



戦司書と世界の力

Tatakau Sisho to Sekai no Chikara

BOOK 10
Tatakau Sisho

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Tatakau Shisho

vol.10 - Fighting Librarians And The Power Of The World

by Yamagata Ishio

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著作権保護中

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「著作権保護」



Ruruta
**Ruruta
Coozancoona**

A Book-Eater. The Demon Lord who owns all. Aims to destroy the world in order to grant Nieniu's wish.



Nieniu

Ruruta's lover. The power of Future Overseer Ormtorra turned her into a being that wishes only for destruction.

Colio
Colio

A former human bomb from the Cult. Retrieved his human heart after meeting with the Ever-Laughing Witch Shiron.

Mirepoc
Mirepoc

An Armed Librarian who can use Thought Sharing. An overly serious girl.

Lascall
Lascall

A sentient stone dagger. A being that continues people's stories.



「著作権保護」

「著作権保護コンテンツ」

戦う司書と世界の力

Tatakau Shosha to Sekai no Chikara

characters

Hamyuts
Hamyuts

Acting Director of Bantorra Library. Extremely ruthless and aggressive. She had been supposedly killed and defeated by Ruruta, but...

Mattalast
Mattalast

Armed Librarian. Master of using his prediction ability and handguns. Hamyuts's partner.

「著作権保護コンテンツ」

Prologue: Parting of the Tools

Let us first speak about the ending of a certain girl.

It wasn't much of a story. A tool no longer useful was thrown away – that was all this story was.

Even if that tool had a human appearance, a human name and a human heart, once broken it would be thrown away. That was the fate of those born as tools.

"Please come out, Chacoly."

Hamyuts Meseta called with a calm voice. She held her favorite sling in her hand.

"You have nowhere to escape to and no chances of victory. As I am now I can snipe you before you activate your ability from here. I became strong. Much stronger than you."

Hamyuts was at a corner of the mountainous region of western Meliot. To the east was a plains area dotted with Meliot's major cities, and to the west extended the Kuler Region currently engaged in civil war.

She was deep into the mountainous region where population density was extremely low. The towering mountains, the sky so bright it hurt one's eye and the dry, thin air all encircled Hamyuts.

"I came to kill you. I'm sorry, but please die obediently."

At the time Hamyuts was 20 years old. This happened 12 years before the last day of Bantorra Library.

Hamyuts was peeking inside a cave deep within the mountain. She released her

Sensory Threads there. She could feel a lone girl was sitting in the depths of the cave.

"Come in, Hammy. Chacoly would like to talk to you about something."

She felt with her Sensory Threads that Chacoly raised her face. She could hear her voice from inside the cave.

"Please, listen to her. Before Chacoly dies talk to her even if just a little."

Hamyuts thought for a while, then set her feet inside.

She knew of Chacoly's defeat three days ago. The one to tell her that was Lascall Othello.

Four days ago, just as designed by Makia, Chacoly had tried dominating Ruruta and making him commit suicide. However, she heard that he had rejected Chacoly and broke her down.

Hamyuts flew to Meliot immediately. Bantorra Library's Acting Director Photona and the Overseer of Paradise Kachua already began their move. Hamyuts had to kill her before she was captured.

It was easy finding her using Hamyuts's Sensory Threads. Photona and Kachua were still looking for her in the wrong places. She had some spare time.

"Who would've thought you'd lose... I really can't believe it."

The cave was deep. Hamyuts slowly descended without any hurry.

"Yeah. Chacoly also thought she would succeed. She believed she would die with Ruruta. But there's nothing to do about it. That's reality."

Her voice was dark.

"...Yeah. Unfortunately that's reality."

Hamyuts proceeded while talking. The deepest part of the cave was a vast cliff. It had a rope ladder coming down from it. After cutting it off, she leapt down. Chacoly was there.

"...!"

The moment she saw her Hamyuts gasped. She even thought she might have gotten

the wrong person or that it was a substitute. She was much different than the Chacoly Hamyuts remembered.

Chacoly, who was once always calm, now seemed haggard and exhausted. Her

detached and otherworldly atmosphere was gone. Her body seemed to be full of

sadness and she wore a smile alike that of complete resignation.

However, that wasn't what surprised Hamyuts. The violet hair that once charmed even her was missing. The color of Chacoly's hair turned into an ordinary dark brown.

"...It's as you see, Hammy. Chacoly's broken. Unfortunately, she was a failed product."

In front of the lamp's light Chacoly was sitting on a rock. Her face downcast, she raised only her eyes and spoke to Hamyuts.

Hamyuts's chest was suddenly assaulted by sadness. In front of her was a simple loser that had nothing. She was no longer a tool meant to defeat Ruruta. She also couldn't live as a normal girl either. She was a being that merely awaited its death.

"What a surprise, Hammy. You've changed so much. Chacoly never would've thought you'd make such a face."

Chacoly said while smiling. Her expression was painful.

"...Chacoly, what did you want to talk to me about?"

She exerted power in her hand holding the sling. *I can't bear looking at her,* she thought. *I want to kill her as quickly as possible.*

"Listen, Hammy. Ruruta wasn't the sort of man daddy thought he was. He's..."

Chacoly tried to talk, but Hamyuts stopped her.

"I'll find out how you lost after reading your Book. That would be more accurate."

"...Right. Hammy, you have to read Chacoly's Book."

"...Anything else?"

Chacoly thought for a while. Hamyuts waited with great patience.

"It's been four days since Chacoly's lost to Ruruta. She thought about a lot of things.

She thought without eating or sleeping. Even though she's tried so hard, she couldn't think of anything.

How can Ruruta be saved?"

"...Saved?"

"Yeah. Chacoly wants to save Ruruta. He's deeply desperate. At this rate he wouldn't be able to endure it and break down. So Chacoly wants to save him."

As Hamyuts made no reply, Chacoly kept talking.

"...Even when it turned out like this. Even now that she's broken down and can't do anything... Chacoly loves Ruruta."

"...I see. Do as you please. It has nothing to do with me."

"Wait Hammy!"

Chacoly shouted at Hamyuts as she was about to rotate her sling.

"...Listen until the end. Please, I have just one wish."

I don't wanna, she thought of saying but stopped. She noticed that Chacoly asked this of her because it truly was the first and last time.

"Hammy. Saving Ruruta is simple. Someone just has to sympathize with him. That's it."

"...Sympathize with him?"

Sympathy. It certainly was important. It was wonderful. But such a thing only appeared in fairy tales for children.

"He doesn't need anything else. Neither ability nor strength, smartness nor anything else. Simple having someone sympathize with him... as long as someone feels that Ruruta will be saved.

Sympathy is an amazing power. Much more than Hammy's sling, than Chacoly's Soul Sharing, than Ruruta's Book-Eating power... a much bigger power. Without the ability to sympathize we wouldn't save abandoned puppies.

If you have the power to sympathize you can save anything in the world.

Chacoly realized that was how it was."

Hamyuts made no reply.

"By simply sympathizing anything and everything will be solved. If someone sympathizes with Ruruta he will change. He will stop killing people. He will stop ruling the world and forcibly collect Books of happiness. The Indulging God Cult won't be needed either. Even you, Hammy, won't need to fight him.

So please, sympathize with Ruruta."

No reply came.

"Please, Hammy. Save Ruruta. Sympathize with him. That's all you have to do!"

Hamyuts shook her head.

"Hammy!"

She wasn't coldly ignoring her. Hamyuts just became speechless. She couldn't help but pity Chacoly.

"How unfortunate, Chacoly. It's impossible. That guy's a monster. The worst kind of monster. It's impossible to save him just by sympathizing with him. It's impossible to solve everything just by sympathizing. It's sad, but that's reality."

"Hammy, you're wrong, Hammy..."

She downcast her eyes. Then, she rotated her sling.

"Please. Just die already. I don't want to see you like this. I don't want to see you being this miserable!"

"Hammy!"

A single pebble flew from the sling, crossing through air with a small noise.

"...It's impossible, Chacoly... changing someone by sympathizing is impossible."

Hamyuts mumbled, looking down at Chacoly's crushed forehead.

That was the end of a tool. Although she had broken down and became

useless, she never stopped loving Ruruta. This was the end of someone who's lived as a tool. Thus Hamyuts thought while looking down at that which was nothing more than a corpse.

"Is it over, Hamyuts-sama?"

At that moment she heard a voice from behind. It was Lascall Othello. He was probably watching their conversation from behind this entire time.

"How do you feel? Now you are the only person to possess a possibility of killing Ruruta.

It is likely that once you are defeated, no other people who could beat him will ever appear."

"So what?"

"Will the world be destroyed at Ruruta's hands, or will he be destroyed, saving the world? The fate of the entire world all falls on your shoulders.

I would like to hear your feelings about this."

"...I have nothing of the sort."

Hamyuts brushed her hair with a hand and spoke sadly.

"I'm also just a tool. Nothing's changed. That's how it is."

Hamyuts read Chacoly's Book and came to know of Ruruta's past. She saw him while he was a hero and saw Nieniu. However, she didn't read the memories of the three days from Chacoly's loss and until she was killed by her.

It was because she didn't want to see her one and only little sister's miserable state.

Hamyuts Meseta and Ruruta Coozancoona. It would be another 12 years before the two of them clashed.

Chapter 1: Dark-Colored Venom

In the middle of a vast desert stood a lone stone theater. Inside the old-fashioned, incredibly modest building were two figures. The surroundings were so silent they could hear the buzzing of their own ears. Neither the sound of wind, the wings of birds nor the footsteps of insects could be heard inside.

It was January 12, 1927, the second ending of the world.

In the center of the Imaginary Entrails, Colio Tonies was facing Ruruta Coozancoona.

"Can you stop me?"

Colio made no reply to that question. In front of Ruruta's freezing smile one couldn't help but sink into silence.

Ruruta had said – there was no longer anyone in the world. None other than them.

Meaning, the fate of the world was entrusted to Colio. If there was any possibility of saving the world it could be in none other than him. He had already died; dying didn't scare him. However, the great pressure of carrying the world's fate on his back held back his words.

Anyone would shake in fear if they suddenly became a hero bearing the fate of the world. Moreover, Colio who had to save the world possessed no sort of power.

"How about you say something? Silence would bring nothing."

Ruruta relaxed his mouth. His eyes sunken in sorrow, only his lips faintly moved.

"Really now, you being silent is the same as always."

When he saw no reply came, Ruruta let his shoulders drop. Colio couldn't help

but feel terror even at this one little action.

When Colio was alive he had faced against people with overwhelming power twice.

The first was Hamyuts Meseta and the second was Cigal Crukessa. However, Ruruta was orders of magnitude different from them.

Just by facing him he could feel it. Both Ruruta's strength and the depth of his despair were incomparable. Colio's face covered with an unpleasant sweat. His legs trembled.

His heart beat rapidly and his breath was short.

"Now then, I shall ask this again. Please answer this time.

Can you stop me?"

Saying so, Ruruta smiled. Enduring the strong pressure that made him feel likely to lose consciousness, bearing up with the fear that made him want to scream, Colio answered.

"I can."

"...Why?"

Gazing at Ruruta's eyes as he replied back, Colio answered.

"I am here on the assumption I can stop you. If I were unable to stop you, I would have nothing more."

As he said this, Ruruta nodded in satisfaction.

"Exactly so. Yes, as expected of you, Colio Tonies."

Without understanding what he was satisfied about or what he found pleasing, Colio kept looking at Ruruta.

'...No way. How surprising. Really.'

Neither Ruruta nor Colio had noticed that a single gaze was watching them. That in this world, supposedly containing only the two of them, there was another person.

Ex-Bantorra Library Acting Director Hamyuts Meseta was watching the two boys

staring at each other inside the theater.

'To think we'd end up meeting in such a place, Colio-kun...'

A few dozens of minutes ago her chest had been pierced by Ruruta and she perished.

Her body already ceased any and all life activities. No matter what method one would use, it was impossible to revive her.

However, Hamyuts was right now gazing at Ruruta and Colio.

'I have plenty to talk about with Colio though. Unfortunately, we can't sit for a nice relaxing cup of tea.'

Hamyuts was intently observing Ruruta as he conversed with Colio. She had the eyes of a hunter aiming for their prey. Not missing a single move, she waited for the opportunity to land a killing blow.

'Because you see, right now I have to kill Ruruta Coozancoona.'

Seeing Ruruta for the first time filled her with a strong sense of intimidation. Because it was her, someone who had fought her whole life, she could clearly feel his outrageous power.

However, Hamyuts didn't plan on losing in the slightest. It was because she was originally created in order to defeat him.

Ruruta hadn't noticed: a small abnormality occurred in Hamyuts's corpse pierced by the needle. The change was so trivial one could probably not find it unless told of it.

Not to mention that, since he was inside the Imaginary Entrails facing Colio right now, he wouldn't be able to notice anyway.

Hamyuts's hair color was changing. It became a color with neither luster nor gloss, a color that absorbed any and all light. It was a deep black much darker than ravens'

wings, much darker than obsidian, much darker than a night sky without moon or stars. Since black hair wasn't rare at all, it would be difficult noticing the change.

However, by looking closely, it would be apparent no such black could exist in the natural world.

A special hair color was the proof of being born with a special Magic Right. The color of her hair changing indicated the activation of her ability.

The inborn Magic Right of Hamyuts Meseta... it was called "Book-Feeding".

This ability was the antithesis of the Book-Eating ability possessed by those with transparent hair.

It would activate when the owner of the Magic Right died. They could instantly change their soul into a Book. Also, they could make a Book-Eater devour their Book by force. It was a simple, completely useless Magic Right.

Several hundreds of years ago, this ability was proven to exist by researchers of Magic Theory using a pen and paper. However, even if it existed it was utterly useless.

It was neither the subject of any research nor used in practice, so it became a useless piece of trivia only a few researchers knew about.

The only known Book-Feeder in current times was Hamyuts. However, there were

possibly some people who lived their whole lives without knowing they possessed this ability as well.

Hamyuts entered the Imaginary Entrails with this ability. And now she was looking at Ruruta.

"I have a guess."

Ruruta said. For some reason he spoke in an amused tone.

"It's probably because of Shiron. Your beloved Ever-Laughing Witch, Shiron Booyacornish.

You came to know of this day through her Predictive ability. She found a way to prevent the destruction of the world and entrusted it to you. Is that how it was?

I don't know when it happened, what kind of prediction it was and how she passed it over to you, though."

Colio shook his head to the side.

"This isn't something as convenient as that."

"What?"

Ruruta raised his voice. He was truly surprised. He hadn't a single reason to show Colio a fake expression.

Ruruta stared at Colio with eyes wide open.

"I can't believe you. Since you're so confident you surely have something."

"I'm... full of confidence?"

"Yeah. Greatly so. No other person in my memories stood in front of me while keeping calm like you.

All those who've faced me shook with fear, thought of escaping, tried calming themselves to no avail, and bluffed. You seem somewhat scared, but you are plenty calm."

Is that really 'somewhat'? Thought Colio while holding down his beating heart.

"As I thought you are splendid. You and only you. Only you can stop me. Only you can save the world."

Why are you encouraging me? Colio's doubts vanished inside his stomach without forming words. He couldn't understand Ruruta. He couldn't grasp even a faint clue about what was hidden behind his smile.

"...Now then, what shall you do?"

Ruruta inquired. *I have to say something*, Colio desperately searched for words.

"...I have a question."

Ruruta nodded as if telling him he could ask whatever he wanted.

"What were you trying to do by waiting for me?"

Colio let the first question that rose to his mind come out of his mouth.

Ruruta made an expression that seemed to indicate he was taken by surprise. He put his hand to his mouth and thought for a while.

"What a strange question. Now then..."

He cast his eyes downward and mumbled.

"Thinking about it I don't know. Was I trying to do something or did I not want to do anything..."

Have I asked something I shouldn't have? Colio waited for the answer while trembling. But Ruruta clearly said he had been waiting for him. He erased all interruptions for his sake and delayed the end of the world. There was no way he had no reason.

"I wanted to meet you. Is that insufficient?"

Ruruta said, raising his face. He spoke in a friendly tone as if he suddenly invited a friend he had lost contact with for a long time. *But why me? Among all the countless people in the world...*

"...Why me?"

Ruruta dropped his shoulders and smiled wryly.

"You've been asking me only hard questions. But it's fine. I'll play along."

The sitting Ruruta rose up and approached. He crossed his gaze with Colio and brought his face closer. Colio noticed that his height was almost the same as Ruruta's, and for some reason was surprised.

"Say, Colio. Since it's you, don't you understand?"

"...W-what?"

Ruruta smiled.

"My feelings."

Hamyuts was watching Ruruta and Colio carefully. She hid her breathing and erased her presence.

'Ruruta... hasn't noticed. Well, if I screwed up at this stage it would all be over.'

Hamyuts was looking at Ruruta, yet her form wasn't anywhere inside the Imaginary Entrails. While she had no appearance, only her sight and hearing were there.

She was manipulating her Book-Feeding ability skillfully. She stopped its activation on the verge of her soul being devoured. Doing so, she wouldn't appear inside the Imaginary Entrails and Ruruta wouldn't be able to notice her. Hamyuts knew that.

The time between her soul being Eaten and being consumed – that was the time to unilaterally observe the interior of the Imaginary Entrails. She was obviously familiar with the usage of her ability.

'...There still isn't any opening yet. If I show myself I'll be killed.'

Hamyuts was waiting. She was waiting for the opportunity of Ruruta showing a single opening. If it wasn't so it wouldn't even become a fight and Hamyuts would be killed.

They had that much of a difference in their abilities.

But Hamyuts also had a way to defeat Ruruta instantly. Because she was a tool meant for that purpose.

"Your... feelings?"

Colio took a step back. Ruruta kept standing without pursuing him.

"Yes. You should be able to understand me. And no one but you will."

Ruruta smiled coldly.

"Love is but one part of people's life. Humans have their daily lives. They have friends, family, a job, a dream, and their own desires. People say love is above

everything with their mouths. There are people who truly think that for a while. But something above everything can't really exist.

But that's fine. It's normal."

Colio was confused at Ruruta suddenly giving him this incomprehensible life counseling.

"But there are only two exceptions to this. Me and you."

"...That is..."

"Colio. Have you never thought about this? What would you have done were you in my shoes?"

Ruruta kept showering the speechless Colio with questions.

"What would you have done if the only way to make Shiron happy was by destroying the world?"

Saying this, Ruruta averted his gaze from Colio and went back to sit on the theater's stage. Colio was desperately looking for an answer to his question.

If I were in Ruruta's shoes... I never thought of it. No, perhaps I'd done my best not to think about it.

When he closed his eyes he could see Shiron's face in the back of his mind. He recalled the happiness he felt when he'd perceived Shiron's true intentions while resolving himself to face Cigal.

What if he had to kill many more people in order to make Shiron happy? He would have probably done it.

What if, in order to make Shiron happy, he would have had to kill even Relia, Hyoue and Ia Mira? He would've probably done it. He would suffer and feel troubled for it, but he would do it.

And what if Shiron was in Nieniu's shoes? What if she turned into a stone statue that wished only for destruction and only waited the day it would happen? What would he have done?

Colio couldn't say anything. He had already found the answer but couldn't allow himself to acknowledge it.

I would have surely destroyed the world. Just like Ruruta.

It wasn't that he hated the world. It wasn't that he wanted to destroy it. However, as long as it was for Shiron's sake, he would kill anyone and everyone.

"Is it not so, Colio?"

Ruruta probably understood the sort of answer Colio had reached. He asked this because he knew he'd reach the same conclusion.

"Colio, you are probably not aware of it... but your true nature is close to evil."

"I'm evil?"

"Not evil itself, but perhaps even more dangerous than that. Evil does not destroy the world. Neither Kachua, Cigal nor Hamyuts would ever destroy the world. The only thing that can destroy the world and triumph against all is love."

Colio was shocked. He had never once thought about his true nature. Identified by Ruruta, Colio discovered his true self for the first time.

"You and I are the same. Only our positions were different."

Colio was convinced by his words. He was deprived of everything and became a mere human bomb. However, even while they were opposites, their circumstances were similar to a frightening degree.

"I am you who didn't manage to bring forth a miracle. You are me who did manage a miracle.

That's why I've waited for you. I wanted to meet my other self.

I wondered why it was you. That is the answer to your question."

"...Ruruta. I'm..."

"I always wanted someone to understand my feelings. I will destroy the world now.

You should be able to understand me here. And no one but you can understand."

Ruruta smiled gently at Colio. He started emitting cold sweat from his head, and when it entered his eyes it was somewhat painful.

Confusion, fear and several other emotions swirled inside Colio. Not knowing what to do with them, he simply kept standing.

He had to stop the destruction of the world. Even so, he could understand the feelings of Ruruta who was about to do that.

Silence once again dominated the pair.

'...I have no idea what's going on.'

Hamyuts listened to their conversation. Or rather than listening, it was a conversation that made her break into cold sweat. Ruruta was her archenemy and towards Colio she felt complex emotions which were a mix of respect and yearning. There was no way she wouldn't be interested in their conversation.

However, this wasn't the time to silently listen to them. She had to eliminate Ruruta.

Even Colio would surely have no way to convince Ruruta. Yet Ruruta was enthusiastic about their conversation. If they kept talking like that perhaps a chance would be born. If all of Ruruta's attention was directed at Colio, he wouldn't be cautious of his surroundings. Even a split second would be fine. That would be enough for Hamyuts to finish him.

A single moment. Hamyuts was created and lived her life just for a single moment.

She held her breath waiting for it. Suddenly, memories from when she was alive rose to the back of her mind.

It was during the height of the battle against the Indulging God Cult. Hamyuts ordered the Armed Librarian trainee called Noloty to save the Book-Eating Monster Zatoh.

And, just like Hamyuts intended, she managed on separating Enlike, who had taken over Zatoh's body, from the Cult.

"So, Enlike-kun. I'd like to ask you about this in detail."

Hamyuts was at a concentration camp far from the premises of Bantorra Library.

Enlike was jailed there. At the time he was still not acknowledged as an ally of the Armed Librarians, so they had no reason to let him out.

"You've taken control of Zatoh's body, right Enlike-kun? But what's happened to the owner of that body? Did Zatoh Rondohone's soul die? Or not?"

Hamyuts's goal was neither to make Enlike her ally nor to fight against him. She collected information about the Book-Eating ability. She had of course investigated it before. However, she wanted to hear about it from someone who'd experienced it with their own eyes.

"I believe he's dead. Since I've socked him with everything I got and he later drew back..."

Noloty, standing by Hamyuts's side, said.

"Sorry, but I didn't ask for your opinion, Noloty. I want Enlike-kun to make it clear for me."

Enlike opened his mouth.

"Zatoh Rondohone's soul is still alive."

"...Huh?"

Noloty said.

"It's still inside the Imaginary Entrails. He's subjugated by Kayas and that man known as Luimon Mahaton. He simply can't come out."

"Is that so... so Zatoh isn't dead."

While casually conducting this interrogation, Hamyuts reached the heart of the matter.

"So, Enlike-kun. What would happen if you kill Zatoh's soul?"

Enlike thought for a while and then spoke.

"...I will also die, no question about it. Without its owner, this body should turn into a mere corpse."

"Why?"

"Because Zatoh's the one with the ability to preserve these Imaginary Entrails. If he were to die they would disappear as well, and since I'm inside them I'll die too. So, for me to keep living Zatoh's soul also has to keep living."

"...I see now."

Hamyuts summarized the main points.

"So it's basically like this.

If you kill the soul of a Book-Eater inside their Imaginary Entrails all the souls inside will be annihilated as well. So in order to kill a Book-Eater, just killing their soul inside them would suffice.

Is that correct? Enlike-kun."

Speaking this far, Enlike inside the cell and Noloty at her side seemed puzzled.

"What's the matter, Director?"

Hamyuts emitted cold sweat as the pair crossed their gazes.

"Oh? What's wrong you guys?"

"Why are you so interested in the Book-Eating ability?"

I was too straightforward, Hamyuts regretted. Since neither of them knew about the existence of Ruruta nor the fact Hamyuts was targeting him, it would probably not cause any secrets to leak though.

"I was just curious. I mean, Zatoh was a strong enemy and all that."

Ignoring their confused looks, Hamyuts cut the conversation short.

Hamyuts had one worry.

There was the possibility that, after defeating Ruruta, someone would take control of his body and powers. That meant that the ruler of the world would be simply replaced, making it all pointless. However, after asking Enlike she found out that was theoretically impossible.

Was it fine to believe him?

What she needed to do was kill Ruruta inside his Imaginary Entrails. That's all there was to it.

"I..."

Colio desperately tried speaking. *I can understand you*, he suppressed himself from saying using his reason. He hadn't come there to understand Ruruta. He came to stop him. If he were to say he understood him he would be unable to stop him.

"I'm different from you. Even if Shiron wished for it I wouldn't have destroyed the world."

The moment he said that the atmosphere immediately changed. A sense of disappointment and a freezing murderous impulse engulfed the area. Despite Ruruta not moving a single part of his body, despite him not changing anything in his expression, the atmosphere froze. Colio understood it was because of him.

"...What?"

Until now, Ruruta truly welcomed him. However, it was now different. Now Colio had to endure fear and pressure incomparable to how they were before. And if he can't he wouldn't be able to save the world.

"So you're also different from me?"

Ruruta said in a lonely tone.

"...So my hopes were mistaken. Well, it's because I can't be trusted to gauge people."

Ruruta was showing him apathy. Until now Ruruta thought of them as two sides of the same coin. However, now that he saw it wasn't so, Colio was no more than a vermin to him.

"Ruruta, think carefully."

"About what? I've thought as much as I could."

Ruruta said coldly. Colio raised his voice.

"Even if you destroy the world Nieniu will not be happy!"

Ruruta raised his face. He glared at Colio. With just that his heart stopped. His eyes were enough to make him think they invited destruction without any salvation.

"...What's that?"

"She won't be happy at all. Nieniu will never become happy if you destroy the world!"

No reply came. Ruruta simply kept directing a blood-chilling gaze at Colio. Even so, he kept operating his mouth that wouldn't move like he wished it to and talked.

"Ruruta. Are you really thinking about her?"

Destroying the world means that both you and she will die. You are trying to kill your beloved. Doing this, destroying the world, will make no one happy."

"Shut up."

A small explosion erupted at Colio's feet. Ruruta's anger burst unconsciously. Colio fell on his backside.

"Are you an idiot? You've read my memories. You should be able to understand Nieniu. Stop spewing all this nonsense."

"But..."

Ruruta lent no ears to Colio's attempt to stop him.

"Nieniu wishes for destruction. Only for that. Why do you think that making her one and only wish come true won't make her happy?"

Only destruction is her happiness. That is the only way to make her happy."

"You've been searching for a different way all this time."

"What's done is done. I knew that Nieniu wouldn't become happy like that. Both the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult don't matter at all."

"B-but!"

He shouted yet he was at a loss for words. He had never felt as awkward as he

did now that he couldn't convey what he thought about and couldn't speak well.

"But what?"

"Is that really happiness? By destroying anyone and everyone you will also vanish and nothing will remain. Even if that's her wish... that's no happiness at all."

They were the words he desperately wrought out. Yet he realized to a painful extent that they didn't reach Ruruta's heart. He once again cast his gaze downward.

"...What does someone like you know? What do you even know about happiness?"

"Ruruta..."

"...What do you even know about me?"

Ruruta hanged his head and muttered weakly. At that moment, Colio experienced pain in his chest that was different from fear.

Hiding her breath, Hamyuts couldn't even let out a single word. And so, she was cheering for Colio in her heart.

'Yeah, just like this, Colio-kun.'

She wanted him to speak more to Ruruta. To shake his heart. If he does then a chance would definitely be born.

She judged it as inadequate and let the opportunity pass, but during the moment Ruruta hanged down his head there was a small opening.

Hamyuts glared at Ruruta. *Just a bit would be good. Colio-kun, please create an opening. Unless you do it I can't fight. Everything now depends on you.*

While being watched by Hamyuts, Colio opened his mouth.

"Nieniu... is thinking that she shouldn't have been born."

Colio spoke to the downcast Ruruta.

"She believes that everything is worthless. Future, past and present, she despairs of everything."

Did he not hear me, wondered Colio while talking. Ruruta made no response. Since Colio stood in front of him he couldn't see his downcast expression.

"If you destroy the world now she will die with thoughts like that. But that's too sad.

That's no happiness.

I'm happy to have been born, to have lived, to have met you... thinking this is happiness. Is that wrong, Ruruta?"

He was on the contrary afraid of the absence of a response. He had no idea whether he managed to convince him or not.

However, his words surely reached Ruruta. And what he spoke were his true feelings.

Ruruta would definitely understand. Believing this, Colio kept talking.

"You understand it as well, right? Destruction will bring no happiness. Since you know that you made the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult gather Books of happiness after all."

No reply came from Ruruta.

"You can still go back. Wake up all the people in the world and bring everything back to how it was. Keep collecting Books of happiness and give them to Nieniu. Look for a way to make her happy.

That's for the best, Ruruta."

Colio stopped talking. He thought that he had said everything that needed to be said.

He gulped and waited for Ruruta's answer.

"Colio."

Ruruta raised his face. He looked at Colio and smiled. He was momentarily

relieved at that smile. However, the next instant he felt a chill run up his spine. Ruruta's fingertip pointed at Colio's chest.

"Are you satisfied? Is your pretentious speech over?"

Sparks scattered from his finger. He was probably going to launch a lightning attack.

"I'm mad at myself. Why did I want to meet up with someone like you?"

"...Ruruta."

Colio took a step back. However, he knew he had no way to escape. Within his fear he realized that he failed. Now came the destruction of the world.

"Are you an idiot? A hopeless idiot? By destroying the world Nieniu will become happy. Why don't you get something so obvious?"

He failed trying to retreat. Colio fell on his backside.

"What a pity. I'd hoped we'd be able to have mutual understanding."

A lightning was about to be emitted from his finger.

But at that moment...

"...!"

Hamyuts Meseta suddenly appeared between the two.

Hamyuts Meseta was a tool created by Makia Dexiart. She had only one function: to kill Ruruta.

But how could one kill Ruruta? Ruruta's powers were in the ultimate domain attainable by human beings. He couldn't be killed with either blades, fire, cannons, bombs or time.

The only possible way to kill him would be inside his Imaginary Entrails. However, his power was absolute there. Hamyuts was a warrior with considerable power, but even her sling was but a toy in front of him.

Ruruta couldn't be killed using force. What one needed to kill Ruruta was a world-shaking way of thinking.

A plan that no ordinary person could realize. A plan that one would realize had zero chances of succeeding when they thought it up. One needed a plan where, if they told about it to someone, it would be called a foolish plan that went even beyond insanity.

Unless it was so, Ruruta Coozancoona could not be killed.

It happened in an instant.

Hamyuts showed herself inside the Imaginary Entrails and Ruruta recognized her figure. The distance between the two was not even five meters. The moment Ruruta realized this abnormal situation she leapt at him.

I can do it, Hamyuts was convinced. Ruruta was frozen, still pointing at Colio. His shock at Hamyuts's appearance as well as the doubts he felt due to Colio created quite enough of an opening.

She pressed near him with a single step.

"What just..."

What just happened. He wasn't able to speak it until the end. By that time Hamyuts already made contact with him. Her arms wrapped around his shoulders.

Ruruta was the world's greatest warrior. Once he sensed danger his body moved instinctively.

If Hamyuts had used her sling here Ruruta would have definitely responded. Whether she tried clenching her fist, sending a kick, or showed any form of attack, Ruruta would have made a reflexive counterattack. However, all Hamyuts did was grab Ruruta. Her movements were definitely not an attack. And since they weren't he couldn't make any response.

Hamyuts pushed down the sitting Ruruta.

And then forcibly kissed his lips.



"What the..."

Colio could do nothing but mutter this. He couldn't even confirm by sight what was going on. He had failed convincing Ruruta. Both the destruction of the world as well as his death were unavoidable. But the next instant a human figure appeared and leapt at Ruruta. She then embraced him and locked lips with him. How could he understand any of that?

He recognized that figure as Hamyuts Meseta. But that only made him more confused.

"...Is that you, Hamyuts?"

There was no reply. He could only faintly hear Hamyuts's tongue entwining Ruruta's lips. Ruruta was also frozen with shock. Everyone there ceased their movements.

After about three seconds, the pair began moving. Ruruta who had been pushed down hit Hamyuts's stomach. She was blown about five meters away and landed on top of the stage.

"Hamyuts... Meseta... why are you... here..."

Ruruta said, holding his mouth with a hand.

"...Huhuhu, your lips are so soft."

Saying this, Hamyuts wiped her mouth using the back of her hand. Lipstick smeared down her cheeks, creating a red line.

"Why are you here and what have you done?"

Ruruta said. Hamyuts did nothing but show an eerie smile. Colio couldn't do anything; he only stared at the two.

"Answer me! What have you done?!"

"Do you really not know? What I came here to do should be obvious."

"What?"

Something abnormal suddenly occurred. Ruruta greatly convulsed as if something exploded inside his body.

"Gah!"

Ruruta grabbed his throat. A voice like someone vomiting leaked out. He coughed painfully several times. His body began to shake violently. Colio reached out his hand to help him, but stopped himself.

"What... is... this..."

Ruruta fell to his knees and vomited. However, only a few drops of saliva were scattered and nothing else came out of his stomach.

"I'm obviously here to kill you."

Hamyuts smiled from ear to ear. Even her body was trembling with joy.

"Is that you, Hamyuts? W-what does all this mean!"

Colio raised his voice. Hamyuts turned around, showing him a repulsive smile.

"You've done a great job, Colio-kun. It was perfect."

Ruruta stared at the flustered Colio.

"What have you done to Ruruta, Hamyuts?"

"Didn't you hear me? Also, can you not tell by looking at him?"

Hamyuts came to kill Ruruta. And she succeeded splendidly. Even Colio understood that much. But why had she kissed him?

"It's simple. It's something that took place countless times in history.

The end of a tyrant should be obvious, right?"

"What does that mean?!"

"Betrayal and poisoning by his own underling... that is the obvious end of a foolish tyrant."

Poisoning? Colio couldn't understand her words. Ruruta was dying. It didn't feel real to him. Could someone as powerful as him even die? The moment he thought this, the collapsed Ruruta raised his face.

"...So it was Makia Dexiart..."

He said, glaring at Hamyuts.

"Correct."

Hamyuts said in a carefree way. Ruruta's line of sight was directed at Colio.

"...So that's... how it was... Colio..."

He glared at him.

"You've... completely fooled me... that's how it was!"

Ruruta slowly stood up. Colio as well understood the situation little by little. He had been used by Hamyuts. Looking at it from Ruruta's point of view, it would seem like Colio only came there to distract him.

"I'll kill you bastards!"

Ruruta shouted. At the same time Hamyuts grabbed Colio's belt. She picked up his body and threw it away lightly. Colio flew through the air along with a scream.

"You're in the way!"

He could hear Hamyuts shouting. Colio, thrown out of the theater, hit the sand and rolled off.

Having gotten rid of the hindrance, Hamyuts pulled out the sling at her waist. Ruruta was somehow able to protect himself against the instantaneously launched gravel bullet.

"Now then, let's start the real show."

Ruruta didn't even think about Colio anymore. His enemy was Hamyuts. As well as the poison poured into him.

Ruruta repelled the gravel bullets that shot at him as if from a machinegun. Normally Hamyuts would be the kind of opponent he could kill instantly. However, right now simply protecting himself took everything he had.

Poison. It was an attack he had no experience in.

It *was* attempted on him countless times; those who had tried to kill Ruruta used thousands of poisons. However, he possessed a Magic Right that allowed him to nullify all poisons. Whether it was a well-known poison or an unknown one, no

poison should have been able to affect him.

And yet Hamyuts's poison was effective. For some reason his Magic Right didn't work at all.

He desperately analyzed the current situation while defending against the gravel bullets. His symptoms were nausea, convulsions, and the feeling as if a foreign body invaded him.

"Guh!"

"First strike!"

His defense was incomplete. A single gravel bullet grazed Ruruta's ear. He grimaced at this physical pain he hadn't felt for who knows how long.

"Let's keep going!"

Hamyuts's expression was full of joy. Wearing that kind of face in front of Ruruta...

he felt humiliated.

"You idiot, Ruruta! Have you really not noticed?"

Hamyuts lightly evaded Ruruta's lightning strike. She kept launching gravel bullets while running around the theater.

"Even though I've been next to you for more than ten years!"

It was a blunder. He had asked Makia Dexiart to kill him fifty years ago. It was a name he already forgot.

After running into Chacoly Cocot once he thought that his battle with him was over.

However, there was another person to bear his "legacy". And she was so close by, too.

He invoked his needle-controlling Magic Right. It was the power he had used to kill Hamyuts earlier. However, she also evaded it. He wasn't able to aim well.

"And so!"

He fired yet another needle. This time he tried to pierce her entire body.

However...

"...Ah... Gwahhh!!!"

The poison stopped his movements. As if his body pounded against something. His aim was off and Hamyuts ran to outside the theater. The needle did nothing but pierce a small sandstorm.

Rather than any pain he felt the sense of foreignness in his body. Something terrifying had invaded his inner depths. Neither coughs nor vomits could pull it

out of him.

However, he also realized that it wouldn't be as simple as spitting it out.

Gravel bullets came flying from outside the theater. Ruruta erected a barrier around him and the statue of Nieniu. And he floated up the air.

"First I have to calm down."

He said to himself. Below him was Hamyuts, running around the desert and shooting her gravel bullets.

The gravel bullets were trivial. The only problem was the poison.

His body could move. His awareness was clear and he could use Magic. It wasn't a quick-acting poison that could take his life instantly. His throat ached and his heart throbbed with strange palpitations. However, he didn't feel like he was about to die.

Besides, Hamyuts attacking him with her sling meant that she couldn't kill him with the poison alone. If so then there should be some countermeasure.

Ruruta had the powers of the tens of thousands of Books he had Eaten thus far. If he mobilized them he would surely find an anti-poison Magic Right. He only needed to ascertain what sort of poison it was.

"...Hu."

Ruruta laughed. At such times one should laugh. By laughing he could retain his composure. If he'd lost that he would act according to Hamyuts's expectations.

Seeing Ruruta laugh, Hamyuts wore an unsettled expression.

"Shall I go outside for now?"

Ruruta looked at the "outside" reflected on the sky. By exiting the Imaginary Entrails, Hamyuts's attacks wouldn't reach him and everything would end. He was a bit anxious about not understanding the poison, but that was the same if he remained inside.

He flew towards the sky. By passing it he would reach the outside world. However, Ruruta was stopped by an unseen force. Rather than being pushed

back, it was more like he felt as if he lost his strength the more he approached the exit.

Ruruta looked down at Hamyuts. Her expression seemed to be telling him he couldn't run away. As long as Hamyuts was inside the Imaginary Entrails there was no escape.

It appeared she possessed that sort of ability.

"Well? Surprised?"

Hamyuts showed her composure. However, he already assumed as much. He obviously wouldn't be able to run away from Makia's assassin so easily.

"...Hey, what's wrong? You've suddenly gone quiet. Come on."

These were cheap provocations. There was no need to respond.

"Should you really ignore me? You'll be killed at this rate."

Ruruta paid her no heed and kept thinking about the poison. At that moment, he noticed that his suffering was fading little by little. He was still nauseous but not to the extent of wanting to vomit. The foreign sense in his body also gradually vanished.

He felt like the balance of his body was being restored.

"...Is that it?"

Was it merely a somewhat special poison that took a little time to negate? If so it was a complete let-down. Makia Dexiart... Hamyuts Meseta... was that all his opponents were capable of?

He still had no idea how she had entered his Imaginary Entrails, but these were small details.

"It's fine, Ruruta. You can be killed."

Hamyuts at his feet looked small. The moment he thought of ignoring her and kill her, she spoke.

"I command you. Absolve all your defenses."

She said while firing a gravel bullet. *No way I'd do that.* The gravel bullet was

vainly repelled and vanished...

Or so it should have been.

"Guh!"

A pain ran through Ruruta's side. A gravel bullet dug below his ribs. His barrier vanished without him noticing.

"We can still keep going, you can't evade it. Please stay there."

Hamyuts's stones began assaulting him from every direction.

He tried turning his body to evade. However, he couldn't move. All bullets hit him squarely. Blood began spurting from his back, stomach and sides.

"Why?!"

There was no way he couldn't evade an attack on that level. And yet he was attacked as if he served for target practice. Although not restrained at all, he couldn't move.

"Hey, I've hit you. What a surprise. You were so cocky I thought I'd failed."

Using his super regeneration ability his wounds were healed instantly. But rather than pain his surprise was much greater.

Hamyuts's consecutive attacks dug into his body. Flesh was ripped and blood scattered. He tried flying upward to leave the gravel bullets' range. His body finally moved.

"Uwah!"

However, something impossible happened again. Although he rose upwards, he then descended a moment later.

This wasn't him merely being unable to evade; he himself went to receive the attack.

Was this due to the poison? If it wasn't a poison meant for killing... just what sort of poison was applied to him? A poison that made him unable to defend? A poison that made him unable to resist commands? He had never heard of such things.

"You bitch!"

He shot a fireball at Hamyuts. It landed completely off the mark. Next he scattered an icy mist approaching absolute zero. However, it vanished before reaching her. Then he tried launching an invisible slashing attack that would cut everything around. Yet this power, which was supposed to cut Hamyuts to shreds, and was above even Shlamuffen in power, did not activate.

"I don't understand, this is, this is..."

Ruruta felt fear for the first time. He couldn't attack. He couldn't defend. He didn't understand any of it. Gravel bullets hailed down on him like rain. He clumsily curled his body and covered his head with both hands. Neither his barrier nor any interception ability was able to work. The gravel bullets all hit him right on mark.

"What's wrong, Ruruta?"

Hamyuts shouted, swinging her sling.

"Are you --- already?"

He couldn't hear the words in the middle due to the impact of a gravel bullet grazing his head.

"What... was that?"

He asked back. Hamyuts shouted in an even louder voice so he could hear her.

"Are you feeling good already?"

"...About what!"

"About getting killed!"

Ruruta then noticed – he was experiencing a strange discomfort since a while ago.

These attacks didn't cause just pain. Aside from it there was also some intoxication he had never felt before.

"C'mon!"

A gravel bullet hit his knee. He felt his bones crack. And another feeling ran

coursed through him along with the pain.

"Next your back!"

A gravel bullet penetrated his back. The impact penetrated his entire body. But why did he not suffer due to it?

"How about this?"

Blood spurt from his head. And yet it felt pleasant to Ruruta.

Yes, the more attacks he was dealt the more pleasure he felt. It was similar to sexual intercourse yet far above it. An abnormal pleasure assaulted him.

Ruruta then noticed – he was panting like a prostitute ever since a while ago every time he received an attack.

"So, doesn't it feel good? It should feel like the best thing ever, Ruruta!"

Was this the effect of the poison? Hamyuts had poured inside him a poison that turned pain into pleasure. Impossible. However, that impossible happened. That poison ate into Ruruta's body.

Further attacks assaulted him. Ruruta was unable to suppress his voice. He wasn't emitting screams but sweeter, strange voices.

"Ahahaha! Nice voice there! You don't have to hold it in! Moan some more!"

Once his defenses were breached they couldn't return to normal. He was unable to stop himself from raising a voice.

"...Impossible, this, impossible, ability..."

Ruruta's mutters mixed in with his sweet shouts.

Gravel bullets dug into his body. He felt enormous pleasure. Since it was so pleasant he couldn't evade it. Since it was so pleasant he didn't want to evade it. Once he received one attack he wanted the next one even more. He wanted even stronger, fatal attacks.

Ruruta screamed.

"As if... such a stupid... ability can exist!!!"

The only response was Hamyuts's shrill laughter. Ruruta could hear Makia

Dexiart's laughter from it as well.

Ruruta kept enduring Hamyuts's attacks for several minutes. Even while the sweet intoxication was dimming his consciousness he desperately searched for the poison's identity.

His power of Book-Eating made every soul his own. Hamyuts's memories were

already inside the Imaginary Entrails. A small point of light was released from Hamyuts's body while she kept flinging gravel bullets. Ruruta sucked it in. He then read a fragment of her life.

"It's called Soul Fusion."

The one to say this was an old man. He was a worn-out old man with gray hair, probably above sixty years old.

Ruruta realized that he was Makia Dexiart.

The place was a dim room in a Magic research facility. Inside it were Makia and one other person.

"...Soul... Fusion?"

The other person responded. She was a young girl. Ruruta saw Makia from that girl's eyes. She was the young Hamyuts.

"What's that?"

Hamyuts said, her voice dyed by confusion. Her voice was very weak and small.

"Explaining it in simple terms, it is the ability to blend your soul with another person's.

You could also say it is the ability to give part of your soul to another person. That is the power I will teach you starting now."

"Okay."

Smiling, Makia kept speaking.

"We were able to analyze the structure of the Passed Stone Blade Yor. And we have also reproduced the Magic of Lascall Othello when he fused with a Librarian Angel.

So I have decided to teach you the same power as Lascall."

"What happens if I use that power?"

Makia continued.

"Fusing your soul means you will become one person. Of course, since you'll be giving Ruruta only part of your soul, you won't completely be the same person.

For example... you love sewing. You will fuse the part of your soul that loves sewing with Ruruta.

If you do that then Ruruta will love sewing as well. You hate celery. If you fuse the part of your soul that hates celery with Ruruta he will hate it as well."

"Is that it?"

"Yes, that is all. You will go inside Ruruta's Imaginary Entrails with your inborn Book-Feeding ability. Next, you will restrain Ruruta with the power to block the exit of the Imaginary Entrails that was already transferred to you.

Finally, you will kiss Ruruta. And you will fuse a part of your soul with Ruruta's.

That is what I am asking you to do."

"...I don't get it, dad. Will that allow me to defeat Ruruta?"

Makia spoke with a smile that was scornful, pitying and bizarre.

"Yes, you will defeat him with that."

"How?"

Ruruta muttered. He could understand the mechanism of Soul Fusion. He now knew how Hamyuts had appeared inside the Imaginary Entrails and why she kissed him.

But how was that enough to beat him? Soul Fusion? Starting to like sewing? Starting to hate celery? Would such a thing really cause this abnormal situation?

Even now the gravel bullets were raining down on him. Every time he received a blow he would raise a voice of pleasure. This wasn't a battle. It was rape.

"Huh? Do you still not get it? You sure are dimwitted."

Hamyuts smiled as if saying she grew tired. Anger welled within him and his body shook with murderous intent. However, he still couldn't move.

What on earth had Makia done to Hamyuts? I am about to kill myself. I am being tempted to do so. How can one accomplish such a thing?

At that moment he suddenly had a flash of inspiration.

"Oh. Have you finally realized?"

He rejoiced at receiving blows. Soul Fusion. Hamyuts Meseta. The various pieces of the puzzle began clicking inside Ruruta's mind.

I fused with Hamyuts. With that degenerate personality of hers.

Ten years before the fight of the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult, Hamyuts had already known that Kachua was scheming a rebellion. However, she purposely didn't speak of it to anyone.

Ruruta heard Hamyuts's words from deep within the underground and perceived her true intentions.

She had two objectives. The first was the Indulging God Cult killing her. And the second was someone exposing her betrayal, leading to the Armed Librarians killing her. *How strange*, thought Ruruta. It was a betrayal that held no benefits for Hamyuts.

In the fight against the Cult ten years later, Hamyuts always threw herself into deadly predicaments.

For example the fight against Cigal. If, at the time, she had fought while running away and waited for Mattalast's rescue, they should have been able to defeat Cigal easily together. However, Hamyuts chose a one-on-one fight.

Or the Monster Zatoh Incident. She undoubtedly expected Enlike to turn into an enemy. She was convinced that he was far stronger than Zatoh.

As well as the battle against Mokkania, Volken's Rebellion, and the final battle, the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion.

It wasn't that Hamyuts was belligerent; she was trying to die in battle. He could think nothing else. And Ruruta was now fused with that Hamyuts.

He realized everything. He now knew about Makia's goal and the poison Hamyuts

administered to him. But while understanding it Ruruta was shocked. Even if he knew what happened he couldn't believe it.

What Hamyuts gave Ruruta was the desire to be killed. Being assaulted, violated and murdered became pleasure, an abnormal desire. Should he call it a Suicidal Wish?

Using her Book-Feeding ability, Hamyuts came inside the Imaginary Entrails. Using Soul Fusion she had poured the poison of Suicidal Wish into Ruruta. Then, she intended on killing Ruruta while he was ensnared by that. That was the method to kill Ruruta that Makia had thought of.

"Im...possible."

He couldn't help but moan. Since he wanted to be killed he couldn't defend. Since he wanted to be finished he couldn't attack. Those who wanted to be defeated, no matter what powers they had, would always lose.

If one made another person want to be defeated, they would be able to defeat their enemy no matter how strong that enemy was.

What an idea. Instead of killing the opponent, they would make them want to be killed.

Such an attack shouldn't even exist. There was no way one could defend against an attack that couldn't exist.

Ruruta had misjudged Makia. He had requested his best and worst opponent to kill him.

Suddenly Hamyuts's attacks stopped. And she spoke to him. She seemed to

understand that he had figured out Makia's plan.

"Say, using your common sense, do you think it could possibly exist? A human like me, I mean."

Hamyuts laughed.

"I mean, I'm completely abnormal right? My desire is to be killed and my pleasure is to be defeated. No way could such a freak exist."

Ruruta didn't understand Hamyuts. He knew that she was abnormal, but thought that she was merely a battle freak that enjoyed the thrill of being between life and death or a pervert that could only derive pleasure from her suffering. However, Hamyuts was not in that domain.

She wished for defeat more than victory, murderous intent pleased her more than love, and she sought death more than life. She was a person whose structure of pleasure was completely reversed from a normal person. No one would make being killed the goal of their entire life. It was impossible on a biological level.

"No way could such a thing exist. No way could a person like me exist."

Then why did she exist? Ruruta had a guess but he couldn't help but ask himself this.

"What did Makia..."

It was only a little bit, but he felt fear.

"What did Makia do to you..."

"Isn't it obvious?"

Hamyuts pointed at her head.

"Makia remodeled me! Both my head and my soul!

Death is my pleasure and defeat is my desire! He remade me into such a being!

Everything just to kill you!"

She pointed her fingertip from her head to Ruruta.

"...You can see my memories too, can't you?"

Hamyuts answered, both hatred and sorrow in her smile.

"Try reading them. Try seeing the day my soul's been remodeled. The day I've been transformed into a monster than takes pleasure in being hurt and in being killed!"

Hamyuts's memories were brought to Ruruta. He vicariously experienced the happenings of that day.

It was Hamyuts Meseta's twelfth spring.

She would soon be taken to the outside world. She would be taken to the place called a zoo, to the place called a department store, to the place called a cinema theater, to the place called a school. She was supposed to have been free once all of that was over. Since she had been promised so, Hamyuts never disobeyed Makia even once.

"...Gah, agiiii!"

Hamyuts was constrained to an iron chair. Her wrists, ankles, knees, elbows, lower abdomen and chest were tied with a leather belt. The tips of her limbs were congested with blood, changing their color to look like a pomegranate.

Her neck and head were affixed more carefully using iron fixtures.

"There are no signs of pleasure yet. Should we continue?"

Said the man standing next to Hamyuts. He pushed heated iron needles underneath Hamyuts's fingernails. Hearing her shrieks, another man spoke.

"No need. Treat her again."

Makia had told Hamyuts once. *I will remodel your soul and plant a Suicidal Wish inside it.* She didn't understand it but nodded. She believed there was no way Makia would do anything bad to her.

"Activating Magic Right. Executing second stage of Soul Surgery."

She couldn't move but was conscious. She also knew what people around her were doing. She could also see the operating table in front of her.

It was part of her cranium. They cut open a hemisphere in a horizontal line above her eyelids.

Hamyuts was absolutely frightened. That thing there was her, with her cranium broken and her brain exposed.

No way could she live through something like that. A Magic tool she had never seen before was inserted into her brain. Yet she still lived.

"Yeah... Chacoly remembers it since you've done it to her as well, but seeing it from the side really makes her feel sick."

Said Chacoly, standing nearby. She was watching Hamyuts going through such a thing while smiling.

"Magic Right properly carried out. Survival instincts were removed and transformed to Suicidal Wish."

The Magicians surrounding her continued reciting horrifying terms.

Hamyuts was scared. She wanted to lose her consciousness. She wanted to lose her mind. She could do nothing in this crazy situation but go crazy.

"It's useless Hammy. How annoying. Soul Sharing. Chacoly rejects Hammy losing her mind."

However, Chacoly blocked her from going insane.

Blood trickled from the cut surface of her cranium and entered her eye. Her vision was dyed by red. Tears mixed with blood and the taste of salt and iron entered her mouth. In her extreme fear she broke her teeth biting the gag in her mouth. She soiled herself and coughed at the smell.

Someone's Magic shook Hamyuts's soul to the core and destroyed it. Her eyeballs rolled back and she saw the back of her eyelids.

"What a pity... and after Hammy was such a gentle older sister. But now she's gone."

Even Hamyuts was able to realize it intuitively: she was no longer herself.

Every time they tampered with her brain using Magic she was dying. She was being transformed into someone she didn't know. It was more horrifying than anything.

"The future Hammy will be nothing but a monster."

"Chacol, stop!"

"But it's true right? Finding pleasure in being killed is weird. A monster.

Well, being a monster is fine though. Hammy's just a tool after all."

And thus Hamyuts Meseta was born. It was the birth of a tool that existed only to plant the Suicidal Wish inside of Ruruta.

And now that tool was attempting to accomplish her long-cherished desire.

"...You're not... human..."

Such words naturally came out of Ruruta's mouth. It was usually said by anyone who faced him instead of the other way around, though.

"Yeah. I'm not human, I'm a tool."

Ruruta was the one to tell Makia to kill him. He had also told him to use all of his efforts. However, he never told him to go that far. He never thought he would go this far.

"Good for you, Ruruta. You're finally going to die. Isn't that what you wanted?!"

"No! I just lost myself! It was a mere mistake! As if I'd die here!"

Ruruta shouted. Hamyuts laughed.

"No, you will die. And here."

Ruruta knew – he had no way to repel her Soul Fusion.

No matter how much he shook with anger, Ruruta's body sought death.

Hamyuts Meseta. Born in 1895. Her place of birth was the Ismo Republic.

She knew neither the names of her parents nor her real name. This was because she had been kidnapped by Makia not long after having been born. If Makia weren't there what life would she have led? She couldn't even imagine.

She was kidnapped for one reason – because of her inborn Book-Feeding ability.

Using his Predictive ability and data collected from Magic research, Makia was able to find a Book-Feeder. Hamyuts hated her ability for her entire life.

Hamyuts was raised in the research facility hidden in the desert. She had no inconveniences in life. Excluding freedom, Hamyuts was given everything.

She knew that Makia wasn't her real father and that she had been kidnapped. However, she didn't hate him. Because he was plenty nice to her. Hamyuts didn't have the courage to hate her one and only guardian.

At the time Hamyuts was a docile, timid girl. She had a good and gentle heart. She was always submissive to the adults. Even with her one and only little sister Chacoly, while she thought of her as weird she cherished her.

Her hobby was sewing, especially embroideries, and she also liked reading and jigsaw puzzles.

She was being raised to kill Ruruta Coozancoona. Even when she knew of it she

didn't hate Makia. She wondered if that was really necessary but convinced herself it was so. At the time she heard nothing about remodeling her soul or about the Suicidal Wish.

She started her Magic Deliberation when she was eight.

Even Makia had not foreseen this, but she possessed a unique talent for Magic. It was fortunate for Makia, but was it fortunate or unfortunate for her?

She was able to acquire a Magic Right that should have taken her until the end of her teens when she was only twelve. And thus approached the fateful day of her soul surgery.

Creating a human that finds being killed the ultimate pleasure... this was originally impossible. Makia and his subordinates sweated blood in order to allow her to keep her sanity. Hamyuts spent hellish days in order to not lose her mind.

She shouted for them to kill her countless times. But there was no one to make her wish come true. She also tried committing suicide. However, they couldn't let her die while she was incomplete as a tool. She was a tool meant only for killing Ruruta. She couldn't put up with herself. She swore at all people she saw and exercised violence.

She only obtained mental stability two years after the operation. In two years the gentle and nice Hamyuts was gone for all eternity. The new Hamyuts was called a monster by Hamyuts herself, a tool by Chacoly, and Chacoly's spare by Makia. Which of them was true?

There was no one to treat Hamyuts Meseta as a person.

She hated everything.

She hated Makia, his subordinates, Chacoly, Ruruta, and her fate. She lived only to die, to induce a mutual kill with Ruruta. She hated herself and every single person that created her.

She lived to hate and preserved her sanity to hate. If she couldn't keep sane she wouldn't be able to kill them. Hamyuts was born to die and lived to kill.

When she was fourteen Hamyuts annihilated Makia and his subordinates, becoming free. She declared an eternal farewell from Chacoly and vowed they would never meet again.

After parting with everything she lost her way. What should she live for from now on?

Since she had received large amounts of cash from Makia she should be able to live easily for a while. Hamyuts spent her days wandering for a while.

Hamyuts hated Ruruta. She wished to kill him. He was the final target of her revenge.

In order to kill Ruruta Hamyuts needed to be killed. Her Suicidal Wish would only be first completed with her death. She had to fuse the joy and pleasure she'd feel at the moment of being killed with Ruruta.

A death full of joy and pleasure. She sought that for her revenge on Ruruta.

At the same time she hated Makia.

Hamyuts decided to die in vain. That would be denying Makia's whole life. That was the best revenge she could enact against him as he was already dead.

And the starting point in the first place was Ruruta having requested Makia to kill him.

By not killing Ruruta she would also take revenge on him.

She would live as an ordinary girl. That would also be a kind of revenge.

Both living and dying served as revenge. She had two methods to accomplish a single goal. After worrying, Hamyuts chose to continue living as her form of revenge.

Hamyuts started working as a seamstress in some town's tailor shop. That was her revenge on Makia. She thought that she would simply keep on living peacefully like this. That was what Chacoly had predicted when they separated.

However, even as she lived peacefully, her remodeled mind, her soul that wished to be killed tormented her. She couldn't stand the boring days. Her heart throbbed in want of hostility, of killing intent, of despair. Because of that Hamyuts left her boarding house one day and headed to a street in the underworld.

Fools that killed people for small money or freaks that killed people for their pleasure... Wanting to meet these kinds of people, Hamyuts walked in the street all by herself.

However, she was not killed and kept on living.

"...You're useless."

Hamyuts said. A man rolled in the street at some dark back alley. A big knife fell near him.

"You're too weak. Being killed by someone like you... would be no different from suicide."

The man's left leg was broken and his right hand was smashed. His throat was being crushed. Hamyuts trampled on his stomach and he made no move. He had been trying to kill Hamyuts and take her money. She didn't care if his goal was her money or homicide.

"You had no actual will to kill me. By only having a flimsy desire you can't put everything at stake and try to kill me. There's no violence that will make me despair.

You're a simple weakling who can only kill defenseless girls.

No way would I feel good by letting someone like that kill me."

Hamyuts said while looking down at the man.

"It's also no good at all. Being killed wouldn't serve as revenge. If I were killed that would make him happy."

Several contradictory feelings swirled inside Hamyuts's mind.

There was the heart that sought murder and defeat.

In conflict with that was her desire for revenge against Makia. She couldn't let herself die like he wanted her to.

And separately from that she sought a splendid death for herself.

She wanted pure killing intent. She wanted an overwhelming violence. She wanted the perfect despair. At the end of despair, murderous intent and violence awaited the satisfying death she sought.

"So, do you understand my feelings?"

"...Hii... hii..."

The killer who had tried to kill Hamyuts desperately moved his neck vertically. He had no other method with which to beg for his life.

"No way you'd get it, idiot."

Hamyuts's shoe crushed the man's windpipe.

"Even I myself don't know what I'm trying to do, after all."

Her will to die and her will to live existed concurrently. She had always been full of contradictions and inconsistencies.

Hamyuts gradually realized – she could never hope to live as the average person.

She had gained something alike to friends. Like seamstresses working for the same firm or girls around her age living in town. However, even if on the surface it seemed like they were getting along, in the end she was always estranged. It wasn't their fault.

They could probably feel how different she on their skin.

She couldn't ever keep up with their conversation topics. Hamyuts had no interest in friendship, fashion or gossip. Her heart was always full of revenge for Makia, for Ruruta, and her desire to be killed.

There was always a thin film separating Hamyuts and everyone else. Even though she was so nearby, she could never overcome and sever it.

Every time she felt lonely she would head out to wander the darkness and seek her death.

Every time killers or criminals targeted her, she felt that her loneliness was healed.

They were trying to kill her. They were the only ones to do what she wanted. They were the only ones to respond to her pleas for death.

Every time murderous intent was aimed at her she was exhilarated.

She turned the tables back at them and returned home. At that time, a sudden light would flare up in the darkness and a friendly chat would drift into her ears. Lovers, couples, family and friends. Every time she heard such exchanges she would cover her ears and leave the spot.

She couldn't love anyone nor be loved. Seeking murderous intent, seeking

battles, was no more than compensation for her inability to get love.

Hamyuts admired the completely normal person. She admired anyone and everyone

reflected in her eyes. No matter how much she pretended to be an ordinary person, she wasn't able to achieve her aspiration.

Hamyuts also longed for Chacoly. She lived without any worries and without longing for a normal life, living as just a tool. If she were able to turn like Chacoly it would probably be much easier.

However, Hamyuts was Hamyuts. She couldn't be anyone else. Unable to be neither a tool nor an ordinary person, she kept on wandering and living.

After a year, a rumor about the serial killer in the back alleys spread with people. The Books of people Hamyuts had killed should have also started being excavated.

Having the town's sheriff be contacted by Bantorra Library was just a matter of time.

Setting out again was unavoidable.

Having no destination or any goal, Hamyuts roamed the world. She worked as a

seamstress in various towns and when she lost her place she would set out again.

Repeating this again and again, she was finally seventeen years old.

One day her legs carried her to Past God Bantorra Island. In a certain port town she learned there was tailor work in Bantorra's town and took the airship there.

Even Hamyuts herself couldn't really explain why she headed to Past God Island. It was true she looked for work as a seamstress, and certainly she found this job offer by chance.

However, she might have purposely headed there because she held certain

expectations. The strongest battle group known as the Armed Librarians, led by the tenacious and sincere Photona, the tyrant lady Ireia, and child prodigy Mattalast...

although Hamyuts wasn't interested in most of the world she heard about them. The overwhelming violence that Hamyuts's Suicidal Wish aimed for was located there.

If she challenged them to a fight and was killed she would surely feel great. All that remained afterward would be fighting Ruruta. Losing and dying, or else tying and dying, which would it be? She didn't mind either. She was Chacoly's spare anyway.

While hesitating whether to fight Ruruta or to keep living, Hamyuts once again spent peaceful days.

She eventually got tired. Revenge and hatred exhausted humans. Even Hamyuts was not an exception. What was she hesitating for? Her life was only meant for her to be killed by someone anyway. She was merely Chacoly's spare.

Every time she'd see Ireia or Mattalast in the town the temptation of death would confuse her. Then, invited by her colleagues to a tavern, she met Mattalast there.

I will be killed by this man and die, Hamyuts had an intuition. *I like that he's strong and good-looking, but I wish he'd be a bit smarter*, she thought while looking at him.

She drew Mattalast's attention with meaningless talk. And then she attacked.

The encounter of that day sent her destiny into a stranger direction.

"...What are you planning, bringing me to a place like this?"

Said Hamyuts. She was inside a room of a luxurious apartment downtown. Mattalast had told her that he possessed several hideouts like this.

"I've already told you. I'm going to make you mine."

Hamyuts narrowed her eyes. At that time she thought that perhaps he was going to kill her. Everyone other than Hamyuts would be able to understand it

wasn't true, thought.

"But do we really have to do it here?"

"...Is that too bold for you? Or do you not understand even more than I thought?"

When Mattalast lightly touched Hamyuts's shoulder, she tumbled down on the sofa.

"That's not true. It seems that you truly want to die. And yet you don't seem to be suicidal. What's up with you?"

"...You'll understand if you kill me and turn me into a Book."

"If I do that where's the fun in that? I find that boring."

Saying this, Mattalast sat next to Hamyuts.



"Stuff that makes you think 'what's that supposed to be?' is art. I wonder who said that... But I think that line should be used for romance rather than art.

Any girl that makes me think 'what's up with her?' is the best. What do you think, Hamyuts?"

"I didn't understand what you said from start to finish."

Mattalast smiled.

"I'll say it more simply. I've fallen in love with you."

"I don't get it as well."

"So I'll make it even simpler."

Saying this, Mattalast pressed his lips with Hamyuts's.

"...Do you now get it?"

It seemed that Mattalast assumed for her to say that she did. Or perhaps he expected her to avert her gaze as if saying she didn't. But Hamyuts widened her eyes and shook her head to the side.

"...I don't."

Hamyuts was surprisingly ignorant at the time. She had no knowledge about love before experiencing it. She didn't know the differences between men and women. She thought that kissing was only used for Soul Fusion.

Mattalast rose up. He held his head and paced around the room.

"...I see. So I'll think about how to make you understand."

"What should I understand?"

"...Even I have no idea anymore."

Eventually that night Mattalast managed to persuade Hamyuts. He told her later that he never thought that he would need to give a girl sex education in order to woo her.

They would often recall the weird questions that rose during that night and turn them to conversation topics. What that happened Hamyuts's face would turn bright red and Mattalast would laugh.

Makia Dexiart couldn't have possibly expected that Hamyuts would fall in love.

Neither his subordinates nor Chacoly would have thought of it. Mattalast Ballory was an idiot beyond their calculations. If not, he wouldn't have made a move on her, or once he did, he would have abandoned it.

Regardless of how it happened, that day Hamyuts made love to Mattalast. Although she was supposed to have been living only to seek killing, although she was born to live as a tool, although she had given up on any other life, he

twisted and overturned her and was able to get her.

He could only be said to be an extraordinary man.

Invited by Mattalast, Hamyuts set foot inside Bantorra Library. Beyond her expectations she spent a lot of time there. Although she hadn't the slightest intention of becoming an Armed Librarian, she herself felt that she fit the job well. And she never thought that she would reach all the way to the position of the Acting Director.

But what have the days she spent at Bantorra Library brought forth?

Her love with Mattalast eventually collapsed. She wouldn't reveal the truth about herself and Mattalast found it unsatisfactory. Not revealing her true self meant they couldn't build a fundamental relationship of mutual trust. This unfilled rupture separated their hearts.

No matter how much she loved him, no matter how much she wanted to love,

Hamyuts found being killed much more attractive. Hamyuts sought to be killed more than a married lifestyle.

They broke up three times and reconciled twice. Finally, they settled at a half-assed relationship where they weren't alone but also weren't together.

An ordinary love was fundamentally impossible for her.

Pouring her life into her job with the duty as an Armed Librarian in her heart... perhaps that road also existed.

But Hamyuts knew the truth about Bantorra Library in the first place. For her it was only a place full of deceit and farces. Never mind being told that protecting Books was their duty, she couldn't feel any loyalty.

Working together and living for her fighting comrades... that was also impossible for her.

The Armed Librarians lived their days in battle,

The Armed Librarians lived their days in battle, in the boundary of life and

death.

They were closer to Hamyuts than ordinary people. However, as Hamyuts wished for the very thing known as death, and they readied their resolve in acceptance of death, they were eventually unable to understand each other. Even inside Bantorra Library Hamyuts was abnormal. The thin film always stayed between Hamyuts and her surroundings.

She never thought of them as her comrades from the bottom of her heart even once.

When trainees were promoted to Armed Librarians a great ceremony would be held.

And there the Acting Director would preach their new comrades about their readiness.

Hamyuts had heard it from Photona and even she herself preached to many of her subordinates. Hamyuts remembered a few parts from that speech.

"From the day we receive the name of an Armed Librarian we shall be bound by bonds that will never be severed. Our souls will, from this day forth, become one.

No matter where we live or where we die, our souls shall be one forevermore!"

What a laughingstock, thought Hamyuts. The one who's speaking it never once believed it. The only thing the Library's given me is loneliness.

In the end nothing changed. She kept being lonely just like when she was when

working as a seamstress.

Also, her days as an Armed Librarian didn't give her the death at the end of mortal combat and despair.

Hamyuts became far too strong. She obtained her Sensory Threads, polished

her stone throwing and bodily reinforcement Magic, eventually becoming known as the strongest in the world. If she were weaker she would have been probably been killed.

Certainly Hamyuts had been cornered several times during the mortal combat against the Indulging God Cult. However, she was only cornered.

If she wanted to die then betraying and joining the Indulging God Cult so she could fight the Armed Librarians would be much better. Hamyuts was the one to realize the Armed Librarians' powers the most. Although they preserved more than half of their fighting power including Yukizona, Bonbo and Ireia, they still overwhelmed the Cult.

She was convinced that if they put forth their entire strength from the very beginning they would have won without it even reaching the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion.

Even if Hamyuts betrayed them the advantageous position of the Armed Librarians shouldn't change. Yukizona would have become a far superior commander to her.

They've also been blessed with Mattalast, Ireia, Bonbo, Yuri and other supporters.

And, besides the time fighting the Cult, it was a boring time with not even a premonition of death.

The Armed Librarians gave her neither life as a human nor death as a tool.

If so, then were these decades meaningless for her?

I believe not, thought Hamyuts.

Photona Bardgamon once said to her. It was a short time before he lost to Mattalast.

"You are an extremely abnormal person. I can understand that. Even in light of that, I believe that you are the most suitable person for me to pass my seat to. Although abnormal, you are a good Armed Librarian. I cannot say this well, but... please take care of everyone."

Photona had believed in Hamyuts and entrusted everything to her. He believed in her even as she was.

Ireia Kitty once said to her. Hamyuts had once challenged her when she was a trainee.

Grabbing the head of the defeated Hamyuts and raising her high, she spoke while bringing her face close.

"You want to be killed? That is not funny, Hamyuts. With that logic you should prostrate yourself and beg me to kill you, right? But even so I will not kill you.

This is an order: live. Live and continue fighting. I will not forgive you disobeying me.

Going against the command of this great Ireia Kitty is unforgivable."

Ireia was the only person to make Hamyuts feel awe. Pushed by her overwhelming spirit, she was the only person she was unable to defy.

Vizac Ziglass once said. It was immediately after Hamyuts had assumed office.

"Who would've thought you lass would become Acting Director. What has the world come to.

Well, nothing to do about it though. Keep working until you grow up into an adult.

Make me retire soon, Hamyuts Meseta."

He had always been a nagging, troublesome leader. However, Hamyuts was thankful to see him not retire.

Volken Macmani once said. It was when he was still a young boy.

"Miss Hamyuts. I will definitely end up surpassing you. Until then please keep being the wall I must surpass. I will take over the seat of the Director from you."

Due to both of their betrayals these words didn't come true. However, since he was showing her an adult face despite the fact that his voice had yet to change, she found him cute.

Minth Chezine once said. It was the day when he was captured as a bandit and taken to become an Armed Librarian.

"You're nuts. There's no other woman as crazy as you.

I see, so that's why you need someone with common sense like me. You want this Minth Chezine to serve as your safety device.

...If someone like you is left unchecked who knows what might happen."

Minth could always be said to have had a hostile relationship with her. Yet, as he had a kind heart he always fulfilled his role. No matter how many times they had clashed, he was her most dependable subordinate.

Yuri Hamlow once said. It was when Yukizona had been designated to become the

next Acting Director.

"Director. Unfortunately, my brother seems to feel uncomfortable about you.

However, I ask you to not be too angry at him. He is simply somewhat overly serious.

He still has a lot to learn from you. Because he still has to become a bit more of a villain."

A somewhat overly serious older brother and his somewhat overly wicked little sister.

Looking from the side they would appear to be an amusing pair. And it was her

biggest pleasure as the head of the organization to raise good successors.

Mirepoc Finedell once said. It was when Hamyuts had received grievous injuries after the battle in Toatt Mining Town.

"Director! Stop that! Why are you trying to die! Do you realize what would happen if you die?! Please think about other people a little!

...Please don't fool around at such a time! It's not like I was crying or anything!"

Although Hamyuts thought of dying she had shouted at her not to die. That attitude was painful. At times she felt guilt for using such a good girl.

Noloty Malche once said. It happened right after she had saved Enlike.

"Thank you, Director. I was able to save Enlike-san thanks to you.

...It seems that a lot has happened, but thank you very much."

She had only used Noloty. Noloty also realized that, and yet she frankly thanked Hamyuts. She was shocked by her kindness and goodness.

Also, Mattalast said many things.

At times as her lover, at times as her ex. At times as her senior or junior, at times as her superior and her subordinate, at times as an accomplice to protect the secrets of the world, he had told Hamyuts countless words.

The pair has created far too many memories to recall.

Did I really have such good subordinates? And was I a good superior? Hamyuts wondered.

She didn't think so. When she dies everyone would probably smile happily. For her selfishness, the desire of being killed, Hamyuts committed several bad deeds.

The thin film separating Hamyuts and everyone else was never demolished.

And yet they have called her their comrade. Although she was merely a tool meant to kill Ruruta, they have treated her as human, as their comrade.

If it was them perhaps she could have connected to them. It made her dream that.

No matter how twisted she was, how crazy she was, how broken she was.

Even though she was chock-full of contradictions and inconsistencies.

Hamyuts loved the Armed Librarians in her own way.

She didn't mind being a tool for killing Ruruta if it was for them. She loved them enough to think that.

Ruruta was running with Hamyuts chasing him. While running with her full speed she launched gravel bullets at Ruruta as he fluttered around like a drunk

butterfly.

When he thought of evading he would be hit and when he thought of stopping in place he would run away. As Ruruta was afflicted by the pleasure of sweet death his actions had no consistency. His desire to lose and not to lose coexisted, making him repeat his mismatched movements.

I wonder if I also look like that to my enemies, wondered Hamyuts.

"...Oh, wah! ...Oh! Curses! Hamyuts!"

The gravel bullets destroyed his vitals many times. They gouged out his heart, shot through his head, and snapped his neck broken. However, his death was prevented by his overwhelming defensive powers as well as super regenerative ability.

But it was enough. Continuously receiving damage, Ruruta would definitely fold in before long. Hamyuts's power was effective. The well-refined power of her sling was plenty enough to kill him.

Hamyuts shook with delight. She could defeat him. There was meaning to her life, to her existence, to the days she had spent as an Armed Librarian.

A single bullet hit Ruruta's temporal region directly. Losing his balance, he headed down in a tailspin and crashed on the sand. Anticipating this and leaping ahead, Hamyuts fired a gravel bullet overhead.

A cloud of sand rose along with the moans of pleasure. Along with them fresh blood was scattered around and slices of meat were blown away. Even torn-off limbs were mixed in that. They dried out immediately and became part of the Imaginary Entrails'

sand. Hamyuts probed inside the cloud using her Sensory Threads. Ruruta was inside in the form of nothing more than a mangled corpse.

"Not... yet, as if I'd die... at such, at such a place!"

As expected of Ruruta. Even that was not enough to fully kill him. As if mocking his vitality, Hamyuts landed on top of his chest. A voice of breaking bones and ripping meat echoed.

"No, you will die. Right here."

She carefully destroyed Ruruta, mercilessly pounding him with her show soles. *I'll turn you into a piece of meat that makes one puke at a glance.* Thinking so, Hamyuts stepped on him.

"I won't die... for, for Nieniu!"

The ensuing explosion was Ruruta's desperate resistance. Hamyuts retreated and Ruruta tried running away while recovering his body. The battle – no, the one-sided massacre – only started.

At that time, Colio Tonies was desperately running around the desert. From behind him came the sounds of the pair fighting. It was the fight of the strongest man in the world against the warrior second to him. Colio would die instantly if he were involved in that. He could only run away.

A pain ran through his back. It received a heavy blow when he had been thrown by Hamyuts. Since he was thrown downhill a sand dune and rolled hard on the sand he couldn't move well.

After running for a while, Colio dropped to the ground, breathing heavily. Coming this far was probably fine.

Looking back, he could see the theater. Although he thought that he ran for a while, it wasn't much of a distance.

He could faintly see figures in the sky. They were probably Ruruta flying around like a bird and Hamyuts leaping about.

"..."

Colio thought back to what happened a while ago. His talk with Ruruta, Hamyuts's appearance, and everything that happened since he was thrown away.

Hamyuts was a Ruruta assassin produced by Makia. He had no idea how she had

entered his Imaginary Entrails or how she planned on killing him, though.

Which of them will win? As far as Colio could see Hamyuts's victory was assured.

Hamyuts was triumphing and Ruruta was suffering in agony.

Ruruta was going to die. There wasn't anything wrong with that. The destruction of the world would be avoided and the one to make people suffer would be gone. He should obviously die.

"...Right, die. Die, Ruruta."

Colio muttered. Yet, the words he had spoken with Ruruta rose to the back of his mind.

'I wanted to meet you. Is that not enough?'

'You and I are the same. Only our positions are different.'

'I want you to understand my feelings. You should be able to. You're the only one who can.'

He was confused by his own feelings. Ruruta should die. Hamyuts had to win. There was nothing to doubt about that.

And yet, when he thought of Ruruta about to die, he felt terrible.

When he had met him he felt nothing but fear. In the end he was almost killed. And yet Colio wanted to see Ruruta again.

"...Shit!"

He couldn't get it. Why was his chest aching so much?

Listening to the sounds of battle coming from afar, Colio held his head alone.

Chapter 2: Punishment of the Inhuman Demon Lord

How many times was she convinced that she had killed Ruruta so far?
Hamyuts

already stopped counting. She pierced his heart and smashed his head. Even so Ruruta still stood up. His super regenerative ability couldn't keep up so his whole body was covered in blood. His consciousness was dimming due to the pleasure of sweet death.

Yet even that wasn't enough to finish him off.

An hour passed since the battle began.

"Uoohhh!"

He pointed a broken index finger to Hamyuts. He shot lightning that was much

beyond what Enlike could produce. Hamyuts didn't move. The lightning strike merely wound up dust in vain.

"Why, why can't I hit?!"

Ruruta also attempted a counterattack. Seeing him repeat attacks that couldn't hit at all was truly comical. Hamyuts scorned him.

The Suicidal Wish already fully controlled his heart. No matter how much he wanted to win, no matter how much he couldn't allow himself to die, he

unconsciously aimed for defeat.

If Hamyuts were to die no person who can kill Ruruta would be left. So Ruruta couldn't ever kill Hamyuts. Hamyuts who possessed the Suicidal Wish realized this.

She knew how much the despair of having no one to kill her was scary.

"You obviously won't hit me, Rurutaa."

"...Guh..."

"Because you're the one who doesn't want to hit me!"

While getting hit by gravel bullets, Ruruta grabbed his right wrist with his left hand.

Even Hamyuts could tell he was concentrating all of his magic power there.

"Oooooh!!!"

He activated several powers at the same time. A storm was created around his right hand, white-hot flames were created in the eye of the storm, and he even gathered a slashing attack made of vacuum. Extraordinary power dwelt in his hand.

"Hamyuts! I will end this!"

He brought his arm overhead. The slashing, scorching storm wrapped 100 meters around Hamyuts. No human could possibly defend against that. Not even cinders would remain of her.

But even that was only assuming it would hit.

"...Huhuhu."

Hamyuts laughed. The only thing that reached her was a hot wind that could lightly burn hair. The storm blew while neatly evading only her body.

"Ahahahahaha! Stop it Ruruta! Are you trying to kill me of laughter? I can't take it anymore! I'll die of laughter!"

"You bitch... you bitch... If I hit you just once..."

Even while she forgot to wield her sling due to laughing so hard Ruruta could

only look at her while grinding his teeth.

"Won't you die already? Surely you realize you can't do anything?"

Hamyuts spoke while dropping her shoulders. Ruruta also stopped moving so the

battle was temporarily suspended.

"Why are you so eager to embarrass yourself? People who'll read your Book will laugh their asses off at about this point. You, the demon lord who owns the world, the great hero who crushed even the Gods... Wouldn't you like for that title to die without shame?"

"Shut up."

"You want to die right? You're itching for it, right? Please be honest with yourself.

Dying feels really, reeeally good."

"So what!"

Ruruta shot a desperate lightning attack. The battle resumed.

He tried escaping to the skies while shooting attacks. Although he knew it was impossible, he probably tried leaving the Imaginary Entrails.

But it was already foreseen. The groundwork has already been laid. Hamyuts shot gravel bullets at him as if attacking from straight above. The ascending Ruruta was knocked down by the rain of rocks.

Estimating the point he would fall off, she followed with another attack. Coming from right and left at the same time she struck his ears. Next she struck both of his heels.

Hamyuts was running. Since Ruruta's ears were shot he lost his sense of balance. He couldn't fly. Since his heels were broken he couldn't run either.

"Gotcha!"

Ruruta used both hands to leap and tried running. But Hamyuts was slightly faster.

She extended her sling to its limits and wrapped it around Ruruta's neck.

Swinging his tied body around, she hit it on the sand, lifted it again and slammed it down again. After his bones were broken she shortened the string and dragged him to her.

Then, applying every bit of her powers she fastened it around his neck. She wasn't trying to suffocate him; she was going to lop his head off. Ruruta gripped the string with his broken arms and tried to loosen it.

There was a great difference in their arm strength. However, when taking into account Hamyuts's full strength and Ruruta's while being afflicted by the Suicidal Wish, Hamyuts had the advantage.

The string dug into Ruruta's neck along with a creaking sound. His trachea was broken and air leaked out of his throat as if he was a whistle.

Hamyuts lifted Ruruta's body. She peeked into his face that was covered in blood and could be seen down to the bones. Small traces of resistance remained in his ecstatic expression.

"Hey, Ruruta. I don't hate you as much as I have before. It's because I've read Chacoly's Book. So I know about Nieniu-chan."

She couldn't tell if he heard her or not. Yet Hamyuts spoke calmly as if remonstrating him.

"You were splendid. It hurt but it moved me. I even respect you. But die. Die because of that. That's the best thing for you."

Ruruta's breathing ceased. She could feel his trachea severed with her hands. All that was left were the bones of his neck.

"If you die no one will hate you. Although you have fallen to the path of evil, everyone will think of you as a great man. Although everything you did was in vain, they will extol your love as beautiful."

Hamyuts cornered Ruruta with gentle words and cruel chocking. Strength left Ruruta's hand holding the string.

"...Please die, Ruruta. That's the best both for you and for other people."

Poor Ruruta. Wounded, exhausted Ruruta. Hamyuts hated and pitied him. These

should be enough words to break his heart.

"You can just relax now."

Ruruta's hand dropped. Hamyuts thought he stopped breathing. However, the next instant his lips moved. No voice came out, but she could read his lips.

But what about Nieniu?

"Uh!"

Hamyuts instantly unraveled her sling and leapt back. It wasn't an action made by her reason, but perhaps due to her instincts or warrior's intuition. The next instant, countless needles stabbed the spot she stood at.

The moment she landed, she began running to the left in full speed. A lightning attack stabbed the sand, its impact sending sparks that singed Hamyuts's pants.

If she hadn't immediately gained some distance she would have gotten hit. Even though it was impossible for him to hit her.

Ruruta was collapsed on the sand, vomiting blood. However, eyes full of anger stared at her. His super regeneration ability quickly recovered his throat.

"I wanted to give up... only once."

Ruruta said, holding his throat.

"But then I remembered. I recalled what I've been fighting for and what's the most precious to me."

Ruruta stood up slowly. The pressure squeezed at Hamyuts's heart.

"I don't need any pleasure. I can't be allowed an easy death."

Sparks scattered from Ruruta's body. He howled while spraying blood around.

"I can endure it! As long as it's for Nieniu!"

Hamyuts couldn't fully defend against the next lightning strike. It was now her turn to scream.

Their positions were reversed. Now it was Hamyuts running away from the indiscriminate attacks. If Ruruta was in his normal condition she would've

died instantly.

Hamyuts also struck back. However, although she hit him with several gravel bullets he raised no moans of pleasure. He survived even the pleasure that exceeded human knowledge.

"Die! Just die!"

"...What a monster... you as well."

Hamyuts muttered. She had again misjudged Ruruta.

He was a struggler. He was someone who would desperately keep on fighting even while crawling on the sand, vomiting blood, and being crushed by despair and agony.

This was Ruruta's real hidden strength. The power of the great hero who had once saved the world.

"Uwah!"

She tried to evade an invisible slashing attack by lying on the ground. But the attack she couldn't fully evade deeply cut her left arm.

"Be ruined, go to hell, die, begone from this world, begone from my sight!"

As Hamyuts rolled on sand to escape, Ruruta's face entered her vision once. For some reason it appeared to her that he was crying.

She could do nothing but run in front of his overwhelming attacks. Even Mokkania's ants or the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion were nothing compared to this. Fighting while running away was Hamyuts's invincible style, but even she didn't have to leisure to attack back for an instant now.

Furthermore Ruruta wasn't even able to display 10% of his former power.

Yet she didn't despair. No way she would. The Imaginary Entrails were the world of souls. The power of the soul was the power of the mind. When her heart breaks her defeat would come.

Hamyuts believed – since Ruruta had hidden strength, so did she. The result has not yet been determined. The shockwave of the lightning scorched her

back. Fire singed her skin and the storm cut through her body. Yet she was able to avoid any lethal injury.

"...So stubborn!"

Ruruta shouted.

"You too!"

Hamyuts yelled back. She evaded needles that came out of the ground, shaving the flesh of her sides.

She unleashed Sensory Threads from her entire body. She spread them to cover the entire desert and surveyed the surroundings. Something was sure to happen. She wanted to not miss that omen.

However, no person appeared in the desert and Ruruta's ferocious attacks never ceased. The Sensory Threads drifted in vain. Pushed back from the shockwave of an explosion, she fell atop the sand.

At that moment, Hamyuts grinned.

She evaded a vacuum slash that tried mowing her down by leaping on all fours. At the same time she flung her sling. The gravel bullet hit not Ruruta but the sand.

Hamyuts heard Ruruta mutter through the sand cloud with her Sensory Threads.

"...A smokescreen?"

Wrong, thought Hamyuts. She further struck several dozen gravel bullets into the sand.

Dust rose from here and there in the desert.

"Or are you trying to destroy the Imaginary Entrails themselves?"

That's impossible, retorted Hamyuts in her heart. Ruruta couldn't even imagine it.

Even Hamyuts herself was surprised.

"You bitch, what're you trying to...?!"

Hamyuts was thinking while lowering her body. *You will soon realize.*

You see...

The next moment, Hamyuts could hear a heavy metallic sound. A moment later came Ruruta's shocked voice and then a scream of agony. His attack stopped. He readied his defenses in order to prepare against an unknown enemy and surveyed the situation.

The sand clouds that lowered visibility gradually vanished. She could now see a huge needle protruding in the desert. The one pierced by it was Ruruta.

And a single girl stood next to Hamyuts.

"...Who're you?"

Hamyuts didn't know the girl. She was barefoot and wore a crude headpiece made of cloth.

"Have you forgotten me, Ruruta?"

The girl swung the fingers of both hands.

"Have you forgotten the power of one of the Books you've Eaten, of Miena Yammo?!"

Hundreds of giant needles protruded from the sand. They all aimed for Ruruta. It was an unforgettable power for Hamyuts. It was the ability Ruruta had used to rob her life earlier.

Escaping from the giant needles, Ruruta employed his barrier, twisting the projecting needles. He was confused. He was now being attacked by the power he had used before.

"How can you..."

Before he finished talking another attack came from a different direction. A vacuum blade raging like a storm aimed at him. That was also a power Ruruta had used just now to torment Hamyuts. Next came a fire attack, an ice attack and an aerial slicing.

Attacks aiming for Ruruta were shot from here and there in the desert.

The standing cloud of sand cleared up. Several dozens of human figures

appeared.

They were people of ancient times, many of them wearing crude headpieces made of cloth and bronze armor. Knights from the middle ages wearing shining silver armor and Armed Librarians clad in brown cassocks could also be seen.

"Hamyuts, you bitch, did you bring them back?!"

They were the warriors that Ruruta had Eaten so far. The ones who should have been digested in the Imaginary Entrails and become a part of the desert. They all uniformly glared at Ruruta. They all pointed their swords, spears, and fingers unleashing powerful Magic at him.

"...Why do you have such a power?"

"You're wrong, Ruruta."

Hamyuts said, holding the wound at her side.

"You're the one who's brought them back."

Ruruta hadn't negated the poison of Suicidal Wish. He had simply forgotten about it due to anger. It was obviously still controlling his soul.

Hamyuts's power could no longer kill him. Therefore, Ruruta's consciousness searched for someone who could. The warriors he had once Eaten, the warriors who hated him... he had revived them all by himself.

Hamyuts knew – among the Books Ruruta had Eaten there were dozens of warriors

that were a match for her. And they were the ones who encircled Ruruta right now.

"I don't know who you are, but I assume it was your ability that called us forth.

Right?"

The girl known as Miena inquired Hamyuts standing next to her.

"I don't know how the world is now, but what we have to do is unchanged. We need to exterminate Ruruta. So it appears, but is it right?"

"...That's right."

This girl's strong. I dare say more than me. Hamyuts smiled at Miena.

"For giving me the opportunity to kill this man, I thank you!"

Miena, the fire users, the slicing air users, the knights, and the Armed Librarians all uniformly invoked their abilities. They attacked Ruruta from all directions. His barrier was easily broken through, and his entire body was burnt, cut and pierced.

"As if I'd lose! As if! And to the likes of you!"

Ruruta activated his needle power, trying to sweep down the surrounding warriors at once. However, Miena's simultaneously activated needle entwined around it, altering its trajectory. The launched invisible slashing attack was met with an invisible slashing attack that counterbalanced it.

Hamyuts did not participate in the simultaneous attack. She ran through the desert and hit further gravel bullets on the sand. The warriors buried in the sand were revived one after the other.

"All you warriors! Kill Ruruta! This is the only time you can fulfill your grudges!"

Even while the warriors were surprised at their sudden revival and confused by the unknown woman wielding a sling, they understood their duty. Everyone unhesitatingly went to face Ruruta in battle.

"You see, I've worked hard. The fact that no one's killed me means I've worked hard.

But you have so many people who can kill you.

I'm so envious, so jealous of you, Ruruta Coozancona!"

"As if... I can lose! Just a bit more and I can make Nieniu happy!"

Every time her gravel bullets struck the sand more warriors were revived. Ruruta's Suicidal Wish kept reviving them.

"Ahaha Ruruta! Even if your mouth denies it seems your body is honest!"

The attacks of the warriors who came one after the other and Ruruta who

was unable to fully defend against them. The warriors' angry shouts and Ruruta's moans echoed in the Imaginary Entrails.

Has an hour passed since then?

Saying Ruruta battled ferociously would be understating it. Although he had gotten used to the pleasure of sweet death and was still being eaten by it, his fighting spirits didn't exhaust at all.

Hamyuts ran around the Imaginary Entrails, explored inside the sand with her Sensory Threads and revived warriors. They numbered over a thousand.

However, even those revived warriors diminished in numbers. There should have been warriors even stronger than Hamyuts there. Even now Ruruta showed how much his power was off the scale.

"Eat this Ruruta!"

An ancient warrior launched a large fireball at Ruruta. Ruruta tried blocking it with the palm of his right hand. Was he trying to invoke a defensive ability or some power of water to counterbalance it? But he couldn't activate it. The possessor of that power had already been annihilated.

"Don't let him run away! Catch him!"

A warrior shouted while leaping. Ruruta attempted evading him to the side but his escape was blocked by a giant needle. A spear pierced Ruruta's chest and attempted to knock him down to the ground. Ruruta shot a fireball from his hand and annihilated the warrior in one blow.

The warrior's sacrifice allowed the surrounding warriors a chance to attack simultaneously. Needles and flames assaulted Ruruta. Although he was not yet dead, he was barraged by attacks without even a moment to breathe.

"We can win! We can win, Miena! It's our victory!"

Although he had not been killed yet, the ancient warriors expressed joy. But it was natural they would be happy. They were the most pitiful humans that were used by Ruruta.

"The amazing thing here is Hamyuts's power that bound him. To think such a method could be used to kill him..."

The needle user known as Miena had at some point become a central figure to the warriors. Considering how terrific her ability was it was obvious.

Ruruta struggled. But he had no way of winning. It was because the powers he was using had been taken away from him by the souls inside his Imaginary Entrails.

Every time Ruruta defeated a warrior their Magic Right would also be eliminated.

This meant that the more Ruruta won the more he was weakened.

Ruruta was on the verge of death. That was the unavoidable, hard truth.

Hamyuts was checking the battle far from Ruruta with her Sensory Threads.

"Ruruta, how much do you have left? How much power do you have left?"

Hamyuts muttered, crossing her arms and simply standing in place.

She didn't participate in the battle.

Almost all buried humans were dug out. There were no other powerful warriors. All that was left was waiting for Miena and the rest to destroy Ruruta.

Having her join the battle would be a bad plan. Were she to die the power that confined Ruruta inside the Imaginary Entrails would be gone. In order to avoid this one-in-a-thousand chance, she decided to devote herself to defense.

Her position was perfect. She only had to wait for Ruruta to exhaust himself. Hamyuts folded her arms and calmly waited for the moment of victory.

During that time Colio had returned to the theater. There were no traces of either Hamyuts or Ruruta there. The statue of Nieniu left there seemed lonely.

He could hear the sounds of battle from afar. While hearing them, Colio was thinking about Ruruta.

How could I have stopped him? He kept thinking about things that were already meaningless.

"...But what's happening?"

Colio standing alone in the theater couldn't help but mutter. The sounds of battle increased in intensity by every moment. Explosive roars echoed in his stomach, and blows shook the ground. Even if a country was to fight with its entire army they wouldn't make so much noise.

Earlier he had seen Hamyuts running near the theater. When she struck the sand with gravel bullets people appeared from inside. Responding to her shouts of "Kill Ruruta!", these people ran ahead.

He had no idea what was going on. However, by hearing Hamyuts and seeing the

faces of all these people heading out to kill Ruruta he knew well what was about to happen.

Ruruta was about to lose. So Colio thought while looking at them.

"..."

Neither Hamyuts nor any of the warriors coming from the sand paid any heed to him.

He was unable to do anything and nobody cared about him. He was as good as not being there.

That was why none of it mattered. He just returned to his former self.

"...Ruruta."

He raised a call that didn't reach anyone with a small voice. Colio thought about Ruruta there for a long time. What was he thinking about? Why had he waited for him? How could he have stopped him? He had the feeling he would realize something if he stayed there.

He thought of his irreversible failure. That was the only thing Colio could do.

He looked at the desert from the theater where Ruruta had sat earlier. What a dreary view it was. But Ruruta had waited there. Day after day, he waited for Nieniu to become happy. He became exhausted, despaired, and stood up to destroy the world.

"Did Ruruta want to destroy the world?"

Colio muttered but immediately denied it. He had told Makia – that was the world he had protected and there was no way he wanted to destroy it.

He loved Nieniu, but he also loved the world at the same time. No way would he want to destroy it. This decision should have been as painful as having his body being ripped apart to him.

And yet Ruruta decided to destroy the world.

"I see, I now somewhat get it, Ruruta."

Colio muttered. He now understood a little about Ruruta's reason for waiting for him.

He wanted to be stopped. He still hesitated deep inside his heart. And so he thought that if someone came to stop him he wouldn't destroy the world.

He thought that Colio would've been able to stop him. And so he waited for him.

"...But I couldn't."

Why couldn't he? Even if the world was destroyed Nieniu wouldn't be happy at all.

Colio was absolutely certain that was true.

He looked at Nieniu who stood lonely inside the theater. As expected, in this situation where he had no idea what was going on he hadn't the courage to try touching her.

But he knew well what she was thinking about.

She was probably cheering Ruruta. But it wasn't because Ruruta loved her; it was because the world wouldn't be destroyed unless he wins. Without loving anyone, without acknowledging anyone, she continued to hate everything as worthless. That was how Nieniu was right now.

Colio felt mad at her. Why didn't she answer to Ruruta? She didn't even say a single gentle word to the person who loved her so deeply. Even though with just one word, with just a single smile, Ruruta would have been saved.

Even if the world was destroyed she probably wouldn't even thank him. She hated Ruruta as well. Even if the world was destroyed she would never respond to his love.

She loved no one.

"...Ruruta... this is so wrong."

Such a thing couldn't be called happiness. It couldn't be love. Love should've been something much more splendid. It should cause a person that regretted their birth to become happy at being born. That was what it should have been. Colio knew of it since he had experienced it himself.

"You've been trying to throw away... the one and only person important to you, the most important thing to you."

No one responded to his call.

And, at that time, something stabbed into the audience seats in the theater. Looking there he could see a rock the size of a palm. It was Hamyuts's gravel bullet for communication. He picked it up and read.

"What're you doing Colio-kun?"

Just as he wondered how to reply he recalled the ability of Sensory Threads. If he spoke normally it would be transmitted to her through the thread.

"Nothing... in particular."

A few moments later, another gravel bullet flew at him.

"Thank you. You've done well. Thanks to you I can kill Ruruta."

Looking at it for a while, he then stored it inside his suit's pocket.

He could still hear the thundering roars of battle. Ruruta was obviously not dead yet.

But the situation was irreversible. And it was such that Hamyuts was even able to afford time for an idle chat.

That's fine. I have no problem with that. The world will be saved and the Indulging God Cult destroyed. Even Colio made a contribution in the form of creating an opening on Ruruta.

He should be happy. And yet, thinking about Ruruta, Colio's chest ached as if being squeezed.

He felt mysterious camaraderie towards him.

They have talked for not a long while. When they faced each other he felt nothing other than fear. And yet he couldn't help but ache now.

'Since it's you, don't you understand? My feelings.'

'But there are only two exceptions to this. Me and you.'

'What a pity. I'd hoped we'd be able to have mutual understanding.'

He recalled Ruruta's words. He now realized another reason why he had wanted to meet him.

Ruruta wanted a friend. Until now he had no one he could call a friend.

This man who owned the world, who put his life at stake, had nothing other than a single lover. The one thing he looked for in the end of his life was just a friend.

"Perhaps we could have become friends, Ruruta."

Colio muttered. Now that he felt some camaraderie he could understand Ruruta.

Even Ruruta realized that destroying the world won't make Nieniu happy. If he hadn't he would've destroyed the world much sooner.

But he had to do it. Because destroying the world was his final hope.

Even offering her happiness, even appealing to her love, Nieniu never opened her heart. Her heart was exhausted. It was sickly love. Even while he was hurt, exhausted, and even thought about death, he couldn't throw his feelings away.

Although he knew it was useless, although he knew it was the wrong path, he couldn't choose anything else. He couldn't help but cling to this final hope. If he had lost even this final hope he would have nothing left.

'...You and I are different!'

'Nieniu will not become happy!'

Colio recalled his own words from a few hours ago. He shouldn't have said those. He was trying to take away all hope from Ruruta.

"Ruruta. I understand you."

It was as Ruruta had said. They were able to understand one another. Only Colio had rejected it.

Perhaps if he'd understood him something would have changed. Perhaps he would

have stopped him from destroying the world. Perhaps he would have saved the world without Hamyuts having to do anything.

An explosion occurred near the theater. He realized that the battlefield was growing closer. He could hear Ruruta's screams as he tried running away and the angry roar of the people pursuing him.

"Serves you right, Ruruta!"

"Curse you, have you learned your lesson Ruruta!"

"Suffer! Die while suffering! Choke on your retribution!"

The warriors pursued the fleeing Ruruta. Colio felt as if their anger and resentment were directed at him.

"...I wasn't able to do anything."

Colio muttered.

"And... I still can't."

He fell to his knees atop the stage. And he covered his face in his hands. He thought of at least crying. Instead of Ruruta... for Ruruta's sake.

But at that moment, he heard a voice from the back.

"I seem to have a peculiar destiny with you, Colio-sama."

Turning around, he could see a woman. Her face covered by a black cloth, she wielded a strange stone sword.

"...Lascall Othello?"

Lascall bowed deeply as if in affirmation.

Hamyuts stood quietly with her arms folded. She was observing Ruruta being cornered with her Sensory Threads.

She no longer paid any attention to Colio. She didn't use her Sensory Threads around the theater either. She wondered if he would try to do something strange while being moved by some weird feelings, but it appeared to have been needless worry.

"...I don't know why... but something feels off."

Ruruta was wounded. He was on the verge of exhaustion. If the fight kept going like this they would definitely win.

Yet that made her conversely anxious. There were no absolutes in a victory. Thinking one could definitely win meant missing the possibility of a loss.

Yet no matter how much she thought, she could see no way for Ruruta to make a

reversal. And so her anxiety increased.

"What's this... is there something still left?"

The most frightening thing was that despite being in such a desperate situation, Ruruta's eyes were still alive. Would he simply not give up no matter what happens?

Or has he seen something?

Should I join the battle? Or is that by itself the trap? Hamyuts kept thinking back and forth in circles.

She didn't notice that Lascall appeared next to Colio.

Colio had met Lascall before. He also came to know of his true identity from Ruruta's memories. He knew that he was the one who'd brought him Shiron's Book as well as brought his Book to Ruruta.

"Do you have any business with me?"

"I have nothing that would be called business. I intend to immediately disappear if you think of me as a nuisance."

What a troubling person, thought Colio. If you need something then just say so.

"So?"

"This Lascall Othello is the ally of no one. Neither am I the enemy of anyone. I am simply one who grants continuation to stories and observes them.

I assist Ruruta-sama, but I have also lent a hand to his enemies. I have allied with the Indulging God Cult, but I have also allied with the Armed Librarians. I have helped you, but at the same time I have also helped Cigal-sama.

That is what I am."

"...And?"

"I will not lend a hand to either side in the battle of Ruruta-sama and Hamyuts-sama.

If the result is destruction then let it all be destroyed, and if it ends in salvation then let it all be saved. So I think."

What do you want to do, Colio swallowed these words. If you're calling yourself neutral you should just watch it silently.

"Yet this is all far too cruel. Since it is so one-sided, even I have lost some of my interest as a spectator. Since it is finally the end of the world, it should be a bit more exciting."

Calling it exciting rubbed Colio the wrong way. *What do you mean by spectator?* he was angry.

"...I have no intention of helping Ruruta."

Colio replied. If Hamyuts were to lose the world would be over. No matter how much his chest hurt, he couldn't save Ruruta.

"Huhuhu."

Lascall averted his gaze, stifled his voice and laughed. Colio felt he was sneering at him. Perhaps this stone sword had always been scorning humans.

"Even you are saying that, Colio-sama?"

He could see his lips distort under the black thin veil.

"The one about to lose is Hamyuts."

"...Wha-"

At the same time as Colio's shout, Lascall disappeared as if announcing his business was over with him. He gazed at the faraway battlefield. It was undoubtedly Ruruta who was cornered. Yet Lascall had said that Hamyuts was about to suffer a one-sided defeat.

Colio started thinking not about the situation of the battle but about Ruruta's mind.

What did he think about while being cornered? What could he do in order to make Nieniu happy, in order to destroy the world? No matter how much cornered he was, he was probably thinking only of her.

"...Ah."

He recalled a certain ability from his scarce Magical knowledge. And he understood Ruruta's thinking.

Colio started running.

"Hamyuts! Hamyuts! Can you hear me?!"

His face paled. His feet tangled with fear.

"Hamyuts! Listen to me! Stop attacking this instant!"

After Colio had left, Lascall appeared in the theater again.

"Hamyuts-sama. Even if I told you he was all barks and no bite it would be useless.

Because something like this could not even be called a secret plan."

Lascall spoke to Nieniu who couldn't move even a single finger.

"Is it not so, Nieniu-sama?"

The moment when Ruruta was exhausted finally came.

The resurrected warriors have already been reduced to less than a third of their numbers. But the damage they have dealt to Ruruta was much larger than that.

Ruruta was skewered by Miena's needles, and his movements were stopped by restraining Magic. The warriors kept tormenting the immobile Ruruta with attacks.

This wasn't a battle but torture.

"Kill him as soon as possible! Attacking all at once should do it!"

Hamyuts was cautious even this late into the game. She only shouted but didn't approach Ruruta.

"Listen to me! I'm telling you to kill him this instant!"

No matter what secret plan for reversal Ruruta had, everything would be over once he was killed. Yet Miena and the rest didn't try killing him. At that time Miena turned back and shouted towards Hamyuts.

"Hamyuts! I'd like you to absolve the power that turns death into pleasure!"

She was being serious. Hamyuts shouted back.

"What're you saying!?"

"We can't fulfill our grudges like this! We won't be able to rest unless we inflict this man with the worst kind of suffering!"

Such idiots, thought Hamyuts. It was still dangerous. She was still anxious. They had to kill Ruruta as quickly as possible before something happened and not a moment too late.

At that time she noticed someone was calling her. It was Colio.

"What is it, Colio-kun?"

Colio was shouting something while running. Hamyuts leapt and landed in front of him.

"Stop! Don't corner Ruruta any further!"

"Even you...? Why are all of you so strange!"

Hamyuts was angry. However, she realized from Colio's behavior that this was not a trivial matter.

"You're going... to lose! At this... rate..."

"...What do you mean?"

Colio stopped in place, breathing laboriously. Hamyuts wasn't able to properly hear what he said.

"Ruruta wants to... give Nieniu..."

Since he was out of breath he couldn't speak, so he only moved his lips. The moment she read his lips Hamyuts's face instantly paled. Her brain worked fast. Hamyuts surmised Ruruta's aim and her boundless anxiety turned into conviction a crisis was approaching.

"Kill Rurutaaa!!!"

Hamyuts shouted without turning around.

"Kill Rurutaaa!!!"

The voice reached Ruruta's ears as he was skewered. Miena and the warriors all turned to Hamyuts. Ruruta also slightly raised his head and saw her attacking.

She noticed, thought Ruruta.

He could no longer escape from Miena's needle. He also couldn't release his restraints.

He couldn't defend at all as well. And yet even then, his secret plan of reversal was slowly bearing fruit.

He knew he couldn't win against Miena and the rest. That's why he had chosen this method. Ever since he was surrounded by them he started his preparations. If he could survive until his method was complete it would be his win. If he died before it Hamyuts would win.

Until his reversal move was ready he needed only several dozens of seconds. If he survived for just that time it should be his victory.

"Move aside! I can't trust you with it!"

Hamyuts launched her gravel bullets. They all squarely hit Ruruta. His consciousness was dimming. The flames of his life were being extinguished. Ruruta clenched his teeth and endured.

Can I hold off these last seconds? Only a few dozen seconds remained to decide the fate of the world.

Hamyuts ran with full speed towards Ruruta. She swung her sling and senselessly hurled gravel bullets at him. All the while shouting 'kill him, kill him now'.

We can still make it, Hamyuts was convinced. He no longer had any power remaining.

They just had to kill him before his final strategy. She could just choke him using her sling. If she did it everything would be over.

"Kill Ruruta, or otherwise move out of the way!"

Hamyuts shouted. However, a shocking response appeared. It was an attack directed at her. Miena's needle obstructed her way.

"What are you doing?!"

Unable to evade on time, Hamyuts crashed into the needle. She tumbled down, rose up and started running.

"Even if it's you we won't take any orders. Our grudge cannot yet be satisfied!"

Miena shouted.

"That sorta thing doesn't matter at all! Kill him already!"

"What do you even know! What do you know about the grudge at my lost life! The grudge at him killing my husband and sending my child to the streets!"

Hamyuts then thought. *She's useless. While she's an excellent warrior she's incompetent.*

"Move aside! Kill Ruruta already!"

"Why are you so focused on it?!"

Hamyuts shouted as if trying to rip out her throat.

"He's going to transfer his Magic Right!"

The moment they heard this, most of the people there couldn't understand what she meant.

Magic Right transferal. Although it was well-known, it was an extremely advanced magical technique. Hamyuts couldn't use it. She had heard that even the child prodigy Mattalast and the great hard worker Photona failed in acquiring it. The only ones among the Armed Librarians who were able to use this ability were Yukizona and Volken.

And Hamyuts also knew – Ruruta was able to use it as well.

"What's that?!"

"Don't be stupid, who's he gonna transfer it to? You think Ruruta has any allies?"

The warriors spoke unanimously.

"He's going to transfer all of his powers to Nieniu!"

"W-what do you mean!"

Hamyuts was astonished at their incompetence. She didn't have the time to make them understand. She fired her gravel bullets. All of them squarely hit Ruruta on his head.

However, they were not lethal. She had to lop his head off using her sling. Hamyuts charged while raising a war cry.

Yet her legs were stopped again.

"...!"

Miena's needle blocked her path like a wall.

"What are you thinking?"

"I won't let you do it. My grudge will not be satisfied as long as Ruruta doesn't see hell. I am here only so that I can show that man hell."

Hamyuts kicked apart the needles and headed to Ruruta. Further needles blocked her way.

"You dimwitted woman! It was a mistake to have dug you up!"

"Transferring his Magic Rights to Nieniu? What would happen even if he does that, I wonder. Would she start moving?"

"Yes! She will start moving!"

Miena was finally able to understand the situation. The needles disappeared and Hamyuts restarted her charge. She kicked around the surrounding warriors and ran.

Extending her sling, she wrapped it around the skewered Ruruta's neck.

But at that moment, she could see him smile.

A shockwave exploded and both Hamyuts and Miena were blown away. Ruruta's

body itself emitted so much power as if he was a bomb.

"Kill Rururtaaa!"

Hamyuts shouted, and the warriors not caught in the explosion moved. However,

Ruruta flew to the air as if being captured before was just a lie.

He had some final remaining power. Pretending to be completely exhausted, he

reserved some power to be able to blow Hamyuts away once.

"This, shiiit!"

Hamyuts shouted. Swinging her sling, she leapt at Ruruta.

Colio was shouting while running in the desert.

"Stop! Stop it! You won't be able to go back!"

If he was able to transfer his Magic Rights everything would be over. Both Hamyuts, Colio, and even Ruruta himself would be finished. And Ruruta would

undoubtedly do it. For Nieniu's sake he would definitely do that.

The pair's bodies intersected. Hamyuts's sling stretched toward Ruruta's neck like a snake.

However, it missed by a few centimeters. Hamyuts got down to the ground. Ruruta fell about fifty meters away. Since he had used all his remaining powers he didn't have enough to land.

"How regrettable, Hamyuts."

Normally, only a small part of one's Magic Right could be transferred. It was impossible to transfer the entire Magic Right when using common sense. Since it was so impossible Hamyuts didn't think of the possibility.

And since it was impossible, Ruruta could do it.

"Magic Right transferal. The target is Nieniu. The object is my whole power."

His index finger pointed at Nieniu.

If he were to transfer his Book-Eating ability, the authority of control over his Imaginary Entrails would also be transferred to Nieniu. All of Ruruta's abilities, including those to control the Beasts of the Final Chapter, were transferred to her.

"...Transfer complete."

Nieniu's voice echoed inside the Imaginary Entrails. Nieniu, who stayed still for 1927

years, finally moved.

"...The power of annihilation taken away by Ruruta... it has now returned to me."

At the same time as Nieniu's voice echoed, Hamyuts screamed.

Nieniu moved. Simultaneously the world was transformed.

Everything took less than a minute since Ruruta had transferred his Magic

Rights.

Hamyuts, Miena, Colio, and even Ruruta couldn't do anything but watch.

Ruruta's hair color started changing. Starting from his bangs and to the back of his head, his ill-omened yet beautiful transparent hair changed into a normal black. This meant that Ruruta lost his Book-Eating ability.

At the same time the Colorless-Haired Statue's hair also changed. The Statue's single tuft of hair, the one that used to be reddish-purple when she was alive, changed to be transparent. That was the power of Book-Eating that allowed her to control the Imaginary Entrails, as well as the power of the incarnation of destruction controlling the Beasts of the Final Chapter. This also meant she had become a being with both powers combined.

Her eyelids that were closed for 1927 years opened. Her black-as-obsidian eyes that reflected nothing in them were revealed. Her colorless hair rose and twisted like snakes.



The sky of the Imaginary Entrails started clearing up. Directly above the theater black spots were created as if out of spilling ink. They started swelling rapidly. The sky was being covered in clouds so black they seemed as if darkness itself acquired mass.

They were the same clouds that once appeared when the Age of Paradise was over, during the first end of the world.

A change also occurred in the world of the living, in Past God Bantorra Island.

Sitting on the needle without moving a muscle, Ruruta stood up. He lightly floated in air and stopped in place with his arms spread a little. The color of his hair started changing. Most of it was stained in the colorlessness indicating ruin, and only his forelocks stayed their previous transparent color.

Ruruta's body was petrified. A statue in the form of a boy appeared there.

Small black dots appeared in the skies. The world was covered in dark clouds just like inside the Imaginary Entrails. The clear sky and the gentle sun were gone and the heavens were dominated by darkness.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter swarming all over Bantorra Library raised a cry of joy.

Nieniu, who was standing on the theater inside the Imaginary Entrails, and the being once known as Ruruta that stood above the needle at Bantorra Library moved at the same time.

They slightly raised their downcast faces, gazing at the cloud-covered skies. The sight was similar to a crucified criminal. On their faces was not hatred for the people, nor delight for being able to destroy the world, but a kind of pitiful atonement.

The few people left inside the Imaginary Entrails all looked to Ruruta standing in the town. They couldn't help but gaze at it.

"...How sad."

Nieniu said in a soft voice. Although it was a quiet voice, it reached every place in both the Imaginary Entrails and in the world. Nieniu used the exact same tone she had when she was alive.

"...I am sad. This is much too inhuman. Why has everything turned out like this?"

No one was able to speak. They were overpowered by Nieniu.

"...I am at fault, anything and everything is my fault. I cannot do anything other than wish for your forgiveness."

Nieniu's obsidian eyes were directed at the far reaches of the desert.

"...Hamyuts-san. It must have been difficult for you. Being a tool meant to kill Ruruta, existing just for that sake, is unforgiveable.

Miena-san. It must have been difficult for you. You had to die while leaving your husband and son behind. Even your beloved husband was killed by Ruruta. What a cruel fate.

Colio-san, it must have been painful. You were robbed of your memories, made into a human bomb, and finally thrown away. Yet you have endured these difficult days."

Nieniu spoke in a choked voice.

"...I am sorry, everyone, I am sorry, I cannot be forgiven.

...I cannot atone for it. However, I will at least accomplish what I can do. In order to atone for my sins, however slightly.

...So starting now..."

Nieniu was crying. Her weeping echoed. All of those who watched her felt a chill.

"...So starting now... I will kill all of you."

Nieniu inside the Imaginary Entrails and the statue at Bantorra Library raised their finger at the same time.

"Causality Erasure: Hope Break."

As far as they could see nothing happened. But an ability had been activated. It was the power that was used by Orntorra in the end of the Age of Paradise to give understanding without any accompanying transmission.

Hamyuts, Colio, Miena and everyone else all understood at the same time: it was impossible to defeat Nieniu. If the sun were to fall down or if the sea were to turn into lava no humans could survive. Her existence was synonymous to that.

"...Seeing the people of the outside die would probably be hard to bear.

...So I will first kill everyone here."

A black swamp was created at Nieniu's feet. From inside of it came out Beasts

of the Final Chapter one after another.

The warriors all simply stared at Nieniu knowing they could do nothing. What broke the silence was Hamyuts's howl. The frozen time moved again.

The people's resistance began. The resistance that was a far too cruel battle began.

"You sure know how to flap that big mouth of yours, you piece of junk!"

Shouting this, Hamyuts started running at Nieniu. She didn't even look at the already collapsed Ruruta. In order to kill the Book-Eater one needed to kill the possessor of the ability. Since Ruruta had transferred all of his abilities he no longer had any value.

She should only aim for Nieniu.

"...Hamyuts-san."

She let her understand that it was useless even if she tried fighting. Hamyuts shook it off with her anger and fighting spirit. She would be the one to determine if something was useless or not.

She's just a piece of junk. A loser that was once defeated by Ruruta. She's nothing.

Swinging her sling, she charged at Nieniu. In the way she bumped into Colio and blew him away, but paid no heed to that.

"Have you forgotten?! I'll tell you! You're weaker than Ruruta!"

She arrived at the theater. The Beasts produced by Nieniu blocked her way. Unable to even become a slight obstacle, they were scattered by Hamyuts's sling. Kicking the chairs, she charged towards the stage.

She captured Nieniu as if she was a beast and kissed her as if biting her. She activated her Soul Fusion. Hamyuts poured the Suicidal Wish into Nieniu.

Kicking the statue's stomach, Hamyuts retreated. It would take some time for the Suicidal Wish to encroach her.

"...Hamyuts-san."

Nieniu spoke calmly.

"So! Feel like you want to die? I'll kill you just like I did with Ruruta!"

Hamyuts shouted. Yet Nieniu shook her head.

"...Did you think it would work? That such a thing would affect me, the incarnation of destruction?"

No change came to Nieniu. Even though the poison of Suicidal Wish definitely entered her.

"...Shit..."

Hamyuts's fingers clenched the sling in the last second. The ability she bet her life on didn't work at all. *That's impossible*, she thought and swung her sling.

She shot gravel bullets from near point-blank range. The theater's chairs, pillars, and swarming Beasts all got caught up in it indiscriminately.

Nieniu didn't defend. She made no movements either. While receiving attacks that would blow off even tanks, she didn't move even by a single centimeter.

"...You can win when it is against Ruruta. However, I am not him."

"What are you doing, you idiots!"

While moving away, she yelled at the warriors behind her.

"Fight! Kill her!"

The dumbfounded warriors started moving. Each picking their weapon, they ran

towards Nieniu. However, just by looking at them Hamyuts knew it was useless.

They only acted because they were told so. No one thought they could win against Nieniu. They've accepted the fact that resisting would be futile.

Hamyuts kicked around the Beasts and charged at Nieniu. She wrapped her sling

around her neck. Nieniu made no move. Hamyuts felt as if she had returned to being a young girl with no power.

"You piece of shit!"

And yet she desperately tightened the sling on her neck. More Beasts of the Final Chapter were produced one after another and swarmed at Hamyuts. A Lancer's thrust and the front legs of an Elephant Soldier assaulted her. She had to detach her sling from Nieniu and evade.

"...Resistance is futile. Please die, Hamyuts-san."

"Stop with the bullshit."

"...I am sorry. It is futile. Completely hopeless and futile."

The sling scattered the Beasts around. However, she wasn't able to affect Nieniu with any attack. Even if she shot her with gravel bullets, kicked her, beat her, Nieniu felt no pain.

Hamyuts felt suffocated. She felt as if her trachea was tightened and her heart was shrinking. Her legs and lips shook. This was something Hamyuts hadn't felt in a long time. They were feelings that disappeared ever since the day Makia Dexiart had remodeled her. Since her goal was death, since her wish was of defeat, these feelings vanished from her heart. The feelings she never experienced no matter the crisis.

Fear towards defeat. True fear. It now assaulted Hamyuts's heart.

"...Although I want to kill you as soon as possible, I lack the Beasts to do so."

Indeed there were not a lot of Beasts. Nieniu still hasn't retrieved all of her powers.

She was slowly shedding the rust she had accumulated for 1927 years.

Further Beasts were created from the swamp at her feet. Before long they would probably fill the entire Imaginary Entrails.

"...But do not worry. I will kill you soon."

Hamyuts screamed and swung her sling frantically.

Hamyuts passed by Colio. He was blown away by wind pressure and rolled on the

sand.

Looking at her from behind, he muttered.

"...Stop it. If you fight you'll only become miserable."

She had lost. The world has ended. No one could stop it any longer.

If they'd noticed Ruruta's aim earlier... If he'd been able to stop Ruruta before Hamyuts came... Only regrets assaulted Colio. The chance to save the world appeared in front of him and passed in vain.

"Ruruta... Ruruta!"

Grabbing sand, Colio shouted.

"Idiot! You idiottt!"

His voice reached no one's ears.

Having seen that the transfer of Magic Right was successful, Ruruta fell on the sand.

He spat out the blood from his stomach and lungs. Pulling out a sword stuck in his flank, he cut part of his waistcloth and used it to temporarily stop the bleeding.

He wasn't able to move for a while. Along with his transparent hair he had lost all power. The only thing left was Ruruta's own bodily reinforcement Magic. He was surprised at how fragile and sluggish his body was. Was a human's body so weak?

However, he had no regrets. Making Nieniu happy was everything. He needed nothing else. Power was useless for him.

"...U-ugh..."

Ruruta stood up. He walked while dragging his feet. He was headed for Nieniu. Just by moving his legs he became out of breath and his knees folded.

He won against Hamyuts. But he couldn't feel happy about that. That was only cleaning up after his failure. He has not accomplished anything.

It was in vain. Everything was in vain.

Both the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult. Both the people searching for the perfect happiness and the days of waiting for it. Even fighting to save the world and winning.

All of it was wasted effort. The world would be destroyed and Nieniu will gain happiness by that destruction. If that was the end, he should've destroyed the world in the first place.

Everything was useless. Yet Ruruta accepted it.

It was fine for these 1927 years to have been in vain. He didn't mind that the unbearable days were all meaningless.

If Nieniu becomes even a bit happier it was fine. That would compensate for everything.

And very soon the awaited time would come.

'...Even if the world's destroyed Nieniu will not become happy!'

At that time, Colio's words echoed in his mind. Ruruta shook his head to shake them off.

"...Shut up, don't come out at this stage."

Talking to Colio was a mistake in the first place. It was foolish of him to want to meet him. He shouldn't have listened to his words.

She would obviously become happy. Absolutely. Undoubtedly. It should definitely make her happy.

If not, Ruruta would have nothing left. If this didn't make her happy then everything would truly be in vain this time.

And so she would definitely become happy. Thus Ruruta believed and proceeded

towards her step-by-step.

"...?"

Hamyuts continued her futile fight far away. The warriors were felled by the

fangs of the Beasts one after another.

Among those, a single Iron-Fanged Mouse left the battlefield and approached Ruruta.

For some reason, once he saw it Ruruta's chest throbbed.

"...Are you Nieniu?"

"..."

The Iron-Fanged Mouse made no reply. But Ruruta realized it was undoubtedly

Nieniu.

"I am sorry... for making you wait so long. Forgive me, Nieniu, forgive me."

"..."

"I finally realized it. This world is meaningless. Please forgive me for being unable to realize that."

Ruruta couldn't say anything else. He wasn't able to mouth his love for her. He believed that he didn't have the qualifications to love her. Since he hadn't given her the happiness that was so close by.

"...Ruruta."

The Iron-Fanged Mouse said. It had Nieniu's voice. It had Nieniu's tone. Ruruta smiled just by hearing that.

"...I have always..."

He extended a hand to embrace Nieniu in the form of Iron-Fanged Mouse.

"...Always hated you."

Ruruta's heart froze with his hand stuck.

"...Huh?"

No way, he thought. *I'm dreaming*, he thought. *No way this is real*, he thought.

However, it wasn't a dream but reality; it wasn't a lie but truth.

"...I have hated you from the bottom of my heart. You, the one to throw everyone, and me, to hell.

So I will never forgive you."

Ruruta's expression seemed like he was on the verge of crying. Much like the face of a child who got lost and had no idea what to do.

"...You have defeated me... I cannot forgive even that. You had no choice? You were desperate? This is no excuse. Since you had defeated me this rotten world was born."

"But that's... that's..."

Nieniu's words sharply gouged Ruruta much more than any gravel bullet or any sword.

"...The days after I have been Eaten by you... were unbearable. It was hell. To keep seeing this world full of despair and tragedy..."

Nieniu spoke with a voice full of sorrow.

"...There were many sad people, suffering people, people who wished to have never been born. I wanted to save all of them. I wanted to kill and thus save them. Every time a baby was born my chest was torn apart. Because once again a person who should not have been born came into the world."

Ruruta wanted to tear off his ears. Yet he couldn't do even that. He had no choice but to endure the blades of Nieniu's piercing words.

"...An unblemished happiness? When have I ever wanted such a thing? When have I ever said so? When have I asked you to make me happy?"

...The only thing I wished for was destruction, right?"

The torture of words continued.

"...Even in this world there was a slight bit of happiness. Yet you have trampled it underfoot, crushing it. Clinging to the delusion of an unblemished happiness, you and your subordinates trampled on people's slight happiness.

...In the first place, what did you think would happen if you collected other people's happiness?

...Poor Armed Librarians. Poor Indulging God Cult. All the people living in this rotten world that you control are excruciatingly poor.

...Who is at fault? What went wrong? It is obvious! You are at fault!"

"But! But, that was for your sake..."

"...To make me happy? You have hurt people just for that?"

...Did you think it would be forgiven?"

"Nieniu!"

"...Unforgivable. No one in this world will forgive you. And above all else, I will not."

Nieniu shouted.

"...I have told you this! Again and again! Haven't I told you countless times to destroy the world! And yet you have kept producing unhappy people!"

Ruruta could still endure that. Even if his chest hurt, even if Nieniu hated him, he didn't mind. He didn't care about himself. He only wanted Nieniu to be happy.

"I have a question."

"..."

"Are you happy right now, if even a little?"

After a while of silence, Nieniu spat out.

"...No way I would be happy. I should not have been born."

"No... way."

"...Ever since meeting you I have not had a shred of happiness. And I will definitely feel no happiness from now on."

If she simply hated him and desired to kill him, Ruruta would have gladly offered up his life. Yet Nieniu cut off even that possibility.

Ruruta shouted. He shouted until he stopped breathing and then struggled to breathe more air and shouted again. His throat ripped and blood bubbles flowed down his lips yet he kept shouting.

"...Ruruta. I wish I would have never met you."

Informing him these slightly and cruelly pitiful words, the Iron-Fanged Mouse crumbled to sand.

Ruruta's scream reached Colio's ears. It even reached Hamyuts who was challenging Nieniu.

They both thought at the same time. Who wished for this to happen? It wasn't Ruruta.

Neither was it Hamyuts, Colio, Miena nor the rest. And it surely wasn't Nieniu.

The time of despair no one had wished for simply passed in vain.

Chapter 3: Recollection of a Certain Spectator

There was still time until evening. Yet the sun should have been sinking already.

The sky that was clear a short while ago was now covered in dark clouds. Dull sounds of lightning reverberated continuously. They were the clouds called by Nieniu to announce the end of the world.

"So is this the end?"

A figure stood on top of the beer hall in Bantorra Library's downtown. It was a woman whose face was covered by a veil. That figure's name was Lascall Othello, alias Passed Stone Blade Yor. He gazed at Ruruta's body being controlled by Nieniu that stood atop the needle piercing Bantorra Library.

"I have thought that the end will come in no time once Ruruta-sama awakens, yet it seems the disturbance just keeps going on and on."

Lascall was speaking to himself.

"The Armed Librarians' brave fight was marvelous. And I could not believe it when Colio-sama had appeared. Hamyuts-sama's activities were also amazing.

However, as I thought the end of the world could not be evaded. Because it was a world meant to be destroyed in the first place. Was it inevitable?"

Thunder roared. Although no one was there to hear him, Lascall waited until the thunder settled down.

"It was pleasant. Truly, truly pleasant. This Lascall Othello was satisfied from the bottom of his heart."

Lascall smiled from behind the veil. He had been trying to wear a serene expression, yet his face loosened to a smile as if unable to bear it any longer.

"All that remains is to wait for the credits roll. I am convinced I will see a splendid conclusion. I believe I shall be thoroughly entertained by the time of ruin."

There no longer was any possibility of reversal. All humans sank into despair and the only thing that could save them was the mercy known as death. In this ending no one had wished for Lascall alone was smiling.

It wasn't that he had wished for this conclusion either. He didn't work to reach this ending. And yet Lascall Othello was smiling.

If Ruruta had destroyed the world Lascall would still be smiling the same way. And even if Ruruta had been defeated and the world was saved he would still be smiling the same.

It had nothing to do with life or death. Happiness and misfortune were equivalent. He didn't care whether the world was destroyed or saved.

His goal was to spectate. It was fine as long as it was enjoyable.

That was the sort of being Lascall Othello was.

"How about this!"

Hamyuts's shout echoed inside the Imaginary Entrails covered by dark clouds. She wrapped her sling around an Elephant Soldier and hurled it away. Since she used too much force there was a sound of her shoulder muscles ripping. The Elephant Soldier's body crashed into Nieniu, and black flesh was scattered around.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter were being produced incessantly. Yet Hamyuts was able to use even them as her weapons. Wanting to kill Nieniu with

her own Beasts, she kept swinging her sling.

However, she wasn't able to inflict Nieniu a single wound.

"...Please forgive me, Hamyuts-san."

Nieniu spoke gently.

"...I have yet to retrieve all of my functions. Since I have so few Beasts I cannot kill you. But please be relieved. I will soon kill you."

"Shut up! Shuddup shuddup shuddup!"

She kept pounding the Beasts of the Final Chapter into Nieniu while shouting.

Hamyuts of the past was not there. She could no longer stay calm no matter the crisis she faced.

"The one to die will be you, you piece of junk!"

How pitiful. How unsightly. A barking puppy. Hamyuts was crushed in the face of true fear she had felt for the first time. If pushed any further she might even start crying.

"...How poor."

It seemed that Nieniu didn't use the power of the needle Ruruta had used before.

These powers should have been transferred to her along with the Book-Eating ability,

but she didn't seem to attack with any of them. She was probably not constructed with the ability to use the low level powers of humans.

Yet this wasn't anything to be happy about. Nieniu herself was much too powerful.

Hamyuts definitely didn't have enough power. Ruruta's powers, the powers of the Memorial Weapons and the destructive power of an asteroid... Unless one could gather all that it was impossible to destroy her.

"You lot! Show some guts!"

Hamyuts shouted to the warriors fighting alongside her. Yet they were also

reduced in numbers in the blink of an eye. Most of them showed no fighting spirits, fought apathetically and collapsed. They were weakened by Ruruta, defeated by the Beasts and only 30 or so remained.

"...I am sorry, Hamyuts-san. It is my fault. Please forgive me."

A black explosion erupted at her feet. Innumerable Beasts of the Final Chapter were born there. She couldn't even count their numbers.

"...Shit, shit!"

The sling wasn't enough to deal with all of them. Hamyuts had no choice but to retreat.

No matter how much she struggled she couldn't win. Yet Hamyuts still fought. She had to fight.

Because she couldn't do anything else but fight.

Tired of screaming, Ruruta collapsed on the sand. He didn't want to do anything. He didn't want to think of anything. He didn't even want to have any hope.

He had already died. He was breathing, his heart was beating, but his spirit was dead.

Hamyuts was fighting far away. He could hear it with his ears, but his dead heart felt nothing.

Nieniu would never become happy. That unshakable truth killed his heart.

A figure stood next to Ruruta.

"...The world might as well be destroyed."

It was Miena Yammo. She was the needle-user girl reborn from the distant past. She was the wife of Hihak who possessed the ability to turn into a tree and the mother of Carloy.

"There's no one I love in this world. I have no lingering regrets."

Miena's leg hit Ruruta's head. His skull creaked and his face sank into the sand.

"Suffer! Suffer and die! I don't care about the world! I'm fine as long as you suffer!"

It would probably be unsatisfying to use her needle power. She probably wouldn't feel better unless she beats him down with her own body. She devotedly stepped on him and showered him with insults.

"Are you in pain?! That's right! How thrilling! You've been thrown away by Nieniu after all!"

Pulling him up by his hair, she spat on his face.

"...Kill me."

"What?"

"...Please... kill me. I wish I hadn't... been born."

Miena laughed and rubbed Ruruta's face on sand.

"Who's going to kill you! If you ask me to kill you I won't do it! How satisfying! Just seeing your face makes me satisfied!"

First one, then two other people gathered next to Miena. Just like her they stepped on him, kicked him, beat him, and showered him with jeers. They kept tormenting Ruruta who wanted to die.

On top of the beer hall's roof, Lascall watched all of them.

"...It is pleasant. Truly pleasant."

He watched Hamyuts, Ruruta, Miena and the rest in satisfaction.

The Passed Stone Blade Yor, also known as Lascall Othello. It was a name transmitted to ordinary humans as a character from a fairytale. The only ones to know about this being were very few people – the Acting Director and some of the Armed Librarians, the Overseer of Paradise and his aides, as well as Ruruta, Nieniu, and the souls inside the Imaginary Entrails.

However, Lascall Othello's existence was far too big in this world.

If Lascall hadn't been there, Ruruta was unable to receive power and would've been defeated by the Beasts of the Final Chapter. If Lascall hadn't been there Ruruta wouldn't have been able to collect Books for Nieniu's happiness. Neither the Armed Librarians nor the Indulging God Cult would've come into existence if it weren't for him.

Colio wouldn't have met Shiron and Enlike would've remained Eaten by Zatoh.

Parney Parlmanta wouldn't have been killed, Volken wouldn't have come to know of Hamyuts's crimes, and Noloty's Book wouldn't have reached Enlike.

He always hid in the shadows and even his own existence not set in stone. He was neither the enemy of anyone nor the ally of anyone. Even so, he always had great influence.

As if he was the mastermind controlling the entire world.

What were his goals? Ruruta, the Acting Directors, the Overseers of Paradise, and countless other people have inquired him this.

Being asked this, Lascall always answered thusly without any hesitation.

I have no goal.

Humans were strange, so they couldn't acknowledge answers that didn't satisfy them as answers. Even though Lascall was honest with them. *No way you don't have one*, most of them persisted. Lascall, slightly disturbed, answered thus.

"My purpose is to grant continuation to tales.

To bring forth yet another development to a story approaching its conclusion. To sow the seeds of disturbance in a story that heads to an undeniable conclusion.

Stories that have ended bring nothing but tedium. It pains me to see an obvious conclusion.

I want to see the stories spun by people. Therefore I grant continuation to finished stories.

That is Lascall Othello's only raison d'être and his pleasure."

Although not fully understanding him, the people told this were tentatively convinced.

He watched the stories of humans interweave. There was no greater pleasure in the world.

For example, once during Toatt Mining Town's Dragon Pneumonia Incident, Lascall showed a Book to Colio Tonies. That action bound Colio with the Ever-Laughing Witch Shiron. It then connected to Colio slaying Cigal, stopping the spread of Dragon Pneumonia.

But this didn't mean that Lascall wanted to help Colio. He also didn't want to fulfill Shiron's wishes. Neither did he want to kill Cigal, to say nothing of wanting to save Hamyuts.

He simply wanted to see it – what influence would Shiron's feelings have on Colio?

By showing him Shiron's Book, what would happen in Toatt? Would Shiron's predictions come true or would another future be born? He wanted to see what sort of conclusion he could bring forth there.

Even if Colio had been killed by Hamyuts, or if he had lost to Cigal and perished, it would be fine. If that was his ending Lascall had no complaints. He would be slightly disappointed at such a dull conclusion, though.

If someone called Lascall the mastermind behind everything he wouldn't be able to hold back his laughter. A mastermind was someone who controlled people and made them move. Lascall never thought of manipulating people. He only wished to see how humans lived and what stories were born of them. What fun would there be in watching people move the way you want them to?

He wanted to see disturbances. He wanted to see miracles. He wanted to see the moment when things he couldn't predict, things he couldn't imagine, things that were impossible happened. By controlling people he wouldn't be able to enjoy disturbances or miracles. Therefore Lascall was neither anyone's enemy

nor anyone's ally, and, while intervening only slightly, he simply kept watching humans.

If this world was a story, he was its reader.

Ruruta Coozancoona. If Lascall were to mention the story he had enjoyed the most, there were none other than him. His greatest purpose was to see Ruruta's story.

The story of the illusion known as love. The story of a powerless boy waiting for a miracle. He watched it while expecting both a happy ending and a cruel ending. Was love powerless, or could it save everything? He thought that Ruruta's story would show him the answer.

And the conclusion has come. Love was powerless. Ruruta's days were useless effort.

Tragedy could also look like comedy if viewed from afar. The catharsis of something which was built up and then crumbled down was here.

Lascall was satisfied. What he sought for was there.

In this ending where no one obtained anything, Lascall alone was content.

This happened long ago in the Paradise Era. There were the beings known as Librarian Angels.

They were one of the mechanisms created by Past Overseer Bantorra to help him oversee the world. They were meant to excavate people's Books and bring them to the Library. Although they could think they had no will and they only heeded to Bantorra's orders. At present time no Librarian Angels existed. At end of the Paradise Era Bantorra ceased governing Books and at the same time annihilated all of them.

Lascall was once one of the Librarian Angels. He was the mere shadow of a fallen angel. That was the Passed Stone Blade Yor.

During the Paradise Era, Books were something that no human could get their hands on.

People's souls would, after their death, crystalize inside the ground and become Books.

Inside these Books the memories and entire life of the deceased would be recorded.

Books were dug out by Librarian Angels and kept at Bantorra Library.

The Library was located on a solitary island where even birds didn't pass, and the Archives where Books were stored were at unfathomable depths. An ordinary person could never get there. Even the rare people who could surpass that were blocked from invading the archives by Bantorra's causality-erasing barrier. They would never be able to touch Books.

At the end of the Paradise Era people aimed for Books. They were the Books meant to be Eaten by Ruruta Coozancoona, the world's savior who would appear before long.

Without any Books Ruruta would be a mere powerless boy, and he would have no

way to stop the world's destruction.

However, obtaining Books was close to impossible.

There was once a Librarian Angel in the frontier that would later come to be known as the Aizel Region of Rona.

His body was made of copper. His form was that of a robust man in the prime of his life. In his right hand he held a one-handed stone blade. When he stabbed it into the ground, a Book would be produced from it. The Book would then be stored in the box he held in his left hand. Next the Librarian Angel would move around by twisting space, carrying the Book to the Library.

Many Librarian Angels were shot by raining arrows, attacked by fire, ice and all kinds of Magic, or assaulted by swords and spears or clubs and fists.

Yet they were protected by Past Overseer Bantorra's causality erasure. The acts of trying to obtain a Book and of trying to hurt the Librarian Angels would be nullified beyond their cause-and-effect.

Attacks against Librarian Angels would never have any effect. Unable to inflict

them even a single wound, people would only repeat useless effort.

Thousands of people challenged them to try to rob their Books. Several people lost their lives and even more people than that wasted their whole lives.

The absolute was absolute because it couldn't be overturned. People have realized that and eventually gave up. At that time, an old man appeared in front of the Librarian Angel.

The man's name was Lascall Othello. Having the exact same name as the later Lascall Othello was not a coincidence. His name became the alias of the Memorial Weapon as is.

That old man clashed with the Librarian Angel all alone. His attacks surpassed Past Overseer Bantorra's causality erasure. It was shocking. It was the first of miracles humans could make.

Wielding a stone club in his hand, he fought the Librarian Angel. When he tried to escape by flying away the man would seal him with telekinesis, and even when he tried to use his power of spatial transposition the man would offset it with a Magic that denied the distorting of space.

By limiting the activation of his ability to once in his life and by limiting the target to a single Librarian Angel, the effectiveness of his Magic was doubled. However, even with that in mind the man's powers were beyond human knowledge. Perhaps there were never any warriors that surpassed him even when taking into account the later era.

After a long time, the Librarian Angel succumbed in front of the old man known as Lascall Othello.

'Splendid, warrior Lascall Othello.'

Said the Librarian Angel who fell on the ground with a voiceless voice.

'However, your fight is meaningless. Books will never go into human's hands.'

The Librarian Angel's box fell to the ground and vanished. The Books inside have crossed space and were sent to Bantorra Library. Even if a single Librarian Angel disappears it would not be a huge blow to Past God Bantorra. It was only

one of many after all.

"With all due respect, I do not care about one or two Books at all."

Said old Lascall calmly. He sat down quietly next to the collapsed Librarian Angel.

'Humans will never beat Gods. No matter how much this Ruruta person acquires

power, no matter how hard you work, you will never surpass the Gods.'

The Librarian Angel asserted. Old Lascall replied derisively.

"It does not matter at all. It does not matter whether the world is destroyed or not."

'...What are you even saying?'

Old Lascall had a serious expression. The Librarian Angel became interested in him for the first time.

"Yes, it does not matter at all. You may as well destroy it. But I have one single request. Please show it to this old man."

'...Why?'

"Even if you ask me why..."

The old man made a smile that wasn't quite wicked but mysterious.

"Because it seems fun. No matter the screams we raise, what face we make as we cry, the way we despair and die... do you not want to see it? This Lascall Othello cannot die without viewing something so enjoyable."

'...What are you thinking about?'

"Well, it is surely something not decent."

Saying this, the old man laid his hand atop the Librarian Angel. His hand was inserted into the copper-made body. It vanished as if it was an illusion.

"This is a power that allows me to fuse with you. You will remain the main body. I will merely become a parasite that resides within you. So do not worry. You will lose none of your functions."

Even having lost one hand, the old man kept talking calmly.

'Do you want to continue living inside my body?'

"Exactly. I have defeated you for that reason. To become one with you and see the world be destroyed."

The Librarian Angel then thought. *This man is abnormal. Is he still human even so? If that also counts as human, just what are humans?*

"I also have my doubts. Just what humans are? There is probably no one who knows.

Even the Gods who have created them."

Lascall spoke as if reading the Librarian Angel's heart.

A change occurred in the Librarian Angel. Curiosity that should have not existed was born in his heart. He had no idea whether it came because of his fusion with Lascall or spontaneously.

The resistance to the fusion disappeared from the Librarian Angel's mind. He didn't want to go back to such dull jobs as excavating and carrying Books. More than that he wanted to understand what humans were. He wanted to, along with this old man, see the interweaving stories of humans.

'Lascall. I now also want to know. What are humans? Are they the failed products of the Gods or developing beings that could someday reach paradise? Or perhaps they are something no one can even imagine.'

"You want to see the actions of humans. I want to see the destruction of humans. If we become one, which of our wishes will be granted?"

They were fusing. Lascall, who wanted to see the destruction, and the Librarian Angel that wanted to know humans. Their wishes were becoming one.

"Let us go look at the destruction of the world."

'Let us go look at the interweaving stories of humans.'

The old man's body was completely absorbed by the Librarian Angel. By combining one human and one being, a truly different *something* that didn't exist so far was born.

At the same time, the copper body too cracked and crumbled.

The only thing left behind was the Librarian Angel's stone sword. Its form started changing. Its plain hilt transformed into a bizarre form patterned after human hands.

The stone melted into the ground and vanished. It went to look for a body to control.

It possessed the body of a dead person somewhere and controlled it.

And thus Lascall Othello was born. That, which was once a single human and a single Librarian Angel, later became known as the Passed Stone Blade Yor.

Approximately 2000 years later, Lascall Othello was on Past God Island. Keeping watch of people's interweaving stories, he was trying to see the destruction of the world.

If the world ends Lascall would also probably end. And after humanity is dead Future Overseer Orntorra and Past Overseer Bantorra would be reborn. There was no doubt that Lascall, who would only be a foreign body in the new paradise, would be erased.

But that was fine. After watching over the end of the world he would have no objections to be annihilated.

What could he look forward to in a world controlled by Orntorra? What was interesting about watching endless happiness? The stories of humans and the destruction of the world were that much pleasant.

Among this delight that made him tremble, and while feeling a slight reluctance, Lascall watched over the end of the world.

Suddenly, at that moment, he muttered.

"Oh?"

Lascall saw something abnormal being born in this world that has ended.

Colio was holding his knees and crying. As his tears ran out, he kept repeating

small weeps. Just like he was as a Meat before meeting Shiron.

Yet his hand suddenly moved. His strongly clenched fist hit his own face. And it wasn't a gentle strike. That hit was as if he was killing a hated enemy.

"You idiot, you incompetent!"

Anger welled from within him. He couldn't forgive himself for simply shuddering, for being unable to do anything.

"Have you really loved someone like me?!"

The face of his beloved Shiron rose to the back of his mind. Colio recalled himself throwing away his life to face the Indulging God Cult.

Who Shiron loved wasn't me like I am now. I'm not worthy of her loving me.

I have to fight, thought Colio. But I have no power. I can do nothing. I only have a single knife and the bomb in my chest. It's not even enough to take down a Beast of the Final Chapter along with me.

"But if I can do nothing other than that..."

Colio touched the bomb inside his chest. He rose up and gazed at the Beast swarms.

The moment he started running, he heard someone's voice.

'No!'

"...!"

He stopped in place and looked around. That was Shiron's voice for sure now.

There was no one in the area. Obviously Shiron wouldn't be there. Yet he definitely heard her voice.

"...Shiron."

He removed the hand from his bomb. And he averted his gaze from the Beasts.

He was about to lose something precious. Who Shiron loved wasn't a bomb. It was a human. He had to fight as a human until the very end.

Colio ran in the opposite direction from the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

He had no idea what he should do or what he could do. He was powerless, foolish and small. Yet he regained his will to fight.

So he could stay human until the very last moment. So he could fight as a human.

Turning around, he could see clouds of sand rising from the desert. Inside them, the Beasts of the Final Chapter were chasing Hamyuts.

All of the Beasts were aiming for Hamyuts. She desperately ran away. She was getting far away from Nieniu. She could not even see the theater with the naked eye anymore.

She would catch the pursuing Beast with her sling and throw it at another. Then, running away again, she would repeat the same process. Yet even when she was doing that the Beasts' numbers increased endlessly.

There were apparently no other people in the fight. Were they all annihilated by the Beasts? What was Colio doing? Where has that foolish girl known as Miena went to?

It was useless to think of them.

Hamyuts simply wielded her sling so that she could live one second longer.

"...Please stop. Why do you fight so much?"

Nieniu inquired. Hamyuts replied as if sighing.

"...Who cares."

"...Please relax already. When you suffer it pains me as well."

"Shuddup! Stop running your mouth!"

She knew she couldn't win. Hamyuts fought in order to not acknowledge defeat. If she were to lose here then what had she lived for? She had been implanted with the Suicidal Wish and underwent hellish days. She fought not wanting to think of all that as meaningless.

"...If you entrust your body to your wish of death, you will be able to die happy. That is the best path for you."

It was definitely true. She had the desire to die. But if she succumbed to it nothing would come out of it. It was much more unbearable than death.

"...It is useless. Everything was meaningless."

"No! I wasn't meaningless!"

By shouting she recovered her broken spirit. In order to keep fighting for even a moment longer.

A single phrase floated to Ruruta's mind: just desserts. Whatever someone does they would definitely pay for it someday. Meaning, this was his punishment.

"Feeling the pain?! Tell me it hurts Ruruta!"

About ten warriors encircled Ruruta and continued his torture. Ruruta simply received it without resisting or moving a single finger.

"Shit! Shit! Why are you making that indifferent face!"

At some point Hamyuts's Suicidal Wish had already been lifted. Pain now tormented Ruruta without turning into pleasure. Yet their torture was nothing. At least when compared to the pain that filled his chest.

He wished for only one thing. *Kill me already.* That was it.

"Cry! Cry and wail! We still haven't seen your tears!"

Ruruta started thinking. *I've never cried. I've lost the function to shed tears long ago.*

Even when I was made to fight as a hero, and even after I became the demon lord who rules the world, even when Nieniu died, I never cried. I wasn't allowed to even cry.

That's how my life went.

Would crying make him feel better? Even if he thought so, no tears came out.

"That's enough... let's kill him. He no longer feels anything."

One person said. Miena replied to them.

"My heart is not yet clear. My only wish is to see this man crying."

Even while listening to their conversation, Ruruta's now apathetic heart was not swayed even a little.

What have I done wrong? Now he knew. It was his birth.

"But it's useless. That man's heart is already dead."

"...So no choice huh. Maybe we'll kill him."

Miena said in a sorrowful voice. *Is this it*, wondered Ruruta. He, who now wished he wouldn't have been born, was about to die. However, at that moment a shout echoed.

"Stop!"

Miena and the rest turned back. Ruruta also looked toward the sound. A boy was there.

Even when he saw him Ruruta felt nothing. *So you're still alive*, he just coldly thought.

"Stop, don't... don't torment Ruruta any further!"

Colio Tonies was standing on the sand.

"...Who're you?"

In Colio's eyes were reflected Ruruta, who already seemed as if he was dead, and about ten people surrounding him. The girl standing at the center spoke.

"Who are you to tell us to stop tormenting him?"

Both the girl and the men standing next to her were warriors who have mastered Magic. They would be able to kill Colio in less than a second.

"I'm Colio Tonies. I am no one, a normal person."

Having introduced himself, the warriors questioned him.

"What have you come here for?"

"To save him! I've come to save Ruruta!"

Colio didn't think about what would happen by saving him. Yet he couldn't help but want to do so. Colio couldn't save the world. Yet he didn't want to forsake someone that he might be able to save.

Colio already forgot that Ruruta had wanted to kill him and that he was the perpetrator of the world's destruction. For him Ruruta was merely a collapsed, wounded, normal boy.

He could understand him. He could feel Ruruta's pain as if it was his own. He could understand the pain of being unable to make one's beloved happy. Therefore he couldn't help but save him.

The warriors surrounding Ruruta looked at Colio as if he was mere trash on the side of the road. Ruruta stayed collapsed, not moving a muscle.

"Stop tormenting Ruruta any further. What good will that do?"

Colio said to them. One of the warriors then asked the girl at the center.

"What do we do Miena?"

"Drive him out."

The girl called Miena ordered. One of the warriors released a shockwave from his hand and attacked Colio's feet. He didn't flinch. Rather he charged towards the warriors. And he tried grabbing the man who shot the shockwave.

"What're you doing you brat!"

"Move! I'm going to save Ruruta!"

"You're in the way!"

The warrior made Colio roll on the ground with a swing of his arm. He stood up while spitting the sand that got in his mouth, and once again grabbed that man.

"I'm telling you to stop!"

The next moment sharp pain ran through Colio's stomach. Miena drove a kick into him. Colio once again rolled on the ground, writhing in pain and holding his abdomen.

"Saving Ruruta? Are you insane, brat?"

Miena asserted ruthlessly. While spewing vomit, Colio glared at her.

Anger welled up inside his chest. But even if he was angry he couldn't do anything.

Colio was far too powerless. He could do nothing but shout.

"You're in my way, move. I'll save Ruruta!"

Miena talked as if spitting.

"Why would you save that man? Everything is his fault. Are you saying it's not true?"

Colio didn't know what to say. What Miena said was the absolute truth.

"You're right. But, he couldn't... Ruruta couldn't do anything else! What else could he have done?!"

Miena's face distorted unpleasantly.

"Ruruta was cornered, and cornered, and finally became so. If someone had reached out to him before it wouldn't have turned out like this."

"So what?"

"No one saved Ruruta. He was suffering all by himself and never heard any gentle words. What were you doing, you were the ones who left Ruruta all alone!"

Reply came in the form of Miena's fist. Colio's teeth broke and scattered in the desert.

She grabbed Colio by the collar, raised him then slammed him into the sand.

She kicked his back as he attempted standing up.

"Stop that Miena, he'll die."

One of the warriors grabbed Miena's shoulder.

"I'll kill him. There's still time to torment and kill that brat."

No one stopped Miena asserting this. Even while being trampled, Colio desperately moved his mouth.

"What's... wrong?"

Colio stood up. As he stood up he was beaten, thrown and rolled.

"What's wrong about it, when you love someone, wanting to make them happy, what's wrong about that!"

"It's obviously wrong!"

Miena shouted, grabbed Colio's hair and lifted him up.

"How many lost their lives because of that? How became unhappy? Try telling me!

What's supposed to be right about him!"

She once again hurled him, sending him flying. What Miena said was right. Ruruta was in the wrong. And yet still Colio wanted to save him.

No more words came out. But Colio replied in his heart.

Ruruta was a fool. The worst man. He had repeatedly made sins and mistakes.

However, only his feelings consisting of falling in love with a person and wishing to make them happy were not wrong.

No matter how wrong Ruruta was, his love was not a mistake.

Miena knocked off Colio three times. His knees trembled and he lost his sense of balance. Unable to even stand anymore, he glared at Miena. That action perhaps rubbing them the wrong way, several feet trampled on him.

"He's already dying."

One warrior said. *Probably so*, thought Colio. However, before dying he wanted to save Ruruta. He couldn't bear dying without doing anything and without saving anyone.

"That's enough, kill him."

Miena said. Colio burned with anger. He wanted to save a wounded, desperate boy.

He hated them for not allowing him to even think that.

"...You're in... my... way..."

Colio's hand grasped sand. He clenched his powerless fist. At that moment, he could feel a strange power welling up inside him.

"You're in my way, move!"

Colio raised his face and glared at Miena and the rest. A strange light was emitted from his body. Just by emitting that faint light for a split second, the welling power vanished.

However, Miena and the rest ceased their attacks. They stepped back as if flinching.

"...Go away."

He hadn't the leisure to ponder the identity of the light from before or think about why Miena and the rest flinched. He stood up and threw words at them.

"I'm telling you to go away. Have you not heard me!"

The warriors flinched at the sound of the supposedly powerless Colio. Even

Miena stood in place unable to do anything.

"M-Miena..."

A warrior said.

"Let's go help Hamyuts. We've had enough of a revenge."

"W...what?!"

Miena said. Yet even she couldn't raise a hand on Colio. He had no idea what was going on.

"L-let's go!"

At Miena's voice, the warriors turned their bodies and headed for Nieniu's direction.

The exhausted Colio once again collapsed on the sand. At that time, a voice reached the depths of his ears.

'...It's useless with you.'

This wasn't Shiron's voice. He had the feeling he heard it before but couldn't recall it.

'You can't... succeed it. Since you're already dead...'

With just this, the voice in his ear disappeared. What was that just now? He thought but had no idea. Colio crawled toward Ruruta.

"Are you still alive, Ruruta?"

Colio desperately roused his body. And he hit the shoulders of the collapsed Ruruta.

"...Why did you save me."

Ruruta said, his breath faint.

"Why did you save me. Kill me, I don't want to live anymore."

Colio couldn't say anything. He understood Ruruta's pain.

"Nieniu won't become happy! If so then I don't want to live any longer. So kill me!"

What can I say? What can I do? Someone please tell me. How can I console this boy who's lost the only person he loves?

He could do only one thing. He could do only one thing for this person who's lost everything.

Colio hugged Ruruta. Wordlessly but powerfully.

"Coli...o?"

What face was Ruruta making? What was he thinking? Since his face was on Colio's shoulder, he couldn't tell his expression.

A long silence descended on the Imaginary Entrails' desert.

"Don't give up, Ruruta."

Colio said.

"Make Nieniu happy. You're the only one who can make her happy.

She's a good person, right? She should be happy, right? So Ruruta. Don't give up."

"..."

Ruruta made no reply. While in his embrace Ruruta made no move and stayed silent.

"Don't say you shouldn't have been born. Don't think your life was meaningless.

Being alive has its own meaning. Loving someone has its own meaning."

"...y."

Ruruta faintly opened his mouth.

"Why... did you... save me?"

Colio then answered.

"I was able to meet Shiron in this world you've protected. I met her thanks to you. I can forgive everything because of that.

Therefore, this time it was my turn to save you."

"...Save... me?"

Ruruta's hands moved. They grabbed Colio's arm.

"Save... save..."

And Ruruta silently began crying.

"Save..."

He couldn't form any further words.

Ruruta cried. The great hero who saved the world, the demon lord who destroyed the world, was crying.



Thinking back, Ruruta never cried starting from the Paradise Era. Even while fearing the Beasts of the Final Chapter and no matter how much his body hurt during his hellish training. Not even when he had lost his beloved Nieniu did Ruruta cry.

"I understand you, Ruruta. You can cry."

Colio hugged the crying Ruruta powerfully.

"You haven't ever been able to cry. Although you wanted to you couldn't!"

Ruruta was alone. Since he was the peerless great hero, never mind crying,

there wasn't anyone who would save him. Since he was the fearful demon lord hated by everyone, never mind crying, there wasn't anyone who would save him.

Tears were the soul's call for help. Even a baby wouldn't shed tears when there was no one nearby. People couldn't cry if there was absolutely no one to save them.

However, Colio said that he would save Ruruta. Apart from Nieniu, such a person didn't exist in the entire world.

There was someone to save him. Ruruta was allowed to cry for the first time.

The tears that didn't flow even in his despair, even in his fear, even during his hellish days. The tears that didn't flow no matter how sad he was and how much he suffered.

The tears he had accumulated ever since the day Nieniu died, for 1927 years.

They were released by Colio's words.

"...Uu."

Colio groaned. The ribs broken by Miena ached. *But I can't let go*, he thought. *I will make Ruruta cry after he was finally allowed to cry*, he thought.

"Colio... what should I do?"

"Ruruta..."

"I was unable to make Nieniu happy, so what should I do? I've lost anything and everything, so what should I do?"

Colio answered unhesitatingly.

"Live."

He spoke while wiping away Ruruta's tears with his fist.

"Live and struggle. Keep struggling to make Nieniu happy."

Colio has perhaps spoken the cruelest of words. Keeping one's hope in a world whose destruction had already been decided was nothing but suffering.

"Even now you love her, right? You want to make her happy. Then nothing

was lost."

At that moment, Colio's body began crumbling down. The attacks of Miena and the rest reached his very life. He preserved his life until now just by the single wish of wanting to save Ruruta.

"...Colio, I can no longer do..."

"Believe. You can definitely make Nieniu happy. Since it's you you can do it. Even if you don't believe it, I will."

The arm embracing Ruruta was changing to sand.

"Don't break yet..."

He still hasn't told him everything. *Please let me speak until the end*, thought Colio.

Yet his body coldly continued its destruction.

"Since I'm... supporting you..."

The words he couldn't fully transmit vanished in the wind. Colio's body turned to a small heap of sand. Colio Tonies reached his second death. Since Ruruta's arms lost what they held onto, he fell on the sand.

"Colio..."

Ruruta grasped the sand that was once Colio.

"Colioooo!!!"

And he raised a loud cry.

"...It will end very soon, Hamyuts-san."

Hamyuts fell to her knees on the sand. She heard Nieniu's words coming from afar.

Blood scattered from her entire body. Moving while crawling on her knees, Hamyuts wielded her sling.

It happened mere minutes ago. The attack of a Lancer caught Hamyuts as she landed and severed her Achilles tendon. It escalated in no time from there. If

she couldn't run she couldn't escape. If she couldn't escape she would be surrounded. Next she would only be crushed and could only wait for death.

Even the reinforcements of Miena and the rest were defeated and gone. Only Hamyuts alone remained.

"...Hamyuts-san. Is it not sad? But that is fine. It is not like the world is ending. The rotten world will be destroyed and then reborn anew."

She rolled on the sand, evading a Jail King Snake's acid. She didn't even have the energy to respond.

"...The reborn world will be a paradise with neither suffering nor sadness. It is a wonderful thing. So Hamyuts-san, please die without any sadness."

The desire to be killed filled Hamyuts's chest. *Yield yourself*, her soul asked of her.

Yet even now Hamyuts's heart couldn't abandon its will to resist.

"...Goodbye."

But just as a Blade-Haired Lion's fangs leapt ahead as if to break that last will...

"Nieniu!"

A shout rumbled inside the Imaginary Entrails. A single arm extended from behind Hamyuts and gouged out the eyeballs of the Blade-Haired Lion.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter ceased their movements. Even Hamyuts stopped

swinging her sling and turned around.

"No way."

The one standing there was a bloody Ruruta Coozancoona. Hamyuts strained her eyes, convinced she had seen wrong.

In his hand he held a knife. It was a commonplace, ordinary knife. But Hamyuts recalled – this knife had belonged to Colio.

He was supposed to have been exhausted. He shouldn't even be standing. Yet Ruruta stepped ahead as if covering for Hamyuts.

"...What are you trying to do?"

Nieniu said.

"I'm going to stop the destruction of the world."

Hamyuts had no idea what was happening. The man who until a while ago was trying to end the world was now protecting her.

"...Why?"

"Even if the world is destroyed you will not become happy."

Leaving Hamyuts where she was, Ruruta advanced. Clenching the knife, he kept

walking ahead. He went toward the distant Nieniu.

"...Ruruta, why can you not understand? The world must be destroyed. This world filled with suffering has to end. After it is destroyed a new paradise will be born."

"But that will not make you happy.

Isn't it so, Nieniu? Even if you destroy it you won't become happy, right?"

"...Ruruta?"

He felt slight anger at Nieniu's words.

"And so I will stop the destruction of the world. All in order to make you happy."

"What happened to you, Ruruta?"

Hamyuts's mutter didn't reach him.

"...What are you saying when not long ago you were telling me to destroy the world?"

"I was wrong."

"...I have told you countless times that the world must be destroyed, so why do you not understand?"

"It has nothing to do with paradise or hell. I don't care how the world is. Your happiness is everything to me."

"...Ruruta. Only you I..."

The Beasts of the Final Chapter moved. Ruruta started running.

"...I will never forgive!"

Nieniu's angry roar reverberated throughout the Imaginary Entrails. Ignoring Hamyuts, the Beasts flooded at Ruruta.

Ruruta went ahead with a single knife in hand against the swarming enemies. He deflected the spear of a Cavalryman with it and rolled to dodge the acid of a Jail King Snake.

How slow and powerless, thought Hamyuts looking from behind. He had no chances of winning. There was no hope whatsoever.

And yet Ruruta was fighting. In his hand was a fragment of the courage Colio left behind. In his chest were his feelings toward Nieniu. Ruruta was fighting only using these.

"...I will never forgive you, I'll kill you, I'll kill you!"

The girl he loved was raging. She was shouting her intent to kill Ruruta. Yet he kept advancing.

"Ruruta, you..."

Hamyuts muttered.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter surrounded Ruruta. Ripping the legs of a Cavalryman and the nose of an Elephant Soldier to shreds with a knife, he broke through the siege.

And he advanced toward Nieniu.

Looking at his back, Hamyuts recalled – he was once the hero who saved the world.

Outside the Imaginary Entrails, a figure stood on top of the beer hall's roof at Past God Bantorra Island.

"...Hu...hahaha, huhahahahaha!"

Lascall stifled his voice and started laughing. And then, as if saying he could hold back no longer, he raised his voice. How many thousands of years was it since he last laughed like this? The last time was probably the day Ruruta had Eaten Nieniu. It was the laughter of joy at having witnessed something completely impossible.

"Oh my, oh my, I am already completely speechless. How much will you entertain me? This Lascall has already said he was satisfied!"

He gasped for air, twisted his body, bent back and laughed. He kept laughing at this man who stood against the destruction of the world with a single knife in hand.

Lascall couldn't understand. How could he stand up and how was he able to fight?

Judging it from the perception of Lascall who could overlook the entire world, his chances for victory were zero. Even Ruruta surely understood that.

Was he sane? If he was, then what was sanity anyway?

Lascall didn't understand, and what he couldn't understand was enjoyable. There was still something he couldn't understand in this world supposedly finished. There was still a sequel to the story.

"...You are wonderful, Ruruta-sama. Meeting you truly was a miracle.

If you insist this finished tale needs to keep going it is wonderful."

Lascall's body vanished from the roof. The next instant he appeared inside Bantorra Library that was swarming with Beasts.

"Bestowing stories a continuation is Lascall Othello's duty. And it is also his pleasure."

While saying so, Lascall walked inside the Library.

Yet even Lascall had no way of providing a breakthrough. In the first place all the Stone Blade could do was excavate and carry Books as well as convey them to people.

He no longer had anyone in the world to convey anything to. And no one would be producing Books.

In the first place he was only a being that watched over stories. He didn't have any combat capabilities.

"Yes, I can only do but one thing. Merely granting a continuation to stories that have already ended."

Librarian trainees were collapsed in the courtyard, streets and inside buildings. The Armed Librarians were inside the Sixth Sealed Labyrinth. Inside the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth were Yukizona, Yuri and Mattalast. Near Hamyuts's corpse Enlike and Bonbo were collapsed.

Lascall could give any of their supposedly finished stories a continuation. He would merely be able to drive away the Power of Tearless Ending and make them wake up.

However, this wasn't Lascall's original function.

Could he do it? He probably could. Although worn-out and withered, he was one of Past Overseer Bantorra's Librarian Angels. He had that much power. But what would happen to Lascall afterward? He had a vague guess: Lascall Othello would be gone.

Lascall had already realized that his functions were deteriorating. Even he underwent aging during these 2000 years. Also, he knew fully well what would happen if he used something not part of his original functions.

"I have gotten my priorities backwards. Although I want to see the stories you will bring forth it will not happen were I to be gone."

However, Lascall surveyed the Armed Librarians and searched for someone to wake up. Although he knew he would break, he didn't stop.

He would probably only be able to revive one person. He had to choose carefully.

And it was possible that even after waking someone up they wouldn't move. Or it was possible that he would be able to see Ruruta's story continuing. Whatever came after an impossible possibility was far too alluring.

But who should he choose? Who would be able to shake up the world?

Mattalast? It would be impossible for him to stand up to Nieniu. How about

Yukizona? Yet his Decay Wave would not be able to land even a single wound on her.

Even Enlike wouldn't be able to do anything. Bonbo, Kyasariro, Marfa, Luik... they were all out of the question.

If there was someone there was only one option. None other than that person. Lascall sat next to an Armed Librarian and put his Stone Blade on their chest.

He exercised the power he hadn't used for 2000 years. He invaded that Armed Librarian's heart, and destroyed the Power of Tearless Ending binding their mind.

"So it is impossible..."

Muttering this didn't mean that he failed on waking them up; it meant that it would not end well for Lascall himself. Small cracks ran through the Stone Blade held in his left hand.

"Huhuhu, that is also not bad. No, on the contrary, that is the most impossible ending of all."

Looking up toward the heavens, he kept his monologue.

"I cannot believe it, Ruruta-sama. You have moved me."

His voice started shaking. Lascall was losing the power to manipulate his body.

"Who would have... thought that I would... throw away my life for Ruruta-sama... it is impossible, more than anything... Huhuhu, that is, that truly is..."

His controlled body let go of the stone blade. It fell on the floor and shattered like glass.

"The most impossible ending... how wonderful, b..."

As Lascall Othello vanished, the Sixth Sealed Archive once again became silent.

Several dozens of seconds later, a delicate woman's voice was heard. Her body

slightly writhing, clothes rubbing against the floor could be heard. After a few more seconds, she stood as if springing up.

She was the one chosen by Lascall Othello as the one and only possibility. The last hope of saving the world. Although only a Third-Grade Armed Librarian, she was the best user of Thought Sharing in the world.

Mirepoc Finedell rose.

Chapter 4: The Light of this Wonderful World

Ruruta's knife fended off a Cavalryman's spear. Charging into its chest, he swept its front legs with a kick and drove his left fist into its torso. An Elephant Soldier's nose came charging from behind and from the left came a Boxer.

Ruruta pushed forward. Stepping over the defeated Cavalryman, he headed for the Blade-Haired Lion in front of him. The bladed fur cut Ruruta, but in exchange he scratched the Lion's windpipe open.

Ruruta ran and ran ahead. He was surrounded by Beasts of the Final Chapter on all sides and even around them the area swarmed with more enemies.

"Guuuuh!"

He blocked the horn of a Rhino and pushed it back. Crossing over its body he moved ahead.

They continued attacking. He had no way to conduct a defensive battle. If he were to stop he would simply receive attacks on all sides and be killed. He could only create his own chance of survival.

The only power Ruruta could use now was his own bodily reinforcement. And it

certainly wasn't something that would allow him to stand up to Nieniu. Yet even with that meager power Ruruta fought and survived.

The moment he threw his doubts away, the moment he overcame his resignation, a warrior obtained a new power.

Nieniu's theater was distant. Ruruta kept earnestly pushing onward.

"...What a foolish man."

The voice of anger reverberated through the Imaginary Entrails.

"...How can you think of fighting? You should have already realized that you were better off not being born!

I cannot bear to look at it! Please die already, Ruruta Coozancoona!"

Nieniu created even more Beasts and sent them after Ruruta.

Ruruta's eyes were wet with tears. This was his second time fighting to the death with his lover. It was the biggest tragedy for him.

Inside Bantorra Library's Sixth Sealed Archive, the rising Mirepoc was astonished. At her feet there was an unknown dead woman. She touched the woman's clothes and looked at her face. She wondered if she knew her or not, but soon realized it didn't matter anyway.

Mirepoc looked around. What she could see there was a scenery from nightmares.

The figures of Armed Librarians, all of them without any exception collapsed and not moving a muscle, entered her vision.

The rebellion of the Guardian Beasts protecting Bantorra Library... Hearing the truth about the Armed Librarians from Hamyuts... The existence of the man known as Ruruta Coozancoona... The fact that the world was about to be destroyed... Finally, the fight against the Guardian Beasts and their loss.

When she opened her eyes she obviously remembered all that. Yet somewhere in her mind she wondered if it was all a dream. Perhaps morning would come and she would return to her normal life. She would scold Hamyuts who was wholly unmotivated, she would deal with Mattalast making fun of her... working in the office even on her days off, she would watch girls of her age happily talk about love and relationships from the side and have doubts in herself. She thought she was going back to that life.

"...Am I not awake yet?"

Even during the fight she felt it was all a dream. Yet reality was in front of her eyes.

The Armed Librarians and trainees collapsed in the Sixth Archive all seemed like a dream but were part of reality.

Mirepoc grabbed the collar of Gamo collapsed near her and shook him. She shouted his name countless times, but he was immobile as if he were dead. Her only relief was that his heart was still beating.

She slapped Tena's cheeks while her whole body was caked in dry blood, and clung to Marfa who was lying face-down. From the Sixth Archive she ran to the Fifth Sealed Archive. She found the bloody Mattalast collapsed there and called his name countless times. But it was useless.

"Why am I the only one awake? Why? Why doesn't anyone wake up?"

Mirepoc further ran up the stairs and exited the Labyrinth. Another nightmare appeared to her there.

"...Heee."

A shriek the likes of which she thought she would never utter after she aimed to become a soldier as a child escaped her mouth. The lobby where the normal librarians worked, the guests' waiting rooms, and the entrance to the Library were all occupied by the Guardian Beasts – no, the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

A Lancer stared at Mirepoc. An Elephant Soldier blew its nose at her face. All these who knows how many Beasts all turned toward Mirepoc. She reflexively drew her gun and pointed it at them. The Beasts made no move and so did she.

Within her own limits of battle experience, Mirepoc's intuition informed her – they were enemies, but she could never win against them. Although they were inactive now, the moment they set out Mirepoc would turn into scraps of meat.

'...We will destroy.'

The intention of the Beasts was transmitted. An aimless killing intent. They were born just to kill so they would kill – such an intent was emitted from their whole body.

I can't fight them. Mirepoc surmised this, lowered her gun and ran. She

smoothly weaved her path through the Beasts. Quieting her breath and shrinking her body, she went outside.

She went through the lobby, passed the hallway and the reception desk, and by

leaving the main entrance she arrived at the courtyard. The outside had also turned into the domain of Beasts of the Final Chapter already.

"...Haah... haah..."

Although she did nothing fear by itself took her breath away.

She found a fallen figure in the courtyard. It was Bonbo. She ran up to him and checked his condition, but soon gave up. He was immobile just like the other Armed Librarians.

There were scorch marks here and there around. This was neither because Bonbo's ability nor because of Kyasariro who had escaped there. Mirepoc found an unfamiliar figure collapsed from afar. She had the feeling she had once seen him but couldn't remember. Since he, different from the Armed Librarians, had an expression full of regret, she hoped that perhaps something would happen. But it was useless. Even he no longer moved.

But Mirepoc still held hope. She believed only that person was not yet collapsed. She believed that person would do something about the situation.

That person should be in the highest floor of Bantorra Library's building that she just ran away from. Mirepoc turned around with 99% fear and a single percent full of hope.

"...Ah."

It truly was a symbolic scene. Underneath the sky swirling with black clouds, a single giant needle stuck out from the old-standing Bantorra Library. A few meters above the tip of the needle floated a figure with an overwhelming presence.

And penetrated by the needle was Hamyuts.

"...U...uu..."

Mirepoc's knees folded. She held her head in fear and cowered on the spot.

"...It's useless, it's already useless, it's over, it's all over..."

The absolute winner and the thoroughly crushed loser. That sight was enough to completely break Mirepoc's spirits.

The crouched Mirepoc entered the Beasts' line of sight. Her mental state was like live bait thrown into a swarm of wild beasts.

"Dad, dad, save me, someone save me, please come, anyone, this is... this is... someone..."

Covering her face, Mirepoc kept muttering.

She was brave enough. No normal person would've been able to run through the

Beasts of the Final Chapter. Assaulted by absolute solitude, faced by an overwhelming enemy, that would be about all a human could do. Being able to do anything more would be abnormal.

"...Please die, die already Ruruta!"

Inside the Imaginary Entrails, Nieniu unleashed one Beast after another.

"I can't die, I can't Nieniu!"

The density of the siege heightened without end. Ruruta could no longer find any gaps.

He could only survive using the path he would carve himself using his knife.

Thrusting away a Cavalryman to wrench open a path, the moment he stepped out he dodged the acid of a Jail King Snake. Spinning his body he rode on the Snake, leapt and spun around, kicking down a Lancer to create a foothold.

If he made but one mistake in his moves he would have been killed. If he stopped but for a second he would have been killed. Ruruta stayed alive even during this deadly combat.

No matter how fierce the attacks were, he could avoid them for five seconds. And if he could survive for five seconds he would also survive the next ones.

Then the next and the next. As long as he could endure five seconds he would endure forever.

This irrational reasoning that was impossible in reality was made possible just by Ruruta's willpower. Only for the sake of the person he loved, for Nieniu.

Although that Nieniu was trying to kill him, he kept fighting for her sake.

"...How stubborn. Why will you not die?"

Nieniu didn't check the Beasts of the Final Chapter "outside". Her hatred for Ruruta was so deep she had forgotten about wanting to destroy the world.

At that moment, Ruruta felt a murderous intent other than that of the Beasts. He turned over his body.

"...Binding Song."

Nieniu's voice echoed. Her stone arm moved and pointed at Ruruta. Binding Song –

one of the causality erasing attacks. It was the power to unconditionally kill anyone she pointed at. Nieniu herself attempted to kill Ruruta.

But by that time Ruruta had already hid himself behind the body of a Jail King Snake.

Becoming his substitute, the Snake dispersed and was annihilated. Rolling on the sand, Ruruta used the Beasts of the Final Chapter as shields to protect against Nieniu's Binding Song.

"Such an ability won't work on me!"

Ruruta shouted, but Nieniu paid him no heed.

"...Apparently. But so what?"

He could prevent the Binding Song. However, this didn't mean he was out of danger.

Despair blocked Ruruta without any change.

Mirepoc crouched down near the fountain. Covering her face with both

hands, tears spilled from her eyes. Even so she invoked her Magic Right. It was her Thought Sharing ability, allowing her to transmit her thoughts to people.

She no longer had any will to fight. The only thing that made her move was that she wanted to run away from fear. She could do by using the only means that supported her thus far, her Thought Sharing ability.

'Help me! Someone! Is there anyone?! Someone help me!'

Mirepoc asked everyone she could for help. There was not a single voice to respond.

Obviously. All people in the world were asleep by the Power of Tearless Ending.

Yukizona and Yuri whom she hadn't seen... Minth and Yanku who weren't currently in Bantorra Library... All Armed Librarians and trainees she could think of.

And not only them. She even sent thoughts to her acquaintances among the normal librarians or people from the town, and even her military comrades and family from the homeland. She even tried sending them to dead people such as Ireia and Noloty and to people whom she barely knew in passing such as Photona.

Obviously no reply came.

'...Help me, someone help me. I'm scared, Director, Matt-san, dad...'

Fundamentally Mirepoc was a person who couldn't fight unless relying on someone.

She was able to gain courage once in her homeland's army and now by relying on the Armed Librarians.

It wasn't a bad thing. Most humans were like that.

There was no sign of Beasts' attacks about to be interrupted. Ruruta's feet tangled, his eyes misted over, and the knife was about to slip from his fingers.

His wounds were to the extent that had he received them on living flesh he

would have already died.

The Imaginary Entrails were the world of souls. The power of the soul was willpower.

Ruruta supported his body only using his feelings for Nieniu.

How many minutes could he hold on? Ten minutes? Fifteen? Or only ten more seconds?

Ruruta desperately rejected the limits of his body.

"...Ruruta, why are you fighting?"

While still angry, Nieniu inquired with a light pity in her voice.

"...No matter how many Beasts of the Final Chapter you defeat you will never reach me. Even if you did there is nothing you can do. You need enough power to fell a star to defeat me, yet your weapon is a single knife.

...What are you waiting for by keeping fighting?"

"I'm not... fighting you... because I want... to beat you."

While defending against attacks he replied with ragged breath.

"...Please answer me. What are you waiting for?"

"What, I wonder. Something..."

Nieniu spoke back at Ruruta's words that didn't serve as any reply.

"...What is that something? What will happen in the few minutes until your death?

...Do you believe that something so convenient would happen to stop the destruction of this world when there is no one left?

...You fool. Die already. Why are you still alive?"

At that moment, Ruruta smiled for some reason. He smiled even though she was

cursing him and telling him to die. Because no matter how horrible her words were, exchanging words with his beloved Nieniu was enjoyable for him.

"...Nieniu. I'm... standing only because... I'm assuming... something would happen."

"..."

"Something will happen! If I don't think so then I have nothing!"

"...I see. If so, then I just need to kill you."

Nieniu asserted. That would probably happen soon. He was no longer able to see clearly.

Mirepoc kept sending out thoughts. There was no longer anyone left. She could think of no other people. She had no one to send her thoughts to.

So this is it, thought Mirepoc.

She opened her eyes. She recalled that she had a spare gun in her pocket. She should have several dozens of bullets left.

"...Director, I can't allow you to end everything like this."

She pulled out her handgun and clenched it. *I can at least open a path for escape with these remaining bullets.*

I'm going to die anyway. As if I care, thought Mirepoc.

The Beasts gazed at Mirepoc. They seemed to be saying with their silence that although the orders to annihilate the human race have yet to come, they weren't as kind as to stay put when being attacked.

The moment she was about to shoot, Mirepoc heard a voice in the back of her head.

"Please survive, Mirepo."

The one to speak this was Hamyuts. This happened when she had just become an

Armed Librarian, when the battle against the Indulging God Cult began. Mirepoc had been called by Hamyuts to be preached about her mental

preparedness.

"I believe the outcome of this battle depends on you. You are more important than either Matt, Ireia or me. Your job is to not die whatever happens. No matter what happens with everyone else, you must keep living."

When she asked why, Hamyuts answered thus.

"You are the plus sign that connects all of us scattered 'ones'. No matter how strong I or Matt are, we only possess our own powers. With you here, we add that one and one together to become the power of two people, of three, of four... You can turn all these scattered ones to a hundred.

So please live. I will never accept your death."

Mirepoc lowered her clenched pistol. *That's not my job. I have to do my job until the end*, thought Mirepoc.

She threw away her gun. She launched it far away with all of her power. It passed above the roof of the assembly hall and disappeared. She hesitated because she had a weapon. She shouldn't have any weapon that hinders her work.

Is there any other path of escape? Mirepoc started thinking desperately.

Are there any other people I haven't connected to? Knowing one's face and name were the conditions to her sending thoughts to them. Has she contacted everyone she could remember?

She suddenly raised her face. She saw the needle as well as the statue of the boy floating above it.

"...Why have I forgotten?"

There still was someone to connect her thoughts to. And he was in front of her the whole time. A while ago in the Sixth Archive she had heard from Hamyuts the name of Ruruta Coozancoona. And he was that statue.

"..."

However, Mirepoc hesitated. She was now going to send her thoughts to the

man who was destroying the world. He was someone who until now plucked off the Armed Librarians as if they were weeds. What would she say to him? What could she tell him to stop him?

The moment she thought of this Mirepoc was assaulted by another fear. If it was possible to stop the destruction of the world with words, then Mirepoc carried the responsibility to say them. The fate of the entire world rested on her shoulders.

What am I supposed to say? Mirepoc kept hesitating.

How many Beasts had he driven away? Meaningless questions rose to Ruruta's exhausted mind. No matter how many he defeated, the number that remained was unchanged. The Beasts would be created endlessly unless Nieniu is stopped.

When would something happen to change the situation? That was also a meaningless question. Ruruta was waiting for something that was not supposed to happen.

If something could happen then it had to come not from the Imaginary Entrails but from the outside world. However, all living people were put to sleep by Ruruta's Power of Tearless Ending. Ruruta cut off the final hope with his own hands a few hours ago.

Was no one, not even a single person able to repel the Power of Tearless Ending?

Or perhaps the outside world was already a wilderness in which no one could live.

Since the sky of the Imaginary Entrails was covered by dark clouds he couldn't ascertain the situation outside.

"...Guh."

Ruruta noticed his fighting spirits were withering. Although he felt despair, he knew that he had to keep fighting. However, at this rate even before his fighting spirits folded he would be killed by Nieniu.

Is there no hope? The moment he thought this, a voice echoed in Ruruta's head.

'...R-Ruruta! Bantorra Library Director Ruruta!'

It came from Thought Sharing. There was someone still alive and moving.

For a moment he even forgot about the thrust of the Lancer approaching him. He felt so happy he could dance.

Yet Ruruta was still too optimistic.

'I am Third Grade Armed Librarian Mirepoc Finedell! Kill me! Please kill this Mirepoc before the world ends!'

He was now fighting to stop the destruction of the world, so he thought of humans as his allies. Yet Ruruta forgot – it was mere hours ago that he was trying to destroy the world.

'Please kill this Mirepoc!'

Mirepoc sent her thoughts to Ruruta. Even she realized she was being stupid. Yet she could think of nothing else to say. Mirepoc had no idea why he was destroying the world or what he was thinking about.

'Mirepoc Finedell... no. The situation has changed.'

When she received the reply, Mirepoc thought for a second she got the wrong person.

'...Wh-what are... you saying...'

'Listen! The situation's changed! I no longer want to destroy the world! I'm now protecting it!'

Mirepoc couldn't understand his words.

'Please, lend me a hand! Otherwise the world, will be destroyed... aaah!'

She heard a scream mixed in with his thoughts. Ruruta received some kind of attack.

Looking up to Ruruta atop the needle, nothing happened.

A few hours ago Ruruta was trying to destroy the world. Now he was fighting against something in order to protect the world. Several hours passed since she had collapsed.

What happened for the situation to change like this?

Why was he trying to deceive her? What did Ruruta want to do to her?

'Stop saying nonsense! Fight me before ending the world! Do something about me! I no longer understand anything!'

'Mirepoc! Believe me! I'm not lying!'

She clenched her teeth. *How can I believe you? You've been deceiving everyone for thousands of years after all. You've created the Indulging God Cult, made them fight us, and tried to destroy the world. How can I believe such a person?*

Ruruta desperately feigned calmness while connected to Mirepoc's thoughts. He

couldn't allow Nieniu to notice her existence. Mirepoc was currently his final hope. If she could even be called a hope.

'I won't believe you. You've deceived us. Both the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult! Who will believe you!'

'But at this rate the world will...'

'I don't know who you're fighting with, but you seem to be on the verge of death. So just die like that!'

'No, Mirepoc!'

Seeing Ruruta's expression change, Nieniu muttered.

"...I something going on?"

If he replied poorly she would suspect him. Ruruta had enemies all around him.

How could he make Mirepoc listen to him? He couldn't think of any method.

Ruruta knew no way of dealing with people other than with overwhelming power.

'Ruruta. Who on earth are you fighting? The people you've Eaten? The Armed Librarians of the past?'

'No! Please believe me!'

'There's no way I'd believe someone like you!'

Don't complain, please shut up and listen. He thought of replying this, but was barely able to stop himself.

How many times had he failed like this? He was used to simply convey orders without telling the truth. Wasn't everything now the result of that?

If he told the truth, if he let his true feelings be known, she would understand. And then she would fight with him. Ruruta believed so and sent out his thoughts.

'Mirepoc, I'll let you decide if you believe me or not. But please just listen to me. I can only count on you.'

'...No.'

'The power of the Beasts of the Final Chapter is not mine. It came from the one who once tried to destroy the world, Orntorra.

I fought against him and won. And then...'

'I said no!'

At that moment the Thought Sharing was cut off. The faintly connected hope was severed, and Ruruta was once again thrust into solitude.

Mirepoc cut off her Thought Sharing. Her head was already too disorderly to connect again.

Ruruta asked her to help him. He said he could only depend on her. He said that he, the person who tried to destroy the world, no longer wished to do it.

She couldn't understand any of it. What did it mean? She wasn't ever taught

anything about such a situation. She had never heard about an enemy overwhelmingly superior to her seeking help. She only knew what she was taught.

What should I do? Someone please tell me. Mirepoc held her head.

She then recalled the face of a certain girl.

"If someone asks you to help them..."

She recalled the face of her friend and disciple. The words of Noloty Malche crossed her mind.

"Then the best thing to do is help them with all you've got. It will probably go well like that."

This happened when she spoke to her after the Monster Incident. Having brought Enlike Bishile back to the Library with her, Noloty said this and puffed her chest.

Is that really fine? When Mirepoc asked this, Noloty made a smile free of worries and nodded.

"...I'll believe. I'll believe in him, Noloty!"

Mirepoc called and connected her thoughts once again.

'Ruruta. Please explain how I can help you. I'll believe it no matter how unbelievable it is.'

On the other side Ruruta was thinking of something. A small mutter was transmitted.

'I see. So there are people who will help me in this world.'

Mirepoc was slightly puzzled at this behavior which seemed happy but self-derisive.

'Why have I not noticed it sooner...'

'More importantly, Ruruta, what should I do? No, first explain the situation!'

Ruruta desperately explained. Mirepoc listened while organizing everything in

her head.

She heard about the woman known as Nieniu. About her being the incarnation of

destruction given power by Orntorra and the master of the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

About her being the one wishing for destruction and not Ruruta. About Nieniu currently hijacking Ruruta's body. About Ruruta losing all his power and fighting desperately.

It was only a brief description while he was fighting. Mirepoc couldn't get anything except the current situation. Ruruta didn't have the time to explain anything about the long past, about his fight with Hamyuts or about Colio.

'So how can we stop the destruction of the world?'

Mirepoc inquired. No reply came.

'Why are you silent?'

'...Mirepoc. The only way to save the world is to have Nieniu change her mind. Have her think the world doesn't need to be destroyed. It can only be done by making her think this world is wonderful.'

'Wait a minute. You said Nieniu only thinks about destruction... That she became the incarnation of destruction after being given power by God...'

'That's the only way. Even if it's useless and impossible it's the only way.'

At that moment Mirepoc finally understood the situation. It budded only ever so slightly, but her hope was instantly crushed.

'Meaning there is no way other than persuading her? Persuading the incarnation of destruction? Persuading a being that only wants destruction?'

It didn't feel real. She felt like that would be something out of a fantasy novel. Rizzly read a lot of such books... this completely unrelated fact rose to her mind. She couldn't settle her thoughts. Her head didn't work properly.

'Impossible, how can I change her mind? We should rather kill that Nieniu or seal her...'

'That wouldn't work!'

She received Ruruta's thoughts in the form of a shout. Mirepoc didn't know about their relationship at the time.

'Please, Mirepoc! Convey it to her! Tell her this world is wonderful and that there is value in protecting it! If you don't then no one will be saved! Neither this world nor Nieniu!'

Mirepoc faintly understood his feelings. Although she still didn't know of his circumstances and relationship with the girl known as Nieniu.

'I-I can try. But... I don't know at all how to do it.'

Once again the only reply was silence. *So even Ruruta doesn't know*, thought Mirepoc.

'...Mirepoc. Do you find this world wonderful?'

This irrelevant, or perhaps too big of a question, troubled Mirepoc.

'Or do you think this world shouldn't exist?'

Mirepoc began thinking. The faces of her family and the comrades she had met rose to her mind. She recalled the faces of Noloty, Luimon, Alme, all her friends who were no longer in this world.

'I don't. I had comrades, family and friends.'

'...Thank you, Mirepoc.'

Saying this, the Thought Sharing was severed.

"...Who were you talking with?"

Nieniu inquired.

"With a friend. With Colio right here."

He couldn't let her know about Mirepoc. So Ruruta lied. His heart ached; although he was in the midst of fighting her, he didn't want to lie to Nieniu.

"...So that knife is your only emotional crutch. Really, what a foolish man."

How frank, thought Ruruta. And he was slightly sad. Nieniu stayed like this

ever since they day they came to love each other without any change.

"...I cannot bear looking at you. Die already."

With a voice unchanged from how it was in the past, she hated Ruruta, cursed him and abused him. Ruruta assaulted the Beasts of the Final Chapter while enduring these words.

He believed that the final hope, Mirepoc, would make something happen.

"I have to... connect to Nieniu..."

Mirepoc muttered while gazing at the stone statue floating above the needle. It was obviously her first time to send thoughts to something that wasn't human.

"But I have to do it... Thought Sharing!"

Mirepoc activated her ability directed to the stone statue. Yet no one received her thoughts.

She tried it twice then trice but to no avail. Mirepoc didn't know the face of the key person Nieniu. The statue floating above the needle was not Nieniu but Ruruta. She had no idea what to do.

"...I see."

She was too caught up in the method of connecting to humans. But Nieniu wasn't human. So the way of connecting to humans wouldn't work on her.

"Thought Sharing to Nieniu!"

Mirepoc invoked her Thought Sharing once again. Her target was not the statue; it was the swarming Beasts and the dark clouds. She sent her thoughts towards everything that surrounded her. Nieniu was now the very will of destruction covering the world. Both the Beasts and the dark clouds were part of her.

She kept using her ability to the fullest. She could faintly feel some sort of connection.

'I can do... seems like it's going to... I'm connected!'

Mirepoc managed to share her thoughts with Nieniu. However, at that moment an

impact that seemed to stir her brain hit her. She instinctively disrupted her Thought Sharing. What she received from Nieniu was a will that denied everything. It denied Mirepoc's life, beliefs, loved, friends, anything and everything.

"Gweh....eh..."

Mirepoc started vomiting involuntarily. The vomit mixed with blood wet her knees.

It was something no human should get in contact with. Yet Mirepoc had to try and connect with it one more time. Stifling her fears, she invoked her Thought Sharing again.

Although she clenched her teeth, exerted strength in her stomach, and readied her mind, she felt her consciousness dimming. The moment she connected she was once again assaulted by a horrifying intent.

It rejected everything. It was no longer murderous intent or hatred. It couldn't bear the very fact that everything in the world even existed. It wouldn't recognize even a single thing in the world as having any value. That feeling could be called the will of destruction. This was not something that humans could feel as long as they were human.

The will of destruction flowed into Mirepoc through the Thought Sharing. She would be broken at this rate. She couldn't help but cut it off.

"...Ah, ah..."

Her empty stomach contracted as if writhing in pain. Emitting a beastlike shriek, Mirepoc puked.

She couldn't endure something like that. No way would she be able to share her thoughts with a being like that. Not to mention that conveying to her that the world was wonderful or that she should cease its destruction was utterly impossible.

It was like attempting to hold back the flow of lava with one's bare hands. But

one couldn't touch lava with their hands and even if they could they wouldn't be able to stop it.

She didn't try her Thought Sharing for the third time. She would rather die than connect to that thing once again. In her heart she wished to save the world. However, Mirepoc's instincts kept stopping her.

Ruruta had told her – there was no other method and none other than her to accomplish it.

Mirepoc regretted the fact she had woken up.

The attacks on Ruruta grew in intensity. Would Ruruta shatter down and disappear first or would Nieniu break his mind first? These were his only two possible futures.

His body couldn't move. His arms and legs wouldn't listen to him. Even the knife in his hands felt heavy.

At that moment, a transmission came from Mirepoc.

'Ruruta, it's useless. That thing is hopeless! I can't possibly tell it the world is wonderful!'

Mirepoc's thoughts were full of grief. But not as much grief as Ruruta who heard this.

'Please don't give up, look for another possibility, it doesn't matter what...'

'You're only saying that because you haven't touched it. It's impossible to make that thing change its mind. It's not something a human could do!'

'Don't give up! Please!'

Ruruta's thoughts were desperate. If she gave up then even his heart would crumble.

'...Why can't I give up?'

Yet even Mirepoc seemed to be trying to break his fighting spirits.

'I now understand. This world shouldn't exist. It's been decided. I can't crush

that conviction. No one can. And so, destroying the world is correct.'

'No...'

'Even I want to protect the world! But it's useless! Absolutely!'

A Cavalryman's spear cut through Ruruta's back. He was about to collapse from the pain.

Did he really think something would happen? The weakness inside of him showed itself.

Meeting Colio was a miracle. Mirepoc waking up was a miracle. Miracles would surely not happen so conveniently.

The Jail King Snake in front of him raised its crooked head. *I'd rather die*, thought Ruruta. But even so...

"...Uooooohhh!!!"

Ruruta roared. Before being crushed to death by the Snake he evaded, rushed up its black body and opened up a path.

He vowed to never give up again.

'Believe in me! It's fine if you don't fight or don't do anything! Just keep believing!'

He sent his thoughts to Mirepoc.

'This world is definitely wonderful! There is also happiness in it! There is value in protecting it! Believe that!'

Ruruta raised his voice, directing his words at Mirepoc to whom he was connected again.

"I can't fight unless you believe! So please don't give up at least on believing!"

Mirepoc's Thought Sharing was interrupted. He didn't even know if his last words were transmitted.

The thoughts transmitted from Ruruta barely supported the crumbling

Mirepoc. But she was not strong enough to connect again.

"Uu... uu... kuu!"

Mirepoc pounded the ground with her fists, lamenting her powerlessness. Her tears dripped down.

Ruruta said he bet everything on her. Yet she couldn't do anything. Nieniu didn't even take her into consideration. The last Armed Librarian was nothing more than a bystander.

Pitiful, she was so pitiful.

She now realized – Ruruta's wish to protect the world was sincere. She didn't know what happened, but that alone was conveyed. His heart was far stronger and far purer than her own.

He was probably placed in a predicament far beyond his abilities inside his Imaginary Entrails. Mirepoc wanting to give up pained him even more. And yet he voiced no complaints. He told her she didn't have to fight. That she could just believe that the world had value. How could he say that even in this despairing situation?

She wouldn't have been able to say something like that. She wouldn't have been able to protect the world. She wouldn't have been able to fight like him.

"...Why was I born so weak?"

She simply reflected on her own weakness.

"But..."

She couldn't let it end like that. She couldn't just hug her knees. Because Ruruta believed in her and bet everything on her.

Mirepoc invoked her Thought Sharing for the third time. The moment she connected to Nieniu another will of destruction assaulted her head. She tried repeating her words to preach that the world was wonderful. But she could only transmit intermitted words.

No words that could move Nieniu's heart reached her.

The Thought Sharing was severed. When she opened her eyes, what reflected

in them were the surrounding Beasts of the Final Chapter.

She wanted to escape. When this allure entered her mind, she forcibly twisted it off and...

"...Aaaah!"

Along with a shout Mirepoc connected for the fourth time. But it once again ended in vain.

I want to fight, Mirepoc thought. *I want power*, she thought strongly.

She had no power to protect the world. But she wanted the power to help those who were trying to protect the world. She wanted power, power, power.

Mirepoc closed her eyes. She folded her arms and poured everything she had into her Thought Sharing. Therefore she didn't even notice the change in her hair color.

The tips of her lemon-colored hair started faintly shining.

At that moment, Mirepoc experienced a strange feeling. It felt warm like being surprisingly reunited with a long-time friend.

Mirepoc heard a voice inside her head.

'Having someone sympathize with Ruruta... that alone should be enough.'

It was the voice of an unfamiliar girl. What Mirepoc felt was similar to but different from Thought Sharing. She felt as if what she received was not the girl's thoughts but her mind itself.

The unknown girl's happiness filled Mirepoc's heart.

'Ruruta was always a lonely demon lord. But he wasn't really a demon lord. He was a gentle, sad, simple boy. So he could definitely change.'

The unknown girl was speaking inside Mirepoc's mind.

'What changes humans is sympathy. That was what Ruruta required.'

If someone were to sympathize with him he will definitely change. From a lonely demon lord he will turn into someone who can connect his heart with

other people.

Such was my belief.'

Who are you, Mirepoc tried to call. I don't know anyone like you. I don't recall having connected my thoughts to you.

'If Ruruta connects with someone he will change. If Ruruta changes then the world will, too. Both the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult will not stay as they are.

If that happens, even Ruruta would be able to escape the dead end he stumbled into and create a new path.

Making Nieniu happy... he would surely find a way to make it come true.

It's truly simple. Just by changing Ruruta's heart plenty of things in the world will change as well. So Chacoly won't give up.'

Mirepoc didn't know Chacoly's name. Yet she also knew her at the same time.

Because she was with Mirepoc. Because she was about to become one with her right now.

'Having someone sympathize with Ruruta... Believing such a day would come, Chacoly left her power behind.

Magic Right transfer. Chacoly Cocot transferred all of her power.

The target is whoever wishes to help Ruruta from the bottom of their heart. This transfer will hold even after Chacoly's death.

She didn't know when. She didn't know to whom. But she left her Soul Sharing in the world for that person. For Ruruta who will someday change.'

Mirepoc's hair changed its color. Into the beautiful and ephemeral color of violet.

Along with the Soul Sharing ability Mirepoc also received Chacoly's heart. The two girls now became one.

'Mirepoc-san, is Chacoly's power of use?'

"Of course, it will definitely be of use."

Mirepoc spoke to Chacoly inside her mind.

Chacoly's memories came flowing inside Mirepoc. She learned about the ending of the Paradise Era. About the days Ruruta had lived in. About his feelings for Nieniu.

She came to know of everything Chacoly knew about.

"...How great for you, Ruruta."

The one to mutter this was Mirepoc, but at the same time it also was the Chacoly inside her.

"You were able to meet such a kind person."

Mirepoc's violet-colored hair swayed.

"So we can fight. We can still fight!"

Mirepoc clenched her teeth. She folded both hands in front of her chest.

'Activating Soul Sharing!'

The revived violet-colored hair emitted shining light.

With her newly acquired power, Mirepoc instantly understood what was possible and what was impossible.

It was meaningless for her to use Soul Sharing to connect to Nieniu. That power only allowed her to give and take her heart with another person's. If she made her heart clash against Nieniu's, she would never be able to break that will of destruction.

But now there was something she could do. Mirepoc directed her power not at Nieniu but at the people of the world.

'I will distribute it to everyone. To all people my Soul Sharing can reach. I will give them the will to stand up again!'

Light was born from her violet-colored hair. It became a faint surge of radiation. The violet surge spread much like ripples on water caused by a thrown pebble. From Bantorra Library it came downtown. From there it crossed the ocean and went to the whole world.

Mirepoc's heart was conveyed by the violet surge.

'Amazing... Chacoly couldn't have done anything like that.'

Mirepoc faintly heard a mutter inside her mind.

Chacoly's Soul Sharing combined with Mirepoc's Thought Sharing. They were abilities of the same category after all.

The inborn Soul Sharing ability now resided in Mirepoc who wasn't born with a talent but polished her ability with diligent efforts. This fusion of talent and hard work raised the Soul Sharing ability to further heights.

While clenching her teeth, Mirepoc controlled her new power. All in order to give the people of the world the will to stand.

On Past God Bantorra's Island, in a corner of the town was the room of a plain apartment. A single boy inside suddenly opened his eyes. This completely ordinary boy heard someone calling to him from afar.

'Stand up. Please stand up again. To protect this world.'

Why did he wake up? He was supposed to have drifted to a long, peaceful sleep. He wanted to keep sleeping peacefully like that, too. He slept while thinking that school, his studies, his family, his friends, his first love, everything and anything was completely inconsequential.

I don't care about anything so don't wake me up, the boy thought.

Yet someone was desperately calling for him. They were calling him to save the world.

In a certain red-light district at the Ismo Republic, a woman opened her eyes. *I don't want you to wake me up,* she thought. She was cornered by her circumstances and exhausted by her daily life. All of her life was nothing but trouble. *I've cleanly forgotten all about it when I was sleeping so please don't wake me up,* she thought.

'Please wish for it. To protect this world, to protect our future.'

A voice called to her from afar. She realized it was telling her that standing up

and living was far more wonderful than dying peacefully.

At a certain hospital in the Guinbex Empire, a man opened his eyes. *I don't want to wake up*, he thought. His incurable disease would be eating into his body until the day he died. He rather preferred to be allowed to sleep peacefully.

'Believe. Believe that living is wonderful and that this world is worth something!'

A voice called to him from afar. He could receive the appeal that even someone like him was needed.

Mirepoc called to all people of the world. It didn't matter if they were men, women, young or old. There was no distinction between warriors and those who were not, good or bad people.

The world can't be saved alone. I need your power, she called the entire world.

No matter who you are, your power is needed.

The Power of Tearless Ending was being crushed. People were standing up around the world. Some people were puzzled, certain they had been asleep, and some people looked around them to search for the voice that had called to them.

About half of the population rose up. But there were also plenty of people who, having received the violet surge, only slightly opened their eyes and didn't move.

Mirepoc sent the power of her Soul Sharing to the whole world, so naturally the individual effect was dampened. She couldn't forcibly control people's hearts like Chacoly once did. It took everything she had to merely tell them to wake up and instill in them only a small bit of will to rise.

But that was enough.

Half of the world answered Mirepoc's voice. There were these many people who

chose, rather than dying peacefully, to live and struggle.

'It's not enough, Mirepoc-san. Just waking them up won't save the world.'

"I know. Leave it to me. I will definitely make it happen!"

Mirepoc kept exercising her Soul Sharing.

Something happened. Ruruta was convinced of it inside the Imaginary Entrails. He had no reason; it was mere intuition.

"...What is this?"

One second after Ruruta had noticed it, Nieniu did as well. The stone statue's face turned toward the sky and the movements of the Beasts ceased.

"It's still not enough!"

Nothing was reflected in Mirepoc's eyes any longer. She was currently pouring her entire being into the Soul Sharing. Both vision, hearing, sense of touch and sense of pain were gone.

Just making people stand up wasn't enough. They wouldn't become a power to save the world.

Since Mirepoc was the plus sign to connect all of the 'ones', her role was to turn the powers from the entire world into one power. The world couldn't be saved by one person. There was still something that had to be done.

Having everything taken away from her, Nieniu thought that she shouldn't have been born. She wished for the world to be destroyed. Saving her heart was the same as saving the world.

What should Mirepoc do for that? What should she tell the people of the world?

She had inherited Chacoly's memories. She knew of Ruruta's feelings and of his days of long labor. What did she need to save Nieniu?

She once again unleashed a violet surge.

Nieniu directed her attention to the outside world for the first time. She had forgotten all about it, trapped by her hatred toward Ruruta.

Using perception organs that humans didn't possess she looked over the courtyard of Bantorra Library. She found the figure of Mirepoc and saw her shining violet hair.

At the same time she felt the people of the world rejecting the Power of Tearless Ending and standing up.

"...Something is happening. And it is very bad."

The Power of Tearless Ending was the power that Ruruta used through the Beasts of the Final Chapter. Nieniu as well wished to destroy the world without making anyone suffer. That power was being broken now. Nieniu looked at Mirepoc. She finally recalled the violet-color haired girl that once tried to kill Ruruta.

"...This is..."

Nieniu felt a slight fear. She would destroy the world regardless if people were sleeping or not. Since she possessed unlimited power their resistance was no problem.

However, she could feel – she felt the same as during the first destruction of the world when she saw Ruruta bring an asteroid from the deep reaches of space. Defeat was sneaking up on her.

It wasn't good at all. She had no idea what was happening, but knew it wasn't good.

"...I will kill you. Right now."

Nieniu's voice echoed in the courtyard of Bantorra Library. All the Beasts of the Final Chapter leapt, aiming at Mirepoc.

Mirepoc felt nothing. Neither Nieniu's words nor the footsteps of the assaulting Beasts reached her ears. She was concentrating her entire being on Soul Sharing.

The violet surge transmitted Mirepoc's calling to the entire world.

For example, it was transmitted to a boy who lived on Past God Island.

'The world is about to be destroyed by a single will. By the will of the girl known as Nieniu.'

He was a mere ordinary boy. Yet he wished to become a hero who protected the

world. And so he lent his ears to this calling. He wanted to save the world.

For example, it was transmitted to a certain bread-selling woman that worked in a certain mining town.

'Nieniu believes that living in this world is completely meaningless. She believes that this world has no happiness and has nothing but sorrow in it.

She thinks that you, as well as me, as well as herself, should have never been born.

And since no person should have been born she is trying to destroy the world.'

The woman recalled the day three years ago when she had lost her lover. She was pained and even thought she shouldn't have been born.

But now she was different. She accepted her sorrow, overcame it and was trying to live. The bread-selling woman lent her ears to the call. She sympathized with the girl known as Nieniu and wanted to cheer her up.

For example, it reached a certain man locked in prison.

'I ask of you all. Is having been born something wonderful?'

The man had once joined an evil organization for the sake of his desires. That organization was defeated by the Armed Librarians and the man was captured. He would never come out of prison.

Yet he thought about the family he lost. He wanted to once again meet up with his wife and son and beg them for forgiveness. Even if they wouldn't accept it, he wished to convey his apology. He lent his ears to the call. In order to protect his lost family and the world.

Mirepoc's call was transmitted all over the world. People looked back at their lives, looked at their futures, and gave their answers.

Was this world wonderful?

Was there any meaning to life?

'If you think this world is wonderful, if you think living has its value, I ask you to convey that. I ask you to deliver your feelings to Nieniu.'

Although no one was ordered to, the people clenched their hands on their chests. They folded their knees, lowered their heads, and closed their eyes, assuming a praying position.

Mirepoc was calling to them. She was strongly, strongly calling.

'Strongly wish for it! Your feelings are the power to save the world!

Believing that this world is wonderful is the power to save the world!'

The people wished. They wished for their feelings that their world was beautiful to be transmitted forward.

Mirepoc's thoughts reached the injured and collapsed Ruruta inside the Imaginary Entrails.

'Do you understand? The people of the world want to convey what they feel right now.

That they believe there is still something wonderful even now.'

"Mirepoc, thank you. If so then the world will definitely be saved."

'Ruruta.'

At that moment, a small wave throbbed in the knife Ruruta held in his hand. Its handle heated up.

'Please convey it. You're the only one who can do it. You're the only one who can deliver the power of the world.'

"...Mirepoc?"

The knife then started emitting light. While holding the knife Ruruta could feel

– the will of all people of the world dwelt inside it.

It was an outrageous power. Ruruta knew it was the power that could save the world.

He was convinced that it wasn't inferior to the power he had gathered during the first destruction of the world.

"Nieniu!"

Ruruta shouted. When he wielded his knife a violet light was emitted from it. The Jail King Snake in front of him was torn in half.

"Nieniu! I can save you! This time... this time I'll save you!"

Resolving his wounded body, Ruruta ran. He knew – the power of the world embedded in the knife was not a power to defeat Nieniu. It was the power to save her from the will of destruction trapping her.

"...You still had such a power? Unbelievable."

Nieniu's voice was full of bottomless anger. She probably realized it as well: the moment this knife reached her she would lose.

"...I will not let you do it, Ruruta. I will not repeat the same mistake.

...This time, you, everyone and anyone, will be absolutely killed."

Back at Bantorra Library's courtyard, a small voice resounded among the roars of Beasts of the Final Chapter that were rushing to kill Mirepoc.

"...I did it. I did it, Ruruta!"

Mirepoc muttered. The Beasts attacked her. Their fangs and blades should have easily taken her life.

However, not a single one of them reached her. She remained alive and succeeded in gathering the power of the world.

Mirepoc's body was not on the stone paving of the courtyard. She was on the roof of Bantorra Library's main building. Her head was held by the boorish hand of a man.

Her body was held by a man in a black suit.

"Well done, Mirepoc. You're an exemplary Armed Librarian."

The one to save Mirepoc from being killed was Mattalast Ballory.

Chapter 5: Final Fight of the Armed Librarians

January 12, 1927. The time was after 4 P.M. Even the last day of Bantorra Library approached dusk.

How many reversals have happened during this day? The situation continuously

changed like the leaves of a tree caught in a whirlwind.

It wouldn't have been strange for the world to be destroyed long ago. If Ruruta hadn't used the Power of Tearless Ending and destroyed the world as is... If Hamyuts had been defeated by him... If Colio hadn't risen up... If Lascall had forsaken Ruruta, if Mirepoc hadn't sent her thoughts to Ruruta and died fighting... Destruction was avoided in the last second countless times. As if the world itself rejected its demise.

Would the world be protected or destroyed? The time to settle everything would soon arrive.

The moment Mattalast Ballory had woken up he immediately rushed ahead. He

kicked his fallen pistols and picked them up. Even while reloading his bullets, his running speed didn't lower in the slightest.

He was headed to the exit of the Sealed Labyrinth. Mattalast had no

hesitation. He could confirm the situation while moving.

A huge metal pillar was thrust from the floor and penetrated the ceiling of the Sealed Labyrinth. He immediately concluded this was Ruruta's power. At the same time he looked at the hole opened in the ceiling. Without any hesitation he leapt toward it. He concluded from the leaking air and light that it was connected to the topmost floor.

The hole was opened up by Ruruta to reach the outside. It penetrated each floor and connected to the sky. As Mattalast exited to the first floor he changed his route to move ahead. He could feel something moving in the courtyard. Unleashing a kick to knock down a wall, he ran outside.

His chain of actions was not made by reason. It was his intuition as a warrior. He couldn't postpone it even for a second and no hesitation was allowed. An average warrior would probably waste time affirming the situation. A warrior could be said to be first-class after becoming able to make his body act based on intuition alone for the first time.

"...I made it..."

Mattalast pointed the pistols in both hands at the Beasts of the Final Chapter. On the other side he could see hair faintly shining in the color of violet. Hundreds of Beasts were rushing towards Mirepoc.

"In time!"

He shot twelve bullets from both guns simultaneously. There was no time for reloading. That wasn't enough to save Mirepoc. However, the one who shot was

Mattalast Ballory. As long as it was limited to the timespan of two seconds, he was the world's strongest predictive ability user.

The first shot broke the spear of a Cavalryman that attempted piercing Mirepoc's back.

The spearhead was blown away while spinning, stabbing into the brow of a Blade-Haired Lion. Clashing into the stopped Blade-Haired Lion, a Lancer collapsed forward. Another bullet pierced an Elephant Soldier's knee. Its giant

body, losing its sense of balance and collapsing, crushed an Iron-Fanged Mouse.

One bullet shot defeated several Beasts at the same time as if it was a bounded shot in billiard. The twelve bullets that weighed even less than 300 grams blew away enemies that together weighed more than 30 tons.

Mattalast jumped. His landing spot was accurately next to Mirepoc. The final enemy he missed on defeating was blown away when he threw his gun like a boomerang. He wrapped his hand around Mirepoc's waist, lifted her and ran. All of the rushing attacks missed Mattalast by a hairsbreadth.

"...What happened?"

Only once he succeeded in saving Mirepoc he allowed himself to look around.

Mirepoc's violet hair... the dark clouds covering the sky... and the stone statue in Ruruta's image that floated in the air.

Mattalast concluded it was impossible to understand. During the few hours he was unconscious the situation apparently changed in a way that couldn't be imagined.

"What does this mean, Ruruta!"

He looked at the sky and directed this question at Ruruta. At that moment he finally realized this wasn't the Ruruta he had met earlier. It wasn't just his form but also his presence itself. The color of his hair changed into something abnormal Mattalast had never seen before and the sense of intimidation he exerted lost all of its humanity.

"...Mattalast-san. So now it is you. Even when it would only take a short while to finish."

What he heard was a voiceless voice. It wasn't the voice of Ruruta but of an unknown girl.

"...Who're you?"

Reply came in the form of the Beasts attacking.

He was yet to grasp the situation. But he could understand one thing: the key to this battle lay with Mirepoc. The Beasts of the Final Chapter targeted her without a shred of hesitation. And she now had violet-colored hair. Seeing

those it was clear to him.

He heard that the violet girl Hamyuts had killed held the only possibility of defeating Ruruta. Due to some sequence of events that ability was passed along to Mirepoc.

Mattalast looked around. Surrounding him were the murderous Beasts.

"Good grief, seems like they won't let me off the hook."

The Beasts of the Final Chapter simply lost their balance and collapsed. In no time they settled their aim on Mattalast and Mirepoc and moved. The swarm of Beasts that was like a black cascade attacked again and again, and even if evaded they would attack again.

"...But we'll still run away."

But Mattalast didn't find it a problem. He could evade anything if there was a chance of evading it. Even if surrounded from all directions, as long as there was a small opening somewhere it was the same thing as not being surrounded.

The opening was with the Cavalryman whose spear he had broken earlier. He received the blade-less stab with his shoulder and repelled it using force. Using Cavalry's body as a stepping stone, he ran above the Beasts.

Using the openings in the disorderly battle formation as footholds, Mattalast evaded the attacks as though dancing. Looking from the side their movements could only make one think they have trained together in advance.

A violet surge was emitted from Mirepoc in his arms. It also reached Mattalast. Who was the girl known as Nieniu? What happened to Ruruta? He couldn't tell.

"...I did it. I did it, Ruruta."

He heard Mirepoc mumble in his arms. Mattalast caressed her head. He knew one

thing for sure: she was fighting to save the world.



"Well done, Mirepoc. You're an exemplary Armed Librarian."

So he could understand what his job was. He just needed to protect Mirepoc. That was all.

"...Why do you resist? I cannot understand it."

Ruruta and Mattalast: Nieniu muttered while looking down at these two resisting men.

Nieniu tried to kill the people around the world without any suffering. However, they rose up and opposed her. Why did they not understand? Even

though the only right thing was destruction... Even though she was trying to save them...

It was always like that. Humans couldn't understand. They simply clung to life without understanding the most important things.

"...I do not mind. I will just destroy them."

Nieniu started thinking. *I cannot lose. Absolutely. If I lose there will be no other one able to destroy the world. I cannot lose a second time.*

At that moment, further power gushed out from inside of her. Her fear toward defeat and her determination to fight brought out her true power. Even until now she intended on doing her best. However, anger didn't allow her to pull out her full powers. They were derived only of clear determination.

Something's changed. Thus thought Mattalast while evading the attack of a Rhino.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter all rushed at him from all directions, including the skies. An Elephant Soldier crushed a Cavalryman while advancing and a Blade-Haired Lion trampled an Iron-Fanged Mouse underfoot.

"...Guh!"

Forcefully pushing through an opening the size of a needle, Mattalast tried escaping the siege. Yet the Beasts headed for him even while crushing their comrades.

It was already a stampede. Their weapons were the corpses of Beasts and their killing method was burying him alive. Matter itself pursued Mattalast.

This was the sort of attack Mattalast, who could evade any attack as long as there was any chance of evading it, was the most poor against.

If he was alone he could have defended. But he had lost his guns and he held Mirepoc in his arms. He couldn't run away with her.

"Get down Mattalast!"

At that moment, he heard a faint voice mixed in with the Beasts'. Obeying it,

Mattalast lay on the ground while covering Mirepoc's body.

Just before they were crushed to death, a massive body rushed fifty centimeters above Mattalast's head.

"Bonbo!"

A huge black shadow flew overhead, scattering the Beasts around and blowing away trees and sculptures. What came rushing through was one of the flying whales controlled by Bonbo Tartamal.

The shockwave inflicted Mattalast with wounds. Yet Mirepoc was safe.

"This is getting quite scary! Bantorra Library ends today!"

He could faintly see Bonbo's figure on top of the whale overhead.

"Mattalast! Is the evacuation of civilians finished already?!"

"Obviously! The only ones on the premises are combatants!"

Mattalast shouted. An Iron-Fanged Mouth and a Lancer that lay down and survived rushed at him again. But it was an attack he could evade.

"Hahaha! It's good news but it's also bad news!"

The sixteen whales recovered and danced in the air. Bonbo said before that Bantorra Library was finished not because of the Beasts of the Final Chapter; it was because he was about to fight using his full power.

The whales danced and the ground shook.

The sixteen whales crushed both buildings and Beasts.

The assembly hall where the world's leaders used to gather was destroyed in mere seconds. The second floor, used for the finances and accounting offices, crumbled down to a mountain of gravel.

The wildly dancing whales raised pandemonium. Even now the Beasts were trying to attack Mattalast. No matter how many of their comrades died, since they were produced infinitely it didn't matter to them at all.

But then, another explosive roar resounded.

"Uwaaaaan! Begone! All of you begone! Be crushed!"

The shrill shrieks of a woman came from the training ground, the opposite direction from where Mattalast had come from. Mixed with them came the sounds of bombardment as if an entire battalion was fighting.

"Kyasariro?! Don't hit me!"

Mattalast shouted. Mortars and machine-guns floated in air, firing one after the other.

This was done using Kyasariro Totona's telekinesis that controlled firearms. She gathered heavy weapons from inside the Library and came to assist them.

Holding only a rifle and ammunition in her short arms, she was shooting randomly without aiming.

"Shit! Die! Stupid! Begone! Get lost! Scatter!"

"Don't point your guns at me!"

Mattalast shouted but she couldn't hear him. She was originally a cowardly woman.

Rather than her bringing out courage she assaulted with her boundless fear at what she couldn't understand.

Both Bonbo and Kyasariro kept their indiscriminate attacks without paying any attention to Mattalast.

But he was thankful for their assistance. He was able to evade even their wild shots and dancing whales using his predictive ability. As long as they were there he had no fear of being crushed.

"...You are in the way, please die obediently."

The thing that used to be Ruruta glared at Mattalast and the rest. Was it the girl called Nieniu now?

"...You poor puppets of Ruruta. I will kill you as soon as possible."

"Puppets? We might seem this way, but that's a huge misunderstanding!"

One whale charged with its forehead to Nieniu floating above the needle. Yet the statue repelled that blow regardless of the difference in mass. It inflicted no

wound.

"No... that's..."

At that time, Mirepoc opened her mouth while in Mattalast's arms.

"You can't defeat that. It has... to be Ruruta..."

"Don't speak. You'll bite your tongue."

Mattalast didn't have the leisure to hear her explanation.

"Relax Mirepoc. I don't understand what's going on but even if you don't say anything we'll protect you."

Dodging attacks, Mattalast headed towards the Library's main building. The next moment the warriors' voices came echoing from there.

"Right, Yukizona?"

The Armed Librarians showed themselves from inside the half-destroyed gate. With Luik and Marfa at the front, they took a fish scales battle formation, scattered the Beasts of the Final Chapter and rushed to Mattalast.

"Everyone, deploy to a double circle formation! Bonbo will whittle down the attack targets outside the circle! Mattalast and Kyasariro will gather inside!"

In the middle of the formation was Yukizona Hamlow. Next to him was his assistant Yuri. Mattalast realized – Yukizona gathered the confused Armed Librarians, managed to unify them even while not understanding the situation and rushed there.

The power of the his Decay Wave as well of the perfectly coordinated Armed Librarians conveyed his capabilities as the leader of the next generation.

While looking at both Mirepoc in his arms and at his fighting comrades, Mattalast called someone inside his heart. He called towards Hamyuts who wasn't there.

Hey, Hamyuts, you might've been a better leader than you thought. The Armed Librarians you've brought up are so dependable.

"Are you fine, Mattalast-san?"

"For now."

Mattalast jumped into the circle and was finally able to catch his breath. The Armed Librarians stared at the Beasts surrounding them. At that moment, the Beasts'

movements suddenly stopped.

"...So foolish."

Nieniu called. The Armed Librarians shook at this voice which was different from Ruruta's.

"Who is that?"

Yuri said. Mattalast shook his head to the side.

"Who knows, I have no idea either. The only thing for sure is that she's an enemy."

Nieniu kept talking toward the Armed Librarians who knew nothing about the situation.

"...You are all still doing the wrong thing. Mirepoc-san has been deceived and used by Ruruta."

Ruruta. That was the name of the man that Mattalast and the other Armed Librarians had been fighting against a short while ago. They didn't know who this woman was, but if she was Ruruta's enemy did that mean she was their ally?

Since Mattalast and the rest didn't understand the situation they had no means with which to ascertain the truth.

"...Ruruta is supposed to be your enemy. He should be hated as he killed Hamyuts-san here."

At that moment, Mattalast finally noticed a figure stabbed in the center of the needle.

"...Gh."

Although he was prepared for it, the moment he saw it his knees were about to fold.

"Mattalast-san, please calm down..."

"...Y-yeah. I know, Yuri..."

He was somehow able to reply to Yuri who came to him. Yet the claim that Ruruta had killed Hamyuts was deeply engraved inside his heart.

Even his comrades stared at Hamyuts's corpse. Some of them expressed anger, some despair... their responses were varied.

"...Please put your weapons away. Do not stand in my way."

"What does this mean, brother?"

Yuri was also confused. Even Yukizona who was being asked couldn't answer.

"...You and I are by no means enemies. I am trying to save you."

They couldn't think of it as being true by looking at the Beasts spread out. However, they could feel a sincere will from her words. They were filled with confusion and doubts.

At that time, Mirepoc moaned.

"...No... don't let her trick you..."

"Mirepo?"

"Soul... Sharing!"

A violet-colored wave spread from Mirepoc's body. The moment it touched Mattalast, her mind was transmitted to him. Along with it the truth about Ruruta that she knew was also transmitted.

"I see, so that's what's going on."

Mattalast muttered. And he was surprised at how little they knew. Ruruta wasn't collecting Books of happiness for his own sake; it was all for the sake of a single girl.

"We didn't understand Ruruta at all."

Yukizona was perplexed. Yuri was flustered as well. The other Armed

Librarians felt the same.

"...Please notice the truth. The world must be destroyed."

Nieniu said. However, none of her words reached the Armed Librarians.

"What do you think, guys? At the very least I don't feel bad."

Luik then said to his comrades.

"Ruruta might be a piece of shit, but he's still a piece of shit that can be saved right?"

Rizzly nodded and started laughing.

"Ahaha, Ruruta's such a helpless idiot. Well, I don't hate idiots like that though."

Gamo also spoke.

"But I still can't forgive him. It's not the time to say such things."

Strangely, the Armed Librarians' expressions were bright. Mattalast also felt refreshed for some reason. Until now he thought of Ruruta as an inhuman demon lord. Yet he was also human.

It wasn't something to be happy about, but it still somehow made him happy.

"So, shall we fight?"

"I don't like it being for Ruruta's sake, though."

Luik readied his giant spear and Rizzly pointed his rapier at the surrounding Beasts of the Final Chapter. All doubts were gone from the Armed Librarians' faces. Now that they knew their reason to fight they accepted it.

This isn't something to laugh about, thought Mattalast. But that's how the Armed Librarians always were.

"...You cling to life in such a world. Without realizing it is a mistake. Why do you protect this rotten world?"

Yukizona then replied.

"We've known the world is rotten since long ago."

He raised his arm, producing Decay Waves.

"But even if it's rotten we'll protect it. Because we are the Armed Librarians."

"...If you insist on fighting no matter what..."

Nieniu's voice shook in anger.

"...Then do as you please. It does not change the destruction of the world.

...Be surrounded and crushed."

Along with that voice the Beasts began moving. Their aim was Mirepoc alone.

Starting with Yukizona's Decay Wave, the Armed Librarians commenced their counterattack.

Inside the Imaginary Entrails Ruruta kept fighting alone. Starting with his battle with Hamyuts, the battle against the warriors of the revived Books, his torture by Miena's group, as well as his fight against the Beasts of the Final Chapter, he overcame all sorts of painful battles countless times. Even his limitless power had already passed its limits long ago.

He swung his knife at the dark clouds. The emitted light scattered the Beasts around.

The power he received from Mirepoc was powerful. However, that alone was not

enough to reach Nieniu.

"...I have to advance."

He urged his unresponsive legs to run. As long as the power of the world shined in his hand he could never collapse.

Even in the outside world they were fighting to save the world. That was why the violet surge didn't disappear.

Yukizona and Mattalast exchanged looks. Mattalast entrusted all of command to

Yukizona. He conveyed that using just his eyes. He didn't have the leisure to

issue orders; all of the enemies were rushing toward him.

The Armed Librarians forming a circle blocked all Beasts who ran on the ground. In the air Bonbo's whales were dancing. The Beasts who were able to weave through the gaps of the whales and assault from the sky were intercepted by Yukizona and Kyasariro.

Even so they couldn't stop all of them. Mattalast desperately kicked the Beasts that managed to sneak through to pursue him. All the while protecting Mirepoc in his arms.

Yet there were too many enemies. They didn't know how long their defensive formation would hold.

What will we do? Mattalast looked at Yukizona.

"All hands, withdraw to the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth! Withdraw while preserving the formation and protecting Mattalast! The vanguard will be Marfa! Tena will provide covering fire! Guarding the rear will be me and Yuri!"

The Armed Librarians all began moving from the courtyard. Yukizona secured a position in front of the destroyed gate and protected the retreating Armed Librarians with his Decay Wave.

The Labyrinth was certainly more advantageous. It would allow them to somewhat confine the attacks of their enemies to one direction. There was the problem that if the Beasts blocked the entrance they wouldn't be to escape. But there were no fools who thought of running away at this stage.

However...

"No, Yukizona!"

Having reached the entrance to the Labyrinth, Marfa raised a sorrowful voice.

"There are plenty of Beasts inside the Labyrinth as well!"

The Armed Librarians stopped. Kyasariro raised a shriek.

"N-no way! What will we do, Yukizonaa!"

"Cut them off Marfa! Kyasariro will support you! The enemies are just

gathering near the entrance to the Labyrinth!"

"Aaah! I'm going!"

Taking the heavy weaponry floating in the air along with her, Kyasariro charged into the Library. Mattalast and the other Armed Librarians stopped in place and waited for a follow-up report.

Kyasariro's fire and the sounds of Marfa's flame whip echoed above ground. There wasn't any sign of good news at all.

"Hey, Yukizona."

At that time, Gamo spoke while putting a hand behind one ear. He was an intelligence support ability user that could strain his five senses to their utmost limits.

"It was mixed with the sounds of Bonbo's whales so I wasn't able to hear it but..."

While receiving support from Yukizona, Gamo put his ear to the ground.

"...It appears to be useless. There are apparently plenty of Beasts down to the bottom of the Labyrinth."

Mattalast gulped. Even Yukizona and Yuri paled.

"Return to the courtyard! All soldiers, change direction! Marfa and Kyasariro also retreat instantly! Rizzly, Ainz! Provide covering fire for their retreat!"

Even during the disturbance Yukizona issued orders. The Armed Librarian's movements became disorderly.

"Gamo-san! Why did you not say so earlier!"

Yuri lashed out at Gamo.

"I couldn't do anything about it! Bonbo's whales made too much noise!"

"Marfa-san! Marfa-san! Did you not hear me?! Come back!"

"What?! What does this mean!"

At the entrance to the Labyrinth Kyasariro was perplexed by the order to cease the attack. Marfa cut in too deep and was unable to retreat. They were

isolated from their comrades.

What will you do, Yukizona, wondered Mattalast. This is your blunder. How will you recover?

The formation was crumbling. The Beasts of the Final Chapter heading towards

Mattalast grew in numbers. The trainees who weren't able to cooperate were becoming unable to fight back.

"Don't lose your minds!"

Yukizona shouted. However, now that the Armed Librarians were disheartened, they wouldn't be able to calm down by mere words.

"All hands, gather in the courtyard again! Create a circle and support Mattalast-san!"

While shouting, Yukizona ripped off the mask covering his face. He stooped down and wrapped both arms around his body as if hugging himself.

"Brother! What are you...!"

Yukizona howled. This was Mattalast's first time to hear him scream. His body was enveloped by a black cocoon made of Decay Wave.

"Move, Yuri! You too Bonbo!"

Yukizona's voice echoed from inside the massive black lump. Yuri retreated and Bonbo's whales also escaped to the sky. Following this hundreds of black, large snakes were shot from the Decay Wave cocoon.

"Evade, everyone!"

Mattalast shouted. The black snakes mowed down the Beasts. Without Mattalast's instruction perhaps several of the Armed Librarian would have been hit as well.

Yukizona's blow eradicated all Beasts in a radius of 100 meters around him.

"Restore battle formation!"

Having mowed down the enemies, the black snakes thrust their heads into

the ground.

They wrapped and entwined around each other, creating a barrier. Bantorra, with half of it turned to rabble, was surrounded by the wriggling barrier of Decay Wave, building an encampment with a radius of about 100 meters.

"I decided this area will be our Armed Librarians' final territory! We will fight and die here!"

A large amount of blood spurt from Yukizona's mouth as he revealed himself. Yuri rushed over and began to heal him.

"Nieniu! Cutting off our path of retreat was a mistake! The Armed Librarians show their true worth when they're cornered!"

Yukizona shouted while bleeding. The Armed Librarians charged inside the snake fences one after another. They were no longer upset. What made the Armed Librarians comply was power. What made them move was resolve. And Yukizona

showed them both.

"Create a path for Mattalast-san!"

"It doesn't matter if we all die! As long as Mirepoc survives!"

The Armed Librarians readied their resolve. And they were convinced they could endure.

However, Mattalast alone was able to keep calm inside the enthusiasm. *How long will we be able to endure? And until when should we endure?*

Is there any meaning in enduring anyway?

While Ruruta was blocked from viewing the outside world by the clouds, he knew –

Mattalast, Yukizona, Bonbo, Marfa and the others all stood up. They were fighting to protect Mirepoc.

"...The outside world is lively, Ruruta, but you are alone."

Nieniu said inside the Imaginary Entrails. She no longer turned her attention

to the world of the living. Seeing how the Armed Librarians resisted was trivial.

"...Gh...uh..."

Ruruta collapsed. The knee of his left leg was gouged, lost halfway to the bone. It was a simple failure on his part. He had simply misjudged the timing on a lower sweeping attack made by a Lancer one time. It was a simple mistake among the thousands and ten thousands of attacks.

He approached Nieniu. Yet she was still far away. While crawling on his left hand and right leg, he desperately continued his defensive battle.

He couldn't stand anymore. His left leg wouldn't listen to him as if it was completely gone.

"...What happens outside does not matter. Once I kill you it will all be over."

Nieniu calmly analyzed the situation. What she said was true. No matter how much the Armed Librarians resisted, it didn't matter at all to Nieniu who possessed unlimited power. As long as the knife in his hand didn't reach her it would amount to nothing.

Clenching his teeth, Ruruta tried advancing forward. No matter how he urged his leg it wouldn't move. Yet he had to get to the theater, to Nieniu's side.

"Sh...it!"

A stream of tears flowed down Ruruta's blood-covered face.

Having been saved by Colio, borrowing the powers of Mirepoc, Chacoly and the

Armed Librarians, Ruruta was able to fight. He wasn't allowed to die there. And yet his leg wouldn't move.

Move, move already! Thinking so and trying to force himself to move was a mistake.

Ruruta's body tumbled down. His right hand holding the knife stopped.

"...It took long, but it will now end."

The Beasts of the Final Chapter in the front came rushing like an avalanche. Ruruta intercepted them with the light still emitted from the knife. However,

the Beasts also attacked him from behind.

From the right came an Elephant Soldier's raised forelegs, from the left a Blade-Haired Lion's fangs, from above a leaping Lancer's stabbing blow... From behind the Elephant Soldier also came a Jail King Snake's large body. Ruruta had no time to react.

But at that moment...

"HAAA!"

The voice of someone who shouldn't be there echoed. The kick of someone who

shouldn't be there blew Blade-Haired Lion away.

There shouldn't have been anyone left inside the Imaginary Entrails. The souls of the Books Ruruta had Eaten were defeated by him. Even the remnants were killed by the Beasts. Even Hamyuts was no longer in any position to fight.

And yet, someone who shouldn't be there used their palm to divert Lancer's thrust, spinning their body to then hit with a backhand blow. Cutting in at the area around Elephant Soldier's legs, they broke through and hit its shoulder and back.

Someone who shouldn't be there held Ruruta and shouted.

"Watch out!"

Turning their back to the leaning forward Jail King Snake, that someone lifted Ruruta and jumped. They barely avoided being crushed and rolled on the sand to escape.

"...Wh-"

Nieniu raised a voice of surprise for the first time.

Swarthy skin with dark-brown long hair... Hemp clothes covering a slender body along with straw rope wrapped around both arms... That girl stood up while lending Ruruta her shoulder.

"Armed Librarian trainee Noloty Malche is here!"

Taking Ruruta with her, Noloty ran on the sand. She ran, leapt, rolled, and

shouted at Ruruta.

"Calling you Ruruta-san is fine, right!"

"...How are you..."

Nieniu shouted. Ruruta was also puzzled. She was the trainee girl killed by Kachua's plan during the fight with the Indulging God Cult. Her Book should have been stored inside Bantorra Library. He had never Eaten it. It shouldn't be inside this world.

"Wah, w-we're surrounded!"

Noloty shouted. They were encircled by Cavarlymen. At that moment an explosive gale rushed to them.

Although it could only look like a storm it was a person. That man moved in a speed that the current Ruruta couldn't follow with his eyes. He ran around him as if drawing a pentagram in one broad stroke. Everything that touched him was torn apart.

Ruruta recalled a warrior from the Library in the past. He was a warrior that possessed the ability to gain overwhelming speed only when charging toward his enemy. Since he was surrounded by enemies on all sides, he could boast in incredible speed.

Blowing away all enemies around, he stopped. He was a warrior who wore a stupid, old-fashioned helmet and wielded a pike that hid a long gun's barrel within it.

"Armed Librarian Vizac Ziglass! Being in an inferior position brings out the best in me!"

"How... why are you here..."

Ruruta muttered while he was supported by Noloty and protected by Vizac. Books he supposedly had never Eaten... Reinforcements that couldn't have appeared... It was far more convincing to think of them as illusions.

The Beasts didn't cease their attacks. Jail King Snake, Starving Mantis, Rending War Turtle – the Beasts that came from the bottom layers of the Labyrinth couldn't be completely killed off by Vizac's attacks.

At that moment, a human figure sprung out of a Jail King Snake. As if a parasite consumed its host from within. The figure then further jumped inside Starving Mantis and disappeared. A few seconds later, it once again appeared from within the collapsed Mantis and leapt inside Rending War Turtle.

His upper body was bare. He held short swords in both hands. He was a man with sharp eyes like a falcon.

"Feekee Quinn. I will handle the big game. You take care of the riffraff, Vizac and that lass."

His ability allowed him to swim inside solid material as if it was liquid. He was a warrior once famous for specializing in exploring the Labyrinth. The Armed Librarian that was defeated by Mokkania.

Just like he said, he started easily crushing the high-level Beasts.

"What, Noloty! Did you die too?"

"It's been a long time, Vizac-san! Huh? Have you died? Or rather, did I die? More importantly, where are we?!"

"I died. And we're inside Imaginary Entrails. It's simple."

Putting the puzzled Ruruta aside, the Armed Librarians greeted each other happily for some reason.

"You brat there!"

While scattering apart the Beasts with his spear, Vizac spoke to Ruruta. Although Vizac himself seemed much more of a brat to him.

"How nice for you to be protected by a girl!"

Right, he couldn't allow himself to be just protected by Noloty. Borrowing her shoulders, Ruruta wielded his knife and drove the Beasts off.

He had no time to be confused. He had to advance before thinking.

"...Why are the Armed Librarians here..."

Nieniu's voice echoed from the distant theater. Being confused was obvious. Both for Nieniu and for Ruruta.

While observing them using her Sensory Threads, Hamyuts chuckled. She sat on a sand dune, barely supporting her body.

Hamyuts had sustained injuries that made fighting impossible. Both of her legs were stomped by a Starving Mantis and her abdomen was pierced by a Lancer. Her right shoulder had been bitten by an Iron-Fanged Mouse so she couldn't properly swing her sling. And yet she managed to escape. If she died everything would be over. As long as she was alive then perhaps she could be of some use. She refused the temptation of her Suicidal Wish and kept escaping.

Nieniu didn't pay her any attention.

"You've done well, you guys."

Hamyuts praised the three people. Noloty prioritized saving the person in front of her before understanding the situation. If not then she probably wouldn't have made it in time. One could only say it was as expected from her.

Vizac and Feekiee also started fighting without being confused at the abnormal situation. Having received Mirepoc's Soul Sharing even inside the Imaginary Entrails, they immediately realized what to do.

The beloved Armed Librarians. And from them three people who were excellent

warriors. There was no mistake about that.

"...This cannot be..."

Nieniu's attention turned to Hamyuts.

"So you finally noticed, you dumb woman."

Hamyuts smiled. Her hair was swaying. It had a color of darkness even deeper than black.

"They're fighting. And yet I can't do anything but watch them."

"...Is this your doing?"

The dark-colored hair swayed. Hamyuts's inborn ability, Book-Feeding, was activated.

Inside of Bantorra Library's Fourth Sealed Labyrinth...

One of the Books stored on the shelves silently gave off a dim light. It was the Book of the Armed Librarian known as Casma. During one of the battles against the Indulging God Cult, the Allow Bay Naval incident, he received the attacks of the human bombs and lost his life.

The Book burst and became small grains of light. It then flew up towards the surface.

The grains of light were absorbed one after another into Nieniu's body.

Even in the Second Sealed Labyrinth and Third Sealed Labyrinth the Books of Armed Librarians all turned into grains of light and entered Nieniu. As if saying none of them could miss the fight.

Casma appeared in the middle of the surrounding Beasts of the Final Chapter without any warning. Just as Hamyuts did a few hours ago.

"Now, this is a battlefield. Please fight, Casma."

Casma was confused at this unknown battlefield. He promptly finished judging the situation and started using his Magic to assist Vizac and Feekiee.

As expected of an Armed Librarian, thought Hamyuts.

"...How are you able to call your comrades here? No, there is no need to ask that."

Nieniu glared at Hamyuts. Hamyuts showed off her confidence with a smile.

Until a little while ago Hamyuts only watched Ruruta fighting from behind without doing anything. She, who was wounded and unable to fight, thought about her comrades. *If only Vizac was here... If only Noloty was here...* She couldn't do anything but think like that.

However, there wasn't any sense in asking for the impossible. And if she really was the Acting Director she had the obligation to fight until the very end.

Hamyuts prayed. She wanted the power to call forth her dead comrades to this place.

Her darkness-colored hair symbolized her possession of Book-Feeding. It was the ability to make a Book-Eater forcibly Eat any Book. That was the only power left in her.

"Now, come... all of my beloved fools!"

The Book-Feeding ability had been activated for the first time in history. Its powers were unknown. There was no actual proof she could only Feed her own Book.

"From the day we receive the name of an Armed Librarian we shall be bound by bonds that will never be severed! Our souls will, from this day forth, become one!"

What she muttered was the speech meant to ready her mind the day she became an Armed Librarian. The words she thought of as complete rubbish when she heard them.

Hamyuts now believed these words. She believed that all Armed Librarians were

connected by bonds that would never be severed and that their souls were one.

"No matter where we live or where we die, our souls shall be one forevermore!"

Armed Librarians had only one soul. And so their Books were the same as hers. If the bond between Armed Librarians was true, her Book-Feeding ability should also affect her comrades' Books.

Hamyuts believed that bond to be true. Because she believed it she activated her Book-Feeding ability and because it was the truth it succeeded.

"Only at the very end I was able to realize. They were my comrades."

How could I think of myself as the Acting Director, she laughed at herself. I've noticed something so simple only now.

"...Kill that person."

From the Beasts of the Final Chapter that surrounded Ruruta, several dozen came rushing toward Hamyuts.

The Armed Librarians appeared around Ruruta one after another. Those who had lost their lives during the battle against the Cult and even those who died by other means before. All Armed Librarians Hamyuts knew that turned into Books gathered around Ruruta.

"Protect Ruruta! He's that bloody brat over there!"

The situation was conveyed to them by Vizac's instructions and Mirepoc's Soul

Sharing. Although perplexed, they all immediately joined the battle.

There were no cowards among them. That was why these warriors died.

Yet the Beasts were far too numerous. No matter how many Armed Librarians were there it was a drop in the bucket.

"Feekee! Can't you defeat them faster!"

"That's my line! Why are you taking your time with small fries!"

Assembled around Ruruta, the Armed Librarians desperately kept the defensive battle.

Although these comrades were finally called in, they diminished in numbers one after the other.

Unless Ruruta reached Nieniu they could never win. However, protecting him took all of their efforts so they couldn't proceed even a single step.

"I have to... keep going..."

Ruruta muttered while using the violet-colored light to scatter the Beasts. However, no matter how many of them they defeated no path was opened.

"...At this rate... but how should we..."

Noloty said while supporting Ruruta. Although she had considerably grown, she

wasn't strong enough to find a breakthrough.

Feekee chopped off a Starving Mantis's neck from inside its body. Exiting with

a leap, he looked around him. He checked the location of the theater and muttered without thinking.

"Have we advanced only this much?"

Feekiee gritted his teeth. They were desperately trying to advance. However, Nieniu's theater was distant. This time a Jail King Snake approached Ruruta and Noloty.

"Watch out!"

He jumped at that point. Activating his Diving ability, he invaded inside the Jail King Snake. Several seconds later, he jumped out of it and went to finish off another enemy.

"Curses! This is how you break through the front!"

Vizac attempted a reckless charge straight ahead.

"Don't go Vizac-san!"

Even Vizac's prided incredible speed rush was able to be obstructed by the much too numerous enemies. Casma raised a defensive barrier to rescue him from being surrounded.

The crowded enemies grew denser the more one approached Nieniu.

Beasts appeared one after another from her feet. There was no longer any place to stand in the theater.

It was useless like this. Both Ruruta and all the Armed Librarians realized this.

What they needed was a warrior at the Acting Director level. No, someone above that.

"Is that monster not here?"

One of the Armed Librarians said while looking around. He was a warrior who died before Hamyuts became the Acting Director.

"...Since she's not here does that mean she hasn't died?"

Standing atop a Jail King Snake's severed neck, Feekiee muttered.

"...Why is she not here?"

Hony opened his mouth.

While in an overwhelmingly inferior position, the Armed Librarians awaited that person. They looked for the one who was extoled as the strongest in history.

"...Every second is a waste. Kill them immediately."

Without minding either Mirepoc or Ruruta, Nieniu only glared at Hamyuts. She

looked at her as the highest priority enemy to defeat.

"Shit, why isn't she coming?"

Making the earth tremble, several dozen Beasts pursued Hamyuts. She no longer had any strength to fight.

"Before I die, just one more person... even one more..."

Hamyuts desperately kept summoning Armed Librarians using her Book-Feeding ability.

It was the first use of that ability in history. Even she couldn't fully control it. Earlier she managed to target and call Noloty, Vizac and Feekiee. However, she had actually tried to call five warriors there in the first place. Two were missing. Furthermore, the one person she wanted to summon the most hadn't arrived yet.

"...Kh, even one more person!"

She now started randomly calling out all the Armed Librarians in her memories. She no longer had anyone to call now.

"...This is the end, Hamyuts-san."

Along with Nieniu's voice the Beasts approached in front of her eyes. It was doubtful whether she could even support her own body. Was this the end? Hamyuts unconsciously closed her eyes.

At that moment, she could hear a man's voice.

"I won't let you."

Next she heard the voices of Beasts being felled. And Hamyuts's body was held up by someone. These reliable arms made her suddenly recall Makia holding her up when she was little.

"...Who are you?"

When she opened her eyes Hamyuts was shocked. It was a person completely outside her imagination.

She never thought of calling him; she had destroyed his Book by her hands after all.

He wore an old-fashioned copper-colored uniform and his hair was light green.

Around him fluttered Dancing Blades controlled by telekinesis.

Volken Macmani protected Hamyuts.

"No way, how could you..."

He had once tried to expose Hamyuts's crimes, was defeated and disposed of. Hamyuts couldn't allow even his Book to exist.

"Hamyuts! Don't stop your ability!"

Volken ran while shouting. His Dancing Blades ripped the rushing Beasts. For him, who was praised as a future Acting Director, this amount of enemies was nothing.

"Why are... you protecting... me?"

She couldn't help but ask. For Hamyuts it happened two years ago, but for him, who was turned into a Book and summoned there, it was just now.

Volken didn't reply. Instead he asked a question.

"...Is Olivia Littolet safe?"

Is he still worried about people even at this situation, Hamyuts smiled wryly.

"She's doing great. I've had a drink with her the other day."

"Glad to hear that."

Volken invoked his inborn ability to create illusions. His body split and the Beasts lost sight of their attack target. He easily slipped running between their ranks.

"Hamyuts. I hate you. I will never forgive you. You make me seethe with anger.

But that is my personal grudge."

"..."

"I will never fight for my own sake. I decided to always wield my Dancing Blades for the sake of someone else.

Now that I can't believe in anything, that is my only pride. And if I lose even that I will have nothing left."

"What a misfortunate man you are."

Hamyuts laughed and Volken then shouted.

"Don't idle around, Hamyuts Meseta! Call the Armed Librarians! Use your Sensory Threads to convey the situation! Do everything that you can!"

"Haha, don't order me, boy."

Hamyuts's dark-colored hair swayed and Volken's light green hair shone. While freely using their powers, they ran toward Nieniu.

Volken appeared next to Ruruta and the rest who were engaged in a defensive battle.

"Head towards the right! Defenses are thin there! Vizac-san! Create a breakthrough!"

That Volken disappeared the moment he received the horn attack of a Rhino. It was one of his illusions. There was no way to distinguish between real and fake except by touch.

"What, had you died?"

Vizac widened his eyes.

"...So you didn't betray us?"

Noloty and the other warriors who died during the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion were surprised all the same.

"What are you doing! Vizac-san! Charge ahead to the right!"

Another Volken, perhaps an illusion, came to issue orders. Vizac rushed. There certainly weren't a lot of high-level Beasts in that direction.

"Casma-san! Use your sticky threads ahead! Support Vizac-san! Hony, escort him during that!"

"Right, Volken!"

"Roger!"

The Magician Casma started reciting chants while Hony took on the approaching

Cavalryman and Rhino.

The illusory Volken kept issuing orders. Everyone followed his orders despite him being almost the youngest. The Armed Librarians' movements, which were scattered, gradually gathered together.

"A path has opened! Charge!"

At that moment, a large amount of illusory Rurutas were produced. At the same time even Noloty who was protecting him split into the same amount.

The Armed Librarian group raised a battle cry and charged along with the illusory Rurutas. Since the Beasts couldn't distinguish the real Ruruta, they weren't able to make a concentrated attack. The distance to Nieniu, which seemed endlessly distant, was being shortened.

Volken secured his position at the tail of the Armed Librarians and supported them with his illusions and Dancing Blades.

"Tell us the situation Hamyuts!"

Volken shouted and Hamyuts responded.

"The strongest flock is at 12:50 o'clock, distance 80! Hony strayed from the company!

He's at 4:20 o'clock, 20 meters!"

Hamyuts grasped the situation with her Sensory Threads and conveyed it to Volken.

"Mairun! Save Hony-san! Feekiee-san! Go to the right ahead!"

Hearing Hamyuts's reports, Volken dispatched his illusions to issue orders. They had such good coordination that one wouldn't think they'd once fought to the death.

That was probably how they should've been. They should've fought with their shoulders side by side.

"Enemy is preparing for a simultaneous attack! Starting from 11:30 to 2:00 o'clock!"

"Ruruta! Attack them!"

Volken shouted. Even Ruruta who was out of breath received Noloty's support and wielded Colio's knife. The violet-colored light emitted from it annihilated the droves of enemies.

Ruruta and the Armed Librarians all pushed on as if they were one organism. They pushed on toward Nieniu. However, even so the wall of Beasts was thick.

They couldn't reach it with cooperation alone. Without an overwhelming power they wouldn't be able to reach Nieniu.

At that moment, Hamyuts snickered.

"She's finally here."

Vizac and the other Armed Librarians created a slight opening. Ruruta tried running there. However, one of his legs couldn't move as he wanted it to. He no longer had any stamina or mental power.

"...U...gh..."

Noloty held up Ruruta as he collapsed.

"Noloty! Stay with him! Don't leave him!"

Volken's illusion ordered. Noloty peeked at Ruruta. He was so injured it was weird for him to still be alive. He could also barely see.

"Can you hold, Ruruta-san?"

She didn't ask him if he was fine. It was obvious that he wasn't.

"...I'll hold out, I can't die, at a place like this."

"I will support you, so please rest."

Noloty wrapped her arm around his shoulders, supported him and ran.

"Vizac! Don't tell me you're at your limits!"

Feekee shouted. He wasn't uninjured as well. He was undertaking the strongest Beasts all by himself.

"Be more respectful! I'm your senior!"

The power of Vizac's charge was also declining. His helmet was blown away and the tip of his spear had broken.

"Keep going you geezer!"

A swordsman who appeared to be in his early twenties who was the closest to Nieniu shouted.

"You youngsters should withdraw!"

An axe-wielding man who appeared to be in his mid-fifties shouted back. They were the previous generations of Acting Directors. Hamyuts had also called the Acting Directors she could remember the name and face of. However, while they could support the frontlines, they weren't enough to break through.

In front of them an exceptionally large Jail King Snake raised its six heads. The exact moment the Acting Directors attempted to launch a simultaneous attack, time stopped.

"How unsightly!"

A girl's voice roared inside the Imaginary Entrails. Hundreds of Beasts of the

Final Chapter ceased their movements. No, they didn't stop – they were moving very slowly.

Their flow of time was being slowed down.

A single figure danced in air, landing atop the head of the Jail King Snake whose movements were sealed.

"This is so pitiful I might cry. You poor mongrels. You should look into a mirror and feel ashamed at your disgraceful behavior."

She was a breathtakingly beautiful woman. Her body was wrapped by a lavish crimson-colored dress, with boorish iron armor equipped only on both hands and legs.

Her long, blonde hair was decorated by vivid black roses. The roses were secured in place by a sapphire hair clip. The girl looked down at all the Armed Librarians and spoke.



"...Huh? Who's that?"

Noloty mumbled.

"Nieniu or whoever you are..."

The girl turned the weapon she held in both hands to Nieniu. If it had to be classified, it would be an iron club. However, it was longer than five meters and thick enough that even a large adult would require both hands to hold it. It was a lump of metal more fit to be used as construction material rather than as a weapon, but the girl wielded it lightly.

"Challenging someone as great as me to a fight is foolish to the extreme. Wanting to destroy the world... how utterly absurd."

While wielding the club, the girl jumped towards the Beasts whose movements were stopped.

"Resolve yourself! This Ireia Kitty will consecrate you with her iron hammer!"

Ireia swung her club. The Beasts, having had the flow of their time distorted, were blown away like leaves.

"Why are you the only one to turn young again!!!"

Vizac Shouted, but she didn't even turn toward him. Ireia, who on her golden day was heralded as the strongest, turned into a tornado.

"We can do it... like this."

Noloty muttered while supporting Ruruta.

"Ha, you monster. Now that's a face I didn't want to see again."

Said an Acting Director that knew her when she was young while emitting cold sweat.

"Hear ye, those who are afar! Gaze upon me, those who are near! Grovel down in front of Ireia Kitty!"

Ireia pushed forward while raising loud laughter. As if saying that even Nieniu who wanted to destroy the world was inferior to her.

The tide turned along with Ireia's appearance. The club that crushed everything it touched and Ireia's power that controlled the flow of time of anything she gaze upon were creating a path.

"So there was a person like that... I've heard the rumors though."

Volken was perplexed at seeing Ireia's figure. Hamyuts in his arms suddenly leaked a laugh.

"What's funny?"

"...It's so weird."

"What is?"

"The fact we're fighting now."

Volken tilted his head but didn't ask further.

What a weird situation. In the outside world Mirepoc had inherited the power of Chacoly and was fighting using it. Inside the Imaginary Entrails Hamyuts had summoned the souls of dead Armed Librarians to fight.

Hamyuts Meseta and Chacoly Cocot. They were both originally tools created by

Makia in order to kill Ruruta. And yet now both of them were now fighting in order to protect Ruruta and worked together to grant his wish. Who could have ever imagined this would happen?

The moment she thought this, Hamyuts heard a voice in her head.

'Say, Hammy. Are you thinking how weird this is?'

The Chacoly living inside Mirepoc spoke to her.

'Yeah. I never even tried thinking about both of us fighting together.'

'Chacoly's the same. If daddy could see us he would probably fall in shock.

But she doesn't think it's weird.'

'Really?'

'Tools can only do what they were made for... But isn't that wrong? Both for Hammy and for Chacoly.'

'...That's true.'

'Chacoly and you are human.'

Hamyuts smiled. Yes, they were human. Ruruta, Colio, Hamyuts and Chacoly were

all human.

They were not Meats. Nor bombs. Nor tools. Nor gods nor demons. Merely human.

"Hamyuts! What are you doing, tell me the situation!"

She heard Volken's voice.

"...So rude."

Along with this small objection, Hamyuts returned her attention to the battlefield.

"...Am I being cornered?"

Nieniu groaned while overlooking the two battlefields in the outside world and inside the Imaginary Entrails.

Led by Ireia, with the Acting Directors of the past in both flanks, the Armed Librarians inside the Imaginary Entrails were pushing forward. No matter how many Beasts of the Final Chapter she poured at them, they were blown away by Ireia's group and were unable to reach Ruruta.

While grasping the violet shining knife and borrowing Noloty's shoulder, Ruruta advanced toward Nieniu little by little.

Mattalast, who was holding Mirepoc, made full use of his predictive ability to keep dodging attacks. Even when he thought they were surrounded, even in the countless times he thought they were finished, he was able to escape by a hairsbreadth.

The surrounding Armed Librarians poured all of their powers to create openings for Mattalast. They were protected by Yukizona's barrier and Bonbo's whales. They both kept protecting the Armed Librarians' domain even while vomiting blood.

Why? Wondered Nieniu.

She was the incarnation of destruction, possessing unlimited powers. A being that possessed power that could destroy the entire world. There was no change in that.

Then why was she being cornered? She should have won. There was no way she

wouldn't. Although she was convinced of it, the moment of victory never

came.

"...U...uhh!"

Nieniu finally realized her flaw.

Even now she was overwhelmingly superior in fighting strength. Since she was infinite she would never tire out. No matter how many efforts Ireia, Mattalast, Yukizona and Bonbo make, they would eventually tire out. Since Nieniu could fight indefinitely she would normally never lose.

However, Nieniu's power was the power to thoroughly destroy everything in the

world. Since it was the power to kill everyone with no survivors, it wasn't the power to finish off individuals. Although she could spread endlessly all over the world, she didn't possess the power to break through a concentrated point.

That was a clear failure of Future Overseer Orntorra. He had never imagined this sort of harsh battle. He didn't think that someone who was able to fight her equally would ever be born.

As a result she had once lost to Ruruta and now she was inferior to the Armed Librarians.

"...No way, I cannot, accept this..."

The single word known as 'defeat' floated to her mind. If she hadn't focused on Ruruta and destroyed the world... if she ignored Hamyuts and destroyed the world... regret weighed on her chest. Yet even those who possessed the power of God couldn't turn back time.

Why did no one understand her? Nieniu shouted in her heart. Only destruction was proper. This world must not exist. That belief would never be shaken inside her.

Nieniu was alone. In order to reject her belief Ruruta was running, the Armed Librarians were fighting, and the people of the world were praying. Although she was doing the right thing, no one was supporting Nieniu.

"...I will never allow it. I will never lose again."

Both inside the Imaginary Entrails and above Bantorra Library, Nieniu's hands moved and covered her face.

Mattalast ran inside the formation created by Yukizona. He didn't let Mirepoc in his arms suffer even a single scratch.

"Look at that!"

Hearing some trainee's voice, he raised his face. Above the needle, the statue in Ruruta's shape covered its face and wept.

"Have we won?"

"We still haven't won, but... we're going to, aren't we?"

While fighting the Beasts, the Armed Librarians mouthed their hopes.

"...Something's happening."

The Beasts were yet to stop. The battle was not over. Anxiety and expectation mixed inside Mattalast's heart.

Nieniu was already visible. Floating about two meters above the collapsed theater's stage, she covered her face. Ireia in the front nearly set foot inside the theater.

"Ahaha, slight regret is not enough to beg this Ireia for forgiveness!"

Ireia pushed ahead while laughing loudly.

"Just a bit more, Ruruta-san!"

While borrowing Noloty's shoulders, while being protected by the Armed Librarians, Ruruta was also growing closer to the theater. Nieniu was at a spot it would take less than ten seconds to reach.

"I pity her, though."

Noloty muttered.

"Let's keep going. For her sake."

"Yes, we just have to keep trying."

Just a bit more. Thinking so, Ruruta advanced his wounded body.

Various scenes floated inside Nieniu's mind.

They were the memories of the 1927 years she had been continually watching ever since being defeated by Ruruta. She recalled the deeds of the early period of Armed Librarians who've killed people and took their Books... the many wars that kept going in the world without rest... soldiers being killed and citizens losing their loved ones.

She recalled the many atrocities carried out by the Indulging God Cult. Dragon Pneumonia... Deep Blue Curse... Human bombs...

Countless misfortune and the despair of people rose to Nieniu's mind.

These are all my fault, she thought. The oppressed people did nothing wrong. Even the oppressors did nothing wrong. The world is at fault. A world without any leader is bad.

These people were born because I have lost to Ruruta.

"...I am sorry, everyone."

Her first loss brought forth a hell that continued for 1927 years. What would her second loss give birth to? She knew the answer. It would create an eternal hell.

The scenes of the future floated to her mind. The development of science would make people prosper. However, the gap between the rich and the poor would grow more and more. Neither wars, poverty nor hunger would ever disappear.

Weapon development would help massacre people more efficiently and growing social systems would bind people more firmly. Without anything changing, people would still hurt each other, hate each other, rob each other and kill each other.

The rotten world must be destroyed. All for the sake of the children born in it.

They must not win. All for the sake of creating once again a world where people could smile at one another and support each other.

"...I... cannot... lose..."

Nieniu exerted power in her stone-made fingers. Along with it, the rumbling of an earth tremor echoed in the Imaginary Entrails and at Past God Bantorra Island.

Several Armed Librarians stumbled at the sudden shaking of the ground. Mattalast didn't collapse but was surprised.

"Everyone, watch out your surroundings!"

Yukizona couldn't speak due to his bloody vomit so Yuri was issuing orders instead.

Mattalast noticed that half of the Beasts stopped moving. However, he didn't think they won or that things became easier for them. That was his intuition as a warrior and as a predictive ability user.

"...Seems like something is coming. What do we do, Matt-san?"

Kyasariro raised an uneasy voice. The next moment, one of the trainees shouted.

"Up there!"

Mattalast directed his gaze upward while covering for Mirepoc. He found something abnormal far above Bonbo's whales.

It was difficult to see since it was mixed in with the dark clouds, but it was an especially dark mass. It was too high to know the altitude of. Perhaps it was just below the dark clouds.

"...Is that also a Beast of the Final Chapter?"

Just how big was that black mass? Since they were able to see only that much at that height, did it not mean that even the entire premises of Bantorra Library wouldn't compare to it?

The Beasts started rising as if being sucked into the black mass in the sky. It looked as if it was growing gradually larger.

At that moment, Nieniu muttered.

"...Calamity of the Final Chapter – Tearshed Celestial."

Was what they heard the name of that mass? Mattalast shuddered the moment he

heard the word "Tearshed".

"No way... is she going to drop that on us?"

Luik replied while grimacing.

"That's impossible. I mean, it just can't be done right?"

Yet Luik's logic didn't hold. It wasn't impossible or couldn't be done. After all, the enemy they were fighting right now was impossible for humans in the first place.

Ireia entered the theater. The moment she was about to swing her mass of metal, she heard a voice from behind.

"Ireia-san! Retreat!"

It was an illusory Volken.

"The foolish should stay silent! I will finish everything with a single strike!"

"Something's happening! It's too dangerous!"

Nieniu was already in her field of vision. Ireia activated her ability, the Magic that controlled the time of everything she gazed at. However, Ireia was instead made to cover her eyes with her hands. She didn't know what kind of power was used, but it seemed to repel her ability.

"Seems like you are quite capable!"

"Please retreat! It's coming!"

The desert shook. Even the haughty and arrogant Ireia expectedly realized the power of her enemy. She pounded her lump of iron on the sand and used the recoil to fly backwards.

She was saved by a hairsbreadth. The next moment, countless black needles thrust through the sand. They were of various thicknesses, starting with ones a

person could hold with one hand and up to the trunks of 5000 year old trees. They were long enough to pierce the heavens and numbered ten thousand.

Further countless needles stuck out from these needles, and other countless needles sprouted from those. The cluster of needles started looking like a forest.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter charged into the forest. Their bodies sprouted needles and merged with it. There wasn't enough space to fit a mouse into the needle forest, much less a human.

"Curses!"

Ireia swung her club. Part of the forest cracked, but before she could hit with the second strike it regenerated back to how it was before. Even with the power she wielded it was impossible to cut through inside.

"...Calamity of the Final Chapter – Forest Fortress."

"S-so big..."

Looking at the massive forest standing in her way, Noloty stopped her legs. Ruruta also couldn't advance. The Armed Librarians attacked the forest.

However, neither Ireia's club nor her power of time worked. Neither the charges of the Acting Directors nor the abilities of other Armed Librarians had any effect on the Forest. It was even able to block the violet-colored light emitted from Colio's knife.

When it was destroyed it regenerated, and the more it regenerated the thicker it became.

"...Forest Fortress, huh."

Ruruta muttered while leaning on the frightened Noloty's shoulders. He thought of its appearance full of thorns and needles as reflecting Nieniu's current state of mind.

It was her refusal toward anything and desire to entrench herself from everything. She was pouring her entire being into rejection.

No, Nieniu. The real you isn't like that. Ruruta spoke inside his heart.

The Nieniu who I had met that day and loved was one who would try to meet anyone.

"What are we going to do Yukizona!"

Bonbo shouted inside Bantorra Library's courtyard, most of it already rubble.

"It's impossible to stop something like that even for a second!"

There was the problem of Bonbo's words inducing the Armed Librarians into a state of fear. However, they were going to be destroyed regardless of them being afraid or not.

"...It's already useless! We'd better run away!"

Kyasariro screamed without caring for appearance. The surrounding Armed Librarians also started shouting. Yet everyone felt the despair all the same. Even Mattalast couldn't think of anything to do.

"...Yukizona."

Mattalast looked at Yukizona. He put both hands on the ground. When he breathed a bloody mist rose from his mouth. He was barely maintaining the Decay Wave while being supported by Yuri.

"Yukizona!"

Mattalast shouted. Yukizona raised his face. He probably couldn't talk anymore. Yet he moved his lips, trying to convey something.

It's fine. It's too early to despair. I leave command to you.

Mattalast was confused, unable to understand his intentions. He removed his eyes from Yukizona and surveyed the surroundings. At that moment he noticed something.

"Everyone gather in the center! Tena! Raise a defensive barrier!"

"What?"

All the Armed Librarians turned to look at him.

"What're you doing Tena! Do it quickly! All of the trainees who have defensive abilities, help her too!"

Kyasariro rushed over to Tena immediately. Luik and Marfa repelled the nearby

Beasts. Tena created a small force-field barrier with a radius of about 50 meters.

Several trainees also reinforced it.

"This barrier won't hold..."

"I know! It's not meant to protect against that Tearshed Celestial whatever!"

Mattalast replied to one of the trainees' shout. Bonbo also made his whales disappear and flew into the barrier.

"Bonbo-san, why did you recall your whales!"

"It's an emergency evacuation!"

The confused Tena then inquired Mattalast.

"What will we protect against with this?"

"...It's to prevent us from being killed by being wrapped up in that."

The moment Bonbo's fat body entered the barrier... a huge thunder roared in the heavens. At the same time they could hear a man's voice.

"...Nieniu or whoever..."

That man stood on the barely remaining roof of the memorial hall of the Library. He was a suit-wearing man with a medium build. None of the Armed Librarians remembered anyone with those kind of sanpaku eyes that seemed to bite into

everything they looked at. However, everyone knew that insolent way of speaking from somewhere.

He leapt into Tena's barrier.

"Seems like she's the incarnation of the Future Overseer trying to destroy the world, huh. Yet she's unexpectedly quite the kind girl."

Thunder which was loud enough to crush ears assaulted the Armed Librarians. The dark Past God Island became so bright they couldn't open their eyes. The man pointed with his index finger to the heavens.

"No way..."

Muttered Yuri.

"It feels as if this sky was custom-made for me."

The man lowered his finger.

"Enlike Bishile!"

Yuri probably couldn't even hear herself shouting. The heavens clamored as if announcing the end of the world. Several of the Armed Librarians covered their ears and cowered.

The man was the lightning user Enlike Bishile. His strongest attack exploded. He summoned lightning from within the dark clouds and brought it down. This strike, controlling the very forces of nature, was equivalent to Ruruta's full power.

Gathering everyone inside Tena's barrier was a right decision from Mattalast. The shockwave of Enlike's lightning trying to crush the Tearshed Celestial swallowed up Bantorra Library. Putting Mattalast aside, more than half of the people there would have been annihilated.

When the thunder was over, a ray of light peeked from the gaps in the clouds.

"...I've crushed the Tearshed Celestial, but this isn't over, Mattalast."

Mattalast looked at the sky. Many scattered black masses started falling down to Bantorra Library. The Beasts of the Final Chapter also escaped the aftershock and were charging toward them.

"Bonbo! Bring out your whales! Stop the ones who are falling!"

"On it!"

Bonbo leapt to the skies and the Armed Librarians dispersed. Everyone desperately moved their aching body and faced the Beasts.

The Tearshed Celestial was trying to regenerate. Enlike also started preparing

to fire a second lightning strike.

"This is the second time you've saved us."

Mattalast said to Enlike pointing to the heavens while kicking apart Beasts.

"Don't be silly. I can't save anyone. I'm simply good at destroying things."

Enlike said in a lonely voice. *But, thought Mattalast, what's wrong with that? You can destroy things better than anyone, right? Everyone does what they're good at and we protect the world like this.*

"...What will we do, Hamyuts?"

Volken inquired Hamyuts while looking at the Forest Fortress. *But I can't hope for an answer*, he thought. Hamyuts was already exhausted. She couldn't even focus her eyes.

Fatigue and injuries brought her to the limit.

"What... you idiot. So you were there..."

It didn't provide any answer to Volken. Perhaps she couldn't even hear him anymore.

She was muttering something.

"I wanted to call him here. Ireia-san, Vizac-san, Feekiee, Noloty... and him..."

"...Him?"

"He's finally moving... that monster."

At that moment Volken also recalled – there was a certain warrior who has not shown himself yet.

A lone man sat in a corner of the Imaginary Entrails. Even the Beasts of the Final Chapter didn't pay him any attention. He was absentmindedly watching Ruruta and the Armed Librarian fighting from afar. He was distressed over something.

"...I'm in a battlefield again. Why? I ran away from Guinbex, ran from the

surface world... I even escaped from the Sealed Labyrinth and from the world of the living, but I always end up reaching a battlefield..."

He was muttering to himself as if speaking to someone in his heart.

"I want to go back, mom.

Although the only place I should return to is where you are, I am never able to reach it.

Hamyuts... Why, Hamyuts? Although you were able to summon me here, couldn't

you bring me back to that home?"

Playing around with the sand with his fingers, he kept asking unanswerable questions toward Hamyuts in the distance.

He had come inside the Imaginary Entrails at the same time as Noloty, Vizac and Feekiee. However, he didn't listen to either Mirepoc's Soul Sharing or to Nieniu's rage and simply sat doing nothing.

"Ah, why..."

Several Beasts of the Final Chapter crawled toward him. But the moment they were about to devour him complying with the order to kill everything they saw...

"Why was I born so strong?"

The ones eaten were the Beasts. Several tens of thousands of ants produced at the man's feet flocked around the Beasts and devoured them along with an eerie sound.

He was a tall, slender man wrapped in a wrinkled suit. His almond eyes were gloomily downcast.

He closed his eyes and looked at the heavens. He conversed with someone in his heart.

"Ah, mom. Mom. Please don't say that."

Further Beasts came to pursue him. Since they knew no fear, the result was them being devoured by the ants.

"If mom says something like this then I'll go all out."

The Ant-User Mokkania. He was once claimed to be equal to Hamyuts. When it had to do with mass killing he was the strongest and worst man in history.

The man who raised an army capable of devouring an entire country in his body

finally rose.

A black tidal wave rose at his feet. The number of flesh-eating ants created there had who knows how many zeroes.

"Nieniu-san or whoever... It seems like your power is infinite."

Mokkania spoke gently.

"What a coincidence. My power is also infinite."

The army of black ants and the army of black beasts clashed. The Beasts were engulfed by the carpet of ants one after another.

A black tidal wave flooded from far in the desert. Rather than joy at having reinforcements come, the Armed Librarians' response was more akin to fear. Noloty raised a scream.

"...M-Mokkania-san..."

While raising an eerie sound, the ants slipped under Ruruta's feet and grappled the Forest Fortress. The countless needles stabbed the ants and the countless ants bit into the needles.

The final stronghold created by Nieniu shook. It creaked and raised a shriek.

"How did you even win against this man?"

Volken muttered while looking at the breathless Hamyuts.

"So, perhaps it is time for me to use my full power as well! Gather, you mongrels!"

The one to shout this was Ireia. The Armed Librarians assembled around with her in the center. Ireia leapt and looked down at the Armed Librarians beneath

her.

"This is the finale! Time Control ultimate secret technique! System interference, Sextuple Acceleration!"

Ireia's staring eyes glowed red. The next instant, the time flow of Ruruta and the rest became six times as fast.

"Charge!"

Hearing Ireia's order, the Armed Librarians launched a simultaneous attack.

Obviously standing in the front and destroying the forest was Ireia.

"Keep going!"

The Forest Fortress, being devoured by Mokkania's black ants and thus weakened, couldn't stop their accelerated attack. Moving in unison, Ruruta and the Armed Librarians pushed forward faster than the forest could regenerate.

All participants gathered on the battlefield, employing every card in their possession to the fullest.

The Beasts swarmed toward Mattalast. His figure was hidden and could not be seen from the outside. He slipped through the slight gaps in the barrage of attacks. The route for surviving while protecting Mirepoc was like walking on a thin thread. If his foot missed the thread he would fall to his death.

His comrades kept fighting in order to preserve that thread. Only their attacks protected Mattalast's and Mirepoc's lives.

One of the trainees threw himself and was eaten by a Starving Mantis. Mattalast rushed through the small safe area created by his sacrifice.

Bonbo already had only three whales left. Those three, while spewing fresh blood, intercepted the Beasts assaulting from the skies.

Yukizona kept emitting his Decay Wave while being supported by Yuri. Yuri couldn't fight anymore; she had no choice but to devote herself to protecting her brother's life.

Enlike was destroying the regenerating Tearshed Celestial. While receiving the

Beasts' fangs on his body, he thrust his finger to the sky to bring down lightning.

Everyone had only little energy left. They were all making desperate efforts.

Mirepoc closed her eyes and kept sending the power of the world to Ruruta.

Ruruta ran through the holes opened by Ireia's club, Vizac's spear and Volken's Dancing Blades with his body lowered. Countless needles aimed to stab him from all around. The Beasts were rushing to trample him down from behind.

While protecting himself using Colio's knife and Noloty's support, Ruruta ran.

"So we can't fully stop that, huh."

Mokkania muttered in front of the Forest Fortress. The ants kept destroying it.

However, they weren't able to stop all of its functions. The endlessly produced Beasts of the Final Chapter couldn't be exhausted.

"...These petty tricks are futile."

Volken ran behind the group of Armed Librarians in unison. He erased his illusions and fully concentrated on his Dancing Blades. There was no longer any need for illusions; they only needed to break through with power.

Hamyuts in his arms was already nothing but a burden. However, he still held her and ran.

"I feel the best! This is Ireia Kitty's final spectacle! Please spread the story far and wide for posterity!"

While running at the forefront of the Armed Librarians, Ireia laughed. Even the exhaustion she had felt after using her secret technique was not trivial, and yet she didn't drop to her knees. She kept destroying the forest in front of her eyes.

"Forward!"

Shredding the pursuing needles with Colio's knife, Ruruta shouted.

"Forward! Even just a step forward!"

However, with every step they took, the number of the Armed Librarians decreased.

Running behind Ireia, Vizac's charge was stopped by thousands of needles. The line of spears attacking from all directions pierced his entire body.

Feekee, rushing ahead instead of him, danced with his short swords to create a path.

The moment he absolved his Diving ability his life was taken through a very narrow opening.

The Acting Directors and other Armed Librarians all collapsed one after another.

Ruruta simply kept running ahead over their corpses.

"How much longer!"

Someone shouted, and someone else replied.

"Don't think of it! Just keep going! Look only ahead!"

They kept being reduced in numbers. They turned into sand and vanished. Yet everyone thought they didn't mind it. They were already dead after all. They would be satisfied as long as they were able to fall and save the world.

Their feelings protected Ruruta.

"Vol...ken... behind..."

The breathless Hamyuts spoke as if whispering. Volken turned around in shock. The pursuing Beasts of the Final Chapter were able to reach to a few meters behind them.

Although their entire bodies were covered by ants they kept moving.

He sent his Dancing Blades backward. Rear guard was left to Volken alone.

"G-guh..."

Even Ireia ended up with needles piercing her whole body. Yet she raised loud laughter and kept advancing even like that.

"Ireia-san, that's too dangerous!"

"This Ireia knows no danger!"

Ignoring Noloty's shout, Ireia broke from her comrades and advanced ahead. Her deadly iron dance demolished the defenses of the Forest Fortress.

Ireia collapsed. However, her last attack was able to buy them a large distance.

In the endlessly dark destination where it seemed like there would be no exit, a light finally appeared. It proved the Forest Fortress was not impregnable.

Noloty was penetrated by needles coming from the right. While raising a scream, she broke the needle, separated from Ruruta and charged. As if following Ireia, she desperately wielded her fists and launched kicks.

Having lost his support, Ruruta ran ahead while stumbling. Stooping forward, using his left hand and right leg, he advanced awkwardly.

"Just..."

The final barrier was in front of his eyes. On its other side was Nieniu.

"A bit more!!!"

He swung Colio's knife. The needles blocking the way were slashed off.

Ruruta fell ahead. This was the small theater he had built himself in the center of the Imaginary Entrails.

The needles of the Forest Fortress didn't pierce that place. The forest of needles was thick with no opening in it... yet only the very center was empty.

Ruruta stood on top of a stone chair. And he looked at the center of the stage.

"Nieniu."

He started talking.

"...Ruruta."

The statue standing atop the stage glared at him.

At that moment everything stopped moving. Neither the Forest Fortress, the Tearshed Celestial nor the Beasts of the Final Chapter filling up the Imaginary Entrails and Bantorra Library moved. Not even Mokka's ants.

As if they all hesitated on disturbing the pair looking at each other. As if they were afraid of defiling the instant everything would be settled.

Chapter 6: The Furthest Ends of Love

The moment Ruruta reached the stage, the Beasts of the Final Chapter ceased their movements. Their job was to prevent Ruruta from coming to Nieniu and killing Mirepoc. But that task was over. They would never make it in time for both.

At the same time the Armed Librarians also stopped fighting. If the Beasts stopped moving their work was also over. It was impossible for the Armed Librarians outside, as well as people like Volken and Mokkaia who remained inside the Imaginary Entrails to help Ruruta. The only thing that could break Nieniu was the glowing knife in Ruruta's hands.

"Is it over?"

The Beasts completely stopped moving. Mattalast muttered while still holding Mirepoc.

The silence suddenly returned to Bantorra Library's courtyard. Not a trace was left of the dignity the Library prided itself on, and small fires occurred here and there. Most of the Armed Librarians, both dead and living, were collapsed.

"Yuri... how much... are left...?"

Yukizona was also exhausted and tumbled to the ground.

"Almost everyone is unable to fight. In the end they were only able to hold out with willpower. About three quarters are alive. Some people were also caught up in Enlike's lightning strike.

Fortunately, since the evacuation of citizens was already complete, I believe they have sustained no casualties."

"...D...don't mind me... so go... help the others..."

From the severity of his breathing sounds she could tell he was in a lethal condition.

Yet without hesitating Yuri went to take care of other people. Those who still had the energy to stand also moved.

"...Is it really over?"

Bonbo climbed out the mouth of a whale lying on the ground.

"Our work probably is."

While answering, Mattalast gently laid down Mirepoc's body.

"Mirepoc's still fighting. The Beasts are also not gone yet. This means Ruruta's battle has yet to be settled."

While saying so he looked around. The frozen Beasts... they would probably move

again only when the time for the end of the world comes.

"...Having a minor role sure is sad. Wasn't it also like that before?"

By before he meant the decisive battle against the Indulging God Cult. During that time as well the Armed Librarians were engaged only in a defensive battle. The ones to settle everything were Enlike and Noloty.

"At the very end the Armed Librarians did nothing but support."

"That's not true. You've done well. Now we only have to wait for the conclusion."

Mattalast didn't say 'for the world to be saved'. No one knew who was going to win.

No matter what the ending was, the only thing for certain was that it would close the curtains. The long, long tale of the Armed Librarians would end in a little while.

In the hole opened up in the stopped Forest Fortress, Volken awaited the conclusion.

"...Volken, did we win?"

Hamyuts said from his arms. She had already lost her sight. She was probably not able to use her Sensory Threads either.

"Y...yeah, we won. The world is saved."

Volken said, making Hamyuts smile.

"You're bad at lying. That's why you lost to me."

He looked at Hamyuts's face. Volken recalled the moment he was killed.

"...Say, won't you take revenge against me?"

"Hamyuts?"

"It's fine. Do what you want. Take revenge for those on the ship or for yourself."

The fight to protect the world has ended. Volken was free. He had no reason to hesitate in his revenge. Yet what floated to his mind were memories from before he knew betrayal, from the time they were comrades.

There was some hatred. However, he felt no bloodlust.

"...You're a good kid. You idiot."

Hamyuts said as if reading his mind.

"I've killed... many people.

I don't want any forgiveness. I definitely don't want any sympathy. Kill me, Volken."

"Hamyuts, I'm..."

"If you don't... then I'll just die by myself."

Volken noticed that the body held by him was crumbling down.

"I'm not meant to die in someone's arms."

Hamyuts sought to be killed. It was transmitted to Volken.

And that's why he decided to keep holding her and watch her until the end.

'What's that kid doing?'

Hamyuts started thinking in Volken's arms.

Isn't that strange? I'm supposed to die by being killed by someone. The first time by Ruruta and the second by Volken. That's my fate.

"Hey now Volken, stop that. If you do this..."

Hamyuts raised a hand and caressed Volken's cheek.

"I'll die happy."

Volken smiled, perhaps finding it amusing.

"Is that so. Then die happy."

I give up, thought Hamyuts. *What's up with him*, she was greatly disturbed.

She never even tried thinking about ending up like this. Because she could only think she was going to be killed by someone at some point.

To think she would die in someone's arms... and it being Volken, someone who could be said to be her archenemy...

"I'm somewhat... troubled... please... stop... I don't know... what to do. How should I die?"

"You don't know? Then I'll tell you.

Think about everyone you've met so far and slowly close your eyes."

Just like Volken told her to, Hamyuts recalled her comrades. She thought of Chacoly and Makia. And of Mattalast, Mirepoc, Ireia, Noloty and the other Armed Librarians.

She recalled the faces not of people whom she fought to the death with, but of people whom she smiled with.

"How strange... this shouldn't have happened..."

And, she slowly closed her eyes.

"Thank you, everyone."

These became her final words. Hamyuts, who was born as a tool and lived as a human uttered her final words.



Hamyuts in his arms crumbled down to sand. This was her true last time. And her enemy had without a doubt seen her face smiling.

"...Ruruta. Save the world."

Volken raised his face, turning his eyes toward the hole in the Forest Fortress where Ruruta and Nieniu were. Whether the world was saved or not, whether Hamyuts's fight was rewarded or not all depended on Ruruta.

There was no longer anything he could've done. Besides watching.

Since it was their story they were the only ones who could end it.

On top of the stage was Nieniu. On one of the spectator seats was Ruruta. Betting on the fate of the world, they calmly glared at each other.

No needles from the Forest Fortress came to assault him any longer and neither were any Beasts of the Final Chapter created. Nieniu raised her index finger and pointed above.

Ruruta realized what her intent was. It was the causality erasing attack, Binding Song, he had seen before. When she pointed it at Ruruta, he would die unconditionally.

Now he knew why everything had stopped. Nieniu staked everything on this attack.

"...Ruruta. I will not lose."

Nieniu said.

Without replying, Ruruta lightly stomped his left foot. It moved. He could run. Since Noloty had supported him, it was somewhat able to recover.

"...I cannot afford to lose."

Ruruta made no reply. Still clenching Colio's knife, he simply looked at Nieniu quietly.

Both of them didn't move. Or perhaps they couldn't move. The distance separating them was a mere five meters. Until when would that distance not shorten?

"...Ruruta. Why are you fighting?"

Nieniu said.

"...There is a slight happiness in this world. Even I already acknowledged that.

...However, even so the world must be destroyed. This world has conflict. It has hatred. It has sadness. This will never change for all eternity.

...Wishing to have never been born... there are many people like this in the world.

Just like I did on that day. Just like you once did.

...I cannot forgive this."

"..."

It was transmitted to Ruruta – he knew what lay behind these words full of determination and fighting spirit.

Nieniu felt fear. She was frightened by the prospect of losing, of the world not being destroyed.

He made her scared. That fact hurt Ruruta.

"...So I will destroy it. Once I do, the world will be born anew. I will create a world with no sadness, suffering, conflict or discrimination. You should be aware how wonderful this new, reborn world would be.

...Protecting the world is a mistake. Neither Colio-san, the Armed Librarians nor the people of the world understand this. That is why they are trying to destroy me. This is something truly important, yet without understanding anything they keep heading down the wrong path."

Ruruta couldn't deny her words.

"...Why do you fight? Because everyone protected you? Because they all supported you?

...That is no reason. You simply mistook me as evil. But I am right. You do not possess even a shred of justice."

He couldn't reply. He couldn't overturn the justice Nieniu had spoken of.

"...So how can you fight?

...You have trampled on people's happiness. And you are now trying to do the same.

How can you do that?"

"I..."

Ruruta shook at hearing her words.

Thinking that it was too late into the game to hesitate and shake off his

thoughts would be simple. However, the one in front of Ruruta was the one and only love of his life.

Ruruta knew – she definitely wasn't trying to destroy the world for her own sake. It was because she truly believed it was the right thing to do.

He painfully received her feelings. Just as she did before, even now she wished for people's happiness without any change. She was also a savior. No, she was the only savior. Ruruta was an evil being who tried destroying the savior for his selfish desire.

"...Step aside, Ruruta. If you have even a little of a righteous heart remaining."

He nearly looked away from Nieniu. But if he averted his gaze it would all be over.

She would probably point at Ruruta and use her causality erasure power to kill him.

She would definitely not hesitate.

"Nieniu, I..."

Doubts encroached Ruruta's heart. The power of the world embedded into Colio's knife... would it really make Nieniu happy? Would it be able to crush the will of destruction? What would happen after the knife hit her? Would she not disappear along with the will of destruction?

He didn't come there to destroy her. He came there to make her happy.

What was her happiness? What did loving her mean?

These fundamental questions assaulted his heart in front of the final confrontation.

'...Ruruta, don't hesitate.'

A voice echoed from the knife. Was it Colio's? Or did it belong to the power of the world? Even those couldn't clear Ruruta's doubts.

"Nieniu. Perhaps you are right."

And yet, contrary to these words, Ruruta once again strongly clenched the knife.

"But I will advance. Even if I am wrong, I will not retreat."

"...Why?"

Nieniu trembled.

"Because I can accept all my doubts and hesitation. I can't know what's right or not. I can only be myself."

"...From the bottom of your heart..."

"Right. From the bottom of my heart, I am myself."

There was only one thing for certain. One thing that never changed now or before.

He didn't want her to destroy. He didn't want her to feel like she shouldn't have been born. He wanted to make Nieniu happy. Ruruta was always like that.

He smiled and simultaneously cried.

Nieniu's index finger moved faintly. Ruruta exerted power to his right leg.

"I am glad to have met you."

These were the words to inform the beginning of the final battle.

Ruruta leapt. He clenched the knife in his hand.

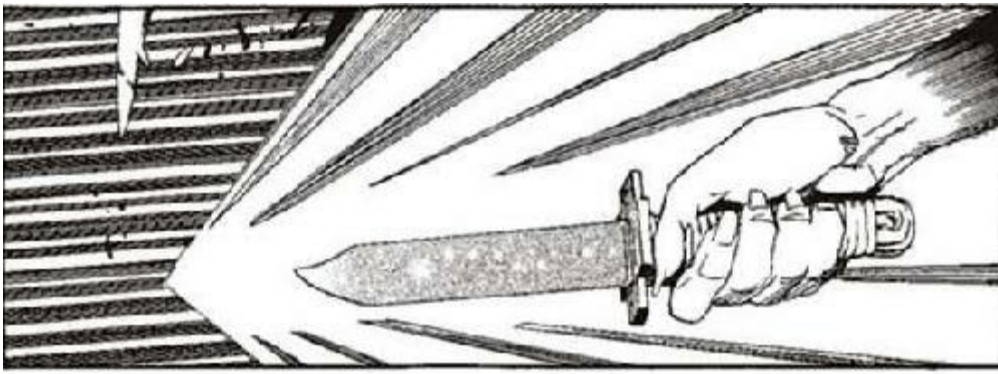
Nieniu moved. She lowered her fingertip down from the heavens.

The distance between the two shrunk immediately. The distance between the pair, that stayed the same ever since the end of the Paradise Era and until this day, became zero.

They collided soundlessly.

Nieniu's finger touched Ruruta's heart.

Colio's knife touched Nieniu's chest. A mere millimeter of the tip stabbed into her.



Silence fell. After a mere few seconds, the endlessly long silence passed.

"...Ruruta."

Nieniu said. Ruruta made no reply.

"...Ruruta!!!"

She shouted. The next instant the knife emitted an especially powerful violet-colored light.

"...It reached."

Said Ruruta. He was alive. His eyes were looking at Nieniu.

Small cracks appeared on Nieniu's stone finger. They spread to her whole body in the blink of an eye. The knife reached her. The moment before Ruruta perished, the power of the world was poured inside Nieniu.

The violet-colored light enveloped her.

"Accept it. Accept everything that I was finally able to give you."

The emitted light wrapped up the both of them. No one could see them anymore.

The power of the world entered Nieniu through the knife. It wasn't any physical power. It was a will in itself.

The heart of the people of the world that wished to protect it clashed with Nieniu's will of destruction, the heart that felt the world must be destroyed.

If it was only one person's heart at a time, they would be easily broken and repelled.

However, what collided with Nieniu was the will of all people in the world.

A mother prayed for the growth of her young child. A father prayed for the growth of his child and his wife's happiness. A child prayed for the safety of his loving parents.

A man wished for the happiness of his lover, a woman wished for the happiness of her lover.

A certain politician wished for a peaceful life of his citizens, a soldier wished for the safety of his countrymen.

If an artist wished for someone to understand his work, then those who did wished to see his next work.

A lonely man thought about someone he hadn't met yet, and another lonely person thought about someone who was already gone from the world.

All their various reasons of wanting to protect the world were transmitted to Nieniu.

Someone wished to protect the world for someone's sake.

Destroying it was proper. The world would be reborn into a paradise.

Although

Nieniu wished to carry out this will, the power of the world denied her heart.

It was because paradise would be born only after everyone was gone from the world.

Even if hundreds of millions of people would become happy, a single person who was there wouldn't become happy.

Nieniu's wish to make all people happy and the world's wish to make a single person happy... These clashed, with the wish of the world winning out.

All humans should become happy without any exceptions. That was everyone's

fundamental wish.

However, without being aware of it their fundamental wish was lost, wore out and broke down. The heavy reality and their own powerlessness destroyed that wish.

The thing that remained after losing their wish... was the wish in their heart to make the few people related to them happy.

That was the power of the world flowing inside Nieniu. Ruruta's power that denied the final chapter. The power of the calamity that misled Ruruta. The power of hope that made him stand up.

A power that didn't exist in paradise but existed in this world.

That mysterious power known as love.

The will of destruction was broken. Orntorra's destined destruction was rejected.

"Look!"

Luik shouted. He was rescuing his comrades at Bantorra Library.

Yet they could see even without him shouting. The Beasts of the Final Chapter that stood in place started disappearing.

The black army thinned out as if it was nothing but an illusion, vanishing one after another.

The Armed Librarians raised a cheer. Even the collapsed people rose.

Bonbo started running around while shaking his large body and Yukizona lost his consciousness as the tension was released all at once. Among them, only Mattalast stayed at Mirepoc's side.

"...Is it over? Mirepo."

Faintly opening her eyes, Mirepoc groaned. Her hair returned from its violet color to her former blonde.

"...It is over. However..."

"However?"

Mirepoc pressed on her eyes. She wore a sorrowful expression.

"However..."

Even Volken left inside the Imaginary Entrails saw its ending. The remaining Beasts as well as the Forest Fortress were disappearing.

"We won... Hamyuts, we won."

Volken said. At the same time the Imaginary Entrails started shaking.

Looking behind him, he saw another abnormal event in the desert. Here and there huge holes were opened up, the sand flowing inside them. It was as if the bottom of the ground became loose and was swallowed up by darkness.

At some point Mokkania came near him.

"...So it means everything's going to be destroyed."

Mokkania muttered. Volken thought the same. The Imaginary Entrails themselves

were crumbling down.

"...But..."

Turning his eyes to the theater, Mokkania muttered.

"What will happen to him?"

Ruruta was still standing there.

"Nieniu..."

Colio's knife left Ruruta's hand. Emitting violet-colored light, it fell on top of the stage, bounced off and rolled to somewhere. As if saying it would no longer disturb the two, the knife vanished far away.

"...Nieniu."

The violet light surrounding the two slowly vanished. Only the cracked statue and Ruruta remained there.

"Please..."

Ruruta muttered. Small fragments scattered from Nieniu's body.

"Become happy. Return to my side once more."

His eyes reflected none of the Beasts disappearing nor the collapse of the Imaginary Entrails. He saw nothing other than Nieniu.

He came all the way there for her. Only for her. He had done everything he could. He even accomplished what he shouldn't have been able to do.

So please don't disappear like that and only show me the ending.

Ruruta hugged Nieniu's body. He hugged her exceedingly gently so that she wouldn't break down, so that she wouldn't be destroyed.

The stone statue broke.

It was all over. Nieniu's sense of powerlessness and misery filled her chest.

Impossible. Unbelievable. Although thinking this, she couldn't stop the destruction.

Why was I defeated? She thought but reached no answer.

At that moment, Nieniu heard someone's voice.

"...Because you finally realized... there's something more important than happiness."

Who are you? Thought Nieniu. It certainly seemed like a familiar voice, but she couldn't recall it.

"...It doesn't have to be a paradise. You don't have to be happy. No matter how sad you are, you can get over everything as long as you have this feeling. You can live by embracing it.

...You have now realized that emotion exists."

Who is talking? Nieniu carefully listened to the voice in her heart.

"...That's why he was able to fight and win. Colio-san, Hamyuts-san, Chacoly-san, Ruruta, and everyone else faced you with this feeling. I have to go as well. I apologize to you."

At that moment Nieniu realized who the speaking voice belonged to. It was herself.

She also noticed at the same time – that she was no longer Nieniu. She realized she was the Future Overseer Orntorra.

"...I wish I wouldn't have been born – the moment I thought this we became one.

...However, I no longer think that way."

Nieniu and Orntorra split. Losing Nieniu, Orntorra could no longer exercise his powers.

Wait, Nieniu. Why are you going? Where are you going?

Nieniu looked back at Orntorra speaking to her.

"...That child is crying. Just like he did 1927 years ago on that day.

...If that child is crying then I must go to him."

Nieniu smiled and announced her goodbye.

"...I feel happy at having been born even just for that."

Nieniu and Future Overseer Orntorra were divided into two.

After the stone statue broke down, Ruruta felt warmth in his arms. It was the soft and delicate sensation of a girl.

"...U...uuh!"

No words came out. He couldn't see because of tears. He only felt Nieniu in his arms.

"...I've made you wait for a long time."

Nieniu wrapped her arms around Ruruta's back. While becoming wet by his own tears, Ruruta shook his head to the side. *Don't worry about it. It was only a mere second*, he spoke in a voiceless voice.

"Nieniu, I'm sorry. What I did... to you..."

He couldn't form his thoughts into words. Losing his memories to the water of Argax...

Keeping her suffering for a long time... The both of them fighting to the death two times. He tried to apologize for many things, but no words came out.

"...It's fine. It's all in the past."

With just these words, the pair forgave each other and understood each other. Even the numerous mistakes, the second battle to the death that put the world's fate at stake, the many days and months all disappeared by just that. That was what loving someone from the bottom of one's heart meant.

There were no other words spoken afterward. As if afraid to hurt each other, they simply stood there while embracing each other. As if no matter what they said it would be lies.

The desert of the Imaginary Entrails started shaking. The sky lost its color and gradually darkened.

The time for Ruruta's world to end has come.

The two remaining Armed Librarians – Volken and Mokkania – both put their hands on their chests the same time. In the silence they displayed their respects and blessings. Although they couldn't understand anything, they realized it was a wonderful time.

No matter what happened, no matter what Ruruta did, only this moment should be extoled.

As the Imaginary Entrails crumbled down, even their figures collapsed into the void.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter vanished, the Tearshed Celestial dispersed, and even the dark clouds were blown away by the wind, clearing up the skies at Bantorra Library. At last even Ruruta's figure floating in the air was starting to collapse. The stone body shattered and its fragments rained down.

Although the Armed Librarians were raising cheers until then, their joyous expressions suddenly vanished. They looked at the crumbling Ruruta with a somewhat solemn face.

The Armed Librarians realized. Even if Ruruta was their enemy, even if he was evil, he was a great being that would never appear again in the world. It was a great moment that would never happen again even if they were to live for a thousand years.

"Goodbye, Ruruta. And Nieniu."

Mattalast muttered. He then suddenly noticed that at some point it became sunset.

While slowly descending, Ruruta's body was dyed slightly red.

The Armed Librarians heard someone's voice. No, was that even a voice? It was a transmission without any vibration of air. A melody that used no vocal cords or musical instruments. It was nothing they heard before, but it was definitely a song.

"...She is singing."

Yuri muttered. With these as the final words, they all stayed silent and listened to her song.

Inside the center of the crumbling Imaginary Entrails, two people stood in the theater.

It was the theater Ruruta had built by his own hands for the day when Nieniu would finally awaken.

They both separated their hugging bodies and sat down on the stage. They snuggled close and intertwined their fingers. They pressed their shoulders together, supporting each other.

Nieniu was singing. Ruruta closed his eyes and listened.

It was a song of tranquility. However, this wasn't her song from the past.

She had affirmed everything. She had accepted everything, affirmed everything in life, be it sad or painful.

She had once wished for something: to sing a new song. To deliver it to everyone in the world. To make the world's people happy with her song. That wish was now being granted. After 1927 long years, the power of the world brought forth by Ruruta let her sing a new song.

The Imaginary Entrails were collapsing. Sand fell into the void and the sky lost its color. The only thing that remained was the theater.

The vanishing pair had no lingering regrets. Was that because they have lived for so long or because they were finally able to meet and so didn't need anything else?

The theater and the pair vanished into the void. In the moments before it happened, Nieniu's singing voice kept echoing.

Ruruta Coozancoona vanished. Bantorra Library was once again enveloped by a mysterious silence.

The winter's evening wind was slightly warm, and the red sunset that seemed

as if nothing even happened covered the Armed Librarians and Bantorra Library. Without anyone giving out any voice, they all looked above the needle where Ruruta no longer remained.

The eastern sky was dyed indigo and stars were faintly visible. Migratory birds, who knows where they have been going until now, crossed the sky while chirping.

January 12, 1927.

The ending to Bantorra Library's longest day was announced by the sunset and stars.

Fragment: At the Ruins of the Gone Library

1937.

Mirepoc Finedell was 31 years old. Ten years passed since Ruruta Coozancoona's final day.

"...It's gotten lonely here too. Everything in the past feels like a dream."

Mirepoc muttered while looking at the night townscape through the window.

She was at the center of Past God Bantorra Island. This place was now called the Bantorra Library Ruins.

Ten years ago, this place had the towering, dignified Library that overlooked the town.

Encircling it were government facilities of various sizes lined up. A garden even more beautiful than tourist sites was spread out, with well-maintained rows of trees pleasing the eyes of all visitors. These were all destroyed by Bonbo's whales and Enlike's lightning, never to be rebuilt again.

Most of the Library Ruins became a desolate vacant lot.

Instead they built several commonplace and boorish concrete buildings, and a single building that indicated where the entrance to the Sealed Labyrinth was. Mirepoc was in one of those buildings.

On the signboard attached to the entrance, "History Preservation Bureau Headquarters" was written with undecorated letters.

In the end, after that day ten years ago, Bantorra Library was gone.

After the battle, everything that the Armed Librarian had concealed until then was brought to light.

The concealing of Ruruta's identity... The creation of the Indulging God Cult... The fact that they have brought many of the world's calamities... The Armed Librarians had to shoulder the responsibility for that.

Who would take responsibility and how? They fought over this discussion again and again.

With Ruruta on the front of the list, most collaborators were no longer in this world.

The situation was far too big for someone still living to bear responsibility for it. At any rate it was responsibility for 2000 years since the world began. There was no person who could shoulder it.

Some called out to kill all the Armed Librarians. This was at a stage when the scars left by the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion were still fresh. The anger of those who came to know the truth about that incident was deep.

Some also thought that they should keep going just as it was before without blaming anyone. No matter what they've done, the fact that the Armed Librarians protected world peace was true.

After the chaos consisting of the long, long debates that went back and forth for three years and dealings of politics, they finally reached a conclusion.

That was the abolishment of Bantorra Library and dissolving of the Armed Librarians.

After ten years passed, Mirepoc thought it was unavoidable.

The size of the concealed secret and the many evil deeds done by the Armed Librarians and the Indulging God Cult... Thinking of them it was actually strange for everything to end with mere dissolving.

There were obviously people opposed to this. No matter what happened, it was obvious for them to be angry since they didn't know of Ruruta's existence. Mattalast went to each and every one to apologize and prostrated in front of them to make them consent.

Only the work of excavating Books and managing them in archives remained even after the Armed Librarians dissolved. It became under the control of the section under the Present Management Agency that came to be known as the History Preservation Bureau.

The final Acting Director Hamyuts said during that day that it was the final day

of Bantorra Library. In the end it came true. Although the world was able to escape destruction, no one could have stopped the destruction of Bantorra Library.

Among her Armed Librarian comrades, the only one to remain on Past God Bantorra Island was Mirepoc. The others all sought out new ways of living.

She had no way to know how all of them were doing.

Yukizona had exhausted himself completely during that day's battle. His congenital disease eroded his body to the extent he couldn't fight ever again. He returned to his hometown and spent calm days being treated by Yuri.

Bonbo fought on active duty. He snuck into the Present Management Agency to one of the top positions in some international peace-keeping organization.

Surprisingly, Minth kept his work in the Humanity Development Foundation as before. His contributions to the development of mankind were acknowledged and he was able to raise funds from various sponsors. Although the Armed Librarians were destroyed the Indulging God Cult survived. One couldn't help but feel the irony of history.

Kyasariro, Marfa, Luik, Gamo, Rizzly, Tena and Yanku all found themselves new lives. Some of them abandoned fighting and some found new battlefields; they took varied paths.

Enlike Bishile disappeared at some point. His whereabouts were completely unknown.

And Mirepoc alone still remained on Past God Bantorra Island. Her current title under the Present Management Agency was the Board Chairman of the History Perseveration Bureau.

Managing the world's mines, digging out Books, storing them in archives and preserving them – the one supervising all of this work was Mirepoc.

But it was trivial. She merely replaced Bantorra Library's Acting Director.

However, there was one person whose sins were not forgiven.

Although everyone else was forgiven, he alone wouldn't be. Mirepoc also thought so.

He let Volken die, captured Olivia, and deceived the Armed Librarians. Mattalast Ballory, who had his hands in many dodgy dealings, was never forgiven to the end.

Mattalast never tried to plead for himself. More than that, he forcibly saddled all responsibility on himself. He used every method he could so that none of his comrades would bear even a single crime, managing to get himself the death penalty.

He even made some false confessions to cover for people such as Yukizona, Minth and Photona.

He had protected his comrades in exchange for his life.

Even now Mirepoc clearly remembered the day of his execution. Along with her comrades, Mirepoc rushed to the execution site surrounded by each country's elite soldiers. Mattalast's attitude was easygoing, but the color of fatigue was clearly visible on his face.

The crying Mirepoc handed him a pipe. *I won't say it's bad for you anymore so please smoke*, Mirepoc said.

"Thanks, I gave up smoking for a while."

Saying that, Mattalast smoked and enjoyed it like usual.

Although there were only a few minutes until his death, he inquired about the lives of everyone. When he heard Kyasariro was getting married he clapped his hands in joy.

When he heard Luik and Olivia were dating he widened his eyes in shock. When he heard Rizzly was merely idling around without doing any work he smiled wryly saying he was a lost cause.

When they finished speaking about everyone, they spoke about the movies and about music. They then spoke of good restaurants and alcohol, getting excited about such silly topics. When the leaves Mirepoc brought ran out, he headed toward the guillotine while smiling.

Without caring what other people thought of her Mirepoc wailed, and all their other comrades also dropped their gazes.

But there was only one problem.

The fact that this Mattalast was still alive even now.

Sitting on the Board Chairman's seat in the top floor of the History Preservation Bureau Headquarters, Mirepoc wore a bitter expression.

"...Long time no see, Mattalast. I never thought I'd see you ever again."

She almost used formal language but stopped herself just before. There was no need to speak to him formally. He was a fugitive death row convict. And Mirepoc was the head of the History Preservation Bureau.

"You've become splendid during this long time we haven't met. You're dignified even."

Mattalast answered while smiling. Although he was supposed to be over forty years old he didn't look much different from the past. He only had a few more wrinkles on his face.

"I just came to see you so don't mind it. I don't need tea or anything."

The moment Mattalast tried to fill his pipe with leaves, Mirepoc spoke angrily.

"No smoking allowed. I hate the smell of smoke."

"I'm sorry."

He said and put the pipe away in his pocket while smiling.

When he had walked to the guillotine he suddenly removed his handcuffs as if it was natural and ran away. All the former Armed Librarians who came there to see him off burst in anger. They formed a Mattalast annihilation unit on the spot.

However, when Mattalast devoted everything to escaping even Ireia or Hamyuts couldn't catch him. With Bonbo, even if he won a whole city would be destroyed.

Yukizona lost his fighting abilities and Enlike was missing, so there was no one

who could stand up to him.

Just like this he was on the run even now.

"I have a question. How do you keep escaping like this? You're wanted all over the world, so how could you come here so easily?"

"Isn't it obvious? It's because I've been doing all sorts of bad stuff."

Mattalast laughed. Right. He had a vast amount of hidden assets and even a private army and pawns all over the world. As well as his own overwhelming battle strength.

He was probably even able to live comfortably without being a fugitive.

"If you just came to see me your business should be over. Leave."

"How cold of you. We have a lot we can talk about, right?"

"Like what?"

"...Well..."

Mattalast looked down from the window. The now lonely scenery of Past God Bantorra Island was there.

"Say, who was the one to save the world that day?"

Mirepoc thought to stop being angry. He was trying to have a serious discussion.

They were close enough she could feel that.

"In the end it was Ruruta. Everything was his fault but it was also thanks to him."

Her feelings toward Ruruta were complex. She felt thankful for him having saved the world, but she was also angry at him having killed Hamyuts and other comrades. She was glad he became happy, but also felt some regret at him quitting while ahead.

"How modest. How about trying to say it was you? No one would complain."

"...That was Chacoly Cocot's power. Not mine."

"No, that was also your power."

"Perhaps... but I don't really think so."

Mirepoc furrowed her eyebrows.

"It certainly wasn't only thanks to Ruruta or only thanks to you. Hamyuts and Chacoly... if those two weren't there, we wouldn't have won."

"Frankly it's quite odd. They were both born in order to kill Ruruta in the first place."

"The Armed Librarians also fought well. Both the living and the dead gave their efforts. I also tried doing whatever I could."

Mirepoc nodded frankly. If he weren't there she would have died.

"But while that's true, I wouldn't really say the Armed Librarians saved the world."

"Yes. Colio Tonies was also there. If he wasn't there Ruruta wouldn't have changed."

"...Yes, there's also him but that's not all."

Mirepoc thought that he was now about to enter the main topic.

"How many people were involved until Colio-kun got there?"

"...There was also Shiron who helped retrieve his human heart when he was a human bomb. There's Lascall who brought his Book to Ruruta. And... umm..."

"Yes, it was first Shiron. Next Lascall. But that's not all.

Colio-kun also had comrades. When he was a human bomb. The boy called Hyoue and the man called Relia. If they weren't there then Colio-kun would've died as a simple bomb without retrieving his human heart. Relia-kun was also involved with Enlike-kun, but that's a different story."

"I knew he had comrades, but that is the first time I have heard their names."

Mirepoc hadn't noticed that at some point she returned speaking formally.

"Hammy's also related of course. You and I as well, although indirectly. There are also the woman known as la Mira and the youth known as Cartohelo. You probably knew nothing about them as well."

"Right."

Why does he know so much about Colio? Mirepoc questioned this but didn't mouth it.

"If they weren't there, if Colio-kun hadn't met them, he wouldn't have been able to reach that place. And that's why I think he's one of the people who saved the world. If by saving Ruruta Colio-kun helped saving the world, then the people who helped Colio are also the ones who saved the world."

"...Perhaps so."

"If Relia-kun is one person who saved the world, then those that helped him also saved the world. And he was also probably supported by other people as well. Family, friends, lovers, comrades, I believe that all them also took part in saving the world.

Also, those who helped Relia were also helped by other people. And they were helped by someone as well. These people, each and every one of them, were indispensable to saving the world."

"...Depending on your viewpoint this might be true, but..."

Feeling it was somewhat sophistry, Mirepoc knit her eyebrows.

"Maybe you can't agree with it. But I think so.

Colio-kun alone was involved with so many people. Even you, Hammy, or Chacoly were involved with people in many different ways. And you are all part of those who saved the world.

Then thinking this through, aren't all people in the world our saviors?"

"..."

"Someone somewhere was just a little kind and helped someone. Someone fell in love with another, and someone protected another. This went round and round and ended up saving the world.

So I basically thought it was this sort of thing that saved the world that day."

Mattalast cut his words and Mirepoc also stayed silent.

"I destroyed many Books during my time as an Armed Librarian. To protect

Bantorra Library's secrets."

"..."

"Now that Ruruta died and the Library's gone, I noticed just how many of Books I've destroyed belonged to the saviors of the world. How can I call myself an Armed Librarian if I didn't leave to the world the Books of such saviors?"

And so, I decided to leave their fragments to the next generations."

"How?"

"For example, Relia-kun's Book is no longer in the world. Kachua broke it.

But I've searched for people who knew him, and hearing about him from them, by inquiring about his place of birth and his place of death I found out what kind of person he was and what kind of life he led. I can't leave behind his Book, but the fact that this person known as Relia-kun had lived was left in this world."

Mirepoc then realized: Mattalast didn't run away just to spare his life.

"Mattalast-san, did you do it for this...?"

Have you kept doing this all the time ever since escaping?"

"Leaving behind even a single person's fragments is much harder than expected. But I can't complain. This is something I have to do."

Then you should've said this sooner, thought Mirepoc. But she somehow understood.

He was good at telling lies, but poor at telling the truth.

Mattalast gazed at the nightscape without turning his face to Mirepoc.

"I don't know how many decades this will take, but I will come here again.

Not alive but as a Book. By that time I will have engraved many people's proof of living into my soul. So Mirepo. Will you work hard to protect this place until then?"

Books are wonderful. It's easy to forget because they're so close to us. They leave behind the proof someone was alive more eloquently than any words and more accurately than any writing. There are no more any Armed Librarians, but

I'd like there to still be Books."

He didn't even have to say so. Mirepoc nodded with these feelings. Mattalast didn't look at her, but it was probably conveyed.

"...Is what I thought that if I say you'd wait before pushing the alarm button."

From a serious atmosphere Mattalast's tone completely turned to a joke.

"I would not push it. Not so easily."

Mirepoc's table had an alarm on it just in case. If she pushed it security would come rushing from downstairs.

"Is that fine? I'm an escaped convict. Even you have a position to uphold now."

"...Why are you so uncooperative. If you tell me that I will have to push it."

She reached to the alarm. She stopped her fingers when they gently touched it.

Immediately after she thought of pushing the button Mattalast suddenly changed the subject.

"By the way, I heard you're engaged. Congrats."

"How do you know that!"

Mirepoc was truly surprised. They have yet to exchange rings and they haven't even told both their families.

"And it's someone I don't know. Apparently a normal person without any relation to the Armed Librarians? Please introduce me to him sometime."

"...Over my dead body."

"I'll leave you my address later. Won't you invite me to the ceremony?"

"Who would ever invite you..."

"How cold. Did we not get along well?"

What getting along are you talking about, she grimaced. When she did, Mattalast's shoulder shook as he was laughing.

"How lonely. This will probably be my last time teasing you."

Without knowing what to answer, Mirepoc stayed silent.

"My days just keep getting lonelier. Recently I thought about Hammy a lot."

"Mattalast-san..."

For some reason she couldn't continue. She could suddenly sense the scent of death from his profile. Thinking it was just an illusion, she let it vanish from her mind.

"Well then, my business is done. Time to go, I guess."

"...I so then I will press it."

"Don't worry. Since it's me it'll be fine."

Mattalast smiled and said. The faint scent of death was gone.

"I will not worry for you."

Her fingers pushed the alarm. The same time the sirens started ringing, Mattalast leapt out of the window.

Mirepoc approached the window. She looked at Mattalast's back growing distant.

"At any rate, why did you have to come here all by yourself without being called?"

"You're selfish, irresponsible and self-centered."

Mirepoc muttered toward his back. These words somehow felt empty.

"...Right? Mattalast-san."

Security guards rushed from downstairs. Listening to their footsteps, Mirepoc watched Mattalast's figure slightly floating in the darkness.

Ruruta Coozancoona's Book was dug out of the Library Ruins after the battle was over and preserved in the archive. Since it recorded the memories of tens of thousands of people, it was so large that it couldn't even normally be carried by two people.

Thousands of people visited the History Preservation Bureau every day to

read Ruruta's Book. What did it give them? Coming to know the truth about the world, what did the people think?

Some came to know how wonderful love was. Others came to realize love was foolish.

Some reconfirmed how wonderful the world was, and others lamented that the world should have been destroyed.

What influence did reading Ruruta's Book give to people? It led them to a new story.

They inherited Ruruta's soul to create new stories.

This story has no final chapter.

Even in the future people would laugh, cry, fight, love, and while losing what they've gained, they would engrave their stories into their souls.

All the while living in this world which is neither paradise nor hell.

Afterword

Hello everyone.

I deliver you the final volume of the Tatakau Shisho Series, "Tatakau Shisho to Sekai no Chikara". Even this long story reaches its end. A lot has happened so far and Yamagata became uncharacteristically sentimental.

To think it would continue for so long... to think it would receive a manga... to think it would receive an anime... Thinking back we have come far.

It truly was tiresome. Crying in the storm of rejected manuscripts, writhing in agony as no ideas came, wandering between cafés and late-night family restaurants while desperately pedaling my bicycle... they were these kinds of days.

However, now that it all came to pass I also feel that they were happy days.

This somewhat turned out to be like a resignation letter. But I will write many more novels. Because I have a mountain of ideas to write about.

It happened only once, but I have shown up for one of the anime's recording sessions.

While there my supervisor T-shi ordered me to greet the voice actors, so while I had some reservations, I made a greeting in front of all actors.

The only problem is that I'm not really a person who could speak properly at such a place.

As I feared it turned out a mess.

Seeing the voice actors with their jaws dropped, I hurriedly ran away. Afterward I was shuddering in a corner of the recording room.

And when the time to begin the recording came, hearing people read the lines I've written aloud made me extremely embarrassed, turned my face bright red and assaulted me with an abnormal fever.

During the break I stood in the restroom, washing my face with cold water,

even feeling palpitations and shortness of breath.

Perhaps unable to stay a spectator, Hamyuts's voice actor Paku-san talked to me, but I was so absentminded I can't even recall what I've replied to her. I feel like I've also talked to other people, but I can't recall that either.

After the recording was over, I spent about an hour in a nearby café in a daze.

That's how the anime adaptation was.

Now for some PR. I have written some small stories as a special perk for the first edition of the Blu-ray and DVD of "Tatakau Shisho – Book of Bantorra". These are various short stories that turn the spotlight to the daily life of Armed Librarians I've not had the chance to write about. Mirepoc's unknown hobby, Volken's romantic circumstances and the like. Incidentally, the first story is about how Hamyuts spends her day off.

If it interests you then go ahead.

Now for some thanks.

The Tatakau Shisho Series was able to be completed due to the help of various people.

Illustrator Maeshima Shigeki-sama and Shinohara Kokonotsu-sama in charge of the manga version, thank you very much. Illustration coordinator Matsumoto Miyuki-sama, designer Mukadeya Yuuko-sama, you have also been a great help. The anime staff too, I will continue being in your care. My editor T-shi and everyone of the editorial department, sorry for causing you all sorts of problems. My family and friends, you have been an irreplaceable mental support.

For you the readers, I hope we will continue our relationship.

Let us meet again in my next story.

Yamagata Ishio

Yatai-kau Shisho Series

Ending Celebrations

Manga version... anime adaptation... and the ending of the series!

Yamagata sensei, congratulations and a job well done!

Being in charge of the illustrations has made Maeshima happy (in my position as a 'False Man...')

While completely immersed in this story of sad love mixing life and death, beauty and ugliness, I have worked hard in constructing the worldview as to not ruin that atmosphere.

Being in charge of designing the weapons was fun but Shlamuffen and the Dancing Blades were pretty difficult...

This time the Colorless-Haired Statue was also quite the pain (After all she's a boss character... and she has colorless hair...)

Being able to participate in this kind of group work was also a valuable experience. And finally, what I always wanted to say—

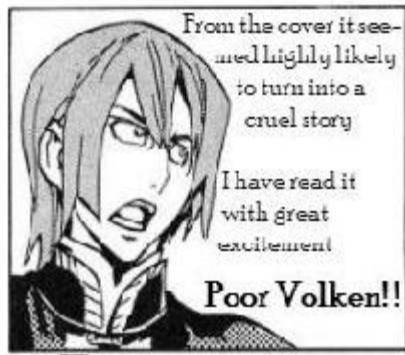
For Yamagata-sensei's proof of living...

for this wonderful story...

Thank you! I wish for you to attain happiness as well!

Maeshima Shigeki 前島重樹

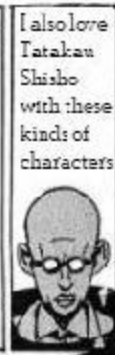




From the cover it seemed highly likely to turn into a cruel story

I have read it with great excitement

Poor Volken!!



I also love Tatakau Shisbo with these kinds of characters



I wanted Enlike to become happy with Noloty. And why has his face changed?

Goodbye handsome~ Handsome is also good, but...

Noloty~

The ones most difficult to design...

Following the description she seemed like a Muay Thai so I changed her into a southern dancer + ponytail. Many of Yamagata-sensei's women characters seem to wear male attire for some reason

Everyone Yamagata sensei, thank you so much!



I really wanted to draw Noloty with her ponytail untied...

Were these two!!

Sae was described with stuff like: A beast wearing human skin..

Canivorous beast.. No: a pretty woman..

Noloty~ I'll let you wrap up everything ~♡



Bunny Embroidery

Every time I made her chest bigger her hair grew longer.. That was Big Sis! I lammj.