

盾の勇者の成り上がり⁶

アネコユサギ
Aneko Yusagi



Where We Met

“Where do you plan to head next?” (Raphtalia)

“I think I have to see the guy I don’t want to meet.” (Naofumi) “What?”
(Raphtalia)

“Eh-?” (Firo)

“W-where would that be?” (Rishia)

Raphtalia looks at the path I’m following. She seems to understand. She holds back a sigh.

I’m surprised she could guess from that sentence. Is she an esper?

... I guess she had seen it coming when I obtained the land.

“Are you selling Firo?” (Firo)

“Is that man really that scary?” (Naofumi)

Firo seems to understand as well. She looks at me with the eyes of an abandoned puppy.

Firo usually acts quite carefree, but I guess she got a trauma from this place.

Though I think she could kill that man instantly if she set her mind to it.

Is it that phenomena where an elephant has his leg tied to a tree as a child, so he doesn’t try to run away as an adult? [\[1\]](#)

It might be something like that.

“Calm down, I’m not selling anyone.” (Naofumi)

“I got it...” (Firo)

“Eh? Wha?” (Rishia)

Rishia... she’s a noble so she probably knows.

Granted, a fallen noble. There is also a chance she doesn’t.

I head down a back street and end up in front of the ever-so-familiar tent.

“My, my...” (Slave Dealer)

The slave dealer, who I don’t want to meet, greets me with a bored expression.

If you think about it, there are very few people who would go out to buy slaves in the middle of the day.

This person is more famous in the town as a Monster Merchant.

“If it isn’t the Hero of the Shield. It’s been quite a while. I’ve heard much about your victory.” (Slave Dealer) “Yeah, it’s been a while.” (Naofumi)

“I was sure you had forgotten about me.” (Slave Dealer) “I wouldn’t be able to forget about a shady character like you even if I tried.” (Naofumi)
It’s quite hard to forget this man. He has a sort of unique aura.

It’s a feeling similar to the accessory merchant.

I guess he needs to act like that to run this business.

The last time I was here was when I came to purchase Firo’s claws. It was around the time I was forbidden from using Class Up.

At that time, I had tried to escape to Silt Welt or Shield Freiden to Class Up Firo and Raphtalia.

I believe that this man had some connection to the Queen... Though he has never personally met her.

“You’ve been quite busy. I didn’t think you would have dubious ties to this

country's government." (Naofumi) "That doesn't change the fact that I approached the Hero of the Shield because I found him interesting." (Slave Dealer) "Yes, I'm aware of that." (Naofumi)

"Now then, how can I help you today?" (Slave Dealer)

"It's about your real profession." (Naofumi)

"Oh!" (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer's eyes sparkle for a moment.

What are you so excited about? Don't think it will be easy to short-change me.

Is he happy that a famous person like me is fighting with his slaves?

While this is a fact, that doesn't mean they are powerful because I bought them from you, you know.

"What price range are you looking in?" (Slave Dealer)

Currently, I have 5000 silver coins remaining of what the Queen gave me.

I'll need the old man to make some more weapons, so I shouldn't spend too frivolously here.

"For now, I would like to purchase some Demi-Human slaves around the price of 3000 Silver Coins. If possible, I would like them to be of low level." (Naofumi)

"What do you plan to use them for?" (Slave Dealer)

"Why do I need to tell you?" (Naofumi)

"I know. You acquired some land and need some slaves there." (Slave Dealer)

"I think I've said this before, but don't ask about things you already know." (Naofumi)

Really, how much does this person know...? If he told me he could see the future, I might believe him.

“Please come over here.” (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer leads me to the back of the tent.

As we start to follow him, Firo stops us.

“What is it?” (Naofumi)

“... I don't want to go.” (Firo)

It seems the darkness of the tent and the smells are setting off her trauma.

I'm already used to it, but I know it isn't a nice scent.

“Do you want to wait over there?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah...” (Firo)

Firo nods as she stumbles towards the monster egg display.

You know Firo, that's where we first met you.

Don't eat those, I warn her, as I continue to follow the Slave Dealer.

“Um... What are we looking for?” (Rishia)

“We're going to get people in positions similar to yours.” (Naofumi)

“Fueeee!?” (Rishia)

“Even though fallen, you're still a noble, aren't you? And before Itsuki saved you, you were in a similar situation weren't you? Please read the situation.”
(Naofumi)

This country has an active slave trade. Nobles and other rich folk should be well aware of its existence.

Why is Rishia so surprised?

Is she unexpectedly quite dense?

“T-this is a... I never noticed.” (Rishia)

“But they don’t deal in human trade.” (Naofumi)

“I see...” (Rishia)

We follow the slave dealer, and end up near the cages where I first saw Raphtalia.

“... This is where my fate changed...” (Raphtalia)

I am also reminiscing about that time.

Though it wasn’t that long ago, it feels like years have passed.

“Let me pick out some slaves that are within your budget. I’ll even give you a slight discount.” (Slave Dealer) “How generous.” (Naofumi)

“I hear you are starting up quite an interesting town. It’s quite exiting! Perhaps you will become my best customer after this.” (Slave Dealer) “Well... I just come to fulfill my needs.” (Naofumi)

“Though business may seem to be slow today, I have already earned a large profit from The Hero of the Shield’s fame.” (Slave Dealer) “What do you mean by that?” (Naofumi)

“During negotiations, if I bring up your name, they expect their new slaves to turn out like your companions. Even if I overcharge, they seem to knowingly accept it.” (Slave Dealer)

Raphtalia did earn herself quite a bit of fame during the last battle.

She outclassed the entire continental army in ability. If people learned this is the place that sold her, I guess business would improve greatly.

“Ah, besides those, there is also another type of slave I wish to purchase.”

(Naofumi) “What may you be interested in?” (Slave Dealer)

In response to the Slave Dealer's question, I turn my focus to Raphtalia.

I approach her head-on and put my arm on her shoulder.

"W-what is it?" (Raphtalia)

"Raphtalia, is there anyone here from the village you used to live in? I don't care about the price, pick anybody you recognize." (Naofumi) "!?" (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia widens her eyes in surprise.

"U-um... Are you really okay with that?" (Raphtalia)

"What are you saying at this point in time? Employing people who used to live in that land is the most efficient option for reconstruction. They might have to fight a bit, but our main objective for now is resettling the land." (Naofumi)
Raphtalia probably has the wish to go back to the village she used to live in tucked in somewhere in her heart.

It occurred to me when I visited the graveyard with Raphtalia. I need to work hard so that when I leave this world, Raphtalia will still have a place to call home. Even if I'm gone...

Of course, that isn't my only reason.

Raphtalia's former village is on the sea, and if you walk a few hours from it, you can reach the mountains. As people used to live there, the ground is relatively level and ready for agriculture.

It's the perfect area for testing various things. [2]

Because of the wave, I won't be kicking anyone out of their homes either.

"Oh, Slave Dealer, can you ask around the store you got Raphtalia at? I'm willing to buy back slaves from nobles if I must. They'll probably be willing to part with them if you mention the Hero of the Shield." (Naofumi)

My popularity is rising in this country. There's no reason I shouldn't use that.

“You plan to motivate your slaves by giving them their previous homes, all while putting them to work? The thought process of the Shield intrigues me! I understand. I’ll ask around.” (Slave Dealer) “Now then, Raphtalia, do you see any familiar faces?” (Naofumi) “... Please give me a moment.” (Raphtalia)

On a side note, that silk hat... he seems to jump on board with any idea I suggest.

I’m scared of his ulterior motives. I’ll investigate his movements later.

The Slave Dealer shows Raphtalia around the cages containing the slaves, and she carefully examines each individual one.

“-Found one!” (Raphtalia)

So there was one.

Raphtalia is pointing her finger at a Demi-Human child... It’s a boy with dog-like features. His age seems to be around 10. He’s a little larger than Raphtalia was when I first met her.

“You’re Kiel-kun, right?” (Raphtalia)

“...Who are you? Why do you know my name?” (Kiel)

So he wasn’t listening to our previous conversation.

“You forgot my face? I might have gotten a bit bigger, but I’m Raphtalia.” (Raphtalia) “Eh!?” (Kiel)

The boy named Kiel looks quite surprised.

“That’s a lie. The Raphtalia-chan I knew was smaller than me, and she isn’t as

beautiful as you. Though she was kinda cute..." (Kiel)

Kiel says this as if talking about a deceased person.

"Then I'll prove to you I'm the real thing. Two months before that incident happened, you were looking for a pretty shell to give Father for his birthday, so you dived into the ocean. You almost drowned, so Sadina jumped in to rescue you, and together you..." (Raphtalia) "...Eh!? Are you really... Raphtalia-chan?" (Kiel)

"That's right, and after that, remember when you accidentally ate a poison mushroom you found in the field, messed up your stomach, and hid to avoid being scolded? You told me to keep it a secret when I found you. You had even wet your pa-" (Raphtalia) "Wai-! Yes! I believe you! You're Raphtalia-chan." (Kiel)

Memories from the past? How charming.

But the contents seem to be quite embarrassing.

"Raphtalia-chan. Why did you become so big... so pretty?" (Kiel) "You know, I am currently the slave of the Hero of the Shield." (Raphtalia) "Eh!?" (Kiel)

"Naofumi-sama is quite a trustworthy person. And by his request, I am currently searching for the people who used to live in our village." (Raphtalia) "D-do you mean me? Can I finally go back home?" (Kiel) "Yes, but... You will be employed as Naofumi-sama's slave, and put to work. I guarantee he won't do anything evil, though. Do you want to come with us?" (Raphtalia)

The child Kiel fidgets and blinks a lot as he listens to Raphtalia's request.

His face is slightly pale.

"Is the Hero of the Shield that man over there?" (Kiel)

Kiel stares at me.

What's with that attitude?

“That’s right. He might have an evil look around his eyes, and he might have a habit of smiling cynically whenever something bad happens to the people he dislikes, but he’s a good person.” (Raphtalia) “Are you even trying to persuade him?” (Naofumi)

She seems to be casually throwing in complaints against me. She’s grown to be quite confident.

But trying to persuade someone with those words is impossible.

If it were me, those words would make me even more cautious.

If I heard those words, I would think that Raphtalia had been brainwashed by a shady person.

... It hurts that her complaints are right on the mark.

“He’s the hero that saved this country. Don’t you know about him?” (Raphtalia)
“Now that you mention it, it has been getting noisy as of late... Will I really be able to go back to that village?” (Kiel) “Yeah. Your mother and father... won’t be there, but if we work hard together, we can rebuild that village.” (Raphtalia) “...I understand.” (Kiel)

Kiel nods and grabs Raphtalia’s outstretched hand.

“I’ll add him to your purchase. Please continue to pick out slaves with that girl.” (Slave Dealer) “I’ll need to prepare a few things in regards to that matter. Leave that to us.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” (Raphtalia)

“Fufufu, I feel that it will be getting interesting around here.” (Slave Dealer)

“Let’s go, Rishia.” (Naofumi)

“How wonderful...Yes!” (Rishia)

Rishia follow closely with teary eyes.

Does Rishia not do well with these sort of stories? She seems like she would

be an avid reader. [3]

Firo suddenly runs over.

“Are you done yet?” (Firo)

“Oh right... Firo, there’s a favor I would like to ask of you.” (Naofumi) “What?” (Firo)

“Please take Rishia and go level grind for a bit. Go hunt until you feel satisfied.” (Naofumi) “Fue?” (Rishia)

Firo’s eyes sparkle and Rishia lets out a confused sound.

What is so surprising?

Did you forget about wanting to get stronger?

“I’m going have to train my newly attained slaves anyways, so this will be good practice. Also, I will be troubled if Rishia stays at level 1 for too long.” (Naofumi) “B-but how am I supposed to train with Firo-san?” (Rishia) “Don’t worry, you just have to ride Firo and make sure you don’t fall off. You’ll still gain EXP. Firo’s carriage is a rough vehicle to ride, so you may need to train yourself. Raptalia went down this road herself. This is killing two birds in one stone.”

It’s a leveling strategy often used in online games. It’s also used in various console RPGs.

A high level character fights with minimal support from a low-level one.

If I leave it to Firo, things should turn out just fine.

“Then, Firo will be off~!” (Firo)

“Fuee!?” (Rishia)

Firo turns into her monster form, grabs Rishia, and throws her on her back. She

then proceeds to sprint out of the tent.

“FUEEE-” (Rishia)

Rishia’s scream of terror fades into the distance.

“Now then...” (Naofumi)

I put on a cloak and leave the tent.

There are some other places I need to stop too.

Acquaintances

I don a cloak and begin to walk around the town.

As expected, the damages are quite severe. The effects of the Spirit turtle are still clearly visible.

There is also clear signs of damage caused by the onslaught of familiars.

As I'm walking, I arrive at a familiar store.

Good, this building is still standing.

There aren't really any visible damages. The building seems to be conducting business as usual.

I walk into the store... The Old Man's store.

"Welcome." (Old Man)

"I'm happy you're safe." (Naofumi)

"That voice... boy, is that you?"

I take off the hood of the cloak and greet the old man.

Luckily, he doesn't have any visible injuries.

"Why are you wearing such a suspicious cloak?" (Old Man)

"I don't want to stand out." (Naofumi)

"Well, you have become quite famous, lad." (Old Man)

Yep, that's my main problem right now.

I'm not like Itsuki. When people call out my name in praise, it sends shivers down my spine.

I don't think popularity is bad in general, but having the people of this country praise me doesn't make me feel good at all.

And right now, I have too many things that I have to do. I can't waste my time dealing with these people.

"Well I guess having people flock around you would get annoying after a while."

(Old Man) "By the look of it, this store hasn't really been affected." (Naofumi)

"Pretty much. I was able to drive off all the monsters that came this way." (Old Man)

(Naofumi) "Good job on that." (Naofumi)

"I saw it. You stood on that monster's neck and suddenly started bleeding, but then a large thing came out of the ground and killed it." (Old Man) "You saw that?" (Naofumi)

I guess it is quite a feat to be able to focus on that while being swarmed by monsters.

I wonder just how strong the Old Man is.

I don't really feel like finding out either.

"I was on the battlefield, so I was able to witness it: your power." (Old Man) "I see. Old Man, What level are you?" (Naofumi)

"I have long since given up on becoming an adventurer. Please don't pry any further." (Old Man)

My question was denied. Really, what level is he?

He's at least done Class Up once, and he is on a level where he can fight on par with the Spirit Turtle's Familiars.

... at least 70, probably.

"You've been through a lot since you first came here. When I first saw you, I

couldn't believe you would be able to change the world." (Old Man) "I was of the same opinion." (Naofumi)

I casually converse with this Old Man. He really has done a lot for me.

The Old Man looks around me intently.

"Is it just you today?" (Old Man)

"Yeah." (Naofumi)

"What happened?" (Old Man)

"Raphtalia is currently working on a different job, and Rishia has gone hunting with Firo." (Naofumi) "What about you, boy?" (Old Man)

"The city is quite damaged, so the castle has put all of its manpower into helping rebuild. Because of that, royal weapon production has been ordered to cease." (Naofumi) "I guess they've got no choice..." (Old Man)

"Yep." (Naofumi)

I can't ask him to make me anything right now. For now, I guess I should get his advice.

I'll probably need something later. I'll have to think about it.

"How's the store going?" (Naofumi)

"A calamity of this scale just happened. Everyone is rushing out to buy weapons." (Old Man) "So business is booming." (Naofumi)

"Yeah, I've sold so much that my store room is almost completely empty." (Old Man) "Isn't that just peachy." (Naofumi)

"Yeah but... for people without any passion for weapons to just go out and buy them in a panic... It feels a little sad." (Old Man)

There's no helping it. The town was almost destroyed. It's not surprising that people with no skill are rushing to obtain armaments.

It's probably like that. In preparation for the apocalypse, people are frantically looking for weapons and armor to increase their chances of survival.

From what I've seen, there's been no looting yet. They seem to be heading in a positive direction.

"Is that all you needed today?" (Old Man)

"Oh, about that..." (Naofumi)

I'm debating whether or not to ask him about arming the new slaves.

The Queen has already approved my proposal, so I can probably get some second-hand equipment from the army, but getting any more than that will be logistically difficult in this time of crisis.

These items are quite important. I don't want to risk it on second-hand goods.

There's also the problem of upgrades and maintenance. Well, first I should tell the Old Man the situation.

"I received some land from the Queen, and I'm planning to start a business there." (Naofumi)

The Old Man will be really helpful in procuring equipment, and various other tasks. I'll try recruiting him.

"So what relation does that have to me?" (Old Man)

"I've come to scout you." (Naofumi)

When starting up a new town, iron goods are essential

Plus, I'm already certain of his skill. I can place my hopes on his equipment.

"I had kind of figured it out. But I have this store." (Old Man) "I know. I won't force you or anything. Perhaps... I may send someone to you to ask to be your disciple." (Naofumi) "Ah, so it's like that... I got it, boy... Though my skills aren't

that great, I'll try to train anyone you send me." (Old Man)

Okay, I've got some approval.

If there's a skilled slave, maybe I can send him to learn under the Old Man.

After that, I just have to buy the equipment. I don't plan to make the Old Man teach for free, either.

"Don't be so modest. I'm confident in your skill." (Naofumi) "Ha, I'm working my hardest to meet your expectations." (Old Man) "Next is... Oh right, do you have any information about the other vendors?" (Naofumi) "Ah, right. The Magic shop collapsed, didn't it?" (Old Man)

So that big magic shop collapsed... It was on the Castle Town's main street. It was also on the side of town the Turtle attacked from.

...

"Were the employees okay?" (Naofumi)

"Yeah, the owner escaped without a scratch. The problem is that the store is now gone. She's currently taking refuge in Ryut Village." (Old Man) "I see..." (Naofumi)

"The Medicine Shop has gotten quite busy." (Old Man)

"There were quite a few injured in the disaster, so that business is thriving as well." (Naofumi) "Something like that. But the clothing stores seem to be losing business." (Old Man)

Fumu... So no one I knew died.

I don't have to go around the whole town to investigate.

"Well, I'm starting a business, so please give my regards to the other vendors. The place is..." (Naofumi)

I tell the Old Man about my land. I also talk about the village that it will be centered around.

Right now, The Hero of the Shield is popular. There may be some people

willing to jump on the bandwagon.

It would be best if I could have some people that I trust among them.

The village isn't exceptionally far from the Castle Town anyways.

"Got it, Got it. Everyone was worried about you anyways, my boy. Some people may be willing to go with you." (Old Man) "I have a debt to those people, so I'll give them some preferential treatment. Old Man, if you ever feel like moving, you can come any time." (Naofumi) "Got it, Got it." (Old Man)

And with that, the Old Man casually avoided the topic. However his gaze seems to be serious.

"You have something else to ask, don't you?" (Old Man)

"You can tell?" (Naofumi)

"Boy, every time you come here, you come with a mountain of requests." (Old Man) "I see..." (Naofumi)

I don't really want to show it. I take off the cloak and show him my armor.

The Old Man gives a look of understanding.

"It was an intense battle. It held up well." (Naofumi)

The Barbarian armor is in a terrible shape. Its defense has also dropped considerably.

Its autonomous repair function did not activate at all. I wondered if it was beyond repair, so I took it to the Old Man.

"The Core Piece is not very damaged, but... everything else is a gone case." (Old Man) "Can you fix it?" (Naofumi)

“Hmm... It’s not like it can’t be repaired, but... that depends on the materials. It will also cost a bit.” (Old Man) “Is that so?” (Naofumi)

“Will you put in a request? I got some rare materials from that Monster for cheap.” (Old Man)

They have more of those parts than they can handle.

It seems that a large quantity of materials were set aside for me, but still the turtle has way too many materials for the town to get rid of all of them.

“I am overstocked on those materials. If you pay a little money, I can make a lot of stuff for you.” (Old Man) “Is that alright with you?” (Naofumi)

“Don’t worry, if it’s a request from you, I’ll definitely carry it out. I also want to experiment with unknown materials.” (Old Man) “...” (Naofumi)

This man’s generosity towards me... it seems to be endless.

His skill level is also on a level I can respect. To be honest, I really want him to come work in my village.

Right now I am just starting out. Once I’ve finished setting up the village, I’ll invite him again.

“Well, in a matter of priorities, I guess the armor comes first... After that comes making a shield. You won’t necessarily lose any money on that one.” (Old Man)

“Yeah, worse comes to worst, I can just copy it, and re-sell the original.”

(Naofumi) “So you do get it. Well, please leave your armor here.” (Old Man)

“Understood.” (Naofumi)

I take off my wreck-of-an-armor and hand it over to the Old Man.

“As for the core piece, I think you should hold onto it.” (Old Man) “Is that alright?” (Naofumi)

“I’ll embed the core in later. You can pay for it at that point in time.” (Old

Man) “Thanks.” (Naofumi)

“Boy, what do you plan to do while waiting for your armor?” (Old Man) “I think I’ll borrow a second-hand one from the castle. Or maybe I’ll wear the Costume.” (Naofumi)

That costume does have some useful features attached. If only the appearance could be changed...

Rishia seems to be forming a strange affinity for it, but... that’s not my problem.

“Anyways, I’ll leave it to you.” (Naofumi)

“Got it!” (Old Man)

My negotiations with the Old Man are complete. I put the cloak back on and leave the store.

E Float

“Now then...”

I put in a few requests with the Old Man. I could go meet up with Raphtalia and the others, or I could go talk to the Queen. I have some questions about her plan from here on out.

I might be able to get some second-hand equipment as well.

I return to the castle and ask for the Queen’s location.

It seems that after the meeting ended, she went to her office to do paperwork.

“Queen.” (Naofumi)

“Iwatani-sama? What is troubling you now?” (Queen) “Can you spare us some equipment?” (Naofumi)

“Sure, there’s no issues with me doing that. However, much of the equipment we currently have in stock has been heavily damaged during the previous battle.” (Queen) “I know, but right now I don’t need anything high class. If you’re not using it, can you hand it over?” (Naofumi) “It’s for managing your new land, right?” (Queen) “Correct.” (Naofumi)

“Oh, right. Iwatani-sama, I have a favor I would like to ask of you.” (Queen) The Queen’s tone makes it sound like it is quite a big deal.

“What is it?” (Naofumi)

“I have finished speaking with the other countries... it’s about managing the heroes for the next waves.” (Queen) “Fumu...”

Though we still don't know the meaning behind the blue hourglass, the red hourglass may begin to move again soon.

The red one only had 3 days left on it. It will be difficult to prepare if it suddenly starts moving again.

The other 3 heroes are still missing, so there is a large problem regarding man-power.

"Many countries want to focus on Iwatani-sama as a main fighting force. There are also plenty of countries that want to deny entry to the other heroes."

(Queen) "Of course, after that..." (Naofumi)

The information has been hidden from the general public, but the leaders won't want to let those who caused this calamity to enter their countries.

Even countries unrelated to the incident wouldn't want the same thing to happen to them.

"Of course, that only applies if they are still alive. If they are found, can I leave it to you to arrest them?" (Queen) "You remember that my stats won't recover

for another 3 months, right...?" (Naofumi) "I know I may be asking the impossible. I do think that they will return to this country, if they do return, though..." (Queen) "Why is that?" (Naofumi)

"Because of spreading rumors, most of the countries besides this one have decided to place restrictions on the movements of the heroes." (Queen)

"Doesn't that mean you can monopolize the heroes?" (Naofumi)

... What a fearsome woman. Somehow, she got to gain exclusive access to a massive fighting force.

"The belief is spreading that the heroes other than the Shield were false heroes..." (Queen)

Well, I can understand their train of thought. They could have just obtained weapons that changed shape.

It seems that in the past, production of such items was possible.

“The belief is spreading that the summoned heroes other than Iwatani-sama were fakes, and that they should instead depend on the strengths of the Seven Star Heroes.” (Queen)

What sort of belief is that?

The mindset of people overcome by fear scares me.

...Though I don't know what sort of people the Seven Star Heroes are in the first place...

“The contributing factor to this belief was a rumor that began circulating during the last wave.” (Queen) “Ah, the fact that all the heroes other than me lost?” (Naofumi) “Yes, there were many people who witnessed that battle, so it was impossible to stop the spread of such a rumor. The rumor had almost died down, but then they had to go off to another country and cause this disaster...” (Queen)

Fake Heroes...

It's the same thing that happened to me before. I have to be careful not to get any bad rumors spread about me.

“There is also the question of their strength. They are definitely strong, but they are not on a level that is impossible to attain by a normal person...” (Queen)
I don't really know exactly how strong those 3 are, so I can't really say anything in regards to that.

But they are probably still sticking to their own systems of enhancement instead of trying the others.

“But it will be troublesome if no country accepts charge of them... So I have decided to make this country the only one to accept them.” (Queen)
Shadow should have told them about how to unlock the other systems, but they stubbornly stuck to the belief that this was the world of the game they knew.

Looking back, their way of doing things was quite half-assed.

If they had only attempted to trust the others, they may have been able to get 3 times the enhancements as before.

Because I was oblivious, I tried out all of the systems and got my weapons to this level...

They're just like Raphtalia and Firo when they had reached their level 40 cap before classing up.

Though their level rose beyond 80, that doesn't mean they were getting particularly stronger.

Because I properly strengthened my equipment, I can keep up with Raphtalia and Firo, but I'm not sure about the others.

"Oh yeah, what about Bitch?" (Naofumi)

"There's still a faint response from her... If I want to, I can still activate her slave crest." (Queen) "I wouldn't really care if she died, though..." (Naofumi) "... Bitch has some uses while alive, so it would be troublesome if she died. And she still owes me some money." (Queen) "Uses?" (Naofumi)

"Well, her punishment helps entertain Iwatani-sama... plus, if she never repents, there is still something we can have her do..." (Queen) "Hmm..." (Naofumi)

What will you make her do?

I think I will feel motivated to find her if you tell me.

"Do you want to know what I plan to do to her?" (Queen) "No, I feel it will be more fun to find out when the time comes." (Naofumi)

If it's something cruel, I think it is better to hear it whilst in front of her. It will give off a 'surprise party' sort of feeling.

"Ah right, have you already gathered the necessary materials from the turtle?"

(Naofumi) “Yes. I was just about to call you to collect them. They are lying around the training grounds in front of the warehouse. You may do as you wish with them.” (Queen) “Got it.” (Naofumi)

I part with the Queen, look around the front of the warehouse as instructed, and begin to feed the large mountain of Spirit Turtle and Spirit Turtle Familiar materials to the shield.

...

As I was doing it, I noticed a giant eyeball, and a chunk of a brain inside of the mountain.

Did they go as far as to take apart the head and bring it all the way here?

This head is probably the one that Raphtalia and Firo were able to cut off during the recon battle.

There were also things that looked like parts of the heart, and a moss-like substance. There’s even some lumber.

If I want to feed the shield all of this, I’ll have to stay up all night. I’ll leave some meaty bits to cook later...

-

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Carapace Shield You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Skin Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Flesh Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Bone Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Blood Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Bodily Fluid Shield [\[4\]](#)

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Leukocyte Shield You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Muscle Shield You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Heart Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Myocardium Shield You have unlocked the

Spirit Turtle Capillary Shield You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Heart Eye Shield
You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Iris Shield

You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle Sacred Tree Shield You have unlocked the
Spirit Turtle Familiar (Bat Form) Shield You have unlocked the Spirit Turtle
Familiar (Yeti Form) Shield ...etc [5]

I unlock a ridiculous amount of shields from the Spirit Turtle Series.

All of them have really high base defense.

The one with the highest defense is the Spirit Turtle Carapace Shield. Its base
is many levels above the Chimera Viper.

I guess enhancing this weapon will be fun.

Now then... to look at its stats...

It seems that a skill can be unlocked by awakening it.

-

Spirit Turtle Carapace Shield 0/40 C

Ability Bonus

...

Equipment Bonus

Skill: E Float Shield

Gravity Field

C Soul Recovery

Magical Barrier (Large)

Weapon Proficiency 0

-

E Float Shield... Is that short for Air Stream? [6]

What sort of skill is that?

I should probably test it.

「E Float Shield!」

The word 'On' appears in my field of vision. In the air, a shield manifests.

... Is it something like Air Strike Shield?

I think this as I try to approach the floating shield...

As I walk forward, the shield moves as well to match my movement.

?

Is it a wall that moves with me as the base? It's like a combination of Air Strike Shield and Meteor Shield.

I wait for the skill to wear off.

...It's not disappearing.

Its effective time is quite long. I don't have time to wait for it to vanish. I'll figure out its effect time later.

C Soul Recovery is probably the ability that the Spirit Turtle had. The ability to steal and recover SP as you attack Gravity Field is an ability that seems to be common in the Spirit Turtle Series.

I believe it will force objects to be drawn to the ground, but as I am the only person here, I can't really test it.

...

As I am deep in thought, the E Float Shield begins to spin in the air in front of me.

What is this?

It's getting in the way. Go away.

And with that thought, it does indeed move away.

...So it can move to whatever location I command it to move to.

This might be quite useful.

Its effective range is 1 Meter from me.

The on-off icon that appears makes me think it is probably a Semi-Passive skill.

My SP is slowly decreasing over time.

I think I will be able to keep it up for quite a while. As expected of something made of Spirit Turtle Materials.

“Change Shield!” (Naofumi)

I change my equipped shield. And instead of disappearing, the floating shield changes to match my new shield.

Hmm... This could have quite a few uses. The only flaw is that I can only bring out one at a time.

This shield may become part of my main repertoire. But that depends on the quality of the shield the Old Man makes for me.

The other Shields are... There are some with nothing but high base stats, and others with plenty of stat-increasing effects.

? I spot an abnormal shield within the list.

-

Spirit Turtle Heart Shield 0/45 C

Ability Bonus

...

Equipment Bonus

HP Recovery Increase (Small)

C Magic Snatch

C Gravity Shot

Tenacity Enhancement [\[7\]](#)

Weapon Proficiency 0

C Magic Snatch... It probably lets me steal magic power. C Gravity Shot seems to be an offensive ability. [\[8\]](#)

Tenacity Enhancement? If this were a game, it would increase my endurance.

There are still plenty of shields to examine. I'll look through them later.

Balloon Shield

“Naofumi-sama.”

As I am testing out my new shields, Raphtalia comes running over.

She was gone for quite a while. Did she finish gathering her fellow villagers?

“I went to many different stores with the Slave Dealer, and managed to gather quite a few people.” (Raphtalia) “I see... Okay, I’ll go check it out. Do you think I have enough funds?” (Naofumi) “Yes, I was sent over to ask what you wanted to do with the remaining money.” (Raphtalia) “I see. I’ll head over to the Slave Dealer’s place then.” (Naofumi) “Yes, let us go. Where are Firo and Rishia?” (Raphtalia)

“I sent them out to hunt. I think they will be out for a while.” (Naofumi)
I don’t know how far Firo went.

I don’t think she would go to a place where even she would have trouble.
Her feral instincts are quite sharp.

“Ah, but first I have to say something to the Queen.” (Naofumi)
It will probably be best to prepare to depart tonight.

Time is of the essence. I need to see just how much I can train these people.

“Hmm? Have you finished preparing?” (Queen)

The Queen appears behind me. It seems she went out for a walk.

I fed most of the materials to the Shield, so the mountain has pretty much

disappeared.

... The Queen must be pretty busy right now. It's not strange for her to look for a change of pace.

"For the most part. Please send the rest of the materials to my village. I plan to make the meat into a meal sometime in the near future." (Naofumi)

With the new slaves I will be getting, the need for food has risen exponentially.

It's not that I can't procure food on my own, but there's a lot I need to do right now. First, I need to work on reestablishing the village.

"Then I shall dispatch a platoon of soldiers to assist in your work. Please use them as you will." (Queen) "Ah, thanks. I plan to head to the area now to prepare." (Naofumi) "If you need anything, please feel free to ask. We will do our best to meet your needs." (Queen) "I got it. The first things I'll need to do are to collect construction materials and put up theft countermeasures. I plan to depart tonight, so please prepare the men by then." (Naofumi)

If a hero were to load a carriage with a large load of slaves, it would seem quite shady. That's why leaving in the night is probably best.

I thought Firo's eyes would be like those of a bird, but she can see at night just fine. Travelling at night is no problem.

"I understand." (Queen)

After hearing the Queen's response, I thank her and leave the castle. I head for the Slave Trader's tent.

"Hero of the Shield, I have gathered the slaves at your request." (Slave Dealer)

"Yeah, I heard from Raphtalia." (Naofumi)

When I enter the tent, I see some Demi-Human children, 8 in total, staring at me from inside cages.

All of them are watching my every action with fear.

Some of them are even shaking.

“I thought there would be adults here as well...” (Naofumi)

“In the wave, most of the adults perished... We don't know the fate of those that survived...” (Raphtalia)

Even if they survived, Raphtalia was unable to discover their locations. Or perhaps she found that they had died afterwards...

If they had fled during the First Wave, there is a possibility that they escaped to Silt Welt or something like that.

Finding them will probably be impossible.

Anyways, I don't plan to dig very deep into this.

“Now then, I'm sure you have already heard it from Raphtalia, but I will declare it again here.” (Naofumi)

It's probably best for me to act strict here.

At the start, Raphtalia was a coward and Firo grew to be selfish.

To avoid these problems down the road, I should treat them with discipline.

“From now on, you all are my slaves. You will travel to your former village and rebuild it, while training to get stronger.” (Naofumi)

If I show kindness here, I will be looked down upon.

“I hate lazy people the most. If anyone begins to slack off, I will sell them without hesitation. You got that!?” (Naofumi)

As I say this, I see the Slave Merchant issuing commands to his subordinates.

One strikes an instrument reminiscent of a gong.

... Who told him to do that?

Look at them, they look afraid.

... No that's probably my fault.

"Hiiiiiii-!" (Child)

"R-Raphtalia-chan, is this really the guy!?" (Child)

"Mama-!" (Child)

My ears hurt.

But what I'm running isn't a charity. I must raise a force to combat the wave.

"Now then, I will start the Slave Contract." (Naofumi)

As I raise my hand, the Slave Dealer lets out a smile. He hands over some Slave Contract Ink.

I put a drop of my blood into the ink.

And the process of putting the slave crest on the children started.

"Yes, what do you plan to do with the rest of the money?" (Slave Dealer) "I plan to continue peddling, so if you have a monster I can use for transportation, it will help." (Naofumi)

... The Slave Dealer's eyes are still sparkling. Please stop it with that look.

"Then, shall I contribute a Filo Rial to your cause?" (Slave Dealer) "No, I have my hands full with a Filo Rial as it is. Please offer a different species." (Naofumi)

"Are you not good with Filo Rials?" (Slave Dealer)

"I would prefer a monster that won't lose to Firo in skill. One that may be able to help plow the fields." (Naofumi)

While wandering town, I didn't see only Filo Rials and Horses. I've also seen animals that looked like Cows and Caterpillars hooked up to carts.

And if I raise another Filo Rial... My hands are full with Firo.

“Master, I’m hungry.” (Naofumi’s imagination)

The thought of more of those things is enough to make my face pale. I only want to raise them one at a time.

Among magic beasts, Filo Rials need to be raised with quite a bit of discipline, apparently.

They might add a good amount to our fighting power, but for now, we are still just reconstructing. I don’t think I can raise a Monster with an appetite of that level.

I still have a lot of Spirit Turtle meat, but I don’t plan to waste it all at once.

I should first start with something I can actually handle.

“I see... Then I shall find a beast for you.” (Slave Dealer)

“I’ll leave it to you.” (Naofumi)

“Do you want to purchase one from an egg? Or would you rather have a fully grown one? Raising them from eggs makes them more compliant later on in life.” (Slave Dealer)

“I guess an egg is fine for now.” (Naofumi)

“Understood. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer walks towards the part of the tent used for Monster Sales.

I look through the restrictions I can put on the eight new slaves.

It seems I can also put a punishment for revealing classified information.

I’ll decide on their specific tasks later.

It seems that the slave registration process has ended. As I look outside, I see the sun has already set.

We can leave after Firo and Rishia arrive.

After a while, Firo comes running in.

... There is no one on her back.

Did she fall off?

Firo skids to a halt in front of me.

“I’m home~!” (Firo)

“What happened to Rishia?” (Naofumi)

“?” (Firo)

“P-please let me down...urp...” (Rishia)

It seems that Rishia hasn’t fallen off. She is grasping onto some of Firo’s feathers on her rear as if her life depended on it.

It seems that she almost fell off when Firo was going at a high speed.

Firo sits down, and Rishia falls off of her quite abruptly.

“Urp...” (Rishia)

Rishia is making sounds quite unbecoming of a noble.

-Please hold for technical difficulties. [\[9\]](#)

“Now then, to check the results.” (Naofumi)

These two have been out since just before noon. The sun has already set, so...

Ah, Rishia’s level has risen by 20. The results aren’t bad.

Her stats are even higher than they were before the reset. It seems that the Growth Correction effect is working properly.

“I can see stars. Itsuki-sama... Is that you in the afterlife?” (Rishia) “That’s an

illusion. Firo, please snap her back to reality.” (Naofumi) “Got it.” (Firo)

Firo lightly slaps Rishia’s cheek.

Or at least that is what it looked like, but Rishia is sent flying. Is she all right?

“Wha!!! Where am I!?” (Rishia)

“Oh, so you were okay.” (Naofumi)

“I thought I was dead!” (Rishia)

“Yeah, but you gained 20 levels to show for the experience. Your stats are higher than ever before, aren’t they?” (Naofumi) “He?” (Rishia)

Rishia checks her own status.

“Wow, amazing!” (Rishia)

For her to be this amazed at her own stats...

Now then.

“Rishia, I have a job I want to give you.” (Naofumi)

“W-what is it?” (Rishia)

“I want you, Raphtalia, and Firo to help me manage the new slaves and monsters I have acquired.” (Naofumi) “I-I see...” (Rishia)

“Raphtalia and Firo are already strong; I want you to act like their elder and train with them.” (Naofumi)

There’s no point in just leveling up.

Rishia, who leveled up down a wrong path before is a good example of this.

I plan to have Raphtalia and Firo assist them, but I don’t just want to build a party with a high level.

Gaining combat experience is also important in itself.

So for a while, I'll take Raptalia and Firo off the front lines.

This way, these people will be able to gain a strength that can't be measured in level.

"You're going to get stronger, right? Good luck." (Naofumi)

"B-but that was for Itsuki-sama, and he..." (Rishia)

"He's not the type of person to die so easily is he? When you meet up again, don't you want to make him tell you that he needs your power?" (Naofumi)
I think it's fine if he is dead, but I'm saying this in order to further Rishia's growth.

"I got it! I'll do my best!" (Rishia)

Rishia seems to have gained motivation. She stands up.

Good. Her heart has become stronger than before.

All that she needs now is diligence. Probably.

"I'll wait expectantly." (Naofumi)

"Yes!" (Rishia)

"Master, what do you want Firo to do next?" (Firo)

"Please get the carriage. We'll be carrying a lot, so also bring some carts. There should be a lot in front of the warehouse." (Naofumi) "Yes! Ah, I found this for you." (Firo)

And with that, Firo begins to pull out the corpses of various monsters.

I've seen all of these before. Whatever, I'll just feed them to the shield anyways.

You've unlocked the Balloon Shield

You've unlocked the Red Balloon Shield

You've unlocked the Orange Balloon Shield

You've unlocked the Yellow Balloon Shield

-

What?

The monster I absorbed was a normal balloon. And I unlocked all of the other Balloon Shields with it.

For argument's sake, I look through the new shields. All of them only effect stats.

But the Balloon Shield is the only one with a strange skill.

-

Balloon Shield 0/5 C

Ability Bonus

...

Equipment Bonus

Monster Book

-

Its stats are terrible. Even worse than my initial Small Shield.

But what does it mean by Monster Book?

I test it.

With a beep, a window appears in my field of vision.

... It displays all of the monsters I have fed the shield up until now.

It even says where I found them. It also seems to have the ability to lead me to a specific species of monster if I wish to encounter it.

How convenient.

It records the data of any monster I absorb.

However, it doesn't seem to display the number of monster species of this world.

In high spirits, Firo went and got the carriage I had parked at the castle.

To be honest, if it weren't for Firo, the voyage would probably take a few days.

"Hero of the Shield, as you have requested, I have prepared you some eggs. Yes." (Slave Dealer)

The Slave dealer appears carrying a number of eggs.

"Ah, I'm grateful." (Naofumi)

"Do you know when your next visit will be?" (Slave Dealer)

"Well, I still have money left over, so I may come again soon to buy more slaves." (Naofumi) "Well then, I will wait expectantly for that time. If I find one of the slaves you were looking for, should I contact you?" (Slave Dealer) "Yes, please do." (Naofumi)

"Understood." (Slave dealer)

"Then I guess I should be off." (Naofumi)

I hear the sound of Firo pulling the carriage getting closer.

"...but before that..." (Naofumi)

I turn around and face the Slave Dealer, who is rubbing his hands together.

"I'll make dinner." (Naofumi)

I use the Spirit Turtle meat that Firo brought back with her, and begin cooking in the tent.

It's a basic hot pot consisting of meat and soup.

The turtle has a bit of a unique taste, but it shouldn't be a problem.

"Wha?! This is Delish!" (Child)

"What is this? It's better than what Mom used to make!" (Child) "Yeah! Why is that?" (Child)

"Naofumi-sama is a very skilled chef, you know." (Raphtalia) "Yeah! Firo loves to eat master's cooking." (Firo)

The slaves seem to be getting closer over the delicious meal.

"This is just perfect. To eat a meal personally cooked by a hero. I might fall for you." (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer also managed to obtain some of the food in the heat of the moment... If I worry about it, I lose. I'm cooking in his store, anyways.

"If you find more of the villagers, you might get to eat it again. Work hard." (Naofumi)

But the Slave Merchant seems lost in his meal. I'm not sure if he heard me.

It's like a welcoming party. Things will get busy from here on out. I need to make sure they get proper nourishment, or they won't hold up.

And like that, after the meal the slaves boarded the carriage and we leave the castle town in the darkness of the night. Towards our new home.

Artificial Feeding

I let Firo pull the carriage and we march in the middle of the night; we arrived at the outskirts of Raphtalia's village in the morning.

"Master, we have arrived." (Firo)

"Good." (Naofumi)

While I was sleeping, Kiel tried to play a prank on me and got reprimanded harshly by Raphtalia.

Of course, with the exception of Raphtalia and Rishia, the slaves got harsh restrictions and the slave mark was set to activate immediately if they tried to attack me.

Also, because of what Bitch did before, now I immediately awaken when something happens.

On the first day, we went to work with the slaves to demolish the building wreckages.

"This house is important to me!" (Kiel)

Kiel shouted in rejection.

"It's important to treasure your house, but look, the roof has fallen and the walls have been destroyed. It's a pity, but you'll have to accept that there are houses that can still be repaired and those that are beyond repair." (Naofumi)
I searched for stuff that either has monetary value or can still be used, but they are either robbed, or there simply is none. There are still some items left

behind, but they are already too rusted to be of use.

The water well seems salvageable.

The field... seems need some considerable maintenance.

“I understand the feeling of not wanting to discard your memories, but from the standpoint of reconstruction, the stuff that is going to get in the way needs to be discarded.” (Naofumi) “But-“ (Kiel)

“Kiel-kun! Stop saying selfish things!” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia warns him. Well, there's not necessarily a need to stop him.

Even so...

“This is the house that you once lived in.” (Naofumi)

“It is!” (Kiel)

“Then, the newly built house here will be yours.” (Naofumi) “Eh?” (Kiel)

The brat called Kiel looked at me with a puzzled expression.

“Under the condition that you will become the one who manages the communal house, you will become responsible for the place where the others are gathering.” (Naofumi) “U-un.” (Kiel)

Kiel nodded vaguely to my words.

“That’s why — NOW! Firo!” (Naofumi)

“YES!” (Firo)

The moment Kiel showed an opening, Firo charged at the deserted house and promptly did flying kick at the fulcrum of the house to destroy it.

“AaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!?” (Kiel) ^[10]

Leaving the dumbfounded Kiel, I went to the next task.

Before noon, the materials for building houses and the castle’s soldiers that the queen prepared had arrived.

Stones, lumbers... and is it plasters?

“Hero of the Shield-sama's objective is to reconstruct this place?” (Soldier)
The soldier seems to have heard the story from the queen.

“Aa, at the very least, I want the roof to be constructed before the day's end. I’m aware this is an unreasonable request, but I’m counting on you.” (Naofumi)
“We might be soldiers, but we do have some knowledge about construction. So please leave it to us.” (Soldier) “Please do.” (Naofumi)

Construction and conscription... are they even related? ^[11]

And then I realized it was about to become noon.

“For the time being, we will leave the building to the soldiers. Raphtalia, Firo, and then Rishia!” (Naofumi) “Yes.” (Raphtalia)

“Wha—at?” (Firo)

“What is it? (Rishia)

Those three replied to my call.

“After this, I will start making lunch. After you've finished your meal, you three along with the slaves will go out and begin demon extermination.” (Naofumi)

“Understood.” (Raphtalia)

“Yeah.” (Firo)

“I’ll do my best.” (Rishia)

“I’ll leave the squad composition to you. Having too many people will be detrimental to the EXP that will be obtained, okay?” (Naofumi)

I haven’t attempted to do an actual measurement; just how much will the amount be decreased by?

Rather, how does the distribution system work? I have no idea at all how the EXP distribution system works.

“Is there anyone who knows the details?” (Naofumi)

“Um...” (Rishia)

Rishia raised her hand apologetically .

“What?” (Naofumi)

“The people who are inside the party receive the same amount of EXP. The maximum limit for that is 6 people. Any more than that will cause the amount of EXP obtained to decrease.” (Rishia)

Oh, so that’s why you were left out.

Though if I said that, she would probably cry ‘Fueee’, so it’s better to stay silent. It’s annoying.

In an expedition with a large amount of people, there doesn’t seem to be a problem in dividing the group.

That means that it is sufficient to organize 6 people in 1 team.

Instead of multiple teams fighting against one demon, it’s better to separate into different areas.

“I understand the explanation.” (Naofumi)

“Alright. Then we will be splitting up.” (Naofumi?)

“Leave it to me.” (Raphtalia)

I gave authority to Raphtalia to make a party.

At the present we had 8 slaves, so Rishia led two people while Raphtalia and Firo led three each.

“Then I’ll start cooking lunch, so lend me a hand.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” (Raphtalia)

Then the three people begin to help as much as they can.

“Raphtalia-chan will be helping out?” (Kiel)

Having just recovered from his absentminded state, Kiel began to stare at me, who is in the middle of cooking preparations, while asking Raphtalia.

He recovered pretty quickly. Is it because he is still a child?

“Raphtalia-chan was always bad at housework.” (Kiel)

“Erm...” (Raphtalia)

With a troubled look, Raphtalia send me a glance.

What? What do you expect me to do?

She seems want to show her friend her good side, as Raphtalia timidly began to open her mouth.

“Should I help?” (Raphtalia)

“Should I just randomly grill some meat or make some soup? I would prefer it if it were a dish that I could just leave over a fire for a while.” (Naofumi)

The meals that I make taste good, so I’ve been the one who did the cooking.

I’m already used to it. Lately, everyone has been leaving the cooking to me.

“It’s enough if you just help me clean up.” (Naofumi)

I began to cut the ingredients to chunks. The meat was large so it was kind of hard to cut with a cooking knife.

With that said, when Raphtalia was the one who cook the food, it didn’t taste good. Firo said to just leave all the cooking to me...

I ignore their complaints and began cooking.

By the way, it’s possible to cook the recipe with the shield, but there is a very big flaw in that method. Before fighting the turtle spirit, cooking was already easy. I tried cooking with the shield at Calmira Island, but...

“Food is coming out of the shield!” (Firo)

Firo stared at my shield enviously with great excitement.

“Ah, it was made with the shield’s skill.” (Naofumi)

“It’s awesome.” (Firo)

The food that is served is a spaghetti-like food that is unique to this world.

The name of the food seems to be naporata. [\[12\]](#)

To be honest, it sounded like the variety kind of pasta from my world, and the shield seems to change the name of the item so it resembles the items from my world.

“It tastes somewhat... normal.” (Raphtalia)

“Yeah... normal.” (Firo)

It seems like the food quality was affected. It tasted normal and didn’t contain

the subtle, delicate tastes.

It doesn't taste bad. But it doesn't taste good either. It's definitely normal.

"Master's cooking is way better." (Firo)

"That's true. Even when it's cold, the food that Naofumi-sama makes is still delicious." (Raphtalia) "I-I got it." (Naofumi)

For some reason, those two stared at me with reproachful gazes, making me remember that I've been looked at with those kinds of eyes.

Come to think of it, these two are no longer satisfied by food from restaurants and are only pleased by the food that I cooked.

I don't think it's possible to become a gourmet after just eating my food once. But, at least they seem to be motivated by my food. ^[13]

Come to think of it, what if this situation where I am the cook got reversed?

For the time being, I'd better assemble a cooking team, because at the moment there are no restaurants in the surrounding area.

"Here, the food is ready. After you finish eating, go out already." (Naofumi)
I distribute the meat that I grilled above the crude iron plate and the soup that has been cooked.

"As I thought, this is absolutely delish." (Slave A)

"Yeah! It's really good." (Slave B)

The slaves devour the food with smiles on their faces.

I also treat the soldiers that built the house to some food as well.

"This.... I've never eaten such a delicious grilled meal before!?" (Soldier A) "Are

you kidding? They made some of those at the castle and they didn't taste good at all." (Soldier B)

The shield's handmade correction is endless.

Did you guys knead any salt and spice on the meat beforehand?

The slaves devoured the food that I cooked.

Nevertheless, there is no need to eat that much.

It'll be bad if I don't prepare enough food after they return from leveling.

"Now then, you lot! Each and every one of you will be carrying a weapon, and with them you will fight." (Naofumi)

And with that declaration, the slaves become scared just like the old Raphtalia, who turned pale when she first received bladed tools.

I hand out the secondhand weapons that I got from the castle to them. Most of them are daggers designed for beginners.

"Prepare yourselves knowing that if you do not fight, you will feel pain in your chest. And if you do that, don't ever think of returning to your hometown."

(Naofumi)

"Gu...." (Kiel)

Kiel tried to complain to me on behalf of the others.

But Raphtalia interrupts him and prevents him from saying anything.

"I don't exactly need you people for anything. Only for territory development. But, because Raphtalia has been obediently following my orders, you guys will become her present. So don't misunderstand or anything." (Naofumi)

The slaves glaring at me provokingly.

I'm used to playing the role of the bad guy in this world. Besides, I'm not doing this for charity or anything. There is no need to be anxiously worried

about the future since I'm planning to return to my own world anyway. I just need to prepare a place for Raptalia so she can spend her time peacefully.

"Now then... Firo, I want you to place all the monsters that you defeat into the wagon. There are a lot of uses for them." (Naofumi) "Yeess!" (Firo)

Mainly as food.

Later, just like what Ren did, I should absorb those materials into the shield.
[14]

Right now, those heroes are still way ahead of me. [15]

"Come on, off you go then. See ya." (Naofumi)

I point at Firo's carriage and ordered them.

The slaves reluctantly ride the carriage. Firo started to pull the carriage and went to hunt.

"Mind the speed." (Naofumi)

"Ye-s!" (Firo)

The carriage made a gotogoto sound as Firo pulled them.

"I'll leave the house construction to you then." (Naofumi) "U-understood."
(Soldier)

I asked the soldiers to begin construction, set the shield to start compounding, and next is to start cooking.

There's only a little bit more time before the demon egg hatches.

Before the Spirit Turtle meat runs out, I need to find a way to supply food.

“Well then...” (Naofumi)

The slaves that went together with Raphtalia returned back in the evening.

Everyone is exhausted. The demons that were defeated are loaded onto the chained carts. At the moment, we urgently need to replenish the food stores; they did good.

But right now, there is something far more pressing.

Guuuuuu.....◦

Guuu.....◦

Kyururururururu.....◦

Gugyururururururu.....◦

The sound resounded like a roar.

I wonder what would happen if they suddenly increased in level in an environment where food is scarce? I'm slightly curious.

Perhaps they wouldn't die, but they'd definitely be starving. I think that while looking at Raphtalia.

The body which is undergoing rapid growth wants nourishment, and thus they become hungry.

“You guys finally returned. Did you fight properly?” (Naofumi) “Erm, everyone did their best.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia answered with a smile.

I saw the slaves' faces and their expressions are difficult.

I didn't ask for a Sparta level of effort, but they seem to be unsatisfied.

“Fuee.... So tired.” (Rishia)

“Oh, Rishia, how was your condition?” (Naofumi)

“It feels easier to move than before.” (Rishia)

Certainly, her stats are higher than before the level reset. With this, battle should become a little easier.

“Rishia-nee-chan. Why are you wearing the plushie?” (Slave) “That is because Rishia is a plushie maniac.” (Naofumi) “Fuee!” (Rishia)

Rishia tries to deny it while shaking her head left and right, but there is no mistake about that.

“I really have to accept it after all.” (Kiel)

Kiel finally consented regarding the management.

He hate me, so he can't trust me.

“If you work, then it'll be fine. It's dinner now.” (Naofumi)

I set the spirit turtle stew and the steaks that I prepared beforehand on the table.

I did this because I've been expecting it.

Even though I made a lot of them, they'll definitely disappear immediately.

“”””Waaaaaa.”””” (The Slaves)

The slaves began to eat excitedly.

Yoshiyoshi....

“Master, where is Firo’s share?” (Firo)

“You have it.” (Naofumi)

I take out Firo’s portion.

It is about 1.5 times the size of the slaves’ portion.

“Only this much? I want to eat more.” (Firo)

“If you want more, go hunt it yourself.” (Naofumi)

“Buuuu.” (Firo)

Firo sulks.

Sorry, but I’ve made a pretty large amount. I can’t just cater it to just one person.

“””Thank you for the meal.””” (The Slaves)

What? When I was in the middle of chatting with Firo, they already ate everything!?

For the time being, they are satisfied.

“Alright kids, go to bed immediately for tomorrow’s preparation.” (Naofumi) “...Ye-s.” (Slaves)

I crammed the slaves into one the houses that the soldiers from the castle repaired in half a day, and the rest of us went into another house to sleep.

The house’s windows are still broken; it can be used to defend from the rain, but the wind is still blowing in.

I wonder what I should do for tomorrow’s food...

“I’ll sleep at the place where everyone is.” (Raphtalia)

“Got it, I’m counting on you to get them used to it, even if it’s just for a little bit.” (Naofumi) “Yes.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia leaves in order to sleep with her old friends.

Firo was already half-asleep. She began to nod off.

Rishia is reading a book that she took out of nowhere. She is a hardworking person.

I began compounding for the preparations of my next plan. While at it, I went and checked the levels of all slaves. It seems the average level that they raised to is 15. Their stats all rose as well. Judging from Raphtalia’s growth pattern, I want to raise their levels, even for those that are unsuitable for combat, to at least 30.

Midnight Snack

And a while after that...

I hear a loud knock on my room's door.

“Um...” (Child)

Raphtalia has come, along with the other female slaves.

“What’s wrong?” (Naofumi)

“Well...” (Child)

Raphtalia ignores my words, and makes a face as if she is asking for a favor.

Is she asking me to make an inference based on the situation? That’s impossible for me.

“Did she wet the bed?” (Naofumi)

“You’re mistaken. Please tell Naofumi-sama properly.” (Raphtalia) “Um... Well...” (Child)

Gu...

The other female slaves are looking at the floor with embarrassed expressions.

“... I got it. Most of the kids will probably ask the same thing, right? Please gather everyone and wait here.” (Naofumi) “Thank you.” (Raphtalia)

I head to the kitchen outside, and begin preparations for cooking.

Really, these kids get hungry really fast.

I look through the monsters gathered while hunting, and arbitrarily stick some on skewers.

It's a pain to deal with the smaller monsters, so I just pan-fry them whole.

With all this cooking, my free time is rapidly disappearing.

The next day.

“Now then, you all even had room for a midnight snack, but I must declare something. Those who don't work, do not eat. My ingredient stock is rapidly decreasing. To replenish it, you all must perform some hunting. Basically, if you are able to defeat monsters, I might be willing to cook them for you. You got that?” (Naofumi) ^[16]

“Yeah!” (Kids in unison)

... They're being surprisingly honest.

Even Kiel, who had previously shown animosity towards me is replying with enthusiasm.

I'm a bit suspicious, but as long as they're motivated, I guess it all works out.

“I'll make today's dinner with what we have, but that's your last free meal. Don't forget that.” (Naofumi) “...Yes~” (Kids in unison)

Last night was quite hectic. No matter how much I made, they kept asking for more. What's more, they all seemed genuinely hungry.

I get the feeling that I will be stuck in the kitchen for the rest of my life.

What am I? A mother?

I only planned to look over their growth, and eventually help them hunt. That's all it was supposed to be, but...

"Thank you for the food!" (Kids in unison)

"You're welcome, now go hunt until the evening." (Naofumi) "Got it~!" (Kids in unison)

They seem much more enthusiastic than yesterday as they board Firo's carriage.

... I hope they get at least 20 levels by the time they get back.

"The Hero's cooking really is tasty. I should try my hardest as well." (Soldier)
The soldiers from the castle are also finding motivation in my cooking. Well, these people are already doing important work, so I'll let it slide.

I... begin preparing for dinner. Am I wasting my time here?

I use the rest of my time helping the soldiers with their work.

There's another important thing needed in ingredient procurement.

And for that, I am having the Shield make herbicide in large quantities.

If a problem occurs, then I can deal with it immediately.

And for that purpose as well, I must raise the levels of the slaves.

If I use that carelessly, a mutation might occur, and I have no idea what will happen.

For now, I should handle the seeds in the carriage with care.

"We're home!" (Kids in unison)

They're all covered in dirt, but smiling as they return to the village.

They're even more energetic before. In contrast, Rishia seems to be quite

worn out.

Raphtalia and Firo don't seem tired at all, though.

"So, did you hunt successfully today?" (Naofumi)

"Yeah!" (Child)

"Of course!" (Child)

The adaptability of a child is something to be feared. After two days, they are already used to it.

I get the feeling Raphtalia took quite a bit longer to adapt.

"Then, I'll cook as promised." (Naofumi)

"Hooray~!" (Kids in unison)

The children stampede towards the dinner I had prepared.

"Now then, Raphtalia." (Naofumi)

"What is it?" (Raphtalia)

"After eating, there's something I have to do... You might get angry."
(Naofumi) "W-what are you planning?" (Raphtalia)

"A jungle." (Naofumi)

It seems she understands what I was trying to say.

Raphtalia stares at me with stern eyes.

"Are you planting that?" (Raphtalia)

"Yeah, this area is filled with forests anyways, so I don't see what difference it makes." (Naofumi) "But still..." (Raphtalia)

“The soil around here probably needs quite a bit of work. I did ask the slave dealer for a monster that would help in tending to the fields.” (Naofumi) “... I understand. You have no intention of changing your mind.” (Raphtalia) “It helps that you’re so understanding.” (Naofumi) “If you consider efficiency, then I guess there’s no choice.” (Raphtalia)

I did raise Raphtalia to value efficiency over all else...

Though she does care quite a bit about aesthetics as well.

“And I also completed quite a few tests. I learned to make many types of medicines.” (Naofumi) “Wait a minute, are you meaning to say you plan on modifying that thing even further?” (Raphtalia) “Yes, I plan to turn it into something that will bring in money quickly.” (Naofumi)

Yes, my plan also puts money as a high priority. Rebuilding a village with only 8 slaves is impossible. Even if the Slave dealer manages to find another slave or two.

“I plan to modify it to make it easier to handle. I’ll also watch to make sure no problems occur. Just in case, I have prepared a stock of pesticides. I’ll keep at it until we gain a steady stream of food supplies.” (Naofumi) “*Sigh...* Well, be careful.” (Raphtalia)

“I know.” (Naofumi)

I won’t do anything that will cause me to lose money. I only act to make a profit.

The thing I’m planning may be able to have combat uses as well.

As I’m mulling over these facts, I noticed the meal I had made had disappeared at an alarming rate.

“Thanks for the food!!” (Kids in unison)

“You’re welcome.” (Naofumi)

I can hear some lively conversations.

They've only been here a few days, but most of them are already used to their new lives.

I guess that because this is their home town, they are able to adjust quickly.

They're not acting like slaves at all... But I guess that will make them mentally stronger later on.

"Now then, I have something important to tell you all. Make sure to listen well."
(Naofumi) "What~?" (Firo)

Firo and the other slaves tilt their heads in curiosity.

It's a bit of an amusing sight.

"Everyone follow me for a bit." (Naofumi)

I walk towards the fields. It seems everyone is actually following me.

"Here, I have a special type of seed." (Naofumi)

The slaves nod in unison.

"It was created in a faraway land, where it caused quite a bit of a problem."
(Naofumi)

I think the Soldiers have heard about it before. They are whispering amongst themselves.

"But I have modified it since then. You people needed a midnight snack last night, right?" (Naofumi) "Y-yeah..." (Kiel)

Kiel is the one who responds.

“Please understand that I can’t waste all of my time cooking for you people.” (Naofumi) “But... The Hero of the Shield’s cooking is delicious.” (Kiel) “Yeah, I want to eat it every day!” (Child)

“If I am chained to the kitchen, then I can’t do my job. It’s not that I’ll never cook for you people. If you work considerably hard, I may consider it.” (Naofumi)

No matter how we progress on the village’s reconstruction, we will always be in need for food.

So I absolutely have to do this.

Those who do not work do not eat, but those who do not eat cannot work.

If they get enough food to fill their stomachs, their progress should improve.

“Now then, for the times that I’m not cooking, you’ll have to use this to sate your hunger.” (Naofumi)

I drop the seed into the ground and pour some water over it.

The plant begins to grow before our eyes.

The Bioplant grows to about three meters, and begins to sprout tomato-like fruit.

“It may have other uses, but for now I will be filling the field with this seed. Your job is to manage this plant.” (Naofumi) “W-what will we have to do?” (Kiel)

“If it grows outside of its set area, you have to cut it. But for now, we haven’t decided on its bounds, so I’ll leave that decision to you.” (Naofumi) “Is that fruit... Edible?” (Kiel)

“Yeah, I think it has become the specialty of the village I got it at.” (Naofumi) At least I’ve seen it in the Castle Town being advertised as such.

“You can eat it if you get hungry. But if you see any problems occurring, make sure to report it to an adult. That’s all.” (Naofumi)

I pluck one of the large fruits and hand it to Firo.

Firo starts eating it, but her expression shows that it isn't enough to satisfy her.

Following her lead, some of the other children begin to pluck the fruit and eat it.

"Amazing..." (Child)

"Yeah." (Child)

"At first I thought that rebuilding the village would be impossible, but if it's this person, he may be able to do it." (Child)

Perhaps my reputation has gotten better. Or that may be my imagination.

"I told you that's all. You are dismissed." (Naofumi)

If the cultivation of this fruit is a success, we can end our food supply problem all at once.

It can also be said that if we didn't end this problem, then I would never be able to train these kids to be competent fighters in the time we had left.

I think it's time for me to see how far the knowledge I brought with me from my world will be able to take me.

Now then... the moment of truth is upon us.

The Next Morning.

I give instructions to the group managing the Bioplant.

"Ow..." (Child)

The slaves are taking some damage while handling it. But that pain builds character.

I check everyone's level.

As I thought, they are all around level 20. Rishia got to level 27.

Raphtalia's level is unchanged. But the food shortage has been solved.

All's well with the world.

Gu...

I hear someone's stomach growling.

"When is breakfast?" (Child)

"Today I prepared it beforehand." (Naofumi) ^[17]

I had made wooden boxes with steel reinforcement and loaded them on the carriage. By the way, their contents are sandwiches containing thinly carved grilled meat.

"We're leaving already?" (Kiel)

Kiel says this with defiance.

He's been making quite a few such comments lately.

Perfect. Today is the day I correct his attitude.

"You're saying that because you don't respect my sincerity. Just go with the flow and take a break for breakfast. Otherwise, something terrible might happen." (Naofumi) "Hm?" (Kiel)

"Firo, go take a walk." (Naofumi)

If you don't eat it quickly, the wild monsters may take it away.

But Kiel has gotten stronger, he should be able to deal with monsters of this caliber.

Firo probably gets it. She won't go to areas with too high difficulty.

With this, Kiel will be able to fight the motion-sickness that Raphtalia suffered from as well.

Just as planned.

What? If you get used to it, it's not a problem.

Well, if you expel the food right after eating it, I guess there's no point. If he learns to eat while riding it, it's killing two birds with one stone.

"Naofumi-sama... You're going too far." (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia says this while poking her head out of the carriage.

"Rishia also had to learn to get used to it." (Naofumi) "Fue..." (Rishia)

"Even though I warned you, you're still making that sound. Should I eat your breakfast for you?" (Naofumi) "I-I'm working on it you know..." (Rishia)

Her voice is weak.

Well, it probably won't be fixed any time soon.

I hand over bags made of Bioplant to the slaves.

"What is this?" (Kiel)

"You'll understand soon. Now then, have fun." (Naofumi)

I lightly hit Firo's back, and she starts running.

"I'll be off~!" (Firo)

"Wa!" (Child)

"Wha-!" (Child)

"Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa..." (Child)

With a rumbling sound, the carriage disappears into the horizon.

“I guess I should begin other preparations.” (Naofumi)

Now that a steady source of food has been secured, I can move on to the next stage of my plan.

“Hero of the Shield?” (Soldier)

“What is it? Are we out of seeds?” (Naofumi)

“No, there are no problems regarding that, but... what about our breakfast?”
(Soldier)

Your breakfast?

Why is it already determined that I’m supposed to make it?

“...Yeah, I’ve prepared it.” (Naofumi)

I distribute food among the soldiers.

The People^[18] of the Sea

Garagaragaragara...

On that day, a carriage with a supplies from the queen arrived.

“I heard the Hero of the Shield could be found here.” (Knight) “What do you need?” (Naofumi)

The knight who came with the carriage addresses me.

I think I’ve seen this face before... I think she was practicing swordsmanship with Raphtalia.

Her appearance is... that of a standard female knight from a game. If she takes off her helmet, I think her face would rival Raphtalia’s in beauty.

Her hair is long and strawberry-blond. Most of it is stuffed into her helmet.

Her eyes are blue, like Firo’s. She looks like she would fit the role of a Wicked Queen perfectly.

She is accompanied by other knights, one of whom I recognize as part of the volunteer army that helped me during the wave before the last.

“Hero of the Shield!” (Volunteer)

“You... How have you been?” (Naofumi)

“We’re working hard on rebuilding the city.” (Volunteer)

“I’ll bet. But, that’s not what I’m asking. What has happened to you guys since then?” (Naofumi) “Nothing major has changed. I’ve been sent here to act as a messengers while the others here are reinforcements.” (Volunteer) “Ah, I see.”

(Naofumi)

The Queen seems to have completely grasped my train of thought. She has already sent more personnel.

“For now, it’s just me, but I have been instructed to act as the official messenger between here and the castle.” (Volunteer) “Not the Shadows?” (Naofumi)

“Those people are to act as the unofficial messengers.” (Volunteer) “What’s the difference?... Well it doesn’t really matter.”

“I’ve been asked to act as a martial arts instructor for the slaves.” (Female Knight) “Ah, that will be helpful.” (Naofumi)

Raphtalia is mostly self-taught. It’s good to have someone with professional training experience.

“So... where are the ever-so-important slaves right now?” (Female Knight) “I sent them out to level grind. I think they’ll be around level 25 when they get back.” (Naofumi) “Fumu... Your lessons sure are fast-paced.” (Female Knight) “It’s Spartan style. Also, I plan to have around 30 more people for non-combat related purposes.” (Naofumi) “For what purpose would that be?” (Volunteer)

“This and that. Well, we also need to rebuild the buildings.” (Naofumi) “Understood, I’ll relay that to the castle.” (Volunteer)

Now then, I need to move on to the next task as well.

Recently I’ve been researching various plants. I’m trying to see why I can’t modify certain substances.

There are quite a few faults to my modification skills.

For some reason, there are some plants I can edit and some I cannot.

In that respect, the Bioplant is very easy to modify.

So I'll see if I can make that Bioplant produce some simple medicine.

I finish readying a plot for the plant without issue.

“The Hero of the Shield sure is enthusiastic.” (Kiel)

Kiel, who had just returned, stumbles out of the carriage.

He has stopped complaining to me about cooking, but...

Guu...

His stomach still growls.

A few days later.

“Ahaha~!” (Child)

The slaves are having fun climbing up the Bioplant.

Their levels have all passed 30. Their appearances also changed, and they now look to be around 14-15 years old.

They only look slightly younger than Raphtalia. They have started to look an age that can actually be sent out to battle. They seem to be growing quite healthily.

Their appearances... well I would put it above village children. But there is no one here who rivals Raphtalia in looks. It just seems that they are eating proper meals.

Out of the boys, the one with the best face is probably Kiel. His face looks like a girl's. He might grow into a pretty boy one day ^[19]. Rather than saying he looks like a boy, it would be more accurate to say he looks like a boyish girl.

Not that it matters to me.

“Hey, Shield-Niichan^[20]! We’ve only been having meat and vegetables for a while now. I’m tired of it.” (Kiel) “Don’t be selfish.” (Naofumi)

For some reason, he’s started to become quite impudent. It’s getting to be quite a pain to deal with.

I should try to set him straight, but he does his work fine, so there’s not much I can do.

He’s been acting quite familiar with me. He’s talking to me as a younger brother rather than a slave. He has also begin to say, ‘Thank you’ when getting food.

As long as he’s motivated...

It seems many of these children were used for physical labor before.

It may seem strange coming from me, but many consider it unethical to send child slaves into battle. They are mostly used for other purposes.

They are quite skillful at physical work.

“Hey, I’m going to go off to the ocean and catch some fish, so please cook them, Niichan.” (Kiel) “I don’t remember becoming your brother!” (Naofumi)

Kiel is definitely looking down on me.

Should I lecture him?

Oh right, Kiel seems to be shorter than the other boys.

His voice is also higher.

“I would also like some fish.” (Rishia)

Rishia and the other slaves voice out their agreement.

“Niichan, I want to eat Seafood!” (Kiel)

“Yeah!” (Child)

“Seafood!” (Child)

Damn, it seems I have mass-produced Firos.

It’s a good thing the eggs haven’t hatched yet.

There’s no way I could handle a strange monster joining in here.

“Ah, I got it. Today we’ll go to the beach to catch some fish. While we’re there, Firo, go swim out and capture some aquatic monsters.” (Naofumi) “Yes~!” (Children in unison)

And so it turned out that we were headed for the sea.

Well, it has been getting quite hot lately.

Swimming around a bit won’t hurt.

These people... They lived here before, so they can swim, right?

And so, after a short walk, we reach our destination.

“Kyahaha~!” (Children)

And so the slaves enthusiastically run out towards the water carrying harpoons. They all take off their clothes and enter in their underwear...

In the middle of this, I noticed... Raphtalia and Rishia noticed as well.

“Naofumi-sama!?” (Raphtalia)

“Eh? Eh!?” (Rishia)

“Firo! Go catch Kiel!” (Naofumi)

“? I got it.” (Firo)

“Wah!? What is it!” (Kiel)

Firo drags Kiel out of the ocean.

Kiel is violently struggling under Firo’s arm.

“What is it, Shield nii-chan!?” (Kiel)

“Let me say this first. I don’t really care, but there is something I must point out. A large problem in the way you act.” (Naofumi) “And I’m asking what it is!” (Kiel)

The other slaves notice the commotion, and come over.

They seem to have caught on to the problem.

“Kiel-kun... are you possibly supposed to be Kiel-chan^[21]?” (Raphtalia) “Wha?! What are you talking about? I’m a boy.” (Kiel)

Kiel’s chest has a bandage wrapped around it, and he... she is wearing a loincloth below.

... For obvious reasons, Raphtalia is pointing at Kiel’s nether regions.

Recently, I have been unable to read Raphtalia’s behavior.

It may be that meeting up with old friends has restored some lost parts of her personality.

“Kiel-kun... do you know the difference between a man and a woman?” (Raphtalia) “???” (Kiel)

“Um, you know... A man is someone who has...” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia begins whispering in Kiel’s ear.

“That can’t be true. If I were god, I wouldn’t do something so painstaking as to differentiate men and women like that.” (Kiel) “Then please look at the other boys. No, look at Naofumi-sama. He’s a bit different, isn’t he? His chest isn’t wrapped, right?” (Raphtalia) “What are you talking about? That’s what happens when you become an adult. I just have a bit of excess fat, so my chest sticks out. When I become an adult, it will fix itself.”

The BS is spilling out at quite an alarming rate.

... How the hell was Kiel raised before becoming a slave?

I have too many questions.

Or was she perhaps raised without such standards? Was she allowed to freely choose her definition for Male and Female?

Whatever the case, she was definitely raised abnormally.

Anyways, how did no one notice during the time she was a slave?

...Was this part of the Slave Dealer’s schemes?

If I were the Slave Dealer, I wouldn’t go to the trouble of changing a slave’s world view, and would just sell her as is.

This country is quite rotten. There’s probably a perverted noble who would buy her thinking she was a pretty boy.

And maybe another pervert found Kiel’s lack of gender identity to be a turn-on. All this just raises her selling price.

It seems she has already been sold a few times.

I think I heard that she had broken too many plates at her last place and had thus been returned...

Kiel also has some signs of significant physical abuse, so I guess she didn’t receive any preferential treatment.

It seems that the abuse of Demi-human slaves is quite common in this country.

Raphtalia also showed such signs of abuse.

I guess this is the aftereffects of the recent war with Silt Welt.

Out of the 8 slaves, one of them said that they were saved by a hero before.

I guess even those people can't stand to see children being abused.

I see that they had left the issue to the country, and the child had eventually been resold as a slave anyways.

In the few days since she came here, I've gotten a good grasp on what personality Kiel has.

Around 6 of the new slaves still act cautiously when away from Raphtalia.

But that isn't an issue I have any influence over. I'll leave that to Raphtalia and Rishia.

At night, Raphtalia puts the other children to sleep, and sometimes sleeps next to them.

She also went through a similar experience, so she is able to understand their problems.

Even if I stay around, I don't think they will open their hearts to me.

Firo, being Firo, is able to interact well with them.

She seems to be good with dealing with children in general, that bird.

This may be similar to the practice of Animal Therapy. [\[22\]](#)

However, the children still get nauseous at the sight of her prized carriage.

"B-but father said that a man is a man if he thinks he is a man no matter what."
(Kiel)

So did the daughter began to imitate her father's manly attitude?

And anyways, that talk in itself is implying that you are a woman.

She was raised like someone from a story I had heard about. [\[23\]](#)

The other female slaves laugh amongst themselves.

I've heard some women like to imagine boys who cross-dress, but what do they think of a girl who wants to be a man of the sea?

"This can't be... I mean, what's the point of separating men and women anyways!?! I don't even know anymore!" (Kiel) [24]

This text is a machine translation (MTL).

Be warned that the degree of translation error may be higher than usual.



This page was created before the updated (July 19, 2015) MTL guidelines and has not been reviewed.

For details, see the [machine translation guidelines](#).

Same Sex Only

“I don’t know the real meaning of being a man or a woman.” (Kiel)
She had always known that she was a man, so now she’s really confused.

Right?

Firo? Why are you butting in?

“The reason they separate men and women, is it because they mate?” (Firo)
Kiel was confused with Firo’s answer.

Read the situation... with a sweet sound reverberating in the air, Firo just defined what it means to be a man or a woman.

How straightforward, it looks like she understood most of what Firo was saying.

I look in Raphtalia's direction and shook my head.

As for Rishia? She looked at their direction and shouted-.

“It’s different!” (Rishia)

“Why do you know so much? Bird!” (Naofumi)

“Come on! Firo knew from the start.” (Firo)

Is it genetic memory?

No, No... Maybe something happened with a Male Philoreal that she happened to meet in the forest.

“That certainly is suspicious.” (Naofumi)

Firo shouted to complain about what I said

When you think about it, Firo lays eggs.

“Booo!!” (Firo)

This has become really annoying

Everyone's faces, including Raphtalia's, have turned red.

Young man... it's as if they've just emerged from the sea. Is everyone alright?

“I don't like it! ... I can't do such a thing... I will never do such a thing with Shield-niichan!” (Kiel) [25]

“Why would I do such a thing?” (Naofumi)

I want them to stop saying things like I'm raising them because of my ulterior motives.

Damn. This is frustrating.

This topic of love-affairs is really getting on my nerves I want Bitch to get captured soon to be punished and receive Divine Retribution

“Stop already with this stupid topic.. at least for the time being, love is prohibited.” (Naofumi) “EH?!” (Children)

The slaves were protesting.

Whatever you say is useless.

This is to fight the incoming wave, not the declining birth-rate.

I'm not here to take care of all of you, there's simply no room for baggage.

“Don't think about such trivial things, do that when the world is already at peace.” (Naofumi) “I don't get it.” [26]

“Why? Why is such a thing decided? Because I don’t like it. Look, Raphtalia doesn’t like it either.” (Naofumi) “Raphtalia?” (Naofumi)

“EH?!” (Raphtalia)

For some reason, I directed my voice to Raphtalia.

Ah!... I was trying to change the topic. Seems like Raphtalia understood.

“Our purpose is to fight the wave. 3 ½ months from now, I will take those who wish to fight the wave with us. Of course, I will not force you if you don’t want to.” (Naofumi) “EH?! That wave?” (Child)

“Right. I was summoned here to fight the wave that took the lives of your family. So tell me if you want to fight.” (Naofumi)

Just 8 people. I need more people; I want to establish several groups.

A guy from the battle squad that wants to volunteer would be ideal. These guys are still unsuitable for battle.

After hearing my words, Kiel remains silent.

“Because I’m a woman, am I useless?” (Kiel)

“Ha? That’s not true, just look around me!” (Naofumi)

I’m pointing towards Raphtalia, Firo, and Rishia

“Come to think of it, why are they all woman? Unbelievable!” (Kiel)

Kiel was sharp! This is annoying.

“You.. What do you want to do? Are you joining?” (Naofumi) “What love prohibition? You just want woman to serve you!” (Kiel) [\[27\]](#)

“Apart from me, Raphtalia has no problems with another man.” (Naofumi)

“EH?!” (Raphtalia)

“Yeah!” (Firo)

“See, Firo!” (Naofumi)

“She has no problem with males.” (Naofumi)

“Booo!” (Firo)

“Men and women are equal. I use whoever is efficient, so don’t be mistaken.”
(Naofumi) “I see.. Shield-oniichan, I see! Two swords!” (Girl)
One of the slave girls mutters alone.

Seems like she misunderstood something.

“That’s wrong.” (Naofumi)

“What? What two swords?” (Firo)

Firo doesn’t know what I’m saying. After all, it’s just genetic memory
“That... time when I heard that, I was sold.”

“To explain that.... Anyways, it’s troubling that love will make you unable to
fight. Therefore, love is prohibited.” (Naofumi)
The slaves were satisfied except for Kiel, who nods unwillingly.

“I see.. I guess I need to give my best in fighting.” (Kiel) “Ah! However, thinking
about after the war... no, my preference may become popular, so Kiel must
practice peddling.” (Naofumi) “What is that?” (Kiel)

“Your face looks good, so I was thinking of using that. But you are timid, so I
guess you’re unsuitable for peddling.” (Naofumi) “Me? N-No way!” (Kiel)

“It’s okay. Oh! It’ll be fine; you should go look around the streets. Humans
have more nasty ways of entertainment.” (Naofumi) “Shield-niichan, the way
you’re saying that is scary!” (Kiel)

Was it a strange thing to say?

Anyways, If I brought Kiel in peddling, I’m sure that I’d be able to sell a lot of
accessories to the ladies.

Together with Raphtalia, men and women would line up to give their money
for the accessories.

“Ah! Kiel.” (Naofumi)

“What is it?” (Kiel)

“I accept same sex relationships. So have fun with Raphtalia as much as you want.” (Naofumi)

It looked like I was jealous

“Such a thing, do you want Raphtalia-chan to kill me?” (Kiel) “You may unexpectedly fall and roll. Based on what I read in manga, Raphtalia is the type that is likely not to refuse.” (Naofumi) “What is manga?” (Kiel)

“Something good. Anyways, I’d like it if Raphtalia was a little more rebellious.” (Naofumi)

Kiel began to tremble.

The look from earlier.

“Naofumi-sama?” (Raphtalia)

Oozing with bloodthirst, Raphtalia approached me while smiling.

I think I might’ve touched a forbidden subject.

“It’s for that reason. Now, everyone disband and bring the seafood.” (Naofumi)

“Yes!” (children)

After a while, the female knight came to the beach

“I heard you were playing at the beach, so it’s true.” (Female Knight) “I’m just giving them a reward, these guys did their best recently.” (Naofumi) “I think they’ve been rewarded plenty enough.”

Certainly, but I also want to go to the beach and eat some seafood.

“I'll also join them in the fun.” (Female Knight)

Female Knight came to the sea with a swimsuit, and began to swim together with Raphtalia.

Despite being so shrewd, you prepared that kind of swimsuit.... What country is this?

Speaking of this woman, she has a strangely good relationship with Raphtalia.

Unrelated to the previous topic, it may be a little related.

Actually, to love another person is good.

It will increase your worries, but they will be there to accompany you.

“Naofumi-sama!” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia waves her hands

“What happened? Were you drowning?” (Naofumi)

“I wouldn't be speaking if I was drowning... besides that, weren't you thinking of something rude?” (Raphtalia)

How did Raphtalia find out?

Even Firo seem to have noticed.

Even in business no one should have figured anything out of this expression of mine...

“Deceiving is useless, you know?” (Raphtalia)

“Ah! Yes, yes! Isn't it nice it has become this lively.” (Naofumi) [\[28\]](#)[\[29\]](#)

Since this could lead to trouble, over denying it, I change the subject.

“Shield-niichan! I caught it!” (Kiel)

You could see the joy on her face when she caught the shellfish in the net.

“Yes, yes.” (Naofumi)

The grill is already hot. It’s ready for grilling.

The food supply is already stable, so there won’t be any problems.

“Eat up; after eating, we’ll go back.” (Naofumi)

“Understood!”

Such a feeling today again... I’m irresponsible; I want to stop cooking for them.

A little bit more time, and the monster eggs will hatch soon.

It’s past noon, and everyone is preparing to get back to the village.

I think the monster eggs are about to hatch.

Yesterday, the incubation period of the monster eggs in the contract was almost about done.

So I went to the shed to check the monster eggs’ status.

“Shield-niichan. What are you doing?” (Kiel)

“Just stockpiling food supplies; also, the monster eggs are ready to hatch soon at any time.” (Naofumi) “Wow!” (Kiel)

“The problem is... that Philorial.” (Naofumi)

That bird is really excellent at pulling carriages, but I feel anxious that there may be two monsters with really huge appetites.

“Firo?”

Firo tilted her head curiously

“It’s different, this egg is not a Philorial.” (Naofumi) “Firo-chan has a younger sister or a younger brother?” [30]

“Amazing!” (Firo)

“Wow!” [31]

So noisy.... If you look at their appearances, they’re just like middle school students, so childlike.

No such thing?

“Categorically speaking, that is right.” (Naofumi)

“Master, would you like the newborn child to become like Firo?” (Firo)
It’s a pain to answer Firo’s question.

Well, whatever.

“I want the monster to be able to pull a carriage, but the huge appetite is unnecessary.” (Naofumi) “Hmmp, perhaps. Okay.” (Firo)

I faced Firo and gave such a reply.

“You’re not what Master wants; you’re probably like Firo.” (Firo)
Firo’s ahoge is moving towards the monster egg.

There’s something in there.

“Is Firo’s family born yet?” (Firo)

Family!

If you think about it, this Philoreal will become a follower to the Philoreal Queen.

“Well then, what will he become? Master, I hope he becomes something amazing!” (Firo) [32]

“Will you do that?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah!” (Firo)

Firo is pouring some magic on the egg as she touches it.

“This egg will never be the same as Firo.” (Firo)

“Ah! I’m safe.” (Naofumi)

But still, there is a possibility that this newborn will end up the same as Firo.

If you consider how huge Firo became, it’ll surely become noisy. I guess there’s no helping it.

Depending on the result, we may leave the raising of the Philoreal to Firo.

The eggs hatched.

“Pii!” (baby chick)

One animal was a Philorial chick. It was a slightly purple-ish kid.

Next were two caterpillars..... When these grow up, they’ll be able to pull carriages. I called them Caterpilands. I absorbed their eggshells into the shield, but there was no effect.

Next, there were three earthworms. They appear to be monsters called a Dunes. Can I leave the soil maintenance to these guys?

I set the basic prohibitions.....

“You... you’re in charge of leveling this guy up.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” [33]

The children felt like they had become the parents to a pet; they were carrying it with on their shoulders as they went to the carriage The Philoreal chick went to Firo and happily sat on top of her head.

“Pyaaa!”

The chick is singing.

In these past few days, I was only watching if the kids were in trouble.

Me, who’s from another world, did I just become their foster parent?

If we lose the wave... I guess all the hard work that we invested will all go to waste.

“Ah, after...” (Girl)

“What?” (Raptalia)

“I’ll slowly learn how to cook so that I can make food for everyone anytime. Well, mainly because I’m not good with fighting.” (Girl) “then, I...” (Girl)

The slave girl went down from the carriage

“Good for you.” (Raptalia)

Certainly, the one wanting to learn how to cook was the one who requested a midnight snack from Raptalia.

“Yeah... I really like cooking.. but fighting is a little...” (Girl) “Is that so... then do your best.” (Raphtalia)

“Yeah.” (Girl)

The girl nodded and stood next to me

“I’m going now.” (Girl)

Raphtalia waved her hands

“Yeah, be safe!” (Raphtalia)

“Raphtalia-chan, is it alright to be that carefree?” (Kiel) “Ha?” (Raphtalia)

While waving to the girl who wants to be a cook, she muttered-

"What are you talking about?" (Raphtalia)

“Hey?” (Kiel)

“Don’t worry.” (Raphtalia)

What’s that?

“Well then, I'm going.” (Naofumi)

“Yessir!”

The carriage made a clattering sound.

“Now, then assist me.” (Naofumi)

“Yes.”

And thus, I taught the child how to cook

Though, for some reason, her food was a mess

It was soo bad that even the food the shield produced was a lot tastier.

“Shield-niichan is really good with his hands.” (Girl) “Is that so?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah, the fish demon was really good.” (Girl)

“Is that so?” (Naofumi)

I said not to feel bad about it

“This delicious dish was made by the power of the shield. I just imagine the taste and then cook it.” (Naofumi) “Yeah, then Shield-niichan will teach me how to cook that dish.” (Girl)

I ended up stepping on a landmine, but I still answered with a smile.

It’s good that I smiled.

Speaking of the results, I ended up in the position where I was taught... Oh well, it’s okay.

This child really likes cooking, so I hope she becomes very good at it. She will become a big deal someday.

The Shield's Brand

It's been a week since I acquired my land and began babysitting these kids.

The soldiers have pretty much finished restoring most of the salvageable houses. I guess it's time to start on the next stage of the plan.

Following Firo's orders, the new Filo Rial is pulling the carriage back and forth.

I guess it will be nice to ride in a carriage that doesn't talk back for once...

I'm currently playing fetch with Firo in relatively good spirits. I'm doing it while the other slaves are asleep, as Firo does not care about her surroundings.

The Catipilands have also become quite large, and we are currently building a carriage for them. This monster seems to be a herbivore that enjoys gnawing on Bioplant stalks.

This kills two birds in one stone. The Slave dealer does good work, and it's also quite easy to handle.

Its only fault is its speed. It can't go very fast, or very far. Visiting the neighboring towns seems to be its limit.

The Dune Worms have become relatively large as well. I'm leaving the maintenance of the soil around here to them.

This monster is also quite docile. Wild Dunes seem to spend their lives peacefully underground. It is very rare for one to get into a fight.

Domestic Dunes will fight if ordered, but they aren't very strong.

Well then, I think it's time to restart my peddling.

“H-how is it?” (Kiel)

I had prepared two sets of clothing for Kiel.

The first was one fit for her preferences, a manly set of armor.

The other one is a frilly one-piece.

Kiel is blushing and waiting for my appraisal.

“Perfect. Make sure you act clumsy and embarrassed while we sell things.”

(Naofumi) “Shield Niichan! Why do I have to do something like this!?” (Kiel) “Of course, for the money. If we don’t have funds, we cannot restore the village.”

(Naofumi) “...I-I’m embarrassed, Niichan...” (Kiel)

I plan to have Firo manage the front, while I watch over the stock.

I also plan to sell medicines made by Kiel (with Raphtalia’s help).

“Rishia, I leave the village’s management and level raising to you.” (Naofumi)

“G-got it!” (Rishia)

I need to teach the slaves how to peddle.

If I don’t then, raising funds will get increasingly difficult.

If I circle the country with a carriage advertising my brand, rumors should spread quickly.

That’s why I have been spending all of my free time making medicines.

By the way, due to the teachings in compounding I received before the battle with the Spirit Turtle, I can make some advanced medicines as well.

As long as I’m there, we should be able to solve most problems, including serious diseases.

Though this is just my opinion.

“Then, we’re off-!” (Naofumi)

“Wai-Nii-chan! I still haven’t gotten used to vehi-” (Kiel)

Ignoring Kiel, we set off.

It only took one hour to visit the neighboring villages. This is all thanks to Firo’s legs.

I see some familiar faces as I go from town to town. It’s a bit of a strange feeling.

“Saint-sama was the Hero of the shield?” (Customer)

“Yeah... I thought it would be bad for business if my identity got out.”

(Naofumi) “I apologize for my behavior back then.” (Customer) “Don’t let it bother you.” (Naofumi)

The bad rumors about me have already died down.

Even though I hadn’t done anything at the time, I was still being called the Devil of the Shield.

I had been faced with quite a bit of undue resentment.

But I don’t have any reason to mull over it now. As long as I get paid, I don’t mind.

I don’t put customers before everything else. Those were the words of an actor. This is reality.

“I got some land, and am training some people to combat the wave. In order to prepare for it, I am also selling medicine and arms. If you need anything, please ask. You can find me in the carriage marked with the Shield insignia.” (Naofumi)
Right now, there is a sign with a picture of a shield attached to the side of my carriage.

“It’s only been a couple of days since you defeated that monster, but the hero

of the shield is already trying to help the populace. You must really care for this country's people." (Customer) "Yeah, but there isn't too much I can do by myself. If you would spread the word of the Shield Brand, I would be grateful." (Naofumi)

And thus, like this, I spread the name of my peddling business.

Firo also serves as a form of advertisement, as she is a Filo Rial Queen.

But her constant chatter is annoying.

If I had someone to manage her, it would be helpful, but I don't think there are many who would like to deal with her.

"I'll buy some things to support the efforts of the Shield." (Customer) "Much obliged." (Naofumi)

And, for once, the rumors were working in my favor.

The good rumors of my carriage spread like wildfire.

Some people rush to greet us as we arrive at certain towns.

It's quite remarkable that gossip can travel faster than Firo's legs.

"S-shield Niichan... Are you sure this is alright?" (Kiel)

Kiel, who is managing sales, comes up to me with an embarrassed face.

"Yeah, your business smile isn't as good as Raphtalia's, but some people might find your clumsy, awkward display to be a turn-on." (Naofumi) "Is that supposed to be a compliment?" (Kiel)

Yes. Clumsy, innocent characters seem to have a healing effect on people. This holds true in any world.

Raphtalia and Firo are also doing well. It seems that I will be making quite a bit of profit from this enterprise.

Our sales are quite steady.

At this stage, we can't really spare personnel to gather herbs.

However, even the worst of ingredients can be made into medicine of 'Normal' quality with the shield.

These 'Normal' medicines can then be compounded by hand to make higher level medicines of quality greater than normal.

I can expect quite a bit in this trip.

For now, I need to prepare enough medicine for all the towns we will stop at. It's good that I prepared a lot beforehand.

We continue our peddling for the next three days before returning to the village. We occasionally buy herbs from passing merchants.

I feed these to the shield to make more medicine.

Kiel and the other slaves observed my actions and learn how to peddle, or at least that was the plan.

"My, my, if it isn't the Hero of the Shield." (Slave Dealer)

When it gets dark, the Slave Dealer appears at the village.

He is accompanied by some sturdy-built adults. It's a bit of a surreal scene.

The other slaves hide in fear.

"What is it? It's rare seeing you outside of your store." (Naofumi) "How are you doing? How are the slaves?" (Slave Dealer) "We're moving ahead on schedule. Anyways, why are you here? Answer me." (Naofumi) "That's good to hear." (Slave Dealer)

So you won't answer!

Calm down... don't get swept up into his pace.

"Today, I came here to deliver the slaves ordered by the Hero of the Shield. Yes." (Slave Dealer) "Ah, so you were able to find them?" (Naofumi)

“Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer goes into his carriage, and out come about 10 people. They are all shaking in fear.

Raphtalia looks through them for people she knows.

She talks to them in the same way that she talked to Kiel.

But...

“There are 3 children here that I don’t know.” (Raphtalia) “Hmm? Did I make a mistake?” (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer claps his hands, and his men move to return the 3 children to the carriage.

“You don’t have to worry about it.” (Naofumi)

“And why would that be?” (Slave Dealer)

The slave dealer tilts his head.

“I don’t plan to only use people from this village. As long as they don’t bear any extreme hatred towards me, I will take them in.” (Naofumi) ^[34]

I planned to hire other people as well, anyways. There’s no reason to go to the trouble of returning them.

There’s no downside of having more manpower.

“You all. Just because they’re not from this village, don’t leave them out. If I see any bullying, then I’ll sell the culprits without hesitation.” (Naofumi) “Ye~s.” (Slaves)

My slaves answer as such.

Well, they may bond as fellow slaves... There shouldn't be too much of a problem.

But with increasing numbers, there may be more problems. I should be cautious.

After the slave registration process finishes, I unchain them.

“Are you alright?” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia, Firo, Rishia, Kiel, and the other slaves comfort the shaking new recruits.

“... I'm fine...” (Slave)

It seems it will take a while for them to open up their hearts...

“Shield Niichan.” (Kiel)

“What?” (Naofumi)

“Let's make some food and have a welcoming party. Of course, Niichan is cooking.” (Kiel)

Kiel answers with enthusiasm.

What do you mean, 'Of course I'm cooking'?!

“...Well, I did it for you guys too.” (Naofumi)

“Y-yeah!” (Kiel)

“The party was my intention from the start. Everyone, please help out.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” (Everyone not new)

A strange sense of camaraderie has been born among the slaves.

...This may be helpful sometime later.

“For your slaves to be this motivated, you sure are good at handling them. It makes my heart race.” (Slave Dealer) “Yeah, keep thinking that.” (Naofumi)

I chuck a bag of coins at the Slave Dealer.

I don't think I will be seeing any of that money again.

“Please continue to collect some useful Demi-human slaves.” (Naofumi) “As you command.” (Slave Dealer)

Now, excluding Raphtalia and Rishia, the village has a total of 18 slaves.

Including monsters, I have amassed quite a few members.

“How about the monsters?” (Slave Dealer)

“Hmm... I will probably need more soon.” (Naofumi)

“Then, I shall bring some with me the next time I arrive. Do you have any requests” (Slave Dealer) “The same species as before will do just fine.”

(Naofumi) “Understood. Now then, I must be taking my leave.” (Slave Dealer)

“Yeah, just go already.” (Naofumi)

And so, I drove away the Slave Dealer and his men... or not.

“I would like to partake in the Hero's home-made meal as well. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

Yes? Your voice is too loud!

I don't think he will leave until he eats.

Dammit.

“I understand. Though I don’t understand what people like about it so much. Just eat and leave.” (Naofumi) “I appreciate it. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

The Slave Dealer’s men follow him.

... Their presence is ruining the taste.

I have to think of some countermeasures for next time, or me having to cook will become standard practice.

Desertion and Discovery

Everyone's appetite had been sated, the slave merchant had also returned, and night had descended.

“Hey? Are you really going to do it?” (Anon slave 1)

“I-isn't it obvious?” (Anon slave 2)

“But....everyone was nice and the food was great.” (Anon slave 1) “No, those guys are definitely trying to deceive us!” (Anon slave 2)

It was noisy outside.

It was dark and hard to see, but for some reason, the new slaves were running towards the fields.

“Haa....Haa...” (Anon slave)

There was a somewhat strained atmosphere.

Just what were they planning?

- Rustling* They tried to push their way through the Bioplant's field.

.....

“ “Waaaaaaahhhh!?” ” (runaway slaves)

Ah, they got caught in the defenses I established.

Hearing the scream, the other slaves left the house and headed towards the fields to examine the situation.

- Sigh*.....For the time being, I have to go out and have a look.

“Shield-niichan, we heard a scream.” (Kiel)

When I exit the house, a concerned-looking Kiel rushes over to me.

It seems like Raphtalia went ahead to look at the situation.

“It's alright. There won't be any deaths. I've already prepared for the worst case scenario and only implemented some defensive measures.” (Naofumi) “Worst case scenario?” (Kiel)

“I could bind them with the slave crest, but then there's the problem of being unable to give detailed orders. Well in short, I'm talking about desertion.” (Naofumi)

Yes, the slave crest has the possibility of prohibiting desertion itself.

Once they leave the grounds, inducing death was even possible, but as one would expect, I paid no small amount for these guys, so killing them would be bad.

Besides, I have plans to designate slaves to peddle outside the village. That's why I configured the penalties to only cause chest pains for all the slaves staying in the village at night.

“ “Waahhhh! He-help—!” ” (Runaway slaves)

The monsters I used to maintain the soil, Dunes, had emerged from underground, coiled around the three slaves who tried to escape, and hung them up in midair.

I had given instructions to the Dunes so that anyone fleeing from the established site would be apprehended.

“To abscond so suddenly, aren't these guys courageous?” (Naofumi) “Naofumi-

sama!” (Raphtalia)

After discovering the circumstances, Raphtalia joined us with an urgent-looking expression.

I thought this commotion of escaping would happen sometime, but it was later than I had expected.

That was because Raphtalia's old friends became attached to me for some reason or another.

Moreover, many of them had lived here to begin with.

“Now then, you guys. Where were you planning to go after you escaped?”
(Naofumi)

I faced the slaves who were hanging in mid-air and inquired.

“Wh-Who's going to say anything!?” (Anon slave 2)

The boy who was acting as the leader, replied.

Hm.... he definitely has a lot of spirit.

It would be a great contest between Kiel and him.

“Is that so? If you don't talk then I'll let that fellow play around, but is that alright with you?” (Naofumi) “Gr...” (Anon slave 2 – runaway slave leader)

By the way, Dunes also have their own personalities. Their appearances may be of huge earthworms, but they're quite amiable and love to play.

If it's this kind of rebellious kid, then I should let them play all night.

To be honest, I don't have any obligation to raise a slave who just attempts to run away. I'd like to sell them back to the slave merchant immediately, but I will give them a chance.

“Look, just talk.” (Naofumi)

“Wh-Who's going to say anything!?” (Runaway slave leader)

“If that's the case, I'll turn you into bait for my followers.” (Naofumi)

I looked at the situation and gestured indirectly to Firo. The slaves distanced themselves from Firo.

“Eh? Firo-chan also eats people?” (Kiel)

“She does have quite an appetite.” (Naofumi)

“If you defy Shield-niichan you'll be bait? Seriously?” (Kiel)

The slaves gathered together and whispered.

She was just standing around in her human form, but read the mood and turn into your monster form—— .

“No~!” (Firo)

That Firo, she denied it!

Did she learn some culture when she came here? No way...such unnecessary knowledge.

Raphtalia whispered to the slaves quietly.

“Naofumi-sama is.....saying that kind of thing, but.....” (Raphtalia) “So really?” (Anon slave)

“Shield-niichan is somewhat naive.” (Kiel)

“I can hear you. You brats!” (Naofumi)

Jeez, now I can't use dignity or bullshit.

“.....” (runaway slave leader)

The leader of the captured slaves also had a doubtful face.

You should read the atmosphere.

“But the thing about becoming monster bait is real. If I were to order you to, then it won't mean that no one will become bait.” (Naofumi)

Be it a Caterpiland or a Dune, if I say 'be bait,' then you might get eaten.

When I turned my attention to the monster hut, the Caterpilands were sleeping soundly.

Will they turn into butterflies?

I cast aside these needless thoughts.

The Dunes played with the slave children.

They're huge so they're great for using as threats. If this were an 18+ game, the caterpillars and worms would be used for sexual assault.

“Now talk.” (Naofumi)

“Eep!” (Slave leader)

“Look, if you don't talk then the Dunes might get hungry and eat you~”
(Naofumi)

Between the slaves who originated from this village and arbitrarily gave the Dunes names, “They won't eat him right?” was whispered around.

I want to say that they only eat dirt, but now's not the time for that.

“At the worst, another Philorial will eat you guys.” (Naofumi)

“Eat us!?” (Slave leader)

I could feel a gaze from the hut.

I shook my head with a *swish*.

Everyone was raised naively!

“Look, they're waiting impatiently!” (Naofumi)

“Eat! Eat!” (Slaves)

The chant changed the mood, but for those who didn't know what life in the village was like, it would appear to be excitement.

It would have been great if I could have used this from the beginning.

“What's your answer?” (Naofumi)

“.....Fine. But you have to spare the others!” (Slave leader)

The runaway slaves' leader reluctantly revealed their story.

It seems to just be gossip among the slaves, but in Melromarc's harbour and other various places, there exists a faction that's stipulating the release of slaves.

In that faction, a plausible rumour is being spread around saying that Demi-humans can have their slave crest unconditionally removed and will be set free in foreign countries.

Are these Silt Welt's people?

No, for argument's sake, even if they resembled Silt Welt or Schild Frieden's people, it seems that recognition of the same species is strong.

If I had a slogan that said that I would unconditionally free them in another country, I would have some sort of scheme to help me make a profit.

Someone who would do that with good intentions doesn't exist.

If we could use a boat, it would be convenient as transportation.

The escaped slaves would be forced to become the working force of a foreign county from a safe place, or something like that.

That would be a crueller treatment than just being slaves....it's felonious.

Or it could possibly be that the slave merchants circulate it to recycle

business.

At the very least, I saw that these guys just couldn't wait for their desired ending.

However, it's a dependable technique for business. Using a smile to deceive the slaves who turn up.

Come to think of it, the slave merchant said so before he left.

No matter what, orphans have increased due to the Spirit Turtle's influence.

There are people who become slaves prior to ending up as orphans. It seems there are few human slaves, but I heard they make humans into slaves in other countries.

It seems like the slave merchant is busy thanks to that sequence of events. He did leave pretty quickly after consuming the food I made.

“Did you guys know?” (Naofumi)

“Now that you mention it, I'm starting to remember.” (Anon slave) “Yeah, there was that kind of story.” (Anon slave)

If you knew about it, then tell me earlier.....Jeez.

“Shield-niichan's place is just so comfortable that we totally forgot about it!” (Kiel) “Yeah!” (Anon slave)

It was a good inclination, but~..... somehow I feel like I'm being underrated.

“Next time, you'd better tell me these things.” (Naofumi)

“Oka~y!” (Slaves)

Because I have no idea where this money-making story comes from.

Until now, we've just been revising our actions after things happened, but if

we can read ahead of time, then we can not only keep damages to a minimum but it would even be possible to forestall them.

Knowledge is power.

“Now then, desertion is a serious crime. However, I'm not a demon. You guys have only just come here, so I'll postpone it for a short while. Think about it carefully.” (Naofumi)

I instructed the Dunes to release the slaves, who were then taken in by Raphtalia and the others.

“Educate them properly. That's all.” (Naofumi)

The runaway slaves defiantly glared at me with hostility.

If it doesn't seem like they've reflected, I'll sell them when the slave merchant comes again.

I can recover my money back if I raise their levels, and if they become stronger than usual with the shield's correction skill, he'll probably buy them happily.

.....Let's hope that they can get along with Raphtalia and the others until then.

“It's alright, this won't be like the other places where all you do is suffer pain. That's why we'd like you to help with our....village.” (Raphtalia) “.....” (Runaway slave)

The three slaves murmured to Raphtalia and the other slaves and averted their faces uncomfortably.

“It has been very painful for you, hasn't it? However.....a little bit, with just a short time it'll be fine, so I'd like you to compare him with your previous masters.” (Raphtalia) “.....” (Runaway slave)

“You know, that person is the Hero of the Shield-sama.” (Raphtalia) “Eh!?”
(Runaway slave)

“You've heard the rumours, right? He's the one who saved this country and even become a legend in the country of the Demi-humans.” (Raphtalia) “Y-yeah. I heard about it. Someday..... it's that he's the saint-sama who will save us Demi-human slaves.” (Runaway slave) “Yes, and you know, that person may have a bad mouth, but he has been rebuilding the village to save us slaves. We'd like you to become a part of that power.” (Raphtalia) “But.....” (Runaway slave)

“It's okay if you still don't believe it yet. Little by little, we'll show you proof that it's not a lie.” (Raphtalia)

Well, for the time being, I'll leave it to Raphtalia and the others.

I returned to my room and resumed my compounding studies.

I've become able to do a considerable amount of the difficult compounding. If I have all the ingredients, I shouldn't fail.

I have the materials prepared by the queen, so let's give it a try.

The next day.

“Is Iwatani-dono here!?” (Knight)

The female Knight came intruding early in the morning.

“What's up? Did the Spirit Turtle appear again?” (Naofumi)

“Can you even handle that much excitement!?” (Knight)

I'm still in the middle of recuperating. This time I'll have to rely on the Seven Star Heroes.

Well.....whatever happens, I also want to be able to participate in it.

“And? You seem to have some urgent business.” (Naofumi)

“I have a message from the queen. I was told to convey it immediately.”
(Knight) “The contents?” (Naofumi)

“It seems we've discovered a companion of the Hero of the Spear.” (Knight)
What? Discovered a companion of Motoyasu?

From her words, it doesn't appear to be Bitch.

So it comes to either Woman 1 or Woman 2.

From this expression, you can't tell who is who.

Well, that's because I don't know their names.

“A corpse?” (Naofumi)

“Wrong. The situation seems to be that an aristocratic father was worried about his daughter, but she was fed up because she was forced to help with her mother's housework.” (Knight)

.....It's a story I've heard before.

It's about her. So now I'm supposed to use her to slay Motoyasu, huh.

And in the end, she returned home and helped with work.

Her assistance didn't seem very proactive, but that sounds like her. She would have felt it was troublesome.

“Don't you have to guard her?” (Naofumi)

“It seems we've listened to her circumstances. And so, we'd like Iwatani-dono to meet with that companion and ensnare the Hero of the Spear.” (Knight)
I see.....there's the possibility of her attempting to rejoin Motoyasu.

We'll be gambling on whether it'll go well or not, but it would be good if we could catch Motoyasu.

“Will Motoyasu's companion cooperate with that plan? She might double-cross us and pass information back to Motoyasu.” (Naofumi) “We've already assigned

a Shadow for surveillance. We've also received a report that she currently wants to cooperate.” (Knight) “Hmm.....” (Naofumi)

Well, if my assumption is correct, she could discern right from wrong when she cut ties.

And now she was trying to protect her own position by plea bargaining.

“Understood. Where should I be heading?” (Naofumi)

“Ah, I'll give you the map.” (Knight)

I received the map from the female Knight and took Raphtalia and Firo with me to prepare for our departure.

“You guys, please help the newbies level up.” (Naofumi)

“Yeah. Understood.” (Kiel)

“I understand.” (Rishia)

Rishia stood in the front and nodded.

“Sorry, Rishia. If there's information about Itsuki, then inviting you will take precedence.”

“Yes. I'll be waiting.” (Rishia)

Recently, Rishia's level had risen up to 35.

It's almost time for a Class Up.

As that may be, I want her to Class Up together with the others so it'll be a bit later, but....for now, the capture of Motoyasu has the highest priority.

To Capture the Spear Hero

“Elena! Thank god. You’re alive!” (Motoyasu)

Upon hearing of the spear’s companion’s discovery, we head to her location, only to find Motoyasu hugging Woman 1 and shouting in a loud voice over the counter of the receptions desk of a store. It seems that Woman 1 is manning the desk. It gives off a feeling of a parent being reunited with their child.

Elena? did she have a name like that?

I don’t recall asking for her or Woman 2’s names back on Cal Mira.

“Ah, if it isn’t the Hero of the Spear.” (Woman 1)

Woman 1 takes on an oppressive attitude and answers Motoyasu indifferently.

Motoyasu lets out a bewildered voice.

“W-what’s wrong?” (Motoyasu)

“Wrong? Now what could possibly be wrong?” (Woman 1)

“You know, I was really worried.” (Motoyasu)

“I did nothing warranting your worry. I’m more surprised that you managed to survive.” (Woman 1) “Isn’t it obvious? There’s no way I would die with you guys there to support me!” (Motoyasu)

Motoyasu answers with quite a bit of enthusiasm.

However, the aura around Woman 1 only seems to get colder.

Her gaze is apathetic. It’s as if she is staring at a pile of garbage.

“Naofumi-sama, are you not going to capture them?” (Raphtalia) “Wait, let’s observe the situation.” (Naofumi)

I think something interesting is about to happen.

And as long as Motoyasu hasn’t noticed us, we have the upper hand.

“-?” (Firo)

Firo would stand out in her monster form, so she is currently assuming her human one.

We are observing the affair from an alley outside the store.

“Let’s once again team up to save the world!” (Motoyasu) “I’m sorry. It seems I will be inheriting my father’s business. I can’t go with you any longer.” (Woman 1)

Her voice is quite indifferent.

It seems she has no intention of listening to Motoyasu at all.

Motoyasu seems to understand this as well. He looks quite confused.

I bet everything had gone his way up until this point.

I envy him in that aspect.

Even though I’ve become a count and acquired some land, for some reason I’ve been stuck cooking and babysitting for my slaves.

I feel as if I’m their mother.

I can hear the soldiers calling me the Hero of the Kitchen behind my back. [\[35\]](#)

To be more specific:

“As expected, the Hero of the Kitchen’s food really is magnificent.” (Soldier)
“You’re being rude, he’s the Hero of the Shield... right?” (Other Soldier) “Ah, right... But recently, his shield has started to look like a pot lid to me...” (Soldier)
“I think you need medical attention.” (Other Soldier) “Hahaha!” (Soldier)

To hell with Pot Lids.

Remember this. I’ll work you especially hard when building gets underway.

... well that doesn’t really matter now.

I need to focus on Motoyasu

“Hey, really, what happened? You’re different from the usual Elena.”

(Motoyasu) “Even if you ask me that... You know, this is a good time. Let me say it.” (Woman 1) “What?” (Motoyasu)

“Motoyasu... No, Hero of the Spear-sama. I’m at my limit. I can no longer work with you.” (Woman 1) “W-what are you saying?” (Motoyasu)

“At the start, you had a good reputation, and quite a bit of money. Look at you now. What do you have?” (Woman 1) “Hm? I’m still a hero...” (Motoyasu)

“Honestly, I’m tired of being your comrade. Sick of it.” (Woman 1) “W-what part of me is the problem?” (Motoyasu)

“You always try to hit on women, you don’t understand a female’s heart, and you only focus on your strength parameters.” (Woman 1)

Motoyasu’s hot-blooded personality has diminished.

Has he never been dumped before?

This is bad. I’m starting to smile at his misfortune.

“Naofumi-sama. You’re smiling.” (Raphtalia)

“But... I mean look. Motoyasu’s face has turned blue.” (Naofumi) “Shouldn’t you be trying to capture them now?” (Raphtalia) “Wait a second. I want to watch for a bit more.” (Naofumi)

Woman 1 has stopped hiding her thoughts and has begun talking rapidly.

“If you have enough free time to hit on me, then go to the castle and turn yourself in.” (Woman 1) “Gu...” (Motoyasu)

It seems that he does realize his own crimes. Motoyasu remains silent.

“You’re already finished. If you want me back so badly, then go get some status. Like the Hero of the Shield.” (Woman 1)

Woman 1 gives a rejection reminiscent of a character archetype that I hate.

She’s speaking as if she hasn’t done anything wrong, and that everything is Motoyasu’s fault.

If the Heroine of a galge did that, the company’s building would be in flames.

But why is it?

When these words are directed at Motoyasu, I feel an extreme rush of happiness.

“Naofumi-sama!” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia is angry.

It seems I cannot observe the situation any longer.

“Then, shall we go?” (Naofumi)

I exit the alley and walk towards Motoyasu.

“W-what happened to you? I was sure you were more of an amiable sort of person.” (Motoyasu) “Even if you ask me that...” (Woman 1)

Motoyasu is too engrossed in the conversation to notice my approach.

This is my chance.

“Hey, tell me this isn’t so.” (Motoyasu)

“I’m very serious, now leave already.” (Woman 1)

Woman 1 notices me getting closer.

It seems she understands the circumstances to some extent.

Please stall him for just a little bit longer...

When I wonder if my message gets across, she gives a quick wink in my direction. For some reason, it looks quite natural.

“And so, I am absolutely done with you. If you don’t give up already, I’ll report you.” (Woman 1)

It seems Woman 1 truly has had it with Motoyasu.

She’s even assisting in his capture.

Well, if she doesn’t do so, she will probably be treated as a conspirator in breaking the Spirit Turtle’s seal.

For argument’s sake, it seems that the Spirit Turtle was set to awaken at some point during the wave.

But to willingly release it is still quite a crime.

I’m almost there. Just a little bit closer...

Damn... This one’s instincts are not to be underestimated.

“Na-Naofumi!?” (Motoyasu)

“Yo. You understand what me being here means, right?” (Naofumi) “...Elena, did you sell me out!?” (Motoyasu)

“You say some hurtful things. I am an ally to those with power. I was back then, and I am now.” (Woman 1)

I can hear nothing but a villain.

If I were Motoyasu, I would have forgotten my crimes and stabbed her by now.

“Now, obediently get captured. The Hero of the Shield did that at well. It may be best for you to start from scratch.” (Woman 1) “E-Elena... You!” (Motoyasu)

I don't think her intentions are as bad as Bitch. But they're both still trash in my eyes.

Motoyasu doesn't intend to give up without a fight. He takes up his spear.

Do you plan on fighting in such a crowded area?

“I want to hear your story. Will you accompany me to the castle?” (Naofumi)

“I'm sorry, but I won't go with you. I need to go and prove my own innocence.”

(Motoyasu) “Innocence, huh? Well, I don't have the slightest intention of killing you. Right now, we're looking for a way to push back the wave, like the time we gained with the Spirit Turtle incident. As I've said before, I'm only an expert on defense. I cannot hurt you.” (Naofumi) “I'm not the culprit!” (Motoyasu)

“Listen to a person when they are talking to you.” (Naofumi) “I'm going to find my comrades, and save the World!” (Motoyasu) “And what I'm saying is... Ah, this is a pain!” (Naofumi)

Anyways, the culprit always says that they're innocent.

But judging from Motoyasu's reaction, he himself believes that he is not the cause.

Which would make the culprit either Ren or Itsuki.

No, it seems all three of them were in the same place at the time. There's no way he's not involved at all.

“Anyways, stop by the castle. If you're not the culprit, then you have no reason to refuse.” (Naofumi) “I refuse!” (Motoyasu)

“You know, you did the same thing to me, right? But now that our positions are switched, you act like that? Is there some sort of reason preventing you from going, like there was in my case?” (Naofumi) “Nope!” (Motoyasu)

“You...” (Naofumi)

“But there’s no way I can let myself get captured here!” (Motoyasu)
I can’t talk with this man. For now, it seems I must restrain him by force.

Can I defeat him with my stats reduced to this level?

No, Raphtalia and Firo are here. It should be fine.

From what I see, Motoyasu is alone.

“Please turn yourself in.” (Raphtalia)

“Wha-?” (Motoyasu)

The ones who appeared are Raphtalia, and Firo in her monster form.

It’s 3 on 1... What will Woman 1 do?

“Shall I join you?” (Woman 1)

It seems she will assist us in capturing Motoyasu.

Her level should probably be around 70-80.

Her skills should be more than enough.

“Now then. It’s time for you to pay the piper, Motoyasu.” (Naofumi) ^[36]

“Don’t rampage too much. It will be troublesome if we break the store’s merchandise.” (Woman 1)

As we approach, Motoyasu begins to spin his Spear in a large circle.

「Portal Spear!」

Motoyasu's figure seems to bend in space.

What the hell!?

And in an instant, he vanishes completely.

Is it a skill? It probably teleported him to a set location.

Damn, I miscalculated.

In MMOs, items that allowed you to teleport to a saved location or town usually existed.

And Motoyasu had found the skill to do it.

"He ran!" (Naofumi)

Damn... It seems that capturing a hero will be more difficult than it seems.

I'll have to do something before he uses the skill, or find some place or magic that will interfere with its activation.

"H-he vanished... Where could he have gone?" (Raphtalia)

"Who knows." (Naofumi)

If it's to a set location, he's probably at the Dragon's hourglass, but if he himself can set the location, then the possibilities are endless.

How convenient. Teach it to me.

I don't know how effective it is, but a warp skill will be priceless while peddling.

I don't know if the effect is limited to me or if I can take along comrades, but either way it seems really useful.

If I set my village as the warp point, it will make movement easier, and if any trouble arises, I can be there in an instant.

I should probably ask Woman 1 if Motoyasu told her anything about it later.

“Well then, it’s been quite a while.” (Naofumi)

“It sure has.” (Woman 1)

I address Woman 1. Her real name was Elena... I think.

“You’ve probably already told the people at the castle, but would you mind sharing your story with me?” (Naofumi) “I understand.” (Woman 1)

Elena takes a deep sigh, and begins speaking.

The Day the Game Ended.

After returning from Cal Mira and travelling back to the castle, the party managed to successfully defend against the wave of another country without issue. After that...

“Will we heading back to Melromark Castle after this?” (Bitch) “No, there’s somewhere I want to stop to power up first.” (Motoyasu) “What do you mean?” (Bitch)

And like that, Motoyasu took a detour, and traveled to the town where the Spirit Turtle was resting.

“It’ll be fine if we’re over level 60, and the materials and weapons that drop off of the guy that sleeps here are amazing.” (Motoyasu)

With that extremely light attitude, Motoyasu steps into the abandoned temple in the Spirit Turtle’s town. He’s being too easy-going.

Though it’s been abandoned, it is usually under surveillance by some monks.

For some reason, Motoyasu knew all of the traps and puzzles in the temple, and solved them with ease.

Elena wasn’t really watching too closely, so she isn’t knowledgeable about how he did it.

So Motoyasu solved all of the puzzles and headed towards the statue hidden under the temple, when the monks on surveillance tried to stop him.

“Oy, what do you think you’re doing!?” (Monk)

As they were holding weapons, we assumed that they weren't simple residents of the temple.

"You're being quite rude. The one who stands before you is none other than the Hero of the Spear, Motoyasu-sama, you know." (Bitch)

Bitch goes ahead and names us.

"Wha... The Hero of the Spear!?" (Monk)

"Sorry for the intrusion. There's just a little event I have to go and clear, you see." (Motoyasu) "I sure am unlucky today. To have a Hero invade this place as well..." (Monk)

These words left a great impression on Elena.

Invade...

So someone's causing a commotion at somewhere other than this?

Looking back on it, it was most likely Ren or Itsuki's party.

"Anyways, hurry and get out of here." (Monk)

"I won't be doing that. If I don't defeat the boss here, then something bad will happen later." (Motoyasu)

And Motoyasu casually destroys the statue.

"H-how could you!?" (Monk)

The monks are enraged.

Well, if someone claiming to be a hero intrudes on a historic place and rudely destroys an ancient artifact, then I guess anyone would be mad.

"Now then, to defeat the boss." (Motoyasu)

... .. Nothing's happening.

"Hmm?" (Motoyasu)

"Anyways, can you please come with us?" (Monk)

The monks try to apprehend Motoyasu and party.

"Insolent Peasants!" (Bitch)

Bitch cries out.

Motoyasu looks confused at her outburst, and restrains her. He begins to explain his intentions.

"I was under the impression that this statue was a seal, and if I didn't hurry, something bad would..." (Motoyasu)

And then the ground began to shake.

"W-what is it now!?" (Monk)

"Yeah! It's finally showed up!" (Motoyasu)

Motoyasu starts running out of the Temple.

But those tremors had been the Spirit Turtle standing up from its long rest. The ground beneath us moved, and the entire mountain, town and all, lifted up. Bitch and Elena were at a loss for words.

How were they supposed to fight that monster?

"It may look like that, but its strength is nothing special. Just fight it like usual! Let's go!" (Motoyasu) "Yes!" (Elena)

"Here I come!" (Woman 2)

We all began to charge the Spirit Turtle.

And that's where everything began to fall apart.

The Spirit Turtle began summoning familiars and killing innocent people left and right.

But ignoring that, Bitch and Motoyasu keep on running.

They eventually reach the Turtle's head.

“Let's go! 「Lightning Spear」” (Motoyasu)

Motoyasu unleashes a strong move right off the bat.

But... The turtle lets out a grunt, and comes out of the attack with nothing but a scratch.

And what's more, that scratch begins to heal in an instant.

“W-what the!?” (Motoyasu)

The Spirit Turtle's familiars swarm us, and we have to drive them off.

But at this point, I don't see any way of defeating the Turtle.

“Hey...” (Elena)

“It can't be...” (Bitch)

“No, no, no...” (Woman 2)

Bitch, Elena, and Woman 2 begin whispering amongst themselves.

They had noticed that the Spirit Turtle had begun walking without minding Motoyasu's attacks. It didn't even consider us as a threat.

Back when I fought it, it had been forced to stop and use its strongest attacks.

But these people were even troubled by the familiars.

I guess it was like stabbing a human with a toothpick. I'm surprised Raphtalia and Firo were able to wound it to that extent. [37]

"O-okay! Everyone, I'm going to try and draw it's attention, so cast support magic on me." (Motoyasu)

Motoyasu starts screaming and running at the beast. It was then that Elena made her decision. She left the party then and there.

She left without looking back, abandoning Bitch and Woman 2.

And after getting far away from the Turtle, she hid until the commotion died down. Then she returned to her parents' home.

Her mother was quite happy that she had survived. She told her that being an adventurer was too dangerous, and that she should take over her father's company.

Her mother decided that she would talk her father into it. Securing Elena's safety was their top priority.

They used her father's connections to prevent her from being turned in to the country and executed. It was negotiated that instead of putting her on trial, they would use her as bait to lure Motoyasu out.

...

"If that story is true, then there are several baffling points in it." (Naofumi)
First of all, what did he mean by, 'If the boss isn't defeated, something bad will happen'?

Was something worse than the Turtle itself set to happen?

Anyways, it is probably quite impossible to defeat that monster at level 60.

This seems to be quite similar to that case with the Bioplants.

Motoyasu rushed to save a starving village with Bioplant seeds, but in the end, he caused nothing but grief.

Is this Motoyasu's supposed innocence?

Could Motoyasu possibly know anything about the Blue Hourglass inside of the Turtle?

I also wonder what Ren and Itsuki were doing at the scene.

All three of them have knowledge from the games of their world. For all of them to move at once, something important must be happening.

The problem is that Motoyasu didn't tell his party much information.

Both Ren and Itsuki have a habit of acting aloof. Their party members probably have very little information as well.

...There's still too little information for me to make any assumptions.

"I can't believe he actually survived fighting that Monster." (Elena) "You know, you're saying that to the person that actually defeated it." (Naofumi) "Ah right, so you were the one who defeated it? You really are quite something. To get to this point from the very bottom... I chose the wrong person to follow." (Elena) And Elena lets out a deep sigh.

If she was my party member, I would want to smack her.

It's surprising that I'm not mad after listening to her for so long.

"Well anyways, Motoyasu-sama has given me quite a few goods, and my level did rise thanks to him. I guess I can stand the boring task of doing my father's work for a while." (Elena) "You..." (Naofumi)

"It's gotten quite cold. I thought I would feel warmer when I met that man again..." (Elena) "Hmm~?" (Firo)

What was that?

It seems that Firo has been developing a strange speaking habit as of late.

“And so that’s how it is. If he comes again, I’ll report him, but I don’t think he will be coming again.” (Elena) “Most likely. By the way, do you have any idea where Bitch may be right now?” (Naofumi) “No idea. But people like her tend to live unnervingly long lives.” (Elena)

It will be difficult to capture Motoyasu, and Bitch’s whereabouts are unknown.

And this one wants nothing to do with the spear anymore.

I can imagine the other women saying something like, ‘We were just following the Hero, we had nothing to do with it’ or something.

They’ll probably receive some punishment, but the Queen isn’t that evil.

“I understand.” (Naofumi)

“Now, you’ll have to deal with that annoying ability.” (Elena)

Warping... how bothersome.

If he can warp, then there’s no point in throwing him in prison.

If this were a game, we would have to afflict him with Silence to seal it off. And if we didn’t do it continuously, he would run off the second it wore off.

Judging him will be difficult.

“He occasionally used it.” (Elena)

“Do you know what sort of skill it is?” (Naofumi)

“Let’s see... He was able to use it on all members of his party at once without a problem.” (Elena)

4 people at once? It’s starting to sound like even more of a pain.

He might be able to take an entire army regiment with him.

But there’s probably a cooldown time. If we know where it sends him, then...

“Location. Did he tell you where he could go with it?” (Naofumi) “How should I know? He didn’t say that much. But we traveled by carriage quite a bit, so it’s not all powerful.” (Elena)

Can he warp to any town he's been to before? No, that would be cheating.

But by Elena's testimony, it seems the location isn't set. For now, I should report to the Queen.

"Thanks for your cooperation." (Naofumi)

"It's fine. It's not like... Ah, now that I think about it, you've started some sort of business, haven't you? I've heard the rumors." (Elena) "Yeah, I need to procure funding in some way." (Naofumi) "Though it's troublesome, I may start trading with you at some point." (Elena) "Well, that depends on your goods. And you really are quite lazy." (Naofumi) "I know. I just want to live the easy life." (Elena)

I can't see what Motoyasu saw in this woman... It's the same with Bitch.

"He's quite an amazing person." (Raphtalia)

From Elena's conversation, Raphtalia somehow comes to this conclusion.

"Don't ever fall for someone like that, Raphtalia." (Naofumi) "I won't!" (Raphtalia)

"Firo wants to run." (Firo)

What is she saying all of a sudden?

Firo has begun acting more oblivious as of late.

I guess she is getting bored.

"Well, see you around." (Naofumi)

"Yeah, good bye." (Elena)

Elena sighs once more. She sits down at the reception desk with a bored expression.

She's really quite an easy-going person.

And so, I have failed to capture Motoyasu for now.

Monster Problem

As I was about to get on the carriage to return to the village, Shadow appeared.

“It’s been a while-gojaru.” (Shadow)

“Even though you say that, you’ve been constantly watching me, haven’t you?” (Naofumi) “Well, you’re not wrong-gojaru.” (Shadow)

As expected of Shadow.

“You should go to the Queen to report on your attempt to capture the Spear-gojaru.” (Shadow) “I know, but in truth, I have no idea how to stop him from escaping. Can we put a collar on him, like we did with Trash?” (Naofumi) If the collar can prevent him from speaking, we can cut off his incantations.

“That collar definitely prevents one from speaking, but its effect is not long in duration-Gojaru.” (Shadow)

Ah, so it had a weakness like that. Also, unless we use an invisible seal like the slave seal, he will probably be able to break it and run off.

I think Trash didn’t break his collar because he didn’t want to anger the Queen...

“Well then, excuse me-gojaru” (Shadow)

And shadow disappeared. This is quite an urgent issue.

In the Net games that I know, there are areas and skills that prevent

messaging and warping, but how about this world?

It's not certain that he even has to chant the spell, so stopping it will be a pain in the ass.

And it'll be troublesome if he escapes to another country.

It seems that we will have to put off his capture until the Queen comes up with something.

When I get back to the village, I see that the new slaves are slowly adjusting to their new lives. They have begun to look happier as they do their work.

"Ah, so you're back." (Female Knight)

Female Knight comes over to greet us.

"I heard that you failed." (Female Knight)

"News spreads fast... He ran away with a teleportation skill." (Naofumi)

"Heroes sure have convenient skills. Can Iwatani-dono use it?" (Female Knight)

"If I get the corresponding shield, I should be able to... but I don't know any way of preventing it." (Naofumi)

This will be a really annoying job.

If I were being chased, I would spam that skill without remorse.

"What is Rishia doing?" (Naofumi)

If she spreads the Itsuki religion, I'll have to have her fired.

"She's trying her best to train the new slaves." (Female Knight) "I see..." (Naofumi)

"By the way, will Iwatani-dono be doing restorations on the town where this area's feudal lord used to live?" (Female Knight) "Ah, that town..." (Naofumi)

Due to the influence of the first wave, all of the towns in the entire area have turned into ghost-towns.

The place Female Knight is talking about is the adjacent village.

Its damages exceed that of this one. The stone buildings and walls have all collapsed, and the Feudal Lord's mansion seems to have been burned down. It's quite severe.

"The Queen asked whether or not you would be rebuilding that area." (Female Knight) "I still need an area for people other than slaves to live. If you're free, I won't mind it if you start reparations on that area by yourself." (Naofumi) "I thought you would say that, so I have already sent a request for anyone wanting to immigrate here." (Female Knight) "Immigrate?" (Naofumi)

"Due to Iwatani-dono's contributions, there are some who want to live on your land." (Female Knight) "Hmm..." (Naofumi)

"I've put together a list." (Female Knight)

Female Knight hands over a list of all of the applicants who want to live on my land.

... There are quite a few people from Ryut village. There are also people from villages destroyed by the Spirit Turtle. There's quite a variety.

"Well, isn't it fine?" (Naofumi)

"I think you should at least go talk to them at some point in time." (Female Knight) "Fumu..." (Naofumi)

I idly pat the neck of the Filo Rial who was resting near me.

"Kueeee..." (Filo Rial)

I'm pretty sure that adult Filo Rials are supposed to cry, "Guaaa".

How the hell is Firo raising it? Is it because it is a vassal of a Filo Rial Queen? Or is it just part of its personality?

As I pet the Filo Rial, I notice Firo glaring at me with jealous eyes.

"Master, why are you patting that child?" (Firo)

"? I have no ulterior motives." (Naofumi)

"Then pet Firo as well." (Firo)

Firo approaches me menacingly.

This will be a pain to deal with...

I sigh, and begin to rub under Firo's beak.

Her plumage is thicker than a normal Filo Rial's.

"Oh, right." (Naofumi)

"Hm?" (Firo)

"Why does this Filo Rial say 'Kue'? Isn't it supposed to be Gua?" (Naofumi)

"He was under Firo's care, so I messed around with him for a bit." (Firo)

Messed around? Can she modify objects like me?

"... Specifically what did you do?" (Naofumi)

"Firo fed him until his stomach was full." (Firo)

I don't care about that.

"Firo also... taught him how to swim... He is a little stronger than the other kids, and can pull the cart very well. But he gets hungry easily." (Firo)

So is this Filo Rial a new species?

“If Master wants me to, I can mess with him some more.” (Firo) “... I’ll consider it.” (Naofumi)

So his fuel efficiency is lower than the other Filo Rials... That’ll be a problem. I wonder if Firo gets a pop up screen during modifications like I get when modifying the Bioplants.

“KUEEEEEEEeEE!” (Filo Rial) [38]

The other Filo Rial rubs against me with his head. Firo copies him.

What was his name again?

I think the slaves randomly picked one...

“And so you don’t confuse him with other Filo Rials, Firo made him say Kue. Now Master can tell recognize him even if he can’t hear him talk.” (Firo)
Is it a sort of signal inaudible to the human ear?

I believe my world had animals that could do that as well.

Though I’m not too knowledgeable.

“Then what is Gua supposed to mean?” (Naofumi)

“Fitoria’s underlings use that.” (Firo)

I see...

“Since I’m here, I’ll ask, but if something happens to you, will he take over as King or Queen?” (Naofumi) “Firo will be fine!” (Firo)

Firo starts pouting.

Was it that unexpected? Well, it's concerning her death, so I guess there's no helping it.

"Yeah, but we're talking about the worst case scenario here." (Naofumi)

"Mu...." (Firo)

Firo's puffs up her cheeks.

"Um, you know. If Master asks him to... I think he will take over." (Firo) "I see."
(Naofumi)

So he will take over Firo's followers if anything happens to her.

But what I was trying to find out was something else.

I wanted to know if he would be able to change his species to Filo Rial Queen.

"KUE!? KUEEEEEEEEE!?" (Filo Rial)

The Filo Rial's feathers suddenly stand on end.

"Master, what do you think you're doing!?" (Firo)

It seems his reaction speed is quite fast. I guess I should stop.

His feathers go down quickly.

"Mu..." (Firo)

Firo idly kicks the ground.

"Master, recently haven't you been quite cruel to Firo?" (Firo) "I'm not being

cruel. I just think that the 'Kue's are more cute than the you that just talks non-stop. If you started to speak in 'Kue's, then I might pamper you more."

(Naofumi) "No!" (Firo)

I don't get why she wants to talk so badly.

Anyways, it seems that only Firo's followers say Kue.

"Hey... Did I just hear some amazing information?" (Female Knight)

Female Knight starts speaking with a dumbfounded expression.

"Really?" (Naofumi)

"Filo Rial are mysterious lifeforms, you know." (Female Knight) "They're Holy Birds, right?" (Naofumi)

"People may say that, but... I don't think that's true." (Female Knight)
'I may need to rethink these facts', Female Knight mutters to herself.

I've gotten used to Firo being like this, but normal Filo Rials are usually used in the same way as horses.

"Oh, right. Returning to topic. Will you be restoring the neighboring town?"
(Naofumi) "Yes, I believe it will be an important asset. You're the count here, so oversee the work." (Female Knight) "That sounds like a pain, but I guess I have to do it." (Naofumi)

I'll need to oversee the restorations here as well.

... Oh right. There has been something bothering me for a while.

"Hey, Firo." (Naofumi)

"What is it~?" (Firo)

"Do the Caterpillands have any sort of social organization like the Filo Rials?"
(Naofumi) "Who knows?" (Firo)

The Caterpillands have also begun to grow in strange directions....

They are much bigger than other Caterpillands of the same level.

They're just large bugs, but the slaves use the Three Caterpillands to manage the growth of the Bioplants.

...Wait.

One. Two. Three...

There's one too many!

"Who is it? Who got another Caterpilland without my permission!?" (Naofumi)
The slaves frantically try to hide one of the Caterpillands behind their backs. The one they hide is the biggest one of the group.

"It's way too late to hide it!" (Naofumi)

When did this thing appear?

"Damn, he found out!" (Kiel)

"How did you think I wouldn't find out!?" (Naofumi)

I can confirm its status. This means that it is a monster under my control.

A girl from the new slaves spreads her body out and tries to hide the monster, but it's still clearly visible. Behind her is the Bioplant field.

I think I've seen this scene before. [\[39\]](#)

"There's nothing here! There's nothing wrong here." (Girl Slave) "It's huge! Do you think you're hiding anything!?" (Naofumi)

I can see everything. What valley did this girl crawl out of?

The Caterpilland behind her back is bigger than any I've ever seen.

"Now then, explain yourselves." (Naofumi)

The slaves hang their heads.

"Please tell me in detail exactly what happened." (Naofumi) "Well, it's not like we were trying to make Shield Nii-chan angry..." (Kiel)

Kiel steps in front of the Female Slave.

Et tu brute?

"How did you manage to register it as mine?" (Naofumi)

"Well, it was kind of mixed it in with the new slaves that arrived." (Kiel) "So you..." (Naofumi)

"By the guy who sold them." (Kiel)

"The Slave Dealer!?" (Naofumi)

When did he have the chance to do it? I never noticed him perform the registration on it.

Was his hunger act a way to sneak this one through?

"Why would the slave dealer..." (Naofumi)

"This is the first egg we all found together!" (Kiel) "Wha?" (Naofumi)

It seems it went something like this.

When everyone had gone to level-grind, they had come across a monster nest. They then took back the egg that was there with them as a trophy.

When they brought it back, no one knew how they were going to raise it.

“Raphtalia, did you know?” (Naofumi)

“I had no idea.” (Raphtalia)

“If we told Raphtalia-chan, we thought she would report it to you.” (Kiel)
Having a monster egg without a registered master is dangerous, so everyone was worrying about what to do. It was then that the Slave Dealer appeared.

So everyone gathered together the money they had saved through peddling with me, and begged him to register it.

And so, the Slave Dealer distracted me while some of his men secretly went and registered the egg. Everyone worked together to raise it healthily, and... this was the result.

I see. I had been looking over the other Caterpillands' levels to make it so they didn't grow too big to handle. That's why this one, who grew freely, is so big. It's 5 times bigger than a normal one. Its level is also quite high.

“Please don't kill it!” (Slave Girl)

“Hey, valley girl. You're being loud. Please be quiet for a second.” (Naofumi)
[\[40\]](#)

“What do you mean by Valley, Nii-chan!?” (Kiel)

Well. These people have been doing quite a bit without my permission.

I haven't lost anything, but it will be bad if they learn to act this way in the future. The slaves around the Valley Girl-ish slave rise and protect the Caterpilland.

“You know, if you act on your own like that, I'll be troubled. If you really want to raise it, make sure you tell me first.” (Naofumi)

I've already asked the Slave Dealer for more monsters anyways. I won't have to put in too much extra effort.

“And make sure you raise it properly. If I see it lose to another monster, I'll sell

it on the spot.” (Naofumi) “Y-yes!” (Female Slave)

Well... Problems are popping out one after the other.

“See, I told you. Shield Nii-chan will let us keep it.” (Kiel) “But Kiel-chan, you said that Shield Nii-chan would definitely sell it. You said he was greedy with money, so he would sell it on the spot. That’s why we worked so hard to hide it...”

(Female Slave) “Don’t add a –chan to my name!” (Kiel)

“...” (Naofumi)

These people...

Wait, I didn’t notice it before, but he said ‘The First egg’...

“This is the only egg, right?” (Naofumi)

“Um... well...” (Kiel)

“Well?” (Naofumi)

The slaves hang their heads.

My head hurts...

I don’t know if these kids are just skilled at finding monster nests, but when I look under the floor of the house the slaves are staying in, I see rows upon rows of eggs.

“When we saved up more money, we planned to take them to the slave-selling guy...” (Kiel) “There’s a lot... If they hatch unregistered, what did you plan on doing!?” (Naofumi)

That would be a calamity in itself.

Well, dealing with freshly hatched monsters wouldn’t be that much of a problem...

“Yeah, but...” (Kiel)

“*Sigh*... well for now, let me see what sort of eggs they are.” (Naofumi)
And wait, there are wild monster eggs as well? Of course that’s the case.

I guess I can make egg-based dishes as well now. But if I say that, I think the slaves will get mad at me.

“Are they all Caterpilland eggs?” (Naofumi)

“Probably not. We got them from all sorts of places.” (Kiel) “I see.” (Naofumi)

These people plan to trouble me in many ways. I hope these monsters don’t cost me too much money to care for. I guess I can cancel my monster order to the Slave Dealer.

Decision

I head towards the town Female Knight told me about.

It's close enough to this village to walk there.

“Ah, it's the Hero of the Shield!” (Villager)

When I head to the village, I find that construction is already underway. Many people are working on salvaging the pre-existing buildings here, and some are starting construction on new ones. Some people stop what they're doing, and come over to greet me.

I put on my best business smile to meet them. The leader of the group seems to be a youth from Ryut village.

“I've heard about your situation. Have any problems surfaced yet?” (Naofumi)

“Well... There's a river and a well nearby, and food circulation is going quite smoothly. If I had to mention a problem, it would be that the management of personnel is difficult.” (Leader) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“It seems there have been some disputes over property rights here and there.” (Leader) “Fumu...” (Naofumi)

Well, this was a town whose buildings were all destroyed in the wave.

What's more, the town is undergoing restorations under the supervision of a Hero. Some people will probably try to arbitrarily claim some land as their own.

“Even if they used to live here, it doesn't matter. Please have anyone without the intention to cooperate leave the premise.” (Naofumi)

As I declare this, some people seem to rise to object, but they quickly give up.

“Also, if you need to extend past the boundaries of the village, feel free to do so.” (Naofumi)

I then begin to consider the possibility of flooding.

I will need someone to manage the roads, but I don't think there are many people knowledgeable in that field.

“Anyways, for now try to build while focusing on bringing new businesses here, and expand accordingly. Also, we will need to build some inns.” (Naofumi)

“Understood!” (Leader)

No matter how reparations proceed, getting businesses will be essential. They should build while keeping this in mind.

“Next, we'll need some sort of security force.” (Naofumi)

For now, we are leaving this to the Castle's guards, but I eventually plan to leave it to the slaves who wish to fight in the wave.

That way, it will be easier to reprimand them for excessive behavior.

“We're getting new applicants who want to live here by the day.” (Leader) “It will be troublesome if they start gathering at my village, though.” (Naofumi)

“The Female Knight that was with you spread the rumor that this village was your actual base of operations.” (Leader)

That Knight does good work. I should probably ask for her name at some point in time.

I can hear hammers pounding away as people resume their work.

“Ah, aren't you the Shield Hero kid?” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“Hm?” (Naofumi)

I turn around and see the old lady from the Magic Shop coming towards me. Ah, yeah. A lot of people had come here from Ryut Village. It's not strange that she would join them.

“Ah, you're from the Magic Shop. The shop collapsed, right?” (Naofumi) “Well, yeah...” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“Did you come here to help with your family?” (Naofumi)

“I'm currently helping feed the workers.” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“I see... By the way, how are the repairs on your store going?” (Naofumi) “I don't know when they will be finished, but there are quite a few people in the Castle Town waiting expectantly for its reopening.” (Magic Shopkeeper)
With all the damage done to it, I guess reopening will take a while.

Though the Queen is doing her best to help, the country's manpower and resources suffered a large loss.

“If possible, I would like to set up shop here for a bit...” (Magic Shopkeeper) “A magic shop will be an important asset. I'll give you special permission.” (Naofumi) “I am very grateful for your words.” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“But only after we get some usable buildings completed.” (Naofumi) “I'll wait expectantly.” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“Don't worry. Oh, and if you have any free time, can you come to the neighboring village and teach some magic?” (Naofumi)
Some slaves have begun learning from books, but there's a limit to self-study. We also don't know anybody's magical affinities. It will probably best to ask an expert in the field.

Recently I have been considering constructing a school-like institution.

Right now, the slaves are learning combat from Female Knight and Raphtalia outdoors, but having a Dojo might also make things easier.

For that purpose, it is very fortunate that we have a Magic Shop close-by.

“I’ll think about it once I set up shop.” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“You’re quite a resilient person. To take on more despite your current situation.”

“Even though I look like this now, I used to run the largest magic shop in the Castle Town, you know.” (Magic Shopkeeper) “Please invite the Apothecary as well. It’s good for business to have many different facilities.” (Naofumi) “It seems the Hero of the Shield is quite the businessman.” (Magic Shopkeeper) “Well, I have been called greedy on numerous occasions, and I can use the reasoning of, ‘It’s for the sake of the world’ as I please.” (Naofumi) “Fufufu...” (Magic Shopkeeper)

“Hahaha...” (Naofumi)

The people around us have begun to distance themselves.

After that, I start to give orders regarding the construction.

...

One Week from that

Rishia’s level is now 40, and the other slaves will be able to class up soon as well.

It’s about time for us to go to the dragon hourglass.

Female knight already notified the Queen beforehand, so all we have to do is go there.

So I gather together the higher level slaves, and headed for the Castle Town.

“It’s been a while since I last came here.” (Naofumi)

We parked the carriage at a nearby village, and entered the Castle Town by foot. This is because we will be recognized if anyone sees Firo pulling the cart.

It's been two weeks, and the Castle town is still recovering.

"Shield Nii-chan, why are you wearing a cloak?" (Kiel)

The slave whose level is second highest to Rishia is Kiel. Her straight-forward personality makes her well suited for battle.

She's started to be able to coordinate attacks with Raphtalia and Rishia. Female Knight tells me that Kiel will become an amazing fighter someday.

"If I'm found out, it will become impossible to move." (Naofumi)

Hooray for the Shield! Is what people will say as they fence us in.

Though I'm a hero, I find that it's quite a pain to actually be treated as one.

"Is that so?" (Kiel)

"Firo, make sure you don't assume your monster form unless you absolutely have to." (Naofumi) "Yes~" (Firo)

Should I stop by the weapons shop on the way back?

... I don't have enough money. If I get something too expensive and have him put it on my tab, I'll feel bad.

Though I don't think I should keep him waiting for too long.

I've been slowly saving up, but everyday expenses have been piling up...

I decide to stop on by on the way back anyways.

And so, we reach the Dragon's Hourglass.

"We've been expecting you." (Soldier)

A soldier who looks quite talkative comes out to greet us.

“Today, I’m here for my comrades’ Class Up.” (Naofumi)

“I’m aware, I received the message earlier.” (Soldier)

The ceremony starts in the same way it did with Raphtalia and Firo. I order Firo to assume her Monster form.

“U-um... What should I try and class up to?” (Rishia)

Rishia looks over at me with a troubled expression.

“You need to choose for yourself...Though there is something here that may choose for you...” (Naofumi)

Firo’s Ahoge shows no signs of movement.

“Firo.” (Naofumi)

“Yes~?” (Firo)

“If your Ahoge starts moving, you need to get out of the building.” (Naofumi)

“Eh...” (Firo)

“Do you want something like that time with Raphtalia and you to happen again?” (Naofumi)

The result worked out, but it wasn’t good for the individuals. In order to let them choose their own paths, I need to caution Firo.

“Yeah... I got it...” (Firo)

Okay, I got Firo’s consent.

“Hey, you. Wait for a second.” (Naofumi)

“What, Shield Nii-chan?” (Kiel)

“I’ll ask just in case, but you do know that we have come here to class up, correct?” (Naofumi) “Well, yeah...” (Kiel)

“You told us earlier.” (Slave)

The slaves all nod at me.

“And so, my belief is that you should be the one to choose your own destiny. This is something separate from preparing for the wave.” (Naofumi) “What do you mean, Nii—chan?” (Kiel)

“I’ll give more training to those that personally want to participate in the wave. But we also have to consider what happens after the wave is over.” (Naofumi) “...” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia watches over me in silence.

That’s right, I started this village with Raphtalia in mind. But, everyone here will also have a life in this world after everything is over.

“The class you choose here may heighten your abilities, but it will also narrow the possible roles you can play in the future. Does everyone understand?” (Naofumi)

The slaves nod.

I confirm this, and continue speaking.

“Your lives will take you to many places from now. You’ll experience many new situations and take on many roles. That’s why you should be the ones to choose your path here. It’s not always best to simply have someone pick the route that gets you the best stats for you.” (Naofumi) “Can that really happen?” (Slave)

I give a heavy nod.

“Raphtalia and Firo here are victims of such a phenomena.” (Naofumi)

The two unenthusiastically raise their hands.

“Do you see the crest on Firo’s head? It arbitrarily decided their class-ups for them. But the class it gave them had higher stats than most normal ones.”

(Naofumi) “Really!?” (Kiel)

“Yeah, but for you guys, combat abilities isn’t everything. If there’s a role you really want to do, there should be a class that allows you to specialize in it.”

(Naofumi)

There’s no perfect class. And among those present here, there are definitely no perfect people.

And that’s why.

“Just make sure you don’t regret it.” (Naofumi)

The slaves whisper amongst themselves.

“I got it, Shield Nii-chan. I... want to become as strong as I can possibly be. If such an option exists, then I don’t need a choice.” (Kiel)

Kiel speaks with determination.

The last time she went back to train, she suffered quite heavy injuries and had to be carried back.

“I want to Class Up like Rishia Nee-chan and lead the others.”

“You won’t be the only one taking damage. In the worst case scenario, some may die.” (Naofumi) “I know, Shield Nii-chan.” (Kiel)

“You have a habit of being impulsive. If you screw up here, you may regret it.” (Naofumi) “Don’t worry! It’ll definitely work out!” (Kiel)

Is what she said. Though her enthusiasm was unmatched, she put too much focus on a single monster, and took an unexpected attack from a blind spot.

Her comrades were also quite injured.

“Shield Nii-chan. I think this is the first time I have tasted defeat... If I don’t do my best, will it turn out like that again?” (Kiel)

She said afterwards. I had healed her wounds with magic and medicine, but the experience still lingered in her mind.

“Shield Nii-chan always protected me... so I never noticed. That fighting was such a scary thing.” (Kiel) “... In the end, it’s fine because no one died, but if anyone were to die under your watch, you’ll feel a pain greater than any other.” (Naofumi) “Yeah... Nii-chan, I’m sorry for looking down on you until now. I’ll go tell the others.” (Kiel) “...I thought it was supposed to be difficult to teach them discipline, but they went and learned it before I had even noticed.” (Naofumi) And that experience gave everyone a lot to think about. It seems that Kiel cried that night.

Kiel still bears the scar of that incident, but the experience she gained outweighs the damages.

After seeing Kiel’s squad come back with injuries, the rest of the slaves have also begun to develop a fear of fighting.

They’ve become more diligent and have begun to develop tactics. If Raphtalia hadn’t been there to rescue them, who knows what would have happened to them.

Even I understood that I was being too light on them, but it seems Raphtalia and the others were harsh on them to compensate.

Raphtalia is supporting me in many ways.

The boy next to Kiel steps forward.

“I... want to pick my own future.” (Boy)

“I understand. Please split into two groups, those who want to choose, and those that don’t.” (Naofumi)

The slaves follow my orders, and divide themselves.

“Now then, Firo. I’ll have the people that don’t want to choose go first, so please back off when those that do step forward.” (Naofumi) “Yes.” (Firo)

“Rishia, what will you do?” (Naofumi)

“I... want to become stronger by my own hand. If it means giving up my choice, then I don’t need such an option.” (Rishia)

I had anticipated that Rishia would pick that. She came with me for this sole purpose.

“Then it’s fine. Pick a class that suits your tastes.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” (Rishia)

The hourglass begins to shine, and Rishia closes her eyes.

The soldiers in the area surround the Hourglass, and liquid begins to flow into the grooves on the floor that formed a magic circle.

The Hourglass glows brighter, and the circle on the floor begins to shine with it.

Rishia’s class up menu appears in front of me, but I close it.

...

“Hm?” (Firo)

Firo fidgets with her Ahoge, so it won’t act up like last time.

“Okay, Rishia, it seems that there are no problems.” (Naofumi)

“O-okay.” (Rishia)

Rishia begins breathing slowly, and reads through the list.

The light begins to converge on her.

“I’ve made my decision.” (Rishia)

This text is a machine translation (MTL).

Be warned that the degree of translation error may be higher than usual.



This page was created before the updated (July 19, 2015) MTL guidelines and has not been reviewed.

For details, see the [machine translation guidelines](#).

Report

The Class Up was confirmed and then Rishia was engulfed in luminescence. Stats increase confirmed.

Every stat grew higher, but not that high.

“How is it? What have you chosen?” (Naofumi)

“As expected I am... In the end, I chose the best way to help. I considered all of them, and unlike last time, now I choose the path to become universal.”

(Rishia)^[41]

“I see.” (Naofumi)

Rishia’s determination took form and raised her stats. Still though, the numbers weren’t really that high.

Rishia’s stats are balanced, so if you compare them to Kiel's stats, you could say that they are inferior in some areas.

However, Rishia chose that personally, so I feel like when the time comes, it will produce great results.

She is now braver than before; she now possesses determination and strength.

I believe that Rishia’s strength doesn’t rely on her level and stats.

Level and stats are not what makes Rishia strong, in my opinion.

“I’m next.” (Kiel)

Kiel touched the hourglass after Rishia

The same magic formed, and an icon appeared in front of me.

“Wa?!” (Kiel)

This time, Firo’s ahoge disappeared. I saw that Kiel’s Class Up was interfered with.^[42]

A smokescreen billowed out and covered the area.

..... Just like when Raphtalia classed up, Kiel’s stats jumped up.

However, if you compare them to the time when Raphtalia classed up, they are slightly lower.

“Wow!... What is this? I can feel the power spreading all over my body!” (Kiel)

“What are you even trying to say?” (Naofumi)

Firo’s ahoge activated with Kiel, but not with Rishia.

Does it only affect demons and demi-humans?

Then the other slaves followed, but there are times when Firo’s ahoge did not disappear.

I still don’t understand the rules.

“Well then, Firo, why don’t you wait outside?” (Naofumi)

“Uhn.” (Firo)

I want them to choose their own path, so I instructed Firo to go outside of the building.

The ahoge would probably not interfere with the Class Up anymore.

Then the Class Up process ended.

“Well then, I have some little things to do, so each and every one of you is free to do what you want. We will meet at the gates by evening.” (Naofumi)

“Understood, Shield nii-chan!” (Kiel)

I don't think that anyone will try to run away, but even if they do, the slave crest is still in effect.

“What should I do?” (Raphtalia)

So Raphtalia asked.

Right, occasionally I have arranged meetings with the Queen and exchange information.

In this case, I just have to send Raphtalia to the slave shop.

“Go to the slave shop on my behalf; I still need to talk to the Queen.” (Naofumi)

“Understood.” (Raphtalia)

“what about Firo?” (Firo)

“Go play with the slaves.” (Naofumi)

“Yay!” (Firo)

Thus, I went to meet the Queen for the first time in a long time.

I headed in the castle's direction to find and speak to the Queen.

“Iwatani-sama, how's your village's state of affairs?” (Queen)

“Oh well, the place is still small in number, but I've taken actions to increase the population.” (Naofumi) “Is that so? Stories about immigrants have already come this way.” (Queen)

“How's the reconstruction going here?” (Naofumi)

“To be honest, if a war were to break out, our financial state would go

downhill.” (Queen)

The damage would be huge...

It’s because of those Heroes’ doing, so I guess there’s no helping it.

“I spoke with Elena, the companion of the Spear.” (Naofumi)

“Yes, I’ve heard of it. To have escaped with such a strange ability...” (Queen)

“Indeed, it will be really hard to catch him.” (Naofumi)

“I’m aware of that, and that’s what I would like to discuss: How can we arrest him?” (Queen)

A weak provocation would have the opposite effect. Still, letting him run loose would be troublesome. To wake up a demon-class monster...

Well, Motoyasu is that kind of person; a sudden change of behavior seems to be impossible.

Especially with those two, I would be at a great disadvantage if that happens. As a matter of fact, it would be really difficult to improve the odds. ^[43]

“Hmmm...” (Naofumi)

“The problem is that when we catch him, we need a place where he cannot escape. Putting a reward on his arrest is unreasonable because he might just flee to another country and defect. He might also become a trigger for war, by spreading the word that he is an impostor Hero, or releasing an article that proclaims that he is actually dead. There’s also a risk that the people will make a fuss if the hero is killed.”

It’d be troublesome to get him aboard the boat with only a stick or a chopstick.

I’d like him to participate in the wave if possible.

Though it's unlikely, I’d like to have four times the present firepower, but in this situation, it seems impossible.

The slaves also need to be combat-ready in less than 3 months.

“Do you have some information regarding the other heroes?” (Naofumi) “There are reports about some eyewitnesses.” (Queen)

“For now, we only have reports about the Hero of the Sword and Hero of the Spear.” (Queen) “How’s that?” (Naofumi)

“The rumors have not been proven yet, and we’re still gathering evidence on the reported information.” (Queen)

That was somehow inconvenient.

“How about your daughter?” (Naofumi)

“Just the same; There are some testimonies, but no concrete evidence.”

(Queen)

She is still alive somewhere.

“I also ordered Shadow to search for them, but the search is not going well.”

(Queen) “They can’t be found anywhere?” (Naofumi)

“There are many possible reasons... one is that maybe they’re stuck somewhere, or maybe they’ve been arrested by an enemy country.” (Queen)

“Hmm...” (Naofumi)

“There’s also a possibility of a jamming tool.” (Queen)

“A jamming tool? Is there such a thing?” (Naofumi)

“The problem is the organization that frees the slaves... that was a high grade slave crest, so undoing it will be difficult. Jamming it is the only possible way to make up for it.” (Queen)

It seems that way.

Again with these stories about an organization that frees the slaves...

“This story is of no importance to Iwatani-sama. However, the news about the Seven-Star Heroes is still not within our grasp.” (Queen) “But the story is that we will meet them when a much more pressing situation takes place.”

(Naofumi) “Right, it will take place.” (Queen)

“Anything else?” (Naofumi)

“Stories have appeared about an unknown metal that has been excavated in the Spirit Turtle’s cave. The city’s livened up because of them.” (Queen) “Ho..” (Naofumi)

Such stories would definitely attract blacksmiths and merchants to come. As expected of the Turtle’s cave, to give such opportunities...

This means I should also go there to gather raw materials to enhance my shield.

Spirit Turtle’s metal and Spirit Turtle’s crystal.

Those kinds.

“We should raise the tax around this area; If you do that, it will help raise the city’s funds, which will help rebuild the city. Also, the weapons made from that metal seem to be of high quality.” (Naofumi) “I wish I could raise the tax...” (Queen)

It seems uneconomical. I guess I should go there instead, since buying Raphtalia and Firo gifts seems impossible.

“Should I give special permission for Iwatani-sama to mine?” (Queen) “I’ll think about it.” (Naofumi)

Selling the ores is likely to be profitable, but on the other hand, it feels like such a waste.

“I understand; afterwards, I will send you samples of the actual ore.” (Queen)

“Understood.” (Naofumi)

Usually, I would send several requests to the Old Man from the weapon shop. However, I don't have the money to make requests to him...

If it's him, he would probably do it for me on kindness alone. But especially because he is like that, I want to reward him.

"There are other problems. Lately, there has been a rumor that an Alchemist Master awakened inside the Spirit Turtle. (Queen)^[44]

"What is that?" (Naofumi)

For such rumors to arrive at the Queen's ears, as expected of a problem child.

"There is no one superior when it comes to researching demons. The problem is that person will end up deviating from the original course." (Queen) "Ho." (Naofumi)

Research investigation, huh? I should also start my research with the bio plant.

If it all goes well, I feel like it will be really profitable. Business is back on track. For the first time, it is something good. It looks like there'll be quite a challenge when I get back.

I need to gather talented people so that even if I fail, I'll be able to cope with it.

"Do you have anything else?"

"Please give me some of the used weapons of the knights. Then, please issue me the required documents for peddling." (Naofumi)

I deal with things in various ways, and as for the weapons, they are necessary because of the increasing number of slaves.

I need those documents for the Peddling team. I feel that it is necessary so that there won't be impostors.

“I understand. However, Iwatani-sama, impersonating you seems impossible.”
(Queen) “What do you mean?” (Naofumi)

“Since the story about you eating the Rokoru fruit is true, they would have to eat it to prove themselves.” (Queen) “Indeed.. such a thing exists.” (Naofumi)

It happened once when they gave it to me and I ate it; that guy’s face became pale.

“It’s real.”

He made such a fuss over it.

“Nope, I still need it in case they ask for proof. If the Queen’s seal is there, impersonation will be really difficult.” (Naofumi) “I see. Well then, I shall deliver the weapons and the documents later.” (Queen)

Weapons, huh?

I wonder, if there are prototype weapons, would they send them to my place?

“What’s the matter?” (Queen)

“Nothing.” (Naofumi)

I have little expectations on that. For some reason, I could see that the Queen is calculating numbers. I understand that it is really tough for her.

Are you still alright financially? She’s really anxious about those numbers

“Let’s help out each other in the restoration.” (Naofumi)

“You’re right.” (Queen)

There are only these words that I could hear from the Queen.

“Come to think of it... Where’s Trash?” (Naofumi)

“I made him watch over the border.” (Queen)

“A watchkeeper?” (Naofumi)

“Yes. No one would be stupid enough to invade if the wise and intelligent King is in the lookout.. right?” (Queen) “Would there be any effect if that ignorant and foolish King is guarding?” (Naofumi) “It’s been effective in these past several years, so there will be no problem. Moreover, he’s the one who summoned all Four Heroes, which the other countries failed to do.” (Queen) “Right, such point of view exists.” (Naofumi)

The Queen sighed really deeply.

“That man was really excellent till he had a child.” (Queen)

“I can only imagine.” (Naofumi)

“Just maybe, I hope that he returns to the person he used to be. Iwatani-sama, it would be good if you could meet that excellent person.” (Queen)
That manner of speaking is just like that of a person who handles human affairs.

First child, huh? I wonder if that child was Bitch. I now understand why Trash’s head became so messed up.

I wonder about Bitch, but if I were to have children, they would definitely be adorable.

As a matter of fact, although I became like their mother, there are times that I want to punish those slaves.

Kiel would be the first one on the list, but recently, Taniko is the one I want to discipline the most. [\[45\]](#)

“Such a thing, where would that charming person be?” (Naofumi)

“Indeed, but if you look at Melty, isn’t she adorable?” (Queen) “Youu...” (Naofumi)

Your daughter is really cute, but to make me consider a child? What a terrible

parent.

It is a game that my own parents are good at.

If you think about it, my parents' expectations towards my younger brother might've multiplied.

If you think about her parents' expectations towards Bitch, it seems Trash really loves her.

Well, it may vary.

... I ended up thinking of that terrible thing as something good.

“Well then, I still have some things to do.” (Naofumi)

“Yes. Iwatani-sama, I sincerely wish for your village's restoration to finish soon.” (Queen) “You don't say?” (Naofumi)^[46]

“Oya?! At this rate, it will definitely be a success because your reputation is now really good! (Queen)

Shameless.

As expected of Melromarc's fox lady.

Leaving such impression after talking with the Queen, I left the castle.

Beastmen

“Ah, Naofumi-sama!” (Raphtalia)

I stop by the Slave Dealer’s tent, and Raphtalia greets me.

“My, My. Is it not the Hero of the Shield?” (Slave Dealer) “You. You did something unnecessary for my slaves. I am quite troubled, you know.” (Naofumi) “Now then, what could you be talking about?” (Slave Dealer) The Slave dealer forces a laugh.

If I try to push this point too hard, I will get sucked into his pace. I guess I’ll drop it.

“Anyways, I came across a large amount of monster eggs, so I would like to cancel my order.” (Naofumi) “I thought you would say that, so I took the liberty of cancelling it for you. Yes.” (Slave Dealer) “You...” (Naofumi)

Calm down... Calm down...

“Would you like another Filo Rial? I don’t believe there was one in the eggs you had.” (Slave Dealer) “So you already checked them!” (Naofumi)

I’m reaching my limit here.

I hate feeling like I’m dancing on the palm of his hand.

“I think it would be more entertaining for you to find out when they hatch. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

My head hurts.

This happens every time I see this person.

It's annoying, so I'll just finish my business here and leave.

"Then, did you find any more slaves from that village?" (Naofumi) "Well..." (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia's expression becomes dark.

"I apologize, but we have yet to find any more." (Slave Dealer) "I see..." (Naofumi)

"I even spread around the Hero of the Shield's name, and no one came forward. I don't think I will be able to find any more within the confines of Melromark." (Slave Dealer) "Fumu..." (Naofumi)

Though we have been able to find quite a few children, I guess not too many people survived the wave in the first place.

I have found 15 already... [\[47\]](#)

"It may be beneficial to increase the search range. Yes." (Slave Dealer) "Can you do that?" (Naofumi)

"If the Hero of the Shield asks for it, I have no choice but to oblige." (Slave Dealer)

This sounds fishy. The Slave dealer extends his hand to me as if asking for money.

"After that is... Do you have any skilled demi-human slaves that would be of use to me?" (Naofumi)

Having someone skilled at compounding, construction, or blacksmithery may help the growth of the village.

The only one there who can make intermediate-advanced medicine is me.

There are a few that have shown interest in the subject, but progress has been slow.

“Then the Tanuki girl you have with you may be considered quite skillful.” (Slave Dealer)

I look at Raphtalia.

Now that I think about it, I haven't actually taught her anything... The most I've had her do is tan leather.

Well, she is quite clumsy in most aspects besides fighting.

“Were you just thinking something relatively rude?” (Raphtalia) “Not really...” (Naofumi)

“Let's see... Well, the Lemo Race is quite good with their hands. They're also relatively docile.” (Slave Dealer) “Hmm...” (Naofumi)

“You've probably never seen one before, though. Yes.” (Slave Dealer) “Are they rare?” (Naofumi)

“They're not rare in other countries, but as they are considered Beastmen, their numbers in Melromark are few. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)

I see...

Are they closer to animals than other Demi-humans? Now that I think about it, all of the Demi-humans I've seen so far have been quite humanoid.

“Do you have any here?” (Naofumi)

“Yes, you may be in luck. I have one in stock.” (Slave Dealer) “Let me see.” (Naofumi)

The Slave Dealer leads me into the depths of the tent.

“Here it is.”

I look at the cage I have been led to.

In it is a child cowering in fear under a blanket.

It's dark, so I can't really see anything.

"Fumu..." (Naofumi)

"Present it." (Slave Dealer)

At the Slave Dealer's command, a muscular man appears and opens the cage. He takes away its blanket.

"S-stop it!" (Lemo Kid)

"..." (Naofumi)

I look at the Lemo Child.

To describe it briefly, it looked like a mole. It's a werewolf-like fusion between a human and a mole.

It looks like the Lemo^[48] are a race of mole-people.

Its stature is quite short. Its height only comes up to my waist. Is it because it is a child?

"It is of a race whose eyes are weak to light. You may be able to use it for nighttime patrols." (Slave Dealer) "Awawa...." (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo Child huddles into a corner of the cage whilst trembling.

Raphtalia has a worried expression.

"Raphtalia." (Naofumi)

"Yes?" (Raphtalia)

“You understand that I’m no philanthropist, right?” (Naofumi) “Y-yeah, I realize that.” (Raphtalia)

Even so, it’s a race that is skilled in craftsmanship...

but...

“Hey, do a lot of people in this country persecute Demi-human slaves?” (Naofumi)

Many of the Demi-human children slaves had remnants of scars left by whips all over their bodies.

“A while ago, this country was at war with Demi-Humans, there’s no helping it. Yes.” (Slave Dealer) “So people are still taking out their anger from that time on these races?” (Naofumi) “Well, it’s war. Many people lost their families to the Demi-humans, and this country’s military campaigns brought an influx of cheap Demi-human slaves. Yes. There was no easier way for those people to get revenge on Demi-humans as a whole.” (Slave Dealer)

This country’s darkness runs deep.

I wonder what the nobles think of me, who is making a Demi-Human village.

“Though slavery is legal in this country, mistreatment of slaves is punishable by law. Yes.” (Slave Dealer) “Those actions were illegal... You seem to be selling quite a few of such illegal slaves...” (Naofumi)

Now that I think about it, this tent is quite well hidden, in a back alley...

“Don’t worry. I am conducting business quite legally. Yes.” (Slave Dealer)
Legal...

The Slave Dealer looks proud as he says this, but something in my head is screaming bullshit.

If so, then why do you carry abused slaves in the first place...?

“Well, there’s nothing I can do about it.” (Naofumi)

I look at the wounds on the back of the Lemo kid.

...They look quite deep.

「Zveit Heal」(Naofumi)

I use healing magic, and the wounds slowly close.

But the wounds were quite severe. I can’t heal them completely.

“Eh?” (Lemo Kid)

“Hey, you. I heard you are quite skillful.” (Naofumi)

“...I don’t know.” (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo slave hides its face as it says this.

It’s a better reply than claiming to do something that you can’t.

“If I taught you something, could you do it?” (Naofumi)

“... if you order it, I would have to do it. So... don’t hit me...” (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo slave sounds like it is about to cry. It curls itself into a tighter ball.

But as the rest of the cage is empty, it still stands out.

“Fufu...” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia looks at me and laughs a bit. What is she on about?

“Should I prepare the slave seal?” (Slave Dealer)

“Yeah.” (Naofumi)

And so, we apply the slave seal to the Lemo child. I am already used to the process.

“Ah, I just remembered. Hero of the Shield.” (Slave Dealer) “What? I won’t cook you anything.” (Naofumi)

“That’s unfortunate, but there is something I must warn you about.” (Slave Dealer) “Hm?” (Naofumi)

“There seems to be a Mad Alchemist in this country who focuses on monster experimentation. Be careful.” (Slave Dealer) ^[49]

The Queen said the same thing. Is he really that dangerous?

“The Hero of the Shield’s monsters all seem to grow abnormally. You may get targeted soon.” (Slave Dealer) “Yes, Yes. Got it.” (Naofumi)

I casually let it slide as I exit the Slave Dealer’s tent.

“I-it’s too bright...” (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo Slave follows me while keeping both of its hands on its eyes.

Oh right. This race was weak to light.

Raphtalia casts some magic, and dims the light around the slave’s face.

“Will this be alright?” (Raphtalia)

“Ah... yes.” (Lemo Kid)

Right, Raphtalia’s best magic was Light and Darkness. She could manipulate them to create illusions.

The Class Up let her use more types of magic, but that magic seems to remain her specialty.

A mole Beastman.

Perhaps we should get some sunglasses.

What sort of environment does this race usually live in?

But sunglasses...

As I walk through town, I see a stand selling spectacles.

“Hey.” (Naofumi)

“How can I help you?” (Glasses Vendor)

I address the person selling the specs.

“Do you have any glasses with darkened lenses? I’m looking for a pair.”

(Naofumi) “We have some.” (Glasses Vendor)

The Vendor takes out a sample and puts it on the table.

The lenses are definitely black... what are they made of? It doesn’t seem to be glass... Is it some part of a monster?

It seems to be made of ‘Black Fly Wings’. It’s a monster I’ve yet to meet.

I wonder where they live.

I understand it probably isn’t common. It’s probably in a cave, or in the mountains, or somewhere else difficult to reach by carriage.

“...That will be 80 Copper.” (Glasses Vendor)

It’s basic business to increase the price if someone shows interest.

“Hmm... I see. Then I guess we should give up for now.” (Naofumi)
I give the glasses back to the vendor and head towards another merchant’s shop.

He should know my face.

However, I make sure to conceal myself with the cloak.

“Do you happen to have any Black Fly Wing?” (Naofumi)

“Wha?” (Merchant)

Upon hearing my voice, the merchant seems a bit startled.

Perhaps he figured out my identity. He puts on a suspicious smile.

“Ah, remember the time with the balloons?” (Naofumi) ^[50]

“I-I won’t treat you like that again!” (Merchant)

“Anyways, do you have any?” (Naofumi)

“I have some. I have some, so please stop pressuring me.” (Merchant) “That depends on your actions.” (Naofumi)

The merchant frantically brings out the requested goods.

Black Fly Wing

Quality: Poor

“Its quality is poor. How does 10 Copper sound?” (Naofumi) “...*sigh*. I understand.” (Merchant)

“But as compensation, I’ll give you some publicity. Raphtalia, take the kid and get a bit away.” (Naofumi) “Understood.” (Raphtalia)

“Eh? Eh?” (Merchant)

Raphtalia takes the Lumo Child's hand and leads it away.

"Eh!?" (Merchant)

The Merchant raises his voice.

I take off my robe, and he makes a startled sound.

"Thanks! You've really helped me a lot. I'll continue to be a regular customer."
(Naofumi)

I say it in quite a monotonous voice.

But the volume of my voice, and the fact that my face was visible causes the surrounding people to stop in their tracks.

"Well then, see ya." (Naofumi)

"W-wait!" (Merchant)

I hear the sound of people crowding his shop as I walk away.

"The Hero of the Shield is your regular!?" (Crowd)

"If that man shopped here, I bet the items will bring luck! Please sell me something." (Another Person) "U-um..." (Merchant)

The Merchant lets out a troubled voice as he deals with all the swarming customers.

Now then, I should find a safe place to put the robe back on.

The Flag, Again

“What do you plan on doing with that?” (Raphtalia)

I meet up again with Raphtalia.

“I’m going to make some simple sunglasses.” (Naofumi) “But weren’t there some being sold back there?” (Raphtalia)

Well, I guess this world already has the concept. The history of sunglasses dated back quite far in my world.

I guess it’s the same for this one.

“You have to think economically in times like this.” (Naofumi)

It seems that buying a pre-made pair is quite expensive.

If I just buy a cheap frame, and cut the wing to size...

“And it’s done!” (Naofumi)

I put the simple sunglasses over to the Lemo child’s face.

“Umm...” (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo Child shows a troubled face upon receiving the glasses.

“Raphtalia.” (Naofumi)

“On it.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia casts darkness magic on the child's face once again.

"Ah..." (Lemo Kid)

"Are you alright? It's not too bright, is it?" (Raphtalia) "I'm fine..." (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo Child replies while fidgeting with its hands.

"Then shall we go?" (Raphtalia)

"Yes." (Lemo Kid)

To make sure it didn't run, we hold hands with the Lemo.

Well, I guess the slave seal will prevent that anyways.

"T-thank you." (Lemo Kid)

"Don't mind it. Where I live, there are plenty of brats like you." (Naofumi)

"Eh?" (Lemo Kid)

"This person here is the Hero of the Shield." (Raphtalia) "EEEH!?" (Lemo Kid)

To only realize that now... I'm pretty sure the Slave Dealer already called me that a few times.

We continue to walk down an alley.

"Is that one of your kids, Hero of the Shield?" (???)

A passerby calls out to me.

"Hm?" (Naofumi)

It's the manager of the clothing shop.

It really has been a while since we last met. Not since I requested the clothing

for Firo.

I don't know why, but she gives off an Otaku-like feeling.

And one that tilts in the direction of a Fujoshi.

“You have a Beastman with you this time, what have you been up to?” (Tailor)

“You didn’t hear from the old man at the weapons shop?” (Naofumi)

I take off the hood of the cloak and begin speaking.

“Ah, right. I vaguely recall hearing something about it.” (Tailor) “You really...” (Naofumi)

“I’ve been thinking about it for a while, but the Demi-human who’s always with you really is pretty. Won’t you stop by to dress her up?” (Tailor) “Expensive clothes are... a bit...” (Raphtalia)

Due to my influence, Raphtalia has learned to live quite economically. I think she would prefer some armor for efficiency’s sake.

“That’s such a waste. Clothing is essential if you want to woo men.” (Tailor) “I-is that true...?” (Raphtalia)

It seems this will take a while.

I don’t care one bit about woman’s fashion, so I kinda want to leave.

“...and that’s why it’s good. Is this child a Lemo? I think I’m getting some inspiration.” (Tailor) “Wa, wa...” (Lemo Kid)

The clothing shop manager pulls out a sketchbook and starts doodling in it. As expected.

“Lately with the calamity, the town’s mood has gone down. No one’s buying clothing anymore.” (Tailor)

She continues speaking as she draws.

“My store also sells armor, but its main purpose is clothing.” (Tailor) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“To be honest, I’ve been losing interest in making clothes lately. I haven’t been getting much inspiration lately.” (Tailor)

I think that she said that the material for Firo’s clothes was very good.

“You know, the girl you brought before. Making clothes for her was really fun. Could you bring her by again?” (Tailor) “That cost quite a bit...” (Naofumi)

And Firo seems to be happy with just one set.

We’re not particularly in need of it, so I see no need to buy her any new clothes.

If we had that sort of extra money lying around, I would use it on more useful things.

Anyways, Firo is usually in her Monster form, so the dress isn’t even used often.

“Hmm... The Hero of the Shield has quite a few inspirational people.” (Tailor)
It seems that her Lemo Race design series is completed.

On the page are a pair of overalls, a vest, and various other designs.

My slaves’ clothes... mostly consist of second-hand armor. This gives the town an adventurers’ guild-like atmosphere.

Buying them casual clothes will cost a bit...

Some cheap clothes from the Old Man are as much as we can currently afford.

I guess I should ask.

“I can only offer furs and some peculiar materials, but do you want to work in my village?” (Naofumi)

Her expression lights up.

“Are you serious!?” (Tailor)

“Y-yeah.” (Naofumi)

“Are there more cute and interesting kids like this one?” (Tailor) “I don’t know if they’ll meet your specifications, but my village has plenty of Demi-Human slaves.”

“A-a-are there also male slaves there?”

“Of course.” (Naofumi)

“Are you sure!?” (Tailor)

She seems to be extremely excited.

I have a bad feeling about this.

“I am a warrior on a quest for new inspiration. Please allow me to trouble you for a while.” (Tailor)

W-wait...

The thing that hooked her seems to be the fact that there were male slaves...

This is bad. The people from my world who were of a similar personality to her would think of ‘that’ when they heard the words ‘Male Slaves’. [\[51\]](#)

My decision may have been rash.

“T-then stop by to check the place out some time.” (Naofumi) “Yes! Of Course!” (Tailor)

And somehow the conversation was over.

...

After that, we parted ways with the clothing shop owner, and kept walking, when...

Kyurururururu...

A sound comes from the Lemo Slave's stomach. The child begins acting embarrassed.

"... I guess we should stop somewhere to eat." (Naofumi) "Yeah, we should." (Raphtalia)

"What does this one's race eat? Is it fine to feed it like the other Demi-humans? Should I give it worms?"

If it's worms, then preparing food will be difficult.

I have the Dunes in the village, but those aren't food.

If necessary, I will cook them, but if I do, it will be troublesome.

Taniko would shout at me.

"Um...well..." (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo child tries to speak up.

"I went... from home... a few times... It seems we can eat normal food." (Lemo Kid) "I see, then should we stop by a food stall?" (Naofumi) "Naofumi-sama won't cook?" (Raphtalia)

"We've come all the way to the Castle Town, and you still want me to cook? The smell will draw that person to us." (Naofumi)

I have a classroom's worth of hungry children here. Even if I cook on the river

bank, I think Firo will notice and bring them there.

“Isn’t that fine?” (Raphtalia)

“Even if you’re fine with it, I will find it a pain.” (Naofumi)

Recently, I’ve been trying to keep my cooking duty to a minimum.

There’s been a slave who came to me, wanting to improve her cooking skill.

“Eh... I wanted to eat Shield Nii-chan’s cooking.” (Kiel)

Is what most of the kids said.

It was quite difficult to encourage her to cook again after that.

“Anyways. Today, we are eating out.” (Naofumi)

“I understand...” (Raphtalia)

And so, we head back towards the market.

The merchant’s shop has a long line in front of it, and the merchant is happily selling his goods for many times the normal price. I applaud his skills.

Now then, where should we eat?

As I look for restaurants, I notice the place I first took Raphtalia to eat.

“Will here be fine?” (Naofumi)

“Yes.” (Raphtalia)

“...” (Lumo Kid)

I hold the Lumo slave's hand as we enter the building.

“Welc...ome” (Waiter)

The person who greets us frowns upon seeing me with a cloak covering my body.

“Sir. Serving a suspicious person accompanied by a Demi-human is a bit...”
(Waiter) “... If you have such a rule, then hang it on the front door.” (Naofumi)
“B-but still...” (Host)

Fumu... the host looks at the dirty Lemo Kid accompanying us, but doesn't remark on it.

This reminds me of when I once brought Raphtalia here when she was still small. No one said anything at that time.

I guess I am being held up because Beastmen are feared more than other Demi-Humans.

There are plenty of people who wear cloaks, though many of them do so for suspicious reasons.

Most restaurants here should understand that. In my world, most restaurants forbid the admittance of animals for sanitary reasons.

However in this world, Beastmen are supposed to be treated as bonafide human beings.

But I guess the hatred of this country is quite deeply seated. There's no choice. I take off the cloak.

“Is this fine? There's no suspicious person anymore. Will you still deny food to a Demi-human and a Beastman?” (Naofumi) “Ah...no... I-I understand.” (Waiter)

With an amazed expression, the waiter leads us to a seat.

The Lemo slave fidgets as its eyes wander all over the room.

“This reminds me of the old Raphtalia.” (Naofumi)

“Please don't bring up that time.” (Raphtalia)

“Do you want another Kid’s Set lunch?” (Naofumi)

“I don’t need one!” (Raphtalia)

The Lemo slave can’t seem to calm down. Its gaze begins to drift to its feet.

“Is there anything you’d like to eat?” (Naofumi)

“Well...” (Lemo Kid)

The kid looks at the menu and gives a bitter face.

“I can’t read...” (Lemo Kid)

“Then should we order something for you?” (Naofumi) “Please...” (Lemo Kid)

I raise my hand and call our server.

“One Daily Special and two Kids se-” (Naofumi)

“Two Daily Specials and one Kid’s Set lunch.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia interrupts me before I can finish.

“What’s wrong?” (Naofumi)

“Naofumi-sama, you’re mistaken. You still think I want that set, don’t you?” (Raphtalia) “Even though you say that, you still kinda want it, right? It’s something the other villagers would happily eat.” (Naofumi)

The last time she ate it, Raphtalia had carefully taken out and saved the flag.

“It’s fine. Please don’t treat me like a child.” (Raphtalia)

Is she at a delicate age? Even though her body has gotten big, her mind should still be a child.

“I-is that everything?” (Waiter)

“Yeah, I’ll leave it to you.” (Naofumi)

The waiter disappears into the back of the store.

I can faintly hear him saying something about the Hero of the Shield visiting.

After a while, the food arrives.

“Thank you for waiting. Here are your Daily Specials and Kid’s set lunch.”

(Waiter)

The Kid’s set lunch is more flashy than usual. There are two flags in the rice.

“...It’s showier than it was last time we were here.” (Naofumi)

They’re definitely showing off.

Reputation is amazing... did the other heroes get this sort of treatment before as well?

Showing my face is inconvenient, but I guess I can get some things out of it.

“U-um...” (Lemo Kid)

I can hear the Lemo Slave swallowing its saliva.

“It’s fine, you can eat.” (Naofumi)

“Is it really okay?” (Lemo Kid)

“Yeah.” (Naofumi)

“You won’t drop the dish and make me eat off the floor?” (Lemo Kid) “...

Where the hell did you learn that? That’s a waste of food.” (Naofumi)

So this one’s previous master made it eat off the ground.

“It’s fine, just eat however you like.” (Naofumi)

It was like this with Raphtalia as well.

“You can eat when you want.” (Raphtalia)

“Y-yes...” (Lemo Kid)

Raphtalia makes this interaction much easier.

The Lemo Child timidly begins eating the Kid’s Set lunch.

It's using its hands. I guess it never really learned manners.

But manners are something you can always learn later.

...Right now, the slaves take food from a single dish in the center of the table.

It’s like eating with a large family.

I think back to around the time I got here. Back then, I couldn’t taste anything. I thought that as long it was cheap, any food would do.

I look out the store’s window.

The Spirit Turtle’s shell looms high over the city... There are still more battles to come.

“Thank you very much.” (Lemo Kid)

The Lemo Race slave begins stuffing its cheeks with the Kid’s Set lunch in tears.

“If you think that, then eat it properly.” (Naofumi)

If you leave any, I may get angry.

“But I won’t force you to eat anything your race cannot eat.” (Naofumi)
I hope there isn’t too much of a difference in constitution.

“Yes.” (Lemo Kid)

Like a mother, Raphtalia wipes the Lemo child’s mouth and begins feeding it.

It’s quite a peaceful scene.

Failed Creation

“Ah!”

When I was feeding the kid’s lunch to the new Lemo slave, a loud voice could be heard from outside the shop.

“Big bro’s eating!” (Kiel)

When I looked, Kiel was pointing at me from outside the shop while she entered.

“No fair, that’s sneaky! I also wanna eat!” (Kiel)

“You’re only saying that because you see the skewer in my hand.” (Naofumi)
I had given everyone pocket money and free time to celebrate their long-awaited Class Up.

As long as they have money, they should be able eat here.

Nevertheless, they shouldn’t be asking me for skewers from the food stall after they’ve eaten.

“Isn’t it okay~” (Kiel)

“Kiel-chan, stop speaking so selfishly.” (Raphtalia) “Don’t add ‘chan’ to my name!” (Kiel)

It’s this dialogue again. How troubling.

“Hm? Who’s this kid?” (Kiel)

“Eeep.....” (Mole slave)

Startled, the Lemo slave curled into a ball.

It’s not that he’s timid, but.... he’s afraid of strangers.

“He’s a new slave.” (Naofumi)

“I see! Shield-niichan may say scary things, but he’s rather indulgent, so it's alright.” (Kiel) “You.....” (Naofumi)

To say this kind of thing about someone whilst in front of the person himself...

“What’s your name?” (Kiel)

“.....Imia Lucullan Lisella Tereti Quariz.” (Mole slave -> Imia)

Such a long name! It’s hard to remember.

“So Imia then. You a boy?” (Kiel)

“No....” (Imia)

Another girl. And I thought she was a boy.

It’s getting a bit much.

“You can’t get spoilt though. Me and Raphtalia-chan won’t allow it.” (Kiel) “O-okay.” (Imia)

“The place we’ll be going to is somewhere where if you work hard, you’ll be able to see your improvement, but only for the part you worked on, so let’s work hard together!” (Kiel)

Kiel explained clumsily and smiled at Imia.

It’s a good development.

“And so, Niichan. Give me some too.” (Kiel)

“Nope.” (Naofumi)

In the end, it was that. She was just making fun of me, this damn brat.

“What happened to the other guys?” (Naofumi)

Ever since I first gave food to Kiel to eat, everytime she finds me, I end up having to feed her. Give me a break.

“They went shopping with the pocket money Niichan gave them. For souvenirs and stuff.” (Kiel)

Really, just what am I even doing?

I should be managing my land, but instead it feels like I’ve just become the big brother who looks after everyone.

“Well, we’ll be meeting up at the castle town’s gates. Don’t be late whatsoever.” (Naofumi) “I already know that.” (Kiel)

Kiel left, as expected of someone who wasn’t usually treated. As she was going, she said this:

“Oh right, the friend Firo brought along is a bit prideful, but she’s interesting!” (Kiel)

Melty....she’s playing around incognito again.

I wonder what’s become of the education in this country.

Imia’s also in a good mood and has become cheerful.

It’s similar to how Raphtalia was in the past.

“For the time being, let’s go to the weapon store after we finish eating.”

(Naofumi)

“Yes!” (Imia)

- munch munch* Imia frantically devoured her Kid’s Lunch.

It seems like she would get along with Firo, with the way she’s eating.

After we finished our meal at the restaurant, we made an appearance at the weapon store.

“Oh, well isn’t it the young laddie. It’s been a while!” (Oyaji) [52]

“It’s been around two weeks.” (Naofumi)

“It’s around that long.” (Oyaji)

“Ah.....it’s about the shields I requested last time but.....the money is still....”
(Naofumi)

It’s very hard to say. That I don’t have money, so I’ll just be copying.

“Ooh, I had also wanted to talk to you about that.” (Oyaji)

The old man also seems to have trouble talking. The atmosphere is oppressing.

“It’s not finished yet.” (Oyaji)

“I see....then it’s fine.” (Naofumi)

“I’ll be frank. I’ve gotten the materials from the country, but they all have the characteristic of being resilient.” (Oyaji) “Ho.....” (Naofumi)

“If I was to make them into weapons, adding enchantments or special options would be easy, and because the foundation is solid, it could become a weapon just by shaving it into shape.” (Oyaji)

Hmm....is it the manufacturing part that’s difficult.....?

I haven’t really looked at the other weapon stores so I don’t really understand, but this one seems to have a bit of an appeal to it.

I remember that the spears and swords were quite conspicuous.

There was a blade that looked like turtle shell. So that was shaped by shaving?

“However, I also wonder if that can even be called a weapon. There’s no need for skills. In the worst case, a clumsily hammered item could still end up on the market.” (Oyaji) “Are you that fussed about it?” (Naofumi)

“Well, it would be affected by the maker’s skills, so I’m fine with just wondering. That can’t really be said for making armour, though.” (Oyaji) “Is that so?” (Naofumi)

“Yes. Anyhow, this material seems to have bad affinity with the Air Wake feature. It has no effect.” (Oyaji) [\[53\]](#)

The Air Wake feature. If I’m not mistaken, it’s supposed to make heavy armour lighter.

This is due to a special effect that the shield has. Gravity Field comes to mind. This special effect that uses a gravitational field has a high probability of developing in shields in the Spirit Turtle Series, and it seems to have the power to somehow cause floating objects to fall.

If that was enhanced by the shield’s effect, then even Firo would say it’s hard to jump around.

I nod at the fact that if the Spirit Turtle materials have even just a tiny bit of this effect, then their affinity with the Air Wake feature would be bad.

“And these materials are intrinsically heavy. I can improvise something for a sword or spear if they were only being used as a blade, but armour is different.” (Oyaji)

The Spirit Turtle’s shell itself can’t help but repel attacks.....however, it’s heavy.

“There’s the concept of making it thinner, but you know..... the fundamental defensive power would diminish.” (Oyaji) “I see.” (Naofumi)

It's a difficult material. In my opinion, it's not perfected yet.

"I've made two prototypes. Have a look." (Oyaji)

The old man guided me to the interior of the shop and I looked at his prototypes.

"Is this it?" (Naofumi)

"Yeah." (Oyaji)

"Is it alright if I hold it?" (Naofumi)

"Go ahead." (Oyaji)

One was an ordinary shield made from the spirit turtle's shell, but the problem was that it was quite big and bulky.

I thought I'd try to carry it to test it, but it was too heavy. I should've had the strength to stop the spirit turtle's foot, but...was that simply the miraculous power of the shield?

It's not that I couldn't pick it up, but it would be hard to fight with this.

I can't wield it.

Just putting it down caused a *thud* sound.

And, there was a major flaw.

It didn't activate Weapon Copy.

In other words, this wasn't treated as a shield. The criteria was hard to understand, but it may appear as a....wall.

However, there was a tiny reaction, so I feel like it's a delicate line.

"How is it?" (Oyaji)

“Looks like it isn’t a shield.” (Naofumi)

“Ah, it’s a total failure.” (Oyaji)

“The other one?” (Naofumi)

“This is it.” (Oyaji)

And what he gave me was a thin, semi-transparent shield made from the turtle shell. Its appearance was really beautiful.

I try hold it for the time being. Its weight is not to the extent of being unable to be held. It seems easy to wield.

However.....huh? This one is more shield-like, but there’s no reaction.

“Ah as I expected, even the young laddie thinks there’s a problem.” (Oyaji)

“What’s the meaning of this?” (Naofumi)

“For this shield, I focused on making it as light as possible. In exchange for that, there’s barely any defensive power. It’d break in one shot.” (Oyaji)

.....Wow. A disposable. Or should I say, this is already.....

“Isn’t this a plate?” (Naofumi)

“Even if you say that, I can’t refute it. When I first made it, I saw something similar shown in the souvenir shop and I wanted to cry.” (Oyaji) “It’s also heavier than it looks.” (Naofumi)

“That’s right, isn’t it? It’s a strong property of these materials.” (Oyaji) “Both extremes are too much; don’t you have any that are more of a compromise?” (Naofumi) “That’s just it though. Somehow, if it exceeds a certain thickness, the weight won’t change.” (Oyaji) “Eh?” (Naofumi)

“If I made that plate just a bit thicker, its weight would have been the same. Its weight is proportional to its size. Having said that, I wanted to try making a smaller shield, but then your forearm would be heavy.” (Oyaji)
.....It’s hard to handle.

Do the ingredients themselves emit gravity?

“How difficult.” (Naofumi)

“Yeah, but my intuition is telling me I should be able to make something good. So just wait with high expectations, young laddie.” (Oyaji) “.....I get it. Oh right, this is about the shield, but-”

I explained to the old man regarding the necessary items for strengthening the Spirit Turtle materials. Perhaps there might be something helpful.

“I see...that’s an interesting story, it might be better than making it with only those materials.” (Oyaji) “Actually I will receive them in segments, so I can deliver some afterwards.”

“Alright. I’ll also try a variety of things.” (Oyaji)

And, while saying that, the two of us returned from the interior of the store.

Raphalia and Imia were waiting near the entrance.

“Oh right, it looks like you brought a beastman slave with you.” (Oyaji) “Yeah, it seems this kid is from a dexterous race, so I bought her.” (Naofumi) “Oh, so she’s the one who’s going to become my apprentice?”

“I haven’t thought about that yet. I’ll bring someone after I’ve gathered and raised them some more.” (Naofumi) “I see. I’m only waiting because it’s you.” (Oyaji) “It’ll be very soon. Please wait a little.” (Naofumi) “I’m strict, though.” (Oyaji)

“Work them hard, but please don’t discriminate.” (Naofumi) “I won’t do that sort of thing.” (Oyaji)

It seems he wasn’t originally born in this country, and I don’t want to see the old man discriminating or anything.

Therefore, it was a good reply.

“It’s because beastmen are frightening as enemies. But when they’re allies, they’re very reliable. If it’s that kid, I’d recommend a rapier.” (Oyaji) “Speaking of which, have you finished the weapon meant for Rishia?” (Naofumi) “Yeah, the improved weapon made with the money I received from the country. It’s finished.” (Oyaji)

The old man took out a sword from underneath the counter.

Pekkle Rapier

Quality: Good

Bestowed Effect: Agility UP Magic UP Blood Clean Grease

Compared to Raphtalia’s sword, the bestowed effects are quite low.

Well, it was originally a spear, so it seems to have degraded from the manufacturing.

“Then I’ll be taking it.” (Naofumi)

“Alright. Please come back whenever you like.” (Oyaji) “I’d like to come when I have money. I can’t be spoiled forever.” (Naofumi) “Hahaha, whenever you have that attitude, it makes me want to work harder.” (Oyaji)

The old man replied in good humour.

He can really make me relieved with his words.

“And it’s also thanks to your patronage that I can be so prosperous.” (Oyaji)

“Ah, so that influence is showing.” (Naofumi)

“Of course. It’s to the extent where I’m so busy that it’s difficult.” (Oyaji)

The equipment hanging in the store has been selling out considerably.

It feels as if the production side isn’t fast enough.

“For a while, I’ve been saved by the seclusion for my manufacturing.” (Oyaji) “It sounds quite envious.” (Naofumi)

“Come to think of it, the pharmacy has been taken away forcibly by the magic

shop. Did you do something?"

"Is that so....so the magic shop succeeded then." (Naofumi)
That stubborn old guy has been fished out nicely.

With this, the slaves can be taught pharmaceuticals.

"I heard something I didn't want to hear...." (Oyaji)

"Next is....." (Naofumi)

"Laddie. Please stop with your recruiting." (Oyaji) "Hahaha!" (Naofumi)

"Stop hiding behind your smile." (Oyaji)

I wish that the old man would also come to my land.

When I send a look saying that, he bluntly avoids my glance by turning away.

"Um... what are they talking about?" (Imia)

"Shh.....They're in the middle of an important discussion. Let's just wait for them." (Raphtalia) "R-right...." (Imia)

Raphtalia and Imia had heard the chat between the old man and me.

Alchemist

I finished chatting with the old man and headed down to the entrance of the castle town since it was close to the meeting time.

By the time we made our way to the entrance, Firo and the slaves had gathered.

“Welcome back~” (Slaves)

“I’m back, is everyone here?” (Naofumi)

I count just in case.

Yep. The whole group has gathered.

“Hey Master~” (Firo)

“What’s up?” (Naofumi)

Firo approached with a question.

Melty is....not here.

“What’s that yummy-looking kid next to you?” (Firo)

“Eep!?” (Imia)

Imia let out a frightened squeak.

Firo’s humanoid form was of similar height, but...to say she looks yummy, did Firo really think that she could eat her?

Nevertheless, the slaves who knew her real form took a few steps away from Firo and whispered together.

“So Firo-chan is really.....” (Anon Slave)

“That’s right.” (Anon Slave)

“Is she gluttonous, or....” (Anon Slave)

Firo looked around uneasily. Did that kid even notice her own slip-up?

“Wh-what? No~!” (Firo)

Hm, I got to see an ostracized, flustered Firo, which was rare.

“You know Firo.....this child may look a little different from us, but she’s still part-human.” (Raphtalia) “And of all the things to say, you had to say she was yummy-looking.....so you finally reveal your true character.” (Naofumi) “Fuee!?” (Firo)

Firo opened her eyes wide and sniffed Imia’s scent.

“No~! Don’t avoid Firo!” (Firo)

I can easily picture the motion of Firo, in her monster form, attacking Imia like an owl would eat a mouse.

This is probably what everyone here is imagining.

“I won’t eat you! I won’t eat you so don’t be afraid!” (Firo)

Firo tried frantically to persuade her, but Imia’s fear didn’t go away.

Imia clung to me with extreme fright.

It's good that she was attached to me, but.....what's with this interaction?

"Master, help me!" (Firo)

"Even if you say that.....It's good as a threat, so won't you become an embodiment of fear?" (Naofumi) "NOOOOooooo!" (Firo)

Ah, she's so loud.

"I'm joking. Imia, you don't have to be so afraid of her. Firo is a nice kid who likes playing with children. She might look like a little girl now, but her true form is....."

.....She's definitely not a normal Philorial.....how should I describe it?

"H-her true form?" (Imia)

Imia asked, frightened more than before.

"Naofumi-sama, if you just stop there, her fear will escalate." (Raphtalia)

"Nooo!" (Firo)

Firo let out an even louder cry.

"My bad. I was thinking of how best to explain it.....er, this guy is something known as a holy bird in this country, so it's alright." (Naofumi)

Imia looked towards Firo while trembling anxiously.

Firo smiled sweetly.

However, that just seemed to backfire and Imia hid behind my back.

"Master~!" (Firo)

“There’s no other way to raise her confidence but to show sincerity. Work hard.” (Naofumi) “Aww.... I get it.” (Firo)

Somehow this incident became quite complicated. It seems that Firo is reluctant to be rejected by her friends.

Even though it was due to her own carelessness.....

“From now on, don’t go recklessly saying that someone looks delicious.” (Naofumi) “Yeah....” (Firo)

Firo learnt something today. Or I should say, just the fact that she’s choosing friendship over her appetite means she’s grown a bit.

“And, we went off topic. Didn’t you guys hear about this from Kiel?” (Naofumi)
“I thought it’d surprise them, so I kept silent.” (Kiel)
Jeez.....that Kiel.

“Well, we’ll do a self-introduction.” (Naofumi)

I shifted the frightened Imia out of hiding.

“This child will be coming home with us from now on. Come on, introduce yourself.” (Naofumi)

Imia’s demeanor was a mix of shyness, fear, and embarrassment, but she squeezed out a few words while constantly looking up and down.

“I’m Imia Lucullan Lisella Tereti Quariz. Please treat me well.” (Imia) “ “Such a long name!” “ (slaves)

Ah, of course everyone thought that. Raphtalia and Kiel didn’t react, so I had thought it was normal.

“Then again, you are a girl. Nice to meet you, Imia-chan.” (Anon Slave)

“Right....” (Imia)

Good. It seems she’s quick to open her heart.

“We’ll be returning to the village now. You guys haven’t forgotten anything, right?” (Naofumi) “All good.” (Anon Slave)

“Yes.” (Anon Slave)

“Yeah.” (Anon Slave)

After I checked everyone, we walked to the carriage.

And then, Firo changed into her monster form in order to pull the carriage.

“Wah!” (Imia)

Imia let out her voice in surprise.

“Th-this is?” (Imia)

“That’s right. This is Firo’s monster form. It’s hard to explain, right?” (Naofumi) “Yeah....” (Imia)

Firo turned towards Imia and smiled. Imia timidly stretched out her hand.

“And just like that her mouth will open and.....SNAP!” (Anon Slave)

One of the slaves tried to intimidate Imia.

Imia anxiously retracted her arm in a hurry.

“Aww~....” (Firo)

A very dissatisfied Firo glared at the slave who had been doing the teasing.

Well, she was the one that had been made fun of.....

Firo is, how should I say it, usually the one causing problems, so this is a little unusual.

Well, she is an omnivore, so she can't help eating everything.

This wasn't the case when Firo was a child, but now that she's grown, she seems like she would eat anything, or was it just my imagination?

.... Ah, is it because I used her to threaten people?

"For now, we'll get on the carriage and take it easy." (Naofumi) "If you get motion sickness, say so properly, okay?" (Raphtalia) "Ok." (Anon Slaves)

There was no need to hurry, so we'll go at a reasonable speed.

I ensured all the slaves had boarded and then instructed Firo to depart.

"Ah, Master." (Firo)

"What is it?" (Naofumi)

"Melty-chan will be coming to play sometime in the near future." (Firo) "I see." (Naofumi)

So Melty will be coming to the village. Just the thought of that loud, chatty girl coming makes my head hurt.

Well, she'll be quiet when playing with Firo, so it's fine.

The next day.

After one night of camping, we arrived at the village. We changed the pace a little because last time, Firo only slept when we arrived.

“Ah, Shield-niichan. Welcome back.” (Taniko)

Taniko came to greet us. How rare.

That she would approach me even though we’re often conflicting when it comes to monsters...

“Niichan, some outsider came and was being very insistent, which was troubling. Please help!” (Taniko) “Huh?” (Naofumi)

Taniko knocked on the door of the building the soldiers were lodging at and called for the female knight.

The female knight also seems a bit troubled.

“Just wait, you can keep a lookout without being so impatient.” (Female Knight)

“But she seemed like she would run away quite a few times!” (Taniko) “It is indeed dangerous, but we haven’t got an arrest warrant yet. We can’t arrest her unreasonably and we ought to listen to the lord’s opinion.” (Female Knight)

“What’s the matter?” (Naofumi)

“An unpleasant, a little eccentric visitor came. She wanted a meeting with Iwatani-dono post-haste.” (Female Knight) “Sigh.....just who was she?” (Naofumi)

“An alchemist who caused lots of problems in Faubley.” (Female Knight) ^[54]

.....Come again?

The one whom the queen and the slave merchant had warned me about has already come to my village?

“She looked at the monsters that Iwatani-dono looks after many times, and by all means wanted to examine——” (Female Knight) “Oh~.....So this is the rumored holy bird.” (???)

Really, before I knew it, an unknown woman came and probed Firo's body thoroughly.

"Master~!" (Firo)

Firo let out a shriek.

"Oh, so she understands human language. This child seems to be of the legendary Philorial Queen species variant that I heard about." (???)
Her hair colour was platinum blonde, and she had long hair and tanned skin. She seems human based on her appearance.

She seems to be in her mid-twenties.

What stood out stood out, and what didn't, didn't. A standard expression from my world would be that she gave the impression of a sultry young lady in a white coat.

"Her plumage is thick. I wonder how her internal organs are?" (???)
A fanatical alchemist? She forcibly opened Firo's mouth and grasped her tongue. Firo resisted, but she was dealt with easily. The Herculean Firo was repressed as easily as taking candy from a baby. [55]

And she even put her head inside her mouth.....

"Unh!" (Firo)

A struggling Firo suddenly spit the alchemist? out.

"It's no good if she struggles. I suppose it can't be helped." (???)
Just before she fell, she pulled a syringe out of nowhere and threw it at Firo. Firo wasn't able to avoid it and with a *pop*, the needle stuck in her mouth. What a feat.

“Funya.....” (Firo)

Firo collapsed with a thud.

“I-I can’t summon any strength.....” (Firo)

“H-hey.....” (Naofumi)

“Just wait a minute. I’m currently in the middle of an examination.” (???) “No, if you do these kinds of things at your own convenience, I, the owner will be troubled.” (Naofumi) “Oh dear.....” (???)

The alchemist? changed her interest after hearing my words.

“Might you be the Hero of the Shield-sama?” (???)

“T-that’s right, but.... you are?” (Naofumi)

“Me? I am Ratotil Anthreya. My friends call me Rato” (???) → Rat) [56]

“I-I see. My name is Naofumi Iwatani; Naofumi is my first name.” (Naofumi)

“So it’s Naofumi-san. Nice to meet you.” (Rat)

Rato replied, pinning the limp Firo with her gaze.

“And so, will you let me examine this child?” (Rat)

She took the opportunity to request my permission.

Judging from her behavior, she probably wouldn’t understand if I said no.

But Firo’s ecology was still full of mysteries.

“Ma-master! No~!” (Firo)

Hmm..... I feel like if I accept it, then the enigma that was Firo could be solved, but I also feel that it would heavily burden Firo.

“Wow, she took down that Firo-chan so easily!” (Anon Slave) “Isn’t it amazing? If it had worked properly, the drug I used should have caused her to lose consciousness, and yet she’s still aware and able to talk!” (Rat) “So you used that kind of drug...” (Naofumi)

“It couldn’t be helped. If she had continued to struggle, it would have done more harm than good.” (Rat) “Sigh.... first of all, I’ll have to refuse.” (Naofumi) “Oh, too bad.” (Rat)

“Ungh....” (Firo)

Firo recovered and slowly got to her feet.

“My my, it seems that if I don’t use a stronger drug, it will be impossible to examine her.” (Rat) “Noo!” (Firo)

Firo ran away.

She won’t be returning for a while.

“So you’re the one who wanted a meeting with me.” (Naofumi) “That’s right.” (Rat)

“What did you want?” (Naofumi)

“To be able to have a look at a variety of things. For example, a certain village’s plant or the monsters in this village.” (Rat) “Sigh...” (Naofumi)

“You see, this really attracted my attention. I’d really like to fiddle around with some of them.” (Rat) “To let you fiddle around, you say.....” (Naofumi)

Just what did this fellow intend to do?

It looks like she even knows the origin of the Bioplant, so it should probably

be fine to just let her do some research.

Was she an alchemist? At the least, she can be called a specialist. She might be pretty smart.

To be honest, I wasn't very good at studying, so I'm aware that I'm not good with this type.

Even if that's the case, I couldn't just let it go.

"I also heard rumours about you. That you're an alchemist who caused a lot of problems in Faubley." (Naofumi) "Problems? That's not right. They're just saying that because they're too incompetent to understand my research. And so they fabricated some lies and exaggerated some mistakes to turn it into something big." (Rat) "Yeah, yeah." (Naofumi)

She said this like some mad scientist character. There's no merit in looking after someone who'd follow that role too well.

Well, she took down Firo easily enough, so that ability might deserve some appreciation.

She might have some war potential.

"Those guys, they called my monster research 'an act that would even scare the gods' and banished me of all things. And by gods, they were referring to the Four Sage Heroes and the Seven Star Heroes, I think?" (Rat) "And so, did you come to approve of the current Four Sage Heroes yourself?" (Naofumi) "No. Their cries about the heroes were making me sick. They're nothing but a hindrance!" (Rat) "...Who do you think you're talking about? Why did you come here then?" (Naofumi) "I came to examine the monster that was the Spirit Turtle. Incidentally, I also took the opportunity to visit this place." (Rat) "Go off to Melromarc's castle." (Naofumi)

"That's good too. My interest has already moved on." (Rat)

Rato stuck out her hand enthusiastically, intending to grasp mine.

I replied while avoiding that hand.

“Don’t touch me. I hate women like you.” (Naofumi)

“I see. Then I won’t touch you, so let me play with the monsters.” (Rat) “You can’t!” (Taniko)

Taniko rejected her arbitrarily.

If it concerns monsters then she’ll charge unexpectedly, this kid.

“Wait, wait.....First, I want to hear your objective.” (Naofumi)

It might be good to recruit her depending on the situation.

She is a monster specialist. There’ll be many uses for her.

I might be expecting too much of her, but she might be able to take care of the modifying of the Bioplant and monsters in my place.

Well, that also depends on her motives.

If she’s thinking stupid things such as seeking revenge on the country or trying to destroy the world, I’ll drive her out without hesitation.

“My aim? It’s to create powerful monsters of course!” (Alchemist)

Favorable Discrimination

“I see...” (Naofumi)

Making a strong monster.

Quite a simple and childish desire.

This world has a game-like modification system, so I can see where she is finding her enjoyment.

But I must admit that it is quite rude to experiment on living organisms.

“For that goal, I traveled the land and studied various monsters. I have learned and assimilated various sciences and magics. But those people... They said something about going against god’s creations and creating works of evil. They tried to kill my creations, it was quite troublesome.” (Rat) “So... to summarize, you’re learning how to strengthen monsters through alchemy. Can I think of you as a sort of monster tamer?” (Naofumi) “Well... close enough.” (Rat)

I expected her to deny it, but she seems to be fine with being referred to as such.

At first, I thought she was crazy, but it seems that she is just earnestly focused on a goal.

Is she the type of person that gets overly enthusiastic when it comes to research?

“Can I ask a simple question? Oh, Female knight, please listen as well.” (Naofumi) “Me too?” (Female Knight)

Female Knight, who had drawn her sword ready to attack, looks confused.

Firo had recovered from the medicine and ran away. Raptalia is also waiting with sword drawn.

As a matter of fact, Firo is the strongest one among us.

Because Rat was able to take her out without a problem, it's no mystery why everyone is wary.

Because of the Shield and my poison resistance, my guard isn't too high.

Perhaps I should be more careful next time.

"There's one thing that has been bothering me for a while." (Naofumi) "What is it?" (Rat)

"Well... Strong Monsters... Are you able to take my already special monsters, and increase their powers even further? For example, could you fuse a Caterpilland and a Dune?" (Naofumi) "It's outlawed by some sections of the Church. They only allow for the pure breeding of monsters." (Rat) "Then, Rat, your research is..." (Naofumi)

"Yes, some may consider it illegal." (Rat)

...In many games I've played, the fusion of monsters happens on a daily basis.

Are the monster users of this world just plain breeders? Instead of aiming to make strong monsters, they just try to increase their numbers for labor purposes.

...Wait, by her phrasing, does that mean that you can crossbreed monsters?

"Is it possible to get an egg with the properties of multiple monsters?"

(Naofumi) "Of course it is possible. It's like with Demi-Humans. If a Fox and Wolf Demi-Human have kids, it will be a mixed breed. Monsters within similar categories can breed to make children sharing the attributes of both monsters. My research happens to deal with..." (Rat) "No, I don't really care about that."

(Naofumi)

I had never thought about what happens when different races of Demi-Humans mix.

But, I have heard that it is possible for a human and a Demi-Human to have kids.

So that logic also applies to monsters?

... How the hell does the ecology of this world function?

“So basically, what you are trying to accomplish is...?” (Naofumi) “I want to research what makes monsters strong, make new types of powerful life-forms, and add to your fighting force.” (Rat)

Rat is extending her hand towards me. For some reason, Taniko’s eyes are sparkling as well.

Taniko always loved monsters. Does she approve of Rat’s research?

“Let her join.” (Taniko)

“Who decided that monsters had to be evil entities that threaten mankind? I want to correct that attitude. Certainly, we can kill monsters and increase our own powers, but then doesn’t that make monsters killing humans for power the exact same thing?” (Rat) “Is that so?” (Naofumi)

“Murder, killing other humans, will also give you EXP, but it is not practiced because it goes against moral standards.” (Rat)

Hmm... I see.

It’s quite a black world here, isn’t it.

“Everyone in this world was made equally, so why are monsters the evil ones? That’s because they are weak.” (Rat)

Well she may be a bit eccentric, but at least she speaks with conviction.

But, there is a high possibility that she is only saying things that will further

her cause.

“Look at Filo Rials, they’re way too famous. Their Queens feast on the flesh of Dragons. They’re called the holy messengers of God even though they’re monsters like all the rest. I want to make a monster that gets a public reputation as good as that. A monster that will be able to help people, and be helped by them.” (Rat)

I can’t deny it. Firo did eat a bit of dragon meat, though it was rotting.

I don’t think an average Filo Rial can get that strong... But I guess that their legends earn them quite a bit of respect.

Perhaps the legends are of monsters like Fitoria.

That one is somehow even stronger than Firo.

“It’s not like I don’t see where you’re coming from.” (Naofumi)

I’ve played plenty of games which involved rearing monsters to be strong.

All this person is doing is taking something that would be the common sense of another world, and trying to apply it to this one.

Though she may be lying.

“So you wish to study the monsters of this village to aid your research?”

(Naofumi) “Yes.” (Rat)

“I hate liars more than all else. If you want to do such work in this village, then to prevent lies, I will have to make you one of my slaves. Will you do it even with those conditions?” (Naofumi) “Sure. If that’s all I have to do, then I’ll happily throw away my human dignity.” (Rat)

She accepted it way too readily.

And... she worded it in quite badly.

It’s not like I make my slaves sacrifice their dignity or anything.

“If that’s what I must do to advance my research, then I won’t mind.” (Rat)

“Fumu...” (Naofumi)

If I let her stay, then my monsters may be able to get stronger.

It's not a bad prospect.

If I place a slave seal on her, then I can act quickly if problems begin to surface down the road.

“I work my monsters hard, you know. Like slaves. You'll be treated no different.” (Naofumi) “There are Human and Demi-Human slaves as well. I see no need to give them preferential treatment out of pity.” (Rat) Mu... Preferential treatment is also technically discrimination.

Overseas, I believe that woman began objecting to receiving such treatment, calling it discrimination as well.

Some Japanese trains even have women-only railcars as well. Quite a few people of all genders protested against them. ^[57]

It might be close to that.

“I don't like it when people protect one life-form. Filo Rials have more intelligence than other monsters, but why does that mean they have to make a law that prevents the consumption of them? And yet when a dragon appears, it is immediately ordered to be slain?” (Rat) “...” (Naofumi)

“I won't tell you not to use monsters. In fact, I support you. I hate people only thinking of monsters as something to be destroyed. Monsters are alive as well, and they can help combat the wave. By my theory, monsters are not born of the wave. They can make for strong weapons, just like the heroes. Whether for good or bad, I hate discrimination. Everyone in this world can be helpful to everything else in it.” (Rat)

Taniko is now glaring at Rat with inflated cheeks.

I don't know what part of Rat's ideology ticked her off, though.

“I understand your objective. You want to make my monsters an effective fighting force for the upcoming waves.” (Naofumi) “Yeah! But that damn Seven Star Hero! I was almost cut down for Heresy!” (Rat) “Well then, hypothetically...” (Naofumi)

I hand a Bioplant seed to Rat.

“This seed is definitely a plant, but if modified incorrectly, it will become a monster. If handled properly, however, it can make abundant food and medicine. What does this tell you?” (Naofumi) “What are you talking about? That has nothing to do with my research. Anyways, hand it over. I tried working with seeds before, but they quickly deteriorated when I tried to work with them.” (Rat)

Fumu... It seems this one can help in my objectives as well.

She might become trouble later on, but as long as I have the reins called the slave seal, I can control her to some extent.

“I’ll allow it. If you will become my slave, then the village will assist in your research.” (Naofumi) “Understood. If the Hero of the Shield can only trust slaves, then this is the easiest way to gain your trust.” (Rat)

I exchange a handshake with Rat.

“I’ll count on you from now on. To gain your trust, I will become a slave. In exchange, you will permit and assist in the conducting of my research.” (Rat) “I don’t allow deceit. As long as you acknowledge that, then I have no problems with you staying here.” (Naofumi)

And so, the alchemist Rat began to live in my village.

“Can I start with modifying that Filo Rial? I’d like to begin by adding another eye on its stomach for increased perception, and perhaps several tentacles to its back for increased movement and tactile manipulation.” (Rat) “NO!” (Firo)

I hear Firo's voice shouting from a distance. It seems that there are now more people in this village that she won't get along with.

"The individual is against it, so you should give it up." (Naofumi) "Well, that's unfortunate." (Rat)

"Why did you drug my Filo Rial in the first place?" (Naofumi) "You don't know? Filo Rials can be surprisingly vicious monsters. If I don't immobilize it first, then I can't examine it." (Rat)

Is that how it is? Well I guess it is crazy to suddenly try and examine a wild animal without sedating it first. It might start attacking, or run away.

"Fortunately, your Filo Rial is in quite good shape. She has an annoyingly high amount of energy." (Rat)

Exactly.

From birth, Firo has had way too much energy.

I don't think she's ever been sick.

Perhaps I can also leave veterinary work to her.

Anyways, this is a person I don't really understand. Her ideologies contain multiple contradictions.

Discrimination is bad, but turning monsters into weapons is okay. She wants to modify monsters to be stronger. Does she like monsters or hate them?

Anyways. It seems that my own research will be getting easier from now on.

Camping Plant

“It’s going quite well.” (Naofumi)

“Right. For me to make this much progress in just 2 days, could I possibly be a genius?” (Rat) “Naofumi-sama...” (Raphtalia)

It’s been two days since then. Raphtalia is facing me with a serious face.

I think I overdid it as well.

I had tried to modify the Bioplant with Rat’s help. Because of this, quite a few people are watching our work.

Having a specialist really helps.

Rat has already been registered as one of my slaves. I have set the crest to punish her if she tries to lie to me.

The punishment has been set to the highest level. Based on the severity of her actions, she may die.

I can’t be negligent. Though for now, she seems to be satisfied while being immersed in research.

The real work starts from here on out.

First, I modified a Bioplant seed to be more like the original monstrous variety in order to grant it sentience, and registered it as a monster under my control. I handed it over to Rat for research purposes.

Rat takes out some complex machinery and begins to perform further modifications on the plant.

There was the danger that it may have been able to break the seal, as Firo did,

but this time it was a success.

As we plant the seed, the Bioplant begins to come to life and move as commanded.

The Bioplant we tried to make today was one that would be able to act as a house.

We'll be getting more slaves soon, so it would be useful if we could speed up the building process.

Which is why we began working on this interesting project.

The experiment was a success. As long as we issued the order, the Bioplant would take the shape of a house.

The new creation was dubbed, 'Camping Plant'.

Rat went off and arbitrarily named it on her own. I don't really care, so I'll leave the name as is.

Flowers bloom to form an effective roof, and as long as we give a specific layout, the plant can take on the form of any building.

The flowers absorb light during the day, and can emit magic light at night if needed.

The slaves had high adaptability, so they readily moved into the dangerous-looking house.

I planned to use them for temporary lodging, but Kiel enthusiastically claimed the house as her own, so I guess it is what it is.

Are you sure you want the house of your dreams to be one built so easily?

A strength of these houses is that they can be easily cleared with herbicide and rebuilt if they got in the way.

This makes them exceedingly easy to manage.

And... Raphtalia is currently questioning me on the influx of green houses in the village.

“I’m sorry.” (Naofumi)

“About what?” (Raphtalia)

“The village you lived in now looks like the dwelling of an evil sorcerer.”
(Naofumi) “Well... there’s nothing we can do about that... I understand. I just thought that you were trusting Rat too easily.” (Raphtalia) “I think she’s the one trusting me way too easily.” (Naofumi)

She had been staring at me intently while I modified the plant.

I thought that our methods of modification were the same, but it seems that she has taken a great interest in my general modification method. I think she called it ground-breaking or something. [\[58\]](#)

Even if you say it’s ground-breaking, it’s the Shield’s capabilities, so I can’t really help her on that.

It seems I can only make general modifications, so I have to leave the finer details to Rat.

The next thing to work on is a plant to produce medicine.

It seems that this will be quite difficult.

Up ‘til now, I have made no progress in this field.

By the way, the prototype house we made was carnivorous.

I continually cautioned Rat not to enter it, but Firo and Taniko suddenly rushed in, only to get eaten. Raphtalia and the rest had to cut it open and rescue them.

The villagers have been eyeing me with strange looks since then.

I also had Rat check the identity of the Monster eggs we had collected.

Additionally, she checked the growth of the monsters I had under my watch. I explained my Monster User Shield’s ‘Growth Correction’ ability, and she began

examining the Legendary Shield with zeal.

It seems that the Monster User shield had awakened, but I didn't get any extra growth enhancements from it.

I was hoping for something that would raise my monsters' intelligence.

"I had heard that the Hero of the Shield's monsters had abnormal strength. So this was the cause?" (Rat) "Probably. And I'm quite sure the other heroes should be able to unlock these abilities as well." (Naofumi)

It's not like I had this function from the beginning. The others should be able to unlock a Slave Series and Monster Use Series as well.

It's even more likely that they will be able to get weapons that allow modification of plants like the Bioplant.

However, plants like this are hard to come across.

I've only ever seen them in the Bioplant's origin town, and this one.

"I won't claim to be an expert, but I've never heard of such abilities coming from the other heroes." (Rat) "I see." (Naofumi)

To put it bluntly, we don't get along.

However from what I've heard, the Seven Star Heroes are supposed to be good people.

It seems that modifying monsters goes against the Church. Such straight-laced heroes probably wouldn't delve into such subjects.

I don't really want to trouble Rat further, and I honestly don't care so, I won't ask what sort of people they are.

...If you look at this village objectively, how many laws are we breaking?

Now then, our food supply has become quite steady. The taste is also guaranteed, and it seems that Rat will be able to produce some variation in the fruits.

I'm leaving the training of the monsters to the slaves, and my peddling enterprise will soon be able to start in earnest.

The slaves have all passed level 30, so our fighting prowess isn't a problem either.

In just a few days, we've made quite some progress.

"I was able to create a research lab so easily. This seed really is miraculous."

(Rat)

Rat's lab... it is a large building made of Camping Plant.

She had brought lab equipment with her from the start, so it seems that the lab is now usable.

From the building, I can hear the screams of a monster. It's reminding me of a few Science Fiction stories.

At that moment, I had a few doubts about letting her set up shop here.

By the way, Taniko and Rat have become rivals in their treatment of monsters.

Taniko believed that monsters should get strong through battle and experience, while Rat opted for strengthening them through modification. Their opinions often clashed.

Due to their differing ideals, they often argued. It appears that they hate each other.

However, Taniko's education is severely lacking, so most of the time it seems that Rat is just toying with her.

"Then I shall work on the Bioplants until I get bored. After that, do you agree to assist me in my goals?" (Rat)

"Yeah, I also hold an interest in Monster Modification." (Naofumi)

If we have monsters that can stand on equal footing with those brought by the wave, then fighting will get a lot easier.

I need to scrape a fighting force together no matter what, so modification may prove to be a useful asset.

I learned from that incident with the Spirit Turtle that having more comrades is always useful.

If they're strong, then even more so.

It seems there was a Balloon egg mixed in with the rest.

No... It wasn't an egg. It seems that a hibernating Balloon had been mistaken as an egg and carried off.

According to Rat, Balloons usually fly. They break off from a larger being called Balloon Legios, and can henceforth freely float in the sky.

If you see a strangely colored object in the sky, it is probably a Balloon Legios.

Though Balloon Legios rarely come to the ground, the numerous Balloons born from them come down quite often.

They become completely independent after separating from the Legios.

After the Balloon awakened, I quickly had a monster seal placed on it, and it is now my subordinate.

As the Balloon leveled up, it got bigger as if it were being inflated. I tied it to the carriage and attached a banner onto it.

With this, it is connected to the carriage and will receive a portion of the EXP gained by Firo, who is pulling it.

The banner on it read 'Hero of the Shield's Peddling.'

Its monster name appears to be Ad Balloon.

What sort of bad joke is this?

It seems that Ad Balloon had previously been cared for by a human.

I'm a bit afraid of a large floating balloon-shaped monster, but... [59]

Taniko readily mounted the Balloon and rode it into the sky with both arms outstretched. Seriously, what valley did she crawl out of?

It's really slow, but I guess I can assign it to guard duty.

I hold Balloons in high esteem.

I haven't forgot my debt to them from when I first fought Motoyasu.

"You are hereby deemed Test Subject #1." (Rat)

"Garu!" (Ad Balloon)

"Quiet." (Naofumi)

Perhaps due to the Shield's influence, this monster seems to possess a higher level of intelligence than other Balloons

"... Now then, I will be leaving for peddling." (Naofumi)

"Understood." (Raphtalia)

"Then I will be continuing with my research. If you need me, you can find me in my lab, Count." (Rat)

Count... That's right, I got a title.

I had completely forgotten.

"Hmm? I had heard that you were a Count. Am I wrong?" (Rat)

"No, you're correct." (Naofumi)

"Anyways, if you have any business, please stop over." (Rat)

"Yes, yes. Oh, and remember that just because I'm not here doesn't mean you can cause trouble." (Naofumi) "I know. I won't do something that foolish." (Rat)

"I wonder." (Naofumi)

I think about how to produce a medicine-generating Bioplant as I call Firo over. I get on the Carriage and set out for the neighboring village.

Business

In the neighboring town, a magic, medicine, and clothing shop have now been built.

They're still working from temporary stands, but business has already started.

"Ah, Hero-sama. welcome." (Magic Shopkeeper)

The Magic Shop's owner greets me.

The building she is working out of obviously isn't as good as her previous shop, but I have been giving her some preferential treatment.

I have high hopes for this town even though we have just started reconstruction efforts on it.

"How are you faring?" (Naofumi)

"I'm getting by. I think I will reopen the store in the Castle Town as well."
(Magic Shopkeeper) "So this will just be a branch location?" (Naofumi) "Yeah. I'll work here until that store opens and I'll occasionally be teaching magic there..... It seems you're doing something interesting there as well, right?"
(Magic Shopkeeper)

The Magic shopkeeper seems to have noticed the sudden change in my village.

This kind of progress is certainly in itself worthy of being called magic.

"..... Hmph." (Naofumi)

I think I can probably smell the Medicine-shop.

Sometimes my gaze turns toward the village.

“We can research advanced medicine now that the Medicine-shop has begun taking care of it. I am looking forward to the results and would like to thank you for helping me since my schedule has become rather tight.” (Naofumi) “.....I see.” (Medicine Shopkeeper)

“Now..... Where is the clothing shop?” (Naofumi)

“I wonder if I’ve made a mistake. I was under the impression I would be living in the Hero’s village.” (Tailor)

Fumu.... I give the various monster materials I had gathered to the Tailor.

I had told her that I would give her various interesting materials.

I think I can leave the sizing of the materials up to her.

“There has also been a lot of reconstruction happening here.” (Naofumi)

Unlike my village, this one has a lot of manpower, so I see lots of progress every day.

There seems to be a plan to rebuild the Feudal Lord’s house.

Currently the foundations have been erected, and they plan for it to be finished in two weeks.

“Sorry for many things.” (Naofumi)

“No problem. Most of the people here had a lot of free time on their hands anyways.” (Leader) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“Instead of hating you, everyone is looking forward to your cooking. Is it really as tasty as they say? I too would like to partake in it at least once.” (Leader)
...I would occasionally come over and cook food to support their efforts, but has that become their motivation?

The shield really does prepare good food.

“Well good. Also, I won’t be cooking again until I return from peddling.”

(Naofumi) “Okay, I’ll pass on the message.” (Leader)

“Yes, yes.” (Naofumi)

I shake his hand, and set out to start peddling in the next town.

I am accompanied by Raphtalia, Firo, and two other people.

There is a need for me to increase my combat forces, and I’m not sure if Rat will be able to produce results in the given time.

On the second day of Peddling

I arrived in a big town.

“Hm?” (Naofumi)

There is a commotion going on involving a squadron of guards.

I should probably ignore it, but.....

“Why are these people getting off scot free, while I have to be taken into custody?!” (A familiar voice)

When approaching, I stop the carriage because the voice I heard sounded very familiar.

I can’t see through the crowd, so I ask someone nearby.

“What’s happening?” (Naofumi)

“It seems that the Hero of the Sword helped capture a thief, but now he is being arrested.” (Crowd Person)

...It’s a story I have heard somewhere before.

“Hm? Aren’t you the Hero of the Shield?” (Crowd Person)

So I have been noticed. Well, my carriage does stand out quite a bit, and Firo is in her monster form, so this much is to be expected.

The crowd is breaking and ringleader comes into view.

There, I see a familiar group of thieves with smiling faces, and Ren being held down by some guards.

...I kinda understand the situation.

Capturing thieves. Something similar happened to me before.

There's no choice. I make my way through the crowd.

"Yo." (Naofumi)

Surprising them would be dangerous, so I call out from a distance.

"It's Naofumi, isn't it?" (Ren)

"Been a while." (Naofumi)

Ren looks happy upon seeing me. He waves his hand at me.

But the person I was talking to was not Ren, but the leader of the thieves.

As soon as the thieves see me, they begin to look pale.

Well... they've already gone through this twice. This will be the third time.

These people, they should really learn to live honestly, maybe become mercenaries or something.

"You people really don't learn, do you? Did you really think that framing the person that apprehended you would really get you off so easily?" (Naofumi) "S-shut up!" (Thief)

There's something I would like to test.

They may be a little afraid of me, but I have something that gives them nightmares.

“Firo.” (Naofumi)

“Yes?” (Firo)

Firo come up by jumping over the crowd.

The bandit’s face became paler.

“Enjoy your meal.” (Naofumi)

“Yup.” (Firo)

It seems she will eat anything that is not a child.

The thieves desperately face the guards and begin to beg to them.

“We are the culprits, please help!” (Bandits)

They confessed... Is Firo really that scary?

Well, Rat did tell me that Filo Rials are supposedly very vicious, and this happens to be a Queen.

“No, these people aren’t thieves. The Hero of the Sword is mistaken.”
(Naofumi)

It seems the guards have yet to discover their hideout.

These people have a bit of skill, and they’re good at saving up money.

I think I’ll make them a source of income again.

“Naofumi! You too!?” (Ren)

“I’m not saying you’re at fault. Just be quiet for a second. I have an idea.”

(Naofumi) “We’ll talk! We’ll talk, so just keep that man’s bird away from us!”

(Bandits) “Hey, master. Firo feels that she is being hated, but did Firo do something wrong?” (Firo) “I think that the fact that you’ll eat anything other than a child is fundamentally wrong.” (Naofumi) “Mu...” (Firo)

I can hear the crowd whispering.

“That Holy Bird eats people?” (Crowd)

“Nah, I hear the Hero of the Shield is quite skilled at deceit.” (Crowd) “Really? As I thought. I once saw the Holy Bird playing peacefully with children in the Castle Town.” (Crowd)

That’s good, Firo. You haven’t become a public symbol of fear.

It’s up to her whether she gets treated as a human or a monster.

“That’s how it is. Those people once tried the same stunt with me when I had a notoriously bad reputation. Please make sure to wring them dry.” (Naofumi)

“W-what?” (Guards)

The guards are taken aback.

“These people’s bounties, will you give them to me?” (Naofumi) “Y-yes, but we haven’t caught their leader.” (Guard) “Hey, where’s your base.” (Naofumi)

“Yes! Please bring out a map!” (Bandit)

They’re being quite cooperative.

“Firo and Raphtalia, go catch the guys hiding there.” (Naofumi) “Yup!” (Firo)

“Understood.” (Raphtalia)

I pass the map to Raphtalia and Firo, and they set off.

“The rest of you, keep peddling.” (Naofumi)

“Yes.” (Anon Slaves)

I walk through the crowd towards my carriage.

“The Hero of the Shield handled the situation.” (Crowd) “Amazing. He got the bandits to confess by himself.” (Crowd) “He must be really strong.” (Crowd)

“Yeah.” (Crowd)

For the love of...

Even if they speak the truth, I don't really want unnecessary abilities tacked onto my reputation.

“Well, hasn't it been a long time, Ren?” (Naofumi)

“Ah, ah.....” (Ren)

Ren slowly distances himself from me, while looking vigilant.

“Wait wait, ignoring that, I don't have any intention to catch you. I just want to hear your story.” (Naofumi) “I see... Everyone I've met so far has been suspicious of me. I've even had random people throw stones at me.” (Ren)

Ren answers defiantly.

I think it's fine if it's only at that level.

In my case, I was literally treated as the devil.

The cause of all that was Trash, Bitch, and the Three Hero Church.

“For now, should we go to the tavern and talk?” (Naofumi)

I take Ren to the tavern. I notice some people from the crowd follow us there,

but I don't really care.

I sat at the bar counter, and order a drink.

Along with my drink, I am also given a real Lucor fruit.

The boss of the tavern looks at me with eyes full of expectation.

There's no choice. I eat the fruit whole.

"The real one!" (Boss)

"Unbelievable!" (Some guys)

My identity has been confirmed by all.

It's quite a strange identification test.

"It seems you've been through a lot." (Naofumi)

I talk to Ren without any ulterior motives.

It seems that he's been alone and being chased without knowing the exact reason why.

When I was alone, before I met Raphtalia and Firo, the only thing I could think of was revenge.

"Yeah... the guild said they were no longer accepting Heroes, I wasn't able to slay monsters freely anymore, and I couldn't claim bounties. Then, to top it all off, this had to happen!" (Ren)

The self-proclaimed cool Ren began to angrily complain.

But it's not like I don't see where he's coming from.

"So I began selling monster drops and began to live day by day... It got really annoying. Everyone I meet seems to turn on me. Why do I even have to defend this crappy world?" (Ren) "That's just how humans are. When I was called the Devil of the Shield, I was treated the same way. No, I was treated worse than

you, you know.” (Naofumi) “I-I see...” (Ren)

“First, let me ask. Were you involved in the Spirit Turtle incident?” (Naofumi)
Now that I think about it, his party members are nowhere to be seen.

Did they run away on him?

Well, I think they’ll do just fine without him though. If he’s been cut off, he can’t really complain.

“No... that’s...” (Ren)

Ren suddenly begins stumbling over his words.

“So you’re going to avoid the topic?”(Naofumi)

“No, it’s not...”(Ren)

As usual for this guy.

His insociability is getting on my nerves.

I have some grudges against this person, but he has done me enough favors to balance it out.

“I am still thankful for that time during the failed attempt to kill Melty. I’ll listen to what you have to say, just as you did for me. I always make sure to return a favor.” (Naofumi) “.....” (Ren)

“Ren, if you don’t say it, your position will become worse. You’ll become the next Demon of the Shield.” (Naofumi) “.... I understand. I’ll tell you my story.” (Ren)

Ren sighs, and begins to speak.

Even Though You Already Understand...

Ren and his comrades successfully cleared the Wave of another country, and then headed to the town the Spirit Turtle was sleeping in to search for greater strength.

He's exactly the same as Motoyasu, or so I want to retort.

According to Ren, the Spirit Turtle was going to be the mastermind behind an even greater calamity, so it was best to kill him off early.

"In the near future, a plague would have struck that land. The people would fall one after the other... And the cause of that would be the Spirit Turtle. He would manipulate their corpses and create an undead army with his powers of mind control." (Ren)

Apparently, in the games Ren played, if he didn't act fast, a large calamity would befall this land. This event was big enough in scale to cause the fall of nations and the formation of several countermeasure organizations.

That's why Ren's main goal was the prevention of this disaster.

The boss was supposed to be beatable at level 60. Since Ren was over 80, he thought it wouldn't be difficult.

...It's the same as with Motoyasu.

"Can I ask something?" (Naofumi)

"What is it?" (Ren)

I interrupt Ren.

“In your Net Game, were you able to visit that area before? Or was it a new area that became unlocked with the event?” (Naofumi) “Let’s see. I think it happened in Update: Episode 7, The Assault of the Spirit Turtle. Before that, it was a normal town and hunting ground. But after the update, you needed permission to enter the area. I read it on the internet.” (Ren)

...Update: Episode 7?

The blue hourglass in the turtle read 7, but... it’s a coincidence, right?

“Please continue.” (Naofumi)

“Yeah.” (Ren)

The reason he acted without the country’s consent was that in the game he played, the Turtle’s mind control was affecting the actions of the leaders of countries as well.

It seems that it was being treated as a sort of quest.

And that’s why negotiations were pointless.

My head hurts. If you were under the assumption that the country’s leader was being brainwashed, why the hell didn’t you actually go check?

Like Motoyasu, Ren infiltrated a temple slightly outside of the village.

“Um, Ren-sama, are you sure we should be doing this?” (Ren Party) “What are you talking about? The monster sleeping here has already infiltrated the upper echelon of the government. Sitting around and waiting for negotiations to finish is pointless.” (Ren) “Oy, you people! Name yourselves!” (Monk)

As he was about to destroy the Buddhist statue that would awaken the turtle, a group of monks surrounded him.

Because they had appeared in the basement of an abandoned temple, Ren was able to conclude that they were under the Turtle’s influence. He hurries to destroy the statue.

“Please stall them. For the people who still have their sanity, we must press onwards!” (Ren) “Yes!” (Ren Party Plural)

Ren’s comrades assist in the destruction of the statue.

“H-how could you... That was a priceless historic...” (Monk)

The monks shout out. They raise their weapons.

I thought he had done the same as Motoyasu, but it seems all he did was destroy a priceless artifact.

Well... it was probably a memento of the past Four Heroes or Seven Star Heroes.

I don’t really know this world’s history, so I can’t say what would be valuable or not.

“Mu.. That Sword... Could you be the Hero of the Sword!?” (Monk) “If you already know, then I guess there’s no harm in telling you. I’m the Hero of the Sword, and I have come to vanquish the darkness that sleeps beneath these lands.” (Ren)

As they were saying that, the ground begins to rumble beneath them.

“Okay! The Spirit Turtle has shown itself. Let’s go!” (Ren)

Ren carefully knocks the monks out and runs in the direction of the rumbling sound.

“It’s big... Can we really fight something that large!?” (Ren Party) “We can win! We have become strong!” (Ren)

With confidence, Ren rushes towards the Turtle.

While closing in, he thought he saw someone use a skill on the head, but he just assumed it was one of the adventurers fighting it.

Thinking that this world's adventurers wouldn't be enough, Ren raises his sword towards the Turtle.

「Handlet Sword!」 (Ren)

It's a skill that takes a while to activate. He stacks on another attack.

「Thunder Blade! 」 (Ren)

But the Spirit Turtle is largely unaffected.

What happened afterwards was just like with Motoyasu, so I'll abridge it.

Ren feels something is off, but he keeps fighting.

Without giving up, he fights for the people in danger of the beast.

“UUUOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

And when he was aware of his situation, the Spirit Turtle was already walking away without paying him any mind. Ren was surrounded by corpses... the bodies of his comrades.

They were cruelly mangled bodies. Destroyed so badly even Ren couldn't identify them.

The only thing he could understand was that his party members were all dead.

“W-what the hell is this... It's a lie... All of them were over level 80, yet...” (Ren)
Ren's brain could not comprehend the events that had just happened.

And Ren's mind shut down for a period of time. He prayed for the slight chance that, like a game, he would be able to revive them.

But no gods would hear his wish, and Ren understood that from the beginning.

After that, Ren rushed through the swarm of Spirit Turtle Familiars and tried to save as many people as he could, but he eventually lost consciousness.

When he regained consciousness, the Spirit Turtle's reign of terror had already ended.

...

"I lost because they were weak... And because they were weak, they died. If only we had worked together more, then winning would have been easy." (Ren)
He's in complete denial.

... There's no helping him. His companions must be turning in their graves.

"I'm not at fault. They were weaker than I had ever imagined. I'm not wrong. I'm not!" (Ren)

And he's running from his own crimes.

I don't even need to pity this one.

However, a kind word isn't what he needs right now.

"You are wrong. Don't think this will always be a game. What you did was clearly rash, and even your comrades saw that." (Naofumi) "What!?" (Ren)

Ren looks at me angrily.

"If that's all you can say about the people who trusted in you and followed you to the end... then you don't only fail as a Hero. You fail as a human being."
(Naofumi)

If you went to me for warm words, then you're very mistaken.

Saying that you're not at fault...

This one... Just as I thought, the only thing he ever did was act as a selfish guild leader.

He fought an enemy out of his league, and as a result his party was annihilated. And in the end, he blamed them for being too weak. His conduct is just as Raphtalia said.

"This world is not a game. If you keep believing that, then more people will suffer." (Naofumi) "S-shut up!" (Ren)

"No matter how much you scream, no matter how much you regret, until the wave is over, we will never be able to go back home. We were summoned selfishly by the stuck-up leaders of this world, and given the pretentious title of Hero. In most worlds, that would be considered kidnapping. But if we want to do anything. If we want to change anything. Then the only thing that we can do is fight."

"Ku....!" (Ren)

"A while ago, you told me, 'If things get bad, you run away? You really are the worst.' And look at you now. Are you aiming to become the worst of the worst?" (Naofumi)

Well, right now I'm just taking out my anger on him.

For him to continue to fight even after seeing the monster was too strong for their party... I would first test its attack power, and then create a plan from there. But this person can only fight as if this were a game.

He didn't do any investigation beforehand, and placed his trust into the knowledge he heard on the internet. It's as if he was following a walkthrough.

He's a coward. Has he even tried to discover anything on his own?

"Your game is over. Your game information is useless now." (Naofumi) "You're wrong! I'm... I'm not at fault!" (Ren)

“I’m not wrong. You told Raphtalia that you ‘Wouldn’t forgive her’. Well, now I’m going to tell you that I will never forgive you for your actions. You’re now a splendid murderer.” (Naofumi) “Quiet...Shut up... Please, don’t say any more...” (Ren)

Ren has begun shaking over my continuous accusations.

When a lot of people died in the plague-stricken village, he had acknowledged that he was in the wrong. He even went there to apologize.

Inside, he already knows the truth. But that truth is something that he doesn’t want to accept. He is unable to accept it.

Even though he already understands...

“I understand that you did not cause any of this on purpose. However, you are still alive. If you’re still alive, then isn’t there something you have to do first?” (Naofumi) “Shut up!” (Ren)

“I’ll keep talking until you listen. You already get it, don’t you? Don’t you know what you have to do right now?” (Naofumi) “QUUUUIEEEEETTT!” (Ren)

Ren unsheathes his Sword

I hold up my Shield.

I feel a light tap on it.

...Hm?

“Take this!” (Ren)

Ren tries to slash at my face.

I... don’t even try to defend myself

Bang... I hear the sound of metal colliding near my ear.

Ren starts to laugh. However, his eyes widen as if he has seen something

unbelievable.

“H-how did you...” (Ren)

“That sword you have equipped right now. It looks to be made from Spirit Turtle materials, but isn't it a bit too weak?” (Naofumi)

I took Ren's attack head on.

Of course, my defense is being greatly bolstered by the shield on my arm.

But if Raptalia had attacked me like that, I wouldn't have escaped unharmed.

“You thought you could take on the Spirit Turtle with that? Are you stupid?” (Naofumi)

It's crazy to think someone could win at level 60 in the first place.

No... perhaps if you properly strengthened all your equipment and status... and you ignored all of the casualties around you, focusing only on victory... The Spirit Turtle's attacks are slow, so it might be possible.

Of course, that only applies if you can take out the Head and Heart at the same time.

And from what I've seen, Ren has only been using the reinforcement methods from his own game.

“You didn't listen to Shadow at all, did you? Your weakness is because of-” (Naofumi) “Those were lies! There's no way the Shield can be that strong! It's a Cheat, a Hack! Don't monopolize it!” (Ren)

I don't want to hear that from you!

Is what I want to retort, however there's a time and place for everything.

“Improve your swordsmanship. Your weakness is-” (Naofumi)

“Che!” (Ren) [\[60\]](#)

Ren raises his sword high above his head.

「Flashing Sword!」 (Ren)

The sword glows brightly and clouds my vision.

“You...!” (Naofumi)

He tries to slash at me a few more times, but to no effect...

“UWWAAAAAAAAA!” (Ren)

He screams out, and I can hear him running away. By the time my vision started to return, he was already gone.

“M-mah eyes...” (Drunk)

The people in the tavern are rubbing their eyes.

“Don’t worry, it was just bright. There should be no negative effects. Stay still for a while. It’s dangerous if you can’t see anything.” (Naofumi)

On my word, everyone calms down. I wait for my eyesight to go back to normal.

They’re nothing but trouble, you know. These Heroes.

And Ren is only on that level? I thought Ren was supposed to be the strongest, but... I can’t count on them at all.

Raphtalia would wipe the floor with him.

If he was actually trying to get strong, then he would at least be able to hurt me. But for now, he is just focused on denying his crimes.

He can't even doubt the knowledge he brought from another world.

And even after his comrades' deaths... I can't accept the current Ren.

I could end his suffering now, but...

I'll put that train of thought on hold.

It's not something to be decided so easily.

And I think it will be fun to watch him suffer more.

Understand my pain, you bastard.

No matter what I did, I was considered evil. Now taste that living hell some more.

Heaven doesn't open in just a few weeks.

Independent Nature

I return to the village and relate Ren's story to Female Knight.

"Fumu... It seems the Hero of the Sword is quite the spoiled brat." (Female Knight)

Female Knight speaks whilst cricking her fingers.

It's not like I can't understand Ren's feelings, but he truly is a wimp.

"Relying only on otherworldly knowledge to rashly rush into battle... There should be a limit to being naïve." (Female Knight) "Well, that pretty much sums it up." (Naofumi)

"If you happen to catch him, turn him over to me. I'll personally make sure to re-educate him." (Female Knight) "...He may have just overestimated himself." (Naofumi)

"What are you saying? It's a knight's common sense to fight a battle even if victory is uncertain." (Female Knight)

Well, that does seem to be logical.

Teaming up on a weaker individual may seem like bullying.

In Net games it's common sense, but if practiced in the real world, there would be a problem.

You can't just wait until a stronger enemy appears, and then run away because you don't think you can win.

That would really cause a lot of problems.

This country may be at peace, but small skirmishes and monster infestations keep the knights vigilant.

Female Knight participated on the front lines of some of the fights against the Spirit Turtle, so she is qualified to say this.

She's quite strong. Her stats aren't as developed as Raphalia, but she makes up for it with skill.

"Anyways, I'll report this matter to the Queen. I'll be out for a bit, so is there anything else you'd like from her?" (Female Knight) "Let's see... what should we do about Rat?" (Naofumi)

She's the person I have to be most wary of right now.

She's trying to make a larger fighting force, and I've given her a bit of time.

"As you've requested, the Shadows are watching her movements, but she's been surprisingly obedient." (Female Knight) "Is there any indication that she is acting secretly?" (Naofumi) "None." (Female Knight)

Mu... I was prepared to act in case she did something, but it seems that isn't necessary.

I thought she may have been a spy, but it seems that isn't the case.

"Well occasionally, she... gets into arguments with the girl who tends to the Caterpillands, but that matter seems trivial." (Female Knight) "She does that even when I'm here." (Naofumi)

"It seems the subject of their disputes is a clashing of opinions." (Female Knight)

Their arguments always seem to be about the same things.

Taniko believes in the natural power of the monsters to level up, adapt, and get stronger, while Rat opts for the use of surgery and other methods to forcibly increase stats.

And every time, Taniko brings up Firo, who got strong on her own.

And then Rat suggests a surgery to raise Firo's intelligence, angering Taniko further.

The arguments then seem to go around in circles, but it seems that each side now has a firm grasp of the other's ideologies.

On some rare occasions, they would agree on a matter, and have a happy talk over it.

...I wonder how Rat's modifications are going.

"Well, I guess I should stop by." (Naofumi)

"What should we do?" (Raphtalia)

"I'm thinking of sending the slaves to peddle independently, so go teach anyone who wants to learn the skills needed in peddling." (Naofumi) "I understand." (Raphtalia)

"What about Firo?" (Firo)

"I'm going to Rat's place. Do you want to come with me?" (Naofumi) "NO!" (Firo)

Raphtalia goes and starts ordering around the villagers. Firo ran off at an alarming rate.

Well, I guess her dislike is understandable.

Rat did give off a really bad first impression to her...

"Umm..." (Imya)

"Hm?" (Naofumi)

Imya fidgets as she comes over to talk to me.

"What is it?" (Naofumi)

"I started learning how to make clothes from the strange person... here is my

first product.” (Imya)

The item she handed over was a pair of gloves.

The material is monster skin. The size is just right for my hands.

“Hero-sama, this is so you don’t get hurt when experimenting with medicine, so...” (Imya) “Yeah, thank you. You’re quite considerate.” (Naofumi)
They’re well made.

It seems the Lemo really are a dexterous race.

“Have you gotten used to the village?” (Naofumi)

“Ah, yes.” (Imya)

“If anything is troubling you, make sure to report it.” (Naofumi) “Yes...” (Imya)

“... Did something happen?” (Naofumi)

Imya begins looking at the ground as she speaks.

“Can I dig a hole here?” (Imya)

“... If that will make your working environment more enjoyable, then feel free.” (Naofumi) “Thank you very much.” (Imya)

She does look like a mole.

I guess she felt uncomfortable in the Camping Plant houses.

“You can order around the Dunes. Make it any size you want. However, make sure to think about where you dig.” (Naofumi) “Yes!” (Imya)

She’s a nice, obedient child.

The exact opposite of Kiel.

“Achoo” (Kiel) [61]

I hear Kiel sneeze from a bit away. I guess coincidences are scary.

And anyways, I went off to visit Rat’s lab.

It’s quite spacious, and has two floors. There is something like a sports playing field inside it as well.

...Exactly how far can these Camping Plants expand?

“Well, if it isn’t the Count. What’s up?” (Rat)

“I’ve come to check your progress.” (Naofumi)

I find Rat in the farthest room from the entrance, staring at a monster inside of a large test tube.

Somehow, the amount of test tubes she has have been steadily increasing. Inside of them, various things are floating. In one of them floats a Bioplant stalk.

“Ah, about that. The Bioplant Research... hasn’t really borne any fruit.” (Rat) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“I think you’ll have to wait a few days before you see any results. It seems it will be difficult to try to make it produce medicine.” (Rat) “It was something that I wasn’t able to do myself. I’ll wait patiently.” (Naofumi) “I don’t think it’s impossible. I’ll work on it.” (Rat) “I’ll wait expectantly.” (Naofumi)

Rat taps on the test tube glass, teasing the monster within it.

I can’t see the monster’s form clearly, but it seems to be smiling in Rat’s direction.

“What is that?” (Naofumi)

“Oh, this child?” (Rat)

As she speaks, her eyes wander around the room.

“There are kids that can’t do anything no matter how hard they try.” (Rat)

“Wha?” (Naofumi)

“I told you about this one before, right? The one the Hero tried to kill...” (Rat)

“It survived?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah, at least a portion of its body did... For now it can only live inside this test tube, but at least it won’t die soon.”

Rat speaks with a pained expression.

And the monster in the vial extends something towards Rat as if to console her.

“This one was able to understand human language well... It always worked hard to be strong.” (Rat) “You can understand it?” (Naofumi)

“For my thesis, I tried to see if monsters were able to think on the same level as humans.” (Rat) “Hmm...” (Naofumi)

“Monsters want to become strong too. And not just to survive, they want to be recognized as well. This child has an especially strong desire to do so.” (Rat)
I see.

I didn’t want to be called weak, but I climbed all the way here.

“I can understand this one’s thoughts quite well. No matter how hard it tried, this one never got any stronger. Can you guess this child’s level?” (Rat) “... Around 40.” (Naofumi)

“Correct, but... this one would always work itself to the ground, and I would have to heal it back up.” (Rat)

So it’s a monster she likes personally.

Is this person’s passion for modification... based on that monster?

“Ah, don’t misunderstand. I had always loved Modification from the start.” (Rat)

“Is that so...” (Naofumi)

I’m not getting that impression...

“No matter how much I research, there are still more mysteries. I’ve already stepped into the abyss of science, and I don’t think I will be coming out.” (Rat)

“Hm...” (Naofumi)

“When I introduced myself, I told you my ideals. But I won’t work on an unwilling subject.” (Rat) “I wonder...” (Naofumi)

I get the feeling that she is the type of person who would secretly conduct research and take action on her own accord.

I’m not buying it.

“I told you no!” (Taniko)

“Hm?” (Naofumi)

With a shaking voice, Taniko runs in and blocks the door from an approaching Caterpilland.

“What are you doing?” (Naofumi)

“This Caterpilland suddenly decided to visit that old lady!” (Taniko) “... Wha?” (Naofumi)

I look towards Rat, and see her walking towards the Caterpilland.

As Rat approaches it, the monster calms down.

“The monster the count raises are quite honest... This one has a good head, and

a high level of ambition.” (Rat) “Mu... I said no!” (Taniko)

“Please let this child act as it wishes.” (Rat)

“Wrong things are wrong!” (Taniko)

What are these two even trying to compete in?

I can kinda see what this argument is about.

No, I can just get the gist of what’s happening.

That Caterpilland is getting close to Rat, and Taniko is unhappy with this.

“You know, the reason I do this sort of research, the reason I spent my childhood learning about the sciences, and the reason I devoted my life to this work - It was so that I could give power to the children like these that came to me of their own accord. I like people to hold high expectations of me.” (Rat)

As if I would accept such game-like logic.

...is what I think, but if there’s a real-life example before my eyes, I guess I have to accept it.

“Well, Dragons and Filo Rials seem to hate me though. Most monsters seem to stay away from me. But this one seems to be okay. It may be because of the Count’s influence.” (Rat)

Is that how it is?

Is this the shield’s influence, or did these monsters just coincidentally turn out like this?

I think this is the Caterpilland that Kiel and friends found, so there may be other factors.

“This child chose its own path by itself.” (Rat)

“But...u...” (Taniko)

“Even though I say that, I don’t have the funds or materials to carry out the

procedures yet, so I'll put that matter on hold. Please go back home." (Rat)
Rat orders the Caterpilland to return.

And the Caterpilland is reluctantly dragged back to the stable by Taniko.

I think that Caterpilland was the one who dragged Kiel back when she got injured.

Because of its actions, we were able to avert a crisis.

It was supposed to be a slow monster, and yet...

"From what I see, if it grows naturally, it will soon hit its limit... That child still wants to become much stronger." (Rat) "I understand." (Naofumi)

I should respect the monster's right of choice as well... Though that Caterpilland seems to hate me specifically.

So it wants to become strong. Monsters have that desire as well.

Firo was born a strong monster, so she never had to worry about that.

"What do you do for your research, specifically?" (Naofumi) "Let's see... there are plenty of ways to carry it out..." (Rat) "Such as?" (Naofumi)

"Monsters that can carry passengers. I tried to modify one act as a ship and swim across the ocean. When this plan got out, I was once again tried for Heresy, though." (Rat) "In that instance, couldn't you just get an aquatic monster to pull a boat for you?" (Naofumi) "But haven't you always dreamed of riding a monster?" (Rat)

.....?

In old RPGs, you would sometimes be able to ride on a dragon's back and travel, but... this is a bit different.

"Can't you just ride a flying dragon?" (Naofumi) ^[62]

"I hate Dragons!" (Rat)

Mu... I don't understand this person's logic.

If it ain't broken, don't fix it.

"Isn't that just your personal preference?" (Naofumi)

"Flying Dragons cannot carry heavy loads." (Rat)

"Then you could find a bigger dragon..." (Naofumi)

"I will work on anything other than dragons. I'll make a new race to replace them." (Rat)

She was just advocating Monster right of choice, but this is the result?

Did something happen to her involving dragons?

No... Did her modifications take her down this route?

"Next, I'll make an Armor-type monster." (Rat)

"Oh?" (Naofumi)

I heard something intriguing.

I think the shield will prevent me from wearing it, but if Raphtalia or Firo were to equip it, it may heavily bolster their defense.

"Taking from the concept that the Hero's weapons share of a weapon that grows over time... However, I'm not getting anywhere. It's quite difficult." (Rat)
If she succeeds, we may be able to mass-produce heroes... but it seems the research is at a standstill.

The imitation I saw before took up a ridiculously large amount of Mana.

If making a Hero's weapon was that easy, then they wouldn't have gone to the trouble of using that..

"I have some leads, though. There are some monsters that take on the shape of

weapons. I thought I could use the Blood Sucking Demon Swords as reference... but that monster's sanity is quite low. It's hard to control." (Rat) "That seems to be an interesting idea, but it sounds expensive." (Naofumi) "You're right. That's why I still have a long way to go. For now, I am looking for insight in modifying the Bioplant." (Rat)

It seems that in order for Rat to complete her research, she will need more time and money.

But I don't think I can really help with it.

"Anyways, if there's someone you want me to cut up and modify, give me a call♪" (Rat) "Yes. Yes." (Naofumi)

So there hasn't been any progress. But Rat's skills are growing.

The skills of the one who grants power to monsters, the Mad Alchemist.

Translator note

1. ↑ TL: See Baby Elephant Syndrome.
2. ↑ TL: It's perfect for both farming and Farming.
3. ↑ TL: I believe Rishia is crying for joy at Kiel and Raphtalia reuniting
4. ↑ TL: (° 5 °)
5. ↑ TL: Quite a pain to translate anatomy terms.
6. ↑ TL: Can someone translate エアスト
7. ↑ TL: Literally Life Force Up.
8. ↑ TL: Though he may be stating the obvious, most of the skill names are in english while his explanation is in japanese.
9. ↑ TL: Yes, it really says that.
10. ↑ TL: Yes, scream louder.
11. ↑ TLN: [1]
12. ↑ TLN: Yes, that is what the raw said.
13. ↑ TLN : raw said gourmet but I think it meant picky.
14. ↑ TLN : Probably as items instead of for shield unlock.
15. ↑ TLN: either in terms of absorbed material or EXP.
16. ↑ TL: Food, the best way to raise a Loli army.
17. ↑ TL: He says, today I packed bento to be more specific.
18. ↑ Note: people is written here as 'men and women'.
19. ↑ TL: Bishounen
20. ↑ TL: I'm debating whether or not to translate Shield-Niichan as Shieldbro.
21. ↑

**IT'S
A
TRAP!**



TL Note:

22. ↑ TL: google it.
23. ↑ TL: I don't know the reference. Possibly Yukimura of Boku wa Tomodachi ga Tsukunai.
24. ↑ Author note (TL: The Real one)

Kiel wasn't meant to be an important character, however the personality I gave him overlapped with another male character I planned to make down the road, so I decided to give 'him' a little... quirk.
25. ↑ TLN: I think the one talking is kiel.. because you know the "niichan" thing.
26. ↑ TLN: I don't know who's talking.
27. ↑ TLN: “恋愛禁止って、女はべらせて何言ってた！” It was hard to understand.
28. ↑ TLN: I have no idea what they're talking about.
29. ↑ Edit: Corrected flow.
30. ↑ TLN: I don't know if this is Firo talking in 3rd person.
31. ↑ TLN: Again don't know whos talking well for sure it's either Kiel or Firo.
32. ↑ TLN: this is the best translation I could come up with.
33. ↑ TLN: same problem I don't know who answered, but probably this is Firo.
34. ↑ TL: Well, he literally says as long as they aren't radicals of the shield faith.
35. ↑ TL: He actually says this, I'm not taking it from the comments.
36. ↑ TL: Literally, Time to pay the land tax, Time to reap what you sow.

37. ↑ TL: Ginnoji, Push the end of it!
38. ↑ TL: The lowercase is in the original
39. ↑ TL: This scene is a Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind Reference. See the video [here](#)(end of chapter).
40. ↑ Translator Note: Valley Girl is read as Taniko.
41. ↑ TLN: Just to make it clear so nobody's confused: Rishia now chose to be full time all-around back then even though she's all-around the class that she chose focuses more on close combat because Itsuki is you know.. Range.. ref. Ch95
42. ↑ TLN: Firo's ahoge also went missing when Raphtalia Classed up... ref.ch81
43. ↑ TLN: He's talking about Motoyasu's companions.
44. ↑ TLN: If you read the Christmas special by Yoraikun, you will understand.
45. ↑ TLN: "Taniko" is "Valley child".
46. ↑ TLN: This translation seems appropriate hahaha
47. ↑ TL: remember, 3 of the 18 were outsiders.
48. ↑ TL: If you haven't noticed yet, Lemo is an anagram of mole. If you can think of a better anagram of it, please present it. (The Japanese is Lu-Mo, rearranged to form Mo-Lu)
49. ↑ TL: O...nii..chan...Da...ddy...
50. ↑ TL: It is implied that this merchant was the first victim of the balloons Naofumi kept under his robe.
51. ↑ TL: Most likely BL.
52. ↑ T/N: He calls him An-chan, which is derived from Aniki/Niichan.
53. ↑ T/N: Air Wake was originally translated as Air Walk in the early chapters, but the pronunciation is 'ea' (air) 'ueiku' (wake).
54. ↑ T/N: Pronounced Fo-burei. Seems to be a town/place? I'm accepting alternate name suggestions.
55. ↑ T/N: Naofumi is not sure if she is an alchemist, hence the question mark.
56. ↑ T/N: Pronounced Ratotiru Ansureia. Any other name suggestions?
57. ↑ TL: Instituted quite recently-in the last 15 years-to prevent grope and molestation, and they still exist during late night hours.

58. ↑ TL: as in how he can change entire attributes without taking the steps leading up to that into account.
59. ↑ TL: Balloon is usually in English, in this line it is said in Japanese.
60. ↑ TL: Tongue clicking sound.
61. ↑ TL: It is Japanese superstition that you will feel a chill if someone talks about you behind your back.
62. ↑ TL: Flying Dragon is a race of dragons, not simply a dragon that flies.