

Two Thirds

“Now then, with this, we’ve pretty much finished cleaning up his forces. Go shoot some light magic.” (Naofumi)

As per Trash’s order, I give the command. Sadina raises her harpoon into the sky and chants magic.

Well, the Cane should have flown to the man, so he should already know the conclusion.

“Hmm? Wha-”

When I look towards the battlefield, I find myself at a loss for words.

It’s fine that smoke’s rising from the castle town.

I mean, the fires seem to have subsided greatly.

The problem is the area close to the fortress.

The remnants of about half the Faublian army come running... seemingly after suffering heavy damage.

“Naofumi.” (Ren)

Ren points to the battlefield.

At that moment, something glows, and a beam of light shoots through the Faublian army.

“Do you know what’s happening?” (Ren)

“... Probably.” (Naofumi)

It was fired from Melromark’s side, and based on the marks left behind, I think it’s heavy artillery.^[1]

After that, a thick laser-like beam pierces the sky.

“I think it’s Rat’s new weapon... and Trash’s skill.” (Naofumi)

A carriage-type... no, Tank-type Mii-kun is probably letting loose the armaments equipped on him.

Like a swarm of baby spiders, half of the Faublian army scatters and flees in this direction. The rest appear to have surrendered. There’s no sign of movement from them.

“More importantly. We should arrest Tact and his followers already, and go fight the wave.” (Naofumi) “Yeah.” (Ren)

I don’t know if any force will come to assist him, so I wonder what I should do.

“Witch... don’t think you can escape.” (Raphtalia)

With hammer in hand, Raphtalia stands before Witch, who was quietly trying to escape. She glares at her.

Remembering the events up until now, there’s not a single person who will let that bitch go.

Just how many things had to become sacrifices because of her?

“Ku...”

“Your life is already over. It’s time for you to prepare for your painful execution.” (Naofumi)

I point my thumb towards the ground and look to Sadina.

“Arara. 「Dreifach Thunderbolt」!” (Sadina)

As if she guessed my intention, Sadina casts lightning magic to prevent Witch’s escape.

“GYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!” (Witch)

It was quite a cry.

“KYAAAAAAAAAH!”

Seeing the tempest of lightning dancing before them, Tact’s women raise up some screams.

It’s paralysis. Moving will be impossible for her.

We definitely have no intention of letting her escape.

“Even if she’s rotten, her level is unnecessarily high. Firo, look over her. If she tries anything strange, kill her without hesitation.” (Naofumi) “What about Master?” (Firo)

“I’ll head to the wave with Gaelion.” (Naofumi)

“Eh? Firo wants to be on that side.” (Firo)

“Deal with it. Helping out here will help Melty out in the long run.” (Naofumi)

“Really? Then Firo will do it.” (Firo)

For Firo, Melty’s a precious friend.

I’ll bet that having her look after the source of all of this world’s evil will prove beneficial to her reputation.

“Gaelion, how long are you going to dig around in that? Let’s go already.”
(Naofumi) “...Kyua...” (Gaelion)

Hmm? Gaelion’s acting strange.

He flies to me in his child mode.

Oy, don’t touch me when you’re covered in blood.

Though, the blood on my body (Tact’s) isn’t something to laugh at either.

“Kyua.” (Gaelion)

Gaelion chants water magic to wash his body.

... He could use something like that?

He gets on my shoulder and speaks in a soft voice.

“I’ve gathered a majority of the fragments. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say I’ve remembered mostly everything.” (Gaelion) “I see. Even on how to breach the level limit?” (Naofumi) “Yeah, something like that is of no trouble to me. More importantly, there was a piece of important information in that woman’s fragments.” (Gaelion)

What? I’ve already heard about the wave from the spirits, and Trash was able to deduce a bit from the memos left by the Queen.

“It’s about the Four Good Omens. You were talking about the wave earlier, right?” (Gaelion) “Yes, and?” (Naofumi)

“The Four omens offer their souls to protect the world from the wave, and they hold the power to prevent it. That’s why the legendary weapon wielders, and their brethren, aren’t transferred to combat them when they appear.”
(Gaelion)

I see. I did think it was something like that, but this clinches it.

It was something I thought up quite a while ago.

The Four Omens were definitely our enemies, but perhaps they were allies of the world.

That means...

“I am... No, if Ouryuu, who’s sealed within the Dragon Emperor Fragments were to be released, then he would sacrifice an estimated two thirds of the world’s population, and the wave will...” (Gaelion)

-Stop.

At that moment, my attention turns to the Dragon Hourglass icon in my field of vision.

Since I registered at Zeltburg’s hourglass, what’s displayed is the time until Zeltburg’s wave.

Numbers representing the remaining time appear, and a world map with the indicated location pops up.

What’s more, a window with 『Will you heed this summon?』 and the choices 『Yes / No』 float before me.

This may be quite a dire situation.

The location is close to Melromark’s... southwest border.

It appears I can teleport there, but if the Heroes were to warp, then Tact and Witch would get away.

“Firo, Sadina, and Ren, you watch over these people. We’ll respond to these summons.” (Naofumi) “Got it.” (Ren)

“Leave it to onee-san.” (Sadina)

“Firo too.” (Firo)

With those three on guard, I don’t think they can run.

Ren's become able to use a bit of support magic, so the 250-level gap shouldn't hold too much meaning.

They don't seem to have any growth corrections or status boosts, so our base power is different.

"Let's go." (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia calls out to me.

Her raised hand is clamping around a ridiculously large mallet.

A Seven Star Weapon... no, a brethren of the four holy weapons.

"Are you fine with that weapon?" (Naofumi)

"Yes. Hengen Musou doesn't restrict itself to a single weapon." (Raphtalia)

"Ah, that's true. Fohl, we'll have to put off harassing that man to a later date. You understand?" (Naofumi) "...Yeah." (Fohl)

He seems reluctant, but he nods anyways.

And Raph-chan jumps towards me.

He grabs onto the surface of my Shield.

"Rafu~" (Raph-chan)

"You want to come too?" (Naofumi)

"Rafu~!" (Raph-chan)

I'd like it if he stopped swinging that sword around in his Tanuki mode... but he seems to have the motivation to fight, so I'll bring him along.

I turn back to Gaelion.

"So, the wave... will stop. Will you do it?" (Gaelion)

Sacrificing about two thirds of the population to ensure the longevity of the world?

With the end result taken into consideration, I guess it's not a bad hand to play.

Thinking about the true enemy we have to fight, it's quite a difficult problem.

But, the cost is too great for me to make the choice.

"Yep, let's leave that as a final option." (Naofumi)

"... As it should be. The Dragon Emperor asked the Heroes of the Past to seal him. In order to prepare for an event like this. It's beneficial to us that that Fake Hero was unable to bring himself to kill that dragon and instead kept it close."
(Gaelion)

No, I think that's just because she was a Bishoujo when in Human form. But I won't say it.

I pick 『Yes』 from the options floating in the air.

At that moment, all those in my party and I were sent flying to the wave.

This wave has both Itsuki and Motoyasu fighting in it.

What could be happening?

We have to check the situation.

The scene I witness upon teleportation leaves me dumbfounded.

A large fissure has spread throughout the sky, and on the other side... was but another world.

And right now, the fissure gradually begins to increase in size.

The Apocalypse... the word crosses my mind.

It was a scene bizarre enough to warrant such a thought.

Even though I heard most of it from the spirits, I'm still this disturbed.

Raphtalia and the others might be looking at fear itself.

I look around.

The villagers were frantically repelling the raging monsters of the wave.

There was also an unfamiliar flock of Filo Rials and a Queen pulling a carriage resembling Rat's tank.

"KUEEEEEEEEEEE!"

In answer to the Filo Rial's scream, light gathers around the barrel of the mounted cannon. It releases a beam that cuts through the rampaging monsters.

「Energy Blaster」!

Itsuki changes his Bow to a Rifle and uses a skill.

The Legendary Bow sure encompasses quite a few categories.

Even firearms are allowed... I'm jealous.

But now's not the time to think about it.

I call out to Itsuki, who was concentrating on the monsters emerging from the sky.

"Itsuki! Reinforcements have arrived!" (Naofumi)

"Naofumi-san! You came at a good time! Quickly, the Wave..." (Itsuki) "Y-yeah!" (Naofumi)

When I nod, the people I brought with me begin running towards the source.

Thinking about it, what should we do about the origin of the wave?

“Quickly, the enemy that... came from the wave. Please beat it with Motoyasu-san!” (Itsuki) “U-understood! 「All Revelation Aura X」!” (Naofumi)

Upon receiving my support magic, we start off towards the boss monster.

The Aura Spell, All Revelation Aura, casts a status buff on all those I consider an ally within a limited area.

“It’s about time the first will wear off. 「All Revelation Down X」!” (Itsuki)
Ah, I forgot to mention it.

The magic Itsuki learned on Cal Mira was Down.

You can probably guess by the name, but it’s a debuff that’s the exact opposite of Aura.

It lowers all stats.

When used on an enemy, their abilities fall considerably.

With my Aura and Itsuki’s Down, the battle should... become easier!

When I look at those who were fighting before we got here, their movements have gotten better. Their skills have risen, but the amount of enemies isn’t decreasing.

It looks like monsters are appearing from areas outside of the fissure.

It’s like they respawn the moment they’re cut down.

United Front

“Just what the hell is happening!?” (Naofumi)

I ask Itsuki once more.

“Report the situation!” (Naofumi)

“Understood!” (Itsuki)

In the face of the raging wave monster, I deploy Meteor Shield X, and protect the villagers.

There, Itsuki raises his voice, and begins his report.

Next to him, Rishia throws her weapon to take out the monsters outside the barrier.

Her weapon has changed from transparent to solid.

Well, just as the Spirit of the Shield and Atlas told me, because the Seven Star Weapons were released, Rishia’s been formally recognized as the Hero of the Projectile.

I don’t know the situation about the wave itself, but the battlefield is quite wide, and is enlarging as we speak.

What’s happening at the center of this wave?

It seems that Motoyasu and his three Filo Rials are fighting there, but it’s quite far, and the sheer amount of monsters in our way make it difficult to make them out.

“We participated in the wave from the start, but the monsters that appeared had very high levels, so it is a close battle. That is the situation.” (Itsuki)
I confirm the levels of the monsters exiting the void.

Interdimensional Bird of Ruin Level 220

“220!? It seems their levels suddenly spiked.” (Naofumi)
With numbers this high, I can see it being quite a struggle.

No, with 100 as the limit, they’re treading in dangerous waters!

Well, with support magic, I guess it’s not too bad.

Right now, everyone’s relying on Itsuki’s support magic to narrowly avoid defeat.

“That isn’t all, right?” (Naofumi)

The air whistles, and behind us, Trash appears, Cane in hand.

It seems he’s brought some Melromark and Allied soldiers with him.

“T-this is...” (Trash)

“Good timing! Trash, I leave the command to you. Make sure we don’t run out of support magic.” (Naofumi) “Understood!” (Trash)

Trash is the Hero of the Cane, so he can use most forms of magic.

That includes the Magic of Heroes.

I went to the Magic Store, and learned how to transcribe spells, before teaching them to Trash.

Well, I only taught him the fundamentals, so I don’t suppose he can use Revelation, but he should be able to manage a Dreifach.

“How does the other battlefield look?” (Naofumi)

“It was Melromark’s complete victory, and the Faublian Army has surrendered. It seems something happened here, so I took your people who were fighting with us, and all those of the allied army that could still fight, and came here.” (Trash)

With him are Kiel and Taniko. Also, Rat and Miikun.

“Niichan! I worked hard!” (Kiel)

“I see. Good job.” (Naofumi)

I offer thankful words to Kiel.

The fact that she’s this energetic means that she must have contributed a lot to the war.

Hmm? Looking closely, Taniko’s carrying a whip I’ve never seen before.

C-could it be... she...

No, she does love monsters, so perhaps he has the proper affinity.

“It seems that this child has been selected as the next Hero of the Whip.”
(Trash) “KYUAAAAA!” (Gaelion)

Gaelion leaps in Taniko’s direction.

You do realize we’re in the middle of a battlefield, right!?

“I see. Then I’ll leave it to you!” (Naofumi)

“No... It’s not me...” (Taniko)

Taniko shakes as she answers me.

“That old woman! When the light came flying over, she used me as a Shield!”
(Taniko) “What are you talking about? The legendary Whip chose you.” (Rat)
“You’re definitely wrong!” (Taniko)

“Rafu~” (Mii-kun)

Tank-model Mii-kun calls out to calm both sides.

At the same time, Gaelion stands between them.

What the hell are these people doing...

“I definitely don’t want to be a Hero! I’m just a researcher!” (Rat) “It’s not that I don’t want to fight, but I don’t want a Hero’s power!” (Taniko)^[2]

The whip lets off a faint light, as it bounces back and forth between the two.

It still hasn’t made a decision?

As long as it adds to our forces, I don’t really care who gets it.

The Spirit seems troubled as well.

“You people... Just go fight already! The Whip chose someone, right!?”
(Naofumi)

Well, both of them are skilled at support, and from what I’ve seen, the Whip has high support capabilities.

Is it that they don’t want to stand out?

Neither of them have particularly good images of Heroes either.

The Hero of the Whip chased Rat out of the country, and Taniko’s surrogate father was killed off by a Hero.

I bet it’s something like that.

And the Whip holds an affinity with those that use monsters.

Both of them have the qualifications.

“KYUA!” (Gaelion)

Gaelion puts Taniko on his back, and starts flying towards the center of the wave.

Don't worry. The Gaelion you're riding isn't the Gaelion of the past.

After stealing the fragment of Faubley's Dragon Empress, he's now the Dragon Emperor with the highest amount of Fragments in the world.

“Go! Gaelion!” (Naofumi)

“KYUAAAAA!” (Gaelion)

Following my order, Gaelion changes to his giant dragon form, and bathes the battleground in flames.

Oh my. This is quite a powerup.

It seems that Taniko's using the Whip's power to cast support skills on him too.

I'll have to teach her about her weapon later.

Raphtalia and Firo as well.

“And? Itsuki, what's happening?” (Naofumi)

We move our mouths as we fight.

That's just how pressed for time we are.

“Yes. The monster's have become stronger as a start... and the enemy Naofumi-san encountered at the last red hourglass, Glass, appeared.” (Itsuki) “As I thought... and?” (Naofumi)

“After that, the monsters went out of control, and we’re currently dividing and conquering. Next... you’ll have to hear it from Motoyasu-san and his Filo Rials, who’re fighting in the source!” (Itsuki) “Got it!” (Naofumi)

So Itsuki and Rishia don’t know the whole situation themselves.

The remaining time on the Hourglass has dwindled quite a bit.

Like a warning alarm, the hourglass had begun flashing, alerting us of the danger.

“Raphtalia! Fohl! We’re going to rush right through to the source of the wave! Follow me!” (Naofumi) “Got it!” (Fohl)

“Yes!” (Raphtalia)

“Rafu~!” (Raphchan)

As if she understood my order, the Filo Rial drawing the tank-like carriage begins clearing the way for us.

That’s... probably Fitoria.

That Tank is... no, it doesn’t matter. I’ll save that for later.

I shrug off the high leveled monsters with my Shield, as we rush to the center.

“DERYAAAAAAH!”

“Ku... That Shield... you’re Naofumi! Finally, a real one has arrived.”

There, for some reason, Motoyasu and Glass were combining their powers to shoot off skills towards the crack in the sky.

Protecting the two, Midori was at the front slaughtering the monsters headed in their direction. He was toting an unfamiliar axe.

“Why are... you fighting with Motoyasu’s group?” (Naofumi) “At the start, I

came to oppose him... but now's not the time for such things! If we don't contain the wave quickly, calamity will come!" (Glass) "Yes... I know. But I don't have any means of attack. So.. I came here to protect everyone." (Naofumi)
The Shield told me just what sort of phenomenon the Wave was.

If it was telling the truth... then I guess I can understand why Glass would ally with us here.

This time, they're directly attacking the crack itself.

This was something outside of Itsuki's knowledge.

I concentrate my attention on the Shield, put in my Chi... and release.

「Meteor Wall X」!

This was a skill from the Shield of Compassion Atlas bestowed upon me.

It's ability is... deploying a Meteor Shield around all those I recognize as an ally. A high-class skill.

What's more, when the group enters a close formation, its area of effect grows.

Right now, all of those at the Wave's origin point, starting with Motoyasu, Glass, and Midori, all get covered in a large barrier.

Of course, it also has its flaws.

I have to shoulder a portion of the damage dealt to the Meteor Wall.

But only if they're able to overcome my defense.

"This is..." (Glass)

Glass seems surprised at the barrier I deployed.

“If this is up, then... 「Rinbu Mu: Musou」!” (Glass)^{[3][4]}

In an instant, Glass’s body vanished, and in the next moment, a large impact sound rang out from the crack.

I only witnessed it for a split-second, but she appeared in front of the crevice, as if through teleportation, and proceeded to unleash a consecutive stream of blows on it.

I was only able to follow that speed with my senses heightened by Revelation Aura.

As expected of one who protects the world?

I don’t know what’s to come, but for now, she’s an ally.

And while I was thinking that, the Meteor Wall surrounding Glass shattered.

It was probably the effect of her skill.

In truth, I did take a small amount of damage.

From Glass’s attitude, it must have been some double-edged-sword-like skill.

I recast the Meteor wall, and re-erect our defensive wall.

“Now! As fast as possible! Suppress the wave!” (Naofumi) “Understood, Father-in-Law! 「Brionac X」!” (Motoyasu) “Got it! 「Rinbu Sen: Samidare」!” (Glass)^[5]

「Thor Hammer」!

「Rafu~」

「KYUAAAA!」

「Dragon of Ruin Inferno Fist X」!^[6]

「Accel Smash」!

「Lightning Whip」!

All of my comrades who had reached the center released their ultimate attacks.

Large shockwaves collide with the crevice, and some explosion-like attacks hit it as well.

But without any change, the fissure continues to expand.

“Ku...”

The Meteor Wall is protecting everyone from the normal monsters' attacks, but it's becoming a bit difficult.

Even if they're like this, they're still monsters over level 200.

They have powers equal to or greater than Tact's Harem.

If it was one on one, I think we could handle it, but these numbers are a pain.

It's good that the wall has yet to fall.

Because of the influence of the Shield of Compassion, I can't use my Wrath Shield, or Blutopfer.

I feel like I could do something about it if I was in the condition I had when I was beating up Tact, but it's currently impossible for me.

I also order around my first and second float Shields to blow away the approaching enemies, and cover the allies they're focusing their attacks on.

「Heaven's Judgement X」!

「KWEH」!

Support fire flies from the rear as well.

All of the Heroes are working together.

Because of that, the wave's expansion... slows down, and stops.

"Good!" (Naofumi)

With this, it should end.

And...

A snapping sound resounded through the world.

A white light began flooding out of the source of the wave, forcing us to close our eyes.

"It seems we've barely managed to prevent the worst from happening, but..."
(Glass)

Glass's words enter my ears.

And after the light abated... I was able to confirm what the wave had done. I was able to confirm that the voices from the Spirit of the Shield had been telling the truth.

The Eighth

“The land...? What’s happening?”

I definitely told him about it before, but Itsuki raises his voice.

But even if he did know, there was no way he could remain silent.

The Time Icon in our vision reverts to the normal hourglass... Zeltburg’s hourglass, but now’s not the time to think about that.

“Quit spacing out! Right now... we have to concentrate on the monsters the wave left behind. What do you think would happen if monsters of that level were let loose on the populace!?” (Naofumi) “Y-yes!” (Itsuki)

Including Itsuki, everybody was thinking about it.

It was... the expanse of unknown land stretching out before us.

Because the wave had died down, no new monsters were spawning, but it left quite a severe mark behind.

“Rebuild the formation, and kill as many monsters as you can! Keep the casualties to a minimum! Understand!?” (Naofumi)

My voice snaps everyone back to reality, and they nod.

Glass runs off towards the unknown land, and begins helping sweep up the monsters.

A few hours passed.

We finally killed every last monster from the wave.

“What is happening?” (Itsuki)

Itsuki comes, and poses the question to me.

“I talked a bit about it, didn’t I? Looking at what was on the other side of the crack, it’s quite clear, isn’t it?” (Naofumi) “But still...” (Itsuki)

“I want to confirm it too. Gaelion.” (Naofumi)

“Kyua!” (Gaelion)

Small mode Gaelion lets me hop aboard, and he changes to his giant form.

Taniko... isn’t here.

Gaelion unfolds his wings, and begins lifting himself into the air.

The ground below us gets smaller, and smaller, and the clouds grow in size.

I concentrate on the changed earth below.

From the Shield, I bring out a map of the country, and survey the land I can see.

From here, I can’t do a thorough investigation... at the very least, by looking down from above, I can see the new expanse of land.

“Fumu... the worst outcome didn’t come about, but it came ridiculously close. We have to prepare ourselves.” (Gaelion)

Gaelion seems to have a grasp of the situation.

“If I were to compare it to a cup, it’s already got cracks running down the middle... just how long is it before the water bursts out?” (Gaelion) “I don’t know. It’s not like we don’t have emergency measures, but...” (Naofumi)
What should we do?

If I didn't hold Tact back, the situation would become even worse, so I wasn't able to prioritize one over the other.

I may be looking in hindsight here, but it's good that I didn't treat Glass as a complete enemy back when I first met her.

Well... it's not certain that she's our ally, and even if she's an enemy, it'll just be an extension of the wave.

"I decided to save the world. I'll just do what I can." (Naofumi) "That's quite some wishful thinking you've got there. But I'd like to believe the same."
(Gaelion)

After our conversation ended, we descended back down to the ground.

"..."

With the Wave's monsters gone, we approach Glass, and her comrades; a group that looked like a form of army.

This is quite a critical situation... isn't it?

I can't let down my guard.

Of course. These people were our enemies up until now.

"First, I'd like to create some space for a discussion. Would that be alright with you?" (Glass) "Understood. There are a few things I'd like to ask you as well."
(Naofumi)

Me and Trash act as representatives to stand before Glass.

I mean, with the King of Wisdom on our side, I think the conversation should head somewhere for the better.

"Let's see. What's become of the Heroes of your world? How about your followers?" (Naofumi) "Yes. That world's four heroes have all but been reduced to one... the other three have perished." (Glass)

...This is quite troubling.

It's not my problem, but it's quite a dire situation.

"That's why, I alone, to prolong the life of the world, attacked this world with my life on the line. Without the opportunity to beat a single person here, I ran out of time, and this situation came to pass." (Glass)

Glass hangs her head.

Well, it's something I already knew.

And we did barely manage to contain it.

"It was a way to preserve your world, so there's no helping it. Since it's come to this, we have to think of how to bring the situation under control." (Trash)

Trash soothes Glass as he responds.

"Naofumi-san, what does this all mean?" (Itsuki)

"I did tell you before, right?" (Naofumi)

I mean, before the battle, I talked with all the heroes.

About just what sort of purpose the Heroes' weapons originally held.

"That's right, but I'd like to confirm it." (Itsuki)

"Got it. Glass, I'd like to confirm the difference in our worlds. Can I ask?" (Naofumi) "Of course, though there are few differences to speak of." (Glass)

So everyone can hear, I reaffirm the truth.

"Then please listen. Originally, the four legendary heroes were... the keystone the world held in opposing the wave. If all the Heroes are to die in the middle of a wave... the world will fall to ruin. Of course, there are also vassals to uphold their banner, so it won't fall immediately." (Naofumi)

The Allied Armies begin talking amongst themselves.

I approached the representative of the Filo Rials, the one pulling the carriage... Fitoria.

“And it isn’t... Seven Stars. Eight vassals existed to offer support to the Four Heroes.” (Naofumi) “Eight? There are Eight Seven Stars?” (Trash)

“That’s right. It’s likely that that Filo Rial is the Eighth one.” (Naofumi) “Kue.” (Fitoria)

“A Filo Rial is?” (Trash)

“Is that strange? Right now, the Axe and Claw have both selected Filo Rials, you know.” (Naofumi)

Trash crosses his arms, and gets lost in thought. He turns to the army, and speaks.

“It was written in my wife’s memos. That there might be an eighth. And the reason why the legend of the eighth died out is... probably because they rarely interacted with humans.” (Trash)

That’s how it is.

Even if it was once common knowledge that there were eight, if no one knew where it was, or what it was doing, the legend would eventually become but a rumor in the wind.

I don’t really know why Fitoria acted in such a manner, but...

“You’re Fitoria, right?” (Naofumi)

“Kue.” (Fitoria?)

“Why were you providing support fire this wave? You’re strong, aren’t you?” (Naofumi)

She may even have every single strengthening method of the ancient Heroes.

I don’t believe her skills have dulled with age, but how is it?

“Kue.” (Fitoria)

...Oi.

“If you’re going to respond, please do it in a language I understand.” (Naofumi)

“Kue, kue.” (Fitoria)

“Umm, she says that a Hero of the past told her to avoid speaking in human tongue, apparently.”

Midori steps forward as an interpreter.

... I tell Firo not to speak too, but it seems a past Hero did the same.

“Cooperation is important, so she decided to at least offer some support. It takes a long time to re-awaken her legendary item, so she isn’t particularly strong, she says.” (Midori)

I see. It’s been too long, so her weapon has gone into a cycle of activity and hibernation.

So she only has strength around our current level.... How troublesome.

“Got it. Then is there any information you can hand down?” (Naofumi) “Kue?” (Fitoria)

...Yep.

I totally got that.

“Apparently, she doesn’t really remember. It’s just that hourglasses far removed from human habitation have been placed under the providence of Fitoria and the Filo Rials.” (Midori)

... So there’s a place like that too.

That means there are other hourglasses in places we don’t know of.

When you think about it, we've never been to Silt Welt, or Shield Freiden, or any of the other major countries with them.

Large mountain ranges, and vast forests... there are countless places we haven't even thought of exploring.

It seems that Fitoria's team was taking care of the wave in places like that.

To protect the world unbeknownst to the populace. What sort of Ally of Justice is she trying to become?

Though it appears that her brain itself is around Firo's level.

"FUOOOOOOH! Giant Filo Rial-sama!"

"KUEEEEEEEE!?" (Fitoria)

Motoyasu notices Fitoria, and drops whatever he's doing. He goes on the offense.

He shouts countless words of affection in her direction, and sends her running.

Amazing. It looks like she's truly running for her life there.

Does she really hate him that much?

Motoyasu is also hated by Firo. Is he releasing some anti-Filo Rial pheromones?

No, he's built up a favorable relationship with a number of them, so it must be an issue with his actions.

"Midori, I permit it. Go silence Motoyasu." (Naofumi)

"Eh, ah, yes! Ei!" (Midori)

"Fugu-"

Now possessing a legendary item, Midori thrusts his axe into Motoyasu from

behind.

And with that, Motoyasu falls forward, never to speak again.

No, even if he's like that, he's a Hero. He isn't injured at all.

Even so, Fitoria's also bad at dealing with that man.

There's no doubt she's the one who put Firo in heat.

"We're continuing the conversation."

Motoyasu is quiet, so Fitoria regains her composure, and returns.

For the love of god, that man really needs to read the mood more.

World Assimilation

“And? Am I right in assuming your weapon is that carriage?” (Naofumi) “Kue.” (Fitoria)

Fitoria firmly nods.

“Last we met, you were able to detach it, right?” (Naofumi) “Kue, kue.” (Fitoria)

“If you use your weapon long enough, you’ll eventually be able to take it off temporarily, she says.” (Midori)

How envious.

I want to learn to do that too, but perhaps the Vassals and Heroes work on different systems...

The Shield did go into dormancy for a while, but it would be nice if I could do that consciously.

“Did you copy the Tank-type body Rat made? Is that also counted as a carriage?” (Naofumi) “Kue.” (Fitoria)

“Yes. I got the feeling that could be copied, so I went and made use of it, apparently.” (Midori) “I see.” (Naofumi)

I don’t know if there’s a gap in power output, but it’s amazing that she could copy Rat’s Tank-type monster.

With this, we may be able to advance Rat’s plans in weapon-shaped monster making. No, that doesn’t matter right now.

But... is a Tank really a carriage?

It's more like a vehicle, or something like that.

“To summarize, originally, there were four weapons that could be called legendary. Each one was able to select two vassals, making for eight in total. In total, that means there are 12 holy weapons circulating in this world. Glass, how was it in your world?” (Naofumi) “Let's see. In our world, there also existed twelve weapons. From them, I was selected as the vassal of the 『Fan』.” (Glass) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“This world... hasn't experienced any particular damage. What happened to its guardian beasts?” (Glass) “Guardian Beasts?” (Trash)

When the conversation had just gotten back on track, Trash posed a question to Glass.

I just learned about their duty from Gaelion a little while ago.

But perceptive people like Trash may have already picked up on it.

“In order to prevent the wave... the assimilation of worlds, there exist certain beasts. In order to protect the world, they collect the souls of its inhabitants. It may be a cruel method, but...” (Glass) “So you mean the four spirits?” (Trash)

“That's right. In this world, three have already been eliminated. It seems that the descriptions of their nature, and other explanations, passed down by the past heroes, were all destroyed by someone's hand.” (Naofumi) “... My world's have all been eliminated already. The only method left to me was to... kill all the heroes of this world.” (Glass)

Glass puts her hand on her chest with a relieved expression.

It's not like she's attacking because she wants to.

At least, that's what I get by watching her.

It may seem selfish from our point of view, but the same can be said in reverse.

I mean, if we don't use the power of the Four Beasts, we'll have to eliminate

Glass's world.

"It may be just a little, but the worlds have assimilated in some parts. At the moment, my world's inhabitants are now slightly closer to becoming yours, something like that." (Glass) "I guess that's how it is. And what do your people wish for?" (Naofumi) "To suppress the assimilation to as great an extent as possible. If possible, we also don't wish for any more sacrifices from our side." (Glass)

Sacrifices...

So Glass's world isn't completely gone, but the assimilation has taken most of it away.

Because of that, Glass came to seek aid from us.

"We hope that you will offer at least half of your lives to your guardian beasts." (Glass) "...Are you sane?" (Naofumi)

Since Glass is on the asking side, there's no helping it, but asking us to sacrifice half our population...

She doesn't seem happy about proposing it either.

It's easy to imagine just how hard of a choice it is for her.

It's that. In an old Sci-Fi novel, I've read something like this The world became too polluted for human habitation, so a small fraction of the population set out for the stars to find a new place to call home. I think.

I do believe that it is strange that the current fantasy situation overlaps with Sci-Fi, though.

But Glass's world seems to have been cornered quite far.

Of course, the situation is the same for us.

If we just stand back and watch, our world will definitely fall to ruin.

To save the many or the few. Such a choice has been imposed on us...

In that sense, Glass's world, who've already reached their decision, have a better grasp of the situation than us.

"I know. It's our final option. But since part of this world has already been eaten away, in order to ensure the survival of the races that live on your world, it isn't the worst option. Of course, if you have a better one, then it's a different story." (Glass)

If we had something like that, we would already be working on it.

But those sacrifices aren't just going to say, "Go ahead," and let themselves be killed.

-but it may be something we have to do.

I can tell since I've survived up until now.

In this world, pretty words aren't enough to bring an end to anything.

Whenever someone gains, someone loses.

Having all parties benefit rarely ever happens.

In order to ensure a third survives, we kill the other two thirds.

This truly is... a shitty world.

Even so, we have to make a choice.

Of course, that truly is a final option.

"... What about your world?" (Naofumi)

Glass averts her gaze.

“The vanguard of the enemy forces, one with memories of another world, left our world in chaos. Suspicion raged on about who the reincarnated one was, and when the world was in grave peril, my comrades began killing one another... you can laugh if you want.” (Glass)

It appears that a reincarnator like Tact caused the death of the Four Heroes, and all but one of their vassals.

It’s scary that with one wrong step, the same would have happened to us.

“I do feel like bursting into laughter, but we’re on the same boat. How about you crack a smile?” (Naofumi)

The Seven Stars were assassinated.

Tact Schemed.

Faubleigh went to war.

Really, he did a perfect job of making a mess of things.

An idiot like that thought he could save the world? That’s too much even for a joke.

“Now then, let’s leave that behind, and see what information we have left.” (Naofumi)

Info on the world we’re opposing.

Looking at Glass’s attitude, we aren’t much different.

“Our world was left with information on what the wave was, but everything else was lost over time... just how many times... did we fight with other worlds to save our own?” (Glass) “I see... Glass, your world’s wave... what number is it?” (Naofumi)

This was the worst possibility I thought of.

Even if their world comes to a close, will their battle ever end?

If it was to be in a hundred years, it would be fine.

If it was in decades, we would still be prepared to make a bitter decision.

But what if it were in a few years, a few months, a few weeks?

Will we simply be fighting an endless battle?

No, if it will continue no matter what...

“We’ve fought a countless number of battles. At the start, we fought your world, but sometimes, a different world would appear in our sky. Perhaps it was because of the power of your world’s Guardian Beasts.” (Glass) “Ah, I see... Our first meeting was... four months ago.” (Naofumi) “At that time, the only thing I knew was the nature of the wave. There’s a world of difference between the me of back then, and now.” (Glass)

Yes, the current us would easily be able to defeat Glass when she fought us back then.

And the same goes for Glass now.

In our joint battle, she displayed quite a bit of strength.

“Um, Naofumi-san, why is it that we cannot let the worlds to assimilate anymore?” (Itsuki)

Itsuki asks a question.

Ah, that’s right. I explained what the wave was, but never why it had to be stopped no matter the cost.

“To put it simply... think of the world as a soap bubble floating in the wind.” (Naofumi) “I... see...” (Itsuki)

“This bubble floats, collides with, and gets stuck to four others of similar size. But it has its limit. The next bubble to hit it will cause it to burst. You get it?” (Naofumi) “... Somewhat...” (Itsuki)

“I see... The wave is a phenomenon where worlds assimilate, and while the

other Heroes were able to survive through it, they were unable to prevent the phenomenon itself. This fits with my wife's notes." (Trash)

Trash picks up what I really want to talk about.

"From the start, the world had one holy weapon, and two vassals. Another world got stuck on, and it became two and four... and in the previous wave-" (Trash) "Yeah, we now have four holy weapons, and eight vassals." (Itsuki) "To summarize, the stories of the past where Demi-Humans don't seem to exist are those that were passed down before the wave, and by the collision of worlds, we became bound to the Demi-Human world? Naofumi-dono and Kawasumi-dono's Shield and bow are... those of the Demi-Human side. That's why their looked down upon within my country." (Trash) "Me too? I didn't feel that I got that bad of a reception compared to Naofumi-san." (Itsuki) "In our long history, perhaps the Bow performed some feat, and got accepted by the church. But the Shield..." (Trash) "I'll bet the original weapon of the Demi-Human world was the Shield. The weapon probably had close ties to their land, so he probably didn't work near Melromark." (Itsuki)

These people are sharp.

Even without me saying anything, they reach their own conclusion.

You're incomparable to how you were at the beginning, Trash.

"The details are unclear, but in the waves before these ones, our world became tied to the Demi-human's, and this time, we've established a link with Glass's. Is that correct?" (Trash) "Yes, your hypothesis isn't wrong." (Glass)

"But... why does the wave require so much time? Though my wife wrote not of it, I have my own theories." (Trash) "Speak." (Naofumi)

"Fumu... First, it's because of the one controlling the one with memories of a life past. The ringleader of this incident." (Trash)

Trash crosses his arms, and gets lost in thought.

"Another possibility is... the Assimilation prevention measures the four beasts perform happen every time the wave comes around, and as if waiting for a fruit

to ripen, the ringleader waits for them to collect... but that would make this ringleader much too long lived.” (Trash) “No, you may be onto something. Try expanding your thoughts.” (Naofumi) “... Understood. The one behind this must reap some profit by sending the world into ruin. That’s why they cause waves to happen, and worlds to go to war, eventually destroying them... of course, the Four Spirits prevent such things, so they reincarnate someone to go dispose of them. But... this train of thought leaves too many things unclear.” (Trash) “That’s right.” (Naofumi)

Why doesn’t this ringleader get involved himself?

It’s safe to consider that they have some reason not to.

Even if these deductions are correct, what they lead us to is...

“That ringleader cannot come to this world, or perhaps... it’s a magical or spiritual phenomenon. Like an automatic system to control the world’s population...” (Trash) “Itsuki, do you have any ideas? You were able to tell Tact was a reincarnator, right?” (Naofumi) “That’s right, but in my world, it would be explained as a power they were unable to awaken to in life, or something... I’ve got nothing.” (Itsuki)

In my world, the books I’ve read with this theme have been quite varied.

So my thoughts may be way off the mark.

But I’ve seen a situation similar to this.

“In the stories of my world, there’s a certain someone who mediates reincarnations like these.” (Naofumi)

One who Claimed to be God

“There’s a troublesome guy like that? Who could it be?” (Fohl)

Fohl bears a repulsed expression on his face that seems to stem from the depths of his heart.

Troublesome... is it?

Otherworlders in themselves are quite a troublesome existence too.

They’re arbitrarily summoned, so they can’t complain, and they end up in situations like ours.

Before coming to this world, I did look up to epic otherworldly fight sequences, so it’s a strange feeling.^[7]

Reincarnation, the existence you meet before you’re born anew-that is...

“It’s God.” (Naofumi)

“God... I see, so there are stories like that in Naofumi-san’s world. There was an NPC like that in a few games, but I was unable to connect the dots.” (Itsuki)

“Well, you probably get it already, but I’ll talk. To be more specific, it’s usually something that claims to be a god, I guess. Something like that.” (Naofumi)

If someone were to die in a tragic accident... like Ren, Itsuki, or Motoyasu, he would call out to them.

To those who faced such misfortune, he would say, 『Here, you died an unfortunate death, so shall I give you life once more in another world?』 He would whisper in their ears and tempt them.

Since they’re dead, there’s no way they can refuse.

If they decline, it's 『Oh, I've developed a liking for you! How about I throw in a Cheat ability as well?』 forcing them to agree either way.

There's also the possibility of forceful reincarnation without any interaction.

I've read novels like that time and time again.

If the one God chose was... someone like Tact, then what would happen?

He was probably a man from some world somewhere out there who played a game that resembled this world.

Or perhaps the game itself was his own creation.

Perhaps Ren, Itsuki, and Motoyasu were merely following his lead.

Then this leads to a single answer.

All God had to do was reincarnate a playing piece he could move to his will, to put those fighting the wave in an unfavorable position.

The Queen and the Granny said it.

Geniuses control the prosperity and decay of society.

Hengen Musou... What would happen if this style were to be spread around the world?

It would definitely become a threat to the operation of the Wave.

So he sent a reincarnated and cut off its lineage.

There's no way we can confirm or deny whether someone perpetuating these events exists.

The fact that the various information about the wave spread around the world has all vanished is more proof than anything.

“God... Thinking back, I've heard that a religion worshiping something like that existed in the past. I see.” (Trash)

Trash seems to have some sort of idea.

This is a world that has handed down tales of the heroes for generations.

But, other religions must also exist.

They didn't gain traction due to the Four Heroes and the Seven Stars.

...But, there must have been one who started it. Perhaps the Hero who became the base for the brainwashing daggers.

The God that the Hero publicized... may be our enemy.

Trash proposed the idea of it being an autonomous system, but I think it's something else.

I spoke my mind.

"It appears my theory conflicts with Iwatani-dono's. But judging by the situation, Iwatani-dono's seems more accurate." (Trash)

With my proposal, Trash immediately topples his own System idea.

Well, I wouldn't say it's impossible, but... there are way too many things that theory fails to explain.

I mean, what system would make a world where they would have to outsource to destroy it?

I'm a bit concerned about the Holy Weapons.

What? The Sacred weapons preserve the world, and God destroys it. Does that make it a malign deity?

No, no... perhaps it's just too much work.

In the first place, what's going to happen to him after the world falls to ruin?

"Glass, do you happen to know anything... about the worlds that have fallen?" (Naofumi) "...We have witnessed the fall of two worlds. The first had looked as if it had the life of every lifeform sucked out of it, and it was transformed to a

desert wasteland. In the second one, the whole world vanished, as if it were never there before.” (Glass)

In order to prolong her own world, Glass has experienced having to destroy others. Her words carry much weight.

Both situations seem hopeless.

Will we destroy Glass’s world, or use Ouryuu... Gaelion to stop it. We have two options.

“So you’ve never experienced complete world assimilation?” (Naofumi)

“That’s right. But I’ve heard of it in legend.” (Glass)

Before it became so serious... I guess she took some measures.

When I first came to this world, we had too little information on the wave.

Even so, we knew it was strong.

However, we didn’t think we would be unable to overcome it.

But with internal discord... with a reincarnated’s intervention, Glass’s world was turned inside out.

“If your world were to end, how much time would you have left?” (Naofumi)

“At the moment, I would say we have a month at most. Though, if we had the Sacred Heroes and their vassals all gathered, it wouldn’t be limited to that.”

(Glass) “How many holy heroes and vassals do you have that can still fight?”

(Naofumi)

Glass raises three fingers.

Three... I guess that’s rough.^[8]

“What about the holy weapon holder?” (Naofumi)

“He was captured by the reincarnated, and my instincts tell me he’s being held somewhere. When a wave hits, it may be possible to rescue him, but that’s

just wishful thinking.” (Glass)

Yep, this is serious. I can see why Glass came to a conclusion so quickly.

But, does that reincarnated have absolutely no intentions of fighting for the sake of the world?

Is he relying only on his own greed and ignoring all of the other heroes' words?

...So people like that can get selected for reincarnation.

It depends on a god's abilities, but regardless of the time, place, or world, there are always one or two people with a few screws loose.

I won't say I'm a moral, upstanding human being, but I've seen too many people with something messed up in their heads.

If you gather up people like that and reincarnate them all, the world will definitely go into chaos.

There's also the idea that there's a form of brainwashing at work.

It may just be that God thought that the wave wasn't enough to destroy the world.

And, that this was but a trivial thing.

...No, I've experienced it.

I'm not sure when, but when Ren and the others didn't die when they lost, they ranted on about it being some sort of Event Battle.

I'm not planning to pin all of that on the enemy, but they may have ingrained an idea like that.

“Of course, he isn't someone who won't listen to reason if you talk to him... but for some reason, that reincarnated is hostile towards everyone, and he doesn't find satisfaction unless he's the leader.” (Glass)

Ahh... what a pain.

A man like that is moving the world at his will... In order not to stand out, did Glass leave the world with her vassal weapon? This isn't something to laugh at.

But... is the wave truly a battle without end?

"He stains others in blood, and himself with their blood. He even turned his madness towards his own child... Perhaps even if we were to triumph here, our world would simply fall by that man's hand..." (Glass)

She's given up.

I can feel such emotion from Glass.

From what I see, Glass isn't a human brought from a world like ours. She was born in her world.

What sort of feeling is it, to give up on the world you were born in?

I won't swing a flag back and forth saying my world was a wonderful one, but...

"I beg of you. Your Guardian Beast still lives, and while our worlds have been connected, yours isn't on the verge of collapse. Please grant permission for those of my world to take up residence in this one. For that, I'll gladly cooperate, even in bringing an end to my own world." (Glass)

She speaks as she lowers her head to the ground.

I understand where she's coming from, but her idea is madness in itself.

Of course, it's an answer she's reached after a lifetime of hardships.

In my eyes, I see Glass acting out of madness. She isn't acting out of any desire for self-preservation.

But anyways, I should ask.

"Are you sane?" (Naofumi)

"Of course. We've all lost it. We've gone mad over there. But there are still some things we've built up; some things we'd like to save." (Glass)

Now that she's accepted her madness, there's something she has to do.

I've done something similar.

No, my rage is but foolishness compared to Glass's insanity derived from failing to save others.

Even so, I can more or less understand her.

And, even if it's for the world's longevity, someone who can ask for the sacrifice of two thirds of the world with a straight face can't be sane.

But among the Heroes, there was never a decent person to begin with.

Among our world, and her's.

"I believe it is overly hasty for us to make that decision here and now. Until the next wave, we should clean up. Will your group lend a hand in our efforts?"

(Trash) "I thank you for your swift judgement. I swear that I won't let this reach a bad conclusion." (Glass)

On Trash's words, Glass declares as such. Everyone present nods.

With the Allied forces at the lead, we first spread the information of Faubley facing an absolute crushing defeat against Melromark.

Of course, the matter of the guardian beasts was put to absolute secrecy.

As if we could spread information like that.

And so, because we have plenty of Legendary Heroes and Vassals at work here, it seems we've been given a bit of an extension on the time until the next wave, based on the time recorded on Melromark's hourglass.

We'll have to set out to deal with other countries' waves, but there are plenty of things we'll have to do first.

We learn that some even more troublesome things are lying around less than half a day after we transfer back to the castle.

Enhancement Methods (Beginning)

“There’s trouble! The monsters throughout the world have increased in activity, and there’s also been a sudden rise in levels! The villages and towns in the country are in trouble!” (Soldier)

An injured soldier came into the throne room and reported frantically.

We’re still in the meeting. Ren and the others have performed a Level Reset at the hourglass and admitted Tact into the country’s jail so he couldn’t escape for the time being, and then joined us.

They couldn’t hide their astonishment about Glass joining us or the appearance of new land.

The conversation with Glass still continues. It was at that point.

“S-speaking of which.” (Naofumi)

Gaelion had said the monsters would have an increase in activity after each wave.

So the thing about the wave conditions becoming more severe was pointing to this sort of situation!

“What is it?” (Glass)

“About the adventurers we just managed to crush, just by defeating them.... we managed to acquire more experience than we did on Calmira Island.”

(Naofumi)

Ha... An ordinary adventurer would go no further than 40 at best, and even soldiers could only reach 100.

That aside, the citizens might be in danger.

“Release the Hourglass of the Dragon’s Era. Let those who want to Class Up freely do so!” (Naofumi)

We don’t have the time to choose our personnel.

Rather, if we don’t raise the levels of all the citizens, they’ll die.

At the lowest, 100 is the baseline.

Well, we have Gaelion here so we should manage the country before that.

How much time would be needed to re-establish the Seven Stars is the issue, but more than that, we first need to measure how much of Glass’s world has assimilated.

Starting with the after-effects of the battle with Faubley, we’ll be pressed to deal with the waves.

“What should we do about the waves throughout the world?” (Naofumi) “Kue.” (Fitoria)

Fitoria shrinks her carriage.

And then opens the carriage’s doors for us.

Various scenes were reflected there.

It’s a tool I’ve seen before somewhere. Oi. [\[9\]](#)

“Er, Fitoria-sama said the Vassal’s carriage has the ability to transport and warp, so it can be used to deal with the waves throughout the world.” (Midori)

“....How convenient.” (Naofumi)

I won’t say we should have done that from the start.

This is probably one of the abilities of the Vassal of the Carriage.

Is it a reduction of the Portal Skill’s range expansion and transfer scope....?

“How long until the next wave?” (Naofumi)

“About five days.”

...There are less days than I thought.

However, we have things to do until then.

“....Instruct the Allied Forces and the troops throughout the world to try raise at least one level before the time limit so they don't die and to protect the people of their country.” (Trash)

Trash gave instructions to the soldier.

What we need to do concerns the one calling himself God, but in order to stop letting him do as he pleases, we must be aware of how fast the waves will descend.

“Glass. What will happen with the next wave?” (Naofumi)

“The monsters appearing because of the wave are the appearing world's screams when the worlds fuse or so I've been told. The monsters' strength won't lessen, but as long as this world's Saint weapons and Vassals exist, we can buy time.” (Glass) “Your world is....” (Naofumi)

Even now, the Four Saints and Vassals of Glass's world were in a damaged state.

“I am.... past being resolved. For example, another world might assimilate while we're trying to hinder the assimilation with this world.... We might be destroyed by the opposing world in the end. I will.... take advantage of the wave and return though.” (Glass) “You're not going to stay in this world and fight?” (Naofumi) “Because I am a Vassal of that world. Until I accomplish my mission at least.” (Glass) “I see... by the way, it's been on my mind, but are you going to continually repeat these fights with no end?” (Naofumi)

Honestly, I can't see any sign of salvation for them.

The spirit of the shield sounded like there was an end and that there was salvation.

Of course, I only managed to get it to tell me the outline of what the waves were, but since there's a reward, there should be an end.

"I also don't know the details of that. Just that the spirit of the fan told me. That an end will come eventually for this fight as well. And that even the being pretending to be God has limits." (Glass)

Until the enemy runs out of patience, we'll continue to hinder the assimilation.

No.... Perhaps just like in a siege, the waves might be a fight to wait for allies against an assaulting enemy.

Like this, we solidified the plan of action against the waves.

Next is the issue regarding the Saint Weapons and Vassal weapons.

If we don't power up all the Saint Weapons and Vassal Weapons, we probably won't be able to overcome the waves.

"Can Glass's fan and our weapons be connected through enhancement methods?" (Naofumi) "...It seems like it's impossible. They're incompatible in regards to enhancing." (Glass) "I see. Then Raphtalia, Firo, the other heroes newly chosen by the vassal weapons, and Fitoria. Check each of your enhancement methods in the help manual and explain them." (Naofumi) "Y-yes!" (Raphtalia)

Beginning with Raphtalia, they each check their own status and help manuals.

Our weapons had mutual compatibility to convert those processes and operate them.

With this, the Four Saints should unlock the parts released by the Vassal weapons.

There's quite a lot, but if we don't listen and test them all, we won't become

stronger, so it can't be helped.

"I suppose I'm first." (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia raises her hand and explains.

"Er, the hammer's enhancement method written in the manual is weapon synthesis." (Raphtalia) "Weapon synthesis...." (Naofumi)

Somehow it has something I can imagine.

How many will be able to apply this?

"Apparently it's about conferring the weapon tree's most characteristic special ability onto other weapons." (Raphtalia)
For the time being, let's go ahead with the enhancement and try experimenting on the Spirit Turtle Shell Shield.

Spirit Turtle Shell Shield (Awakened) +8 70/70 SR Blessed (Compassion) Ability released.... Equipment bonus, Skills [S Float Shield][Reflect Shield]

Special Abilities: Gravity Field, C Soul Recovery, C Magic Snatch, C Gravity Shot, Vitality Up, Magic Defence (Large), Lightning Resistance, SP Drain Nullification Growing Ability

Proficiency 100

Item Enchant Lv8: Defence 10% Up

Dragon Spirit: Defence 50, Fire resistance up

Status Enchant: Magic Power 30+



When I checked, o icons appeared at the bottom.

Incidentally, what the Blessed series' Shield of compassion does to the other shields.... seems to be in a different category to Enchant or Synthesis.

The Blessed Series can't enhance, but it assimilates with the normal shield and manifests its abilities.

No matter how weak of a shield it may be, it's fine to think of it being endowed with a part of the Shield of Compassion.

For the time being, let's try endowing this shield with the Soul Eater Shield.

Ah, the Shield of Compassion has the special ability 'Spell Support,' but that has a weaker ability than Trash's cane.

But I've gone off topic.

Synthesize the Soul Eater Shield!

Spirit Turtle Shell Shield (Awakened) +10 70/70 SR+ Blessed (Compassion)
Ability released.... Equipment bonus, Skills [S Float Shield][Reflect Shield]

Special Abilities: Gravity Field, C Soul Recovery, C Magic Snatch, C Gravity Shot, Vitality Up, Magic Defence (Large), Lightning Resistance, SP Drain Nullification Growing Ability

Proficiency 100

Item Enchant Lv8: Defence 10% Up

Dragon Spirit: Defence 50, Fire resistance up

Status Enchant: Magic Power 30+

Soul Eater ○ ○ ○ ○

So it also increases the Enhancement value and Rarity?

Ah, Soul Eater Shield's Enhancement value and Rarity have been reset....

As a test, I tried synthesizing other shields which had been enhanced, but whether it would increase or not depended on the weapon's strength, and it

seemed there were limits.

So it won't go that well....

Or I should say, with this, my skill 'Reflect Shield' seems like it's turned into a dead skill, but....

Well, it can still be put to practical use, so it's fine.

"Naofumi." (Ren)

"What?" (Naofumi)

Ren enhanced his weapon many times and then came to address me.

"It seems there's a limit to how many times the material weapons can be synthesized like this." (Ren) "Is that so?" (Naofumi)

"Yeah, after using it three times, the weapon book entry turned dark. It's also impossible to alter it." (Ren) "....Is it alright?" (Naofumi)

"It seems I can relight it again as long as I have the materials, so there's no problem. Also, I unlocked a sword because of this." (Ren) "Well, I guess it was possible." (Naofumi)

An image of entrusting a fully enhanced blade to a blacksmith and receiving a famous roguelike weapon comes to mind. [\[10\]](#)

Or rather, did synthesizing to a specific rule turn it into the strongest sword?

"So it's one week of synthesis as I expected?" (Naofumi?)

"What are you talking about?" (Ren)

"No, it was on Monday or Tuesday.." (Naofumi?)

"The sword I experimented on was the one that appeared when I combined the Dragon slaying sword." (Ren) "Ah, that one?" (Naofumi)

Ren showed the transformed sword he was experimenting with.

Oh, there was an incredibly pretty ornament added on the sword. A dragon scale glittered, it looked cool.

“The disappointing part is its basic attack power is lower than the spirit turtle sword and my fighting partner, Gaelion, seems to hate it.” (Ren)

Taniko glared with all her heart. She’s angry since he possessed the sword that killed her father, huh.

“You might be able to use it after raising its level so isn’t it fine?” (Naofumi)

“Well....I guess.” (Ren)

Let’s not go into why he synthesized together only swords that were effective against dragons.

I see, so the hammer was a vassal weapon with a smithing aspect.

.....I wonder why it chose Raphtalia?

“What’s wrong?” (Raphtalia)

A mallet for Raphtalia.... A hammer, huh?

I wonder if Raphtalia would get angry and change it to a 1 tonne hammer and hit me with it if I went on a date with the villagers.

“You’re thinking about something strange again.” (Raphtalia)

“Don’t hit me with that.” (Naofumi)

“Why must I be hitting Naofumi-sama with the mallet!? Or will you be doing something that I would hit you for?” (Raphtalia) “I thought it might be possible in the middle of doing various things with the villagers or Melty.” (Naofumi) “I won’t! Haven’t we spoken properly about this!?” (Raphtalia) “Well, I suppose

so.” (Naofumi)

I’m thinking too much, huh.

Or I should say, it probably fits Raphtalia perfectly, with her straight-man disposition.

Let’s have Imia’s Uncle make the PikoPiko Hammer and let her copy it. [\[11\]](#)

Then... it probably won’t hurt, and I’ll be careful to never let her turn it into a 1 tonne hammer.

“You’re still thinking something....” (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia completely suspects me.

“Now then~ let’s move on!” (Naofumi)

It would be bothersome in various ways, so I diverted the conversation.

Enhancement Methods [Middle]

“Next, let’s continue with large weapons. Midori, you’re up.” (Naofumi) “Ah, yes. The Axe’s enhancement is... let’s see, it seems to be Body Modification.” (Midori) “What’s that?” (Naofumi)

“According to the Help, besides weapon bonuses, you can distribute points freely to your own status.” (Midori)
So it has nothing to do with weapons. The Vassal Enhancement methods sure are broad.

I confirm my Status with magic.

There it is... around the stats portion.

More specifically, around Defense, Agility, and Magic, an arrow mark appeared.

When I slowly concentrate on it, a window pops up.

‘Will you distribute Stat Points?’

I have quite a bit of points saved up. It’s like those old games where you can distribute stats to your liking.

This is... can’t I increase my attack so that I can fling myself at enemies!?

Thinking that, I try to distribute points into Attack.

But there is no arrow next to the Attack stat...

I fell to my knees, and took on the pose of despair.^[12]

Shield... why must you crumble my hopes so?

Thinking about how badly Tact failed to use the Shield when we were beating him up, I realize that I must have been forced into playing on lunatic mode!

It seems that Agility would be useful, but I wonder what I should do.

Ah, it seems resetting is possible.

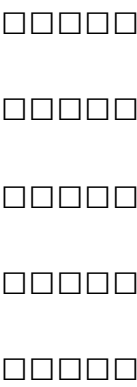
But like the Cane and Gauntlets, there’s a certain cooldown time.

This one is long. It takes three days before you can reset again.

“Is that it?” (Naofumi)

“No... it seems there’s something else there.” (Midori) “Eh?” (Naofumi)

When I tried to exit out of the point allocation screen, something resembling a grid work appears.



What is this?

As I thought that, the points I input takes physical shape on the board.



Could it be that I’m supposed to mess with the points on this board? It’s a puzzle!

As expected, if I don’t make the correct shape with the inputted points, the strengthening won’t take effect.

“Father-in-Law!” (Motoyasu)

“What is it, Motoyasu?” (Naofumi)

“I want to distribute all my points en masse, but should I?” (Motoyasu) “... I can’t guarantee that you won’t die, but knock yourself out.” (Naofumi)
Oh right, I think that in Motoyasu’s game knowledge, weapons were but ornaments and status determined everything.

“Understood. Then I’ll maintain some balance in stats.” (Motoyasu) “I recommend raising Agility so you can execute countermeasures for enemies more easily.”

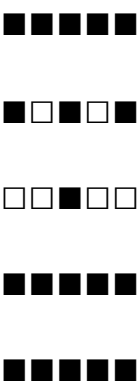
It’s a longstanding custom for agility to be the focus of strategy.

Of course, increasing Vitality is also important. Especially when working solo.

The problem is that neglecting agility will make it so that I won’t make it to defend in time.

This will require some research and experimentation.

By the way, thinking about what would happen if I drastically invested points...



Most of the Grid Panels were filled up. This strengthening seems to be based on Cellphone Games.

“As expected of Father-in-Law! You pick things up quickly!” (Motoyasu) “No, I

think anyone would be able to pick this up.” (Naofumi)

But... it’s a plainer enhancement method than expected... right?

And wait, I’m getting more bonuses than what I inputted.

It seems the arrangement can create some effects. What’s more, alongside stats, there are also resistance bonuses and special effects.

This may be a higher priority than equipment bonuses.

“Midori.” (Naofumi)

“What is it, Master?” (Midori)^[13]

“Make sure you don’t put everything into attack. You’ll end up killing Motoyasu.” (Naofumi) “Why would I be doing such a thing!?” (Midori) “I mean, you’re...” (Naofumi)

One of Motoyasu’s three stalkers.

Ah, Stalker 1 and Stalker 2 are glaring at Midori with envy.

“Why does only Midori get a weapon?”

“Mokkun is all of ours!”

Midori’s broken into a cold sweat.

He’s worried about getting alienated from his group.

They always fought together, but because of this weapon, they’re going their separate ways.

What will happen from now on... I’m a little anxious.

Kuu is a Filo Rial Queen who uses Kicks and breathes fire, right?

Marin throws her feathers like darts and uses long-ranged magic.

Midori swings around an axe in human form and uses magic.

Having the Axe Vassal weapon fly to Midori is an inevitable result.

Isn't it just that there wasn't an axe wielder besides Midori around at the moment?

"Rafu~?" (Raph-chan)

Skillfully sitting on top of Raphtalia's hammer, Raph-chan tilts his head to observe the scene.

What's with his reaction?

A few glances were exchanged, but nothing really happened, so the conversation continued.

"Now then... Firo." (Naofumi)

"What~?" (Firo)

"It's your turn." (Naofumi)

"Ah, I see. Um, you know... My skills you see~! They get rea~lly strong!" (Firo)
Yep, you've lost me.

I was an idiot for asking Firo.

What should I do... I don't get what the claw does at all.

The only one who can have a genuine conversation with Firo is Melty, I guess.

No, does Raphtalia work too?

"Raphtalia, ask Firo about her enhancement method." (Naofumi) "U-understood. Firo?" (Raphtalia)

"Yes~?" (Firo)

"Can you explain it a little better?" (Raphtalia) "Hmm? If you do it again and again, then Bang!" (Firo) "Someone, anyone!? Call Melty over!" (Naofumi)
This isn't getting anywhere.

After a while, Melty appears, and she speaks with Firo a number of times, after which, she arrives at a conclusion.

“Putting together Firo’s words, apparently, Skills that can only be used by Heroes, as well as Magic, are given a proficiency level, and they can get stronger with continued usage.” (Melty) “Oh... how amazing. I’m surprised you were able to get that much out of the girl.” (Naofumi)
I truly admire how she was able to understand that much from the conversation.

As expected of Firo’s best friend, and lover.

No... I have a slight hunch, but Melty... No, is that just my imagination?

“Naofumi, why are you fantasizing about something strange?” (Melty) “No, well Melty, are you-” (Naofumi)

When I was about to ask, Motoyasu interjects.

“Gununu... I have no choice but to accept it. Your qualifications of being Firo-tan’s fiancé!” (Motoyasu) “You can stay silent!” (Melty)

Melty shut Motoyasu up with a single phrase.

But that’s fine. The result is advantageous.

I truly applaud her efforts.

I confirm my skill list.

... Besides the Gauntlet and Staff’s strengthening icon, a new bar with a % sign appears. Next to it is a number indicating skill level.

This number will probably rise with continued use.

If I increase the level of my Float Shields, would the shields get bigger?

I won't know until I test it out.

"Next is..."

Going in turn, I turn my eyes to Rishia.

She changed from the possessor of a ephemeral armament to the true possessor of the Projectile.

I guess the weapon had used the legendary bow as a medium, through which, it analyzed her compatibility.

But because Tact existed, it was only able to grant half its power, so it was left in a form like that.

"Rishia." (Naofumi)

"Y-yes. My Help menu mentions something about using up money to do something called Over Custom!" (Rishia)

An excited voice escapes from her mouth. Even though she's climbed her way up to being a Hero, she still doesn't have it all together.

I'm a bit worried about leaving her as Itsuki's guardian.

But Itsuki himself has become calm and collected.

"..."

"And what exactly is that supposed to mean?" (Naofumi) "Well... I don't have the slightest idea, but... I can use physical currency to strengthen myself. But apparently, it holds no meaning if I don't know any other enhancement methods..." (Rishia) "So it's a unique, yet generic method... is it not?" (Itsuki)

"Fumu, as expected of a Jack of all Trades..." (Naofumi)

It matches Rishia's way of life.

I see, I kinda get it.

"That's right." (Itsuki)

“Fuee... why are you all nodding to yourselves?” (Rishia)
Money...

Right, I don’t think I’ve ever put any money into the Shield.

I slowly insert a single copper coin.

A clinging sound echoes through my head, and an icon displaying ‘1G’ appears in my vision.

... Let’s try silver.

The same sound comes, and the icon changes to ‘101G’.

I bring up the Axe’s strengthening screen.

The grid’s sides are a pain.



Is there nothing I can do to extend it?

‘Do you want to invest some money?’

Ah, a window pops up.

... I reluctantly press ‘yes’.

A bar appears, requesting the amount, and I input 101.



... Well, I didn’t really input that much, so while the shape changed, that’s about it.

It’ll probably work on other enhancement methods as well.

I found it out later, but the Whip’s Strengthening method, Synthesis Measure,

is able to increase the amount of O's on weapon synthesis.

How convenient.

Next is... Protector, a method that eliminates the chance of failure for the Refining method of the Four Heroes. It seems a bit redundant.

The amount of money we waste is tremendous!

Screw this, you bourgeoisie!

Though it's useful, this isn't some goddamn Freemium.

Enhancement Methods [End]

“Next!” (Naofumi)

Is Taniko...

When I look over at Taniko, she turns her head away and shows an expression indicating that she doesn't want to speak.

I'll bet it's because she didn't want to be a Hero.

What's more, she's that Tact's successor.

“ ... ”

“Say something.” (Naofumi)

“Kyua?” (Gaelion)

“Um, according to the Help screen, it's Growth Elevation.” (Taniko) “You mean something like the Slave User Series and the Monster User Series?” (Naofumi) “Yes. You can set a specific parameter you want to improve when leveling, it seems. Also, it isn't limited to its user. As long as you have their permission, its effect extends to your comrades as well.” (Taniko) “Hmm...” (Naofumi)

That's a useful one.

It further increases the stats gained during a level up.

“But when you activate it, your level will drop proportional to the extent of the growth elevations you want, so you have to use it with planning in mind.” (Taniko)

It's still kind of useful.

It sacrifices level to increase potential, and when you level up again, you can use it once more for even greater elevation.

And now that the world's monsters are running rampant and distributing monstrous sums of EXP, leveling up is relatively easy.

The Whip has a strong image of being used alongside monsters.

When I concentrate on bringing up the screen for it, it appears easily enough.

Let's try increasing Vitality for now.

How many levels will you use up?

An icon pops up.

... I'll put it on hold for now.

If my level falls too far to fight these monsters, there would be no point.

"And... last is..." (Naofumi)

"Gua?"

There's no consistency in her cries; the current Queen of the Filo Rials...

"Midori." (Naofumi)

Melty's eyes are sparkling as she celebrates her reunion. While that's happening, I call Midori to translate.

It appears that this bird really likes to talk.

But it's more of a pain to persuade her to start talking.

She's the same as a certain bird I know! But I can't really voice my complaints.

“Gua, gua.” (Fitoria)

“Um, Fitoria-sama says-” (Midori)

“NUOOOOOOOH!”

“GUAAAAAAAA!?”

“Firo!”

“Yeah!”

“Hau! I’m so happy to have received Firo-tan’s kick!”

For the love of all things holy, this damn spear needs to get his shit together.

Having received the kick of the Hero of the Claw, Motoyasu squirms on the ground in ecstasy and agony, but let’s get back on track.

“Continue.” (Naofumi)

“Motoyasu-san... Um, if the amount of a certain type of item stored in your weapon crosses a certain point, you can get various status bonuses and abilities, she says.” (Midori) “Regardless of the weapon you have equipped, right?” (Naofumi) “Yes. It’s called Item Book, it seems.” (Midori)

Having heard the information, I confirm it on my weapon.

It definitely appeared.

I do make a habit of diligently putting materials in, so many entries in the encyclopedia-like window are filled in.

The bonuses are quite moderate, and there are some things like a % damage resistance against a specific monster, or like raising the effectiveness of healing magic. There are many abilities apart from status bonuses.

It even registers items obtained by dismantling larger items. How convenient.

The problem is that you can no longer sell monster items if you use it.

And it doesn't look like you can freely choose the bonuses you get.

It's really plain and simple.

But it can't be underestimated, this system.

Portal Skill Scope Up, Monster Drop Chance Up, Money Acquired Up, there are many skill bonuses I've never seen before.

But I guess the Carriage's power is... useful in itself?

Whenever Fitoria opens her carriage, it links to another location... it seems.

It's like a magnified version of the portal. There doesn't seem to be many restrictions, and she says she's recorded the locations of multiple Dragon Hourglasses world-wide.

What's more, inside the carriage, your Vitality, MP, SP, and Stamina recover faster. She says that even Healing Magic is more effective.

It's like the Tent from a game of the past.

Through Midori, she explained that inside, your body requires lower amounts of sleep. And let me say it.

What sort of Delivery Service is this!?^[14]

Like that, the Vassal Enhancement Methods were spread.

The so-called Seven Star Weapon Enhancement Methods can be summed up as follows:

Axe: Body Modification

Hammer: Weapon Synthesis

Gauntlet: Skill Enhancement

Cane: Magic Enhancement

Claw: Magic and Skill Proficiency Level

Whip: Growth Elevation

Projectile: Strengthening by Money

Carriage: Item Encyclopedia Bonus

First is the Axe's Body Modification.

Using an energy stored up besides EXP, you can add additional points to your Stats.

It's like doping. Like in some RPGs, how certain seeds and other items can permanently raise a stat.

It seems plain at first, but the amount of points you can distribute is high.

Its main advantage is that you can get an additional bonus on top of those for the weapon you have equipped.

Next is the Hammer. This one allows you to transfer special abilities from one weapon to another.

To put it simply, if Ren had a Sword that was highly effective against Dragons, he could transfer that ability to one with higher stats.

Ren seems to have developed an interest in the system, and his curiosity has proven that new weapons can be unlocked using it as well.

Like, gathering all Dragon-Based skills on a single weapon will unlock something.

By the way, the amount of syntheses that can be performed depends on the weapon.

The Cane and Gauntlet need no further explanation.

You can distribute skill points onto Magic and Skills to increase their output.

The Claw is the growing form of that.

By using the same skill again and again, a point value separate from the

Gauntlet's skill points are stored up, and the output and ease of use increases.

The one that's really easy to understand, but hard to use, is the Projectile. Strengthening by Money is, as it sounds, using money to break the limitations of the Enhancement Methods we already know, apparently.

If the item you're modifying is of low ability, the amount you need is low, but it costs a fortune to modify high level stuff. Before awakening an item, you can even pay to unlock their hidden abilities.

The Whip is troublesome in another way.

Increasing Growth Potential may seem convenient at first, but it's a little different.

While it may increase the innate amount of stats gained during a level without affecting weapons, it decreases the level of the person it's used on in proportion.

That person will have to level up all over again.

But by the time they've reached the same level, their stats will have become much different than they were before.

The projectile's cost is too high.

By expending your wealth, you increase the bonuses brought by other weapons.

I've tried it on the Axe and Hammer, but based on the sum I spent, I can also increase the rate of proficiency gain for the Claw, and the amount of growth gain from the Whip.

Is the fact that it's practically useless if its user doesn't know the other strengthening methods based on the personality of the current user?

No, perhaps the fact that it cost money is based on the fact that projectiles were originally expendable items.

Whatever the case, now that I know all the strengthening methods, I can have grand expectations for the results.

Finally, the Carriage's Item Encyclopedia increases stats based on how much of a certain type of item has been placed into the weapon. It's quite a pain.

But as I've already put in quite a bit, I think I can expect something of it.

Putting together our conversations...

Just what sort of RPG is this?

Well, enhancement methods were just like that from the start.

"Mu... this is hard."

Firo is holding her head in her hands as she desperately tries to memorize the Enhancement Methods.

"Let's go over it again." (Raphtalia)

On the other side, Raphtalia was quick to pick it up.

Now that I think about it, Raphtalia's memory is quite something. It must be a sort of talent for her to have been able to recite Imya's whole name after hearing it once.

"Firo-san, as I was saying..." (Midori)

Even though he's also a Filo Rial, Midori has the capacity to remember it.

For him to remain in Human form while swinging an axe around, Midori is a bit...

"Kue?"

Fitoria is... yeah. Is she smarter than Firo?

I'd like to believe that she's at least trying out the Enhancement Methods.

"In the time we have until the wave, let's raise our levels as high as possible. It's important that we work to the best of our abilities." (Itsuki) "Yes, Itsuki-sama. And about that, where do you think would be a nice place to go to level?" (Rishia) "Let's see. Ren-san, Motoyasu-san-" (Itsuki)

Rishia's been quite quiet lately, but she happily discussed the new methods with Itsuki.

As one of the Four Heroes, I need to find out just how high I can raise my level in the few days left. I participate in the conversation of where to find easy-to-beat monsters.

We have Fitoria's large-scale Portal Carriage, so we can go anywhere in the world to find easy prey. We need to concentrate on leveling.

Ah, right. From the forest Fitoria used as her base of operations, she brought back some armor made by a Hero of the past.

Well, as they're quite old, I get the feeling that there are plenty of modern ones out there with better abilities.

Magic Armor is definitely useful, but it's strange that there isn't much of a difference between it and the armor made out of the Four Beasts' materials.

I can't offer enough thanks to the Old Man and Imya's Uncle's skill with metal.

I usually just copy whatever shield I come across and have everyone use whatever defensive gear they can find.

I'd like to have those two take our armors apart and modify them soon.

I'll have to give something to the more powerful ones of my village.

Trash, Fohl, and Taniko were listening to our conversations, and they manage

to implement the methods successfully.

The problem is Trash, I guess.

It's not that he can't fight, but his long hiatus may have lowered his senses.

Another thing I was able to determine was that while it's true that the Four Heroes repel one another, and they don't get EXP when fighting together, the same does not apply to vassals.

But if it's only Vassals alone, some problems may crop up.

It may have something to do with the system on which the weapons were made, but a party of a single Holy Hero and two vassals gains EXP as normal. The law works like that.

So we go and distribute the vassals among the Heroes.

I'm with Raphtalia and Firo.

This was already set in stone, or everyone just kinda went along with it. It's the same formation as always.

Raphtalia's gained a giant weapon in the form of the Hammer, so I'm a little worried, but she'll probably be fine. Occasionally, Raph-chan stands on top of the Hammer and makes various poses. I wonder why.

Next is Motoyasu. He's bringing along Midori and Trash.

He has a habit of charging the enemy. Midori is similar, so it's ideal if Trash were there to offer as much support magic as possible.

Next is Itsuki with Rishia and Fohl.

Both Itsuki and Rishia are long ranged, so I thought the close-ranged Fohl would be nice.

In truth, Trash seems to have an affinity with Fohl, so I thought about putting

them in the same formation, but Fohl declined.

What's left is Ren with Taniko and... I guess he's in charge of Fitoria as well.

Well, this is just the initial result.

Since Gaelion comes as a set with Taniko, it looks like there'll be some infighting there.

Ren seems to pay special attention to Taniko.

I think he's still trying to take responsibility for his actions.

But Taniko herself has an extremely sullen expression on her face whenever he tries to do so.

There's no helping it now that she's become the Hero of the Whip.

The Whip's ability is to raise the ability of monsters, so having more monsters in the formation is beneficial.

Despite how he looks, the current Gaelion is a Dragon Emperor. In a different Time Period, he may have even been called a Demon Lord.

It's a formation incorporating the Sword, which carries the strongest image of a Hero, and a Dragon, who carries the strongest form of a Demon.

The bad part of this party is that they don't seem to get along too well.

True Gaelion seems to hate Ren, but child Gaelion doesn't seem to be affected by that.

"Well, I guess that just about does it. Everyone set out to maintain public order and raise your levels in order to defeat the wave." (Naofumi)

Interwordly Exchange

“Now then, I’ve got things I have to do too.” (Naofumi)

We want to make the battles of the wave as short as we can.

Because of Tact, the time between Waves has decreased, and I don’t know how to reset it.

... No one knows just how many waves we’ll have to survive before an end is in sight.

For the next few days, we all put our best efforts towards raising our levels and preparing for the wave with our parties.

Because we are able to utilize all the enhancement methods, despite the fact that all the hunting grounds had a huge level spike, we reach a state where could manage somehow.

Well, the problem is... the civilians.

After exiting the castle, even the mob Balloons are over Level 40... My peddling has also become quite a trial.

Normal people won’t just get away with a few injuries. Even veteran adventurers are struggling.

Our saving grace is that the amount of EXP received upon their defeat is massive.

And so, a long line forms outside the Dragon Hourglass every day.

At night, I receive a report at the castle and find myself overcome with

emotion.

“Balloons... how nostalgic.” (Naofumi)

“Iwatani-dono... I humbly apologize for my actions at that time.” (Trash) “I have no intentions of forgiving you, but don’t mind it for now. So even the Balloons are Level 40... how troublesome. That place is swarming with Balloons.” (Naofumi) “What?” (Trash)

Trash tilts his head to one side.

What’s with that? It’s as if I said something strange.

I mean, aren’t they plentiful around here?

I have a feeling it was quite a while ago, but I spent a whole two weeks out there.

There’s no way I’m wrong.

“Even now, the Balloons that populate the Castle Town’s Plains are reported to be quite low in numbers.” (Trash) “What are you talking about? I set those plains as my base and camped out every night. Whenever I woke up in the morning, my entire body was covered with Balloons biting at me.” (Naofumi) “That’s strange...” (Trash)

Trash inclines his head once more.

Did I really say something that strange?

I thought their encounter rate would just be high around the starting town, but perhaps I was thinking of this as a Net Game.

“What’s wrong~?” (Firo)

Firo barges into the conversation.

“No, well, I’ve just been told that the plains surrounding the city don’t contain very many Balloons.” (Naofumi) “Yeah, there aren’t too many. So?” (Firo)

... Yes?

Even Firo concurs with Trash.

“Now that I think about it, whenever I’m with master, I see a lot more monsters.” (Firo) “... Is that true?” (Naofumi)

I turn my eyes to Raphtalia.

I mean, she did spend a long time training in the mountains, so she should be knowledgeable about it.

“Yes. We encounter them quite frequently when we’re around Naofumi-sama. Now that I think about it, it’s actually quite rare to encounter that many monsters on the highways.” (Raphtalia)^[15]

What is this?

I have an exceedingly bad premonition.

“But didn’t Firo encounter loads of monsters when she went to level up the villagers?” (Naofumi) “Firo goes to places where a lot of them live. But, I think I would be able to find more if Master was there.” (Firo)

Well, she does run through the mountains, and she does go through their natural habitats... Was encountering so many monsters while peddling due to my own bad luck?

No, my sales and threats turned out to be quite effective at that time.

“How about we go and test it out?” (Raphtalia)

“I don’t really want to...” (Naofumi)

Stuff like that should be fate and luck. It must be a coincidence.

Is what I keep telling myself.

If the entire world doesn’t begin raising its average level, even living will soon become difficult.

The reason monsters don’t appear on the highway is because Humans are just that troublesome of an existence to them.

But now, even those roads experience frequent attacks.

That’s the current state of affairs, apparently.

We suppressed Zeltburg’s wave, and overcame another one from yet another country.

By the way, we’ve been able to handle these waves without too much of a problem.

I was a tad bit disappointed.

It’s true that the monsters have become visibly stronger, but with all the Heroes working together, it was surprisingly easy to bring them to an end.

Nothing special to speak of... it was easier than the first wave we faced.

It’s as if it’s become just another job.

I was waiting for whoever was naming themselves as God to do some form of divine intervention, but nothing happened.

Glass went back to her side once and returned yesterday to give a report.

As the Heroes on that side cannot muster enough power to fight, their situation is taking a turn for the worst.

Because we're quickly dealing with it over here, the casualties from the wave are... well, they're few in number, but there's still a substantial amount of damage being caused.

Glass's world's vassals are being pressured into strenuous battles.

They were lamenting that it would all come to an end soon.

The fact that the war with Faubley was completely over and the fact that Faubley had declared its defeat are ringing around the world.

The end result is that Melromark became recognized as the world's greatest Superpower.

The true identity of the wave seems to have become known throughout our neighboring countries.

There was also an investigation conducted to see just how much assimilation had come about as a result of the wave worldwide.

Apparently, around half of Melromark's land had been assimilated.

The races of Glass's world seem to be... accepting the situation.

Because of the differences in language and writing, there's still some disorder, but as the Heroes are standing beside them, we're facilitating them in deepening their understanding with one another.

For that, today we ended up in a meeting with the representative of Glass's vanishing world.

"Hey, Glass." (Naofumi)

"What is it?" (Glass)

"What sort of races does your world have?" (Naofumi)

"Meaning?" (Glass)

"Well... are there Humans like me, and is there anything different between them and the people of this world?" (Naofumi)

Honestly, I'm thinking Glass is of a different race than the people of this world.

In truth, her body occasionally becomes somewhat transparent, so I don't think she's quite human.

If I were to give it a name, I guess it would be 'half-spirit.'

There may be some ancient legend about a country where humans and ghosts lived alongside one another or something like that.

"Now that I think about it, I never spoke about it, did I? Yes. My world also contains Humans. And I am a Spirit... A race called the Soul People." (Glass)^[16]

"Spirit?" (Naofumi)

"Yes, unlike humans, we can get stronger through Status Magic." (Glass) "I'll ask for argument's sake, but what do you mean?" (Naofumi)

"First, to put it simply... the Vitality, Magic, and Spirit Power that exist in humans exist in us as one Stat. We also don't have levels." (Glass)
Spirit Power?

I don't really get it, but it may be a term for EP and SP.

"No Level? Then how do you get stronger?" (Naofumi)

"Soul People measure their strength in something called Energy. That constitutes our Vitality, Magic, Spirit, and Level." (Glass) "... Then when you use magic, you use up just as much Stamina and Vitality as you do MP... You mean?" (Naofumi) "Something like that. It also influences our Attack and Defense. If there's too little energy, we will get weaker." (Glass)
I see.

That's why when we first fought her, we were able to defeat her after she had dealt with the other Heroes.

Or else, there would be no way we would be able to beat the enemy who made a fool out of Ren.

"By defeating monsters, does something change?" (Naofumi)

“When we defeat monsters, the Energy of the Land stored inside them... in Human terms, I guess it would be EXP, is absorbed into us as Energy. Well, if we use too much, we can go into negative Energy point values.” (Glass) “That sounds like quite a troublesome race.” (Naofumi)

“It’s not too bad. It automatically recovers itself every minute, you know.” (Glass) “Then with time, does your ‘Level’ rise as well?” (Naofumi)

“For that, I would have to increase the maximum capacity. The amount gained when defeating a monster is able to exceed the maximum capacity I can reach by automatic recovery.” (Glass) “Fumu, what happens if you use recovery magic?” (Naofumi)

If Energy is what’s being restored, then the Shield sounds useful for a race like that.

We could gather healers from around the globe and supercharge people of Glass’s race.

“Human Magic cannot heal us. Though, we can receive energy from others of our Clan.” (Glass) “I see... Then...” (Naofumi)

Well, it doesn’t look like it’ll work out that well.

I take out Spirit Water from the Shield and toss it at Glass.

“This water restores something called SP in this world. What happens when you drink it?” (Naofumi) “I wonder. Let’s test it.” (Glass)

Glass begins drinking down the liquid.

“... My energy increased by quite a high amount. This is quite a convenient drink.” (Glass) “I see.” (Naofumi)

Mass producing Spirit Water is difficult, but it seems that it can strengthen Glass.

I'll have all the Heroes start making some later.

"In exchange, this is a gem from my world. Please accept it." (Glass)

This time, Glass takes out a red crystal and hands it to me.

"What is this?" (Naofumi)

"It's called a Crystal of the Earth in my world. It's known to recover Magic. Try gripping it tightly." (Glass)

As I was told, I squeeze the gem in my hand.

'You have accessed the Dragon Pulse! You have gained 3000 EXP!'

A window like the one that appears after defeating a monster floats before me.

3000... I guess it's not a number to be laughed at.

"I got a bit of EXP." (Naofumi)

"It seems that different tools have different purposes across worlds. To put it bluntly, that drink from before was truly splendid." (Glass) "If I can get EXP just by gripping a Gem, then I'm fine with trading." (Naofumi)

... It isn't foreign exchange, but through otherworldly exchange, we can get some items we both want. It may be necessary to overcome the wave.

In this world, it was a simple SP recovery item, but in Glass's World, it lets her acquire Energy.

In Glass's World, it was just a magic recovery item, but here, it can give you EXP.

I'll have to have the Old Man analyze it, but I feel that a wide range of possibilities sleep within these gems.

“Okay, I understand what Spirits are. Are Spirits and Humans all that inhabit your world?” (Naofumi) “No, there are also the People of Crystal, a race of people with gems at their cores called the Jewels.” (Glass) “What sort of race is that?” (Naofumi)

I’ve played some games with similar races in them.

They had a setting where they were targeted and hunted by people for the rare gems that made them.

From what Glass’s saying, they have equal citizenship, but I wonder.

“If I had to say... certain gems that collected power gained their own will and wished to be human. As they’re a bit hard to label as Human, they received some discrimination in the past.” (Glass) “Hmm... Spirits too?” (Naofumi)

“Yes... in the past, Humans labelled Spirits as Ghosts lingering in the world. There were times when people called to purge them.” (Glass) “And you’re not?” (Naofumi)

I feel that Spirits and Ghosts are quite the same.

Souls and Crystals, they have quite a spiritual feel surrounding them.

“Spirits are not left by Human souls. We may have similar natures, but we are fundamentally different.” (Glass) “I see.” (Naofumi)

“Returning to topic, Jewels eat gems, and based on the minerals they eat, they can change the abilities they possess. Their status magic is the same as Humans, though.” (Glass) “I see... Hmm? How do they reproduce? I don’t know their body structure, but...” (Naofumi) “They can spontaneously generate from nature, but they can propagate just like humans, you know?” (Glass) Stones multiply... I can’t imagine that at all.

“There are some coming in the meeting, so confirm it for yourself.” (Glass) “I got it. Spirits and Jewels.” (Naofumi)

“Also, there’s some of the race that also exist in this world, Demi-Humans, though they’re quite scarce.” (Glass) “Fumu.” (Naofumi)

By the way, the Demi-Humans Glass was talking about were Elves and Dwarfs.

Since the ones I know of all have fluffy animal ears, it’s rare to see a human subspecies.

Would the past me have been overly excited over this?

Execution

Author's Note

As noted in the tags, this chapter contains excessive and cruel depictions. But I thought it necessary for the sake of the story.^[17]

After that, Glass spoke of a representative of several small countries in the peace talks to come.

The ones who were to become new residents of our world seemed a little bit lost, but having understood the situation, they had no choice but to accept it.

“Then to protect the world from the wave, let us take each other’s hands and proceed forward.” (Trash)

Trash acts as our rep, as he shakes Glass’s hand. Negotiations ended without a hitch.

Well, due to differences in language, I don’t think we’ll be getting along too well, but that’s no different for us.

This and that happened, and we solved some peace-related problems.

Next is...

“S-STOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOP!”

The day after the peace talks, the one who declared the World his own

property, the Fake Hero who plotted for World Domination, Tact, and his conspirators, were scheduled to have their public execution.

Due to the prestige of the Four Heroes and the fact that we had all the vassals gathered to start with, it ended up that we were all forced to watch.

The Dark Guild of Zeltburg, which was experienced in putting on showy executions, offered to carry it out... but it ended up so that it was carried out by our allied nations.

The method itself was proposed by Zeltburg, and it received approval among the other country's leaders.

I flip through the document to see what sort of method it was as well.

Trash is... sporting a face that seems it will break out into tears in at any moment. Despite how rotten she is, he's still being forced to watch his own daughter's execution.

When I caution him, he loosens his clenched fist and sullenly nods.

"Iwatani-dono... you have no need for worry. I won't use my authority to halt the execution." (Trash)

I find the sight of him silently consenting to his daughter's death with a pale face to be quite pitiful.

Now then, about the method...

After he was defeated by me, Tact had his level reset at the Hourglass before he could regain consciousness.

Of course, his harem included.

It seems that the young women fought in protest, but Ren, Sadina, and Firo were able to arrest them.

The result: the squad with the lowest at level 250 was brought down to a pitiful group of Level 1s. They can barely even move.

Well, there seems to have been a few militaristic-type women among them,

so a few of them might be able to perform some action.

There's also... we also smoked out any women in Faubley who would rise up for Tact's sake.

Faubley has lost to Melromark!

Before we spread that information, we proclaimed Tact's victory and invited all of Tact's Harem to come to Melromark to celebrate. And they sure did gather.

It seems that we captured Rat's rival, the little girl in a lab coat, as well.

Just how many did we gather?

Just in case, I put Motoyasu in charge of apprehending them.

"There were so many pigs. How filthy." (Motoyasu)

Is what he said.

It's hard to imagine that there was a time when he would flirt with any woman he met.

And what sort of method did Zeltburg devise...?

Tact's head and arms have been locked in a strong board so he can do nothing but walk, and in order to bind his movement, he has shackles carefully attached to his feet.

The only part of his body he can control is his eyes.

It may be a bit severe, but as long as we don't know what strange powers he possesses, we have to be careful.

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAH-"

And in front of the immobile Tact, we display various executions one by one, starting with burning at the stake. Then water torture, hanging, guillotine, the Phalaris Bull, shooting brigade, drawing and quartering, being run over.

Death by various forms of Magic, administration of lethal poison, mauling by monsters, the scenery repeats over and over again, from dawn to dusk.

Sadina's Lightning Magic was amazing.

She seemed proficient with it, and without killing them, she skillfully put her targets on the borderline between life and death.

From the beginning, the country carried out the will of the church. As Tact besmirched the name of all Heroes, his crimes were quite heavy.

And while all of that was happening, the citizens were lugging rocks at Tact's static body.

The concept was to kill Tact after his heart had been completely broken.

And that's what was happening.

Well, he did plot to overturn the world, and on top of killing Heroes, he proclaimed to have been the chosen one after parading around his stolen Holy Weapon, which was found out to be a fake.

In this world, where the Hero Faith runs so deep, he had become a target for a lot of pent up aggression.

And the one they believed in turned out to be a fake, so...

While remaining powerless, Tact desperately calls out to the women heading to the gallows. He calls their names one at a time.

From his neck, elbows, and ankles, blood flows from his attempts to break free.

"Gu-...u... please... stop! If you need to kill someone, then aren't I enough!? Why

must they be killed-" (Tact)

Hahh... [\[18\]](#)

I let out a sigh of depression. Again and again.

"How many times must I say it!? Your crimes aren't so light that they can be made up for by killing someone like you!"

The Executor in front of Tact declares as such.

And he hits Tact's face with his bludgeon before casting recovery magic on him.

Keeping him alive with healing magic as they torture him. It's a method only possible in a parallel world.

Though I shouldn't be saying anything, as I did it to the man as well.

"... It really isn't something good for the eyes."

As I was sitting in the chair specially made for me at the Execution Ground, Glass calls out to me.

I understand how she feels.

Even if he's Atlas's killer, having a stranger conduct such a cruel execution on him is... I guess when I'm the observer, it feels like this.

I thought this during the coup d'état performed by the Three Hero Church as well.

I guess this just means I'm still a man of the modern era.

I can't look at execution scenes with pleasure. I must still be soft.

"That's right... but, the responsibility of making a toy out of the world is too much to push on him alone." (Naofumi)

Tact's parents, starting with his mother, and all of his relatives were executed.

His father... did he not have one?

I don't really know, but it seems he's already dead.

The one who was just killed was his sister.

『Please save me, Onii-ch-』

It was impalement this time.

I didn't want to watch, and if I heard her death throes, it would merely give me nightmares.

I can't understand having this shown as entertainment, but my world apparently had a time where this was popular, so I can't really criticize.

More importantly, I have no obligation to save them.

"I do understand it in my head, but not my heart. In order to protect my own world, I have caused the collapse of others..." (Glass) "If you were able to look upon this scene as something natural, then you truly would be insane. I guess you're still normal. And if you think too hard about it, it will affect you in battles to come." (Naofumi) "... That is... true." (Glass)

By the way, Glass is also assisting in the executions.

What exactly she's assisting in will be made clear shortly.

Tact turned his eyes filled with hatred towards me countless times today.

I stand up and approach him.

"Were you under the belief that prisoners of war were to be handled with care?" (Naofumi) "Of course! There's no way a Hero would be able to forgive something like this! You fake, who's stolen all my weapons!" (Tact) "I was wondering what you would say... don't you know? Of the people you've killed,

the most distinguished one was the Queen of Melromark. That means Melromark's acting to restore their honor." (Naofumi) "What are you talking about?" (Tact)

Tact tilts his head, with an expression implying that he's being made fun of.

He better choose his words carefully...

Well, it's fine, is it not? Shall I teach this pitiful reincarnated?

"You and your followers are the detested enemy of this country, so is it not natural that they would want to execute you all? Being a Hero isn't relevant to any of it. Especially not to a prisoner of war." (Naofumi)

To put it bluntly, this is an era where the representative of the losing party and his cabinet get killed.

Melromark ain't a republic. It's a monarchy.

It has a Pyramid-like organization of power.

And he killed the top.

It's easy to imagine what would happen if he lost a war against this country.

"Were you thinking the world was getting freed from oppression through your actions? For that selfish ideal, just how much blood did you get on your hands? As long as you were satisfied, you didn't care what it was you got your hands in. It's time for you to pay the bill. It's your punishment for readily calling the world yours for the taking." (Naofumi) "I'll kill you! Even if I'm reduced to nothing but my head! Even if all that remains is my soul, I'll kill you!" (Tact) "...Let me give you the words of a literary strategist from my world. 『Those who are allowed to shoot are only those with the resolve to get shot』. Just how many people died by your hand? Were killed by the firearms you built with your own hands? Is it possible that you don't have the resolve to take on the resentment of those that got involved in your schemes and died?" (Naofumi)^[19]

If I ever were to lose, then I'll lose everything, starting with Raphtalia.

Well, since this Fake Hero is the way he is, he'd probably spare any woman with a nice face... and brainwash them after violating them, but there definitely would have been a massacre like this from his side.

I understood that from the start, and I had the resolve to kill.

And, I swore it to Atlas... and to all the villagers who lost their lives.

I'd definitely take revenge.

I came here prepared to do anything, no matter how cowardly or vile it was.

I'm sure they never wished for such a thing, but still, I have no intention of stopping.

I may be extremely caught up in my own pride... but it's not like I'm standing here alone.

If this cruel execution is to be my crime, then I'll go to hell, or wherever, once it's over.

At the very least, I don't think I'm bound for heaven...

And wait, I need to go pick a fight with that bastard up there.

Heaven must be hell too.

"You're just facing the punishment for your selfish crimes. Accept it. If you win, you're the exalted new order. If you lose, you're the filthy rebel scum."

(Naofumi) "DON'T SCREW WITH ME!" (Tact)

"Shut up!"

The executioner gags Tact with a rag.

Tact's eyes are losing their color. It looks like he's about to shed tears of blood.

No, his tears are already stained with a hint of red. I think his tear glands are

broken.

So humans can withstand this much without breaking.

These thoughts run through my mind.

Well, I'm also fed up with the piercing cries echoing behind me.

"A...ah..."

Oh? It's the lab coat little girl. Yep, she fits the description to the point.

I can only see her as a kid playing at being a doctor.

So they brought her along... but what's that? That culture tank beside her?

A stairway had been built, and she was forcefully herded to the top.

"S-sto-"

When she was pushed forward, the lab coat girl drops into the tank.

"Gaboboboboboooooboooho-"

A large amount of bubbles build up.

A sulfuric acid dive?

I step backwards.

The one proposing these seems to be Zeltburg, but... I don't really want to get involved with that country.

It's a shitty country that earns money by putting on these shows as entertainment.

"N_____!" (Tact)

Tact tries to call out.

Eventually...

Yeah, no. It's probably best not to talk about it.

If I had to say something, she got the magical creature bad end.

“Now then, the next event is...”

When I was sick of it all, a special program that caught my interest comes up.

What is it, you ask?

Witch, and a few women, enter the stage.^[20]

Soul Eater

Witch and her women leisurely walk forward.

Ah, she's definitely under the impression that she won't be executed.

I mean, she's definitely looking towards me, trying to provoke me.

Should I kill her here and now?

Well, I know what's in the program, so I stay silent.

"Malty!" (Tact)

The gag on Tact's mouth is lifted.

"Oh, my. If it isn't the fake. 'Tis a pity your women were killed off." (Witch) "M-Malty!?" (Tact)

"Don't call my name so easily!" (Witch)

Witch plants a kick in Tact's face.

"Fugu-W-what are you-" (Tact)

"Because you deceived me, just how much grief do you think I suffered!?" (Malty)

The other woman follow suit, offering blows to his head, appendages, and nether regions while laughing.

It's truly the worst sight of all.

The one who thought of this one must be completely insane.

“I-I see! As long as you beat me up, then you guys will be...” (Tact) “I’m telling you to stay quiet, you foul man!” (Witch)

Watching Witch kick him so seriously, even Tact can’t seem to hide his doubt.

And Tact’s doubt isn’t wrong.

Maybe around half of it isn’t.

“Ma... lty?” (Tact)

“And didn’t I say it? Someone as low as you shouldn’t be speaking to me. My papa is now the head of the world’s strongest army, you know. And what about you, you fake? The leader of a ruined country. Do you get the difference?”

(Witch) “T-this can’t be.” (Tact)

Witch glances over at Trash and speaks.

“How dare you trick me?” (Witch)

“When you’re just a fake, you acted so high and mighty...” (Woman)

“Everyone died because they believed in you!” (Another Woman) “You pretended to care about the world, when you were only ever working for yourself! You heartless bastard!” (Woman) “Pervert! Fiend!” (Another)

“Because of you, how many people died?” (Witch)

I don’t want to hear that from you, Witch!

A sudden urge to shout out wells up within me.

The woman continue to throw abusive words at Tact.

Since I know what comes next, even I feel some discomfort.

“We were merely tricked by you. So... we hold no crimes on our heads. As

evidence, here we are rebuking you.” (Witch)

Witch laughs to herself as she and several of Tact’s other followers continue to torture him.

They order the executioner to break his fingers one by one and laugh like madmen.

You damn garbage.

“Gu... ii... you devil... when I... you...” (Tact)

Tact seems to understand Witch is coming at him for real. His eyes are dead in a different way than before.

“T-this must be...”

Ah... I think I know what he’s trying to say.

This must be a dream. And he glares at me having gotten caught up in that possibility.

And he cries out.

“This wasn’t how it was supposed to be! There’s no way this could ever happen. It has to be a dream! If it isn’t then... Oy! You’re listening, right!? I demand a redo! I’ll definitely be born anew and deliver revenge on these bastards!” (Tact)
All the heroes look upon the execution grounds. As Trash, Glass, and I expected, Tact proclaims this loudly.

...It’s about time.

“Unfortunately, even if you die, there will be nothing left for you.”

Glass stands up and speaks.

“What?” (Tact)

“I haven’t the slightest idea what sort of person your God is. But my side will be troubled if you and your companions were to be recycled by him.” (Glass)
The way Glass speaks seems to change by the situation.

But that doesn’t matter.

It’s time.

I gave instructions to those below the platform.

Carrying the chain of a certain monster in hand, an executioner from Glass’s world comes forth.

The monster’s name was Soul Eater. [\[21\]](#)

Just as the name implies, it’s a monster that feasts on souls.

In Glass’s world, where the concept of the transmigration of souls is believed in, it is used to prevent the process. It’s a vicious beast that eats souls, though this one has been domesticated.

If we fought it and lost, our souls would have been eaten.

That’s a bit of a scary thought.

I never fought it directly, but according to Ren, its face was blue.

This seems to be a different species than the Soul Eater they fought in the Wave.

“GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!” (Soul Eater)

By the way, there are several Soul Eaters within this area.

And their orders are to eat the souls of anyone killed within the execution grounds.

“If you die and get your soul eaten by this monster... will you be able to reincarnate?” (Glass)

Tact’s expression gets paler and paler.

I mean, it’s natural.

This must be a dream. If not, I can do it over again. Or perhaps I can meet God and get the power to deliver vengeance on those people. His thoughts were too naïve.

But what will happen if we use him as food for this monster that devours souls?

It destroys his hope that there’s a second chance.

“Now then.” (Glass)

“S-stop!” (Tact)

It’s finally Tact’s turn. For real this time.

Uu, what was it again? Sustain his life with healing magic, as he goes through the execution of all the women before him.

Just how much do these people want him to suffer?

But as I lynched him, I can’t really say anything.

It’s no longer my revenge alone.

There’s the Allied Army, who had its forces disappear against Houou without any reason.

There’s the Hero of Zeltburg and his honor that he killed.

There’s the many Heroes he killed, whose names I don’t even know, and the people who supported them. The countries he destroyed.

“GYAAAAAAAAAAH! UGUUUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaaa!”

And Tact's execution begins.

After he had been beaten to a pitiful state, the Soul Eater closes in on him. Like a fish, it floats and circles the air above him.

"Good bye. I am but a little thankful for having met you, but you treated people as property, and you were much too condescending. Because you gave such a fate to the women around you, it was all wasted." (Witch)

For some reason, Witch is wrapping things up.

What a waste.

The little pity I had for him after seeing his end has all disappeared.

"Aaaaa..."

He can no longer form words, and his eyes are dilated. Finally, the priests of the Four Hero Church activate their ritual magic, and Tact departs from the world.

"Good Bye."

It was the ritual magic 『Judgement』 and 『Trial by Flames』. Tact disappears from the world without leaving a single trace behind.

"Now then, where is that Faker's soul?" (Naofumi)

If I equipped the Soul Eater Shield, I think I could see it, but I ask Glass anyways.

"Over there." (Glass)

Where Glass points, the Soul Eaters converge. They seem to be greedily devouring something.

Hmm... so that's where it is.

But even his soul became monster food. This world is scary.

“And now I assisted in dealing with that fake. Hurry and release me!”

As soon as that was over, Witch and her women cry out.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. .. do it!” (Naofumi)

As I call out, Witch and the women are covered in a rain of magic arrows.

“KYAAAAAAAAA!”

“Wha, what are you doing?” (Witch)

“Oy, Bitch... did you seriously believe your existence would be forgiven before my eyes?” (Naofumi)

Right, as for why Witch betrayed Tact, we have to go a bit back.

A few hours before the Execution, we gathered all of Tact’s Harem in one place and asked:

“Were all of you really in good relations with the Fake who called himself a Hero, Tact?”

All of his loyal women nodded at once. Others gave vague responses.

It’s not like all of those beside Tact were blindly obedient to him.

“I wasn’t!”

The first one to break her allegiance was the bitch called Witch.

“My mama was... killed by that fake. And my papa was the one who was able to destroy all of his new weapons, the great King of Wisdom!” (Witch) “You traitor!” (Woman)

“Know you no shame!?” (Woman)

“You repay his good will with scorn!” (Woman)

Witch was alienated from the group.

Of course, I was shown this scene later.

Her way of living truly is the lowest, this Witch.

“Hmm... then, you merely have to declare that when your time for execution comes about. If you’re not his comrade, then perhaps you’ll live.”

The executioner stated what was asked of him, word for word.

At first, the women spoke ill of Witch, but a few of them sided with her to protect themselves. They spoke ill of Tact to preserve their lives.

The ones who were executed before were the ones who never betrayed to the end.

“Papa! I’m not bad. I was merely being used! Just when I thought I had been freed from that accursed Pig King, that fiendish fake Hero apprehended me. That’s all!” (Witch)

Witch puts on an act and lets loose crocodile tears. She makes a play towards Trash.

Trash overlooks the scene with heartrending emotions. His hands begin to shake.

If we did something like sparing her here, nothing good will come of it.

None of those who have been involved with the battles surrounding her can forgive this wench.

And more importantly, I cannot forgive her.

This time, we won't let her escape.

Unlike with the Pig King, we won't be negligent.

In front of all of our eyes, we will promptly confirm Witch's demise.

He seems to have mustered up his resolve. He stands.

"Kill that shameless woman at once! That one speaks praise of our late beloved Queen, yet sides with the man who killed her! She is but a traitor we cannot forgive!" (Trash)

Trash utters his last words of farewell.

Witch is held down by the executioners and is crucified on a large cross. Below her, a bonfire is built.

"No, it's hot. NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Gradually, the fire grows larger, and Witch bears the brunt of its force. She cries out.

Fu... this was quite an unsettling event, but Witch's screams make me feel refreshed.

This must be the proof of my own madness.

Witch's body is burned away, and her soul is offered to the Soul Eaters.

And like that, before my very eyes, Witch utters her true final breath.

Remorse

“...As I thought, I am ‘Trash.’”

While watching the Witch burn, Trash murmurs under his breath.

I silently watch the scene beside him.

“My lack of control over my daughter’s actions, everything that has happened was brought about by my deeds.” (Trash) “That may be true. But you still have work you have to do.” (Naofumi) “I know.” (Trash)

His beloved daughter Witch used the world as her toy and put on a crude play up ‘til the very end.

Why can she use humans so well...

I do believe Trash to be a terrible person. But, there has to be another source.

I’ve begun to think of him differently than I think of Witch.

Trash’s life gave him ample reason to hate the Hero of the Shield.

The Hero was the bane of his very existence.

His parents and his beloved sister were taken by the men singing praise for their beloved Shield. By Silt Welt.

I’ve never had any direct relations with them, but it isn’t a story I can’t comprehend.

There are many a protagonist with backstories like that.

“My wife... tried to correct my daughter again and again... but I never thought too much of it at the time. And this is the result.” (Trash) “...”

It would be easy to affirm his statements.

But a large question hangs above my head.

It's true that the daughter of Trash and the Queen, Witch, is an unredeemable devil of a woman.

The Queen lamented that Witch had inherited the worst traits from both of them, and she did much to try and correct her.

Even so, when looking at Trash and the Queen, I see too much of a disparity between them and that bitch.

The Queen was apparently skilled enough at negotiations that she was called the Vixen of Melromark.

But she acted for the country's sake by principle.

Even if she commits evil, she puts the country first, and she conducts them calmly while acknowledging the malice behind them.

Her evil deeds carry a greater goal.

For the Queen to do them knowingly suggests that she has a bit of a personality problem, but you can also say she cares for her people.

Next is Trash.

He's called the Great King of Wisdom, and there isn't a better man at scheming, it seems.

That may sound nice from afar, but when you're the target of his plans, it isn't something to laugh about.

But, you can say that that's standard practice in wars and conflicts, and if you

don't plan, you can lose against enemies you could have easily defeated.

For the weaker side, it's natural for them to have to use scheming to take down the strong.

And here's the big question.

Trash... he does a good job of using his knowledge for those dear to him.

In the recent war, he did his best to fulfill his wife's will and protect the country.

But... what about Witch?

For what purpose did she find pleasure from getting people to fall for her traps?

I can only think she's acting for herself.

It's a bit rash to think the child of those two would only act for her own sake, is it not?

Am I thinking too much? Of course, Trash has gone senile after getting that child.

But looking at Melty makes me wonder.

Despite what she says, Melty treasures friendship.

When Firo was in trouble, she took the initiative, and she assists in the managing of my land.

Is it the influence of her growing environment...? That's all I can think of.

But still, she was born to royalty.

And her birth mother, the Queen, spent her time trying to correct her.

For her to have turned out like that regardless of her environment, it must have something to do with her base personality.

Looking at the parent's personalities, I can see how someone like Melty could result.

Well, Witch's past isn't of any interest to me, and perhaps Trash merely pampered her too much.

I've thought about it a few times, but Witch truly seems cut off from the rest of that family.

If it was just the selfishness, I could point to Trash and nod, but she has no feelings for her family.

I'm not sure about the Queen, but I'm pretty sure she had as much familial affection as everyone else.

I mean, Trash's lineage is connected to Faubley, and with the blood of past heroes flowing in her, I guess it isn't unthinkable for her to end up on an evil path.

...Could it be that like Tact, there was a reincarnator among the Heroes of the past?

Or could it be that one of the ones summoned to this world had a twisted personality?

Honestly, I'm no saint.

The Spirit of the Shield called me the First Candidate, but I wonder how much of its words were true.

My thoughts are straying. Back to Witch's personality.

It's as if she existed merely to harm the world; merely to put the Heroes through pain.

I wonder whether she's a reincarnator herself, but judging from her actions, the possibility is slim.

But... it's scary that I can't deny it.

Could this be it...? The scary thing Glass said about reincarnators?

Including those at my place, I can't say there isn't a reincarnated individual among us.

Of course, I would know if they took flashy action like Tact.

But if someone was truly skilled at hiding it, then there would be no way for me to tell.

The people I trusted until now may betray me at the last minute. It's nothing to laugh at.

I can understand how Glass's world fell into the trap of suspicion.

Raphtalia was really a reincarnator, and in the last moments, she would attack me... If something like that happened, my heart would break.

But it's also hard to deny it. I pray that it isn't true, but I can't say it isn't with certainty.

From her statements and actions, there are too many things I have to analyze.

If I could read people's hearts, then all of this may be resolved, but that one calling himself god seems to be able to give some strange powers.

If I could, and they had the ability to block it, then I would be certain in my judgement, and that would be the end.

Well, it's more fun to try and find the reason that God didn't help out Tact.

To protect our sanity, we had all the Heroes assembled here just in case, but it was quite a letdown.

I got to see the execution, but... quite a few of us retired part-way through.

I mean, it wasn't a good sight.

At the very end, Trash, Glass, and I stayed as representatives.

“I’ll accept any work... This is my crime.” (Trash)

Having lost his wife and having the one who prompted it be his daughter.
Having the one his daughter was with be the one who destroyed the memento left by his sister. If I were in his position, perhaps my heart would break.

The current Trash has admirable ability and decisiveness.

Honestly, I see why the Queen put her faith in this man.

His strength of heart... If it were me, I don’t think I would be able to imitate him.

For the first time, I sympathized with Trash. For the first time, I thought that perhaps I should stop calling him Trash.

But, because the individual himself wishes to condemn himself, I must continue to refer to him as such.

“I thought that that child should live as freely as she could. She responded to my parental love, and I often was too soft on her. For it to reach a conclusion like this...” (Trash) “I’ll bet it was the freedom. Where the hell did she learn to take pleasure from looking down on others?” (Naofumi) “I have no answer... even so, when that child proposed the idea of accepting the Three Hero Church and summoning the Four Heroes, I felt I had awoken to my mission.” (Trash) “What?” (Naofumi)

Witch was the one who proposed the idea of summoning us?

Well, we aren’t the only Heroes, and she already had the experience of looking down on everyone by a Hero’s side.

But, I’m starting to understand Witch’s motives less and less.

Was Trash’s foolish state her doing as well?

She’s good at getting others to pamper her, and looking at all the Heroes, me included, she’s a master of having people fall into depravity.

Perhaps if Tact never associated with her, he would be a bit more decent of a Human Being.

The first time they came into contact was the Academy at Faubley.

This is just speculation, but Witch probably gave her first to him.

“You know how Witch studied abroad in Faubley, right?” (Naofumi)

“Yes, well, to some extent.” (Trash)

“Then did you know Witch’s first partner?” (Naofumi)

“No... but I learned it from my Wife’s memos. It seems that child was trying to hide it.” (Trash) “I see.” (Naofumi)

The Queen did say quite a bit.

Like how Motoyasu was far from being her first.

She created friction among the Heroes and kicked them down to the ground whenever she wanted. Up to the Spirit Turtle Incident, the Queen looked over her actions out of benevolence.

But after that?

If she was too scared to do anything, all would be solved if she came before the Queen. But instead, she seduced Ren and placed false charges on Motoyasu. After stealing Ren’s belongings, she ran. After that, she took the Three Hero Church Remnants, and Itsuki, and started her upheaval.

No matter how angry she thought the Queen would be at her deserting the battlefield, I don’t think she would have been executed, or sent to the Pig King at that point, at least.

When Motoyasu honestly admitted his fault, he only received minimal punishment.

Her mental state may have been affected by the bounty on her head, but though her status wouldn’t have been what it was before, she would have been

able to make up for it.

...Did she hate the rumors and hardships that much?

That was enough for a Coup d'état? She did proclaim she was the one worthy of being Queen.

Just how much was she acting for her own self-satisfaction?

Did Trash teach her to hate the Shield from a young age, and so she started emulating his worst parts?

“Did you ever teach her that the Hero of the Shield was the God of the Enemy and an existence to be hated?” (Naofumi) “I didn’t. Though it was in the country’s policy.” (Trash)

Well, she did seem to participate in their religion, so would her being a devout follower of the Three Hero Church constitute a proper reason?

But... her moves are a bit erratic for her to be a believer.

She did take advantage of them, but I don’t think she had any firm belief.

Honestly, it just doesn’t fit her.

Religions like that seem to prohibit excess luxury in all worlds, so it doesn’t fit the Witch’s character.

It was quite obvious she was using them, and the Pope was enraged when he figured that out.

If she was a devout believer, she would have been accepted there.

Her objective is too unclear.

In the end, the fact that Witch was the one whose mischief dropped the world into chaos is undeniable.

Did she receive some interference or objective from the one naming

themselves as God?

An answer probably won't come. Even if we tortured her, she would probably stay silent.

"It's all my fault." (Trash)

That day, Trash's back looked so narrow.

We were in a hate-hate relationship, but even scum like me felt like I should cheer him up a little.

Breaking the Limit

“Now then, Gaelion. I’m leaving the limit-breaking Class Up to you.”

“KYUA!”

Because Raphtalia and Firo were selected by the legendary vassals, it’s unnecessary for them. But those unchosen ones still need it.

We ended up getting permission to use the Dragon Hourglass at night.

Gaelion jumped on top of the Hourglass, and cried out.

By the way... it seems that a vassal or legendary weapon is required to break the limit.

『Let us start.』

After getting a large portion of the fragments, True Gaelion became able to use something like telepathy.

He still won’t use it on Ren or Taniko though. He refuses to interact with them.

“Then first is onee-san!”

Sadina skips forward as she announces her candidacy.

But it’s a valid choice.

She’s top class in the village, and her base abilities are high.

And she hasn’t even been taught Hengen Musou.

Recently, she's been watching the Granny's son, and her disciples training, and she's picked a little up.

Just how high are her specs?

"Well, that's about right. You've been helping out with quite a bit lately, and you are acting as a test subject here." (Naofumi) "That's right~ onee-san's been dyed with Naofumi's colors." (Sadina)

Sadina seems to be in high spirits as she uses both hands to cover her face in embarrassment.

By the way, there's a reason why we didn't perform the Class Up as soon as Gaelion got hold of the Fragments.

It was because of the Growth Elevation from the Whip.

It was a useful enhancement that could be granted onto people other than the possessor of it.

It truly is the Whip... it may be a bit cruel to say, but it's perfect for Slaves and Animals... In this case, I guess it's the perfect method for one who raises monsters.

But there's a large flaw in this method.

For people who aren't Heroes, they can only level down within the scope of their Class Ups. In this case, it would be from 1-40, 40-100, or 100+.

Heroes have no concept of classing up.

So we can sacrifice our levels, and downgrade ourselves to level 1.

And proportional to our sacrifice, our growth will increase.

But if we fall too low, with the monsters around the world experiencing a spike in level, it's exceptionally dangerous and inefficient.

Apparently, Class Ups in themselves can be divided into those that magnify

stats, and those that amplify certain possibilities.

The first one does something like doubling one's current stats, while the latter lets you add a percent modifier onto a certain stats.

In the former, it's the stats right after the class up that are important, while in the latter, it amplifies for times to come, so they balance out.

In order to figure this out, I have to do some experimentation.

The Class Up at 40 was the latter.

So I think it will turn out fine, but just in case...

The Level 100 Class Up being the former sounds likely.

If we mess up, it's not like we're going to do something complicated like starting over from level 1. We don't have too much time.

We have to quell the waves worldwide.

Though we're able to buy a bit of time with all the Legendary Weapons and vassals gathered.

The Test Subjects were to be Firo and Sadina.

These two were the ones in the village with the quickest level growth.

Of course, their battle abilities are also high.

But Firo became the Hero of the Claw, so Sadina became our main testee.

We do have the consent of the individual.

"Take responsibility~." (Sadina)

"Ah, yes, yes. When must I do that?" (Naofumi)

Refusing her has gotten to be a pain, so I just go with the flow of her conversation.

“Let’s see~. Then tonight, won’t you do something fun with me?” (Sadina)
I get the feeling that Raphtalia is looking upon the situation with envious eyes.

Perhaps Sadina realized this. She grabbed and wrapped herself around my arm.

She’s definitely playing around here...

“Do you mean something 18+? Or do you mean drinking?” (Naofumi) “Let’s see... Which one would you prefer, Raphtalia-chan?” (Sadina) “W-why are you asking me?” (Raphtalia)

“Because it’s fun.” (Sadina)

“I will get angry.” (Raphtalia)

“Ahaha, it’s a joke~.” (Sadina)

She sure likes teasing the girl.

Though I do believe Raphtalia’s good reactions are the cause of it all.

If I were asked if I were an appealing person, I would deny it.

But for Sadina, who treasures the village, she’s thinking about the future. Perhaps she’s merely pretending to be smitten with me.

She is one of the people I have to answer eventually.

...I put my hand on Sadina’s face.

“Ahn, Naofumi-chan. Save that for when we return to the village.” (Sadina)

“Hah...” (Naofumi)

It’s really hard to tell whether she’s being serious or not.

Sadina closes in on my ear, and whispers.

“If you’ve cleared up your doubts, and you still seek me, I will be nothing but happy, you know. This isn’t a lie, or a joke, or anything.” (Sadina)

This whale woman is...

Let’s return to topic.

Recently, I’ve been going with her to raise my level in the sea.

Me, and the other Heroes are helping raise the villagers’ levels. We’re also patrolling, and visiting various places.

And I was left in charge of the coast. It’s not like I was forced into the job, or anything.

It was quite an efficient place, and I was interested in Sadina’s way of leveling. Under the pretense of patrolling, we went to level grind.

The amount of aquatic Demi-Humans in my village isn’t small.

There are ones like Dolphins and Octopii.

I’m had them level with Sadina, but according to them, Sadina was strong, so it was too easy... apparently.

If you ignored Hengen Musou, perhaps she’s the strongest in the village.

Atlas couldn’t see, but she could fight by sensing Chi.

And Hengen Musou is a style that trains people to sense things the same way. To hit pressure points where Chi is lax.

On the contrary, like Firo, Sadina specializes in overpowering the enemy.

Well, Firo was able to do Hengen Musou’s Mussou Kassei.

There seems to be a difference between being able to do is consciously or unconsciously... but Sadina can’t grasp it at all.

In simple fighting power, in a battle without bluffs, she falls into Firo's category.

Probably, if Fohl wasn't recruited by that old woman, he would grow into a style like hers.

Another reason I'm leveling in the sea is because Fitoria notified us that there was a high chance the next wave would be happening over the ocean.

According to the convenient teleporter that is Fitoria's carriage, in an underwater temple, there's a single hourglass overgrown with moss.

Of course, its surroundings are underwater as well

We can probably combat it above water, but if the boss remained under, then we'd have to beat it to end the wave.

Now that I think about it... Ren's face was a bit pale, but could it be that he can't swim?

I'll have him spit it out later.

Fitoria prepared some underwater fighting equipment, and among them was a certain penguin suit.

What's more, its stats were higher than the one in my possession, and its color was different.

I really didn't want to, but when I trained underwater with Sadina, I was forced to wear it.

Yeah. It was a world of difference fighting with or without it.

But I'd really like to do something about its appearance.

And I'm digressing again.

In fights underwater, the physics were different, and I was pressed into a

difficult stream of battles.

I mean, as if I were flying in the sky, I had to defend from attacks both above, and below.

And I had to go up for air at regular intervals.

Luckily, the special equipment let me breath in water to some extent, but it still requires regular resurfacing.

Additionally, water wraps around my body, making my body feel much heavier.

Many times, I could only stick to Sadina, and deploy something like Meteor Wall X.

I understand the importance of the Harpoon. I'll bet Motoyasu will be the most capable of the Four Heroes in this field.

Next would be Itsuki. He seems to have a special bow, and bow-gun.

"Sadina sure has grown."

When the wave caused the increase in monster levels worldwide, she went into the sea as a test run, and still easily came out victorious.

I think she fought... level 150 monsters. Monsters like that frequently appear about the coast.

Even if she had some support magic on her, I think she's way too strong.

"At that time, when you asked me to drop you to level 40, I thought you had a death wish." (Naofumi) "Ara~? You worried about this onee-san?" (Sadina)

"I shouldn't?" (Naofumi)

I'd like to teach her the concept of recklessness.

Heroes have their own forms of strengthening, so we can manage against

Level Gaps to some extent. It's too much a responsibility for one who isn't a Hero like her.

I cautioned her time and time again, she would shout, 'It's alright~, follow me!' and I would reluctantly move forward.

When it got too hard, I planned to have us flee through the portal, and level aboveground.

But... Level 40 Sadina with support magic beat a level 150 monster.

The fight lasted around three minutes.

What the hell is with this?

"Oh my, I'm happy." (Sadina)

She acts lax, but now that we've lost Atlas, the strongest slave in the village is definitely her.

After that fight, Sadina dragged me all over the ocean, and we encountered plenty of monsters.

I've heard that some aquatic mammals use sound waves to get a feel for their surroundings, but Sadina was able to sense the presense of monsters from a long ways away.

Well, it's no different from Firo on Land.

And while she was only level 40, she was able to get up to 70 while fighting with me.

The next day, she reached 90, and had me give her Growth Increases again.

When we dived down real deep... the monsters were all 200.

But with support magic, they came down relatively easily, and our levels rose higher and higher.

The ones with us were Raphtalia and Firo. Also Raph-chan. It seems Raph-chan can swim. But if you think about it, he swam all the way from that island to the village.

Right now, I also dropped my levels to raise my abilities. I dropped to 80.

The increase from Growth Elevation... can't be laughed at.

And the villagers also have my growth corrections, so their growth is even higher.

In general, Sadina's stats are... past what could be called human.

Even after rising that high, Sadina said, 'I still don't think I can beat that monster I encountered last I went salvaging~.' These waters sure are dangerous.

Just how high is this world's max level?

Are the monsters outside of Human reach entering levels humanity can never surpass?

Are Dragons okay?

I also have to raise Gaelion's level.

It would be humiliating if he got attacked by another Dragon and died.

And after repeating Growth Elevation a few times, Sadina's Status became something amazing.

She was ready to break the level 100 limit.

"Then let's start~." (Sadina)

"KYUA!" (Gaelion)

Sadina touches the Dragon Hourglass, and Gaelion begins chanting magic.

『Here... to save this world alongside the legendary Heroes, let us awaken the warrior of this world to their duty. Oh, world, oh Dragon Pulse, oh manifested destiny. Release the power stored within him !』

Through Telepathy, only I heard the incantation.

In truth, he did nothing but call out GyauGyau over and over again.

When I thought the chant was over, the gems raining down inside the Dragon Hourglass let out a single beam of light that extends out to my Shield before glittering to show their confirmation.

And as always, the display asking which route to take appeared before me.

Are there no special Class magnifications here?

I think as I look through the options before me.

...Um, raise her abilities in Human form, or raise her abilities in Beast Form. These are quite restrictive.

There are also options to grant her special abilities.

It differs greatly from when the villagers chose not to use Gaelion or Firo on their first Class Up.

Those were small changes in status. Of course, special abilities were included.

But this time is different.

The scopes are much larger.

Shouldn't it be the other way around? Is what I think... but perhaps Gaelion's divine intervention is the cause of all this.

"I pass on the right to decide to Sadina."

"Ara~? I wonder what I should pick. Which one do you like, Naofumi-chan?"
(Sadina) "It's your choice." (Naofumi)

“Hmph. Listen here, sometimes women like to have things picked out for them by the person they like.” (Sadina) “Is that how it is?” (Naofumi)

I look towards Raphtalia.

“Hmm... yes.” (Raphtalia)

“So it was true.” (Naofumi)

Even so... can I really choose Sadina’s future like this?

“Otherwise, I’ll choose the option that produces plenty of children when I do something fun with Naofumi-chan.” (Sadina) “For realz!?” (Naofumi)

This is bad. I don’t want to to bear that much responsibility.

No, just how serious is she?

And wait, am I really doing it with her after this?

Honestly, I can’t really imagine the two of us doing that sort of thing, you know...

“Sadina-onee-san? Please don’t trouble Naofumi-sama too much.” (Raphtalia)

“I know. I was just teasing him a little.” (Sadina)

She chuckles to herself.

Ah, for the love of all that is divine... please don’t play around with me.

“Hmph!” (Naofumi)

“I wanted Naofumi-chan to choose, but I guess there’s no helping it.” (Sadina)
Sadina picked her choice, and the hourglass began emitting light. The light slowly soaks into her.

Eventually, the radiance dies down to reveal Sadina smiling.

“Well, I guess that’s about it. Naofumi-chan, please confirm my status.” (Sadina)

“Sure.” (Naofumi)

I bring up her Status screen.

Uu... it’s elevated to an even higher level.

Her basic stats are many times greater than mine. Of course, I’ll bet there will be a bit of a gap between us when factoring in the power of the legendary weapon, but it’s the highest status I’ve ever seen.

It’s twice that of Firo’s when she grew with my growth corrections.

The stat amplification of the level 100 Class Up seems to be... percent based. I don’t really know what Sadina chose, but her evenly distributed stats are now all over the place.

Of course, it may just be brought about by the path she chose.

“What did you choose?” (Naofumi)

“Agility and Strength, also Magic.” (Sadina)

“I see.” (Naofumi)

If she mastered Hengen Musou like this, then she truly would have entered the realm of true monsters.

I learned later, but apparently above level 100, the Whip’s Elevation can sacrifice level for special abilities as well.

In Sadina’s case, she had me grant Magic Enhancement and Underwater Activity Time Up.

Transformation... are the modifications the strange me left behind still active?

That's how it went.

Honestly, we're becoming quite strong.

It seems I can count on our non-hero forces as well.

Coronation

“Your Majesty, Queen Melty!”

Having come out victorious against Faubley, Melromark essentially became the world’s strongest country.

Having built up a favorable relationship with the Hero of the Shield, their relationship with Silt Welt improved, and Silt Welt’s evaluation of the new Queen was quite high.

The two countries formed an alliance as if their long years spent lashing at one another had been but a dream.

However, neither side made any changes to their slave policies.

Under the pretense that things would change someday, the two were merely in a union to rid themselves of the wave.

Having gained Faubley’s land, it was unavoidable that things like this would happen to Melromark. It became an unbelievable large country by the standards of the time.

Because of Tact’s influence, the royals that defied him had already been sent to hang.

The remaining ones, who hung onto their lives by clinging to him, had experienced a sharp drop in power.

The result was that Melromark was able to take control without much issue.

Well, in a world with deep-rooted belief in the Heroes, there’s no way anyone would wage a war with the country holding all of them.

Because of the wave strengthening monsters, everyone’s in a panic trying to

maintain public order as it is.

Ah, right. It's about Shield Freiden, but after they learned that Tact had experienced defeat, they had a sudden change of heart, and a bit of a shuffling of leadership.

They placed all the blame for siding with Faubley on a representative.

It's an amazingly liberal country. When they feel the direction of the wind change, they take measures like this.

I guess all's well that ends well.

Normally, their actions would provoke further conflict, but Trash proclaimed that now wasn't the time for petty squabbles, and we hopped on his bandwagon.

Power is needed everywhere right now, it seems.

It's just that we shouldn't place too much confidence in them.

It's not hard to see the path Shield Freiden will tread down in the near future.

By the way, while the relations between Silt Welt and Melromark were being built, a lot of money was collected from all over the place in the name of world peace.

After peace is achieved, I can see quite a few places making excuses to reclaim it.

And like that, the various actions of various countries were shaken up by Melromark's victory.

For the general populace, it's just that the head has changed.

Even though he technically held the blood of Faublian Royalty, Trash immediately gave up his right to the throne upon attaining it.

He proclaimed that he would work to support the country as a Hero.

As a result, the one who bore the brunt of the responsibility was his daughter, the new Queen Melty.

“Long Live Queen Melty!”

The Grand coronation of the new Queen that took place in Melromark involved not only those of the country, but all the allied forces as well.

The enemy of the country, Silt Welt’s Genmu Gramps messenger clapped his hands, and congratulated her.

Perhaps the past Queen’s wishes have been granted, but Melty herself is...

The coronation took place on the castle terrace that overlooked the city plaza.

As a Hero, I was also present.

Trash acted as a representative and he stood next to the throne, crown in hand, waiting for Melty’s arrival.

“From here, we will begin the coronation ceremony for Melromark’s Queen.”

Melty trudged over to Trash wearing an extravagant dress that seemed ridiculously hard to walk in.

She stood in front of the throne, and lowered her head to the Trash in front of her.

“Now then, Melty Melromark.” (Trash)

“Yes.” (Melty)

We have consulted the girl, for argument’s sake. She accepted the position.

She was raised as the future Queen to begin with, so she had no reason to refuse.

“Up until now, you have been working to maintain order in the land governed by the Hero of the Shield. Through your efforts, the land that had once been left to rot has become prosperous once more. It is not a simple feat. With momentum like that, I hope that you will govern our country of Melromark.”

The crowd begins raising their voices.

“From this day forth, you will accept the Duties of Melromark’s Queen, and gain the title in its entirety. Henceforth, you will be known as Melty Q. Melromark.”

“I accept it graciously.” (Melty)

“Then please take the crown.”

Trash balances the crown on Melty’s head before taking a step back.

“I hereby recognize Melty Q. Melromark’s rise to the throne.”

There was a moment of applause.

That goes without saying, as it was the moment a new Queen was born in Melromark.

And Melty set out from the Terrace to the plaza in order to let the populace get a better look at her. She waved her hand the whole way through.

“Long Live New Queen Melty!”

“Long Live the Queen!”

“Everlasting Prosperity to Melromark!”

The people shout out their various orders at her.

Though she's but a small girl, she smiles as she receives the hopes of the people all at once.

"Everyone! I am the one who has been crowned the New Queen of the country, Melty Q. Melromark. From here on, for the country and the world, let us fight together!" (Melty) "Yeah!"

"Currently, the world is forming itself into a single lump in order to combat the menace that is the wave. The previous Queen, my predecessor, wished for this, and I am also in agreement. I hereby declare that we will succeed her will!" (Melty)

Deafening applause sound out once more.

Well, that's how the coronation went. To put it bluntly, we were done showing the girl off to the people.

"Fuuu..."

In the throne room within the castle, Melty fell back into the throne. She seems exhausted.

The Heroes and the leaders of the country. The representatives of the allied forces got together to congratulate her.

Her fatigue is understandable.

"Mel-chan is pretty~. Everyone was cheering for you." (Firo)

Firo stands next to her, praising her.

In the honest way that a friend would.

"Thank you, Firo-chan." (Melty)

"You've sure made your way up, Melty. For the princess of a small country to

become the ruler of the world's largest must be quite a promotion. You rose up quite a way." (Naofumi)

I offer some cynical words of praise to Melty.

"What's with your attitude?" (Melty)

"Nothing really. I was just thinking of the sort of deeds Your Majesty, Queen Melty, would perform as the ruler of the world's greatest power." (Naofumi)

"Good grief... why must I go through something like this..." (Melty)

Melty unpleasantly grumbles to herself.

As always, her ambition is quite weak.

When her sister wanted to be so famous.

But it's not my problem.

"It's going to get hectic from here on out. You'll have to do quite a few pain-in-the-ass jobs for the people, and the world... etc." (Naofumi) "Isn't that the same for you, Naofumi!?" (Melty)

"My term's 'til the wave's over, while you have a life sentence. What's more, unlike me, who just has to do well in battle, you have to do the work behind the scenes. Man, Heroes sure have it easy." (Naofumi) "Mu... I'll have you eat those words. Just watch me!" (Melty)

With a stiff expression, Melty stands, raises both hands above her head, and declares.

"For his efforts in the previous war, I hereby grant the Hero of the Shield, Iwatani Naofumi, the title of Archduke!" (Melty)

Wha-

"You bastard!" (Naofumi)

"Ahahahahaha! You won't get away with trying to push all the troublesome

stuff onto me!” (Melty) “I don’t want it even if it kills me! Hurry up and retract it!” (Naofumi) “As if I would! This is an imperial command! Oh, I’ll add on some more.” (Melty)

Oh god!

The allied forces representatives begin clapping their hands.

Why is it? She’s acting so lax, and taking on a childish attitude, but no one tries to caution her!

“Then shall I award some of the Faublian Land we gained during this war to Iwatani-dono? Currently, with the monster problems, they’re facing a bit of trouble, but you should be able to levy a tax of some sort.” (Trash)

From the Shadows, Trash appears with a map, and Melty fills in the areas to be given to me.

Status is status, but this is quite a bit of land.

If I did end up staying in this world, I think I would be able to play around for the next 100 years with this much.

“Don’t proceed the conversation without me!” (Naofumi)

“But Iwatani-dono, it is a fact that your efforts led us to victory in the war. If I do not award you with some form of reward, my country’s honor will be affected.” (Trash) “Trash! That goes for you as well!” (Naofumi)

In fact, the biggest contributor should be him.

Without holding any heroic title, he commanded the battlefield.

“I merely acted as a representative of this country. My role hasn’t changed before, or now.” (Trash)

Trash’s standing is a fact, and he’s the next most important person next to the Queen... so I guess he’s something like a manager.

But I’m still not satisfied with this.

“There are plenty of things I have for you to do, Archduke Naofumi!” (Melty)
“Shut up! Don’t push your troubles onto me! Screw being an Archduke!”
(Naofumi) “It’s not like I want to be Queen either!” (Melty)

“Um... both of you don’t have to be that angry at getting promotions...”
(Raphtalia)

Raphtalia is holding her hand out towards us with an apologetic expression.

No idea what she’s talking about.

Originally, I only wanted land so that Raphtalia would have a place to spend her days in peace once I was gone.

So why is it that I have to deal with so many stacks of paper?

I guess it’s the same for Melty.

She was already fighting with the dreadful stacks at my place, but now that she’s Queen, the amount of work will increase without end. It’s easy to imagine.

I truly wonder why Witch wanted the position so much.

Did she plan to push all the work onto her retainers, and party?

That sounds likely.

But reality isn’t so generous.

“How did the Pig King manage the country anyways?” (Naofumi)

Not much time has passed since Tact took office, so I can’t really look to him.

I’ll bet he entrusted it to the competent women of his harem.

“Besides crucial decisions, he left it to his subordinates.” (Trash)

Trash explains.

He did live in Faubley’s Royal Palace before, so I guess he has some knowledge about it.

“But a capable king who truly cares about the country and its people should take the initiative in tackling the country’s problems. Like my wife did...” (Trash)
Trash stares out into the distance, and Melty goes quiet.

Well, I’ll bet she spent a long time watching her mother.

“Is it hard, Mel-chan?” (Firo)

The future Queen of Filo Rials seems to be completely at ease...

“Yeah, a bit. Firo, you have to make sure to support Melty properly.” (Naofumi)

“Sure! Firo will cheer for her.” (Firo)

“Firo-chan, thank you...” (Melty)

Having lost her mother, and having the direct cause of her mother’s death, her sister, be executed.

She’s behaving all prim and proper, but Melty’s going through a lot.

Trash has become decent, and he’s supporting her, but I’ll bet she’ll feel a bit lighter with Firo by her side.

“However, for you to award Iwatani-dono with the title of Archduke... as expected of Melty. I’m proud of you.” (Trash) “Eh? Ah!” (Melty)

Melty’s making an ‘Oh Crap!’ face as she looks at me.

I believe that Archduke is the highest rank among nobles.

Well, I’m not too sure about its level within this world.

“I’m not sure if Iwatani-dono understands or not, so let me explain. In this country, an Archduke is the one whose importance is only second to the Queen. A rank denoting one’s position as the future king.” (Trash)

Um... but Melromark is Matriarchal, right?

Trash was a representative when he acted as King.

“Yes, in the past, I held the title of Archduke as I acted as representative ruler.”
(Trash) “What?” (Naofumi)

“You still do not understand? To summarize, our majesty, Queen Melty has just acknowledged Iwatani-dono to be her fiancé.” (Trash) “Ge!” (Naofumi)

Melty is covering her face, and grumbling.

Her face is screaming, ‘ah, right. I forgot.’

“Due to your position as the Hero of the Shield, we’ll need permission from Silt Welt now that we’ve formed an alliance, but... there shouldn’t be any problems, right?” (Trash)

On Trash’s proposal, the Silt Welt representatives nod.

“There is no problem. As long as your side agrees to let a few of ours get married to him as well.”

Chance!

If I put Melromark at a disadvantageous situation politically, we can pretend this never happened.

“I refuse!” (Naofumi)

“Is what I thought he would say, so could you, by chance adopt the Demi-Humans from his village, or their children (when they come around) into your royal families? We’ll permit that.” (Trash) “I refuse!” (Naofumi)

“Let’s do that after we overcome the wave. I’ll leave it down to the Hero of the Shield’s generosity when the time comes.”

Uu... this is like when I was teasing Raphtalia with Sadina.

Thinking about the future, if I want to keep the village alive for as long as possible... something like that.

I have no plans of refusing at this point.

Thinking about what's to come, the villagers, and my... when I think about it, my face turns red.

"This conversation is-" (Melty)

Just when Melty was about to bring an end to it...

"But there is an individual I would like to recommend if the marriage of Iwatani-dono and Queen Melty falls through." (Trash)

Trash starts staring at Fohl.

Why is it Fohl?

"Eh!?" (Fohl)

A chill runs down Fohl's back, and he throws his head backwards.

So he doesn't want to. Well, I guess that's obvious.

Seeing the scene, the Genmu Gramps nodded.

"Yes, if it's the Hakuko's lost memento, the Hero of the Gauntlet, I'll bet there will be a few takers, and it will help bridge the gap between our countries."

(Genmu) "Wait, wait, wait. Wasn't it that the Hakuko had lost their power in your country?" (Naofumi) "Taking into account the Hero of the Gauntlet's

deeds, I don't believe it to be a bad move. Even though he contains mixed blood, it's not that his lineage is bad, or anything... also, his position of following the Hero of the Shield no matter what will gain him some acceptance."

(Genmu) "Aniki!" (Fohl)

Fohl's eyes are asking me for help.

Don't look at me with those eyes. What sort of commercial is this?^[22]

Fohl is starting to look like a kitten on the verge of tears.

"Naofumi!" (Melty)

Eh... if I refuse the marriage, then it looks like those two will be forcefully paired together.

But Melty will probably just keep it up in image alone, and their relationship won't be that good.

I'm not sure if Trash wants to treasure the keepsake of his little sister, but he seems to be going out of his way for Fohl.

"Then Fohl-dono, since you worked alongside Iwatani-dono, I'll have to award you with a title as well. In the unlikely case that something happens to me, I have to give you a position high enough that you will be able to pull this country together-" (Trash) "Aniki! I'm seriously begging you! Please!" (Fohl)

"Naofumi!" (Melty)

Ah, I guess there's no choice.

"I get it, so calm down, okay? There's Queen Melty's age to consider, and her body can't deliver children yet, correct?" (Naofumi) "Wha-" (Melty)

Melty's really glaring at me now.

There's no helping it, right? If I don't put it like this, they're going to find some excuse to get us hitched.

"Please do not worry about that. Melty has already developed a body capable

of the feat.” (Trash) “Why would father know!?” (Melty)

“There was plenty written about Melty in my late wife’s memos...” (Trash)
Oy, he’s trying to end this on a melancholic note.

And wait, that Queen knew about Witch’s virginity, and she knows about Melty as well?

Just how much surveillance does she have?

No, before that, why is she leaving things like that to future generations?

With one wrong step, she could embarrass them for ages to come.

“N-no, thinking about Melty’s body, I would like to put it off for a while. By my standards, she’s still too wet behind the ears. She’s just a child.” (Naofumi)
I’ll leave it vague, and pretend it never happened after I return to my world.

“What did you say!? I’m already plenty an adult already!” (Melty) “Idiot! Be quiet!” (Naofumi)

It was then that I remembered the standards through which people were recognized as adults around here.

As long as the parents recognized them as such, they were treated as adults.

A smile full of good intention floats on Trash’s face.

“Then there are no problems. As she has expressed her opinion, it appears that we can treat Queen Melty as a bonafide adult. And so... Iwatani-dono, I leave Melty to you. I really want to see the face of my grandchildren soon.” (Trash)
“Someone please save me!” (Melty)

When she’s the one who instigated it, why is she crying out for help?

“Mel-chan, do you want to run?” (Firo)

Melty's scream reached everyone but the oblivious bird beside her.

Love Consultation

After Melty's coronation finished, we return to the village.

Stuff's been happening, and we've been busy lately.

It's the familiar village that puts my mind most at ease.

Hmm?

Ren's with Female Knight.

Come to mention it, he follows her around a lot.

As Melty's personal guard, it was decided that she would be promoted and stationed in the castle from here on out.

But to protect the country from the monsters that had been overly active due to the Wave, she went out with Ren to level.

"How are things going on your side?" (Naofumi)

"I guess it's going smoothly. It would be helpful if our levels rose faster, though." (Ren) "I see... what about you, Female Knight?" (Naofumi) "Iwatani-dono, can't you learn my name already!?" (Female Knight) "Um, was it Eclair?" (Naofumi)

"Is she supposed to be some sort of dessert?" (Ren)

Ren's retort was quite sharp.

Though I'm not sure if she knows about the dessert, Raphtalia often cautions me to call her Eclair-san. ^[23]

I know. It was intentional.

“Even though you said you would pound a lot of training into Ren, it looks like you’re the one being taught now. I thank you for the work you did up to your Class Up.” (Naofumi) “Why are you acting so self-important, Iwatani-dono!?” (Female Knight) “Because I am. I don’t really like getting status, but for some reason, I’m now an Archduke. I truly am important.” (Naofumi) “You got promoted again? Despite that, you don’t look too happy.” (Ren) “Yeah, it was against my will. And thinking about what happens after the world’s at peace, it’s best if you treat me befitting of my title.” (Naofumi) “Mu... you’re right.” (Female Knight)

She’s started to imitate me. She’s really straying from her path, this one.

What was she doing before this?

I think... she was in Trash’s encampment during the war, repelling Faublian invaders.

“And? Did you learn how to manage land yet?” (Naofumi) “Looking at Iwatani-dono and the Queen, as well as the King, I’m starting to see it.” (Female Knight) “Hmm...” (Naofumi)

In the end, Female Knight aims to be a lord of some sorts.

I guess you can call Melty and Trash her ideal.

“Eclair-san...” (Raphtalia)

“I’ll bet that if we lost that battle, we all would have been labelled as Evil. Justice is... I must learn its true form.” (Female Knight) “Isn’t it Justice as long as you win?” (Naofumi) “You can say that. But is there justice in a land ruled by a strong lord? A country is made of its people. It is not based around its king... is what I want to believe.” (Female Knight) “Eclair is always looking ahead. I’d like to learn to do that too.” (Ren)

Ren looks to Female Knight in praise.

In the end, he does look up to her, and he tries to look after Taniko.

That hasn't changed.

Though Taniko really seems to hate it.

I signal Ren to come closer and whisper in his ear.

"Did you confess yet?" (Naofumi)

"Wha... it's not like that!" (Ren)

"Ah, so you prefer little girls?" (Naofumi)

"T-that is..." (Ren)

Ren seems to want to say something, but he holds it in.

Was he trying to say I'm the one into them? Unfortunately, he's wrong.

No, is he?

Just a little earlier, I got engaged to Melty, so if I play this poorly, I'll be labelled a Lolicon.

And the ones who surround me, despite having larger physiques, are mostly young in age.

Raphtalia, Atlas, Firo, Kiel, and the others.

Thinking about it like that makes me feel a bit strange...

"Right... Naofumi is... never mind." (Ren)

"You seem to want to say something. Spit it out." (Naofumi) "No... um..." (Ren)

Ren looks towards Fohl, who's lecturing the slaves training their skills.

Why is it Fohl again?

"What sort of misunderstanding are you getting?" (Naofumi) "Eh? I mean, don't

you swing-" (Ren)

"I get it so just shut up!" (Naofumi)

What sort of misunderstanding is this?

While it's true that I sleep with Fohl on occasion, there are a few things wrong with his assumption.

Well, it's a bit rough, but the feel of Fohl's fur isn't bad.

"Love is free, right? Recently I learned that." (Naofumi)

It isn't just about Atlas's will. So that I don't have any regrets, I decided it was necessary for me to learn to love.

To regret because I wasn't able to do anything is too much to bear.

"Ren." (Naofumi)

"What?" (Ren)

"After we restore peace to the world, what do you want to do?" (Naofumi) "... Let's see." (Ren)

Ren signals for me to infer his meaning as he shifts his gaze to the village.

The Holy Weapon will probably ask him whether he wants to return to his old world, or remain in this one.

I plan to return, but it's not a bad option if Ren and the others choose to stay.

"Will you remain here?" (Naofumi)

"I don't know. What do you think I should do, Eclair?" (Ren) "Me? I don't know why you're asking me, but you have a place you have to return to, right?" (Female Knight) "Yeah... I have my own world. Since this world was my ideal, I kinda forgot about it when I came here." (Ren) "What you do is your choice, so I can't say anything by principle. But if you have lingering feelings for that place,

then it's better that you return. If you save the world, I won't be able to declare whether you've atoned for your sins or not, but working for others is-" (Female Knight) "Working for others is my path to atonement, right? I know." (Ren)
They've been together for quite a bit, these two. Can they sense what the other is implying?

"Female Knight." (Naofumi)

"And remember my name already!" (Female Knight) "What do you think of Ren? No, if I ask like this, I have the feeling you'll just say, 'A trusted comrade!' or something, so let me get to the point. What do you think about him as a member of the opposite sex?" (Naofumi)

I ask her with the slight intention of teasing her.

"I told you before, did I not? As a member of the opposite sex, I can say that he is not my type. Ren also dislikes matters like that, correct?" (Female Knight) "...R-right..." (Ren)

Ah, a critical hit to Ren's heart.

I guess Ren has a long path ahead of him.

"Well, I'll say it once, Ren." (Naofumi)

"...What is it?" (Ren)

"Naofumi-sama, please restrain yourself." (Raphtalia)

I ignore Raphtalia's warning and proceed.

"How about making do with Taniko?" (Naofumi)

"GYAU!?"

My words elicit quite a glare from Gaelion.

Ah, so he really does hate it.

As if I would hand my daughter over to you! Something like that.

“Wyndia is... just someone I’d like to take responsibility for...” (Ren)
So their relationship hasn’t improved.

Looks like he has it rough.

“Naofumi-cha~n. I’ll be waiting for you in your room~.” (Sadina)
From afar, I see Sadina waving her hand, inviting me.

Why the hell is that the first thing she says? Read the mood!

“So this is the gap between me and Naofumi...” (Ren) “Hey... it’s just that the people you’re with are no good. Don’t you have plenty of people close to you as well?” (Naofumi)

Female Knight and Taniko... neither of them have any interest in love, so I don’t think Ren’s at fault.

“What are you doing, Niichan?” (Kiel)

A wild Kiel appears.

Through everything happening, she’s become quite strong.

But she has yet to pick up Hengen Musou. I think she’ll manage somehow as Kielberos, though.

She’s been placed in Itsuki’s group with Fohl.

“Kiel, what about you? How is your party faring?” (Naofumi)

I was dragged along with Sadina to level, and Kiel was in a different group.

But she seems to like swimming, so she arbitrarily followed us anyways.

It seems her parents were fishermen, so did she pick it up at home?

“I’ve gotten strong! I want to go with Niichan, but I’m having fun here too!”
(Kiel)

Kielberos has a lot of weaknesses, but the form is strong.

Even so, for her to find battle fun, she’s becoming like Firo.

“So what were you talking about?” (Kiel)

It was about love, right?

No, about the people from the village close to Ren.

“It was about whether there were any people interested in Ren in the village.”
(Naofumi) “Naofumi, please don’t try to force the information out. I don’t think my heart can take it.” (Ren)

It’s my duty to harass people!

Is what I want to do, but I think the current Ren will be fine.

“First there’s Imya’s Uncle, right? And there’s Wyndia and Eclair-san. Also...”
(Kiel)

Kiel fluidly starts listing the people in the village interested in Ren.

“So there are quite a lot. Did you think you were hated? I don’t think you have to worry about it.” (Naofumi) “T-thanks...” (Ren)

Well, Imya’s Uncle is teaching him smithing, and they often work together. Though, they’re of the same gender.

But Kiel... doesn’t seem to be in love with anyone. She’s fallen for the crepe tree.

And Ren’s affections lie with the people who defeated him: Female Knight and Taniko.

“Are you worried about people’s opinions of you?” (Kiel) “... It’s not like that. During battle, things like that may become important.” (Ren) “I see, the mental aspect of battle is also crucial. It’s when the people you want to protect are by your side, that you can manifest your true power. At least, that’s what I’ve heard.” (Female Knight)

It seems Female Knight’s finally caught onto the topic of our discussion.

Is it my job to give them a push here?

“Female Knight, what would you do if someone were to tell you they loved you?” (Naofumi) “I think I would honestly be happy at their sentiments. But, unfortunately, I have no free time to indulge in love. I’ll have to politely decline them.” (Female Knight) “Even if it’s Ren?” (Naofumi)

“Yes.” (Female Knight)

Ah... Ren seems really depressed.

He’s quietly admitting defeat even before the battle.

While he says quite a bit, in the end, I think he still likes her.

But I don’t think it’s over here.

It would be terrible if his broken heart affected his morale in battle.

“Ren.” (Naofumi)

“... What?” (Ren)

“People like her are probably just uninterested when it comes to love itself. When it actually comes down to it, her heart may waver. If you have luck on your side, then perhaps she’ll begin to develop an interest in the opposite sex when you confess, so it’s too early to give up.” (Naofumi) “U-understood.” (Ren)

“However, read the mood. If you confess now, I highly doubt she’ll accept. After you’ve grown stronger, and shown her your strength, I think the time will be right. Let’s see... Right after we save the world, it may be good to try making

use of the feel of exhilaration.” (Naofumi) “Y... yeah!” (Ren)

On my words, Ren energetically nods. He’s surprisingly simple.

Well, I only have knowledge about this sort of thing from Galge, so my words may not be the best to follow.

This would normally be the time for Motoyasu to shine, but with him as he is right now...

By the way, I made sure to include ‘maybe’, and ‘I think’ so I have no responsibility if he meets failure.

“Then I will go with Ren to take up my post at the Castle. Iwatani-dono, I’ll definitely repay you for all the things you’ve taught me. Now then.” (Female Knight)

And Female Knight uses Ren’s portal to teleport to the castle.

The Graveyard of Life

“Kiel.” (Naofumi)

After I confirm Ren and Female Knight had left, I call out to Kiel.

“What is it, Niichan?” (Kiel)

“Do you have anyone you like?” (Naofumi)

“Naofumi-sama, you plan on continuing that topic?” (Raphtalia) “Let’s see. I guess I like Imya-chan.” (Kiel)

“Imya?” (Naofumi)

She’s of the same gender. I guess it’s hard for Imya as well. She’ll have to go through the same troubles as Melty.

Kiel was there to witness our lecture to Firo, so she should know.

And wait, I think Kiel’s ‘like’ is as a friend.

“Did you call for me?”

Imya, who was chatting with others in the dining hall, came at the sound of Kiel’s voice.

...Should I ask?

If I don’t confirm it here and now, there will be a bit of trouble in the future.

If I try to instigate them so to leave behind any regret, there’s a risk that I’ll damage their relationship.

Yes, I'll proceed with care.

"Naofumi-sama, you seem to be planning something again." (Raphtalia) "Just think of it as me awakening to my responsibility as the Lord here." (Naofumi) "Is it really that grand of a problem?" (Raphtalia)

No, I'm probably wrong.

But still, I won't stop.

I need to take responsibility for my villagers.

I have to think of what happens when I leave... and there's also the matter left hanging at the castle.

"Kiel likes Imya despite being of the same gender. Well, Kiel is aiming to be an honorable man of the sea, so perhaps she'll make for a good husband."
(Naofumi) "Eh!?" (Imya)

"W-wrong! I didn't think you meant it that way when you asked, Niichan!"
(Kiel) "What did you think I meant?" (Naofumi)

"Since it was you, I thought you were asking about who I got along best with in the village! By not regret, I thought you meant not to get into fights with them." (Kiel)

Ah, as I thought.

But, she should learn to follow the flow of the conversation.

"Then among the boys, who do you like? No, who do you like based on whatever sexual preferences you have?" (Naofumi)

Even now, subjects like these make me feel a little sick, but I have to consider the future.

Or else...

Ah, I am aware that I'm dragging out my own problems.

Even so, I don't plan on torturing myself by waiting until the end.

“W-what are you asking all of a sudden?” (Imya)

“Well, just in case. The world’s on the brink of ruin, so I have to warn you all to live without regrets.” (Naofumi) “Niichan’s changed.” (Kiel)

“Right...” (Naofumi)

I think so too.

I did ban love not too long ago, and I rejected Atlas’s advances.

It’s all Witch’s fault. And mine.

“That’s right... Niichan gets along well with Raphtalia...” (Kiel)

Raphtalia responds to Kiel’s suspicious glance with a questionable expression.

“Well, I like Niichan most, but I guess next is Fohl-niichan.” (Kiel) “Fohl?” (Naofumi)

“Yeah! I mean Fohl-niichan is cool, right?” (Kiel)

Thinking back, Kiel did call Fohl’s beast form cool.

Fumu, perhaps Kiel’s energetic attitude can fill the gap left in Fohl’s heart after losing Atlas.

“Naofumi-sama, isn’t it time to bring an end to this topic? I have a bit of a bad feeling about where this is headed.” (Raphtalia) “Okay Kiel! I’ll permit it. Go sleep together with Fohl! He’s a lonely man. Go heal his loneliness!” (Naofumi) “Understood, Niichan!” (Kiel)

Kiel runs up to Fohl in dog form.

Her innocence is really something. She has a charm similar to Firo’s.

“Ah... it seems we’ve made yet another needless misunderstanding.”

(Raphtalia) “I’d like Fohl to regain his spirit.” (Naofumi)

That’s my wish.

As I couldn’t protect Atlas, at the very least, I have a duty to make Fohl happy.

He’s made protecting the village his mission, but he’s focusing too much on it and forgetting his own happiness in the process. I’m not sure if he’d be able to face Atlas like this.

He doesn’t seem worried about his possible engagement, but as it’s with Melty, I guess there’s no helping it.

“Regardless of what comes of this, I won’t hold any responsibility.” (Raphtalia)

“I’ll be the one taking responsibility.” (Naofumi)

I’d like for Fohl to find a special someone in this village he wants to protect, like he did with Atlas.

“Next is Imya.” (Naofumi)

I’ll have to confirm it with all the villagers anyways.

She’s not like Sadina, but eventually... she’ll like someone, right?

“W-what is it?” (Imya)

“Do you have anyone you like, Imya?” (Naofumi)

“Um... that is...” (Imya)

Her face is dyed red as she holds both arms together, and looks at the ground.

Eh? Could it possibly be me?

She arrived in the village in the same manner as Raphtalia, so perhaps it isn’t

too strange.

What's more, we do sleep in the same bed in regular intervals.

Like with Firo, I kept her around because she was fluffy, but she seemed strangely conscious of it.

"Well... that is... um..." (Imya)

"Hero of the Shield-sama, what seems to be the problem?"

It seems people are coming up to me one after the other today.

When I look up, I see Imya's Uncle.

"Well, I asked Imya if she liked anyone, and Imya, by your reaction, am I supposed to take that as affirmation? It seems that I cannot give myself to a single person, and in the end I plan on returning to my world, but even so, does your answer remain the same?" (Naofumi) "Um... yes." (Imya)

Even with her face colored a deep shade of red, Imya nods.

And having sensed the situation, Imya's Uncle claps his hands in good humor.

"I see, I see! You've become a fine woman, Imya. I'm proud of you." (Imya's Uncle) "By the way, you're quite popular in the village. Do you have any intentions of marriage?" (Naofumi)

On my question, Imya's Uncle's expression stiffens. He slowly turns his head to look at me.

His eyes are screaming, 'What the hell are you talking about?'

"What? I'm just asking about your future plans." (Naofumi)

I know. I had hid and learned the village's popularity ranking. Imya's Uncle was within the higher part of the list. [\[24\]](#)

“I have absolutely no idea what you’re talking about, and I don’t know why you’re bringing marriage up!” (Imya’s Uncle) “Even so, you apparently have high popularity, man. It seems some people have become smitten by watching your smithing.” (Naofumi) “Eh!?” (Imya’s Uncle)

“Is that true?” (Imya)

Imya puts her hands together and asks.

“I’ll have to give out a few rewards to you all as well. If you ask for freedom, I’ll happily grant it to you.” (Naofumi)

He’s done enough work deserving of such a thing.

Be it weapons or armor or anything else, this guy’s the one who makes most of the things in the village.

“If you have a missing wife somewhere in the world, I could search for her.” (Naofumi) “Uncle, I don’t remember you having someone like that, right? Even though your looks are good.” (Imya) “I-I live for my work and a-as long as everyone’s happy with that-” (Imya’s Uncle)

So he isn’t aware of it? Perhaps he’s actually relatively dense.

Is he the type of person that spends so much time helping others that he passes his prime alone?

It’s that. People’s impression of him don’t go further than, ‘He’s a good person.’

“Imya, do you know anyone for him?” (Naofumi)

“No...” (Imya)

Why is it that this mole is so popular?

It’s probably for the same reason as me.

I make the food... and he makes the weapons.

The reason I wasn't on the popularity poll was probably because cooking is more of a domestic chore.

Does it have to do with his appearance? By Imya and the other Demi-Human's standards, it seems his face is on the nicer side.

Among the villagers, he's quite old.

Just like Sadina, it's like he's looked up to as a reliable adult.

And wait, just how old is he?

It seems he learned smithery with the Old Man.

By the looks of it, the Weapon Shop Old Man's in the latter half of his thirties, I guess.

This guy should be around the same, so he has a few years under his belt.

"Well, this is only a concern after the wave, so don't get too conscious of it... I guess. But still, I'm slackening the regulations on love in the village. Please pass on the message." (Naofumi) "... Understood."

Imya's Uncle nods.

"Or is it that you're... gay?" (Naofumi)

"N-no, I'm not!" (Imya's Uncle)

Is he going to say Blacksmithery is the world of men?

When he was in a village of his own race, it seems he ran a metal goods shop... and it's true that he's good at making saucepans.

I believe I've heard him say raising kids was dreadful, or something.

He must have been part of a large family. That's why, instead of his own love,

he tends to focus on the needs of others, I guess.

Through slave hunting, his clan was dispersed, and he made his way to my village, which is like a large family in itself. I guess he didn't have much free time.

"Anyways, just take it easy." (Naofumi)

"It seems that any and everything is meddled with by the Hero of the Shield." (Imya's Uncle) "Don't mind it. From now on, the amount of things I'll ask from you will only increase. Ah, after this, it doesn't matter who, but go tag along with a Hero to level. If you level, won't your work become easier?" (Naofumi) We've been able to make new equipment from the materials of the new, higher-level monsters.

As I thought, the higher the level, the better quality of the drops gained. And we have to do a complete reformation of the villager's equipment.

Right now, Imya's Uncle's level is at 40. He kept saying any more wasn't necessary and refused to level, but in the grand scheme of things, his level's in the danger zone.

What's more, his job requires power. I'll bet a higher level will be beneficial. I wonder why he put it off.

"I'll be counting on you. Keep working hard." (Naofumi)

"Y-yes! For the Hero of the Shield-sama, I will do my best." (Imya's Uncle) "Me too!" (Imya)

It helps that the Lemo Race is one of stubborn hard workers.

Recently, Imya's started making armor that doesn't lose to those from the Old Man's creations.

Is it partly because I taught her how to make and enchant accessories?

Right now, we have to prepare for war to the best of our ability.

“Now then.”

The amount of times I’ve stopped by the Old Man’s shop has decreased, and he’s been earning mostly from local orders. He also has requests from the country, so I sometimes meet him in the castle as well.

But his good nature hasn’t changed from the start.

Right now, he’s working to use the Spirit Turtle and Houou’s materials to make weapons for the Heroes.

There’s now 12 of us, so he’s been busy.

I’ll bet Kirin’s materials will reach him soon, so it’ll only get harder and harder.

Sometime soon, I’ll have to stop by to come to an agreement on the costs.

Ah, right. Through the carriage’s enhancement method, I fed monster drops into the Shield to unlock temporary money acquisition raises, but I barely managed to get the value of what I put into it.

I didn’t gain as much money as expected, and I barely broke even.

I also tried to cheat by placing a freshly minted silver coin into the Shield, but it only got registered as the material Silver.

It seems that money has to have been put into market circulation before it can be used in enhancements.

How troublesome.

“Aniki-!”

While I was lost in thought, Fohl burst into my house with Kiel under his arm.

“W-what happened?” (Naofumi)

“I heard it. You told her that I was lonely, so she had to sleep with me!” (Fohl)

“Pretty much.” (Naofumi)

“Niichan, Fohl-niichan’s gotten a lot more energetic!” (Kiel)
How’s that for ya?

And wait, why is Kiel being carried like that?

It’s quite an interesting scene.

“Ah, as I thought, it ended up like this.” (Raphtalia)

“Rafu?” (Raph-chan)

Firo’s supporting Melty at the castle, so she isn’t in the village.

I’ll have to build a room for Raph-chan soon too.

“Fohl-niichan really is cool. Please transform again!” (Kiel) “Perhaps another time.” (Fohl)

“Eh? Even when it’s so cool?” (Kiel)

“Please just be quiet for a second!” (Fohl)

Kiel sure is hyper... Seeing her obliviously tease Fohl out of good will makes for a foolish back and forth.

Could it be that these two are surprisingly fitting for one another?

“Fohl.” (Naofumi)

“What!?” (Fohl)

“You have the right to be happy. It’s because Trash thought that as well that he proposed a marriage with Melty. You just have to show him there’s someone you like to be with.” (Naofumi)

I’m stooping to fooling the man.

“Show him?” (Fohl)

“Otherwise, he’ll meddle with your life a bit. It’s probably for that reason that he’s going out of his way for both of us...” (Naofumi)

Fohl’s face goes pale.

Is he no good at dealing with Trash?

Yeah, well they’re likeminded people, so they repel one another. Or perhaps when someone approaches him so affectionately, he finds it scary.

It’s like your aunt bringing a photo of a girl she wants to introduce to you. That sort of fear.

And wait, it may be my fault, but the male slaves in my village seem to be under the impression that marriage is the graveyard of life.

... Ah, maybe it’s because I spoke of my experience with Witch with much zeal.

Be careful of women. You can’t much confidence in those close to you, lest the life you know comes to an end.

Even if they’re nobles, if they marry, they become slaves to their wives... I taught them quite a bit.

Since this is another world, I guessed that it was centered on men.

Is what I thought, but Melromark is matriarchal.

But I do feel that there are a lot more males among the nobles. In my village, we rarely come across those of such high status.

I think the most exposure we’ve had was some idle banter with them while peddling... but I made sure to teach them that other people are existences to make use of.

... Isn’t this kinda bad?

Yeah. I’ll need to provide some re-education.

Well, I’ll just leave it to Kiel, Raphtalia, and Sadina.

“What’s wrong, my good Niichans?” (Kiel)

“Wah!” (Fohl)

Fohl accidentally drops the dog he was carrying.

He doesn’t have to be that scared.

“A-Atlas isn’t like that. She can’t be like this! She wasn’t like this! The Atlas I knew used whatever she could and never wasted anything!” (Fohl) “... No, she kinda did.” (Naofumi)

"Onii-sama, please don't get so close to me," she would often say.

Even though we both bought her medicine, she fawned over me so much, while she gave Fohl harsh treatment.

Ah, did he subconsciously look over that side of her and develop a fear of women as a result?

“Fohl.” (Naofumi)

“What!?” (Fohl)

“I pray that you’ll start a happy family.” (Naofumi)

“Naofumi-sama, please decide whether you’re supporting him or striking fear into his heart.” (Raphtalia)

And like always, Raphtalia offers a retort.

Idealism

It made me slightly relieved that Fohl was acting so energetic.

So I left Raphtalia in the house and decided to take a quick night walk around the village. I step outside.

And there, I find Itsuki sitting in front of the Bioplant House looking up at the night sky.

“What are you doing, so late at night?” (Naofumi)

I ask the lone man.

Is Rishia asleep?

She should be the one looking over him... but from his actions up until now, I guess we can trust Itsuki just a little bit more.

“Ah, is that you, Naofumi-san?” (Itsuki)

Itsuki shifts his gaze from the stars to me as he answers.

He’s a bit... well, the recent Itsuki’s been so quiet it seems a bit eerie.

It may sound nice if you call him obedient, but I can’t tell what he’s thinking behind that façade.

“I just thought the moon was pretty, so I wanted to watch it.” (Itsuki) “I see.” (Naofumi)

Even in another world, there’s a moon.

Well, this is a world with werewolves, and with Fohl and Kiel, there are Demi-Humans that can transform as well.

... Why only the wolf race is translated as 'Werewolves' by the Shield is a mystery to me.^[25]

When I was shown one by the slave dealer, at least, that's how its name showed up.

Is it that once it's heard like that, the Shield will always translate it as such?

Thinking back to the status displayed back then, I'll bet it was my fault.

It's probable that when the Slave Dealer introduced me, he used a tool to display information in a way that could be read by anyone. It used my understanding from my own world.

But it only used it for a certain set of words

"..."

"..."

Silence surrounds me and Itsuki.

Should I leave?

When I think that, Itsuki breaks the silence of his own accord. He begins speaking.

"Naofumi-san, you know about it, right?" (Itsuki)

"About what?" (Naofumi)

"My... curse has mostly been lifted already." (Itsuki)

"... Yeah." (Naofumi)

I'm no fool.

There's no way I wouldn't suspect Itsuki, who continued to stand beside Rishia without asserting his presence.

"So you knew..." (Itsuki)

"Of course." (Naofumi)

What's more, he's even stopped being a Yes Man as of late.

Though I don't think that's so bad in itself.

Even so, for him to answer my questions honestly despite that, I wonder what sort of change has happened within him.

"A little while ago, when you were talking about the wave, and the reincarnated, do you remember?" (Itsuki) "Yeah." (Naofumi)

"I... couldn't think of an answer. And what I did remember was an NPC from a game who said similar things..." (Itsuki)

Come to think about it, Itsuki said something like that.

I think it's a cheat system the developer intentionally put into the game, or something like that.

"If you ask why I remain here even though my curse has been broken..." (Itsuki)
He suddenly changes the topic.

I don't think he's fully recovered yet.

"... I was wrong. Naofumi-san was right... it's just that I never had the courage to say it, is what I thought." (Itsuki) "And now you think differently?" (Naofumi)

I did consider that possibility.

Itsuki's party instigated a rebellion against the state, and they were all executed.

They even conspired with Witch. He should have heard from Rishia about how he used an ability to brainwash others.

Because of his curse, he was forced to listen to and accept what others told him.

“Right now, because I’m like this... I can... muster my courage.” (Itsuki) “Ah, I see.” (Naofumi)

“But, please... you definitely cannot trust me.” (Itsuki)

“I never trusted you from the start. That’s why you’re under Rishia’s protection.” (Naofumi)

And there’s also that promise with Rishia.

“Then you don’t have to believe it, but please listen to what I have to say.” (Itsuki) “Got it. And? What is it you want to talk about?” (Naofumi)

“First... about the progression of my curse.” (Itsuki)

“It isn’t cured?” (Naofumi)

“I cannot say. While I think it has been lifted, I can find plenty of places where it’s still in effect.” (Itsuki)

Well, his curse is something like the loss of individuality.

If something’s off, those surrounding him can’t tell, but I guess the individual himself can notice.

“My judgement and my will, I’ve lost various things to this curse. But... it seems that my memory was included as well.” (Itsuki) “What?” (Naofumi)

“I still... cannot remember the faces of my family in the other world, and there are parts of the game, and novels I’ve read online, that I cannot recall at all.” (Itsuki) “You never said anything about that.” (Naofumi)

“It’s not like I didn’t want to... I didn’t notice. I was able to recall a brief outline of things when I didn’t have my sense of judgement, though.” (Itsuki)

“...”

“When Naofumi-san spoke of the novels of your world, I merely thought, ‘so there are stories like that too,’ but when I used Cal Mira’s Onsen today... I remembered my world had them too.” (Itsuki) “I... see.” (Naofumi)

He has partial amnesia, and he lacks the ability to feel anything was off?

“But why?” (Naofumi)

It’s strange for him not to have noticed until now.

“Isn’t forgetting your parents something serious?” (Naofumi)

“It’s not that I can’t remember. I can look back and see what sort of people they were, and what sort of things they did, but it’s like I have slight lapses in memory in some places. I just can’t remember them no matter what.” (Itsuki)

“But isn’t that just natural? What’s the problem?” (Naofumi)

“It appears in my gaming knowledge as well. I talked about the game Dimension Wave from my world, correct?” (Itsuki) “Yeah.” (Naofumi)

“Isn’t it strange? If there was a sequel or continuation on the market, then shouldn’t I have at least researched the information on it or something?” (Itsuki)

Well... he’s right.

No matter how hooked he was on it, if he knew there was a sequel to his favorite game, he would at least look up an overview of the story.

But Itsuki didn’t do any searching. He didn’t read anything.

No, he didn’t speak about anything?

“Of course, the information about what the wave was... probably wasn’t in the game. But, what sort of waves there were, or what sort of new battle systems were in place would definitely be out there.” (Itsuki) “T-that’s right.” (Naofumi)

“Well, I remember visiting the country that Silt Welt currently occupies and

the areas I didn't get to visit. But that isn't all." (Itsuki) "What?" (Naofumi)

He's going around the main topic. I don't get what he's trying to accomplish.

It's just that I understand this will transition into something important.

"The Sequel's wave... After defeating Ouryuu, Dimension Wave had the expansion... Let's Go to the New World linked by the Wave! A system like that. I remember... I was waiting for it to come." (Itsuki) "That means..." (Naofumi)

"Yes... it was already too late to save that world." (Itsuki)

Every wave, Glass slowly leads her people here.

So what happens to the people here?

I'll have to ask later.

"No matter how you look at it, that's way too late." (Naofumi)

"... I know. But... as if intentionally, the information about the wave was... deleted. Is this also the enemy's meddling?" (Itsuki) "No clue." (Naofumi)

The Cursed Weapon Itsuki got his hands on was one a Hero of the Past took in hand to try to conquer the world, it seems.

If that hero got the weapon from whatever god's up there, and Itsuki received its influence, then there's a possibility that whoever's running this took away any memories that would prove disadvantageous.

"And so, I am... perhaps I'm being used by the enemy. I can't even tell whether or not the curse has been completely lifted or not." (Itsuki)

Ah... so he was always thinking about something like that.

"So if I ever do something that would hurt you and the others... please strike me down without hesitation." (Itsuki) "I can't do it, so can I leave that to others?"

(Naofumi)

“Yes. I know this is something I should be confiding with Rishia-san... but I don’t think that girl will be able to do something so heartless.” (Itsuki)

“Understood. I’ll make a promise with you.” (Naofumi)

With Ren and Itsuki, if this was a story, then they’d be raising so many death flags right now.

While I was thinking that, Itsuki turns back to the village.

“This is a good village. It’s a place I envy, a place Naofumi-san built from scratch.” (Itsuki) “Well, it isn’t a bad place to live.” (Naofumi)

It’s next to the sea, and Bioplant fruits are plentiful. You won’t have problems with food supply.

The Crepe Tree is... questionable, but it’s a nice place to live.

“I can understand now. Naofumi-san isn’t evil... if you just arbitrarily gather the worst information, even the greatest of saints can become but another villain.” (Itsuki) “No, I am a villain.” (Naofumi)

... I look towards the village to condemn myself

It’s a place I built. A place the villagers will happily lay down their lives for. A place where I trained everyone to happily march off to war.

I learned that in business, you can make the most profit when you make the other side happy to buy your merchandise.

But I can’t think the one who made a place where people happily sacrifice themselves to war can be a good person.

“I never taught the people here the futility and tragedy brought by battle.” (Naofumi) “But... you’re always protecting them so they don’t have to

experience it.” (Itsuki) “... I couldn’t protect them.” (Naofumi)

I couldn’t protect my own villagers.

Starting with Atlas, we had plenty of victims in the Houou battle.

In the war with Faubley, the amount of casualties on our side was unbelievably low, but that doesn’t mean there were none.

“The past me would have chastised you for your lack of responsibility... but now, I can understand. Rather than a village without the means to fight, one that exists only to be protected by the Hero of the Shield, one filled with people who want to fight together with Naofumi-san and lend their power to him, shines much brighter.” (Itsuki) “That’s just lip service.” (Naofumi)

“Yes, it sure is. That’s why Rishia-san, and Ren-san, and Naofumi-san are working so desperately. That’s what I understand.” (Itsuki) “So I can continue working the villagers like slaves?” (Naofumi)

I keep saying I’m not working hard, but two people have given me this speech already.

Now and before, I’ve never felt this conflicted before in my life.

“Us Heroes are... we can’t just work for our own self-satisfaction. Because Naofumi-san had many things we were lacking in, he was able to solve the problems we caused. In truth... like Naofumi-san, we wanted to make the people truly happy, without rotting them.” (Itsuki) “Rot?” (Naofumi)

“Let’s liken this to a person who knows danger is approaching. If they are merely protected, they will eventually think it natural to get protected, and eventually, they’ll even... forget their thanks.” (Itsuki)

... It’s not something I don’t understand.

That’s what the world of normality lives on.

It’s only when the unsung heroes disappear that we notice.

In this case, it’s again, much too late.

“That’s why, even if Naofumi-san returns to his own world, the village he made will definitely live on. He was just making a place like that.” (Itsuki) “It was just my way of thanking a slave, Raphtalia.” (Naofumi)

“Even so. Everyone is being protected, but by protecting them, you show them the difficulty of protecting, and the meaning of strength. And that’s exactly why this village is a good place.” (Itsuki) “... Power’s all about how you use it.” (Naofumi)

Even if I make them strong, there’s no meaning if they use it for robbery or revenge.

This village can’t be devoid of people with feelings like that.

Grief is followed by Hatred, and Hatred is followed by Strife... and what if someone gained strength to fulfill these means?

The answer is simple.

They become like me.

This might be plain self-satisfaction, but that’s a fate I’ll never wish upon those guys.

“That is... looking at Ren-san and Wyndia-san, everyone’s learning how to deal with it as well.” (Itsuki)

Ren and Taniko?

I think all the villagers know about it.

About how she gets along with the one who killed her father.

And it seems Taniko’s resolved herself not to act in revenge.

“Also... everyone’s learned that the world isn’t filled with bad people. Peddling was your way of getting them to deepen their understanding of people, right?” (Itsuki)

No, I just wanted money.

Is what I think, but I see.

The people grew to understand Demi-Humans, despite being hated by the country, through their peddling under the popular Hero of the Shield's banner.

For the villagers who had their parents killed by humans, and who were oppressed as slaves, they were able to learn, through peddling, that the human race had good people as well.

But, I don't get what's to celebrate.

Misunderstanding paving the way to war is a common story.

Well, Demi-human countries often go to war, so they should have some oppressed slaves themselves.

I guess it's a good thing for that system to gradually become obsolete.

Right now, Melromark and Silt Welt have an alliance.

Looking at the wars they waged in the past, I guess it's a wondrous outcome.

"If it were me... I'd definitely label the ones who mistreated Demi-humans to be an evil to defeat. I even delivered punishment onto humans back then." (Itsuki)

"There are true villains out there too. Don't look to me as an ironclad law."

(Naofumi) "Things can't be decided by the ideals of a single person... I knew.

Perhaps I would have turned out like that reincarnated. I think I need to talk more with those I see as evil. Or else history will merely repeat itself." (Itsuki)

"Then... what would you do if the one calling himself god has his own reasons?"

(Naofumi) "... If he has something grand enough to require the deaths of so many people, then I'd definitely like to hear it. In order to read it out at his funeral." (Itsuki)

The reason for destroying the world...

I don't think it can be anything good.

“You mean of how, to save the world from the wave, we have to sacrifice two thirds of the population? For him, there may be a certain reason he has to do such a thing.” (Naofumi) “Each and every world has its limit, and worlds that are no longer necessary must be destroyed. If it was something like that I could understand, but I do not think it offers any respite to those that died as a result. I want him to find a better way, no, it’s his duty to find one. Or else we will go against him.” (Itsuki)

Fumu... it’s idealism, but it doesn’t sound bad.

Of course, in the end, we may have to bring about some victims ourselves.

And it’s us who have to make that choice.

But in the very end, we’re going to oppose him.

“Rishia-san said it. It takes a good amount of courage to say someone else is wrong, but pushing justice onto another is something else entirely. Probably.” (Itsuki) “Sure sounds like her.” (Naofumi)

For Rishia to be able to say such things to Itsuki makes it sound like her pitiful start was but a lie.

The “probably” at the end really fits, though.

But, I can’t think of her as the one who screamed “FUEEEEE” whilst trying to drown herself.

Hmm? Did she shout something like that when she jumped? I can’t remember.

But even now, Rishia continues to “FUEEEEEEEE” loudly as her ideals develop further.

“In order to fulfill one’s own desire, to take from people you hate is evil. But how about taking from those you hate to protect the weak? If not to satisfy his own lust, but to save someone, a man took the wealth a nobleman had earned himself, would that be right?” (Itsuki) “It’s a hard problem.” (Naofumi)

What sort of person is the noble he loathes? Why must he steal in order to gain the ability to protect the weak?

Additional factors pop up.

In the end, it's best to uphold the established rules.

But rules themselves are created by humans, and they need to adapt to the times.

"And so, I am... without going forward on a single ideal, I think I need to talk with the person I am to oppose and come to a conclusion afterwards. Up until now, I was merely ignoring them while they shouted at me. It was merely because they were of lower standing that I believed the weak to be the ones I had to protect." (Itsuki) "Itsuki, I don't think you'll reach an answer like that." (Naofumi)

The person will definitely hide any inconvenient information.

And there are plenty of cases where conversations don't lead anywhere.

Or perhaps... there are cases where both sides are rotten beyond repair.

"... I'll bet. But if I were to go back to the start of it all, then I'd like to hear what both you and Witch-san had to say. I'd like to confirm the truth. Gender doesn't matter. Why did that happen, and if Witch-san was the one to fool Naofumi-san, then why did she do such a thing? I want to think carefully after asking all of that." (Itsuki) "I see. If someone like that had been there at the time, then perhaps things would have gone in a slightly better direction." (Naofumi)
But it's already passed.

Noticing he was wrong, it seems Itsuki's trying to say he wants to save the me of the past.

I guess I'll just take those feelings.

Well... if it's just words, he could just be bullshitting the hell out of me, but is it my bad for thinking it?

“In truth, justice was... something as difficult as this. But I got drunk off the feeling of convicting others...” (Itsuki) “Then what do you plan on doing once the wave is over?” (Naofumi) “I think I want to stay in this world, and go on a journey.” (Itsuki) “A journey... where do you plan on going? And wait, what do you plan on doing?” (Naofumi) “I want to lend my power to those in need of help.” (Itsuki)

“Using your arrogant justice again?” (Naofumi)

“Perhaps... but this time, I want to try hard so that I’m not the only one satisfied by the conclusion. A path where I won’t have any more lingering regrets. And if in the end of all of it, I have rocks thrown at me once more, I won’t offer any excuses.” (Itsuki)

This is an illness. It’s the return of the Justice Virus.

But, I feel he’ll offer a bit less self-justification than the Itsuki of the past.

I’d like to hope that he’s made some progress.

With Itsuki’s actions, there were definitely a lot of problems, but I guess there were people who were saved as a result as well.

Rishia’s a representative case. Though his aftercare of her was the worst.

“I haven’t told her yet, but when the time comes, if I make a mistake once more, please tell Rishia to stop me again.” (Itsuki) “Dude... that’s quite a Death Flag, isn’t it?” (Naofumi)

“Death Flag, is it? Now that you mention it, you’re right.” (Itsuki) “Well, I’d like to believe such things hold no meaning in reality. Even so, it’s ominous, so watch the way you phrase things. Ren even said something along the lines of, ‘once this battle’s over...’ though I have the feeling I instigated that one.” (Naofumi) “Then I’ll go tell Ren to avoid his imminent demise.” (Itsuki)

“No, can you intentionally avoid Death Flags...?” (Naofumi)

Just as before, Itsuki is still a bit strange.

But either way, he has changed.

Eventually, he'll wander into a battle where there's no right answer, but he's resolved himself to search for one.

Will he find happiness on the end of his path? I can only pray.

The Holy Land of Filo Rials

A few days passed.

About the wave in the ocean... well, I'll just report that it ended smoothly.

Ren turned out to be a hammer in water and humiliated himself greatly, while Sadina performed magnificently against the large whale-shaped wave boss.

I learned once more the Hero of the Cane's, Trash's, strength.

Using the cane's power, he can use most all forms of magic.

While he can only use up to Dreifach, even Aura and Down are fair game to him. I wonder if there's anything he can't cast.

I'm in the middle of teaching him how to cast Revelation.

"However..." (Naofumi)

"Gua?"

"Don't you guys have any concept of cleanliness!?" (Naofumi)

Right now, we were in Fitoria's carriage, headed to a temple that was supposed to be the Holy Land of the Filo Rials.

Fitoria brought us various items used by Heroes of the past, but among them were items that seemed to be no different from garbage.

So all the Heroes decided it was necessary to go to the Filo Rial Holy Land itself, and sort through her equipment.

Trash is absent on this voyage. It seems that he's busy with supporting Melty.

Gaelion and Taniko also refused to come.

And... we arrived at some ancient ruins...?

We were surrounded by a forest, and there was the remains of what seemed to a village. Nearby was a slight open area with a temple-like building in the center.

I think Melty said something about it.

Within the Filo Rial legends, there appeared a Forest of Illusions, in which people would find themselves lost if they were to wander in.

This is probably the center of it.

“FUOOOOOH! Let’s make this holy land our paradise!” (Motoyasu)
“GUAAAAAAH!”

“Fubu! This isn’t enough to stop-!” (Motoyaus)

Motoyasu was sent flying by Fitoria’s kick.

But he didn’t take any significant damage, and immediately stood up once more. He began a one sided game of tag with Fitoria.

Again, and again. Just how many times does he plan on repeating this scene?

Ignoring Motoyasu, we begin examining the inside of the ruins.

And the reason I voiced my opinion on sanitation was because the narrow passages of the abandoned temple were littered with trash-like items.

Are the abundance of shiny items among them because these guys are birds?

I remember the pile of goods Firo collected in the past, and labeled as her treasure.

“Wa~ It’s sparkl~y” (Firo)

Yep, this place has gone to the birds. It’s pretty much the same.

This appears to be Fitoria's nest.

The miscellaneous shiny items range from rare gems to cheap crystals.

"Anyways, we'll be organizing this." (Naofumi)

But... just how much junk is collected here?

This ruins is supposed to be a temple, but... I'm not sure if I should be saying this, but it lacks taste.

I was imagining something like finding treasure in a dungeon, but it was completely different.

Like trash, precious artifacts were casually tossed aside.

What's more, bird feathers are peppered everywhere. It's filthy.

"In this case, should we just burn away the feathers?" (Naofumi) "But what if something important here was flammable?" (Raphtalia)

Raphtalia's warning is on the mark.

So that idea is rejected.

Anyways, from Fitoria's many years of inhabiting this nest, it's become a castle of trash.

It's sad to imagine the rare items sleeping here.

If we find anything nice, we'll have to recover and analyze it, so we'll have to go about organizing this place.

"Then, let's split up and start cleaning!"

I really should have taken the villagers with me.

Well, this and that happened, and we started cleaning Fitoria's nest.

"This is~? It's shiny and pretty, you know. Was it called a crystal?" (Firo) "It's

trash! What's more, it's already been used up." (Naofumi) "Um, was this a rare gem? Naofumi, what should I do with it?" (Ren) "Keep it. We'll sort through them later." (Naofumi) "Why are there swords just lying around!? Ren-san, what should we do with this?" (Rishia) "Hmm? Wait... this is a sword I've never seen. Um... Ascalon? What's this? It's extremely effective against dragons." (Ren)

I get the feeling I just heard the name of a familiar powerful sword, but we'll continue working.^[26]

And wait, it's good that Gaelion didn't tag along.

"There's a spear wrapped in cloth and hung high up. Motoyasu-san, please go get it. You can leave feather collecting and sniffing for later." (Itsuki)

"Understood sir! Funu! I can't get it down." (Motoyasu) "Then how about you try copying it?" (Itsuki)

"That's right! Cursed Beast Spear? Oh, this one can move by itself, how convenient." (Motoyasu)

I feel that we're finding some dangerous artifacts here. But I'll leave it be.

And like that, we arranged the various rare items and trash.

The shed feathers... yep, they're the same as my bird's back home.

I'll have the bird deal with them herself.

"There were also dragon bones lying around... for now, let's just collect them." (Naofumi)

There are even weathered bones... just how much history's been discarded here?

What's more, it would be nice if they were intact, but due to the lack of protection from wind and storm, they're all in terrible shape.

"This..."

In a ruined room lies the weapon the pope used against us.

This... is a replica, right?

Why is even something like this here?

I thought about reusing it... but that would probably be difficult.

It needs a large input of magic. I guess I'll take it to the castle, and have the old man analyze it.

By the way, I tried to copy it, but an unrelated shield popped out.

Something called Ancient Shield.

Its abilities... aren't particularly high.

It only really increases magical defense.

Ren and the others also unlocked the Ancient Series from it.

Apparently, theirs were able to inflict a status ailment called Magic Jamming.

If you call it convenient, I guess it is, but it only works against individuals.

"Good grief... there's way too much garbage. How does it look deeper in?"

We continued to proceed towards the heart of the temple.

Eventually, we reached an area that seemed to be an altar.

Garbage hasn't been spread this far in.

On the ground, a stone-made clock-like gear system was installed.

"It seems gloomy here." (Itsuki)

"That's right." (Ren)

"Goodness gracious, there are so many wonders in Filo Rial-sama's house."
(Motoyasu) "Motoyasu, don't go wandering forward without us." (Naofumi)
Motoyasu walked to the center of the clock, and stuck his spear into the

ground.

And something clicked into place.

...

An ominous rumbling started to come from below us...

“Motoyasu!” (Naofumi)

“W-what could be happening?” (Motoyasu)

“How should I know! 「Meteor Wall」!” (Naofumi)

Just in case, I cast Meteor Wall, and deploy a barrier to protect everyone but Motoyasu and his following Filo Rials.

“Fitoria, do you know anything about this?” (Naofumi) “Gua?” (Fitoria)

Don’t tilt your head like that.

She really is unreliable!

“Oh? Oh? Oooooo...” (Motoyasu)

Light started pouring out of the hold Motoyasu had stuck his spear into.

And... while leaving a faint afterglow behind, the light is sucked into the shaft.

...

“F-fuee... w-what just happened?” (Rishia)

“No idea.” (Naofumi)

It doesn’t look like anything else is happening.

“Motoyasu, did anything change?” (Naofumi)

“Let’s see... a spear called the Dragon Era Minute Hand was unlocked.”
(Motoyasu)

Motoyasu changes the shape of his spear.

It’s quite slender.

It looks like quite a simple design.... Like the weapon name indicated, it looks like the hand of an old clock.

“Then if we stick our weapons into that hole, we can fulfill the conditions to unlock a weapon?” (Naofumi)

As a test, I searched for the hole Motoyasu thrust his spear into and tried inserting my Shield.

But there was no signs of anything happening.

“Could it be that it’s limited to one person?” (Ren)

Ren asks as he tries as well.

“Motoyasu!” (Naofumi)

“I-I don’t know anything about it!” (Motoyasi)

Well, sticking his weapon in so strange places... we would have never figured out it would unlock anything unless he tried it in the first place...

“Hah... it doesn’t matter anymore. For now, let’s proceed forward.” (Naofumi)
There don’t seem to be any monsters.

And wait, this is the Filo Rials’ turf, and since the leader, Fitoria, is here, I don’t think we run the risk of encountering any.

Though there are a few traps.

Like the old classic rolling rocks... and needles raining down from the ceiling. Most of it could just be dealt with with Meteor Wall, so it seems traps are powerless before a Hero.

Once it came into contact with the wall, the giant rock just stopped. I almost burst into laughter.

Well, it would be useless against things like puzzle solving, but it doesn't seem they installed something like that.

At the end of the ruins, was... a stone room suspended in the air by magic.

A floating stone... is it made out of Graweik Ore?

I climb the floating staircase, and confirm the inside of the room.

... What is this? The atmosphere feels very heavy in here. It's somewhat oppressing.

I also feel a large quantity of magic hanging in the air.

"And? There has to be something special in an ominous place like this."
(Naofumi)

In the depths of Fitoria's house, the ruins, was... a small bottle suspended in the air. Behind it was... what is that?

The form of a cat-like being with feathers protruding from it? There was a mural like that covering the wall.

There are also depictions of the sacred weapons... and the vassals are there as well. They glowed faintly, and light danced around them.

When I reached out my hand to grasp the bottle, it regained its sense of gravity, and fell into my hand.

Inside was a blood-like red fluid.

When I tested its smell, it smelled... like blood?

What is this?

“Is this supposed to be the Holy Grail, or something?” (Naofumi)
It’s something that could appear in a fantasy like this.

A container with the blood of a saint of the past, or something of the sort.

“Gua.” (Fitoria)

“It’s not, she says.” (Midori)

Midori starts acting as a translator.

“Then what is this?” (Naofumi)

“Gua, gua.” (Fitoria)

“Um... apparently, she doesn’t know, but it’s apparently poisonous. In the past, when Fitoria-sama was ordered to drink it by a Hero, she was suddenly overcome with pain.” (Midori)

Poison... just by looking at it, I can’t deduce anything

“At that time, the Hero said, the first sip is eternal pain, the second, eternal solitude, and the third... a dreadful end.” (Midori) “Hmm...” (Naofumi)

Anyways, I don’t need a poison like that.

And why was such a powerful poison left in such a place?

Fitoria’s taken a sip before, right?

“GUA GUA!” (Fitoria)

“Ah, I remembered. I was told to put a drop of it into my weapon as a material.” (Midori) “The poison?” (Naofumi)

“Yes.” (Midori)

Well... it's a strange mixture left by a Hero of the past.

I want to discard it, but that seems like a bad idea no matter how I look at it.

"Motoyasu." (Naofumi)

"What could it be?" (Motoyasu)

"It's punishment for before. Try putting some in your weapon." (Naofumi)

"Understood!" (Motoyasu)

I tilt the bottle, and let a single drop of it fall on Motoyasu's spear.

The liquid was thick, and the fact that I was easily able to let but a single drop fall might be the influence of some form of magic.

"Oh? The Spear of ∅ appeared." (Motoyasu)

∅?^[27]

As in the number ∅?

Motoyasu definitely said ∅, right?

"What sort of abilities does it have?" (Naofumi)

"Its special ability is Arbitrator of Truth, and The Hand that Protects the World. There's also a skill. It's just the Spear of ∅." (Motoyasu)
???

So what sort of spear is it?

"How are its stats?" (Naofumi)

"All ∅!" (Motoyasu)

"Excuse me?" (Naofumi)

"Just as it sounds, it provides no additional stats, Father-in-Law." (Motoyasu)

“Um... is it cursed or anything?” (Naofumi)

“It doesn’t seem to be part of the Curse Series.” (Motoyasu)
Fumu... by testing it on Motoyasu, it seems safe.

I let a drop run down my Shield as well.

You have cleared the conditions to unlock the Shield of ∅!

—

Shield of ∅ (Awakened) 0/0 —

Ability Bonus:

...

Equipment Bonus:

Skill 『Shield of ∅』

Special Ability: Arbitrator of Truth, The Hand that Protects the World.

Proficiency Level: 0

—

Fumu, a Shield just as Motoyasu described was unlocked.

And as he said, all its stats are 0. It’s worse than the initial Small Shield.

What’s this?

Let’s try changing to it.

Its appearance was exactly that of the Small Shield.

「Shield of ∅」

The moment I used a skill, the Shield started emitting light.

Oh... it sure looks cool. I’ll try it out later.

It doesn't seem to have any strange effects, so there's no problem.

The Shield itself is too weak to be of any use, but its abilities may be useful.

There are games where weapons like these make their appearance as well.

"Well, if Fitoria's okay with it, it's probably best to feed it to all of our weapons." (Naofumi)

And so, the contents of the bottle depleted itself, drop by drop.

Everyone unlocked the same $\emptyset$ weapon, with the exact same abilities.

"Firo, wanna try drinking it?" (Naofumi)

"Eh? ... Isn't it poison? No." (Firo)

"Well, that's true." (Naofumi)

Why did the Hero of the Past feed it to Fitoria despite knowing it was poison?

Could it be this bird was actually hated?

Though I'm a bit off for trying to feed it to Firo.

"GUA!" (Fitoria)

"Eh? ... don't wanna." (Firo)

"What was that?" (Naofumi)

"Um, you see, Fitoria says Firo has to drink it when Firo succeeds her." (Firo)

Drink the poison?

Is this some custom, or ceremony of succession?

I'll stay silent here.

We finished cleaning up and returned, but Gaelion refused to come near me when I held the bottle.

"KYUA!" (Gaelion)

“What’s wrong?” (Naofumi)

When I stepped forward, he followed suit, and stepped back.

『D-d-don’t come any closer! From thy being, I feel something ominous.
Something that causes the muscles along my spine to turn to ice! 』

I handed the bottle to Raphtalia, and tried approaching the dragon once more.

And Gaelion stopped drawing back.

It seems the poison’s a natural Dragon Repellent.

It’s an interesting tool. Fitoria said to return it after giving it to all of the Heroes, so I’ll have to give it back later.

And now to report on the Shield of Ø’s abilities, or more like the abilities of the whole series.

It was a joke skill just meant to show off.

After unlocking it, I tried using it to take on monster attacks, but nothing happened, and I couldn’t defend against them.

It shattered instantly.

Raphtalia’s 『Hammer of Ø』 and Firo’s 『Claw of Ø』...

They looked flashy, but they couldn’t inflict a single point of damage against monsters.

It doesn’t have anything to do with holding back. The skill literally does 0 damage.

Raphtalia’s surrounded herself with light... and displays a special effect cool enough to make one want to shout out the skill name with great emotion...

Its cooldown time was 0, and its SP cost was 0. It really was a joke.

Was there a necessity to spread something like this around all of the Heroes?

Well, like that, we cleaned up Fitoria's house and finished excavating the ancient ruins left of Heroes passed.

As a result, we found some good equipment, so I won't offer any complaints.

Translator note

1. ↑ TL: How would you translate 四射目?
2. ↑ TL: Whip-kun is sad. No one wants him.
3. ↑ TL: Glass has been shown so far to use two styles, Rinbu Mu (Circle Dance of Nothingness) 輪舞無, and Rinbu Ha (Circle Dance of Rupture) 輪舞破
4. ↑ TL again: The Kanji used for the skill name is 無想(Blank Mind). It a different kanji from the one in Musou Kassei and Hengen Musou, which is 無双(Peerless). I'm not sure if I should translate these, or leave them as is.
5. ↑ TL: Rinbe Sen (Flashing Circle Dance) Samidare (early Summer Rain)
6. ↑ TL: 滅竜烈火拳X
7. ↑ TL: Because this world reveres otherworldly heroes
8. ↑ TL: Gender neutral pronouns coming up, so don't quote me on it.
9. ↑ T/N: "Don't rip off a certain robotic cat!" (Naofumi)
10. ↑ T/N: A reference to something?
11. ↑ T/N: Squeaky Hammer
12. ↑ TL: Zetsuboushita!
ED: Orz
13. ↑ TL: Midori uses Goshujinsama in Katakana
14. ↑ TL: this seems to be a reference that I do not get.
15. ↑ TL: And that's pretty much the only place Naofumi trains.
16. ↑ TL: Naofumi thinks about the Japanese word for Spirit(霊), while Glass says her race is Spirit with an English Pronunciation(スピリット). Her people are called (魂人) Soul People
17. ↑ TL: You cannot see the tags here. So sorry.
18. ↑ TL: No, this is not a laugh
19. ↑ TL: This line is given by Philip Marlowe, but the Japanese translation is used by Lelouch Vi Britannia in episode 1 (21:28) before he orders the

troops to kill themselves. The original line is 'Take my tip-don't shoot [guns] at people, unless you get to be a better shot,' but the people who translated it gave it a different connotation. (Source: Moto-neta)

20. ↑ TL: I dunno, I'm just a lowly translator, you know.
21. ↑ TL: If you remember, it's the second wave boss
22. ↑ TL: I'm not sure of the reference, but I imagine a general humane society Ad here
23. ↑ TL: Female Knight's name is エクレール(Ekure-ru) while the desert is エクレア (Ekurea)
24. ↑ TL: This was right before the Hououin Kyoufumi Arc.
25. ↑ TL: Werewolf/ wolf man is written in Kanji, while the rest are katakana [Blank] Race.
26. ↑ TL: Ascalon is the name given to the lance Saint George used to slay a dragon. It has become a sword in popular culture.
27. ↑ TL Note: For your reading convenience, all 0s in the skill and weapon names have been replaced with the Scandinavian vowel Ø. It was a font thing. All of those are zeroes. In the original text, it's just a 0.