though.

Once again I have received the help of many people in order to complete this work. I would like to use this opportunity to offer my gratitude.

Tanaka Hirofumi-sama and Hirohashi Ryou-sama I have written about before, and the radio staff. My supervisor as well as those from the editorial department. Maeshima Shigeki-sama, who even in these increasingly busy times provided wonderful illustrations. Thanks for your continued support.

The long-standing Tatakau Shisho series passed the point of no return, and this entry marks more or less its first big turning point. From now on we will approach the truth between the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult and solve all mysteries.

Please look forward to the new developments in the 7<sup>th</sup> volume and beyond.

Yamagata Ishio