

盾の勇者の成り上がり^②

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Egg Gacha

"Oh, if it isn't Hero-sama. How may I be of service today?"

The gentle owner of the slave shop appeared flourishingly to welcome us.

"Oh?"

Surprised, he looked at Raphtalia curiously.

"What a surprising change. I did not think you would grow so well."

He said in a disappointed voice while slumping.

"... What?"

"I thought you would be more like us, how unfortunate."

What does he mean? But I'll just keep that question to myself.

"Real slave traders would raise high quality slaves by keeping them half dead."

He casually continued.

"Then the slaves you know of were discarded after being used, right?"

"N-Naofumi-sama?"

Raphtalia looked up at me concerned.

I've become a lot more confident now.

My current situation is much better than last time.

"Fufufu... Is that so, how exciting."

The slave owner, perhaps amused by my reply, let out a laugh.

"Then, looking at her condition... she has grown quite well. For a non-virgin... how about 7 gold coins?"

"Why are you talking like I'm going to be sold! Also, I am still pure!"

Shocked at Raphtalia's words, the slave owner let out a gasp.

"Oh my! Then how about 15 gold coins? May I confirm if she is a virgin?"

"Naofumi-sama!"

15 gold coins for Raphtalia!?

"Naofumi-sama! Hey, please say something?"

15 gold coins would be enough to buy the Level 75 male wolf!

While I was having those thoughts, Raphtalia tightly grabbed my shoulder with a scary look on her face.

"Naofumi-sama... If you keep playing around, I'll get mad."

"What's wrong? You have a scary look on your face."

"You're not defending me at all even though I might be sold."

"I'm just playing along."

--That's how I'll have to play it off as. Although I did think it over, Raphtalia saw right through me.

I shouldn't pretend to consider selling the one person in this world who believed in me.

"15 gold coins...."

Her grip became stronger when I murmured this.

"Ow, ouch!"

Raphtalia's offensive strength... had become greater than my defense.

This was reliable in a combat sense.

"... I'll run away, you know."

"It's a joke. I was just thinking of how amazing and beautiful you've become."

"T-that... Oh, Naofumi-sama..."

For some reason, Raphtalia became bashful all of a sudden.

It's kinda irritating.

... Is what I thought, but why? What did I say?

"Well, she's not for sale."

"I see... that's too bad. So how may I help you?"

"Ah, didn't you hear about the commotion at the castle?"

The slave trader grinned at my question.

"I have. The slave curse was removed, no?"

"If you understand already, then this will be simple... Don't ask in the first place if you know beforehand."

Since I'm already tired from dealing with Raphtalia.

Good grief...

"Of course, you know, despite what the king declared, the slave system will still exist."

"Hmm, I thought the nobles didn't buy slaves?"

"No, not at all. There are many slaves owned by the wealthy. After all, they are quite useful, of course."

"That trash king, saying those things while supporting Motoyasu, the Spear Hero... Won't the nobles become rebellious? I would if I were them."

It'd be quite funny if that happened.

Although it'd be quite bad for the kingdom.

"Well, there are many factions within the kingdom. If they did rebel, the ones who will end up losing would be the nobles themselves. Yes."

"That bearded old man has that much influence?"

Was it because this kingdom was a complete dictatorship?

Then maybe the kingdom will eventually collapse due to an uprising.

Since the kingdom currently had a trash king who will be succeeded by a bitch princess.

"Actually, in this country, rather than the king--"

"Um... back to the matter of the slave curse..."

"Ah, yes."

We've digressed. Now that I think about it, I don't care what will happen to that trash king.

"So, you've come to reapply the curse, yes?"

"Yeah, is that possible?"

"Whenever you wish."

With a snap of his fingers, an assistant appeared with the same jar used when we first marked her.

An embarrassed Raphtalia took off her armor and exposed her chest.

"H-how is it?"

"How is what?"

"... Haa..."

?

Why is she acting so embarrassed?

Even sighing afterwards.

Did I do something?

Just like last time, I added my blood to the ink and the mix was coated on Raphtalia where the old mark used to be.

"Although the mark was erased, it is possible to restore it."

"Ohh--"

The erased mark began to reappear as Raphtalia's chest glowed.

"Ngh..."

As expected, it seemed to hurt. Raphtalia tried to bear the pain.

The mark was restored before my eyes.

I need to check the reaction from disobeying orders.

... It should be fine to go easy this time.

Raphtalia became a slave again to gain my trust. So I should trust her now as well.

"Now then."

While thinking about what to do, I noticed that there's some ink left on the plate.

"Hey, can I have some of that ink? I can pay for it."

"Sure, go ahead."

I spread the remaining ink from the plate onto my shield.

Suu-my shield absorbed the ink.

-The requirement for Slaver's Shield has been unsealed.

-The requirement for Slaver's Shield 2 has been unsealed^[1].

Slaver's Shield.

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Slave growth+ (S)
Slaver's Shield 2.

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Slave condition+ (S)
Slaver's Shield... well, that's somewhat expected.

Something new appeared in the tree, branching from Small Shield series. It was not that strong.

However, the equipment bonus caught my attention Improved growth.

But two items were unlocked from just a little bit of ink?

I carefully look at Raphtalia.

"What is it?"

That reminds me that the shield absorbed her hair before. 'Racoon Shield' was unlocked at that time, but maybe that also fulfilled some of other conditions.

That was probably for Slaver's Shield 2. With those conditions fulfilled, two shields were unlocked.^[2]

I logically reasoned.

In that case...

"Raphtalia, give me a bit of your blood."

"What, why?"

"There's something I want to test."

Puzzled, Raphtalia makes a little cut on her fingertip and spreads some blood onto the plate. I drip it onto my shield.

-The requirement for Slaver's Shield 3 has been unsealed.

Slaver's Shield 3.

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Slave growth+ (M)
Yes! As expected!

"Naofumi-sama? You seem like you're having fun."

"Ahh, an interesting shield appeared."

"That's great."

I change my shield to the Slaver's Shield and waited for it to unlock.^[3]

"Now then... Hmm?"

We've finished our business here and began to leave, but a wooden box filled with eggs caught my eye.

I don't remember seeing these last time. I was curious.

"What is that?"

I ask the slave trader.

"Ahh, that is what we sell as our business front."

"What business is that?"

"A monster shop."

For some reason he answered excitedly.

"Monsters? In that case, are there also monster tamers?"

"How perceptive, was Hero-sama not aware of this?"

"I don't think I've seen any..."

"Naofumi-sama."

Raphtalia raised her hand.

"What?"

"Filo Rial are monsters raised by a tamer."

The name of a monster I've never heard of. I have no idea what she meant.

"What is that?"

"It's a bird used to pull carriages instead of horses within the city."

"Oh, those things."

Those birds that looked like chocobos. [\[4\]](#)

I thought those were just animals unique to this world, but I guess they were monsters.

"In the village I lived in, there were also people who raised monsters. They were raised for their meat in many of the farms."

"Ohh..."

Is that how it was? In this world it seems people who worked on farms also count as monster tamers.

"So then, those eggs are..?"

"It's difficult for people to handle monsters otherwise. This way is easier to do business."

"Is that so."

"Would you like to see the cages with fully raised monsters?"

If I showed interest he would try selling them to me. The slave trader was a businessman.

"No, it's fine."

I have other matters to attend to.

"So what's that sign on top of the box filled with eggs?"

Although I don't know what's written there, I saw an arrow pointing to the box and characters which looked like numbers.

"One try for 100 silver coins, a monster egg lottery!"

"100 coins is pretty high."

We currently have 508 silver coins. That was a hefty price.

"Because they are expensive monsters."

"Just making sure about Filo Rials, how much are they normally?"

"Starting at 200 coins for a grown one. They also provide lots of byproducts like feathers. Yes."

"So chicks are cheaper than adults? So this is the price of a Filo Rial egg... but there's also the cost of raising one?"

"No no, we also have other types of eggs in there."

"I see... since it's a lottery."

So he's saying there are losers and winners.

So a loss is worth less while a win is more than the attempt.

"So there's probably no winners in there, right?"

"What! Hero-sama thinks that we would pull such a scam!?"

"Am I wrong?"

"We have pride in our business! Although we do like to trick our customers, we would never misrepresent our products."^[5]

"You like to deceive, but won't lie..."

What kind of logic is that. I wonder dumbfounded.

"So? What is the winning prize?"

"An easy way to explain it to you would be a Kiryuu."

Kiryuu? That's maybe... a dragon that a knight commander would ride?^[6]

"A horse-like dragon?"

"These are the flying types. They are quite popular... so nobles often vie for them."

Flying dragons... like in dreams.

"Naofumi-sama?"

"The market price for one of these winners is about 20 gold coins."

"What are the chances? Just for the Kiryuu."

"Right now there are 250 eggs in the lottery. Among those, one."

So 1/250.

"Strong magic has been cast so you can't tell from the look or the weight. Only

after customers acknowledge they may not win do we allow them to play."

"What a good business."

"Yes, if one wins we make sure to get their name. And from the publicity we get many participants."

"Of course, it's just luck..."

"If one buys 10 attempts then we allow them to pick another one from the box. Yes."

"But, how about excluding the Kiryuu?"

"Yes. Nevertheless, there are ones worth 300 silver coins."

Hearing that made me smile.

Wait a second... Isn't this just CompuGacha? Hey!^[7]

It's easy to reap huge profits with something like this.

I was nearly tricked again.

"Hmm..."

Still, I ended up seeing something interesting here.

Thinking about it, I feel somewhat vulnerable with just Raphtalia.

So which would be better, buying another slave or raising a monster?

It would be interesting to try out the new Slave Shield. Raphtalia's level has already gone up, so it would be difficult to get the benefits of Slave Growth+.

However, I was reminded of Motoyasu.

That guy sure was annoying about freeing slaves... Although, maybe it was just because Raphtalia was a pretty girl.

There were also many times when Raphtalia was in a lot of trouble.

Additionally, I would have to buy equipment for the slave. This would be a

problem for my penniless self.

"Okay, then I will buy a single try."

"Thank you very much! This time I will also throw in the slave ceremony for free."

"Oh, how generous. I like that."

"Naofumi-sama!?"

"What's the matter?"

"Are you going to buy a monster egg?"

"Ah, I was thinking that our last battle was tough with just Raptalia. Equipment for another slave would be expensive, so I thought raising a monster would be interesting."

"Haa... But monsters can also be troublesome."

"I know that. Don't you want a pet though?"

"... But aren't you aiming for a dragon?"

"Even a crappy Usapiru is fine."

It's not like I hate animals, even MMOs have pet taming features. Hopefully, raising it would be just as relaxing. Either way, as long as it's able to obey orders like a slave, then it should have a higher attack than me.

I notice that since I have a bit of extra money now, I'm starting to be reckless with my spending. However, this should be a good investment.

Anyways, with the Slaver's Shield it makes sense to own a monster.

"Selling it off after raising it won't be as painful like with a slave."

"Ah, I see. That makes sense."

Although we may end up becoming attached to it, we have no money so we'll

just have to bear it should that happen.

Since a slave is another person, having to sell them would be very sad. If for some reason I need to sell a slave whom I've become close with like Raphtalia, I'm not sure I would be able to do it.

However, monsters aren't able to talk, so no matter what it'll just be slightly painful.

Leaving them behind with a 'I hope you meet a good master'.

"So you also provide those services?"^[8]

"I'm excited by how insightful Hero-sama is! Yes!"

This slave owner gets really enthusiastic.

Let's just look at the eggs for now.

He said something about there being no way to search through them.

Well, I guess just randomly picking one is fine.

"This one then."

Using my intuition, I pick one out from near the right.

"Please mark this seal with your blood to remember which one you chose."^[9]

Like he instructed, I smeared my blood onto the design on the egg.

A bright red light shined as an icon representing the monster tamer appeared.

I guess this is the same as restricting what slaves can do.

... Setting a punishment for it if my orders are ignored. I'll make it more severe than the one on Raphtalia.

It's a monster after all. Since it can't understand my words, then it would be better for the punishment to be harsh.

Though it hasn't even hatched yet.

While grinning, the slave owner opened an incubator-like machine.

"If for some reason it doesn't hatch, I'm going to ask for compensation."

"How admirable! For the Hero-sama who won't take a failure lying down."

I take note of the slave owner's mood and attitude. Geez, isn't this guy a bit of a masochist?

Although I don't get off on verbally abusing other guys... well, I do want to see the suffering faces of those shitty heroes.

"Even though it's just words now, I really will come. I'll unleash my violent slave on you."

"What are you going to make me do!"

"Duly noted."

The slave owner was seriously in a good mood.

"Around when will it hatch?"

I ask the slave owner after handing over 100 silver coins.

"It is written on the incubator."

"Hmmm..."

The number-like characters were changing.

"Raphtalia can you read?"

"Um, Just a bit... it says around tomorrow."

"So fast. Well that's good."

"We will await your next arrival."

In the end we left the tent with our egg.

Chapter 25: Gift of Life

Now then, what's next?

I remembered that I still have leftover potions from the wave.

Even though I had them prepared beforehand, I never used them in the end. It might be better to just sell them to a medicine shop.

"Let's go to the medicine shop and then, the blacksmith."

"Naofumi-sama, we won't be receiving any more aid so we need to be more careful with our money. We should refrain from what we've been doing up until now."

"Understood."

"Right now, we'll be fine with our current equipment. Let's consider buying them only when we really need them."

"..."

Fumu, that is a good idea.

However, we only have cheap goods compared to the equipment of the other Heroes.

I think it would be a good idea to get Raphtalia a better weapon when we start fighting stronger enemies.

"It has only been a few days since we got new weapons. Imagine what Oyaji would think."

"Yeah..."

The Oyaji from the weapon shop has given us various services. Although he allows us to trade in our equipment, we won't be able to afford better gear with our current funds...

"Alright, let's save up then."

"Yes!"

Well it wasn't a bad idea to be frugal with our money.

"Then, let's go to the medicine shop."

And so, we went to the medicine shop. The owner had a friendly smile when he saw us.

"What? What's going on?"

Normally, he had a sour look on his face when he saw us, so seeing him smile sent a shiver down my spine.

"Nothing much. I just wanted to thank you if you came."

"Huh?"

We were both confused.

"I heard that you guys saved my relatives in Riyuuto Village. They told me to help you out if possible."

"Oh... I see."

When the wave ended, everyone from Riyuuto Village got together to thank us.

It seems like his relatives were among them.

"So, thank you for that."

The shop owner retrieved a book from a closet and handed it to me.

"What's this?"

"You've been making beginner level medicines, this book has a bunch of recipes for mid-level medicines. This will be a good time for you try them out."

"..."

I gently opened the book of mid-level recipes. The binding was in bad shape, but the letters were printed clearly.

Yup. Can't read it.

"T-thanks. I'll try them out."

I should show him some gratitude for helping us out.

Recipes for medicines with higher sale value could probably be found in here.

"I'm happy to hear that."

I felt pressured because I might not be able to answer his goodwill.

I had already given up on reading the language of this world... but it might be a good idea to learn.

"The owner of the magic shop also told you to drop by."

"Magic shop?"

"Naofumi-sama, it's the shop that sells magic books."

"Oh, I see."

I thought it was just a bookstore... but now that I think about it, they had things like crystal balls at the back.

"Where is that?"

"The big store along the main road."

... Ahh. One of the biggest bookstores in town.

"So, how may I help you today?"

"Ah, today's--"

I sold my potions for higher than the usual amount.

I also bought new tools using that money before heading to the magic shop.

"Oh, you're the Shield Hero. You've been a great help to my grandchild."

"Uh..."

I had no idea who she was talking about, but it was probably someone from the village. The old lady at the magic shop politely greeted us.

The old lady was a bit plump and wore witch-like clothing.

"So what do you need?"

I looked around the magic shop that I thought was just a bookstore.

There were rows of stale books and lots of crystals placed behind the counter.

Along with items such as staves, it definitely felt like a magic shop.

Anyway, how do you use magic in this world?

"Is that young lady over there your companion?"

"Hmm? Ah."

I nod at Raphtalia.

"Please wait a moment."

The old lady said and retrieved a crystal ball from behind the counter, then she began to chant some sort of spell.

"Okay, now then Shield Hero-sama. Can you take a look at the crystal ball?"

"Ah, sure."

What's going on?

Is what I thought as I gazed into the crystal ball.

... It was shining a bit but I didn't notice anything else.

"Hmm... it seems that Shield Hero-sama is suitable for support and healing magic."

"Eh?"

I'm suited for magic!?

Hurry up and teach me then... well I can't really complain since I wouldn't understand.

"Next is the young lady there."

"Ah, okay."

I step to the side as Raphtalia looked into the crystal ball next.

"Hmm. As expected, the young lady of the Raccoon race is suited for light and dark magic."

"As expected', as in that's normal?"

"Yes... her race is skilled at illusions using light distortion and darkness concealment."

I see. So the Raccoon race is similar to Tanukis. It seems that even in Japan, Tanukis are a sort of creature that can transform into humans.

"So what now?"

"Here, just something from this old lady at the magic shop."

The old lady then handed us three books.

Books again! Even though I said I couldn't read, why were you also giving us books?

"I actually wanted to give you a crystal ball, but this old lady's livelihood would be endangered if I did."

"What do you mean?"

"Doesn't Shield Hero-sama know that you can learn a spell by releasing compatible magic from a crystal ball?"

What!?! That means that I can use magic even though I can't read?

"The country recently made a large order... of crystal balls for the Heroes. A lot of them were delivered, does Shield Hero-sama not know?"

"I had no idea."

Because of that trash king. They were probably given to the other heroes.

Geez, they left me out to die.

"Although magic books are a bother, one could learn 10 spells in a single month with dedicated studying."

So, 1 spell with the crystal ball and around 3 spells per magic book; though I still can't read it yet. No, since she said a month maybe there's something more to it.

"My apologies."

"No no, these magic books are more than enough."

Raphtalia answered while smiling. I nod along.

"So how much magic will we be able to use?"

"These are all beginner level. For higher level... please buy them."

"Ah-Ah."

It is a shop. So we shouldn't be ungrateful since she was hurting her own business by giving these books away.

"Thank you."

It was hard to express but we accepted the magic books from her.

"Ha..."

I let out a sigh.

I don't really like studying. What could someone with low grades like me do with these?

Fine. I'll definitely decipher the recipes and spells in these books.

Is what I want to say.

I kind of wish my shield had a 'written language translation' ability.

There's a high chance that my shield has recipes for various medicines. I should be able to use them if I try.

However, I wonder which option would be better, spending the effort to search through the branches of my shield or learning the language to understand the medicine recipes from the books?

With the latter, I would have to deal with costs and other problems.

Still... just thinking about the possibility of my shield having a way to translate this world's written language made me lose my willpower.

"Let's learn magic together."

Raphtalia happily said to me.

"But I can't read the language of this world..."

"Eh, that's why we should learn it together."

"Well... I guess that's fine."

Well, it doesn't hurt to study while making medicine.

"Anyways, when is the next wave?"

"Hm? Ah, one moment."

I looked at the icon in the corner of my vision and check the menu for the next scheduled wave.

Next: 45 days and 14 hours.

"In 45 days."

Wasn't it every month!?

Hmm, well looking back, it has only been around 2 months since I was summoned here.

In that case, maybe the time limit is longer this time around.

It had only been a few days between Raphtalia becoming a slave and then meeting me.

A month is... a long time then.

"Well, having a lot of time is also good."

It's possible that there isn't much we can accomplish in that period.

"For now, have we finished all we needed to do here?"

"Hmm... we have reapplied the curse and sold the medicines. We have also received the books. I think that's it."

Raphtalia confirmed.

Since coming back here because we forgot something would be a waste of time.

"Let's get some food then grind some levels afterwards."

"Okay."

Today's breakfast surprised me. Because my sense of taste had returned.

I can now say that something tastes delicious.

Requirements for Mortar Shield has been unsealed. (note: mortar as in pestle & mortar)

Requirements for Beaker Shield has been unsealed. (note: beaker as in beaker & flask)

Requirements for Yagen Shield has been unsealed. (note: does this have an english name? it's pretty much the same as pestle & mortar)

Mortar Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Novice Mixing

Beaker Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Liquid solutions bonus

Yagen Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Harvesting skill 2

After eating, we left the town and headed in the direction of Riyuuto Village.

Nearby was a place with a moderate amount of monsters.

I don't know the grinding spots of the other Heroes. Because the only way to find these spots was either by asking the locals or searching for them yourself.

Finding a decent hunting spot just from looking at a map was pretty difficult; enough to be called a challenge.

Although it was not like we were competing, it was slightly frustrating to fall behind the other heroes. It was just that fighting new monsters and letting my shield evolve doesn't sound too bad.

While I've left out many details, a lot of shields have been unlocked. Although my abilities have risen, that was also a small problem on its own.

Because of my shield, my defense had increased a lot. My other stats such as agility, stamina, magic power and SP have all risen. Everything other than attack.

For that reason, during the last wave I didn't really receive any injuries.

While we were en route...

"... By the way, can I absorb any monsters from the wave?"

I completely forgot about it after returning from the invasion, but I want to see if my shield will react to them.

So near Riyuuto Village, we found the mob corpses from the wave.

Requirements for Netherworld Locust Shield has been unsealed.

Requirements for Netherworld Bee Shield has been unsealed.

Requirements for Netherworld Corpse Eater Demon Shield has been unsealed.^[10]

Netherworld Locust Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Defense +6

Netherworld Bee Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Agility +6

Netherworld Corpse Eater Demon Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Decay Prevention (S)

Next I checked to see if any other shields would be unlocked from these.

However, the requirements for this shield series were not fulfilled and only one of them was unsealed.

Requirements for Bee Needle Shield has been unsealed.

Bee Needle Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Attack +1

Special Effect: Shield of Needles (S) Bee's Poison (Paralysis)

With this we continued onward. The villagers were in the middle of disposing the Chimera corpse.

"Sup."

"Ah, Shield Hero-sama."

Because of our efforts the other day, the villagers warmly welcomed us.

"Is that the boss of the wave?"

I grumble while looking at the Chimera corpse.

I closely look at the thing called a Chimera, but for some reason... it doesn't quite look like the monsters in this world.

Maybe it's the color or something, but I can't pinpoint why.

"What a fearsome thing."

"... Yeah."

The villagers and I agree.

I wonder if the other heroes or knight brigade already harvested it. What's left of the meat and fur are carved up.

"Can I take some of it as well?"

"Please go ahead, we're having trouble disposing of it anyways. Do you need us to help process and prepare the parts?"

"That doesn't sound too bad... but there doesn't seem to be much I can use."

The fur was carved up so it isn't possible to make something like armor. So, all that are left are... the meat and bones... and the snake tail.

The heads have been removed and taken. Looking at it, it seemed that it had 3 heads.

Well whatever, Raphtalia and I cut apart the corpse and let my shield absorb the pieces.

Requirements for Chimera Meat Shield has been unsealed.

Requirements for Chimera Bone Shield has been unsealed.

Requirements for Chimera Leather Shield has been unsealed.

Requirements for Chimera Viper Shield has been unsealed.

Chimera Meat Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Cooking Skill+

Chimera Bone Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Darkness Resistance (M)

Chimera Leather Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: Defense +10

Chimera Viper Shield

True power sealed... Equipment bonus: [Change Shield] skill, Antidote Mixing+, Poison Resistance (M) Special Effect: Poisonous Snake Fang (M), Hook

The last one seemed to come with lots of useful bonuses. The defense increase

was pretty high too.

However, using the shield requires a high level and unlocking more of the Chimera Series.

It should be fine to do this later, but there's a big chance it could be important for the next wave.

"What about the rest?"

I ask the villagers.

"We were going to bury it anyways, so take whatever you need."

"Okay..."

Although it was a bit of a waste, all that was left were mostly just meat and bones.

I guess we can hold onto the bones, but I think we can use the meat for jerky.

There was no way it would be edible though.

So it was like that. I felt like it could be used for ingredients in some magic potions.

... But I'm not sure if anyone would ever buy it... Plus, it'd be bad if the remains became rotten. It would also be scary if it somehow regenerated because of it not being preserved properly.

About the bones, I think they should be fine.

However, even then we should probably be careful.

"Then I'll take as much as possible."

"Um, but it will be quite heavy."

"Can I have the village look after the rest?"

"Eh? If Shield Hero-sama asks..."

"Just take the meat and dry it, but leave a bit and see if there's anyone who would want to buy some. That should help with the reconstruction. There should be people who would buy the meat of the wave monsters in order to research it."

"Yes, there should be."

The villagers seemed interested in the reconstruction fund so they accept my suggestion.

I dealt with the innards and other easily decayed parts by absorbing them into my shield. The sun has set by the time we finally reach Riyuuto Village.

The village was half-destroyed, but the survivors all stayed together in the remaining, intact houses.

We received a room in a safe inn and quietly spent the rest of the day resting.

"... Although I do want to help out with the reconstruction, we don't have the luxury to worry about others right now."

Today, we were taken care of by the people of Riyuuto Village.

They were grateful for our help with the chimera parts, but for us to receive a free meal and room might have been overdoing it.

"You're right. But it would be great if we could do something that would be mutually beneficial."

A villager who could read and write had provided us with a chart of this world's alphabet.

In other words, the Hiragana table. Or the alphabet table in English.

Afterwards, since Raphtalia could read a bit, I had her point out characters and teach me the pronunciation until I slowly deciphered the table.

With this, maybe even words can be formed, but figuring it all out would be difficult.

For now I don't need to rush to learn the letters.

In between making medicine, I worked hard at memorizing the characters.

Firo

The next morning, Raphtalia overslept due to staying up late last night. I groaned while holding the magic book in one hand.

Eh? I was brewing medicinal herbs into medicine.

While I was preparing to leave to regain some time from oversleeping.

"Ah, it's hatching."(Naofumi)

I had left the egg by a window in the room. Raphtalia noticed that the egg, that I bought yesterday, has started to crack.

A fluffy wing with feathers could be seen peeking out from within the cracks.

It's trying really hard to break free from it's shell.

"Okay."(Naofumi)

I'm interested in what was going to hatch from the egg.

I watched the egg as more cracks appeared.

The cracks noisily spread with a *Piki Piki* sound, the face of a baby demon emerged from the egg.

"Pii!"(Fledgling)

With soft and fluffy feathers along with eyes of a demon, the pink fledgling looked at me with a piece of shell on its head.

"Pii!"(Fledgling)

It jumped cheerfully and collided with my face.

It wasn't painful at all, and the demon seemed to be very energetic despite just being born.

Although I don't know its race, it seemed like its physical condition was good and it would grow up well if it was properly taken care of.

"What kind of demon is this? Is this thing from the Pikyu bird race?(Naofumi)
Pikyu is a demon that was similar to a condor that could not fly high due to it being deformed.

I observed the newborn chick's body.

Its body seemed more agile than the balloons. So I can expect it to be able to attack when it grew up because it has a beak.

"Hmm... Well I am not familiar with demons."(Raphtalia)
Raphtalia answered with an embarrassed face.

"It can't be helped. Should we ask some villagers?"(Naofumi)
Because this was a purchased demon, it shouldn't be dangerous to bring around. If there was any trouble, it would obey my commands.

When I extended my hand to the demon chick, it ran up my hand, onto my shoulder and jumped on top of my head to settle down.

"Piiii"(Fledgling)

- Suri Suri* slipping from my head to my cheeks

This is... really cute.

"Fufu, Naofumi-sama, it must think of you as its father."(Raphtalia) "Oh, it's

probably due to imprinting."(Naofumi)

It might be registered beforehand because the one who moved it first was me, so it must have assumed I am its parent.

When I picked up the egg shards, my shield reacted.

It might inform me what demon this is if I absorb a fragment of the egg.

Therefore, I let the shield absorb a fragment.

Requirements for Demon Trainer Shield has been revealed.

Requirements for Demon Egg Shield has been revealed.

Demon Trainer Shield Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Demon Growth Correction (Small) Demon Egg Shield Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Cooking Skill +2

...A shield I wasn't expecting came out. I'll change it into Demon Trainer Shield from Slave Trainer 2 Shield because it seemed more convenient.

"Did you discover something?"(Raphtalia)

"No, but a shield I wasn't expecting came out though."(Naofumi) What kind of demon was this young chick? Hopefully the guys from the village will know.

I thought about where to Level Up today while walking through the village that was in the middle of reconstruction.

Maybe we could go to the bog area near the western part of the village? I also want to search for a suitable enemy near the North-west mountains.

I saw a villager that I recognized.

"Ah, Hero of the Shield-sama."(Villager)

"Good morning."(Naofumi?)

"Good morning."(Raphtalia?)

This was where I was defending last week during the wave, it seemed like

there was a lot of familiar faces here rebuilding the village.

"Good morning."(Villager?)

He bowed his head very deeply. I was feeling a little embarrassed.

"Pi!"(Fledgling)

The chick on my head chirped rather cheerfully.

"Oya?"(Villager)

The villager looked at the chick on my head.

"What's wrong?"(Naofumi)

I pointed at the chick on my head.

"I bought an egg from a demon dealer."(Naofumi)

"Aah, I see."(Villager)

"However, I don't know which demon I bought. Do you guys know what kind of demon this is?"(Naofumi) The villagers stared intently at the chick.

"Let's see... Do you think that is a Philorial?"(Villager) "Eh? The birds who pull carriages?"(Naofumi)

It would seem I made a little more than the money I paid... Well, only if what the villager said was true.

"Yeah, you can go see check with the ranch near the outskirts of the village."(Villager) "Then I'm going to go see."(Naofumi)

We arrived at the house of the fellow who was managing the ranch. The ranch seemed to have been damaged during the wave, half the bred demons were killed.

"In short, is this demon a Philorial?"(Naofumi)

The ranch man nodded when I ask.

"Let's see. This is a female Philorial."(Ranch man) The young chick sat still while the ranch man appraised her.

"This breed of the Philo Aria Philorial species is good. However, unless she pulls a cart, she'll be restless."(Ranch man) "... What kind of creature is that?"

(Naofumi)

"Is there something strange?"(Ranch man)

Oh, it's not that strange if you're born in this world.

Hmm... I wonder if these birds treat the carts as their nest that protects their eggs.

"Well, at least I didn't lose any money."(Naofumi) This wasn't bad, when she matured, she'll go for at least 200 silver coins. Quite a good deal for 100 Silvers.

Though, I don't know how much time and money she will need before maturity.

"Pi!"(Fledgling)

The young Philorial chirped on my head.

"What does this fellow eat?"(Naofumi)

"In the beginning something soft, like boiled beans. After she matures anything is fine."(Ranch man) "I see, Thanks."(Naofumi)

I was surprised I could bow and say thanks this easily.

For now I should look for boiled beans inside the village.

"Well, what should we name her?"(Raphtalia)

Raphtalia asked me while stroking the chick.

"You're going to name a pet which may be sold?"(Naofumi) Well, you will be attached the moment a name is given, and when it is time to sell, you won't be able to.

"Do I call this Philorial chick all the time?"(Raphtalia) "Mu..."(Naofumi)

This is surely troublesome.

"Then... let's call you Firo."(Naofumi)

"... So cheap."(Raphtalia)

"Shut up."(Naofumi)

"Pi!"(Firo)

The young chick chirped cheerfully when she understood that she was named.

After we had breakfast we headed out to hunt with Firo.

"Where should we go today?"(Raphtalia?)

"Pii?"(Firo)

"Let's see... A place we can walk to safely."(Naofumi) "Okay"(Raphtalia)

Raphtalia was very reliable. Fights were easier compared to before.

Firo was happily chirping on my head.

It was noisy, but very comfortable.

When evening approached I noticed some strange sounds.

There were a lot of unexpected encounters with demons, but they were defeated easily.

It was probably due to the brand-new weapons and armor. I could defeat enemies coming from the front.

Today's results were:

Me Lvl 23

Raphtalia Lvl 27

Firo Lvl 12

Though I hardly fought, I got enough experience for a level, while Firo's Level soared.

This was good. For young Demi-humans I heard the body grew rapidly when leveling up, it seemed demons were the same.

But... I wondered...

Firo's appearance changed considerably.

Before, Firo was a small chick that could be held with both hands, but now she was big and grown up.

Well... Her figure seems to resemble a steamed bun.

And her feathers grew lighter, the color changed from pink to light pink.

I stroked the wings slowly for feathers.

Requirement for Demon Trainer Shield 2 have been released.

Demon Trainer Shield 2 Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Demon Status Correction (Small) Still, I noticed Firo's growth when I didn't even notice Raphtalia's.

"Piyo"(Firo)

She changed her chirp and was beginning to walk on her own with a pitter-patter, because she was heavy.

Guuuu.....

There was an unpleasant premonition from Firo who was constantly chirping.

Though I bought a little too much feed, it seemed grass on the roadside was already a suitable substitute.

Her appetite was unending... This was the proof of her rapid growth.

"Umm... Naofumi-sama..."(Raphtalia)

"I understand. Demons are amazing."(Naofumi)

To grow so much in one day... It was only a matter of time before she could be rode.

Though her body was strong, it was a little scary that her mind would be immature.

Therefore I performed a considerably severe limitation.

I returned to the hotel and showed the storekeeper Firo and asked where I could put her.

Afterwards, we were guided to the stable of the hotel and substituted straw for a nest.

"Hm? The meat and bone of the Chimera were put here."(Naofumi) Is it because this place hasn't been corrupted that the materials rot slower? Or due to it being a monster of a different world.

"For the time being, I am waiting for it to soften so it will be easier to process."(Villager) "Eh..."(Naofumi)

It might not be edible, so is it processed so that it may be easier to handle just in case?

"After that, I'll make dried meat and look for buyers. I am still looking forward to selling them. It seems that a few mages are coming."(Villager) "That's good."(Naofumi)

Because it was quite a big chimera, there seemed to be a lot of stock. The meat was probably equivalent to two cows.

It may be tough to make it edible, but there were many who wanted to research it.

This would be a place to acquire it.

"Piyo"(Firo)

Guu...

Are you still hungry?

Though I got additional feed in the village and fed her, it still doesn't seem to be enough.

Where does it all go?

Biki... BikiBiki...

Is that the sound of meat and bones creaking? Are you still growing?

"To grow up so much in one day... That's pretty unreasonable"

The shopkeeper watched my face anxiously.

"She is still level 12."(Naofumi)

"Eh? 12?"(Villager)

The storekeeper was surprised at my answer.

"I think around 20 days was needed to let it grow to that level but I guess this was to be expected of the power of a Hero-sama"(Villager) Hmm... There was the possibility of Demon Growth Correction (Small) having an influence.

It changed every time I checked her status. What amazing growth.

Still, I can't send her to battle yet.

"Piyo"(Firo)

Firo who was growing up quickly healthily chirped.

After I pet Firo to sleep, I headed back to the room shared by me and Raphtalia. I would study this world's letters afterwards.

The problem was that there were too many letters in this language.

Growth

The next morning.

Raphtalia had been studying until late last night, so I woke up and discreetly slipped out of the room in order to see Firo.

It would be troublesome if she were to die from hunger.

I gathered the excess medicinal herbs that I didn't use in yesterday's compounding.

"Kweek!"

I heard a hoarse voice coming from the stables.

Looking at her figure, her feet and neck got longer. From a manjū ^[11], now she looked very much like an ostrich.

It was an amazing change. Her growth was entirely different from the birds I knew.

Her height was around my chest level, so it was still impossible for a person to ride her.

Gū...

It seemed that she was hungry. That was why I bought some animal feed from the farm.

Even though buying her food used up a lot of gold, it was still cheaper than buying equipment.

Seeing how rapid she was growing in just a day... I had a terrible feeling about this.

"You. Only a day had passed since you were born."

"Kweeek!"

'Surisuri' Firo clung to me and I smiled softly and naturally.

This doesn't particularly mean my love towards animals has awoken.

I'm just excited about what she could do when she grows up.

Earning her keep as a substitute for a carriage... my chest swelled with anticipation.

Wait, I can see a tinge of white and cherry blossom colors when I look carefully at the feathers.

I let the shield absorb the feather as a way of grooming.

The requirement for Demon Tamer Shield III has been met.

Demon Tamer Shield III. True power unsealed... Equipment Bonus: Growth Revision (Medium) Nothing... So it didn't have to be blood. Then it might also be good to cut Raphtalia's hair and absorb it again.

She played and ran energetically, even though Firo was still a newborn.

"Kwek!"

Although she wasn't a dog, I played with Firo by throwing a tree branch a distance away, where she then picked it up and returned it to me.

Her legs seemed fast, swiftly catching the branch before it even fell on the ground and quickly returning it.

She was quite intelligent.

Kukuku... it looked like my luck has finally turned around.

I played with Firo until Raphtalia woke up.

It was a rejuvenating type of therapy, these pets.

"Mu.. I've never seen Naofumi-sama show such a refreshing smile until now."

Raphtalia came over to me while softly murmuring her displeasure.

If anything, it was an impish smile.

"What's wrong?"

"It's nothing."

"Kwek?"

Chon, Chon. Firo's beak peck lightly at Raphtalia.

It seemed she wanted to engage in some skinship.

"Ha~a... Guess it can't be helped."

Raphtalia smiled while caressing Firo's face with both hands.

"Kwee~ek..."

Firo snuggled up to Raphtalia, squinting her eyes from the pleasant feeling of being caressed.

"Now then, where should we explore today?"

"That's right. How about going to the southward grassland in order to save food expenses for Firo?"

"Fumu... I guess so."

The medicinal herbs as well as weeds have grown in abundance within that vicinity. I also think that it's a good place to go.

For now, the purpose was to save money for better equipment.

"Yosh, Let's go then."

"Kwek!"

"Yes!"

Well, we blithely went to the grassland while fighting monsters and leveled up slightly.

Me: Lv 25

Raphtalia: Lv 28

Firo: Lv 15

Picking medicinal herbs among other things, we focused on Firo's food and several other harvests.

We defeated various monsters, releasing shield requirements with the best status bonus at around +1 or +2.

... The shield's Intermediate Compounding Recipe still has not been found.

Evening.

Firo had grown into a splendid Filorial.

"It's early..."

The inn's shopkeeper and the farm owner are both surprised.

The reason might be because of Growth Revision (Small) and (Medium) "... Raphtalia, incidentally, when I bought the ink did you recognize..."

"A wa wa..."

I wonder if Raphtalia also wanted to grow up like that.

Biki...

A sound similar to a bone creaking was heard.

"Kwweek!"

Shortly, Firo, who grew up so much that a person could now ride her, sat in front of me.

"You want me to ride?"

"Kwek!"

Turning her head as I rode on her back, Firo chirped as if it was natural.

"Then let's go."

But was it all right to not attach a saddle or rein?

While thinking about it, I got on since she wanted me to ride her. I was sturdy thanks to the shield.

It would be all right even if I fell.

Riding her... wasn't so bad thanks to the feathers.

There seemed to be no problem in regards to maintaining my balance properly.

"Kwek!"

Firo readily stood up.

"Uwa!"

The view was quite high.

I felt deeply move as I proceeded to ride an animal, even though I don't know a thing about horse riding.

"Kweeek!"

Firo started running while I was thinking, her chirp is very cheery!

"You, hey!"

"Na, Naofumi-sama--"

Dotadotadota!

Wa, so fast! The scenery passed by me in no time, and Raphtalia's voice became distant in an instant.

Dotadotadota!

I wanted to see what Firo could do. After going around town, she stopped in front of the stables And sat, then I got down.

"Are you all right!?"

Raphtalia ran up to me anxiously.

"Oh, yeah. I'm all right. But it sure is fast."

Firo appeared to not even be that tired and started tending to her own feathers.

I was surprised when it exceeded the speed which I imagined. I might have got a good bargain.

"Well then, that's enough for today, let's return to our room."

And then, someone grabbed the collar of my armor.

When I looked behind, I saw Firo seizing my collar with her beak.

"What's wrong?"

"Kwwweek!"

I got called to stop by a chirp that seemed like a wail.

"Hn?"

Oh well.

And, when I tried to leave, I got grabbed once again.

"What is it?"

"Kwwwek!"

Firo cried in a slightly displeased way and stamped her foot on the ground.

"Huh, have you not played enough?"

Firo shook her head when Raphtalia asked.

She can understand words

"Are you lonely?"

She cheekily nodded to us.

"Kwwweek!"

Then, she tried to appeal to us by unfolding her wings.

"That said..."

I'm reluctant to sleep in the stable, and I can't take such a big monster to a bedroom inside the inn.

"Let's accompany her here until she falls asleep."

"Mu... well, fine."

This girl has a big body, although it has only been 2 days since her birth. Even if

it's an animal, it's too early to leave her alone in the stable at night.

That day at the stables, I studied this world's letters together with Raphtalia.

Firo watched us quietly while resting tensely in her nest.

Biki

"Ah... you really can't read these letters easily!"

If there was a shield like that, I want to find it fast.

"It can't be helped. Anyways, I don't think it's very Naofumi-sama-like if you depend on the legendary shield for everything."

"... Raphtalia. You've learned to even say things like that now huh."

"Yes. Therefore, let's learn magic and the language together."

... Shit.

There was nothing that would make this thing easier. While praying that my efforts won't be wasted, we continued to study at the stable until Firo fell asleep.

Afterwards, we returned to our room and began making medicine with the newly obtained herbs.

The result, well, don't ask - since I wasn't able to decipher the recipe.

Exit by a Kick

The next morning. Raphtalia woke up early today, so she went to the stable with me.

"Gua!"

When we got there Firo let out a happy-sounding shout and ran to us.

"Is your body an adult now?"

Somehow...I feel like her head has grown one size since yesterday, but I'm not too sure.

"For the most part, this size is about average, right?"

"Now that you say it, that's true."

Firo's form was about the same as the appearance of the Filorials I saw around the castle town or on the road.

Her color has turned white... well, there was a little pink mixed in.

It was a beautiful mix of colors.

That slave dealer. He actually does a pretty good job.

"Are you not starving today?"

"Gua?"

Firo tilted her head and chirped.

Yeah. Looks like the growing period has passed.

Biki...

She was still making that weird noise though.

Well whatever.

After that, we finished breakfast and thought about what to do from now on. In the middle of that.

"Gua..."

While going the the town Firo looked at the wooden carts with jealousy.

"Do you think she wants to pull those?"

"Probably so"

"Is something the matter, Hero-sama?"

While pointing to the carts and chatting with Raphtalia a man from the village asked us.

"Right, my Filorial was looking at the carts, so I was talking about whether she wanted to pull them."

"Well... Filorials have that kind of habit after all."

The man nodded and look satisfied as he turned towards Firo.

"Right now this village is in the middle of rebuilding our buildings and we don't have enough people. Hero-sama, would you be willing to help out if we gave you one of the carts?"

"Mu..."

That was not a bad offer. I finally got a monster like this so there was no reason not to use it.

If it goes well it seemed like we could do some other work while moving things.

"What would we have to do?"

"In the nearby forest we are cutting some timber, so we would like you to bring it to the village"

"The forest...."

Now that he mentioned it, we haven't gone to that forest.

"We'll be back late but is that ok?"

"Yes"

"I got it. We accept."

And so I took on the villagers quest and received one of their carts.

The wheels and stuff were all made of wood. It was small and cheap-looking, but I got it for free so no helping that.

It wasn't new but rather seemed a little old.

"Gua♪"

We set up Firo with her own cart. She seemed happy and started pulling the cart.

The villagers also prepared a bridle for us. If I just looked at it, it seemed like something for a horse.

"Ok! Today we're setting out for the forest!"

"Okaaaay!"

"Guaaaaaa!"

I pointed to the way we were going and Firo, filled with energy, started pulling the cart.

Thud! Thud!

So the cart lightly...

Thud! Thud! Thud! Bumpbumpbumpbumpbump!

Gradually a loud noise sounded from the cart. Like yesterday the scenery swiftly passed by.

"Too fast! Too fast! Lower the speed!"

"Gua..."

We slowed down, and Firo bumped the cart along letting out an unsatisfied cry while walking.

"Uu... somehow I've started to feel sick..."

Raphtalia might be getting motion sickness. She slumped down and laid down in the cart.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes... but, please don't shake it too much..."

"I see, Raphtalia has gotten motion sickness."

"...It looks like it. Are you okay Naofumi-sama?"

"I've never gotten it..."

Getting drunk from alcohol and getting motion sickness were unrelated.^[12]

When I was a primary school kid, I remembered guys sitting next to me watching me read light novels or manga and said it made them feel sick so they changed seats.

Also, I remember when we took the voyage that lasted about a day to see our relatives, my entire family was down with sea sickness while I was playing phone games inside the ship.

"Well take it easy, Firo and I will carry you to our destination" "I'll take you up on your offer..."

Raphtalia said weakly as she laid down in the cart.

In the middle of that journey... I met someone I didn't want to on the road.

"Buha! What is that! Haha, oh no, that's just too funny.
Buwahahahahahahahaha!"

He looked at me and clutched his stomach while laughed out load. That bitch stood behind him and laughed along.

I don't know what tickled their funny bones, but just being laughed at irritated me.

What's with you Motoyasu, right off the bat.

Motoyasu found us on the town road while being surrounded with women and started laughing.

"I-I mean right! You're super lame right now right!"

"What is?"

"Did you start peddling? I guess people without money get desperate. Your bird is lame too!

Mu... peddling! That's not a bad option.

Depending on Firo's ability it could be possible. I'll start thinking about it seriously.

"Laaaame! It's not a horse but a bird, and what's with that color. There's that thin pink mixed into the white. It's normally just white right. Plus it's slooow!"

"I don't know what's normal but..."

I don't get this guy's sense of humor.

This is becoming a waste of time. I'll ignore these guys and get going.

While I was thinking that Motoyasu got close to Firo while pointing.

Right after that

"GUAAAAA!"

Firo aimed at Motoyasu's crotch and kicked up with her tough leg.

I saw it.

I saw Motoyasu's stupidly laughing face distort into shock as he flew back about 5 meters while spinning.

"Ugeh...."

"K-Kyaaaaaaaaa! Motoyasu-sama!"

Haha, that must have crushed his balls.

I felt really exhilarated. Just being able to see this made buying Firo worth it.

As expected of my monster. She must have gotten revenge for me.

Firo, tonight I'll specially let you eat something delicious.

"GUAAAAAAAAA!"

While flapping her wings around, Firo steadily took off running.

After a while I couldn't see Motoyasu's group.

Wow... I'm feeling very exhilarated. I didn't even dream I'd be able to see a scene like that.

"Wh-what happened?"

Raphtalia who had been lying limp lifted her face and asked.

"Hm? Nothing."

"... in spite of that you're making a radiant face I haven't seen before."

Oooh. It's showing on my face huh.

Still, that's some amazing leg strength, to send the hero of the lance flying that far.

"Umm... please go a little slower."

I ran Firo with a radiant feeling, enough that Raphtalia's words didn't enter my ears.

After that, Raphtalia threw up during the trip and when we reached the forest she seemed to be at her limit.

"Uu...uuuuu..."

Raphtalia moaned with a white face. I realized I had gone too far and felt sorry.

It's all Motoyasu's fault. He had made me feel so energetic and exhilarated.

"Sorry"

"Gua..."

Firo, same as me, looked sad and sorry.

"I-I'm al...right"

"You definitely don't look it. It'll be nice if we could find a place to rest but.."

"Ah, Shield Hero-sama"

There was a cabin near the forest. A villager that looked like a lumberjack came out of it.

"Aah, the villagers asked me to come and get some lumber but.."

"Umm... is your companion alright?"

"I think, probably not. I want to let her rest, but do you know a good place?"

"Well then there's a cabin over here, let's let her lie down."

He said that and led us to the cabin. I supported Raphtalia's shoulder and laid her down on a bed.

"If we say that Firo can only fight easy-ish enemies, then for today we'll focus on transporting things."

Raphtalia seemed to be weak to vehicles, so until she gets used to it let's not go fast enough to bump the cart around.

"So, sorry but could you place the lumber on the cart, we'll be back in a little while."

"Ah, yes."

Firo was unhooked from the cart and was looking in at us from outside the cabin.

"Okay, let's go."

"Gua!"

She had kicked Motoyasu that far into the air. It seemed like I can expect quite a bit from her attack power.

Let's take a little stroll around the forest. (!) We went into the forest and unexpectedly didn't encounter any monsters.

I walked around the quiet forest with Firo.

It might have been me getting immersed in the forest, but I felt like the air was really clear.

Come to think of it... this was the first time since coming to this world that I took the time and looked around at my surroundings.

I wonder why.

Seeing Motoyasu's pained face must have blown all my troubles away.

... No.

I think it was because Raphtalia believed in me.

That Raphtalia was now motion sick and not here.

I felt kind of lonely.

Thinking about it I've only been with her for half a month or three weeks or so. Even so, it seemed like we've developed a natural relationship.

"It would be nice if there was medicine that worked on motion sickness."

For now I'll gather any herbs I see around here.

"Even so... no monsters are coming out huh.."

I've been walking for a while but there was no presence of monsters.

"Gua."

"Hm?"

I heard Firo's voice from unexpectedly far away.

I ran towards it and saw that Firo had just put something into her mouth.

... Was it just my imagination? That looked like an animal resembling a Usapiru.

Eventually Firo swallowed with a gulp.

"Gua!"

Firo walked over here like nothing had happened.

34 EXP gained.

... Let's not worry about it.

After a little under an hour, we finished foraging around the woods and

returned to the lumberjack's cabin where we saw the lumber had been packed onto the cart.

Entering the cabin, Raphtalia was still lying limp on the bed.

This was a problematic effect.

Raphtalia won't last if Firo ran at top speed.

This might require some training. If Raphtalia doesn't get used to vehicles we won't be able to do any transportation work.

"Seems like some training is needed to get used to the cart." "Uu...uuuu"

Raphtalia let out a moan in response to my words. As I thought, it seemed tough.

"Umm... I finished loading the lumber but.."

"Ah, yeah. Then I'll head to the village and back, so can I leave her to you?"

"Yes! If she's Shield Hero-sama's companion then I'll protect her no matter what."

I'm a little worried, but I don't have the patience to sit around doing nothing.

"Then we'll get going."

I got on the cart and gave the order to Firo, who was all prepared, to set out.

"Guaaaaa!"

Letting out an energetic voice, Firo took off running.

Those with Wings

I didn't encounter Motoyasu on the path back.

I thought he probably would have gone mad with anger and searched around for me, but it looked like that was a needless worry.

After I dropped off the cargo at the village, I returned to see Raphtalia feeling better.

"Were you okay?"

"Yes"

"Th-that was fast..."

The lumberjack was surprised at how quickly we had returned.

"Seems like this guy is a good walker."

I answered the lumberjack while petting Firo.

"Gua!"

Firo answered energetically. Yeah, you're fast.

"Well then, shall we start seriously searching the forest?"

"Yes"

"Run slowly on the way back okay."

"Gua!"

Biki....

What is that? That noise, her growing period should be over right?

I heard it coming from Firo again.

It's okay if it's not a strange disease but..

That day's harvest was pretty good.

Raphtalia put in a particularly good effort and while she was at it, I got to see Firo's movement and attack power.

To be honest, she might be beating Raphtalia in speed and hitting power.

Me, Lv26

Raphtalia, Lv29

Firo, Lv19

The requirements for White Usapiru Shield have been met.

The requirements for Dark Porcupine Shield have been met.

The requirements for Usapiru Bone Shield have been met.

The requirements for Porcupine Bone Shield have been met.

White Usapiru Shield True power sealed.....Equipment bonus, defense +2

Dark Porcupine Shield True power sealed.....Equipment bonus, wit +2

Usapiru Bone Shield True power sealed.....Equipment bonus, stamina up (small)

Porcupine Bone Shield True power sealed.....Equipment bonus, SP up (small)

They're all great status up types.

It would be good if I could unlock a high performing shield and become more

efficient, but I don't know places that have good money or exp. So I have no choice but to honestly work hard to raise the ability of the shield.

What all these abilities I've unlocked add up to... there are too many so I don't know.

In the first place I haven't used the beginning equipment like the Orange Small Shield even once since unlocking them.

At best I've just been using the shields with exclusive effects like the Whetstone Shield when I need them.

If it's not exclusive then it affects all the shields after all.

Well at least, I won't be using the four from today again after unlocking them.

The sun went down as we slowly walked back into the village.

Raphtalia required training to get used to the cart after all.

During the trip, she felt sick many times so we repeatedly rested while slowly making progress.

In the end, we made it back after the sun had mostly set.

"I'm very sorry."

"Don't worry about it, you'll eventually get used to it."

Even I think it's odd that I don't get motion sickness at all, but I have no intention saying that other people do not have any willpower.

I've hear that if you get used to it then you wont get motion sickness anymore.

So I want to get Raphtalia used to the cart quickly.

Well, if something happens then the sprinting Firo will be at fault.

"Gua!"

At this time, something strange was already happening.

To be correct it had been happening for quite a while, but we still hadn't noticed it. No, we noticed it but decided to ignore it.

The next day.

Even I noticed the change at this point. Raptalia was the same as me, deep in thought.

"Guaaa!"

When we showed up at the stable, the change had already ended.

Firo had... no matter how you looked at it, grown far larger than the average Filoliara.

Filoliaras usually grow to about 2m 30cm. This about the same height as an ostrich.

But, Filoliaras' have a larger skeleton, in particular their heads and necks are larger.

However...Firo's height had passed 2m 80cm.

She was already at the point where if she stood up her head would reach the ceiling of the stable.

"Did I really buy a Filoliara's egg? I'm starting to want to think that I bought some other thing."

"Yes... I also think so."

"Gua!"

Gulp, and Firo swallowed something down.

Looking closely, the chimera meat that the villagers had left in the stable was gone.

There should have been about two cows' worth of it, but it had tragically all disappeared.

Did she just eat the last of it?

"I had thought she lost her appetite but..."

"Um, is it possible that Naofumi-sama's shield's power caused her to grow this big?"

"It's plenty possible. The Familiar Shield III had a bonus called growth compensation (middle)."

"Na-naofumi-sama... there was a Slave Shield as well right?"

"Yeah, the Slave User Shield had a similar bonus with it."

"...Um, did the power affect me?"

"Yeah, it was unlocked a while ago. So it has been affecting you a little."

"Noooooooooooo!"

Raphtalia ran out of the stable while screaming.

"Ra-raphtalia!?"

"Recently, I thought my body felt light. But it was just because of Naofumi-sama right!"

"Ca-calm down!"

"A-am I going to become big like Firo!? That's scary!"

"You're not making any growing noises right!"

"O-oh, that's right. Thank goodness, really thank goodness!"

... This doesn't change the fact that we can't make guesses in this situation.

While imagining a Raphtalia that's grown to be super macho, I turned my gaze to Firo.

"Are you thinking something rude?"

"... What should we do?"

I ignored Raphtalia's question and advanced the conversation.

"I think it would be good to return to that tent and get confirmation."

"Right"

No helping it. I don't like the idea of returning to the castle town for no reason but... there was no other way.

"Gua!"

We left Riyuuto Village as Firo energetically pulled the cart. At the same time, I was worried for Raphtalia as she fought with motion sickness.

During the trip, Firo stomach rumbled, so I fed her some food. We also fought with a few monsters. When we got to the city it was after noon.

"Oi..."

I noticed that Firo's appearance was still changing.

Her legs and neck were gradually getting shorter. By the time I noticed she had changed to a body with short legs and a long torso like an owl.

Even then she enjoyed pulling the cart, and kept pulling it without change.

However, there was a big change in how she pulled it.

Right now she was skillfully using her hand-like wing to grip the cart's harness

and pull it along.

"Kue!"

Even her call was different, and she was becoming pure white.

"Hm?"

As I slowly got off the cart I got a look at Firo's height.

She shrunk?

She had shrunk to about 2m 30cm. However, she was wider too, and it seemed like she might be more intimidating. To put it badly, she looked like an amusement park's mascot, strangely fat.

"Kue?"

"No, it's nothing"

Had Firo noticed her own change?

It was to the point where you couldn't tell what kind of animal she was.

"Well... I wonder what this was, thinking about it I had nothing but words of surprise, yes.

The slave trader, while repeatedly wiping away his sweat, looked closely at Firo.

"Kue?"

Firo had gotten an even larger breadth and width, making her look like some kind of owl monster.

Where did that friendly ostrich-like form go to.

"So, I wanted to ask directly. This guy is the monster hatched from the egg I bought from here. What kind of egg did you give me?"

Depending on how this turns out...

I whistled with my finger and Firo threatened to attack.

"KUEEEEEEEEE!"

The slave trader seemed to panic and check over some kind of document several times.

"Th-that's weird. The supply papers we have show that the egg Hero-sama bought definitely had a Filolial inside of it."

"This is a Filolial?"

"Kueeeee!"

I threw a fairly big piece of food to Firo and she skillfully caught it in her mouth and swallowed it down.

"Ummm..."

Come to think of it, I feel like that growing noise that had been coming from Firo stopped.

Did she finally grow into an adult body...?

"Still, even though it's only been a few days to have grown it this large, as expected of Hero-sama. I'm moved."

"Don't use flattery to get out of this. Hurry up and tell me what kind of egg I bought."

"Uh... did this monster have this shape from the start?"

"No"

I gave the slave trader a rundown on Firo's growth from when she was born to now.

"Well then, she was definitely a proper Filolial up to the middle right?"

"Yeah, and it has grown to the point where you can't tell what kind of monster she is now though."

"Kue?"

While tilting her head in a somehow cute pose, Firo seemed to pick up on my slight irritation.

Who's fault do you think it is that I have to do this.

"Kueeeee"

Using her whole body, Firo slid up and snuggled me. Being hugged by her fairly large wings I felt Firo's body heat that was hotter than a bird's. Truthfully it was just hot.

"Mu..."

Raphtalia frowned and grabbed my hand.

"Kue?"

It somehow seemed like Raphtalia and Firo were talking with their eyes.

"What's with you guys?"

"No, it's nothing."

"Kue kue"

Both of them shook their heads to convey their intentions. What was that?

"So? What is it?"

"Uhh... umm"

The slave trader was very troubled.

He deals with monsters but does he not know how monsters grow?

"For the time being, I will quickly contact a specialist and investigate, so could I have you leave her with me? Yes."

"Yeah, don't make a mistake and kill her so you won't have to say 'I don't know'"

"Kue!?"

"I understand of course, but it will take a little time for the specialist to come here. Yes."

"...Well, that's fine. I'll leave it to you. If something happens I'll just take compensation money."

"Kueeee!?"

At my response Firo flapped her wings like she was protesting.

However, the slave trader's workers put a collar on her and moved her to a cage. It might have been since I was close by, she entered the cage surprisingly obediently.

"Alright then, I'll be back to get her tomorrow. Have an answer by then."

I warned him just in case, and left the tent with Raphtalia.

"KUEEEEEEEEEEE!"

I still heard Firo's loud voice even after leaving the tent.

That night...I was staying at the inn when suddenly the inn keeper called out to me.

"Um Hero-sama."

"Hm? What is it?"

"There's a customer here to see you."

Who is it? I thought as I went up to the counter where the inn keeper was waiting. There was a man I hadn't seen before.

"What business do you have?"

"Umm, I... am someone from the monster trader."

Monster trader... ahh, the slave trader. He definitely can't make a public introduction that way.

"What happened?"

"Um, my master has ordered me to ask you to take the monster you left with us back."

"What!?"

It's only been a few hours... what exactly happened.

I went to the tent with Raptalia to hear Firo's cry still echoing.

"I'm sorry to disturb you so late at night. Yes."

The slave trader, seeming a little tired, came out to greet us.

"What happened? The plan was for you to take care of her until morning right?"

"That was my intention, but Hero-sama's monster is a little bit of a problem."

"KUEEEEEEEEEEE!"

Firo had been flapping wildly with her wings and finally calmed down when she saw us.

"She's broken 3 iron locks, I've had 5 workers who tried to subdue her sent to the hospital, and 3 of the monsters I used have suffered serious injury. Yes."

"I'm not paying for that."

"I tip my hat to Hero-sama whose first concern even now is money."

Is this slave trader serious?

"So, what happened? Did you figure it out?"

"No... just, I've found an eye-witness report that says she has a body similar to a Filolial king."

"King?"

"To be correct there's talk that there is a Filolial that rules over a group. It's quite famous among adventurers."

It looks like the slave trader had used all his information network to check for some kind of hint to her identity.

It seems like there's a large group of wild Filolials, and he heard a conversation mentioning that the one who runs it is the king.

The Filolial ruler that seldom appears before humans is the king Filolial... So his conjecture is that Firo is one too.

"Hmmm"

This is hearsay.

If I unlock the shield crest for this monster, I might be able to determine whether it's true or not, but that would mean killing Firo.

Even if I use her feathers or blood, she's my monster so the only thing to come out would be the Monster User Shield. It seems like a light bulb isn't coming to me....

I don't have the needed level or series.

I look closely at Firo.

"... Kue?"

The monster's species name doesn't come up in the part monster status... but if it's an enemy I can get it though.

"So, what do you call that kind of monster."

"It's called a Filolial king, or queen."

"Firo is female so I guess queen."

"R-right... if it's this attached to Hero-sama, then as it stands if you tried to sell it to me I'd be troubled."

She went wild while crying out and broke 3 iron locks, was it?

Damn! My plan was completely ruined!

Well, I didn't plan on selling her though.

"...ter"

"Hm? Did you just hear a strange voice?"

"Well now? I feel like I heard a voice like that too."

"U-um..."

While covering her mouth Raphtalia pointed to the cage Firo was in. Looking the same, the slave traders workers also pointed to the cage.

The slave trader and I tilted our heads wondering what was going on and turned around.

"Master-"

There, with a faint light remaining, white... with white wings was a naked girl inside the cage reaching her hand out to me.

Transformation Ability

"Oyaji! Oyaji! Oyaji!"

I knocked on the door of the closed weapon shop over and over.

After I did the unpleased weapon shop Oyaji reluctantly opened the door.

"What is it all of a sudden shield an-chan^[13]? The shop closed a long time ago."

"It's not like that!"

I showed Oyaji Filo who I had dressed in my cloak.

"An-chan, don't come bragging because you got a good slave."

"You're wrong!"

What does Oyaji think I am!

If I me the me that's inside Oyaji's mind, it seems like I could kill him without regret.

"Master? What's wrong?"

"You be quiet."

"No way."

Damn! What the heck is happening!

After that the was no end to the panic.

That slave trader, he had his mouth hanging open while pointing. His men also were too shocked to speak.

Even Raphtalia was speechless.

Filo had really wanted to be by my side so she became human.

By the time I noticed I had carried her over to Oyaji's shop.

"Ha-hachoo"

Poof! Sreeeech!

She transformed and I heard the sound of the cloak I put on her ripping.

In a moment Filo transformed to a Filolial Queen's (pending) body.

This bird! Cloaks aren't free you know.

"Wha..."

Oyaji also lost his words. He looked up at Filo.

Filo returned to a human form, and grabbed my hand. A thing that resembled a mantle fell on top of her head.

"...do you get the situation?"

"Ye-yeah."

Oyaji led me into the store with a really complicated face.

"So, the reason you came to me, is for that girl's equipment?"

"Just leaving aside defensive power, isn't there some outfit that won't break even if she transforms?"

I knew it was unreasonable as I asked Oyaji.

"I mean why is she transforming!?"

"An-chan, calm down a bit."

That's right. Thinking about it carefully why is Filo transforming into a human?

Maybe there were the remains of her true form but there were wings growing out of her back. She was a blond and blue-eyed girl so she kind of looked like an angel.

On top of that, she was so cute she had a face like a painting.

She looked around 10 years old. Her physique was like Raphtalia's from a while ago.

Guuuuu....

A classic loud stomach growl.

"Master I'm hungry."

"Bear with it."

"No way."

Ku! What the heck is happening.

"For now do you want to eat what I'm having for dinner?"

Oyaji said as he brought a pot out from the back of the store. It seemed like a soup.

"Sto-"

"Yaaaay, thanks for the food"

Filo stole the pot from Oyaji and drank it down, the entire pot.

"Hmm...it doesn't taste that great."

She gave the pot back to Oyaji.

Oyaji looked at me, stunned.

"Um, sorry."

"...An-chan, treat me to a meal after this."

I felt more and more like despair was waiting for me.

"Right...I feel like I might of had some clothes for demi-humans that had transformation powers but...I mean go to a clothes store an-chan."

"Are you telling me to go to a clothes store that doesn't know me at this time of night with a completely naked girl? On top of that the girl can change into a monster you know?"

"...that's true, hold on a sec."

Rustle rustle, Oyaji rummaged through the back of the store.

"I don't know if the size will fit, and they're some odd clothes so don't expect much."

"I got it."

In the end, Oyaji spent some time before coming back.

"Sorry. None of the clothes look like they'll fit her after she transforms."

"What, was that!?"

This was my last option, what should I do now. Are you telling me there are no clothes for this young girl who looks at me dearly and comes into contact with me?

With this, the recent good opinion I've gotten is going to take a steep dive.

"Master"

"Don't transform!"

Even if I have to use the magic crest, there's no choice but to forbid her from transforming into a human. A monster transforming into a human has to be pretty rare.

"No way."

Ku...what does this kid what to do!

Plus she's completely going against what I say.

Is it her rebellious phase? She shouldn't be allowed to enter a rebellious phase a few days after being born.

"Cause...if I'm in my true form master won't sleep with me."

Filo tightened her grip on my hand and smiled with her whole face.

"...why do we have to sleep together?"

"cause I'm lonely."

"Ahh.... how to say this, an-chan. You have it rough huh."

I didn't come to this world to take care of kids though...

"Come to think of it where's Raphtalia?"

"I finally caught up."

Raphtalia entered the shop breathing heavily.

"You suddenly took off running...I searched for you."

"Ah, sorry."

"Ahhh Raphtalia onee-chan."

Filo happily waved her hand.

"I'm not giving you master ok?"

"What is this child saying!"

"Not giving me, I'm not your thing. More like you guys are mine right."

Meaning they're slaves.

"Well, for now I'll see if there's a way to tailor clothes for her so go back for today."

"Right, sorry about this."

"Thanks for the food~"

"Man...you manage to surprise me again and again, an-chan."

I left the weapon shop and started tiredly making my way towards the inn when Raphtalia called out to me.

"Ah, that sla-... the monster trader asked you to come back."

"Hm? Got it."

We returned to the tent and the slave trader, who was just waiting for us, came

out to greet us.

"Well, that was a surprising development. Yes."

"Yeah."

"So, I've realized why sightings of filolial kings are so rare."

"Oh? You figured it out?"

"Yes. I mean, I think Sheild Hero-sama will also be able to understand."

What? The slave trader's using quite a round-about way of speaking.

"You don't understand?"

"...no so tell me."

The slave trader pointed to the human shaped Filo who was wearing the torn up cloak.

"Filolial kings have a high level transformation ability, so they transform into regular filolials to avoid human eyes, is what we think."

I see...they have the power to transform and hide so that people won't realize they're the filolials' boss on sight. They could also use it to transform into humans.

"Well well, to be able to see with my own eyes the filolial king that can rarely be studied, I'm moved by Hero-sama's high monster taming ability. Yes."

"What?"

"To raise a normal filolial into a queen...what raising method would you use to raise a queen do you think?"

...I understood the slave traders aim. This guy wants to hear how to raise filolial kings from me and mass produce them.

It must be a pretty rare class of monster, plus it has transforming power. He'll raise them at minimal cost and sell them at a high price for huge profit.

"It's probably, the legendary shield's power I think."

I reasoned that the power of growth compensation raised her to this height, otherwise it wouldn't be worthy of being legendary.

"When Hero-sama is vague like that, it makes me all tingly. How much would I have to pay to have you teach me I wonder?"

"That's not what I mean!"

"Well then, I'll present you with one more filolial, so please try-"

"I refuse!"

If they increase any more my wallet won't hold out. I already have to do something about Filo's clothes, if my food expenses increase any more it will be downright indecent.

"Sigh...thinking of any other possibilities, I guess there was that."

"What was it, if you please."

uu...the slave trader's eyes are sparkling.

It's feels sick.

"I fed her meat from a huge monster that was beaten during the wave, so I can't deny the possibility that affected her."

Well, even I think that that sounds crazy.

But she did eat the chimera's meat so I'm not saying anything wrong.

"Hmm...then no helping it."

The slave trader didn't believe it either, but he didn't want to irritate me so he backed off.

"I'm give you a filolial anytime, so please try raising one. Yes."

"If possible I want to decline but..."

"If you raise it to be easy to use the money will pile up."

"Hm, if I'm not busy I'll think about it."

With that one phrase, I became even more self-aware that I'm a miser.

"Have you finished talking to him?"

"Yeah."

"By the way what shall we do?"

"About want?"

Filo was drawn into the conversation so she had a question mark above her head.

"About your treatment."

"I'm sleeping together with master~."

"I won't let you!"

"Ahh no fair! Raphtalia's onee-chan, you're trying to keep master to yourself~"

"No I'm not!"

What are they getting so worked up for...

"Alright, then Filo will sleep in the stable attached to the inn."

"No way!"

I was clearly rebelled at by a bird.

"I'm sleeping with master!:"

...this is the same as a child having a tantrum because they want to sleep with their parents.

"I see I see, no helping it."

"Naofumi-sama!?"

"Even if I reject her, she'll just keep being selfish so I should meet in the middle somewhere right?"

"Well...yes but.."

Raphalia muttered like she wasn't satisfied.

"But make sure you're not naked in front of other people."

"Okaaaay!"

Does she really get it? Well whatever. I'll pray that the weapon shop owner can do something about it tomorrow, nothing to do but return to the inn.

I returned to the inn, paid the inn keeper for one more and went back to my room.

Studying or mixing potions...the free time for that disappeared when Filo transformed into a human.

"Yay! A soft bed~!"

I warned Filo who was jumping on the bed and decided to turn in early.

...It's hot!

Why is it hot!?

"uuu..."

My body won't move as I want.

What's happening?

I fearfully opened my eyes and the world was pure white.

I was wrapped in wings.

"Su...su..."

This bed is breathing!

I slowly raised my to see I wasn't sleeping on a bed. I was on top of Filo's belly after she had returned to her real form.

At about the same time, Filo's original body rolled in her sleep, falling of the bed while hugging me like a pillow.

"Wake up! You fat bird!"

Who said it was okay to return to your original form.

"Noooooo.."

This guy's speaking even though she's in her real form.

"Wh-what are you doing!?"

Raphtalia yelled at me while looking half asleep.

"Oh, Raphtalia, help me!"

This guy's not waking up even if I punch her. My attack power is just too low.

"Wake up Filo!"

Filo rolled over on the floor.

Creak creak creak...

I had a bad noise coming from the floor. With just a wooden floor, we're near the breaking point.

"Get up!"

However, Filo kept smothering me showing no sign of waking up.

"Wake up now!"

Raphtalia forcefully pulled Filo's smothering arm open.

I didn't miss that chance and somehow managed to escape.

"Whew...it's only morning and it's already terrible."

"Nnya?"

Filo realized I was gone and opened her eyes.

Filo noticed me and Raphtalia glaring at her and tilted her head.

"What's wrong?"

"First return to human form!"

"Ehhh..I just woke up."

Ku! This is the last thing I wanted to do but no helping it!

I used the status magic and chose the monster icon. and in the restrictions index I put a check on the part that said my orders were absolute.

If I do this she won't be able to go against any kind of order I make.

"Become human!"

I faced Filo and issued an order.

"Ehhh...I want to sleep with master for a bit more."

After taking action against my order the curse mark on Filo's belly emerged.

"Eh?"

"If you don't listen it's going to hurt."

The shining red curse mark spread across Filo's body.

"Noooooo..."

Some kind of pattern showed on Filo's wing. It flew to the curse make and, with

a fizzle, the mark stopped.

"Huh?"

I checked the monster icon. For some reason the part of the restrictions index I had mark had become unmarked.

I tried to check it again, but even if I messed with it it didn't change.

Damn! I brought a monster because it would listen to my orders.

Slave trader...I'm heading to your place right now, so wash your neck and wait^[14].

Carrot and the Stick

"Slave Trader!"

First thing in the morning I barged into the slave trader's tent.

"What is it from so early in the morning Hero-sama? Yes."

"The curse mark from your place was defective. Depending on your answer, my dangerous slave and monster will start going wild in here, okay?"

"My stomach is empty so I'll do it later."

"... if you don't start behaving I'll turn you into breakfast."

The curse mark on Firo won't activate like it should. On top of that it isn't going away.

"Huh? What does that mean?"

I explained to the slave trader what had happened this morning. After that it was horrible. I somehow managed to coax Firo into human form and we went to the tent.

Firo was led here by Raphtalia who was on constant watch for Firo doing anything weird. Seems like it's tough.

"It seems that a normal curse mark won't restrict a Filolial queen. Yes."

"And that means?"

"A normal curse mark won't bind a high rank monster. The dragon that was

the prize of that lottery has a special curse mark carved on it."

"In other words a normal curse mark won't work on this guy?"

"Yes."

The slave trader was writing something in his notebook very excitedly.

"So, will you apply that special curse mark?"

"No no, that would not be something we could give for free. Yes."

"What was that?"

"This isn't something that will be cheap, so giving it for free would be tough. We've also neared the limit of the damage we can take."

Ku-! It seems I can't expect any more service.

Well, they did suffer that much damage so I guess there's no helping it...

"How much?"

"Expecting much from Hero-sama in the future, how does the great discount of 200 silver coins sound?"

Kuuuu... that's expensive.

"Couldn't you-"

"By the way 800 silver coins would be considered cheap in the current market. I'm expecting much from Hero-sama so I'm not lying."

Gah!

My wallet took a lot of damage.

I admitted defeat and very regretfully handed 200 silver coins to the slave

trader.

"... If that's a lie my dangerous underlings will hold a festival in your blood."

"Of course I understand."

Raphtalia led in Firo by the hand while Firo was looking around in her Filolial queen form.

"Stand still right there Firo."

"Why?"

"If you stay still then afterwards I'll give you something good to eat."

"Really?"

"Yeah."

Firo had sparkling eyes as she headed to where the slave trader was pointing and stood still.

Alright, if we're casting the magic now's the time.

I gave a signal to the slave trader with my eyes. He nodded, called 12 of his underlings who had their faces hidden with robes, and had them surround Firo.

They poured some kind of chemical on the ground and started chanting magic.

The floor shined with light, and a magic square formed with Firo in the center.

"Eh, wh-what?"

Firo tried resisting and sparks flew, but it was no use and the magic square started invading into Firo's body.

"Ow,Ouch----! Stop it-!"

Feeling the pain of the update to the curse mark, Firo started thrashing around. At that the magic square gave off sparks and started to sway.

The Slave trader's underlings let out voices of surprise.

"To be on the safe side, I had a lot of people cast the magic but still... to be able to move under this pressure, this young one would be scary in the future. Yes."

Come to think of it she is still only lvl 19. If she was to become lvl 70 like this exactly how strong would she become? I nodded to the slave trader's words.

Eventually, the magic square was completely carved onto Firo's stomach, and it became quiet.

"It's finished. Yes."

My display also showed a more advanced monster icon than before. Without hesitation, I checked the part that made what I said absolute.

"Haa... haa..."

Firo walked towards me while breathing heavily.

"That was horrible master, it hurt a lot."

Even I thought I had an evil smile on my face as I ordered Firo.

"First, change to human form."

"Ehhh, that hurt so no way. Give me something tasty!"

She rejected my order in an disrespectful tone, while she was asking for food

the curse mark shone.

"Eh, no! What, no no!"

Firo sent some kind of magic at the curse mark, but this time the curse repelled it and activated.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Firo fell over from the curse mark's pain.

"If you don't listen to what I say, it'll hurt."

"Ow, ow! Uuu..."

Firo unhappily transformed into human form. After that the curse mark's light faded.

"Hm... this time it properly activated. Good job, slave trader."

"Yes, it is a fairly strong pattern, so it's not easily tampered with. Yes."

I went in front of the collapsed Firo and told her.

"You yourself were 100 silver coins, next that curse mark was 200 coins. In total I'm out 300 silver coins. I'll have you pay that back by obeying my orders."

"M-master..."

Firo swayed and reached her hand out to me.

It kind of hurts my conscience to say this to a child with such a pure face, but I don't think she can survive outside if she's this selfish. (!)

"Listen to what I say."

"N-nooo"

"I see I see, If you don't want to listen to what I say no matter what, then I'll sell you to this scary old man here."

"....!?"

Firo seemed to finally understand her position as her face distorted into fear.

The slave trader was wearing some kind of troubled yet happy expression while looking at me...

"How much would you buy this guy for?"

"Let's see. She is rare so even including the fee for the trouble I'd want her even for 30 gold coins. A effective curse mark is already carved on her so she won't be able to go wild anymore, there would be many ways to use her. Yes."

Even the slave trader who didn't like buying back goods was willing to offer this high of a price on her.

I don't know his true intentions, but if Firo falls into his hand I can expect that her life would be over.

However Firo was looking up at me with an incredibly fearful expression.

This is tough... my conscience which was supposed to be gone was speaking up.

But depending on Firo's attitude I might really have to choose that future.

I'm not a kind older brother or someone who spoils their pet.

"That's how it is. So if you act violently again, I won't see you anymore... you'll drink really bitter medicine, have your body messed with a lot and in the end... you'll probably die...?"

"N-noooooooo!"

Firo rejected that in a loud voice.

"Master don't hate me..."

Firo clung to my legs and begged me.

Ku-! This is tough...

Even so I can't back down.

"If you honestly listen to what I say then I won't hate you. Therefore from now on, you must properly listen to me"

"Y-yes!"

"Good good, then when we're sleeping at the inn don't turn back into your real form no matter what. This is your first promise."

"Yes!"

When Firo smiled with her whole face, what was left of my conscience ached.

Okay, today after this we have to head to the weapon shop...

As I moved my gaze from Firo, I saw the slave trader smiling with an unbelievably amused expression.

"Such a wonderful and evil method. It sent shivers down my spine. You truly are the legendary hero of the shield!"

I feel like his way of praising me was off... but complaining about it doesn't seem right either.

And, beside him Raphtalia was also looking at me with a difficult expression.

"Naofumi-sama... wasn't that a bit too..."

"If I don't do this then she won't listen to me. Even you were like that at first right?"

At my reply Raphtalia nodded.

"Now that you say that, I was."

"Selfishness has parts where it can be forgiven and parts where it can't."

After hearing my, her master's, true thoughts she couldn't challenge them.

"Carrot and stick right? I understand. Yes."

"I wasn't talking to you slave trader."

Also, don't just decide you understand me.

"I guess I caused you a lot of trouble."

"If that's what you think then please, take and raise a Filolial that we prepared so that it would be easy to use—"

"Now then, we still have places to go today. We'll be leaving now."

"At hero-sama's strong will that keeps from getting caught up in our pace as much as possible, I hold true feelings of respect. Yes."

With this we ended our discussion and left the tent behind.

Reward

Firo was wearing my mantle as we head to the weapon shop.

Old Man: "Hey lad."

The Old Man waved as we approach.

Naofumi: "Did something happen?"

Old Man: "Yeah. Wait a moment."

The Old Man closed the weapon shop and guided us.

We arrived at the magic shop where I received the magic book.

Magic Shop SK: "Oh my."

The aunt from the magic shop beamed when she saw the Old Man.

Magic Shop SK: "Why don't you guys come in?"

Naofumi: "Right, Firo, don't change into your true form until I permit you to."

Firo: "Okay."

At the back of the magic shop, there was a workplace that smelled like nature.

We were guided to that workplace.

The ceiling was quite high, about three meters.

In the middle of the floor was a magic square with a crystal.

Magic Shop SK: "Sorry that it's a little small because I'm working."

Naofumi: "No it's fine. Anyway, is there any clothing for children here?"

Old Man: "This Aunty from the magic shop is an acquaintance that could help you."

Magic Shop SK: "That's right~"

She removed the crystal and put an outdated sewing machine on a pedestal.^[15]

Magic Shop SK: "Is that child really a demon?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, let me take off the mantle first before she changes. Firo, return to your original form."

There should be enough room in here for her original form.

Firo: "Ok."

When I gave the command, Firo removed the mantle and returned to her original form.

Magic Shop SK: "Oh my, oh dear!"

The magic shop Aunty looked up at Firo who had returned to her Philorial Queen form in surprise.

Firo: "Is this all right?"

The scene was very strange as Firo's voice contrasted greatly with her body.

Even though this was a fantasy world, it was still weird...

I looked towards Raphtalia

Raphtalia: "What is it?"

Naofumi: "Nothing"

That reminds me, Raphtalia was also a Demi-human.

Now that I think about it, if it was the past me, I would agree in regards to Motoyasu's behavior in trying to attain a relationship with her. However, that is what the past me would have done.(!)

Magic Shop SK: "So what kind of clothes do you need?"

Naofumi: "Can you make something that won't break when she transforms?"

Magic Shop SK: "Strictly speaking, I'm not sure I can make clothes."

Naofumi: "What!?"

Magic Shop SK: "Hero-sama, what do you see?"

Naofumi: "Magic shop... And a witch."

Magic Shop SK: "That's right. I only have some knowledge on transformation."

Though I don't really know what is considered common sense in this world...
But I know that witches can transform into animals.

Magic Shop SK: "Oh my, it takes a great amount of magical power and a very troublesome procedure to transform yourself into an animal. Wouldn't it be bothersome to put on clothes every time you transformed?"

Hm? So it seems it was possible for witches to transform.

The Aunty answered while working on the bobbin.

By appearances alone it resembles a sewing machine from my world.

Magic Shop SK: "It would be fine if she transformed at home. But if she does so in a crowded place, it would be pretty serious."

Naofumi: "Yeah, that's right."

That's why Firo's clothes are my main concern. Walking around naked would stand out.

Magic Shop SK: "Therefore, it would be best if the clothes can be automatically worn when she transformed and stored safely when reverting."

Naofumi: "I see."

True, if the clothes just disappear after she reverts back, the problem would be solved.

Magic Shop SK: "There's a technique passed down by a certain demon category of the Demi-humans that is able to deal with this problem. A famous example of a clothing incorporating this technique is the vampire's mantle." [16]

Yeah, like when they transformed into bats or wolves. So it was also true in this world too.

Magic Shop SK: "Well, this bobbin machine makes the materials for those clothes."

Naofumi: "Oh... So how exactly do the clothes transform?"

Magic Shop SK: "Strictly speaking..... what are clothes exactly? It is something that can be seen by others right?"

I tilted my neck and gave the Aunty of the magic shop a puzzled look.

What is she trying to get at?

Magic Shop SK: "What I mean is, this item can transform the threads to magical power and magical power to threads. Therefore, the user can change the threads to magical power at any time."

Magic Shop SK: "To put it simply, the user can change the threads to magical power and vice-versa."

Naofumi: "Oh, I see."

Now I understand why the Old Man from the weapon shop brought us here.

It'll certainly be weird to call these clothes. When not in human form the magical power would circulate in the body, and it would become "clothes" once back to human form.

Magic Shop SK: "Now then, Firo-chan right? Turn the handle of this tool slowly."

Firo: "Ok"

Firo begins to slowly turn the handle of the bobbin machine.

A thread comes out immediately and the Aunty wrapped it around a spool.

Then, the threads started to gather on the spool.

Firo: "Hmm? I feel like some power is leaving me."

Magic Shop SK: "This changes magical power to threads. It is tiring but please endure. It is still insufficient to make the clothes"

Naofumi: "Hmm... Interesting."

Firo was still a child who was barely one week old.

Firo looked tired while spinning the machine.

Naofumi: "Endure it and I'll promise you something."

Firo: "Food? Delicious food?"

Naofumi: "Sure."

I am a man who keeps his promises. I'll let you eat your fill of delicious food later, Firo.

Firo: "I'll do my best!"

Firo begins to energetically turn the bobbin machine.

Firo: "Yay, I'll work hard!"

The Aunty seemed surprised at the speed at which Firo worked.

Naofumi: "Old Man, I remembered that owe you a meal. Are you free after this?"

Old Man: "I left a note at the shop explaining I'll be closed till early afternoon. So what're you going to treat me to, lad?"

Naofumi: "How about this, can you prepare a big iron plate?"

Old Man: "What're you going to use that for?"

Naofumi: "I'm going to cook."

Old Man: "The lad's home cooking? I was expecting something different."

Naofumi: "What was that?"

I was slightly offended by the Old Man's disappointed expression.

Old Man: "Oh well, what did I expect."

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, go to the market to get meat, vegetables, and charcoal. I think Firo can eat the portion of 5 people."

Raphtalia: "Understood."

I handed some silver coins to Raphtalia to go shopping.

Firo: "Food~ Food~"

Firo was in high spirits while spinning the bobbin machine.

Magic Shop SK: "That's enough. You can stop spinning now."

After awhile, the Aunty told her to stop.

Firo: "Will there be more food if I turn it more?"

Naofumi: "No. you can stop."

Firo: "Okay~"

Firo returned to her original form.

Firo: "Master~ food~"

Naofumi: "Hold on a bit."

Firo: "Eh-..."

Firo sounded very disappointed. Raphtalia hadn't returned yet, so there was no food.

Naofumi: "When we leave the shop, return to your human form."

Firo: "Ok"

Do you really understand?

Magic Shop SK: "You can use this to make your clothes."

The magic shop Auntie gave us the threads.

Old Man?: "I'll go ask someone who knows how to weave this."(!) Naofumi: "I have high hopes for that fellow. Firo, let's go."

Magic Shop SK?: "What should I tell the young lady who went shopping?"

Naofumi: "Tell her we'll be waiting at the gate leaving town."

Magic Shop SK?: "Understood."

Following the Old Man from the weapon shop, we left the magic shop.

Magic Shop SK: "As for the fee, I'll be sending it to the weapon shop~"

Naofumi: "How much would that be...?"

I asked a little anxiously.

Magic Shop SK: "Making the magic string? Because the crystal is expensive, I'll charge Hero-sama 50 silver."

Damn! Why is Firo so expensive?

In the future, we need to be careful with her clothes, it was like wearing money.

We headed to the weaver with the threads.

Weaver: "This is some unusual material, I could do a lot with this. Go to the dressing room and measure your size. I should be able to complete the dress tonight. You can pick it up later."

After she said that, we went straight to the dressing room.

Even though it was only making a piece of clothing, it will still take quite a while.

Dressmaker: "Wow..... What a very cute child!"

The Dressmaker was a girl with glasses and a scarf.

She seems a little plain. By that, I mean she looks like someone from my world who would write doujinshi.

Dressmaker: "Her wings are just like an angel. She seems similar to a Demi-human... Well enough of that, I'll work on your order now."

Naofumi: "Is that so?"

The Old Man puts a hand on my shoulder.

Old Man: "Bird Demi-humans usually have the hands or legs of birds, or features of a bird in other parts. But this child only have wings so it's very wonderful"

Firo: "Hm~?"

Firo tilted her neck while looking up at the Dressmaker.

Naofumi: "Yeah... This fellow is a demon that can transform into a human. When she reverts to her true form, her clothes break."

Dressmaker: "Interesting..... So that's why you need clothes made from magical power."

Her glasses gave off a dangerous light.

As I thought, this girl reminded me of an Otaku.

I felt a little nostalgic because I had an acquaintance selling doujinshi within a circle. She would often give me admission tickets for the circle and was quite friendly.

Sigh... There was no such thing in a different world.

Dressmaker: "Because the material is excellent, making a simple one piece dress may be good. And if she does not receive any impact during the change from magic to clothes, then it would be perfect."(!) Naofumi: "Eh? Uh sure?"

Firo was measured again after she put on her mantle and then the dressmaker started designing something.

Dressmaker: "I want to see her true form!"

Firo looked at me with a troubled face. I gulp and looked around.

Naofumi: "Looks like she would barely fit here"

When Firo returns to her original form, her head would hit against the ceiling of less than two meters high.

Dressmaker: "Can you sit down?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, I think that's better."

Firo stared at the dressmaker girl while changing back to her demon form and worrying about the ceiling.

Dressmaker: "Oh-... This gap is good!"(!)

To be unfazed even after seeing Firo's true form... This dressmaker is capable!

But at the same time, she's absolutely the doujinshi-type that has a very unpleasant personality. I'm glad this is a different world.(!)

Dressmaker: "I'll bet that a ribbon will suit her."

Firo's neck size was measured by the dressmaker. Then she went back designing clothes again.

Dressmaker: "Well I'm going to wait for materials to arrive!"

She seems excited while answering.

Old Man?: "This fellow is a good craftsman."

Naofumi: "I guess..."

She's the type to be absorbed in her work and will accomplish it by all means.

Old Man?: "Well, looks like everything would be completed by tomorrow."

Naofumi: "That's fast. By the way, how much is this going to cost in total?"

Old Man?: "I recommended you to this place so it should be around 100 silver pieces."(!)

Ugh... I received a shock.

Naofumi: "Firo, do you understand? I spent a grand total of 400 pieces of silver on you. I expect you to work diligently."

Firo: "Okay!"

Do you really understand? We left the shop with Firo in her human form.

We joined up with Raphtalia, who was waiting at the gate of the castle town.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama, I bought the ingredients you asked for."

Naofumi: "Firo costs 400 pieces of silver. Raphtalia was cheaper."

Raphtalia: "Please don't say it like I'm a cheap woman!"

Sigh... Guess I have to live with this.

Naofumi: "Alright, Old Man, bring the iron plate. Firo, get a cart and carry it from the weapon shop."

Firo: "Ok!"

Old Man: "Alright..."

Firo left with the Old Man for the weapon shop and came back pulling a cart.

..... Why was she pulling it in her human form?

An iron plate around the size I had imagined was inside the cart.

Naofumi: "Alright, let's leave the castle town and go to the riverbank near the grassy plains."

We arrived at the riverbank.

I took out the iron plate, put it on a griddle and immediately put charcoal under it.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia and Old Man, take care of the fire."

Old Man: "Yeah yeah."

Raphtalia: "Okay"

As expected of the Old Man of a weapon shop, it seems managing fire is his forte.

Firo: "What about Firo?"

Naofumi: "Be on guard so that balloons won't approach us..."

Firo: "Okay~!"

I had Firo, who was curious on what we were doing for some strange reason, do something else because she is likely to mess up at the chores we were doing.

I cut the meat and vegetables, that Raphtalia brought, into appropriate sizes and put it near the grill.

Old Man: "Lad, the charcoal is ready."

Naofumi: "Yeah."

Raphtalia and the Old Man had already heated the plate as per my instructions, so I just put the fatty meat onto the grill for the oil.

Then I spread out the vegetables and meat so that they aren't directly on top of the fire.

Old Man: "You sure are skilful."

I used a stick and a knife to turn the meat and vegetables so they don't burn.

Naofumi: "Well, this should be fine."

Yup. Today's lunch is a barbecue by the riverbank. Firo's reward.

Naofumi: "Firo, it's ready."

Firo: "Okay~"

Firo was already drooling from the smell when she took the skewer I handed her.

Firo: "Yaay~! This is delicious!"

Firo started throwing meat and vegetables that were just cooked into her mouth.

Naofumi: "Hey don't eat everything, this is for everyone."

Firo: "Mfkay~"

Firo nodded while stuffing her mouth.

Do you really understand?

Naofumi: "Well no matter. Raphtalia and Old Man go and eat."

Raphtalia: "Okay."

Old Man: "Sure."

I put the meat and vegetables onto some leaves and handed it to Raphtalia and the Old Man.

Old Man: "Oh, this is delicious! I'm surprised grilled meat tastes so good."

Raphtalia: "For some reason, the dishes that Naofumi-sama makes are strangely delicious."

Naofumi: "I'll take that as a compliment"

Old Man: "I'm not flattering you. Why does it taste so good?"

The Old Man looked at his plate with a puzzled expression.

Naofumi: "It's probably because of the cooking skill from my shield."

Old Man: "The power of the shield?"

Naofumi: "Well, at least I think so."

From the corner of my sight I see, Barbeque is now available. Quality: Good -> Great quality.

To think that such a strange icon would exist.

Old Man: "That's quite a mysterious shield. I'm envious."

Naofumi: "I can't take it off so it's quite inconvenient."

Not to mention the non-existent offensive power.

Oh right, there was the special effect from the Bee Needle Shield. So now I can use the [Shield of the Needle] to attack enemies.

Although the enemy would have escaped before I beat it, unless it's slow like a balloon.

As expected, when the monster realize it was in a disadvantageous position, it would just run away.

Sometimes, a smart monster would ignore me and aim for Raphtalia.

Old Man: "Haven't you become quite strong?"

Naofumi: "I don't know... Compared to the other heroes..."

Old Man: "Is that so, are the legendary weapons that powerful?"

Naofumi: "That's right, I learned from experience."

Old Man: "I see"

Naofumi: "Then-"

Because skills could be acquired in various ways, the power of a legendary weapon was way above average.

Moreover, accumulating status improvements whenever a shield was unsealed was good.

Monsters, materials, levels, and the skill tree. There were many different conditions that would unseal new shields.

Besides, the exclusive effects of any shield that was released would give permanent bonuses.

Even a weak shield could be helpful if I unsealed it.

Due to the Equipment bonuses carrying over, the more shields I unsealed, the stronger the skills I could use.

I can see how many bonus stats I got. My stats in general were higher than Raphtalia's. Maybe it was because I'm a hero.

Especially in the aspect of defence. I have 3 times more and that's not including the permanent bonuses from unsealing other shields.

Because I never attack, all the better gears went to Raphtalia. After all, the Hero of the Shield only has the potential in defending, that's why my defence is so high. But the price for that is having 1/10th of attack power.

The only difference between a resident of this world and a hero are the effects granted by this shield.

If I didn't have these effects, I would never be able to beat a monster with just defence.

After all, the only reason a hero is different from a normal person was because of the legendary weapon.

It could be considered that you are only a hero because you have the legendary weapon.

I hate it, but I am only a hero because of this shield.

It seems there is an influence from being the companion of a hero.

Raphtalia is superior to normal Demi-humans because of the effects from Slave trainer Shield and Firo's abilities are on par with her despite the level difference.

I don't know how much effect Growth Correction had, but it seemed to be quite large.

The effects of Slave Trainer Shield and Demon Trainer Shield were good. I wonder what effects Friend Shield would have, if that even existed.

Basically, existences called companions are essential for a hero.

Friend huh..... something that I don't have.

Old Man: "I see... It seems that heroes really are different from us commoners."

Naofumi: "That seems to be the case."

Travelling around the world, absorbing various demons and materials to grow stronger.

Honestly, there's just so much more to know.

I don't understand how much I can improve the shield.

And even if I don't do anything, the wave of disaster will strike.

I don't know how many times it will come either.

It's been twice already. Maybe 5 times, 10 times, or even 100 times, I don't know.

Whatever it is, I can't just sit around and do nothing.

That reminds me...There seems to be a worrisome shield called Curse Series.

At that time when I almost lost Raphtalia, the Curse series was released and had started to erode the shield.

I've looked for that skill tree many times. (!)

However, I can't find it no matter how hard I look.

I'll try asking for help.

[Curse Series]

I hesitated to even touch it.

I had only written that sentence. But when I checked it many times, I felt a shock and the letters change(!)

Curse Series The Curse Series bestows power but consumes the user. Hero, Do Not Use It!

Therefore, I decided to stay away from this topic.

When I need it, the power will appear. This shield seems to have many limitations.

Firo: "Master~ there's no more meat"

Naofumi: "What!"

When I looked, there was no more meat. Everyone had already finished eating the stuff I prepared.

All that was left were vegetables.

Firo: "Is it already over? Firo still wants to eat more."

Naofumi: "Uhhh, well... Go to the forest and catch 5 Usapiru. I'll cook those too."

Firo: "Okay~!"

Firo rushed to the forest at full speed.

Old Man: "Oh man, that was delicious. Totally worth it."

Naofumi: "If you think that, then discount the price of clothes."

Old Man: "Lad, if I gave you anymore discount, I would suffer a huge loss."

Oh well, we barbecued next to the riverbank till evening and then called it a day.

By the way, Firo caught 10 Usapiru.

I barely had time to eat. Mostly because of managing the barbecue and dismembering the Usapiru to roast.

Peddling

The next day, that otaku Dressmaker greeted us with a smile when we entered the dress shop.

Dressmaker: "Yes yes~ I've finished making the clothes. It took me all night."

The Dressmaker looked extremely tired with her red and tension-filled eyes. She then brought Firo's clothes from the back of the shop.

The dress was mainly white with a large blue ribbon placed in the middle for contrast. Even though it looks simple but I understand that it was beautiful.

Firo: "Master, am I going to wear this?" [\[17\]](#)

Naofumi: "Yeah."

Firo: "Yay!"

Firo, who was wearing a cloak to cover herself, had taken it off and became nude on the spot.

Raphtalia: "Firo, no!"

Firo: "Eh--"

With Raphtalia urging her to stop, I guided them both to the back of the shop.

I waited for Firo to change in the shop.

Dressmaker: "Alright, change into your demon form."

I could hear the Dressmaker's voice from the depths of the store.

Firo: "Why~?"

Dressmaker: "If you wear this ribbon, I'll give you meat."

Firo: "Yay!"

Don't just casually say something so terrifying.

Firo: "Understood~"

I could hear the transformation sounds.

Dressmaker: "Yup. As I thought you look good..."

I heard an enchanted voice.

Dressmaker?: "Alright, let's go."

Firo: "Ok!"

The two girls appeared from the back of the store.

My eyes turned towards Firo.

... Wow. Her original figure which was already angel-like was now even more stunning.

Pure white wings, matching the white one piece... And a blue ribbon on her chest. What was it?

Right, she looks like an angel heroine from the 2-D world.

Firo: "Master~?"

Naofumi: "Hm?"

Firo: "Well? Does it suit me?"

Naofumi: "Yea, it suits you."

This otaku Dressmaker was able to take full advantage of Firo's specs and make suitable clothing for her. Her talent is quite outstanding.

Firo: "Ehehe."

An embarrassed Firo laughed while her clothes fluttered.

Seriously, what a terrible expenditure.

I let Firo pull the cart while we head back to Forest village.

When Firo changed to her demon form, the clothes dispersed and the ribbon turned into a collar.

That function was very convenient.

Magic Shop SK: "Oh, it's Hero of the Shield-sama."

Before we left the town's castle, we coincidentally met with the Aunty from the magic shop.

Magic Shop SK: "Are you heading to Forest village?"

Naofumi: "Yeah"

Magic Shop SK: "I happen to have some business there too. May I tag along?"

The Aunty from the magic shop asked with a smile.

Oh well, I don't really want to decline her since she has helped us out with various things.

Naofumi: "I won't guarantee that it will be comfortable, is that fine?"

Magic Shop SK: "Yeah."

Raphtalia was already battling with her motion sickness by looking far ahead.

Magic Shop SK: "Well then, let's get going."

The magic shop Aunty got on the cart.

Naofumi: "Good, Firo. Don't go too fast."

Firo: "Okay~"

The pedestrians who we just passed by gawked at Firo, their faces were filled with surprise. Talking demons are probably rare.

The cart rolled along with a pitter-patter. [18]

I feel that in these past few days, I have been really busy. [19]

Actually, I'm always busy. Its just that recently, I have been 'very' busy.

All of these circumstances could be summed up within one word, Firo...

Magic Shop SK: "So, how's your study of magic going?"

Naofumi: "Uh..."

The magic shop Aunty attacked where it hurt.

To be frank, I made no progress at all.

Should I retort with a "you should have given me a crystal ball"? No, she helped procure the threads to make Firo's clothes and gave a discount, I shouldn't complain.

Naofumi: "Because I am from another world, I can't read these letters."

Magic Shop SK: "Oh... I'm sorry."

I felt bad seeing her apologize. I lament at my insufficient studying.

I was defeated.

I repaid a good intention with bad feelings.

Therefore, I want to repay Aunty for the help.

I must learn it as fast as possible.

I don't have any support, unlike the other fucking heroes. That's why I have to do my best to learn. [20]

Also, I need to acquire better equipment to survive the next wave.

Let's not forget about translating the medical recipes either.

Though it would take a lot of time, I decided to learn the letters first.

Firo: "Fuua... it's light."

Firo was yawning while pulling the cart steadily.

You're calling a cart with 3 people light?

That's great. I already have a certain plan. This can't be done without Firo.

The Aunty from the magic shop gave me 25 coppers when we arrived at Forest Village.

Naofumi: "What's this for?"

Magic Shop SK: "Transportation fee."

Naofumi: "Oh I see."

I can use this.

Forest village was reviving nicely. A storekeeper welcomes us pleasantly.

I have already apologized for the chimera meat.

Although, keeping that meat there was my idea in the first place.

Naofumi: "Now then, Raphtalia, let's go on some motion sickness training."

I promised to help with the reconstruction to compensate for the meat.

Although it's only a little, I still get some compensation.

Raphtalia: "Eh!?"

Raphtalia had a bitter face. Oh dear, it's not good if you can't overcome something like this.

Naofumi: "From now on, our transportation is Firo pulling the cart, so you must get used to it."

Raphtalia: "O-Okay"

Firo: "Okay~!"

Naofumi: "Firo, you're pulling."

Firo: "Yup!"

Philorials really like pulling carts. Firo's eyes shined.

Raphtalia: "Uhm.....Are you thinking of something?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, I think we should start peddling."

Raphtalia: "Peddling? Why?"

Naofumi: "Although we don't have a lot of goods, I want to stock up on an assortment of medicine."

Raphtalia: "Sigh....."

Raphtalia doesn't seem to see the appeal. Oh dear, did I have too high expectations? However, it would be a waste if I did not use the precious cart given to me.

Naofumi: "So when you get used to the motion sickness, Firo can pull the cart everywhere at maximum speed."

Raphtalia: "I understand the reason..."

Naofumi: "I know a place that would make it hard to get sick. You should get accustomed there."

Raphtalia: "Is there really such a place?"

Naofumi: "Yeah."

And, before starting the day's work, I put Raphtalia on the place where she was most likely to get motion sickness... On the back of Firo.

Firo: "I'm fine with master, but why is Onee-chan on my back?"

Firo muttered as Raphtalia gets on her back.

Raphtalia: "It's the same for me. This is embarrassing."

It's a strange sight to see Raphtalia in a semi-crouching position on top of Firo's owl shaped body.

Naofumi: "Is it too tough?"

Firo: "Nope, this is easy."

Firo seems to have no problems at all.

Naofumi: "Well then, let's go."

Firo: "Ok!"

Firo pulls the cart with Raphtalia on her back.

Actually, it should be quite taxing. However, the one doing the pulling said it isn't.

Meanwhile, I began decoding the book of Intermediate recipes while learning the letters.

Rumble...

Rumble.....

It is difficult to concentrate with the sound of a wheel as background music.

Raphtalia: "Uhhh..."

Rumble.....

Raphtalia: "Uh-Uhhh..."

Hm?

I looked at Firo and see her in human form piggybacking Raphtalia. Raphtalia seems troubled and tried to get my attention while the passers-by whisper and point at us.

Naofumi: "A strange rumour is going to circulate!"

My reputation is going to drop again because there is going to be a rumour that

I forced a slave girl to do manual labour by pulling a cart and carrying another person.

Naofumi: "Well..."

Naofumi: "When you pull a cart, do not turn into a human."

Firo: "Okay."

Firo nods and, seemingly dissatisfied, returns to her demon form.

I'm getting bored. Raphtalia doesn't seem to have motion sickness yet.

It will probably be okay if we go faster.

Naofumi: "Alright, Speed up!"

Firo: "Okay~!"

Firo nods energetically and begins running.

GaraGaraGara!

The wheels on the cart turn noisily.

Raphtalia: "Wa!"

Raphtalia was surprised and clings to Firo.

At least, we will arrive at our destination today.

Journey on the Carriage

Hmmm...

“Uuu... Have we reached?”

As we've arrived at our destination, I glanced at Raphtalia who looked like she was just about to collapse and I let out a bit of a woeful groan.

It didn't seem like she was having trouble earlier, but it looks like having Firo run quickly may have been too much.

“We've made it to the hut?”

Looks like Firo didn't have enough, as even after she stopped pulling the wagon, she was letting her legs loose and frolicking about.

Raphtalia looked dreadful as she staggered on her feet.

“Well, let's load up the lumber now.”

I aided the lumberjack who came out of the hut in loading the lumber onto the wagon.

I also helped out a bit in cutting down some trees. Thanks to my [shield] skill, the quality of the lumber was raised.

While I did that, I had Raphtalia continue her riding training. On a side note, I got a reaction from the lumber so I let [the shield] absorb it.

The requirements for the Kino Tree shield have been unlocked.

The requirements for the Les Tree shield have been unlocked.

Kino Tree Shield

Ability remains locked... Equip bonus – Woodworking Skill I

Les Tree Shield

Ability remains locked... Equip bonus – Low Level Wood Working Recipe

It's the Wood Shield branch. These two trees seem to be the most common types used for woodworking.

The Kino trees are like the Hinoki (Japanese cypress) from my world but with a bit of an aromatic fragrance. The Les trees sort of resemble the Sugi (Japanese cedar), but the grain of the cut tree seems to differ depending on the location. It's a bit of an odd tree.

Well, not like that matters too much.

A few days later.

Pound, pound, pound.

With a wooden mallet in hand, I worked vigorously in modifying our wagon to become a full horse-drawn carriage.

It seems my skill has improved considerably which I suspect is due to the Woodworking Skill I I unlocked the other day.

I began to affix a frame on top of our wagon. After that I'll need to cover the top with some thick cloth.

The Ryuuto village reconstruction is proceeding swimmingly, and it looks like they'll be fine without our help now.

The villagers noticed I was working on upgrading my wagon into a carriage and even lent a hand.

“Alright, this seems to be pretty ok.”

“Looks like it’s done.”

I, along with the few villagers that helped me out, let out a bit of a cheer upon finishing the carriage.

It’s a horse-drawn carriage, but the one pulling it will be a Philorial... Well, whatever.

“Thanks for helping me everyone.”

“It’s no problem at all. Hero-sama has helped us out so much, this is the least we can do.”

The villagers all helped me out with kind smiles.

They’re treating me kindly as I’ve saved their lives, but I can’t spoil myself by staying here. Still, I’m honestly grateful to the people here.

“I’m glad you feel that way.”

“You’ll be peddling goods you say?”

“I’ll mostly be a guy that does odd jobs. Traveling from village to village, town to town transporting goods, selling whatever commodities I come across, escorting people.”

“I see...”

Yeah, the villagers don’t seem to really get what I mean.

Well it’s true that it’s not typical hero behavior like what Motoyasu would do.

It’s not like I’ve envisioned a clear cut path to success here, but I’ve got Firo now, and it only makes sense to make the most out of her.

“Hm? Woah... The wagon turned into a carriage-.”

Firo, who was in her human form and playing about, had a look of surprise as she notices how large the wagon has grown.

“Is Firo going to be pulling this?”

Firo asks, her eyes positively glimmering.

“Yeah, that’s right. From now on you’ll be pulling this carriage as we travel all over the country.”

“Really!?”

Firo cheers, brimming with happiness.

Man if it were me I’d absolutely object to doing so much manual labor...

“Are we really going to?”

Raphtalia mutters dejectedly.

It seems Raphtalia doesn’t sound very enthusiastic about our journey on the carriage as she has yet to completely get over her motion sickness.

“You’ll get over it eventually. Just bear it until then.”

“Fine.”

I faced Firo and go over this multiple times.

“Firo, what is your job?”

“Uhhh, Firo’s job is to pull the carriage to wherever master wants to go.”

“Right.”

“And to kick that spear guy if I ever see him.”

“Correct.”

“One of those is wrong! Just what are you making her do?”

Raphtalia objects to my words in bewilderment.

“What... You’re looking at me as if I said something crazy.”

If you see Motoyasu, kick him. I see nothing wrong here.

Seriously, I’ll get nowhere if I have to micromanage each one of them so much.

“Alright then, we’re off to peddle our goods. I’ll be hiding in the carriage. Raphtalia, whenever we hit a village or a town, try to sell what we've got.

“Okay... I will.”

Outside of Ryuuto village, I still have a pretty bad reputation. So if I were to come out and try to negotiate, things might go awry and I won’t be able to sell a thing.

That’s why I’ve appointed Raphtalia with the task of selling and haggling our wares.

She has a fairly attractive appearance and is not particularly shy either. She might be pretty well suited to jobs handling clients.

“Well, let’s head out.”

Our preparations complete, we load up the carriage with our baggage and have Firo draw us.

“Ah, Hero-sama.”

“Hm? What is it?”

Within the mass of villagers seeing us off, a man stepped forward in front me and was dressed several notches above everyone else.

“I am the lord who is in charge of the area in which Ryuuto village resides. Shield Hero-sama, I thank you for everything you have done.”

“Don’t worry about it. This was just a nice place for me to set up a base.

“...Please, take this.”

The lord says that as he hands me a sheet of parchment.

“This is?”

“As you’ll be selling goods, I’m sure this will be useful. It’s a Commerce Amnesty.”

“A Commerce Amnesty?”

“Yes. In this country, if you sell goods, at each and every village or town you visit you must pay a fixed amount to that region’s lord.”

... Is that so. Well, if I just flaunt my authority as a hero then... Nah, since I have such a shitty reputation, that’ll probably just backfire.

“But that’s when you can present this Commerce Amnesty with my stamp on it. If you have this then you’ll be exempt from paying the region’s lord. I hope you will find this useful.”

“Uhhh... Is it really ok?”

“Yes. I won’t be able to face my people if I don’t present to Hero-sama proper remuneration for the services he has done.”

Now that I think about it, this is the agricultural sector of the Merlot Mark region. It's a place that gets quite a bit of traffic, so the lord of the region must have the same degree of influence and dignity to match its affluence.

It must've been brought to his attention by the villagers that I minimized the possible damage that could've occurred to Ryuuto village during the wave. With my bad reputation spread about, the king would scorn any nobles that would assist me. But for his villagers, he is willing to bear such contempt... That's why he faced me with a cheerful smile.

"... I give this to you out of concern that your poor reputation may detriment your future business."

He's giving it to me with purely good intentions. Then I can respond with honest gratitude.

"Thank you. I'll make use of it."

"May you have a safe journey."

"...Yeah, I'll be off."

"If there's anything we can do you aid you Hero-sama, please allow us to help."

"If you guys can just live long and prosper, that'll be plenty."

"Of course!"

And with that our journey as a jack-of-all-trades doing odd jobs began.

At first we began with selling medicine.

We didn't have much, but we were able to sell it below the market price.

Our main items were remedies and nutritional supplements. These specifically I was able to make in higher level quality and we were able to sell it for a fairly high price.

And whenever we stopped by a village I would buy the medicinal herbs that I knew about and synthesize them into medicine on the road.

Firo was quite fast, so most of the time we made it to the next village within a day, but on some occasions we have to camp out.

When that happens we stop the carriage, set up a campfire and have dinner.

“Master! The space next to Firo is open! Let’s sleep together!”

Pat, pat, in her Demon Form Firo signals to me to sit beside her.

“It’s way too stuffy being next to you...”

It seems Firo really wants to sleep next to me. At an inn, I’ve ordered Firo to never change to her Demon form, so when we camp outside like this she indulges herself a bit more.

Well, if we’re camping outside there’s no one around so there won’t be any trouble. I guess it’s fine to let her off the hook a bit every now and then...

“Firo, you really do like Naofumi-sama don’t you.”

“Yup! I won’t lose to you, Raphtalia onee-chan.”

“How did you end up with that!”

Whenever Raphtalia and Firo argue, it’s in some fine line where I can’t tell whether they’re on good terms or bad terms.

Firo is still a kid, so she can throw a tantrum at just about anything.

Oh wait, Raphtalia is also actually a kid herself isn’t she. So mentally they’re about the same age.

“Yes, yes. Hurry up and sleep you two. I’ll wake you up when it’s time to switch-

.”

“Ahh-you’re treating Firo like a kid again-!”

“That’s right! Please stop treating me like a child!”

“Oh that’s right-! Raphtalia and Firo are both grown ups aren’t they-!”

“You don’t think so at all!”

“Yeah! Master you’re so meeean!”

And with silly conversations like that, our days of peddling continue.

Rumors of Our Hero

Naofumi: "Hm?"

About an hour before arriving at the next village, I heard a strange sound while working in the carriage.

There are wheezing sounds coming from a carriage next to ours. When I look outside, I saw a man with an impatient expression on his face, holding onto a bag.

Naofumi: "What's the rush?"

The key to being proficient in business is the ability to act curious.

Naofumi: "Hey, you over there, what's wrong?"

Villager: "I need to return to the village on the other side of the mountain quickly."

Naofumi: "Why are you in such a rush to return to the village over there?"

The man wanted to buy medicine for his parents but Firo ran past him.

Villager: "Yes, every second counts."

I understand the circumstances of this man who caught up to my carriage.

Hmm...The cost of getting to the other side of the mountain should be around 50 coppers.

Naofumi: "Firo, how fast can you get there if you go at top speed?"

Firo: "Uhhh, let's see... If I were to run without pulling the carriage we would arrive quickly."

Naofumi: "Understood."

I glanced at Raphtalia who read my mind and nodded.

Naofumi: "I'll take you there for 1 silver is that fine?"

Villager: "Eh!?"

The man has a shocked expression.

Villager: "I just bought medicine, I don't have any more money..."

Naofumi: "One silver is already cheap you know? You can repay me with medical herbs when we get there. That's my final offer."

Villager: "In that case....."

Naofumi: "Alright it's done. Firo!"

Firo: "Okay~!"

Firo leaves the carriage on the side of the road and turns around.

I pick up the man and put him in the wagon on Firo's back.

Villager: "Uwah!"

Firo carries the wagon with both hands and dashed at full speed.

Raphtalia is waving away from the carriage.

Firo: "I'm leaving!"

Villager?: "Oh!"

Dotadotadota!

When Firo runs seriously, she is two times faster than an average Philorial.

We arrived at the man's house in the village across the mountain in no time.

Villager: "What frightening speed....."

Naofumi: "Don't you need to give your parent the medicine? Don't drop it."

Villager: "Oh, right!"

The man enters the house. I enter after him as I have yet to receive my compensation.

It was a very normal house in a farming village.

I heard coughing sounds as I stepped inside.

Villager: "Mom, I brought medicine. Endure it and drink."

As I walked towards the voice, I saw a pale old woman who looks as if she is about to die at any time.

What medicine is that? The effects seem greater than any I know.

Hm...

Naofumi: "Hey. Before you let her drink it, boil it in hot water first."

Villager: "Is that ok?"

Naofumi: "Pass me the medicine."

I received the medicine from the man and fed it to the old woman while

rubbing her back.

The skill Medical Effect Up seems to be working.

Old woman: "Cough..... Cough....."

The old woman somehow managed to finish the medicine.

In my eyes, I can see some light scattering.

Apparently it was pretty effective.

The old woman's condition seems to have improved by leaps and bounds. Some redness returned to her complexion and her coughing has decreased.

Naofumi: "You should rest for a while. Your son will bring you food immediately."

The old woman looks up at me while trembling.

Naofumi: "Now then."

I leave for the kitchen where the man is.

Villager : "Oh, did she drink it properly?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, her condition seems to have stabilized as well."

The man's shoulders sag in relief at my answer.

Naofumi: "You can pay me later."

Villager: "Okay."

I leave the house and head to where Firo is waiting.

Before we leave the village, the man's expression becomes tense.

Villager: "Um..."

Naofumi: "What's up?"

I answered the man while packing up peddling goods.

Villager: "Because of you, mother's complexion has improved remarkably."

Naofumi: "It's not necessary for you to thank me."

I have a bad reputation, so if people hear this, they will be doubtful.

Villager: "At least tell me your name."

Naofumi: "I have no reason to tell you. The medicine did all the work. Now, bring a silver piece or some suitable herbs."

Villager: "O-okay!"

The man brought some items and some food from his house and gave it to me.

Naofumi: "Thanks, best regards and see you later."

Villager: "Thank you very much!"

The man seems to be a lot more cheerful.

As a side note, on my next visit, the old woman seems to have become very energetic... Maybe a little bit too energetic for an old woman.

I got back on the wagon as we return and began compounding medicine while translating the intermediate recipe book.

The intermediate recipe book seems to be easier to translate than the magic book.

Though I was exhausted after being able to barely translate a treatment potion.

I've gotten pretty far.

Various things have happened this past month, I wonder if I can meet my brother some time... [21] [22]

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama, I've finished selling items."

We arrived at the village sometime in between evening and afternoon.

Villager: "Can you take this baggage and letter to the next village?"

Raphtalia: "Sure"

I get off the carriage and load the baggage.

This luggage must not be worth much to trust an unknown peddler with it.

Since it might be stolen, it should be full of cheap things.

Well, it's not my problem since I can earn some pocket change.

I continue from village to village, town to town in this manner.

It seems that if I feed someone medicine directly, the effects do improve.

After two weeks, I've become famous for being a peddler with a rare demon.

As my credibility increases, customers who want a ride also increased.

I've been saving up money slowly.

There's some merit in being a travelling peddler.

First is being able to sell medicine smoothly.

Next, any demons that were defeated on the way were absorbed, increasing my stats.

On this trip, I found out that every region has different demons.

As a result of peddling, my shield seems to be getting stronger.

I also overheard various information.

I didn't know what the other heroes, Motoyasu, Ren, and Itsuki were doing before.

Motoyasu seems to be in south-western region, I heard he solved a famine for a village by providing some legendary crop.

That knowledge seems to have come from a game.

Ren is in the south-east region where atrocious devils are residing. It seems there's a rumour about him dealing with a violent dragon.

And Itsuki... Well, he seems to have brought down a tyrant in a small country to the north.

But there's no evidence of who Itsuki took down. There are also vague rumours that claim Itsuki of the Bow is the strongest hero.

Before I came to this strange world, I had read about the 4 holy weapons and the events that are happening now resembled what I read...

The journey continues with these thoughts.

Our levels after two weeks:

Me Lv 34 Raphtalia Lv 37 Firo Lv 32

We have grown.

Firo's growth is abnormal because she is a demon...

Especially her physical abilities; before she needed both hands (Wings?) to pull the carriage, but now she can do it with one while yawning. ^[23]

The person in question says:

Firo: "This carriage is too light, my motivation is dropping."

Oh well. That's a good thing

It seems the Status Up bonuses from my shield are effective.

Though there are other changes.

Pickaxe Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Mining Skill 1

Crystal Ore Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Craft Skill 1

I wonder. When we arrived at a prosperous mining town, I found a broken pickaxe on the road and absorbed some crystal ore which was thrown away.

Although these two skill bonuses seem good for making money, I lack information.

If I fail in processing some ore, it would become trash. I think a recipe would be necessary.

In the first place, I had to solve the intermediate recipe book I got.

The deciphering was completed in 2 weeks time. But before that, there were 3 weeks where I couldn't understand anything and had a staring contest with the book.

Antidote

Herbicide

Healing Ointment

Treatment Medicine (Already able to make)

Nutritional Supplement (Already able to make)

Gunpowder

Strong acid

Magic Power Water

Soul Healing Medicine

Insecticide

That is what I have deciphered so far. The basics of the intermediate class is that the effects change depending on how it's mixed.

Although I can't be certain, understanding the recipe seems to provide a bonus.

I let my shield absorb some of the intermediate recipe book.

And the results were:

Book Shield Unsealing completed.....Equipment Bonus: Magical Power Up (Small)

Yup. I had high hopes that an intermediate recipe shield would appear. It seems to be a waste. Besides, the defence is very low.

However, during the next morning when I finished deciphering the Intermediate Recipe book, Demon Treants appeared but were quickly dealt with and then absorbed.

Requirement for Treant Shield has been released.

Requirement for Blue Treant Shield has been released.

Requirement for Black Treant Shield has been released.

Treant Shield

Unsealing completed.....Equipment Bonus: Plate Appraisal 2

Blue Treant Shield

Unsealing completed.....Equipment Bonus: Intermediate Compound Recipe 1

Black Treant Shield

Unsealing completed.....Equipment Bonus: Half Compounding

Is this some kind of bullying?

Right after I finished deciphering that book too!

All I learned was the Heal Ointment? Perhaps, those monsters are materials for a recipe.

I cried when recipe 2 and 3 popped up.

I don't know how to make gunpowder, but it seems these treants are materials for herbicide and the healing ointment.

It seems that gunpowder can be substituted with some king flammable grass called Crackling grass.

I experiment with the gunpowder by collecting it into bags and creating makeshift bombs. After setting the bags on fire, I hurl them at an enemy. After throwing it, I dive to the side.

Oh my, it seems the power of the bombs was terrible, it just burnt the bag and turned to ash.

It seems I'm not even allowed to attack with tools such as bombs. That's actually kind of amazing.

The strong acid that I store in a glass bottle seems to be a little less acidic than sulphuric acid.

This is not a medical herb, but it seems I can mix it with water. I don't know what I can do with this yet so I'll just let my shield absorb it.

The Magic Power water restores magical power when drunk. But, the materials are rare and hard to get.

It is an expensive medical herb. If I create this, I should sell it.

The Soul Healing Medicine seems to restore SP. It also seems to be rare and difficult to prepare.

Insecticide was easy. I just dissolve and mix grass that repels insects until it hardens.

Of the new recipes I learnt, the antidote, heal ointment and insecticide seem to be popular.

However, the herbicide seems to only sell in small quantities since people don't need that much.

I let my shield absorb the extras.

Requirement for Anti-Poison Shield has been released.

Requirement for Glyphosate Shield has been released. [\[24\]](#)

Requirement for Medicine Shield has been released.

Requirement for Plant Fire Shield has been released.

Requirement for Killer Insect Shield α has been released.

Anti Poison Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Defence Power 5

Glyphosate Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: 5% Damage Reduction from Plants

Medicine Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Medicine Effect Range Expansion (small)

Plant Fire Shield

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: Fire Resistance (Small)

Killer Insect Shield α

Unsealing completed... Equipment Bonus: 3% Damage Reduction from Insects
Perhaps I originally would have received the anti-poison shield for Poison Resistance (Intermediate), but that probably changed because I acquired the Chimeric Viper Shield first.

The skills that I have acquired change due to the fact that I already had them, so instead of replacing the current skill, it gets replaced by something new.

I am also confused as to what the range expansion from the Medicine shield does.

Does it make it so that medicine is effective at a range or will be it effective to its surroundings?

I think the latter makes it way too convenient.

I wonder if the Plant Fire Shield is also effective against magic.

What is Glyphosate? It's the chemical name for an herbicide. As for the Killer Insect Shield α ... Maybe it will turn into Killer Insect Shield β if I increase the amount of herbs mixed.

The effect of reducing damage from specific enemies seems to be convenient.

The problem is deciphering the magic book. It seems to be considerably difficult.

Raphtalia seems to have gotten the hang of it, but she can't use any magic effectively yet.

She is now able to make a ball of light float in front of her for a few seconds.

You're making this prestigious hero look bad!

Therefore, after Raphtalia goes to sleep, I asked Firo how to use transformation magic.

Though it's difficult to call that magic, I am grasping at straws.

Firo: "Uhhh. Imagine what you want to become and feel the power gushing from the bottom of your body."

Yup. I completely don't understand.

I'm done thinking.

It seems that even after deciphering characters to read, I can't use magic.

I can't get the feeling of magic flowing since I was originally from a world without magic.

Still... I must learn magic.

I must live up to the expectations of that magic shop aunty.

Not participating in a wave would be a problem. Since no one else is protecting the villages and towns, it has become my job.

Sooner or later, being able to use magic might make a difference.

Although using a crystal ball to learn magic is much easier, using a book was much cheaper.

Therefore, recently while riding the carriage, I've been groaning with a magic book in one hand.

It seems Raptalia's explanation on magical power is the same as Firo's: it's a feeling in your body that comes from the soul.

The feeling of sensing magical power that even Firo has, what kind of sense is that?

I continuously ponder that question in my head.

Oh well, such are the results of two weeks.

Snatching Everything But Your Life

“Ohh... I am so fortunate as to be able to ride on the carriage of the Holy Bird.”

“The Holy Bird?”

That day we met a merchant who was looking to head over to the next town so we gave him a lift.

“Did you not know? Uhm, you are the owner of this carriage correct?”

The merchant who was chatting with Raphtalia points to me rather than her.

He pointed me out even though I try to make it seem like Raphtalia was the owner while I pretended to simply be the guy who synthesizes our goods.

“I am...”

“You guys are getting quite famous. Word has it that there is a carriage drawn by a Holy Bird whose proprietors wander about bringing miracles as they sell their goods.”

The carriage rattles about as I take a look from within the carriage at Firo.

People seem to think pretty highly of you, when in truth you're just a glutton who wants to be spoiled.

But just what are these miracles that he's talking about?

Hm?

“KWEEEEEEH!”

Firo suddenly lets out a strange call and runs rampant.

“Uwah!”

The three of us who were in the carriage (Me, Raptalia, and the merchant) grasp at the carriage’s handrails to keep from falling.

“----GYAAAAA....”

“-----YASU-SAMAAAAA....”

Gararara!

The wheels let out a loud rattle so I couldn’t hear what was going on outside.

Every now and then Firo flips out and causes a ruckus like this.

This is the fourth time since we’ve started peddling. Such a capricious creature.

“Watch it, it’s not just us two in here you know.”

“Oka-y, I mean.... Kweh!”

I whisper at her so that the merchant doesn’t hear.

It seems that a talking monster sticks out quite a bit, and I’d prefer not to invite any needless attention ... Though I have a feeling I might already be getting that attention.

The merchant is giving me a look in complete surprise.

“I’ve heard that it can understand our language, but it’s really amazing.”

“Yeah, I think so too.”

Now that I think about it, just understanding human language is pretty amazing, but being able to speak our tongue too? Such a high spec monster.

I'll consider it as the expansive possibilities that the monster race can have. But even in that sense she might be something unbelievably rare.

"We just peddle plain old medicine and pick up any jobs that would benefit from our carriage."

I respond going back to our original topic.

"It's said that a saint riding the carriage bears special medicine, and the sick and ailing who drink this special medicine from his hand will be saved."

"Is that so..."

It's a bit expensive, but it's medicine that most anyone can afford.

On a side note, it seems I can change which kind of herbs to use to make medicine that would best target specific symptoms.

The first medicine I made was an all-purpose one so its Quality was quite low. It might've been pretty good at stopping a cough.

But now that I've gotten my hands on a wide range of herbs, I can cater the medicine towards a specific purpose.

Fevers, pulmonary problems, digestive problems, skin problems, the efficiency of the medicine towards each of these issues depends on the type of herbs I use. I've just got all kinds of these targeted medicines on hand.

This type of stuff was covered in pretty fine detail in the intermediate recipe book. Though I still use the shield skill [menus] to help me out when mixing herbs.

"Plain old medicine you say?"

I pull out a bottle from our goods box and let him have a look at it.

“Is this the miracle drug?”

The merchant pulls out the top and takes a whiff.

“Well it certainly... Does smell like the medicine I’ve taken sometime ago.”

“... Do you know what it is?”

Is this guy also an apothecary?

As such questions go through my mind, he shakes his head.

“Nope, that’s just the feeling I get.”

So you have no idea!

I considered interjecting, but just let it slide.

“So, what kind of merchant are you?”

“I’m a jeweler.”

When he means jewels he probably means that. It’s probably in this world too.

He’s probably off to sell accessories and the like to some bigshot nobles.

“A jeweler huh... You’ve got money selling valuables to the nobles and yet you’re dealing alone?”

If there’s that much money riding on this merchant then it would make sense to bring with a comparable envoy to guard him. And yet he’s alone, which makes

me quite suspicious.

“Your words hit a sore spot.”

Hahaha, the merchant responds with a short laugh.

“Jewelers come in all kinds. If I had to be more specific then I’d say I’m an accessory merchant.”

“What’s the difference?”

“Well then would you like to take a look at my wares?”

As he says that, the accessory merchant pulls out his baggage.

When I take a look inside, I see things like broaches and necklaces. Seem to be a few bracelets in there as well.

But the ores used seem to most all be iron or copper. As for the affixed gemstone... How can I say this, actually calling it a gemstone would be somewhat of a gray area.

“This time around I mostly just have cheap goods.”

“I see... Did your business not do too well?”

“Nope, this time I’m just selling low-profit accessories to adventurers.”

“Is that right...”

According to the accessory merchant, accessories can be Enchanted which could boost the wearer’s abilities.

“By the way, how much would each of these go for?”

“How much you say... This iron bracelet that increases the users Attack Power would go for about 30 Silver.”

Ooh... That's quite pricy. Even my remedies don't sell that high.

"If it was Enchanted it would go for 100 Silver."

"Is that so."

"It would."

Hmm... I should definitely give this some thought.

My medicine business has more or less plateaued at the moment. I typically get pretty close to selling out, but since I have to buy herbs as materials, there isn't much profit.

I wouldn't be able to keep up with sales if I had to go out and gather the herbs.

They might have been fine for use back then, but the medicine made from gathered herbs are of too low efficiency to be sold.

"You would make these with Crafting correct?"

"Hmm... Indeed, making the accessories into this form would be crafting, but then I'll be Enchanting them. Till that point it would be Crafting I'd say."

... I see. So you could craft an accessory, but it wouldn't be effective until you Enchanted it. Enchanting... this seems to be the kicker.

It has an unpleasant ring to it. Why would it be? I've seen the term a few times when I was making medicine. It came up quite a few times in the Magic Water and Spirit Water mixing instructions.

This is something you can't make unless you're able to use magic.

"This has been quite educational. Thank you."

"No problem at all, the pleasure is mine."

“Master-, looks like something is coming.”

Firo warns me in a slightly wary voice as she brings us to a stop.

From the suddenly stopping carriage, Raphtalia and I take a look at our surroundings.

And from within the forest came several figures.

All of them bore arms and approached us with a look that was anything but good.

They looked rather ragged, but they had pieces of armor here and there which resembled barbarians. It's most certain that they're mountain bandits or something of the like.

“Bandits!”

The accessory merchant called out in distress.

“Hehehe... You lot, bring out your valuables and leave 'em here.”

I was almost astonished at such a cliché line.

It's that sort of thing isn't it. Is there really any point in charging into these situations?

Ah, I'm sure Firo already realized it but charged straight in anyway.

It's written all over her face, 'I can beat these guys, they sure are making light of me.'

“We know you've got a Jeweler holed up in there!”

The bandits shout at us.

I look over at the accessory merchant.

“I thought you said you didn’t have anything that was of really high value?”

“Yes... I don’t have anything of the like this time...”

Very nervously, the accessory merchant puts his hand to his shirt pocket as if he’s covering something important.

“I do have an accessory that would sell for quite a bit.”

“I see... So that’s what they’re after huh.”

Looks like I’ve let on a pretty risky passenger.

“I thought they wouldn’t target a merchant that’s carrying mostly nothing but cheap goods and going for personal matters rather than official ones, so I skimmed on security.”

“Are you stupid? Geez...”

All I can do is sigh.

“I’ll be charging you an annoyance fee for this.”

“... I understand.”

The accessory merchant nodded with a solemn look.

“Raphtalia. Firo. They’re enemies.”

“Right!”

“Yup!”

On my signal, Raphtalia jumps out of the cart and arms herself.

I pull the accessory merchant with me as I follow suit.

“Do not leave my side.”

“G, Got it!”

I change from a shield that I’m working on releasing the abilities from to a shield meant for battle.

“Y, You’re the shield...?”

“Yeah...”

The owner of the carriage of the Holy Bird was actually the notorious Shield Hero. At that fact, the accessory merchant was dumbfounded.

“What’s that? You guys wanna have at it?”

“Yeah. One must protect themselves from whatever danger comes after all.”

I answer, glaring at the bandit.

The goal of this fight is to prevent the enemy from reaching their objective.

In other words, it’s to prevent them from stealing what the accessory merchant is holding.

“Raphtalia. Firo. Are you ready?”

“Yes, I’m ready when you are.”

“I was just about to die of boredom.”

“I see, then... GO!”

At my call the bandits also brandished their arms and charged forward. From what I can see there are about 15 enemies give and take. There are about that

number of targets.

“Air Shield!”

I distract the enemies running towards me with the shield that suddenly appears out of thin air, then quickly activate my next skill.

“Change Shield!”

Change Shield is a skill that allows me to change the shields that appear from Air Shield or Shield Prison into another Shield that I know.

The shield that I change it to is Bee Needle Shield.

Bee Needle Shield’s Special Effect is Shield of Thorns (S) and Bee’s Poison (Paralysis).

“Wha, The shield suddenly...! Gaah---!”

One of the people charging after me runs head first into the shield that suddenly appeared. He then tumbles to the floor, gets paralysed, and starts convulsing. Nice, it looks like the Special Effect is actually kicking in.

“Shield Prison!”

“The hell is---“

The cage that comes from the shield then traps one of the other bandits.

Each of the shields have different time limits. Change Shield’s cooldown time is 30 seconds. It’s not something I can really use repeatedly.

But it lets me bring down their numbers so it’s quite effective.

Three bandits appear in front of me. They must think I’m stupid as even

though I'm an escort I've got nothing on but a shield.

I stand in front of the merchant and block the attack.

Sparks fly from the point it hits the shield, and I deflect the robber's attack as a metallic clang reverberates. It seems his Attack Power is below my Defence Power.

The shield I'm currently equipping is the Chimera Viper Shield.

Its Special Effects are Poisonous Snake's Fang (M) and Hook.

The snake sculpture on the shield begins moving and bites the bandits who come to attack me.

The Poisonous Snake's Fang retaliates with a poisonous counterattack to whoever tries to strike me.

"Guaaaahhh!"

"I, I won't go down with just.... Ugh!"

"I, I feel sick..."

Poisonous Snake's Fang poisons all who attack me. It's not too effective on things that have resistance. It seems to be working. I've never tried it on people before but it looks to be considerably effective. Also, it's not really a detriment, but the poison is actually lethal.

I order the shield to use Hook. The snake ornament on the shield comes out and grabs one of the bandits. The Hook's effect has no Attack Power, but just pulls anything from within 2 meters. It's pretty useful when trying to climb a cliff.

The bandit's movements begin to dull and a few of them start to fall over.

"T, This guy is the Shield Hero!"

The bandits start to get a bit spooked.

It seems they've just realized that they bumped into one of the country's famous heroes.

But it's too late for them at this point. With that fear the bandits quickly affirmed their own disadvantageous position.

"Tei!"

"E-i!"

Raphtalia, with sword in hand, takes a swing at the bandit when she spots an opening. His armor protects him from the cut, but with the sheer force from Raphtalia's swing, the bandit is smashed to the floor, hits his head, and collapses.

Firo moves at a breakneck speed, kicking one, then another, with her powerful legs that sends the bandits flying. Each kick, the bandits flew about 5 meters like Motoyasu did... No wait. That one just flew 20 meters.

.....I'm pretty sure you would die from that?

In no time at all, the bandits' numbers dwindled, and those that can remain standing numbered 6.

"Shit! Retreat!"

"You think I'd let you?!"

I capture the guy who looks to be the leader of the bandits with Shield Prison. The remaining bandits who try to run are captured by Raphtalia who is riding on Firo.

I'm glad they were weaker than I thought they'd be.

Though Raphtalia and Firo sure did quite the work.

"Now then."

I pass my judgment on the tied up bandits.

“Maybe I can turn you guys in for some kind of bounty?”

“At times like these I’m not sure there’s money to give for that...”

Raphtalia responds with a troubled face.

“Do you know?”

I ask the accessory merchant, but as expected he shakes his head.

“Even so I believe you should turn them in anyway.”

“Hmm... Is that so...”

The leader of the bandit troupe is looking at me with a flippant smile.

I can easily imagine what he’s thinking.

“‘We were attacked by the Shield Hero. We’re just normal adventurers!’ is what you’re thinking?”

The leader gives an unpleasant scowl.

That’s right! The officials will probably take our word over yours, you no-good Shield Hero!

“Well, I can’t root out that possibility.”

Just why is my reputation so bad... I think about it now, and I just can’t really accept it.

Thanks to that fucking princess and king, even if I do good deeds, no one would believe I did it.

Sigh...

“It can’t be helped. I’ll just kill you all.”

As they didn’t think I’d fathom that choice, the bandits all instantly turned pale.

Within the bunch one of them was frantically trying to undo the ropes, but Firo quickly came in and kicked him and he fainted in agony.

“I guess I can have my dangerous monster here learn how human flesh tastes like...”

I say that to the bandit troupe in a low voice with a hint of duress.

“Food?”

Firo says that as she stares at the bandit troupe, drooling.

“H,Hiii---?!”

“I wonder what I’ll do.”

“Y-You’re the Carriage of the Holy Bird aren’t you!? You’re supposed to bring miracles and yet you’re about to commit murder!?”

“It’s not like that’s a title I made up. One must protect themselves from whatever danger comes, right? I’ve been taking it up the ass from everyone else up until now. But now it’s your guys’ turn, so just give it up.”

“A-At least spare our lives!”

“Then give me all your valuables and equipment, and tell me where your hideout is. You’re fine to lie all you want. But you know, I hate being lied to to

death. If you tell me one lie, I'll have my Holy Bird here rip out each one of your four limbs one by one and eat them."

I say that casually as the bandits tremble in absolute fear.

Since I'm the notorious Shield Hero, it's very much effective.

"I, I got it! Our base is---"

I confirm the location on our map.

It's close.

"Alright, looks like negotiations succeeded."

As I bring my hand down, Firo lets out a kick with such force it knocks out all of the bandits.

"In any case, let's strip off any valuables they may have. Oh? This guy has some pretty good gear. Raphtalia this will be yours."

"Stripping the bandits of their goods... What we're doing is exactly the same as them."

So Raphtalia says as she follows my orders and quickly strips the equipment off of the bandit.

"Now give the guys that are poisoned some antidote and load them onto the carriage. Quickly now, we'll be bringing these guys to the hideout as well."

"Oka-y!"

After confirming that the bandit's base is really there, I proceed to strip the guards who were on lookout of their valuables in the same manner.

We then crammed the considerably abundant stockpile of treasure onto the carriage, and got all the bandits and tied them up in their base.

The various treasures were quite bountiful.

Things like plain money, food, liquor, weapons and armor, precious metals, healing pills and other cheap medicine.

It's far more bounty than I imagined and an unexpected bonus income.

These guys might be the bandits that are raiding people all over the region.

"Such... Boldness."

The accessory merchant, who has been following my actions in a confounded manner, looks deeply at me.

"So, how much of an annoyance fee do I charge you?"

The accessory merchant comes to his senses at my question.

"Maybe a few Silver Coins..."

I proceed to threaten him.

Thanks to you, this whole predicament happened. I didn't put in all this effort just for that much.

After negotiations, we agreed to one accessory as proper recompense.

"... That mindset to not just take the bandit attack without something back... I'm deeply moved."

Something seems to have sparked inside of him. The accessory merchant has been looking at me with a fire in his eyes. Yeah he's probably telling the truth.

“Okay then. I will tell you my secrets in Crafting and Enchanting as well as the trading routes.”

“... Isn't that a bit much?”

That is way too much compensation, to the point it's making me suspicious.

There's a good chance that he's trying to trick me somehow since I took an accessory off of him.

“Not at all. Greedy merchants such as yourself who wouldn't take a single hit without some sort of recompense are becoming a rarity.”

“I'm sure there are countless people who are greedy out there.”

“That's not what I meant. It's how you squeeze every last drop of profit out of someone. Not just using them then disposing of them, but to keep them going in order to wring out everything they have is what I'm saying is necessary.”

“Using then disposing huh...”

I look over to the bandits whom I've wrung out everything from.

They seemed to be pretty well off judging by how good their clothing were, so I just snatched all the equipment they had.

They're just getting their just desserts. Having all of their goods taken away from them feels like a fair curtain call.

“By doing that?”

“These guys tried to take our money and our lives. However, you negotiated and compromised to let them live so long as they gave you all of their possessions. They were after your life, so it would've only been natural for you to kill them. From your standing, [who had their lives in your hands], this is the best possible outcome for them.”

Well I do have a terrible reputation, so even if I tried to turn them in, there's a good chance the officials would believe their testimony over mine. Though there was also the chance they would believe me.

"They bought their lives from you by giving you all of their possessions."

"I guess you can look at it that way..."

"And then, when you could have had your just revenge, you used that as leverage to increase your own profits and wrung every last drop out of them!"

The accessory merchant let out a heinous smile.

What's with this guy?! He looks extremely repulsive!

"W, Well, I'll drop you off at the next town."

"No way, I have so much I must teach you. I won't get off until I'm done."

Just what is this accessory merchant aiming to teach me!

I'm a bit worried about how fired up this guy is getting...

But with that we carry on with the goods we snatched away from the bandits and this merchant who seems to have warmed up to us.

This may not be very important, but the one who sold out the accessory merchant to the bandits was apparently a merchant union member. It seems that after that act he was excommunicated from the union.

Learning Magic

For some reason, the accessory merchant joined our peddling. I'm not complaining since he is paying us, but I don't know what this fellow is up to.

The accessory merchant started teaching me various things after he found out about my Hero status during the bandit fiasco, which he seemed to have enjoyed.

Apparently, he wants to refine my talents...

While the accessory merchant on the surface is someone who is gentle and teaches apprentices kindly, he actually holds considerable influence within the merchant guild. Apparently, the thieves around this area are notorious. It seems that they were tipped off by associates within the merchant guild.

The first thing he taught me was where to mine for the gemstones needed to create jewelry. Next is processing precious metals into accessories. I am currently capable of making various designs. Because I am somewhat of a picture otaku, my creations were quite nice.

The tools needed to work are also cheap. In this world, there are magic tools that were powered by magic stones, similar to how fuel works. There are several points that seem similar to the burning and grinding process of metalworking in my world. [\[25\]](#)

To process any hard iron, I would need to go to the ironworks and work with a metal mould. Having crafting skills really help out with preventing any mistakes that might be made. Although the Shield is reacting, I can't just let it absorb my work because it's expensive.

Back to the main issue, I wanted to start working on enchantment magic.

As expected, I need to be able to use magic. I groaned while holding the magic book in one hand and the accessory merchant is curious.

Accessory Merchant: "Is Hero-sama unable to use magic?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, even though my slave can already use magic..."

Accessory Merchant: "Ah I see... "

The accessory merchant took out some small transparent fragment and handed it to me.

Naofumi: "What is that?"

Accessory Merchant: "It's a piece of an extremely rare ore. It's quite expensive."

Naofumi: "Wow..."

Accessory Merchant: "Can you read the letters?"

Naofumi: "Yeah... Only the simple ones though."

I've been seriously tackling the letters of this world for about a month. I can't read any of the more difficult words, but I can understand the simple ones.

Accessory Merchant: "It's enough for you to be able to feel magic first, learning how to use magic will come after."

Hmm... What you said just now is quite difficult.

I played with the fragment while thinking and then the fragment began to shine.

What can I say... This feels like I just found another hand within myself that I had no idea about.

Until now, I had no idea of the existence of such an "organ", but it doesn't feel out of place. Seems quite similar to how even when a bird doesn't know how to fly, it still knows how to flap its wings.

Naofumi: "What a strange feeling."

Accessory Merchant: "I grew up knowing the magical power was there. However, you had no idea of its existence until recently, but you seemed to have succeeded"

Naofumi: "Is that so...?"

I am now conscious of another "arm" called magic power.

I open to the part of the magic book which I have already deciphered. The letters begin to shine. This is a magic engraved by me and only usable by me.

Naofumi: "I am the Hero of the shield who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. May the power of nature defend me!"

Naofumi: "Fast Guard!"

A target mark appears in my view. I selected myself as a test.

A light shines over me. Then I check my status and it seems to have risen.

Naofumi: "Oh..."

Naofumi: "I seemed to have learnt it somehow. Well then, teach me some magic."

The accessory merchant disregarded my excitement and immediately began another lecture.

Even though I thought this was something pretty special...

While the accessory merchant was teaching me, I was trying to apply magical power to a processed jewel.

I had trouble at first but my shield corrected some of my mistakes.

It gets difficult when I try mixing power from a different gem. On a side note, I seem to be able to draw out magical power from medicine and apply it.

Accessory Merchant: "Well, that's the basics. Please keep improving and apply it to your business afterwards."

After saying that, the accessory merchant left the carriage.

Thus, I learn how to craft something besides medicine.

Because crafting required the use of ores, when we arrived at a mining town, I immediately went to negotiate with the owner of the mine.

Owner: "Eh? Is that an introduction letter?"

The coal mine owner asked in surprise when I showed him the accessory merchant's letter of introduction.

Owner: "This is certainly a letter from him. How did you manage to get something from someone so stingy?"

Naofumi: "What do you mean?"

Apparently the accessory merchant is a very stingy person.

The owner of the coal mines was suspicious when I appeared with a letter of introduction from that scrooge, but was shocked when it was the real thing.

Owner: "Since the letter is real, how much do you want to buy? Since you have the letter, I'll be flexible."

Naofumi: "Uhm, may I mine it myself? It would be cheaper."

Owner: "Eh? Well... That's fine, take whatever you mine..."

I left the peddling business to Raphtalia and Firo as I head to a cave with my pickaxe. I'm interested in the mining skill.

The sound of pickaxe striking stone echoes through the cave. To be honest, it's quite noisy and the air is hot and stuffy.

As expected of a different world, a crystal protruding out of the wall was providing light.

Owner: "This cave is safe unless there are extreme circumstances, so there are no problems wherever you may want to dig. However, the risk of collapse is not zero."

I was guided to several places within the mine by the coal mine owner.

As I raise the pickaxe slowly, a cross-hair emerges on the wall.

What? Do I strike there?

Naofumi: "Tei!"

I swing the pickaxe down with momentum.

With a clang, a crack emerges from the wall. The crack spreads and the wall falls apart.

Owner: "Whoa!"

That was a very fragile wall.

Naofumi: "Hm?"

The coal mine owner looked at me as if I'm crazy.

Owner: "That hard bedrock... In one strike?"

That was hard...?

Due to the mining skill, walls collapse whenever I swing and ores were collected at a terrifying pace.

But there are still walls that I can't collapse no matter what...

Maybe it's because of my low skill level.

Naofumi: "Well I'll just work with this."

Owner: "O-okay."

I filled a bag with gemstones and leave quickly.

By the way, gemstones were even able to be found near the entrance of the mine. I just had to dig near a few mulberry trees.

It is surprisingly easy to find in the neighbourhood.

Although the uncut stones close to the surface seems to be of a lower quality for magic.

According to my knowledge of my world, there seems to be a famous place where jewels were dug up simply by digging in the field.

Even though this is a different world, I believed the good quality gems will be buried deep underground.

Ruby Bracelet was made!

Quality: Good -> High Quality

Even though I originally made that as a trial, It seems to have turned out well.

I also tried to imbue the bracelet with magic.

Ruby Bracelet (Fire-Resistance +)

Quality: High Quality -> Normal

Ugh... The quality fell a lot after magic was imbued.

I dabbled in making accessories as the peddling continues.

By the way, it is very hard to make accessories on a moving carriage, so I can only work on them at night.

It seems my shield is not of high enough level to absorb a finished gem.

Guess I should sell it instead.

On a side note, the bracelet that was made earlier took 2 days to make and it had sold for 80 silver pieces. It takes time to make the foundation of the bracelet after all.

It seems that the value of gems in this world seems to be lower than that of my world's.

How valuable the product is depends on the originality of the design. Even if it is slightly inconsistent.

It seems anything will be popular. So that's why what's popular in my world might be popular here too.

I mean, even an unknown jewel that I make may also turn out expensive.

However, when I think about the time used to make one, it looks like the pros and cons are well balanced.

That said, there is money to be earned. And it's also not a bad idea to upgrade our equipment.

Requirements for Iron Ore Shield have been met.

Requirements for Copper Ore Shield have been met.

Requirements for Silver Ore Shield have been met.

Requirements for Lead Ore Shield have been met.

Iron Ore Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Smelting Ability 2

Copper Ore Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Smelting Ability 1

Silver Ore Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: 2% Damage reduction from Demons

Lead Ore Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Defence Power 1

A skill which seems to be useful for the old man from the weapon shop appeared.

It's pretty useless to me at the moment anyway.

The Lead Ore Shield seems to have displaced another skill. I'm not going to use that skill anyway.

Every day of peddling was passed with such a feeling.

Just when I stopped at a southern town, through a certain reliable source (Accessory Merchant), I heard of a province that wants to acquire large amounts of Herbicide.

Since there's an opportunity to make lots of money, we rushed to the southwestern village.

By the way, judging by speed alone, Firo seems to be a match for a God Bird...

The Reason it was Sealed

After hearing that there was a village that had huge demand for herbicides, we quickly rushed over...

It might be because Firo was excessively fast that we were able to make it to the region in just a few days.

“Master-”

“What is it?”

“Uhhh, the plants here are pretty crazy-”

“Huh?”

Raphtalia and I both look outside of the carriage.

When we did, we saw the road completely buried in some sort of viney, squirmy vegetation.

“T-The hell?!”

It’s advancing slowly and gradually, but the vegetation is most definitely expanding its domain.

“The village is...”

I took a look around and noticed that there were people gathered over at somewhere that looked like a refugee camp.

“Firo, head over that way.”

“Okay.”

We head over to the camp and start to set up shop.

“Alright, what should I price these herbicides.”

I’m sure these will be used to try to exterminate those slowly encroaching vines.

I can see what the accessory merchant meant when he said I’d be able to make a killing here.

So then, just how much profit will I be making.

“Though it is possible that there is already a specialist here helping them out.”

“You might be right.”

I got out of the carriage to try and gather some information.

On a side note, I changed my shield into Book Shield. I then turned the shield around to make it look like I was just any old peddler holding a book.

By setting my shield to something that doesn’t really stand out, I can hide my identity as the Shield Hero.

“I came by since I heard I can sell herbicides for a good price here.”

I ask someone at the camp who looked like they had some authority.

“Oh, a trader. It would definitely help.”

He responded quickly as if he was waiting for me.

“But what exactly is going on here?”

I inquire as I look towards the invading flora.

“What exactly... Our village was hit by a famine.”

Ah now that I think about it, I did hear of a rumour along those lines.

But didn't Motoyasu handle that?

“However, thanks to the visit of the hero of the spear and the sealed miracle seed he had obtained, our famine was solved but...”

“No way, this is that miracle seed?”

I look towards the encroaching vines. Now that I observe carefully there are various fruits and vegetables stemming from the vines.

It doesn't seem like this camp is having any issues with food, and there aren't any food relief aids in sight. The vines also apparently have potatoes as I notice some farmers approaching the vines and digging them out.

In other words, the villagers have no trouble whatsoever with food, but because the plants are growing out of control, they've been driven out of their homes...

Is he that retarded?

If you carefully think about it, there must have been some reason for the seal in the first place. It wouldn't have been done for nothing.

So what the hell was Motoyasu thinking?

“Moreover, the village edges are still fine, but if you head further into the village the plants have turned into monsters.”

Oh, so the plants can evolve.

How can he be this retarded?

Why must I feel this way in such a short span of time? Seriously, that guy [Motoyasu] is a genius at rustling my jimmies.

“And that’s why you guys need herbicide?”

“Yes.”

Since they’re farmers, I’m sure they know about plant and weed control...

“At first we were overjoyed with all the harvest we were getting. But then it started growing from the fields to our homes... We tried our best to weed it out, but it just grew too fast.”

“By the way, when did this happen?”

“It wasn’t an issue two weeks after the Hero left. But ever since two weeks ago...”

“I see. Have you tried reporting this to the kingdom?”

“We have. But since the Heroes are all so busy, it would take some time before they arrive it seems. So we’re just trying to stop it from spreading further with herbicide.”

Haaah... Before I knew it I let out a sigh.

“Have you tried just lighting it all on fire?”

“We’ve tried everything we can think of.”

“Oh, so you guys already did.”

I’m sure they’ve also called to adventurers for help.

I take a look around and see people with weapons who were clearly not villagers.

“Uwaaaaah!”

A scream comes out from the village.

“What’s going on?!”

“Some adventurers said they were going to go in to try and raise their Level. I tried to stop them, but they didn’t listen. That scream might have been coming from them...”

The villager says that as if he’s given up on them.

“Dammit...! Firo!”

“Ye-s!”

I point towards the village and Firo, who was stuffing her face with the produce from the plants, rushed in.

She then busts out of the verdure outgrowth shouldering three adventurers who were in tatters.

“What’s it look like inside?”

“Uhhm, there were plant monsters inside creeping about. There were some pretty interesting ones that spat out poison and acid. These guys here sure are dumb going in there when they’re so weak--.”

“You didn’t need to mention that last bit.”

“Fi-ne.”

The villager was flabbergasted at Firo's fluent speech.

"A, Are you the rumored Saint who rides a carriage drawn by the Holy Bird?"

The villager now asks me, covering my hands with his own.

"Well... I don't know about a saint, but I am the owner of a carriage and a bird."

"Please! If you can, please help us! There are some people here who have been infested by the plants!"

"So some of them have parasitic capabilities huh..."

With a remedy and herbicide in one hand, I'm led into a tent.

Inside I see some people laid down with half of their bodies blighted by plants.

"I don't know if I'll actually be able to cure them though. But I don't run a charity here, so you better make sure you pay the treatment fee."

"We will..."

It was barely audible, but I could hear people around lamenting in a low voice, 'If only the Spear Hero didn't come here...' It made me feel somewhat good.

In any case, I go to the nearest patient who was a sleeping child that had troubled breathing, and had him drink some medicine.

A dim light appears, and the child's breathing returns to normal. I then spread the herbicide along the diseased areas.

The child looked to be in a bit of pain, but the plants that were ailing him began to wither away and scatter about. What resulted seemed to be a full recovery.

“Oooh...”

“As expected of Saint-sama.”

Voices of admiration started flowing out.

I continued on to the other patients, feeding them the medicine and applying the herbicide.

After I finish treating everyone, the air around the camp seemed to lighten up a bit for some reason.

Well, even if it's not that major, I guess good news would tend to brighten up the mood.

“Thank you, thank you so much!”

The people here gave me their gratitude.

“Give me my treatment fee.”

I charge them a tad bit above the market price.

I gotta be careful here. Since they've already requested aid from the kingdom there's a very high risk that I'll end up seeing one of the other Heroes.

If that happens then there's a good chance that these guys here will instead look to me in aversion. The villagers are now giving me their money with smiles on their faces.

“Well then, I'll be here selling herbicides now. After that, I'll be off as I'll no longer have any business here.”

“Ah... Saint-sama, if you can, could you please save our village?”

“The hell?! Why don't you go ask one of the country's Heroes?”

“But...”

Ugh... The villagers were now gathering around and begging me as if in prayer.

I'm not the type of guy that would do anything so long as they ask. On top of that I have no obligation to help them.

"I refuse."

"Please. If it's money we can gather some."

"...You pay me in advance. And after, no matter what happens don't come crying about it. Now, tell me everything you know about the seal that the Spear Hero released."

At my response, the villagers began to pull money out of their own pockets and amassed their funds. In the meantime I try to gather as much information as possible.

According to what they were told, sealed inside of the nearby ruins was the seed of a certain type of plant, and protecting it was a powerful guardian.

Really, did you guys not have any doubts considering there was a fucking guardian protecting this seed?

I had an almost uncontrollable urge to scream that out but somehow I was able to restrain myself.

And that's all could get from the Spear Hero's... Motoyasu's story.

From what I got from questioning the villagers, long ago this region used to be the stronghold of an alchemist, and it was said that his one masterpiece was sealed here.

And some other details saying that some time ago, this whole area was under the domination of plants or something like that...

"If you had legends like that, don't go around undoing seals! Did no one really stop to consider?"

Everyone averted their gazes at the same time.

I'm sure they thought it was safe since a Hero brought it to them after all.

It doesn't seem like I can find any more useful information besides that. And while we had these discussions, the funds have finished collecting.

... This is quite the sum of cash.

Since they paid up front, I can get away with showing my identity now.

"Understood. I'll see what I can do."

I then change my shield into one meant for combat: the Chimera Viper Shield.

"T, The Shield Hero?!"

I ignored the voices of the villagers and head toward the mass of vines.

Raphtalia and Firo followed behind me.

I tied the ample bag of money I received to my hip, and walked down the road rife with the encroaching vegetation.

Plant Invasion

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, Firo, be careful."

Now then, the enemy this time was a plant.

According to my vast knowledge of medical herbs, the plant in front of us was quite unique.

Various ripe fruits could be found hanging from the vines and potatoes could be seen on the root.

That's not all, apparently it also has the ability to spit poison and attach parasites to the human body.

Was the herbicide even going to be effective? Physically beating it up doesn't seem to be a good plan either...

As we advanced, the vines wriggled and then attacked us.

Raphtalia: "Haa!"

Firo: "Yaa!"

Raphtalia and Firo each cut down some vines.

But, we have already been surrounded by them.

Might as well try magic...

Naofumi: "I am the Hero of the Shield who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. May the power of nature defend me!"

Naofumi: "Fast Guard!"

I applied defensive magic on Raphtalia and Firo.

This magic improved the target's defense by a percentage. It is a support magic that shines when the target has high defense.

Raphtalia: "Thank you Naofumi-sama."

Firo: "Thanks~"

Both of them thanked me as they continued to decimate the attacking vines.

Even though it is easy to advance, it is difficult to completely remove the plants.

Well there is that. We can either use some strong magic or special medicine. But since we have neither to suppress it, our only option now is to withdraw.(!) But at least, we'll annihilate the enemies here.

There is a high chance that a strong demon is lurking within the village.

Since the legends passed down did not reveal a specific method to defeat the plant, there was no sure-fire way to exterminate them.

So a frontal attack may not work and thus I have no choice but to think of another method.

The vines' attack do not seem to be able to penetrate my defense so my movement is unobstructed.

Naofumi: "For now, to investigate, let's advance."

Raphtalia: "Okay!"

Firo: "Okay~!"

I started running towards the root of the plants in the center of the village.

It's overflowing with plant demons, though enemy of this level is still

manageable by the three of us.

However, I'm quite uneasy about Raptalia and Firo's defense.

Naofumi: "Humm....."

The names of the demons are Bio Plant, Plantriwe, and Mandoragora.

Bio Plant is the general name for all the common plants. Plantriwe is a demon in the shape of a human made of vines. Mandoragora seems to be an immobile plant fortress.

According to Firo, the Plantriwe scatters poison pollen with the big flower on top of its head.

The Mandoragora sprays acid from a vine to weaken and drag in its prey.

Bio Plant is the demon that is producing these two. Occasionally, a vine swells up and these demons burst from within.

I smiled in satisfaction as when I sprinkle some herbicide on these demons, they wither and die.

It seems that the shield does not consider scattering herbicide as an attack. Is it because these are just considered really aggressive plants and not demons?

I wonder what the criteria for it is.

It might work because it differs from its original purpose, like using holy water or recovery magic on undead monsters.

Or, it could also be because the medicine recovers paratism...

I have no clue.

Expanding on that idea, perhaps the parasites are pathogens and my treatment medicine is effective against them.

Naofumi: "So what do we do?"

Plantriwe and vines continued to attack me meaninglessly. The attacks

themselves do nothing, but my nose is slightly stuffed because of the poison.

The acid is also troublesome. It seems to be very effective in lowering defense.

Still, it's not as if they can break through. Snake's Poison Fang (Intermediate) makes those effects useless.

This is pretty common. The enemy is a plant and uses poison.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia."

Raphtalia: "Cough...! What is it?"

The air seems to be bad for Raphtalia...

Even though she was cured, it was possible that Raphtalia's respiratory system is still damaged and weak.

Naofumi: "Here, take this herbicide just in case."

Raphtalia: "Ah, Okay!"

I throw some herbicide to Raphtalia. I hope it will be useful in an emergency If I think very carefully about the way these vines wriggle, it would remind me of an eroge-like scene where the heroine was about to be violated.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama?"

The demon plants in Raphtalia's area seems like it was about to wrap around and violate her.

Raphtalia: "You're thinking of something quite rude aren't you?"

However, as the vines wrapped around Raphtalia, she tore them apart calmly. Unexpectedly, it seems like they have no durability.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama? Let's hurry up and go!"

Naofumi: "O-okay."

Firo: "Tei!"

Bicha! With a squish, Firo kicked the eyeball.

That was pretty gross...

Monster: "!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

The earth shakes as the vines tremble in rage.

Is it still not dead even after its eyeball was destroyed?

Hmm..... What happened?

Naofumi: "It's not falling over."

Raphtalia: "Yeah."

With a grotesque sound, the eyeball regenerated.

At the same time, I spotted a plant seed in the middle of the eyeball.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, Firo. The main body is within that eyeball. Pour the herbicide in it."

The cool-down time is over. I can use Air Strike Shield again. By the way, Plantriwe and Mandoragora were attacking me together.

But it does nothing, so I can take it forever.

Raphtalia: "Understood!"

Firo: "Roger~!"

Raphtalia jumps onto Firo's back while approaching the regenerating eyeball.

The eyeball must have registered them as the highest priority threat and unleashed a rain of vines at them.

Naofumi: "Shield Prison!"

I used the cage formed from Shield Prison to protect both of them.

The shield will stay in the air, unless an attack is strong enough to break through.

The effective time is 15 seconds.

Meanwhile, the Prison looks like it is able to drive the vines back.

Oops... Vines surrounded the Prison.

After 15 seconds, the Prison disperses. At that moment, I cast Air Strike Shield under Firo to be used as a foothold.

Raphtalia: "Tei!"

Raphtalia's sword flashes and the vines surrounding Firo were cut down.

The vines were cut beautifully and Firo succeeded in jumping off the shield.

She kicked the eyeball twice.

Monster: "!?????"

The eyeball's movements have stopped to regenerate.

By taking advantage of this chance, Raphtalia spreads the herbicide over the eyeball's wounds.

Monster: "!!!!!!?????"

After an enormous vibration that isn't exactly a voice echoed throughout the

vicinity, the Bio Plant suddenly stopped moving.

Naofumi: "Did we do it?"

I don't even care that I death flagged myself, these attacks aren't even enough to make me itchy.

However, the Bio Plant begins to move again.

Raphtalia: "I apologize. It seems I didn't spread the herbicide well enough."

Naofumi: "No, you did it properly. It seems the herbicide is not effective enough."

There must be something we can do...

Then, an idea flashed through my mind.

I have a skill that increases the effectiveness of medicine. Even just now, I had used this skill to help a person.

So what would happen if I applied the herbicide directly?

Naofumi: "Well, it won't hurt to try that next."

I ignored the enemies surrounding me and took out the herbicide with one hand.

Recently, I've noticed that my defense is now ranged, I can proceed through enemies even if I'm surrounded.

However, this doesn't apply to my attacks.

I stroll through the large amount of demons like it's nothing.

At last, I've reached the Bio Plant.

Naofumi: "The effect might increase even more if I apply the herbicide while

riding Firo."

I scattered the herbicide on all its roots.

Monster: "!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!?????????"

The Bio Plant convulsed violently. It seems to be its death throes.

The Bio Plant is dyed brown as its eyeballs dries up.

With a poof, the whole thing started falling apart.

The whole Bio Plant crumbles and we evacuate.

Naofumi: "Oooh..."

All the other demons started turning brown and withering. Everything is gone except for fruits that grew on their bodies and us left.

And...Where the Bio Plant used to be is a shiny seed.

... It would be dangerous to leave that here...

Naofumi: "For now, let's gather them because my shield may be able to absorb it."

Raphtalia: "Okay."

Firo: "Food!"

We were collecting seeds while Firo stuffed herself with the remaining fruits and potatoes.

Selective Breeding

Raphtalia: "Something like this?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, we should contact the village after this."

Seed of Miracles... After subjugating the Bio Plant which was Motoyasu's failure, we are currently collecting seeds.

I let my shield absorb any seeds that it has a reaction to.

Requirements for Bio Plant Shield have been met.

Requirements for Plantriwe Shield have been met.

Requirements for Mandoragora Shield have been met.

Bio Plant Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Plant Remodelling Special Effect:
Hook

Plantriwe Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Intermediate Compounding 2

Mandoragora Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Plant Analysis
I've unlocked the plant skill tree for my shield. But it is insufficient to open other parts of the skill tree.

Naofumi: "Plant Remodelling?"

I switched to the Bio Plant Shield and test out what plant remodelling does.

An icon appeared over the seed that I look at.

I fed some magic to the seed of a Bio Plant that I picked up earlier.

The seed floats in the air.

Fertility 9

Productivity 9

Vitality 9

Immunity 4

Intelligence 1

Growth Potential 9

Variability 9

Special Ability

What is that?

First of all, I'll lower everything.

The window makes a beeping sound as the values decrease.

All other statuses were decreased while increasing one.

Fertility 1

Productivity 1

Vitality 1

Immunity 1

Intelligence 1

Growth Potential 43

Variability 1

Special Ability

Hmm... I don't understand.

Well, all it has is growth powers, is that even good?

Oh, my MP decreases when I use this skill, it's almost empty.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama?"

The modified Bio Plant seed that I made was dropped by accident.

"Oo!"

The ground immediately becomes lush and green

But...

"What?"

It grew in abundance for about 3 meters and then withered instantly.

Raphtalia: "What are you doing?"

Naofumi: "Ah, I'm experimenting with Plant remodelling using that seed."

Raphtalia: "Please don't do something so dangerous!"

I was scolded by Raphtalia.

Well, if it was someone else who did that, I would be angry too.

But, this skill is really interesting.

It seems I'll be able to make huge profits if I utilize it correctly.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama, your smile looks rotten."

Oops, did it show on my face?

Naofumi: "Anyway, let's return to the village."

Raphtalia: "Yeah."

We were greeted by silence as we walked out of the brown plant zone.

Villager: "Thank you, Hero-sama."

Humans work for profit.

After I save the village, I am welcomed gratefully.

Well, it would be impossible to live in the village with all those dead plants.

That day, we ended up cleaning all the withered plants.

Even if the main body is destroyed, the fruit and potatoes remain. It seems there won't be a food shortage for a while.

But I'm a little worried about the soil.

Naofumi: "Aren't you going to return to a famine?"

Villager: "Well..... that's very likely."

In the near future, this village might be deserted.

After thinking it through, I push forward my plant remodelling plan.

I don't understand what 'special ability' is yet.

By looking at a seed, the plant analysis menu pops up.

I equip the Mandoragora shield and go to bed.

The next morning, I change to the Bio Plant shield and continue remodelling.

Fertility 9

Productivity 9

Vitality 9

Immunity 4

Intelligence 1

Growth Potential 9

Variability 9

Special Ability

Upon death a seed is produced.

Mutation Range Expansion.

I see... This was the original ability of the Bio Plants.

Originally, it was made with the purpose of producing food, but due to its mutation ability, it became a demon.

It might not be a bad idea to nip the problem at its root.

Due to its low immunity, the herbicide is effective.

I check the special ability. Various items appeared, with special instructions next to each item.

It seems I can choose abilities by sacrificing stats.

This village is troubled by the second coming of the famine.

That's why I'll experiment.

Fertility..... 4 is simply the ability to reproduce. We don't need too much so I'll lower it.

Productivity..... 15 should be the ability that produced fruit. To combat the

famine, I'll increase it.

Vitality..... 6 - is this the power to grow anywhere? Let's drop it a little.

Immunity..... 4 is the power to resist sickness. Because the herbicide is effective, I'll leave it alone.

Intelligence..... 1 - What the heck is this, does it give it a demon's intelligence? I don't know what increasing it might do.

Growth Potential..... 15 - the speed at which it grows. Let's increase this.

Variability..... 1 - this is probably the cause of plants becoming demons.

Special Ability - I add in an ability that increases quality of crops and cancel the Mutation ability. Upon death, a higher quality seed is produced.

Naofumi: "It's completed."

Raphtalia: "Is something wrong?"

Raphtalia stirs and asks me sleepily.

The villagers suggested that the saint and holy bird stay overnight in the village.

The fruits and potatoes of the Bio Plant are quite delicious. It's an annoying plant, but it tastes good.

If my remodelling succeeds, it will become the special product of the village.

Naofumi: "Ah, continuing from yesterday is a bit..."

Raphtalia: "You're still at it?"

Naofumi: "It's a little bad to leave things as is right?"

The famine will hit sooner or later. Therefore, I'll stop it by all means.

Even if I can go shopping from different areas, it's impossible for this amount of people.

It would be difficult for these inhabitants who have lived here a long time to move.

Naofumi: "Now then."

I got off the carriage and dropped the seed onto the withered ground slowly.

The plant grows and covers a corner of the former village site.

Villager: "Wh-What's happening?"

The people who were resting near the camp run up to get a closer look.

Naofumi: "Ah my bad, it's just a little experiment."

Villager: "What are you doing?"

The villagers seem to be scared of the plants.

Naofumi: "Experiments to change this into a safe plant..."

Due to its low fertility, the plant stops growing.

And.....

Red and young fruit similar to tomatoes appear. It seems the foundation for the plant is a tomato.

Naofumi: "I think that's a success."

Villager: "Yeah..."

Naofumi: "Whether or not you want to use it is up to you. Whether this was in vain or becomes an asset is in your hands."

It seems the mutation range expansion and the variability status doesn't only

change the plant into demons; it also has the effect of producing various fruits and other plants.

I sprinkled some herbicide to wither the plant. I hand the seed over to the feudal lord there.

Naofumi: "Well then, we'll be on our way, bye-bye."

Firo who was already awake and stuffing herself with tomatoes prepares to pull the carriage.

Villager: "Please wait!"

Naofumi: "Hm? What's up?"

Villager: "We still haven't rewarded you yet. How abo-"

Naofumi: "Are you guys possibly trying to make me deal with the excess food here?"

Villager: "Uh-uhm how about it....."

My carriage has now become 4 vehicles.

3 of the carts were loaded with crops that came from the Bio Plant.

It seems that the carts were also given to me.

I reluctantly received it because they presented it with a smile.

After connecting the carts, Firo pulls the carriage happily.

Firo: "It's heavy and comfortable~!"

As expected of a demon changed from a Philorial.

And so, our journey continues as the carriage shakes.

Additionally, after I realized the herbicide could be used as a weapon. I went to play with treants.

It seems to be effective only on plants which have a parasitic ability. I don't understand how it works.

Or perhaps the Bio Plant is actually not a demon but just a simple plant.

Well, it's fine. With Raphtalia and Firo, I don't have to worry about being attacked.

Let's think of a way to use the food that cannot be eaten first.

That reminds me... I heard a rumour about a famine up north. Let's go there and sell.

Naofumi: "Let's depart for the north."

Firo: "Okay~!"

Shogun-sama.....

On our way north, we came across a town.

Naofumi: "What? There's a toll fee?"

The guards stopped us as we were about to enter the town and asked for a toll, so I showed them the note I received from the feudal lord of Forest village...

Guard: "These kinds of things aren't accepted! Pay quickly!"

Raphtalia: "But-"

The guard didn't even respond when Raphtalia tried to negotiate, only asking for gold.

Despite all that negotiating, the guard held his ground.

Naofumi: "What a stubborn bastard!"

Even though the guard looked like he was going to rush us, he stood there and just glared at me with hostility.

Hmm... Something must have happened here.

After I started peddling in this world, I learned a few things. No one would perform such unreasonable extortion unless they had strong backup. It seems whoever this person works with is powerful.

It seems like we have to call this guy's backing to talk about how they treat people. But it'll only work if the other party is not hostile though.

As for why the other party isn't here could be due to a few reasons...

Naofumi: "The Feudal lord here must be an outrageous bastard."

I muttered while looking at the town. The guard's expression changes upon hearing that.

Guard: "Don't you dare speak ill of the lord! Or else I will punish you!"

Ah I see. So it's a problem with the top dog. In this case, neither threats nor negotiations will be effective.

The road is closed so I can't pass. There will be punishment if caught.

Maybe if I make enough of a commotion for the lord to appear.

However, there is little reward for such a risk...

Naofumi: "I understand. You guys have it tough too..."

I hand the amount asked to the guard.

The guard looked a little shocked.

Guard: "Yeah... This is good."

The guard whispered to me.

Guard: "I'm sorry..."

Naofumi: "It can't be helped."

Is this in the jurisdiction of that trash king? Or is this country's feudal lord also rotten.

I intended to sell the food loaded in my carts, but I stopped when they collected tax.

The inn seems to be fairly high class, at least when compared to the neighborhood.

Everything in this town seems to be taxed: daily necessities, food, weapons, armor, crafted goods, and even the hotel fee. Everything is expensive.

Living here must be hard.

The commerce is totally in decline and the markets aren't lively at all.

The unreasonably heavy taxation must have taken its toll.

Naofumi: "Collect information on the village that's short on food."

Raphtalia: "Understood."

Firo: "Okay~! Master, I want a souvenir~"

Naofumi: "You eat so much food and you still want more?"

This Firo, demanding a souvenir despite the high prices...

We head to the bar with Firo in her human form.

By the way, I changed my shield to the Book Shield.

There, I saw a fellow who I would rather not have encountered.

"Fellow": "It seems that way."

Although he has a bow, there is also a sword on his waist, and his equipment also seems to be of low quality.

Similar to my Book Shield as camouflage, the bow is small and plain.

If this was our first meeting and if he wore a glove, I wouldn't have known him.

But, his companion was dressed in very conspicuous colours. It looks like he's trying to hide himself. Probably.

That's right, the hero of the Bow is having a discussion in the corner of the bar.

He doesn't seem to have noticed me.

What are they talking about? I'll get closer and concentrate on listening...

Villager: "The lord here..."

Apparently, they are gathering information about the lord's notoriety.

According to the story, he fills his own pocket with the raised tax money, accepts bribes from merchants, and employed bodyguards to severely punish anyone who objects.

It seems this feudal lord is also trash.

Itsuki: "That's overboard, I must punish him."

Whoops!

I almost fell over when I heard Itsuki's dangerous line.

First off, how am I supposed to respond to that...?

What are you trying to do staying concealed anyway, what kind of shogun are you? Are you going to leave right after the revolution?

Didn't I hear some rumors similar to this about the Hero of the Bow?

In hindsight, rumors aren't really reliable since I am known as the saint of the holy bird. At the same time, I'm also known as the nefarious Hero of the Shield.

Because nobody knows my real identity, I can still get by pretending to be a saint.

As for the reason why Itsuki is hiding, I do not know.

For example... Is the country asking him to hide? I can't really speculate due to the lack of information on Itsuki. There's little to nothing on the Hero of the Bow either.

Are you hiding intentionally...?

Itsuki: "Everyone, let's go."

Itsuki finished his talk, left the bar, and disappeared into the night.

The next morning, the feudal lord was removed...

After making a mess of the feudal lord's mansion, Itsuki's subordinates revealed themselves to start preaching.

The trash king heard about it, and in the end, the Lordship was transferred to another person.

I am reminded of dramas about olden times and a journey of revolutions.

Are they retarded...?

This is too troublesome to be involved in.

I returned to the hotel after looking for what I originally came for, information on the village that wants to buy food.

Firo's souvenir? There's no way I'll buy something like that in such an expensive town.

I just read my magic book and ignored Firo who seemed to be complaining to me about something.

I learned another spell.

What the Aunty from the magic shop told me about the Hero of the shield being good at using support and healing magic seems to be true...

Next morning.

As I expected, adventurers hired by the country are secretly investigating the town, stories about how the lord lost power are everywhere.

In the middle of the town, I see Itsuki engaging in small talk with a beautiful girl.

Girl: "Really, thank you very much."

Itsuki: "There is no such thing. It's secret you know."

That's a secret my ass.

Yup.

My suspicion has been confirmed.

Now I know why there are no rumours of Itsuki. This guy is pretending to hide himself and creating the image of being humble, then rejoices when people "find out" and ask him about it. What an unpleasant hobby.

That guy's retarded.

Hiding your true identity to satisfy your "superhero unmasking for the public" desires, truly obnoxious.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be chatting in such a conspicuous place.

At least I understand the reason she would be indebted to such a guy.

It seems she was almost taken away due to being unable to pay the tax and she has to take care of a bedridden old man.

This is ridiculous. We left the town at a quick pace.

After travelling for half a day, we reached the village bordering a neighboring country.

It seems that all the food that wasn't sold yesterday is in high demand. Apparently the entire region is in famine.

However, it looks like there are a lot of guys that aren't residents of this village. Their clothes don't seem to be from this country.

Naofumi: "Hey. You over there..."

It seems they are from the neighboring country where their tyrant of a king was

exterminated.

Are they here to peddle?

After they looked into my carriage, they came to have a talk about business.

They don't seem to have money so maybe they'll try to barter. Their medical herbs are good and maybe some lumber for woodworking...

I got off the carriage and asked about their circumstances.

Villager: "Thanks for allowing us to use other forms of payment than money. It allows us to save money."

Even if I am handed string or coal, as long as I acquire enough, it will be useful. Though I only traded because they had a nice amount of medical herbs.

Villager: "I'm sorry. For a while now, there has been little to sell....."

If I look closely, he resembles a thin twig, seems like he'll die at any moment.

Naofumi: "...Here's a little gift. Although it's not much, eat it sparingly."

Because it can't be helped, I borrowed a large pan from the group of villagers.

The village suffering from starvation cooperates willingly.

There's many things that are about to rot. Give or take 4 days until they go bad.

That's even after I got the skill 'Anti-Corruption' which delays rotting.

Villager: "Thank you very much!"

They hungrily devoured everything I made in the pan.

Meanwhile, I inquired why this is happening.

It seems that regardless of whether or not the king was a tyrant, life was fine.

Taxes weren't too high, and some people even took it easy.

But it seems that would be over soon.

It seems that the militia known as the Resistance that took over, and they increased the taxes.

Naofumi: "What? Didn't you guys overthrow the evil king?"

Villager: "..... Yeah, but since money is required to properly administer a country, taxes were raised. As a result, our military power was reduced."

I see. If the king wasn't particularly bad, he would have at least kept a minimum amount of military to protect his country.

It is said that "it is not a country without its people", but what do you say about a country that cannot protect its people?

It seems that only bad rumors of the king were being spread.

I don't know what the king was thinking, but I feel a strange sense of camaraderie with the king that was labelled as a tyrant.

Something could have been done if the king was negotiated with instead of being exterminated.

As for the trash king in this country, he's been evil since the beginning.

Villager: "Only the head changed and it's becoming impossible to live. So we brought what little wealth we have into this Melromarc country and try to live."

Firo: "I feel sorry for your king~! I wish everyone the best. Anyway, I'm hungry so who do I blame?"

Naofumi: "Shut up you bird! My spirit as the owner will be doubted!"

Firo: "Okay~"

I scolded Firo for opening another's wounds.

It seems that recently she has picked up some strange wisdom and has become foul-mouthed.

Raphtalia: "I wonder who she is learning from..."

Raphtalia watched and commented under her breath.

Naofumi: "Did you say something?"

Raphtalia: "Nope, absolutely nothing..."

It seems Itsuki took part in the Resistance. He might have been behind it since the beginning.

Anyway, are these people entering this country illegally to buy black-market food?

It seems the prices of food have sky-rocketed in this area. And I can just rake it in.

If I'm not mistaken, Itsuki... Shogun-sama has done some reforms around this area.

Though the after service sucks...

Because his sense of justice was satisfied, he moved on.

Villager: "Although this nation could attack our country as it is weakening, it is simply impossible to live during a famine..."

Naofumi: "Hmm I see..."

It might be due to the wave's influence that famines are frequently appearing in various places.

Villager: "This is?"

Naofumi: "This is a remodeled plant that was causing trouble down south of this country. I modified it with a special technique so that it will grow when planted. It will probably be okay, but pay attention while managing it. If it is handled carelessly, it could be dangerous."

Villager: "O-Okay....."

Naofumi: "I'll be around this neighborhood again in the future. You can thank me then."

Because the three carts were sold completely, I gave two seeds as a bonus.

As for what will happen to the village? That's a different story.

It seems that my true identity was revealed, but because the small neighboring country was saved from famine, the residents weren't bothered by it.

Additionally, due to the large amount of medical herbs acquired here, it seems an epidemic was prevented in the east after we decided to sell there.

The Village of Plague

We were camping outside that day.

Naofumi: "We were somehow able to dispose of that ridiculous amount of food at a high price."

Because the South's famine was already resolved, we came to the North and sell.

Though there is still one cart of food left, it is for that absurdly gluttonous bird.

Firo: "Food~~!"

The bird stuffs her head into the cart and starts devouring.

Firo: "Delicious~!"

I've heard the annoying phrase somewhere before.

Although this fellow's growth is over, she's still a glutton. Everyday food costs are nothing to scoff at. On the other hand, we travel extremely fast.

However, the carriage went through quite a lot of abuse as various unreasonable actions were performed. The repair costs are also quite hefty...

Naofumi: "What should I do?"

Firo was complaining about how light it was. So this time, maybe the carriage should be made of metal instead of wood. It would be more durable but also more expensive.

Raphtalia overcame her motion sickness, but the g-force from Firo's full speed is ridiculous.

Maybe the shock will be reduced if I add in a spring.

My money has been accumulating nicely. I'm looking forward to meeting the Old Man from the weapon shop.

That weapon shop in the centre of the castle town sells the best weapons. I don't know where the other heroes buy their weapons and armours, but I haven't found a shop that sells better equipment than the Old Man's weapon shop.

Firo: "Master~"

Squish..... Firo hugged me and pressed her feathers on my face It's the North, so it's a bit cold. Therefore, Firo's feathers that have her body temperature are nice and warm.

Firo: "Ehehe~"

Raphtalia: "Muu....."

For some reason, after I sit down, Raphtalia also clings to me.

Firo: "Hehehe, everyone is nice and warm together."

Naofumi: "It's getting quite hot for me....."

Though, I didn't leave this position because it's still somewhat chilly.

Raphtalia: "Firo, get off. The temperature will be just right after that."

Firo: "No~, if anyone should get off, it's Raphtalia Onee-chan. Stop monopolizing Master!"

Raphtalia: "I'm not monopolizing anything!"

Noisy!

Naofumi: "Both of you go to sleep!"

Raphtalia: "But..."

Firo: "Master~ let's sleep together~!"

Naofumi: "I need to prepare medicine before we arrive at the east area."

I eagerly started compounding the large amount of medical herbs I've acquired in anticipation of a large demand for medicine.

You never know whether or not you have enough... Such are the difficulties of peddling.

Firo: "Boo....."

Firo parted from me and went to sleep while sulking.

At the same time, Raphtalia entered the carriage. Sleeping on the ground may not be as good as sleeping on a bed but it's still not bad.(!)

Naofumi: "Now then."

I continue to work on the medicine while tending the fire.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama."

Naofumi: "Hm?"

I heard Raphtalia's voice from the carriage.

Then I saw Raphtalia beckoning me to the carriage.

Naofumi: "What's wrong?"

Raphtalia: "... Can we sleep together?"

Naofumi: "You too...? Honestly..."

Though they looked like adults, they are still children. Being lonely is a given.

Naofumi: "How bout you sleep with Firo in her human form."

Raphtalia: "I'm not lonely... It's just..."

Raphtalia looked down shyly and fidgets.

That reminds me of the time when she was crying non-stop at night... A considerable amount of time has passed since then.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama... was there anyone you liked...? In your original world?"

Naofumi: "Huh? No not really."

Why would she want to talk about Earth?

I don't get her intentions.

Naofumi: "What's up with you?"

Raphtalia: "Um... I'm just wondering what Naofumi-sama thinks of me."

What?

Hmm... That fucking woman flashed through my mind, but there is no reason to get angry at Raphtalia.

As to the reason why that fucking woman came to mind, I have no idea.

Naofumi: "At this moment, I don't really think of you as a slave"

Raphtalia: "Then... Is there anything else?"

Naofumi: "Anything else...?"

While I tilt my neck questioningly, Raphtalia has a very delicate expression.

Naofumi: "You trust me. So I trust and value you too..."

Raphtalia: "O-Okay!... Huh?"

Raphtalia nodded with a smile, and returned to bed in the carriage with a puzzled face.

Naofumi: "Now then..."

I continued working for our next peddling trip.

By the way, our respective levels from the fights that happened occasionally:

Me Lv 37 Raphtalia Lv 39 Firo Lv 38

I'm even lower than Firo. Is it because I need more Exp to Level?

No, these two are attackers. Especially Firo, who is more aggressive and agile compared to Raphtalia, and obliterates enemies in the blink of an eye. So she would gain experience quicker.

Raphtalia's attacks are gradually becoming quicker and they are very reliable.

We arrived at the eastern area of the country.

What can I say? The nearby trees are all dead and the air is heavy. Though, it's not particularly cold around here.

I observed the soil and it's dark enough to be called black.

When I looked at the sky, the clouds are thick and the big mountain range slowly grows.

What an ominous feeling.

Naofumi: "Umm."

I had to check the map again because the road was cracked.

Naofumi: "Firo, head towards the mountain."

Firo: "Okay~!"

Naofumi: "Also you two, make sure to cover your mouth with a cloth. An epidemic seems to be spreading in this neighborhood."

Raphtalia: "Okay."

Before we arrive at a farm village, I also covered my mouth for a minimum amount of defense.

Villager: "...Is that person... peddling? Sorry, but in this village a plague is spreading *cough*... Please evacuate."

A villager explained to us while having a painful coughing fit.

Naofumi: "I know. That's why I came to sell treatment medicine."

Villager: "Is-Is that true!? We're saved."

The villager starts running and reporting that a peddler with medicine arrived.

... The situation seems to have become considerably tense. There is some anxiety about the amount I have.

My anxiety comes true; it seems the whole village needs medicine.

Villager: "It-It's the carriage of the famous holy bird! The village is saved!"

Uwaaa.....Such high expectations.

If the medicine is not effective, my hard earned trust will plummet.

It can't be helped.

Naofumi: "Where are the fellows who need medicine?"

I should use the most effective method of giving them the medicine personally.

Villager: "Here, Saint-sama."^[27]

Though I've been called a Saint for a while now, it feels a little unsettling. Still, it's a lot better than being looked at with disgust as the Hero of the Shield.

We were guided to a building where the people with the most serious symptoms were gathered.

This is probably an isolation facility. There is a graveyard at the back and several brand-new grave posts were seen.

... No wonder this place smells of death. I'm sure this is an unpleasant atmosphere exclusive to graveyards and hospitals.

I'm not confident that this will be solved with only treatment medicine. I shouldn't be conceited because I deciphered a mere Intermediate class recipe. Moreover, if the treatment medicine is not effective then we're screwed, though if the treatment medicine works, I'll be able to make a large sum of money.

Still... It's unsettling. Even though the deciphering was difficult, the effects

may not necessarily be that much better.

The next time I stop by the Pharmacy, I'll ask for a High Class Recipe book.

Villager: "Please see my wife first!"

Naofumi: "Okay."

I woke up a woman who won't stop coughing and gave her the medicine little by little.

Pa... Light spreads around the woman.

Was it effective? Colour returned to the woman's face. That's great. It seems to have worked.

Naofumi: "Next!"

When I looked up, all the villagers were staring at me with their eyes opened wide in surprise.

Naofumi: "What's wrong?"

Villager: "Uh-Uhmm....."

Some of them pointed to the child who was laid next to the woman. Some time ago, he was coughing just as bad as the woman.

Hm?

Is he dead.....?

I confirmed the child's breath.

What a relief, he's still alive. But still, he was having a coughing fit a while ago. Why has it stabilized?

Naofumi: "What happened?"

Villager: "When the Saint gave my wife medicine, the breathing of the child next to her also seems to have relaxed."

Hm..... Is this due to the effect of Medicine Effect Range Expansion (Small)? If the range increases, it'll be very useful.

It seems to be able to apply the same effects of the medicine to anyone within a range up to 1 metre in the surroundings.

Just how much potential is hidden within this shield?

But with this range, it will hardly be useful in combat. I'm considering clustering people up within 1 metre, unless the effect diminishes.

Naofumi: "I'll explain the story later! The medicine has an effective radius of 1 metre when drunk. Gather up!"

Villager: "O-Okay!"

Because the manpower is insufficient, the patients were carried into the vicinity by Firo and Raphtalia.

This will save medicine, and the treatment of the isolation facility was finished quite early, but it only suppresses the symptoms. I am unable to completely cure the sickness.

Naofumi: "So currently this is the limit of my medicine huh..."

Villager: "Thank you very much!"

Even though I was thanked, I do not feel satisfied because I was unable to resolve the situation.

The possibility that more people becomes infected is still there and I cannot eradicate the illness.

Naofumi: "That reminds me, where did this sickness come from? Was there an

epidemic or something? This is no ordinary disease."

This illness is quite formidable for the treatment medicine to only be this effective.

There is also a risk that we are infected.

We might have to flee as quickly as possible.

Villager: "A treatment master said that the disease had originated from the demon that lives within the mountains and that it was transmitted by the wind."

Naofumi: "Give me the details."

Villager: "Then, he..."

A treatment master is an occupation that is proficient in recovery magic and medicine, quite similar to a doctor in my world.

The treatment master was compounding medicine to combat the illness and came by the isolation facility to help out.

Naofumi: "You, can you make High Class treatment medicine?"

Treatment Master: "Yes. I am working on it now. Due to your help with the Saint medicine, I can get back to work on it."

Naofumi: "Hurry it up, the treatment isn't complete yet. They will relapse sooner or later."

Treatment Master: "O-okay!"

Naofumi: "Wait."

I stopped the treatment master who is about to run.

Naofumi: "I heard you explained the cause of this sickness is from the

mountains. Explain."

Treatment Master: "Ah yes. About a month ago, Hero of the Sword-sama got rid of a huge dragon in the mountain range territory."

Speaking of which, I heard that rumour too.

Treatment Master: "Dragons usually make a stronghold in rural areas. But this dragon was a straggler and it had built his nest near the village."

Naofumi: "What does that have to do with anything?"

Treatment Master: "At one time, the villagers gathered to watch the feat of the Hero. After that, the adventurers went up the mountain and brought back the materials of the dragon that Hero-sama defeated."

It seems that excellent weapons or armour can be made with the materials of a dragon...

Quite enviable.

Naofumi: "Then?"

Treatment Master: "Here is the main issue. All the good parts were taken and this deserted village became lively again thanks to it. However, the corpse of the dragon began to rot and the problem appeared. The adventurers who went to the corpse got sick."

Naofumi: "... I see. So are you saying that the corpse is the cause of this illness?"

Treatment Master: "Most likely..."

Although all the usable parts of the dragon were taken, the corpse was left. The meat. If the dragon rots then what's affected will be the neighborhood. Some gourmets may want it, but adventurers have no use for decaying meat. Though I have no idea how dragon meat is treated in this world. It might be delicious

but we don't know.

The entrails left behind, especially the liver will rot easily.

Ren that bastard seems to be after the materials, so the entrails are discarded. There's also the heart... It probably works very well with magic.

Naofumi: "Since the cause is known, you should quickly dispose of it."

Treatment Master: "Removal is impossible for the farmers of this neighborhood... The mountain range is infested by evil demons."

Naofumi: "Then ask some adventurers."

Treatment Master: "By the time we noticed, the ecosystem of the mountains changed dramatically and poison was mixed into the air. Any common adventurer gets sick immediately. Moreover, other adventurers were warned not to approach due to the epidemic."

Sigh...

Ren that guy, dispose of the corpse properly.

Before all that, let me look at this from another angle. [\[28\]](#)

Ren is the youngest hero.

Also, I didn't know that things rot until I was a high school student.

Let alone, he is the biggest game addict among the heroes.

And what he plays is the product of science fiction called the VRMMO.

So naturally, it would be difficult for him to tell the difference between a game and real life.

Conclusion: this result is inevitable.

Treatment Master: "Saint-sama, what will you do?"

Naofumi: "Did you report to the country?"

Treatment Master: "Yes. Medicine is scheduled to arrive shortly."

Naofumi: "... What about the heroes?"

Treatment Master: "There is little possibility of them appearing because they are busy."

He seems to be referring to Motoyasu and Ren.

This is exasperating.

Naofumi: "Has the request fee to the country already been paid?"

Treatment Master: "Yes..."

Naofumi: "Can you get it back if you cancel it?"

The Treatment Master looked at me with wide open eyes.

Treatment Master: "Is the Saint-sama going to go?"

Naofumi: "How long will it be until you finish the medicine anyway?"

Treatment Master: "Uhm... it should be done in half a day."

Naofumi: "Alright, I'll go get rid of the dragon corpse. And give the request fee to me instead."

Treatment Master: "Un-Understood."

Thus, we went to dispose of a dragon corpse in a mountain.

Curse Series

"Wooooooooow..... There are so many demons~"

The influence of the mountain has turned the land into nothing but barren rock.(!) We advanced slowly along a mountain path in the East of the country.

It's been 30 minutes since the beginning of the climb, which Firo spent running and kicking demons.

Right now, we have brought treatment medicine and antidotes in anticipation of the poisonous air.

By the way, we left the carriage at the village, only bringing a wagon before heading out.

Firo: "No~! Many of Firo's memories are in here~!"

Firo, this fellow, she absolutely wants to pull everything. I'll ditch you here. You were born last month and you're already talking about life?

Well, I can understand her attachment to the carriage because she has been pulling it for 90% of her life...

There are many demons here that are from the Poison class, such as Poison Tree and Poison Frog. I diligently let my shield absorb it all after we defeated them.

Requirements for Poison Tree Shield have been fulfilled.

Requirements for Poison Frog Shield have been fulfilled.

Requirements for Poison Bee Shield have been fulfilled.

Requirements for Poison Fly Shield have been fulfilled.

All the Poison Resistance bonuses have been displaced, and instead gave additional stats up as equipment bonuses.

The sole exception is the Poison Bee shield.

Bee Needle Shield II

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Attack Power 1

Special Effect: Shield of Stinger (Small) Bee Poison (Poison)

The defensive power hasn't really changed from the Bee Needle Shield, but the paralysis poison can now be changed to poison damage over time.

Well, enough of that, it seem that enemies are appearing quite frequently. Even after defeating one, another just takes its place.

Certainly, the poison in the wind is causing the plague. Furthermore, there were miasma coming from the ground. This is definitely too severe for a normal adventurer. (!)

Naofumi: "There is no point to killing them all! Firo, run through!"

Raphtalia and I ride the wagon while giving instructions to Firo.

"Okay~!"

Firo pulled the wagon and ploughed through at full power.

Some experience was occasionally gained while running over enemies.

Along the way, Firo ran over a sludge-like demon, but because there was no time I didn't get to absorb it.

And after a few minutes...

Naofumi: "Is this our final destination?"

I saw the corpse of a dragon, leaking poisonous miasma and releasing a foul odour into the air.

It's around 10 meters. It looks like... a typical western-style dragon depicted in a painting.

However, the features can't be made out any more. The extent to which it is rotten has made it hard for even the original colour^[29] to be seen, and all that's left is black miasma-like skin.

It seems the fatal wound was a single blow to the abdomen. There's a big scar on it exposing its internal organs while releasing a putrid smell.

Poison flies gathered around the rotten meat of the dragon. This is quite disgusting...

Firo: "I'm hungry~"

Naofumi: "Is your appetite so great that you can still eat after looking at that...?"

Firo began eating the food in the wagon.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, are you okay?"

Raphtalia: "Y-Yup."

I need to make sure Raphtalia is okay because her respiratory system is weak and the miasma will damage it even more.

Naofumi: "Take a rest if you think it's too tough."

Raphtalia: "Okay."

I checked out the other side of the corpse while swatting poison flies. The fingernails, scales, skin, and wings are all gone. Even the tongue was taken.

Seem to have been stripped by Ren and the adventurers It's not an exaggeration to say that all that's left is bones and meat. Excluding an extremely small portion of skin, there's nothing else left.

The smell is extremely nasty. This is definitely severe.

I might be faring better than Raphtalia because of my poison resistance. I have no idea about Firo.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, exterminate the poison flies. Firo, come dismantle the corpse with me. It's too big for my shield to absorb."

I should let my shield absorb all of it. There is a risk of the soil getting corrupted as well if I bury it.

Firo: "Okay."

Firo finishes her meal with a bloated belly and nods.

Firo: "I feel a little sick."

Naofumi: "That's because you've overate."

I approached the corpse to dismantle it as planned.

Goso.....

Naofumi: "..... Did it just breathe?"

Raphtalia: "Ummm....."

The dragon's corpse seems like it have moved.

Wait, maybe I imagined that because of all the poison flies crowding around

the corpse.

Gorori.....

... Yup, it's not my imagination.

The dragon's corpse began to move. It got on its hands and legs and was ready to attack.

Zombie Dragon: "GYA000000000000000000000000!"

The dragon raised its head and unleashed a roar with its fang-less mouth.

Naofumi: "How the hell can it move!"

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama, please calm down!"

The corpse of the dragon..... No, the zombie dragon moved as I shouted.

What the hell? This is too much for us. The zombie dragon's level and abilities are unknown.

What is wrong with this world!

The zombie dragon turned to face us while regenerating each organ. A part of the wing and tail has already regenerated. I don't know whether the fangs and claws will regenerate too.

It seems to be liquidizing the rotting meat and turning it into its wings and tail. The fatal wound on the abdomen was closing and the internal organs were regenerating.

Dealing with this is impossible for me!

Naofumi: "Let's escape!"

Raphtalia: "But, Firo is already--!"

Raphtalia pointed at the dragon zombie.

Firo: "Terya!!"

At that moment, Firo jumped on the zombie dragon and kicked it in the head.

There was a nice smack and the dragon zombie bends backwards.

Naofumi: "That's unexpected..... Can we fight it?"

Firo's offensive power is high and there are no fangs or claws on this zombie dragon.

We may be able to win..... Provided it does not have unlimited stamina.

However, there is a risk of the zombie dragon attacking the village if we escape there. Of course, there is also the possibility of it returning to its territory. But it may be fully healed next time, so it must be defeated now.

Naofumi: "Don't be rash!"

Firo: "Okay!"

Naofumi: "Alright, we're stopping this thing here!"

Raphtalia: "Okay!"

The dragon roared threateningly and attacked.

I change into the Chimeric Viper Shield which has the highest defence, and I am able to block the dragon's attack.

But.....

Zombie Dragon: "GYA000000000000000000!"

The zombie dragon shoots purple gas from its mouth at us.

Raphtalia and Firo run behind my back as I set up my shield and prepare to block the attack.

Naofumi: "Ueh.....What is this!"

Raphtalia: "Cough, Cough!"

The real nature of the breath attack is high-concentrated poisonous gas. Even with my poison resistance, I still felt breathless and dizzy.

I had a coughing fit, while Raphtalia behind me is barely able to breathe.

While the zombie dragon was shooting its breath, Firo, seemingly unaffected by the gas, kicked it and made it stop.

Naofumi: "Ra-Raphtalia, are you all right!?"

Raphtalia: "Coughcoughcough-"

Raphtalia wanted to answer me with tears in her eyes, but she was just coughing non-stop.

.....This might be really bad.

Firo and I can fight, but Raphtalia is out.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, hurry up and get back, there is an antidote in the carriage. Drink it and rest."

Raphtalia: "Coughcough!"

Raphtalia desperately points towards the zombie dragon.

I turned around and see what's happening.

In just a second, the zombie dragon opened its mouth and swallowed Firo who is jumping over it.

Naofumi: "A---"

Bagun!

A loud sound echoes, and from the zombie dragon's mouth crimson liquid drips down.

Naofumi: "FIROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Is it me or Raphtalia? Who's shouting? My head is empty. I cannot comprehend the situation.

The bird who is not even one month old and is easily elated by praises and flattery..... The bird who was just born and had immediately rubbed against me..... The bird who only wanted to be pampered by me.....

Flashbacks of my experiences with Firo played in my head like a revolving lantern.

What happened?

Something.....

The zombie dragon chewed several times, something red leaked out of it, and then the zombie dragon swallowed with a large gulp.

Raphtalia: "Cough!"

Raphtalia slapped my cheek strongly while I was absentminded.

Tears gathered in my eyes.

The situation is getting worse but I am still lost in my own world.

All I felt was the anger from my heart after losing an important companion right before my eyes.

---Power, Do you desire it?

I thought I heard a voice from the shield. I looked at my shield almost unconsciously and listened for the voice.

---Everything, Do you wish for it?

Dokun.

My heartbeat is stronger.

I remember the feeling that is produced from the darkness shield.

This... It's the same feeling as after that fight with Motoyasu.....

The skill tree section of the shield appeared.

The skill tree screen turns inside out, and on a weird background that is neither black nor red appeared another skill tree.

Curse Series

This phrase reverberates in my mind.

The shield glows brightly.

Curse Series

Shield of Fury

Mortar Shield

True power sealed... Equipment Bonus: Skill "Change Shield (Attack)" "Iron Maiden"

Special Effect: Self-Burning Curse Physical Strength Improvement.

Being born from the heart, Killer Shield.

There's also a special description for this shield..... Am I conscious or unconscious? While feeling like this, I held up the shield with my hand.(!)

Shield of Fury

Intense feelings flowed from the shield to me while the shield changes with a red and black light.

It became a crimson shield with decorations of abominations and flames.(!)
Dokun.....Dokun.....

My consciousness was swallowed in anger.

I hate everything in this world.

Everything in this world became black, all that is left are shadows sneering at me.

That feeling controlled me.

Zombie Dragon: "GYA0000000000000000!!!"

A big black shadow stretched its arm towards me.

Naofumi: "UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!"

Shield of Rage

Naofumi: "UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

I unleashed a roar which rivaled the dragon's and caught the arm of the shadow with the shield.

I didn't feel anything.

Zombie Dragon: "GYA!?"

The black, shadowy mouth distorts in astonishment and sneers at me.
Ridiculous.

Naofumi: "DIE!"

I catch the black shadow and throw it.

The black shadow flew while roaring in surprise.

Zombie Dragon: "GYAOOOOO!"

However, the shadow gets up immediately and rushed to attack.

..... Can this shield attack an enemy?

Not available.

The black shadow attacks me with its tail and arms, knocking me to my knees.

Naofumi: "It's not working!"

The attacks of the black shadow are not effective on me.

Naofumi: "Haha..... Are you stupid?"

Though, I don't have any means to defeat it.

After that thought, a black flame immediately appeared around my arm and it burned the tail and arms of the black shadow.

Zombie Dragon: "GYAOO!?"

The shadow was surprised at that fact and fell down.

Naofumi: "Hm..... Is there a counter-attack offensive ability in here?"

The shadow is keeping its distance, seemingly afraid.

Naofumi: "Are you begging for your life now? It's too late for forgiveness!"

I slowly recite a skill.

Naofumi: "Iron Maiden!"

However, the skill is not activated and a skill tree appeared in my view.

Shield Prison -> Change Shield (Attack) -> Iron Maiden

Is this the activation conditions?

That's troublesome. I suppose I have to trick the shadow into hitting me before I can use this skill to counter-attack.

Naofumi: "Wait for me.....I'll kill you by any means possible....."

The shadow swings its arm at me, frightened by my murderous intent and anger. My shield was raised to intercept the arm and a black flame engulfed it. It roasted the meat and melted the bone.

This amount of heat is insufficient..... I want to erase the existence itself.

Zombie Dragon: "-----OT!"

I see... The angrier I get, the more powerful the Shield of Fury gets.

That's simple.

All I have to do is remember my feelings for those bastards.

Mein = Sofia..... Or was her name Malty?

I feel angry just remembering that name.

Next is Trash king, Motoyasu, Ren, and Itsuki.

I remember the things they did to me one by one.

Hate..... I want to kill them.....

My anger begins to dissolve into the crimson shield, staining it black.

Naofumi: "This time I'll kill..... Everyone....."

I catch the arm of the shadow and everything is erased, exterminated by the flames of indignation.

The flame wrapped around the entire shadow and consumes it all.

Somebody touches my hand.

Dokun.....

This is..... The same gentle feeling as that time?

Raphtalia: "I am different from the whole world which tortures and shuns Naofumi-sama..... I'll say it as many times as it takes, Naofumi-sama won't do something like that."

.....Eh?

My visibility warped by darkness slightly shakes.

Somewhere inside of me, a voice is warning me that if I give in to the anger, I will lose what's most precious to me.

I want to deny it. But.....

Raphtalia: "Please believe me. I am convinced that Naofumi-sama didn't commit any crime. You are a great Hero of the Shield-sama who gave me medicine to save my life and taught me how to live..... I am your sword and I will follow you no matter what road you take."

A voice whispered to me.

Don't be consumed by the urge to kill. There is something you must protect.

Did you forget your anger?

I did not forget, but I want to repay the person who so sincerely believes in

me.

Do you defy me?

Do not order me. I will decide for myself!

..... I am always here, waiting for an opening.....

The black voice disappears and my view becomes bright.

Raphtalia: "Cough! Cough!"

When I noticed, Raphtalia was holding my hand while trying to hold down her coughing.

Naofumi: "Ar-Are you okay?"

She had suffered terrible burns.

There is no enemy here that can use fire.

Just... What...

Ah.....

Special effect of the Shield of Fury, Self-Burning Curse.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia!"

Raphtalia: "Coug-"

Raphtalia smiles and collapses.

Because of me... Raphtalia suffered serious wounds.

Naofumi: "I am the Hero of the Shield who commands the origin of power. I

have read and deciphered a law of nature. I call forth the power of nature to heal!"

Naofumi: "Fast Heal!"

Naofumi: "I am the Hero of the Shield who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. I call forth the power of nature to heal!"

Naofumi: "Fast Heal!"

Naofumi: "I am the Hero of the Shield who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. I call forth the power of nature to heal!"

Naofumi: "Fast Heal!"

Until my magic power ran out, I did not stop healing.

Raphtalia... Raphtalia is the only person who believed in me!

There are severe burns. Using beginner class recovery magic is insufficient for treatment.

I must hurry to the wagon and use the healing ointments.

Zombie Dragon: "GYAOOOOO!"

I turned around and saw the zombie dragon roar. It faces us and uses its breathe while attacking with its un-burnt arm.

Naofumi: "Get out of my way!"

I intercept the zombie dragon's attack by raising my arm.

The shield shines with a black light and activates Self-Curse Burning.

Naofumi: "Stop it!"

The shield stopped as if responding to my voice.

If the shield activates again here, it will also burn Raphtalia.

I cannot do such a thing. However, the poison breath is very bad for Raphtalia's vitality.

As if in response to my intentions, the shield burns only the poison breath. But this output is not enough to earnestly slaughter the enemy.

What should I do?

The urge to kill and anger is always supplied to me from the shield; I try to hold it down somehow as to not be swallowed by rage again.

My highest priority now is to return to the wagon quickly and treat Raphtalia. Protecting Raphtalia is all that's left of my reasoning.

Zombie Dragon: "GYA!?"

While in the midst of attacking and defending, the zombie dragon begins scratching at its chest painfully.

Naofumi: "Wh-what is going on....."

What on earth is happening? Is the Self-Curse Burning burning it from the inside?

Zombie Dragon: "GYA000000000!!!"

Eventually, the dragon stops moving and returned to its original corpse form.

Now is not the time to observe the situation.

There seem to be no more poison flies buzzing around. They probably escaped as a result of the zombie dragon's rampage.

I returned to the wagon with Raphtalia and rub the burn cure made from healing ointments and medical herbs on Raphtalia's burns.

And an antidote was given to Raphtalia.

Raphtalia: "Ah..... Naofumi-sama."

Raphtalia's breathing becomes quiet and she opens her eyes to smile at me.

Naofumi: "Are you okay!?"

Raphtalia: "Yeah..... Thank you for the medicine Naofumi-sama....."

Still, her burns are quite severe. Though the simple burns were cured with the medicine..... Because the effect was from black magic, a black trace is left. Though it's a little better, a complete recovery seems unlikely.

Raphtalia: "I-I'm fine...Hurry...the dragon..."

Naofumi: "The zombie dragon isn't moving anymore."

Raphtalia: "That's not it..... dispose of the corpse quickly."

Naofumi: "..... Okay."

Raphtalia's strong gaze was directed at the corpse of the dragon.

Naofumi: "Is it safe to leave it here?"

Raphtalia: "If it gets up again, we have no way to fight it."

Naofumi: "I see..... Okay."

I got off the wagon and walked towards to corpse of the dragon.

It is necessary to dismantle the dragon and then let my shield absorb it.

And Firo..... even if it's only a corpse, I have to at least make a grave.

When approaching the corpse, I noticed its internal organs were wriggling.

What on earth is going to happen?

I can barely fight in this state.

Shield of fury.....

It's a dangerous shield that erodes the mind, but it provides strong physical defense and a strong counter attack.

I still haven't recovered from when I used it earlier, so I changed to the Chimeric Viper Shield.

But I get ready to respond to anything while taking a stance.

And I approach the corpse.

The wriggling stops in one place. It's getting eaten? The chest is broken and something appeared!

Firo: "Puhaa~!"

A familiar bird that was dripping with rotten liquid walked out of the corpse of the dragon.

Firo: "Fu.....Finally Firo is out."

Naofumi: "Firo? Are you safe? Are you not injured?"

Firo: "Yup. Firo is not hurt."

Naofumi: "Then..... What about the blood that came out when you were eaten?"

Firo: "Blood? Firo threw up all the food inside the dragon."

Did Firo eat the red fruit that resembles tomatoes.....? Is that why it looked like blood was dripping?

She certainly was eating before the battle.

Naofumi: "Don't scare me like that! I thought you died!"

Firo: "An attack of that level didn't even make Firo feel itchy."

Is this a bird or a monster?

No, it is in fact a demon.

Honestly..... I am surprised.

Firo: "Master, were you worried about Firo?"

Naofumi: "I don't know."

Firo: "Master is embarrassed~"

Naofumi: "Do I have to kill you myself this time?"

Firo: "Noo~"

Sigh..... She's safe, that's great.

I'm angry at the smirking Firo though. I'll remember this.

Naofumi: "So what did you do?"

Firo: "Oh right. There was a big crystal that shined purple inside the stomach of the dragon. So Firo tore it up and it stopped."

Naofumi: "Hmm....."

What does that mean?

Was the foundation of that zombie dragon the big crystal?

The place where Firo came out.....the heart?

But, such a thing.....

Because it's a dragon...? Did the magic that stay in the body all gather in the heart and crystallize?

That might be possible.

Naofumi: "So... The crystal?"

Firo: "Geffuuuuu!"

Yup. She ate it..... I want to smack this fellow.....

Firo: "Firo left a little. A souvenir for Master."

After saying so, Firo passes me a small purple fragment.

..... What can I do with this?

First, I'll let the shield absorb half.

As I thought, the amount is insufficient to unlock any skill tree and level.

Naofumi: "Because Raphtalia is hurt, Firo, dispose of the corpse with me.

Firo: "Okay~!"

Honestly..... This bird really surprises me.

I watch Firo and think.

At that time, if I didn't give in to the anger...

After I changed the shield to defeat an enemy for Firo, I completely lost to the anger after that.

If Raphtalia did not stop me, I might have even burned Firo.

Anger..... The shield which was cursed.

Were you trying to take over the consciousness of the hero?

All that I can say is, it gave me an uncontrollable urge to kill.

..... At that time, that was all I could think about.

Firo: "Itadakimasu!"

Naofumi: "Hey Firo, don't eat that meat! It's rotten!"

Firo: "Meat that's about to go bad is the most delicious, Master~!"

Naofumi: "This one isn't going bad, it's completely rotten!"

And without any tension, the zombie dragon was disposed of.

Though, I couldn't level any skill trees with the bone and meat of the dragon.

Still, the dragon zombie's skin and bones seem to be useful so I'll put them in the wagon.

The Results of Peddling

Treatment Master: "This is a curse, isn't it?"

After hurrying back to the village, I got Raphtalia to see the Treatment Master about her burns that I caused.

Treatment Master: "Even so, this kind is quite strong. Did the dragon corpse on the mountain have a curse that was this strong?"

Naofumi: "Ah... No... That is..."

Wondering how I was going to answer, I stammered.

Raphtalia: "Yes, I made a mistake and was accidentally cursed by the dragon."

Raphtalia smiled while looking in my direction as if to say it was a secret.

Naofumi: "Can you do anything about it? If it's money...I'll pay whatever you need."

Raphtalia is a girl after all. If she has black marks like this, she would stand out which would be troublesome.

Treatment Master: "It's not that it's impossible, but..."

During the preparation, the healers bring a bottle of transparent liquid to the room.

Treatment Master: "It's quite a powerful curse. Healing her immediately would be..."

Naofumi: "What is that?"

Treatment Master: "It's holy water. To remove a curse, it's best to use holy power..."

Naofumi: "I see."

It seems that injuries would take a long time to heal due to the effect of the curse shield. That curse is very dangerous.

There is no clear distinction made by the curse shield between friend and foe. Additionally there is not a simple counter curse healing effect for allies. I must not even think about using it. Also, after looking at the shield tree, the unsealing wasn't progressing at all. It was only for a short time, but I know I cannot unseal that shield. I somewhat remember having that sort of hunch.

Treatment Master: "Soak the holy water into the bandage..."

The healers apply the bandage soaked with holy water to Raphtalia's blackened wounds.

Treatment Master: "Sorry it's only this much healing for now. Please use the far more powerful holy water made by the church in a large town if possible."

Naofumi: "How much will it heal?"

Treatment Master: "To be honest... it's a fairly strong curse. I'm not sure whether it can be truly cured... when it comes to the curses of dragons..."

The truth is that I did it though. But to think the curse was so powerful that it

could be considered the work of a dragon...

Naofumi: "Oh right. How much more medicine will be needed?"

Treatment Master: "This is all I can do for now. Saint-sama, please help the people who are suffering from the illness."

Naofumi: "Fine."

I left Raphtalia in the room with the Treatment master and head to the building where they gather the sick.

As expected of medicine made by a professional. The sickness that could not be cured with my treatment medicine was easily cured by his.

I felt relieved looking at the sick people breathing calmly in their sleep.

..... I want strength, but not from relying on that kind of shield. Saving someone from sickness is significant, but I still curse my weakness.

There may come a time where even Firo could get hurt. Thankfully, she was fine this time.

My head blanked in an instant when I thought she died.

I've thought this many times. This world is not a game.

Nobody will revive if they die.

I gaze at the graveyard behind the isolation facility deep in thought.

I was betrayed and swindled----But I want to protect the people who believe in me no matter what.

I returned to the Treatment room and spoke to Raphtalia who is wrapped in bandages.

Naofumi: "I'm sorry."

Raphtalia: "It's alright."

Naofumi: "But....."

Raphtalia: "I was afraid. Afraid that Naofumi-sama went somewhere far away."

Naofumi: "Eh?"

Raphtalia: "That power, it's trying to drag Naofumi-sama somewhere. That's what I felt. Therefore, this is a cheap price to pay if I was able to stop Naofumi-sama."

Raphtalia's laughing expression pierces my heart.

I must absolutely protect her. With determination, I swear not to lose to that shield.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia, is your sickness cured?"

Raphtalia: "It should be alright for now....."

Naofumi: "Next time I administer medicine, stay close to me. It will serve as prevention."

Raphtalia: "Okay."

Thus, we slept in the village that night.

We worked on the extermination of the epidemic as hard as possible on the next day.

I asked the treatment master if I could help make the medicine and the work was completed earlier than scheduled.

When I wanted to learn, I felt something inside of me interfering.(!) ^[30]

The number of people suffering from the illness has been reduced to zero and the village became peaceful again.

Raphtalia: "Where will we peddle next? Did you ask the treatment master on how to make medicine?"

Procuring holy water for Raphtalia is top-priority now, but I do want to learn how to make High Class medicine.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama? Won't the wave start soon?"

Eh!? That reminds me. What Raphtalia said returned me from my thoughts. I hastily open the arrival prediction window. There are only 3 and a half days left!

Naofumi: "This is bad! We only have a little over 3 days remaining!"

Preparations will be insufficient.

Naofumi: "Firo, let's hurry to the castle town!"

Firo: "Roger~"

Village Chief: "Uhhh Saint-sama...this....."

I was presented a bag full of money by the village chief.

Village Chief: "Saint-sama this is the money you asked for. Please accept it."

Come to think of it, my real identity is still hidden.

Naofumi: "Yeah....."

I receive the bag of money and count how much is inside.I put half into another bag and returned it to the village chief.

Village Chief: "Eh?"

Naofumi: "It wasn't my power alone. This is for the outstanding treatment master who is in this village. Hand it to him."

Village Chief: "O-okay....."

Yup, it would have been really dangerous this time if that treatment master was not here. Because just suppressing the illness is my limit. That person contributed just as much.

Naofumi: "See ya."

Village Chief: "Ah, thank you very much!"

The group of villagers saw us off together. When these guys know my real identity, will they look at me in disgust? It's a complicated feeling. I stow that thought away in the corner of my head, because there are more important things to do.

I can't worry about the condition of the carriage at a time like this! So we push the carriage to top speed and head to castle town. There was a rumour about a carriage that was roaring down the road with frightening speed after that day.

On the way.

Firo: "Master~ something is-"

Naofumi: "Hm?"

I come out of the carriage.

Wild Philorial A appears!

Wild Philorial B appears!

Wild Philorial C appears!

Wild Philorials: ""Gua!?"""

Firo looked at the Philorials with an astonished expression.

After Philorial A, B and C looked at Firo with the same expression, they ran away.

Naofumi: "What was that?"

Running away right after encountering us..... That is the behaviour pattern of rare monsters that have delicious experiences points and money. Though, I can't expect a lot of experience from Philorials in such a place. Maybe they were just surprised to see a Philorial Queen and so they ran away.

Firo: "They look delicious. Whenever a travelers pass by us, I think of that."

Naofumi: "They are from the same family as you."

I noted that Firo is licking her lips. Is there anything this fellow doesn't see as food? It's scary as it's easy to visualize her performing cannibalism.

Firo: "Master, if we chase now we can still kill them~"

Naofumi: "..... Stop it."

It's still not too late now? This fellow has no sense of tension at all. That reminds me, I did not check our levels after the fight with the zombie dragon.

Me Lvl 38 Raphtalia Lvl 40 ★ Firo Lvl 40 ★

★..... Star?

Naofumi: "Hey, do you guys know of the star next to your levels?"

I have a bad feeling. What could it be?

Raphtalia: "No....."

Firo: "Firo has no idea."

Hmm..... Let's see, Help. I don't understand it. I can't find anything on the ★.

At long last, we arrived at the castle town.

Naofumi: "Let's go to the Old Man and get some weapons and armour to prepare for the wave."

After a long absence, the Old Man from the weapons shop just watches us with a hand on the middle of his forehead and seems to be lost in thought.

Old Man: "Hey lad, don't just appear so suddenly."

Naofumi: "Don't you know sudden events go hand in hand with business?"

Old Man: "Well, that's true. So, what's your budget?"

Naofumi: "Let's see."

I put my month's earnings on the counter in front of the Old Man. It's about four large bags of money.

Naofumi: "I think this is all the silver coins I have."

Old Man: "Count properly lad! But more importantly, how did you make such

a killing!?"

Naofumi: "Hahaha, this is the result of peddling."

Old Man: "Seriously..... What a surprising hobby for you to have."

Naofumi: "It's not unfortunate."

Old Man: "Well, did you count how much there is?"

Naofumi: "Uhh..."

The contents of the money bags were counted by Raphtalia, the Old Man and me.

Old Man: "So, how did the missy get injured?"

The Old Man points at Raphtalia while counting money.

Raphtalia: "Uhh, earlier I received a powerful curse attack by a powerful demon."

I stop counting and looked at Raphtalia.

Old Man: "Ah yeah, curses are troublesome. Did you get any treatment?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, after this we will go buy some holy water at the church."

Old Man: "I see."

Why are you lying.....? Is it because it's a curse that I gave? I can only sigh.

Naofumi: "After buying equipment, can I request a carriage made of metal?"

Old Man: "Don't order anything from me, lad."

Naofumi: "You can't do it?"

Old Man: "Well..... I'm familiar with working with metal."

Though the amount of silver coins may look like a lot, after converting to gold coins, it looks like there's very little.

Old Man: "This is equivalent to 70 gold coins! Lad, your earnings are tremendous!"

Naofumi: "I am aware of my business talents."

Though I'm not sure if I actually possess such talents, I still feel proud of myself. I feel like I have done a few things similar to merchants of death.

Naofumi: "Oh right, there is various surplus equipment that was taken from some thieves."

I gave instructions to Firo who has been restless within the goods store to bring in the various unneeded armor from the carriage.

Naofumi: "This stuff is all for trade-in."

Old Man: "Lad, isn't spending...this is too much..."

Naofumi: "How much equipment can I get with only this much?"

Old Man: "Let's see..... The missy can get a new weapon and you can get some gauntlets."

As I thought, the Old Man is impressive.

Old Man: "I am thankful that you're favoring my shop, but go to another shop for the trade-ins."

Naofumi: "What do you mean?"

Old Man: "Recently, I have not seen the other heroes. So you should go check out the other better shops."

Naofumi: "Hmmm....."

I haven't even considered that. Because the heroes have knowledge from games, the possibility of knowing where they can get better equipment than from the Old Man shop is quite high. Let's assume that the best shop in this city is the Old Man's..... Are they somewhere in another country?

Naofumi: "Do you have any idea?"

Old Man: "There might be something in the neighboring country."

Naofumi: "Your shop is good enough, I'd rather not waste time on speculations."

Old Man: "Lad....."

Naofumi: "Even the worst weapons and armours I've seen you make are quite good. Is that a skill?"

Old Man: "What are you saying? I was a disciple of a master craftsman in the east when I was young."

Naofumi: "Exactly. I'll be in your care because it's efficient."

Old Man: "Lad. I understand. I'll live up to your expectations!"

The Old Man left the counter and started browsing the wares in his own shop.

Old Man: "Let's see..... For the missy, a High class magic sword should be adequate. Needless to say, the Blood Clean coating will be applied after it's completed."

It cost 10 gold. Of course there were some trade-ins included in the 10 gold.

Old Man: "Next is magic silver armour that has a magic defence within an appropriate range."

Naofumi: "Magic Defence?"

Old Man: "The process of absorbing the magical power of the wielder to boost defence."

Naofumi: "I see."

I want to make Raphtalia's defence as high as it can because there is a possibility I could hurt Raphtalia.

The Old Man moves 10 pieces of gold again. It's quite expensive. But.....

Naofumi: "Hey, isn't there better equipment that I can buy?"

Old Man: "The metal carriage and the missy's treatment will be quite expensive. Also, it is absurd to have equipment that doesn't balance with you."

Naofumi: "That makes sense."

Old Man: "This is also the limit for equipment around here for now."

Naofumi: "Ah, so that's why."

I'll take the Old Man's word for it if the equipment is good enough.

Old Man: "From here on out it needs to be custom-made. Come back later."

Naofumi: "Sorry for the trouble, but the wave comes in 3 days. Will it be done in time?"

Old Man: "I won't have enough time if I have to procure the materials."

.....that's what I figured.

Old Man: "I already have various materials, but it's not enough."

Naofumi: "Well..... Can you use the skin of a decaying dragon?"

Old Man: "That's not a problem, what are you going to do lad?"

Naofumi: "What am I going to do?"

Old Man: "I can lighten the heavy equipment because you prefer it, and I can make new equipment with any materials you bring."

Naofumi: "By the way, will the performance be good?"

Old Man: "It can be done easily, the durability will be good too."

Naofumi: "Hmm..... by the way, would the performance go up if you add bone to the armour? Something similar to the Barbarian Armour?"

Old Man: "Ah, I was going to recommend that. Chimera and Dragon materials are amazing! It would be perfect to protect the core of the armour with dragon skin too."

The core of the armour was that souvenir from Firo and a certain dragon. It seems it will become some good armour.

Naofumi: "Then..... can I order it?"

Old Man: "Thanks for business, there will be extra fees for processing costs and material charges."

After saying so, the Old Man moves another 5 pieces of gold and takes the materials to the inner part of the counter.

Old Man: "I'll also improve your armor at the same time."

Naofumi: "Okay."

I go to the changing room to change and put my armour on the counter.

Firo: "Master is just like a villager."

Naofumi: "Shut up."

This bird has a foul mouth.

Firo: "Hey Hey, What about Firo?"

Naofumi: "You're getting a new carriage."

I made the arrangements with the Old Man for a metal carriage. It was quite costly. It cost me 10 gold coins. Well, there were some bonuses added in.

Firo: "Firo wants armour like Raphtalia Onee-san and Master~"

Naofumi: "No."

Firo: "I want it! I want it! I want it!"

I'm pretty frustrated by this bird's whining.

Old Man: "Don't be like that lad. I'll do you a favour and lend you the equipment for that little bird missy."

Naofumi: "You see....."

I told him this fellow's offensive ability already surpasses Raphtalia and that's with her bare hands. That is already sufficient.

Naofumi: "Is there anything?"

Old Man: "Hmm. Does the Bird missy usually fight in her Demon form?"

Naofumi: "Yeah."

Old Man: "Well then that's outside of my jurisdiction. But it's not impossible to acquire equipment from demon shops though."

Naofumi: "Demon trader....."

I am reminded of that nasty smile. I had just imagined that guy saying "Welcome" to me.

Old Man: "Do you need me to introduce you to somebody?"

Naofumi: "No, I know someone."

Should we go meet him?

Old Man: "Then..... Come back two days later for the equipment."

Naofumi: 'Okay. So..... Old Man."

Old Man: "What's up?"

Naofumi: "Do you know about the stars attached next to a Lvl?"

Old Man:"Oh? Did you get strong enough to Class-up?"

Naofumi: "Class up?"

Old Man: "The lad doesn't know? The Class Up is a growth limit breakthrough. When levels are raised to their limit, a Class Up can be done, after that levels can rise even higher."

What was that!? In other words, it's a rite of passage for a job change in gaming terms. Unless a Class Up is performed, they can't get stronger?

Old Man: "Originally, if you are a knight loyal to the country or a magician adventurer, you can get a class up. But will you be granted one as a Hero?"

When I think about it, it was no wonder thief groups were so weak. The highest level is 40. Using the fact that unworthy adventurers and villagers cannot class up, power is managed. The reason is that if the country does not deem you trustworthy, a Class Up will not be granted.....

Old Man: "There are worries as to what direction to take during a class up..... But if you get a star, then all the possibilities are open."

Naofumi: ".....Where can I class up?"

Old Man: "It can be done in at the Hourglass of the Dragon's era."

You can do it in such a place? No wonder the management was so strict.
Then when I had met the other heroes there, was it because they were having a Class Up? I wonder what their Levels are. As expected, I feel irritated.

Naofumi: "Then I'm going to head out."

If it's possible, I should do it as quickly as I can. We left the weapon shop and get ready to hurry to the Hourglass of the Dragon's Era. Because our carriage reached its limit, we leave it parked behind the weapon shop. Firo is in human her form.

Raphtalia: "What are we going to do?"

Naofumi: "Um....."

Lately every time I've come to town and see an inn, I feel that it's construction is odd. ^[31] Maybe it's because recently when I came here, this bird was always in her demon form rather than her human form. That must be it.

Naofumi: "Now that I think about it, what exactly does a Class Up do?"

Raphtalia: "I want to Class Up as per Naofumi-sama's request."

Naofumi: "..... Stop that. Raphtalia, you must decide your class up path for yourself."

In old games, the class change would let you choose between a light route and a dark route. The person in question has to make the choice themselves.

Naofumi: "You have to think about what to do without me after the wave is over and when I have returned to my world"

Raphtalia: "Eh..... Naofumi-sama will go back?"

Naofumi: "Yeah."

I have no attachments to this world either. There are people that I want to repay, but I will do that by saving the world. I do not wish to remain in such an unpleasant world.

Raphtalia: "Can you take me with you?"

Naofumi: "Where?"

Where would you stay? In my world, people would look at Raphtalia with strange eyes.

Firo: "Firo wants to go too. Where are you going?"

Naofumi: "Firo it's impossible....."

Firo: "Really?"

Naofumi: "Oh well. Firo, what Class Up do you want?"

Firo: "Firo wants to be able to spit poison~!"

Naofumi: "....."

I was at a loss for words. All I can say is that, what is wrong with you! Was it because of that? Recently we've been fighting a lot of demons that had the ability to use poison, like that Bio Plant and Zombie dragon.

Naofumi: "You're mouth is already poisonous enough." By this I mean her tongue of course.

Firo: "Really!?" Firo exhales and checks her breath.

Firo: "It's not coming out?"

Naofumi: "That's not what I meant. Anyways, let's go."

Holding expectations for the Class Up in our hearts, we head to the Hourglass of the Dragon's era.

Exit by a Kick, Again

We arrived at the Hourglass of the Dragon's Era.

As usual, the facilities give off a solemn atmosphere.

Sister: "Hero of the Shield-sama right?"

Just like before the sister stares at me with a suspicious expression.

Naofumi: "Yeah....."

Sister: "What do you want this time?"

Naofumi: "I want to Class Up."

Sister: "Then..... 15 gold per person."

15 gold!? No matter how you look at it, that's too expensive!

The sister's expression doesn't change but her eyes are smiling.

You want to make me look like a fool for not being able to pay?

Naofumi: "Just 15 gold."

I reluctantly reach for my bag of money and produce 30 gold coins.

The sister's expression changes and she produces a document.

Sister: ".....It is prohibited for the Hero of the Shield-sama."

Naofumi: "What did you say? What does that mean!"

Sister: "By the king's direct order, the party of the Hero of the Shield is prohibited from getting a Class Up."

That fucking king! I honestly want to kill him!

I especially need stats to improve.

First there's that ridiculous Class Up cost, then to top it off, I get turned down because I am prohibited by the king.

At this rate it will be impossible to Level up!

Creating a 'no level changes without permission' is just player control!

Naofumi: "Don't joke around!"

Sister: "Those are the rules. From the start, it was impossible for the Hero of the Shield-sama....."

Naofumi: "Say that first!"

I burst into a fit of rage and knights start appearing from behind the reception.

Naofumi: "Tch! Fine! I get it!"

Putting as much power as I could in my legs, I stamp on the ground to stand up and leave the place.

Seriously, everything about this is unpleasant, especially this country!

Raphtalia: "But, what now?"

Raphtalia looked troubled as she asked, this is certainly a big problem.

Firo: "Hey hey, what was that hour glass? Firo wants to see more!"

Naofumi: "Hold it."

While still feeling unpleasant, I go take a look at the help section.

..... Class Up was found.

Class Up is a ceremony that expands the path chains of members who become Hero companions.

Let's also check under The Hourglass of the Dragon's Era.

It is recommended that I do it after a ★ appears.

There is no growth limit for a Hero.

Heroes have no growth limit?

Does that mean I can get past the normal level 40 cap without a Class Up?

But still, this is very unpleasant!

If Raphtalia cannot Class Up, there will be problems with our attack power.

Raphtalia: "What should we do?....."

Naofumi: "Can't be helped, we'll do this later."

Fortunately, raising our levels was not scheduled until after this wave has passed, I'll think about it afterwards.

There is also the method of having Raphtalia become an adventurer and acquire a Class Up recommendation that way.

It can probably be done with more money. But, there is no time now. Searching for that would also be especially difficult.

That reminds me, the slave trader had slaves over Level 40. Wasn't I going to go there anyway to get a weapon for Firo?

Motoyasu: "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

What's that?

I turned around and see Motoyasu pointing at me.

Motoyasu: "You! What were you thinking!"

Naofumi: "What? Don't apply some strange connection to me."(!) Motoyasu: "Are you trying to play dumb? I know. The owner of that fat bird is you."

Fat bird..... Is he talking about Firo?

Naofumi: "Come to think of it, how's your crotch?"

Motoyasu: "It was almost crushed, Thanks to that fucking guy!"

Naofumi: "What.....!?"

It wasn't destroyed!? Don't joke around!

To be kicked by such power and still manage to not lose its function?

Naofumi: "You haven't lived up to my expectations."

Motoyasu: "You bastard-"

Naofumi: "It's not me who did it! Why would your crotch be destroyed?"

I asked Motoyasu while facing Raphtalia who look amazed.

Oh right, Raphtalia was not there to witness this guy getting blown away.

Raphtalia: "Why are you looking at me with pity?"

Naofumi: "Because you missed a really refreshing moment?"

Raphtalia: "I don't need to know such a thing!"

Motoyasu: "Fine, hand over the fat bird! I'll kill him!"

Naofumi: "Why do you even want my bird? What even happened? Besides,

you were the one who approached so carelessly at that time."

Motoyasu: "Are you feigning ignorance? I was kicked whenever that bird spotted me!"

Hm? What did he say?

Is it fate?

Naofumi: "What do you mean?"

Motoyasu: "As I said, whenever we meet your fat and ugly bird, it would chase me around just to kick that place!"

I look at Firo.

Then Firo says.

Firo: "Yup. I kick him every time I see him."

Naofumi: "I see, I see, that's great."

Firo: "he he!"

Raphtalia: "Why are you praising her!?"

I pat Firo's head.

I noticed that on Montoya's nice equipment, there is a crotch protector in the groin area.

That is hilarious! This guy has a trauma!

I burst out laughing.

Naofumi: "Ahahahaha!"

Motoyasu: "That's enough you bastard!"

Motoyasu's companion: "That's right! Motoyasu-sama, don't bother yourself

with that lowly shield!"

What are you saying, you follower.

That fucking woman's face is red while denouncing me.

This is refreshing.

Raphtalia: "What a refreshing smile, I haven't seen Naofumi-sama smile like that before."

Motoyasu: "You---"

Motoyasu clenches his fist and grabs my coat.

Firo: "Master~ Firo is hungry!"

The bird that cannot read the atmosphere asserted herself.

Motoyasu's gaze turns to her.

Pita.

Motoyasu stiffens when he makes eye contact with Firo.

..... What's the matter?

Motoyasu: "Deryaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

He takes a second look at me and throws a haymaker punch to my face, but I catch it.

Naofumi: "What was that? If you want to have a fight, use your spear."

Motoyasu: "Miss! Hurry up and run away! This guy is very dangerous!"

Motoyasu shouts in the direction of Firo, trying to look like a good person.

...That's the fat bird you wanted to kill just a moment ago.

Oh right, she's in her human form now. Is it because she's pretty? That does seem like Motoyasu.

Firo: "Eh? Master is not dangerous, right~?"

Motoyasu: "He is your Master!?"

Motoyasu's face is dyed with anger.

Motoyasu: "You bought another slave!"

Naofumi: "What's with you..... Do you have a problem because she's a woman?"

Motoyasu: "Wrong!"

I tried to boast about it.

Motoyasu: "Amazing..... This is the first time I've seen such an ideal woman....."

Naofumi: ".....Huh?"

Motoyasu: "I did not think a girl so similar to Flonne-chan would exist in the world!"

Who is that?

..... It's a game character.

That reminds me, Firo's appearance is that of a certain pure daughter angel who is from a game in my world. [\[32\]](#)

Motoyasu: "I... such a moe angel....."

Naofumi: "Shut up! I do not want to know your sexual preferences!"

Motoyasu: "Different worlds are the best!"

Motoyasu's tension reaches its climax.

The moods of his followers are the opposite.

I don't think I'm seeing the same human who flew into rage a moment ago.

However, I am now very aware of Firo's well-defined facial expression.

Motoyasu: "Miss, what is your name?"

Firo: "Uhhh, It's Firo."

Naofumi: "Don't answer obediently!"

Motoyasu takes Firo's hand affectionately.

Motoyasu: "This guy is probably working you like a coach horse. I will save you."

Firo: "Well, Firo doesn't pull the carriage like a horse."

You should just accept it. That's the kind of race she is.

Firo: "Firo pulled a heavy carriage everyday for more than a month!"

Annoying, I don't see this ending well.

Motoyasu: "You bastard-----!"

Motoyasu is being noisy.

I don't have a lot of time. I want to leave already.

Motoyasu: "Release Firo-chan!"

Naofumi: "This again!?"

It didn't work for Raphtalia, so it's Firo this time?

Do you want to take away my subordinates that much?

Motoyasu shouts with blood thirst and turns his spear to me.

At that action...

Firo: "What are you doing to master!?" Firo knits her eyebrows and asked.

Motoyasu: "Don't worry, Firo-chan. I will save you!"

You're not listening!

Completely in his own world.....

Naofumi: "Anyway, the fat bird that you were looking for... That's Firo."

Motoyasu: "Naofumi! You bastard! To say such a thing about a girl!"

Naofumi: "It's you. You're the one who has been calling Firo that. You even said you wanted to kill her."

Motoyasu: "...Huh?"

This guy looks at me like I'm stupid.

Though, I do call her a fat bird too.

Naofumi: "Anyway, stop complai..."

Firo: "Firo will protect Master~!"

With a Bofun, Firo returns to her true form.

Motoyasu: "Eh? What?"

Firo raises her foot and kicks Motoyasu in the groin while he is dumbfounded.

Motoyasu: "Ahhhhhhhhhhh-"

I was able to see it. With a perplexed expression, Motoyasu flies over 10 meters while spinning.

Furthermore, the crotch protector was shattered.

Motoyasu: "Uge!"

Were they destroyed this time?

No, they were probably okay. There was a crotch protector.

Naofumi: "Now then, let's ignore the fool and move on."

Raphtalia's face is blue as her mouth leaks an "awawawa."

Still, his entourage is not trying to help him.

Well..... a lot of unpleasant feelings were blown away.

I must give Firo a reward.

Naofumi: "Alright, shall we go to the slave trader now?"

Firo returns to her human form with a frightened expression.

Firo: "Firo is going to be sold?"

Naofumi: "Don't worry, I'm not going to sell you, I'm going to buy you a reward."

It seems she has been faithfully following orders and whenever she came across Motoyasu, he was kicked, not to mention that blow just now.

This good behaviour must be rewarded.

Naofumi: "I shall buy the equipment you wanted."

Firo: "Yay! Firo also wants food too!"

Naofumi: "Yeah, definitely."

Firo: "Then, Firo wants food cooked by Master~"

Naofumi: "Very well. This will be special."

Firo: "Yaay~!"

Firo begins skipping happily.

Translator note

1. ↑ can't think of a way to word it so it fits with the names of all the other shields
2. ↑ I guess his logic is that absorbing things fulfill conditions in the skill tree. So since he absorbed her hair before and with the addition of the ink now, multiple shields were unlocked (ie. one from just the ink and the second from ink + hair).
3. ↑ He probably means unseal, as in unlocking the true power of the shield.
4. ↑ If you don't what these adorable creatures are do look them up ^-^
5. ↑ I guess there's a slight difference... :-D
6. ↑ kiryuu kanji is horse + dragon roughly, he's just randomly guessing using that
7. ↑ Wikipedia says its a mobile game. think of it like puzzle&dragons
8. ↑ reselling of slaves
9. ↑ pretty direct translation since hard to word while keeping the meaning.
10. ↑ note: I am not a creative man. literal translation.
11. ↑ **Round and smooth**
12. ↑ In Japanese, motion sickness literally means getting vehicle drunk
13. ↑ An-chan is a term that literally means older brother and can be used to refer to young to middle-aged men you're familiar with. It carries a bit of a folksy inflection.
14. ↑ This is a common phrase used in Jaapanese. It's original meaning was "I'm going to behead you so wash your neck and wait" but it's basically now equivalent to the "I'm going to kill him" used in English when you're mad at someone.
15. ↑ Remember the bobbin machine? That one from Sleeping Beauty. TL note: <http://i.imgur.com/fsS6pIV.png>

16. ↑ The wording is really awkward here, TLC please
17. ↑ ED Note: I changed "Goshujin-sama" to "Master" since "Master" is commonly used ltr.
18. ↑ pitter-patter? wouldn't it be better to say, "The cart rolled onward, with a large racket."
19. ↑ "In the past few days, I felt really busy" It's just my take on it
20. ↑ Question, does he directly swear here, or is this the translators choice of words?
21. ↑ tl note: He has a brother? or is it just my shit translations? "ここ一ヶ月色々あって忘れていたが、もしも生きて弟に会えたら何か言ってやるのも良いかもしれない")
22. ↑ Yup it was mentioned earlier he has a younger brother who is a straight A student and a otaku. the direct translations i got from that are "It might be also good to say something when it can meet younger brother by living though it forgot because it is variously during this month." and "Although I forgot I met here a month various , and the Say something if I saw my brother If you live also has such may be a good. Which probably means: "I've been so busy this past month, If i live to speak to my younger brother again that would be nice..." (you can end it with a . or ... either would work. btw the younger before brother isn't necessary but its a nice detail)
23. ↑ TL note: 両手(翼?) <= that's in the actual chapter.
24. ↑ TL note: <http://i.imgur.com/t82ZsY2.jpg> LOL
25. ↑ TL note: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metalworking>
26. ↑ TL Note: No idea..... なんでも速度からして間に合うのは神鳥.....フィー口位なものらしい。
27. ↑ TL note: Jesus shieldbro in the house.
28. ↑ Editor's note: Made up this line to make it more coherent.
29. ↑ for those that don't know, in Europe many world like color and honor have a u before the or
30. ↑ TL note: I'm a little confused with this 教わろうかと思ったが今の俺ではかえって邪魔になる気がした。
31. ↑ TL Note: Not sure what this means 毎日、宿屋で見ているはずなのに、何か珍しい構図になってしまっているような気がする。)

32. [↑](#) TI note: Flonne from Disgaea