

盾の勇者の成り上がり⁴

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Farewell

We returned to where the boss died to check up on those heroes who have fainted with volunteers and villagers.

So unnecessary.....

Well, I had to return to get materials from the wave for my shield to absorb, and since the Assault Shadow Goblin and Shadow Lizardmen were only shadows, they could not be absorbed.

No, I have a feeling that if i make a lump of shadows and compress it, I should be able to absorb it.

Shadow Shield

True power sealed.....Equipment Bonus: Darkness Resistance (Small)
The other guys are omitted because the only equipment bonus they provided was for stats. [\[1\]](#)

The big ghost-like fish that the other Heroes defeated is quite desirable.

"Aan~"

"Don't eat it."

Because Firo was about to eat the head, I ordered her to stop.

As for why this bird went berserk, the cause is still unknown.

My speculation is that it should be due to the dragon core that this fellow carelessly ate.

"But....."

When I was about to pick it up, my hand fell through and onto the ground; it was quite surprising.

"How did you pick it up?"

"I used wind magic on my hand."

"Hah....."

I can't even touch it barehanded, this sure is quite the strange fish.

I asked the volunteer soldiers to bring the other heroes here. It seems their exclusive weapons are necessary.

Since one of them possesses a weapon with a cheap attribute that is useful, I'll have to borrow it.

According to Firo, the item itself has to have magic imbued.

My shield absorbs a part of the head.

Soul Eater Shield

Ability sealed.....Equipment Bonus: Skill "Second Shield" Soul Resistance (Intermediate) Mind Attack Resistance (Intermediate) SP Up Special effect: Soul Devour Sp recovery (Weak)

Even though the demon head was dismantled, the name did not disappear so it doesn't really matter.

I absorb another part but there is no change either.

However, I am curious as to what the Second Shield skill does. As for soul resistance.....It is probably resistance against attacks of this type. The name Soul Devour makes me slightly anxious. It seems I can eat souls; it's quite unpleasant.

The shape of my shield changes slowly. The design seems to be based off of this demon's head since it is attached to my shield.

..... Its defense is greater than the Chimeric Viper Shield.

It seems Soul Devour is a skill that is exclusive to this shield.

So I reach out my hand. When I do so, I am unable to touch the flesh of the soul eater.

But it still feels different somehow.

Good.

I don't want anything that will consume souls, I don't have such a hobby. It's probably a counter effect. It will probably just absorb the enemy's SP.

Now then, what will the skill Second Shield do?

I'll experiment.

"Second Shield!"

Air Strike Shield -> Second Shield

An icon appears.

"Air Strike Shield!"

After I confirm the Air Strike Shield appearing, I once again call out:

"Second Shield!"

.....Another shield appears.

I see. It seems I'll be able to add another shield on top of Air Strike Shield within its effect duration.

This will have various uses, but the performance of the second shield may be different.

I pay more attention to the remains of the Soul Eater.

"I want to absorb the rest, but then those annoying fellows won't shut up about it....."

They probably won't shut up.

This is troubling since there are beings stronger than the heroes who are already the strongest in this world.

If those three are this weak, even if I become strong I won't be able to take it easy.

Sigh..... Should I just leave?

"Master, can Firo have the rest?"

The bird is slobbering everywhere while being noisy.

"Can't be helped....."

I cut the area from the back bone to the tail and give it to Firo.

Who ate it it one gulp.

"This texture is like a slime~"

"Wait a minute bird. When did we encounter slimes?"

"Uhhh you see~"

I'll omit the details and abbreviate.

As a result I was angry.

In the meaning that I didn't get to absorb any by my shield.

"Alright, let's help out with the reconstruction of the village."

Along with the volunteers, we started helping out around the village by processing demon corpses and reconstructing any damaged buildings.

Still, I cannot help everyone. So my top priority became making meals and treating injuries.

"Okay!"

The volunteers obediently did what I asked without question.

It seems I don't need to doubt them anymore.

One night passed after the long fight, and it seems the knights have finally arrived. Along with the volunteers, I was summoned by an angry knight leader.

"Bastard! who gave you permission to selfishly take my soldiers!?"

"This isn't the Hero-sama's responsibility! We were the ones who wanted to help and borrow his power."

"What? You lot call yourselves knights of Merlot Mark? By siding with the shield bastard?"

"You know..... this is quite the disgraceful scene. If you have a problem with our behavior, just get rid of us alright?"

The volunteers protected me by frankly expressing their opinions.

According to the stories I heard, the upper echelon of the knights had a meeting after they found out that the volunteers wanted to help a Hero.

"I think that if these guys weren't here, there would be much more damage."

The villagers who heard what I said also nod.

"The other heroes and their companions were brought to that building to rest after they were defeated by the formidable enemy who appeared during the wave."

Though they weren't asked to, the villagers take care of the Heroes and their companions. Thanks to the prescribed medicine, they will have a complete recovery in a few days.

Due to the fast recovery, they regained consciousness today.

"Hurry up, carry out Hero-sama and their companions and send them to the Treatment Institute Immediately!"

"Hey..... They are going to be fine. Priority goes to the villagers and others who are severely injured."

"The Heroes are our top Priority, for this world and our country."

What an arrogant answer.....

Well, it seems their problem is that I prioritized the treatment of villagers.

"Whatever. Go away, I'm busy."

"Wait, Shield"

The knight leader calls for my to stop, so I turn around and ask for the circumstances.

"What is it this time....."

"You need to give a report, so come to the castle."

"No thanks, that place stinks."

"I'm telling you to come!"

Do you have the authority? Even though this is meaningless why does it still have to be prioritized.

The volunteers lower their heads and look down, but I just ignore it and turn around.

"Hero of the Shield-sama I beg you, please go....."

.....Oh, this guy obeyed my instructions and acted properly.

I cannot coldly refuse, though it is also necessary to go collect my metal wagon from the old man.

"Hah....."

I look back while scratching my head.

"Fine. I'll go. But I'll only meet this guy once."

"Thank you very much!"

I nodded to the volunteer who expressed his thanks.

This, we went straight to the castle.

Next day.

We arrive at the castle town and enter the castle.

"The shield's companions have to wait in another room."

"Why am I the only one that goes?"

Why is this guy acting so overbearing?

"Hey, can I leave yet?"

This is going to be a giant waste of time.

"Please don't go. There are various things that you must hear."

"I would have liked to talk about them before coming here."

The process of how the other heroes got smashed and how we defeated the enemy was already explained.

It seems one of the volunteers confirmed what I said since he happened to see it.

In any case, if the trash king tries to force something on me, I'll just run away.

Due to Raphtalia and Firo, I will not be easily caught.

"Quiet! You are in the King's presence!"

I was guided to the throne and the trash king greeted me with a grim expression.

It seems he already heard the story. He seems to be irritated.

"Although it is regrettable, thanks to the shield the wave was defeated. Though I don't believe it."

"Is that any way to thank a person?"

"Insolence!.....Well, it's fine. I only want to ask one thing. Though I'm sure you're lying."

".....What do you want?"

It is a little annoying that he believes everything I say to be false.

"Shield, how did you outwit the other heroes and steal their strength? You have an obligation to speak, though I don't believe it. Now speak. Though I know you're lying."

.....So it's about that. The trash king is concerned that the other heroes are weaker than me.

Hah. I am so disgusted that I can't even talk.

Honestly, Glass beat the other heroes up.

Even though the Heroes outnumbered her they still lost.

Did I only win due to compatibility and the fact that the other party was worn out? Or were the other heroes weak and could not even exhaust her?

I should look around that vicinity when I'm free.

But, what to do here.

Alright.

I showed a radiant smile to the trash and gave him a thumbs down.

"Prostrate yourself if you want to find out."

"What?"

All that's on the trash king's face is a dumbfounded expression.

That's a very interesting face. I want a picture.

"Did you not hear me? It seems trash has poor hearing. I told you to rub your head on the ground if you want to know."

"Yo-Yo-Yo-"

"What's wrong? You sound like a screeching monkey. Oh I see, the trash king

of this country is indeed lower than a monkey. Though I would rather be talking to a monkey."

The trash king's face is instantly dyed-red, and stares at me like I'm responsible for the murder of his parents.

Ah, this feels pretty good.

"You bastard-----!"

The cry of the trash king echoes throughout the castle.

Enemy from the wave in front, and trash king in the back.

But, I do not intend to be defeated by either.

And in this way I parted with the trash king.

Departure

"I demand Decapitatioooooooooooooon!"

As expected of trash. My answer is equivalent to your crown.

"Opps, it looks like you think your guillotine can hurt me."

With a clang, the knights of the trash take out their swords and surround me.

"Did you guys forget during the wave that I am the one who defeated the opponent those other heroes got trashed by?"

I equip my shield and answer.

As for the knights, none of them dare to move.

An appearance befitting a hero. These are people that know of what happened during the wave, so they do not attack.

Even if it was a half bluff.

"What are you doing!? Kill this impudent bastard already!"

"Hey....."

I glare at the trash king and repeat.

"Do you not understand? The present me can enter the castle from the entrance, murder you, and walk out just like that....."

"Grrr....."

At last, this trash seems to finally know his position. His face is mortified.

"Do you believe I can actually do it?"

I learnt that in this world threats and bluffs during negotiations are necessary. Therefore, against this trash I'll use it to the maximum.

"If you're going to request a hero to do it, do you think they can win against me?"

"Grrrrr....."

The trash is grinding his teeth with frustration.

"Being able to say such a thing--"

"If you harm my subordinates? I'll kill you."

Before I lose the possibility, I will take the first move.

Since I have no clarification, I don't know whether or not the Iron Maiden skill can kill this trash.

But, I'm quite sure it will work.

If I also include the flames from the Self-Curse Burning.

The trash's expression turns blue when he understands his position.

"Do not bother me, trash. I will cooperate during a wave, but once it is over, do not disturb me."

This is my only threat, but I cannot reveal my trump card easily. I'd prefer that to be my last resort.

Even if I kill him here, nothing will be solved. This trash's successor will just appear and put me on the wanted list.

Even if I fight the other Heroes, it is doubtful that I can win.

Besides, if all three of them team up on me, I will lose.

"See ya."

I turn my heel and walk out of the throne room.

"Unforgivable! I won't forgive you Shieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeld!"

The trash's scream resounds throughout the throne room.

"That's my lineeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

I pointed at the trash before leaving.

After leaving the throne room, I pass by a noblewoman-like person concealing her lips with a fan and an expensive-looking dress.

The face is too well concealed to be able to tell her age. Perhaps late 20s.....?

Her hair is purple.....Quite a rare colour.....

"Thank you for participating, degojaru."

Was whispered to me as we passed each other.

Gojaru?

Dangerous, I almost turned around.

Hm?

A girl just like Raptalia when she was small and Firo's humanoid form is

behind the woman. Her hair colour is bluish. Also something you don't see much.

She is dressed well, is she her child?

However, they don't really resemble each other.....

Though her looks rival that of Firo's human form. Is this little girl also a bird?

Hm.....

I cannot remember who she looks like.

Oh well, that person is probably unpleasant. Remembering is just a waste of time.

So, at that time, we just crossed paths unintentionally. I had no idea this kid would become an important figure in a future uproar.

By the way, Raphtalia and Firo were waiting for me in another room.

And the fact that they predicted I would cause trouble and were even ready for escape was icing on the cake.

Anyway, we left there in a hurry.

The next day.

I show up at the equipment store to check on the requested carriage.

"Oh it's the lad. The carriage you asked for is done."

"Pretty quick. However old man, can you make anything as long as it's metal-based?"

"I had my acquaintance help out, so I didn't make all of it."

Is this common for metal workers?

"Well, he's just one of those guys that can do anything as long as you have

money."

"Lad, don't be sad just because you found out I can't do everything. I'm not versatile like you."

"I'm not omnipotent either....."

What does the old man think of me?

"Well it's parked in the back."

"Ah then let's check it out. By the way, Raphtalia-"

Raphtalia grasps my hand before I finish.

"What's wrong?"

"This sword is still fine. Let's conserve money for now."

"Well..... If Raphtalia says so....."

Though Firo is now our main attacker.

It shouldn't be necessary for Raphtalia to act unless it's urgent, and the same goes for me.

This sounds bad, but there may be weapons somewhere else that are better than the ones in the old man's shop.

We went around the equipment store to check out the metal wagon. The hood is metallic, and the whole carriage feels like an enlarged Christmas ornament that my parents bought.

"Wow~....."

Firo's eyes are shining with unprecedented brightness. She heads towards the front and grabs the handle.

"Firo is going to pull this right!?"

"Yeah."

"Yaay~!"

Firo is quite happy, with both her feet and wings flapping as if hoping to bolt off at any moment.

She has such a face.

"For the time being, let's carry in your luggage."

"Okay."

"Okay~!"

We transfer the baggage from our carriage that we used in between waves to the new one.

It took quite some time to carry the materials, merchandise, and tools.

"How is it lad?"

The old man from shows up when he has free time. And I answer with a thumbs up.

"Yeah, it's as great as I expected."

"I see, but it seems to be very heavy. Will the little missy be fine.....?"

"Yup!"

"This fellow here ran around the country with a carriage that had 3 carts attached."

"That's amazing."

"Rather, it's lighter than I expected so I'm a little disappointed."

"You know, stop being so stubborn!"

What are the standards for Philo Rial anyway? Why do they feel great when they pull carriages?

"Hahaha, do your best. So what'll you do from now on?"

"What will I do?"

"I heard about the commotion at the castle."

The old man says to me with a somewhat troubled face.

"That sure traveled quick."

"Rumors keep the town lively."

"Oh well. I did it so that trash would understand his position."

".....Though it's only a matter of time before you get falsely accused again."

"That's what I expected."

"If possible I don't want to know."

"I believe I asked this some time ago..... Are you going to go to Silt Welt or Shirudo Furiden to Class up? [\[2\]](#)

An idea came to mind then, that what I should have done when threatening Trash was also get permission to use the Hourglass of the Dragon's Era. But if the class up is controlled by the Trash, I would also fear for Raphtalia and Firo.

I would rather not have that unnecessary anxiety haunting me. It would be best to get a free pass for Class up in any of these two countries.

"Well, I expected you to go to be forced to leave this country someday."

"What?"

It seems the old man is nodding his head as if agreeing with himself.

What does he mean?

"I would recommend you going to ShiruFuriden. Silt Welt is in turmoil....."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah, humans there are treated just like the demi-humans in this country."

No wonder..... It would be unsuitable for me who is a human.

"But--"

"Thanks for the help. I'll be going to ShirudoFuriden."

We finished loading and got into the carriage.

"Well then, I expect you to visit a great number of shops."

"Thanks. Oh, right. Do you know of any weapons that have a soul attribute, or can damage ghosts?"

"I see, so you've gotten to the point where you need to prepare for such enemies."

"I can make something cheaply from certain materials."

"I cannot match you any more. If possible, don't come back for a while. I'll tell you where you can get materials."

"I understand. Thanks for all the help. Then, let's go."

"Okay~"

"See ya. old man."

"Later."

Firo pulls the rattling carriage.

Our present goal is a Class up. It seems to be quite far into the future.

With Firo's running speed, we should arrive in two weeks.

"That's!"

I hear a loud voice outside.

Before leaving the castle town, something hits the metal carriage.

"I found you!"

".....What?"

After making Firo stop, a little girl looks into the carriage and points at me.

Behind the girl is a knight-like guy.

These guys seems to have followed us for a while.

"You did something terrible to father!"

"Hmm?"

What? The girl with blue hair that I am not familiar with gets closer.

"What's with you?"

"Don't play dumb! I know that you can't hide it! You are an accomplished villain! The atrocious Hero of the Shield!"

This goddamn noisy kid. Is she some aristocrat?

That reminds me, I sold some cheap accessory to a noble before. Though it

wasn't just once or twice. I can't remember how many times any more.

"I see, your father just can't tell quality. I am just smarter."

"What did you say!?"

But, Hero of the Shield = Evil person..... That's quite unpleasant.

Oh well, it's too late now.

"Tell your father. To polish his aesthetic sense next time."

"Boo, Boo..... I'll never admit it, mother is wrong, the Hero of the Shield is a bad person! I'll punish you!"

The subordinate knights step forward according to the girl's order.

"Hm. Can you keep them company Firo?"

"What~?"

"Just go."

"Okay."

"Ah....."

Firo stares at the goddamn kid and seems preoccupied.

"Holy Bird?"

"Eh?"

Firo inclines her neck and looks at the goddamn kid, puzzled.

"Hurry up and go!"

"Okay~"

Firo nods, and the carriage suddenly takes off.

"AH Wait-----! Don't run awaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay!"

The voice of the goddamn kid fades into the distance.

The castle town sucks as expected. Other than coming for shopping, I would rather stay away.

Devil of the Shield

"Let's continue peddling."

"I guess. Travelling expenses and the cost of weapons can get pretty expensive."

"I think so too."

"Though our food costs for a certain bird are the highest."

The Mileage to Food cost ratio on our bird is not negligible, but our horsepower is amazing. Feeding a demon is ridiculous, the sheer quantity required impossible to sustain.

So before all my money is consumed, I need to earn more.

We should be fine selling things in the villages and towns we stay at.

While thinking so, our treat begins. but.....

"I finally caught up!"

It is now evening.

The goddamn kid from the castle town caught up with us.

While peddling, I decided on an inn.

"What a persistent brat."

"We haven't finished talking yet!"

"Whatever. It's about your father. So what?"

"So what!? You suck!"

The goddamn kid's face instantly turns red. Quite an emotional kid.

It's annoying and hysteric.

"My father is angry at the shield."

"I see, that's great."

"No it's not!"

This annoying brat.

After deciding on a place to stay, the hotel charges are paid. I want to ignore her, but she is very persistent.

I wonder how far she intends to chase. I want to ask and make sure.

"What's wrong?"

Firo got bored of playing nearby and came back. By the way, even if a party member beats a demon far away, I still get a little experience.

Sometimes, all those minuscule experience gains block my view while peddling.

Though Firo brings me materials under the pretense of souvenirs.

"Ah....."

The goddamn kid stops and watches Firo again.

"Are you the Philo Rial that pulled the carriage?"

"Yeah, you understand."

"You are different from all the Philo Rial that I know of. It's my first time seeing one that looks like a child."

To be fair, only a few people have actually seen a Philo Rial Queen. We might be the only ones in the country.

"Master, did you need anything?"

"We are talking!"

"Start from the beginning."

Firo has been talking with her since they met.

"Shouldn't you be chirping?"

"Nope. Firo can speak words~"

"Wow.....Awesome!"

"Ehehe I'm amazing."

The goddamn kid approaches Firo and touches her.

Firo doesn't seem to mind.

Oh their mental ages are probably similar.

.....I can use this.

"If Firo agrees to it she can take her Philo Rial form and you two can go out and play together."

"Really!?"

"Yeah, go play until you're finished and then return."

"Yay~!"

The goddamn kid pats Firo with a smile.

"Master. What about Firo?"

"Play with the child. I order you not to injure her."

"Yay~!"

Firo saddles the little shit on her back.

Her expression instantly brightens.

"Yaay! We're so high!"

"Let's go play!"

"Ok!"

They happily run off together.

The knights chase after them with perplexed expressions.

"It's finally quiet again."

"Naofumi-sama, your expression right now is very evil."

"There's no problems. That goddamn brat is probably going to forget any grudges she has after this."

"Goddamn brat..... Naofumi-sama do you dislike kids?"

"Not particularly. If I disliked them I would have abandoned you and Firo a long time ago.

"Well, that's true."

I hate her because she is accusing me.

I'd like to avoid any falling sparks if possible.

"When we enter the neighboring country, they should stop."

If she's an animal enthusiast and just plays with Firo, it'll be fine.

".....I guess."

That day, Firo did not come back until very late.

It seems they were very excited about having new friends and played a lot. Well, it's good that they are happy about it.

By the way, the name of that goddamn kid is Mel-chan.

Next morning.

After eating a light breakfast, we leave the inn quickly. On the road:

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaait!"

I crease my brows and face palm.

I knew this was going to happen, but to think she would be this quick...

I already forgot about the fellow when we departed this morning.

"Ah, it's Mel-chan."

Since Firo stopped, I got off the carriage to welcome the goddamn kid.

"You should be glad, Firo-chan! I won't have the Hero of the Shield apologize if we can play!"

"I'm sorry. Are we done?"

"Don't apologize to me, do it to father!"

So annoying.

I can't deal with her.

"If you don't apologize, everyone won't be forgiven."

So she says, as the knight behind her pulls out a sword.

You want to fight?

Against a Hero?

Huh? The guy behind the goddamn brat is pointing a crystal ball at me.

What's that?

Suddenly I notice.

This guy.....He's not looking at me.

I feel a chill run up my spine.

This foreboding feeling and atmosphere remind me of when I was deceived by that bitch.

This atmosphere that I encountered in the past few months carried the intent to plunge another into despair.

I charge the Knight at once.

And my premonition becomes reality.

The knight aims his sword at the goddamn kid.

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

"Air Strike Shield!"

The goddamn brats starts to scream. I immediately cast Air Strike Shield to intercept.

".....What the hell are you doing!?"

I stand in front of the goddamn kid and glare at the enemy.

"You Shield! how dare you hold a princess hostage!"

"Huh?"

Princess?

Regardless of who you are looking after, isn't it weird to call them princess?

The goddamn kid seems to know what's going on and her face turns blue.

"The shield is evil! I've known since the beginning."

The enemies are attacking us while saying so.

I protect the goddamn kid by pulling her close.

Gakin, the clashing of metal resounds in the area.

"Damn....."

The enemy starts to cast magic that rains fire.

Can't be helped. I'll cover the goddamn kid with my mantle to protect her from magic.

"You.....Devil of the Shield!"

"Firo, Raphtalia!"

"Okay!"

"Okay~!"

As per my instructions. Raphtalia and Firo charge the enemy.

Just as we counterattack, the enemy retreats on horseback.

"Fools."

Firo's leg power overwhelms horses. One of them is instantly blown off.

"Guaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"Ah, it's the devil!"

Additionally, we pursue the enemy and continue attacking. One, two, many were captured, but a few of them managed to get away.

"What the hell is wrong with these guys?"

Were they not the goddamn brat's guards?

A princess huh.

I have no choice but to perform a few interrogations here.

I ask the enemies who are bound by rope.

"Now then, you bastards, tell me why you are trying to kill a child. Only the reason."

"As if I have anything to say to a devil."

"Hooh....."

Devil, huh. It's been a while since I've been straight up called that.

Regardless of who, it's always Hero of the Shield.

"You. Do you understand what's happening to you?"

I give instructions to Firo.

"Food?"

The enemy's face turns blue.

"I will sacrifice myself for God..... God will lead me to heaven."

.....Religion.

Against these kinds of fanatics threats will not work.

"Hey brat, you have any ideas?"

The goddamn brat shakes her head in fear.

"Say, what religion do you believe in? It'll probably be to some stupid god anyway."

"The Three Heroes Church! You damn Devil! You dare mock God?"

As I thought. These fools can't stand it when their religion is mocked.

Now, if I can skilfully manipulate him with insults I may be able to get some information.

"The religion of this country."

Raphtalia mutters alone.

"Do you know about it?"

"This country mostly believes in the teachings of the Three Heroes. I did not believe since my parents were from a different religion."

".....Then this guy is just using religion as a tool for personal gains."

"Ah, Yeah."

I find a Rosary-like Accessory on the people who Raphtalia tied up.

"I'm going to place this on the ground."

"Hah....."

What a strange symbol. Three weapons pile on top of each other.

Sword, Spear, and Bow?

Quite an unpleasant lineup of weapons.

"Now, I will step on this tool if you guys don't speak obediently."

"St-Stooooooooop!"

The enemy's cry stops me.

That was quite early.....

Is this lump of metal so important?

Rather than anything special, it just reminds me of a fashion accessory, it doesn't even have any special effects.

Though it might just be the case for me since people in my world start wars for religion.

"Look at this."

I repeatedly stomp on the strange symbol with my foot.

"You devil of the shield! God will never forgive such acts!"

"I know, now tell me quickly why you're trying to kill her. Or is this the degree of your faith? Huh?"

"Damn....."

"To think there would be a devil stepping on god's symbol right in front of you. Shouldn't god be on your side?"

It's the opposite of the loyalty test.

Since this guy recognizes me as the devil, he will not stand by as I perform barbaric acts.

"If you spit it out I'll stop."

"I'm not going to listen to anything a d-devil has to say."

"Ah, I see."

I stomp on the symbol hard enough that it sinks into the ground.

"You bastaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaard!"

Hmm..... I wonder what happened.

Did he finally realize his position?

"Hey brat, who is this guy anyway?"

"Aau....."

The goddamn brat still seems to be recovering from the fear of almost being killed.

"Mel-chan. Master and Firo are here so you'll be alright."

".....Firo-chan."

The goddamn kid collects herself, gives me a look, and mutters.

"Uhm. These people are my father's knights."

"That reminds me, who is your father?"

"Father?"

"Yeah, which noble family are you from?"

"Uhm."

Not nobility? Then what is it?

She looks considerably well-bred, is she the daughter of a famous merchant?

Daughter of the accessory merchant? Though there should be no reason for malice if that's the case.

.....From this guy's speech and behavior, her dad should be quite powerful and respected.

I still think she's some noble's daughter.

"Father is the king of this country."

".....What?"

"Holt Clay = Merlot Mark the 32nd. I am Melty = Merlot Mark.....This country's princess." [3]

Thus, I somehow became embroiled in a ridiculous conspiracy.

Church of Three Heroes

"Alright, let's throw this guy away and leave the country."

I declare immediately after finding out that this goddamn brat is the second princess of Merlot Mark, Melty.

"Please wait. Are you just going to abandon a child who is being targeted?"

"She's the daughter of trash. I'm also going to be convicted regardless."

"But I think the circumstances are quite strange."

Hm, Raphtalia's opinion does make sense.

The second princess who was almost murdered is shaking again, while Firo is babysitting her.

If she really is the second princess, there should be no reason for the knights of this country to kill her.

Is this just a big conspiracy, or factional strife? Why would they want the princess dead?

I am completely ignorant about the circumstances of this country's internal affairs.

"Mel-chan. Why were you almost killed?"

".....I don't know. I just came to complain to the Hero of the Shield because he hurt father."

"You came alone?"

"No. The imperial guardsmen knights wanted to come no matter what."

It seems the second princess is merely a puppet.

Even if I interrogate her, it would be impossible to get any information.

"Firo will certainly help you!"

"Hey, don't just go making promises without my permission!"

"Master. Firo wants to help Mel-chan."

"No."

"I want to help! I want to help! I want to help!"

"Argg, so annoying!"

Shit, I have a bad feeling about this. What's going to happen?

The knight who was watching begins to laugh.

"Finally, you understand your position as a devil."

"Shut up. I'm done with you."

"You can't escape. I'll be waiting here until the mission succeeds."

".....What do you mean?"

"Our goal is to kill the second princess and pin the blame on you, but even though the first condition cannot be fulfilled, it is fine. Your head will be worth a lot of money from now on."

That trash, to think he would do something like this...

You're willing to sacrifice your daughter to find a just cause for killing me!?

"Even if you escape abroad, the royal family's assassins will pursue you!"

".....Wait, why is it necessary to kill the second princess in front of me?"

If you wanted to pin a false charge on me, all you needed was the Bitch's testimony.

Even if the second princess is murdered somewhere else, they just need to claim that I did it.

Why aren't they doing that?

Suddenly, I recall that other knight's crystal ball.

Due to him fleeing first, he managed to escape.

If that was something that took photographs...

"Devil of the Shield, the fact that you participated in murdering princess Melty has been spread to the other countries. You will no longer be able to take refuge there."

No wonder. In this country, they cannot cross the borders to search for me. If I manage escape abroad, then it will show that this country is weak.

As for the other countries, they will help the Hero of the Shield to try gaining me as an ally.

However, that will be impossible now.

There is a crystal ball that shows the moment when the Hero of the Shield might have murdered the second princess.

That is plenty of evidence.

Once they show that to foreign countries, I won't be able to seek refuge.

Wow..... I kind of respect how thorough they are.

That leaves me with 3 choices.

Choice 1

I ditch the second princess.

The knight of the trash that came to kill the second princess will fulfill his duty and give the country a just cause to hunt me.

I will live as a wanted man with a bounty on my head.

If it spreads to the other countries, the time that I stay as a wanted man will become even longer.

It will be the most dangerous when the wave comes. I will most likely be caught.

Choice 2

I take the second princess to the trash and explain the circumstances.

The second princess will keep her life, but this is trash we are talking about. The crime of kidnapping will not be cleared.

In other words, I can save the life of the second princess, but my innocence will not be proven.

Choice 3

We go kill trash in an outrage.

The crime will be complete, which will lead to the 3 heroes, the church, and a massive amount of knights hunting me down.

The possibility of failure is too high.

"No matter the choice, my innocence will not be proven-! That trash king, to murder his own daughter to kill me!"

Very unpleasant!

Seriously, why is everyone blood related to the king so annoying?

"Hahaha! It's over for the Devil of the Shield. You will perish before the Church Three Heroes!"

"Shut up!"

I tell the knights to shut up while ordering Firo out of spite.

"You are allowed to kill them, but it's meaningless since a lot of them already escaped."

But, if my false charges are dropped, they will ask about the homicide.

"Still, that Church of Three Heroes....."

Church of Three Heroes

Three, Heroes, Church.

Now that I think about it, aren't these things all connected?

The symbol contains the holy weapons of those three.

But isn't it strange?

Sword, Spear, Bow, and Shield.

According to legends, these 4 are the only ones.

But the Knights view me as the devil, and the Church of Three Heroes is also hostile.

.....Is that it?

Upon arrival in this world, none of the adventurers wanted to become my companion. Naturally, the only adventurers they prepare are ones trusted by the country. It seems the religion known as the Church of Three Heroes is brought up a lot around the city.

Since the Church of Three Heroes calls me the Devil of the Shield, I am supposed to be an absolute evil within the country.

Who would willingly become the Devil of the Shield's companion? Were they not even aware of my situation, or were they trying to create a situation where

I can be nothing but evil?

.....That seems to be the case. In this country, just saying Hero of the Shield will earn you a dirty look.

The majority of the knights are blind believers, and of course the royal family is no exception.

Thinking back with this information, I can't help but be a little amused at the rape accusations placed on me.

Since I am treated as a religious enemy, I was ignored intentionally and branded as a criminal without evidence. If I do anything bad, the citizens will just say "Because he's the Devil of the Shield."

That sister's hostility towards me at the Hourglass of the Dragon's Era proves it.

I can somewhat understand the trash king's thoughts.

If he wants to keep his standing as the king, he will not be able to treat the Devil of the Shield the same as the three heroes.

Currently, the reputation of the Hero of the Shield has improved within the country since I have been going around various places masquerading as the Saint of the Holy Bird and saving people.

Excluding the castle town, recently, even as the Hero of the Shield, there has been no more hostility aimed towards me.

The problem is related to the prestige of the church. I have no doubt they will also add threatening the church of three heroes to my list of crimes.

Is that why they played the trump card that is the second princess?

But in the end, this is all merely speculation. No matter what I do, it will be impossible to get rid of the false accusations.

"Fa-father wouldn't do something like this!

Declares the second princess.

"Maybe....."

"Finish your sentence."

"Mother said that Father's forte is in warfare, but recently he also has quite a short fuse."

"Mother, huh....."

Speaking of which, I still have not met the wife of trash.

Good at war, huh.....That's certainly one hell of an enemy I've made. So far, nothing good has happened to me.

"Mother always wins when they play intellectual games."

"Aren't you just calling her cunning?"

Whenever I talked to him, all I felt was the he was a fool. Not sure how smart this mother will be.

"Father cherishes me, so he won't do something like this."

"Then why did such a thing happen?"

"Uh....."

The second princess seems ready to cry at any moment.

"Master is awful~"

"That's right. To make such a small child cry."

"She is the same age as you."

Did Raphtalia forget she was the same size about two months ago? Or is it because she has a big sister relationship with Firo?

Well, that trash king wasn't exactly a good person. However, he does not seem like a criminal.

I think that the trash treasures his relatives.

There is also the possibility that this situation was entirely cooked up by the fanatics that are trying to label me as a devil at all costs.

Besides, is the current royalty even stable?

This might be a little forced, but what if there are two factions: one supporting that bitch and one for the second princess?

"What about your sister?"

The successor would want to nip a bad bud early.

That bitch would pull off such a plan.

"Wouldn't it be something like, 'I am the next queen. I need to prevent my younger sister from somehow taking the seat'?"

"If it's elder sister.....maybe."

"Well, I'm not denying that possibility."

"Since the old days, mother would tell me not to imitate my sister in entrapping people to get whatever she wanted."

Is this the bitch's plan?

I mean, even her own relatives are wary of her.

"Mother said that Father does not understand."

"Now that I think about it, you've been saying mother a since a while ago, but who is she?"

"Mother is the queen of this country. All year round, she is in charge of diplomacy. I am always with mother."

"So what does that have to do with us?"

"Mother will occasionally return to visit father."

"Uhh.....So about her diplomacy."

"Because I do not want war, I try my best everyday. Because of the wave, the world is in danger. Since I am the queen, it is my duty to protect my country."

From what I hear, she seems to be superior to the trash.

She might not patronize me.

Though a dangerous fellow may come after me to protect trash.

Hmm?

Thinking back seriously, did I not pass by this fellow in the castle after I parted from trash?

"The day before yesterday, were you with your mother? Is it that person with the purple hair?"

"That is my mother's body double."

"Body double huh..... Was there really such a feeling?"

Her outstanding purple hair left an impression.

"Yup. That's her disguise, and she talks funny."

"Wow."

Doesn't matter.

"She is greater than father."

The second princess just said something outrageous.

".....What did you say?"

"She is greater than father."

"What?"

"Naofumi-sama, in Merlot Mark, the queen has the power. This country's royal family is of the female line."

Raphtalia supplemented as if it was natural.

Then is that it?

That trash is a son-in-law!

"Naofumi-sama, why are you laughing?"

"This is too funny, that trash is just a son-in-law taken into the family?
Ahahahahaha!"

"Master you seem to be having fun~"

"Do not speak ill of father!"

"Isn't it fine? He deserted you."

"I wasn't thrown away! Uwaaaaan!"

Oh, the second princess has begun hitting me while crying.

What a healing scene. I see an annoying fellow crying.

"You're the worst, making a child cry and then laughing."

"I know."

Raphtalia got mad as expected.

"So is there any way we can clear the suspicions and save her life.....?"

In the first place why should I defend relatives of the trash and bitch?

Still, I cannot murder her.

Though this fellow's blood is bad, I would rather not dirty myself with it.

Sigh.....

However, I do sympathize a bit with her situation.

Being betrayed by blood relatives whom you believe in, the second princess has tasted the bottom of despair.

All right. There must be some method.

"Do you know where your mother the queen is?"

This is the first method. If trash is of no use, I'll meet and talk with the queen. Since she has more power than trash, our problem should be solved.

In this scenario, the second princess's survival has become a necessary condition. We will be heavily depending on whether she lives or dies.

It also seems from our talks that her mother is quite intelligent. Though I still have my doubts considering how stupid trash is.

".....I don't know."

The second princess shakes her head.

"I see."

There is no reason to flee to another country aimlessly in this situation.

I recall my talk with the old man of the equipment store.

If I'm not mistaken, the country of Demi-humans Silt Welt is the one that

dominates humans. Merlot Mark's influence will be very low there right?

The possibility is quite high that the queen will find out and come to negotiate when she finds out that the second princess has left Merlot Mark.

Of course, it would be very dangerous for us humans, but we have Raphtalia who is a demi-human.

It might also be good if we disguise ourselves.

"Alright, let's run away to Silt Welt for the time being. We might be able to overcome this situation there."

"That's the country of Demi-humans..... I see, It could work."

Raphtalia seems to understand.

"I'll leave the negotiations to enter the Demi-human country to you."

"Okay!"

"Now second princess, I will have you come with us. Rest assured, I will protect you by all means. If you do not wish to die, then follow me."

".....okay."

The second princess unwillingly joins our carriage.

I do not dislike children if they understand.

But in this case, it would be better tell the truth about this trash king and bitch princess who are no better than filth to this world.

Since the situation demands it, our destinies have become intertwined. If either of us die, it's over.

The second princess is also still a child.

If we teach her about what's correct starting from the beginning, she might be able to understand.

"Then we'll be together from now on, Mel-chan."

"Yup.....I'll be in your care, Firo-chan."

Firo is in a good mood now that she found out she'll have a new friend to journey together with.

The second princess will be the key that leads us to victory.

If we lose her, we are done.

I covered the knights who fainted in the forest and changed our direction to Silt Welt while staying cautious.

Wanted

"Umuu....."

I am observing the situation behind a bush.

It's been several hours since we picked up the second princess. Since there is a village nearby, we must be cautious.

Nearby is the village that was plagued by the dragon corpse a while ago. It seems what the knight said was true.

"Devil of the Shield Iwatani Naofumi slaughtered imperial guard knights and kidnapped the second princess while escaping. Wanted dead or alive. The prize-"
"

On the notice board within the village, there was posted a piece of paper that has quite a large amount of price money declared on it by the soldiers of the castle.

Is this seriously only a few hours after? They seemed too prepared for this.

I knew this was a set up since the beginning.

For some reason, they also assumed I killed off those knights that I caught.

I heard it.

If you strap a bomb on yourself and charge, you will go to heaven.

These guys are putting similar insane thoughts to practice.

"The Imperial guardsmen knights have memorized an image of the criminal!"

The Imperial guardsmen knight who brought the crystal ball to the castle also died after the duty was completed."

Furthermore. It seems that a hologram of me is being projected by the crystal ball. My face was twisted with wickedness, and I am strangling the second princess by her neck, which also appears to be bleeding.

.....Is that amount of fabrication even possible?

Should I make a habit of avoiding crystal balls at all costs in the future?

Though she looks pretty healthy despite being on the verge of death.....

When I look closely at the second princess's face, despite the fact that she is being strangled, her expression is more shocked than painful.

By the way, the country of Silt Welt is located southeast of Shirudo Furiden, which is northeast of our current location.

It seems that it's necessary for us to cross two countries, a considerably further distance than before.

We will somehow have to advance without being found.

"If you see the devil that has a strange bird pulling his carriage, contact the country immediately."

The crystal ball then shows Firo's image, and her expression is that of a bird of prey spitting poison from the mouth.

That's good. I can use poison since they put that in the forgery.

This is going to be a problem though, since Firo is our main means of transportation.

We might have to leave Firo somewhere.

"So, Firo, you understand right?"

"Noo~!"

As I finished scouting the village, I went to Firo and to let her know.

If we continue letting Firo pull the carriage to refuge, she will attract a lot of attention.

If it comes down to it, Firo could just abandon the carriage and run off with her superior speed. They would have a hard time catching her, but we would lose everything.

So, I have to explain the situation.

"We can't help it. Because you stand out."

In the sense that she's an unusual demon.

She is the reason I am known as the saint of the holy bird after all.

"Can't Firo just change into a different form before anything happens? Firo will work hard!"

"How are you-"

Firo's body shines and starts transforming.

She will probably pull the carriage in her human form anyway.

Her neck and feet started extending.

"Gueeee!"

Firo has transformed into a normal Philo Rial that resembles an ostrich.

Well, the size is considerably bigger than average I guess.

"Can you maintain this figure?"

"Gueeee!"

She nods.

"Can you only chirp in that form?"

"Guee!"

"I see."

I guess we will be fine if she can keep this appearance.

"Firo-chan is amazing!"

The second princess's eyes sparkles as she begins playing with Firo.

"Gueeee..."

This high pitched screeching is better than her toxic mouth anyway.

"When you're in that form, be quiet."

"Guee!"

My head was gripped by her foot.

Naturally, since Raphtalia and Firo rarely attack me, they forget that it violates the slave mark.

The demon crest appears on her chest and she rolls over in pain.

"Gueee!?"

"Firo-chan!?"

"Seriously, what is it you don't like?"

"Don't use violence on Firo-chan!"

"I didn't. The demon crest only activated because she attacked me."

Though she is still sort of cute in this form, her communication is lacking. Like this, I don't know what Firo is saying.

It seems that this could be from my inner thoughts of "it would be nice if I had a pet that would unconditionally listen to me and not be noisy."

Firo returns to her human forms and starts whining like a child.

"It's painful!"

"You asked for it. Even you understand. Demons can't attack their masters."

"Ueh....."

The second princess is strangely worried about Firo.

Is it because they are friends?

"For the time being, I'm assuming you are fine with disguising ourselves."

Up until now, we were fine staying hidden as a saint, so it should work out somehow.

"Raphtalia..... can you make yourself look a little shabby, and wear a hat?"

So like this, the princess and I hid ourselves within the carriage while the transformed Firo and disguised Raphtalia took care of passing the village.

"Ah....."

Raphtalia meets the villager's eyes.

"....."

"....."

We pass silently.

"....."

"....."

The metal carriage passes the village as the soldiers watch.

"Wait."

We were halted.

I begin preparing for being found out; we should be able to deal with the people in this village.

"O-okay. What's wrong?"

"The other side of your carriage has a wing mark. It resembles the one on that devil bird....."

"N-no. I'm just a merchant.

"Hou.....May I confirm what is inside?"

This is dangerous.

The soldier puts hand on the door of the carriage.

What to do? I may be fine since I am wearing common clothing and my shield is in the form of a book, but the princess will be recognized immediately.

"Ah!"

The villager who made eye contact with Raphtalia suddenly spoke.

"What's wrong!?"

The soldier turns around to face the villager.

"I heard that someone spotted the Devil of the Shield a while ago over there."

"Really!?"

The villager nods his head.

The soldier starts running towards the direction indicated by the villager.

"Over here."

The villager knocks on the carriage.

"Hurry, before it's too late."

It seems he's going to provide a hiding place for us.

What to do..... the deceived soldier will come back soon and that will be disastrous.

"Please go. I'll stall them here."

Raphtalia senses my hesitation and decides for me.

"But-"

"I planned to do this since the beginning."

Is that so?

The second princess and I get off the carriage, and when we arrive at the house, I cover her with a mantle as the villager guides us.

"There was nothing."

"Huh? Was I wrong?"

"No, you reported as ordered and even gave details. He just got away."

"I see."

The villager finishes deceiving the soldier and he checks the carriage.

"Hmmm.....there are only miscellaneous goods. Is this medicine?"

"Yeah, an adventurer asked me to transport it. Hahaha."

While in disguise, Raphtalia answers with a wry smile.

"I see, well sorry I bothered you."

"No, it's fine."

The soldier leaves to patrol somewhere else.

The villager points Raphtalia in the direction of the inn and she responds obediently.

"Hmm....."

We were peeping from the window of the private house.

I was very nervous.

That was pretty dangerous. If that villager choose not to help us, there would have been an uproar.

"Saint-sama, are you all right?"

"Ah, yeah.....somehow."

"After Saint-sama saved the village, we noticed you were actually the Hero of the Shield-sama."

"And you guys don't condemn me?"

"Condemn!? No way. The saint saved the people of this village. There is no way we would repay kindness with enmity."

".....Are we safe?"

The second princess anxiously asks.

"You're going to side with the devil?"

"We received various things from the Three Heroes church. But, the Devil of the Shield kindly saved us from the disaster that the god of the sword caused."

The fight here was harsh. I also learned various things from this village.

It seems that the village is still recovering from after-effects of the plague.

"Although you might be called a devil, under these circumstances, we would be even worse than devils if we do not repay our favor."

The villager points at the second princess who about to ask.

"This is just a little conspiracy."

"Well it's fine if the princess went willingly."

The princess nods at the villager's words.

"Currently there are those within the country aiming for my life. The Hero of the Shield-sama saved me....."

The villager nods in understanding at the princess's answer.

"I get it. Some of us might be ungrateful though. So you should quickly escape."

".....I know."

"There is a cart in the back that is fully loaded with straw. Please hide in it, and several villagers will carry you to your companion who is at the inn."

"I am grateful."

Thanks to the villagers who carried the cart of hay and distracted the soldier, we rejoined Raptalia.

"As I thought, we are in considerable danger in this carriage. Let's ditch it for something else."

"Gueee!?"

Transformed Firo informs me of her displeasure.

Her neck is shaking back and forth.

"Gue! Gue!"

"We can't help it! Do you want to be found and caught? The second princess, Mel-chan will be killed."

"Gu....."

Firo reluctantly falls silent at the mention of the second princess's life being in

danger.

It seems she has become quite an important friend for her to care this much.....

"You're great, Firo. You can let go of important things for your friend."

"Gue?"

I pat her kindly.

Even if I don't understand what she is saying, she choose correctly.

"After this is over we'll certainly take it back."

"Gue!"

Absolutely. I understand.

"Sorry. Would you mind looking after the carriage here?"

".....Sure."

The villager seems to understand the situation and accepts it.

"I will be very grateful."

"You've already done enough for us."

"I see. Alright second princess, come here and change your clothes. We'll be discovered instantly with what you're wearing now."

"O.....okay."

The second princess doesn't seem very happy about the idea of wearing cheap clothing, but given the situation she has no choice.

It seems that the apprentice's clothing from villager barely fits.

It's probably due to the villager having no children.

Compared to the second princess's usual clothing, now she looks like a shabby little villager.

Albeit a well-bred one since blue hair is only associated with noble-born children.

Well, I can worry about that as we travel. There is no reason to discard her old clothes.

It will be a little awkward to bring it around though.

"Fill the bags with miscellaneous goods."

I put the more valuable things inside the straw cart and cover it.

Anything bulky was given to the villagers.

We should be fine going for two weeks like this. This stuff will be useful for the revival of the village.

"Alright, let's go."

"Okay."

We leave the village quietly and while the villagers see us off.

Well, we were still seen by another villager.

After this, our best bet would be to avoid towns and villages as much as possible.

The wagon made a rumbling sound as we began to run northeast.

If possible, I hope the village won't be punished for helping us.

Firo's Secret

The crackling of the campfire was the only thing that could be heard while we sat around.

There haven't been any enemies so far, but we cannot just take it easy.

In the first place, we are in disguise. From the first glance, it would be hard to tell that I am the Hero of the Shield.

But that's to be expected.

"Ahahahahahaha Firo-chan!"

"Ahahahahahaha!"

The second princess and Firo are running around the clearing without a care in the world.

Pleasant things in life include food, sleep, and a close circle of friends.

Since I participated many times in school events in a country school and excursions to seaside summer houses, I understand how they feel.

Once I became a university student, I also lodged at my friend's house.

But..... To think these two would be so chummy...

It might be because ever since Firo was born, she never had anyone around her age or size to communicate with, so it is understandable.

No, the feeling I'm getting is what an owner feels for their domestic animals.

This second princess is a little surprising though.

I thought that this culture looked down on animals and such.

It might also be how she is coping with this unexpectedly long journey that

she had no say in.

"Don't be too loud! We may be found."

"Okay~"

After replying, they go right back to playing.

Seriously, after Firo made a friend it's gotten very noisy.

"Mel-chan, Firo will show you a treasure."

"Yay!"

After saying so, Firo opens a bag that is concealed within the wagon, and shows the second princess its contents.

I wonder what's in it. I am a little worried.

The treasure of that bird. Is she just collecting the stuff I throw away?

"Master wants to see too~?"

"Ah, yeah."

I approached Firo and took a look inside.

Oh, a piece of a broken sword. Also, trash jewels which I threw away after failing to make them into accessories.

An empty bottle. Glass marbles.

"It's shiny and beautiful!"

"Yeah, it's beautiful."

The second princess is putting on quite a subtle mask.

Well, it's just garbage.

Is it because birds like shiny objects? I heard something like this before, it was an uproar caused by a crow stealing valuables.

This might be related.

Hmm?

"What's this?"

Since there was something strange mixed in the bag, I took it out.

A big brown..... furball? It has the shape of a ball, but it is very soft.

It kind of stinks.

I have a really bad feeling about this.

"That is..... something that came out of Firo's mouth."

It came out of the mouth..... of the bird.

Is this comparable to a cat's hairball? In human terms it's barf.

Bullet of the bird = Vomit.

In other words, the hard objects like bones and whatnot that Firo eats are dissolved into.....this.

"It's finished!"

What is? I just realized I'm still holding onto the hairball.

I threw it away.

"Ah, Firo's treasure!"

"That's not a treasure! That's waste! If I see another one of those in your bag,

I'm throwing it all away!"

"Boo....."

Firo and the second princess seem to have a few subtle exchanges in front of me.

"Hey, Second princess."

"Hm?"

"When Firo changed into her human form, you were not surprised."

"Yup. Because I saw it yesterday."

"I see."

So you already knew.

Well that's good.

Today's dinner is grilled skewers consisting of meat from the demons we encounter.

"Master is good at making food!"

"How is this skewer so delicious!? It's just meat on a stick!"

The second princess eats anything without flinching. It seems my fears of her not eating barbaric cuisine is groundless.

I was expecting her to take a while before she was able to eat this stuff.

My expectations were betrayed. It seems the queen brought her up nicely.

"If it's with Naofumi-sama, we can eat this everyday."

"Yay~!"

"I see, that's good."

Now then, for my spare time. I'm getting quite used to camping out.

Should I study the beginner class magic book and try to learn new magic?

After a few minutes, the second princess and Firo quiet down.

They are probably tired and sleeping.

Raphtalia is going to take a nap.

I can't sleep soundly if Firo or the second princess is watching the fire, and I have to prepare for any night attacks.

"Hmmm....."

Despite it being beginner class, there are various kinds of magic.

There is a ranged version of Fast Guard and Fast Heal.

Though I haven't read the book completely, some beginner class magic was learnt.

I now have magic that will increase offensive ability and speed.

I would like to learn the more difficult spells, but deciphering difficult concepts and grammar is hard.

As the firewood burns, time passes.

While mixing medicine, I am unable to calm down. I haven't advanced much in poison compounding, but I can sort poisonous herbs and understand a few recipes.

There is no time to look for materials though.

"N....."

Raphtalia woke up with an absentminded look.

"Oh? Did I wake you?"

"No.....Do you want to change?"

"If you're fine with it."

"Okay."

Since Raptalia is taking my place, I decided to lay down.

"Umm, Naofumi-sama?"

"What's up?"

"About Firo and Princess Melty....."

Raptalia points towards Firo's Philo Rial · Queen form with trembling fingers.

The second princess's clothes are discarded and lying around Firo, who is sitting alone and rocking back and forth in her sleep.

"Ummmm..."

Based on circumstantial evidence.....Where is the second princess?

There is nothing behind Firo either.....

Even her shoes are there.....Where is her body?

"No way....."

No matter how much of a glutton you are.....

"Naofumi-sama, I don't want to believe it, but it seems you threatening other humans with Firo eating them may not be a bluff....."

"Nonono! No way!"

"But.....Firo is..."

"U....."

Can it be? Did you recognize Friend = Edible partner?

Is that what you meant by wanting to help her no matter what?

"Raphtalia, let's do our best as fugitives."

"Yeah. Our crimes are certain now....."

Seriously, this fat bird does the most outrageous things.

"Funya?"

Firo wakes up and tilts her head.

"Raphtalia Onee-chan? Master? What happened?"

"Firo, where is Princess Melty?"

"Melty-chan? Melty-chan is sleeping within Firo's feathers."

"What? Not inside you?"

This is something that must be verified.

"Melty-chan. Wake up."

Firo lets her feathers on her back stand on end.

"N~?"

It is a strange sight to see, the second princess appearing from within Firo's back.

"What!?"

How is there enough room for a person inside of Firo's feathers?

But it is undeniable that the second princess came out of a strange place.

"Firo-chan How did you do that?"

"Master, did you wake me up to look for Mel-chan? Here she is."

"Firo's back is very warm....."

".....Why did you take your clothes off?"

"Because it's hot."

Ah.....That's not surprising.

"How did you get so deep?"

"Firo-chan's feathers are soft and fluffy, but also mysterious and thick you know? You want to feel it?"

"Ah, yeah."

What the heck is happening in Firo's body?

Since the princess is beckoning, I stretch my hand out.

The princess catches my hand and puts it into one of Firo's feathers.

"Uwaa.....This is quite deep."

I can put my whole arm into her.

As I thought, her temperature is hot.

If the princess snuggles up in here I may not notice.

It seems to only swell a little.

"What the heck is with this bird's structure."

"I know right....."

"Should we examine by plucking all her feathers? I might even make a profit from selling the feathers."

"No~!"

"No roughing up Firo-chan!"

Hmm.....Today it seems I have had a glimpse at the strange anatomy of this bird.

Devilry

Several days later.

Firo is pulling the wagon across the highway, while looking like an ordinary Philo Rial. We are mostly trying to ignore villages and towns, repeatedly camping out at night.

We're almost at the border.

"Gueeee!"

Firo cries in alarm.

Is it an enemy!?

The second princess and I hide in the straw to observe.

"Hehehe, hand over all your money and you may leave."

A familiar-sounding voice.

Why look at that, if it isn't the thief who tried to rob the accessory merchant before.

What is wrong with this guy?

He's seriously going to attack a wagon full of straw?

"Hey! Hurry up and leave all your valuables! Oh? you look pretty famili-"

The bandit's complexion instantly pales after he takes a look at Raphtalia in

disguise.

"You look different."

It's probably not necessary to hide any more, so I jump out of the wagon.

Firo, who senses that it's not necessary to disguise herself, returns to her Philo Rial · Queen form.

"Are you fighting?"

The second princess anxiously asks from the midst of straw.

"Yeah, probably. Don't worry about it."

"Why not? Will we be okay?"

It seems about two thirds of the bandits haven't fought with us before, and most of them look at me with puzzled expressions while the rest turn blue.

"D-D-D-Don't be afraid. Th-This guy has a bounty now. I-If we beat him, we can get it."

He declares while stuttering and trembling.

That's one hell of a stutter.

"Even though I ransacked you last month, you're already back on your feet. Quite quick if I do say so myself."

One of his companions who had a puzzled expression prepares to attack.

"Sh-Shut up! Because of you I'm just a lackey in another group of thieves now!"

"Ah, so you guys merged?"

"The boss has returned to his country!"

"That's great. You should also resign from these types of jobs."

"Sh-Shut up! You're going to get it!"

They all take up their weapons and charge us.

"Firo! Raphtalia!"

"Okay!"

"Okay~!"

I step back to protect the second princess.

Neither Raphtalia nor Firo will lose to thieves of this level.

"Eat this!"

One of the thieves swings his sword at Firo.

"Firo-chan!"

The second princess pops out of the straw, extends her hands, and starts to chant.

What? The second princess can fight?"

"I command the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Blast them with water!"

"Ars •Tzuvait•Aqua Shot!" [4]

Huh?

Water erupts from the second princess's hands and speeds towards the thieves.

Tzuvait. It is an adjective that makes a magic intermediate class. As for Ars, it means multiple magic systems.

"Uge!"

"Gawa!"

"Ugu!"

The thieves near Firo are blown away.

That packs quite the punch.

"I command the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Cut them with blades of water!"

"Tzuvait • Aqua Slash!"

The second princess follows up immediately with another spell.

More water erupts from her hands, but this time instead of a ball of water, blades of water are released.

Somehow, I heard something dangerous.

She missed her target, but the tree that she did hit was cut in half.

"Next.....I'll use....."

She's gasping for breath. It seems to be difficult casting continuously.

"They have a magician! She's also an expert!"

"Firo-chan!"

"Okay~!"

The bandits who are staring at the second princess in surprise are kicked like toys by Firo.

"I'm finished over there."

"Not yet~!"

One of the thieves snuck around us by taking advantage of the confusion, and tried to jump the second princess.

"Air Strike Shield!"

"Argg!"

Right as he jumps, I summon a shield in between them.

"Not yet!"

The remaining thieves start charging at the second princess who is our weakest link.

"Second Shield, Change Shield."

I call another shield to protect her and then I instantly change shields.

I'll just use the Bee Needle Shield this time. They may accidentally die from sustained poison damage, so I'll just stun them with paralysis.

"Ugh,arg....."

One of the thieves is hit by my the second shield and falls down convulsing.

"Still not done yet!"

The first thief who approached the second princess begins to crawl.

"No, it's over."

"Ah....."

A big shadow looms over the thief. It seems he noticed too. I hear crying.

Probably one of thieves crying in resignation.

"I'll help Mel-chan!"

And with a thud, Firo just body slams him.

"You guys know the drill. Tell me where your hideout is."

I ask after tying up all their members.

"We'll never talk-"

"Firo."

"It's over there!"

"H-hey!"

It seems the newbie thieves don't know their position.

"What's wrong?"

One of the thieves who encountered us last time desperately pleas.

"That fat bird will eat us if we don't accept obediently!"

"Are you joking?"

"Does that guy look like he jokes?"

I was surprised as the thief talks.

"Who is that anyway? He used some strange skills and magic."

'Don't you understand!? That's the shield!"

"Eh!?"

The remaining members of the group of thieves all turn blue.

"The devil and his man-eating bird!?"

"That's right! That bird eats everything including the head. I'd rather just get kicked and get away!"

"Please just spare our lives! We'll give you all our property, even the leader's!"

It seems another rumour has been added to my notoriety.....

Raphtalia sighs and face-palms.

"If you tell a lie-"

"I know! so please spare our lives!"

The thieves inform me of their hideout location. Of course, we occupied it with overwhelming combat power.

That day, we spent the night at the bandit hide-I mean inn. And took everything the thieves accumulated.

It was mostly just food. But since we have been living like fugitives recently, and only eating demons, a decent meal was appreciated.

When we entered, the second princess was scared, but after a while she settled down.

Anything that was valuable was collected, and anything that was too troublesome to take was burnt.

Well, if anything is missed and the thieves reclaim it, I don't really care.

I half-smiled at the thieves who were despairing.

They were then rolled out of the hideout.

"Hey second princess, it seems you practice magic."

"Yup. I learnt it for self-defence."

"How much can you use?"

If the second princess joins our party, we could fight better in the future.

"What level are you?"

"Uhhh, I'm level 18..... I can use a few Intermediate class water spells."

That's unexpectedly low. Well, if we're judging by appearance and age, she would be very high leveled.

But intermediate magic huh?

"So you are good with water?"

"Yup."

Her hair is blue. Are they related?

"I can use a little earth magic too."

"Hoh....."

Her repertoire is unexpectedly wide.

"Oh right, does your elder sister use wind magic?"

I would rather not remember her.

I was hit in the back during that duel with wind magic.

Damn, I'm getting irritated just thinking about it. Let's stop.

"Older Sister? she is proud of her fire magic, and uses a little wind."

Oh, it makes sense due to her hair color.

"Your mother is good with fire and water?"

"That's right."

Not that it matters.

"This is probably for the best. For the time being, enter my party."

"Okay."

I don't intend to rely on her.

But this is insurance in the case of an emergency. It would be best if we didn't fight though.

There is always the risk of death.

I don't want to go in a direction that would not require us to rely on the second princess.

"Hey. Why did Hero of the Shield-sama make father so angry?"

"Now that I think about it, I didn't tell you. It all started when your sister framed me-"

That night, I told the second princess everything that trash and bitch did to me. Firo also seemed to be listening to my story for some reason, but she stayed quiet. I did not hide anything or lie, I just told her the truth.

Well, my feelings and grudges were mixed in a little, but I'll just think of it as education.

"Father and Elder sister are cruel! Even though Hero of the Shield-sama said bad things to them I can't complain."

"Right, right."

"Mother even said to value the Hero of the Shield-sama as much as possible."

"What?"

What did you say? Doesn't the religion of this country designate the shield as the devil?

Is the queen different?

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, I'm just wondering what your mother thinks of me."

"Um.....I don't know. But she sent a letter to father telling him to treat all the heroes the same."

I understand the second princess's story a little; it seems the queen was worried this would happen to me.

Oh well, since it all happened anyway thanks to trash.

"Master, a lot of things happened before Firo was born."

"That's right."

"Eh?"

The second princess has a dumbfounded look.

"Uhhh Firo-chan, how old are you?"

"One month and three weeks old."

"Ehh!?"

Being surprised is correct. Her growth was rapid even for a demon.

"Firo-chan is so precocious!"

"Ehehehe.....I was praised."

"You were praised?"

"Then I'm the older sister."

"Well, in the age category. Raphtalia over there is about the same as you."

"Raphtalia onee-chan is....."

Firo looks at Raphtalia with an extremely disappointed expression.

Raphtalia looks at me coldly.

Well, I understand your feelings since the bird said something like that.

"Wh-what?"

"Demi-humans..... even if we are the same age she feels older."

"Well..... I was not allowed to lose."

The atmosphere is delicate.

"Well, despite Raphtalia's age, her appearance suits her."

That would have immediately labelled me as a lolicon.

Also, both the second princess and Firo are children.

Not to mention, Raphtalia became my slave when she was a little girl.

"This is just how things work out."

"Naofumi-sama....."

These three would be considered a Loli-Harem.

I wonder what the other heroes would say.

"Anyway, we'll rest here today and cross the border tomorrow."

""Yay~!""

"Okay!"

Persuasion

"Wow....."

I muttered unintentionally while looking around the checkpoints at the border to the northeast.

The reason I muttered is due to the enormous amount of knights patrolling the border.

Did they bring a whole army for this?

What're you going to do if another country attacks? That trash.....

Well, I was certainly expecting soldiers, but this amount is ridiculous.

"The Devil of the Shield will surely escape to Silt Welt! Do not miss him!"

"Roger!"

So insufferably annoying.....

They are being strict enough with the border patrol that not even ants can escape.

If it were just Raphtalia, Firo, and I, we may be able to break through the front, but now we have to worry about the second princess.

It is probably impossible.

Even if we do charge in from the front, the other Heroes may also be here.....

Well, they shouldn't have recovered completely from the last wave yet though.

Me charging in alone while they try to sneak past is also not going to work.....

However, how did they find out I was going to Silt Welt? They probably figured that would be the most disadvantageous country for them.

Either way, my imagination is running wild.

"What do we do?..... We can't pass the barricade, should we change roads?"

"Impossible....."

The second princess mutters.

"Why would it be impossible?"

"This seems to be an emergency deployment. Warnings will resound once people cross national borders, and soldiers will rush there."

"That's pretty severe....."

I imagine something like an infra-red alarm system. These guys probably have something like this set up along the border.

Even if we just camp on a mountain, it will only be a matter of time before we are discovered.

"Firo, can you evade them while pulling the wagon?"

"They were warned. It is impossible to get away since they have the warning line."

"Hmm..... They are strangely detailed."

"This is my mother's emergency plan, so no expenses were spared since it will be used in emergencies after all."

"It's quite elaborate....."

My Killing intent rises.

Though there is nothing I can do to release it.

"Can't we escape to Silt Welt through another country?"

The closest border is here, and we cannot choose any others.

We ended up bumping to a villager from the neighboring village.

Since we are in disguise, it should be fine. The second princess and I are hiding within the straw.

"Ah....."

Raphtalia and the villager make eye contact and there is a mysterious silence.

"Hero of the Shield-sama. It is dangerous here. I recommend you take a detour."

We were found out immediately?

I must reconsider Raphtalia's disguise.

"Ah, our country has improved a lot thanks to the seed Hero-sama gave us. Thank you."

Now that I look carefully. This guy is from the neighboring country.

Moreover, this guy looks like he's been peddling.

"I think your disguise will be fine if you add a little more dirt. I only recognized you since she is such a beautiful Raccoon Demi-human.

This is my fault. As expected, Raphtalia seems to be one of the better-looking raccoon demi-humans.

Or did she become a celebrity when we were peddling?

In the first place, when I bought Raphtalia, the slave trader said that the raccoon class's appearance is slightly bad.

Since they are very wary, they are able to disguise themselves.

"I'm sorry for everything."

"Don't even think about it. Compared to what Hero of the Shield-sama has done for us, this much is nothing."

I give him some silver in exchange for food.

Our food problem is quite serious due to Firo.

During our fugitive life-style, her stomach rumbled non-stop.

I'm afraid she'll drop in speed.

Our only advantages are Firo's speed and disguise ability.

It is practically our life line against bounty hunters and adventurers on the road.

"Oh a peddler? I want to buy something....."

Oh shit!

A soldier approaches the guy from the neighboring country.

".....Hero of the Shield-sama?"

Shit, we've been discovered by a soldier! Just as I was about to order Firo to silence him and run-

"It's me. I cooperated with Hero-sama during the wave."

Ah, now that I look carefully, he's one of the volunteer soldiers.

That reminds me, after parting with trash, I couldn't follow up on any of the others that came with me to the castle.

I was a little worried, but it seems like they're cooperating with us?

Though at that time I did not know about the story of the Devil of the Shield.

It must have been a considerably hard decision to go through with.

They might even have been demoted.

".....Did you get demoted?"

"No, for some reason there was no blame."

"I see, then you're on border patrol without getting demoted?"

"It's not like that. The majority of the knights are concentrated here."

Just for me!?

Hey hey. Just how much does trash hate me? It seems they really don't want me to go to Silt Welt.

Catching me might not even be their true purpose here though.

There must be something I don't know concerning the country called Silt Welt.

It might not be impossible to proceed after all.

My best hand = Whatever the enemy hates.

I don't know what, but there is certainly something I can exploit here.

"Anyway, It's dangerous here. Please escape as soon as possible."

"I am grateful."

"Don't mention it..... Hero-sama, are you troubled by the fact that we bumped into each other here, and that I recognize you as the Hero of the

Shield-sama?"

.....Certainly.

At the time of the last wave, the other Heroes may have contributed to Glass's withdrawal.

They may consider my abilities above them, but.....

I would be murdered if we encounter again.

In any case, we change Raphtalia's clothes for some even worse ones and plaster her face with mud.

"For the time being, let's get out of here."

"I pray that your suspicions will be cleared up."

After parting with the villager from the neighboring country and the volunteer, we headed south to take a detour.

We had only advanced a little.

According to the volunteer's story, Motoyasu and Itsuki were on their way in a carriage.

.....I barely steal a glance.

One of their magicians seems to be chanting something.

"There! That cart of straw!"

I seriously hope that was not us. Immediately I have a very bad feeling.

Motoyasu and Itsuki rush up to our cart.

Shit! Why are you guys heading here?

It's probably that bastard that used magic.

I suppose it's some analysis magic.

I brush off the straw and jump off the wagon. Firo sensed the situation and returned to her Philo Rial · Queen form.

"So it was you after all!"

To they they were so close. Ren also appears.

Shit..... Can this situation get any worse?

"We found you! Free princess Melty!"

Itsuki points at me like he's some messenger of justice and makes a provoking face.

"Release what? I'm not restraining the second princess."

"Stop playing dumb, we have evidence!"

"That's right. You have no justice."

"Justice.....huh?"

Are the knights acting based on justice during the wave?

The reality is, everyone has their own sense of justice.

Wait..... If I think carefully this guy's sense of justice is very straightforward.

Back in the castle town, Ren was worried about the village of plague, while Itsuki just wasted my time on his useless justice impression.

Can I use this?

Well, there is no way they will believe me but I might as well try.

It will still be worth it trying to explain it once and the matter gets settled.

In other words, if I can turn their sense of justice against each other, we may get out of this yet.

An evil plot is hatched.

It is one of the situations that game enthusiasts long for.

If it works, this will make them doubt the country.....

"Are you guys saying that what you believe in is truly justice?"

"What are you saying?"

"The second princess is here without any injuries."

I show the heroes the second princess while maintaining readiness to defend from any attacks.

The second princess looks at me anxiously, and nods.

"Hero of the Sword-sama, Hero of the Spear-sama, Hero of the Bow-sama. The Hero of the Shield-sama is innocent. Rather, he has saved my life."

The second princess is not speaking with her usual childish tone, but rather with the authority of an authentic princess.

The expressions of those 3 visibly change.

In fact, they are just finding out they were used for evil.

Since these guys are basically lumps of justice, this will be extraordinarily disgraceful.

"Please believe me. There is a big conspiracy hidden behind this."

"But why did Princess Melty go to this guy?"

"I just asked him to protect my life."

The second princess explains what happened to them.

"Isn't it unnatural? Who would profit if the Hero of the Shield-sama kidnaps me?"

"Th-That's....."

Are you trying to look for a reason?

Your eyes are swimming.

"But, this guy is-"

"Did the country Merlot Mark not give the Hero of the Shield-sama different treatment?"

"Certainly....."

"In the first place Mother was saying. When the time of misfortune comes, the people must join hands and unite to repel it..... There is no room for the Hero-samas to be fighting each other. Please lower your weapons."

The 3 heroes weaken their grips on their weapons and stood down.

Though they are still wary.

They were defeated in the last fight after all.

As the second princess said, we need to train together and get stronger.

If we are going to fulfill our missions as Heroes, we cannot just increase our levels. Both our weapons and levels must be sufficient.

"Do you understand? This is a conspiracy. I will tell you everything that I know. Whether or not you decide to fight will be up to you."

After I say so the bitch steps forward.

"Do not listen to the words of the Devil of the Shield!"

Shit! You bitch, I was just about to explain our circumstances.

What should I say.

In the first place is she even worried about her younger sister?

"The latest incident is already solved! the Devil of the Shield used powerful brainwashing on the second princess!"

Common Destiny

"Ah.....Melty.....To think you would be brainwashed by the Devil of the Shield..."

"Elder Sister?"

The second princess gives the bitch a look of astonishment.

That bitch.....

This is absolutely disgusting.

What kind of shield can brainwash? If I had such a thing, I wouldn't be having such a hard time. To think she would claim I brainwashed someone without even flinching...

I mean, the purpose of religion is brainwashing.

What a joke.

"Does the wicked shield possess the power to brainwash? It seems fake....."

"I don't know if you have heard, but this was a suspicion of the church's from a month ago."

That's when I started peddling.

Selling medicine to sick people was my priority back then.

After that, rumors of me being the saint of the holy bird started spreading.

Indeed, that cannot be a coincidence. It turned out to be convenient for the church in various ways.

"This situation proves it. Were you guys not being clouded by the information he provided? And also about to help him? Is it common to help out criminals?"

"Some of the countrymen are also acting strange. If the Hero of the Shield can make an old grandmother energetic, he also might be capable of brainwashing."

That grandmother.....I instantly know who that is.

However, don't I have a say in this? These guys.....

It is true that a lot of people have helped me recently.

However, that's just repaying me for saving them.

What I don't know = The enemy's strategy.

These guys are also stupid enough to believe it.

"He is probably brainwashing his companions to talk for him too. We are currently preparing some church authorized personnel with the power to remove the brainwashing."

"What kind of power is that!?"

No one reacts to my retort

No, Raphtalia, Firo, and the second princess are also dumbfounded.

Let's think about this situation. The government is ordering the country to gather information, and also placing a high bounty on me. A lie that I have the power to brainwash was fed to the three heroes by the bitch, and she also has convincing fake evidence. Is that it?

Realistic forgeries. That's not impossible.

"Is the Hero of the Shield-sama that powerful?"

The second princess looks at me anxiously.

"Do I look like that to you?"

"Umm.....I don't think so."

"I kind of hoped for an immediate answer."

I wouldn't be struggling so hard if I had such a convenient shield.

If I can brainwash the soldiers, knights, magicians, and villagers, I could just become the lord.

I need to defend myself in this situation.

In other words, though this was arranged when they put that bounty on my head, the authenticity that the shield can brainwash is doubtful to say the least.

Do you goddamn heroes not understand something so simple?

"So Raphtalia-chan and Firo-chan are being brainwashed forcefully by that guy!"

"You're wrong! We're not brainwashed!"

"We'll rescue you!"

"Firo wants to be with master!"

Motoyasu you bastard, still not giving up on Firo and Raphtalia yet!?

Just how much do you like women?

"We've heard enough! Hand over the second princess!"

"Eh!?"

The second princess was surprised to gasp.

".....Will you tell us what happened?"

Ren takes the lead and asks. This is a volatile situation. I want to avoid wrong choices as much as possible.

"In the first place I have no such power as brainwashing-"

"I do not believe it!"

"Shut up! You're annoying, Shogun!"

Since Itsuki prevented me from explaining I told him to shut up.

Aren't you a hypocrite deciding on right and wrong only after you get one-sided information?

"Anyway, this is a conspiracy. The King, that woman over there, or the church attempted to assassinate the second princess and frame me for it."

".....I understand what you said. We'll just have to take you into custody first. I promise not to harm your companions. Just wait till the inspection is complete."

"You actually believe it!?"

"That's right!"

"Hero of the Sword-sama! Don't listen to the words of the devil!"

"I would rather end this without fighting. The truth can be confirmed later."

As expected Ren is the only one staying calm in this situation and analysing.

.....Should I consider it?

".....No."

The second princess clenches my hand tightly and begs.

She is trembling and her face is pale.

"I will most likely be murdered....."

I confirm the surrounding situation.

The second princess probably will receive treatment different from us.

Since in order to remove the brainwashing, the second princess will be subjected to magic by magicians of this country.

And what happens will be as follows: A brutal curse will be removed from the second princess, but she will die because of its power.

Such a scenario will play out.

Ren will surely believe it and I will be branded the culprit.

The possibility that this is an event orchestrated by Bitch to frame me is very high.

To even aim for your younger sister.....

"Help....."

A small voice could be heard.

There is also no way to prove my innocence.

Sigh.....

"Didn't I promise?"

"Eh?"

During that day I was falsely accused to rape. Nobody believed me.

And now this matter concerns the life and death of the second princess.

Brainwashing..... what a convenient plot used by those that want to kill the second princess.

This is too obvious.....

Even I know that much.

The second princess's death means our defeat.

We definitely have a common destiny. Who would trust an untrustworthy person?

"Too bad. You cannot be trusted. Even if the second princess is handed over I will still be screwed. I promised her that I would absolutely protect her."

I place the second princess on Firo's back and tell Raphtalia to get on as well.

"Firo, I know you hate it, but abandon the wagon and run!"

"Okay~!"

"See ya."

I also jump on and Firo takes off.

"Ah, wait-"

"Okay let's go-!"

We are instantly 7 meters away. As I expected, Firo's leg strength is truly fearsome.

But those three aren't falling behind and keep pace.

"You think you can escape!?"

Itsuki shoots magic arrows at us.

"Air Strike Shield! Second Shield!"

I turn around and chant the skills. Blocking the attacks aimed at us.

The shield shattered with a loud crack, but the attacks have been neutralized.

"You won't escape!"

Itsuki's starts to prepare another arrow.

I cannot use the shield any more due to cooldown time.

"Eagle Piercing Shot!"

Itsuki's arrow glows after being shot and flies straight at us.

What the hell? The one you should be protecting, the second princess, is here too. Why are you using such a strong skill!?

While riding on Firo, I am forced to change my posture to receive the arrow.

"Master, are you okay?"

Firo supports me so that I don't fall over.

"That arrow..... Firo! It's coming!"

"Yeah, it's very fast."

The arrow which Itsuki shot is fast enough to catch up to the light-footed Firo.

At first glance I understand that it's a lump of energy. This doesn't look like a beginner skill.

I change my shield to the Chimeric Viper Shield and prepare.

I hope I can endure this.

I stare at the lump of energy. Then, I see an arrow.

It's flying fast and in a straight line.

.....Can it be done? Firo might fall over from the impact if I take it badly.

No.....Judging by the name of the skill, this is meant for penetrating.

Because I played a fair amount of Net Games, the names of bow system attacks aren't unfamiliar.

This arrow is meant to pierce a hole right through me.

It is a skill used specifically since I am here, with such high efficiency.

Then it's not possible to receive this arrow.

Can't be helped..... the only way to escape this penetration attack is to either get out of range or to catch it.

Can I do it? If I fail, this will be dangerous.

Seriously, you guys totally forgot about the second princess right?

.....I start to focus.

I intensely concentrate on the flying attack, and while lightly putting my hand over its energy, I catch the arrow by its shaft just before it reaches me!

"What!? He caught my Eagle Piercing Shot with his hand!?"

Itsuki responds to my action by expressing his shock.

The shot of energy is unexpectedly weak; I just dispersed the power and caught the arrow.

"Wait!"

Ugh! Ren and Motoyasu catch up and take out their weapons.

I had to make some unnecessary movements to catch Itsuki's arrow and just barely stop falling off.

Our speed fell a bit as a result.

To think that they would have companions that could catch up...

"I do not want to attack Firo-chan! This is all your fault--Gefu!"

"Hindrance."

Firo stomps Motoyau in the face. Was it that unexpected?

This isn't the time now. Ren aims his sword at me.

Dokun.....

The shield pulsates, and I unconsciously stretch my right hand towards Ren's sword.

Fresh blood scatters and pain runs through my hand.

Why!? It is different from what I expected. Ren's eyes do not shift, as if he's being manipulated by something.

My shield suddenly glows red, and black flames are fired at Ren.

"Wh--"

This was probably unpredictable. Ren desperately defends with his sword.

Is that Dark Curse Burning? Did the core of the dragon killed by Ren react and counter attack from the shield?

To think the shield would change without permission and flash red!

Dokun.....Dokun.....

Oh shit. It would be impossible for Firo to run away from here if the shield of anger comes out.

"Raphtalia, give me your hand....."

"Yes? Naofumi-sama!? You are injured!"

An anxious Raphtalia looks at me with concern and stretches out her hand.

The pulsations settled down and subside.

"Firo are you okay? Escape as fast as possible!"

"Okay~!"

Firo regains her balance and runs at full power.

We lose the heroes in no time.

After that, Firo ran at full power till she was exhausted.

"We should be safe for a while here."

"Yeah, Firo-chan is fast~!"

"Firo is a little tired."

"That's fine.....but we lost all our luggage and our wagon."

"Can't be helped."

I have some stuff on me: portable rations, money, a knife, and simple cooking utensils.

But we lost Raphtalia's armour.....

I feel uneasy. I think it's showing on my expression.

"Since we did not cross the border, what will we do now?....."

We can probably run around the country aimlessly.

But we have to at least try to get to Silt Welt by a detour route.

We'll continue our fugitive lifestyle.

By the way, I cured the injury with a Fast Heal.

Shadow

We are travelling south along the border, searching for any gaps within the border patrol.

Motoyasu is extremely annoying. He's been chasing us ever since.

There hasn't been any situations where we were truly in danger since that one back at the border thanks to Firo's swift running.

The strange thing is that there has been no sign of either Ren or Itsuki.

Did they give up? Or are they laying an ambush somewhere?

In the first place, trying to accuse me of brainwashing was irrational. Did they lose interest in this event and go back to leveling? I would understand if Ren gave up since he was already skeptical, but was it good luck for us that Itsuki is also nowhere to be found?

On the contrary, Motoyasu is way too persistent.

Either way, it is fortunate since his attacks aren't as strong as Ren's and he doesn't have any ranged attacks like Itsuki.

To be honest, Motoyasu seems more interested in Firo than actually bringing the second princess back.

Still, problems are piling up nonstop.....

"What should we do?....."

It is irresponsible to just pass every day being disgruntled, so I must consider what we should do.

Border patrol is too strict. Isn't there somewhere we can sneak over?

Living as a fugitive everyday won't solve anything, and my life is over when the next wave arrives.

In this case, recklessly crossing the border may not actually be a bad idea.

As it stands, our names will never be cleared. Those chasing me may also avoid Silt Welt.

That night, we discussed our course of action over the campfire.

Since Firo is stupid, she is not listening.

The second princess and Raphtalia had some reaction, but that was to be expected.

"It might be a little tough, but if we want to break through, then here is our best bet."

It would be hard to pull off. But as long as the other heroes don't interfere, my defense should be able to break through.

"You're right, we won't last if we continue escaping like this....."

"Yeah....."

"Mel-chan!"

Firo returns to her human form and starts playing with the second princess.

Kan!

Hm? I heard a strange sound coming from the scruff of my neck.

What? It's not painful but.....

I immediately turn around, and see a needle fall down.

"Master, enemies!"

"What?"

Was that a blow dart just now?

Or was it something Itsuki fired?

I cannot confirm anything due visibility since it's night time.

"I didn't notice until he attacked."

"What?"

Bofun!

A bunch of darts fly out of nowhere and Firo expands her wings to cover the second princess.

Can Itsuki even fire so many at once?

No, Leaving that aside!

The main usage of blowdarts are to apply poisons. Firo and I will be fine due to our poison resistance, but it will be dangerous if Raphtalia or the second princess get hit.

I have no idea what kind of poison they are using either.

If I know what poison they are using, I can make an antidote.

There were a bunch of antidotes in the wagon and carriage too.....

But I can't treat anyone in these conditions!

"Ah....."

I turn my gaze to Raphtalia. At that moment, a blowgun dart aimed at her appears.

"Air St-

I shout for Air Strike Shield in haste, but I don't know if I can make it.

Immediately, a high-pitched screech is heard and the dart was stopped.

"That was dangerous degojaru."

Suddenly, someone in jet-black clothes appears and defends Raphtalia.

His face is covered by cloth so I can't see it.

I can't tell if his voice is male or female. Who is that? A ninja? Degojaru?

"Hurry up and flee degojaru!"

In the shadows of the trees and bushes, fighting could be heard.

"Hero of the Shield-dono, leave this to us and run away degojaru. Wait for me after you have escaped, I want to talk with you degojaru."

"What is going on!?"

"There is no time to explain right now, I'll do it later degojaru!"

"Tch! Firo, Raphtalia, Second Princess!"

"Okay~"

"Yeah."

"U-understood!"

While riding on Firo, blow darts were flying around us.

"Do you know who that person was?"

"I think so, that is probably my mother's secret guard corps....."

Explains the second princess while we were getting away.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I know the person who helped Raphtalia-san. She is my mother's body double."

"Now that I think about it, her way of speaking is familiar."

Is she that woman I passed in the hallway after parting with trash?

Her behavior and appearance left a strong impression.

"So what exactly is going on? We got ambushed, but we have no idea who did it."

I would say it was Itsuki, but that guy should not be capable of such things.

Judging by his character, he would confront me head on.

"Assassination corps of the country.....maybe."

"There's an assassination corps?"

Now that's dangerous. Well, places where the nobles and kings completely trust each other do not exist.

That leads to a great deal of problems being handled behind closed doors.

It's quite simple actually.

"Though in reality they are the same as the secret guard corps....."

"You guys have separate assassination corps?"

".....I don't know"

"I see....."

I guess there's no choice but to hear from someone who knows.

After running a certain distance on Firo, we prepared and waited in case of more enemies.

"Hmm?"

Firo reacts immediately.

"Here it comes."

Suddenly, the ninja-like person appears in front of me.

"Sorry for the wait degojaruna."

"Ah don't worry about it. Thanks to you we got away safely."

"First of all, I should introduce myself degojaruga..... Have you already heard from Princess Melty degojaruka?"

"I heard you are a body double. And you are either from the secret guard crops or some assassination unit."

"That is not entirely correct degojaru. We are the special duty corps of the country, and our aliases is [Shadow] degojaru."

"I see."

"By the way, I do not have a name degojaru. I believe shadow shall suffice degojaru."

Shadow, huh..... Trying to sound cool?

I wonder if it's just the difference between my world and the inhabitants of this world.

Since there are ninjas, I'm reminded of the Showa era.

"So, who did you fight?"

"Shadows of the country and church degojaru."

"Aren't you from the same organization?"

"The organization is not unified degojaruyo. There are factions within the organization that are fighting each other degojaru."

There are so many things wrong with that, but I'll refrain from commenting for now.....

"Why did you help us?"

Since that's what I'm most curious about, I'll ask.

I have a few guesses, but none are concrete.

"I cannot answer that degojaru."

"I see. Are you sworn to secrecy?"

"All I will say is that this one works as Princess Melty's guard degojaru."

"I don't believe that."

She didn't even show up when the second princess was being attacked.

"I did not appear because I knew the Hero of the Shield-dono could protect her degojaru."

"You bastard....."

That means she knew but stayed silent.

Although, she seems fairly competent.

"Originally I was somewhere else with her majesty the queen, but I was ordered to watch over Hero of the Shield-dono degojaru."

The self-named shadow shows a map and points.

What she was pointing at was the neighboring country to our southwest. The opposite direction of Silt Welt.

"Right now, her Majesty the Queen is there degojaru. Since this country is in the opposite direction of Silt Welt where Hero of the Shield-dono is escaping to, patrols are scarce degojaru."

"Oh....."

For some reason, I feel that if I run away to the country to Demi-humans I would receive some recognition.

It occurred to me that there may be something in the country of Demi-humans that believes in the shield, similar to how this country believes in the Three Heroes Church.

I can probably safely go into exile there in cases like this, and it would be very bad for trash.

Though since they are putting so many resources to guard the border, that it makes it impossible to break through.

This distance can be covered by Firo in two and a half weeks, but it will be hard to advance since the other heroes are anticipating it.

Even though we have to take a detour, I want to go.

"This latest case has many things behind it degojaru. I will cooperate with Hero of the Shield-dono as much as possible degojaru."

"What do you mean?"

"Right now, the higher-ups of the Three Heroes Church are discussing about the activities of Hero of the Shield-dono degojaru. So I had no choice but to

move and inform you degojaruyo."

"Hmm.....So in other words, they had a reason to maintain that farce of claiming I have the power to brainwash."

My activities recently consisted mostly of selling medicine and helping people who were in trouble.

However, as a result of those actions I solved problems that the other heroes have caused.

It seems that due to these events, people are starting to question the legend of the Hero of the Shield spread by the church.

If they can prove that I am capable of large-scale brainwashing, then the people's faith in the Church would be restored.

But won't it also mean that if I can prove my innocence, the Three Heroes Church will receive a devastating blow?

"What should we do degojaru? If you are planning on going to Silt Welt, would you require help degojaruka?"

"That's....."

Giving someone else a difficult job and relaxing myself is not one of my hobbies. Even if I do just escape, when the wave comes I'll be summoned into the midst of enemies.

That's very inconvenient.

The church, The bitch, and the trash king will all want to capture and torture me.

Rather than going into exile recklessly, and then getting summoned into a trap, this might be more effective.

If this goes well, my remaining days here will be easy.

But.....

"What would the queen gain from helping me? The Three Heroes Church may get destroyed."

"I cannot answer that degojaru."

Shadow is only giving me answers about the queen, but not what I should do next. Though she is certainly the queen's subordinate.

The second princess is someone we both need to protect, and since she is a subordinate of the queen, I cannot do anything that might disadvantage her.

As far as I am concerned, meeting the queen would be more beneficial for me.

Frankly, I cannot see what the queen's goal is.

From what I can make out of the second princess's speech and behavior, her goal would be to prevent wars between this country and another.

Furthermore, she understands what is happening to me, due to the deep-rooted and crazy legends in this country about the devil of the shield.

The shadow also said, "I want to cooperate".

It seems the queen does not share the same views as the Three Heroes Church.

That is just a safe line though.....

Hmm..... Perhaps she isn't my enemy.

Though it is also doubtful whether or not she can be called a friend, it is still better than my current hand and the present conditions.

"You saved Raptalia, so I'll hear you out. Do I only have to meet the queen?"

This is nothing but a farce, and I don't really have any choice but to willingly participate.

"I don't like the idea of acting based on someone else's ideas, but it seems to be for the best. But if you deceive me....."

"I know degojaru. Then I'll leave at once degojaru. We don't know when the shadows on the church's side may show up degojarukara."

After saying so, she disappeared instantly.

Though my last words were a joke, it seems to have been taken seriously.

"Can we trust her?"

Honestly, I am slightly suspicious.

"It's alright..... because mother trusts her."

"I can't understand your mother....."

Though at least her thinking seems to be different from both trash and bitch.

So far, all I have is that she seems to be friendly, but that is only based on information from shadow and the second princess. Her true purpose still remains unknown.

I also cannot deny that this could all be another a plot to assassinate the second princess by the Three Heroes Church.

I have no other choices, so if this is a conspiracy by the queen to kill me, I am doomed.

In the end, we advance in the opposite direction of Silt Welt.

I do not want to believe it, but there is also a chance that the second princess was truly abandoned.

But, it is necessary to know the queen's agenda.

I cannot just view this situation as black and white any longer.

"Anyway, I have decided on our destination."

"Okay. Let's go."

"All right. Let's go. Firo-chan."

"Firo will do her best!"

We have taken a step from escaping abroad aimlessly.

Now we will set a course towards the southwest.

Names

We changed our course and advanced southwest.

Since we have been riding on Firo for a while without a wagon, I'm getting cramps.

"Is there a cart somewhere that we can steal?"

Since I already have a bounty. It's just a wagon.....

"Noo~!"

Firo seemed to have a reaction to that

"Firo won't pull a cart that is stolen."

Is this perhaps some Philo Rial sense of justice?

"Stealing aside, it's quite uncomfortable to ride Firo for a long time."

"Does the second princess also think so?"

"Ummm....."

The second princess gives me an unpleasant look and avoids my question.

What's wrong?

"Even though it will be dangerous, maybe we could have Raphtalia buy a wagon in a village....."

It would be nice to just have something to ride in.

Should I ask that shadow?

"Oops, it looks like nightfall soon. Shall we take a break?"

Just as we were about to rest.

""Gua!""

A wild Philo Rial A appeared!

A wild Philo Rial B appeared!

A wild Philo Rial C appeared!

The Philo Rials saw Firo and raised their voices.

They look familiar. Ah, they're the ones that ran away immediately before.

Somehow, these Philo Rial have the expressions of those determined to complete their mission, but after a while they run away again.

"What's that?"

"How rare, being able to encounter Philo Aria and Firiru classes in the wild."

The second princess seems to be looking at those Philo Rial with entranced expressions.

"I've this suspicion for a while now, but second princess, you really like Philo Rials right?"

"Yup! Ah....."

After the second princess nodded, she looked at me with an unpleasant face.

Just what did I say?

Gu.....

Firo's stomach growls.

"I'm hungry."

"Do not eat each other."

"Firo-chan is such a glutton."

The second princess pokes Firo with her fingers.

"Ehehe."

It's good that they are close, but their behavior is a little disgusting.

Like some idiot couples.

I finish preparing the campfire and start cooking.

"Hey, second princess."

I give her today's dinner, but she refuses it with a frown.

What on earth did I say?

"Mel-chan doesn't want to eat?"

"I'll eat. But....."

The second princess seems to be at a loss.

What is going on?

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

When Raphtalia asks, the second princess picks up her dinner.

"What's wrong Mel-chan?"

"Um....."

Firo asks the second princess and she shows a troubled face.

"I don't have the power to brainwash you know."

"That's not it!"

The second princess turns away and pouts.

Her usual attitude doesn't change. She happily chats with Firo's human form and, talks with Raphtalia happily.

But for some reasons she only gives me an unpleasant face, or just ignores me.

I can't understand at all.

After finishing our meal, I heard a few strange cries in the distance.

"The cry of a Philo Rial!"

The second princess strains her ears to listen carefully.

"The second princess really likes Philo Rials huh."

"Yup!"

"Why do you like them so much?"

When the second princess noticed I asked the question, she gave me another unpleasant look.

Another Philo Rial cry is heard.

"Because.....Philo Rials are legendary holy birds....."

"Legendary?"

"Yes. It is a common belief that Philo Rials are companions of Heroes that save people from demons in the olden times."

"That so?"

"Yes, in the past during another wave of calamity, the heroes used them as mounts."

"There were waves back then?"

Since it was something I heard from trash, I disregarded it.

However, there was a prophecy of the wave.

I wonder if that was it. Glass also said that thinking of the wave as a simple disaster was a big mistake.

Though I don't know if I'll get an answer, I might be able to get some hints from the second princess's story.

"When travelling with mother, she told me the story of Philo Rials."

"Interesting.....What stories?"

"You see, Philo Rials are the mounts of heroes, their support, and also their protectors."

"Right now Firo here is the same."

Raphtalia answers while looking at Firo.

Certainly, Firo is the cornerstone of our offensive power. Her legs are fast and strong.

Without Firo, earning money through peddling would have been very difficult. Not to mention our lives right now as fugitives are only possible thanks to her.

"Yes. The legends also describe the Queen of Philo Rials."

"Is that so?"

"Umm, the Queen of Philo Rials was also a hero's mount, and she helped them fight against the wave. It is said that the Queen of Philo Rials who also participated in the wave at that time is still alive and watching over the world to this day."

Did I just use such a legend as a substitute horse?

That also explains the reason why Firo was called a holy bird.

"You see, my dream is to one day meet the Queen of Philo Rials."

The second princess embraces Firo affectionately while saying so.

"The Queen of Philo Rials. They are capable of various transformations."

"Well, Firo is probably also a Queen of Philo Rials. She has all kinds of transformation abilities too."

"That's right! And since I could become friends with Firo-chan, my dream was realized."

Second princess, is that the reason you wanted to become friends with Firo?

"Queen, huh....."

Incidentally I start thinking about the second princess's mother.

I don't know what kind of persons she is, but if possible I would like to have a talk with her and ask about the story.

Since she is also a parent of that bitch. Half in expectation, half in resignation, according to degojaru's story.....I have to admit she does seem to be a good person.

Hmm?

I have a feeling there was some sense of incongruity just now.

I compare Firo with the second princess.

"Ahh, so that's what it was."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, according to legend, the Queen of Philo Rials is still alive now. Does that make Firo a princess of the Philo Rials?"

"Eh, so are you saying Firo-chan is not the Queen?"

"Who knows. Though there is no way to prove that the actual Queen still exists, right?"

As if the second princess understood something, she shook her head.

"Then are you saying that my dream of meeting the queen still hasn't been fulfilled?....."

"Did I say something bad?"

"No. Just that I would like to meet her some day."

"What do you want to do after meeting her?"

"I want to be friends!"

"I see I see, when the time comes I'll help you out, second princess. After the world becomes peaceful, you can search for her together with Firo."

"What about Master~?"

"I'm going back to my own world."

There is no reason to remain in this world, and if I had the choice I would go without hesitation.

Though I do not say that.

"No~! Firo wants to go with Master!"

"No, There's no way people of this world can come."

"I want to go! I want to go!"

"Endure it. Because the second princess will be your new master."

"No~!"

Oh my, its gotten quite noisy.

"Really.....Naofumi-sama will leave if it becomes peaceful."

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Nothing....."

Raphtalia mutters while looking at the campfire with deadpan eyes.

"----Don't call me that!"

"Hm? Second princess, what's wrong?"

The second princess seems to be talking about something while trembling.

"What did you say?"

"Stop calling me the second princess!"

While looking at me with tears in her eyes, the second princess shouts.

"What is with you suddenly?"

"The second princess is not a name! I am Melty!"

"What? Isn't that obvious?"

"Why does the Hero of the Shield-sama not call me by my name!?"

It seems the stress from the journey has finally exploded.

Raphalia and Firo were just as surprised as I was and looked at the second princess with eyes of bewilderment.

"How many times do I have to say it!? My name is Melty! However, Hero of the Shield-sama just keeps calling me second princess, second princess! That's not my name, that's a position!"

"What? Did you just want me to call you by your name?"

"That's not what I mean! Why is Hero of the Shield-sama ostracizing me!?"

"Ostracized? Well, you are an outsider from the party after all."

"But we are friends sharing joys and sorrows now! Don't just call me by my position!"

"Hmm.....But don't you call me Hero of the Shield?"

I can say the same about this second princess.

My name is not Hero of the Shield.

"Then I'll call you Naofumi in the future. So Naofumi has to call me by my name too!"

"Haah....."

"Hey! Call my name! Naofumi!"

To call me by my first name without even adding honorifics.

Though if I don't reply she is going to become even noisier.

Since I am troubled that there may be night-attacks despite camping out, I don't want to make too much noise.

In the first place..... the second princess even calls Raphtalia with honorifics.

But I remember the bitch calling my name with "sama".

That bitch called me Hero-sama, but.....

Well, this is probably alright.

"Fine. Melty. Is this fine?"

"You better remember it!"

"Yeah, Yeah."

Was she just displeased recently because I was calling her the second princess? Such a troublesome fellow. Or is it because she's a girl?

"Firo was surprised."

Yeah. Firo is noisy, but she's not hysterical.

Is it just noisiness peculiar to children?

Though for Firo it's fine, since her age is correspondingly short.

"So Princess Melty did mind it."

Raphtalia.....How did you know?

My name was called without me noticing.

"Since you helped me, give me your hand."

Since she insisted, I shook her hands.

Her fighting style is reliable, but unlike Firo, it has good affinity with me who uses a shield.

She can help with my business when peddling, and it should be easy for her to disguise herself.

"Are you praising me?"

"Is there something wrong?"

"Seriously....."

Why does Raphtalia looked troubled?

I feel like something strangely annoying happened.

"Well, should we sleep early to get ready for tomorrow?"

"Understood."

"Okay~"

"Uh huh."

Legend of the Holy Bird

Several days after I changed the way I addressed the second princess to 'Melty', we have been making considerable progress in the opposite direction of Silt Welt, and all thanks to Firo.

Setting that aside...

Recently, we have been encountering a lot of wild Philo Rial. ^[5]

At night, their calls remind me of howling wolves in the distance, and it is very annoying, especially in the middle of the night.

'Is there a Philo Rial habitat around here?' I wondered while trying to sleep. <For this chapter, to distinguish thoughts from observations, I put thoughts into 'thoughts'. Please, do not confuse the --'thought'-- with the --"dialogue"--. </ref> It was midnight then, and I was sleeping when suddenly-

???: ""Gua~!""

Naofumi: "Firo, shut up."

Firo: "It's not Firo."

That was fairly close to us though, so if it wasn't Firo then what was it?

Are there more wild Philo Rials nearby?

Raphtalia: "Umm.....Naofumi-sama? I just heard a lot of Philo Rial cries."

I notice another cry, and this one is quite near.

Naofumi: "Thanks for reminding me. Firo, do you know how many there are?"

Firo: "I don't know."

Naofumi: "Are they far off?"

Firo: "Well, they are coming."

Naofumi: "What?"

Raphtalia: "What?"

We look at Firo with strained expressions.

Naofumi: "Be cautious."

Firo: "Everyone said they are coming to meet with Firo."

Naofumi: "Are they speaking to you with this cry!?"

Firo: "Yep."

She nodded. I felt uneasy at the large amount of Philo Rial cries that could be heard.

Slowly, all the bushes around us start rustling, and the tall silhouettes of Philo Rials become visible.

"What the hell is going on!?"

Melty: "Waa.....There are so many Philo Rial!"

Melty's eyes start to shine as she watches the Philo Rial.

Naofumi: "Umm, Melty. Listen well because I'll teach you something important."

Melty: "What is it?"

Naofumi: "Philo Rials eat everything. Firo and I may be alright, but if these wild Philo Rial attack, you and Raphtalia will be eaten."

Melty: "What are you saying Naofumi. Philo Rials are gentle demons. There is no way they would do something like that."

It's hard to keep a straight face after all that.

Naofumi: "Shit..... I won't get to the neighboring country to meet the queen anytime soon, if joke-like developments with wild demons are going to constantly happen."

The next thing I know, the Philo Rial stop hiding and in a moment surround us.

There are way too many to count.

A bunch of the Philo Rial eyes are glowing in the darkness too.

There are Philo Rial as far as the eye can see.

What on earth is happening?

Maybe this is a territorial dispute between Philo Rial?

But Firo shouldn't be able to understand the concept of territory.

Firo could be recognized as an extremely high ranked Philo Rial; 'Did they come thinking that she is a danger?

However, since Firo didn't give us a warning cry, this may be different.

Or rather..... Did they come to scout Firo into their group?

There is a possibility that that is what's happening.

Alright, let's go with that.

Naofumi: "Firo, I hope you find happiness with these guys."

Raphtalia: "What are you saying suddenly, Naofumi-sama!?"

Melty: "Firo-chan is going to leave!?"

Naofumi: "We can't help it. These guys came to pick up Firo."

Melty: "Really!?"

Firo: "Separating from Master? No~!"

'Firo, don't you understand the situation?'

'It's already too late. If we don't give up Firo here, we'll be mobbed by a large amount of Philo Rials.'

Naofumi: "Do your best for us, and for these guys. Firo."

'After this situation is solved, I'll have to go buy a new Philo Rial. I hope the next one won't be so annoying.'

Firo: "No~!"

While we were bantering.

""Gua~!""

The group of Philo Rial just divided into two like that one scene from Moses and the Red Sea.

'What the hell?'

"Gua~!"

From the divide, one Philo Rial walks leisurely towards us. It is also pulling some luxurious carriage.

..... There are jewels fitted onto that carriage.

'I think I've seen some of those jewels before.....Where was it?'

I suddenly look at the shield.

There is a jewel that looks the same as those on the carriage.

""Gua!""

A group of Philo Rials salute and bowed towards the Philo Rial that is pulling the carriage.

Rattlerattle, the Philo Rial pulling the carriage stops before us.

Firo: "Wow..... that is cool. I'm jealous!"

Firo's eyes are sparkling as she watches the carriage.

'I hate it. It's such an upstart carriage.'

'If I had the choice, I'd rather not ride something like that.'

"Gua!"

The rope that connected the Philo Rial with the wagon came off and it stepped forward.

Another Philo Rial walked up to the rear.

Naofumi: "What's that? What's going to happen?"

"Gueeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

When the Philo Rial surrounding the carriage calls out, the surrounding plants start glowing green and wind arises.

Melty: "Ah.....did they put up a barrier!?"

Naofumi: "Barrier?"

Melty's voice is full of surprise.

Melty: "Yes. Naofumi, doesn't it look brighter? From a distance all you would see is fog."

I pay more attention to the group of Philo Rial.

There doesn't seem to be anything like a dense fog.

Melty: "This is a high-class sanctuary type barrier."

Naofumi: "What's that?"

Melty: "There exists a Forest of Illusion, and according to legends, the equipment of the old era heroes are said to be kept there; However, the fog of magic stops all who approach."

Naofumi: "You know quite a lot."

Melty: "Mother likes stories about the Forest of Illusion. This fog also resembles the one described in the stories. I'm surprised."

'What does that mean? We can't escape from here even if we run?'

Melty: "Will you be able to return if you enter the fog?.....We seem to have set foot inside the sanctuary of Philo Rial."

Melty seems totally entranced.

That reminds me, this fellow loves Philo Rial. Isn't this like a dream come true?

Naofumi: "Now's not the time for this!"

While we were talking, the plants' shine had increased until it's became as bright as day.

'What on earth is happening?'

The Philo Rial that pulled the carriage starts to swell up, up the point where it's just a black silhouette.

Huge.....

The silhouette swells flabbily. There is probably a big chance that Firo will end up like that.

At first it had the appearance of a normal Philo Rial, but now it's 6 meters tall.

And..... it stops expanding when it reaches 9 meters. This figure is the same as Firo's demon form.

The same as Philo Rial · Queen (Temporary) ^[6]

Melty: "Wow~.....Big."

I mutter, and Melty looks like she cannot contain her excitement.

Compared to Firo's colour which is light pink and white, that Philo Rial · Queen is white and azure.

The big difference now was a wing-like crown on top of it's head, something that Firo didn't have.

Philo Rial Queen: "Kueeeeeeeee!"

With just its voice, The vibrations could be felt to the bones.

Firo: "Yes. Yes. I understand."

Firo nods a few times and turns to us.

Firo: "Umm, you see. It seems visiting in human form is impolite, or so she says."

Firo translates the words that the queen said.

'Oh, is it natural that you can communicate since you are from the same race?'

Firo: "She says that because there is an ancient pledge and oath, I cannot speak with people easily. I hope you understand."

Naofumi: ".....Well, that's fine. But what business do you have with us?"

Philo Rial Queen: "Kueeeeeeee!"

Firo: "She says this. First let's have some self-introduction. I am the Queen of the Philo Rial. My old name is Fitoria."

Melty: "Fitoria!? That's the name of the Philo Rial from the legends."

Melty yells with an expression full of astonishment.

Firo: "Are you by any chance the Hero of the Shield? She says."

Naofumi: "Ah, yeah....."

Firo: "She says, I apologize for the sudden visit. I have some little business here."

Naofumi: "Wh-what would that be?"

By then, I had a pain in my neck from looking up at the big Philo Rial.

Fitoria: "Kueeee"

Firo: "Eh.....No~"

Firo gives her a dirty look. What are they talking about?

Fitoria: "Kueeee!"

Firo: "Really!? All right. I understand."

Naofumi: "What did you talk about?"

Firo: "Umm you see. She wants to know Firo's ability , and she seems to want to fight Firo."

Naofumi: "Just Firo?"

Fitoria nods at my question.

Firo: "You see. I think we will have a good fight."

Naofumi: "Are you going to avoid killing each other?"

Fitoria nodded again.

'Although I was busy trying to meet the queen..... A different queen shows up.'

Naofumi: ".....Isn't it fine then?"

Fitoria: "Kueeeee"

Firo: "She says, thank you for listening to my request, Hero of the Shield."

'What a troublesome conversation. You should talk from the start if you are capable of it.'

The Philo Rials surrounding us started to back up when Fitoria expanded her wings.

Fitoria: "Kueeee!"

Firo: "She says, the Hero's party should fall back too."

Naofumi:"Okay, okay."

Raphtalia, Melty, and I went to the edge of the circle made by the Philo Rial.

Fitoria: "Kueeeeeeee!"

Firo: "Here I go~"

Firo returns to her demon form and charges at Fitoria.

Ahoge

Firo: "Ya!"

Firo attacks first.

She jumps with all her might and reaches the belly of Fitoria's gigantic figure.

Fitora: "Kue!"

Fitora flaps her wings and dodges swiftly.

Firo: "Ha!"

While Firo was landing back on the ground, Fitoria slices at her with a wing.

Firo: "Oops!"

Firo barely avoids the wing by diving to the side.

Melty: "Firo-chan do your best!"

Melty loudly cheers her on.

""""Guaaaaaaaaaaaa~!""""

The Philorials similarly support Fitoria with their cries.

Firo: "I will not lose~!"

Firo charges up to Fitoria.

Fitoria: "Kue!"

Fitoria tries to bat Firo away using her wings, but Firo dexterously uses the wing as a scaffold and jumps for her face.

Firo: "Wow! Amazing~!"

Firo's attack unfortunately ends in failure, but she calls out in admiration.

Firo: "Very fast. But I won't lose."

After taking a stance with her wings, Firo begins preparing.

Are you going to suddenly use your special ability?

Firo: "Yay, here I come~"

Firo's body becomes a blur.

In the next moment, a loud wham could be heard.....

Fitoria: "Kue!"

At first glance, it seemed Fitoria was slowly waving her wings up and down.

Firo: "Waaaaaaa!"

Firo was blown into the air and knocked around.

After being forced to expand her wings to control the air flow, Firo lands.

Firo: "To think you would dodge Firo's trump card so easily-"

Fitora: "Kue!"

Fitoria puts one of her wings on her waist and taunts Firo.

To act in such a carefree attitude...

Amazing.

Brushing off Firo's ultimate attack just like that.....

Melty: "As expected of the legendary Philorial."

Melty expresses her admiration.

I agree.

What can I say. Our combat expert Firo is being toyed with.

Firo: "How about this!"

Firo flaps her wings again.

Firo: "Firo commands the origin of power. Firo has read and deciphered a law of nature. Blow her away with a raging tornado!"

Firo: "Tzuvait •Tornado!"

Naofumi:"What?"

To think Firo could use intermediate magic! I doubt she could teach me.....

If you could have always used it, then you should have.

We could have ran away from those heroes easily if that spell was used.

The tornado brought forth from Firo's hands flies towards Fitoria-Fitora:
"KueKueKueKueeeeeeeeeeeeeee..."

Fitora: "Kueeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

Firo's magic was enclosed and dissipated like it was never there.

Melty: "Counterbalance?"

Oh, that's a phenomenon that was described in the beginner class magic book.

Interfering with magic. However, that is only possible if the user has sufficient power and is able to analyse the magic as it is cast.

The proper magic system required varies every time.

It is difficult because the magic cast to counterbalance must be from the proper system, and also must be cast right before the magic hits.

It is easier to counterbalance high class magic than intermediate class magic due to longer cast times.

Firo: "Wow.....Firo's magic is not effective either~"

Firo charges rapidly Fitoria again.

Without delay, Fitoria strikes at Firo with her massive wings.

Firo: "Ha!"

With a thud, Firo raised both her wings to catch the colossal attack

Firo: "Ugh.....It's heavy.....But!"

After barely withstanding the attack, Firo kicks Fitoria's wing away and jumps.

As expected, Fitoria who had her wing kicked away was not in position to defend against Firo who flew up to her face.

Thanks to coating herself with wind, Firo's jumping power improved.

Firo: "Tei!"

Firo spun her whole body and unleashed a roundhouse kick at Fitoria's face.

It should have hit.

Yet despite all that,

Fitoria: "Kue!"

Fitoria was also coated with wind, and Firo was blown off into the sky.

Basaa~!

Still, Fitoria was slightly grazed and a feather was hit off.

Fitoria: "Kuee..."

Fitoria was watching the feather that Firo hit down with a smile.

I noticed it.

Fitoria still has a something besides magic and physical attacks. There is still something she is hiding.

She hasn't moved one step either.

Just how strong is she?

Legendary Philorial. She certainly lives up to those words. Firo is being taken lightly.

She has absolutely no chance of winning.

Firo: "Boo....."

Firo is whining with an ill-humoured expression.

Firo: "I will not lose!"

All of Firo's feathers start to stand on end.

Firo: "Suuuuu....."

She takes a giant breath. I see, Firo is absorbing the surrounding magic.

Such a thing is possible?

And for nearly 30 seconds she does not move.

Firo: "Ok---"

Firo flaps her wings.

Everyone can see that wind magic is being condensed behind her.

This is most likely Firo's strongest finisher.

The prerequisite is too severe. It's not usable in actual combat.

Firo: "Here it comes!"

Firo flies at Fitoria with the speed of a bullet.

She rotates her beak, by dashing off the ground and flying low. This attack is the fastest by far.

Usually Firo's attacks consist of basic kicking and pecking.

What can I say. This attack resembles the finisher from an air-plane shaped robot in a strategy game. [7]

Fitora: "Kue!?"

Even Fitoria widened her eyes in surprise.

With a large movement, Fitoria takes a step back and.....

It was over.

Fitoria stretched both her wings, her expression changed, and squishes Firo, her posture resembling one killing bugs with both hands.

Fitora: "Kyu....."

When Fitoria opens her wings, a knocked-out Firo falls down.

Melty: "Firo-chan!"

""""Guaaaaaaaaa!""""

The Philorials start cheering.

We follow after Melty who rushes out first.

Melty: "Are you okay?"

Firo: "Yup.....ah....."

As Melty rushes up to Firo to check on her, Firo looks up at me.

After looking around restlessly, I look down at her.

Firo: "Firo lost."

Naofumi: "But you did great. You fought well against the Queen of Philorials."

Firo: "She wasn't even trying, Firo couldn't hit her at all."

As Firo was sulking, Fitora called with a KueKue.

Firo: "What are you giving me?"

Oh, we're going to receive something?

Fitora: "KueKue."

Firo: "I pass? Pass what?"

Fitora pulls off a single piece of her beautiful feather crown and gives it to Firo.

Suddenly, the feather glows and attaches itself to Firo's head.

Then it splits and disperses.....

And on Firo's head is now an ahoge bouncing around.

"....."

Raphtalia and I are left speechless.

What just happened? What was that a reward?

Naofumi: "Eh?"

Melty: "Firo-chan is so cute!"

Melty is excitedly admiring Firo while the bird in question doesn't understand what is going on.

Firo: "Did something happen?"

Firo: "Umm....."

When I point on top of her, Firo timidly touches her head.

Firo: "Something strange grew! No~!"

Buchin!

Eh!?

She yanked it out with all her might.

Firo: "It hurts~!"

Firo is delighted about getting rid of the ahoge, but is also in pain.

Pyokon!

However, from where it was pulled out, another ahoge appears.

Naofumi: "It grew again!"

Firo: "Ehh!?"

With watery eyes, Firo sadly gave up on removing the ahoge after pulling it out several times.

Well, the ahoge isn't that bad.

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Firo: "You're terrible~!"

Naofumi: "What did she say?"

Firo: "Give up on pulling it because it will always grow back."

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Naofumi: "Eh.....So it's become like that....."

Firo looks at Fitoria's feather crown.

What on earth did this legendary Philorial pass down to Firo?

I swiftly check Firo's status screen.

.....Her abilities have improved from before.

Perhaps, this is divine protection or something like a correction ability.

It's a good reward for Firo who is unable to level up.

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Fitora points at me and beckons me with a Kui Kui.

Firo: "It's a gift for master."

Naofumi: "I don't need an ahoge."

Firo: "Ahoge?"

I'd rather not explain. If I tell her she'll annoy me about it.

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Firo: "She said it's even better."

Naofumi: "Hmmm....."

I don't know what it is, but I hope it's nothing strange.

I can't really refuse, so I approach.

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Fitoria points at my shield and gestures upwards.

Naofumi: "Like this?"

I lift up my shield. Fitoria pulls out another crown feather and puts it on the shield.

The shield has a huge reaction and absorbs it.

All of the Philorial series has been unsealed.

Naofumi: "What?"

I check the skill tree and confirm that all of the Philorial shields are lit up and active.

Most of them are basic ability and equipment bonuses, but there are Speed Ups too, Philorial ability correction, Growth Correction (Big Middle Small), GrowthooCorrection (Big Middle Small), as well as shields received that I cannot wear.

What stands out is, Riding ability Up (Big Middle Small).

However, there are a lot of shields I cannot use since my level is insufficient.

It is nice to have unlocked all the Philo Rial shields though.

Naofumi: "I am extremely grateful."

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Fitora nodded while smiling.

I was given quite an amazing reward.

Are the powers of Philorials condensed into that feather?

This is also very helpful since Firo cannot Level.

That reminds me, Melty said that in the legends the Queen of Philorials fought together with heroes.

Is Fitora the origin of the legend of the holy bird?

Does that mean Fitora gave me her feather because she understands how the hero's weapon works?

Fitora: "Kue"

Firo: "I have finished my business here so I will take my leave."

Melty: "Ah, Umm....."

Melty timidly calls out to Fitoria.

Fitora: "Kue?"

Melty: "Please shake my hand!"

It is Melty's cherished wish to meet and befriend the legendary Philorial so she pleases excitedly.

For a handshake..... Are you meeting an idol or an athlete?

Fitora: "Kue Kue"

Fitoria was dumbfounded for a few seconds before she stroked Melty's head with her large wings.

And she was embraced kindly with a smile.

Melty sunk quite deep into Fitoria's bosom.

Melty: "Wow....."

It seems Melty has also received a large service and was placed on top of Fitoria's head.

Melty: "So high!"

Melty is extremely thrilled.

Fitoria tells us to get back, and as we fall back.

She expands to twice her size.....18 meters.

That's as big as a building already.

Melty: "This is amazing!"

Melty's voice could be heard in the distance. Isn't that a bit too high?

Can this still be considered a Philorial? Just how much can it grow?

No, this form or its 9 meter form should be its original size, so she is probably transforming.

.....Will Firo become that big too?

I look at Firo suspiciously.

Firo: "What's up?"

Naofumi: "Nothing."

If you seriously grow that big.....it'll be quite a problem.

To sustain that size, the food expense would be astronomical.

Fitoria lives in the wild. Moreover, she's the genuine queen of the group.

In those conditions, eating regardless of amount would be fine.

But Firo is a pet Philorial. I have to take care of her.

Should I reuse the Bio Plants?

After Melty and Fitoria finished playing, Fitoria changed back into form of the usual Philorial that pulled the luxurious carriage and shook Melty's hand.

Fitora: "You see, I have an old oath, so I can only say words of parting to humans."

Naofumi: "I see."

I wonder if this is just courtesy.

Fitora: "See ya-"

Naofumi: "Eh!?"

That voice is the same as Firo's! That bird!

I mean she can even speak in the figure of a normal Philorial?

The Philorials surrounding us scattered when Fitoria disappeared.

Melty: "Ha....."

Melty sighed while seemingly enchanted.

Melty: "That was dreamlike....."

Naofumi: "It was a good dream."

I feel that was a monster capable of Armageddon.

To effortlessly toy with Firo who has the strength to kick around a dragon...

Anyway, I am looking forward to how much Firo has powered up.

Our journey southwest continues.

Jungle

"There's a village just southwest of here."

Two days after the battle of monsters with Firo, we are approaching the village where Motoyasu caused the plant problem.

By the way, the Ability correction from the Philorial Shield series takes precedence over the other equipment bonuses.

It is necessary to use any abilities that will help in combat since Raptalia and Firo cannot level up.

The lower level Philorial shields finished granting their equipment bonuses after an hour or so.

Of course, this is a very generous gift, and at this point I'll take anything.

In the first place, releasing all the Philorial Series was more than what I could have hoped for.

Furthermore, Firo's speed became even faster due to the effects.

Well, this is great. We were very lucky.....

The problem is that the village south west of us has become a dense jungle again.

"This is my fault....."

"Probably."

We advance through the flourishing forest by pushing aside plants.

Melty was surprised to know that this was my fault.

To think the Bio Plant seed I gave to the villagers turned them back to square

one.....

I don't have the right to judge Motoyasu.

"There are no strange demons."

Firo mutters while investigating the neighborhood.

"I see."

Perhaps the changes I made are more powerful than I thought.

While pushing through the foliage, we encounter a villager.

"Ah, Hero of the Shield-sama."

What should we do? Escape? No, I hear that a lot of villagers do not believe I did the things that warranted that bounty.

If that wasn't the case, we would have been reported by those villages in the beginning-

"Thanks to Hero of the Shield-sama, we can work in peace."

"Pardon?"

I question the villager as I look around.

"This?"

"Yes, can't you tell this is already an agricultural area?"

"All I see is a dense forest."

"We developed a large scale farming business thanks to the seed that Hero of the Shield-sama gave us."

The villager proudly points around while saying so.

There are bright red fruit-like tomatoes hanging off a bunch of plants.

"The only drawback is that only the same fruit is growing, but it has become a village specialty already."

"You guys are fast."

Hasn't it only been a month?

That is quite amazing.

"Then there have been no problems at all?"

"Nope."

"Then.....isn't it fine?"

The villager smiles wryly at my answer.

Long ago, the creator of the Bio Plant may have wished for this.

Now, his dream is being realized in front of my eyes.

.....It really is quite a spectacle.

"So where is Hero of the Shield-sama heading to? Isn't Silt Welt in the opposite direction?"

"Well, we are escaping this way."

I am troubled as to whether or not I can tell the villager. So I'll just give him a vague answer.

"Hah.....Seems to be quite serious."

"It is definitely not easy."

Well it's not their problem.

"Don't worry, we will not inform any of the soldiers from the castle."

"Leaving aside whether or not that is true, you have my thanks."

Gu.....

"Firo is hungry."

Firo hungrily looks at the growing tomatoes.

That reminds me, a lot of Firo's food supply came from here.

"Go ahead."

The villager points towards the big fruits and tells Firo to eat.

"Yay~"

We also get some fruits while Firo begins gorging down.

These tomatoes have a subtle mandarin orange taste to them..... It is delicious, but I feel it is a little lacking.

Raphtalia and Melty eat while exclaiming their deliciousness though.

While resting and eating lunch, several villagers come and I give them some food that I cooked.

"I am grateful, in various ways."

"Don't worry about it."

"For the time being..... be careful."

I was indirectly warned about a dangerous plant.

"I understand."

We finish our meal like this.

"See you."

"Yup. I pray that Hero of the Shield-sama can prove your innocence."

We cross the dense forest for the border.

50 meters after parting with the villagers, we are caught by a magical cage.

"Kya!?"

"What's this?"

"Wh-what is going on?"

It's about 40 meters in every dimension. A cage comprised of lightning.

Is this.....magic? Or is it some trap?

Did the villagers set us up?

So that they could capture us here!?

"T-Trouble! Hero of the Shield-sama is being attacked by someone-!"

Villagers that were watching yelled towards the village and it gets louder.

This attack.....It's not from them?

"I finally caught up, Naofumi!"

"You.....Motoyasu!"

Motoyasu's party appears after pushing aside the dense forest.

Did you hide yourselves in the jungle?

That must have been difficult.

"Naofumi, you won't be able to escape from this magical instrument [Thunder Cage]"

Melty inspects the cage and informs me.

"This is a setting trap, it must have been used by someone experienced."

"What is the purpose of this trap?"

"Never letting whatever it captures free."

I see, so this trap was used because we always rely on Firo's leg strength to escape.

"Maybe I can break it, but it will take some time."

"You know a method to definitely remove this trap?"

"If you can get the key away from the user....."

I consider for a moment, stare at Motoyasu, and then Firo.

"Are we going to fight?"

"That seems to be the case."

Raphtalia gets down from Firo and takes up a stance with her sword.

"Raphtalia, you don't have armour. Fall back."

"But....."

"Can Firo fight?"

"Yeah."

Motoyasu is vulnerable to any beautiful girls.

So far, he has been treated roughly by Firo.

Possibly.....

"Melty, can you remove the cage?"

"I can try.....But don't expect anything."

"Raphtalia, while we fight protect Melty."

"Okay!"

"I'll solve this brainwashing problem, with three people."

Seriously, who in their right mind would believe a shield has the power to brainwash? I honestly think that the ones framing me are the ones capable of brainwashing.

However, this guy is one of the Heroes referred to by the holy weapons manual.

Companion's thoughts = Not suspecting a Companion.

There is also the bitch and trash king supporting this guy. I would be a fool to really believe this guy to be friendly.

"Motoyasu-sama, please save my younger sister from the brainwashing of the Devil of the Shield."

Hey bitch, stop adding oil to the fire.

"Hero of the Shield-sama! And.....Spear....."

A villager calls towards us from outside the cage.

The villager looks at Motoyasu with a troubled expression.

I can easily imagine the reason. For the cause of the village's disaster to appear again, even if he is one of the three heroes, it wouldn't be pleasant.

"You guys are also brainwashed too."

Motoyasu, that guy is absolutely infatuated with himself.

He looks me in the eye and prepares his spear.

"I won't be defeated like last time."

"..... What's with those lines?"

I was summoned to a different world, and on the second day was already being looked down upon by Motoyasu.

Wouldn't it be fun to retaliate here?

I change the Chimeric Viper Shield and take a stance against Motoyasu.

Motoyasu's companions, that bitch, and two other woman.

.....There should have been another man.....But it's just Motoyasu. Did he throw away the unnecessary element in his harem?

We face each other with Firo standing in front of me, Melty trying to release the trap, and Raphtalia protecting her.

"Which will win if the Spear and Shield fight?..... Of course it'll be me!"

Motoyasu declares while smiling full of conviction.

"Don't be a coward this time. Are you going to cheat again? Know your place, clown!"

Motoyasu was about to say something, but stops immediately.

It seems words have become unnecessary.

Very well. I am different from before.

Melty cannot fight, but I have Raphtalia and Firo.

In this situation where I can utilize the shield to its full potential, I will not lose.

Now.....Let's see who is stronger!

""Uoooooooooooooooooh!""

We both step forwards and charge towards each other.

Battle Between Shield and Spear

"Firo, you take Motoyasu-"

I give Firo instructions as the battle begins.

Motoyasu cannot lay a hand on women. Especially Firo, Motoyasu even hesitates to point his spear at her.

Even if Motoyasu was able to attack Firo properly, she would be able to stop the spear.

"I am the queen who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Rain flames upon my enemies!"

"Tzuvait • Fire Squall!"

The arrogant bitch sings an aria and casts Fire system magic.

"Naofumi! Firo-chan!"

"I am one who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Hinder the rain of flames that pours on us!"

"Anti • Tzuvait • Fire Squall!"

Melty instantly counterbalances the intermediate magic that the bitch chants before going back to work on the cage.

However, she could not perfectly counterbalance it and the rain of fire still poured towards us.

Fortunately, it only hit Firo and I who were in front.

The jungle is set ablaze.

The area nearby instantly becomes a sea of flames.

Many villagers start to panic as the fire spreads.

"I will not forgive you for kicking Motoyasu-sama so many times."

The bitch is casting magic towards us seriously.

Melty is good at magic, but she is pretty good too.

There is a big difference between the bitch and Melty known as Levels, due to her being in Motoyasu's party.

"Firo, Are you okay!?"

"Yep. I'm fine-"

Firo doesn't seem affected by the rain of fire.

Well..... during the first wave I also barely felt anything when the knights barraged the area with magic.

But the biggest problem now is the surrounding Bio plants which have been set ablaze.

What kind of dumbass uses fire magic inside a jungle? Are you even thinking about your surroundings?

"I am one who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Bless us with the rain we eagerly long for!"

"Tzuvait • Squall!"

Melty directs her magic towards the jungle while Raphtalia protects her.

"Mein, Thank you."

Motoyasu who received the bitch's help shows his gratitude by giving her a thumbs up.

Everything this guy does is infuriating.

"Now! Motoyasu-sama please concentrate onto the devil of the shield! We'll hold that damned bird back with magic!"

Under bitch's command, Motoyasu's subordinates begin to chant.

"Here I come-!"

Firo ignores the chanting and charges straight at Motoyasu.

"Wait, Firo--"

I don't understand what they are doing, but charging recklessly is not going to help!

"Wing •Tackle!"

Firo tries to tackle Motoyasu with her giant body coated in wind.

"Fube---"

As a result, Firo is blown off while spinning, but she unfurls her wings to make a landing.

"That was surprising. But, here I go!"

Firo charges at Motoyasu again without learning her lesson. However, I have no idea as to what magic it was that blew Firo off again.

This is not a feasible combat strategy.

While Firo is being pinned down, Motoyasu rushes at me--

"Eat this Naofumi! Meteor Spear!"

Motoyasu's spear shines brilliantly as shouts and leaps.

The energy condenses to cover his spear as it heads towards me.

"Guu.....!?"

I receive the attack with the thickest part of my shield.

Through the shield, I receive a heavy blow that affects my whole body.

I'm guessing that was a finisher move.

Well, there is no reason to hold back in a real fight.

All the bones in my body groan under the pressure. I think this is the worst attack yet. Glass's attack wasn't as heavy thanks to the shield of anger.

"How's that!" There's still more! Disorder Piercing! Rising Dragon Spear!" [8]

Motoyasu unleashes his skills continuously. I fire the special ability of the Chimeric Viper Shield, Snake's poison fang.

Shit..... It's not effective because his level is too high!

An intense pain could be felt from the attack that I failed to block.

I understand that I'm bleeding even without looking.

Recover magic..... But Motoyasu won't give me the room to heal.

"Shield Prison!"

I trap Motoyasu within a cage of shields.

"Giant Windmill!"

Motoyasu swings his spear around like a baton, and cuts down the shields that I summon.

Damn..... His offensive power has already greatly exceeded my defensive power.

Whenever a cool down is off, I cast a skill.

As expected, there is no chance to win in a defensive fight.

What do I do.....

Firo can't even get close to Motoyasu thanks to the bitch and her subordinates.

"Firo commands the origin of power. Firo has read and deciphered a law of nature. Blow her away with a raging tornado!"

"Tzuvait ▪Tornado!"

"I am the queen who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. The Tornado shall disperse and disappear!"

""I am one who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. The Tornado shall disperse and disappear!""

""""Anti ▪Tzuvait ▪Tornado!""""

The magic that Firo casts overpowers the counterbalancing of three people and breaks through, but it loses a lot of power.

"Yaay, Here I go~"

"Wing Tackle!"

Firo tries to take advantage of the situation and charges Motoyasu immediately, only to be blown off again.

This is.....looking bleak.

It seems those three are well prepared against Firo, and have taken measures in advance.

Motoyasu you bastard, I really want to kill you.

Fortunately, Raphtalia and Melty were excluded as targets.

Are they looking down on us because we lack the power to kill them?

Perhaps if Raphtalia joined the fight, and Firo was not being suppressed.

It is evident that it requires three people, and they are barely stopping Firo.

Melty's speciality is magic. It would be possible to counterbalance, but her Level is too low.

I told Raphtalia not to step in because of her lack of armour.

No wait, if I approach together with Firo I should be able to hold back their magic. At this point both bitch's magical power and my physical strength is starting to decline.

"Hm!?"

Bitch and her lackeys drink something.

Is that possibly a potion that recovers magical power?

Dangerous.....I don't think we can hold out until they run out of potions.

"What a tough guy. Thanks to the shield's skills he will not fall down....."

Motoyasu seems to be out of breath as he continues using skills. I have also received considerable damage!

I feel blood dripping from my body.

"I received good information and gotten strong in a different way."

So far, after coming to this world, everything has been developed through trial and error.

I did not choose the means of becoming strong. Avariciously, I stacked the equipment bonuses of unsealed shields.

Nonetheless.....I am still unable to win?

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"What's going on!?"

Motoyasu got distracted as one of his companions cried out.

I follow Motoyasu's line of sight and check.

One of Motoyasu's companions has a sword piercing her shoulder from behind.

Melty was considered too weak, and since Raphtalia was on defence, she was ignored.

"You are only paying attention to Firo; there are too many openings!"

Raphtalia's figure suddenly appears.

"You!"

After her companion was stabbed, the bitch brandishes her sword and slashes.

"Hide • Mirage"

When Raphtalia was about to be stabbed, she disappeared like smoke.

Raphtalia used concealment magic that uses a magic sword skill to produce a phantom, hence Hide • Mirage.

It appears to be concealment magic that utilizes illusions.

"Do not get carried away with mere illusion magic!"

"I am the queen who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Cut down the illusions!"

"Wind Flasher!"

The illusion magic Raphtalia was using to hide disappears. Raphtalia emerged from the mist that the wind cut down.

"There!"

The bitch thrusts towards Raphtalia.

Raphtalia.....is receiving the attack!?

Raphtalia has no armour. She's wearing villager clothes.

Bitch's sword is probably of a high quality. If something happens, then we are finished.

There is no time to choose the means.

Shield of Anger!

With the thought of losing Raphtalia, I activate the Curse Series Shield.

"Ah, Wait!"

"Uooooooooooooooooo!"

Make it in time.....Make it in time.....Make it in timeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

The world instantly slows down. While my mind was being eroded, I cast my skills.

"Air Strike Shield! Second Shield!"

Two shields appear between Raphtalia and the sword

With a clang, bitch's sword was repelled.

"Haa.....Haa....."

I made it in time, somehow.

"Eat this!"

Motoyasu aims his skill at me who sighed in relief. If I'm not mistaken, those are the movements for the Meteor Spear.

It seems while using the Curse Series, not only is my body enhanced, but also my kinetic vision.

I powerfully grasp the the shining spearhead.

"Im-Impossible! Grabbing the Meteor Spear!?"

"You retard, you just used that skill a while ago! What kind of idiot would forget!? Fool!"

The counter effect of the shield of anger is based on the attack's strength. Self Curse Burning is activated.

The strength of this flame is influenced by my anger.

I was almost consumed by rage when I saw Raphtalia about to be stabbed. This generated an enormous amount of power.

"Uwaaaaah!"

Motoyasu's whole body was covered in black flames, and he was rolling around in pain.

Guu.....If I don't change shields I'll forget myself in anger.

"Not yet!"

The bitch hasn't learnt her lesson yet and tried to stab Raphtalia again.

Shit..... Cooldown time!

They are just about to end!

"Shield---"

Not in time!

Raphtalia was.....

The bitch's assassin's knife hits Raphtalia.

"Ahahahahaha, trying to defy me.....What!?"

Raphtalia disappears and all that's left is an after-image.

"Your magical power was not enough to completely nullify my illusion magic. Now it's my turn!"

Judgement

Raphtalia appears behind the bitch and slashes.

Clang! The bitch barely blocks Raphtalia's sword with her sword by turning around.

There was probably another illusion piled upon the one that was dispelled.

"You're just a pebble on the side of the road!"

"To treat others as pebbles..... Is that that attitude of one meant to rule!?"

Raphtalia and bitch continue their game of cat and mouse while also insulting each other.

Bitch's sword must have been expensive. However, she is unable to break Raphtalia's sword.

I don't know if it's simply because Raphtalia's ability exceeds hers, I have to hurry and help...

"I will not collapse just yet!"

Motoyasu, who was on the ground from the Self-Burning Curse, gets up with great difficulty and is barely able to stand in front of me.

"You think you can stop me with these kinds of burns? I will not acknowledge it!"

Although Motoyasu has taken considerable damage from Self Curse Burning, he

continues on without consideration for his body.

His steps are a little unsteady.

"This amount of damage is nothing that can't be fixed with recovery magic."

"Do you have someone who can apply it?"

I do not know what kind of magic Motoyasu uses.

When I look at his companions, I see the one that wasn't stabbed desperately using recover magic.

Raphtalia and the bitch are still engaging each other in close combat, neither of them backing off.

"Don't forget about Firo either~!"

"Firo!? Are you okay?"

Firo should have been induced into a state of frenzy when I took out the shield of anger. But she's showing no signs of losing her mind.

After the shield of anger's second form, shield of anger 2 was unlocked, its power increased without changing to that form.

I am also able to send my companions into a frenzy with the angry dragon's roar.

Maybe that's why I can stop the shield of anger 1 from from sending Firo out of control.

"What's up?"

When I look at Firo's head..... her ahoge is glowing.

"Somehow my body has become extremely light!"

Black flames are covering Firo, and her white limbs are being dyed black.

Firo's mind doesn't seem to be eroded though.....

It seems the reward from the Queen of Philorials is amazing.

"I am one who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Cure this person!"

"Al ▪ Tzuvait ▪ Heal!"

Motoyasu's companion casts healing magic him after a long chant.

Ranged recovery, they had such a hand available?

"You saved me!"

But.....Motoyasu, you have made one big miscalculation.

The light of recovery falls onto Motoyasu and his group to heal.

"Alright.....Huh?"

The recovery magic that Motoyasu was waiting for barely did anything for him. Motoyasu tilted his neck looking puzzled.

"Did you think you could recover completely with just one cast? I'm sorry to disappoint you. I have my own hand to prevent that."

This is funny, the side effect of Self-Burning Curse slows down healing. His long awaited recovery magic barely did anything.

"I think the outcome is decided."

His companions turn towards Raphtalia and starts chanting magic.

"Firo."

I give instructions to support Raphtalia.

"Okay~!"

Firo charges even faster than earlier.

As Firo approaches Raphtalia who is preparing to defend with her sword, both Raphtalia and the bitch back off to start preparing magic.

"Not yet!"

Without learning his lesson, Motoyasu tries to stab me with his spear.

"Air Strike Javelin!"

A thrown spear flies towards me.

"Like that would work!"

I catch the flying spear.

Gakin! Sounds of metal clashing rings out when I grab the spear.

When I completely stop the spear, it disappears from my hand and reappears in Motoyasu's.

Throwing skills..... Certainly Self Curse Burning is ineffective at a long distance.

If you are a gamer, you would understand after seeing it once.

"I won't.....I won't lose here! If I lose then Princess Melty, Raphtalia-chan, and Firo-chan will all become tools for the devil of the shield."

..... In a way coming all the way here believing in justice in itself is somewhat praiseworthy.

But I am treated as the villain.

No way, In Motoyasu's eyes am I a mid-boss within a game?

What an unpleasant treatment. Who is a boss character?

"I will absolutely help you!"

"A buffoon of a womanizer coming here, it's too pathetic."

Don't you understand you're the one being brainwashed?

It's such a waste to not be directing your passion somewhere more productive.....

"Damn....."

He doesn't even respond to my remark. His Companions are being trampled on by Firo.

Well, his unyielding will is certainly Hero-like.

However, if you insist of blindly following justice like that, then there is no saving you.

"Give it up, you cannot beat us."

You don't even know your allies are the ones behind this.

I look at Melty anxiously while thinking about what's to do next.

Victory or defeat is also decided on whether or not the cage can be destroyed.

It is admirable that she can act so bravely knowing her own older sister is trying to have her assassinated.

.....Killing intent surges within me.

But if I murder anyone here, my innocence will never be proven.

If I murder anyone, I will be no different than that trash who is trying to frame me.

I refuse to become an existence similar to trash.

To even sacrifice your own flesh and blood without hesitation...

Is that really alright?

No, I will prove my innocence!

"Not yet.....I haven't lost yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeet!"

Motoyasu suicidally charges me, like he's trying to die an honorable death.

It will be decided with the next move-

Right before the deciding moment, a foreign sound echoes.

Applause is heard from a strange place.

"Iya~..... as expected of the spear, truly a strong will. It was a good show."

The area is filled with magical pressure.

All of Firo's feathers stand on end as she covers Rapphalia.

"Eh--"

"Mel-chan!"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"I-I am a princess! how dare you treat me with so impolitely--"

"Firo-cha--fube!"

And without any hesitation, everyone including Bitch and Motoyasu were kicked towards me. Freely using high-speed magic, Firo appears in front of me. Everyone, whether friend or foe is gathered together at my feet by Firo.

"Master! We'll defend with everything!"

"What's happening so sudden--"

"Hurry up! Something big is about to come!"

"Damn! I know!"

While Firo was watching with a threatening attitude, I use Shield Prison, Air Strike Shield, and Second Shield.

Just as the shields appear, a huge pillar of light pours down on us from the sky.

"Guu....."

It was a heavy attack that shook my body to its core I endure it while chanting Fast Heal.

Air Strike Shield and Second Shield are blown away immediately, and Shield Prison is barely holding up.

As the shield is protecting everyone from the sky, a Bakin sound could be heard. The prison is destroyed and the light falls onto me. My shield is

somehow blocking the thick beam of light.

As I was about to slip, Firo wraps her wings around me and supports me.

"Uguguguuuuuuuuuu....."

The light reduces my physical strength.

"A little more.....It's over!"

The light suddenly vanishes but I still hold my shield ready.

Firo stands up and covers everyone with her wings.

The area around us.....It's all scorched-earth.

It looks like a meteor fell and we were at its epicenter.

There were some villagers groaning outside the crater that was part of the aftermath of the magic the enemy cast.

It was horrible.

"Wh-What on earth....."

"Oh my, what's this? To think the devil of the shield could withstand the High class synthesis magic [Judgement] and remain calm."

When I look towards the voice, what greeted me was the smiling face of the priest back in the church of castle town. He was followed by a dozen church officials, with some knights mixed in.

"You.....!"

Motoyasu looks at the priest in frustration.

They're not your reinforcements?

No wait, Motoyasu would have been caught up in that blow as well.

This is.....

"Oh dear oh dear, How could I forget to introduce myself? I am the pope of the Church of Three Heroes."

Pope

"The pope.....huh."

Wasn't that too extreme of a greeting? The power of that spell earlier was just barely tolerable even with the shield of anger.

Firo, that fellow, why did you help Motoyasu's group too?

You should have just brought Raphtalia and Melty.

Well, it's fine. I'm curious as to what the Pope's real intentions are.

"To fire such magic at the two princesses of this country and the Hero of the Spear.....What are you thinking?"

"Hero of the Spear-sama.....You say?"

If I'm not mistaken, the Heroes of the Sword, Bow, and Spear are objects of worship for this guy.

I don't know what is going on, but.....

The Pope does not stop smiling while looking at me.

I wonder what he's thinking. I am getting a weird feeling.

Will he keep that expression plastered on his face like a mask even if someone dies in front of him?

Does his face even understand how to change expressions?

That's the kind of feeling I'm getting.

"I have faith that the Three Heroes will save the people and the world from the

wave. The problem is that fake pretending to be a hero."

"What do you mean?"

The pope answers as if it's an everyday conversation.

Motoyasu watches the pope with a dumbfounded expression.

"The queen candidates have already been killed by the devil of the shield. Don't worry about your corpses, they will be verified later."

"No way....."

Raphtalia was so disgusted that she didn't even feel angry.

The Pope, before he seemed like a fair and unbiased person, but it seems that was just my imagination.

"The devil of the shield acted aggressively, but god has granted him mercy. Therefore, I am here as god's spokesman to complete the purification."

What an amazing reason. In other words, the reasonably priced holy water offered to us was available because we could have been dealt with at a moment's notice?

At that time I had no idea of the big picture.....

Back then I would not have considered this a possibility either.

"Don't joke around! I am the next Queen! I cannot be murdered by a shield!"

"No no, don't worry about that. Be at ease, princess Malty. The person inheriting this country has already been prepared. All is as god's will."

Bitch' face instantly paled from that conversation; it seems this was all a conspiracy by the pope.

"It's a lie.....Right?....."

"Hahaha, No way."

"Stop joking around!"

Motoyasu yells at the pope and points his spear towards him.

"Did we not fight to save this country and princess Melty?"

"Oh right. This country, in the end will be used in the holy war for the world. After our church expels the 3 fake Heroes and the devil of the shield, the church's authority and power will consolidate."

"Fake hero....."

My face cramps as the Pope's answer is way too unpleasant.

"Yes..... The belief in the Church has been shaken in various places in face of the heroes causing trouble everywhere. The Fake Hero of the Sword caused an epidemic, the Fake Hero of the Bow does not bow to my authority, and the Fake Hero of the Spear caused an ecosystem to go mad."

All the things that I made up for.

Now I understand what Itsuki did, he usurped a bad lord who raised taxes to contribute to the church.

"Therefore, I already disposed of the sword and bow imposters."

The pope answers calmly.

"What!?"

"I have summoned the bow and sword to different locations, and the devil of

the shield will be wiped from existence with [Judgement]. Such is the will of god."

Ren and Itsuki.....They were investigating too forcefully, and got themselves in trouble.

I expected Ren to at least be suspicious, but Itsuki too.....

To think they would behave in such a way... If Itsuki noticed wickedness, he would act for justice.

No way.....Did they get ambushed?

Does that mean both of them are.....

"Did you murder them!? Everybody fought for the sake of this world!.....Ren!.....Itsuki!"

Motoyasu has an incredibly angry look.

Were you guys that friendly with each other?

I feel bad for those two, but I feel nothing besides sympathy.

"Do not call it killing. We are merely purifying the devils and imposters who deceived us."

"Wha....."

"We will inform the King and Queen like this. This country is being controlled by the fake Heroes, and although we purified them, the princesses were unfortunately....."

Wow~.....That's pretty far fetched. Will they even believe that?

Hm.....I can see the trash believing it. He might cooperate solely because I was killed.

We can barely fight, since all of us are exhausted.

Even though in this world I ostracised-- I will not become a pitiful person after the truth has become apparent.

In wars, regardless of whether or not you have weapons of mass destruction, if you win then it does not matter.

Truth is, I don't really understand either, but I can say this. I will not forgive assholes who are trying to destroy us for a selfish reason.

Motoyasu is at a loss for words and slowly turns towards me.

"Naofumi, a truce. I want you to lend me your power!"

"What an extremely selfish speech. I will not let you say you forgot what you said to me before."

Making a situation where I was attacked one-sidedly and not even able to escape.

In the first place, this guy really did believe the shield was capable of brainwashing just a little while ago.

"I beg you! I.....I want to have a funeral for those guys. I can never forgive this guy!"

"Whatever. Only if we can win.

It will take time until the next strong magic is fired. However.

"Will you lend me your power? Do you think nothing of that guy!?"

"I am thinking of many things. I was going to be made a scapegoat. But Motoyasu, I have no obligation whatsoever to lend you my aid."

The situation is, the cage was broken so we should be able to escape by riding on Firo.

"Rather."

I smile at Motoyasu and show him a thumbs down.

"Die please♪"

"Yooooooooooooou!"

Even while unsteady, Motoyasu tries to punch me.

"Are you sure you want to hit me?"

If Self-Burning Curse activates after you hit me, you will die.

"Damn....."

Well, I can control it because of Raphtalia, Firo, and Melty.

"As expected, the devil of the shield and his companions the fake heroes will fight each other."

"Who the hell is this guy's companion?"

"Shut up! I won't depend on you! I'll take that guy down alone!"

"fufufu, I wonder if you can really defeat me."

The pope instructs his subordinate to bring him his weapon while laughing.

I wonder what it is. It's a big ass sword.....

It was a silver white sword decorated with ornaments.

Is that similar to a game where in the second half they get a sacred sword that talks? [9]

Such complicated decorations.....It's probably quite strong. The jewel buried in the middle of it gives off an unpleasant feeling.

"Wha.....That's-"

Bitch and Melty both pale at once.

"Naofumi! Take care, That-"

"First, the devil of the shield. You shall receive god's judgement."

Despite the Pope being far away, he swings down the sword with a shout.

A shock-wave through the ground is coming right at me.

I ready the shield to receive it.

"Ugh....."

The impact was so strong I was almost blown off. Its damage rivals that of Motoyasu's meteor spear.

A big fissure is created in the ground.

Wait a minute, right now I have the shield of anger equipped!

What kind of weapon can deal such damage that Motoyasu's skill can't even compare?

"Naofumi. That. It's a replication of a legendary hero's weapon."

"A replication?"

Just how strong was the original!?

Ren, who also uses the sword.....Motoyasu would be stronger, but they simply cannot compare to that.

I mean, Glass completely ruined Motoyasu.

Her attacks would be around 5 times stronger.

I was still able to defend against them with the shield of rage.

But this attack just now surpassed it by far.

"Why is such a thing.....They should have been lost hundreds of years ago....."

"It was not lost, it was stolen. The Three Heroes Church stole it."

There was a bomb conspiracy theory in a certain country during World War Two that claimed they lost a large quantity of bombs, and to this day the missing bombs have never been found.

To think that is just a replica of the legendary weapon, will Ren's sword become that strong in the future?

Although I may be the Hero of the Shield, is it safe to give an individual such power?

If you have that kind of power from a mere replica, do you guys even need to summon heroes?

I am curious.

"If you have such things, then why are you summoning heroes? Can't you just mass-produce those and defeat the waves?"

Melty shakes her head at my question.

"To have similar power equal to a legendary weapon.....The fuel consumption is too huge."

"What do you mean?"

"To use that weapon once, several hundred people's worth of magical power must be sacrificed. Moreover, it is impossible to mass-produce now, as that

technology was from a lost era. It is a legendary weapon after all."

"That's great."

I have seen the anime. A giant robot using all of Japan's electricity to shoot one shot.

Something like that?

"Everyday believers have devoted their energies and risked their lives. This is for a crusade!"

Well they certainly are prepared.

Bringing out the replica of a legendary hero's weapon in such a place?

They said it was lost for several hundred years.

Was the thing accumulating magic for that many years?

Shit! To bring out something so troublesome...

.....No, it's just evidence of how cornered they were.

If we can overcome this, then our counterattack will begin.

Right now is the crucial moment.

Replica

Pope: “Well then, time to end the little test here. I shall start taking this seriously.”

The pope readies his sword.

Then, the form changes to a spear, the shape changing while retaining its luxurious design.

Looking at the weapons, they were clearly made by the same person.

Naofumi: “It can transform!?”

Pope: “Of course, it is a legendary weapon after all. Sword, spear, and bow..... What shall I purify you with?”

Holy Weapon of the Three Legendary Heroes.....?

The power of Three Legendary Heroes merged together into one weapon turns its fangs against the Hero of the Shield.

That is quite the composition.

Even if I tried to escape.....Can it even be done against an opponent who wields such a weapon?

That shock-wave was too fast to dodge.

If he takes this seriously and uses a bow skill, it might even be impossible for Firo to escape.....

Pope: “You see, our power from the believers is limited. So allow me to end this with a single blow.”

The knights are wholeheartedly supporting the Pope in the background.

The weapon was pointed towards us.

The replica spear shines and from the light transforms into a three-pronged spear.

Motoyasu: “..... High Class Skill, Brionac!?”

Hero of the Spear Motoyasu cries out.

It is probably a skill name from a game which Motoyasu has played.

That means this is a considerably high-class skill.

It would normally do an enormous amount of damage; will the skill kill us.....?

Escaping is impossible, so I have to block it..... Motoyasu and the others are unable to; only the shield can.

Is this move going to attack from all sides?

No matter what, I have no intention of giving up.

Naofumi: “Firo!”

Firo: “Okay!”

Firo grasps my intention and throws me directly at the pope.

The moment the pope entered the range of my skill, I shouted its name.

Naofumi: “Shield Prison!”

A cage of shields imprisons the pope.

Afterwards, I will use Change Shield (Attack), then Iron Maiden will surely kill him-Pope: “.....What kind of imitation is this?”

He didn't even need to take a posture; the prison was destroyed merely by the skill's aftereffect.

No way!?

No, I need to calm down and think about this.

The requirements to activate Iron Maiden weren't met, and it's my only other means of attacking.

I'll just burn him with Self-Burning Curse.

However, he grips the spear and begins his attack.

I think not.

Naofume: "Firo, throw Motoyasu at me!"

Motoyasu: "Eh!?"

Firo: "Okay!"

Motoyasu who hasn't landed yet is hurled towards me by Firo.

Motoyasu: "Dowaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Motoyasu shouts in panic while flying towards me at a high-speed.

Naofumi: "Motoyasu attack me!"

Motoyasu: "Ahhh!? Oh I see, okay!"

Motoyasu turns out to be quite sharp.

While I turn around, Motoyasu readies his spear.

And with a thud, the spear hits my shield.

That's right.

This is good.

Motoyasu: "Meteor Spear!"

Next, Motoyasu releases his skill towards the Pope.

Pope: "Foolish."

However, Motoyasu's meteor spear was stopped by an unknown barrier around the pope.

Motoyasu: "What!?"

Naofumi: "Now try this!"

With me at the centre, the Self-Burning Curse flames fly out and engulf the pope, hitting Motoyasu as well.

The barrier surrounding the Pope suddenly vanishes and the flames—
Pope: "It's useless!"

The believers accompanying the Pope immediately begin chanting in unison.

Knights: ""Our god commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Purify this curse with a miracle!""

Knights: "High Class Purification Magic [Sanctuary]!"

The area was dyed pure-white and my Self-Burning Curse was instantly removed.

No way!?

Certainly the curse power conflicts with holy power.

Was I deceived into buying holy water? Oh well, it did do enough.

High Class Holy Water should still be required to completely cure the curse.

But instantly.....

Naofumi: "Air Strike Shield! Second Shield!"

Before reaching the Pope I called the shields as a foothold, and Motoyasu and I both use them to back off.

It seems the flames that also burnt Motoyasu were purified.

There is nothing I haven't used yet.

Naofumi: "Okay. Motoyasu's companion heal us with recovery magic."

Woman: "R-right! Tzuvait •Heal!"

Motoyasu's wounds healed considerably.

This is becoming quite useful.

What's sad is that I'm forced to work with Motoyasu.

Pope: "Now then, are you finished with your farce? I would like to attack now."

As the Pope begins to activate a skill, the tip of his spear glows.

Pope: "This is as far as you go. I bid the devil and the imposter good-bye."

The spear shines even brighter than before and the pope smiles at us. His attitude is as if he completed an exorcism.

Firo: "Mel-chan!"

Firo instantly covers Melty. Raphtalia grasps my hand.

Motoyasu: “So this is it.....”

Motoyasu mutters as if he has given up.

Malty: “I-I am going to become the queen of this country! How dare you be so rude-“

The bitch is screaming before death.

Motoyasu’s companions begin to lose their composure and break down crying.

Is there any possibility that I can withstand this?.....

It’s sink or swim, with nothing to lose, I step forward.

Of course I would rather not defend those guys.

I just want to protect Raphtalia, Firo, and Melty, as they are the ones who have believed in me.

I ready my shield and step forward.

Raphtalia: “I’ll accompany you.”

Raphtalia follows me as I step forward. With her hand on mine.

We’ve gotten this far together.

I was brought to this world against my will and became the devil of the shield, and was forced to buy a slave to become my fighting force.

Of course even to now there is no sense of guilt.

Still, even in those days she believed in me.

Naofumi: “I’m sorry.....To bring you to such a place.....”

Raphtalia: “No, Naofumi-sama I believe you can protect us all.”

Motoyasu: “.....That’s right. I don’t know how the previous Hero of the spear was, but this is definitely one of his skills.”

Not yet, I will not be finished in such a place.

The chance to finally counter-attack the mastermind is right in front of me.

Brionac.....I'm not sure which Celtic Myth it is from, but I will stop it.

The Pope raises the spear towards the sky—

Ren: “Hundred Sword!”

Itsuki: “Meteor Bow!”

Suddenly, a wave of swords and arrows rain down on to the Pope.

Pope: “What’s going on!?”

Since I broke down the Pope’s barrier, he was forced to stop casting his skill and twirl the spear around to deflect all the swords and arrows.

I turn my gaze to where the voice came from. There I see-

“Oh my. You two should have already been purified by the judgement of god, why are you here?”

Ren and Itsuki are standing in a line with their parties.

Ren: “Don’t just kill me off without my permission. In the first place did you even confirm our corpses?”

Itsuki: “That was a close call. I barely made it in time.”

Ren and Itsuki call out to us while preparing for battle.

Pope: “Oh dear, if there was even a need to confirm your bodies, then there

would have been no reason to use that magic.”

I look to where the attack previously landed.

Certainly, there is a slim chance of even finding a corpse within the crater.

Not even a trace would remain.

But I endured it though.

When looking at Ren, my body feels heavy.

The shield makes a commotion about who I should be directing my hatred towards.

The rage of the dragon is producing anger meant for Ren.

I have to endure it..... I cannot act violently now.

Motoyasu: “You guys, how did you.....”

Motoyasu is looking at Ren and Itsuki like he’s looking at dead people.

Well Motoyasu isn’t wrong, it’s definitely strange that all the heroes have gathered in such a remote area.

The last time I saw them was in the opposite direction heading towards Silt Welt.

Ren: “A group called shadow helped us.”

Itsuki: “Yeah, it was a close call.”

Motoyasu: “Eh? Did a guy called shadow tell you about Naofumi’s whereabouts?”

Ren: “He said that he was on the church’s side.”

If I think about it, it’s strange that they’re able to predict our escape route and lay an ambush.

In other words, Motoyasu was able to pinpoint my location thanks to the help from the shadows on the Three Heroes Church.

We also met a shadow during our escape.

That reminds me.....

Naofumi: "..... I was told the shadows are splintered."

Ren: "Yeah, the shadows who saved our lives said they worked for the queen."

I see, the queen's shadows are collaborating.

I'll assume that the shadows who helped Itsuki and Ren are from the queen's faction.

Is this because the queen has a hostile relationship with the pope?

At least now the queen and the four heroes are hostile against the Pope and his Three Heroes Church.

However.....These guys look like they came from an old weekly manga.

It's like they were waiting for the perfect timing to appear.

The leader of the heroes side is Motoyasu.

The Arch-enemy position is me.....? I'm not kidding.

Is it possible to clear up the misunderstanding if I had a companion character there? Like in the manga.

Unfortunately, I have no intentions of becoming a companion of Motoyasu or any of them.....

Ren: "A punitive force will be arriving soon! Surrender quietly!"

Ren declares as if he already won.

However, the pope doesn't seem to be worried at all.

Pope: "Our victory is certain no matter how many you bring. No matter what armed forces arrive, they're just numbers. It's meaningless!"

The pope gets in position to activate his skill again.

Ren: "I wonder about that."

Itsuki: "Of course."

The two heroes both shoot a skill at the pope.

Ren: "Meteor Sword!"

Itsuki: "Meteor Bow!"

Arrows and swords made of light head directly towards the Pope

Wrath Shield

“Meteor Sword!”

“Meteor Bow!”

Ren and Itsuki’s prided Meteor Series attacks are fired at the pope, but the pope is covered by another barrier, keeping a cool face while wielding the replica spear.

Ren and Itsuki’s companions also use their skills and magic, however the barrier is deployed again so nothing comes close to harming the pope.

“As expected of imposters, you only have this degree of strength.”

“Damn.....”

“This is harsh. To think he would have such a hidden-card to play.”

“What did you guys even come for?!”

Even with these guys, our chances of success are still almost nil.

“Do you guys even have any plan in mind?”

“Just how much long do you plan on making fun of us?”

Ren and Itsuki’s weapons start to glow, but this time they charge up their energy before attacking.

“Thunder Slash!”

“Thunder Shot!”

The pope looks startled and his eyes open wide as he receives the attack, his barrier creaking.

“It’s too late! I’ve already bought enough time!”

The barrier was destroyed due to my Self-Burning Curse last time, and Motoyasu and the rotten heroes were also able to break through it this time.

“I could still fight..... But I’m out of SP.”

“That’s just the whining of a loser.”

I haven’t helped them so far because I did not expect them have such strong skills.

Is it too late to jump in? Have I been too cautious?

“Fufufu..... foolish heroes. Did you truly think you could beat me, the wielder of the legendary weapon?”

The believers immediately use recovery magic on the Pope to heal him.

This is troubling. The attack that took so much effort to land was healed in one go.

“If the others help suppress you, I’ll defeat you. It is my duty as a hero.”

“Everyone. The aria of judgement will now commence.”

The pope’s believers nod and begin to recite magic.

“All of the imposters and their companions are evil.”

Wow. Quite fanatic.

I’m not sure we can win this fight even if the reinforcements that Ren and Itsuki called show up.

“Now then, shall we finish this?”

The pope is going to seriously kill us. Brionac has been ready for a while and now he charges at us.

“Naofumi.”

“What?”

Ren approaches me and asks.

“Let’s combine our power and beat this guy.”

“Honestly, cooperating with you guys is far too unpleasant.”

It’s impossible to successfully escape.

Furthermore, if they use the spell, “Judgement,” again, I don’t think that I can endure it.

“Someone must attack me with hostility, and then I must get in close proximity of the pope. After that, get away from me – my attack will affect anyone in range.”

The only effective weapon I have is Self-Burning Curse. If it comes to close range I should somehow manage.

“I understand.”

“Then, what are you waiting for!?”

I cast support magic on everyone and issue instructions, preparing myself to protect those who will attack with close combat from both physical and magical damage.

The heroes attack, supported by magic, their defense buffed, in an unexpectedly organized formation.

“Let’s go!”

We rush towards the pope first.

The pope is ignoring us and concentrating on his skill.

The only way for me to deal a decisive blow is to receive a hit myself. Since I regularly develop my defense, this skill requires a lot of damage to activate.

“Naofumi!”

Motoyasu’s spear hits my shield, activating Self-Burning Curse.

“Uoooooooooooooooooooo!”

The believers not singing the Aria of Judgement try to purify the flames, but of the barrier shatters anyway.

Immediately I cast Air Strike Shield and Change Shield, then use Hook to withdraw behind the other heroes. Hook’s special effect lets me manipulate it however I want, so I tie it around my arm and use it as an anchor.

“Thunder Slash!”

“Lightening Spear!”

“Thunder Shot!”

The other heroes use their strongest skills against the pope.

“Brionac!”

However, the pope counters with his skill!

The Pope’s skill and the heroes’ skills clash against each other, and the two sides’ conflicting energies fill the air with the electric crackling.

“Gooooooooooooooooo!”

“Yooooooooooooooooou!”

“Deryaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

I am reminded of an old anime where two beams collide and fight for superiority in both offence and defense.^{[10][11]}

The heroes’ companions are also supporting them with magic, pushing the pope back little by little.

Or so I thought.....

“Fufu.....Is that it?”

The pope’s smile remains undiminished.

No way! He was holding back!?

“No..... Not yet! I will not be defeated yet!”

“That’s right! We can still fight!”

“Yeah, let’s raise the output!”

The three of them use all their SP on their skills.

Though it’s just a little I’ll try to help too.

But... I cannot rid myself of the ominous feeling that something is wrong.

“Now then, shall we end this soon?” The pope murmurs indifferently, increasing his power.

Shit! If we die here it would be troublesome!

I mean, I wanted this the other’s to die, but the timing right now is terrible.....

I push away the Heroes to stop their skills and step forward.

I almost can’t withstand the pain as energy passes through my body, but I hold out my shield and endure it desperately.

After what seems an age, the energy dissipates.

“Haa..... haa.....”

“Interesting..... I did not expect the Devil of the Shield to be able to withstand that.” The pope declares quietly, swinging the spear around.

“A-Are you okay?”

I look back, but all I can see is a blur.

Everything except for a small area behind me was completely destroyed.

Fortunately, I did not receive too much damage, thanks to those supporting me from behind.

“”Tzuvait • Heal!””

My wounds were immediately healed thanks to the recovery magic.

If the other three heroes hadn't reduced that attack's power with their skills, I would have died.

"Damn.....Our SP....."

"Me too."

"Same here."

I give the three of them SP recovery potions.

We probably won't have enough time to completely recover though.

I suddenly hear a loud war cry. It seems the reinforcements that Ren called have arrived.

"Now then, I have had enough of this farce with the devil. I shall dispose of all of you and summon the true heroes. But first, why don't I keep those people occupied for now?"

The pope changes the spear into a sword and takes up a stance.

The sword blade's shape takes on the semblance of a phoenix.

Perhaps this skill is even superior to Brionac.

Dangerous..... those guys from the punitive force have no idea that the Pope has something like this up his sleeve.

There is the possibility they will all be wiped out at once.

"Everyone, Let's provide judgment together."

He intends to attack together with his subordinates. Although only a bit, we have gained some time.

“So we could only come this far.....”

The other heroes are all pale.

No matter how reckless we act, our chances of success are low.....

No, wasn't it also like this against Motoyasu? Can I say that I did my best? Did I do my best...?

Suddenly, it comes to me.

It's a desperate gamble, but we're dead anyway. We might as well give it all we have.

“Ren, come here for a moment.”

“What's up? Do you have a plan?”

After I tell Ren to approach, he does so suspiciously.

Dokun, Dokun. (Sfx: Pulsing)

The shield's pulsing strengthens, and it begins to vibrate.

I was intentionally sealing off the dragon core's rage towards Ren up until now.

The memory is being projected in my vision again, and the shield wants to slaughter the enemy before me.

That's right..... More... Give me more anger!

Thanks to Raphtalia, I can control the massive amount of rage pouring from the Shield of Anger.

“Raphtalia, your hand.....”

“Okay.”

I join hands with Raphtalia and point my shield at Ren.

I look at Motoyasu and the Bitch to remind myself of the anger that I wanted to avoid.

Immersed in hatred, with everything else forgotten, all that is left is pitch-black rage and anger.

Grow Up has been achieved due to released emotions.

Curse Series: Ability improvement of the Shield of Anger! Shield of Anger changed to Wrath Shield!

Wrath Shield 3

Ability sealed..... Equipment Bonus: Skill [Change Shield (Attack)] [Iron Maiden] [Blutopfer]^[12]

Special Effect: Dark Curse Burning Physical, Strength Up, Roar of the Angry Dragon, Roar, Frenzy of Companions, Magic Sharing, Clothes of Anger (Intermediate)

Instantly, my heart is consumed by dark emotions.

“—————!!!”

Price

“————-!” (Naofumi)

I shouted at the heavens.

Hate!

This whole world is hateful, I hate everything!

I'm going mad from everyone reproaching and accusing me.

I should just burn down everything with this power!

My vision is stained red and black, and everything I see becomes an object of my hatred.

“-!”(Naofumi)

Someone's voice reaches my ears, but I cannot hear it. It feels as if I'm submerged under water.

“-!”(Naofumi)

I feel something take hold of my hand – does it want to be incinerated!?

“Master, do you truly hate everything in the world?” (Firo)

I feel trapped – everything that torments me will die by my hatred!

“Really? Is that what you really think?!”(Firo)

Yeah, so what?

“Then, did Master hate the days he spent with Firo and Raphtalia onee-chan?

(Firo)

That voice..... An old memory floats to the surface of my mind: A young girl loyally following me wherever I go, nothing separating us.

Obeying me even while injured..... This recollection fills my view.

Later, too, my feelings of love are transmitted to a young bird that hatches from an egg and grows up under my care.

“That.....That is.....”(Naofumi)

“It’s different. Since Master works hard, Firo can do her best.”(Firo)

The darkness is gradually clearing up.

“That’s why Firo will eat master’s anger and hatred.”(Firo)

My vision clears and I glance around.

“Naofumi-sama!”(Raphtalia)

“Are you alright!?”(Melty)

A few seconds have passed since I screamed, and I am being looked at with suspicion.

“Master, are you alright!?”(Firo)

“Did you help me control that?”(Naofumi)

“Yup, Master was in trouble.”(Firo)

Firo hugs me from behind. If I look closely I can tell that she has been severely burnt by the black flame.

Not even Firo's body could withstand the Improved Shield of Anger's flames.

It must have been very painful, but Firo still worried about me without complaining.^{[13][14]}

"Firo, Raphtalia onee-chan, and Mel-chan all believe in Master, so do your best!"

"Yeah."

All I wanted was to simply beat the wave; it was not necessary to be swallowed by my anger.

After all, I can crush one of the ringleaders who made me suffer.

That pope bastard conveniently used Melty, the other heroes, all of us.

I will..... kick that bastard's ass!

".....I'm going."(Naofumi)

"There's still a chance, even in this situation?"(Ren) "Yeah, I'll be sure to kill him with my strongest shield."(Naofumi) "What's with that confident attitude? You looked like shit just a little while ago."(Ren)

Shield of Anger 2's dragon-like figure has become even more ominous compared to before.

The dragon's features have morphed to be more devil-like, the horns curl around.

"I have a skill that I need to use, please help make an opening for me to use it."(Naofumi) "You... Can't be helped. I'll rely on you for now."(Motoyasu)

"Right. It is difficult to trust you, but we have no other choice."(Ren) "All-or-nothing."(Itsuki)

"We'll use magic to help somehow..."(Hero companions)

The heroes and their companions nod and turn to face the pope.

“Oh dear, Oh dear..... To think you would continue to put up this futile resistance. I hope you are prepared, because this is already over. Shall I perform the coup de grace?(Pope)

Magical power gradually fills the area.

High-density light is going to be unleashed any moment now.

“Firo!”(Naofumi)

On my signal the heroes charge at the pope, and Firo faithfully carries me as ordered.

“Fly!”(Naofumi)

“Okay~!”(Firo)

Firo jumps while the enemies start to chant.

“””High Class Synthetic Magic [Judgement]“”” (Church Fanatics)

A beam of cleansing light falls from the sky.

“Gooooooooooooooooooooo!”

I raise my shield above my head.

Crackling sounds can be heard as the light pours down onto me, but it is impossible to penetrate Wrath Shield 3’s defense. The light barely does any damage to me even though I am right under it.

“To not even suffer a wound from Judgment!”(Pope)

The pope has a surprised expression on his face, all traces of his old smile gone.

What a suitable price for using the shield.

I’ll teach him his place.

“No way... You won't be able to block this!”(Pope)

The pope points his sword at me and yells.

“Phoenix Blade!”(Pope)

A Phoenix takes flight from the Pope's sword and rushes towards me.

“I can withstand that, no problem!”(Naofumi)

I lower my shield in front of me.

Firo, understanding what I'm thinking, casts support magic.

A chant comes to my mind on its own. Are these the conditions for the Clothing of Anger (Intermediate)?

“I am the Hero of the Shield, commander of the origin of power. I have read and deciphered the law of nature. May the devouring flames become my power!”(Naofumi) “Wrath Fire!”(Naofumi)

Anger is now my power.

The flaming phoenix collides with me and doesn't even singe my eyebrows.

“Wha! To nullify my skill...”(Pope)

“That's quite ironic. Your bird became food for my holy bird.”(Naofumi)

The barrier protecting the pope was shattered by the other heroes' attacks and Firo's powerful kicks.

“Phoenix Strike-“(Pope)

Firo's sure kill dash!

Firo's finishing move is strong enough to combat the pope.

"Meteor Sword!"(Ren)

"Meteor Spear!"(Motoyasu)

"Meteor Bow!"(Itsuki)

The pope changes his sword into a spear and prepares for the onslaught.

"The Stance of Heaven and Earth Reversal!?"(Motoyasu)

Motoyasu yells in surprise.

Is that another High Class spear skill?

"Tch... How dare you go against God's will."(Pope)

Firo's skill is repelled as light overflows from the pope's spear.

"Gua!"(Ren)

"Gufu!"(Motoyasu)

"Gu....."(Itsuki)

Is that a counter skill?

Just how tenacious are you!

"But, I will not be stopped!"(Pope)

"I wonder about that."(Naofumi)

This time the pope's weapon becomes a giant bow and he jumps away.

"You think you can run!? Firo!"(Naofumi)

“Yep. Let’s go~”(Firo)

We instantly catch up to the Pope, and Firo tries to kick him.

However, as just Firo’s attack connects, the pope vanishes.

If he escapes here he loses.

Where is he hiding...?

“Hide Arrow!?”(Itsuki)

That’s Itsuki’s voice.

“That skill creates a large amount of illusionary copies of himself! Be careful!”(Itsuki)

Damn... If I can’t target him I can’t do anything.

There are currently 10 popes, but their numbers are increasing.

“Fufufu, I was a little surprised by you, but shall we end this now?”(Pope)
The popes hold up their bows and begin to cast a big skill.

“This is my strongest skill. Let’s see if you can withstand this, Devil of the Shield.”(Pope)

The bows shine.

Shit, I should be able to block it, but I can’t counterattack.

“I am the queen, she who commands the origin of power. I have read and deciphered the law of nature. Restrain him with ice!”(???) “Doraifa ▪ Icicle Prison!”(???)

The lower half of a bunch of the pope’s mirror images freeze.

“Now!”(???)

Who is that!?

No, there is no time to worry about that.

I have to defeat this bastard now.

Blutopfer!

As expected, its chant floats into view.

“This is the name of the punishment for the foolish sinner, he who shall be sacrificed as a scapegoat to god. Become a sacrifice to the steel trap!

Experience the intense pain of a being drained of all your blood!”(Naofumi)

“Blutopfer!”(Naofumi)

Gufu.....

Wh-What!? The moment I cast the skill, blood begins to overflow from my body, my muscles begin to tear, and my bones start to creak.

This...Was it a suicide skill?

The pope smiles as he sees me heavily injured, but the next instant a giant red and black steel trap appears under his feet.

Quite unlike a normal steel trap, this one has multiple layers. It looks like the ground grew a shark’s mouth, with the Pope in the middle.

“Wha-“(Pope)

Gatun! A sharp metal sound can be heard the instant the Pope is bitten by the steel trap.

“Gugyaaaaaaaaa—“(Pope)

The pope’s scream echoes out.

Red bloods splashes over the steel trap and causes it to shine.

“Something of this degree—“(Pope)

This is... harsh.

The pope tries to take countermeasures, but the steel trap repeatedly opens and shuts, seeming as if it were ridiculing him.

“Guha.....It was all... for.....Go-God.....”(Pope)

The pope fires off a few skills, but the steel trap isn’t even scratched.

Two... Three cracks start to appear on the legendary weapon replica. As the fourth crack appears, a shattering sound can be heard.

The steel trap suddenly falls to the ground and disappears, leaving the pope’s corpse behind, which, at this point, is nothing more than a lump of flesh.

“.....”(Everybody)

It was so gruesome that we couldn’t breathe.

All skills from the Curse Series are bloody.

Is it because the Curse shields erode the mind?

This is a definite reminder not to overuse the shields of this series.

“Th-The Pope has been defeated by the Devil!”(Church Fanatics)

The Three Heroes Church followers mutter in utter despair.

“Yes... This is the end of the line for you lot as well.”(Queen)

The punitive force surrounds the Heroes Church remnants and captures them.

Now that the pope is gone our victory is certain, but...

As the punitive forces work, I slip off Firo.

A new attack skill, Blutopfer, was added to the Wrath Shield.

It is strong, but the price is too great.....

The Queen

“Master!?”

Firo holds me anxiously as I was covered in blood.

The shield changed to the Chimeric Viper Shield by itself.

“What horrible wounds! Someone! Help master!”

A woman who looks like the commander of the punitive force runs towards Firo who was calling for help.

“Mother!?”

Melty exclaims in surprise towards the commander.

That reminds me..... The head of the punitive force looks like the person that was with Melty in the beginning.

I couldn't get a good look because of the fan though.

“Your efforts this time were quite amazing. Hero of the Shield-sama.”

It might be because of her that the pope was trapped.

“Everybody! Treatment for Hero of the Shield-sama is top priority! This is a royal order. We must save Hero of the Shield-sama's life without fail!”

“””Yes Ma'am!”””

The treatment team within the punitive force gathered around me and began chanting magic.

“Doraifa ▪ Heal”

Light surrounds me.

However.....There is no sign of the pain receding.

“Ar-are you cursed?..... For it to be so strong.....”

The treatment team cast de-curse magic with surprised expressions.

But..... It had no effect.

“Do a thorough examination! Everyone please hurry!”

The queen issues instructions to the treatment team and Firo follows hastily.

“Ugh.....”

My whole body is screaming in pain. But I will not lose consciousness here.

Because I still do not know whether or not the queen is friend or foe.

“Y-you are the queen?”

“Yes, I am the queen of Melromark, Mirelia Q Melromark. I’m sorry for helping so late.” [15]

“.....You were definitely slow.”

What does it matter.

Do you have power? Are you the true ruler of this country?

Do you even see the big picture behind this event?

There are a mountain of things I want to say.

My grudge towards her daughter and trash start to surface.

“Really.....this time was all my fault.”

“Mother.....”

“Mama, why are you apologizing to such a person!?”

When the bitch impeached, I could see a few veins appear on the queen’s smiling face.

“Malty..... Prepare yourself because there are a lot of things I need to say to you after we return to the castle.”

Gogogo..... The air trembles.

Though I’m not the one that this anger is directed at, a chill still runs up my spine.

With the snap of her finger a shadow appears behind the bitch and arrests her.

“Wait mama!”

“Silence this fool at once.”

“Yes Ma’am!”

The bitch’s mouth is covered by a cloth.

“W-What are you doing to Mein!?”

“I am Mein.....Malty’s mother. By my authority, the fight between heroes is finished until we get back to the castle. Let’s return to Melromarc castle and rest.”

Motoyasu and the other heroes fall silent due to the queen’s aura of authority.

“Now then, Hero of the Shield-sama.....No, Naofumi Iwatani-sama. Your treatment is our top priority, so please rest. Everything will be prepared immediately.”

The treatment team starts bringing out various magic tools, medicines, and holy water to use on me.

I feel like an emergency patient in an ambulance from my world.

“But.....”

Why did the queen come here? Various questions appear as to why she isn’t in the country southwest of us.

“I know what you want to ask. Why was I outside of the country for so long, why I am leading the punitive force, why did I not come defend you sooner?..... There are a lot of things I need to tell you. However, that can be settled after you are healed.”

“Naofumi-sama!”

Raphtalia anxiously runs to my side while crying.

“I thought your heart stopped! Are you okay!?”

“Who.....knows.....”

I feel that I have suffered some grievous wounds.

My whole body seriously hurts, and it would be too troublesome to stand up.

Firo in human form and Melty come from the carriage.

“What terrible wounds.....Hurry, come over here.”

One of the treatment team members see Firo’s burnt limbs and calls her over.

However, Firo doesn’t want to leave my side to receive their treatment because she is worried about my wounds.

“But, Master is.....”

“It’s alright Firo, Naofumi-sama will be cured by these people. Go have your wounds healed.”

Raphtalia gently strokes Firo’s head and whispers in an anxious voice.

“But.....”

“Naofumi-sama would hate to see Firo getting a scar because of him.”

Will you listen, Firo? She stares at me while tilting her neck.

Can’t be helped. Normally being so selfish and carefree, to be so anxious for my sake.

“I’ll be fine, so go over there.”

I squeeze out some instructions for Firo. When Firo reluctantly left to receive healing, the treatment member nodded at me.

The treatment team use different recovery magic that seems to be effective against the curse.

“What a strong curse!.....”

Mutters one of the healers.

Yeah, this is certainly a strong curse.

It literally says Curse Series.

Since the it's very effective, the price for using it is equally as high, such as directly receiving the curse myself.

It is very different from a mere spell.

“Prepare for Group Synthesis Magic [Sanctuary]“

Are you going to use that to remove the rest of Self-Burning Curse?

They aren't believers of the Three Heroes Church right? Then what religion are they following?

It does not seem to be the Shield religion.

As I think about such things, my eyelids become heavy and it starts getting dark.

“Naofumi-sama!”

“Naofumi!”

Raphtalia and Melty shake me awake.

“Yeah? What's wrong?”

“Please stay conscious properly.”

“What are you saying, it's like you think I died.”

Well, in this situation I certainly might die.

Though I have no intention to die in such a place, I am tired in various ways.

I want to sleep.....just a little.

But, I can't sleep yet. We are still far from the safety zone.

However, I am unable to do anything in my present state.

In that case.....

“Raphtalia, if something happens, run away with Melty on Firo.”

“Understood. But I will be taking Naofumi-sama too. So no matter what, please wake up.”

“Okay. I'll just sleep a little..... if anything happens, wake me up.”

During this exchange a memory appears.

..... I remember it.

The story where Raphtalia still looked like a child and would always cry and scream at night.

Raphtalia had to be ordered to do everything back then.

“My bad. It looks like there's no breakfast this time.”

“.....It's fine. Because, this time I'll defend Naofumi-sama while you sleep. [16]

After the conversation was over, my consciousness went blank and I started dreaming.

It has been two days since then.

“Ugh.....Heavy.”

“Su.....Su.....”

“Munya.....Master~”

“Heavy.....Help.....Firo-chan.....”

When I awake I see Raphtalia, Firo, and Melty all on my bed.

“What the hell is this? Get up!”

I wake the three of them up immediately and scold them.

Instead of them looking down, all three of them smiled.

I was told that I got urgently rushed to receive treatment in Melromarc Castle.

The curse caused by Blutopfer was very serious, and even specialized curse treatments couldn't remove it completely.

When I ask how to cure it, the answer I got was it cannot be cured by magic or medicine. It seems that the only way to cure it is through time.

But the burns and scratches were healed and my physical fitness has recovered, so I just feel lethargic.

When I check my stats, everything except defense dropped by 30%.

It seems until Blutopfer's curse is cured completely, they will stay debuffed. This is the price which I paid for meddling in troublesome things.

“So how long till I recover?”

“The rough estimate is a month for complete recovery.”

A month huh.....that's long.

Will it happen before the wave?

That reminds me, I was unable to go to Silt Welt after all.

For the purpose of Raphtalia and Firo's class up, we ended up in a strange position.

“How is your condition?”

While I was lamenting about the absurdity of the world, the queen came over and asked about my condition.

I do some stretches to show my body's condition.

“.....”

I feel that I can trust her a little since she gave instructions for my treatment even while I was unconscious.

The queen also asked the treatment team at the hospital how I was doing.

“I see. Then could you follow me?”

“Where are we going?”

“We are going to the castle.”

The queen produces her fan and hides her face, generating a strange pressure.

“Mother is scary when she's angry.....”

Melty hides behind my back and starts trembling.

I feel an unpleasant atmosphere, is that anger?

“Are you going to execute me?”

“I will do no such thing. Iwatani-sama.”

I feel her smiling as the atmosphere changes.

Does the fact that I wasn't attacked in my sleep mean this is safe?

“I just think Iwatani-sama would like to witness what will happen. Hohoho.”

“What do you intend to do?”

“Please come to the castle, I’m sure you will enjoy it. There are various things I need to talk to you about as well, so shall I answer everything Iwatana-sama asks after that?”

It seems the queen has created a situation where I have no choice but to go to the castle.

She is necessary for me to prove my innocence, so there is no way I can refuse.

Well, there is no reason to decline for now.

“I want to ask one thing.”

“I would like to talk after we arrive at the castle, but.....what is it?”

“You.....Did you send Melty to me so she would get involved in this incident?”

This is the problem I am worried about most.

Depending on the answer, there is a possibility that all the heroes will be rounded up at the castle and gotten rid of, all according to the queen’s plan.

“.....That concern is only a baseless fear. Would that be the correct answer?”

“Eh!?”

Melty trembled while staring at her mother.

“Melty didn’t say it, but she wanted to meet her father so much that she couldn’t sleep at night. So I let her be selfish and meet him.”

Meeting that trash. I was feeling uneasy when I thought the queen sent Melty to meet him.

"There is nothing to worry about. When such a thing happened I told shadow my ideas."

"Idea?"

"Yes, I entrusted Melty to the Hero of the Shield, and if he tried to murder her then he would have been arrested."

The queen snaps her fingers.

Suddenly a group of assassins appear.

"What an annoying story."

".....I apologize to have troubled you. However, I think a lot of problems have been solved."

"That's not it. What would you have done if Melty died!?"

I cannot hide my sympathy for Melty as she looks down sadly.

"There were always two bodyguards following her and supporting Iwatani-sama in various ways."

"I see....."

"For example, the one knight who tried to assassinate her."

One of the shadows transforms into the shape of a knight, just like that anime with the phantom thief!

"Villager."

One of the villagers who helped us in village to the east.

“Merchant from the neighboring country.”

Even the guys from the neighboring country that thanked me.....

Certainly, it was strange for a person from the neighboring country to show up there.

“I’ll explain the circumstances later. Do you still doubt me even after the shadow appeared when Melty was truly in danger?”

That reminds me..... a shadow did appear when the Church ambushed us.

However, that was a really dangerous situation so I couldn’t think straight.

Firo and I were the only ones able to nullify the Three Heroes Church shadow’s poison.....

“Mother..... did you know I might have been killed?”

“It was a possibility.”

Melty hangs her head when the queen answers flatly.

Well, as expected of the parent of bitch and wife of trash. Quite suitable to being a bad person.

“Are you people really parents?”

“I cannot argue about that even if I am one. There are a lot of lies that can be told.....Let’s see. Do you understand what it takes to be queen of such a country for years?”

Well.....Even if I impeach I don’t understand.

This fellow. I can only agree that she is trash's wife.

"But.....I believed in Iwatani-sama. Is that a suitable answer?"

".....Coward."

"Otherwise I cannot protect this country."

"Hah.....Wouldn't it be better if you didn't arrive?"

"Naofumi-sama!?"

Raphtalia speaks anxiously.

"It seems you are unable to refute it. I won't spread it. In the first place, if we were enemies I would not have received treatment."

"Yes, certainly, I think you would want to be present for what is about to happen."

If we share a mutual interest, then there would be no problems in lending a hand.

I don't know what you are after, but if necessary I will use the Wrath Shield again.

"I brought the carriage of the holy bird here. Let's return with the luggage."

"Really!?"

At the queen's words Firo steps forwards.

"Yes of course. It's in front of the hospital, please confirm it."

"Yay~! Mel-chan! Let's go!"

"Okay!"

Firo and Melty run out of the room together.

She really loves that carriage, huh?

After watching the both of them run off, I stare at the queen.

“I feel disgusted.”

Although I have received some goodwill, I do not know her real intentions.

The queen antagonized the Three Heroes Church, and furthermore treated the devil of the shield favorably. I wish to know why.

I can't even think of a reason.

I do not believe in some noble reason such as fighting the wave together.

Or is there still information that I am lacking?

“I have a goal. I will use any means necessary to achieve it. Although the way we go about things is different, I believe I have the same feelings as Iwatani-sama.”

Similar feelings as me.....

I don't know why, but I feel that I somewhat understand.

After coming to this world, I have experienced various things.

At least this person is talking to me as an equal.

“I will follow your instructions for now.”

“I am grateful. Iwantani-sama.”

After obtaining my consent, the queen smiles.

The smile has a strong will mixed in.

“Auckley.....Malty..... This isn’t over yet.....” [17]

Sermon

Trash: “Oh! Malty and Melty! It’s great that you defeated the shield and came back. Why is Malty tied up and gagged?”

The queen entered the castle with Melty and Bitch first to issue orders. The other Heroes followed after.

Those three didn’t like that I was leading the way. Though they cannot complain since the queen grandly declared that in the latest incident, I was the one who contributed the most.

Firo pulled the carriage that we all rode in, and the queen informed the three heroes of the situation.

The pope’s death still hasn’t spread within the castle town yet, so the Three Heroes Church is still active though preventative measures have already been taken. All parties concerned are currently being captured and transported.

Queen: “It is noisy when you talk. Can you shut it?”

So declares the queen as she briskly enters the room.

I can hear some extremely angry sounds from here.

As soon as I arrived behind the queen, trash’s face distorts in anger.

Trash: “Why is he here!? Execute him at once!”

Queen: “I won’t let you!”

The queen’s authority is above Trash’s so the Imperial guardsmen don’t move.

Trash: “Grr. That queen is an imposter! Arrest them!”

Queen: “You.....Mistaking me for..... Can’t be helped then.”

Queen: “I am the queen who commands the origin of power-“

Trash: “Wha!? This aria-“

Queen: “I have read and deciphered a law of nature. Restrain him with ice!”

Trash’s whole body is frozen in a cage of ice.

He tries to talk to the queen, but his voice doesn’t pass through the cage.

Queen: “Seriously..... When did you become so foolish?”

As she closes her fan, the cage of ice disappears.

Trash: “That level of magical power and quality, you are certainly this one’s wife! What on earth happened!?”

Trash asks the queen with disbelief.

Trash: “Did the shield possibly-!?”

Are you just going to pin any bad thing that happens on to me!? Stop it.

This is why I didn’t want to come to the castle...

Queen: “That’s not it. Seriously, do you actually believe that Hero of the Shield-sama has that power?..... Foolishness.”

The queen approaches the king and — slaps him on the cheek.

Dumbfounded, the trash takes a few steps back while trembling, and for some reason glares at me.

Queen: "This is not Iwatani-sama's fault, I have already said this a while ago."

Trash: "Urgh!"

He was slapped again.

Just as the trash was about to retort, the queen gave him another slap.

Queen: "Listen to me, you dared to disregard my order of not abusing your power and discriminating against the hero while I was outside the country!? Do you want a war!?"

Trash: "But, But he-"

Queen: "There are no buts! It is necessary to work together to prepare for the wave, and you are supposed to help with that!"

The queen scolds trash severely to the point that he is not allowed to object.

The purpose of this is to show that all the heroes are equal.

Queen: "Well then, let us reintroduce ourselves. I am the queen of Melromarc, Mirelia Q Melromarc. I hope you all will take care of me."

Itsuki: "Ah.....Yeah."

Ren: "Same here.....please."

Motoyasu: "Wow.....amazing."

The other heroes all express their thoughts.

They are completely dumbfounded.

Queen: "Hero of the Shield-sama, I would like to request a little of your time later today."

Naofumi: "For what?"

Queen: "Let us chat over a meal. Hero-samas except Iwatani-sama, please rest in the guest room."

Motoyasu: "What about Mein?"

Motoyasu asks while looking worryingly at the bitch, but she is being held down and unable to talk.

Queen: "We'll be having a little conversation about her standing in the country. Depending on the circumstances you may get another companion, so please prepare accordingly."

Motoyasu: "O-Okay....."

Thanks to the queen's attitude, the other heroes were driven out of the throne room.

All that's remaining is Raphtalia, Firo, Melty, and I.

Trash: "Fu....."

The trash breathes a sigh of relief as he just shown the other heroes an unsightly scene.

Queen: "What's with the "Fu....." Huh!? Our talk isn't over yet!"

Trash: "This one is not wrong! This is entirely the shield's fault!"

Bitch: "That's right!"

The bitch's restraints were removed and she stands by trash.

So noisy.

Bitch: "Mama! I was raped by that devil over there!"

Queen: “And what’s wrong with that?”

Bitch: “What’s wrong with that!? Mama, that was my first time! Does that mean nothing to you!?”

Queen: “You were a virgin? Did you think I wasn’t aware? You already lost your virginity.”

Oh, so she wasn’t a virgin from the start?

Now that I think about it, pinning a rape accusation on me as she acted like a small fry adventurer, even if the princess declared that she was raped..... Since the Hero of the Spear saved her, it was at best an attempt, but rumours about me already spread.

The woman adventurer who the Hero of the spear saved, did he even notice she was being treated like a princess in society?

Either way, the bitch turned out to be an outrageous whore. This is the best.

Bitch: “H-How do you know!?”

Queen: “Your assumptions that I had no idea about your affairs are downright presumptuous. In the first place, if you were actually in a relationship with Hero of the Shield Iwatani-sama, then you might still be saved.....”

The queen turns her gaze at me for an instant.

Me? With this goddamn bitch?

Naofumi: “Don’t joke around!”

Queen: “Then I won’t pursue. I expect it with Melty.”

A bomb was just dropped.

Trash: “What are you saying!? Cute Melty is still young!”

Naofumi: "Seriously!"

It pains me to have the same opinion as the trash, but being in a relationship with Melty is a little.....

I haven't fallen so low that I would want to be in a relationship with a child.

Melty: "That's right! What are you saying!"

Firo: "What are you talking about-"

Melty: "Firo-chan does not need to know!"

Well, I'll just leave this alone.

Queen: "Refused! Melty will marry Hero of the Shield Iwatani-sama."

Trash: "What did you say.....!"

Queen: "Do you really understand? There are very little opportunities as perfect as this one to befriend old enemies, and what did you do?"

Trash: "What do you mean?"

I also understand.

Silt Welt probably believes in the Hero of the Shield. That would make them this country's arch-nemesis.

If the object of faith, Hero of the Shield, marries a woman of Melromarc and is a saint here...

Something like that happening will greatly improve relations between the two countries, and they may even become allies.

The situation would be perfect if the Hero of the Shield also has a child under these circumstances.

There would be no chance that they could become enemies after that.

Naofumi: “Unfortunately, it is already too late.”

Queen: “You think so?.....Melty, do you best for Hero of the Shield Iwatani-sama.”

Melty: “N-no!”

At the queen’s proposal of a political marriage, Melty refuses and blushes a deep red.

Well, it would be unpleasant to be married for politics at this age.

Of course, I won’t take any actions to let this country prosper.

Just give it up on this.

Queen: “Oh? I heard from the shadow that Melty might have a chance.”

Naofumi: “She had bad eyesight.”

Melty: “Mu.....”

Naofumi: “What. Oh..... did you hate having been seen as a child?”

What a troublesome age.

Queen: “It seems there is still some hope left. How about it? Melty will be the queen in the future. Won’t it be good to break this country from the inside with a puppet?”

Naofumi: “In that case I would have been made your puppet. More than anything, I do not wish to remain in the world.”

Queen: “There are no problems then..... Just get Melty pregnant with Iwatani-sama’s child.”

.....What an unpleasant thing to say.

In short, I can only return to my original world if I father a child as the Hero of

the Shield with the royal family.

Indeed, this would be very effective for diplomacy.

It's actually quite brilliant. Is this a manga?

Queen: "All the chances of having an incompetent daughter and husband are removed. It is good that Iwatani-sama is still single. You will win over an ally. If you domesticate her, then the next queen will be in the palm of your hands."

Bitch: "Who would be with someone so ugly!"

What does this bitch want?

Can't you guys just understand my viewpoint—

Raphtalia, Firo, and Melty: ""He is not ugly!""

Raphtalia, Firo, and Melty refuted all at once.

What is up with all of you?

Bitch: "What? I just stated the facts. You all being angry and retorting just makes it true."

Queen: "Let's see. The fact that you are not a virgin is also undisputed."

Bitch: "There is no evidence anywhere. Ask Motoyasu-sama. I was a virgin."

Queen: "No, I've known this a long time ago. Your speech and behaviour does not match. Malty, if you're going to lie, at least make it believable. Although you may be able to deceive the Hero of the Spear-sama, it is impossible for you to deceive me..... In the first place, you used your body to have your way since the old days—"

And so the queen begins a sermon on the bitch.

However, it's clear that the bitch isn't actually listening; in fact no one is

actually listening.

It seems the queen's preaching has become a habit.

Queen: "When your younger sister was involved in a conspiracy, you not only took advantage of it without protecting her, but you even tried to dispose of her with the help of the church."

Eh?

The bitch wasn't taken advantage of by the church? Was it trash?

Perhaps these two are just stupid.....

Queen: "You probably thought you were going to be the next queen too."

Bitch: "N-No you're wrong!"

Well.....based on her magic chant, she certainly desired it. In her chant she actually called herself the queen.

The queen just announced that the next queen is -, and it was not Bitch, despite what she believes.

After hearing this, I was momentarily lost for words.

Bitch: "It's a lie!"

Queen: "It is the undeniable truth."

Bitch: ".....something so trivial, it doesn't even matter."

Wow...I just figured it out.

Even if you guys are corrupt, you're still family. The queen is completely in control.

Queen: "Next, Aultcray."

At her gaze, the trash winces and backs up.

Queen: “What were you doing? Without investigating the truth, and throwing out the Hero of the Shield, who our country should specially protect.....I am extremely disgusted. Where did the generosity of the old you that I fell in love with go?.....”

Trash: “Th-That’s because the shield is evil!”

Queen: “Malty was not raped. It was a farce. Now.....what else do you have to say?”

Trash: “Grrr..... The shield is evil!”

It seems no matter what this trash will still see me as evil.

In this situation, it’s just pouring oil on fire though.

Queen: “Seriously.....Where did all your wisdom go to.....? You’ve completely changed!”

The queen’s veins are showing as she places her hand on her forehead.

Queen: “It seems you’re not even going to defend yourself.”

Bitch and trash both averted their gaze at that.

Well I understand that they’re not going to apologize to me.

It’s to be expected. Why did the queen have to show such a scene to me?

These guys aren’t going to reflect on their actions.

Queen: “There is only one way to finish this, but that goes without saying.”

The queen closes her fan and points at the both of them while declaring.

Queen: "I permanently deprive you two of the authority of the imperial family."

Trash: "What!?"

Bitch: "Ehh!?"

Trash and bitch both call out in surprise. It seems they don't understand just how heavy their crimes are.

This is reasonable.

Ah, this feeling is quite pleasant. I want to see more.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama..... what are you laughing at?"

Naofumi: "You don't know?"

Raphtalia: "It's not like I don't understand, but it is rude....."

Melty: "Mother..... is serious."

Firo: "Hm-?"

Firo tilts her head. She is completely lost does not understand anything that is going on.

Well she is a bird. The only thing she thinks about is her carriage and food.

Trash: "Why!?"

Queen: "Because your actions greatly deviated from the range of your authority. If you're really sorry, somehow beg Iwatani-sama for forgiveness....."

Naofumi: "You think I can forgive them?"

Queen: "Maybe various bribes can help you consider."

Bribing huh.....I am interested, today is turning out to be pretty good.

Bitch: "If I am no longer considered royal, what will happen to this country?!"

Queen: "There is Melty. She is far superior compared to you, so this country will prosper."

Well, it would obviously be much better if Melty succeeds as the queen, compared to bitch.

It seems she grew up a lot due to the latest incident.

Trash: "If this one stops being king then our allies will not remain silent."

Queen: "I have already silenced them; Did you think I was doing nothing for these 3 months? That's quite a large mistake."

Trash: "Wha—"

Trash is surprised to the point his voice stopped working. He just opens and closes his mouth.

Queen: "In the first place, who gave you the authority to summon the Heroes? This talk is over."

Naofumi: ".....What do you mean?"

Queen: "Did Iwatani-sama not doubt it earlier? Why I, the highest power in the country, did not attend the hero summoning? I was out trying to improve diplomatic relations."

I certainly did wonder about that.

If this person was in charge of the Heroes summoning then things would have been a lot smoother.

We would have been manipulated and utilized to our full potential.

At least, I was sure to have been easy to manipulate when I arrived in this

world.

Maybe the queen would have somehow pushed Melty the second princess on me, and it might have been a political marriage masked as a love marriage.

Queen: "First of all, there is a problem that needs to be addressed. This country..... was only 4th in line to summon the four holy Heroes, as designated by the world conference."

Trash and Bitch

Naofumi: "Wait a second!"

An outrageous statement was just dropped.

Other countries can call heroes? There are turns?

Then that means this country did something crazy.

Naofumi: "Explain it in detail."

Queen: "Sure."

The queen's story is like this:

Damages from the wave were reported all over the world, and there was a world conference where every country was represented by their king or queen.

Of course there were countries on bad terms with each other, Melromarc and Silt Welt for example, but due to the prophecy stating that the world was facing its end, their hostilities were put on hold, and the conference was complete.

During the conference, the country Melromarc was fourth in line to perform the summoning.

By the way, each hero summoning is only supposed to summon 1 Hero. In many cases, they do not even appear at all.

Of course, which hero summoned is determined by discussion with the other countries.

Naofumi: "So, how did this country manage to summon us?"

Queen: "During hero summons, it is customary to use a holy relic. A time and ceremony is then decided upon according to the summoning....."

It seems the Three Heroes Church took advantage of when the queen was absent to summon the four holy heroes.

Queen: "The Three Heroes Church is a religion that has deep roots within this country, but from what I know, they were very conservative. Therefore, I overlooked this unexpectedly big plan."

Naofumi: "That is quite the problem, is it not?"

To gather all the heroes are supposed to save the world in one place.

Queen: "Yes.....That lead to a lot of criticism from other countries. It was the problem I was taking care of."

Naofumi: "What were you thinking, leaving the country to a fellow who might have caused a war?"

There was a big problem. The person entrusted with responsibility is horrible.

Trash: "What are you implying!?"

Queen: "Silence!"

Trash shuts up after the queen's thundering roar.

Queen: "It was not a problem before. Before the waves even started I was involved in diplomacy. Our domestic affairs were also excellent, and I left the country to the one I trusted as my right-hand man, but....."

Naofumi: "But?"

Queen: "He died during the wave.....That person was respected by demi-

humans too.....”

Quite unlucky.....So is that why all that was left were trash and some other useless guys?

.....As expected, that level of incompetency was unnatural.

Right now the posts within the country need new and talented personnel, otherwise things would remain the same.

Worst case was trash having all the power, and those around him never speaking up due to fear. This was such a place.

Trash: “The truth is, it just came to me to perform the hero summons, and as a matter of fact all of the heroes appeared!”

The queen slaps trash.

Trash: “Fuguu—”

Yeah, it would be weird if she wasn’t extremely angry after returning to her country and finding a mountain of problems.

Queen: “Even though it was foolish, I had to depend on my successor because of a useless husband like you! When he died an unnatural death you didn’t even investigate. The culprit was the Three Heroes Church!”

Trash: “Gufu!”

Queen: “Furthermore, the day right after the heroes were summoned you framed the Hero of the Shield! At least doubt the conspiracy a bit!”

Trash: “Guha!”

Queen: “And yet, I even told you not to discriminate against the Hero of the Shield! Do you understand that those actions could have caused a war!?”

Trash: "Geho!"

Queen: "And during the end of the second wave, you intentionally tried to take away Hero of the Shield's slave, which I had to arrange through a lot of trouble!"

What!?

What did she just say?

Naofumi: "Wait a minute, you set up my meeting with Raphtalia?"

Queen: "I'll explain later. Right now I'm dealing with this guy."

Uwa.....she snapped.

Queen: "While you were acting beyond your authority, the nobles started planning behind your back to take power. A riot started in Silt Welt, and Shirudo Furiden started preparing for war!"

Somehow.....I sympathize with the queen.

The people you can rely on within the country are all dead and you are protecting the country alone against other countries that might attack.

Amazing. I wonder what she had to go through to talk like that.

This hysteria, I only thought it was possible for women in their early twenties hitting their husbands.

I mean..... She is the mother of Bitch and Melty. Yet, she still looks so young...

Queen: "To cap it all off, Melty wanted to selfishly meet you! I was at the limits of my patience. Therefore I set a trap!"

Trash: "Wh-What did you say!?"

Queen: "Did you even investigate the events happening around you? I let you

dispatch a large amount of soldiers for emergencies! That was the start of this whole incident!”

The queen declares during her outburst.

Queen: “The Three Heroes Church is a heretical religion! Melromarc’s religion is the Four Saint Faith!”

Trash: “Wh-What did you say!? That tradition was abandoned since the start of this country!”

Queen: “There are heretical religions that have no value and cause nothing but problems!”

Four Saints Faith?

Naofumi: “What is that?”

Melty: “A religion believing in the Four Saint Heroes equally.”

Melty explains.

Well, now that I think about it, there should be a lot of countries that believe in the legend of the Four Heroes who saved the world.

Melty: “Even though originally the Three Heroes Church were an extremist faction that split from the Four Saints Faith.....I would explain more but I would need to start from the beginning of this country.”

Naofumi: “I see.....”

If Silt Welt has a religion following the shield, then it should be natural for other countries to believe in all four.

In other words, Melromarc’s dispute with Silt Welt is over the Hero of the Shield being hated.

The other country believes in the devil of the shield, so did the belief that 'our religion is correct' lead to the Three Heroes Church's creation?

Where was the royal family in all of this?

Queen: "Fu....."

After slapping and abusing trash for a while, the queen covers her lips with her fan and turns to me with a refreshed look.

Queen: "There are various things about Iwatani-sama's actions.....that I want to talk about it later."

Naofumi: "I'll pass..... I would rather not hear those heroic tales."

Queen: "It is necessary to hear it. Because Iwatani-sama has also caused a lot of problems."

Uh..... I wonder what they are. I would rather not hear it.

To be frank, ever since coming here I did a few bad things Of course I am not going to reflect on it, and I do not intend to.

Queen: "For example, that incident at the demon dealer's with your demon."

Naofumi: "Hmm....."

Queen: "That uproar at the bar."

To know about so much.

Queen: "I wonder who covered it up before my husband heard."

Naofumi: "Do I get a lecture too? It's regrettable, but I am not like this guy."

Queen: "No way..... I only want you to listen."

Naofumi: "I do not think what I did was wrong either."

Queen: "I guess. Though I was able to relax a bit while staying in foreign countries thanks to your efforts. That isn't the problem."

Naofumi: "Hrmm....."

Queen: "For the time being, there a plenty of things before your punishment."

Trash and Bitch turn very pale.

It's the end of their road.

Queen: "Are you dissatisfied?"

Trash: "O-of course!"

Bitch: "That's right! Mama! I'm not to blame!"

Queen: ".....Wasn't our parent and child relationship cut a little while ago? I literally disowned you. Go somewhere else.....No, pay for your crimes in the country."

The queen almost expelled her on impulse, but stopped halfway.

A sheet of paper with an amount of money written on it was handed to the bitch. The bitch turned even paler than a little while ago.

Bitch must have been spending money carelessly due to her social standing.

Bitch: "This is not an amount of money I can pay!"

Queen: "That is the price demanded from you from the guild. Trying to steal it from the treasury without permission.....You think I wouldn't notice? you will serve this country as a slave from now on....."

Bitch: "That's unreasonable!"

Queen: "If you hate it then save the world along with the heroes. I'll think about it if you play an active role."

The queen silences Bitch, and then looks at Trash.

Queen: “Why are you looking at me like I’m a different person!? You changed too, Aultcray.”

Trash bends backwards.

Truthfully, there is no way this guy can go against the queen.

He should have acted more tactfully.

Queen: “Fight as a commander at the front line of this country against the wave, or lose your position and become an adventurer.”

Trash: “Ku.....My wife, My queen. This one was swindled. Have mercy.”

Bitch: “That’s right. Mama, please postpone your judgement.”

Queen: “Both your mercy and postponement are both over already.....Oh, I have a good method.”

The queen beckons me over.

I stepped forwards and waited.

Queen: “Iwatani-sama, what kind of punishment do you want to give these two? You have the right to choose.”

Naofumi: “Death! Capital Punishment!”

I answered almost on reflex. I must hate them unconsciously as well.

Honestly, other than killing no other choice exists for me.

This grudge of mine can’t even be solved with death.

Trash: “Gunu! You Bastard—”

Bitch: “Stop joking around—”

The queen raises her hand and silences the two.

Queen: “Really..... you will be satisfied with just killing?”

The queen suspiciously wraps her magic around me.

A chill runs up my spine. Annoying..... I instinctively realize who I am dealing with.

Queen: “Assuming you kill them, they would be released from whatever torment or fun you would have with them, for just a moment’s of satisfaction.”

Naofumi: “You.....No, keep talking.”

Queen: “Killing them is too half-hearted. If a dog is useful, you stroke it affectionately, keeping them tamed till death.”

To act so cold despite them being relatives.....

Queen: “Please think of this as my last feelings for them.”

Naofumi: “Yeah..... So that’s how it is.”

Basically, besides murder and forgiving, I will grant you anything else.

Queen: “Originally the authority of the country is with the queen, but following the scandal of the Three Heroes Church, the royal family’s position is being questioned by foreign countries.”

Naofumi: “Crucifying two incompetents would persuade the foreign countries wouldn’t it?”

Trash: “Shieeeeeld.....You bastaaard.....!”

The queen ignores trash's howling.

Queen: "Normally that would be the case. But, that does not apply to Aultcray."

Naofumi: "Why not?"

Queen: "He is a fool now, but he was amazing back in the day..... since his name is well-known outside the country, settling this by killing him is impossible....."

I don't know what this trash did, but I understand the situation.

He is too well-known.

In the first place, I thought he had too much power for such an incompetent king.

Was it due to his past actions? It seems those concerned will not stay silent.

It would be extremely interesting to look down on such a man who has been deprived of all his past glory and dragged through the mud.

Naofumi: "I understand. I'll listen to your plan,"

Queen: "I am grateful."

Naofumi: "However, I wish for these two to taste hell on earth. That is the minimum condition."

Queen: "Yes, of course..... Then what punishment would you like to start with?"

It's a good idea..... I shouldn't kill them.

Naofumi: "I'd like to start by pulling off their hands and feet....."

I see the look in Raphtalia's eyes and think about it again.

Although I have every right to do this, even I think that might be a little too far.

.....What should I do? Something that would break them.....

Still I don't want to miss this chance that has finally appeared.

Raphtalia: ".....Naofumi-sama."

The bitch holds both hands in front of her and starts crying.

Wow, what a performance. If I didn't know how she truly was I would have been deceived.

I'm quite sure she approached Motoyasu with this face.

I mean, when I was summoned she was the first one to approach me.

Raphtalia: "Stop acting foolish, and please stop with this revenge. Revenge only produces more vengeance. Naofumi-sama please endure it here. If possible, be more considerate for the queen."

.....

.....

.....

.....Sigh.....

"I guess so....."

That day, messengers on Philorials ran around the country of Melromarc, reporting to every village and every town.

Messengers: "Due to taking responsibility for recent events, king Aultcray Melromarc and Princess Malty, have changed their names to Trash and Bitch

forever! Anybody caught speaking the wrong names will be severely punished!”

In every signboard in every city, every town, and every village, a similar letter was posted.

Everybody who saw or heard this message, regardless of social position all reacted the same.

“””What!?”””

Dogeza

Trash: “Who would force another to endure something like that!?”

Bitch: “Only a devil would do something like this!”

Bitch’s face distorts terribly in anger.

Wow~ so refreshing. I never would have thought that a moment like this would be possible.

Naofumi: “Hahahahaha! That’s the face I wanted to see!”

Trash: “Bastard———!”

The names of Trash and Bitch have become official.

Naofumi: “Revenge only gives birth to vengeance..... It is a splendid phrase. You should endure. You should practice it.....Bitch.”

Bitch: “Shut up! I will absolutely never forgive you!”

She tried to attack me, but the queen’s assistants held her down.

Queen: “Since Bitch can use a pseudonym as an adventurer. What do you wish to call her there?”

Naofumi: “Whore.”

Queen: “Then that will be her adventurer name from now on. Other than those two names, you may not use anything else.”

Bitch: "I'll kill you! Anytime there's a chance I'll murder you without fail!"

Wow, even faced with such killing intent, I can only feel refreshed, nothing else.

Oh well!

Naofumi: "Hahaha! Try it if you can. If you lay even a hand on me it will be capital punishment!"

Queen: "Yes, so you have been deprived of that right."

I see, if it was me who executed a part of the royal family that would undermine the queen's dignity and authority, so she has deprived me of the privilege. Well it's that sort of thing.

Naofumi: "This is so refreshing!"

Queen: "Now then, there is something that I wish to get Iwatani-sama's cooperation with."

Naofumi: "What is it?"

Queen: "During the last incident, didn't Iwatani-sama ask Trash to prostrate himself for an explanation?"

Both Bitch and Trash were forced on to their knees by the queen's shadows and knights.

Bitch: "Stop it! Who do you think I am—"

Trash: "That's right! This one is—"

Queen: "Aren't the both of you just an adventurer and a general?" [18]

The queen suppresses their complaints by informing them of their place.

Queen: "Prostrate yourselves."

Trash: "What, my queen! This one is—Stop it—This one will not bow! This one will never bow! nuooooooooooooo!"

Bitch: "Stop joking around! I will never kneel for this bastard! Iyaaaaaaaaa!"

Trash and Bitch were surrounded by several people, forced to prostrate themselves, and their heads are being rubbed against the ground.

A shadow in between the both of them speaks.

Shadow: "Go ahead—"

Trash: "Nuooooooooooooo!"

Bitch: "Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Trash and Bitch are yelling extremely loudly.

Queen: "Shut them up!"

On the queen's orders clothes are used to gag Bitch and Trash.

Trash: "Fumuuuuuuuuuu!"

Bitch: "Muuuuuuuuuu!"

They are violently resisting with everything they have, but they are outnumbered and overpowered.

Shadow: "Please, Hero of the Shield-sama! Lend us your power!"

Shadow#2: "Hero of the Shield-sama, please fight for this country!"

Their voices are imitated by the shadows and such phrases were spoken.

Queen: “How was that?”

Naofumi: “How was that you ask.....”

Being asked that while watching them kneeling on the ground by force..... It is extremely refreshing, but.....

Although it is refreshing, this request is a little.....

Queen: “Maybe if you step on their heads?”

Naofumi: “Oh!”

Oh damn, I didn't even think of that.

Raphtalia: “Naofumi-sama.”

I ignore Raphtalia's voice and begin to trample on the Trash and Bitch's head.

Maybe Raphtalia wants me to be a hero that everyone respects.

It is regrettable, but I am part of the commoners.

It would be troublesome to be misunderstood as a saint. Well then again, where would you find a commoner stepping on the head of a king?

But I don't understand Raphtalia. This degree of punishment is nothing compared to the humiliation I suffered.

So, can't you at least give me this much?

By the way, I did not stop even though Raphtalia called out.

There was a time I thought Raphtalia was another Bitch as well.

There is no reason to support Trash and Bitch, they have been agonizing us until now. This is natural.

Trash: “Muuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!”

Bitch: “Fumooooooooooooooooooooo!”

Regardless of how much Trash and Bitch are being suppressed and humiliated, they are still resisting.

After a while Trash quieted down so he was released.

Somehow.....He has the eyes of a raped woman; in his eyes there are tears overflowing.

Just how much were you humiliated by bowing to me?

Bitch is still resisting.

Queen: “Oh my, this amount of torture should be about enough don’t you think?”

The queen raises her hand and gives instructions.

Queen: “Pick them up and throw them out of the throne room.”

Shadows&Knights: “”””Yes Ma’am!””””

Both of them were thrown out.

Whoa, that was a sight to see.

Asides from Firo who seems happy..... Raphtalia and Melty look at me with strained expressions. I feel that my evaluation may have dropped.

They don’t voice their complaints, but I can understand that I may have gone overboard.

Queen: “Moving on, in order to request the cooperation of Iwatani-sama, I gave them this punishment.”

Naofumi: “Well.....”

There is no reason to decline since so much was already done.

Against someone who can make their family do something like this, it's impossible to refuse. It's my own fault.

Queen: “First of all, did you have something you wanted to ask?”

Naofumi: “I want to ask about the Hero summoning and Four Saints Faith, the story of the legendary heroes and history of this country, as well how you arranged Raphtalia's purchase, and the reason you never showed yourself until now.”

There are still some other things I wish to ask, but this is generally it.

Queen: “I see. Then, shall I tell you the story concerning the legendary Heroes?”

Thus the queen began the talk.

Queen: “The story of the four holy heroes is a favorite of mine. Though it differs for every country.”

Naofumi: “How is it different?”

Queen: “I think Iwatani-sama already has a vague idea right?”

At the queen's question, I nod.

Queen: “You are already aware that in this country there is no story about the Heroes of the Shield. They were deliberately erased.

Naofumi: “.....I see.

In that book I read before being summoned to this world, the shield was mentioned but not described among the four holy weapons.

I thought that was a story based on when I arrived to this world.....That book may be describing the legend of this country.

Queen: "A great achievement that the Hero of the Shield accomplished was mediating between humans and demi-humans, but that was omitted. As a result, the other heroes had a hostile relationship with him.

I see, does that mean the shield will be trusted by the demi-humans unconditionally, because he was their ally?

Queen: "As you can see, our country's principle is human supremacy, and you already know the treatment demi-humans receive here."

Naofumi: ".....Yeah."

I have been in this country for more than three months, so I'm aware of the demi-humans being slaves in this country.

Queen: "Due to such circumstances, we have very bad relations with Silt Welt. Our countries have been fighting for a long time."

Silt Welt, the country with demi-humans following absolutism. These countries are like oil and water.

Certainly, making peace with them would be ideal.

Queen: "by the way, Iwatani-sama, the religion in Silt Welt is also a sect of the Four Saints Faith, where they believe only in the Hero of the Shield."

Naofumi: "I roughly guessed it, but that seems to actually be the case, huh?"

Queen: "Yes.....Now then, I'm sure Iwatani-sama understands how the Three

Heroes Church came to be.....”

Silt Welt and Melromarc are oil and water. Both of their religions are branched off from the Four Saints Faith, and are divided in to the Three Heroes church and Shield Religion.

According to the Queen’s story, they have been fighting for a long time.

That means.....

Naofumi: “So I was summoned right in the middle of enemy territory.”

I see, I can only accept it.

It would certainly be troublesome if the enemy’s Hero was being treated as a saint here.

In the Three Heroes Church, the Hero of the Shield is written to be brutal and treacherous.

Even my world’s religion is the same. Every other god apart from yours is the devil.

It’s quite a common thing.

Did trash participate in the war against Silt Welt? Is that why he looked at me with such hostility?

Queen: “Now, returning to the story. When the wave was upon us, the conference of every country in the world agreed. Heroes needed to be summoned.”

The queen was in another country attending the world conference as Melromarc’s representative, and it was decided they would be the fourth to perform the hero summoning.

The legendary heroes are traditionally summoned by the most powerful countries, and most hero summons are supposed to be performed in Foburei.

[19]

I don't know how many were summoned. However, whichever country succeeds in summoning them will get a big lead on other countries.

However, the four legendary heroes did not respond to the summons.

As a result of an investigation, it was found out that a holy relic was required to summon the four legendary heroes, and Melromarc unexpectedly summoned them.

It was even news to the Queen. Ignoring the summoning order which the world has decided, and to use a holy relic for the summons...

Queen: "Let's omit my struggles, and just to clarify that after a long investigation, it was found out that all of this was caused by the recklessness of the Three Heroes Church."

Naofumi: "I can only sympathize."

Queen: "I appreciate it."

Naofumi: "So what holy relic was used?"

Queen: "At first glance, what used was just a metal fragment. But no matter how hard we try, we're unable to understand it....."

Naofumi: "In other words, the reason we were summoned here is because of that holy relic?"

Queen: "Yes....."

If the summoning here failed, would the holy relic have been used in some other country until it succeeds?

Queen: "And so the biggest problem we are facing, the four legendary heroes that were summoned here by that holy relic."

Naofumi: ".....Were only four people summoned?"

Queen: "Yes.....Therefore, that relic has become the most important item."

Naofumi: "If it's such a huge problem, did the other countries blame this one?"

Queen: "After I negotiated.....not likely. Iwatani-sama and the other heroes are greatly related in this. It would be a good idea to have a talk with them after this."

Naofumi: "Then why did the Three Heroes Church not just kill me and be done with it?"

Queen: "It is necessary to keep you alive to avoid war. They were hoping for the waves to kill you.....Probably."

Indeed, that is the world's enemy so the blame won't fall on the Three Heroes Church.

Naofumi: "Were they waiting for the other heroes to get stronger?"

Queen: "That also may be the case."

If I was murdered immediately, there would be war. Was it because they could not cheat the other three heroes when we just got summoned?

Queen: "Well, the other Hero-samas are a bit..... They do not understand the consequences of their actions."

Naofumi: "Yeah, I figured."

Those guys still believe this is a game. Only doubting visible evil and not doubting their friends.

Queen: "Of course, there were others who acted as well. There have been large quantities of invitations from each country, particularly for Iwatani-sama. There were also plenty of donations towards the heroes. But you rejected all of them."

Naofumi: "What!?"

What the heck is she saying?

Queen: "Don't you have the memory of having done so yourself? It was on the third day you were summoned....."

Naofumi: "What?"

Contract

I recall the third day I was summoned.

During that time, I was doubting everyone after the false accusation.

Moreover, I was getting tired of people trying to deceive me by pretending to be friendly.

.....Eh?

Was there a chance that one of them actually wanted to be friends?
Everything back then that sounded good to me was just a lie for people to get close.....

Naofumi: "Do not concern yourselves with me!"

There were even some people who saluted and said they understood.....

Eh?

Then, does that mean I drove away everyone from Silt Welt because I told them not to concern themselves with me!?

Because I kept rejecting people.....?

Shiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiit!

I drop on my knees and hug my head.

Queen: "As expected, I was also troubled. Moreover, Iwatani-sama was causing problems and crimes in various places."

Naofumi: “Urgg.....”

The queen was thinking of me like that. The reproach in her voice was severe.

Queen: “Well there were situations solved that were thanks to you, so I’ll overlook it.”

Naofumi: “.....What do you mean?”

Queen: “You see, the heroes acted in order to remove the bad from this country.”

If looking at the results they would all be successes.

Queen: “Iwatani-sama was crucial in solving the problems the other heroes caused.”

The other heroes caused problems, and I was the fire-man going around the country putting out their flames.

Queen: “After the Three Heroes Church lost power, We are asking for cooperation with the Four Saints Faith to right the lies they spread about you.”

The Three Heroes Church sure didn’t choose their methods.

Naofumi: “What about the other heroes?”

Queen: “As for the Spear, Bitch was with him. The sword and bow seem to have been misled by false information from the guild.”

Did they just trust whatever they heard first.....?

Well, if the evidence they had to work with was little, it would make sense.

Though if it were me, I would just refuse the burden.

But since I don't know, I cannot judge.

Naofumi: "Then next, Raphtalia..... did you have the slave trader show me her?"

Queen: "The more correct answer would be I gave instructions to a shadow. I do not know what kind of person this slave trader is."

That reminds me, that fellow didn't talk to me like it was our first meeting.

Slave Trader: "There was a customer who wanted to enslave a hero. So I intended to approach Hero-sama with that open possibility, but I've changed my mind. Yup."

Those were the words that guy said on our first meeting.

Wanting a hero as a slave. It's funny that such a person exists in this country.

Queen: "I heard the details. Please recall and think carefully. Do you think you can buy a slave with merely 20 pieces of silver?"

Naofumi: "Well.....I don't think so."

Considering the condition she was in, I wasn't suspicious about the price, though I didn't actually check the price of any other slaves.

It is doubtful that the wolf-man would have been sold to me for its actual price.

It seems compared to other shops, it was remarkably cheap.

Seriously, that slave trader, what an outrageous fellow.

To help me and not talk about it...

Raphtalia: "Regardless of the circumstances in which I met Naofumi-sama, I am

still grateful.”

Raphtalia says so with a smile.

.....That’s right. Even if there was something behind all of this, it doesn’t change the fact that I bought Raphtalia from the slave trader.

If Raphtalia wasn’t there protecting my back, then it would have been dangerous.

Raphtalia probably would have died if she had not met me either.

At that time, the slaves beside Raphtalia were put there to make sure I chose her.

In the end, I used most of what little money I had accumulated to buy a slave that should have been sold. I would have likely doubted it if I was sold an excellent slave cheaply from the beginning.

However, betraying his expectations, Raphtalia grew up to be.....First class goods.

Thinking back carefully, that slave trader really helped me.

Naofumi: “Alright then, moving on. What is the reason behind you not coming back to the country?”

Queen: “I think you understand from our talks. I was at the limits of my patience, and Melty wanted to meet Ault.....Trash, so I laid a trap. The preparations for cornering the Three Heroes Church were also completed.”

Thanks to her arrangements..... The fight swung in our favour.

Queen: “I did not think they would possess a replica of the Four Legendary Heroes weapon.”

Even if I had been warned beforehand about the existence of such a weapon, the fight would still be incredibly difficult.

Queen: “The pope was a foolish man..... If he changed the replica weapon to a shield to receive Iwatani-sama’s attack, then perhaps his life would have been saved.”

Naofumi: “It can become a shield too?”

Queen: “Of course. However, the replica only had one-fourth of the original legendary weapon’s power.”

Naofumi: “That was only one-fourth?!”

Multiplying that power by four times.....That’s just too ridiculous.

Well to be fair, if it wasn’t at least that strong, it would not have been a legend in the first place.

Queen: “And my husband who had fought against our country’s nemesis Silt Welt in the old days, Trash, has become a fool due to the long peace. If he was competent, or if his old wisdom returned, I would not be feeling this way now.”

Yeah.....I figured they did not want me to reach Silt Welt due to that kind of border security.

Is it possible that Trash wasn’t the one that sent all the knights to the border?

Oh well. We’re still in the middle of our conversion.

Queen: “Afterwards.....Let’s see. I happened to be in range and helped out Iwatani-sama against the pope. After hearing all of this, do you still wish to go to Silt Welt and start a war?”

Naofumi: “Hrmm.....”

Even if the queen thinks of me like that, is there any reason for me to protect them?

But.....

Queen: “By the way, Silt Welt, or Schildfrieden, whichever one Iwatani would have went to, I will tell you the outcome of your choice.” [20]

Naofumi: “Hm?”

What does the queen intend to say?

Queen: “First, the Demi-human princesses, and nobles of various races will also approach Iwatani-sama, and thus a harem will be formed.”

Naofumi: “That is disgusting!”

I feel nauseous thanks to the result of Bitch’s actions.

A bunch of women approaching me with ulterior motives...

Queen: “Anything you want would have been given to you. If you wanted to conquer this country, the people would have gladly taken up arms and started a war.”

Hmm.....that does sound good. But a harem.....

I’ll endure it.....

Queen: “Though you will be fine till then. However, for all countries and all religions, those in power will be corrupted and have their beliefs dyed black.”

Naofumi: “What?”

Queen: “Iwatani-sama would be risking.....unidentified illnesses and unfortunate accidents.”

Naofumi: “.....I don’t really understand.”

Queen: “It was how the Hero of the shield in the past met his end.”

I would rather not hear this.

Queen: "By the way, do you remember those adventurers who lied about wanting to be in your party?"

Naofumi: ".....Yeah."

It was several days after I arrived in this world.

Queen: "Their horribly disfigured corpses were discovered several days later."

Naofumi: "Ge!?"

Queen: "There was also a soldier that asked for your signature a while ago."

Naofumi: "Yeah."

I gave it to him because he asked.....No way.

Naofumi: "Did he die!?"

That fellow did his job properly. I would rather not see him meet his end like this.

Queen: "No.....But, the clothes that Iwatani-sama signed was stolen. It seems he was stalked every day until it was gone."

Holy shit.....That's troublesome.

Queen: "Afterwards, the clothing was found to have been sold for a large amount of money in the black market."

Next time I meet him, I'll apologize.

Queen: "I had to protect those soldiers who cooperated with Iwatani-sama."

Naofumi: "Ahh, are you blaming them?"

Queen: "The knight leader was attacked by someone and murdered. The culprit has not been caught yet. Perhaps....."

With that, I've concluded that Silt Welt is an extremist country.

What can I say?.....Would going to Silt Welt be heaven or hell?

Of course, the queen's story may not be entirely correct.

Queen: "I think that it would be safer for you to build your own relationships that you can trust."

Naofumi: "....."

However, there is no reason to co-operate.

The pain that I have received until now is not something that will simply just fade away with the queen using her power, I'm still not convinced.

Although I was concerned indirectly, the punishment and explanation the queen gave a little while ago was done as the one in power in this country.

Yet, she was too benevolent and showed mercy.

I admit that I do recognize her abilities, but I do not trust her.

Anything can be said.

Because it would be troublesome for them if I went to another country, I am being kept here.

If what she says is correct, then I would be highly received regardless of Schildfrieden or Silt Welt.

There is no special reason to staying in Melromarc.

Queen: “.....”

The queen is staring into my eyes while I think.

Queen: “Up until now, I have been covering for all the damage that Iwanati-sama has received until now. I understand this is a selfish. However, to me.....No, to this country, there is no other choice but to rely on you. If I can appease your anger with my head then I would gladly pay the price. If you wish I can even change my name. Therefore, please postpone your decision. I, Mirelia Q Melromarc, will take a magical contract, and vow that you will not be treated as you have been previously.”

The queen bows deeply.

Melty is speechless at this scene, and Raphtalia can only watch with her eyes wide open.

Even Firo seems to have sensed something is happening from the atmosphere.

She.....is only really thinking about what is best for the country.

If I really wanted Trash and Bitch dead, then there is no doubt that they would have died. Is Melromarc really in such a dangerous position on the global scale?

In other words, the fate of this country has been entrusted to my hands.

If I wished, I could destroy Melromarc.

But-

Naofumi: “Only once.”

Queen: “What do you mean?”

Naofumi: “Your shadow has saved our lives before.”

Queen: “That means.....”

Naofumi: "I will believe you only once. Regardless of reason, there will be no next time."

Queen: "Thank you very much."

The queen lowered her head and bowed to me in appreciation.

This might sound good.

But I cannot go on doubting everything.

I.....No one is perfect.

The enemy of a Hero is not the country, but the wave.

If Glass attacks while the countries are fighting each other, then we will be done for. I will not forget that the three heroes were defeated by her in the previous wave.

There is no need to forcibly increase my enemies.

The situation of being attacked from the front and behind has changed.

If I defeat the wave, then I can return to my original world. I will concentrate on fighting the wave..... and Glass from now on.

This is actually quite a big step forwards.

Naofumi: "Are we safe diplomatically?"

Queen: "I get what Iwatani-sama is asking, and for the time being all the other problems have been dealt with. The only problem now is not having a dependable Hero-sama. Therefore, I wish to ask for Iwatani-sama's cooperation, even if I will have to take an oath."

Naofumi: "Are you going to punish the other heroes that you will be relying on?"

Queen: "Certainly. Due to the Hero-samas' recent actions, and assistance in subduing the Three Heroes Church, their punishment won't be too severe. But, I will have to punish them because of the increasing criticism from the

surrounding countries.....”

Naofumi: “Is that so.....that’s unfortunate.” I said with a smirk.

Well, I was hoping to show those fellows hell. Either way, if a chance comes, I’ll take it.

There are still a lot of things to discuss, but I suppose this is our position now.

Queen: “Could you keep our conversation a secret from those three? Heroes are human too. I don’t know what they will do if any weakness is shown.....”

Certainly, there were many things that probably can’t be said to those three heroes.

I don’t know about Motoyasu or Ren, but Itsuki might go into frenzy.

In any case, the situation around me will be improving greatly.

Naofumi: “Understood. One of those guys.....”

Queen: “Yes. From now on, I will take the responsibility of watching over them.”

Naofumi: “Is that so, well after this one enemy has finally disappeared.....”

Queen: “I am very sorry..... Please forgive us for summoning you without permission and forcing you to fight.”

Naofumi: “It’s fine already. So what will you do from now on? Are you going to speak to those three?”

Queen: “Yes, we will talk about matters concerning your participation over dinner.”

Naofumi: “Understood.”

The queen then gave instructions to a subordinate who walked towards the throne.

Queen: "Melty.....Let's go."

Melty: "Ah.....Okay."

Queen: "Iwatani-sama, thank you for protecting Melty."

The queen lowers her head and bows in gratitude.

Firo: "Is Mel-chan going somewhere?"

As expected, Firo seems to have understood and looks troubled.

Naofumi: "The world Melty lives in is different from us. It is unlikely we will be able to journey together like before."

It was difficult to say that while I turn to the queen.

Firo: "Really?"

Firo looks at Melty who is crying.

Melty: ".....yeah."

Firo: "We can't meet anymore?"

Melty: ".....No. We will meet again. Many times. But travelling together is impossible now."

Melty faces the queen.

The queen nods in confirmation.

Firo: "But..... I won't say goodbye."

Melty: "Alright. However, Firo-chan is always welcome." Melty tells Firo in a tearful voice.

It's a fact that our journey had a big influence on Melty.

I made up my mind then, to leave Firo with Melty when the waves are over.

Firo: "Even if we separate, Mel-chan will always be Firo's friend right!?"

Melty: "Yeah! No matter what, I am Firo-chan's friend."

It was a touching scene, but goodbyes..... I'm not sure if you should be saying that now since we will still be in the castle today.

There is also no schedule for talking with the queen in the future.

But I'll stay silent. Because this will deepen their friendship.

Having a good friend is important, for both of them.

Raphtalia takes hold of my hand as I watch the conversation. I clench her hand silently, understanding without turning around.

Translator note

1. ↑ (TL note: It's not because I'm lazy he just says 他の奴等は全部ステータスアップ系の装備ボーナスしかないので省略する。)
2. ↑ TL note: Still need some help for names of countries. シルトヴェルト (Silt Welt) シルドフリーデン (Shirudo Furiden)
3. ↑ TL note: Holt Clay..... as expected of the trash. If anyone has a better name let me know. オルトクレイ = メルロマルク32世。私はメルティ = メルロマルク.....この国の第二王女)
4. ↑ TL Note: 「アル・ツヴァイト・アクアショット！」 Anyone got a better name let me know.
5. ↑ Some words (like dirt), do not change depending on the amount. The word "dirts" does not exist.
6. ↑ TL note: フィロリアル・クween(仮) not sure why there is a temp in the raws.
7. ↑ TL note: An anon kindly informed me of what this was referencing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxkzaMVj2UE#t=140>
8. ↑ TL Note: SHORYUSPEAR
9. ↑ Anonymous note: That talking sword most probably refers to "Star Dragon Sword" from "Suikoden II".
10. ↑ TL note: KAMEHAMEHAAAAAAAAA
11. ↑ Ed note: AVADAAA KEDAVRAAAAAAAAAA
12. ↑ TL note: Blutopfer means Blood Sacrifice in German.
13. ↑ TL Note: I cried a little.
14. ↑ Ed note: Bakahou, you softie.
15. ↑ TL note: I have corrected Merlot Mark to Melromark and removed the = since they are just spaces.
16. ↑ TL Note: Referring to where Raphtalia was crying and screaming at night by the river and Naofumi defended her all night from monsters
17. ↑ TL Note: Auckley = trashking for those who forgot.

18. ↑ Tlnote: 冒険者と将軍 Shogun is for Itsuki, so I changed it to general.
19. ↑ TL Note: フォーブレイ <= If anyone has a better name let me know.
20. ↑ TLnote: Shirudofuriden is changed to Schildfrieden, which means Peace of the Shield.