

# 盾の勇者の成り上がり<sup>⑧</sup>

アネホロトサキ

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MIYAKO

# Melty's Job

The next morning.

“Come to think of it, the messenger knight isn't here.” (Naofumi)  
I didn't see the female messenger knight. Where did she go?

Raphtalia, Rishia, and some of the slaves were taken to a training camp by the Granny.

Gaerion was playing with Atla and Taniko... [\[1\]](#)

- Growl\*...

Gaerion complained of hunger.

His ate so much of the Bioplant that its production couldn't keep up.

“Then, you guys go hunting again today.” (Naofumi)

“Okay.” (Taniko)

“Kyua!” (Gaerion)

“We'll be going.” (Atlas)

“Atlas! I'm going too.” (Fohl)

Fohl joined their party again today.

Well, that's fine.

“I won’t let anything hurt Atlas!” (Fohl)

“It’s alright, brother. And besides, Gaerion-chan will protect me.” (Atla)

“Alright shmalright! As if I’m gonna entrust Atlas to this monster.” (Fohl)

“Kyua!” (Gaerion)

“You’re not a monster, Gaerion!” (Taniko)

And so they left, with such a hubbub.

I’m glad they’re having fun.

“Well, I guess I’ll also go hunting in the ocean. I wanted to raise my level anyway.” (Sadina)

Sadina remarked as she moved out to the ocean.

Now then, I should do some land management.

The villagers had my orders, and it became relatively deserted in the daytime.

When the peddling group left, the place become deserted.

I taught a simple medicine recipe to the Lemo slaves, other dexterous slaves, and also anyone with an interest in making medicine.

Just after noon, I announced that the food made by the junior slaves was ready, and we had lunch.

It was a peaceful day.

I felt uneasy about Rat's activities, but she should’ve been looking after the monster hut.

“Count.” (Rat)

Rat appeared as we were eating.

“You're also letting the monsters class up, right?” (Rat) “Yeah.” (Naofumi)

“I’ll pick out some of the monsters that are ready, so can you take care of it?”  
(Rat) “Got it.” (Naofumi)

Even monsters can class up.

“The Caterpilland?” (Naofumi)

“That’s just it. If I research on the Caterpilland, it won’t get much stronger even with a class up. It grew, but its abilities aren’t that high, despite being under your influence.” (Rat)

Hmm...

She did mention that she was considering modifying it.

Even with her abilities, it’s a rather weak species.

“Then, isn’t it better than to not do it?” (Naofumi) “True.” (Rat)

After we finished talking about the monsters’ class up, I moved to the town.

The shops’ products have improved; they seem to have expanded favorably. The problem would be the formation of factions, but the Accessory Merchant seemed to have them all under his thumb and there weren’t any big movements.

I showed up at Melty’s estate.

... Melty was there struggling with a stack of official documents just like the Queen had been.

She dealt with them promptly, just like her mother.

That Melty did.

That Melty did. [2]

“Firo-chan Charm.” (Melty)

“Yeah.” (Firo)

She struck a pose at Firo to relieve some of the stress from her work.

At first glance, she looked like an idiot.

“You guys...” (Naofumi)

I'm surrounded by idiots.

But I won't say that.

I've heard that intelligent kids have some strange habits.

I guess this is something like that.

Melty's a bird enthusiast, so she probably has that kind of fetish too.

“Huh? Well isn't it Naofumi. What do you want?” (Melty) “I came to see how the state of affairs are.” (Naofumi) “We're doing well.” (Melty)

Melty took a break and rode on Firo's back while massaging her shoulders.

Why did she ride her...?

Was she pretending to ride a horse or something?

I really don't understand the relationship between these two.

“The people in the castle are working hard and the people in the Commerce Guilds are also putting in effort for your sake. I guess there is a misunderstanding problem with Demi-human adventurers.” (Melty) “I see, sorry about all this. By the way, the knight who usually passes on messages isn't around... and I also don't know the whereabouts of a number of the soldiers.” (Naofumi) “Huh? You didn't hear? We received a leave of absence saying that she and a number of soldiers were accompanying the Battle Instructor and

were secluding themselves in the mountain.” (Melty)

I almost fell over.

What was that?

She did say she wanted to be taught, but she was going so far as to take a vacation for it!?

How motivated was she!?

“Well Naofumi’s obtained the warping skill, so moving has gotten easier, right? We only need to receive messages from the castle now, so the priority dropped.” (Melty) “So it’s that kind of thing.....I’ve never tried using her to send instructions to the castle though.” (Naofumi) “It’s just that Naofumi didn’t use her. We relied on her when Shadow had other official instructions. Really.....” (Melty)

The documents in the seat Melty was sitting at.... there was some sort of cross written on it.

Should I write on it as a prank? I drew the design of a paper aeroplane.

“Which reminds me, was it a rule of the town? I’m sure it was written down somewhere.” (Naofumi) “Yes, this region is under the protection of the Hero of the Shield, but nevertheless, the Demi-humans have been trying to discriminate against the humans.” (Melty) “That’s troubling.” (Naofumi)

Discrimination is forbidden, the Hero of the Shield treats Demi-humans and humans alike; I had rules written down for everything.

It’s not like I didn’t understand.

But there were fools who felt like they could do whatever they liked here, just because I was the God of Demi-humans.

Of course, I won’t tolerate that sort of thing.

I won’t forgive anyone discriminating without a proper reason.

Just for the record, if they do have a reason, I may forgive them to a certain extent.

Otherwise I wouldn't be able to discriminate against the other heroes, right?

"Ah, so lucky. Naofumi's slaves are patrolling around so we're managing without problems, but when the town grows further, there might be some commotions we can't ignore." (Melty) ".....It should be similar to what happens in the castle town." (Naofumi) "That's true. We have to be tolerant to a certain extent, but I wonder if the people from Silt Welt and Schild Frieden know that." (Melty)

Melty took a deep sigh.

That this child has to be burdened with middle management, being a queen is hard work.

"I'll be honest. We kept it from Naofumi, but there are many abandoned Demi-human children; it's troubling." (Melty) ".....huh?" (Naofumi)

"Naofumi only made the Demi-humans he chose into his slaves, right? However, there's no end to the people abandoning their children near this town and village, wanting them to become Naofumi's subordinates without knowing that." (Melty) "What are you doing about it?" (Naofumi)

"For now, we're deporting them back to what we think is their own country, judging by their language and species. It's not like we can't discern their species and we're also receiving the deportation costs from the other party. But we don't know how serious they are." (Melty) "So the Demi-human countries have really become active." (Naofumi) "Now, can you warn them in some public place? It's troubling." (Melty) "Is that so.....I understand." (Naofumi)

Not directly interfering with me was something they said when they were peeved.

I wonder if there's any way to handle this problem.

Of course, it's not that I can't pick up the abandoned children and turn them

into slaves.

But if I do, it's likely there will be more children being abandoned.

I understand that, so I can't do it.

"It's true that we profit from the money left by the Demi-human adventurers, but regulating them is hard....and besides, humans come too." (Melty)  
One way or another, there's an emphasis on Demi-humans.

Come to think of it, if you look at the streets, there are many Demi-humans.

"If Firo-chan wasn't here for the disturbance before, it would have been dangerous." (Melty) "I see, I've been helped in many ways." (Naofumi) "If you think that, won't you warn them? At least by the end of today." (Melty) "I understand." (Naofumi)

I brought Melty with me and headed to the town square.

I stood on the platform established in the square and vocalized loudly.

"Er....everyone who put in effort for the sake of the town's development, and all the adventurers who are utilizing the town, I have some things I want you all to hear." (Naofumi)

After I checked that everyone had gathered, I started talking.

I didn't have a memo, but it was a simple task to say all the lines I had memorized earlier.

"Lately, some people have the misconception that we are a privileged class and have been causing some disturbances. That's why I'm giving this warning. In this town, there are no social statuses between races." (Naofumi)

A third of the demi-humans started to make noise.

"I'm not really saying to forget the past and make friends. However, whether

it's this town or the village, our purpose is the reconstruction. My goal is not to create a town in Melromarc that will provide Demi-humans with hospitality, but I want no more than to have a government like what the previous head who lived here created. Please don't forget this." (Naofumi)

As far as it goes, I heard that what the previous head wanted to do was to spread the awareness that Demi-humans and humans were equal living beings, in both hospitality and discrimination.

I also joined that cause.

"In the same way, my raising of slaves is a not a charitable enterprise, but for the sake of increasing the war potential during the waves. Please bear in mind that I don't have the intention of raising any abandoned children." (Naofumi)  
This was a problem I had to bring up in public.

It's not something that can be forgotten.

Jeez..... did they really think they could ask anything of God?

Whether it was Silt Welt or Schild Frieden...

They're nations which I may visit eventually, but I hope that they're the kind of nation that don't like to be influenced, if possible.

That is, when these problems occur.

I finished the announcement with no problems, and returned to the village.

After that was the trivial addition of Melty coming to blame me for a delay in her work, which was actually caused by her playing around with a paper aeroplane. She had Firo teach her how to make one and had used the paper on her desk – the document with a cross that I had drawn on as a prank. [3]

Come to think of it, I've made paper aeroplanes with the children before.

Although they didn't fly very well because we used the leaves of the Bioplant instead of paper.

I was told that that paper had the plans for the town written on it.

Indeed, you're still a child..

When I said that, Melty's face turned red, after which she became hysterical and left, together with Firo.

# Ding Dong Ditch

『Damn... This body's will is stronger than I thought. But given time...』

I think I've heard this voice before.

The voice sounds like it's in pain.

『Kukuku, luckily there are two parts of me close by. If only I could obtain one...』

This seems to be quite a Chuu2 situation. <sup>[4]</sup>

Mostly the atmosphere.

『What is this feeling? ... Is this Windea's presence? She survived! But...』

It's been six days since Raphtalia left for the mountains.

That morning...

Naofumi: *Sigh...*

It happened again.

Atlas has been sneaking into my bed lately.

Firo also occasionally sneaks in, so I just assumed it was her and went back to sleep.

Whenever this happens, I go get Fohl, but his situation's gradually changing.

On the morning of the second day Fohl was tricked.

Atlas left a dummy in her bed.

The next day, Fohl was suddenly overcome with sleepiness.

I think Atlas put something into his food.

This drug came from Gaelion.

Recently, he's learned Sleep Breath.

And then the next day... Fohl was physically put to sleep.

He's already losing to the girl.

I wonder what will happen today.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama! I have returned!"

With a bang, the door opens and Raphtalia enters.

She looked like she was looking forward to seeing me, but as soon as she steps in, her expression changed.

Naofumi: "She's been sneaking in here lately. Can you help me out here?"

Raphtalia: "Um... Just to clarify, nothing has happened yet, right?"

Naofumi: "What was supposed to happen?"

I am truly troubled by her sneaking into my bed.

Both Firo and Atlas don't listen when I tell them to stop.

Maybe the indecency of the situation is angering the Raphtalia's pure heart.

Does she think I'm the sort of man who would do this on purpose?

Raphtalia: *Sigh*... "That's right. You're just that sort of person."

Naofumi: "Please, go get Fohl. I'm more worried about him right now."

Raphtalia: "Yes."

Today, he was wrapped up in a mattress prison. [5]

He was left lying face down in his house unable to move the entire time.

Raphtalia: "Naofumi-sama? Why don't you just forbid her from sneaking in?"

Naofumi: "I drove her out yesterday, so she slept outside. The day before, I used the slave seal, but she ignored the punishment and came in anyway."

Raphtalia: "Is she some sort of Demon!?"

When I tried to drive her out she slept outside. Her previous illness was even more painful than the Slave Seal, so she was already resistant to it. She was able to sleep through the punishment.

Fohl is quite angry.

What exactly do you expect me to do?

Fohl himself was put to sleep against his will twice already.

Raphtalia: "That's right. Naofumi-sama is just that sort of person."

Naofumi: "Why do you keep saying that? What are you trying to say?"

Atlas: "... What's wrong Naofumi-sama?"

Atlas gets up slowly while acting innocent.

We're worrying over you, you know.

Raphtalia: "... You don't get it?"

Atlas: "I'm just sharing my sleeping spot with him. Is that so wrong?"

Naofumi: "To be honest, it's troubling me. Isn't the seal hurting you?"

Atlas: "The warmth in my heart outweighs the pain. Why can't I sleep with you?"

Naofumi: "Your brother will get noisy."

Fohl: "Atlas! Why do you have to sleep with someone like him!?"

Naofumi: "See what I mean?"

Atlas: "Don't mind my brother. I only yearn for Naofumi-sama's attention."

Fohl: "What are you saying!?"

Atlas has raised quite a commotion...

What could have possibly done this to her? There's one possibility.

Naofumi: "Raphtalia. Fohl."

Raphtalia: "What is it?"

Fohl: "What!"

Naofumi: "This might be a side effect from the Yggdrasil medicine."

Both: "Ha?"

Right. If that's the case then everything makes sense.

Many excellent medicines have troublesome side-effects. Maybe this one increases the psychological dependence of the person taking it.

That's the only explanation I can think of.

Naofumi: "Look at the Military Instructor. She's affectionately calling me Saint-sama. The Yggdrasil medicine might have a love potion like effect."

This high class medicine has a single defect. Yeah.

And the effect of the medicine on Atlas was greater than it was on the

Granny.

But I can't increase the slave seal effects on her. She could die.

Naofumi: "Anyway, until the effects dissipate, we must be vigilant."

Raphtalia: "T-that's right!"

Fohl: "Hah!?"

Raphtalia agrees with my hypothesis, but Fohl seems surprised.

Naofumi: "Are you unsatisfied with something?"

Fohl: "N-no! That must be it! It has to be a side-effect! It was a medicine strong enough to give Atlas a full recovery. It must have a strong side-effect too!"

Atlas: "You're wrong, Naofumi-sama! I yearn for you from the bottom of my hea-"

Fohl: "Now then Atlas, let's level up a lot today!"

Atlas: "Ah, Naofumi-samaaaaaaaaaa!"

Fohl grabs Atlas and leaves.

This is a reversal from the usual shenanigans.

It's a bit refreshing.

Despite how they act, they're still siblings.

Naofumi: "Now then. Raphtalia. Did you finish your mountain training?"

Raphtalia: "No... We decided to switch locations, so I stopped by..."

Granny: "Saint-sama, has my disciple Raphtalia stopped by here?"

I hear the Old Woman's voice from outside.

Disciple...

Naofumi: "I see..."

Raphtalia: "It seems... I must return to the mountains now."

Hengen Musou, was it?

It seems the training is tough.

Perhaps I will have to undertake it later.

Well, I probably have to.

If I take on an attack that ignores defense, I'll probably die.

Yes. I'll find some free time and train on my own.

Granny: "... Boy, do you wish for greater power?"

Outside, I see the Old Woman trying to recruit Fohl.

... Female Knight is looking on jealously from afar.

She took a vacation to go with the old woman, but she hasn't been taught yet?

Fohl: "I-I have a duty to look after my little sister!"

Granny: "I won't accept it if you escape with such a lukewarm reason. For the Saint-sama, you must attain even greater strength!"

Fohl: "A-Atlas! I-I am! I aaaaammmmm!"

Was Fohl's fate decided from the beginning?

...This is no good.

If Fohl's gone, how am I supposed to prevent Atlas from sneaking into my

bed?

Hmm? Atlas is waving her hands at me.

*Now there's nothing stopping me from sleeping with you.*

That's what she must be thinking.

I must take drastic measures.

Raphtalia: "For now, let me take some measures. You don't have to worry!"

Naofumi: "Ah, understood. I'll rely on you."

Raphtalia: "Yes. I definitely won't let Naofumi-sama make any mistakes."

If I leave it to Raphtalia, it should be okay.

Hey, what do you mean by make any mistakes?

After breakfast, Raphtalia and the others set off once again.

And they took Fohl with them.

Knock knock.

Again. I've been Ding-Dong-Ditched quite a bit recently.

They're probably delighted over seeing me come out and finding no one.

That's why after the slaves gathered at breakfast, I accessed the slave-seal options and checked a box.

Naofumi: "Recently, someone's been pranking me at home. Does anyone have anything to say about this?"

... Nobody stepped forward.

And none of their slave seals activated.

So it wasn't a slave?

Then...

I stared at the soldiers, and other shopkeepers who have come to the village.

They all shook their heads.

... Who could it be?

I confirm it.

I open the door, and no one's there.

This happens three times a day on average.

I could get someone to watch the door, but then the culprit probably won't pull anything.

But I can't really leave this matter alone.

Knock knock.

Yesterday I waited by the door and opened it the second it was knocked.

It was Kiel.

And like Atlas, she claimed it was the first time that she knocked.

She asked what the orders were for today. She was with a large group of slaves so she probably wasn't the culprit.

Today, Kiel and the others have left to go peddling.

The only slaves in the village at the moment are those that are good with their hands, and I have already told them not to come to my house this morning.

So this time it must be the culprit.

I won't let them away today.

Naofumi:「Shield Prison!」

I capture whoever's on the other side of the door.

I open the door.

The Shield Prison is shaking; it looks like I caught something.

Rat: "What's wrong, Count?"

Naofumi: "Rat, what are you doing here now?"

Rat: "I took a walk for a change of pace. More importantly, what are you doing?"

Naofumi: "Recently, someone's been knocking my door and running. I told you at breakfast, right?"

Rat: "Ah, right. So that's the culprit?"

Naofumi: "Most likely."

Rat: "I wonder what sort of person it is."

The Shield Prison's effects wears off and disappears.

Gaelion: "KYUAAAAAAAAA!?"

...

Rat and I stare at him with the same fed up expression.

Yeah, if it wasn't a slave, I should have suspected the monsters. But I didn't think there was a monster who would actually Ding-Dong-Ditch.

Gaelion tries to escape by flying into the sky.

I open the monster seal and activate a punishment.

Gaelion: “KYUAAAA!?”

Gaelion falls to the ground and begins thrashing about.

Including his tail, the dragon’s full height is now two meters.

He definitely looks like a dragon.

But his tail is too thick.

His eyes are big, and he gives off the impression of an innocent child. He’s also a bit fat.

He's currently level 35.

His growth has begun to slow down. He didn’t grow as big as I thought he would.

Taniko hears Gaelion cry out, and comes running.

Taniko: “Gaelion, what’s wrong!?”

Naofumi: “He’s the culprit. I caught him red-handed.”

Taniko: “Eh?”

Taniko seems to be deliberating whether or not to defend Gaelion. She looks at me.

Naofumi: “Don’t defend him. If someone does something wrong, they will be punished.”

Taniko: “Understood... bad Gaelion. You can’t pull pranks. Bad!”

Gaelion: “Kyuaa...”

Firo: “What’s happening, master?”

Firo hears the commotion and comes over.

Wasn't she playing with Melty?

Firo: "Ha, you made him mad!"

Firo taunts Gaelion and tries to rile him up.

Firo: "Gaelion made master mad. That's why master belongs only on Firo's back."

Gaelion: "KYAUUUUUUUUUU!" [6]

Gaelion gets angry.

I turn on Firo's punishment as well.

Firo: "AKYAAAAAA! W-why?"

Naofumi: "Don't laugh at someone else's misfortunes."

Firo: "B-but master laughs at others..."

... Now that she mention it, she's right.

I deactivate the monster seal.

I understand Raphtalia's feelings now.

Though I don't plan on reforming myself.

Rat: "Why are you admitting defeat here!?"

Naofumi: "I enjoy schadenfreude, so I don't have the right to lecture others on it."

Rat: "You know..."

Rat puts her hand on her head. She seems amazed.

I laugh at Witch and Trash's failures. I laugh at the other heroes' situations.

I can't be persuading others not to do the same.

Though I don't plan on reforming myself.

Rat: "Just because you think he's your rival, you can't go around saying things like that."

Firo: "Bu..."

Rat: "If you get me angry, you know what happens, right?"

Firo: "No!"

What's with this farce? Though this might be good therapy for Firo.

Taniko: "Why did you pull this prank?"

Taniko pats Gaelion's face.

Gaelion calls out softly.

Taniko: "It's because he wanted to play with you, he says."

Naofumi: "Ha?"

Taniko: "You never play with him. You only play with that bird."

Firo: "Mu...!"

Firo and Taniko glare at each other.

When Gaelion is concerned, Firo gets serious.

It's not like I particularly play with Firo either.

Naofumi: "Wait, wait... so if I don't play with him, he'll keep doing this?"

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

He nods.

I can't be bothered to look after him.

I look at Rat.

Rat: "Skinship is important. For both of you."

Is that so? Well, that seems like a pain.

Naofumi: "Then, Firo and Gaelion. I'll play with you guys every day on rotation. However, if you interrupt the other, your turn will be skipped."

Firo: "Mu...!"

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

They glare at each other and grumble.

Naofumi: "Then I won't play with either of you."

Firo: "I-I got it."

Gaelion: "KYUA KYUA."

Both sides give in and nod.

Naofumi: "Then today, we'll start with Gaelion."

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

Firo: "Eh...!"

Naofumi: "Half the day's over. Tomorrow, you will get a longer turn, so endure it. Aren't you supposed to be the older one here?"

Firo: "Mu... I got it. Then."

Reluctantly, Firo invites Taniko to go level.

Atlas goes along with them.

Rat: "Oh right, Count. I thought I should teach you how to make use of a dragon."

Naofumi: "What?"

Rat: "Body fluids from dragons are high class medicinal ingredients."

Naofumi: "I see..."

Rat: "His saliva and breath might make for good materials."

Oh right, Atlas was able to make a sleeping drug with Gaelion's breath.

In order to put her brother to sleep.

I wonder how he fell for that so easily...

Rat: "Similarly, some parts of Filo Rials can be turned into medicine, but... that child is extraordinary. I recommend getting closer to her and exploiting that later."

Naofumi: "Oy, do you really love monsters?"

Firo's saliva?

Motoyasu is the only one who would want something like that.

Maybe I'll consider it.

Naofumi: "Now then, Gaelion. What should we play?"

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

He wags his tail like a dog's. He looks happy.

I guess I'll play with the Frisbee Shield.

I change my shield into a Frisbee and throw it.

Gaelion chases it majestically while flapping his wings.

The disc flies quite far.

He catches the thrown Frisbee, it disappears and returns to my hand.

Gaelion seems overjoyed. He flies straight at me and begins licking my face.

It's nice how pure he is. Unlike that talking bird.

After playing with Gaelion for a while, I went back to my work.

# Wimp

Naofumi: “Raphtalia’s Atlas countermeasure is you?”

Sadina: “Yes, I am also quite troubled.”

Sadina answers while pouring herself a glass of sake in my room.

Why was she even chosen?

Sadina: “Well, just leave it to this Onee-san.”

Naofumi: “That’s just making me more anxious.”

Sadina had a fast growth rate, she is already level 35.

She hunts alone.

I wonder how strong the sea monsters she fights are.

Should I send the other slaves ocean monster-hunting? I could build boats, and...

Sadina: “What exactly should I do? Should I act like I’m having a good time with Naofumi-chan in front of Atlas-chan?”

Naofumi: “That sounds idiotic. What do you mean by, ‘a good time’?”

She’s avoiding saying anything indecent, but Sadina is slowly taking off her loincloth.

Who wants to have a good time with you!? Stop kidding around.

Raphtalia, your personnel choice is off.

Sadina: "If it's with Naofumi-chan, I think I can have a good time."

Naofumi: "Listen to people when they're talking to you."

Sadina: "Hmm? What were you thinking of? I just wanted to invite you to drink sake with me."

Naofumi: *Sigh...*

My head hurts. And I haven't even had a drink.

So she was adjusting the cloth to not spill anything on it.

I'm supposed to be past the age where I get flustered by something like this.

Naofumi: "Anyways, stop calling me Naofumi-chan."

Sadina: "Isn't it fine?"

Naofumi: "No, it's not. That's why I'm telling you."

Why am I spending my night under the same roof with her? Dealing with people like this tires me out.

This is all Atlas's fault.

Sadina: "Don't be so stiff. Gaelion-chan is also helping keep watch."

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

Just in case, we also have Gaelion standing on watch.

He's too big to fit through the door, but we somehow managed to squeeze him in.

Gaelion is curled up in a corner of the room.

He occasionally wanders around, looking at the objects in my room curiously.

Sadina: "Sleeping with Gaelion-chan feels quite high-class."

Naofumi: "That's all you're thinking of?"

This person... I'm not going to become her toy.

Sadina: "Do you have any intention of returning Atlas-chan's feelings?"

Naofumi: "Feelings? She's a child. Raphtalia as well. My relationship with them is parental."

They didn't have anyone to look out for them, and suddenly I took up that role for them.

Even if they mistake that emotion for love, it's more like the love they will have for their family.

As an elder, I cannot approach them based on those vague emotions.

That's something that comes after they mature mentally.

Even if they mature, we are in a situation where anyone could die in battle at any moment.

I only bought Raphtalia because she was the same gender as Witch. I don't have the right to be romantic with her.

The same goes for Atlas.

Naofumi: "I'm a coward, you know. I'm pushing them toward a path that may take them to their deaths."

Sadina: "And that's Naofumi-chan's reason?"

Sadina stares at me seriously.

Sadina: "Naofumi-chan sure does treasure everyone."

Naofumi: “Did you hear what I just said? I’m nothing but a coward.”

Sadina: “I’ll leave it at that. But if you get really close to Raphtalia-chan, you better be prepared for stuff like that.”

Naofumi: “What are you even talking about?”

I think the sake is getting to her.

After talking for a while, she lies on the bed, and turns her back to the door.

Atlas: “Um.”

What the hell are you doing? Before I can say that, Atlas quickly opens the door and enters the room.

Sadina: “Oh my, Naofumi-chan is quite bold~.”

Naofumi: “Who is being b-!?”

She lifts up the covers and pulls me in, interrupting me.

What is this? W-wait!

Sadina: “Ara, Atlas-chan? Naofumi-chan is currently doing something fun with this Onee-chan, so please come back later.”

Don’t screw with me.

I don’t want to be put into a situation that could cause such misunderstandings.

Her large body is trying to crush me.

But, don’t forget that I am the Hero of the Shield.

Something of this weight feels like nothing.

Gaelion: “KYUA!”

For some reason, even Gaelion climbs into the bed.

Atlas: “I don’t really get that feeling...”

Sadina: “Ara? You saw through it. Oh well. ‘Twas a failure.”

Naofumi: “What do you mean failure!?”

Was this Sadina’s supposed Atlas countermeasure?

She's blind, so if she doesn’t feel that sort of presence, Atlas won’t be fooled.

Even if it succeeded, my reputation would be destroyed. Everyone would look at me like I was a pervert.

What sort of situation would bring me into this position with Sadina?

Naofumi: “Quit it!”

Sadina: “Then onto stage 2. Gaelion-chan.”

Gaelion: “KYUA!”

Sadina: “Go have some fun with Atlas.”

Naofumi: “That’s not happening. Give it up.”

Stage 2...!?

Are these people even serious?

Atlas: “Naofumi-sama and Sadina-san sure get along well.”

Atlas ignores us and comes in.

Don’t enter my house without my permission!

Sadina: "Now then, Atlas-chan. You understand why I'm here, right?"

Atlas: "...Yes."

Sadina: "You're quick minded. Atlas-chan is quite a good girl, so please leave these sorts of things for when you become an adult."

Atlas: "I can't."

Sadina: "T-this Onee-san doesn't like kids who don't listen."

Atlas: "I yearn for Naofumi-sama. I just want to get a little closer to him."

Sadina: "Arara... This is quite serious."

Sadina seems to have given up.

So Raphtalia's countermeasures only go this far.

Sadina: "Naofumi-chan, won't you have some fun with Atlas-chan?"

Naofumi: "Hell no!"

Sadina: "Then that's that."

Sadina puts her hand on Atlas's shoulder.

Sadina: "Atlas-chan, Naofumi-chan is a wimp, so he can't bring himself to devour women."

Naofumi: "Wimp? Oy!"

Somehow this situation has gotten out of control!

Atlas: "It's alright. Naofumi-sama is someone who strikes when the time is right."

Atlas seems to have developed a strange trust in me!

This is a pain! I want to run away.

Does this girl even know what she's saying?

Sadina: "Your resolve is strong. Atlas-chan, Naofumi-chan and I are concerned about your age."

Atlas: "My... age?"

Sadina: "Yeah, Atlas-chan is still a child. You've just gotten over your illness, so please grow up healthy. And if you still love Naofumi-chan at that point... Naofumi-chan will consider it as well."

Atlas: "I see..."

Atlas seems troubled. She tilts her head as she answers.

Nice follow-up.

Because she's a child, tell her 'After you grow up, we'll get married.'

Since I was raised in Otaku culture, I know the phrase works.

There'll be problems down the road, but I don't plan to stay in this world for too long. So I don't have to deal with it.

Yeah, let's go with this.

... Wait. Isn't this the mindset of a wimp?

Let's not think about it too hard.

Sadina: "It's still too early for you."

Atlas: "But I heard that he sleeps with Raphtalia-chan."

Naofumi: "Not that 'sleep with'. We just sleep in the same house. The only one who sometimes climbs into my bed is Firo."

Atlas: “Then, without any deeper meaning, please let me sleep in the same bed as you.”

It was no good. Words aren't getting through.

No it seems that they are, but her resolve is strong.

Atlas: “I could die tomorrow. If I have to wait to adulthood, it might be too late.”

... So she realized it.

In this world, you don't know when and where you might die.

And the people of my village are eventually going to combat the wave.

It goes without saying that the people here might die.

But this is a child whose illness could have taken her at any time.

She must live treasuring every day.

Atlas: “I can't live relying on my brother forever. I want to properly marry someone.”

Sadina: “... And that someone is Naofumi-chan.”

Atlas: “Yes, I can't consider anyone other than Naofumi-sama.”

Sadina: “Then it would be best for you to understand his feelings more.”

Atlas: “Naofumi-sama's feelings?”

Sadina: “Right. Naofumi-chan is considering Atlas-chan and everyone else. It's not like he has no special feelings for you, but there is something more important than that. Do you understand?”

Atlas: “... Yes.”

Atlas answers after a long silence.

Sadina has a way with words.

Is she just good with dealing with children?

I should caution myself not to get swept up into her pace.

Sadina: “From Naofumi-chan’s point of view, Atlas-chan is a precious villager. Everyone in this village is like family to him. Even Raphtalia understands this.”

Though I think that Raphtalia is quite diligent, and uninterested in love.

But if I bring that up now, it'll just complicate things, so I'll keep quiet.

Sadina: “So don’t try to be selfish or Naofumi-chan will get mad. Please wait for the right opportunity to get him.”

Atlas: “I understand.”

Sadina points at me... For some reason, her index finger and middle finger are curled with her thumb in-between them. [7]

In my world, that sign is quite dangerous.

I wonder what it means in this one.

It seems Sadina is using it in the way I know.

Atlas: “Then I’ll sleep in his room waiting for my chance.”

Naofumi: “Nothing changed!”

Gaelion: “KYUA!”

What am I supposed to do?

Sadina: “There’s no helping it. This Onee-chan will sleep with you. Don’t go crawling into Naofumi-chan’s bed.”

Atlas: "Got it."

For now... Does she understand?

I don't feel any safer.

Atlas lies down on Raphtalia's bed.

Atlas: "Sadina-san, will you tell me a bedtime story?"

Sadina: "Let's see, then will one about the ocean be fine?"

Sadina soothes Atlas and begins speaking.

She's a strange person, but she seems nice.

She's trusted by the villagers, though I don't get what they see in her. She's become about as trustworthy as me.

They rely on her more than Raphtalia.

She also seems good with children. If she doesn't mess around, there are a few jobs I want her to do.

Gaelion: "KYUA!"

Gaelion was listening to Sadina's story, but he soon got bored and began snooping around the room.

He sticks his head into the sack I keep the materials used to make new clothes and weapons.

Naofumi: "Hey, don't tamper with that."

Gaelion is quite a curious one. He's also easy to deal with. Firo was also like this once.

Is what... I thought.

But I never thought this would be the trigger for that big incident.

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

# Lv Drain

Gaelion: “KYUA!”

The sack collapses and the contents fall out.

Recently, Gaelion has acquired some bad habits.

Last time it was ding-dong-ditch, this time it's the sack rummaging.

I scold him every single time, but he doesn't stop.

Just when Atlas became more obedient, now Gaelion's acting up.

Also, Firo does the same thing. Even now.

Firo, while rummaging through garbage, would refer to them as treasures.

After all, she is a bird. Gaelion is no different.

Ah, I'm sure the dumpster diving is also going to turn into territorial disputes.

Naofumi: “Ah jeez... look at this mess I have to clean up.”

Out of the sack roll demon bones, ores, and the Zombie Dragon's core which was previously embedded in the Barbarian's Armor.

The Zombie Dragon core continues to roll.

Gaelion sees the Zombie Dragon's core, chases it with his eyes, and starts playing with it.

His reaction is like a cat's.

This reminds me, Gaelion and Firo both like shiny things.

Didn't Firo's eyes also shine brightly when she saw the Zombie Dragon's core for the first time? They both share the same habit. [8]

Gaelion: "KYUAA!?"

Though I am slightly relaxed by this happy state, I have no desire for this mood.

Let's end this quickly with a swift scolding.

Paku!

Gaelion grips the core of the Zombie Dragon with his jaws.

Naofumi: "Hey. That thing isn't yours. Return it quickly."

I might as well have been talking to the wind; Gaelion pays no attention to me.

The Zombie Dragon's core is deep in his mouth... Honestly.

Gokkun.

He swallows it.

Naofumi: "Hey! Spit it out!"

I grab Gaelion by the scruff and shake him.

Huh, didn't the monster seal have a punishment for that?

I try activating the system.

Gaelion: "KYU!?"

Gaelion convulses and writhes with his eyes wide open.

Gaelion: “KYU..... GYA..... KYUUU.....”

Gaelion breaks out into cold sweat, his eyes tightly shut and moans as if he's enduring something.

I can hear Gaelion's whole body creaking.

Naofumi: “O-oi.”

Sadina: “What's going on?”

Atlas: “There's a terrible ominous feeling overflowing from Gaelion-chan, is he all right?”

An ominous feeling?

Before I could ask, I see with my own eyes a darkish purple light being emitted from Gaelion's body..... and the magical power is unleashed.

I recognize this color.

When I equipped the Wrath Shield, Firo was enveloped by the same aura.

Gaelion: “GYA00000000!”

With bloodshot eyes, Gaelion roars towards the ceiling.

A breath of magic is unleashed from Gaelion's mouth and the ceiling is blown away in an instant.

Gaelion: “GYA!”

- Flap\*... the sound from his wings reverberates as they begin to expand, as Gaelion leaps high into the air.

Great! I'll just open the monster seal and activate the punishment.

Opening the monster seal!

But the view for my status window is warped; the monster seal can't be activated.

Gaelion: "GYAOOOOOO!"

Before I call out to Gaelion, he flies off.

Naofumi: "W-what?"

Sadina: "What just happened?"

Naofumi: "Gaelion ate the Zombie Dragon's core that used to be in my armor. Then this happened."

Atlas: "Something... wrapped around Gaelion-chan... and then—"

We exit the building and look at the direction Gaelion flew in.

Rat: "What happened?"

The slaves who remained in the village emerged when they heard the commotion.

Taniko: "What? Did something happen?"

Rat and Taniko look in my direction.

Naofumi: "To tell you the truth—"

I explained how Gaelion ate the Zombie Dragon's core.

Rat: “The core of a Zombie Dragon..... the Count sure has strange things.”

Naofumi: “Do you have any ideas?”

Rat: “I’m not that knowledgeable about dragons. Dragons are a species whose ecology is shrouded in mystery. Though I’ve heard the cores found in other dragons are highly desired... but to make him lose control like this...”

Taniko: “We must chase after him.”

Taniko speaks impatiently. Oh yeah, it’s her precious dragon.

The core of the Zombie Dragon is important for my armor, and in the worse case, I’ll get it back even if I have to fight Gaelion for it.

Naofumi: “I understand. We have no choice but to call Firo and leave.”

It doesn’t mean we couldn’t just chase after him, but it would be much quicker with Firo.

I haven’t even ridden him yet, but I have to take him down. What kind of dragon is he?

Naofumi: “We need horses to get to the next town...”

Riding on horses prepared by the soldiers, we are off to find Firo.

Halfway there, we meet several soldiers on horses riding in from the opposite direction.

Soldier: “Ah, Shield Hero! We were just on our way to fetch you.”

Naofumi: “What is it? I also have an errand to attend to.”

Soldier: “Princess Melty urgently summons the Shield Hero. It seems something grave has happened to the Shield Hero’s holy bird.”

Naofumi: “What!?”

Guided by the soldiers, we head toward the clinic in town.

Upon entering, Melty comes rushing, about to break into tears.

Melty: "Firo-chan started suffering suddenly. Naofumi. Help Firo-chan!"

Naofumi: "Suddenly telling me to be a doctor... I don't understand because I'm not a treatment specialist, but if there's something I can do, I will do it."

Melty: "Absolutely!"

That being said, if it's a really dangerous disease, there's no choice but to rely on the Yggdrasil medicine.

The problem is, I only have one left, but if it's for Firo, then it's worth using.

I'm reminded of how deeply attached I am to Firo; I will spare no expense.

Naofumi: "Anyway, let me have a look."

Melty: "Yes."

I enter into the examination room accompanied by Melty and the Treatment Master.

There, Firo lies wearily in her monster form.

Firo: "Uhh... uhhh..."

Around her abdomen, her body is eroded like when I equipped the Wrath Shield.

Actually, it's worse. It would be better to say that the damage has greatly increased.

Though the erosion is resisting against the influence of the shiny crown of feathers on Firo's head, the erosion is winning.

Naofumi: “What’s going on here? Can this even be cured by the Yggdrasil medicine?”

Treatment Master: “I'm not sure. Because the magical connotation is so strong, I don't expect Yggdrasil medicine to have any effect.”

The bewildered Treatment Master answers my questions.

I check Firo's status.

I can determine simple matters such as whether Firo is being invaded by poison or paralysis.

Firo: “Oh, master.....”

Firo reaches out to me, groaning painfully.

I touch Firo gently on the cheek.

She wasn't in her human form, and yet, when stroking her cheek, through painful groans, Firo smiles comfortably and closes her eyes.

I continue with the status verification.

Firo's status screen flickers many times as though caught in a sandstorm.

No matter how you consider it, it is unusual.

I also notice a big problem while I'm there.

Firo's level is lower than it should be.

Level down? What is going on?

Multiple possibilities are surfacing.

The problem is that there's only circumstantial evidence for now, so I can't be certain.

Naofumi: "...Bring in Rat from the village."

Melty: "Understood."

After a while, not only Rat, but even Atlas, Taniko, and Sadina come in.

Taniko: "Firo-chan!? What happened?"

The worried Taniko runs up to Firo.

Usually, you side against Firo whose relationship with Gaelion is bad, but now you're saying you are worried.

Is it because you like monsters?

Naofumi: "Rat, what you think?"

Rat: "If I was to take a haphazard guess, I'd say she's being eroded by a curse, don't you think? Will you let me have a look?"

Rat reads the diagnostic notes that the Treatment Master made, and then she begins to medically examine Firo's body.

Naofumi: "If you can look at the status, you can see that her level is going down little by little."

Rat: "Level down? Isn't that a high-ranked curse? So far I've never seen anything as terrible as this."

Naofumi: "I'm willing to bet this has a connection with Gaelion losing control and running off at the same time. What do you think?"

Rat: "I think there's no doubt. But... is there a matching contact point between Gaelion and Firo?"

Naofumi: "There is, if you assume the core of the Zombie Dragon as the

cause.”

Rat: “What?”

Naofumi: “During our encounter with the Zombie Dragon, Firo ate his core. The one I had was only a small fragment.”

In fact, the reason why Firo managed to defeat the Zombie Dragon lay in the decisive moment when Firo ate his core. When we assume that both events are connected, we become more convinced.

Rat: “Indeed, it is reasonable to consider that something is influencing Firo, who ate the core, and Gaelion, who is currently running out of control.”

Naofumi: “I suppose.”

Rat: “Then confirm it with Gaelion. I feel like that's not the end of it, somehow.”

I verify Gaelion’s status.

As expected, just like Firo’s status window, as though obscured by a sandstorm, there are a lot of things which could not be read.

However...

Naofumi: “His level has skyrocketed.”

It is visibly increasing.

Gaelion’s level which was 35 has become 45.

...It’s exceeded the class up limit.

Atlas: “Umm... I feel an ominous force is flowing out from Firo-chan.”

Naofumi: “We can see that.”

Atlas: “No, I don’t mean that.”

Atlas points her finger at something.

Although there's nothing there.

Rat: "Atlas-chan can see things that are not visible to the naked eye. She might know where the force is moving towards."

Naofumi: "Hmm..."

There is enough possibility.

She has a surprisingly useful ability.

The problem is the supposed destination in which Firo's life force is flowing.

It's the same direction that Gaelion flew in.

Naofumi: "Is it possible for Firo to vomit out the core?"

Atlas: "That's impossible. Using my magical power of perception, I can see the core circulating throughout her entire body."

I verified Firo's status.

To recall Raptalia and the others to chase after Gaelion... at the speed her stats are decreasing, we don't even have two days.

Firo's level is quickly dropping to one no matter how I slice it.

No, it's still better if it gets to one and stops. Worst case scenario, she might die.

Atlas: "Also, I can see some additional force leaking out from Naofumi-sama."

Naofumi: "What?"

I check my own status screen.

There's no noticeable change.

Atlas: "That— it's from around your left arm."

Where I have my shield attached.

It's coming from the shield... I let the shield absorb half of the core fragment.

[9]

Does that mean the shield's ability is decreasing?

I check the list again to confirm, but there are no abnormalities for now.

Rather, I let out a sigh of relief.

What was I supposed to be angry about again?

... I sense danger.

Naofumi: "For now, locate where the Battle Instructor is having the training camp and give instructions to return. We are chasing after Gaelion immediately!"

Otherwise, there wouldn't be enough time.

Atlas steps forward full of determination.

Atlas: "Naofumi-sama, there is something I would like to try out for a bit on Firo."

Naofumi: "What is it?"

Atlas: "I would like to suppress the leakage of Firo's force, even by a little."

Atlas goes to Firo's side and puts a hand on her chest; she affixes both hands lightly.

Firo: “Mm... ah...”

Firo moans painfully while opening her eyes and slowly gets up.

Firo: “It became a little bit lighter.”

Melty: “Firo!”

Melty runs up to Firo.

Atlas: “I think we’ve gained some extra time.”

Naofumi: “Well then... A carriage...”

Shit. There aren't any vehicle mounts.

The other Filo Rial is out peddling.

Do I have to rent a Filo Rial in town?

Naofumi: “The pursuing party will be me, Sadina, and... Tani... No, you and Rat will—”

Firo: “The one who will draw master’s carriage is... Firo.”

Firo declares with a strong will in her eyes while being supported by Atlas.

Melty: “Firo-chan is no good! You have to stay still.”

Naofumi: “Yes. You rest quietly in bed.”

However, Firo shakes her head in refusal.

Firo: “No—... Firo is absolutely going together with master.”

There is none of the usual vigor, but she takes a step forward and insists to follow at any cost.

... If she was made to stay here, she would certainly come chasing.

She is very stubborn.

Naofumi: "Well, if anything happens, I'll leave you in a clinic. And then, I'll get something else to pull the carriage."

Atlas: "Naofumi-sama!?"

Naofumi: "Atlas, you'll also be there to suppress it, right?"

Atlas: "Ye-Yes!"

Naofumi: "Good."

Melty: "I will go too!"

Melty declares even though she is on the verge of breaking out into tears.

Ah, her best friend is in a pinch. She insists on coming by any means necessary just like Firo.

I ignore the declaration of the princess.

Naofumi: "Do not act rashly. You are a princess."

Melty: "Being a princess comes second, Firo-chan is my friend!"

Naofumi: "I see."

... Firo was throwing a tantrum about wanting to protect Melty before.

Firo has a good friend indeed.

Naofumi: "We are setting off to chase after Gaelion. The soldiers of the castle must hurry and notify Raphtalia and the others."

Everyone: "Yes!"

Thus, we let the stubborn Firo overdo herself and left on a carriage.

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# Grasping Forces

It's been four hours since we left.

Firo's level-drain is being suppressed by Atlas.

Firo's level is declining steadily. Though the level-drain speed has slowed down, it's still severe.

Naofumi: "Atlas, do you know where the power is going to?"

Atlas: "Yes, Firo-chan tells me which way it's going."

Naofumi: "Okay."

Firo: "Haaaa... Haaaa..."

Atlas: "Firo-chan?"

Atlas is riding on Firo, and I let Melty drive the carriage.

Rat and Taniko ride along, while Sadina is watching the back.

Firo is getting considerably exhausted.

It'll be dangerous if we don't make it there fast.

Motoyasu's beloved Firo is in a great pinch...

I wonder what that guy is up to now.

Raising that flag is impossible.

That guy isn't even around when you need him.

Naofumi: "Where on earth is he flying off to?"

Atlas: "I can sense that he is somewhere over there."

It's midnight. The dawn will come, but still far off.

Naofumi: "Worst-case scenario, we have to put Gaelion down. Do you understand?"

I told Taniko directly. Taniko was the closest one to him. Even though Gaelion is technically mine, I feel I have a responsibility to tell her.

Taniko: "... Mmm."

Naofumi: "That was strangely logical; I thought that you'd refuse it more."

Taniko: "It's not like I'm giving up just yet!"

Naofumi: "Well, I know."

Taniko: "I understand that it'll be a tough decision. However, I refuse to give up."

Naofumi: "Is that so... then I will get rid of any hesitation."

Taniko: "I get it! It's our last resort! But we absolutely have to help Gaelion!"

I'm trying to be as casual as I can.

I understand that Gaelion is what's tormenting Firo.

Gaelion is a huge asset for us. Getting rid of him is going to be our last option. I want to avoid that as much as possible.

Taniko: "I hate Heroes."

Taniko sheds tears, and she keeps on crying all the while.

Naofumi: "I'm used to being hated."

Taniko: "It's not you."

I sympathize with her. The other Heroes would never consider others' feelings, but not me.

The one she is thinking of... is it Itsuki? Saving people halfway, the barbarity of that Hidden Justice...<sup>[10]</sup>

But this feeling is something different.

Who exactly have I become?

Where is he flying off to anyway?

Naofumi: "Rat... Where do you think Gaelion is going?"

Rat: "If I were to guess, I think it would probably be Eastern Melromarc."

Naofumi: "East huh?"

If I remember correctly, east of Melromarc is where we fought the rotting dragon... Ah right.

Naofumi: "That's where we fought the rotting dragon."

Rat: "I see... he's returning to its territory, right?"

Naofumi: "I think so too."

Sadina: "What should this Onee-san do?"

While I was talking with Rat, Sadina asks from the back. I still can't come up with a solution; there's also the probability of encountering monsters at this hour.

Actually, there are several monsters on our tail.

Sadina is intercepting them with magic and harpoons.

Atlas, Firo, and Melty are taking care of the front. Firo can't fight, because she is already struggling to pull the carriage.

It's unreasonable to force yourself that much.

I also use Meteor Shield to protect Atlas and Firo at the bare minimum.

Naofumi: "I'm trying to think of a way to get Gaelion back to his senses. You should be more vigilant of your surroundings."

Sadina: "Y-yes..."

Naofumi: "If anyone has any ideas how to help Gaelion, then spit them out. And make it quick."

Rat: "... Then, maybe... Can't we just pin him down and yank it out of his gullet? But we need to use a tool that he can't bite through."

Naofumi: "It'll be alright. My defense is no joke."

Rat: "Well, we don't have to worry about the Count."

Naofumi: "Rat, can you suppress Gaelion using your anesthetic?"

Rat: "Do you even need to ask?"

Rats shows me a syringe with the drug in it.

Rat: "This drug is quite strong. It's strong enough to placate a dragon for a while."

Naofumi: "Then I'm counting on you."

Raphtalia is not here, but the monsters around here aren't tough.

Gaelion's level is rising little by little, and his stats are getting really high because of the shield's correction.

Firo's status-drain reveals his status changes.

It'll be like fighting a dragon-shaped Firo.

I think I'll be fine, but the other slaves would be in trouble if they were to eat an attack.

If there is a god, he enjoys watching me suffer.

Naofumi: "First, let's plan this out. Rat, it'll be good if you can weaken him, even if it's just a little."

Rat: "Okay. Will do."

Naofumi: "Sadina, I'll face Gaelion, and you'll take care of any approaching enemies."

Taniko: "... And me?"

Taniko trembles while asking.

Naofumi: "Can you fight?"

Taniko: "Errr... If I do, Gaelion will get hurt and it'll be dangerous."

This strong sense of responsibility...

Naofumi: "What can you do?"

I don't know how Taniko fights either.

I saw her wielding a stick in the beginning, but what how is she fighting now?

Taniko: "I'm good with magic attacks. Among everyone, I'm confident in my power."

Naofumi: "Hooo... What kind of magic?"

Taniko: "I'm not sure. According to the magic trainer, she says that the magic I use is different."

The magic shop owner taught the slaves various kinds of magic. I did ask her to do that, but what did she teach Taniko?

Naofumi: "I don't understand. What kind of magic are you using if you know what what it is?"

Taniko: "It's a magic my father taught me."

I have a feeling that it's some kind of unique magic.

I don't know what to make of it. Maybe I'll understand it better once I see her fight.

I don't have the power to understand the slaves' ability.

In MMOs, there's a function that lets you monitor the guild members' current status when you're raising them.

In raids and castle wars, monitoring your allies will be your lifeline. In MMOs, I can choose my allies by considering their job and level.

I can't evaluate them if I don't see how they fight. We'll wipe over and over if the party isn't organized.

There's also a means where they could learn by gaining experience firsthand.

Pairing them with people that know the strategies is a surefire way of doing it.

This is the evil truth because those rules don't apply now.

This is the very reason that I feel like this is still a game.

Naofumi: "If I pair you with Atlas, can you fight alongside her?"

Taniko: "Uh, yeah."

Naofumi: "What about Melty?"

Taniko: "The princess? What kind of magic does she use?"

Naofumi: "Water? I think that's what it is."

I think Sadina would be compatible with Melty. After all, Sadina is an aquatic-

type of Beastman and has a high affinity with the magic that is close to her habitat.

Naofumi: "How about you, Sadina?"

Sadina: "Well, I can do both melee and magic."

And Rat is the one who understands Demon ecology and Gaelion's abnormal condition.

Naofumi: "Well then, I'll be the vanguard, magic-users will fight from the rear, and Sadina..."

Atlas can't help because she's suppressing Firo's curse.

I need more firepower.

Naofumi: "Sadina, please attack from the rear with your harpoon."

Sadina: "Yes... Yes..."

Melty: "Understood."

Taniko: "Uh, yeah."

Naofumi: "We don't have any choice but fight like this."

I just noticed, but this party is estrogen-heavy.

Although I have no problems with Raphtalia, Firo, and occasionally Rishia... I think that this is Motoyasu's kind of party.

I should treat Fohl more kindly. He might have a sister complex, but I'd like a male companion.

Rat: "Count, are you having dirty thoughts?"

Is she an esper? Do the people in this world also have sixth sense?

Or is that what you would call a woman's intuition? Just kidding.

Hours pass, and we finally arrive at the eastern village. Dawn breaks.

Firo's fast, but Gaelion's flying speed is something else.

The mountains near the eastern village are covered in clouds... It's really dark.

[11]

Villager: "Oh... It's the Saint!"

Other villager: "It's the Shield Hero!"

The villagers spot us and approach... For some reason, Taniko hid herself in a sheet of cloth.

Villager: "This morning, a villager heard a dragon's cry in the direction of the mountains."

Naofumi: "There's a dragon that got loose and escaped over there, we're here because we're chasing it."

Villager: "Uwaaa!"

I didn't mention that it came from our village for our reputation's sake.

The villagers figure it out anyway, and fall silent.

Naofumi: "Just..."

I looked at Atlas and Firo's condition.

They looked really tired.

She was able to point out Gaelion's location.

Naofumi: “We've been at this since yesterday, I'm warping us back to our village to rest for a bit.”

Melty: “...but!”

Naofumi: “If we're not in top shape, we might lose. Over exerting yourself is unacceptable, so please rest up for now.”

Melty: “I-I understand.”

I registered the village with the portal shield. It'd be better if I left a message back home. [\[12\]](#)

Naofumi: “It'd be good if we could get back to the village if something bad were to happen. 「Portal Shield」!”

Having set the waypoint, I warped us all back to the slave village to check if Raphtalia and the others were back yet.

... I can warp 7 people, including me.

It says 6 people, but that's not including me.

In short, I can warp 7 people including me.

I suck at explaining things.

Let's just say 7 people in total.

Or is it based on a 3 people + my Lv / 20 kind of condition?

Firo and Atlas prop themselves up against a wall and rest alternately.

I rechecked her status.

Firo's level is still diving slowly. This is dangerous.

Naofumi: “Please relax until it's time.”

Melty: “I understand.”

Naofumi: "Understand that I can't make medicine strong enough to suppress it."

Firo: "Uhhh."

Melty: "Firo-chan... here's some water."

Firo: "Thank you, Mel-chan."

I ask if Raphtalia made her way back yet, but that's not likely.

I explain how the portal shield works and the cooldown.

I hope that Raphtalia gets back soon, so we can start already.

We're fighting against the clock.

Judging from Firo's stats, she won't last for half a day.

I can't do anything but hope that Raphtalia and the others get back from their training soon.

Naofumi: "I guess it's hopeless..."

The cooldown's over, but Raphtalia isn't back yet.

We don't have any choice but to stop Gaelion with just the advance party.

We'll have to prepare for the worst.

Naofumi: "Atlas and Firo, you're staying here."

Firo: "Please, Master."

Naofumi: "We don't need to make the long trek back anymore. The objective is just a stone's throw away now with the portal shield. Don't burn out."

Firo: "But... I want to go."

Naofumi: "Enough... If you come along, you'd only be a burden. You can barely move; you're already at your limit."

Firo: "No... no."

Naofumi: "Atlas, I'm leaving Firo with you." (Naofumi) Atlas: "I understand. Firo-chan, let's leave it to Naofumi-sama."

Firo: "But Firo..."

Atlas: "Naofumi-sama is saying that taking Firo-chan along is too much of a load to bear. Even if he didn't order us, I won't let you go."

Firo reluctantly agreed to stay behind.

Atlas, who has trouble speaking because she's still recovering from her illness, and Firo, suffering from the curse. This is for the best.

Naofumi: "How about you, Melty?"

Melty: "For Firo-chan, I would do anything."

Naofumi: "Don't force yourself. You're going to be the next queen."

Melty: "I understand, but this is something more important than being Queen."

Can't be helped. They are close friends, after all.

After I return to my own world, Firo will probably stay with Melty.

Melty: "Firo-chan! Please wait a moment."

Firo: "Mel-chan..."

Melty: "Please, go rest up in bed."

Firo: "Uhhh."

I hold Firo's face as she cries, unable to accept her feeling of helplessness.

This is the first time that I've done something like this.

This is too much to bear...

Naofumi: “It’s time to leave. 「Portal Shield」.”

We warp back to the eastern village, and begin to walk towards the mountain covered in dark clouds.

# A Mass of Klesha<sup>[13]</sup>

Naofumi: “We should be close.”

I climb the mountain, only to find that the ecosystem here is just as messed up as ever.

The soil is polluted, and it feels like the flow of magic here is abnormal.

I never thought that I’d have to return here someday.

Taniko stares back down at the village with angry eyes. What's she mad about?

Last time, Firo sent all of monsters we encountered flying, but this time is different.

We wasted time fighting monsters.

Having Sadina, Rat, Taniko, and Melty sped things up.

Taniko: “I lead the flow of the power of the land, and give it the power of incarnation. Earth Pulse, become my power. 「Dark Firebolt」!”

Taniko’s magic summons black flames that burn the monsters.

The incantation's fundamentally different from the one I know.

Melty: “Her magic draws in surrounding energy and releases it.”

Naofumi: “It really is a strange magic.”

Taniko: "Yeah... I've only learned the basics, but this is a magic that borrows powers from the surroundings."

Naofumi: "I see."

Taniko: "Father's version was much stronger."

Taniko continues casting her strange spells. I wonder what sort of mage her father was.

Rat looks at the spell and cocks her head.

Rat: "That magic is..."

Naofumi: "You know it?"

Rat: "That magic doesn't originate from humans or demi-humans."

But Taniko is a demi-human, right?

She has dog-ish ears and everything.

I never asked her exactly what race she was because I didn't care.

Rat: "Could she have divine protection?"

Naofumi: "By the way, what sort of magic do you use?"

Rat: "Recovery Magic."

Naofumi: "Ah, I see. I'll leave support to you."

Rat: "That's what I was planning on."

Sadina eliminates the remaining monsters in silence.

Sadina: "It's not widely known, but it isn't an extinct form of magic. Maybe I should teach her some advanced spells."

Sadina spins her spear and begins to cast on a large group of incoming monsters. She pulls out a canteen of water and holds it out.

Sadina: “I, Sadina, draw out the power of water to do my bidding. Dragon Pulse, eliminate my enemies. 「Saint Aquabolt」!”

With a similar chant as Taniko's, Sadina unleashes a shining mass of water.

The horde is repelled.

Sadina: “By the way, I can also use the main varieties of magic as well. I, who has understood the origin of power command you. Once again be read and come forth. Pierce all with spheres of water, 「Faust Aquashot」!”

She takes out another monster with a more familiar magic.

It looks like Sadina has a lot of tricks up her sleeve.

It's not like she was hiding anything from me, I just don't know too much about her in general.

Sadina: “Understand? Magic that borrows from the surroundings has power proportional to the environment. Always be prepared.”

Sadina hands the canteen to Taniko.

Sadina: “This flask contains holy water, so it's a good counter to the monsters here. But if you use it too much, it'll get less effective, so be careful.”

Taniko: “G-got it.”

Sadina: “If you're in a tight situation, you can try borrowing power from the sky. It's hard to control, though.”

Taniko: “It's amazing that you know my father's type of magic.”

Sadina: “Only a little. I usually use magic that changes the flow of energy in my own body.”

Naofumi: “What kind of magic is that?”

That sounds convenient. Of course, I won't be able to learn it.

Sadina: “Humans and Demi-Humans need special blessings to learn it, so it's rare. Naofumi-chan might be able to learn it.”

Naofumi: “What do you mean?”

Sadina: “Ah, but with Firo-chan around it'll be hard.”

I can't learn it if I'm with Firo?

My curiosity is peaked.

Rat: “... Could you mean...”

Rat looks like she knows what Sadina's talking about.

Rat: “One of the extinct magics, known now only by high class monsters, Dragon Pulse Order?”

Sadina: “Correct. I was taught it long ago.”

Melty: “T-that's kinda amazing.”

Melty sounds as this is the first she's heard of it.

Sadina: “Ah, Melty-chan might have the aptitude for Choral Magic.”

Melty: “Eh!?”

Choral Magic? What's that?

Is it similar to ritual magic?

Was it in the magic books I've read? I think I've heard about it before, but I can't remember from where.

Melty: "Impossible, Impossible, not happening."

Sadina: "It's fine, Melty-chan. Even your hair color signifies that you have the talent. Trust me."

Melty frantically denies it.

Ah, I think Choral Magic was that thing Bitch was doing. Casting several magics at once.

Sadina: "Anyways, you have the talent, Melty-chan. Work hard."

Melty: "Uuu..."

Even so, Melty's level isn't that high. I don't think you should expect that much from her.

Sadina: "I'll teach you once you're ready. Shall I lecture on magic as we head there?"

This has somehow begun to feel like a picnic. You know, Firo's life is on the line here...

We talk as we climb up the mountain. We arrive at the area where the Dragon Zombie was. It's been three hours since we set out.

There isn't a single blade of grass growing in the area.

Even now, this land is heavily polluted...

Naofumi: "Where could Gaelion be?"

Taniko: "...I think that way."

Taniko points further up the mountain.

What?

As if reacting to her statement, black fog begins rising from that area.

Rat: "My, my... That's quite ominous."

Taniko: "But we have to go."

Taniko leads the party.

Naofumi: "You know the way?"

Taniko: "Yeah... This way."

Taniko seems familiar with the area as she leads the party.

Sadina: "I see, so that's it."

Naofumi: "What? What happened?"

Sadina seems like she's figured something out. If you don't explain it, I won't get it.

Sadina: "Naofumi-chan, are you the type of person that digs up people's pasts? Shall I tell you this Onee-san's past?"

Naofumi: "Don't care!"

She seems to be dodging the subject.

Past? Did Taniko live here once?

Was she part of a reclusive village of Demi-humans that lived with the dragon...? This area's population died out from plague. Maybe she tried to escape it and got sold off. And the magic was passed down through that village.

Something like that?

...

Taniko: "There!"

Two hours later, Taniko suddenly jumps and begins pointing. We had to fight a lot of monsters on the way. Firo's time is running out, yet we were wasting valuable time...

Gaelion is lying down in front of a cave.

Is he asleep? He's not moving at all.

We stay hidden as we get closer.

If I can get close enough, I can trap him with Shield Prison. After that, we can prepare magic casts and release them the moment the prison vanishes to weaken him. Then Rat can use her anesthetic.

After that, I just need to get Gaelion to spit up the core.

But that's wishful thinking.

My Shield Prison's range is five meters. We are 20 meters from Gaelion.

I analyze him. He's level 55. He's stolen more than 20 levels from Firo.

Gaelion: "GYA000!"

Gaelion suddenly opens his eyes and rushes into the cave.

Naofumi: "Damn!"

A failure.

But now we can trap him in the cave.

We carefully peer into the cave.

Gaelion seems to be scampering all around the cave, frantically looking for something.

Naofumi: "What's he doing?"

Taniko: "I think he's looking for his treasure... The villagers took it already."

Rat: "Dragons have a habit of collecting things. I think the core Gaelion ate had some lingering affections for the treasure."

So Dragons are that sort of lifeform.

Taniko: "..."

Taniko murmurs something quietly.

But I have no time to hear her out.

Naofumi: "Okay, let's go."

Taniko: "Gaelion!"

We approach.

Gaelion: "GYA0000000!"

Gaelion shouts out.

Thump!

The Shield pulses in response to the yell.

W-what is this!?

When Gaelion shouted earlier, nothing like this happened.

Rat: "This looks dangerous. We should create a bit of distance."

Taniko: "Gaelion! Come here! Please!"

The shield continues to pulsate.

A visible black aura emanates from it and begins enveloping Gaelion.

Gaelion begins sucking up the pollution from the surrounding land.

Gaelion's body gradually increases in size.

Naofumi: "I'm got a bad feeling about this. Rat, do you know anything about this?"

Rat: "How should I know? Isn't this your shield's fault?"

Naofumi: "Probably... I think I absorbed something like Firo did."

Melty: "Hey, Naofumi. Why do you look happy?"

Naofumi: "Ha?"

Well, this did give off a bit of a 'Boss Battle' vibe.

... But I'm getting an ominous feeling. Something must be wrong with me.

Melty: "Naofumi, you got power from the Zombie Dragon's core, right?"

Naofumi: "Yeah, the shield I used to defeat the Spirit Turtle, the Wrath Shield used the core's power."

Melty: "Didn't that shield appear when you got mad at sister and father?"

Naofumi: "Sister? Ah... Why was I angry at her again?"

Melty and Sadina: "THAAAAT'S IT!"

They point their fingers at me and shout out.

Melty: "Naofumi, that thing absorbed your hatred for sister!"

Naofumi: "W-what!?"

Damn. I can't remember a thing.

I get the feeling that it's something I'm better off forgetting. The world around me seems off.

Now that I think about it... Sadina looks pretty good too.

Why didn't I notice it before?

Melty: "Naofumi, I'm starting to get creeped out from how you're looking at us. Go back to normal."

Naofumi: "Even if you tell me that~"

Raphtalia. When I think of her, my heart beats faster.

Firo's in trouble. Even as a bird, she's really cute. I think I'm starting to understand Motoyasu's love for her human form.

Melty looks like a cute Tsundere.

Atlas is also really cute. I can imagine her growing up to be a beauty. I get Fohl's Sis-con tendencies now.

Fufufu. If this was an Eroge, it would be NTR.

... This is really bad! I don't know what's so bad, though.

What's this about NTR? Useless!

Is the me without hate, resentment, and killing-edge just a mass of Klesha?

I have to get my negativity back fast, or things will get dangerous.

On multiple levels.

# Good Luck

I check the Wrath Shield.

... You have not cleared the conditions to unlock this shield.

I can't check its status!

And Gaelion's status is so distorted that I can't make any sense of it.

"The only thing we can do now is defeat him!" (Naofumi) "Defeating him is... correct, right?" (Taniko)

Gaelion was able to slip past us and get out of the cave.

He's bigger than 20 meters tall; he looks like an authentic dragon.

His eyes are shrouded in darkness. I can't read his expression.

I don't recognize any part of him that's similar to the Gaelion we know.

"GURUUUUUUUUUUUUUU<sup>[14]</sup>....." (Gaelion) "Ah... Yes. I'm fine. How have you been?" (Taniko)

Everyone snaps their heads towards Taniko... She's also at a loss for words. She's one of the lower level slaves, who has yet to Class-Up.

Gaelion inhales a large amount of air.

He's going to unleash a Breath Attack.

「Meteor Shield!」 (Naofumi)

I deploy my Meteor Shield, and brace for the impact. The others get behind me.

“I’m going to borrow the holy water for a second.” (Sadina)

Sadina takes her holy water back from Taniko and begins to chant.

“I, Sadina, draw out the power of water to do my bidding. Dragon Pulse, protect my body. 「Saint Aqua Shield」!” (Sadina)

Sadina’s magic envelops the party.

I wonder what its effect is.

“Naofumi-chan, I've protected us in case his flames are able to inflict curses.”

(Sadina) “Thanks.” (Naofumi)

As long as I can withstand his blasts, we can stand a chance. It’s not like he could be as strong as the Spirit Turtle.

A pitch black flame spews forth from Gaelion’s mouth, and flies towards us.

It immediately dissolves the Meteor Shield on impact.

W-what!?! That shield was able to withstand being trampled by the Spirit Turtle, yet it was destroyed instantly!

The flame continues to fly at me. I deploy the E Float Shield too and block it.

I feel like my body is melting as the shield blocks the attack.

Comparing it's power, this attack rivals the Spirit Turtle’s lightning!

“Saint Aqua Shield was dispelled... What a powerful curse.” (Sadina)

I quickly cast recovery magic and stare at Gaelion.

This is... without a doubt the flames of the Dark Curse Burning S.

Maybe what I was doing was merely an imitation of Gaelion’s power... This is a monster with the true power of the Wrath Shield.

It absorbed Firo's power, making it even tougher than the Spirit Turtle.

We could retreat now.

But if I run here, then I can't consider myself a Hero.

Hmm? Did I just think something stupid? Something feels off.

"Rat, if we weaken it, can you get the core from its stomach?" (Naofumi) "... By getting eaten?" (Rat)

"Possibly, but it might be quicker to cut its stomach open." (Naofumi) "After we're done, we'll heal it, right?" (Rat) "LOL. Yeah." (Naofumi)

Hopefully that'll get the job done. Taniko is desperately calling out to the dragon, but it seems to have no effect. If this were an anime, it'd work, at least a little...

"Then this Onee-san has to work hard." (Sadina)

Sadina spins her harpoon as she steps forwards.

"Can you do it?" (Naofumi)

"I'll try." (Sadina)

Sadina points the harpoon at the sky and begins chanting.

"I who has understood the origin of power command you. Once again be read and come forth. Rain down spears of lightning, 「Dreifach Thunderbolt」!" (Sadina)

Upon Sadina's chant, the clouds overhead darken, and lightning flashes between them. The thunderstorm gathers around Sadina's outstretched Harpoon.

Dreifach... That's a level above Zveit. For the level 35 Sadina to be able to cast

that is remarkable. Could she be very strong?

Her previous level was capped at 40, but I wonder what level her strength was on.

“It’s a bit dangerous, so step back.” (Sadina)

Sadina leans forward, and rushes towards Gaelion.

She’s fast. Though slower than Raphtalia, she’s running at a speed at odds with her level.

「Thunder Impaler!」 (Sadina)

With a loud crack, Sadina kicks off the ground, and launches her harpoon at Gaelion’s abdomen. The moment the harpoon leaves her hands, lightning flashes out, blinding the dragon and keeping it from dodging.

The harpoon pierces Gaelion’s chest...

Or it should have.

Clang!

With a noise not unlike the ringing from my shield deflecting something, and the harpoon impales Gaelion’s skin for a moment, before being launched back in the direction it came.

“Ara... It seems Onee-san’s signature move didn’t work.” (Sadina)

Sadina lands and catches the incoming harpoon while retreating. She rejoins us.

“... So we’re in a lot of trouble unless Raphtalia gets back.” (Naofumi)

The blinded Gaelion covers its eyes with his claws and lets out a moan.

We can experiment with the effectiveness of other magic... But it doesn’t look

good for the home team.

But we can't just sit back forever. Time's running out.

"Count, can't you do something?" (Rat)

"Even if you say that..." (Naofumi)

It's absorbed my offense abilities...

Hmm? Absorbing abilities?

It has the powers of the Wrath Shield.

What would happen if I tried to funnel power into it?

"I'm going to try pour power into him." (Naofumi) "ARE YOU AN IDIOT!?" (Rat and Melty)

"Wait, Wait. Listen to what I'm saying. Strengthening occasionally fails. What would happen if I made it fail on purpose?" (Naofumi) "Is that how that works?" (Melty)

"Yeah, I think the dragon is drawing power from my shield, blocking all attacks... I might be able to destroy his defenses." (Naofumi) "Got it." (Rat)

Gaelion unshields his eyes, and starts looking for us.

It's only a matter of time until we're found.

"Let's retreat for now, and fight it again later." (Naofumi) "It will definitely stay in its territory." (Rat) "Probably." (Naofumi)

I activate the Portal Shield...

... It's not letting me select a destination.

Eh? Could it be that the abnormal flow of magic in the area is blocking the

skill!?

“I can’t teleport. We have to make a run for it.” (Naofumi) “I don’t think it’ll let us.” (Sadina)

Sadina points upwards.

Gaelion is floating directly above us. We’ve been found.

If we wanted to flee here, we would need Firo. Without her, it’s impossible.

“GYAOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO ! ” (Gaelion)

He swoops down, and tries to slash at us with his massive claws.

I step forward and take the attack.

Pain runs through my body.

It’s not as severe as with the breath, but it’s still smarts.

I deploy the Meteor Shield, but it’s only a matter of time before he breaks through.

Following his claws comes a whip from his tail, and then his fangs.

All of them send intense pain coursing through me.

“Count! 「Zveit Heal!」 「Faust Guard!」” (Rat)

Rat casts support magic. It saved me. I don't have the flexibility to cast it on my own.

“Then, Melty-chan. Try casting Choral Magic.” (Sadina) “Eh... But...” (Melty)

“You too, Taniko. Help Melty-chan. Your magic should be more effective than the standard magic we're using.” (Sadina) “Y-yeah.” (Taniko)

“I’ll take the front. Melty-chan, work on tuning and synthesis, you need to focus on support. Let’s go.” (Sadina)

Sadina and the others prepare their casts, and I open up the Wrath Shield strengthening window.

I have more than enough resources.

Wrath Shield +7 → +8. Do you want to carry out this reinforcement?

I select 「Yes」.

Warning, if this reinforcement fails, the reinforcement will fall to +0.

I ignore the message, and select 「Yes」 again.

You have successfully reinforced your Wrath Shield to +8.

Damn! Why did it have to succeed here!?

Beep...

I timidly look up at Gaelion.

His scales shimmer briefly. In an MMO, when you enhance a weapon, it usually glows for an instant like that.

Why must I be so unlucky?

“U-um, Count? He... seems to be getting stronger.” (Rat) “Ah, the strengthening succeeded.” (Naofumi)

“Are you an idiot!?” (Rat)

“Yes, I’m sorry.” (Naofumi)

“You’re acting so nonchalantly. Count, there’s something wrong with you.”  
(Rat) “I know. If we don’t beat Gaelion soon, I don’t know what will happen to me.” (Naofumi)

I try to strengthen again.

I select 「Yes」 again.

You have successfully reinforced your Wrath Shield to +9.

...

Shit.

Gaelion’s attacks start to pierce through my defenses.

This pain is ratcheting up so sharp.

I'm bleeding all over.

“Count!?” (Rat)

Is this shield... trying to kill me!?

If the next attack succeeds, we’re screwed!

We’ll get devoured.

I button mash 「Yes」.

Do you want to carry out-

You have successfully reinforced your-

Gaelion’s massive tail is swooping toward us.

He shines for a moment. If this hits me, I'm going to start seeing stars.

Gaelion's mouth is gaping open. At this rate, we'll be swallowed whole.

I continue the button mashing!

You have failed in reinforcing your Wrath Shield to +11!

I hear the sound of shattering and the Wrath Shield reinforcement fails.

Gaelion's scales darken, and his attacks get visibly weaker.

He positions himself to devour me, and picks me up in his teeth and tries to bite down on me, to no avail.

"Get off!" (Naofumi)

I wrench his maw open with all my strength. I fall to the ground.

This finally looks like a battle we can fight.

# Choral Magic

“Count, are you okay?” (Rat)

“Do I look okay to you?” (Naofumi)

My whole body aches...

Damn, now strengthening finally works.

Just my luck. This is harassment.

I'm not one of those inherently unlucky protagonists who appear in Light Novels. [\[15\]](#)

“Zweite Heal.” (Naofumi)

Rat and I cast recovery magic.

As expected of a fantasy world, my wounds heal before my eyes and the pain fades.

I got hurt bad, but the enemy's hurting too.

Our average level is still low. I want to lower another rank.

“Okay, next, lower the rarity!” (Naofumi)

Should I attempt SR -> SR+?

I ignore the warning and spam the button.

For some reason, I'm getting a bad feeling about this.

“H-he’s getting vicious again.” (Rat)

“Dammnnnnn!” (Naofumi)

When my luck is bad, it's terrible. What was with this chain of successes!?

I didn't see how many times it worked. If this was the Soul Eater Shield, this would have been easier!

I'm blown away when I see the letters LR.

Not again! The chances of this happening over and over are miniscule!

Everyone's behind me; I can't avoid it any more and take the attack head-on.

“Ugh!” (Naofumi)

With his rarity upgraded, Gaelion lays into me with all his strength.

This hurts... I want to go home.

His attack rose to an impossible level beyond absorbing Firo's abilities, and now even his rarity has risen. How bad is my luck gonna go?

Lately everything has been a cake walk. This must be retribution.

Am I going back to square one?

No kidding. I need to hurry up and fail the rarity enhancement so that Gaelion will weaken.

Enhancement to AF failed!

In an instant, the rank falls to C and Gaelion weakens visibly.

The luster of his scales disappears and his brute strength diminishes. At this rate, we can break through his defense with perseverance.

“I’m done. How about you guys?” (Naofumi)

<Earth of the Curse, flow of that cursed dragon pulse, for the sake of spitting out the congested blood, let us....>

I look back to see Melty, Sadina, and Taniko chanting spells, their voices merging together.

Glittering, firefly-like luminescence gathers around us.

“GURUUUUUUU....” (Gaelion)

Gaelion inhales deeply in preparation for a breath attack, as if trying to interrupt the chant.

I position myself in front and bare my shield out to protect Melty’s group.

Gaelion leaps up high, facing downward, and opened his mouth.

It’s coming!

“Meteor Shield! Air Strike Shield!” (Naofumi)

I project the Air Strike Shield as a foothold and protect Melty’s group from the breath attack.

Ugh... My whole body roasts and I'm scorched by the flames.

I was already so weak from the curse; the flames add to it and my body screams out in pain.

Gaelion leans forward in pursuit and thrust his claws out. At this rate, he’ll probably snap at us.

<Oh Dragon Pulse. Please grant our wishes. I, who is worthy of the origin of strength, implore you. I’ve read and understood the truth once again, grant us the power to overcome this evil!>

The light intensifies, and the three turn their attention this way.

It's so stressful because as the defense, I can't do anything except hold on and defend.

... I must look so cool protecting everyone, large-scale magic is the best!

Such thoughts pass through my mind.

The pain shooting through my nerves adds to the stress.

“This might be surprising at first, but compose yourself. We'll be fine, believe in big sis! Now, Melty-chan!” (Sadina) “Choral Magic!” (Melty)

“Deep Sea!” (Sadina)

“”Zee Vier!”” (All)<sup>[16]</sup>

Was it just my imagination or did they each cast a different magic?

Water suddenly appears from the midst of the group and submerges everyone. It's like being in a giant water tank.

I can't breathe...

- Splash\* In pain, Gaelion tries to escape from the water tank by swimming.

“Naofumi-chan, are you alright?” (Sadina)

I hold my breath, but Sadina walks toward me with ease, speaking normally.

“It doesn't affect allies, we're fine.” (Sadina)<sup>[17]</sup>

“Eh? Ah...” (Naofumi)

Like in an anime or manga, I can move and breathe normally underwater.

This magic is really amazing.

I realize, we've been following the law of nature until now, or rather, our battles have been simple.

I summon my shields, Raphtalia uses concealing magic, and Firo attacks with her claws.

We each had our own magic to battle in a flashy way.

... what flashiness? There was no need to worry about appearances.

What's important is practicality and efficiency.

It looks like that has been absorbed substantially.

Let's be a little more conscious. Otherwise I'll go crazy.

"Haa....Haa....no more." (Melty)

"Yeah..." (Taniko)

Melty and Taniko plop down, spent, and breathe hard. I lift some Mana Potions from the shield and hand them over to the girls.

"Well, good job... now big sis shall do her best." (Sadina)

With a *pop*, Sadina dives into the magical water tank and swims to Gaelion.

She's fast.

As expected from someone that fights regularly underwater.

Does she get stronger underwater?

"As expected from the Ruka species, you swim like a fish." (Rat) <sup>[18]</sup>

"Is that Sadina's species?" (Naofumi)

"Yes, they're famous for being the rarest and strongest of the aquatic species. It's been said that even Hakuko would flee when opposing them in the sea."

(Rat)

Amazing. So she's the strongest under the right conditions. Well, orca is written as the tiger of fish. [19]

Gaelion tries to spew flames, but before him, Sadina leaps out from the water's surface, encased in water.

In the form of a dragon made of water.

"Enraged Dragon's Twin Blades<sup>[20]</sup>!" (Sadina)

With a splash, Gaelion is repulsed into the water tank again.

He looks injured with blood trickling from his abdomen.

"Gaelion..." (Taniko)

Taniko murmurs quietly and stands up.

"Gaerion!" (Taniko)

"One more time! Reverse Prong Attack<sup>[21]</sup>!" (Sadina)

The water current surrounding Sadina forms a tail, and smashes into Gaelion's stomach.

"...so tough." (Sadina)

Exhausted, Sadina descends and takes some quick breaths. Gaelion spits out black flames in the water.

The water erodes by the black flames and dissipates.

"Ah... this is going to be tough." (Sadina)

It stood up to Sadina's brutal attacks. What a tough opponent.

The Wrath Shield's enhancements can't go any lower than this, and it'd be

hard for Melty and Taniko to fight him.

... What should we do?

We could retreat and regroup. We could beat him if Raphtalia was here.

However, if we took too long, Firo would be in danger.

If we fall back now, the situation would get worse...

The remaining options are... there's Rat.

If we use the anesthetic that cold-clocked Firo before, we might win.

"Rat, can you drug him?" (Naofumi)

"I'll give it a try." (Rat)

Rat throws the syringe at Gaelion with a dark ability.

It hits the area injured by Sadina and seems to stick.

However, Gaelion's showing no sign of stopping.

"GYAOOOOOO!" (Gaelion)

Gaelion recovers from Sadina's attack and cries out.

He glares at us in irritation.

"Gaelion!" (Taniko)

Taniko calls out many times.

"Please! Come back!" (Taniko)

"Hey! Wait!" (Naofumi)

Taniko shakes me off and runs in front of Gaelion.

I understand your feelings, but the situation is critical.

“GURUUUU.....” (Gaelion)

“Gaelion....” (Taniko)

With both arms spread out, Taniko glares at him as if she wouldn't let him go any further.

“Hey! I'm begging you, return to normal!” (Taniko)

Taniko's words echo through the cave.

But I see that they don't reach Gaelion's ears.

I start running, trying to put myself between Taniko and Gaelion.

However, Gaelion opens his jaw wide and snaps at Taniko before I could get there.

“Air Str——” (Naofumi)

I call out my Air Strike Shield.

But, before that—

“... Father! Stop this already!” (Taniko)

Taniko shouts out desperately.

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# Wrath Dragon

“G U R U !?” (Gaelion)

Those words stop Gaelion in his tracks.

Did the love for his daughter move his heart?

“Father?” (Taniko)

“Eh?” (Naofumi)

“I knew it!” (Rat)

Rat mutters to herself like she has it all figured out.

“Uhhh, My father... My father is the dragon that occupied this area.” (Taniko)  
Taniko drops that bomb before turning to Gaelion.

“There are stories about feral children growing up with demons, monsters, and dragons.” (Rat)

What the? So she was raised by wolves. [\[22\]](#)

Was Taniko really raised by a dragon?

As I look at her, I see that Taniko is some sort of canine demi-human; there's not a hint of dragon.

It must have been before the Zombie Dragon died. Did that dragon raise her while it was alive?

Then, did she learn that unusual magic from the dragon?

Why does Sadina know how to use it?

Sadina looks my way.

“SE-CR-ET.” (Sadina)

She’s annoying.

I’ll hear about it later.

“Stop it already, father. Soon, this place will become nothing. I understand your hate for the hero that took everything away from you. However, troubling others won’t change anything... So please stop it!”

“GU.....” (Gaelion)

Gaelion groans; it looks like Taniko’s words are affecting him.

I cover my ears with my hands; I don’t want to hear it.

“When will your rampage end? I know a hero took away my happiness, your death can never be forgiven. But the shield hero is different. Everybody from the village is kind and gentle. They're different from the horrid people that beat and whipped me if I did something wrong. They're different from the villagers who laughed while plundering your treasures.” (Taniko)

Tears stream down Taniko's face from remembering all the things that happened while recounting her past to Gaelion.

I cover my ears, trying to avoid hearing their conversation.

When a dragon raises an adopted child, does it warp that person? Am I being influenced by games too much?

“Please... Please return that child’s body back... That child, I’ll raise him... his name is Gaelion, the same as yours. I promise that your name will live on... and also, please return Firo’s strength. Father, you don’t belong here anymore.”

(Taniko) “G Y A O O O O O O!” (Wrath Dragon)

Something's happening in the dragon's head.

And...

“Gyaa... Gyaaa...”

“Gyu aaaa...”

A creature resembling a newborn Gaelion comes out from the dragon's mouth.

The experience and growth have been ejected along with him; that should prevent any more rampaging.

Then... The Wrath Dragon was covered in darkness and started dissolving while glaring at us.

I look on at Taniko.

“Father... I'll give you rest... I will stop you.” (Taniko)

Taniko comes back to her senses, and Melty and Sadina take huge breaths.

“Sadina Onee-chan, let's stop father.” (Taniko)

“I understand.” (Sadina)

“Looks like we have no choice.” (Melty)

The three gather together and begin chanting their choral magic.

That was fast, it looks like Taniko's chant is affecting the Wrath Dragon.

The small Gaelion flies over to the three chanters.

I direct my focus to the melting black-eyed dragon.

“GYAOOOOOOO ! “ (Wrath Dragon)

This is Taniko's father... the one that I fought before. Back then, he didn't even have fangs and horns. He looks more dangerous than he did before.

"Count, are your wounds alright?" (Rat)

"How's it look?" (Naofumi)

It's Dark Curse Burning's flame. Well... the flames are getting weak, so it shouldn't kill me.

Though it felt like suffering a curse on top of another curse.

"My curse resistance decreased, but there's holy water, so don't worry about it. Look, their chant is working." (Naofumi)

I move to protect Taniko and the others.

Gaelion leaps toward us, and I hold my ground.

"It's dangerous, get back." (Naofumi)

『This is perilous』 (Wrath Dragon)

"Wha... "

The Wrath Dragon spoke.

Its voice is so deep.

『Don't lose your composure; you'll leave Wyndia exposed.』 (Wrath Dragon)

"You..." (Naofumi)

『My daughter's growing splendidly. Hero of the Shield, there's something I'd like to teach you. Have you noticed yet?』(Wrath Dragon) "If I knew what you were talking about, then you wouldn't have to tell me. So no, I don't know what you're talking about." (Naofumi)

I glare at the dragon with hostility.

The Wrath Dragon.

The name of the black dragon slowly deteriorating before my eyes.

『The corruption inside me consumed your hatred. That hate is what corrupted me and made me lose control. Hurry, kill me before I start rampaging again.』

(Wrath Dragon) “I've got no means of attack anymore.” (Naofumi)

With the Wrath Shield I could go on the offensive. With the shield gone, defense is my only option.

『Be at ease, I will cooperate with you and release the attack. Hold your ground and endure it.』(Wrath Dragon) “Enduring's what I do.” (Naofumi)

『I see that's the case. I leave to you my memories and experiences in the shield... I entrust them to you.』(Wrath Dragon)

A feeling of uneasiness washes over me.

Gaelion joins the party to speed up the chanting.

The Wrath Dragon releases its attack. The power of each attack ratchets up; it was getting stronger and stronger.

Pain and numbness washes over my body, this is just like the curse of Blutopfer. I can't hold on much longer. I'm going to go crazy...

However, I push him back, despite his relentlessness.

He bites down with all his strength; he's mounting my defense, attempting to pin me down.

I activate the meteor shield and shield prison each time he attacks, using the air shield to create distance when I can.

『The cursed Earth that brings hatred, but gives clarity washing all grudges away... Dragon Pulse, the power that comes from the desire to save the world. I

wish for a miracle.』(Gaelion) 『 I, Gaelion, order the heavens, order the earth, and remove the laws and ties, in attempt to discharge the sea. My power, to feel once again the controlled power that's flowing within.』(Gaelion)  
The shield translates it all, so I understand what Gaelion's chanting. It was spewing noise relentlessly, displaying the translation in my sight. Does Sadina notice? I look back at Gaelion.

『『Erase Aqua Splash ! 』』

『『Water Dragon Destruction Wave ! 』』

The girls' chant is finished, but then, magic power surrounds Gaelion.

“Eh!?” (Taniko)

Taniko yelps in surprise, Melty's knees buckle out under her.

Sadina, harpoon in hand, runs.

Gaelion gathers the magic power and forms a ball.

“Naofumi-chan and Rat-san, support!” (Sadina)

“Ah!” (Rat)

“Zweit Aura!” (Naofumi)

“Fast Power! Fast Magic!” (Rat)

I lend magical support and Rat covers with physical attack speed.

“Let's go! Gaelion-chan.” (Sadina)

“Gyauuuuuuuuuuu!!” (Gaelion)

Gaelion cries out.

He takes a deep breath, and shoots the ball of magic.

A flood of water gushes from the ball and we attack.

Sadina dives into the gushing water and raises a cyclone.

These attacks are so much flashier than Raphtalia and Firo's. Could Sadina be stronger?

Sadina's level isn't that high.

Is this thanks to the slave-shield correction?

Well, a flashy attack doesn't necessary mean a strong attack... but still...!

If I was the old me, I'd complain.

It should be from a robot that transforms using electromagnetic waves, and then attacks the enemy with a fatal technique!

Sadina spins through the Wrath Dragon.

Gaelion takes a hit, and the mass of water disappears.

“How do you like that...!?” (Sadina)

Sadina lands beside the Wrath Dragon's shoulder. I check the Wrath Dragon's condition.

There's a gaping hole in his abdomen, but despite stumbling, he still advances toward us. When he gets close to me, he roars.

It feels like victory is beyond hope.

“GYAOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO ! ” (Wrath Dragon)

“He's tougher than nails... Onee-san, don't overdo yourself!” (Taniko) 『I underestimated thou's emotions. I never expected my strength to swell to this level.』(Wrath Dragon)

Everyone's reaching their limit.

Are Rat and I the only ones that can move?

“Rat, do you have a trick up your sleeve?” (Naofumi) “It’s, uh... All I have left is defense potion.” (Rat) “Give it to me.” (Naofumi)

“Alright... Alright.” (Rat)

Rat tosses the medicine into a bucket with hot water without hesitation.

It explodes with a bang, and when it dissolves, a strange smell permeates.

“This was expensive... but we have to do something before we die here.” (Rat)

“Give it up... I’ll lure him, let’s retreat.” (Naofumi)

So this is how this ends.

“I’ll keep him here; you all escape first. I’ll be right behind you guys.” (Naofumi)

I don’t like self-sacrifice. I mean, I have no intention of going down.

Though I’ll eat some attacks, it’ll be fine as long as I can avoid it.

We should escape and kill it later. We should prepare for when Raphtalia arrives.

What about Firo? Is she okay? She can’t die... She’s too cute to die.

...Something’s weird.

I feel something unfamiliar inside.

Was I always like this?

“... It’s time.”

I hear footsteps to go along with a familiar voice.

I peer behind me to see Raphtalia and Atlas arrive on Firo in just the nick of

time.

“Raphtalia Onee-chan... please!” (Firo)

“Leave it to me!” (Raphtalia)

“Raphtalia-san, please help Naofumi-sama and the others!” (Atlas)

Did they prepare beforehand? Raphtalia’s sword is shining brightly.

As soon as the Wrath Dragon sees Raphtalia, its mouth gapes open in fright, and it tries to escape into the safety of the sky.

Why? This composure, where'd it come from? Raphtalia is scary.

“I won’t let you escape!” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia launches herself off of Firo into the air and slashes the Wrath Dragon.

“GYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA ! ” (Wrath Dragon)

It lets out a loud cry. Raphtalia's swing creates fierce wind pressure, and the dragon is cut in half. Two halves fall to the ground.

“Father... I’m sorry. I won’t look back any more.” (Taniko) 『...』

I stare at Taniko’s back as she clasps her hands together and shed tears for Gaelion.

# Strange

Raphtalia lands, and swings her sword to get the droplets of blood off of it. She looks towards us.

“Hm?” (Naofumi)

Wow. When I look at Raphtalia’s face, I see sparkles for some reason.

It’s a face I see every day, but somehow staring at it makes my heart race.

She’s truly a beauty. She has a fluffy tail and ears, but her body is quite slender.

She doesn’t have most of the traits associated with Tanukis.

“Um...” (Naofumi)

I raise my voice to try and thank her, but speaking is difficult.

Something’s strange. I could talk to her normally before, but now I can’t even look her in the eye.

“Amazing...” (Taniko)

“Raphtalia-chan. You’ve gotten really strong.” (Sadina) “No, it was almost dead when it came into contact with my blade.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia gestures towards the Wrath Dragon’s corpse.

“I believe that it was Raphtalia-san who saved you when the shield was going to control you, was it not, Naofumi-sama?” (Atlas) “Yes, it was, but...” (Naofumi)

“It seems that Raphtalia-chan was the bane of this one throughout its existence.” (Sadina) “Firo, are you alright?” (Melty)

“Yeah. I was in pain, but now I’m fine.” (Firo)

Firo, with Atlas on her back, goes off and embraces Melty.

“Raphtalia-san returned right after Naofumi-sama left. After explaining the situation, we quickly set out.” (Atlas) “Firo seemed to be doing bad, so we intended to leave her, but she wouldn’t let us.” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia pats Firo’s head with a troubled expression.

I’m surprised they could get through these mountains in that short amount of time.

But Firo, without any carriage attached, is unparalleled in speed.

“Firo was worried we wouldn’t make it.” (Firo)

“But it all worked out. Atlas-san, I am grateful to you as well.” (Raphtalia) “All of this was for Naofumi-sama.” (Atlas)

Good. With this, the incident is resolved, I guess. I’ll have to talk to Gaelion later.

“KYUA?” (Gaelion)

Gaelion pounces on Taniko, and starts licking her face.

Did he return to normal? Or is he just acting?

“Gaelion, are you better?” (Taniko)

“KYUA!” (Gaelion)

“Give back the things you took from Firo!” (Firo) “KYUA!” (Gaelion)

Gaelion and Firo are glaring at each other again. I shift my gaze to the Wrath Dragon.

“Your stats are probably over there.” (Naofumi)

“Is that small dragon really Gaelion?” (Raphtalia) “Yeah. He pushed himself too hard, and ended up small.” (Taniko) “Give me back my EXP!” (Firo)

Firo starts shouting at the Wrath Dragon Corpse.

She’s an idiot, but she’s cute.

But Raphtalia is better.

...Damn.

I’ve been holding hands with this girl and sleeping next to her.

“U-um...” (Naofumi)

I try to talk to Raphtalia without sounding suspicious.

And she returns a few words.

“Ah, Naofumi-sama...?” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia stares at me and tilts her head. She’s too bright for me to look at.

My heart is going to jump out of my chest.

“Um, you are Naofumi-sama, right?” (Raphtalia)

“Y-yeah.” (Naofumi)

“But you’re a little strange.” (Raphtalia)

“What’s strange?” (Naofumi)

“Your eyes are... strange. Also, the atmosphere around you is different.”

(Raphtalia) “Really?” (Naofumi)

This is a girl who’s close to me. A girl who’s traveled and fought next to me.

Alright, I’ll use a cliché romantic line when we get back to the village.

...? What? I feel really bad for some reason.

I’m forgetting something.

No, Raphtalia has been working really hard as of late.

I should praise her for that first.

“You saved us. Thank you. We were in quite a bit of trouble. This is all thanks to Raphtalia.” (Naofumi) “Naofumi-sama!?” (Raphtalia)

“If you’d oblige, perhaps we can talk a little later.” (Naofumi) “Naofumi-sama, you’re definitely acting weird. Your eyes are strange and you’ve never shown such a disgusting smile before. Your way of speaking has also completely changed. Did something happen to you while I was away?” (Raphtalia) “Ah, Naofumi-sama has had various things sucked out of him by that corpse lying over there, and he became strange. He fought okay, but he’s become somewhat creepy.” (Melty)

Melty gives a strange explanation.

“Melty, were you a girl who said such rude things?” (Naofumi)

I pinch Melty’s cheeks, and take on a smug attitude.

I always wanted to do something like this.

“Something’s definitely wrong with this scene!” (Melty & Raphtalia)

Raphtalia and Melty both point and shout at me.

What are they on about?

“I’m concerned about my relationship with Melty from here on-” (Naofumi)

“Please shut up for a second!” (Melty)

I don't know why, but Melty backs off with a red face.

Raphtalia and the others begin talking amongst themselves.

The beauties Raphtalia, Melty, and Atlas are huddled together.

What a perfect scene.

“What can we do to make Naofumi-sama turn back?” (Raphtalia) “I'll follow Naofumi-sama no matter what.” (Atlas) “What are you saying? There's no way that creepy man over there is the Naofumi-sama we know.” (Melty) “The foundation is the same. This Naofumi-sama will be able to find happiness easier. Raphtalia-san, please accept this Naofumi-sama.” (Atlas) “Never!” (Raphtalia)

She plainly rejects Atlas's words, and looks over at Sadina and Rat.

Yeah, Raphtalia's beauty is a level above the others.

I think I will find happiness just looking at her.

But I feel... Strange for some reason. However, I feel really good today, so I'll let it slide.

“Can either of you revert Naofumi-sama?” (Raphtalia) “This Onee-san has no idea.” (Sadina)

“How about chucking him into that decomposing mass of dragon over there?” (Rat)

Both Rat and Sadina point at the Dragon corpse.

After hearing this, Raphtalia starts to approach me.

As I stare at her in admiration, she suddenly grasps both of my shoulders.

My heart skips a beat as I stare into her eyes.

And...

“W-wait! What are you people doing!?” (Naofumi)

Raphtalia and Melty, also Rat and Sadina all lift me up and throw me at the Dragon Corpse.

“I apologize, Naofumi-sama, but... Please return to normal.” (Raphtalia) “If Naofumi-chan gets sucked into the dragon, then we’ll have a problem. Raphtalia-chan, good luck.” (Sadina) “Eh!?” (Everyone)

Think before you throw!

What are these girls trying to accomplish? They keep calling me creepy. How rude!

“Master, what are you doing? Let Firo join.” (Firo)  
And Firo nestles next to me in the dead dragon.

At that moment.

“Raphtalia! You are my...!” (Naofumi)

With a loud sound, the shield starts sucking something in.

At the same time, something appears to be flowing into Firo.

...Was I forgetting something?

That was something that I should never have forgotten. My grudge towards Witch and the people of this world.

And if I made a wrong turn at the beginning, would I have turned out that creepy?

Blood rushes to my head. Why did I try to hit on the diligent Raphtalia?

I even looked at Melty and Atlas with lecherous eyes. Am I supposed to be Motoyasu!?

“Fumu... I’ve caused you some trouble.” (Naofumi)

Dammit. I still have my memories of a few moments ago.

Just thinking about it makes me angry.

I was acting like a dog in heat.

But at the end, what was I trying to say?

...I forgot.

It’s a thing of the past.

Anyways, it seems that being angry has become my default personality.

...At least it’s better than that previous state.

I think I should stop thinking about it.

“Ah, your eyes are back to normal.” (Raphtalia)

“Naofumi-chan is more likeable when he’s irritated.” (Sadina) “Ha? What are you trying to say?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah, this Naofumi is the best one.” (Melty)

It seems everyone can distinguish that my personality is back.

“Raphtalia, you were a big help. We’ll be returning to the village from now, but what will you do?” (Naofumi) “I’ll accompany you to the village, but I still have training after that.” (Raphtalia) “I see. I apologize for interrupting your training.” (Naofumi) “No, it was an emergency, so there’s no helping it.” (Raphtalia)  
I turn my gaze back to Gaelion.

“KYUA? (Gaelion)

“Explain yourself.” (Naofumi)

I think that he was speaking before.

Though he was only whispering to me.

“KYUA!” (Gaelion)

He jumps at me and starts fooling around.

I stare at him with serious eyes, but his behavior doesn't change.

Has he completely returned to normal?

“Ah! Firo is the one who will play with master!” (Firo) “You're making too much of a fuss! We're returning now. By the way, Firo. How is your condition?”

(Naofumi) “My body is better, but... I didn't get everything back from Gaelion.”

(Firo)

I look at her status.

Firo's level is... 41. It's dropped quite a bit.

And in contrast, even after separating from the Wrath Dragon, Gaelion's level is 60.

Their levels have pretty much flipped.

“Give them back!” (Firo)

“KYUA!” (Gaelion)

And the two glare at each other again.

“KYUA! KYUA KYUA!” (Gaelion)

“Gaelion is saying, ‘I don't know anything about that, but the Hero of the Shield's favorite is Gaelion.’” (Taniko) “Mu...!” (Firo)

Gaelion got a preemptive strike. He used his short tail to whip Firo's cheek. He laughs.

“Give them back Give them back Give them back!” (Firo) [23]

“KYUA KYUA KYUA!” (Gaelion) [24]

The two are now exchanging blows.

Even though Gaelion was the cause of all of this, he doesn't seem to be repenting. He's even going as far as to feign ignorance.

That's one of my least favorite actions. I guess I should have him make reparations now.

“Okay, now then Gaelion. Please return it to Firo. If you become Firo's dinner, perhaps she will get some of it back.” (Naofumi)

I quickly grab Gaelion, and move him towards Firo's mouth.

“KYUAAAA...!?” (Gaelion)

“NOOOOO!” (Taniko)

Taniko prevents it.

“Mu...! Master, what were you trying to feed me!?” (Firo) “You're a glutton, aren't you? Dragon meat might bring you good luck.” (Naofumi) “I don't want to eat dragon anymore!” (Firo)

Ah, so she's developed a hatred of the Dragon meat that caused this.

I hope she keeps a balanced diet.

“Don't be such a picky eater.” (Naofumi)

“No!” (Firo)

“Naofumi-sama... Please don’t give Firo any strange eating habits.” (Raphtalia)

“It’s a sort of punishment. Firo needs to get over her fears as well.” (Naofumi)

“No!” (Firo)

“Stop doing strange things to Firo!” (Melty)

This time, Melty steps up to defend Firo.

And she starts glaring at Taniko.

“That child was the cause of this turmoil. Please dispose of him.” (Melty) “He’s already better!” (Taniko)

Whatever. This is becoming a pain.

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# Purification

“Time to go home!” (Naofumi)

“As I thought, tagging along with you sure gets interesting.” (Sadina) “Sadina, stop laughing and use some purification magic already!” (Naofumi)

Being cursed still hurts you know!

Be at least a little bit considerate.

“Can’t be helped.” (Sadina)

And so, Sadina uses holy water and casts magic on me. It seems like special magic, the fact that it’s effective on this curse is amazing.

“Ah, Naofumi. Would you hand me a magic potion? I’m running on empty here.” (Sadina) “So what? We don’t plan to fight anymore.” (Naofumi) “Ahh, it’s really troubling for me though. Please!” (Sadina)

She goes on and on, but I ignore her and walk away.

“Firo, we’re leaving.” (Naofumi)

“Kay.” (Firo)

“Kyua!” (Gaelion)

Once again, Gaelion clings to my leg.

“It’s hard to walk. Move!” (Naofumi)

“Kyuaaaa!” (Gaelion)

Suddenly, Gaelion's body starts shining, and he returns to his original size.

Even larger than before actually, probably up to 40 meters.

He takes flight with me on his back, grasping Taniko, Sadina, and Rat around his tail and his hands.

“Ah, AHHHH-!” (Firo)

Firo lets out a cry filled with fear.

“Naofumi?!” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia is taken aback. Even I have no words for this!

Gaelion can transform?

“Kyuaa.” (Gaelion)

Gaelion shifts everyone onto his back and provokes Firo.

“Mu?!” (Firo)

“Kyuaa.” (Gaelion)

His flight-path takes us descending down the mountain.

“Raphtalia! Hurry up! Master belongs only on my back!” (Firo)

Firo, refusing to be defeated, takes off running.

Even without a cart, her speed is no match for Gaelion.

Though he's my slave, even when I order him to let us down, he won't listen.

I can't activate the slave crest either, or we'd fall.

"Jeez. This kid is too out of control, huh." (Rat) "Rat, were you aware that dragons grow up like this?" (Naofumi) "I've seen it often in my research, but I don't know if the possible variations are to the same extent as that of the Filorials. Kids around the Count always seem to grow in interesting ways." (Rat) "That's not the problem..." (Naofumi)

From the sky, I look down. I notice that the air of pollution was dissipating.

"Did the Count notice too? I wanted to inspect the surroundings influenced by the berserked Gaelion, but I guess there's no chance of that now." (Rat)  
I see. With this, the land also returns to its peaceful state.

I wonder if I could use Portal Shield.

Let's test it.

"Portal Shield!" (Naofumi)

Alright. Looks like there's no problem there. Just to be on the safe side, I'll fly in and check the situation with the village.

Are we out of Raphtalia's range? I'll need to think about how to fly in here later.

"Ah... Naofumi. I'm begging you, would you give me a magic potion?" (Sadina)

"Why should I?" (Naofumi)

I turn to Sadina, and Rat, Taniko, and I are all at a loss for words.

"Please?" (Sadina)

Sadina... was pleading, no longer as a giant, but in the form of a human.

Huh?

“Who are you?” (Naofumi)

“That’s why I’ve been asking for a magic potion, else I can’t keep up my appearance. Even alcohol will do.” (Sadina)

She has long black hair, and skin and a face that would rival even Raphtalia.

A beautiful traditional Japanese-style woman.

It was so surprising to see such a beauty ask me a favor.

“Can’t be helped, eh?” (Naofumi)

I throw her a potion.

“I guess I should have realized something was up when Gaelion brought you too.” (Naofumi)

There’s no way he could have flown with a four-meter giant on his back.

“Don’t drink it now. We’ll crash.” (Naofumi) “Naofumi, you’re not surprised?” (Sadina) “I am.” (Naofumi)

“Don’t cry for me.” (Sadina)

“Who would.” (Naofumia)

“Do the Ruka have this ability?” (Rat)

“I’m not Ruka.” (Sadina)

Sadina answers Rat’s question.

“Are you something else?” (Rat)

These two are about the same age, figures their personalities would clash.

Well, Sadina looks a little older though.

Whatever.

“I’m from the Sakamata race. Ruka is close, but they’re different.” (Sadina)

“How are they different?” (Rat)

“Can’t you tell just by looking?” (Sadina)

Well, if she can transform, she could have been anything.

“Not at all. It looks like you can transform with magic somehow. I mean, we're riding a living example right now.” (Rat) “Well, it’s too bad that you can't tell the difference. That’s all you get, I don’t have much of a migratory diet.” (Sadina) By the way, I’ve read that Orcas are split into three types back in my own world. It feels just like I had seen it, but I think I remember something about their genes differing as little as between an average dog and a wolf. [\[25\]](#)

“Kyua!” (Gaelion)

“Gaelion, grow up to be handsome... Become a fine dragon like my father.”

(Taniko) “Kyua!” (Gaelion)

“That father of yours is feigning innocence.” (Naofumi) “What are you talking about? Father... is dead.” (Taniko)

Taniko interrupts me and refuses listen to anything else I have to say.

Before returning to our village, I land by the eastern village.

The Eastern villagers are content with the mountain's return to normalcy.

'As expected of the Shield Hero!' Trying to flatter me, but I won't be fooled.

To be blunt, from what Taniko and Gaelion said, I think they got what they deserved.

My inner evaluation of the eastern village’s people dropped quite a bit.

They can just go to hell.

“Master rides only on my back!” (Firo)

“Kyuaaaa.” (Gaelion)

Once everyone reassembles at the village, Firo and Gaelion’s bout continues.

Gaelion had transformed back into his small form.

“Yes, yes. That’s enough.” (Naofumi)

“No, it’s not!” (Firo)

Firo is still fixated on being my only mount.

“Ha... For now, I’ll play with you from today onward Firo, so chill out.”

(Naofumi) “Yaaay! But master...” (Firo)

“If you dwell on it any more, I won’t play with you.” (Naofumi) “No!” (Firo)

“Kyua...” (Gaelion)

“You’re the one who caused all this, so you’ll be disciplined for a while. If you have time, I’ll let you play with Firo, so be obedient.” (Naofumi)

Gaelion trots over to Taniko to cry.

“Kyuaaaaaa.” (Gaelion)

“Why are you covering for that bird, why do you pick on Gaelion?” (Taniko)

“You don’t understand? It’s punishment.” (Naofumi) “Uu...” (Taniko)

Teary-eyed Gaelion glances over to me.

It’s like a child faking tears to get what it wants.

“No way.” (Naofumi)

“Kyuaaaa...” (Gaelion)

Gaelion begins to cry earnestly.

“Yaaa-y! Serves you right!” (Firo)

“Firo.” (Naofumi)

After warning Firo, she turns her glance away and starts singing.

I swear, she's still a child. I wonder if she's aware of the trouble she caused.

“Then I'll heading back.” (Raphtalia)

“Ah, you saved us.” (Naofumi)

“No problem. If anything, I apologize for being late.” (Raphtalia) “It couldn't be helped. I can't even imagine what we would have done without you.”

(Naofumi)

With that, I express my thanks to Raphtalia, and see her off.

That reminds me, Rishia took a liking to the old hag, didn't she?

In my head, Rishia turns into a muscle freak.

“What you're thinking is probably wrong, you know.” (Raphtalia) “You know me so well.” (Naofumi)

“Well, we've been together for a long time now.” (Raphtalia)

It's that thing where we understand each other by breathing the same air, huh.

“I see. Then, I'll make sure nothing like this ever happens again. Next time, report to me where you'll be training.” (Naofumi) “Got it.” (Raphtalia)

“Your level... hasn't risen all that much.” (Naofumi)

It looks like there's more to her training than fighting fierce monsters.

Is there some sort of standard for survival when training in the mountains?

Now that I think about it, I need the old hag to teach me too.

“Ah... If there's time, your training will begin after ours ends.” (Raphtalia)

“Somehow, I feel commonplace.” (Naofumi)

“You're the type of person that learns through actual fighting experience, so she was saying something about your qualities already showing results.”

(Raphtalia) “What?” (Naofumi)

“No offence, but you can't afford a haphazard defense. You can't counter forever either, but if you remember the basis for parrying, it'll be enough to apply it later... I don't really understand though.” (Raphtalia) “I don't really get it either.” (Naofumi)

Well, I heard that I should remember the technique to draw out the destructive power within...

Thinking back, though Atlas is blind, she could see the flow of ki.

If I ask her, she'd probably agree be my practice partner.

I'll go ask her after we're done here.

After finishing our talk, Raphtalia leaves the village, albeit a little reluctantly.

I look forward to her returning after her training is over.

**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](#).

# Nickname

--That night--

At home, Sadina's drunk and Atlas is lounging in Raphtalia's bed like she owns it. Meanwhile, I brought Firo along for a little job.

Firo: "Hehe-Master is petting me!"

Firo clings to me in her human form happily.

Naofumi: "You get the plan, right Firo?"

Firo: "Yup. If Atlas tries to get into master's bed, I drive her out."

Naofumi: "That's right. If you mess up, I'm driving you out too."

Firo: "Okay, got it!"

If I have to sleep with someone, I'd rather it be with someone without ulterior motives.

After all, Firo went through a lot. So I'll indulge her a bit.

I need to get her level back up, so it's better to keep her motivation factor up.

Atlas: "Ah, Naofumi. Why are you being so mean?"

Atlas asks, vexed.

Do you really want to sleep with me that much? I feel sick.

Atlas: "Firo gets to sleep with Naofumi. I'm... so envious."

Naofumi: "Sleep with you say... You're too much..."

I'm not Motoyasu, you know.

If he were in my situation now, he's probably do something criminal to Firo.

That guy didn't even show up when during Firo's crisis, how worthless is he?

Next time I see him, I'll let him have it.

I gently brush Firo, while she leans against me satisfied. Someone knocks on the door.

Naofumi: "What is it?"

???: "Please excuse me, Shield Hero."

Then, as if he owns the place, Gaelion bursts in.

I'm surprised to see Rat accompanying him.

Taniko isn't with them? What happened?

Naofumi: "Hey. Your daughter isn't here."

I don't know if she's his actual child or adopted, but the all-important Taniko isn't here.

Gaelion: "I made sure she was asleep before I left."

Rat: "I was doing research in my lab when he asked me to come along. He has something he wants us both to hear... I was surprised."

Looks like it.

Gaelion just suddenly started using human language, and now he's asking for things.

Gaelion: "You're Sadina, right? When I saw your transformation, I was honestly surprised."

Sadina: "You're surprised? I'm surprised about you."

Atlas also weighs in.

Gaelion: "Atlas, you've always known, haven't you?"

Atlas: "Yes. I knew it from the beginning. There was someone else inside you."

Naofumi: "Why didn't you say anything?"

Atlas: "I didn't realize it right away, but ever since that ominous spirit left Gaelion, he changed."

Naofumi: "I see..."

This isn't a time where you should keep something like that to yourself.

Atlas: "You laid dormant in Gaelion, so there was no need to call you out."

Gaelion: "Fumu... as expected of the Hakuko, to grasp my situation so easily."

Firo: "Muu..."

Firo glares at Gaelion.

Gaelion: "The next Filorial Queen, hmm? This whole predicament happened because you ate part of my core. Fool."

Firo: "Give me back my experience!"

Gaelion: "Fumu... It belongs to me now... Is what I'd like to say, but since it's mixed in with mine, you have to deal with getting it back gradually."

Just as I was wondering what Gaelion meant, he takes in a deep breath.

He spits out a large candy-ball looking mass.

Gaelion: "If you lick that, you'll get a little bit of your experience back. So be silent."

Firo: "Bu..."

Firo protests while staring at the spitty mass in her hands.

I guess getting her experience back wont be so simple.

Naofumi: "So, what business do you have with me? Was everything up to now all an act?"

Gaelion: "There's a lot to talk about. The owner of this body, for one, is the Gaelion you know. One day, when he reaches adulthood, our minds will fuse."

Naofumi: "Against your will?"

Gaelion: "Most likely. The owner of this body also wants it to happen. Ever since you warmed his egg up yourself, Shield Hero."

Naofumi: "I see."

I recall I had a strange dream last night. I don't remember the details, but I remember hearing this guy's voice.

Gaelion: "In the first place, even though our minds have been fusing little by little, the moment when we ate the core, your rage occupied both of ours and wreaked havoc."

Naofumi: "Then the reason why he flew in that direction was..."

Gaelion: "According to my memory, he would have flown further. Over there, the polluted land's energy was being absorbed; else he would have stored up

enough power to wreak havoc at who you wanted to kill the most.” (Gaelion)  
Naofumi: “Who I wanted to kill?”

Gaelion: “The person you hate more than anything... if I say it like that, is it easier to understand?”

So it’s like that, huh.

He was planning to raise hell after finding Bitch and Scum.

Though indirectly, my rage would have brought upon the downfall of the country.

It was a really bad situation in a lot of ways.

Gaelion: “Thus, I can keep this appearance, but not for too long. That’s why I’ll explain it to you simply.”

Hmm... To summarize, Gaelion can hold a deeper conscious for short periods of time, in contrast to the child-like Gaelion. He made the judgment that now was a better time to talk than ever.

Naofumi: “Wait a second. Are dead dragons even capable of passing on their consciousness?”

Gaelion: “Just a part. Our kind are sort of like immortal beings.”

Rat: “Immortal... A pure-bred dragon!? The kind that marks territory around mountain recesses?”

Rat, as if she saw something horrible, asks Gaelion. She really hates dragons, huh.

Gaelion: “How should I put this, I am that pure-bred.”

Rat: “What are the chances... Shouldn't the Sword Hero have killed you?”

That would make him around level 40 when he lost.

Even so, that Gaelion shouldn't have been able to find a way to get stronger mid-battle.

Which means, originally Gaelion was pretty weak.

Gaelion: "It can't be helped. I am the weakest fragment left of the Dragon Emperor."

Naofumi: "What?"

Dragon Emperor... the weakest of the four heavenly kings.

It's a famous phrase that I tend to remember.

I don't think anyone would listen to what I'm saying, but...

For the weakest dragon to be boasting is pretty lame.

Naofumi: "Fragment of the Dragon Emperor?"

Gaelion: "It looks like you don't know about the ecology of dragons. Let me explain from there. Wait, maybe it would just be faster to ask that shrine maiden over there?"

Murmurs Gaelion while pointing at Sadina.

Naofumi: "Shrine Maiden?"

Rat: "As far as I can tell, it's someone who's received divine protection from the Dragon Emperor. Correct?"

Sadina: "Yuuuup. I'm a Shrine Maiden. That's why I'm able to use Dragon Pulse~"

Answers Sadina while playing with her hands, all curled up. It doesn't feel like she's motivated at all.

Rat: “That’s also something that I’ve heard. A long time ago, the Filorial Queen had forced the Dragon Emperor to scatter.”

Naofumi: “I see...”

So it’s basically an already extinct being then.

It seems like it was because they were on bad relations with the Filorial back then.

Gaelion: “But speaking of the dragon’s existence, in the first place, they were the only pure-bred existence on earth; everything else originated from a hybrid or cross-breed. Dragon Emperor was more of a label that us pure-bred dragons used for ourselves. Since we were able to breed with any living thing, our offspring increased. And then once extinction came, we sought whatever way we could to survive.”

Naofumi: “What a stubborn being. Like a cockroach.”

Rat: “That is why you didn't die while all scattered about. It could be that Gaelion-chan is the successor of a part of that Dragon Emperor from the past.”

Gaelion: “Fumu... For the most part, you’re correct. It’s because I've confirmed personally how weak I am that, to not get snatched away by the remainders of the Emperor, I lived near humans.”

Since he was secluded from his allies for being too weak, he was in always hibernating like a bear. The more I hear about it, the more pitiful I think this dragon is.

After talking like he was all that, now this? It’s the worst.

Sadina: “What I say from now is pretty important. The pure-bred fought among themselves, and the winner had the power to control its fragments. Like that, they gathered for several hundred years in hopes for revival.”

Naofumi: "Come to think of it... I've heard often about the hero of legend who defeated the revived Dragon Emperor."

Sadina: "...The battle of the struggling fragments turned into a death match of the same race. It came to a point where the next generation would lose its ability to breed."

Naofumi: "If you don't want to be aimed at, isn't it OK to just hand over the fragment?"

Gaelion: "It's because I can't do that; that's why I ran away. As expected, no other Dragon Fragments would do anything reckless like settling near humans. If the fragments gathered, they'd just be torn apart again." (Gaelion) \*?[26]

Pitiful.

Hasn't the Dragon Emperor itself already lost?

Sadina: "That's all the information I've got."

Gaelion: "So then, let me supplement. I am but a single fragment of that Dragon Emperor; that's why I can exist right now. Originally, I was going to look for a different retainer, but in that situation, I didn't have control over my common sense."

Basically what everyone's trying to say is, Gaelion living on was nothing but the matters of the previous era.

That's why the remaining Dragon Fragments didn't realize it.

So, that Fragment's magical power reorganized into the flesh of the Zombie Dragon that Firo and I defeated, even though it should have been sealed.

As a result, the fragment my shield absorbed transferred over to the egg. A perfect revival with all fragments gathered... is what should have happened if the rage sleeping in my shield didn't take over.

How pitiful.

I should look down on this guy.

Gaelion: "Well, I am fine. Good job saving Windia. You have my thanks for her growing up into a fine girl."

Naofumi: "Windia?"

For the most part, I didn't have enough evidence to pick out someone.

Gaelion: "Mu? You surely aren't planning to tell me you were planning to raise her without even knowing her name?"

Naofumi: "It's that Monster-loving idiot slave, right? So she had a name like that."

Rat: "Hold on, could it be that you don't know the names of the children in our village, Count?"

Naofumi: "There are ones I know, but a lot I don't."

I can only remember Atlas... Kiel, and Foulu thanks to Raphtalia.

Aside from those, I'm pretty unclear. I can find some way around using their names, anyways.

Now that I mention it, there are a lot of guys I don't know.

Even the Female Knight I talk to a lot... I don't know her name either.

Rat: "Count, what do you usually call Windia?"

Naofumi: "Probably just Taniko."

Rat: "Why!?"

Sadina: "A great nickname isn't it? Or would fatty be better? OR MAY-BE Mistress?"

Sadina asks me in a really irritating pose.

If she turned into her human form, this would turn into a brawl.

Naofumi: "I remember people calling her name out, and other people calling out to her. But I've never called her by her name myself."

Rat: "Ah...That's true, isn't it. Most of the time you usually just refer to people with 'You' or 'Over there'."

Sadina: "Hey Naofumi-chan, have you ever called anyone by name? Tell me."

Naofumi: "Head chef, Imia's Uncle, Old Hag, and there are many others."

Sadina: "Wow... this is pretty serious. Naofumi-chan isn't fussing over it so it's fine, but you shouldn't call people by those names."

Naofumi: "Isn't Old Hag fine?"

Sadina: "I don't know who you're talking about."

Naofumi: "Battle Adviser."

Sadina: "Oh... she's definitely an old lady."

Atlas: "Naofumi-sama, what do you call my brother and I?"

Naofumi: "Atlas is Atlas. I've started calling Fohl, Alps."

Rat: "Like I was saying before, why!? I don't understand your naming scheme, Count."

Sadina: "That's certainly true."

I'm just basing it from anime in my world. If you want reasoning, go ask another hero.

Even so, there's no way of telling if the other heroes had seen the same anime.

Firo: "What about Firo?"

Naofumi: "Do you want to hear?"

Firo: "Yeah..."

Naofumi: "By the way Gaelion, you're Ding Dong Dash."

Gaelion: "It's longer than my real name! I don't understand its origin."

Ding Dong Dash protests while amazed.

I wonder which Ding Dong Dash was the one who actually Ding Dong Dashed.

Hmm, this name is hard to use.

Naofumi: "Well that's all well and good. I'll ask once, but... that kid is your child?"

Ding Dong Dash: "That would be correct."

Naofumi: "Then you kidnapped her with the intentions of violating her, huh? You're deplorable."

It's not strange that Taniko is in blind acceptance of Dragons. Since she was young, she was intended to marry into Dragon nobility. Even if Gaelion didn't feel like it, he could still have his way.

This type has his own intentions, and will stick it out until the end to fulfill his desires.

Gaelion: "How dare you speak like that!? I'll kill you! Since Windia was small-!"

# A Dragon's Rage

Apparently, a group of Demi-Human Merchants were attacked while passing through Gaelion's mountain range.

Of course, Gaelion was not going to let the culprits go scot-free.

But before he could do anything, a female Demi-Human came running to his cave with a baby in her hands. She collapsed at the entrance.

"Fumu, what are you doing in front of my cave? Depending on your answer..."  
(Gaelion)

The woman's vision was getting hazy. She could not see who she was addressing, but still she smiled and held the baby up with the last of her strength.

"Thank god. There was someone here... we were attacked in these mountains, and I somehow made it here... I beg of you, please, at the very least, save this child..." (Female Demi-Human) "Nu..." (Gaelion)

"This is a harsh country for Demi-Humans. I understand that I am asking for a lot, but... I beg of you."

And with shaking hands, the woman tries to hand the child over. Her eyesight is slowly leaving her.

She doesn't realize that the one she is talking to isn't even human.

"...I understand. I shalt care for thy child with my life." (Gaelion)

Gaelion listens to the woman's last wish. He picks up the child in his massive claws.

“Thank... You. That child’s name is... Wyn... dia...”

After saying this, the woman stops moving.

The only thing sustaining her lifeforce was her desire to protect the baby.

“Fuhihi... So she ran all the way to this place.” (Bandit)

The bandits that had attacked her earlier arrived.

They were fools who simply gave chase without seeing where they were going.

There was supposed to be a famous story circulating in this region.

One of an Evil Dragon that made its home on these lands.

“A promise is a promise. I guess I have no choice.” (Gaelion) “He? Wha-!?”  
(Bandit)

Before the Bandits could say any more, Gaelion releases a Breath Attack.

And the thieves are immediately reduced to rotting ashes.

“Now then. Protecting my land takes most of my effort... What should I do with this?” (Gaelion)

Like this, Gaelion started raising the baby.

With the help of the other monsters inhabiting the area, he looked after Wyndea, while protecting his land. [\[27\]](#)

And because of that, Wyndea... This is a pain. Taniko learned to treat monsters as family.

It appears that Gaelion had many children.

And having a Demi-Human among them didn’t hurt.

The story after that went into Gaelion's child-care journal, so I'll omit that.

Anyways, Gaelion awkwardly brought up Taniko.

He learned to treat her with love, but a dragon raising a Demi-Human is still difficult.

Melromark had always had a tradition of Human Absolutism, and Gaelion somehow wanted to give Taniko human happiness.

But because of that...

-

On that day, Gaelion left Taniko in the care of the other monsters, and went on a walk.

“The Dragon plaguing this land is you, right!?” (Ren)

A person wielding what appeared to be a magic sword, and his companions, appeared.

Occasionally, some humans attack Gaelion's lair in search of his treasure.

Though he understood human language, there was no real reason for Gaelion to converse with these thieves.

“GYA000000000!” (Gaelion)

With the cry of a beast, Gaelion attacked these humans.

But his opponents were too strong.

The Humans had somehow obtained an anti-dragon sword, and every hit from it put Gaelion in great pain.

Gaelion realized it.

That this was one of the summoned humans. The Hero of the Sword.

The fight itself took around 30 minutes.

The sword's properties put Gaelion at a disadvantage, so he wanted to retreat.

But in his cave was Taniko, and the monsters caring for her.

If he ran here...

The monsters would probably be fine. They were inhabitants of this mountain, and had the ability to run.

But Taniko was different.

If this cowardly fragment of the Dragon Emperor were to run here, then she would probably confront the Hero... and perish.

He thought back to what his crime was. It was his very existence.

Just by protecting his territory, he attracted greedy humans vying for his treasure.

Gaelion felt great resentment.

In the last moments of his life... Gaelion stared at the Hero of the Sword's face.

Those weren't the eyes of one who was prepared to die fighting.

He was killing him as if it were simply a job.

While Gaelion was fighting with his life on the line, this man was simply doing a job.

The irrationality made him think he was going insane.

Taniko's troubled, crying face.

Taniko's slightly lonely face when he went out.

Taniko's happy face when he returned home.

He could no longer see any of them.

The Dragon Emperor fragments are immortal.

But when will he revive? There's no guarantee he will ever see Taniko again.

If someone were to extract his core and use it, then revival would be impossible.

And with those thoughts of anger and despair, Gaelion died.

Luckily, his core was not taken.

From within the core of his lifeless body, he quietly waited for his resurrection.

He waited, and waited. Even when his body started to rot.

Gaelion wished. If only someone came by to help take on his soul.

But that wish never came true. His friends at the cave had probably been exterminated by now.

Eventually, he stopped thinking entirely, and his core's instincts took over.

He could no longer hear rhyme or reason.

His body began moving against his will.

Gaelion could no longer perceive the outside world or speak.

And all that surrounded him was tainted earth.

Taniko and the others were most likely dead.

When he finally regained his senses, he witnessed a Filo Rial eating his core. It was the end.

-He no longer cared for reputation or pride.

Just one hit was enough. He just wanted to give that Sword Hero some form of retribution.

“But the one I found was the Hero of the Shield. I watched and waited for my opportunity from inside your shield.” (Gaelion) “And I conveniently obtained a Dragon’s egg, so you tried to shift your conscious to it?” (Naofumi) “Pretty much. But I never expected to find Wyndea alive here. My luck was good.” (Gaelion)

Gaelion turns to Firo.

It was a long story, so Atlas is sound asleep.

If someone tells a story while you’re lying down, you will tend to fall asleep.

“As expected of a Filo Rial’s body. You were able to contain my power and keep control of your body. You’re quite a troublesome one, you know.” (Gaelion)

“Hmph-!” (Firo)

Firo shows open hostility towards Gaelion.

“And? How did Taniko get to this village? I just bought her from the Slave Dealer, so I have no idea.” (Naofumi) “I can guess. After the Hero of the Sword killed me, the villagers probably came to my cave for my treasure. They slaughtered all the monsters there and sold Wyndea along with the eggs there. She does have a good face.” (Gaelion)

Ah, Dragon eggs are quite valuable, so they were probably sold off.

I was suspicious of how the villagers in the area were so wealthy.

They were pretty much getting their just deserts.

But that’s just from a dragon’s point of view.

Honestly, humanity is a race that only sees things one-sidedly, and commits crimes without remorse based on this arbitrary judgment.

I learned that myself here.

Monster hunting can be considered merciless slaughter from the monster's point of view.

"You won't get my sympathy." (Naofumi)

"I know. How long do you think I hath inhabited thy shield? This world is based on Survival of the Fittest, and I think I'm resigning. I can't forgive the one who killed me without any thought and left my body to rot, but I've already delivered retribution on many souls." (Gaelion)

There were many casualties at the plagued village.

I guess that was his retribution.

"I was simply waiting for mine own revival. And now I hath been given a body here." (Gaelion) "Yes, yes. If you don't intend to serve me, then you can take Taniko and leave. Otherwise, I don't mind forgiving you for the trouble you caused us." (Naofumi) "I never said I didn't wish to serve thee. This body's owner seems to have taken a liking to thee." (Gaelion) "Master is Firo's!" (Firo)

"Quiet, future Queen! He who wins out is the winner! This time, I shalt obtain this hero's favor, is what this body's owner says." (Gaelion) "Mu...!" (Firo)

"My Favor..." (Naofumi)

My pets appear to be fighting over me.

If they get to be too much of a pain, should I kick them out?

But Firo is currently here as an Atlas countermeasure, so I can't really kick her out.

"So, in the end, what do you want to do?" (Naofumi)

"I wish to gather the Fragments and obtain the strength of the true Dragon

Emperor.” (Gaelion) “Rejected. That sounds troublesome. Do that by yourself. I have no obligation to do that.” (Naofumi) “Wa, you rejected him quite bluntly, Naofumi-chan.” (Sadina) “The Count’s decision-making ability is amazing. He can say that even when he’s offering you so much information about Dragons.” (Rat) “Information? Think you can write a paper on it?” (Naofumi) “I don’t think anyone will believe it. We can’t really write this guy up as a credible source.” (Rat)

Gaelion finally recovers from my sudden rejection. He starts speaking.

“Can you not at least hear me out?” (Gaelion)

“Rejected.” (Naofumi)

“Then I’ll just talk, and you can choose whether or not to listen. I wish to become strong. My vessel also wishes for this. We’ll probably get much stronger than I was in life.” (Gaelion) “Then isn’t that fine? Why must you search for the Dragon Emperor Fragments?” (Naofumi) “The waves of calamity are causing the fragments to gather.” (Gaelion) “Hmm... As summoned enemies?” (Naofumi)

“No, as the world’s...” (Gaelion)

“What’s wrong?” (Naofumi)

“This is all the information I have on the fragments. All I know is that they are gathering to prepare for a large event.” (Gaelion) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“If I win fights against those other fragments, then I can gain more and more of the Emperor’s power. And here I swear, that I will use that power for your sake.” (Gaelion) “Of course you will. If you weren’t going to lend me your power, I wouldn’t let you get power in the first place.” (Naofumi) “Mu... Just listen to me. If you assist me in becoming stronger, then I shall grant upon you the knowledge of the Dragon Emperor.” (Gaelion) “I don’t really need the knowledge of the people you beat...” (Naofumi)

I don’t think this deal seems very credible.

“Even if it’s forgotten knowledge on how to break the level 100 cap?” (Gaelion)

**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](#).

# Release

“Wouldn’t the ability to break through the level 100 cap be of appeal to you?”

(Gaelion)

Damn... I really hate it when people tempt me like this.

Even so, this guy... made such an uproar just a few hours ago, and is asking me to lend him help.

If the situation had gotten any worse, I, along with the three other heroes would have just been killed off and re-summoned. That’s what this world’s people are like.

In the first place, with what previously was my most combat capable party member, Firo, halved in level, do you really think I’d take you on?

My concessions are at stake here, so I’m listening.

If this is just a promise to make up for what he did, I’ll drive him out and dispose of him properly.

If anything, I want him to actually act like he understands.

Honestly, it’s true that the conditions for exchange he’s speaking are exactly what I want.

But, my instincts are telling me to refuse.

In the first place, he’s still not reflecting on the time he fought with Firo at all.

It’s that habit, the one where you make up whatever reason to get what you want. Have the Dragon Emperor’s fragments not had proper manners from the very beginning?

“You know, why have you just been treating me however you please? Do you really understand?” (Naofumi) “.....Ahh.” (Gaelion)

As expected of the Dragon Emperor, quick to understand.

Well, maybe it's because of how his feelings were synchronized with mine for a little while.

“I'm sorry. If you can overlook what happened, I'll help you as much as I can.” (Gaelion) “Alright. Let's hear what you have to say.” (Naofumi)

Jeez, you should have just said that from the start.

“Huh? Count, is that all you wanted him to say?” (Rat)

“Naofumi-chan, you just wanted to be apologized to, huh.” (Sadina) “Shut up.” (Naofumi)

Ignoring Rat and Sadina, I look over at Gaelion.

“I can inform you about the truth behind the wave, the reality behind the legend, and all other knowledge accumulated by the Dragon Emperor.” (Gaelion) “If that's all you've got, I could just ask the Firoial Queen.” (Naofumi) “The Firoial Queen, you say? Why don't you take a look at the next Queen herself.” (Gaelion) “Ah...” (Naofumi)

I take a look at Firo, and it looks like she's playing with her ahoge.

What is she doing?

Well, Firo's an idiot after all.

The actual Queen might just be the same.

“Hmm~?” (Firo)

“It’s no good.” (Naofumi)

Firo’s wiggles her ahoge.

What’s up with that reaction?

“Well you see, I can hear Fitoria’s forgotten voice.” (Firo) “Is that an antenna, or what?” (Naofumi)

The reason they fought with dragons was probably some silly reason like who would get the rights to be the hero’s mount.

In any case, is she even capable of talking with that to Fitoria through that idiotic ahoge of hers?

It’s probably something like telepathy.

I swear, the fact that anything’s possible in this world makes me feel sick.

“Well you see~, Fitoria is saying that since she was little, she hasn’t understood much about the past.” (Firo) “....What do you think?” (Gaelion)

“Yeah...” (Naofumi)

That’s really fascinating, but Fitoria... you shouldn’t be so honest.

Firo and Gaelion start glaring at each other.

“Shouldn’t we be on better terms by now? The Shield Hero’s Shield will end up getting bottlenecked at this rate.” (Gaelion) “Huh?” (Naofumi)

What? Could it be that the dragon series shield being locked is Fitoria’s doing?

In exchange for unlocking Firo’s Series, the Dragon Series was sealed?

That huge bird... trying to pass off as royalty only to do something petty like this.

This would probably limit my ability quite a bit.

Just doing whatever she wants. Damn that bird.

“Most of my power comes from that core of mine, you know.” (Gaelion) “Ah, that makes sense.” (Naofumi)

With your level too low, you had no choice but to transform.

Is the dragon’s core the same level of importance as Fitoria’s ahoge?

If this was a game or something, it’d feel like you could only opt for one.

I’ve been thinking recently, but I really want to know if I’ve been living in reality, or just some game.

“If you’re going to take me on now, do it. Even Firo knows you’re the weakest of the dragon fragments. Ahahaha.” (Firo) “Gununu....” (Gaelion)

I don’t understand the point of pets.

Somehow I can see things from an even lower perspective.

“Look. Take out your shield.” (Gaelion)

“Ha... If you say so.” (Naofumi)

Gaelion transfers some sort of energy into my shield.

It was as though the shield sparked for a second.

A part of the core was absorbed.

Dragon Leather Shield's conditions have been met. Dragon Leather Shield has been unlocked.

Dragon Scale Shield's conditions have been met. Dragon Scale Shield has been unlocked.

Dragon Meat Shield's conditions have been met. Dragon Meat Shield has been unlocked.

Dragon Familiar Shield's conditions have been met. Dragon Familiar Shield has been locked.

"Gu... This is it. Damn." (Naofumi)

"Even then it's better than nothing, right?" (Gaelion)

"Mu...!" (Firo)

Firo and her ahoge look mortified.

Well, at least the stats make it worth it. As expected of the Dragon Series, huh.

And the stats scaling is pretty good.

The condition for unlocking is to be level 50.

Fitoria really screwed me over.

Oh? The Dragon Familiar Shield has Growth Correction Up for Dragons.

In other words, if I gathered the other fragments, we could raise Gaelion's stats even further.

"After Class Up, I can do some support techniques. I'm also willing to teach you the Dragon Pulse." (Gaelion)

Let's try looking at the ups and downs.

With Class Up, we'll get stat correction...that ahoge had that kind of power huh.

I kind of understood but, the Dragon and Fiolial's attributes are pretty different. Something like darkness and light.

"I can also handle the corruption of your cursed shield. I should be able increase its performance and duration too." (Gaelion)

Help with the Wrath Shield... Firo did it too, but Gaelion will join in, huh.

If that happens, it might be easier to handle.

"I understand. I'll help. In any case, we were planning on raising Gaelion as a dragon from the beginning." (Naofumi)

It's better if I set it straight now.

It's Taniko and the rest of the village's job to take care of the dragon, not mine.

"Also." (Naofumi)

"What is it?" (Gaelion)

"I've already been using your core in my armor. Compensate for its loss."  
(Naofumi) [28]

"Ha... It can't be helped." (Gaelion)

He handed me a red ball just the time he gave Firo a candy ball.

"That ball is a part of my strength, and will borrow power from your armor. I'll be able to strengthen yours further if you get more fragments too." (Gaelion) "I see..." (Naofumi)

This armor just became a lot more useful.

Firo's ahoge is showing some sort of strange response.

"What is it, Firo?" (Naofumi)

“Firo doesn’t know. But it’s trying to do something.” (Firo) “Wait, what do you mean by that?” (Naofumi)

“It’s working together with my core to strengthen your armor further. I handed you a clone of mine, or so to speak.” (Gaelion) “Does this mean he’ll be strengthened by both?” (Rat)

“Ah, if I recall right, Rat was studying weapons and the like used by monsters. In a way, it’s close to what monsters use for protection, huh?” (Naofumi) “It looks like you’re getting the idea. Fumu... now that I think about it, you know about monster modification, right?” (Gaelion) “...What is it?” (Rato)

Rat hates dragons, doesn’t she?

Although it seems to be because they supposedly have no honor.

It’s just because he mated with too many monsters in the past, huh?

The fact that dragons are beings with no honor isn’t something that’s been proven.

“Don’t lay a hand on Rat.” (Naofumi)

“I wouldn’t do such a thing. But, if she wanted to, I wouldn’t mind playing with her for a bit. Claiming this place as my territory and mating with the monsters in the area doesn’t sound too bad.” (Gaelion) “No way!” (Rat)

“Don’t say that. I’m greedy for strength, enough to take down that Firoliel Queen.” (Gaelion) “No... you’re filth.” (Rat)

“Fufu, I wonder how long you’ll last with that mentality. Is this the extent of your motivation for research?” (Gaelion)

Rat glares at Gaelion with a somewhat bitter face.

What is up with this eroge-like development?

All of a sudden, I feel like driving out Gaelion now.

“If your daughter had heard this, she’d cry you know.” (Naofumi) “Gumu...” (Gaelion)

Taniko's completely against messing with monsters in research.

If her parent Gaelion is all for it, all her efforts are for nothing.

"The times are changing... is another way to put it." (Gaelion) "What do you mean?" (Naofumi)

"I've forgotten the true meaning behind the wave itself. But, there is one thing I do remember." (Gaelion) "What is it? Speak." (Naofumi)

"Well you see... Every time a wave takes place, monsters around the world get stronger." (Gaelion) "What?" (Naofumi)

Stronger... somehow, what he said has a bad ring to it.

In other words, it's similar to online games from my world where the strength of monsters would scale with the player population?

"Come to think of it, how do wild monsters Class Up?" (Naofumi) "Wild monsters work on a different system from humans. They get power from the earth itself, which is where humans also get experience from. Hence why there's a level cap." (Gaelion)

I've been told something I hadn't known before.

"In the first place, is that knowledge a fragment like you should have?" (Naofumi) "From the beginning, I've been a wild dragon." (Gaelion) "Well that's only natural." (Naofumi)

"Of course. Like wild monsters, we also work on a different system." (Gaelion) "How the hell do you know that!" (Naofumi)

"I heard it from an offspring of mine." (Gaelion)

"...I see." (Naofumi)

As a parent, Gaelion really doesn't care about anyone aside from Taniko.

Was the fact we worked on different systems supposed to be common sense?

Although, in Japan there's no way I'd be able to talk with wild animals like this in the first place.

"I understand what you're saying. Well, it's not that I won't consider it, but...if we get attacked by some dragon because of you, get out of here." (Naofumi) "If it ever came down to that, I would fight. I need to protect what's here, after all." (Gaelion) "You should probably tell that to the Queen." (Naofumi) "If the waves were to continue on like this, and the people of this world didn't find a solution, they would die sooner or later."

Just like an RPG, the monsters around the devil king are stronger, while the beginner area is a lot weaker.

"Well then, I'm tired and going to sleep soon. Would that be all?" (Gaelion) "Well, I guess so. I guess next we'll need to discipline your body's actual owner, huh?" (Naofumi) "He's reflecting plenty enough. Probably because of how he went against orders." (Gaelion) "I see. If he shows results, I'll believe that. Ding Dong Dash." (Naofumi) "Gumu... Ha.... I understand. It can't be helped." (Gaelion)

Like this, the conversation was over and I retired for the day.

Of course, Gaelion and Rat left.

For some reason, Sadina is sleeping in the same room though.

Firo is sticking to me without a shred of dignity.

Something will probably come out of this.

# Salute

It's been 3 days since I've started giving Firo preferential treatment over Gaelion.

In my free time, I've started training with Atlas.

"Training with Naofumi-sama. How delightful." (Atlas) "Atlas, I believe you were able to read the flow of energy or something, right?" (Naofumi) "Yes." (Atlas)

"Can you perform attacks that can breach my defenses, and damage me from the inside?" (Naofumi) "Um... something like this?" (Atlas)

Atlas makes a gesture as if she's grabbing something out of the air, and then pushes her hand at me.

At that moment, I suddenly feel a sense of pain in my stomach.

This technique is the same one that granny used.

"Y-yeah... That one." (Naofumi)

It's good that I didn't have a powerful shield equipped.

I have the feeling that if I equipped one of my heavily strengthened shields, then I would have fallen to the ground with that attack.

But for her to be able to execute it simply after hearing the granny's explanation, Atlas truly is a genius.

"I thought I would try training to be able to control my energy to withstand attacks like that." (Naofumi) "As expected of Naofumi-sama. You're always

trying to get stronger. Please allow me to assist you.” (Atlas) “I’ll leave it to you.” (Naofumi)

And like that, I began sparring with Atlas.

Because of this, Atlas is too tired at night to force herself into my bed.

I’ve been able to understand the general concept through my spars, but applying it is difficult.

I’ve been able to use support magic to drive away the forces acting within my body, but something is different.

But I guess it’s best to learn little by little.

“Master~! Let’s play~!” (Firo)

Firo occasionally comes over while we’re training.

I wonder what happened to Melty.

So I occasionally spar with Firo as well. I also just play with her normally.

“Kyua...” (Gaelion)

I can see Gaelion watching us from the shadows in envy, but I ignore him.

“Don’t bully him too much.” (Gaelion)

The older Gaelion speaks out in protest.

“Bu...! Go Back!” (Firo)

Firo truly seems to hate Gaelion.

“Now then, Gaelion. Where shall we go today?” (Taniko) “Gya... Gyau!”  
(Gaelion)

“Gaelion?” (Taniko)

Taniko is getting suspicious of Gaelion’s behavior.

Why must he hide his revival?

Even if he’s trying to fit into human society, I’m sure Taniko would be delighted if she knew.

Also, Kogaelion’s cry is Kyua. [\[29\]](#)

What the hell is Gyau supposed to mean?

Adult Gaelion stares at me for help with eyes like a calf that’s about to be sold. I won’t get involved.

Gaelion gets dragged off by Taniko.

He should be able to get through this with his own strength.

And so, 3 ordinary days passed.

“Firo is going to go level with Melty.” (Firo)

As I was walking around town with Firo, she suddenly blurts this out.

“... Are you sure you don’t want me to go with you?” (Naofumi) “Yeah!” (Firo)

Her answer is very energetic.

Since reconstruction has been going smoothly, I thought I would go level myself, but...

But with an answer that energetic, I can’t really force myself into their group.

Oh? Melty looks troubled.

“Um, Firo-chan. I don’t have that much free time.” (Melty) “Eh? But Mel-chan, you said that you felt weak and wanted to raise your level.” (Firo) “I didn’t mean right now.” (Melty)

“But Melty-chan, the villagers told me that people that put things off to tomorrow, never really do it tomorrow.” (Firo) “I have something else that I have to do.” (Melty) “Eh... But Mel-chan, they also said that if you don’t mix in fun with work, then you’ll never get anywhere.” (Firo)

Firo enters inquisition mode again.

In this mode, she seems to lose the ability to read the situation, and just continuously asks questions.

But if I don’t do anything here, Firo’s level will remain low.

If I tell her to go level alone, will she get mad?

“Firo.” (Naofumi)

“What~?” (Firo)

“Go level alone.” (Naofumi)

“No!” (Firo)

As I thought.

I look towards Melty’s subordinates.

I signal for them to open up a space in Melty’s schedule later.

It seems they were worried about Melty’s low level as well.

She hasn’t been neglecting her magical studies, so her abilities go beyond her level, but it’s probably better for one who is going to lead a country to have a higher level.

And there’s also the problem of having a child do strenuous labor for a long period of time.

Melty also needs time to play.

Firo is more than qualified to be her bodyguard.

“There’s no helping it... Future Queen, Melty. You must go on a journey to find yourself with that bird as your companion!” (Naofumi) “Na-Naofumi? What are you talking about?” (Melty) “And so, Firo. Go level up with Melty.” (Naofumi) “Hooray!” (Firo)

“Wait, Naofumi! Don’t go deciding these things on your own!” (Melty) “It’s fine, Melty.” (Naofumi)

“What is!?” (Melty)

“This isn’t just my own judgment. Your subordinates have already given me permission. Even Shadow will guard you from the shadows.” (Naofumi) “That’s even worse!” (Melty)

“After that, we’ll have to decide whether or not to apply the slave seal on you for the stat boosts. That Queen will probably grant permission.” (Naofumi) That Queen seems to want Melty to become my wife, so she’ll probably do anything to get her closer to me.

I’ll ask for the individual’s opinion here.

“Never!” (Melty)

“I see. Then we won’t. Firo, while you’re away, what will we do for Atlas countermeasures?” (Naofumi) “Hm... I’ll ask a reliable person.” (Firo)

Who?

Since it’s Firo, will she bring in her subordinate Filo Rial?

“I have no intentions of sleeping next to a Filo Rial.” (Naofumi) “Then I’ll ask Imya-chan.” (Firo)

“How will that help?” (Naofumi)

I don't think Imya can stop Atlas.

It seems that she's gotten skillful enough for the Tailor to begin passing on her personal secret techniques.

Will she make Atlas a wedding dress? I don't know how she would accomplish that with nothing but monster skins, but that sounds like it will sell well.

"Then Firo will bring in someone stronger than Atlas-chan." (Firo) "Who?" (Naofumi)

"Hm..." (Firo)

This isn't going to work. It doesn't look like she's even thinking about it.

"I think that person will be able to stop Atlas-chan." (Firo) "And I'm asking who." (Naofumi)

"Well then, we're off, Master~." (Firo)

"Wait, Firo-chan! I never said I was goin-" (Melty)

Before Melty can protest, Firo grabs the clothing on the back of her neck and tosses her onto her back.

And as soon as Melty lands, Firo runs off while flapping her wings.

"Naofumiiiiiii. Remember thiiiiiss!" (Melty)

"I expect great growth from you, Future Queen, Melty." (Naofumi) <sup>[30]</sup>

Going with the flow, I salute her. She seems angry, and tries to throw something at me. It appears to be a piece of scrap paper.

But as she's on the back of a running Firo, the item that she throws doesn't reach me. It just gets carried off by the wind.

She starts screaming hysterically.

But despite all of this, it's not like I hate her.

"Now then." (Naofumi)

I hold a meeting with Melty's subordinates about the management of the village.

The area's development is proceeding faster than expected.

This is in part due to the usage of the Camping Plant, which I lent to some of the stores.

This interesting plant will probably bring in a lot of customers.

-

"And... The help Firo hired was you?" (Naofumi)

When night comes, I once again hold my head in my hands.

Was that bird even thinking at all?

"That's right. This Onee-san really is troubled." (Sadina)

Raphtalia had already asked her, so why is Firo requesting her as well?

This is double booking.

Sadina is happily drinking sake as she sits on the floor of my house.

"Anyways... you have Raphtalia, and you have Firo. Why does everyone rely on you?" (Naofumi) "No idea. This Onee-san also finds it amazing~." (Sadina)  
She's being annoying.

I activate her slave seal for a second.

"Ahn. Naofumi-chan, how stimulating. Ahn!" (Sadina)

...As the pain sets in, Sadina releases a disturbing voice.

If someone were to hear her, they would definitely misunderstand the situation.

So she isn't someone the slave seal will work on so easily. I'm seriously considering kicking her out.

But if I did that, I might damage the relationship I have with the slaves.

For some reason, they seem to put a strange amount of trust in this person.

And I have no idea what Raphtalia would say to me if I do.

*"Sigh..."* (Naofumi)

"Do you really hate Atlas coming into your bed that much?" (Sadina) "Yeah. It's just as I said before." (Naofumi)

"...Everyone really is having it tough." (Sadina)

"With what?" (Naofumi)

"Everyone really likes Naofumi-chan, but Naofumi-chan has no intentions of responding to them." (Sadina) "Their feelings are more like those they would have for a parent. You can't call that love. I don't want to be responsible for something like that, so I try to keep my distance. It seems Raphtalia also seems to get angry when such matters come up, and Firo... I'm not even sure if she understands what Love is." (Naofumi) "I can understand what Naofumi-chan is saying. I think it's best if you don't discuss these sorts of things with Raphtalia-chan." (Sadina) "You're saying it as if it's fine to discuss it with everyone else, though." (Naofumi)

If Raphtalia harbored those kinds of feelings towards me, would Sadina tell me to take responsibility?

Her phrasing makes it sound like Raphtalia is keeping something from me.

Well, we've known each other for quite a while, so Sadina might be mistaking our relationship.

"...I'm grateful that you've been protecting Raphtalia all this time. When the first wave hit, I wasn't able to help her. I couldn't protect her." (Sadina)

Protect? What sort of relationship did they have?

Or is she regretting that she was unable to protect the other villagers?

Her sense of duty is quite strong.

“Now then... This Onee-san will offer Naofumi-chan a special idea.” (Sadina)

“What?” (Naofumi)

“Naofumi-chan, don’t you have quite a convenient shield? When you sleep, can’t you just move to a different town? I don’t think Atlas-chan will pursue you that far.” (Sadina) “But my money is...” (Naofumi)

The lodging fee will be quite a bit. The daily amount isn’t much, but if I want to stay every night, the amounts will add up.

I can camp out in a camping plant and the wild monsters probably won’t be able to damage me, but I don’t think I will be able to sleep.

Perhaps I can sleep for free at Melromark Castls.

But Trash is over there, and I think I’ll get dragged into something troublesome.

“Then should this Onee-san show you her secret base?” (Sadina) “Secret base?” (Naofumi)

# Secret Base

“I see... So this is your secret base.” (Naofumi)

After that, Sadina dragged me towards the ocean.

She told me to get on her back, and started swimming.

Riding Sadina, it took around 30 minutes to get there.

I saw an island in the distance. It was too dark for me to see clearly, but the island didn't look particularly big.

It looked kinda like a crescent island I've seen in postcards.

I don't really see any monsters.

I'm not Motoyasu, but I can say that it's quite a romantic island.

After we reach the island, Sadina goes onto a hill and lights a torch. She leads me to a cave-like area.

The structure is man-made, and even has windows.

“This place is regularly maintained, so it should be able to stand against storms.” (Sadina) “If we come all the way here, I guess even Atlas won't follow me.” (Naofumi) “Pretty much.” (Sadina)

If she decides to cross the ocean, or gets a boat, then there truly is nothing I can do to stop her.

...The fact that it actually seems likely scares me.

“You should be able to get back using your shield. How does the place seem?”

(Sadina) “If I’m only using it to sleep, then this will suffice.” (Naofumi)

The location isn’t bad. The only problem is that it will be a pain to bring over my medicine compounding equipment.

The island is very quiet, and perfect for work.

Perhaps Rat can move her laboratory over here.

“And so, Naofumi-chan.” (Sadina)

Sadina goes deeper in the cave and brings out a large barrel.

It most likely contains alcohol.

“Where did you get that from?” (Naofumi)

“I salvaged it from a shipwreck. It’s matured to a perfect age now.” (Sadina)

Ah, I see. For some reason, that barrel looks like illegal goods to me.

I mean, it is being hidden away in such a reclusive place.

“Why don’t you have a little drinking contest with me?” (Sadina) “Why would I do that?” (Naofumi)

“Onesasan wants to get Naofumi-chan drunk so he will spill out his true feelings.” (Sadina) “Did you think I would permit it if you just asked honestly?”

Anyways, I can’t even get drunk.” (Naofumi) “This is the last time you’ll be saying something like that~” (Sadina)

Sadina enthusiastically cracks open the barrel. She dips a cup in and starts drinking.

I guess I’ll keep her company. I think I can sleep peacefully here.

“You said this was from a shipwreck, right?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah.” (Sadina)

“Can you just take goods like that in this country?” (Naofumi) “No problem~, This wasn’t within this country’s salvageable range.” (Sadina) “Salvage range?” (Naofumi)

“There are laws that mandate the acquisition of goods from the ocean, but they aren’t very definite. This barrel was picked up in international waters, so it’s not subject to law.” (Sadina)

It’s not like anyone’s going to ask for its origin anyways, so as long as we keep quiet, it’s probably okay.

“With water magic, one can gain the ability to breath underwater for a while, but that doesn’t mean they can match aquatic races. Melromark is a country of human absolutism, so even if they build salvage ships, most of the deeper areas of the ocean are untouched.” (Sadina) “I see...” (Naofumi)

“Fishermen will actively attack aquatic Demi-humans and Beastmen, and the reverse is also common.” (Sadina)

The oceans here seem to be quite dangerous.

“Recently, the waves have gotten stronger and the currents faster as well.” (Sadina)

So the Wave is also effecting the normal waves.

I get the feeling that the ship captain said that on the way to Cal Mira.

“If I find time, do you want me to go treasure hunting? Though if I don’t raise my level a bit, it will be kinda dangerous.” (Sadina) “Well, your level has risen quite a bit... If you think you can do it, I’ll leave it to you.” (Naofumi)

Treasure from the sea will definitely sell for a bit.

Sadina pulls out an ocean map with one hand, while she continues drinking with the other.

“U... Naofumi-chan is a strong drinker~.” (Sadina)

While we were in the middle of the second barrel, Sadina starts swaying a bit.

“Oh? You even have Lucor fruits here.” (Naofumi)

I was curious, so I walked past the drunk Sadina and look further into the cave.

I snack on some of the fruits before returning.

Apparently, because of its ridiculously high alcohol concentration, it almost never spoils.

These ones seem to be a bit old. The taste is deeper than usual.

Mass producing these and selling them is possible, but it's probably best not to introduce alcohol to the slaves. I can imagine quite a few of them being bad drunks.

“Uu...” (Sadina)

Seeing me eating the Lucor Fruit, Sadina opens the window and begins throwing up into the sea.

“You really are strong. Oneesan is surprised. *Hic.*” (Sadina) “Yes, yes.” (Naofumi)

“...Naofumi-chan. Will you not become my groom?” (Sadina) “Don't. Want. To.” (Naofumi)

“Ara. Oneesan said that she would marry someone who could drink more than her. I don't think I'll find someone better than Naofumi-chan.” (Sadina)

“Why should I marry you?” (Naofumi)

“How cruel~. Well, that's part of Naofumi-chan's charms.” (Sadina)  
And while we continued talking about it...

“...Samaaaa...” (???)

“Was that my imagination, or did you just hear a very ominous sound?”

(Naofumi) “What a coincidence. I also heard Atlas-chan’s voice. *Hic.*” (Sadina)  
I look towards the beach.

...Atlas is approaching, riding a transformed Gaelion.

“Gaelion! Go Home!” (Naofumi)

There is still around 100 meters before they reach shore.

At this range, Atlas shouldn’t do anything stupid here.

“Kyua!?” (Gaelion)

It seems it’s child Gaelion this time.

I had never even considered the possibility of her using Gaelion to follow.

Atlas isn’t exactly stupid. She’s using all of her resources.

I guess I’ll have to deal with Gaelion later.

...With him here, no matter where I go, I will be followed.

What other options do I have left now?

“Ah, Gaelion-chan. Why are you turning around!? Naofumi-sama is right in front of us.” (Atlas) “KYUAAA!” (Gaelion)

“Then you’ve forced me to take drastic measures.” (Atlas) “Kyua!?  
KYUAAAAAAAAA!” (Gaelion)

“Even if it hurts, I’m going to do my best and jump off!”

He probably thought that getting any closer would only anger me.

Gaelion frantically tries to contain Atlas, and flies back along the route from which he came.

It seems that our aerial offensive power has greatly increased.

“...We were immediately found out.” (Naofumi)

“Wow~... That child’s the real deal.” (Sadina)

“What should we do?” (Naofumi)

“Adult Gaelion will probably refuse her, and it seems child Gaelion has found out that you dislike him coming here, so it will probably work out fine.” (Sadina)

“Ah, I see.” (Naofumi)

“But it’s good that you didn’t choose to sleep in another town.” (Sadina) “... She would have come on the Filo Rial or another monster.” (Naofumi)

“Probably.” (Sadina)

After a while, Gaelion comes flying back.

This time, it’s the adult one.

“...That girl doth not know when to give up. Perhaps you may say that she’s simply strong willed.” (Gaelion) “I’ve caused you some trouble.” (Naofumi)

“No problem. Also... Oh? Is that Wine? Won’t you offer some to me?” (Gaelion) “Isn’t your body that of a child? Will you be fine?” (Naofumi) “Yes, yes~ Naofumi-chan is too strong of a drinker, and Oneesan is in trouble. Gaelion-chan, please drink as well.” (Sadina)

Ignoring my words, Sadina hands Gaelion some sake.

“Yes, the taste of this one isn’t bad.” (Gaelion)

“What did you want to talk about? Speak before you get too intoxicated.” (Naofumi) “I’d never challenge the Lucor-eating Naofumi to a drinking contest. I wanted to speak concerning the class up.” (Gaelion) “Ah, there was that.” (Naofumi)

The monsters we keep around here are getting to be around that level.

After hunting for a while, a ★ appeared next to Gaelion’s level value. It seems

that the experience he stole from Firo let him level up past the preclass-up limit, but after a while, his level stopped growing.

“How about you, Sadina?” (Naofumi)

“Let’s see, Oneesan will be able to class up in a little bit.” (Sadina)

It seems this one is hiding quite a bit of information. Or she just wont say anything until you ask.

Let me try asking.

“Did you ever Level Reset before? Besides when you did it with me?” (Naofumi)

“Ah? You could tell~?” (Sadina)

That was a bluff, but she happily responds.

I had found a few things strange about her.

“I was able to get all the way to 75 before, but then I reset. The reason is a secret. I think it was around when Raphtalia-chan was born... My age was around that of a child I think.” (Sadina) “I see, so does that mean you were a criminal?” (Naofumi) <sup>[31]</sup>

“Depending on the perspective you look at it from, I may have been a criminal.” (Sadina)

She starts laughing out loud. What happened to her in the past?

“Exactly how old are you anyways?” (Naofumi)

“To ask a woman for her age is quite rude, you know. By the way, I’m 23.” (Sadina)

Her eyes twinkle as she says this.

And... she’s much younger than I thought. I estimated her to be in her 30s.

Raphtalia’s true age is quite young, so when she was born, Sadina would be around 13.

“At that time, I was an Ocean Shrine Maiden.” (Sadina)

“So you were fired, and had your level reset?” (Naofumi) “Well, that’s pretty much how it went.” (Sadina)

Again, what exactly did she do?

Digging up people’s pasts is a pain, and generally unproductive so I don’t do it, but a former criminal...

“What~?” (Sadina)

“What did you do?” (Naofumi)

“I just went against my faith. It’s not like I killed someone or something. I won’t tell you more than that.” (Sadina)

She answers seriously for once. I get the feeling that this is a secret she will take to the grave.

My mind wanders towards Raphtalia.

Like Raphtalia’s parents, she used to be a wanderer I think.

Did she know Raphtalia’s parents for a long time?

...Raphtalia sometimes treats her as if she were her mother... Or is that just my imagination?

It seems she has no intention of saying more, so asking won’t do anything.

“And? Gaelion, what is this about the Class Up?” (Naofumi) “You have the protection of the Filo Rial Queen, correct?” (Gaelion) “Yeah, Firo’s Ahoge is a sort of protection I guess.” (Naofumi)

It seems that Filo Rials possess a wide variety of powers.

Or at least that’s what I believe.

“I don’t really know how it works, but the Ahoge sometimes interferes with

Class Ups.” (Naofumi)

Sometimes regardless of the individual’s will.

“That power interferes with the land the Class up takes place on, and magnifies its effects.” (Gaelion)

Power of the land...?

I believe he said that also influences experience and Status magic.

“A Class up is the enhancement of an individual’s power. Of course the Hero’s protection also amplifies power, but I am referring to something different.”

(Gaelion) “What do you mean?” (Naofumi)

“Most likely, the Filo Rial’s protection will not work on people who can use the Dragon Pulse Order and other monsters. The reason for this should be obvious.” (Gaelion) “Mu...” (Naofumi)

So neither Taniko or Sadina can use the special Ahoge-enhanced Class up.

They’ll only be able to depend on their selves for strength.

“I was worried about it, and thus I came here. You said that there were currently 2 who could Class Up, right?” (Gaelion) “I think so.” (Naofumi)

“Including me, that’s 3. I may be able to give protection on the same level as the Filo Rial one. If you want to Class Up other Monsters, then bring them along.” (Gaelion) “Is your protection different from the Filo Rial one?”

(Naofumi) “Yeah... I forgot the reason. If you want to conduct a special Class Up, then... Ah, this is annoying.” (Gaelion)

So he lost the knowledge on how to do it.

“I think doing it before I class up myself is dangerous.” (Gaelion)

There’s also a possibility he can’t even do it.

“Sadina, do you know anything about this?” (Naofumi)

“Nope~. Though when I did it, I did get the Water Dragon Emperor’s power to do a special Class Up.” (Sadina) “This one is probably incomparable to the other one.” (Gaelion)

Says Gaelion.

So Sadina’s conducted a special Class Up before.

“Understood. I’ll have a monster that understands human speech ask them before they class up.” (Naofumi)

If they truly wish to become stronger, then we can use Gaelion’s protection.

The monsters going to Rat for strength will most likely consider it.

“I guess I’ll take Firo and Gaelion along when next we decide to go Class Up.” (Naofumi)

Atlas... Still has a while to go. The Hakuko have a higher class up level than the rest.

But Sadina and Taniko, also some of the other slaves are almost ready.

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“And so-” (Naofumi)

I explain what Gaelion told me to the monsters over Level 40.

I have absolutely no idea whether or not monsters can understand human speech, but giving an explanation is better than not.

I feel like an idiot right now.

“Even so, if you still want to, come with me. Today, we’ll go to the castle to Class Up.” (Naofumi)

...The monsters here don’t even move.

So they really can’t understand human words.

“Everyone who wishes to get stronger, step forward.” (Naofumi) “Kyu-!”

“Domomo...”

“Pyon!”

“Garu!”

A majority of the monsters come towards me.

Wow... They actually understood me.

Even the Usapill steps forwards.

By the way, this village's Usapill has grown quite big. Big enough to ride it. [32]

And all of these monsters are striving for strength.

“*Sigh*... I got it. Then we'll wait for Gaelion to class up before we go. You'll have to stay that way for a while.” (Naofumi)

The monsters listen to my command and return to the monster stable.

My head hurts.

And so after speaking with the monsters, I took Sadina, Taniko and Gaelion to go class up at the castle.

I don't think I even have to talk about the Class up ceremony at this point.

In the middle of Gaelion's Class Up, he began chanting magic, and the ceremony suddenly sped up and came to a close.

When I checked his Status, I found it had rose just as much as Firo's when she classed up.

Sadina's stat increase is also considerable.

Is it because she's the Oneesan that everyone relies on? She doesn't seem to be that strong on land.,,,

“Did you learn anything regarding providing providence during Class Up?”

(Naofumi) “Yeah, Father's power came through Gaelion, and gave us power, right?”

(Taniko) “No, your father is alive clinging to that dragon there.”

(Naofumi) “What are you talking about? If you don’t stop, I will get angry.”

(Taniko)

Taniko believes wholeheartedly that her father Gaelion is dead.

That very individual seems to be looking away and making a whistling sound.

What’s with this scene?

...Who was it? They called me a Boomerang or something. [\[33\]](#)

Anyways, like that we were able to obtain the Dragon’s protection for Class Ups.

# Translator note

1. ↑ T/N: Which is better, Gaelion or Gaerion?
2. ↑ T/N: Repeated for emphasis. Not a typo.
3. ↑ T/N: This sentence was combined with the one before it as a massively long sentence in the raws and I had so much trouble figuring out how to word it/split it up.
4. ↑ What does this mean?
5. ↑ TL: Think Erio from Denpa Onna.
6. ↑ TL: His cry actually changes.
7. ↑ Note: In Japan, this [sign](#) is called セックス (sekkusu) and means sex. Since 1989, it has fallen into disuse.
8. ↑ TL: referring to the time Firo ate the Zombie Dragon's heart in Chapter 44.
9. ↑ TL: Referring to the events in Chapter 44.
10. ↑ T/N: Perfect Hidden Justice (パーフェクト=ハイド=ジャスティス) is the name Itsuki's using to go undercover.
11. ↑ TLN: just to clear, he meant that the mountainside is covered in clouds.. not the entire eastern part...
12. ↑ TLN: He's referring to the leaving a message to the demi-human village
13. ↑ TL: Google it.
14. ↑ TL: Note, this sound is written in alphanumeric.
15. ↑ T/N: But you are actually...
16. ↑ T/N: ゼー・ヴィレ... it's slightly different to how it's pronounced, but oh well.
17. ↑ Talking about the breathing underwater thing...
18. ↑ T/N: Oh how punny...
19. ↑ T/N: Orca = 鯨. 魚 = fish, 虎 = tiger
20. ↑ T/N: 激龍双刃?
21. ↑ T/N: 逆叉撃?

22. ↑ Note: This is a reference to Mowgli, the boy who was raised by wolves from The Jungle Book. It could also be a reference to Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome who were said to have been raised by wolves.
23. ↑ TL: Ora Ora Ora
24. ↑ TL: Muda Muda Muda
25. ↑ By Sachi he means Orca, not Sachihoko and he's referring to Orca's having three types: Resident, Transient, and Offshore:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killer\\_whale#Types](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killer_whale#Types). One of them is migratory in relation to previous lines.
26. ↑ I'm not really sure who's speaking here, but I want to say Gaelion. Actual line doesn't state "I" explicitly.
27. ↑ TL: There is a side note that these monsters are Gaelion's lovers.
28. ↑ Naofumi tells Gaelion that he has been using the dragon core for his armor and to give it back. Gaelion gives him the candy-like thing as a replacement for it. Gaelion had eaten the core used in the armor earlier after all, which is what led to the mess with the Wrath Dragon.
29. ↑ TL Note: Ko means child
30. ↑ TL: As in Stats.
31. ↑ TL: Remember that Level Reset was initially a punishment.
32. ↑ TL: See manga for size comparison.
33. ↑ TL: I don't really get this line, please help. Perhaps I'm just sleepy (Knowing Naofumi, it's probably a pop culture reference, but...)...誰だ？俺の事をブーメランとか言った奴は？ -probably implies 'you get what you sow' since the "boomerang" you throw returns to hit you, or something like that