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転生した次こそ
のいでにば
幸な人生を掴んで
みせましよう

侯爵令嬢リズの

愛され

チートな

今度の人生は
ハイスペック幼女!

セカンドライフ
開幕!!!

Tensei Shitanode Tsugi Koso wa Shiawasena Jinsei wo Tsukande Misemashou

(I Reincarnated, so the Next Thing to do is Lead a
Happy Life)

Vol.1

by Saeki-san

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Arc 1: 0-year old

Chapter 1 - Beginning from the 0-year old

“Daah.”

This was the first time I’d been so unable to understand something.

In order to get a handle on the situation, I first tried to speak, however all that came out was senseless babble.

In addition, I had very tiny hands, and my body was very difficult to move. Actually, it was hard to move period. I couldn’t just move on a whim.

Anyone would realize something was weird by this point.

And they’d be right! I’d been leading a perfectly good adult life, then suddenly regressed to a baby. I must be crazy in the head. If I’d been able to freely speak, I’d want to scream “OH JESUS!”

Still, it was strange.

I mean, it was already strange enough that I’d turned into a baby, but in the first place...didn’t this mean I had died at some point?

Without explanation, I was accidently killed by a vehicle. The car ignored the signal and crashed into me, and the I was on my way to the afterlife. It was so sudden, I don’t even remember the exact moment of impact. So, in short, I was born again it would seem.

“Honey! Liz smiled!”

“Really?!”

As I couldn’t move my body all that well, my ‘smile’ was nothing more than an over glorified twitch of my face.

The person that suddenly lifted me into the air was no doubt one of my parents...but now that I saw them, I could very clearly see they were

not Japanese.

By general beauty standards, they were a gorgeous couple, with a myriad of colors in their hair and eyes. My father's hair was so red, it'd give a ginger a heart attack. Unlike dyed hair, it was rich and beautiful the way only a natural color could be. His facial features were perfect, with nary a blemish in sight.

And my mother had pale ivory-colored hair. They both suited each other. You wouldn't find anyone like them in Japan.

"Liz, I'm your dad~"

When my father brought me close to his face I saw that he had crimson eyes. With a loving expression, he rubbed our cheeks together. I guess I really was this guy's daughter...wait, I am his daughter right? I'm not his son, right?! Currently, I'd only been defined as their 'child', without any specific gender mentioned.

From what I heard, I assumed my name was Liz. Even more proof that I wasn't anything close to Japanese anymore. Despite all evidence pointing to that conclusion, I still couldn't be absolutely sure at the moment.



My second father looked at me with intense and shining eyes. He had probably been desiring a child. And that child born of love was me.

I felt a little bad for my new parents to have a child with the mind of an adult, although I would do my best to keep that under wraps.

“Ooh! Do you know who I am?”

“Daau.”

“Selen, Liz knows I’m her dad!”

“Our child is so smart!”

These people were overly doting parents. I understood that they were at the stage where it that was normal, and they should be allowed to dote on their child. ...If their child acted like a child that is.

I tried to play the part of a child and loosened up my face enough to to laugh. This brought great happiness to my parents who laughed along with me.

I really was a child born out of love.

In that case, I wanted to live up to their love. Even if my mental age was older than theirs, it wouldn’t change the fact that they’d given birth to me.

For all that they treasured me, I wanted to treasure them in return.

“And with the amount of latent magic power she has...her following in my footsteps as a Royal Magician isn’t just a dream.”

...Yeah, I have a feeling something outrageous was just tossed into this conversation, but I’m just gonna pretend I didn’t hear that. I’m just an adorable baby who doesn’t know a thing about those fantasy-like words. Nope, not at all.

Arc 2: 4-years old

Chapter 2-3 - Bookworm reserve army / Little hope

To begin, I, Lizbeth Adelcian, had turned 4-years old.

Having received an abundance of love from my parents, they raised me into an unrebelling and obedient child...as far as they were aware anyway. I hope you’ll forgive me for not being charming both inside and out, but it was impossible for a proper adult to return to being a toddler.

I was affectionately called Liz by my parents, and although I was now used to it, I had to work hard to overcome the discomfort of that very non-Japanese name.

As an infant, I had to go through a lot of experiences I'd have rather not have, thus I decided to omit that part of the story. If there was just one event I had to mention, it would be my customary bathtime with Dad, and I'm sure I don't have to spell that one out.

"Liz, come here. Shall we read together?"

"Of course Mother."

The name of the mother that birthed...was Selen.

Mother beckoned me with a gentle smile. It had become a daily routine, and I responded immediately with a smile and ran over to her side.

I may have been biased as her daughter, but my mother was very beautiful. If I were a man, I'd definitely propose to her.

That same mother now beckoned me with her beautiful smile; there was no way I would refuse.

I was careful not to fall over as I dashed to my mother, and when I got close she pulled me into an affectionate hug while still smiling.

...My past self was extremely envious of the soft pillows protecting my

mother's chest. I was my mother's daughter though, so I prayed to someday have similar set of 'chest armor'.

Considering both sides of my bloodline, I had high hopes for my future appearance. As of now, I had a good glimpse of what the future held, but it was still somewhat complicated.

You don't just become an unrivaled beauty, though starting as a cute girl would certainly help. In the end, thanks to my patronage, I should, at the very least, have a face I could be proud of.

"What book should we read today?"

I nuzzled my head on the soft bulge of her bosom. It was the most comforting feeling in the world, and my eyes closed in relaxation. People looking upon this scene would probably smile and go 'daaawww'.

Also...it might be obvious, but even though I was only 4-years old, there was a big to do over how unbelievably smart I was. I didn't want to have to be babied, but I did still seek attention. And what's more...

"What would you like to read Liz?"

"I want to read a book from Father's study."

...This did not make for a cute 4-year old, please forgive me. There was hardly a child in the world that could give such a clearly purposed and precise answer. Fortunately, my parents always exclaimed "Our child is so clever!" and that was the end of it.

“Not the study, those books are very difficult...they’re all about magic.”

Ah, right, when I was still a baby, that had been my first concern.

As I had thought, I had not been reborn on Earth, but some strange fantastical world instead.

Being born into a noble family was just icing on the cake. My parents served the castle as Magicians...ah, Magician was a title given to people that had mastered the art of magic. In other words, they were the Elite.

I’d like a chance to explain about magic later, but for now all you need to know is that the goddess of fortune has smiled upon me. I was born into extremely privileged circumstances, and I had to wonder if the God of earth had deemed me fit for such a blessing.

“I want to study magic too.”

My parents had said, “She has the talent. The amount of latent magic power she has is extraordinary.” Is this something like a cheat ability...? Man, it’d be great if it was.

It was a high appraisal, however even if I had the latent power, if I couldn’t use it, it would be a total waste. And even if I had the talent, it didn’t mean I could afford to be complacent.

I’d rather work hard than just have innate talent. I wasn’t satisfied with only

having natural talent in my future.

...That, and in this life I'd like to stand at the very top. This time, I shall attain a life of happiness. I'd get that happy life with my own two hands.

For that reason I wanted to get an early start on my magic training, however my mother's face frowned at the notion.

I had thought she wanted me to follow in her footsteps, but maybe I was being too impatient. Like the magic might weigh a heavy burden on such a small body, or it'd be bad if any accidents happened, or she still wanted to spoil me... something like that. And maybe it was just my imagination, but that last reason seemed the most likely culprit.

"...Mother, do you...not want me to learn magic...?"

I wasn't playing fair, but if she wasn't going to let me, then...

I brought my hand from my chest to my face, and looked at my mother with watery eyes. This time, I did not forget to lightly grip the hem of her sleeve while I gave the the ol' upturned eyes. I was sure I cunningly pulled off the cute look well.

I was well aware this was in poor taste to use my child's body to my advantage in this way, but the alternative was to throw a tantrum and be told I was being selfish. When I became an adult I wouldn't use such underhanded tactics, but for now...

Having lived with my mother for 5 years, I know the ins and outs of her

personality. My parents...especially my father, spoiled me rotten. As their beloved daughter, it was all too obvious that they doted heavily upon me.

With my eyebrows lowered, I completed my dejected look, and my mother was unable to say anything. I felt bad troubling her like this.

But I still wouldn't back down. There were times when you had to take risks. ...Well, you know, I only wanted to look at the book from the study.

“...Can't I...?”

“...We're just going to read it, all right? No practicing magic just yet young lady.”

“Yes ma'am!”

Mother finally caved, and made sure I understood the condition upon which she agreed to let me see it. As expected of my mother, I really loved her.

I gave her a radiant smile and a hug to show my gratitude, and mother smiled back, albeit a little strained, and patted my head.

In any case, it was now time to dedicate myself to studying. Even if I had knowledge, it would do me no good if I didn't do anything with it. I'd study as hard as I had to if it meant I'd have the knowledge to circumvent any disasters to come my way in the future. Not that I hated studying or anything.

...I thus immersed myself in studying every day, to the point that the maids

were calling me a bookworm or a loon, and that's just how it went.

“So that's how it is.”

As I frequented my father's study, I came to understand something while browsing the rows of books.

My father was an amazing person.

He was normally an idiot parent...sorry, that was impolite, I meant that I'd only seen him as an over-indulgent father, but when it came to his work he was very accomplished. Even among the other Royal Magicians, he probably ranked first or second.

At least, I had heard there were a number of magicians under the king's employ, but it was difficult to image he was among the best of them. At best, I thought he ranked in the middle somewhere. I wasn't looking down on him, I just couldn't believe one of my parents could a person held in such high esteem.

Knowing that, I really got the feeling I was living the good life as the result of a 'cheat'.

I mean, come on, I was born of a union between a beautiful mother and handsome father, and on top of that, they were both preeminent magic users. Like, my latent magic ability was way more than a normal child's, I looked adorable, I had good reflexes, and the icing on the cake, my father was a Royal Magician!

It was like my life had been made to order. To be honest, I was a little troubled by all the entitlement I'd received.

I was thankful that my latent magic power was higher than normal, but it was almost absurd how it practically guaranteed I would have a high social standing with hardly any effort. I wanted to put in the effort to climb the ladder to success.

Of course I would still use anything to my advantage, but I didn't want to come to rely on such things. It wouldn't make me happy to succeed off the coattails of my parents, such success was hollow and would eventually crumble beneath my feet.

Since I was still a child, there wasn't much I could do about it at the moment, but it never hurt to be prepared.

For now, my priority was to work on cultivating my own power. With my own power I would take hold of everything this world had to offer.

...I don't mean world domination, at most I just wanted to live a happy life. Make no mistake about it.

"Father, Father!"

"Hm? What is it, Liz?"

Just as my father entered his study, I ran up to him with a big smile on my face. Father also smiled back at me, but somehow his smile towards me was even bigger and filled his whole face. He really was fawning all over me.

As I gave him a big hug, I noticed his smell reminded me of the sun.

He didn't really work outside at all, yet it still brought to mind the image of gentle sunlight. It was a feeling akin to jumping on a freshly made bed, that kind of indescribable happiness. Such was the sort of fluffy feeling I got from my father.

Mother's scent was like a sweet flower, something gentle that made you feel better when you smelled it.

When I first told my parents what they smelled like, they each gave themselves a good whiff. It was pretty hilarious.

And then there was the time, they were on their bed in their night clothes, and I had smelled a lit fire so I went to check on them, but I was sorry I had. I knew my parents were still young, but it was creepy walking in on them trying to give me a younger sibling.

Of course I had my own room by that age, but I tried to not make it a habit of interrupting people doing their business, and quickly retreated from the room. I was well aware that no normal child my age would have been able to guess what they were doing, but still...

...I seem to have completely gone off topic.

After I gave my father a hug, I made eye contact with his crimson eyes.

Even I was susceptible to getting caught up in the beautiful color of his eyes. His expression relaxed as he smiled gently at me and lovingly patted my head.

...Maybe it's because he was just relaxing at home, but it was still hard to see him being such an impressive and respectable man out in the real world. Even so, I still loved my father who freely gave his family all his love without asking for anything in return.

"Say, Father..."

"Yes, Liz?"

"Please teach me how to use magic."

Yank.

At my words, he balked and accidentally put too much force into patting my head, and wound up ripping out 2 or 3 hairs the same color as my mother's pale hair. ...It really hurt.

"Did someone tell you to ask me that?"

"No, it is by my own desire that I wish to learn."

Shaking my head, I looked straight into his eyes, and I could see Father wearing the same troubled expression my mother had.

Father was also worrying about me in his own way. He wanted to teach me, but was conflicted by the danger it posed...is what I guessed.

But, I had anticipated this reaction, so it's not like I was blindsided.

"I want to become a great Magician, just like you, Father."

Father's first weakness.

Father was incredibly susceptible to being flattered (though just by me and my mother).

"Is, is that right...?"

"Yes, I've heard Father is a very prominent Magician. I, as well, would like to command the respect of my peers as a Magician just like Father."

"It makes me very happy to hear you say that...! But Liz, you're still too young..."

"...Father, do you mean I'm not good enough?"

Father's second weakness.

He was very vulnerable to tears (again, only from me and my mother).

I cunningly turned my eyes up to him, already tearing up. He began to panic

upon seeing me look so sad with my big wavering eyes.

...I was thankful it was easy to turn on the waterworks as a child, even though I knew it wasn't very nice of me to do so, teehee. Sorry for getting ahead of myself.

“Oh no, Honey, it's not like that, I just wanted to wait until you were a little older...”

“I want to hurry and be like Father, so I can be of help to you. Can't I...?”

“...Urg.”

“I promise I won't quit halfway. So please, can't you teach me?”

“...Well, I did think this would happen one day anyway...It's just, much sooner than I thought. I do want to teach you though...”

“You'll really teach me?”

I deliberately ignored everything other than him saying he would teach me.

My smile was laden with expectations, and finally my father looked like he was seriously considering it.

Father's third weakness.

Father was extremely weak to a surprise attack smile (one last time, limited to my mother and me).

So it all boiled down to Father being completely enamored with me and my mother, and loving us no matter what. It also meant we had him wrapped around our fingers.

Rather than this just being a selfish wish of mine, it was more like I just wanted something now that I would eventually get anyway. It was just a jump start, really.

With my added sparkling and expectant eyes that only a child could pull off, my father let out a small, no, a rather large sigh.

“...Okay, but there are some conditions. You can’t just be taught when it’s convenient for me to teach you, so I’ll hire you a tutor, and you must follow their every word. You can’t quit half way. Also you will accompany me to the Magician’s department of the castle to have your magical aptitude properly tested. If you can do these things...”

“I will do all of them. Thank you so much Father!”

Father had a bit of a strained smile as I cut him off and smiled with all my might. Sorry Father, but you were doomed to fail. This was my victory.

I told Father I loved him and kissed him on the cheek which immediately restored his earlier good mood. He would have taught me eventually anyway, so I hope no one will hold this against me.

“Liz, we’re here.”

“Nmm...Father...?”

With his gentle whispering voice, my father gently patted my back to rouse me. I rubbed my eyes, wondering when I nodded off.

Our destination was a long way to walk for a child, so my father had carried me in his arms. That sun-like scent and warmth of his body had slowly lulled me into a drowsy state, and I accidentally fell asleep.

Haaa, I yawned while only half-awake, and after putting in a little effort I was able to open my eyes.

...Wow.

What I saw with my still drowsy eyes was a huge castle gate. Towering behind it was an incredibly large fantasy-like castle.

Did my father really work at a place like this? I was once again reminded of his actual greatness.

“Father, Father, do you really work here?”

“I do indeed.”

“That’s amazing, Father...!”

The praise was not unwarranted, and caused my father to bashfully blush. He very happily patted my head in gratitude for the compliment.

Still in his arms, my father carried me towards the castle gate, and approached one of the gatekeepers. As expected, the castle has proper gatekeepers. Of course, if it didn't, people would be trespassing all over the place.

“Oh my, Welf-sama, is that your child?”

“Yes, this is my daughter. Liz, introduce yourself.”

“Put me down first, Father.”

“Ah, of course.”

Welf was my father's name.

Father wasn't one to mix business and personal affairs...I'd like to say that this time didn't count, but I appeared to be the culprit responsible for making him do so for the first time ever.

For me, seeing that my father actually worked at such an amazing place was impressive. You're amazing, Father. People working at a place like this were sure to use others to their advantage to advance. ...Ah, rest assured, I'm praising him. Father is so kind, I was worried people might take advantage of that very kindness.

Father put me down on the ground, then I smoothed out all the wrinkles on my clothes before turning to face the gatekeepers.

“It is a pleasure to meet your acquaintance. My name is Lizbeth Adelcian, daughter of Marquis Welf Adelcian. I am much obliged to have my father in your care.”

I lowered my head, completing my flawless introduction to the now slightly bewildered gatekeepers. Their reaction was perfectly normal, as anyone would hardly expect a girl of such a young age to introduce themselves with such polite language. I was such an unexpected child.

“Pardon me Welf-sama, but how old was your daughter again...?”

“She just turned 4 this year.”

“To be precise, I am exactly 4 years and 7 months old.”

Those half years were extremely important to children, so I corrected Father’s statement with an adorable smile on my face.

And not that it mattered much, but it was my best ‘business’ smile, one that thoroughly highlighted all the cuteness of a child. It was a little different from the one I gave my mother and father.

That smile seemed to clear up all their bewilderment, and the gatekeepers instead inspected both mine and my father’s faces.

“You two sure do look alike. Though I certainly see some traces of Selen in there.”

“Haha, is that so? She is our daughter after all. See, isn’t she just too cute? And she’s isn’t just cute, she’s also...”

“Father, I’m very happy for your praise, but we have business to attend to.”

If I’d let him go on like that, he would have bragged about me for hours so I quickly cut him off. This also caused the gatekeepers to be taken aback again.

But, come on. It would be embarrassing if Father kept bragging about me right in front of my face. It’d make me want to hide in a hole! He already did as much to all the maids and butlers in our household. It made me so uncomfortable I thought I might just die of embarrassment.

“Ah, that’s right. ...Is it all right for her to enter the castle? I brought her by to get her magic aptitude properly inspected.”

“I-is that so? She is the daughter of Welf-sama, so I don’t see it being a problem.”

“You may enter the gate.”

“Thanks, you’re a big help.”

Thus some of the gatekeepers backed off. It was also partially my fault.

After getting their permission, Father took my hand and we passed through the gate. As his place of work, Father had a majestic gait as he walked. I couldn't quite pull off that same magnificent way of walking, so I just followed along at a modest pace.

Oh right, as we passed by the gatekeepers, I made sure to smile and wave. If I have to go to the castle again, I wanted to leave a good impression; such was the meaning behind my farewell.

They were surprised by my smile, and, out of my father's view, smiled and waved back to me. They were still on duty, so they wanted to keep the action discreet. I'd have make sure to give them another wave on the way out.

Chapter 4 - Workplace Observation

As father lead me around the castle grounds, there were many passersby observing us. That's to be expected as an amazing person like father was bringing a child around.

Sometimes conversations were struck with father in order to inquire about me, during which a simple self-introduction and head bowing was given. First impressions, super important.

"Welf-sama!"

As though they'd walked for a while, looking out of breath, an unbelievably great looking person had rushed over and arrived. For this person to address father with -sama indicates just how amazing father is.

"What's the matter, Nadia"

"Yuuris-sama has gone missing!"

".....Yuuris-sama has escaped again....."

The person called Nadia had a serious expression engraved on her face, in

comparison father's brows were twitching as he strained to hold back his expression.

From what I gathered, it seems this Yuuris-sama had a tendency to slip away causing Nadia to endlessly worry. This would be apparent judging by father's reactions.

Also, this might just be my presumptuous guess about Yuuris-sama, but he's probably royalty. Because it can be surmised based of how a great looking person like Nadia-san addressed him politely. Father as well. Although Father has a better grasp of the situation, I think.

If not, she wouldn't have came to him. Though father holds an extremely important post, he earned a honorary title with it. And considering the case of the restrictions on the escapee, in this matter physical restriction wasn't necessary as it is to understand the mentality of the escapee in order to resolve this matter.

In other words, the answer was in plain sight. With all due respects... Well, it's easy to conclude the Prince's whereabouts.

"His highness never learns....."

A VIP sprung out unexpectedly. Never expected it to be royalty. Furthermore to have a habitual offense escaping like a criminal.

"A place where the King can walk freely without his guards within the castle....."

Where the first Prince was unexpected to be.

... Well, it's not like I don't fully understand. As royalty, there's a staggering amount of expectations and pressure to be bared especially if you're the eldest child. I think knowledge, education and behaviour appropriate for the next in line is required.

However to feel tired to the extent of running away, it's inevitable I suppose. Though whether it's good is another matter.

"Welf-sama, I would like to request your assistance in our search for Yuuris-sama"

"I'm sorry but I decline."

"..... Father"

"Don't make such a face, Liz. I know where Yuuris-sama is hiding. It's where everyone usually is."

Sighing whilst muttering the words, my eyes blinked with a snap. If you knew, why aren't you bringing him back?

The words I wished to express could easily be read on my face, a wry smile could be seen gracefully rising to the surface.

"..... Originally I would leave this matter be. Because his highness is getting worn out from his studies and the power disputes"

"..... The Prince has it rough"

"Liz is also a member of nobility, your debut in high society won't be long"

"I understand"

I have understood to that extent. Unless another child is born after me, I have understood that it is my duty to inherit the family estate as the heir. Although worried, now watching my parents flirting together, my anxieties are put to rest.

Desires smear an adult's world. To think even I who was once an adult felt it was troublesome, I dare say regardless of age, the feeling is the same for the Prince who had to endure it.

It's natural to think of wanting to escape.

"For now, I can understand his highness's feelings. Nevertheless, that being the case, it is even more imperative that his highness should focus on acquiring knowledge and education. By acquiring them today, they would serve as his armour and defend him in the future"

"..... Liz, sometimes I just can't understand you. It's okay to be satisfied"

"I'm anxious about his highness's future prospects. Taking it lightly now will only affect his highness in the future"

Though not childlike remarks, father has already grown accustomed and

hardly questions it. On the contrary, Nadia's mouth was gapingly wide opened as she looked over us.

..... Yes, I'm obviously a child matured beyond my age. It may have been better to behave a little more childlike on the outside.

Father gave a wry smile to Nadia who was still somewhat frozen. And then, kept staring here motionlessly. Ah, what an unpleasant foreboding.

"Liz. To say this much, you might as well persuade his highness. Guide him"

"It's impossible. After all, I'm an unacquainted child"

"It will be all right, Liz's cuteness will guarantee it"

This isn't a place where it'll be useful.

"..... Then let's do it this way. If you're able to persuade his highness, I will teach you magic"

"That's unfair"

"Haha. Don't worry. If it's Liz, you can definitely persuade him"

Please don't act so unreasonable.

Father didn't even asked if I had any complains. If only I hadn't acted in my usual unsatisfactory habit this time!

For the time being let's pray not to establish any unnecessary flags.

Chapter 5 - His Highness's Rebellious Age

Now then, I, Lizbeth Adelcian, will begin my pursuit to persuade his highness.

..... I wonder how should I carry out the persuasion?

Why it would be strange to be told off frankly by a unfamiliar child. Even if the first son of the royal family allows it, I'm just an unrelated outsider. An unconcerned unrelated outsider.

His highness can be said to be the future king who will be responsible for shouldering his nation. To be concerned with such a person is awe-inspiring.

Well, it's worrying having to stake my opinions whilst painstakingly avoiding offending and causing the collapse of the aristocracy.

Without understanding my mental state Father said, "If it's you, you can do it" whilst providing me with his full support as though it was someone else's matter, and forced me into the library where his highness was against my will. Sigh, I braced myself.

The library that I was forced into was chilly and dimly lit with a dusty aroma.

Although it was a little unhygienic, unexpectedly I didn't hate the stale aroma. Tickling my nose was the fragrance of paper and ink. Or rather you could say dust was tickling my nose physically.

"hachuu---"

"..... Who's there!"

..... Ah, I've found his highness.

I had not actually seen his highness but from the edges of the bookshelves, a boy's face was peeking out so I realized instantly.

He looked approximately two or three years older than me.

Even with the low lighting from the lantern and the trickle of sunlight from encroaching ceiling, the silky quality of his blonde hair was unmistakable. That snow-white skin like porcelain, even women do not readily possess such smooth skin.

Peeking through his bangs with blue eyes, open wariness was projected at me. You asked me to handle a really troublesome matter didn't you, father.

"May I introduce myself? My name is Lizbeth."

The words - it's a pleasure to make your acquaintance - I didn't bother to continue, I didn't want to concern myself with royalty to the utmost. Nor be embroiled in the power dispute.

Pinching my skirt slightly to curtsy, his highness gazed at me suspiciously. It would seem from out of nowhere, a child appeared so suddenly.

Perhaps, in his highness's head, he had arrived to the conclusion that the child had been sent for by an adult.

"Please relax. I'm not here to take you back against your will"

"..... That can't be trusted."

"Right? But there is no power that I could possibly possess to force your highness to return"

Because even if it was said, I'm just a four year old girl. Even if there will be hereditary qualities, if physical growth is not accompanied, it can't be done.

In the first place, if I were to conduct myself rudely to his highness, he could have me sentenced to death. I don't intend to just flatter and manage the upkeep of this big-shot's mood though.

Without letting my intentions leak, I lifted both hands lightly into a surrender pose. There was no intention to use any physical means. I mean it would be an impossible action for a child.

Well then to persuade, I would have to be eloquent. In this case I would have to provoke. I prayed that I would not incur punishment for lèse-majesté. When push comes to shove, I'll implore the king with my childlike manners.

"..... So, until when does his highness wish to remain here?"

Despite easing a loaded question to verify and compromise, it was met in return by a naked hostile gaze.

Oh well! Coming from his highness, I must be perceived as an inferior pawn, right..... An immature little girl who's rather impolite and direct, right? I'm pissed. Nope, just kidding! Granted to give off an aura of cuteness like me and not be stupid is understandable.

"Everyone is worried about you."

"That's not it! Those fellows are only making such gestures because I'm the king's child! Besides, all they care is to flatter me when possible just to use me!"

His highness raised eyebrows were accompanied with a strain voice . I see, for

a child raised like an adult, he had a very harsh way of thinking. Basically there's no feelings of trust.

Well in actuality to harbour such thoughts, it was not necessarily incorrect. However to accept that everyone has ill intentions is unhealthy.

"I suppose you could say that. So?"

"So? So"

"That's only just an excuse, am I right? Your highness is only escaping from your responsibilities. Abandoning your duty"

Declaring it like this is wrong, but it has to be said. Even if I dislike what I'm doing and would like to avoid it as much as possible, when it has to be done, it's done. The time to snuggle closer to an influential person and slurp the sweet rewards isn't now.

Being born into royalty, being constantly in contact with people harbouring malicious intent even I understood that. But if that was the reason to justify running away, then things would never resolve. Rather it would deteriorate.

"You... How could you ever understand!"

"Of course I don't. Running and running, even if the truth was before your eyes, you immediately avert your eyes from it"

".....!"

BANG, thrown away from his reasoning, the time to fall on one's butt vigorously had arrived. Dealt a heavy blow to his overenthusiastic momentum, his highness could not even retort back.

As it is, his highness leaned over me, trembling in rage with shaky hands had grasped my collar. Violence, not good.

I seem to have ignited his highness's fuse. Splendidly going berserk.

Considering the words spoken were for your benefit. Not even spitting out a just reasoning, flying suitably into a frenzy. Has resulted into this present situation.

Well if I'm hit, I'm hit, mother will heal me. If I'm not dead. Not kidding.

"You, How could you possibly understand me..... !"

"I understand that these reason weren't born willingly. However, being born into royalty means having a duty to fulfil, furthermore it is personally for your own benefit"

I know how to sulk too. However, sulking and running away solves nothing. In the simplistic thoughts of a child, nothing in the end will ever alter the current situation.

"Do not argue with me!"

"Then please don't selfishly repute me. If this is all you can muster up, you are still just a child. Because your selfishness will be pardoned"

Still childish, his highness shouldn't be allowed to bare the burden of his vessels. Therefore assuming he stopped running away, eventually his surrounding would also be less noisy.

..... But, because it's now, that's still forgivable.

"Nevertheless, sooner or later you will become an adult. By that time, running away would never be forgiven. Because you will be shouldering the whole country, assuming as our sovereign"

"I"

"Doing nothing right now is one option. Simply it's one of your armours, tied together by many partable matters."

"..... Armour"

Slowly calming down, he seemed to response to my words.

"Because you're still being protected is why you may not understand. When you just escape from everything, you lose the art of protecting yourself. What lessons are you being taught? Magic and sword fighting are beneficial to protect one's self, studying is for the sake of protecting the country, being cultured is so foreign countries would not look down upon us. Everything was laid to ease your future, can you understand it was done for your sake?"

Even if I say such things to a child around here, it would be impossible for them to understand.

But his highness is wise, who had a matured way of thinking. He should be able to understand the real intention of my words.

"I apologise for saying too much. However, please consider them. Everyone has been stern towards you for your sake"

Upon declaring that, his highness stared wide-eyed looking in my direction. The force used to grasp my collar with his tiny hands loosened.

..... All that's left is one more push.

"Walking down this road, you will meet people who will try to use you. I do not deny it. However, by acquiring the art to defend yourself, you would be able to judge between good intentions and malice. You could cut off the malice or conversely, use it to your advantage"

I extended a hand slowly to his highness who was still leaned over me as I informed him. Turning away from the hands around the neck, an extremely flat-chested bosom lured the other mildly into a tight embrace.

Please bear being narrow-minded physically, so that I may still have a future.

"..... Therefore, this time will you stop running away? When you become strong, you will naturally be able to defend yourself"

"....."

"Just for now, you can act spoilt if you want. okay?"

What words can a four and half years child use to win an argument but, to his highness, without being able to cross examine carefully was presently clung on by my chopping board like frame. The hands which once grasped my collar, seeking a purpose, rested around my back.

Raising my body lightly, I gently stroked his head and rubbed his back whilst comforting him. Yup, not a four year old's action.

"..... Obstinate. It's very different from mother's"

"Your highness, I'm still just a child so stop demanding tenderness from me"

For a second I wanted to punch him, but that would be absolutely considered as *lèse-majesté*, so I'll stop. If I lay a hand on his highness, I'll be killed. In this

occasion my mouth was effective in preventing my fall.

After hugging for a while, his highness sluggishly lifted his face. The pupils were delicately moist evidenced that he had cried a little, I decided to refrain from inquiring about it.

Because his highness took a long hard look at my face, I was left feeling puzzled. Or rather I realized his highness was positioned extremely close within point-blank range.

Until now because he had always been glaring at me, I didn't noticed that he had a very lovely face. Till then, I thought it was arranged. Such formidable royalty genes. In the future won't he be really good looking?

"What's the matter?"

"..... How old are you"

"Four years and seven months old"

"..... Impossible"

To the surprised muttering, even I thought so with a bitter smile. After all, the contents were of a woman steadily approaching her thirties.

If I were to tell him, he would just think I've grown up way beyond my age. He would unravel the sense of my words.

Pulling himself together, he brush the dust which clung to my clothes, without revealing his thoughts, extended a hand towards me.

Surprised by the unexpected conduct, I blinked my eyes, furrowing my eyebrows when it was followed by "Women are delicate creatures and should be treated with care as I've been told" with the coming behaviour of a gentleman.

No apology for what transpired earlier? Well, I guess it's fine since I'm not hurt.

..... To be honest, I think almost all girls are sturdier than boy, but let's keep it

a secret.

"..... About earlier, I'm really sorry"

Oh, he apologized.

"No, I was also at fault for fanning the flames" I apologize for that sincerely. Please pardon my earlier rudeness"

"..... You don't need to be so formal. The way you spoke earlier is fine"

Somehow, it seems I've escaped from being punishable for incurring lèse-majesté. From the bottom of my heart, I felt relieved. It seems my mouth worked splendidly.

Sighing secretly in relief, I finally noticed we've been holding hands since and proceeded to let go.

..... Not letting my hands go?

".... You can't let go without my permission"

Oh, how very tyrannical. Unless pushed away, I can't let go? Ah well I guess he's just emotionally attached to me.

Hmm, I'm not sure what flag I've just triggered, but for now mission complete. I have to report back to father.

Either way without a question his highness was accompanying me, paying heedless to our joint hands.... Being treated in deterrence with an enticing treatment is frightening.

Chapter 6 - His Highness's Age of Independence/Adulthood/Marriageable Age

In the end, his highness never let go, firmly holding my hands or rather, it became a situation where it was impossible to separate because it was grasped. Even if for an instant the son of the king acts completely unreasonable, for now our joint hands were getting along splendidly.

As I looked troubled at his highness, without intending to separate, he entwined his fingers tightly against mine. This is referred to as a couple's connection right? Ugh no, as long as it's separated by the time I meet father, I'll much appreciate it.

Well when it comes to Father, you might think he's smiling, but let's not cause him to weirdly misunderstand. It'll be troublesome.

Whilst feeling happy despite reluctantly connected, upon exiting the library, we found father laying in wait for us where I last left him.

Father's eyes brightened upon seeing the two of us together, but froze when he noticed our hands entwined together. The moment he laid eyes on father's figure, his highness frowned.

"..... So, your highness?"

"Why is Welf here?"

"And why is your highness holding my daughter's hand"

Daughter, those words caused his highness to blink. Seeking a confirmation, he glanced my way, so I nodded while smiling wryly.

Didn't his highness found it strange that I could easily enter the castle, furthermore for a child who exist to possess unusual red eyes should have been clear indicators. Amongst the nobility, only our lineage had red eyes. Generally they were blue. Even so compared to royalty, ours had become impure and diluted.

"I apologise for the late introduction. My name is Lizbeth Adalcian. Welf Adalcian's daughter"

Expressing the business smile which I had cultivated in my previous lifetime, his highness's eyes were wide opened, after which he began comparing me and father with mixed feelings.

If anything, I take after mother's looks, but inherited father's characteristics. This red pupil is an obvious example. It would be extremely unlucky if the red coloured resembled blood, however the colour resembled a high quality ruby called blood pigeon therefore I was suitably pleased with it.

"This time there is no use escaping. Look, it's father"

"Ah, right. Your highness, I have a favour to ask of you. Please do not try to escape from your training"

"..... It can't be helped. This fellow has already persuaded me"

Ah, he understood, that's great.

..... By the way, why does father looked so surprised.

"..... You won't go back on your word?"

"That is correct, I will endure my training and studies!"

When his highness scowled at father through the raised corner of his eyes, father nodded his head, later bursting out smiling with a broad grin. That's a rather tenacious teasing smile, isn't it?

Because it assumed a beautiful shape, could it be solely to tease his highness in the capacity of a follower? I had a foreboding that I was going to be dragged into this.

"Liz, does Liz wants to follow in my footsteps to become a Royal Magician?"

"Eh? Ah, that is, yes. It is for that purpose that I came here"

"You don't want a master as strong as me?"

"Eh? Eh? Hasn't this digress somehow?"

"It's fine. Isn't it?"

"Well, not to make a fuss I don't know what that future holds for me. Moreover, even if my master is weak, as long as I'm able to protect him is fine"

Rather it would be inevitable to talk to a four year old child about marriage. Also, on the assumption that I will inherit the Adalcian estate, marriage proposals would be regarded as political marriages.....

Only the partner that father approves may be allowed to marry me though there's none (what with him being so devoted), as for a partner I'm in love with, I don't consider any currently. That being the case an arranged marriage would be useful.

Father hardened for an instance from my response, before stifling a sounding laughter from his throat whilst sending meaningful glances at his highness. Wai-
- Father. What's with the provocation now.

"As you heard it, your highness"

"I, I have nothing to do with this"

"I see. My daughter likes men who're kind, calm and chivalrous. By no means is she fond of men who escape from their training"

"Tsk, like I said this has nothing to do with me! That's enough, I'm going back to training!"

Taking the bait from father's provocation, his highness somewhat roughly shook loose of my hand and ran off somewhere. Because his face was red, he must have been considerably embarrassed by father's teasing.

When I sent father a reproaching gaze, father laughed pleasantly. Mou, this isn't someone else's problem.

"Father, please. What do you intend to do if his highness loses his head because of this thoughtless mistake"

"It's already too late, all I gave was a push. What did you think it was, Liz"

"What it was..... It sounded like a pep talk"

"Well with his highness's attitude, I'm worried for my daughter's future"

"..... His highness has misunderstood something. Because I encouraged his highness by chance, I was seen in that light. In the first place, wouldn't puppy love fade away before long?"

I'm not stupid, I know that his highness likes me. But that's just the suspension bridge effect. His anxieties and worries, because I happened to intervened, had settled them by chance. Attracted by that image, it led to this misunderstanding.

Therefore, his highness doesn't truly know me very well; it would be impossible for his highness to come to like my true self. Moreover an uncharming woman as myself.

In the first place, opportunities to meet his highness is scarce. Casually meeting the heir of the throne is impossible, much less intentionally. The world we live in is different, troublesome connections aren't needed. It was just an encounter.

Shrugging my shoulder, father's face twitched a little, though I didn't do anything.

Certainly the return is big if I'm acquainted with his highness, but the risk is scarier. Considering the risks as much as possible I would like to avoid the thought of utilising his highness.

"Leaving that aside father, you will keep your promise, right?"

"Ah, yes. You properly persuaded his highness, huh"

"Thank you!"

Because of father a weird flag had been triggered, but my original objective was to measure myself against the magical aptitude test. Simply put his highness was work, it's not like I hate him but with my original objective in front of me, perhaps he would be considered trivial.

".... I've come to feel sorry for his highness"

Finally achieving my long-cherished desire, I smiled naturally, whilst father let out a magnificent amount of sigh.

Chapter 7 - Touchstone

"Father, Father, what should I do? There are so many books! Compared to our house, there are so many more books! What should I do? Well then, isn't it a waste not to read them? This, isn't it a waste not to read them!"

"Settle down, Liz. It's alright to read, how about after we've settled your

request"

The place where Father had brought me along was the Magician's Institution located inside the castle. Rather than saying it exists inside the castle, it felt like a building that had been found within the castle.

The Magician's Institution was treated like an external department. Even so, it was still considered a system that was under the King's direct supervision. And more importantly, above all else, within the Magician's Institution, books concerning sorcery covered all of the surfaces on the walls.

Earlier when I was at the library, there were not many books on sorcery. Primarily, it felt filled with books on history and the world, which wasn't very interesting for me. Of course, I love ordinary books, though as expected – my love for sorcery books are an exception.

Upon entering, Father was immediately greeted by a personnel's request so I was showed into this room..... Yup, this place is heaven.

I mean look, the walls are crammed packed, lined with magic books. There are even a lot of books that I don't understand. Considering I've read everything within the span of the house, seeing the spectacle before my very eyes rather excites me.

Seeing my twinkling eyes, Father gave a wry smile. Father knows that I especially love these kinds of books.

"..... Fuwahhh, excuse me, unconsciously....."

"Well it was expected..... Well, Liz, come inside here"

Lead by Father's hand, there was a door located deep inside. Judging from it's appearance, it was a sturdy door. It gave a feeling as though something quite precious was located deep within.

"Father, this is.....?"

"On the other side of this door is the magical aptitude stone. This is where

you release all your magical powers into it. Ah, but it's fairly precious, so try not to destroy it"

Well if a hammer were to strike the topmost of the Magic Institution and it were to fall, it still wouldn't break, was said by Father with an assured laugh and a clap on my shoulders.

Stop please Father, that's like an introduction flag right. A flag that I'll crush.

My cheeks twitched slightly as I acutely felt an ominous foreboding. Father, however, was still laughing, pushing me from the back. No, even if it broke, I had no idea, honestly.

"..... It won't really break, right"

"It will be fine. Furthermore, it's an object that shines upon accumulating magical powers. Even though I say it's precious, it doesn't mean that we can't mine it again"

..... I really didn't know that.

"..... So I need to release my magic into this?"

Having been invited into the room, I was handed a lump the size of a man's fist. An onyx looking, glossy looking jet-black stone remained in my hands. Also as it was quite heavy, it was extremely difficult to hold. Because it was incredibly beautiful, it was inconceivable that it was just a stone. It seemed to have been placed on the pedestal, for in the centre of the small room stood its installation spot.

..... Expensive, it looked absolutely expensive.

"Yup. In the front of the pedestal..... Positioned at the centre, release your magic into it"

Father conveniently declared with a smile, causing me to become extremely hesitant. Somehow, I felt exceptionally guilty. Even if I were to be said to be a child of Father's and Mother's. It was easy to be self-conscious of one's abilities with these people.

Father could be seen with a smile full of expectations. Perhaps my child is

amazing, is what he anticipates..... So I can't let down his expectations, can I.

Considering the conditions set before me, one can only advance. Wishing hard, I place my hand on the stone and put my all into it.

Unsure how to invoke the touchstone, I slowly concentrated my powers into it. As my parents' child, I expect to have some talent.

Probably.

Synchronising my breath as I breath in and out, from the surface of my palm, magic poured into the touchstone. The magic poured steadily in accordance to my blood flow stream, with the sensation that it was being absorbed by the touchstone. It can be said that the source of magic is blood, though the more accurate source is actually our life force.

Magic resides in our blood. In fact, endlessly flowing within us is what's called magic. Externally, the dispelled, materialised form is called sorcery..... Though that's just second hand information from a book. There's also an organ that produces magic..... Hmm, I guess it's somewhere in the brain tissues. This organ takes in the magic source called magic particle in the air when you aren't aware of it and converts it into magic power inside the body and accumulates it in blood. A condenser and a transformer? That seems to be its role.

To be termed highly as a genius in the making, according to others, my condenser, transformer and battery allows a phenomenal maximum, permissible dosage. Creating magic personally is a requirement for the conversion. If you can process large amounts of magic particle in the atmosphere, then you can store a massive amount. Thus to be able to handle that quantity all at once is uncommon.

In the realms of possibility for parallel processing of sorcery, this would appear to be an accomplishment. Simply by Father's judgement, this was a needed preface. Because he was an overly doting parent, I only half listened to him. There's a limit to listening about one's cheat specs that one can be amazed by. How can Father easily make a judgement based on that.

"Liz! Your hand, your hand!"

"..... My hand?"

Mindlessly absorbed and concentrated within my thoughts, Father's voice sounded desperate in the distance.

Coming back to reality I glanced at my palm..... Crap what should I do, it's melting.

Not my hand, the stone.

"Father, was it broken when you gave it to me?"

"How are you even so calm there, Liz! Quickly suspend your magic!"

Without even saying I already understood, concentrating, I stopped the flow of magic and began to accumulate it back with my palm. Nevertheless, it barely stopped the flow. The solid trace of the touchstone was nowhere to be found.

The mineral lump had liquidized into fluid. The jet-black liquid..... had transformed completely into a liquid that was milky-white which occasionally glittered and radiated with the seven prismatic colours, for example, opal looking.

Nope. As expected, I didn't wish for this special sort of ability. Why such a cheat.

"Father, container"

"Huh, container!? Wait just a minute, I'll get it!"

As expected it was wrong to complain. Even though I had only poured in what I deemed an ordinary amount of magic, the resulting state of the touchstone was completely unexpected. Father left in a panic after his gaze met the touchstone with lowered eyebrows.

Father could not have predicted this situation. Even I, who had an ominous foreboding, couldn't have predicted this outcome.

Until Father returned I stood motionlessly, concentrating my gaze on the milky white liquid within my palms.

..... Why did the stone get dissolved. For the mineral to dissolve, it would require hundreds to thousands of degrees or it would be impossible, yet my palm wasn't even hot.

Simmering, the liquified touchstone had changed completely into a clear opal. Personally, I like the ruby I inherited from Father but..... there's no complaints for the touchstone either.

"Liz, the container!"

"Ah, Father"

Wondering what to do, Father worriedly dashed back carrying a container in addition with an obviously understandably important elderly man accompanying him. I'm going to be predictably lectured, right.

The elderly man personally took one glance at the liquified touchstone in my hands and collapsed.

"Stay strong, Monk Georg!", Father said as he supported him without any problems.

Oh dear, I'm truly sorry.

For the time being, the container that Father brought back..... Must have been used by someone drinking at work..... I transferred the touchstone into the wineglass.

Thereupon leaving my hands, the white touchstone gradually turned black. Even the form the mineral was in gradually changed back into its original state. Was this shape recollection.

Father was surprised beyond amazement, considered all my undertakings and proceeded to laugh strenuously with a half-opened eye. What's with that sorrowful expression.

"Liz....."

"As told, I only just poured in my magic?"

It wasn't like I did anything strange. Just as instructed, I poured my magic into it. And then it broke, which surprised me.

To me shrugging with a troubled face, the elderly man, whom I believed was called Monk Georg, with eyebrows pushed close together looked in my

direction.

..... Chiri.

From the bottom of the nape of my neck, some kind of unpleasant feeling was caressing me. A type of pricking sensation, pain was travelling slightly. Unconsciously rubbing behind my neck to search for the source..... No, even without searching I understood.

..... Seriously.

I wish you wouldn't do that to a child, such actions can send you flying. Well it's not like I don't understand. It really makes you wonder what he's thinking, huh. Honestly, the older you get, the more stubborn you become.

Nevertheless even if I realise it now, who knows if he actually did it and it's not like I have definite proof either. It might be nothing more than a needless fear but I want it to stop.

If necessary, acting innocent might be a good plan.

"..... Liz, for now let's call it a day. Father has more work to do, so I'll remain here"

"I understand..... Because it's dangerous to walk home alone, can't I just read a book here?"

Although the last part of my emitted thoughts were a bit subtle, it seems that Father knew me well..... Realising the meaning behind my words, he gave a nod. Nothing was going to happen with Father around.

Feigning innocence at the unpleasant aura scattered by Monk Georg, I jumped out of the room.

Goodness gracious, adults are scary.

Chapter 8 - Tutor

Unfortunately since the incident, I've been prohibited from entering the Magical Institution. It seems Monk Georg secretly made the necessary preparations. Despite possessing an impressive quantity of magic, as expected of I, who had perpetrated the act of melting the valuable touchstone, lacked control and therefore was deemed dangerous. Yup, I had a hunch that something like this would happen.

To me, it was such a huge shock being unable to visit that mountain of treasure..... Oh well, you reap what you sow. Besides, I'm reluctant to meet and manage the messed up prince. I hope the latter doesn't become reality.

"Liz, do come down"

Ah, I was about to read that book over there. In response to Mother's soft voice humbly calling, with my face buried under a pillow, I let out a sigh. Strange. It was rare that I was called for when I was usually reading unless it was to eat.

"What is it, Mother?"

"Your Father..... That is to say, you have a visitor"

"Me?"

From the start, I had no neighbourhood playmates. The reason being, there was no profit to gain outside, hence I have no acquaintances. However, despite

knowing this, Mother still claimed that I have a visitor.

..... Hold on, surely it can't be his Highness? No no, it couldn't be. As the heir to the throne, it would be next to impossible for him to easily visit the castle town.

That being the case, it was most likely to be Monk Georg, bearing hostility. I had the impression that the stubborn man would inquire what I did to the touchstone, then yell and scrutinise me. He would definitely falsely accuse me of destroying the touchstone.

"..... Understood. I'll be there shortly"

Unwilling to cope with a heightened terrible feeling, I left the room reluctantly and descended the stairs.

And then, a totally unexpected pattern occurred.

"You are Lizbeth Adelcian-sama, am I right?"

Waiting in the parlour was an unfamiliar person. What does this mean.

It was probably a man, wearing a hooded robe that concealed his entire body.

His height was a bit short, probably about the same stature as Mother's. It's a small impression overall.

Fumbling the words to ask him who he was, whilst staring fixedly at him, he gave me a wry smile. It was a passing look that a child was unaccustomed to.

"My name is Gilleraide Sévéne. I have been asked by your Father to teach you sorcery"

Realizing he still had his hood up, Gilleraide politely lowered his hood. From the back, glossy green hair tied in a bundle spilled out.



..... For a moment, I thought of the name Blue Beard, which was extremely impolitely. Thankfully I didn't say it out loud. Although their names were a little similar.

I huddled absentmindedly.

Slowly, Gilleraide raised his eyes. Oh my, he was a real beauty. For the coming of age ceremony, in this world, it's 15 years old. From his appearance, he couldn't possibly be at such an age; the boy was most likely 12 years old. Rather than calling him a beauty, wouldn't it be better to call him a handsome boy?

The same color as his hair, his pupils relaxed softly with a smile praised on his lips. Staring fixedly at the vivid green eyes, I locked my impressions inside of my heart without saying anything.....

"I am Lizbeth Adelcian. Did you come here intentionally to greet me?"

"I was specifically requested to teach in your house"

Gilleraide nodded his head with a smile. With a, 'is that so', I shook his hand which came out from his short sleeves with downward cast eyes.

To my actions, Mother gave a wry smile before continuing the conversation.

"Did it take long to arrive here? If you live far away, it must have been quite troublesome....."

"No. As it was quite a distance, I've taken up lodging at an inn"

"But the charges are absurdly high are they not? As you're teaching my child, how about residing here instead?"

Worrying about the inn charges, despite being a noble, Mother was the spitting image of a housewife. Well, before she married into the house, Mother was part of the middle class. It's a splendid thing to be in a love marriage. Although personally, it has its own challenges.

Gilleraide seemed cheerful about the proposal, further inquiring "Is that alright?" and waited for our response. That is extremely convenient for Gilleraide. If I was in his position, I would have taken it up instantly.

My kind-hearted Mother nodded in response, Gilleraide looked somewhat relieved.

..... It wasn't like anything in particular had been decided, nor were there any objections.

"This child is very shy, please forgive her rudeness"

"That's fine. I was also awkward at that age..... Lizbeth-sama, it's a pleasure to make your acquaintance"

Approaching closer to me with a friendly smile, I shyly raised my head and replied "I'm in your care" at Gilleraide. Okay, this seems shy.

Mother, don't assume I'm shy, even if I certainly don't have friends and even acquaintances of the same age. Ah, that excludes his Highness.

..... After this, I began to suffer hardships.

In various ways.

Chapter 9 - First Spell

"To what extent do you understand sorcery, Lizbeth-sama?"

Right away, I began studying under Gilleraide-san on the practice of magic.

As expected, it was dangerous to practice inside the house in the event of an accidental discharge. Therefore, our lessons took place in the pointlessly wide garden.

Pondering while gazing at the sun, Gilleraide-san asked the question under the tree. Troubled, I lowered my eyebrows.

"To say to what extent..... Conversely, to what extent is desirable?"

"Ahahaha. This is troubling to say the least. I see..... Then, what about the method of invoking sorcery"

With a wry smile, Gilleraide-san rephrased and asked the question again. Putting my finger on my lips, I hmm-ed with a troubled manner If it's about the invocation process, I had read it up in a book but answering immediately, as one would expect, was the least adorable.

Putting on a childish countenance whilst groaning by and by, I accidentally glance at Gilleraide-san as I nervously opened my mouth.

"Um..... The phenomenon for the purpose of displaying magical powers in bodily form, a magical equation needs to be constructed. Here, it is inserted with magical powers and the phenomenon will materialise..... Is it?"

It's a child's explanation, kay? So please don't crush it. All I did was simply express an abridged version of the long explanation from that book I read.

Well, to simplify, magical powers resembles electricity. When that electricity is passed through to various devices, the desired result is achievable. For example: a refrigerator, television, electric fan and a motor. Those machines are

a form of magical equations.

Overall, magical power isn't simply sheer energy. By intervening with intention, it is able to clearly shape magical equations to boost the materialisation. Unless the image and control is realised, sorcery can't be handled.

I don't have any worries though.

Gilleraide-san was surprised by my answer. His green eyes widened and then, with a grin forming on his lips, he gently stroke my head.

"That is correct. Well done, Lizbeth-sama"

"..... Please stop addressing me with -sama, Gilleraide-san"

Yup, since earlier, I've been feeling a little bit impatient. To address a short young girl with -sama, for me, it felt embarrassing. Especially considering this person was a child as well, I need to relieve this kid from respecting me.

"Just Liz is fine"

"Then please call me Gilles, I'm not too fond of my name as is"

My request was a bit surprising but it was met with a similar exchange of endearment. To be frank, the name Gilleraide was a mouthful. Then, when I teasingly called Gilles, with a tender smile he said, "Yes, Liz-sama"and responded with the same tone.

A lady killer to be..... No, wait! He is already a lady killer. In the end, I couldn't convince him to drop -sama but ah well.

"..... Moving on, since you understand the invocation sequence then implementing control is the problem, hmm..... Let's move on to practice at once"

"Yes"

Finally, the real lesson of sorcery begins, I thought as I smiled broadly. Even if I wanted to try it, my parents intervened, claiming it was dangerous, so I couldn't. Furthermore, I was cautioned several times as a result of the touchstone incident, leaving me distant and a little bit displeased. At last, at last it's possible!

"First of all, let's begin with the basics. Even Liz-sama would be able to do it as a beginner"

From beneath his robe, Gilles-san took out a book and a small cloth bag. The book looked similar to a textbook..... But I wonder what the small bag was for. It seems there was something inside the palm-sized bag. No, that was natural.

Puzzled but without batting an eye, Gilles-san dropped the small bag into my palm. Giving off a light and fresh sound, it was not particularly heavy and rested on my small palm easily.

"..... This is?"

"A plant seed. It is called the flower of Rishia"

Flower of Rishia.

..... Ah, it's Mother's favourite flower. With pale pink petals, the shape looked similar to sweet peas..... That is to say, it roughly looked like sweet peas.

Alright, I felt motivated suddenly. No, I felt motivated from the beginning. If this works, I can give it to Mother as a present for always taking care of me. She'll probably be pleased.

"Then I'll demonstrate first. Please watch from there, Liz-sama. You may practice after you've read this book"

Fetching a single seed out of the cloth bag, he placed it on his palm for me to see.

And, hey presto!

Without any spare movements, the seed split and the sprout grew. By the time I noticed, it had grown into a bud. Before my very starry eyes, the bud bloomed into a splendid pale pink flower.

"....."

"How is it?"

"Yes, it's splendid..... Could you explain the process?"

It was so astounding that I was left speechless. Without even a sign, before I noticed, it had bloomed into a flower. Certainly it was so wonderfully surprising that for the time being, I desired my tutor to explain the theory. Unless I understood the hypothesis that produced this result, I would be unable to reproduce the same effect even if I read all the textbooks there is to read.

"..... You could not understand what you saw?"

Blankly, Gilles-san looked at me. I secretly sighed inwardly at him. Choosing this person was a mistake, wasn't it?

My human intuition tells me he was definitely the genius type. The type that couldn't teach directly. He was certainly chosen for his personality and ability.

"Ah, er..... That's right, how about reading the sorcery book?"

Noticing my stiffened cheek, panicking, he hurriedly flipped the thin pages of the substitute sorcery textbook, directing a particular page at me.

'Green Thumb'

'Sorcery that stimulates the growth of plants. The effect relies on the practitioner's magical powers'

..... Like translating foreign words into English, they were confusing even though the words made perfect sense. A person who raises the plant, who loves nature – that was the connotation. Or rather, that's not what I wanted to know.

After witnessing the effect, what I really wanted to know was the invocation process. What kind of magic equation construct was used to produced an

effective materialisation.

"This was the sorcery I used earlier. As for the magical equation..... Ah, got it. This is it"

As expected, he understood what I was about to ask. Indicated on the next page was a diagram resembling a magic formation.

"Please feel this and memorise the magical power surge. By memorising the shape of the magical equation, it can be constructed within your body"

Finally sounding like a teacher, I quickly followed his instructions and begun tracing the lines on the magic formation with my finger. The lines were drawn with an ochre colour, possibly to symbolise the earth attribute. As it was sorcery related to the plants in the earth, it was a good nod to the attribute.

Slowly, I traced the lines of the magic equation with my fingertips, allowing it to soak into my body until it's shape was finally imprinted within me. That was the magic equation.

"Have you memorised that feeling? In that magic equation, pour your magical powers into it. The most important thing is the image and how Liz-sama wishes to materialise it"

"..... Materialise"

"Yes, how would Liz-sama want to do it"

While whispering to me, he removed a single seed from the cloth bag and dropped it into my palm.

"Now, pour your magical powers into it. What would you do to this seed, Liz-sama?"

..... I, I want to make Mother's favourite flower bloom a lot.

With that firm decision, the magical powers flowing within my body was poured into my palm. Condensing the overflowing powers from the magical equation into the seed, I concentrated my powers in order to emphasise the image change.

Light sprang from my palm. Dazzling brightness filled my vision. The reaction was different from Gilles-san.....

"..... This is....."

When the light settled, residing in my palm was..... somehow twice the amount of seeds.

"....."

"It multiplied"

Incomprehensible.

"..... Erm, Liz-sama used this sorcery, right"

"That was the intention"

"..... Why did it multiply"

That's what I'd like to know. Even though I had only put my magical powers as told.....!

I tried once again, however the result was needless to say. Exceeding the fourth attempt, I found my eyes staring into the distance.

..... If this keeps up, it's going to be difficult. It looks like there'll be many difficulties ahead of me.

Chapter 10 - Different Image

In the end, I've since persisted through trial and error, repeating the germination process, yet not a single bud grew. Incidentally, the number of attempts exceeded my mental age, as expected it was so pitiful that Gilles-san said let's go home to me.

Grown accustomed to stuffing the seeds away into the bag..... Ah, this new seed was slightly large and it couldn't fit inside, so I concluded that the bag was filled to the brim.

It's not like I had any intention to throw the towel and give up. My concentration was at it's limit, therefore it was time to take a break. Still, there was no sense of fatigue what-so-ever. This was the blessing of inheriting my

parents' abundance of magical power.

"Liz-sama, as you've only just started, it'll be alright"

"That's what I'd like to believe too....."

Though I had practiced desperately, the end result was still the same. Having the hypothesis was important, in this case, the result was the basis. Moreover, with my said aptitude, the problem had to be how I handled it. The me who got carried away was embarrassing.

For now, upon returning, I intend to shut myself in the study and mull over the problem. If this keeps up, I feel that today's results will surely repeat tomorrow.

"Aren't you exhausted, Liz-sama?"

"No, I'm fine. I can still continue..... Well, at this rate of loss, it might be better to return and think on it"

Gilles-san hardened and was at a loss when I lowered my head lightly and thanked him for his concern. He probably wanted to say that it was strange to apologise thoughtlessly.....

"Liz-sama has changed. Lowering your head to someone like me....."

"Saying something like someone like me..... Aren't I studying under you?"

Furthermore, isn't Gilles-san not of a lower social position?"

"Tsk"

"You would have to be at least a noble, as generally nobles are well suited for

magic. Furthermore, to the extent that even Father requested your service"

It's not as though Father was the type of person who discriminates between the commoners and the nobles. Rather than comprehension, it was an emphasis on a person's abilities. Still, for me to be paired with a tutor, it would be better if I was paired with a child of good standing.

There were expectations for a future friendship to be fostered. So that I could profit from it, Father had chosen someone without hesitation. Also, perhaps if a child whose outward appearance was close to my age had been selected, there would be unnecessary concerns.

"Besides, even if you were a noble, commoner or even a slave, my manners will not change. It is natural to be grateful when receiving favours from others"

Gilles-san held his breath and stared at me, but before long the strained expression he had changed into a bitter smile. To be seen through, for a child to declare such things was perplexing.

Well, both parties gave off that feeling. Unbecoming of his age, Gilles-san gave a bitter smile on his face.

"..... What to do"

"Either way, it's fine. I don't intend to pry afterall"

There were no advantages in it for me. Investigating into a person's past and weaknesses wasn't a hobby I was fond of. I have a guilty conscience after all.

"..... Shall we return, Liz-sama"

"I suppose"

In some respects, keeping our distance, we returned home.

"..... Hmm, there doesn't seem to be any problem with the method though"

Upon returning and bidding farewell to Gilles-san, I shut myself in the study as declared to review the probable cause with the sorcery book that I had dragged out. As far as I checked, the method that Gilles-san taught me wasn't the problem. That in which an image is materialised through magical equation is a process of sorcery. The difference in every sorcery can't be found here.

There are a few exceptions. For example, when somebody is extremely familiar and when it's a super large scale destruction sorcery that only requires the perfected input of magical equations to activate. In either case, those exceptions were inapplicable to this situation.

Then would the problem lie with me? There was no problem with memorising the magical equation. The quantity of magic powers I had could be guaranteed based on the touchstone incident. That being the case, then the problem must lie with the image. Unaccustomed to using my magical powers, I couldn't form a clear image as a basis for sorcery. Is that what I was lacking?

However, if that's case, it's strange that I haven't improved from my failures. The number of multiplied seeds produced from my attempts have already

entered the thousands. Multiplication?

Well, with these I would be able to grow a flower garden, completely dyeing the garden pink with the Rishia flowers.

..... A flower garden?

"Ah, so that's it"

I see! This was where I had made a mistake. It certainly was a problem with the image. That's right, the effort I expended to bring the image and reality into fruition wasn't enough.

Understanding that, I can begin the necessary preparations. If I start now, I should be able to make it by sunset. Would this be able to make Mother and Gilles-san surprised? However, that's if my hypothesis is correct.....

"Mother. Gilles-san. Would both of you come to the back yard for just a moment?"

I called out to Mother who was in midst of preparing the evening meal - Ah, Mother usually prepares it instead of leaving it to the maid - and Gilles-san who was in the living room. Mother walked up to me, curiously staring at my hand in amazement.

"I thought you were shut up in the study..... Why are you covered in dirt?"
"There are some circumstances behind it. Ah, would you come with us together to the rear garden, Gilles-san?"

"..... I don't think there's a problem with that but....."

"Then, let's go"

Leading the confused duo, I ran to the rear garden as I guided them.

"Would you both please stand here? Ah, please keep still, okay"

Bringing them to the designated spot, both of them came to a halt. Surrounding them was a circle drawn in the earth with a different coloured soil. Yes, I used a scoop but it was considerably difficult to use with a child's body. Including the practice of sorcery, I was exhausted. Whether the results corresponds with the hardships faced, it would depend purely on my ability.

The two people looked perplexed at my strange behaviour, but I returned a sweet smile with a smiling face.

"Then, please take a close look"

Falling two steps behind the circle of the different coloured soil, I sat on my knees. It was like a crouching start pose. Ready, go!

Jokes aside, I quickly sucked in a deep breath. Both thumbs on my fingers pressed firmly onto the ground, coming in contact with the earth. I used the magic 'Green Thumb' as Gilles-san taught me. The literal translation was green thumb. It meant that a person who loves nature is a person who can raise plants.

And my greatest mistake was, wanting to show a great spectacle to Mother. That was the answer.

Using my thumbs which touched the earth as an intermediary, I poured my magical powers into the earth, spilling it into the nearby surrounding different colored soil. It wasn't clear if it would succeed. However, I still wanted to show it to her, a gift from your daughter.

"Bloom....."

My head trembled as I put my powers into the magical equation. From my lips, I mumbled the words 'Green Thumb'.

"This is....."

The dazzling burning light reflected into my eyes which I shut reflexively. In a daze, Gille-san murmured so I slowly opened my eyes..... and began to smile broadly.

Before my very eyes, Mother was surrounded by a blossoming field of pale pink flowers.

"It's a success, isn't it....."

Yup, my hypothesis was proven.

Why did I fail before?

That's because the image I had drawn compared to the image Gilles-san had practiced were completely different. Gilles-san had instructed me to make a flower bloom. And when I practiced, it failed..... Rather, due to my unconscious preparations to execute my desires, it had caused me to fail.

I wanted to show Mother a flower garden. Therefore, just one flower blooming wasn't sufficient. With that said, why did the seeds multiply? Perhaps the seeds were necessary for the sake of achieving that goal, so it multiplied. It's multiplication was the first step to achieve my goals. The final step was to bury them and apply sorcery to make them bloom.

Even if I say so myself, this was an excellent deduction. As for the objective, I managed to make a flower garden in the end.

"This..... was Liz's doing?"

"How was it? I did pretty well, didn't I? I wanted to show Mother's favourite flower blooming"

Puffing my chest for giving an excellent performance, Gilles-san and Mother exchanged glances with a troubled look. Eh, they don't look so pleased.

"Was it..... useless? If it isn't enough, I can add more seeds to it....."

"That's not true. It was a pleasant surprise beyond my expectations however....."

"Until now, you had trouble with it. How did you....."

"I seriously pondered on it"

Honestly, good job me! Due to a sudden terrible feeling, I started to become

dizzy. Or rather, my vision became blurry.....

"Liz!?"

Huh, Mother looks visibly warped..... Like an octopus. When did you become a mollusc.....?

Limply gazing at Mother's and Gilles-san's flustered faces, feeling satisfied, I lost consciousness.

Chapter 11 - Father and Gilles-san

Once I got the hang of it, sorcery wasn't that difficult. Well, Gilles-san was only teaching elementary sorcery after all, so it's not something proud to say.

By the time my awareness had returned, a day had passed and I was scolded severely when I woke up. Don't overexert yourself and you've tried too hard. Instead of being praised, I was yelled at instead.

Later, I received a hug and the words "Thank you", which left me feeling pleased with myself. Mother had a gentle scent that made me happy in her embrace.

"How about we start on this sorcery today?"

"Yes"

Gilles-san's tutoring was progressing as well. Since I thought he taught straight forwardly with a genius temperament, I didn't expect that he could provide logical answers.

While there's no mistake in saying that he has a genius temperament, he did his job and taught me the information and vocabularies sufficiently. His explanation with sound effects were scary, but in the end, it turned out to be a baseless worry.

Today's lesson was on the water sorcery, 'Water Rain'. Well, judging from its name, it's a sorcery that calls down the rain. In other words, a magnificent

sorcery that makes watering easier. As expected of Gilles-san. Nice choice!

By the way, the offensive version of this sorcery is called 'Splash'. The feeling was like a water jug being thrown out with force from above.

"Once we have finished, may I pay a visit to the garden to check on its condition?"

"After you finish your assignment, Liz-sama, you may do as you please"

After that, with Mother's help, I planted various seeds alongside the Rishia flower garden. The terrifying thing about using 'Green Thumb' is that it makes everything grow rapidly. Amongst the various flowers, a fruit which looks like a strawberry – for snacks – was growing in the garden shrubs, bearing fruit. I'm fairly certain its name was Fraise.

As it was a French name, I wasn't certain.....

For that reason, I had converted the backyard into a plantation. Fully motivated when learning sorcery, I felt even more enthusiastic than during my free time. Today's watering spell was just what I wanted to memorise, so let's practice it.

Motivated more than usual, I opened the sorcery book with familiarity to the designated page. As I flipped the pages running through the water sorcery chapter, something caught my interest.

"What is this 'Tidal Wave' sorcery? "

"If you don't want to destroy this neighbourhood, please never use it"

"Ok"

"It's a sorcery that summons a tsunami, okay? Of course, the strength and image is dependent on the practitioner's abilities. However, with the quantity of Liz-sama's magical powers..... if summoned, it would be disastrous"

Why is such a dreadful spell written in this book? Dangerous! Even if I tried it for a bit, it wouldn't have been a joke if it became a catastrophe. I wouldn't be able to face Father again.

That reminds me, since then, I haven't seen Father's figure..... For some reason, since I had been involved in the case of the liquefied touchstone, he's been caught up in some troubles. I felt guilty that he's been cleaning up for me. He'll be coming home soon though.....

"Even if you could control the spell, it would be better for Liz-sama to try it in a deserted land where there's nothing around. However, we're getting ahead of ourselves. For now, let's focus on learning basic sorcery"

"I understand. After all, I'm not particularly fond of killing others"

Indeed it wasn't a cute impression to give. However, because I didn't want to fall into ruin, I answered in this manner. I mean, I don't want to degenerate into a criminal.

Leaving this talk aside, I turned my focus towards practicing 'Water Rain' for the rest of the day.

"Liz, I'm home!"

"Father!"

Today's sorcery practice... Ah, it was a success! Under Gilles-san's watch, I headed into the rear garden to visit the Rishia flower garden which I hadn't seen for two weeks.

Resisting the urge to run to Father, I approached and hugged him with a slightly loose cheek. Ah, I'm sorry that I made it so difficult for you.

"It's been awhile, Father. Due to my mistake....."

"That wasn't the reason..... Okay, perhaps a little, but as various studies had developed, in the end, it was alright!"

I was grateful for his words..... However, I still felt exceedingly apologetic towards Father.

Embracing whilst stroking his cheek, Father whom I was worried for, tenderly smiled in return and caressed my cheek. Father was really sweet with me...

Wanting to express my thanks, I moved my hands and neck to embrace him and after I received a pat on my tummy, I let go. Perhaps he had been confined

in the Magic Institution for a bit too long so being under the sun's fragrance would do him some good. I really loved this smell. It's frightening to think that one day it'll change into an old man's scent.

"And you must be..... Gilleraide-kun, right?"

After talking with me, Father became aware of Gilles-san whom I had left behind. Carrying me, Father approached him.

Turning around for an instance, Gilles-san gave a stiff look to Father and I. Was it my imagination that..... he faltered..... No, looked intimidated? That look left us pondering over it.

"I would never have expected you to come"

"..... because of my Father's life"

"..... Father?"

Why was Father's tone eerie? Glancing at his face, his smile hadn't changed. It was the usual tender smiling face.

Although that was the case..... An intimidating pressure hung in the air.

"Was this under your Father's orders? Or....."

"I'm unable to answer you....."

I somewhat understood what Father wanted to say. I didn't understand the full circumstances, but I was able to guess. This tied in with my initial uneasiness.

Lowering his eyebrows, Gilles-san gave an apologetic head shake. Even if Father didn't say what he wanted to, someone would have commanded it.

Based on the present conversation, Father had not hired Gilles-san directly to be my tutor. However, to accept this notion..... Father must have sent for a talented person through his connections, and the person who ended up being sent was Gilles-san.

For Father to be concerned of my acquaintance with Gilles-san, perhaps it would be better to stay vigilant of him. His personality didn't make a difference. The problem most likely resided with his family.

"Gilleraide-kun, you....."

Drip drop.

Whatever Father wanted to say, in that instant, the 'Water Rain' spell I had learned earlier and casted had activated in an extensive range. It had already covered the entire span of the estate. Continuous, moreover, extensive raining wasn't an easy task.

Well, with this body that was uselessly overflowing with powers, it would be utilised and spread in one go.

To my surprised Father, I smiled sweetly.

"It looks like it's about to rain. How about we head home. Hmm?"

The rain was deliberately obvious, but Father, after looking at me with a slight grumble and a wry smile, nodded his head. Gilles-san was surprised by my conduct. However, it was because I was guilty of intervening between them, furthermore, as the reasonably concerned party.

For now, I had a debt to repay. Originally I didn't like to get involved..... Just, it was in repayment for the opportunity to make Mother happy. Besides, he didn't seem like the type of person to stir up trouble suddenly.

Not telling Father and Gilles-san that I had used sorcery to cause it to rain, we simply returned home to escape from the downpour.

I hope nothing seriously bad happens. Yup..... Well, if anything happens, I will handle it by myself, one way or another. For that sake, I need to quickly brush up on my sorcery.

Chapter 12 - Assault Visit

"Liz, I'm here!"

Wai----- Ehhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Am I dreaming? Standing imposingly in the hallway as my maid called upon

me with a frantic voice was his Highness, a self-satisfied look adorning his face.

No no no no. It would be impossible for his Highness, who is in constant peril of assassination, to boldly pay me a visit. Normally, a servant or guard would stop him. Ah, look! The servant and knights are..... Ooi! Don't avert your eyes. Argh! This absolutely selfish, wilful child! He must have threatened them with dismissal if they didn't heed his words.

"Liz!"

Standing in the hallway, I stared dumbfounded at his Highness, wondering how he could be so reckless. Whereas upon seeing me, his Highness' eyes gleamed.

Why did this happen? Do you really like me scolding you? Or rather, he seems to think that gatecrashing my home was natural.

I sucked in a deep breath as his Highness shook free from the maid's restraint and rushed over to me.

"Liz---"

"What are you doing here!"

For the moment, I threw out a magnificent booming voice.

"Understand this, your Highness. You are first in line to succeed the throne and with it, the country. It doesn't matter how much work you try and dump onto your younger brother, as the first successor, you will still have endless matters to attend to. When you're King, will you continue to shake off your retainers without looking back in order to pay a visit to an individual such as myself? You are the heir to the throne. Please refrain from being intimate with a noble such as myself, who would be considered a good bait if anyone plans to crush you. Also, no matter how many guards there are, you can't predict what would happen outside. A person whom the knights within your guard can't

defend against may show up. If an assassin amongst your guard were to appear, what would you do? Would you wish for your selfishness to endanger both you and your knights? Do you intend to die pointlessly? Do you know the value of your own life?"

I announced, smiling as I politely lead the stiff faced Prince to the drawing room by the hand (like eloping). Normally one wouldn't enjoy preaching to a child, however, from the start, I was never childlike.

The knights stood behind his Highness' back though everyone had a stiff face. Yup, everyone understood except this kid, but now's not the time. Not acting cute-like but strange? That's okay.

Generally, knights assigned to people of higher authority would cling and attach themselves to their charge. To stop a person..... Ah, well, there's none, I guess. To forcefully comply, you would either have to be the King or the Queen.

"Nn-- No, but see, I'm....."

"There are no restrictions to going outside the castle to pay me a visit freely but did you obtain permission from the King or announced the destination? It is the standard to inform, communicate and discuss"

"..... I'm sorry"

Dropping my smile for a stern look, his Highness apologised meekly. Well, that apology to me is inevitable. However, I wasn't the only person whom he ought to apologise to for abusing his power.

"Your Highness, please apologise to the knights for declaring something so unreasonable"

"Bu..... But"

"If you won't apologise, please leave at once"

"..... It's my fault"

..... You could say I was rather pleased. Normally, he would fly into a rage and leave. That was my experience.

To think his Highness regarded me so highly. Rather, it would be better if I was hated. In reality, some adults..... Well, no one would declare it. Those big-shots, suspiciously acting as if I'm an eyesore all because I'm not childlike.

Taken aback by his Highness' action, the knights awaited my response with slight unease when his Highness asked if it was sufficient. Eh..... No, to have such a fixation towards me.

"..... You did well?"

Considering this would absolutely be taken for lèse-majesté, I gently stroke his head and his handsome face relaxed. Ah~..... Er, don't look at me with those eyes, your Highness.

For his Highness to be pleased from being stroked by a brazen young girl, the knights wore an astonished face before recovering and letting out an unnatural cough.

"See here, Liz. There's a party happening at the castle---"

"Ah, as I'm busy every day, please allow me to decline"

I won't let you continue your sentence to the end.

This flag is not needed. Being introduced to the King would be a great honour which spells meeting troublesome people which spells stirring animosity. Well, I just want my ordinary life to remain the same. So although I know I'm being deliberately uncooperative, please forgive me.

Whilst I've more or less received training for this, it was not a place where a five year old girl could be seen attending. Attracting various attention, the other nobles would be envious and wrongfully suspicious, leading to my ruin. Envy is frightening, I don't want to be pierced by it.

Which is why I'm refusing.

"Thi--- This is my birthday party that has been planned for months!"

"How old are you, your Highness?"

"I'm going to be eight soon!"

"Is that so. I refuse"

I refused curtly. There was no mercy in my speech; my time and I are more important. Besides, it's evidently too early for me to attend. For someone like me, who isn't even a noble, to receive a personal invitation from his Highness is absolutely strange, don't you think? Ah, I don't care what his Highness will make out of my words on this occasion.

"Why!"

"Your Highness, in the first place, you would need to ask for your Father's permission. Upon which, if granted, an official invitation would be sent by mail to invite me. At present, please leave this place"

I'm not particularly keeping a distance or loathing him. Frankly, being liked is troublesome..... To like me, it would hardly come to fruition.

Excluding the matter of me reciprocating his feelings, I'm merely a noble. My status is insufficient to be associated with the royalty.

And his Highness is the first in line to succeed the throne. To start with, marriage isn't something you can do as you wish. That would apply even to the second in line and his child. Mainly, when it concerns the princes, they would be forced into politically arranged marriages. The princess of foreign countries would benefit the country far more as opposed to one's own nobles.

Well, considering his Highness' whining, at most I'll be his mistress, if that was even possible. I refuse to be in a love marriage.

Being in a loveless marriage means I'll be able to tear through it and there would be less surprises in store for me.

"..... No matter what, you won't come?"

"Implore for the invitation. Persuade his Majesty and we can talk afterwards"

"..... If I'm able to obtain his permission, would you definitely come?"

"Eh? Well, if a formal invitation was issued, refusing would be....."

"I understand"

Why did I imagine an extremely foreboding premonition when his Highness

noded his head seriously? Hey! Why are the knights giving a resigned look? That's a look that indicates this unwanted future will occur. Please stop. What's going to happen if it does become a reality?

For the moment, his Highness, who had given up exuding confidence in returning home to make the arrangements, intently looked me over..... What a hot gaze. Nope, that would be a lie. What is with..... that criticising feeling.

"..... Why are you wearing a male looking outfit?"

"My preference"

"..... You look better in a dress though"

His Highness pointed out my appearance. Rather than wearing a dress today, I had worn pants to move around easily. Not cutesy, right. To be honest, with my short hair, I looked like a boy.

It seems his Highness somehow desires a cute girl. In that case, choose those cuter girls instead. Whomever you choose would be approved.

"Whether it suits me or not isn't important, as I was about to head to the garden. Then, your Highness arrived"

"Garden?"

"Yes. I'm growing some flowers and fruits at the moment"

"I want to see it!"

..... Uh huh, I predicted his response would be like this. Yup, it was highly unlikely for him to meekly return home.

Looking at me with eyes filled with anticipation, I secretly sighed and said, "It's nothing big", which was met with approval.

Chapter 13 - The Small Promise

Sorcery was an extremely convenient tool. Making it rain whenever and

forcing plants to grow.

Perhaps it may be against natural providence, but man wouldn't abandon convenient advantages once experienced so easily. That is, I can confidently say that this includes me as well.

His Highness (along with an entourage of knights) accompanied me to the rear garden which I introducing to them kindly.

Stretching out in front of our eyes..... yeah, even I considered it was an unorganised spectacle.

Where the flower of Rishia had previously bloomed were the potted fraise. After that, with the intention of adding whatever I felt like eating, I also planted some auge..... ah, it's a fruit that resembled a tangerine. The shape was different in that it had a thin pink rind. The flesh was orange though.

Oh, I'm growing that orange tree. To be frank, because it's my private property, I can grow plants and fruit wherever I please. Live to eat, not eat to live. Don't despise a child for her hearty appetite.

..... Though only a glutton wouldn't have heard of it, but I did properly arranged a flower zone. Here, your mouth will water. There, your eyes will be pleased. Yup, our garden was clearly different from the ones found in other homes.

"I would love to stay and play to my heart's content, but I have other matters to attend to. Please excuse me"

Since everyone in this household was sweet to me, nobody would stop me. Gilles-san being Gilles-san, would atypically move to observe the garden with a gentle smile. However, he's returned temporarily to the Magic Institution. He has taken a leave of absence for the day to retrieve some official documents.

With his Highness' mouth wide open, I walked slowly to the fraise..... ugh, this is troublesome, I mean strawberry, and presented it to him.

"It's fresh. If you're worried about poison, then I can eat it first....."

No sooner as I said it, his Highness tossed the strawberry into his mouth without hesitation. If possible, leave the stem. It's not edible. At least let me warn you first before you eat.

Well, his Highness had an interested face, so I guess it can't be helped. Since he has never been outside of the palace, there was never a time he would have seen fruits growing.

At the most, it would have been in a picture. In the sense of social studies, perhaps there is meaning to this assault visit? Only for his Highness anyway.

"..... There's some left in my mouth"

"Please spit the stem out. Don't you think that's usually removed when your Highness eats it?"

As such, this is why I grow strawberries (It's troublesome calling it a Fraise. So in my heart, I'm just going to keep calling it a strawberry). Biting into the fruit causes the fresh fruit juice to overflow, stimulating the mouth with a sweet and sour flavour Although, the sweetness can't be compared to Japan's..... selective breeding was required. I'm not sure if that was possible.

If selective breeding was possible, that would be great. With the sly use of sorcery, as long as we're able to raise the seeds conveniently, I wonder what other hurdles we'll encounter?

Of course, even sorcery has its limitations. Special conditions need to be met, such as using a little of one's own vitality for the plants and flowers.

Assuming this wasn't a requirement, 'Green Thumb' would be an extremely convenient sorcery. There is a valid reason for sorceries like this though. When I wasn't able to execute the spell, Gilles-san had reasonably questioned what I was going to do from that point on.

"Does your Highness like fruits?"

"Yes, I love them"

"What sort of fruits do you like?"

"Uh..... Adyim?"

Aydim..... Ah! Apples.

Guessing that the root word was derived from Adam and thus, the taboo around the fruit's name. I'm not familiar with this world's Adam and Eve story though.

"Then, until your Highness visits again, I'll raise it"

"Is it alright for me to visit.....?"

"Even if I refuse, you'll still visit. If that's the case, I would rather you send a letter informing me in advance before your arrival"

His Highness would surely be inspired by the success of this assault visit. That being the case, setting preliminary conditions means that the agreed party would have time to prepare upon receiving the letter and the knights wouldn't be confused.

Really, his Highness doesn't understand the dangers of assassination.

..... Though I'm sure the knights are competent, what if I was swallowed up in the event and died? What if the opponent was considerably skilful and the knights were unable to compete with them?

"Ah. Maybe it's better not to visit. My life is more precious"

"What! Why?"

"Well, if an assassin comes, I think I'll die"

"I..... I'll protect you!"

"Can your Highness say that when you're being protected by adults"

"Since then, I've been training every day"

"That's great, but if, in reality, the knights are unable to defeat the assassin, your Highness probably can't either"

To begin with, it is strange for his Highness to protect just a single noble like myself. From a reverse standpoint, a noble like myself would be considered his Highness' subject. Risking my life to protect his Highness to the end is expected. Well, I'm not certain that every noble in the country has unwavering loyalty.

Even with the current ruling King, there are small uprisings occurring, some

nobles are also voicing out their objections to the political measures. Speaking of discontentment, I heard from Father directly about the circumstances of the nobilities when he grumbled and divulged that the royal faction was divided inside due to the current circumstances.

The present faction's loyalty was strong towards protecting his Highness, but the rebels are scheming to erase him. I wish his Highness over there would understand.

..... The Adelcian house?

We are a neutral faction that have no particular dissatisfactions towards the current conditions. That is to say, we're part of the King's faction. It's the principle of letting sleeping dogs lie.

"Please act more reasonably, your Highness"

"Doesn't this mean I can't meet Liz?"

"Please give up"

"It's better if Liz comes to the castle!"

"I have no business there. Forcefully speaking, even if I go, I would only visit the Magic Institution..... However, I have been prohibited from entering it"

It truly is regrettable to be prohibited. If I was permitted entry into the Magic Institution, I would go to read the books even if I had to see his Highness for a bit.

However..... speaking with such a high authority is not my intention. In the first place, it's strange for his Highness to simply utter things.

"..... Why were you forbidden?"

"Due to being guilty of a matter, Monk Georg had prohibited my entry"

Well, I was paying for my mistake.

If it continues, I would compromise with my flower garden. The sweet, blooming surface of the Rishia flowers was softening; looking at them for a moment washed away all my negative feelings. Yup, if I was depressed, I could easily cast 'Green Thumb' with my magic and present his Highness with a

wonderful view.

"Go ahead. You've been staring at this flower for quite some time. Do you like it? Well, receiving flowers from girls as presents must be a strange story though"

"..... I'm grateful"

"Ah, right. No need for any elaborate arrangements please. The matter regarding my entry into the Magic Institution, I'll deal with it somehow in the future"

"..... Then Liz won't come no matter what?"

"Please be patient, aren't you a boy?"

Being intolerantly selfish doesn't reflect well, even in education. As his Highness will someday be responsible for the country, he should learn that it's impossible to have one's way all the time.

Since issuing the warning earlier, his Highness has been frowning sullenly, especially when I made it clear that it was useless. Are you saying I should abandon everything that I've worked for?

"..... Fine, I will be patient. If I'm patient..... will you hug me again?"

My eyes blinked several times at his Highness' request as he stood awaiting a response to his request, in order to avoid crushing the flowers.

Ahh, did.... did you fancy that? Were you really this pleased with this shabby, infant figure? It's not like I was requested by the Queen to do it.

"..... If you behave like a good child, the next time we meet, I'll give you one"

"Really!?"

"Your Highness doesn't like lies, right? It's a promise"

..... Well, if it's just a hug, it's alright. It'll lift up his Highness's motivation. At this age, his Highness is still restrained and doesn't yet have any dreams.

At a glance, his Highness' face brightened. By the time I had noticed the troop of knights smiling in the distance, I could not hide my sigh.

The next time we meet, please don't say anything unnecessary to the King.

Chapter 14 - Still a Kid

An hour after his Highness left my place with a sorrowful expression (or rather, he stubbornly insisted on remaining and I had to forcefully turn him away), Gilles-san returned. It seems that they may have passed each other.

"Gilles-san, welcome home..... What's the matter?"

"Huh?"

Welcoming him in the hallway, I noticed his expression had visibly changed when I went to greet him. He had a depressive countenance, or rather, the right expression would be that he was feeling blue. His face looked pale. It was highly unlikely that the trip to the castle had worn him out.

With a gloomy gaze unbecoming of his age, he stared blankly, seeming puzzled.

"Did something bad happen?"

..... Taking a deep breath, I began poking at the nature of this malaise.

Probably, the current Gilles-san is unable to express himself because when I spoke, his pupils became unsteady, revealing his fright.

Appreciating the meaning of my words, Gilles-san immediately returned to his former self with a tender smile. An emergency measure to keep up appearances, which I understood easily. His complexion hadn't improved.

"I was scolded a little because of my work"

The reason sounded fair, but I sensed that wasn't the only reason.

To truly deceive someone, one needs to be able to blend the truth with the lies. As it wasn't a complete lie, no matter how incongruous it seemed, would it truly be possible to hide a lie within a truth?

..... Well, I may be reading too much and steering off-course.

My usual stance is to not poke into the affairs of others, unless it had something to do with Gilles-san and Mother.

On that evening, it occurred with a groan.

A child's greedy slumber was disturbed by an itch in her throat. Feeling thirsty, I walked towards the kitchen to grab a glass of water. Whilst it wasn't necessary for me to personally get it, using sorcery expressively within the estate was ill-advised. Though it really doesn't matter.

On the way back from the kitchen. Talking about my family, my parents feel dispirited as nobles. Well, it's not accurate to say that they feel dispirited but rather, it's promising..... Well, it's reasonably tolerable at a distance, as long as we keep to ourselves.

The moonlight looked quite forlorn with the use of light sorcery that illuminated the way. I was on my way back to my room when suddenly, out of nowhere, I heard a low sound.

Coming from the ground, it took a moment for me to realised that it was a groan and I started moving towards the source with haste..... Well, though I said I was moving towards it, the sound was coming out from somewhere within the vicinity of my room.

As I moved towards the sound, my body began to tremble naturally in fright.

"It couldn't possibly be an intruder....."

Our bodyguards outside probably would have noticed; they were quite capable when they did their rounds. Also, Father had traps set up so the probability of an intruder being caught in it was fairly high. They couldn't possibly be that skilled.

My heart started pounding as I made my way to my room, when push comes to shove, I was prepared to chuck my sorcery out..... As I thought of that, the groaning sounds ceased.

Instead, it was replaced by crying sounds. Ah, it can't be, there's no such thing as ghost. Yup, zombies or undeads don't exist, they definitely don't.

"..... is....."

"..... Eh?"

Frightened for a second after hearing the noise, I finally heard a recognisable voice. The voice was blurred, trembling slightly in the passageway.

"Gilles-san.....?"

That reminds me, in the innermost section of my room was a room that we had loaned to Gilles-san. As the voice was audible from inside, this definitely meets the conditions.

Slowly, I moved soundlessly past my room to Gilles-san's room.

Gilles-san's room wasn't locked; the door carelessly left half-open. Coming here was convenient, although if it hadn't been opened, I wouldn't have heard the noise so it was a complicated feeling.

It's probably wrong of me, but I peeked through the crack of the door and spotted Gilles-san lying down on the bed. Only, he seemed to be having a nightmare, constantly tossing about in bed whilst quivering.

..... Ah, I see. Even if Gilles-san was my tutor, he had yet to undergo his coming of age ceremony and could still be considered a child (That's what I think). He was still at an age where, naturally as a child, he would be cared for by his parents.

However, Gilles-san - although I don't quite know the circumstances - worked at the Magic Institution and had a part-time duty teaching sorcery to a child (aka me).

I'm not in a position to say anything, but Gilles-san was no longer a child and was wise. Hence, he suffered from his responsibilities. It wasn't strange that whatever dissatisfactions and anxieties had burst out. For example, something that had transpired today at the Magic Institution.

Honestly, I'm not sure what to do. Perchance..... Nay, in all probabilities, I might be the cause of his stress. I think it could be my fault.

With that said, what should I do? I don't want to be heartless, but I have no methods to help him. Looking at the child groaning before my very eyes, I wanted to extend my hand. However, without being able to properly assist him, it would be better to stay my hand. Rather than stretching out in a half-baked manner, this is a much better option.

"..... No..... Don't want to....."

Whilst experiencing the unpleasant nightmare, Gilles-san groaned as he continued quivering in his sleep.

..... Pretending that nothing had happened here was easy, all I had to do was return to my room.

"..... Hel..p.. me"

Ah, geez.

Biting on my lips, I slip my body stealthily through the half-open door.

It wasn't as though he was sick and could be rescued with a potential for recovery. He was simply having a bad nightmare and he was unconscious now. I wouldn't want to be responsible if anything unexpected were to happen.

"Ug..... Ugh....."

I quietly encroached on Giles-san, who was continuously groaning in his sleep.

Looking at him, Gilles-san had worn simple clothes to sleep. His long, glossy green hair was loosened and scattered about the bed sheets. If it wasn't for the current circumstances, he would be oozing with sex appeal that wasn't suitable for his age.

"..... It's probably really effective"

In a time such as this, being Mother's child, I was grateful that I had shut myself in the study in a not-so-childlike manner. It was a good thing that I had read a book on healing magic.

There were no spells that the healing magic book could offer to cure

nightmares. However, if it was about restoring the physical condition, it was possible.

The mind rules the body, therefore you could say it affects one another. If the balance was maintained, nothing happens.

This time, it was the mind that had weakened and because of that, it was possible that it had also affected his physical state. Placing my small palm against his forehead, it felt a bit feverish. It would also be helpful to gather the fatigue that had accumulated in an unpleasant direction.

"Cure"

Cautiously trying to avoid making a mistake, I delicately put my bountiful magical powers through the magical equation. There was nothing wrong, I just wanted to restore his physical condition with healing magic. As expected, it wasn't a serious injury that needed healing.

Slowly, I poured my magic into the magical equation to give him solace. Well, it wasn't trivial, the fatigue took a toll on me but I was able to lower his temperature.

Incidentally, whilst the efficiency could not be anticipated, it was also a purification magic that could be used against demons..... To tell the truth, that's just an exaggeration. For chuckingsomething as outrageous as that, sorry! It's just a superstitious belief that it acts like a talisman. There's some expectations that it would take away the nightmare.

Applying the healing magic within my capacity, Gilles-san's appearance began to relax. I'm not sure if it was effective, but it seemed to have given some slight comfort to him.

"..... It'll be alright now"

In order to not disturb his sleep, I moved quietly and gently stroke his head. Then borrowing a handkerchief from his desk, I wiped the sweat that had collected between his eyebrows. This would be the time where he might jolt and wake up.

As it wouldn't be good to catch a cold from perspiring while sleeping, I replaced the thin blanket that had fallen off when Gilles-san was tossing and turning in his sleep with satisfaction. Great, it looks like he'll presently be able to cope with it after being administered with the necessary medical treatment. Do the best as you can to persevere in a child's body, you can do it. With this, it all boils down to his force of will.

"Good night"

As expected, the body of a child desires more sleep.

Concealing a big yawn, I return the way I came. Tomorrow..... Actually, it's already today, it'll be great if you're feeling better.

Chapter 15 - Nightmare and.....

The following day, as if nothing had happened, Gilles-san gave me his usual smile and announced, "It's time for your sorcery lessons".

He seemed to be alright..... I thought. However, the smile on Gilles-san's face looked troubled for some reason. It had the same usual expression though. The angle of his lips that shaped into a soft arc was identical; the narrow gaze he gave was the same as always.

Even so, I wonder why I thought that?

And there was a slight change to the sorcery lessons.

It was unusual but Gilles-san stroked my head.

When I first began studying under him, he did it as well. However, I despise being treated like a child. To be fair, I'm still a child so I guess it can't be helped.

Today, hmm..... It didn't feel like I was being treated like a child, nor did it resembled Father's loving caress. I wonder what it meant..... Rather than for my

sake, Gilles-san might be trying to recall something by touching me.

If it's about the matter yesterday, I recalled that he was unconscious when I checked him. Then I wonder what's going on?

By the time our lessons drew to a close that day, I didn't know the reason behind the caress.

"Liz, a letter has arrived for you"

Returning home with Gilles-san, Father who had returned home early called out to me. To call out to me when I was with Gilles-san was strange.

..... Letter.

Yup, I had a bad feeling. No no, it's impossible that the results of yesterday's visit transpired today. It would be..... highly unlikely for his Highness to be able to persuade his Majesty to deliver a letter within a day. Unless the letter was delivered by his Highness' subordinate directly, it wouldn't have arrived immediately from the castle. It would be good if it was delivered by sorcery.

"It's from his Highness"

"As I thought--", that thought escaped my lips. Father being Father seemed pleased, or more precisely, he was smiling. Thinking it's someone else's problems.....

Carefully, I decided to avoid frowning as I obediently received the letter.

Do I have to break the seal here? Well, if I've truly been invited, I'll need to consult Father Father would be pleased. Definitely.

"..... What does it say?"

"It seems that I've been invited to his Highness' birthday party"

Opening the letter with a paper knife, I removed the content and took out the invitation. It seems to be written by his Highness, judging by the handwriting style.

To summarise, it read, come by hook or by crook. Just like love scenes transpiring one after another, I've been issued a formal invitation letter. His

intention has been transmitted thoroughly through this.....

"Is it already at this stage? His Highness sure has grown up....."

"Father is also attending, right?"

"Of course, I've been invited..... Or rather, I'm more or less attending as a noble in the castle's service"

"..... Then why did his Highness send out an invitation solely for me?"

"That could be the embodiment of his Highness' innocent goodwill"

In the sense, you meant that his innocence is cute and his actions were praiseworthy, Father?

Certainly, his Highness exudes a cute appearance, but he'll turn into a splendid-looking man in the future, probably. If it's the latter, as Father says, there's nothing I could possibly say. Well, it would be strange for the unrelated party to say anything, right?

At present, I am not at a stage to be romantically engaged with his Highness. I'm still just a child.....

"Oh, that's right! A letter has arrived for you as well, Gilles"

"..... For me?"

Gilles-san looked surprised and puzzled at us when the topic abruptly changed. As expected, he started speaking casually in front of Father.

I never expected a letter to come for Gilles-san, so I peeked a look at Father.

"It's from the Viscount"

Just from that sentence, Gilles-san froze.

Somewhat turning pale, Gilles-san received the letter with a stiff expression whilst watching Father intently. Father returned his gaze with a quiet look.

It was a look that Gilles-san couldn't endure.

Tucking the letter into his breast pocket, he bowed and exited the room. It was obvious that he was shaken.

"..... Father, what type of man is the viscount?"

"That's Gilles's real father. His name is Albert Sévéne"

Viscount..... If I'm not mistaken, that's the second bottom rank in the peerage. It's a good lineage nonetheless. After all, a person's language, mannerism and demeanour could be felt from his upbringing.

Incidentally, I'm a marquis. To put it bluntly, Father is indifferent about the peerage, he just succeeded it.

However, for Gilles-san to make such a face upon receiving a letter from his real father.

"What I'm about to say is cowardly, but Gilles and Albert have a bad relationship. Their dispositions are complete opposites..... Well, it's best to hear the details from the person himself"

"..... I understand"

"If Gilles-san is going through a difficult time, it would be good if you could help him. Although I don't admire you wandering about in the middle of the night"

Busted.....

I had even suppressed my sorcery's reaction as best as possible. As expected of Father, he isn't called the No. 2 of the Magic Institution for nothing.

..... Gilles-san hasn't noticed it, has he? I mean, I did it selfishly so if it was noticed, it would leave me feeling complicated. Demanding gratitude was never the intention.

"You've handled sorcery considerably well, that's admirable"

Blowing away the gloomy air and cracking a smile, Father tousled my hair as he stroke it which made me grumble a little while smiling. However, in my head, I was filled with the thoughts of Gilles-san's matter.

..... I wonder if Gilles-san will be alright.

That night, Gilles-san had another nightmare.

"....St....op....."

Gilles-san was deliriously entreating someone in his sleep. In response to his bad nightmare, he was grimacing and breaking out into a cold sweat. Seeing that sight was painful.

Vaguely expecting this, I intruded into his room in the same way as yesterday to apply some sorcery. It was merely a temporary consolation.

If he couldn't be separated from the source of his nightmares, there was nothing I could do. As for the cause, it was unwise for me to meddle with it.

Wiping off the unusual amount of sweat that Gilles-san was perspiring was the only thing I could do.

"-Ah..... !"

"Hyaaa !?"

The moment I applied the towel to Gilles-san's forehead, he had leaped out of the bed. Tha-- that scared me..... I was wondering what had happened. Seeing that dreadful expression with widened eyes really surprised me.

Gilles-san had leaped to his feet whilst gasping and breathing heavily. Only after that did he realise my presence and gave a different wide-eyed expression.

"Why..... is Liz-sama.....?"

"Umm..... It's because I heard your groans, so....."

"..... Yesterday as well?"

"Yes....."

"As I thought. After all, I had sensed Liz-sama's magic"

As expected, it was discovered. Well, he had a shallow dream and wasn't sleeping well; not being able to sense any presence would have been strange. Furthermore, to not be able to sense my magic.

"..... Umm, are you feeling well?"

"I'm alright. It was just a bad nightmare, that's all"

Declaring that, Gilles-san gave a firm smile.

..... Generally, people who aren't well will always say they are. One can tell easily by looking at their poor complexion.

I understood it easily because it was a habit that I personally exhibit as well. And yet, did Gilles-san wished not to show his vulnerable side to me?

It's not like I was asking him to depend on me. To Gilles-san, I'm just the child of his employer, a student he was instructed to teach. I had no relations to this after all However, just for a bit, it would be great if he would stop being in denial.

"..... Gilles-san"

With a squeeze, the petite body hugged the slender line of the boy's body.

Directly looking at the widened eyes with surprise, I mustered a gentle smile as best as possible.

"I'm not scared"

Slowly transferring my magic into the magical equation, I loosely converted it into healing magic.

Gradually, I became accustomed to Gilles-san's body as the fatigue and agony melted away. Even his fear was washed away, turning him calm.

In the beginning, Gilles-san was surprised and perplexed. Now from his eyes, you could see his emotions settling down.

That, and he sought the hand rubbing his back on his neck. As is, it was like luring a flat bosom over. His Highness seems to favour this, how is this flat-chested bosom even likable?

I knew it was done when Gilles-san leapt out of my arms with a start. It's alright, I'm flat-chested after all.

"..... It'll be alright"

Crumbling down, Gilles-san, who I had tried to support, dragged me down with him.

Even though I was on top of Gilles-san, it did not develop into an erotic scene.

Naturally, I am just a four year old. Certainly, Gilles-san would be suspicious.

Shifting my posture slightly to lie down, we slept in that position, with my face resting against the area close to Gilles-san's heart. His heartbeat's rhythm was a comfortable melody which lured one to sleep.

Thump thump thump. The sounds of my pats was transmitted one by one to Gilles-san, which I felt it weakened his quivering.

..... Honestly, I wish this hadn't happened. My circumstances, but I couldn't just ignore it.

It may have been the motherhood I left in my previous life.

Matching the rhythm of his heart, I felt the pats resonating from his back. With a constant rhythm - thump, thump thump thu--.

I somehow remembered when I was little, this would calm me down easily. I wonder if Gilles-san would have mixed feelings for being treated like a child?

And thus, boldly speaking, I felt sleepy..... The early bird catches the worm and secures his breakfast - was my motto for leading a healthy life as a child, so waking up at this time, my body felt sore.

Recalling the gentle rhythm that had put me to sleep and having poured my magic as much as possible to invoke the spell into that back..... Yup, there was no hope to win against the sandman.

By the time I realised that I had carelessly fallen asleep, it was already morning.

"..... nyuuu....."

With the chirping of a small bird, my consciousness dimly returned.

My body was still in a dormant state so I couldn't open my eyelids. That's to say, it didn't want to open.

Nn? Huh, since when did I fall asleep?

Groggily, I opened my eyes slowly and found myself being being quietly gazed upon by those green eyes.

"Good morning, Liz-sama"

"..... Ish Gilles-shyan..... Goo.... mor--ning"

"Are you feeling tired? It's still early so you can go back to sleep"

Smoothly, Gilles-san was gently stroking and combing my loose hair with his fingers. Combing affectionately and courteously, there was nothing to be said in that comfortable moment. Furthermore, it lured me back to sleep.

Thump, thump - lulled the pats from the back..... Uh? Wasn't this what I did last night?

Shaking off the sleepy feeling, I strained my eyelids to open.

Before my eyes, smiled a calm Gilles-san. Our position had changed. This time, it was Gilles-san embracing me in this situation Huh, huh?

"..... Um, why has Gilles-san been observing me since you've risen?"

"Because you look really young when you're sleeping and I've just realised for the first time that you lisp when you wake up"

"..... Ugh"

At any rate, I have to correct this habit of mumbling when I wake up after a tiring day. That's to say, why did I feel so tired.

"Ah, it's better not to get up by force. It seems that you've been pouring healing magic constantly all night"

..... All night. Being able to control it was surprising. Also, to be able to maintain it with my magic. Even though my body isn't prepared for this, good job me! Suffering from the magic conversion burden was fine but..... No, to risk the burden and train should be good?

Just as Gilles-san said, my body felt a little heavy. Maybe I used my magic too much? Since I fell asleep, my control seems to have improved.

"..... Are you feeling well, Gilles-san?"

"Fufu, I'm feeling good. Liz-sama made it settle"

Giving a meek smile, Gilles-san was combing my hair and was playing with it with his fingertips. He also played with my hair strewn against the bed sheets. That could be said to be seductive. It was not an age where an elementary and junior high school student could cross the sexual boundaries.

"..... Why is Gilles-san embracing me?"

"Just returning the favour. This is calming, isn't it? Also, Liz-sama's child body temperature feels good"

"I'm just a child..... With that said, please stop. I'm really starting to feel sleepy"

"It is for that reason. Please rest sufficiently so you can recover your magic"

Whispering into my ears, Gilles-san's palm covered my eyes. Sensing Gilles-san's magic for a moment..... Huh? Sleepy..... Ah, forcing me to sleep..... You..... should have..... told me first.....

Seized by a sudden drowsiness, I felt myself sink into a lake. With the sensation of slipping downwards, I lost consciousness.

Chapter 16 - Being Invited

Ever since then, Gilles-san has been a little..... No, quite soft and taken a gentle attitude towards me. Until now, he has always treated me with a calm courteous manner but somehow, it felt cold. I suppose that's because of his duty as my tutor.

However, now it feels..... gentle or rather, hmm..... more intimate? Like pampering..... excessively pampering towards me. You can say it's as though the barrier between us has broken down.

"Hm--....."

That's good. It's a delicate position to be good friends with him, but there are no dangers at this stage.

It doesn't bother me.

"Liz-sama, your face is making weird expressions....."

"That's because of Father"

"I am of the same opinion as Welf-sama. Though there are various circumstances and I wished I wasn't attending....."

Frankly objecting, Gilles-san let out a sigh. Similarly, filled with complicated thoughts, I released a sigh as well.

We're currently in the castle wearing formal attire.

Well, no matter how you put it, it's for his Highness' birthday party, the one that I had been invited to previously. In the end, because it was impolite to refuse, I had come along to pay my respects. I thought it would be over when I found his Highness, however.....

Unexpectedly, I attracted attention in high spirits. It seems to be the complicated result of catching the King's attention. Even though I came to pay my respects, if possible, I would not like to meet him, were my thoughts.

It's such a contradictory stance, but it can be said that it was inevitable.

Gilles-san being Gilles-san showed his displeasure subtly with a frown. Unlike me who had an obligation, Gilles-san who hated this place the most was forced to attend. It was Father's fault.

"..... Father, what intentions does he have?"

"..... I cannot understand his intentions for entrusting Liz-sama to my care. Though I vaguely understand his reason"

"His reason?"

"I can't say that yet, but whilst it concerns you, it's not a matter that we would want Liz-sama to learn of"

Gilles-san, you shouldn't have said that to me. You didn't think I would snoop further? Then again, to leak this information out means that he's being frank with me.

"In the first place, I understood that if I came here, I was going to have a bad

time. Do you wish to pester Welf-sama?"

"Gilles-san, leaving Father's circumstances aside, please keep your thoughts to yourself"

Still, the person who forced Gilles-san to take the dislikeable role of an escort was Father. I understood Father was at fault here..... Father knows very well that Gilles-san wasn't a part of the Adelcian household.

For Gilles-san to be invited, he would need to possess a court rank. However, this time, he wasn't attending as part of a household.

"..... For a person like myself, this is originally the type of place I would never be permitted to"

"..... But Gilles-san is a noble, aren't you?"

"It was going to come out eventually but..... I've been disowned. Rather than disowned, I'm treated like I never existed"

But a letter came from the Viscount..... If that's how he's being treated, why intentionally send a letter. There's nothing I can say since I don't know the Viscount's personality but normally, I would never send a letter to someone I refuse to recognise because such a thing means acknowledging the person.

However, since contact was made, there must be some purpose behind it. It has to be a hateful thing to the extent that Gilles-san had nightmares.

My worst imagination grew wild; rapidly, my eyebrows kept sinking. Seeing my expression, Gilles-san gave a wry smile and stroke my head gently. "There's nothing for Liz-sama to be anxious about", he said with a seemingly sad smile I only know that he merely has a complicated background.

"Gilles-san....."

"Liz!"

That dense Highness. Of course, being the man of the party meant celebrating, but at least learn to read the mood.

..... Well to be frank, celebrating his Highness' birthday could be interpreted as a pretext to allow the nobles to socialise for the sake of exchanging various intelligences at a social gathering.

My conversation with Gilles-san momentarily came to a halt; I found his Highness rushing over towards me in his formal attire. He's already 8 years old and starting to look rather good-looking.

As expected of the royalty. Honestly speaking, I wish he would stop that conspicuous act of rushing towards me. Look! The other ladies are looking at me and are starting to whisper secretly.

"Your Highness, thank you for inviting me this time. Respectfully, I would like to express my congratulations on your birthday"

"..... Saying it this formally is troubling"

"In front of everyone, I cannot be overtly familiar with you"

Putting a smiling face and bowing on the outside, his Highness seemed dissatisfied. Please forgive me your Highness; if I lacked etiquette here, my life in the future would become difficult.

"...Hmph. Who's that man over there?"

"I apologise for the late introduction. My name is Gilleraide Sévéne. Congratulations on your birthday, your Highness"

Towards Gilles-san, who perfectly handled his greeting with a smile, his Highness curtly replied "Hmph". No no your Highness, that's not how it's done. Even if you're bored with a person, you should conceal your facial expressions.

Gilles-san was aware that he was handled in an unfriendly manner but calmly smiled. This was the difference in years, even though Gilles-san was still a child.

"Why is Liz with this man?"

"Father had business so we came here separately. I received Gilles-san as my escort instead"

Though the person himself disliked the task, which I didn't add, I smiled at Gilles-san with "Right?" for agreement. Gilles-san gave a nod then quietly held my shoulder..... Why are you fanning the flames?

Giving a slight resentful look at Gilles-san, Gilles-san didn't waver from his calm expression. However for a short time, his eyes looked down challengingly at his Highness. Was this deliberate?

"Aside from Welf-sama, I order you not to associate yourself with other men"

"Ho..... Even with me?"

"I'm just following Welf-sama's instructions"

What's with this small carnage?

..... Gilles-san is absolutely enjoying himself, isn't he? Look, his cheeks are twitching. His Highness' cheeks are cramping for a different reason though.

Please endure, your Highness.

To Gilles-san, as expected, his Highness' good will towards me was a charming affair. And unexpectedly, Gilles-san had a fondness for teasing others. His Highness has yet to notice he's being made fun of.

"Liz, come here. I want to introduce you to my father"

"Well, I would like to say I decline....."

"It's fine"

"A female's intentions should be respected, your Highness"

".....Tsk, I said it's fine"

Your Highness, you have yet to be on par with Gilles-san. Also, please stop forcibly taking and dragging a person about, it's painful to look at. Since you're a child, it's an unpleasant behaviour.

Gilles-san being Gilles-san tried to detain me however, his gaze slipped..... and turned stiff in the face. At first, I didn't understand the meaning of that expression, but with his Highness pulling me forward, I somehow understood.

Enroute in the middle of his Highness' path, in a small distant place..... stood a man.

He was formally attired and his hair, which was slicked back, was the same vivid-green colour as Gilles-san. Though his features were similar to Gilles-san, the only assured difference was the disquieting bright sharpness in his eyes that was filled with ambition. Totally different from the always gentle Gilles-san.

Gilles-san who had intended to detain me, lowered his extended hand. Somehow his pupils trembled with fright, his gaze moved towards his foot. And clenching his fist, his hands started trembling.

Being forced to accompany his Highness, I couldn't worry about Gilles-san.

"Your Highness--"

"It's better if you don't associate yourself with the people of Sévéne"

"..... Eh?"

After bypassing the man similar to Gilles-san, his Highness murmured to me in a small voice.

"There aren't any good rumours. I am reluctant for Liz to have a dangerous experience"

"..... Are you worried?"

"Obviously! Liz is my....."

"Have you recognised me as your friend?"

His Highness blushing ever so slightly, I didn't allow him to finish and kept smiling. I'm sorry, your Highness but everything in life is precious.

If this is repeatedly said in front of the King, I will endeavour with all my strength to correct it, ok? I flatly refuse to have my future dictated for me. Also, don't arbitrarily decide with temporary feelings, your Highness.

Interrupted, his Highness seemed obviously displeased. Don't you want to be friends? Actually, I feel this expresses our current relationship openly.

"..... Does Liz hate me?"

"I never said I hate you. If I have to admit it, I think we're good friends"

"..... Liz is an idiooot"

Sulking won't change my opinion. From my point of view, I have my own position and future to be concerned with.

"Please don't be mad, your Highness. Also, it'll be awesome if you could let go when I greet the King"

"..... Julis?"

"Father!"

As soon as I had finished, the person himself made an appearance.

"Father, this is Liz, the girl that I spoke of!"

Somehow I have to correct his Highness' air.

With a gleeful voice and timidly raising his eyes..... What should I do? I never thought I would made it this far.

Reflected in my eyes was a handsome man and a beauty.

The man had blonde hair and blue eyes. His appearance had a similar hue to his Highness, but the King had a more adult sex appeal with an added ambiance. Indeed, with just a mantle worn, it still looked good on him.

As for the lady, she had striking, long and wavy strawberry-blonde hair. Her eyes were greenish-blue. Clad in an extravagant dress, only the beauty of the lady was able to eclipse its remarkable appearance.

In my mind, such a thought echoed, "Who's that ignorant person? Being in the presence of the gracious King and his Queen! You're too haughty!" This is from watching too many TV shows.

"Julis, calm down. If you speak hurriedly, I won't be able to listen to your story"

The Queen looked a little strange when she laughed pleasantly. Or rather, as expected, her type of laughter overflowed with elegance.

..... And now I will declare boldly! You---! Youthful, the two of them look so youthful! No matter how I look at them, they can only be in the mid-twenties! If nothing else is said, they could also be said to look like they're twenty!

As I was caught in my thoughts, the King slowly moved his gaze towards me.

"..... Ho, so this is the girl that Julis spoke of?"

What did you tell him, your Highness? For incurring lèse-majesté, would I be restrained and dragged by a rope to prison? Or will my future be restricted?

"What may I call you by?"

"I am Li--- Lizbeth Adelcian"

As one would expect, the King addressed me directly and although my heart was pounding, I still introduced myself and gave a bow. As I was unskilful with small chatter, I kept my mouth shut. His Highness looked at me curiously, but this kind of behavior is obvious when meeting with the greatest person in the country, don't you think?

Clutching my hands, his Highness burst into a delighted expression No, please don't rejoice with a ship set for sail, there's no hope there.

"Welf Adelcian's daughter?"

"Yes"

"You look exactly like your parents"

The Queen smiled softly, giving some kind of eye contact to the King. Am I imagining it or did I just have an extremely unpleasant hunch?

"Won't you speak with us for a moment?"

Ah, I'm might have just been cornered.

Chapter 17 - Conversation

Whilst drawing a strange attention to myself, I followed behind after the King and Queen.

..... What have I done to deserve this? No, it's certainly because they listened to his Highness' audacious words, and for some bizarre reason, were pleased with it.

"If it's here, this should be amicable"

Accompanying them, I was led into a room. As I had only walked a short distance and it wasn't located deep within the castle, this was probably a drawing room or a lounge. As expected, the furnishings in the room had the same grand feel of the castle.

Though I've projected an attitude towards his Highness, as expected, in front of the tops of our country, I was quite bewildered.

Ordinarily, I recognised my objective value as a cheeky girl but even for me, it's a contradicting matter sometimes. In the case of his Highness who was a child, I have to say, I feel sorry that his Highness was pleased with me because of my standard of tolerance.

Therefore I'm not angry that it was mishandled, I'm just disheartened and peevish about it. Understand that every time we meet, you need to be self-aware of your extremely poor attitude.

Well that's my stance, but it's another story when it comes to the King. For now, I have to avoid offending him and lacking courtesy. It would just cause trouble for Father and Mother.

"Ah, you don't have to be so nervous"

"Ye-- Yes"

Well, there was no such precedent for a King to say this directly to a nervous person. Furthermore, towards a child.

As I stood upright on the side of the entrance, obeying respectfully, the King gave a wry smile and beckoned me over.

"I do not demand courtesy more than required from a child. To begin with, being ceremonious is too bothersome. Therefore, I would like to - not as the King but as Julis' father - talk with you"

I stared in amazement for a little at the change in the King's manner of speaking. After which, once again, I gave a bow and promptly sat on the sofa. The King and Queen sat down on the sofa facing me whilst directing a gentle smile towards me.

..... How did this happen? Though they were smiling, it felt like an interrogation. No, perhaps I'll be asked with regards to my relationship with his Highness.

"Julis has been telling us all about you. Liz did this, Liz did that, in that fashion"

"It's the first time I've seen that child make such a face"

"..... What has his Highness said about me?"

"He said 'my most precious person'"

It's an outttttttttttttt..... No, wait! Save? It seems he hasn't yet lacked the common sense to propose a statement such as that I'm his future companion or his wife. If it was said, I would certainly have been checkmated.

In truth, if I got fed up, fleeing to another country was always a possibility..... However, this would inconvenience the Adelcian house greatly. It's not like I dislike his Highness; I could come to like his Highness slowly..... I'm unsure though, as it would require a bit of effort.

But, I would like to avoid becoming Queen if possible. This would be the moment to put an end to his Highness' childish prank.

"For his Highness to say as such..... I feel honored"

Saying precious, let's pray that feelings turn towards friendship. Your Highness, that should be fine, right?

As I smiled, the King and Queen looked a little like they were deliberating over something. Oh well, if I was unlucky, I might really end up as his Highness' future wife, huh? In my opinion, that's an unwanted flag that should be smashed.

Being the Queen would elevate me to the highest position but I would like to be successful through my own efforts. In addition, I am not so fond of being so ceremonious.

"..... What do you think about Julis?"

"If I may be permitted, I think he's a good friend"

"Let me rephrase my question. This may be impolite but..... what do you intend to do with Julis?"

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

"For some strange reason, Julis has easily accepted your words. Especially for us, we're worried that Julis would be used as a puppet by the likes of you"

The King narrowed his eyes slightly, upon which I understood his strong

concerns.

In other words, the King just issued a direct 'warning'. To use such difficult words to a child like puppet, even if they understood would be dangerous. You could say, normally, that was incomprehensible. The King judged that I am much smarter than that child and thus, acted in this manner.

The King's judgement was right. It would be dangerous if the future King became a yes-man. There was a possibility of the country collapsing should the danger be concealed. This was a situation that couldn't be overlooked.

"Please be relieved on this point..... Though even if I said that, you won't believe it, right? For me, I do not intend to be concerned with his Highness more than which is necessary"

Since it's come to this, let's speak frankly.

"I think his Highness is temporarily attracted to me. I do not, however, hold any feelings beyond friendship for his Highness"

I plainly laid it out. To speak about our relationship, I wish that we wouldn't be engaged and it wouldn't transcend beyond friendship.

Conversely, if this was said in front of his Highness, he would deny it with all his strength. I don't want to cause trouble, but even if I died, his Highness would continue to pursue me..... What would I do if I was declared his mistress?

In any case, I have no intentions to accompany his Highness. This is what I want the King and Queen to comprehend.

"Perhaps from another standpoint, I could protect his Highness when needed. Still, I do not wish to be tied down to matrimony with his Highness"

"....."

"I believe even you, my King, wishes to impart that to his Highness. For someone of the likes of me to be his Highness' partner would be awe-inspiring"

"..... ku, fufu, hahahahaha"

"..... My.... My King?"

Somewhat unexpectedly, the King started laughing. Something I said must

have been agreeable, as he raised his voice excitedly. Observing closely, the Queen has a hand covering her lips and was laughing elegantly too.

..... ehhhhhh?

The King happily gazed at me whilst raising the corners of his lips said to the Queen, "As you said", and gently held her hand. Seeing how those figures together formed a beautiful picture, merely for a few moments, was fascinating.

"Hey, didn't I say we have nothing to worry about?"

"Fuuu, that's right. Indeed, nothing less can be expected from Welf and Selen's daughter"

"You are acquainted with my father?"

"Before I ascended the throne, we used to compete for the magician's position together. Presently, Welf is one of my elite guards, though it's only part-time"

A shocking relationship was revealed! Rather than Father being employed at the castle, he was under the service of the King as his royal magician.....!

Looking dumbfounded, the King smiled meekly at me, "I apologise for testing you"and uttered an apology. I absolutely did not notice I was being tested..... Pondering closely, if I had more faith in Father's knowledge, he would already have known of my matter.

"I know you do not harbour these thoughts. Welf has also spoken to us about it"

"I haven't met Selen in a while but it seems she has a good child"

Listening to this, it seems that the Queen was a foreign princess who had came to train at our Magical Institution and was good friends with Mother. How did Father and Mother also gain the friendship of these influential people? That wasn't my aim though.

"In the future, I would be grateful if a child like you were to support Julis"

"If I become a magician"

"That's harsh"

"Fufufu, Julis will have a hard time"

I am not opposed to developing a relationship with his Highness as his confidant, but please spare me from supporting you as a companion. Knowing that the King and Queen weren't forcing me into an engagement was a relief.

"I hope you would maintain a good relationship with Julis from now on"

"If as a friend, I would be delighted"

For now, it seemed to be over without any major events. The thing that I obtained was an authorisation from the King and Queen. Somehow it might just be my imagination, but I had a hunch that my companionship and values had steadily risen frighteningly.....

Chapter 18 - Oath

When I returned to the grounds, you could say I that understood that I naturally drew an awful lot of attention. The girl whom his Highness spoke intimately to and was summoned directly by the King and Queen. It's not strange for them to have their suspicions.

In fact, the ladies who looked at me were whispering whilst merrily gossiping. There were even more girls slightly older than me present at the ground, all of whom looked displeased. Hmm, I guess to the girls aiming for social status and wealth, I was just an eyesore.

As I had deserted his Highness when I left to convene with his Majesties, his Highness was not by my side. From afar, I could see him surrounded by adults who were attempting to curry favour from him. Although he wore a smiling face, I knew very well that he was bored of their antics.

Persevere, your Highness. After all, this is yet another obligation of royalty.

Which reminds me, looking around the grounds, I tried to search for that green hair.

Since I parted ways with Gilles-san, I wonder where he went? Though it has been mentioned that he doesn't like to be conspicuous in crowded places, could he be at the edge?

Boldly, I walked in the opposite direction of his Highness with the purpose of looking for an attendant. To put it bluntly, I want to leave soon. The amount of gazes that brought out this fatigue was incomparable to his Highness'.

Whilst exposing myself to public scrutiny, I checked around for green hair..... Ah, found it!

Gilles-san was at the terrace and beside him was..... The person I had glimpsed sometime ago that caused Gilles-san to hang back when he caught sight of him; a man who looked visibly aged. Perhaps, it was Gilles-san's real father, Viscount Albert Sévéne. Both were mutually facing each other but Gilles-san's complexion wasn't good.

Since it was evening, the twilight colours were illuminating, however..... Judging from his appearance, I understood that he was frightened. Unable to look directly at Lord Albert, his gaze lingered at his feet. In contrast, looking from a distance, I could tell Lord Albert's eyes were chilling.

Making my way past the eager nobles striving to engage in conversation with me, I drew closer to the terrace. To avoid them noticing, I made a slight detour so as to not be visible from the terrace. But..... While I was at it, I suppressed my surge of magical powers because it would normally be discovered by Gilles-san. The basis was not to cause a commotion with that person, right? As he would be able to perceive everything. Only that itself is excellent.

"Do you understand why I let you go?"

"..... I am aware. But I....."

"Cloy. You, the youngest bastard of a child, were given this last role to perform. At the most, be of use to me"

His cold voice was in accordance to his outward appearance, even my heart felt like it was grasped by that feeling. Compromising wasn't bad to begin with.

Mainly, it was the cold way that he treated his son, Gilles-san; slovenly handling him as though he was nothing but an insect. And with that, I had a violently pleasant premonition.

I was well aware that I was blessed with the people in my surrounding, but there were also a lot of people who were unhappy with me. Father said, I had "Developed a good judge of character. Whether people wounded my feelings or not. That's the power that will protect Liz" and could be depended on.

..... And while I would continue my observation, my instincts were warning me. This person was not good.

"..... Understood?"

"....."

Instead of replying, Gilles-san kept silent. So as to not be discovered, I stood hidden by the shadow of the curtain. Therefore, I couldn't get a glimpse of Gilles-san's face. Still, he was undoubtedly gritting his teeth with his head hung in shame.

Hearing footsteps, I quickly concealed myself inside the curtain. Fortunately, it was the petite body of a child, so it was easy to conceal myself. Also, the nobles who looked suspiciously at my conduct averted their gazes, convinced it was child's play.

After that, until Viscount Albert had passed, I couldn't stop my cold sweat. I must be overly blessed for that sort of people to not exist within my vicinity.

"..... Liz-sama, it's fine to not hide yourself anymore"

"Haaa!?"

Relieved and taking a breath; coming out from behind the curtains, I emitted a strange voice from the inside of my throat unconsciously. The overturned voice surprised Gilles-san but even I was surprised. Or rather, Gilles-san noticed, didn't he? That I was nearby straining my ears wholeheartedly.

"It would be advisable that Liz-sama spends a bit more time to calmly circulate your magical powers within your body. Even if you hid, a minuscule

amount leaked out"

"I'm being reprimanded, aren't I?"

"While there are a lot of absolute quantities of magical powers, I think control over it is still difficult..... Therefore, it's certainly ill-suited to be used for spying"

Feeling the sting of those words, I needlessly felt guilty. However, Gilles-san seemed even more depressed. In this situation, I couldn't speak vigorously.

Quietly, I touched Gilles-san's hand though he grasped it back tightly and conversely. His hand trembled a little.

"How much did you hear?"

"Not much..... I only heard from when you were asked if you understood why you were let go"

"Though you didn't hear the heart of the matter but, what does Liz-sama imagine it could be?"

That is, though not quite a fool yet, I somehow understood and was always in fear of it. I also knew that it wasn't Gilles-san's desire.

"Liz-sama, what do you wish me to do? This, I....."

Looking at those eyes shaking sorrowfully and a smile full of self-mockery, I was at a loss for words. Knowing that I had pieced everything together, Gilles-san still asked that question.

I.....

"Liz, so you were here. I was looking for you"

Unable to give an answer, from out of nowhere, Father sprang out and started a conversation.

"Father. I should be the one to say that in return. Until now, where were you?"

"I had some minor business to take care of. Gilles, did you escort her properly?"

Abruptly touching on the subject, Gilles-san looked slightly troubled; his eyebrows lowered. Escort, the previous problem.

"Father, previously whilst escorting me, his Highness pulled me away and I ended up stuck in a conversation with the King and Queen"

"Diaz did?..... I mean, the King, how was King's business?"

Addressing him nonchalantly without a title was my daring Father, but as expected, in front of the public's gaze, he hurriedly corrected himself. Father and the King were really intimate, huh? Usually, you would be caught for incurring lèse-majesté for not addressing him by his title Well, I also can't talk about others either.

"Just a bit about his Highness "

"Ah~ Because of his Highness' infatuation with Liz. But the King understands now, right?"

"As expected of Welf and Selen's daughter was the response"

"That also makes us proud"

Father, who pleasantly loosened his lips, had an atmosphere that resembled the King earlier. Perhaps Father and the King were unexpectedly birds of a feather, huh?

Though Father's appearance meant the conversation was over, I was still thinking about it for a while. What should I do with regards to Gilles-san?

"Father, I have something to discuss with you....."

Returning immediately from the party; after Gilles-san had returned to his room, I paid Father a visit.

After that, this occurred on the next day.

"Welcome, Gilles-san"

The night curtain had been lowered a long time ago, everyone was already fast asleep at this time. Well it was in the middle of the night, when at this time, Gilles-san appeared in my room.

I sat on my bed and smiled at Gilles-san, who opened the door quietly. To be

honest, it was quite hard to wake up, so I had used sorcery to forcibly compel myself to wake up. A child's body is considerably bearable, isn't it?

Either him getting up at such a time or me predicting his appearance at such a time or possibly both? Catching my appearance, Gilles-san's eyes were wide opened.

"You understand what I intend to do, right?"

"I believe so. When we first met, I had some misgivings"

"I see....."

Seeing my gentle expression, Gilles-san looked depressed and grimaced. In his hand reflected a dull knife. The blade was not even the length of Gilles-san's palm but it was sharp enough to take my life away.

Dimly, I had foresaw this occurring. When I first looked into Gilles-san's eyes, I vaguely knew. Well, it was just a kind of intuition. For it to be proven right, it had to become like this, right?

"What will you do to me?"

In the similar way as Gilles-san had asked "What should I do?", I began to slowly question Gilles-san.

Gulping, Gilles-san made a painful grimace and his shoulders trembled. Eventually, I compromised peacefully, as is by pushing his shoulders, I pushed him onto the bed. Being thrust at was a dreadful feeling.

"Are you..... going to kill me?"

Whispering my question, Gilles-san rattled. His hand, tightly grasping the knife, trembled. The tingling pain that began to ache was where the sharp blade had pierced the thin skin on my neck.

Even if I felt fluid streaming down my neck, without paying any heed, I continued to look at Gilles-san.

Gilles-san looked like he was filled with various feelings. Fear of his father, conflicts of murder, pity towards me. After this, would his future despair lie here?

It does not mean that he doesn't have a choice, being able to understand that was enough.

"Gilleraide Sévéne. Are you going to kill me?"

Deliberately questioning slowly, *thunk*, the knife dropped onto the sheets. The rattled hand which trembled held my eyes.

..... The answer, from the beginning was always there.

Aiming for me, Gilles-san had come as a tutor. He was Viscount Albert's sacrificial pawn. Even if Gilles-san were to kill me, the matter would end if the Viscount asserted that the boy had been disowned from the Sévéne house. There would also be the testimony from others about the poor relationship between them.

Whilst no fault would be found with him, it would be the former noble who rampaged wilfully that would be finished. If it suits him, after killing me, the Viscount could dispose of Gilles-san secretly. If he was found in the midst of it, he could obstinately say that he was taking responsibility. It would be such a scheme.

However, there was one miscalculation.

Gilles-san hasn't grown up yet; he was still young. There may be a change of heart; the conflicts of murder was also present.

In sum, Gilles-san was an object of denial and I sympathetically hugged him.

"I..... I don't want to kill you....."

Gilles-san insisted with his tiny voice, tinged with moisture.

From the beginning, it was never his desire. Only, Gilles-san was still young. He was too beautiful to be covered in a cloak of darkness. For a person whose heart had not matured completely to command an innocent child (I think) to murder was strange. That it could not be executed wasn't strange.

"I understood that much..... Gilles-san....."

"If I kill Liz-sama..... I would be punished"

Either way there's no future for me, Gilles-san seemed to think as he smiled while crying Why did that man cornered him this far? Even though I'm just a child.

Recalling that cool-headed face made me angry, but I suppressed it and stretched out a hand quietly. Coming into contact with his cheeks that were wet by his tears, I gently stroked them.

"Please don't cry. It's alright, there's nothing to be afraid of anymore"

"But I--"

To Gilles-san's expression that held tortured feelings of guilt and remorse, I smiled and seized the knife nearby. I know the knife cuts really well.

"I will make Gilles-san at ease"

Holding the knife with one hand, I pointed it at his neck. For an instant, Gilles-san held a frightened expression. However, he immediately resolving himself, he closed his eyes.

Because it was delicate to get the right length, half raising my body, I brought the knife close to the back of Gilles-san's neck. With my other hand, I gathered his hair into a bundle quietly.

And then, I twisted the wrist with the knife.

"With this, Gilleraide Sévéne is dead"

snip and the bundle of green hair fell down.



"From now on, your name is Gilles-san. As just a sorcerer, you will live your life as my servant"

Stroking his considerably short hair, I gaze honestly at him. Looking at the dumbfounded Gilles-san, I smiled sweetly at him.

It's not like I think bad of Gilles-san. I didn't want him to be played by Viscount Albert any further. Virtually, I had no intention of demanding Gilles-san to take

responsibility for wounding me.

After that, I had consulted with Father. About Gilles-san, Viscount Albert's conversation and from there, we derived a solution.

Somehow, Father seemed to have grasped that Viscount Albert was somehow involved with an unrest movement and was investigating him at the party. The method seemed to be a secret.

Therefore, upon grasping my story, Father asked me a question.

'What do you intend to do, Liz?'

'.... I have been in Gilles-san's care and I like him as a person. If possible, without being accused, I would like him to continue as my tutor'

'.... If that's the case, then Gilleraide has to die'

'Hey--'

'Ah, that's wrong! Gilleraide Sévéne whose name was once connected as the lowest of the Sévéne house. As expected, if he was employed using this method, when Albert tries to utilise him again, Gilles will no longer be silent'

Just for that sake, to have the once 'Gilleraide'disappear was troubling. That's what Father said.

"Fortunately, it has also been announced formally that they're unrelated to Gilles-san. Now if the assassination attempt failed, they would attempt to silence you..... Even this, countermeasures have been prepared"

"..... Countermeasures?"

"Gilles-san will be formally protected in this house. Furthermore, it's been decided that you will be employed as a servant"

In any event, it can't be helped that I had to rely on an adult for this, so I borrowed Father's power.

The King also knew about the suspicious movements made by the Sévéne house. Or rather, it seems Father had reported it and the King was convinced.

In the middle of the origin of the dark rumours that ceased from the Sévéne house laid the protected and disinherited Gilles-san.

From the standpoint of the King's loyal retainer (and today, I knew for certain whether it's a neutral party), the Adelcian house had pleasantly accepted their status whereas the criticisms from the opposition swelled. I think that if people were to arbitrarily investigate Gilles-san's disownment, they would think it was an internal dissension.

If, in the middle of it, Gilles-san were to be silenced by being killed, the Sévéne would only merely inquire into it. Thoughtless conduct would not be tolerated, right? Besides, Father won't let that slide. Just chopping off the hand that spined out of control was enough to elicit a strained smile from Mother.

After all, Father took a liking to Gilles-san. A partial person would always be sweet, hmm, Father.

Ah! By the way, a bobbed hair represents a fresh start. So far, the present Gilles-san or rather Gilleraide Sévéne has disappeared, the only proof has simply become Gilles.

Like a Buddhist monk shaving his hair as he steps into priesthood, abandoning a symbol of worldly possessions, this religious belief had no relevance to Gilles-san. However, as an act to sever the bonds, I thought I should shave his hair. However, as expected, it was too pitiful to shave it off, so I chopped off his hair instead.

"Liz-sama....."

"Ah, consider this a favour..... Live, work and return the favour, ok?"

Perhaps it was a little bit condescending, but it's fine like this. If grudges were to become his sustenance to live, that was fine too. Well, I estimate that's beyond Gilles-san's personality.

"..... Ojou-sama is a sweet person. What would you do if I were to attack you again?"

"What should I do? Maybe if I die, my wounded parents would explode equally and get mad, annihilating the entire clan? That would be the social punishment that they would inflict"

Ah, his face turned pale. And now, he was staring at the nape of my neck You might say it was just an unforeseen circumstance; I had no intention of talking about it to Father.

..... Well, Father and Mother should be getting up by now. If I had die, this would be troublesome.

"After all, I believe in Gilles-san"

"Looking like this has some benefits, no?"and tilting my head to the side, I displayed an impish smile whilst Gilles-san was still smiling while crying. However, this time happiness was showing through.

"Haha.... You're really a sweet person, aren't you, Liz-sama?"

"Will you stay by my side?"

".... With pleasure"

Arc 3: 6-years old

Chapter 19 - A Slight Change in Circumstances

"Hmmm..... I'm not sure to what extent I am able to achieve it"

"Liz-sama's already putting an adult to shame. Nay. Your handle of magical powers is greater than sorcerers from around here"

Sighing whilst boringly gazing at my palm, Gilles comforted me..... Perhaps there was some truth to his words. Even Gilles had become increasingly stronger and had better control than me.

Gilles said I was already full-fledged, but I don't personally feel excited about it. In comparison with Gilles, with exception to Father and Mother, I can't understand it too well. To put it bluntly, the three were monsters.

Since the attempted assassination by Gilles, two years had passed.

Since then, Father had marched into the Sévéne house and found them indeed guilty of the incident. Safely returning, furthermore, carrying back a promise was surprising. The present head of the family, Viscount Albert, was personally spoken to.

Father's courage was amazing, wasn't it? If men were courage, then would it be charm for women?

The promise that was exchanged with Father was this:

- Gilles would be part of the Adelcian family, no one was allowed to interfere.
- If someone were to interfere, they would need to provide a suitable response.
- If under careful supervision, he was found conspiring, a punishment would presently be handed out.
- For laying a hand on the daughter, it would be similarly dealt with.

This was the feeling I got from Father's story. It was fairly unilateral without the right to veto, giving the sense that it was closer to a decree. This was because, from a certain standpoint, the Viscount was below a Marquis, and yet, was publicly opposed excessively.

Moreover, Father grasped the entirety of the Sévéne house's plan. He did not tell me, though, in any case, but it was along the lines of an uprising. The Sévéne house had hardly any intentions to abide by the present King.

That is due to the King's pacifism. To make matters worse, he was younger than Viscount Albert, his outward appearance appeared a bit more different than his age. Therefore, Viscount Albert felt he was taking instructions from a greenhorn and this was probably not a good feeling.

Well, deals were made so it ended anticlimactically without a hitch and we returned to passing everyday peacefully. Except for the circumstances of the meeting in the hallway at the castle's party, where passing by, lightly clicking tongues and glares were dished out. How childish.

"Have some confidence in yourself, Liz-sama. I guarantee it"

"If Gilles says it, I more or less believe it, but....."

By the way, I came to call Gilles-san, Gilles. As it had been decided for appearance's sake, he was my servant; using the honorific -san did not serve a purpose. Gilles-san also spoke to me in first person, but only when he was outside, keeping precise appearances. This did not extend to when we are at home.

Also, Gilles entered a growth period and furthermore, grew larger. He has already reached 170 cm; much bigger than he used to be and his voice was already breaking. Privately, I was fond of his high transparent voice but..... Well, his current voice was fine too. His looks were also adult-like; it felt like his youthfulness was gradually fading away. It was inevitable that we are 8 years apart, but when Gilles-san lines up to take care of me, it feels complete. As it's real, I can't deny it.

Speaking of changes..... I now have a younger brother. He's only one year old. It's the long, cherished heir and son that my parents desired. With this, I'm no longer bound to the house..... To publicly become a bride gave me mixed feelings. If I was unlucky, under the supervision of his Highness, I would become his bride and that would be dreadful.

My mother, who gave birth, and my Father being a father were reasonably devoted to their baby son. Luckily or unluckily, I who was relied upon strongly, was partly left alone. That was nothing to be concerned of. It was the right decision but..... it wasn't very pleasant. Well, when he gets older, it'll return to the former state, I suppose.

With my parents preoccupied, I inevitably spent more time with Gilles. Earnestly practicing the usage of magic and gardening (obviously with sorcery), those were my days.

"Ha~~~, I somehow have a lot of free time. Father's been taking care of brother"

"Ruby-sama is still young, don't you agree. Being doted upon is understandable"

"I understand that"

Locking the flames into the water sphere, I let out a sigh for utmost time.

This was sorcery to develop control over my powers. I had to keep practicing the usage of two conflicting sorceries at the same time. Whenever it inclined to either one, it would immediately disappear, so it needed a reasonable amount of concentration.

Well, I had already become accustomed to it.

Without wasting time being able to juggle them, I was already able to control it. In order to prevent the impact from my palm from causing the flames to disappear when I brought the water along, I only had to disperse the impact and maintain the shape of the sphere. Not to forget, magical powers also had to be distributed evenly. It appears to have the same concept as oxygen, but burning up magical powers does not mean it easily disappears.

"Truly, nobles are always at leisure. As I'm no longer a heiress, it's needless"

With a toss, I chucked the water polo out the window and watered the plants in the garden with it. Naturally, after putting out the fire.

Gazing absentmindedly at the sky as it split open and blessed the plants, I collapsed on the bed afterwards.

The soft and fluffy bed, the smell of the sunset, those depressingly reminded me of Father. Inside was a woman exceeding her thirties but had returned as a child; it was simply laughable. It wasn't even a Father complex.

"Gilllless, let's just take a nap today. I just want to sulk in bed"

"Well today's practice has come to a close but..... I'll take my leave---"

"Gilles should lie together with me, come on"

That place was half-opened so pushing his face onto my chest whilst squeezing it slightly, we hit the bed. Gilles subtly hardened, and then had an astounded expression.

"..... Liz-sama, I'm your servant, furthermore a man."

"Then, it's the master's decree. As for gender distinctions, it is irrelevant to a child"

If Gilles thought it was a little girl's pastime, then it was different, but that wasn't what Gilles meant. When he heard it the other day, it was denied with a serious look. Indeed, it's not like he's a lolicon.

"..... Haaaa. Well, it doesn't really matter. Please don't ask this of others though."

"I only asked it because it's Gilles. Besides Gilles, after we sleep together, don't you feel relieved?"

"That's a story from the past. Now, if Welf-sama discovers us, I'm anxious about what he'll do"

"It's alright, he doesn't really pay attention to me now"

As both of them were devoted to Ruby, it wasn't a problem since Ruby was certainly cuter than me. I apologise for not being cuter.

Grinning and laughing, Gilles resigned and laid sideways beside me. Cheerfully reaching and embracing his chest, he let out a sigh and hugged me close to comb my hair.

..... Compared to the time I was four years old, I had a hunch that I would cling onto Gilles, but that's fine. On the contrary, it was good to be childish again. It's because there was something about Gilles that was calming. He probably looked at me.

"Gilles really likes that place, huh"

"Perhaps. Liz-sama has surprisingly turned into quite a spoiled child"

"So far, I'm just claiming back my share of being fawned over, you know..... It's lonely"

I didn't think I would be this lonely and it would be this dull when my parents no longer cared about me. In my previous life, I was the youngest. There was a large age gap separating me from my elder siblings, so it wasn't something I took mind of. Did my elder brothers have this feeling too?

Burying my face in his chest whilst grumbling, turning my body, I drew my hands back towards me.

"Liz-sama has me as well"

"That's true..... Somehow, Gilles is like an older brother..... Ah nooo touching~~"

"Please sleep quietly"

For some reason, my cheeks were pinched lightly.

Chapter 20 - The So-Called Observation Trip

Lizbeth Adelcian, 6 years old (mentally in my 30's). For the first time, I found myself on the streets of the castle town.

Except for the castle, there was never an occasion where I've left the estate. Or rather, Father wouldn't let me leave.

Even if the castle town was under His Majesty the King's protection, nonetheless, unseen shady sections still exist and so does slave trading. He probably thought it would be dangerous if I were to be seen in those places.

But now, Father is devoted to Ruby. His mind is filled with Ruby. As for neglecting his daughter, it was somewhat unamusing, but that was understandable. I was quite reliable, therefore, I was left alone and Gilles was left in a situation to manage everything.

In the past, I wasn't very interested in anything outside the estate. This was because I was preoccupied with sorcery studies, and I received Father's various teachings and care.

Now that Ruby's in that position, I gradually obtained a lot of spare time. Also, my studies in sorcery was now nearly at the final stages, I only needed to improve my control abilities. It seems that because I had did my best, my magical power progress, had again, increased.

Therefore, I was totally free. Making ice with sorcery, carving with the wind; I started working on specific sculptures and exchanging sorcery shots with Gilles. Even so, my boredom merely grew everyday.

"If you're so free, how about exploring the castle town?"

At that moment, Gilles made a proposal.

"I believe Welf-sama would permit it if I come along"

"..... Really?"

"I have said that soon, Liz-sama would wish to see the outside world. Whether this request is permitted....."

"I'll negotiate with Father!"

Promptly, I dashed over where Father was and requested for permission. He seemed hesitant in the beginning, but when I added that Gilles was coming along, he quite readily gave his consent. Whilst I was at it, I also received a little bit of pocket money. Thank you, Father.

Therefore, in high spirits, Gilles and I set forth for the castle town together.

"Oh--- It's quite lively"

Enjoying the sight while controlling my inner feelings, as it would cause quite a bit of trouble, I walked beside Gilles with a calm face.

By the way, my attire was the less inconspicuously looking commoner's dress. Matching with the surroundings, Gilles also wore a modest outfit. However, it could not conceal his beauty. From time to time, it drew the young ladies' gazes.

"Liz, where do you want to go?"

In order to not lose sight of me, we were holding hands and walking when Gilles asked that question. No honorific title was used as it was for the sake of hiding my status.

As expected, I would immediately be discovered in this fine place as a young lady if someone older had called me with -sama. Well, going by my appearances, one could clearly see that I was raised in a good household.

"I want to see the magic tool shop"

If I was a little bit older, perhaps it would look like a date from another's viewpoint. However, I was obviously a child and do not harbour feelings for each other. No matter how you look at it, we look just like siblings, although we don't resemble each other. To begin with, Gilles was older than me by eight years.

No matter how inappropriately childish my suggestion was, to some extent, the anticipated wry smile, "I understand" and brush off occurred. As expected of Gilles, he knew where these places existed. As a young lady that was sheltered throughout her peaceful life, it was extremely reliable to have someone who knew the town.

"Does Gilles also use magic tools?"

"I don't really use them but..... If I need to use them, then I will"

Gilles doesn't seem fond of magic tools. To begin with, mankind's magic was certainly reliant on their possession of magical powers, using sorcery through their own power to pull out the results of their desires.

In the first place, magic tools can be said to be tools entrusted with sorcery. The inner workings were special, sorcery can't reproduce magic that's possessed; hence, the existence of magic tools, but..... Fundamentally, sorcery normally can't be altered.

Humans who can't use magic, for the sake of controlling the consumption of magic and economising labour or using unsuitable sorcery, used magicians instead.

I didn't experience this much, but every person seems to have a reasonable sorcery. It also seems that there's an affinity to certain attributes. If your affinity was poor, your power to invoke would be inferior. For me and Gilles, to be able to invoke sorcery as we pleased, was considerably strange.

..... It has to be the blessing from Father and Mother's lineage.

"Because Liz and I do not especially need them. It would have an immense result, if needed"

"Uh---- But I really want to see some"

"I know..... Look, we've arrived"

Ever since following Gilles, we entered into a few alleyways and, indeed, came upon what appeared to be a store. Like a witch's house appearing in a tale, with that similar appearance, it was easy to agree that it sold magic tools. Of course, my first impression was not stained with the idea that this was a witch's house.

Opening the door, I heard a nostalgic clink-clonk sound like in the coffee shops.

It was gloomy inside but here and there, there was a faint dim light and the merchandise was visible. The chilly air was a little dusty, having a stale smell.

Displayed on the shelves and tables were various objects. Pots, ocarinas, pens, sorcery books, robes and carpets, it wasn't coherent. Ah, the carpets drew my interest a little, I have longed to fly in the sky with a carpet. I was unsure if it involved the use of flight sorcery though.

"Welcome"

Feeling the signs of magic emitted in the area, I glanced around restlessly everywhere and heard a casual voice speaking from deep within.

"Elza-san, it's been a while"

"Oh my! It's little Gilles, isn't it?"

The voice sounds like a young woman.

Lured to looking behind the counter..... I became speechless.

With ash blond hair which sketched elegant waves and emitted a sense of majesty - even inside the dim atmosphere of the shop's interior - to the point that I questioned why I hadn't noticed until now. The similarly coloured pupils were loosely narrowed. The milky white skin didn't seem wholly warmed by the fire and I felt it was slightly pale.

With the lustrous hair flowing to her rear, resting languidly behind the counter with her chin on her hands was a beautiful woman.

By the way, loosely speaking, a certain part could be seen. How should I put it, by other's standards, it was huge. Those ripen fruits formed a deep shadowed valley as it was flaunted on the counter. Because they were clothes that were opened to emphasize the breasts, it released a destructive power that would cause girls to lose their confidence. I..... I'm still a child so this had nothing to do with me, yup!

"When did you gave birth to a child?"

"I didn't"

"Not acknowledging is pitiful, you know"

"Like I said, she's not my child!"

"Papa~~"

"Don't get carried away too, Liz-sama!"

Ah, the return of the -sama use.

The older girl cackled and gave a weird smile; Gilles looked at her, unamused. I have a feeling Gilles's pessimistic nature has yet to improve, huh.

After Gilles looked at the girl's destructive weapons, he calmed down. Rather, he glanced with an indifferent expression. Gilles, is there something wrong with you as a man?

"Little Gilles has grown up, yah. I heard it. You've left the Sévéne?"

"..... Be that as it may, I'm not a household member of the Sévéne, I'm just Gilles. Please don't mistake that"

"Haven't I always received little Gilles from the very beginning?"

smirk and well, Elza-san lifted the ends of her mouth. It appears she's an acquaintance from Gilles's past.

"And that miss is?"

"Ah. Nice to meet you. My name is Lizbeth Adelcian"

"Adelcian..... Ahhh, young master Welf's daughter? He also seems to have grown up. For such an immature boy to come this far, hah"

"Fa--- For Father to be treated as an immature boy..... "

"Liz-sama, Elza-san's age cannot be judged by her appearance alone"

No matter how I looked at her appearance, I could only picture her in her early twenties, but according to Gilles, she was older than she appeared For someone to able to treat Father like a boy..... At least, forti--- Let's just leave it at that.

Enduring my stiffened cheeks, I bowed my head and Elza-san gazed at me pleasantly. Her forefinger pointed towards the store's merchandise.

For an instant I wondered what it was for and the next moment, several merchandise came flying towards the counter top from the store's interior, before resting quietly on top of the countertop.

I repeatedly blink several times; before my very eyes, they were sorted and descended in front of me.

"Well, I wonder if this seems to be what the Miss requires? Gilles, choose"

"We have not come to a decision to purchase yet..... Liz-sama, Elza-san is the necessary person to see if you want magic tools that correspond to you"

..... These were the magic tools that corresponded with me?

..... Or rather, I can't understand and attest to their usefulness.

"This is a robe of concealment, that is a wand that enhances attributes, and over there is a flute that gathers animals....."

Elza-san gave a simple explanation of the magic tools on the table. There seems to be a variety of magic tools, I was also informed easily about their effects.

Amongst them, there were only two that caught my eye. For some reason, I was attracted to them. They were not explained, but I would like to think these were agreeable.

"These are?"

"The ribbon has a concealment spell and the ring..... That's right, it's an item that creates a connection"

"Connection?"

"Yes. It's a pair, isn't it? If each party carries it, they'll mutually be able to find each other. You can also transmit the voice of your heart. Well, that's if the

person desires it"

In other words, it's probably like a transmitter for feelings? No, in my previous life, this would resemble a mobile phone. The type for children that's embedded with a GPS function.

"..... These are fine"

"Will you have these?"

"But what will I do with money? My Father only gave me this much"

Because I didn't understand the value of money, I couldn't understand how much it cost. How much would ten gold coins cost if they were converted to Japanese Yen?

Producing the small sack that was tucked away into my inner pockets, Elza-san was startled upon looking at the contents inside Was it insufficient?

"For young master Welf to pass this amount of money to his daughter was a mistake"

"He's quite doting..... That being the case, I'll pay for these"

Not leaving any excess, pinching a suitable amount from a leather bag, Gilles handed it over to Elza-san. One..... Two..... Three..... Erm, five gold coins and three silvers coins?

"Ohh, how generous---, the disinherited boy has quite a lot of money to burn"

"Ehhh, Gi--- Gilles, that expensive? If that's the case, take my money---"

"I don't mind; even if I kept it, I won't be able to use it. Besides, the wages that I received from Welf-sama can't be compared to this"

Even if Elza-san made a delighted whistle. If I knew how expensive it was, I would have restrained myself from taking out my pocket money. Gilles produced the required money and before I could meddle, had bought them.

..... I'm sorry, it's inexcusable for me to make my servant buy them for me.

"Please don't take it to heart, Liz-sama. I did it voluntarily on my own"

"But..... !"

"A woman should not hesitate when being given a present..... This is a present from me to the always hard-working Liz-sama"

Airily laughing, he brushed my hair and tied it up together with the ribbon. Combing my hair with his considerably large palm, it was comfortable but I felt somewhat embarrassed.

..... For this to be done in public was excessively embarrassing. Elza-san grinned and laughed as she watched attentively.

After pulling myself together a little, Gilles finished my hair and gently smiled, "It suits you"and praised me.

..... Handsome guys are sly, I can't return a blow to that face, I thought happily.

"..... I pray that Gilles won't become like that in the future"

"I have my hands full looking after Liz-sama, so I'm not interested"

"You're wasting your life, Gilles....."

"It's alright, little Gilles has already exchange saliva with a little girl"

"Please stop joking. I'll get angry, Elza-san"

The teasing voice made Gilles's smile and face stiffen but as for me, it wasn't like that.

What should I do? I received something expensive and am greatly indebted to Gilles. If this keeps up, I will keep on depending on Gilles. Though it was bought with kindness from Gilles but..... I had a lot to consider. Even if it's just a little, I should express my feelings of appreciation.

Looking at the cold war between the two, and then I looked at the pair of rings that I had purchased.

"..... Gilles, give me one of the rings please"

"Eh?"

"The ring that creates a connection, if that's the case, it should be sufficient with Gilles. I want to be connected to Gilles"

With Gilles always by my side, he would be able to find me. Wherever I am, Gilles would always be able to find me. Wherever Gilles was, I would always be able to find him - is what I would like. Perhaps it might be a bit uneasy, however, if Gilles doesn't like that, I will not try to persuade him.

Looking at me grasping the hem of my dress, Gilles stiffened and Elza-san bursted out laughing as she held her stomach I don't understand why it's laughable, what was the problem? And looking at Gilles, Gilles had a complicated and troubled expression with slightly blushed cheeks.

Looking puzzled at him, "Using that expression can lead to misunderstandings", Gilles responded with a furrowed brow.

..... Expression? There wasn't any expression, I only wanted to be connected to Gilles.....

.....

"Wa--- Wait! I didn't mean that!"

"Ahahaha! What an audacious miss! Aren't you glad, Gilles? In future, it'll be a reverse Cinderella story!"

"That-isn't-true! This isn't what it is, I have no feelings for Gilles, I said it's different. Ahhhh please, I already said it isn't true, please stop laughing"

"Liz-sama, I understand already. That's why, please calm down"

As expected, whatever I said was understood. With a bashful bright red face, Gilles brushed my head gently and calmed me down. However, Gilles also had a slightly red face. For a child's misspoken words to cause Gilles to feel awkward was rare, but now wasn't the time for that.

For a while, Elza-san kept laughing. I clung onto Gilles from behind, glaring whilst on the verge of tears. I wasn't crying in particular, it's just my tear gland were loosen.

"Elza-san, please don't tease Liz-sama excessively. As an adult to laugh unexpectedly at her innocence is very childish"

"Haha-- Hi..... phew, sorry, it was just so worthwhile teasing her"

"..... I am dissatisfied with that assessment, however"

"It's what I understood from these past two years"

Restoring his expression, Gilles was brushing my head gently whilst calmly responding. Pouting, I scowled displeasingly at Gilles. Well, it was ignored, however.

While Elza-san looked astonished at Gilles, he picked up the ring and handed one over to me. The counterpart was already in my palm.

"Well then, thank you for giving me the offer to be your counterpart"

"..... Yes"

"Phew, ah--- That's right, here's a freebie"

It seems that Gilles didn't dislike the ring itself as he smiled broadly. Till then, remembering that laughable lingering memory that remained due to Elza-san, would have made me throw the ring away.

Besides matching, in mine and Gilles's palm was a silver chain.

"Be careful not to lose it. You too, Gilles"

"I know that already"

"Well, if the magic tool recognises its owner, it will conveniently return to you.

It all depends on you."

"..... Thank you very much, Elza-san"

Quickly bowing my head in gratitude as I said that, she waved her hand, "Not at all"and responded again casually.

.... Perhaps Elza-san's a somewhat eccentric and irresponsible person, but I sensed she was a good person.

Chapter 21 - Kidnapped

"Take it out here!"

"Behave yourselves, you stupid brats!"

Yup, how did this happened?

I was in a slightly dirty stone-walled room. There wasn't any decent furniture; only a cloth bag and a wooden box that was something like luggage. Rather than calling it a room, it would probably be correct to call it a warehouse? In such a gloomy room, I was locked up with other kids.

Judging from their appearances, there were two commoner boys, the other..... How should I put it, a cat eared little girl.

Slightly light brown and covered with pink short hair, excluding the fluffy triangular ears, was a glossy tail. I was aware of the existence of demi-humans from books, but I never caught sight of any on the streets.

In the first place, demi-humans rarely appeared in front of people. Encountering one meant they were pets that were treated like slaves. This was an unsightly world, where any living thing that was different from you was exclusively discriminated.

By the way, let me recall how this happen.

After leaving the magic tool shop with Gilles, I looked at a stall. Well, it's the type of food that can't be eaten in the mansion, the so-called junk food that was quite fascinating to my craving.

After all, the estate always only served elegant food. However, there was the exception of my home grown fruits and vegetables that I could easily prepare by biting into it completely.

Setting aside my appetite for now, I looked at the stall. Thereupon a large crowd of people began to push through and my hands separated from Gilles.

If that was the case, I would have instantly ran back but after being separated for an instant, from behind, my mouth was held down and just like that, I was forcefully taken away. Commonly referred to as a kidnapping based on my personal experience.

"..... Oi, were you also dragged here too?"

Gathering myself from the cat eared little girl's existence that deeply moved me, I saw a similarly imprisoned boy who had began the conversation. He was, approximately, slightly older than me and slightly younger than his Highness, he was probably exactly in between.

With a bright dark reddish-brown hair and same coloured eyes, the boy had an unyielding gaze.

"It seems so, huh"

"Seems so..... You're confused, we're being sold"

"I see. It's the first time I've ever encountered an actual human trafficking site"

"..... You, a noble? With that proper sort of easy-going attitude, you probably have a screw loose somewhere inside your head"

Outwardly seeing through a noble's appearance and yet brazenly using insults

was remarkable. If it had been other nobles, this person would have assumingly been lynched. It's not particularly any of my concern though.

"Perhaps if it's understood that I'm a noble, they would shift me and charge for a ransom. Probably, I won't be used in their trade"

"That's unfair!"

"Shut up, damn brats!"

"Hiieeeeee!"

The boy's voice strained and the girl who wasn't the cat eared little girl became frightened and started crying. In addition to getting irritated, the man on guard duty approached the little girl and raised his hand.

..... It can't be helped.

"Please stop"

Running, I thrust myself between the little girl and the man. *slap* Recognising the taste of blood that spread inside my mouth, I had protected the little girl and taken the blow.

Although I said I caught it, it was in a state of which I used the girl's body as a cushion. But even so, it was quite a shock absorber, I guess?

Satisfied with my state, the man said "Next time, if you make a noise, I'll kick you", spitted and I saw that he returned to the entrance; I held onto my cheek.

..... Ah--- It hurts, this is the worst.

It was incredibly painful. Healing magic could relieve the pain, but it was still painful. The inside of my mouth was cut and one of my teeth had broken off. Well, it's my baby tooth so it'll regrow again but..... An abnormality to the bone.....

If I had received a crack, I could just get someone to fix it. Or rather, I don't care. Perhaps if Gilles, Father and Mother found out about this, they would be overcome with rage. Not my problemmm~!

"Hicc..... *sniffs* Sor..... sorry, I, in my place you....."

As I used healing magic to heal the inside of my mouth, the little girl I had

protected not long ago was crying and came apologising to me. And in some way, the boy who was the cause of this came over apologetically.

"Sorry, because I had shouted....."

"It's all good, it's only a broken tooth"

"--Sorry, I.....!"

"It's fine, although the tooth came off, I was able to stop the bleeding and heal it"

"Eh?"

Spitting out the tooth from inside my mouth, I took a handkerchief out from my dress and tucked it away. Evidence, evidence, material for Father's anger.

"Are any of you wounded? Just in case though, I'll just heal you"

"..... You can heal?"

"I'm still incompetent though..... Over there, you too"

Greeting the loosely frightened cat eared little girl with a tiny voice, she jolted with a start. Probably by nature, she feared humans themselves because sub-humans were often found hunted for sport.

Slowly approaching, I didn't want her to keep her wariness as much as possible. Drawing closer to her side with a smile, nevertheless as expected, her face looked frightened.

"My words, can you understand them?"

"I..... can"

"In that case, were you hurt in any way? If there is an injury, please say it"

As gentle as possible, I asked the question. The cat eared little girl timidly rolled up her clothes and showed me her stomach.

..... There was a great number of bruises, the white skin had become spotted. The two people glancing from behind me made an audible gasping sound.

Oh well, this fell within my expectations. Purporting it as discipline, it was an increasing act of violence that was taken out on concealed parts.

"..... Well then, I'm going to heal it, so please be quiet"

Because it would be troublesome if the guard discovered us, using the shadow of the wooden box, I placed my hand directly on the cat eared little girl's stomach and invoked healing magic. The reaction of wrapping an entire body with magic would also be conspicuous but in a specific region, moreover, given the circumstances, it would not be conspicuous - with the participation of the rightly purchased magic concealment ribbon of course.

In a twinkle, the black marks faded away and the cat eared little girl was amazed. The other two also looked absentminded.

"Does it still hurt?"

"..... It..... It's ok....."

"Then it's good. Now then, can I ask for your name?"

As one would expect, in my mind, speaking to the cat eared little girl was probably impolite but in this situation, one way or another, we would be sharing our fate together. There was no loss from just remembering a person's name.

"..... Maria"

"I'm Klaus"

"I--- I'm Lily"

"I'm Liz. For the time being, I'm in your care"

For now, having completed our introductions, in order not to be doubted, the four of us children pretended to be frightened and huddled together. Although, two people were honestly frightened.

"How are we going to get out of here?"

"It's--- it's impossible..... Those people have a lot of friends"

"What about calmly waiting for help?"

"Nn... Without a doubt, it won't come"

My proposition was laughed scornfully by Klaus. Whether one liked it or not, in actuality, perhaps Gilles was on his way here..... In a somewhat wonderfully

angry state.

Gilles, arrest the kidnappers and save us please. If possible, bring the cavalry or Father, because in my inner pocket, I didn't know how to use the ring and could not send my feelings across. Hmm, I guess he would definitely make his way here. It was a situation where we needed to wait till we're rescued, right?

..... However, wouldn't this be a burden on Gilles? This would simply be a tale of a heroine waiting to be rescued, struggling was normal. But I'm just a child, a powerless child that's reliant on an adult.

"Liz-sama's already putting an adult to shame. Nay. Your handle of magical powers is greater than sorcerers from around here"

"Have some confidence in yourself, Liz-sama. I guarantee it"

In such a time, I suddenly remembered the words Gilles uttered before.

..... If it's me, I could possibly..... do it?

"Hey, are you listening? If the four of us were to strike, won't we be able to manage somehow?"

"Th--- that's impossible....."

"Well then, let's go. Ah, no matter what happens, I won't be responsible"

"Eh?"

Listening to Lily's question, I smiled sweetly and laughed.

"Leave the room on my signal"

Slowly I converted magic powers within my body through the magic equation. If possible, I would like to prevent the guards from moving while minimizing the casualties.

..... Also, I would like to avoid killing them. Acting under self-defence, it is understandable if allowances are made towards the villains if they let their victims walk free.

'Sleep'

Inside my mouth, I let out a small mutter and threw the sorcery at the guard.

It was often said that nature was in their names; as with the name, it was a sorcery that forcefully caused a person to sleep. This was what Gilles used, wasn't it?

The effect was light for a person who has an aptitude for sorcery and a person who prepared in advance, but on talentless people who were unprepared, it had an immediate effect.

The man who was left with the dull task of guarding the kids was obviously unprepared. And thus, having no talent for sorcery, indeed, he simply fell to sleep. This person clearly had no idea that nobles had a high aptitude in sorcery.

"Well, let's go?"

Brushing away the dust on my clothes as I stood up, the trio had an extremely idiotic expression. What is it? I thought as I'd decided to escape on my own.

Chapter 22 - Escape & Negligence

Author's note: There are bloodshed and cruelty descriptions this time. It may not be a significant presentation, but please be careful if you dislike descriptions like this.

"As expected of the capital, having wide roads is complicated, hmm..... ---"

"Hey! This isn't the time to be saying such things, is it"

"Haaa. Where's a good place to run~"

It's the great escape play with four people. Escaping the warehouse, we frantically ran into the middle of a complicated, maze-like road.

To be honest, there was one more guard outside the room, but because sleep

wasn't effective on him, I dropped ice on top of his head and made him faint. Most likely, his neck bones weren't fractured - hopefully.

While the four of us have escaped, Lily-san - who didn't have much stamina - was falling behind a little. On the contrary, the fastest was Klaus-kun..... Nope, Maria-san. Demi-humans generally had an insufficient amount of magic powers, but this trait was compensated by their physical abilities. Even though our ages weren't that different from each other, it didn't affect how fast she sprinted. Perhaps I would need to adjust this as well?

"For the time being, I will have to struggle on until I meet up with Gilles and my household"

As to the victory conditions, either we have to meet up with Gilles or escape to my household, seeking shelter.

Since Gilles was on his way here, this was the easiest option. But perhaps, this would change and add an additional condition, repelling the human trafficking organisation. However, with Gilles being angry, he would destroy them arbitrarily.

Escaping to the estate was another option. Being pursued in this situation made it considerably difficult, but taking refuge at once would be a relief. Knowing Father's position and capability, no fool would dare to pick a fight with him, and strangers that Father didn't know would be repelled. After capturing and interrogating them, the move to crush the organisation would begin..... I suppose?

Well, I don't know if they'll be crushed; perhaps it may also be related to the nobles? Slaves and pets are lifetime goods that establishes a noble..... Hmm, I guess it's the class of nouveau riche that covets it. I can also imagine it's an adherence. As for me, as long as my security is ensured, that's all that matters.

"I dare say, Gilles..... That's my servant, he's searching for me and his response is getting closer so he'll be able to manage one way or another"

"Wait, you stupid bratssss!"

"No way!"

Again, the pursuers came. Whilst running, I converted my magic with the

magic equation and fired at the men.

To be accurate, I aimed at the ground.

The men and the ground were soaked together with 'Splash' and I used 'Freeze' on that water. Immediately, the water there froze, so there was hardly any loss of magic. As the surface froze over with a crackle, the men trembled; my sorcery had flipped over my pursuers. Well, I had just frozen the ground so they were falling down.

Yet they were still chasing, so once again, I converted my magic, using a different sorcery this time.

"Just confining isn't enough"

This time with my own power, using magic to produce ice, I made a wall out of ice. The sorcery called 'Ice Wall' formed a box, making a wall in all four directions of the fallen men and a lid covering the top.

Though it probably won't be broken so easily, they won't be able to endure as they would die from suffocation. Even if their body temperatures won't drop, I had given it some consideration..... Nope, since I froze them earlier, it'll likely be a bit perilous, but you reap what you sow. I know nothing. After all, my life is precious.

They were confined perfectly and thus, the tactic to snatch away the pursuers physical strength and fighting power was secured.

Verifying that the men were neutralized, I turned back.

..... As expected, the high speed development of sorcery and invoking it continuously, as usual, was wearing me out. On top of running, my concentration was decreasing. It wasn't too bad though the two years of training with Gilles proved fruitful.

"---Haa, haaa, are you fine using that much magic?"

"---nngh, I won't say I'm fine, but it had to be done..... With these people, a lot of magic has to be used"

Or rather, please don't talk so much to me, I'm a shut-in. Though we ran around to the garden, regardless of sex and age, we were reasonably close.

Using magic and invoking it to apply healing magic for fatigue recovery whilst concentrating in the midst of sprinting was certainly not helping.

Gasping for breath and also breathing heavily, I - who had used my whole strength to sprint - was approached by Maria-san, who slowed down and drew closer to me.

"..... Climb on"

"Eh--"

"I, not like others, am stronger"

Declared so in a lisped voice to me, who looked perplexed, Maria-san turned her hand and guided me to her emptied back.

..... Is this really alright?

Unfortunately, she was also much more petite than me. For her to run, I held onto her neck as I drew closer to her back. Suddenly using my hand, my body was elevated and I was carried on her back. With ease, she carried me and ran.

"Th-thank you"

"Ok"

Where does such power dwell in this petite body? It would have taken a toll on her as I rode on her back, and yet, she dashed away just like Lily-san. Although I felt apologetic, entrusting my body to her shaking back, I put aside my mood.

..... Gilles was, in the Japanese expression, about a distance of 500 metres away. It's complicated, but we couldn't readily advance straight. Well, it's that sort of place. For the present, meeting with Gilles takes precedent.

"--Ha, I feel a bit at ease"

Because I had stopped expending energy whilst moving, I still had some reserved strength. Casting healing magic, to recover everyone's fatigue as they made a dash, definitely lightened the burden. Furthermore, for Maria-san who was carrying me, her body was made a little lighter with wind sorcery.

The three who ran, who suddenly noticed their fatigue beginning to fade,

were surprised but acknowledging my deed, they gave me a well-meaning thumbs up. Gradually, the time to chat disappeared. However, thanks to Maria-san, I still had some allowance.

"-- Stop, damn brats! That's as far as you go!"

"--Geh"

By the time I realized, the pursuers from before had gained on us. There's a bend in the road, but there were pursuers there too. This is bad - I thought, and consenting it personally as an emergency measure, I quickly gathered my magic, with high speed, into the magic equation.

As much as possible, today's priority was to not cause harm to people when using sorcery.

"Keep going!"

In order to escape, we cannot afford to slow down. Therefore, we can only push our way through. This isn't Japan and it isn't a peaceful world. One has to defend one's own body by one's self.

""Lightning""

As I was riding on Maria's back, it was easier to control my magic equation. Nevertheless, the sorcery was still difficult to control; as much as possible, I needed to restrain the power used so as to prevent unnecessary killings. Consequently, with the abundance of magic, having high basic powers would backfire.

From the sky, a single lightning bolt appeared and pierced the pursuers in front of us directly.

There was an unpleasant smell of burnt flesh. All that remained from that single move was carbonized skin. The men let out a shriek ripping from their throats and pierced our ear drums. To those agonising voices, I felt increasingly guilty.

Reflexively grimacing, I turned my face away; Maria-san and Lily-san screamed. Still, the pursuers from before were still moving.

I did not mean to cause a fatal wound. It was a severe burn, inevitably

inflicted, but enough to keep them alive. Taking this situation in consideration, it really backfired.

Damn, my cheeks stiffened and a man from the pursuers knocked Maria-san off her feet and sent me flying. With animal strength, in the heated moment, Maria-san's body, which was hit with that power, made an unpleasant crack sound, and I was flung into a wall. Having been thrown, the wind was knocked out of me.

Throbbing and ringing, the pain coursed through my whole body. Fortunately, my lungs weren't smashed but..... See here, my ribs seemed to be fractured. Unless it pierced my lungs. No, it's okay to kill now.

Klaus-kun was also sent flying, Lily-san was rolled over and kicked, I was recovering from the shock from the strike. For Lily-san to be kicked hard by that pursuer bloke.

The body of young Maria-san rolled over easily and sank in that place limply. Groaning in pain, I couldn't do anything for that girl.

The man from the pursuers, who had carbonised skin falling off of him, caught a hold of me by the collars. Arriving with a resentful mind, his eyes were bloodshot and held a glint that could kill someone - he had that expression.

"..... Only you fucker, I'll kill ya..... !"

Ah, am I going to die. The pain and fatigue made my thoughts sloppy, but that was an expected result.

..... Father and Mother, Gilles, I'm certain they'll be pissed. Why didn't I wait patiently?

..... Gilles, please, save me.

No matter how much I pray, the result is inevitable though. As I'm about to be killed, I can only apologise.

"Die!"

His hatred delivered, filled with disparagement, the other party used his hands to wring my neck that had already been seized by the collar..... That was what I thought.

The sound of the wind severing.

And then, plop. Something had made a falling sound.

For the second time, I heard shrieks.

That wasn't me; before my very eyes, the shrieks had jumped out of the man's mouth.

The clothes that had been seized by that hand, with force, slackened. I, who had no strength left to stand, felt myself collapsing on my back when I felt someone had caught me.

My head was dizzy with pain; slowly I raised my eyes..... and I saw the usual smile as always.

"It's going to be alright already, Liz-sama"

Smiling calmly, Gilles stroked my head. At that moment, my consciousness receded, not knowing whether it was because of relief or if Gilles had used sorcery. Visibly was a man who was smeared in blood, an arm missing. Even that was inconsequential.

..... Because Gilles had come, all was well.

Coming to that conclusion in my consciousness, I sank into the deep darkness.

Chapter 23 - The Servant's Worries

"Liz-sama, what should you say to me"

"My sincerest apologies"

As soon as I woke up, I offered an earnest apology it was laughable.

It has been three days since the kidnapping. It seems three days had passed since I lost consciousness and I slept through it. Although it didn't feel like such a thing.

After Gilles and the chivalric order had turned up, we were rescued from the human trafficking organisation. It was truly by a hair's breath; if he had arrived even a moment later, I would have probably died.

Mother desperately cured my injuries, leaving no visible scars behind. As expected of Mother.

"What would you have done if I hadn't made it? It's a good thing that I made it in time"

"I'm sorry"

Awaking, I thought Gilles would speak to me tenderly, but as soon as I woke up, it was lecture time. That was because of my careless actions, I had fallen into danger. Hence, why I also understood why he was angry.

"Remaining obediently and waiting for an opportunity to leave would have been a good decision, so why did you decide to escape?"

"Because---"

"That's not a good enough excuse. Heedlessly moving. Liz-sama, please restrain yourself from taking hastier actions. Even if you're better at others in using magic, it's still a different matter in combat. You haven't personally attacked someone head on with sorcery before, have you?"

"..... But--"

"No buts. Because, if something had happened to Liz-sama, what would we do? It would have been a bitter reality to experience"

With no room to retort, I kept silent.

All of Gilles's words were sound, it was my fault. I knew I was going to be rescued so I should have obediently waited. My hastily conceived plans and actions exposed everyone's lives to danger. If Gilles hadn't come, I would have surely died.

When I thought that, I suddenly became frightened.

"So--- sorry"

The reality of me exposing people's lives to danger was frightening. The fact that lives could have been lost because of me was frightening. And above all, dying was frightening.

If I had died again, what would become of me? Where would I be born again or what would I become? As I didn't know, I was afraid. Being separated from Gilles or Father, Mother and his Highness was frightening.

"--uhu--- Gilles, I'm sorry, I'm sorry"

Perhaps, this was the first time I had spontaneously cried.

Filled with the horrors and feelings of guilt in my head, I couldn't stop the tears from pouring out. There was a lot of tears, to be precise, a flood of tears. Having difficulty breathing, I sobbed convulsively while my tears fell down.

Gilles was surprised when I bursted into tears; somewhat coming together, he then embraced and rubbed my back. Hugging and tenderly stroking my head made me feel excessively pleased, and I kept crying.

Although I no longer knew why I was crying, but being alive was undoubtedly a happy thing - was what I thought. Being alive meant experiencing this, Gilles's worries and his embrace. If I had died, I wouldn't ever experience this again.

"Gillesh, Gillesh, sorry, Gillesh.....----"

"It's fine now, I'm here by your side"

Slowly continuing to cry, Gilles - as always - continued to cuddle me tenderly.

"..... *sniff*, uhu---- Gillesh, tishue paper puhlease, my nose ish dripping"

"Yes yes"

Feeling refreshed after crying wretchedly, was not how it went. There still remained some horror and feelings of guilt. Thus, with a runny nose, I ended up with an unbecoming face, like any other women.

Gilles, with a wry smile, handed the tissue papers to me. Resigning, I blew my nose with all my might. The tears which came together with the mucus were tears nonetheless; they were dirty, but as it was all over Gilles, what should I do? Luckily, the clothes weren't soiled so that was a plus.

"---Gu, wh-- why is Gilles smiling about?"

"No, it's just the first time I've seen Liz-sama cry. I guess you're still a child deep down inside, huh"

"..... I'm sorry, I'm still a child, that was why I was in jeopardy"

"Please don't cry, I was just teasing you lightly. Your usual sulking face is cuter"

"..... I'll have to question the usual image Gilles has of me"

"Yup, that's the way"

With a "there, there" smiling face, as he stroked my head gently, he didn't it look like he was making fun of me, and I pouted my lips. Of late, I had a feeling that Gilles was mostly treating me like a child.

That is, to Gilles, I was still a child, hence, this treatment couldn't be helped.

..... Ah.

Was the cause because Gilles has been spoiling me?

Recently, because Father wasn't around to care, I had clung onto Gilles, so he has probably been treating me like a younger sister, hasn't he? Gilles had mentioned he was the youngest in his family; perhaps he was pampering me because it was his first time considering me as a younger sister.

"Gilles, I'm not your younger sister, you know"

"How did that expression came about?"

"Isn't it?"

"It isn't"

I was denied with a serious look.

"I have always seen Liz-sama as my master and as a female"

"Is it my imagination that you've taken unexpected lengths to ridicule me?"

"It is done consequently because you're dear to me"

"The ends justify the means"

Hmph, I coldly responded by turning my face away from Gilles's teasing. Smiling wryly, Gilles hugged me again and stroked my head. Like I said, that's treating me like a child and not a master.

When that was conveyed, "You have no faith" as he lowered his eyebrows and laughed..... That doesn't mean I have no faith, but I am convinced with certainty that I was looked upon like a child.

There wasn't any particular need to look from the perspective of an adult in this current situation; even if I had somehow been treated like a child, but wanting to be fawned on was also a fact.

My cheeks swelled a little; I murmured against Gilles's chest "Stupid Gilles", and closed my eyes.

.... Once our body temperatures became the same, I quickly fell back to sleep.

Chapter 24 - The Detailed Accounts of Facts and Later Developments

And thus, for a while, I was grounded in my room.

Father and Mother were absolutely reposed so I yielded. Well, the wounds have already healed perfectly thanks to Mother's healing magic. Because I was unreasonably vigorous, I would like to do a bit of gardening at the garden.

Thanks to the kidnapping incident, no, due to the kidnapping incident? Both of my parents became overprotective again. Or rather, ever since before, they've always been increasingly overprotective. As I had been close to death, it was as though they had to endure parting with me which made them more concerned.

To be honest, it was at an irritating level. I also understood their feelings. It was I who desired for their attention in the first place But this is a little bit different from what I wanted. Being restricted to such a degree is bothersome.

Ah, that's right! The details of the kidnapping incident.

The kidnapping organization was destroyed. Yup, destroyed. Just as I expected from Father's personality.

Hearing that I was close to death filled Father with rage (Off topic but people said that in that situation, his rage was manageable), together with Gilles, they marched in full force Or rather, cindered parts of it (physically).

Gilles, please do stop.

I heard that the chivalric order could do nothing but stop and watch attentively, which I apologise for my Father's behavior.

As kidnappers were the extremities of humanity, Father also tor--- Ahem, interrogated them and got a confession from the upper echelons about the boss's whereabouts. It's better not to hear how he did it, it would just make you sick.

With those feelings, Father located their headquarters and assaulted it with great vigour. Isn't Father wonderful?

However, this only proceeded smoothly because it seemed that His Majesty, the King, spearheaded it. In His Majesty's lifetime, it was time to begin the roundup and expunge the infection. From the seized customer list, a number of nobles — ranked no less than viscount — were noted. It also seems that they

would be punished at any given time.

Looking at it this way, it's amazing to be part of the world and high society, right? But if you're unable to come forth, then I can't understand that.

And then, there were the children that ran away with me.

They also suffered serious injuries, but Mother completely healed them with healing magic; Klaus-kun and Lily-san were delighted to be escorted back home. That's nice, to be able to return back to one's life.

And as for the demi-human, Maria-san.

"Hou Fluffy~"

Now, she's within my arms, sitting meekly.

Being a demi-human, Maria-san was caught for the purpose of being sold as a slave but as her parents had already passed away, it seems that she was living alone. Even so, the outside world is hazardous.

Since she didn't even have a place to return to, if she were to be thrown out on the streets, she would also be persecuted. As such, she was to be given protection by my household. Nah, it's a good thing since I'm able to touch this fluffiness.

"Ha~~Fuuu~~"

Basically, since I wasn't allowed to head outside, just touching fluffy Maria-san was soothing. Her tail was bushy, fluffy, and glossy whereas her triangular ears were just fluffy and glossy. It was comfortable to touch and was fascinating as well.

Though I said Maria-san's protected, it was more like she has been employed as a maid and is being given wages. Cat-eared maid That has an amazing ring to it.

"Is this Fun ?"

"Yup!"

"Then, it is, OK"

Furthermore, her haltering speech is just adorable. Haaa If such a younger sister existed, how pleasant would it be?

No, this is reality.

My brother's body wasn't that resilient, so I couldn't meet with him frequently. Mother was always constantly supervising him. Just looking at the boy, one could tell that he resembled Father with his redhead and red eyes. He was named "Ruby" because his colouring was similar to the mineral, ruby.

"..... Liz-sama, your face is slipping"

"But"

She's just too adorable, nee?

"Hou~~....."

"..... This feels complicated, huh"

On the next day.

"Liz, are you alright!"

And thus, the equilibrium was intruded upon by His Highness.

"I'm fine. As you can see, I'm lively"

"I I was worried, ya know. I heard that you were close to dying!"

"It's not like I've died, I'm all right"

"But you were crying shamelessly if I might say"

"Gilles!"

Why are you uttering unnecessary things? If the matter of me sobbing and crying was revealed, it would be embarrassing. In this lifetime, this was the first time I've cried. That and loudly wailing with Gilles comforting me, that was something I wish to forget.

As it was obviously an unnecessary remark, I narrowed my eyes and, acting as though it was none of his business, Gilles began making the tea preparations. It might have been my imagination but Gilles has been handling me roughly of late.

His Highness being His Highness never imagined that I would burst out into tears; he looked dumbfounded.

"Liz, you cried

"..... It was after I'd been saved"

Though it wasn't exactly a lie, why does His Highness look so surprised? Perhaps he couldn't imagine the child with a scolding mannerism to ever cry.

However, I am — first and foremost — a human, and a woman. It was neither the fear of the near-death experience nor the sense of security I felt from the tight embrace that made me let my guard down. As for crying against Gilles's chest

I had been, very calmly, enveloped by Gilles and had accepted his comfort to the point where I left large tear-stains on him.

"..... It was painful, wasn't it"

Holding my silence, His Highness patted the top of my head with his palm.

..... Something's different. Rather, His Highness is a bit rough? Yup, there's no feeling of embrace from it. Though I'm being patted, it was definitely a rough, tousling feeling.

Though, I feel grateful as it was proof of maturity that His Highness was able to sympathise with another person. He has already learned how to handle girls.

Hmm, and groaning with that delicate face, His Highness pulled me into his embrace.

"Next time, it would be good if you fawned over me"

You're even asking me to depend on you.

..... But it was a delightful feeling Your Highness, even if, for a moment, could you please hug me gently? Although I don't dislike it, it's rather undeserving, your Highness.

Somehow, Gilles had a smiling face but his eyes told a different story. And whose fault do you think this was? The clingy prince or me, who did not reject His Highness? Or both parties?

Or rather, why are you even mad, Gilles? When this is merely children playing around. Well, having his master taken away from him might have caused mixed feelings; it was certainly not jealousy though, I'm a child after all.

This was troubling towards I, who was worrying within his arms. Then, something occurred to His Highness and he released me from his embrace.

..... What is he scheming, with that smile?

"Your Highness, what are---"

"You're sounding much more energized"

Asserting with such confidence from His Highness, he firmly grasped both my shoulders.

Chuuu.

A tender sensation could be felt on a part of my face.

"Huh? Eh?"

"Mother said doing this to Father would always cheer him up"

The source was the Queen? His Highness was excellent in his manners, as well as sorcery and swordsmanship studies, but he seems to be lacking in sensitivity and common sense. Of course, when I was younger, Father used to kiss me on my cheeks, but that was where the line was drawn.

..... No no no, why am I getting embarrassed from this? It's only a kiss, just a little contact. It's not a particularly embarrassing matter for a child to do.

..... Towards His Highness, who was laughing pleasantly, my heart unconsciously throbbed. Looking at that beautiful visage that was anyhow attractive..... that was sneaky.

"Julis-sama, Liz-sama's health will be further affected if this carries on"

"Oh? Ahh, apologies, Liz. I'll swing by again next time"

Somehow, Gilles, who had become conversely calm, was frightening. And His Highness moved towards Gilles with a triumphant glee; it was as though he was provoking him.

Let's just say, you actually understood the meaning of the kiss, didn't you, Your Highness?

Gilles just kept on smiling. Uh oh, Gilles's eyes returned to a cold expression. I wonder if His Highness' expression and voice was irritating Gilles' nerves. It was unusually rare for Gilles to be angry. Ever since the earlier incident, the two of them have never gotten along, huh?

After Gilles sent His Highness out of the room, I held my knees whilst on the bed and sighed.

Touching the corners of my lip gently, I began to shyly throb again.

..... From Gilles' point of view, he must have thought it was the lips, but it

wasn't. It was to the side of my lips. I guess His Highness had shifted to the side on purpose.

Nevertheless, it didn't change the fact that I was kissed.

"..... Why is everyone becoming so cajoling?"

Wondering what is being requested from a six year old child, I let out a deep sigh and pulled the bed sheets over me.

For the time being, there were no signs of my blushed cheeks stopping.

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Arc 4: 7-years old

Chapter 25 – Lonely

"Gilles, I want to go outside—"

"You can't"

Being bluntly rejected immediately for the 38th time in a row, I acknowledged my fate.

It has been three months since then; another year was added to my age but the days of being unable to head out still carried on. Though I was granted permission to come and go as I pleased to the gardens, but if I were to take one step out of the estate, the maid would immediately inform Gilles Mostly Gilles anyway. And he would come flying and drag me back inside.

Of course, when I think back to the matter that happened several months ago, I understand their concern, but I just want to go outside the grounds for a little bit. As expected, until I've learned my lesson, I can't visit the town even though I only wanted to take a stroll along the noble quarters. The noble quarters were tightly guarded which I thought it meant that it would be all right but

"Gilles, you tightwad"

"Whatever you say, I prize Liz-sama's safety above all else"

Though my parents were also overprotective, but the person who was the most overprotective was Gilles.

Gilles, who had personally witnessed my near-death moment, began to meticulously pay closer attention towards me. It wasn't like I was imprisoned in my room; however, when I did something dangerous, I would be immediately reprimanded and stopped. Like when I used sorcery to construct an ice castle (1/300 scale), the inside felt nice and cold to cool off, but it was dangerous when it collapsed. Or the time when I used 'Green Thumb' to produce an imitation of a jungle gym that I could ascend and descend from. No matter how much I was thought of as a dangerous child, it wasn't like I was injured or anything.

I've already exhausted all of the sorcery books in my house, been scolded for creating play equipment, and been dragged back every time I venture outside. Maria became my only amusement.

However, Maria was also busy with her job as a maid, so it was impossible for me to steal her time.

In summary, I had too much free time.

Tragically rejected — I somewhat anticipated this vexing result to occur and sulkily returned to my room.

.... Being unable to do anything was irritating. Why am I just a kid. If I was a little older, it would have been alright. If that had been the case, I wouldn't be treated like a child and I could protect my own body by myself.

Lately, Gilles has been reducing the amount of surrounding guards and hasn't been paying much attention to me. Even if I approached him, he would immediately disappear off to somewhere. Father being Father and understanding my moodiness hasn't been interfering much. Overprotective being as is, it was like being handled with great caution.

That's fine with me. As Father had Ruby, I was taken care of just fine. I've even devotedly considered becoming a rebellious heiress. Rather, it was better for my mind's sanity.

The problem was Gilles. He is unduly overprotective and had a blunt personality.

"Gilles, you id—iot!"

I probably had an adorable sulky look. It was really immature. I could gradually feel that my childishness began to overlap both in my body and soul. It was likely that I'm beginning to adjust the imbalances in my body.

Well, it's not like my knowledge is particularly disappearing, having the previously tempestuous and undulated emotions was my current state. Saying that my emotions were more expressive Somehow, only in front of Gilles do I easily express myself. Perhaps by clinging onto Gilles in tears and behaving like a spoilt child, the shackles came off?

"..... Free"

Gilles didn't care, I can't go out, I read all of the books, and sorcery being dangerous was prohibited. What should I do?

Fundamentally, what brings me joy is reading, sorcery, and playing with Gilles. After which is eating. That's how it is. Though this is usually within my reach, I don't know what else to look forward to.

Like all women, I like dressing myself up, but that's a story for when I'm an adult, right? I don't dislike being fashionable, but being unable to move as I please as a child makes it annoying to be dolled up. There were not that many places I could go dressed up to anyway.

Therefore, how or what should I do? Gilles is so uncaring. Weren't you going to stay by my side?

"..... Uuuu—"

Groaning whilst retaining my sulky expression..... Let's just dive back into bed.

Grasping the ring we shared tightly, I curled up. When there's nothing to do, the only thing left is to sleep. Let's raise a well-slept child. And when I become older, I'll be able to protect myself automatically and someday become a magician that works in the Magic Institution. As well as building a happy family

for all to see. Ah, would His Highness object discretely?

'..... Liz-sama, you occasionally do act very childish, huh'

'But that's what makes you so adorable. Though you earnestly said you were lonely, I'm still by your side'

Dozing off mid-way, I heard Gilles' voice mingle with a strained laugh. While my thoughts were slipping away and being drowsy, a personally complicated feeling washed over me. Due to sleeping, there was a sense of my body and consciousness being disconnected from each other. However, I had a feeling that my hair was being combed gently.

"..... Gill es....."

"What's the matter, Liz-sama"

Half-awake with a particularly fluffy bed hair, I heard a gentle voice reach me. Even if I was drowsy, I slowly opened my eyelids and expressing a quiet smile, Gilles stood by my side.

The soon to approach the coming of age ceremony Gilles, his hands already had the palms of a man. Slightly bony fingers were smoothly and proudly combing through my hair. Sometimes, my cheeks were stroked. When I closed my eyes in embarrassment, Gilles would laugh tenderly.

"..... Gilles, is this a dream?"

"Of course not. It's the real thing"

"Iyahhhh"

Taking advantage of my pulled out cheeks, the pain reverberating from them sobered me up. The only person composed enough to do this to me was only Gilles, therefore it had to be Gilles.

"..... Why is Gilles here ?"

"When I heard Liz-sama shouting 'Gilles, you id–iot!' audibly from the ring, I thought of scolding you a little"

"That's cause....."

"Fufu, however, after that, hearing 'It's lonely', 'Doesn't care for me',

'Shouldn't you be my side?' spilling out from the ring, I decided not to"

"You....."

Ce-Certainly it's as mentioned, however, to convey those, what sort of harassment is this, ring!

Gilles' gentle smile held a slight roguishness as he tickled my cheeks. That smile was like one to comfort a child.

I'm de-definitely being mocked!

Feeling angry all of a sudden, I brushed aside the fingers that were caressing my cheeks, but my hand was seized instead. As I had just woken up, it couldn't be helped that my movements were sluggish, so Gilles stopped it quickly with such ease. Please just receive it contently.

Turning slightly sullen, I escaped from Gilles' constraint upon which I found that Gilles' usual earnest smile had a slight mixed expression.

I felt somewhat bewildered as he slowly raised the back of my hand up and pressed his lips down.

"..... Huh"

"..... I will always be by your side if that's what you desire"

Just like that, he had left a kiss on the back of my hand. But it was exceptionally embarrassing, like in stories with knights, being kissed like that. Nope, Gilles is a servant, not a knight.

The kiss on the back of the hand meant respect, affection, and honour. Gilles did it because he understood that.

"..... Do as you please"

Why does this make my heart beat faster when I'm only seven? Let's calm down, me. Gilles is just attending to me as his master. Hence, the meaning for

the kiss on the back of my hand. Right, Gilles is my servant. That won't change.

The smile on Gilles' face didn't change. Having a hunch that he said that statement as though it was natural for him, I turned around and hid my face in the bed.

Ah geez, why are there lots of beautiful people surrounding me and taking on such suggestive behaviours?

Gilles, you id–iot!

Chapter 26 – The Uninvited Earl

This may be abrupt, but our Adelcian household is a reasonably well parentage. Possessing the same history as the royal family, wouldn't this be referred to as a noble consanguinity?

If it comes from me — Oh, I see — would be my standard of recognition, but others don't. Our rank was granted to us personally by the founding king, and it has been inherited ceaselessly without the lineage dying out.

And now, Father, the present head of the family amongst the successors is the most talented person with overflowing resources..... To me, his daughter, and his son, he was only visible as a doting and kind father. However, from the start, I understood that Father was amazing. He even had the present King as his acquaintance.

..... And such a Father had me as his daughter. Skillfully succeeding the talents of Mother and Father, I was also intimate with His Highness.

What do you think the others' reaction was to this?

"Liz-sama, there's someone here who would like to see you"

"Please decline saying that I'm ill"

I do not know how many times I have made that exchange. Haaa, and most recently, this has been the place that I'm able to take a breather.

I don't understand when this began. I reckon it probably started from the

time of the kidnapping incident.

Due to supervising the large-scale crime, the Adalcian family has been very conspicuous. And so, even the incident about their daughter's kidnapping became a widely known fact. That degree of destruction caused from flipping out was enough reason.

Well, that's to say, I have become known as a tragic heroine.

If it was just that, then it would have been fine. However, both the King and His Highness joined in. The King sent flowers and sweets which was awkward, and His Highness — being his usual self — personally called upon me at my house.

Naturally, if such things were done, this would make me even more conspicuous.

In addition, whilst admiring the flowers in my garden (In actuality, I was busy with selective breeding), I was seen by a curious aristocrat's son who fell in love with me at first sight Fell in love with me? More like, seems to have taken a fancy. The house's stalker Ahem, this is when I started receiving calling cards. If it was just based on appearances, rather than a sheltered young woman, I gave out an appearance that resembled a fickle girl. My parent's blood is great.

Even the other nobles seem to have noticed me as a good object, and a strange appeal began. Why, by possessing excellent consanguinity and being liked by His Highness, being nothing but a delicate and reasonably beautiful (?) maiden, receiving me as a bride would therefore bring a lot of merits. If that wasn't meant to be, then being friends also had its merits; there would be no

disadvantage from maintaining the friendship — was the view that was considered. Whereas for me, I found it terribly annoying.

"Can't something be done about this"

"..... Only this"

Every day receiving letters and servant calls, as expected, I was getting fed up with it. Currying favors from this young girl now, they must be so free.

When I said Gilles was previously cold, or rather, had immediately up and vanished without paying any attention to me, in truth, he was dealing with these people. This was something that I wasn't aware of until much later.

..... If I think back, there were periods where I was comparatively free from being instructed and prohibited to visit the garden or leave my room, and at those times, Gilles looked sullen. Dealing with those people and driving them away Thinking that I wasn't being looked after was my selfishness.

"However, we can't continue to decline them forever"

"As the other side is also an earl's child, it can't be neglected"

Amongst the intruding people, the most persistent was the Earl Emmenthal's* son. No matter how many times he comes to pay a visit, because of him, I wouldn't come out and was terrified.

To provide context, he has been turned away, but if it was done continuously, he may fly into a rage. Though I have approximately a higher court rank in comparison with the emerging noble Earl Emmental, ignoring him wasn't okay. Even if it becomes troublesome, I couldn't possibly flat out refuse him.

How should I handle this?

"Maybe I should meet him just once"

"You can not. Liz-sama will be defiled"

"Gilles, isn't that an overstatement"

"..... That person is revolting"

Seeing the serious look on Gilles's face, I found it hard to believe and blinked my eyes incessantly. No, definitely impossible, that person is from an earl's lineage. To go as far as to express disgust

No, given the probability, it was scary.

Somehow or rather, when he was being received, he happened across Maria and it seemed that something happened as she frowned and pursed her lips. What have you done to my solace, Earl Emmmental's son?

"N- Bu- But

If we don't encounter each other, I'll probably have it under control and"

"Has Welf-sama said anything?"

"Even if I keep depending on Father

Right now, he's preoccupied"

Father has been recruited to deal with that case's post-processing. Forcibly by the King. It seems "Since it was my elite guard's part-time work, therefore this time, it was his work" was the King's pretext. Although it was by the King's instructions, well, it was Father who caused the destruction. Nonetheless, he decided by himself to clean up the aftermath.

"As expected from declining too much. Just once"

"You can't, Liz-sama doesn't know anything about that person, hence why you say that"

"T—To go that far..... Bu—But there's no solution, is there?"

..... And so, if I had taken Gilles's sincere advice at that time, I wouldn't have regretted it so vehemently.

"I've been wanting to meet you, my princess"

Saying so, with arms wide open was the Earl Emmenthal's son; I believe his name was Zerais-san*. Did you think I would rush over, leaping into your arms as you wished? Absolutely not. Since this is the first time we've met, to come in contact with someone unfamiliar wouldn't be something I would normally consider.

"Eh, Ermmmmm This is the, first time, we've met? Yes?"

I said with a smile on my face, even if it was an insincere smile that was stiff.

Just once, and having been reminded, permitted the meeting. However, upon entering the drawing room, I immediately had the urge to spin around and make a U-turn.

The earl's son upon seeing me — in an instant — expressed a vulgar smile. How should I put it? It was much more vulgar than being stared at by eyes fixed on their prey, like my body was being licked all over by that gaze.

It is important for me to say this but, I'm only seven years old. It's not like I've developed secondary sex characteristics that would invite a man over; I only have a flat-chested, waist-less figure. If it's the general preference, then I would almost never be received as a target, having a figure of a child.

Despite this, the eyes of the earl's son (estimated 16 years old) turned, filled with desire. Even though it turned out this way, my crisis inference sensors sounded an alarm. Perhaps my human rights would disappear once I entered this person's household as his bride, much less be allowed to step outside.

In other words, this person has a lolicon complex. Though the correct term given my age would be the Alice complex. It could also pass as paedophilia with the obvious abnormal feeling that I was feeling. To possess such cravings for me gave me the shivers.

Earl Emmenthal, you shouldn't have let this thing out into the world.

"This is not my first time"

"Have we met somewhere before?"

"I watched you when you were in the garden playing with the flowers and the butterflies. I was convinced that this was fate"

No, isn't that just a one-sided encounter?

With a hardened smile on my face, the earl's son took my hand. Ugh, No, you can't do that!

"By all means, won't you come and become my bride?"

The earl who conveniently took my hand left a kiss on the back of my right hand that Gilles's oath existed.

Simultaneously with my whole body having goosebumps, *crackle*, and I felt myself losing control, bursting with magical powers.

"..... Pardon me but Liz-sama is in a bad condition, so could you please leave?"

As for the magic power not exploding accidentally, Gilles was covering for me by standing in the earl's son's way.

With a hand placed on my shoulder, I could already feel like he was saying everything was going to be alright. That alone was enough to settle the waves of my overflowing magic powers, and I felt slightly relieved.

The earl's son grimaced, feeling obviously hindered, but after I let out a forced cough, he was unable to pursue the matter. Actually, my face had turned pale and I was shivering, so it wasn't like I was lying.

"In that case, please give me your answer next time. I'll be waiting for a favourable answer"

After the earl's son was led out by the maid, I slowly gave orders to Gilles who was standing by my side.

"Please prepare the bath right away"

"Certainly"

It's no use, I feel cold. It was as Gilles said, that gaze gave off a defiling feeling. I also felt that Gilles's oath was defiled. I must clean my body.

First of all, I'll submerge myself in the bath for an hour, play with fluffy* Maria, after which I will hug and sit on Gilles until the unpleasant feelings go away.

By the way, the back of my hand was disinfected by Gilles after he did it again. I was embarrassed, but compared to the unpleasant feelings, this was several hundred times pleasurable to receive — yup.

TL Note: Earl Emmenthal was a definite giveaway. Such swiss cheese, much holes. LOL

TL Notes 2: ゼライス is the name of the Earl Emmenthal's son. It's also a brand of gelatin in Japan. LOL. <https://www.maruha-nichiro.co.jp/recipe/zerais.html>

TL Notes 3: 取り敢えず、御風呂に一時間浸かってマリアを暫くもふもふして、その後ジルに抱き着くまでは気持ち悪さが取れなかった事を明記しておきます。

It actually reads mofu mofu. I had a hard time translating it as it translates to soft to the touch or fluffy. As an action, it doesn't make sense to say "I mofumofu Maria" hence the actual word change. 😊

Chapter 27 – I Decline

Regarding an individual noble, I do not have any intentions to make distinctions between like and dislike. Even my household's association in detail — whether I'm pleased or displeased with it — is also pointless.

Conversely, I do not intend to be on good terms with them beyond what is necessary. In the case of a noble's association, its foundation only resides superficially. Generally, it's not about likes or dislikes as long as they're able to get into a good group.

To me, that stance, this is the first time in my life... No, this is the second human being who has appeared before me that I've come to dislike.

"It is regrettable, but I'm unable to consent to the matter of the engagement"

Letting Gilles wait at the side, I firmly responded back to Earl Emmenthal's son.

Having just met, I thought that it was amazing that I came to loathe him to this extent. Mainly, "whatever" and "it can't be helped" was how it ended up, but he was simply being unreasonable.

By the way, the first person I disliked was Lord Alfred. I want to personally tell him off and render him speechless, yup. It's not as instinctively repugnant as Earl Emmenthal's son, though.

The opposite of like is indifference. Therefore, the earl's son has yet to fall to

the absolute lowest reputation, hence I'm able to treat him in that manner. But to me, it honestly doesn't really bother me if he provokes Father and Gilles's wrath. It just means I'm indifferent. Even though I said I dislike him, if I don't deal with it and leave it alone, it would become a danger to myself.

"M-May I inquire as to the reason?"

"I decline being married to a gentleman who acted rudely. Acting friendly and touching a woman's body without permission is impolite"

Half serious, half giving face. Frankly, saying that I hate him with visceral disgust would be a problem. There isn't anyone who would promptly plant a kiss on a woman's hand upon meeting them; it's not like they're a prince from a fairy tale. His Highness is a different matter that I've resigned myself to, though I don't find it unpleasant.

In the first place, this conversation should have been presented via letter instead of being addressed directly. In addition to that, he would have to appear before my father to ask for permission, and then, after having dated and obtained a promise would this finally occur. To suddenly barge in and demand for my hand in marriage is strange, isn't it? Could he have been aiming for the moment Father was absent to propose?

"Isn't that man also the same! Isn't he being overly familiar touching you!"

"Because I have received Liz-sama's consent. Therefore, it is alright even if I touch you?"

"Yes"

Essentially, a servant should not be touching his master intimately, but this isn't a public place. And now Gilles looked like he was about to get angry, so with a smile as I nodded in agreement, I entwined my hands with Gilles.

With a gentle smile on his face, Gilles stroked my head, and the earl's son was unable to conceal the shocked look on his face. As expected, Gilles had grown tired of him and, in his own way, had sought revenge.

Seeing our intimate scene, the earl's son was taken aback for a moment before his face turned red like a tomato. I wonder if he understood that he was being made fun of. Actually, instead of an idiot, he's just a fool. Do you know what will happen if you anger Father and Gilles? Even when there's a prime example of that earlier on...

Perceiving me with eyes filled with inconceivable greed, the earl's son then took off the pure white glove worn on his hand and threw it at Gilles's feet. No, seriously He's plunging himself in the deep end. Does he not know Gilles's current status?

"I challenge you to a duel! Should you refuse, you will lose your rank!"

"I'll decline. In the first place, I'm not a noble"

"Wha—!"

That's right, dueling is a way of resolving problems amongst fellow noblemen. Unfortunately, the present Gilles, however, is no longer a noble. He's just a servant attending me.

In any case, am I such a desirable existence that must be possessed by all means which, from that point of view, makes me a superior good?

"Not even knowing that and throwing out a duel is ridiculous"

"Gilles, proceeding further is useless as it's pitiful"

Gilles spoke toxically with a smile. Recently, I've begun considering that Gilles is black-bellied but, towards me, whilst he's a bit mean, he's also a gentle and dependable person.

The earl's son shook at Gilles's words while his shoulders trembled. It was obvious that he was being made fun of.

Now then.

It starts from here. If he withdraws as is, I wouldn't challenge him to a duel. His obsession towards little girls is a nuisance for me so I wish for him to cease his advance.

"Well then, Zerais-sama, how about I handle the duel that you've issued?"

"Wh- Liz-sama!?"

"I mean, if you leave it like that, you wouldn't be able to withdraw"

Gilles said no and advanced to control the situation but, like I said, it was unlikely for this man to withdraw meekly as is. Obsessed with me, he seemed like he would kidnap me if an opportunity arises. I don't want to be kidnapped anymore.

If that's the case, I would rather duel and refuse his request publicly.

"Without using a substitute, if it's just me and Zerais-sama, how about we duel?"

"Haha, as I expected"

Looking at my body, the tip of the earl's son's lips curled lasciviously and nodded in agreement. Well, from appearances, I do look ill and furthermore, I'm obviously a child. In addition to being treated like a fragile ojou-sama since being rescued from the kidnapping, the thought of losing never occurred to him at all.

For me, it'll be good that he remains careless. It's fine if he thinks that I'm a meagre and protected child who's unable to do anything. Also, it would never have crossed the earl's son's mind that a child would propose such nonsense and not have an ulterior motive.

The disgrace of losing a duel does not vanish easily. But even if I were to lose, the fact that the count's son immaturely won against a child would also circulate, as well as the shameful fact that he challenged a child to a duel.

Well, I have no intentions to lose, however.

"Liz-sama, if Welf-sama finds out about your rashness..."

"If that's the case, I don't mind as I want Father's intervention to stop this affair"

I was certain to be scolded but as long as it's resolved, that would be fine. In the first place, it was Father who opened the doors of our house that allowed these people to intrude and refuse to remain silent.

"Can you decide the date, time, and venue of the duel? If possible, even the witness. I only ask that you vow to find someone impartial"

"That wouldn't be a problem"

Agreeing to my words, the earl's son laughed happily. Probably, while thinking about what would happen after he won, he must be imagining a scene that would be censored if a commoner were to see it or something. That feels disgusting, however, so let's leave it at that. That way, I'll be able to indulge in a happy dream.

Don't count your chickens before they hatch — is a phrase which that person doesn't know.

Beside me, Gilles held onto his forehead and sighed. After which, he looked on sympathetically. Well, who are you sympathising so obviously with?

After all, aren't I Gilles's best pupil?

Chapter 28 – The So-Called Duel

To be honest, I didn't think that the story until here would turn serious when I had initially requested for it.

"If I win, I desire that you will — on no account — have anything to do with me and my people"

"If I win, I want you to become my bride"

"Do both parties agree to the terms?"

"Yes"

The person who came asking these questions with a serious expression was a handsome looking man with blonde hair and blue eyes. Incidentally, his position is the thirty-second ruling king. To put it bluntly, the present Majesty, the King, is His Highness's father.

Being addressed for the first time by His Majesty the King, the earl's son looked nervous. Yet, considering that the agreement was made before His Majesty the King and, in this case, his wish would certainly be realized, his lips began to relax. He really didn't think he was going to lose, huh?

So how did this happen?

This question surfaced when I started looking for a place to borrow for the duel.

As expected, if we carried out the duel in the garden or the town, a disaster can be expected. Mainly from my sorcery. I don't know what his abilities are, but from what I've seen from the nobles' magical powers, the level is below average. Well, a large-scale calamity probably wouldn't occur.

As for me, my aim was to use a wide space as much as possible, so I considered hard before settling on the castle. The Magic Institution is located in the castle, and within it, there's a space for sorcery training. If it's the people from the Magic Institution, they would conjure a magic barrier and this made me feel relief.

Therefore, I requested Gilles to take me to the Magic Institution. Being Father's daughter, I plotted that they wouldn't be able to bluntly refuse me. Sorry that I'm not cute.

And then, a problem occurred. Somehow, His Highness found out about it.

His Highness was elated that I was in the castle. Well, leaving that aside, how did he know that I was in the castle? Since I wanted to borrow the place, I couldn't say nothing and explained it to him.

Naturally, when I mentioned the subject of the marriage proposal, His Highness got upset. After which, His Highness told the story to His Majesty.

'Nevertheless, Lizbeth-jou is just like Welf. After all, Welf also duelled about ten years ago'

'Eh, for what reason?'

'To marry Selen. Welf's father was stubborn..... He was opposed to the notion of accepting low-class nobility blood. Therefore to gain recognition, he dueled with his father'

'Father had

'Then, I had judged the match. This duel, I will judge it too'

It was shocking to hear my Father's episode as is; furthermore, to hear this bombshell of a statement from His Majesty To have His Majesty personally judge it. Or rather, just like Father, I'm settling a love affair through a duel No, I'm doing this for the sake of defending my chastity and for the sake of ensuring the safety of my body.

It seems that, with various things, Father secretly caught wind of the duel preparations and steadily hastened his pace towards us.

"Liz! I did not hear of this conversation! The duel is also unheard of!"

Then, the day of the duel.

It seems Father, who was busy running around settling the case, learned about the matter from His Majesty on the day itself. Of course Father was surprised and shouted at me.

.... Since I didn't inform him.

"But that's because Father didn't return home. Thanks to that, an engagement was pressed against my wishes. If Father was around, you could have rejected it"

"Ugh"

"Welf, Lizbeth-jou's decision is sound. In the first place, wasn't it you who opened the doors to your household?"

"Wasn't it Diaz who said to clean up after!"

"Yes, however, neglecting the house was also your fault. Besides, I wouldn't worry, Lizbeth-jou is undoubtedly your child"

With those last words, I had a feeling that I had His Majesty's support despite being unable to publicly support me.

That's right, I'm Father and Mother's child. No matter what, I won't allow a strange pervert to defile my body. My ideal partner is someone who is gentle, honest, and occasionally, someone who remonstrates me. Speaking of desires, it would be good if I am able to find someone who's good with sorcery, like

Gilles. It's not like I have to be protected.

However, there isn't anyone like that; someone like that is practically impossible to find.

Confirming that my Father had silently withdrawn, I gazed at Gilles and His Highness, who were in a distant location. His Highness seemed anxious and, in the meantime, was shooting seemingly hateful scowls towards the earl's son.

Gilles threw a glance at the earl's son with eyes filled with contempt and pity. Gilles's chilly gaze was somewhat frightening but upon meeting my eyes, he gave me a sweet smile.

I'll do my best since Gilles, who had always taught me sorcery, came too.

"Your Majesty, would it be permitted for me to ask a question?"

"What is it?"

"The outcome of the duel is decided if the opponent surrenders or is on the verge of being fatally wounded, right? In the case of an injury, there will be no charges, right?"

"Naturally. It is your own responsibility if your training's inadequate"

Just hearing that was sufficient. Even if it's just a minor scratch, it would be acceptable within the agreement.

The hem of my skirt fluttered with the blowing wind, gently lifting the cloth as it fluttered.

Presently, my figure is dressed in a high-class trimmed lady-like one-piece. Originally, I'd considered wearing a dress, but I thought it was too troublesome, so I passed on it for a sweetly appealing, cute one-piece. Not overtly gaudy nor

too plain. The main point was the accompanying ribbon which was of a modest design.

Speaking of why I'm dressed in an outfit that is difficult to move in, it is for the sake of emphasizing that I'm a helpless little girl. Along with presenting an inhuman impression to the public of a feeble girl being challenged to a duel, the sense of an ignorant young lady would induce the earl's son's negligence.

And most of all, my appearance was of a transient-like girl; this look was achieved as Mother selected it for me. Since it's Mother's choice, I'll wear it.

Mother knows about the duel. She wasn't even particularly against it, could she maybe have known his abilities?

Being informed that His Majesty was judging, the duel at the castle was spread out, so there was also a lot of audiences. Even till this point, it was frankly unexpected.

All of the audiences were sympathetic towards me. They knew about the opponent, who was twice my age, and the unreasonable duel request. For now, the earl's son, Zerias, had no allies.

"Now then, are both of you ready?"

"Ah, please give me a bit more time, Your Majesty"

"That's fine"

His Majesty seemed as if he knew what I wanted to do, so he coolly nodded his head. Having made a bow of gratitude towards His Majesty, I ran over to Father and Gilles.

"Father, I've come for your cheers"

"..... Don't lose, Liz"

"Yes. I'm Father's daughter"

Being hugged, I laughed and gave a nod. It's been awhile since I smelt Father's scent, which was as always like the sun, so it made me feel wonderful and happy.

"Liz-sama, if it's you, you'll do fine"

"Yes"

"When it's over, I won't mind you doing whatever you like"

"Th-That speech is already sufficient So, I'll do my best"

Gilles stroking my head made me recall unnecessary things, so I exasperatedly pouted my lips and slowly moved away. The audiences smiled warmly as they looked at us. In response, the other party was silently protesting with a cold gaze.

If that was aimed at me for doing so, it's not like I have any loveable qualities.

"I apologise for the interruption, Your Majesty"

"I don't mind. Now then, are both parties ready?"

"Yes"

Trotting back to the predetermined location, I nodded to His Majesty's words. The opponent doesn't even have a weapon, it'll just be a simple sorcery match, right?

Lord Zerai looked at his surroundings uncomfortably while still looking at me, giving off a daring smile. Without even considering being defeated in the slightest, I had a hunch that he was thinking of his instant happiness in his head. Ah, that won't do, I want to turn these hateful people bitter no matter what.

After His Majesty verified that both of us had made our preparations, he quickly inhaled in his breath. Seeing that signal, I prepared the magical power within my body to complete a single spell.

"Begin!"

To prepare the spell, a massive amount of magical power was poured into it. This was made possible owing to the vast amount of magical power I possessed. Due to my accumulating constitution, I was able to frequently change the incoming magic essence effectively.

The earl's son also used sorcery, but its power was terribly slow and small. It seems like the sorcery was usable But I won't let you resist, kay?

"Absolute Zero"

It's the first time I've tested it in actual combat. At most, I've only used it in practice.

Murmuring the name when the signal was given, the temperature surrounding Lord Zerai, dropped in an instant. -273.15°C , Well, as expected, I didn't intend to go that far but the extremely low temperature in the air surrounded the earl's son, making a mountain of perpendicular ice rise from the ground. Precisely, leaving a gap for the earl's son.



This is mercy. I don't know who he thinks he is, but I really hate being touched by this man. I want to erase it from my memories. In order to prevent him from approaching me again for the second time, it would be better for me to just do this.

Though there is more or less a bit of space left , the gap will gradually freeze.

It's just a matter of time before the earl's son's body becomes a victim to it. Making him slack purposely was to fan his fear. In my opinion, it's also important in a match to snatch away their collected thoughts.

By nature, absolute zero is colder than liquid nitrogen so it'll immediately crack, but I have adjusted the spell so that the temperature is higher than liquid nitrogen. As expected, I couldn't even bring myself to kill him. Even if it cracks easily, if he comes into contact with it, he'll be frozen solid.

On the other side, the opponent used flame sorcery to melt the ice; however, it wasn't easily melted.

Before he could resist, I fired a few baby dome-shaped fireballs at his directions and wiped my hands. With precision, the fireballs overwhelmingly scattered about from the exceeding magical powers or rather, it flickered about. Of course, with the barrier in place, it only flickered nearby.

By doing this, I appeared strong while my opponent didn't possess overwhelming skills and schemes as well as magical powers. If he thought he could win only by age, that was a big mistake for I've been studying under Gilles.

At that time, I had panicked and wasn't able to enact a barrier due to being injured but I won't let it happen again.

It was not just the earl's son's surroundings, the atmosphere in the audiences also stilled. They probably didn't think that this young girl would apply so much pressure single-handedly.

"..... Do you surrender?"

Just in case, I used 'Icicle Rain' to suspend icicles above the earl's son's head as I slowly raised the question. If he didn't surrender, I wouldn't kill him as it would make me feel sick as expected, so I'll momentarily leave him in the middle of the ice to endure the cold.

It's a fortune to have an abundance of magical power. If it melts, I could freeze it again and until the surrender comes in, I'll just wait it out?

Discerning that there was no mercy in my eyes, trembling as he shivered from the cold "I—I surrender!" and yelled with a pale face. Alright, checkmate!

"Your Majesty, it's my victory with this, ne?"

"Mhm. The winner is Lizbeth Adalcian!"

Everyone in the audience was bewildered by His Majesty's announcement but before long, cheers of joy were heard. They probably didn't think a child could win, hence why I felt their eyes look towards me in awe.

..... Why am I standing out so much when all I want to do is escape from the crisis of my chastity.

Dropping the icicle in a suitable place and using a sufficient flame sorcery, I melted the ice. As it was an appropriate amount of firepower, Lord Zerai felt the heat but I couldn't care less.

Without even soaking in the victory, I trotted straight to Gilles right after. Since Gilles was like a teacher-figure and because I wanted to show off my unsightly sorcery.

"Gilles, how was it? I did my best!"

"Excellent, excellent. Shall I say as expected of Welf's daughter?"

"Aren't I also Gilles's pupil?"

"Fufu, that's right. Well done"

Gilles was also angry at the earl's son, so even if I had attempted to use the ice, he wasn't even upset about it. Rather, his face indicated it would have been better if I had used the ice.

Embracing my shoulder and caressing my head, Gilles praised me. Personally, I'm satisfied with only Gilles's praises. Thinking that I was already free from the unwanted marriage proposal, I naturally began to relax my face.

The audiences seemed satisfied by watching us with relief. Well, I'm sure they also disliked seeing a frail looking girl be forced into lewd things by a paedophilic-loving earl's son in the future. If that had happened, I'll release all my magical power.

As a matter of fact, only one person didn't agree.

"Th—That's sly! I have never heard of such magic!"

Released from the ice, the freed earl's son shouted. The cold and heat made the earl's son's skin color uneven. I will neither be responsible for the burns nor the frostbite.

"Even if such a thing was said. Wasn't it you who decided to issue a duel challenge? Since Gilles can't participate, it's only natural for me to take his place"

"Th—That's because you said—"

"Either way, I believe even if Gilles was challenged, the tables would turn on you"

If he can't win against me, then it's impossible for him to win against Gilles. Although I have a considerably higher amount of magical power, when it concerns control and implementation, Gilles was overwhelmingly superior. As

Father hasn't really seen it, he wouldn't really understand. However, Gilles was equally as strong or even stronger than him.

Eventually with training, I will surpass him but, for now, his back's far away. If the earl's son can't win against me on this occasion, he won't win against Gilles.

"If you have any dissatisfaction towards the ruling, then please make a direct appeal to His Majesty. If you are so inclined, we could go for another round. If you're unable to face me, then I'll get Gilles — who was your original contender — to accept""~nh!"

"!!"

"How unsightly, Zerais-dono!"

His Majesty barked in a thundering voice at the sight of the earl's son gritting and scowling.

At the force of His Majesty's voice, the tantrum throwing earl's son was startled stiff.

"The situation is already settled. Cease your struggle, know your place... You have to accept Lizbeth-jou's demand"

In some respects, I was treated with an indifferent look from the earl's son. Ah, isn't this the desertion route? With this, doesn't this mean neither the needless affair nor the possible guilt of a rank change would happen? Well, this is what it means to reap what you sow.

"And with this, the duel comes to an end"

For now, it's great that my body and chastity has escaped from danger.

Chapter 29 – His Highness and the Trivial Truth

"Liz!"

After the duel was over, His Highness came barging into the room.

As Father seems to be in a discussion with His Majesty, I borrowed a guest room and, having moved, was slowly unwinding in the room alone. "A little girl shouldn't have to overexert herself", said His Majesty and he graciously loaned me an excellent first-class guest room. If I wanted to, I could even stay for the night.

Your Majesty, what are you implying? Is it wise to leave the decision to stay the night to a young girl? Well, I had heard that it might have to do with a retaliation from someone. Although I would still turn the tables on him.

Gilles and Father went to deal with the matter and somehow ended up meeting up with Lord Zerais's father. In other words, it was a "Your son made a pass at my daughter" sort of complaint trip. Most of all, it was to end the attempt.

That was good and so, I didn't mind the encounter with His Highness.

However, I didn't want to be seen playfully leaping and bouncing on the bed.

.... But, see, isn't it a momentary yearning to leap about on a super soft and fluffy bed? The soft and fluffy feel can't be compared to the one at home. Can't I enjoy it? It's not like I have dirty feet. I'm just reverting back to an innocent

childlike state for a bit.

"Er—- Erm, Your Highness, what can I do for you?"

In a panic, I corrected my seating posture while my hands smoothed the dishevelled skirt back into place. Ah ah, I wanted to run away and hide my face in shame. Calming down, I thought it was a silly thing to do, even for me.

His Highness stared at me with his mouth wide open before he gradually began stifling a laugh. Feeling a needless overwhelming shame, my face turned red as I glanced downward. If only I could somewhat turn back time.

"If you're that interested, then it's fine to come over and play whenever you like"

"Please don't te-tease me"

I—I have a hunch that it's the first time His Highness has beaten me. Having been seen, there was no room to retort. Just looking at his smiling face irritated me.

"First of all, good job, Liz"

Whilst I kept silent from embarrassment, His Highness slowly compromised by sitting down beside me. As it wasn't a sofa but a bed instead, it left a somewhat complicated feeling. We're kids, however, so it's ok.

"I didn't think Liz was that strong"

"It's only because his abilities were lacking"

"Even so, Liz is strong. More so than me"

His Highness grinded his teeth while feeling vexed, grasping a sizeable amount of bedsheets tightly in his hands.

Members of royalty generally have high levels of magical power. His Highness, too, is not an exception. It was presumptuous or rather, a far outcry to compare our skills based on the outcome of today's duel with Lord Zerai.

For His Highness to embrace such an inferiority complex, it seems that my magic abilities are high. Even though I didn't give it my all during the duel, it still left His Highness feeling frustrated.

"It's good that Liz isn't going to be that bastard's bride but, as a man, it's complicated"

"There is that and also because I would like to be excused from something like marriage"

"It's thanks to Liz's strength that you were able to avoid the worst-case scenario However, you being stronger than me leaves me with mixed feelings"

"Your Highness also has magical talent, and haven't you been diligently training without playing truant for three years?"

When I first met His Highness, he said that he would endure his training and studies. It seems that promise wasn't a lie. I heard from Father that he put up with the extremely strict coaching everyday. Merely because of that promise. Because of something that I had said on a whim.

Father said I had a lot of influence over others. Though some things aren't

easily discernable, whenever I'm involved with someone, the person and everything about them seems to change. For example: His Highness, Gilles, and Maria. To them, if they hadn't met me, their future would have been drastically different.

Even so, I'm only just encouraging and supporting them.

"..... If Liz wasn't around, perhaps my self-awareness wouldn't have sprouted"

"You're overestimating me, Your Highness"

"No, if Liz hadn't scolded me, I wouldn't have worked this hard. I wouldn't have bothered even in the future. You're remarkable for that, Liz"

Lowering his eyes, His Highness slowly took my hand. His Highness was just three years older than me; his palm which was bigger than — I thought as it slowly began to wrap around mine.

Responding late to that sudden interaction, I blinked my eyes before I looked into His Highness's face Ah, it was a good thing that I had looked and it was somewhat regrettable.

His hand demandingly gripped mine as His Highness leaned closer. I was caught by the painful pleading look in his eyes. Even though he was just a child, it was a shock as I felt slowly depressed by looking into his eyes.

"..... Liz"

To be honest, I have a bit of trouble dealing with His Highness. Although I don't dislike him, if I had the choice, I wouldn't want to be close to him.

It's because the opposite sex has been affectionately approaching me upfront.

Initially, I had thought that it was just the suspension bridge effect. It was simply that the man I had provided aid to had embraced that affection and misunderstood, or so I had believed.

Yet, for three years, he continued to approach me. Even if I saw the truth and was aware of the misunderstanding, I didn't receive him coldly.

In other words, this was unmistakably genuine affection.

"Does Liz dislike men like me?"

Being asked in a whisper, I was unable to respond with words and could only shake my head in return.

My weakness is that I'm weak to affection. There's no self-interest; I don't reject when genuine affection is directed towards me. It's different if I'm accepting, but I can't easily hate, dismiss, nor discard it aside.

Thinking about why I somehow have trouble dealing with His Highness, somehow unconsciously, I expected this type of detestable development to occur. It was impossible for me to come outright and flatly refuse him.

In the end, I am human after all and was conscious of His Highness's affection. It's one thing to receive affection, but another to embrace it. Whilst I do not

have the same passion as he does, my love for him hasn't changed and I don't want to hurt the people that I love.

Towards a person who has gently and seriously voiced his affection, I can't so easily turn him down.

"I know that Liz doesn't have any feelings for me"

"..... Ss—"

"But Liz has yet to select anyone. Doesn't this mean there's still a chance for me to be selected?"

Pulling a bit, his hands encircled my waist and back, embracing me tightly. Having never considered that a ten year old's speech and behavior could be like that, I felt extremely confused. His Highness, who is ten years old, was seducing the seven year old me.

Why has His Highness matured so much? Surely, I'm to be blamed for it. An unbelievable ten year old who had matured and was romantic. He was usually an immature and conspicuous youth, but today, this ten year old had obtained an unimaginable charm.

"Hey Liz, won't you give me a reward?"

"Re-reward.....?"

"For the me who's working hard to continue persisting three years onwards"

Smiling softly, His Highness moved closer to my face just like that. From thence action, I was unable to react.

"..... Your— Your Highness, did you behave childishly three months ago deliberately?"

"Hnn? Ahh, that. I was more or less serious, however It's better since Liz wouldn't mind if it was slightly childish. I was thinking of touching you more affectionately"

Upon hearing His Highness uttering such things as he whistled, I held my cheeks whilst my muscles stiffened. Fortunately, nothing came out of my lips, although this wasn't usually the case.

Rather, th—this child has been acting, deceiving me as always. Even till now, I'm certain he has always been acting.

Well, I can't say I've been deceived since I hardly meet up with His Highness. Behind my back, he has probably been growing up. There's a saying — if you don't meet a man for three days, you should rub your eyes and look at him closely*. Even Ryomou himself was a surprisingly altered person.

"I—I'm only seven, Your Highness"

"Well, I'm going to be ten years old. To an adult, a three years gap isn't a big difference. There are also cases of nobles whom are tied together despite the ten year gap between them"

"Is that a problem?", His Highness puzzlingly said, and I had to swallow the words with downcast eyes.

..... I've probably awakened a terrifying child. It's a crime of conscience and, like, really scary; what is this?

TL Note: Lu Meng (otherwise known as Ryomou Shimei) from the Three Kingdoms was known for to have mentioned this proverb. The Japanese phrase varies a bit from the Chinese. The original phrase (as per Wiki) is “When scholars part ways for three days, they will view each other in a different light when they meet again later.” It means to look at a person in a different light, especially after the person has made remarkable improvement.

I could have gone with another phrasing from James Howell, “Respect a man, he will do the more” however I felt it fit better if I stuck to a literal translations.

Chapter 30 – Father's Request

"My... assistance?"

"That's right. Could you come and assist me for a bit?"

It's been several days since the duel ended. Father finally came home and had asked for my help.

To assist the Magic Institution. Until now, I would have never considered that Father would propose such a request to me. After all, I'd been prohibited from entering the institute and Monk George certainly loathes me. Father was also aware of it. Since then, he's never brought me along.

Therefore, why the sudden change of mind?

"During the duel, Liz's abilities were exposed to the guys from the Magic Institution. And so, they want you to assist them in their research"

"..... Specifically?"

"They want you to assist them with creating a magic tool"

"Creating a magic tool?"

I blinked my eyes at the unexpected direction the proposal took.

Previously, I have explained that magic tools are tools imbued with sorcery. To magicians, such tools weren't really necessary. Even so, the Royal court still carries them.

To begin with, there are magic tools created by our ancestors and the abundance of newly made ones were from powerful magicians. Even an ordinary magician could create an instrument with a weak effect.

"If we have Liz's sort of magic power, we'll be able to make something good. Of course, simply saying that isn't enough; if you help, you'll be given a reward"

"A reward?"

"Create a section of a magic tool prototype and you'll receive a Magic Institution entry permit. With it, you'll be able to visit the Magic Institution's library whenever you like to —"

"I'll do it!"

If all I need to do to get it is to just help out, then I'll do it. I've always wanted to go to the Magic Institution's library but, without permission, I couldn't do so. Thus, I want to go.

It'll be a good change of pace for a hikikomori like myself and since it's Father's workplace, I wouldn't be in any danger No, there is, but it's unlikely to happen in a public setting. If push comes to shove, I'll fire off my sorcery.

Bumping into His Highness would be a bit troublesome so naturally, I'll just run off. His Highness is scary. I don't dislike him, but he's scary. Being tangled and picked upon is scary.

"So, you'll help?"

"Yes!"

I, Lizbeth Adelcian, was easily lured in.

Has it been three years? Though I haven't once stepped foot in the institute since then and can barely remember it, it doesn't seem to have changed much in these three years. If the building had changed, then I'll be surprised.

"Welcome, Lizbeth-sama"

When I stepped inside, the receptionist greeted me with a smile. Father probably informed her beforehand as the onee-san wasn't surprised to see me.

I'm not sure if it's a good thing, but she bowed and Father, who was accustomed to this, simply announced, "Third Laboratory", leading me away by the hand. Somehow right now, Father looked like a bigwig. Is he actually that great?

When Father dragged me away, I waved my hand to the onee-san. Having smooth human relationships was important. Onee-san also waved back as she secretly smiled.

Onee-san was a beauty..... I was probably imagining it, but she had a subtle sympathetic smile on her face.

"Liz, we're heading to the Third Laboratory and Erm, how should I put it Don't pull out from this"

"Pull out?"

"Liz, they're researchers so there's no question about their high abilities and trifling personalities"

At Father's grim-face, I replied with an "Ahh, is that so?" and was convinced.

To sum it up, the people who I'll be facing at the "Third Laboratory" were complete oddballs. That's why the onee-san at the reception was pitying me. I agree.

Excellent but with a semi-problematic personality and behaviour — no matter where you went in the world, these sort of people were constantly around. These people were all gathered together in one place at the Third Laboratory.

And I'll be joining that colorful lineup.....

"Also, it's difficult, but to expedite the matter, we will need to stay over for a while"

"Well, I have asked Gilles to tend to the garden so I guess it's fine"

I had forgotten to mention, but Gilles was house-sitting. He had work to do at home and for some reason, after the duel, there was an increase in marriage proposals that he had to reject, so that kept him busy.

It was probably because they wanted me to give birth to a child who would inherit my talent in sorcery. Being a spectator and watching me defeat my opponent — that was how they understood that I had talent. As I desire a love marriage, I have been declining all of it.

"Do you want to stay in Cecil's room? Of all the members, he's the most truth-worthy"

"Hey Father, what do you mean by trustworthy?"

"Liz, it's alright. These guys aren't bad"

"You didn't answer my question, nee"

Father wouldn't look me in the eye. Hey Father, what do you mean by safety? My body isn't in any danger, is it?

Even as I fretted and pulled my clothes uneasily, he only stroked my head and didn't give an explanation. Are you refusing to answer? Is that what it is?

If I was assaulted and injured, I'll blame it all on Father. I'll report it to Mother and Gilles. It'll be good for once if Father was rebuked severely.

Given that Father was a bit untrustworthy, I brushed off his hand that was — once again — joined to mine and looked the other way. Even if he was shocked, I wouldn't know. Please don't deliver your daughter to her doom.

"..... We've arrived. Ooi, this is the helper I had mentioned—"

"Uhyaa~aaaa! Isn't this the exemplary girl!!!!!"

"Hiiinyaaaaaa!?"

As soon as Father, who was somewhat depressed, opened the door on which hung the plate indicating the Third Laboratory, I received a shock upon which I screamed and fell on my butt. Someone had approached to hug me, and I was slow to understand it.

The person who came swooping at me was a woman in her early twenties. With a flushed makeup-less face and excited eyes, she rubbed her cheeks against mine. Breathing roughly, her hands reached out, crawling through my

upper arms and thighs which made me shiver violently. No, in many ways, I sensed danger.

"Fuohhhhhh~~~ Such smooth and bouncy skin! I've seen that outstanding talent! Nee nee, how bout taking your clothes off for a bit so onee-san can feel em—"

"Stop that, Caldina. Don't touch my daughter"

"Iya~nn! You're so cruel"

It was a blessing when Father tore the woman off me with one hand and although I was flung into a complete state of confusion, I survived without further problems. Unaware, the top three buttons on my blouse had been unfastened. If this keeps up, the only thing I'll remember is the dread. Why am I a magnet for people who have a taste for little girls?

Fearing the danger to my body, I arranged my clothes whilst having a stiffened face. Then, I quickly hid behind Father. I had already become quite disgusted by this point in time.

"Liz, Caldina might seem abnormal, but she's not a bad fellow"

"May I leave?"

"Yaa~ Don't say such things, Liz-cha~n"

If that's the case, what is with those wiggling hands*? And please do something about those massaging fingers. What are you massaging? There's nothing but a smooth chopping board here.

"Caldina-san, I've brought my daughter along. Please settle down"

"I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry, I did it because Felt-san told me to! I'm sorry!"

As I stood without any intention to approach her while Father acted as a shield, the woman gave up and sidled over When suddenly, she was drenched with water. I knew it was a very small scaled 'Splash' when I saw it attack the woman.

Feeling surprised, I turned around and saw two boys gazing at the attacked woman.

"Mou~ You're so heartless, Mel-chan. A child like that will get spanked~~""Hyeeeeeeeeee!?"

The sopping wet woman thus became angry. It seems the earlier 'Splash' had made her change targets, throwing herself at another.

I'm a girl who'll like to sweetly scream before running on the verge of tears, but that perverted-looking woman was nimble and had successfully hugged my body. Earlier, she wasn't able to successfully utilise her wiggling hands all over me. Yup, I think that was extremely pathetic.

"Father, may I leave?"

"I'm begging you, please endure it"

I'd relatively petition earnestly; however, Father didn't acknowledge it.

Chapter 31 – Various Insecurities Kept Coming

For the time being, to calm the situation down, Father dropped a punch at the perverted-looking woman.

Father was also disgusted by the high-spirited woman and for now had her restrained to a chair; she was still in a dripping wet state to which she pouted her lips in response. I thought Father was relatively feminist but he didn't seem to hold back with her. If she continued her excessive behavior, he showed her that he was prepared to punch her again. Therefore, the woman sulked and settled down.

Leaving aside the woman, the one who attacked me earlier was now grossly crying. As expected, even that was unpleasant for me. Although, since it was coming from the same sex, it wasn't as bad when compared to the earl's son.

"If you guys make a move on Liz, I'll expel you all from the Magic Institution, got it?"

"Hahaha. It isn't as if I'm Caldina-san, there's no way I would lift my hand"

"You're the most concerning one. If you even think about dissecting her, I'll seriously dismiss you"

"..... Hahaha, no way~"

The man from earlier who had an interest in women was met with a denied smile from Father, and for a brief moment, had a somewhat delayed response. I had thought that he seemed like a gentle, straight-forward man but I feel it was better to keep my distance.

When I took a step back instinctively, the man with a smile on his face said no and waved his hands as if he wanted me to come back. Yup, he couldn't be trusted.

"Cecil, you come over here too"

It's not like I wanted to pull off an unconcerned attitude, but the aura of that person compared to the trio was like heaven and earth. How should I put it, a clear distinction could be made based upon his appearance alone.

He had silky fine-looking silver hair and golden eyes. With well-proportioned looks, the young man No, the kid was seated on a chair by the window reading.

With his back turned away from us as he rested against the edges of the wall, I thought that his figure was that of some cool guy as he turned over the pages of his book, flipping it with one-hand. However, it's regrettable to call him handsome when he's not of age. I bet that the boy's age wasn't any different from mine.



The boy called Cecil glanced over here for a moment before returning his gaze back to his book. I felt like I've seen that figure somewhere before. Eh, but even so, I don't think I recall seeing him before.

"Liz, this is Cecil. He's a misanthrope so he doesn't associate with a lot of people, but he isn't a bad fellow. Please get along with him"

"Yes"

Well, I want to talk to him as long as it's not to the degree that he dislikes it. If he does dislike it, then I'll stay as far away from him as possible. However if his misanthropy isn't corrected, I believe he'll have a difficult time ahead of him.

"All that remains is the names of these fellows. That dripping wet person is Caldina, the foolish person laughing over there is Felt, and the person in tears is Melphondo"

"Name's Caldina Harvis~. I'm pretty much the section chief of the Third Laboratory. Nice ta meet ya~"

Whilst still tied up, Caldina-san winked as she introduced herself. Caldina ended her speech in a lively tone filled with playfulness as though she had affixed a star to the end of her sentence This made her seem youthful despite being in her twenties. Even if she was a pervert to a certain extent, she must have ability, otherwise she wouldn't have been made the section chief.

"I'm Felt, delighted to make your acquaintance. By the way Liz-jou, may I draw some blood from you?"

"I'll dismiss you"

"I refuse"

"Harsh, aren't you?"

"Liz, if they assault you, I give you permission to let loose your sorcery"

It's unbearable if I allow this person to analyse and furthermore, wanting to learn more by dissecting me. I mean, drawing my blood

I was becoming increasingly reluctant to be acquainted with them. Why is there such an abundance of eccentric people here Ah, Father had said it was a gathering of weirdos.

The girl whom Father had introduced remained hesitant and was sniffing. Melphondo-san, right? She seemed relatively respectable. However, she carried the facade of a victim.

"There's still one more person but Well, that person is usually outside so they're nothing to be concerned with"

"Outside?"

"He does various things outside of the capital like hunting monsters and experimenting. It would seem he won't be returning for the present so there's nothing to be concerned with Cecil, could you please guide Liz? For the time being, she'll be lodging in your room"

"..... Ah?"

At Father's words, Cecil-kun responded in a threatening voice that one wouldn't expect from a child and stared intensely at him. Nevertheless, I thought he had a lovely voice, but his reactions obviously weren't agreeable for a child. Despite having a lovely face, the nasty look in his eyes gave off an intimidating aura.

"Cecil is the most trustworthy, you know. You understand me, don't you? The ones who can be trusted amongst these faces"

Caldina-san, Felt-san, Melphondo-san, Cecil-kun. Melphondo-san aside, the other two are hopeless Something is bound to happen to me physically and sexually while I'm sleeping.

It doesn't seem like Melphondo-san heard the conversation as he's crying, and it's ... Cecil-kun, isn't it? I think of Cecil-kun as more or less of a boy.

Cecil-kun seemingly clicked his tongue energetically at Father's orders whilst glowering at me. Seeing as how I was being provoked, I sighed. Closing the book he was reading, he stood up without attempting to conceal his listlessness.

He made his way quickly towards the door beside me and left just like that, so I rushed out and pursued after him. Well, it seemed like he wasn't very eager to guide me. Since if he wanted to do so voluntarily, he would have just called out to me to follow him.

It seems that Cecil-kun had every intention to leave me behind. He was also walking at a quick pace. Judging from appearances, he wasn't any older than

me, therefore it wasn't like I couldn't keep up with him.

Seemingly displeased that I had trotted along, he quickly attempted to pick up his pace to leave me behind. Although I'm actually fine with running.

After walking for a while, Cecil-kun stopped and entered a room. This is probably is Cecil-kun's room.

Travelling to and from home whilst working at the Magic Institution is troublesome, and there are a number of benefits to living in the dormitory. It appears that it was also ok to stay overnight at the laboratory. Cecil-kun as well was no exception.

..... I think it's awfully wonderful to be able to work at the Magic Institution at Cecil-kun's age.

Entering the room after Cecil-kun, Cecil-kun didn't even give me a glance as he gathered a lime colored stick from his desk. Oh, it seems he had fetch something that resembled chalk as a line was drawn on the floor with it.

On one side, there was the sofa and on the other, the bed. The furniture in the middle acted as the partition whereas the desk was moved to the side of the bed.

With a whistle, Cecil-kun pointed at the space beside the sofa. Since he wasn't using words, I guessed that he was indicating that I can use that side.

Well, it's not like I planned to stay for long and even though I wouldn't be able to sleep on the sofa, I had no intentions of getting upset. After all, I am borrowing it.

"Got it. I'll just use that space over there"

For the time being, I excused myself and placed my light luggage on top of the sofa. Just in case, I had brought spare clothes to change into tomorrow. If I

didn't have enough, it seems that Father would bring them over for me.

Cecil-kun glanced at me before leaving the room. He was probably returning to the laboratory.

I'm beginning to worry whether Cecil-kun and I could cohabited together in the days ahead

Chapter 32 – Details of the Request

"So, how can I be of any assistance to you?"

Like usual, Cecil-kun deserted me completely so I had to rely on my memory to trace my steps back to the laboratory. I approached Caldina-san, who was stretching after finally being freed from the ropes, inquiring about my objectives.

For the time being, I've pledged in my heart to quickly finish the job. It seems Cecil-kun really can't stomach having me around. So for his sake, I was anxious to promptly leave as soon as possible.

For what it's worth, I wanted to be on good terms with him However, no matter how hard I tried, it didn't seem to work out favorably. Of course, I did make the effort.

"Ah, you didn't hear the details from Welf-sama?"

"I was told that I'll be assisting the creation of a magic tool. Now then, where's Father?"

"Welf-sama said he was busy so he left for the other departments. Furthermore, he punched me before he left. Isn't that cruel~ doing it to a young maiden like myself"

Though she stuck out her tongue when she grumbled about Father, it didn't seem like she particularly disliked him. Rather, it seemed like she enjoyed it. As it was an everyday occurrence, was she really a person to hold a grudge against another?

I would like to insist, as a victim, that either way, she was paying for her actions from earlier.

"And, about the creation of the magic tool. We have the shape, all that's left is to make sure it's operating properly, like verifying the flaws and fine tuning it. After which, there's the issue of maintaining the output and sense of stability. These minor works is why I plotted to enlist the highly sensitive with large volumes of magical power Liz-chan's help! Haa~ What's with that face?"

"No I can do the work"

"Un~fair. Doesn't this seem like you're being entrusted by the section chief?"

While saying "Liz-chan's so coldhearted" and feigning crocodile tears, she came over to cling onto me but I quickly dodged to avoid contact. If she caught ahold of me, sexual harassment difficulties lay ahead.

Caldina-san seemed dissatisfied that she failed to seize me. However, when I warned her with a single phrase, "Father", she obediently withdrew.

Of course, Father wouldn't have usually witnessed such a scene as he was the Magic Institution's No. 2. It was easy to report and have the unabiding subordinate be punished; Caldina-san as well was no exception.

"Haha, Caldina-san doesn't get along well with Welf-sama"

"Too noisy! People like Welf, Mel-chan and Cecil-kun are just the same kind"

"Haha, no mistaking it"

At the sound of Felt's teasing voice, Caldina-san puffed up her cheeks. How should I put it, from Caldina-san's appearance, her actions and conduct were a little childish. Or should I say, youthful?

On the contrary, Felt-san's previous aged appearance gave me a sense of stability until the end. However, on the occasion when he mentioned drawing my blood, my instincts told me that he could not be completely trusted.

"In any case, let me first start by introducing you today to the magic tool. Mel-chan, bring the usual~"

"Ye-Yesss!"

It seems she has finally stopped crying and, in a rush, flew into the back of the room "Su—ahhhhhh" came the sound of her falling. After which, I heard a crying "Fueeeeeeeeeeahhhh" sound and in my heart, I affixed the clumsy label to her.

"Ah~ Mel-chan fell over again. However, at least the magic tool isn't broken"

"I think Caldina-san's also at fault for leaving the documents on the floor"

"Ehe"

"Let's just tidy it up"

It seems half of that was Caldina-san's fault. However, I felt that Melphondo-san was also the cause of it because of her being considerably careless.

"Hiccup~ *sniffs* I've brought itttt~~~"

Despite having just stopped moments ago, Melphondo-san was once again crying and sobbing convulsively as she brought several accessories in both hands. The skin on her forehead, that was slightly visible from the gaps of her blue hair, turned bright red due to the fall.

As expected, it was pitiful so I healed her using healing magic and gazed at the accessories that Melphondo-san had obtained in her hands.

"Haa, it doesn't hurt"

"I casted healing magic on you. And so, what sort of magic tool is this?"

"I'll explain! This is, well, a secret item that was requested from a certain client. To create this, we had to go through various troubles—"

"Please make it brief and concise"

"Aaah! Liz-chan's cold! You see, this is~~ a certain magic tool that can convert and nullify magic!"

"How's that" Caldina-san said, brimming with confidence with her hands on her hips.

..... Convert and nullify magic. In other words, it was an unrivalled item under specific conditions.

"..... Isn't it impressive?"

"Isn't it isn't it! Praise me praise me~!"

"If you have to praise someone, then praise Cecil-kun. Liz-jou, this enchantment was designed by Cecil-san"

"Huh?"

Cecil-kun's design. No matter how I look at it, Cecil-kun's age wasn't any different from mine. Even if I were to estimate, he was probably a year older than me. He appeared younger than Klaus-kun who I'd met just the other day. However compared to Klaus-kun on the inside, he was matured, or rather,

harsh.

It's this person who had constructed an enchantment through his own abilities. Isn't that really remarkable?

"He's amazing A genius"

"Hey Liz-chan, you're pretty weird as well. When I was about Liz-chan's age, I wasn't even able to use sorcery"

"It's because I had the assistance of an excellent teacher"

That's right, Gilles was amazing. After all, it's expected since when Gilles first taught me, he was approximately at the age of an upper elementary school student. Gilles was also amazingly extraordinary for being at that age and for being so composed.

..... Does that mean he had looked at it in the long term?

When I was frankly admiring Gilles, Cecil-kun looked over here and somehow clicked his tongue. Th—that's not adorable No, was I somehow disliked, hence why he's taking that attitude up with me?

Hmm Could it be that I had hurt his pride?

Since I was a child, I've always held this magic power. For Cecil-kun to be at the Magic Institution means that he's considerably good at casting sorcery. As far as he's concerned, I, who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere, was probably like a thorn in his side. Well, it's probably conceit.

..... Even so, that hateful style wasn't unusual.

"Since it requires a large volume of magical power, I was unable to produce the enchantment. That's why I'm very envious of abilities like that"

"Buttt~~ Cecil-ku~~~n"

Saying in a stupid voice, "Isn't that great~", Cecil-kun's eyes narrowed in annoyance. His eyes were filled with such animosity that it surprised me to see him visibly disgusted.

"..... Liz-chan?"

"If it's just our first meeting, I have an idea"

"Hoho. In other words, you're the type of person who teases the girl they like"

"It's not what you think. Look, Cecil-kun's scowling at us senselessly"

Given that I said what shouldn't have been said, please just drop that passionate gaze and stop clicking your tongue...

"Ah, let's see For starters, can you fully fill that pendant with magic?"

Caldina-san picked up an object from the accessories that Melphondo-san was carrying and dropped it onto my palm. *Clink* Verifying that it was the sound of chains that chafed against each other, I closely looked at the shining metal.

The ornament itself was ordinary — a simple tear shaped pendant. If I had to call out it's compelling characteristic, it would be that its body was made out of a shining bluish metal. How am I supposed to handle this tiny jewel?

"It's made out of mythril, therefore it'll nicely absorb your magic~"

"An expensive object yet again You've definitely made fine arrangements"

"That's because it's by His Majesty's request, so I have no choice but to use the best materials"

"Eh?"

..... From His Majesty. Was it alright to get assistance from a girl who's an outsider to help manufacture an item that was ordered by His Majesty?

But well, I do understand. By nature, the automatic invocation of defense sorcery was so high that the number of people who could use it was restricted. It's still impossible for me, at least, not consciously.

As danger was unavoidable for royalty, having this sort of self-defense magic tool was indispensable. All the more if they leave the castle or the country. The risk of assassination was always possible.

Since I'm indebted to His Majesty, this can be considered a form of repayment. In all seriousness, it's just paying the debt with my help.

Suddenly feeling motivated, I poured as much magic as I could into the tear shaped pendant in my palm to fill it up, pouring as much as it could contain But would it really do just that?

"That can take a wholeeeeeeeeeee lot of magic though"

"Of course, since it's mythril. Previously, because the enchantment consumed a lot of magic, I was flat out exhausted after invoking it about two to three

times. Even when I went all out, I couldn't tell if it completely absorbed everything"

"Even on the first day, I wasn't able to fill it up completely no matter how many times I tried. The most I could do was four to five times"

"This is really non-standard. Even Liz-chan would be worn out by this magic tool. To make it easier for His Majesty to use, it is our job to provide our thoughts on the adjustment and if possible, the application. Making these improvements is Liz-chan's job"

As Caldina-san finished it off with a pleasant smile on her face, I sighed.

..... It seems like it's going to take some time making these adjustments. It doesn't seem like it's completed yet and there's still the experiment that needs to be performed to see to what extent it can withstand sorcery. For now, everyone is tackling three issues: improving its durability, the stability output, and the consumption constraint. When it's time for it to be filled up, it'll probably be left to Father to handle.

It's going to be a while before I head home, and remembering the faces of Gilles and Maria who are doing their best, I let out a deep breath.

Chapter 33 – An Adult's Advice

"..... Is it really alright for me to receive this?"

"It's fine, as long as you understand your limits to a certain extent"

"After I receive it, what do you want me to do?"

Presently, I'm in a sorcery training space near the laboratory facing Caldina-san. It seems that the laboratory comes with such a space. Compared to the space used for the duel it was much smaller, but the members of the laboratory could use it whenever they liked.

If you're wondering for what purpose I was brought here for, well... It was for the sake of reviewing the enchantment. In addition to getting a grasp on the room for improvement, we'll be checking the level of completion at the present stage.

Standing behind Caldina-san was Cecil-kun. However, as always, he stared at me with a sharp look which was a little bit frightening.

"Didn't I say it's fine? For starters, I hope you will use the magic tool without invoking the enchantment. Liz-chan, you need to understand firsthand the minimal amount of magic it can absorb"

"Then for what reason is this pendant charged with magic? "

"Because there's another purpose to it. First of all, let's assess the enchantment's durability"

In other words, if I'm unlucky, I'll end up serving as both the battery and the human sacrifice. No, it's fine. I somehow got the gist of it

Incidentally, if it had been set to directly absorb magic from the practitioner, then it was fine to just use magic in that manner, but this foolish idea was denied by Caldina-san. As the practitioner serves as the form of which the magic is absorbed from, it seems the automatic self-defense invocation circuit would constantly be activated and therefore would be unable to use other enchantments. Invoking and extending it at a high speed at the same time was difficult for an average magician.

In addition, as magic is being collected directly from the practitioner, if they are of insufficient skill, it is very possible that they could faint from it. Since fainting and being attacked would be like putting the cart before the horse, the idea was rejected. However, since it's me we're talking about, we could still carry out the experiment As expected, I'm the battery and the human sacrifice.

"Then, I'll begin. 'Aqua Spike'"

With complicated feelings of dissatisfaction and gloominess on the inside, Caldina-san had proposed water spheres. It was probably due to its limitations as the powers it carried within were the safest. In other words, the sorcery shot out lumps of water.

Although it was fine to stand naturally, as expected, having sorceries fired at me was a bit terrifying.

The moment when I was prepared to be struck as the water spheres drew closer to me, they were repelled at roughly the same distance as if I had both of my hands spread out wide. The water erupted, falling onto the ground without flying in my direction.

Simultaneously, I noticed that a tolerable amount of magic power had depleted inside of me. It was still tolerable, but I had poured some into the pendant, I know that I probably have five to six shots to go before it becomes quite difficult for me.

"How is it?"

"..... I think that, given the unusual consumption, there isn't any sustainability to the defense enchantment. Although it's able to repel attacks for now, suppose that if it was an advanced level magic; the defense will shatter like usual. Even if we take into account an automatic incantation to split the consumption of magic power, there may still be room for improvement"

It's not something I should proudly declare but, frankly, I'd called it earlier.

Certainly, the self-defense invocation automatically activated, but taking into account the current magic power consumption, it appears that the power of resistance was almost negligible. For the magic tool, it's not the enchantment but me who has to etch the enchantment, so I have to grasp the conversion efficiency. To what extent is there a surplus of magic power and to what percent can the magic power be split up.

Sensing it, I know it means there's still room for improvement.

"But Cecil-kun"

"..... Got it"

Murmuring that much, Cecil-kun left the room. At that time when he left, he gave an instant unforgettable — and in some ways — honest glare at me.

"Well then, let's just wrap it up here for today~"

"Eh? That's it?"

"It's that kid's job to improve the enchantment so come tomorrow, we'll be experimenting with multiple patterns"

That's because Cecil-kun is excellent — said Caldina-san with a carefree laugh. And with a smile, she added — you're also amazing.

"To tell you the truth, Cecil-kun wanted to personally test it out but Cecil-kun's magic can't even withstand three shots. That's why he's envious of you, Liz-chan"

"..... But even still, his magic should be considerably above average? "

It's not like he had an especially low amount of magic power. I considered that being employed in some way by the Magic Institution meant that he possessed a sufficient amount of magic power. Cecil-kun's inventiveness was far superior; I'm simply unable to imitate him.

Like a one-woman exhibition, I tilted my head in puzzlement and Caldina-san, upon seeing it, smiled bitterly.

"That's true. But Liz-chan, it's better to remember this. There are people in this world who would struggle till they die in order to obtain what Liz-chan has. To these people, Liz-chan would become an object of resentment for achieving it"

Ceasing her smile, Caldina-san fixed her eyes on me with a serious gaze. The piercing look in her eyes completely snatched the words out of me.

"If you're strong, they'll envy you for sticking out like a sore thumb and try to conform you. On the contrary, a person who doesn't have it is excluded. This is how an adult's world's like"

Liz-chan probably wouldn't yet understand that. And lowering her eyebrows, Caldina-san sorrowfully laughed before returning to her usual laugh "Well, let's leave" and broke off. However, even if it seemed friendly, there was a bit of rejection in her voice.

While staring at Caldina-san's turned back, I noticed that the words weighed heavily in my chest.

From her words earlier, it was as if I was being blamed for it. That's not right, it's as if I I was indirectly being blamed.

For hurting Cecil-kun's feelings.

While being surrounded by harmonious people, I averted my eyes from outside criticism. Realising that there was a considerable amount of people who detested me was agonizing. I knew they existed but to see it demonstrated so clearly before my very eyes was painful. When it comes to Monk Georg and Lord Alfred, their directed look of hate carried a different meaning.

My heart ached, whispering to me to escape from reality.

"..... How should I best proceed?"

Assuming that I had hurt Cecil-kun's feelings, I assumed he resented me.

..... Even if I were to apologize, it would have the opposite effect.

Not knowing what to do, I left the training room and didn't even return to the laboratory.

"..... Liz?"

While absentmindedly walking around at that moment, wandered into the castle when I heard a familiar voice. It was only after the owner of the voice had tapped me on the shoulder with a blank expression did I realized I was in the courtyard.

Just when in the world did I get here? Although I was allowed by the people of the castle to freely walk in, wouldn't I seem rather suspicious, seeing as I had walked in and was wandering around? Still, I suppose my face is well-known.

"What troubles you so much that you're in a place like this? I heard from Welf that you're assisting the Magic Institution"

"..... Nnn, I'm just mulling over some things"

His Highness looked at me and knitted his brows. After which, he took my hand and started walking. Furthermore, he was forcefully dragging me.

Somehow or rather, it seems he had been taking fencing lessons; his hands were barely sweating. From a short distance, the knights welcomed us and bowed at me when they noticed my gaze. It's surprisingly that I'm standing out

or rather I'm reaping what I sowed.

Leaving the hustle and bustle of the castle, we arrived at a shady place under a tree. His Highness let go of my hand and sat down, reclining against the tree while beckoning me to do the same. Accepting his invitation, I sat beside him. He then stretched out, grasped my arm, and pulled me towards him with my face on his shoulder.

"If there's a problem, just tell me"

"Your Highness is so forceful, mou"

"Because it's for the greater good"

Don't laugh — His Highness said while tapering his lips. And without knowing why, I somehow felt relieved. He was still the same in that regard.

Relaxing my slightly stiffened body, I leaned on His Highness's body.

"Your Highness, if someone envies and resents your power, what would you do?"

I struck His Highness with the question I couldn't find an answer to. It wasn't like I expected for His Highness to find a solution to my question; I simply was in need of his opinion.

"..... Let's see I wouldn't do anything. In the first place, it's normal for people to be envious and resent royalty"

"That's true~"

I nodded my head earnestly as His Highness spoke — he was quite persuasive. It wasn't unreasonable that His Highness, too, had people aiming at him.

"Hmm. As it can't be helped that I've attained such powers, then it should be utilised to the maximum of its abilities"

"..... Even if it's better to keep your head down?"

"Well, it's more like a skilled hawk hides its talons. However, it's a waste to not use what you have. I believe that it is our duty to give it all we've got if we possess that kind of power"

At His Highness's unwavering declaration, I unconsciously throbbed slightly and, as time passed, my heartbeat hastened. I thought to myself, why was he acting so maturely?

When I first met him, having ran away from his training, he was just a child acting his age. Now, he has become a praise-worthy man How quickly he's grown from a child into an adult.

"..... Your Highness is strong. For me, it's a bit impossible"

"Liz, you're also strong. It's because Liz is kind hence you feel troubled"

"I'm not that kind It's just problematic that I'm not self-conscious"

Since I was born, it was normal for me to have this power. However, to others, it's a power that they desperately desired. The fact that I can use it naturally becomes a reason for people who can't to resent me.

But based on His Highness's thoughts, this entire concept was laughable. What's wrong with using the power that I have? The person making the allowances is being discourteous.

Both parts are easy to comprehend when they're looked at subjectively. You could say it's an extreme example, though. Speaking maliciously, it is an insolent and menial thought.

"Well, you're aware now, aren't you? Just be careful next time"

"Your Highness is optimistic....."

Why was he so optimistic? Was it because it's his inborn characteristic? Or was it because of the support from the people around him?

..... Most likely, it was probably both.

"Because a good policy can't be invented backwards"

"Fufu, it seems the future king is reliable"

Having great faith in His Highness's last words, I smiled broadly and, with a quiet feeling, leaned on His Highness and took a nap.

The fact that I was woken up with a warm smile from the knights was a matter that happened an hour later.

Chapter 34 – The Submitted Conclusion

"Cecil-kun"

Having made the mistake of carelessly falling asleep and being watched over lovingly (?) by His Highness as well as receiving the lukewarm gazes of the knights, I returned to the room that I shared with Cecil-kun.

There, I found Cecil-kun seated at the desk, running through some papers with his brush. Without entering Cecil-kun's side, I called out to him. I didn't know if Cecil-kun had noticed that I'd returned since he didn't give a response and simply remained silent, wrestling with his work

It was obvious even to the naked eye that he hated me.

In response to this method of rejection, ignoring my existence, I hardened my face and stood on the boundary line. Yet, Cecil-kun continued to ignore me, which felt a little like I was being snubbed.

"Cecil-kun"

Again, he didn't respond when I called out to him. So, after making up my mind, I called him out on it.

"I know that Cecil-kun considers me an eye-sore. I also know that you hate me"

Frankly, I felt that he was being unreasonable, disliking me to such an extent.

Nevertheless, I have no doubt that he finds my mere existence unpleasant.

The movement of the brush, which Cecil-kun was using — as he continued to ignore me — stopped. So he had heard me even though he didn't respond back.

"However, please properly talk to me when we're working. I know you find me sickening, but I can't accept that you despise and ignore me when you don't even know my character"

Caldina-san was on Cecil-kun's side and not mine Or rather, she probably knows about Cecil-kun's past and was, therefore, his ally. Cecil-kun being Cecil-kun, finds me detestable. That won't change.

The fact that I'd unconsciously hurt him was implicitly pointed out to me by Caldina-san. Vaguely, I understood the reason. To him, I was an intolerable woman.

After thinking and worrying about this, I came to a conclusion I will confront him directly. It's not like I'm being timid. My excuse is that my emotional stability is due to my body and soul not being in harmony.

If he knows me well enough and still dislikes me, then I'm resigned to the result. It would be useless to even struggle at that point.

However, Cecil-kun doesn't know anything about me. And even if he does, it's just a surface level understanding. And arbitrarily hating, resenting, and treating me like an enemy — that felt unreasonable. It was too one-sided. I could not agree with it.

If I'm to be hated, then he should at least know everything about me. If he still hates me after that, then I'll be fine with it. However, I refuse to be hated when we haven't even discussed or come to a mutual understanding with one another.

Slowly, Cecil-kun looked languidly in my direction. Faced his usual gaze, I stared directly at him.

"You don't know anything about me, please don't hate me when you arbitrarily decided to do so on your own"

"..... You don't know anything about me either"

"I don't despise you. We're both at fault for not getting acquainted with each other. If we hate each other without even making the effort to understand one another, then we'll never be able to come to an agreement"

Truthfully, I rarely disliked people. With the exception of two people, that is.

"If I've hurt you, then I apologise. However, I won't ever say I hate someone when I don't understand anything about them. Even if this is just my willfulness, I dislike being judged by my appearance. I don't know how or to what extent you despise me, but at the very least, please tell me the reason for it"

Asserting myself in a firm manner, Cecil-kun made an obvious grimace and clicked his tongue. Even being shown that particular childishness, I firmly stared at him without changing my attitude.

The look I received from Cecil-kun was bone chilling; when I watched him intently as he looked away before *Bang*, Cecil-kun knocked the desk and stood up. *Splash* Even as the ink bottle broke and the contents spilled out, Cecil-

kun paid it no heed and glowered at me.

His mouth opened slightly. Then, biting on his lips vexingly, he pushed me aside from where I stood next to the boundary line and exited the room. Falling on my rear, I was also immature and let out a sigh.

"..... It would be good if it was just like a kids squabble"

I can say with certainty that Cecil-kun has a very mature way of thinking. Though his form of outbursts are childlike, overall, he was maturely considerate. I wonder if he has never felt inferior about his abilities compared to adults? Hence why, he probably hates me.

It'll be good if he could properly talk to me tomorrow — I muttered to myself, burying my face into my knees.

"Liz-chan, what did you do to Cecil-kun?"

The next day as I walked into the laboratory, Caldina-san called out to me in an anxious voice. Ah, when I woke up this morning, Cecil-kun seems to have properly returned to the room and was also awake. He even greeted me good morning, albeit still in an unreasonably bad mood, which was made apparent by the clicking of his tongue — it wasn't cute.

"Yesterday, I indirectly picked a fight with him"

"..... Hold on—"

"He can dislike me after he knows everything about me"

Because I knew Caldina-san would stick up for Cecil-kun, I went ahead and said it.

"However, when I requested him to tell me what he disliked about me, he left. I can fix it if it's within my capabilities"

"It's often said to the person himself. Ah well, Cecil-kun isn't the sort to just frankly speak his true feelings, ya know~? "

"I suppose. But it's unreasonable to not even say the reason to me and hate me. How unpleasant. If all of this is just because of my abilities, then that repugnance leaves me with mixed feelings"

Being resented just because a person has abilities would make the world an incredibly difficult place to live in. This seems common no matter where in the world one is. Well, I wouldn't know much about it, but I have been involved in an assassination attempt and kidnapping before. However, Father has been silencing these through various means.

It's not like I'd wished to be born with these powers. I use them because I have it and there are people who find that disagreeable. Why am I being blamed for not concealing it? Despite understanding it this far, it worries me a little.

"Until we can amicably come to terms with each other, I will keep at it. I want to get along with him"

"Haha~ In that case, good luck, Liz-chan~"

Upon hearing that I wanted to get along with him, Caldina-san grinned and laughed, giving her support. Although Caldina-san was Cecil-kun's ally, it seems that becoming a friend was alright by her. She must be worried about Cecil-kun being all alone.

Yosh, steeling myself to give it my best shot, I lightly fist pumped. Seeing that, Caldina-san grabbed and buried me within her arms as she rubbed her cheeks against mine. The fact that she seemed rather lonely was a completely different matter.

Chapter 35 – Unless It's In the Middle of Work

"..... This is the improved enchantment"

Surprisingly, Cecil-kun started a conversation with me. It must be because it's work-related. Even so, he seemed quite reluctant.

Still, I'm glad that Cecil-kun kept his promise and properly spoke to me. The worst I'd imagined was that he might still treat me as though I was non-existent. Deep down inside, he really isn't that bad of a kid.

As I gave him a thank you with a lovable smile, I took the paper filled with various kinds of patterns from him.

Although Cecil-kun seemingly clicked his tongue, he didn't stop his friendly interaction. His actions made him seem like a tsundere. And since he came off as a tsundere, his actions seemed relatively cute so my heart remained at peace.

"Then, shall we test it out at once?"

"..... Please do"

After entrusting the task to me, Cecil-kun turned to leave. This was when I firmly seized his wrist. This time, without betraying the smile on my face, I looked at Cecil-kun who smacked his lips. He had an extremely scornful look, but I wasn't disheartened by it.

"If the proposer isn't even here for the experiment"

In other words: I'm not letting you escape.

Though his impression of me since the very beginning was the absolute worst, I wanted to forcibly change it on this occasion. I had no intentions of having him tag along, however. At least, during the required work hours, it would be good if we were here together. Of course, the first and foremost reason is that it's for the sake of simplifying work.

By the way, this exchange occurred in the laboratory, so everyone was paying attention to us. Caldina-san was smirking and Felt-san had a gentle, lukewarm gaze whereas Melphondo-san had a panicked, flustered expression.

Taking in the expressions of the trio, an annoyed wrinkle formed in between Cecil-kun's eyebrows as he brushed my hand aside. If you make such a face when you're this young, wrinkles would definitely appear faster in the future, you know.

"..... Felt"

"Ahh, is it me today? No matter, I'll accompany you"

Somehow, it appears that, based off of the previous experiment, in order for us to conduct the experiments together, having Felt-san along with us was a required condition.

..... I hated the fact that Felt-san was chosen because I felt that this person was a danger towards my body.

"Liz-sama, I'll be starting right now"

This time, the experiment was an endurance test. It was to determine the extent of the endurance once the consumption was set in place.

In my mind, I overwrote an existing enchantment with one of Cecil-kun's latest produced enchantments. The enchantment was amazing and I secretly admired it.

When it comes to the likes of creating new enchantments, even by utilizing all of the existing enchantments that I know, I still wouldn't be able to do it. If it's something like combining two invocations and producing a different result, then I could more or less do it. For example, making a smokescreen from steam through the combination of water and high temperatures.

However, when it comes to invoking enchantments by changing the sorcery, ever since the very beginning till now, I'm still unable to perform such an act. Hence, I chose the simultaneous invocation of two types of magic.

From the onset, if the function was incorporated into the enchantment, it would be easy to master and I wouldn't have to use the two-part redundant magic. There was such a merit in the enchantment's development, but it was simply impossibly difficult so I take my hat off to this youth, Cecil-kun, for being able to complete it.

"Will this do, Liz-sama? "

"Ah, yes"

Because I didn't answer immediately, I hurriedly nodded my head, readying myself. I was grateful to Felt-san who seems to have waited for me. Then, I

firmly stood on the ground with both feet anchored carefully. It was important to firmly stick to the ground when defending. Well, this time, it's an automatic defense.

In other words, this endurance experiment will involve me being attacked by sorcery aimed at me. If it exceeds the barrier's capacity, I would have to make sure it's negated immediately since I would otherwise take damage.

"Then I'll begin. 'Flame Lance'"

Since it was an experiment, I didn't mind if the sorcery I faced had the ability to wound or even to kill a child without hesitation. However, by Caldina-san's authority, it was rarely okay to use such abilities. The intention was to roughly inspect the same sorcery and do a comparison.

Flying towards me were cone-shaped lances with the size of an adult male. If I took a direct hit from those, I would get severe scalds. Although I was prepared, as expected, frightening things are frightening. Be that as it may, there was still room to negate it if the barrier gets destroyed.

The results were identical to the previous session; the flame lance was repelled by the automatic invoked barrier. The amount of magic power it absorbed was slightly less than before, and I also felt that the strength of the barrier had somewhat increased.

Although it was unlikely for us to verify all the prepared patterns, it was astonishing that there were already improvements in the results that came out.

"As the enchantment has changed, next, please do the honours"

"Understood. Fufu, it seems there are merits to destroying it"

"Given that I won't be able to inspect it if you do, please regulate your power"

"Hmph"

For the time being, I intend to ascertain the entire enchantment.

"ti..... I'm tired....."

Overall, we tried eight variations of Cecil-kun's suggested improved patterns and when it was finally over, I sat down immediately. We stopped when only twenty percent of my magic power remained; if I had continued any longer beyond this, I would have been too tired to even move.

Cecil-kun looked at my sorry state as I was by the wall, but it was a look full of hatred. I inherited my latent magic power from my parents, so I wish that you would forgive me for it.

"How was it?"

"Overall, I believe the improvements we made was a success. Taking the consumption and endurance into consideration, I believe the first and fifth enchantments were the best"

"Like she said, Cecil-kun"

"That's needless to say"

Cecil-kun snorted with a hmph and turned away. His coldness was the same as ever and his attitude towards me hadn't changed one bit. Well, it would be just as troublesome if he really did change within a day.

He glanced at the worn out me out before departing from the training room. But from my motivated eyes, there was still even more improvements to be made.

"Actually, Cecil-kun has a gentle side as well. He just doesn't easily show it to Liz-sama"

"Ahaha, that's because he hates me"

"No matter how much he hates you, him acting this way is still surprising. By the way, it's been a while but could I draw some of your blood—"

"I refuse"

I ignored the unnatural sad face Felt-san made at my instant refusal.

Chapter 36 – And Then The Incident That Occurred

And so, those mutual exchanges and experiments were repeated for ten days.

Compared to when we first began, we were able to see clear results; we were able to get a grasp on the improvements to both the consumption rate and shield endurance.

When I first started assisting with the experiments, the enchantment's magic consumption was absurd; it was at a level where ten deployments of the enchantment was enough to flatten me out. Nowadays, the magic consumption was fairly tolerable. If it was the Magic Institution staff, then they would be able to withstand up to five shots, whereas I'm able to use it as many times as I liked. However, the reason I'm using it is because the intention of my invoked sorcery is sturdy and the consumption is low.

Well, I think there'll be progress in the development so long as we keep working and improving on the current scope.

"No one's arrived yet....."

I called out to Cecil-kun who I saw next to me, but he didn't respond back. Although I'm right beside him, he still doesn't treat me any different than before. Just being allowed near him was an improvement even though the person himself was reluctant about it.

Right now, it was just the two of us in the training room. We waited for Caldina-san and the others to arrive but It's been more than an hour since the scheduled time and there was still no sign of them.

As he walked up towards the entrance, it seemed that Cecil-kun was reaching the limits of his patience. Then, just like a little kid, he decided to push the heavy door and stopped. No, he did push the door but you could say that it didn't yield.

It was likely that Caldina-san and the others were reading too much into things. They saw me just moderately working as I cared about and chased after the runaway Cecil-kun. Therefore, Caldina-san, who knew I wanted to become friends with Cecil-kun, showed me a friendlier method.

"..... Caldina"

A resentful voice followed by the smacking of his lips. Even though we were of the same age, he didn't seem like a seven year old because, well, you don't say.

"It'll eventually be unlocked"

"..... Was this your doing?"

"Nope, it's not as if I wished to be shut in here with you. If there was only just me and Cecil-kun, we won't be able to conduct our experiments"

I shook my head to indicate that it wasn't like that and appealed to him. It was meaningless if we weren't able to do our work; the promise only applies during work hours.

Cecil-kun wasn't going to attack me with sorcery. In fact, I've never seen him use sorcery before. He was constantly working just his brain, just like a bona fide researcher.

Having an inner debate about whether it was because he couldn't or won't shoot, I had a hunch that it would be rude if I asked him.

"Shall we take a break from the experiments for now? It doesn't seem like Caldina-san and the others are coming"

"..... What are we going to do with today's experiments, then?"

"Let's just stop. It's not like Cecil-kun can use the enchantments"

There wasn't anyone around who could chuck sorcery at me for the experiments. Even though swapping roles could work, if the barrier broke, it would be troublesome if we didn't have any magic left in us to stop it. I realized that I truly was a person who was precise when it came to experiments.

Should I keep talking to Cecil-kun until Caldina-san lets us out? Just as I thought of that, I met Cecil-kun's gaze "Ah, crap" and regretted.

"..... I can. I'll do it"

Cecil-kun glared at me with an extremely black face. I understood immediately that I'd touched on a sensitive topic.

"Hey, it's not like it's an urgent experiment, you don't have to overdo it"

"I'm not, I can do it"

Although Cecil-kun stubbornly asserted that, his tightly grasped fist was trembling. Was he trembling because he was angry, or was it due to other reasons?

I'm certain that I'd added fuel to Cecil-kun's fire.

Are you seriously going to do it? I glanced at him questioningly with my eyes, but it didn't seem like he wasn't going to budge. He just gritted his teeth and glanced back at me with sharp eyes. From deep within them, I perceived hostility, or rather, an antagonistic-like spirit.

"..... Then, please do. Step back a bit further"

I knew it was going to be a waste of time to convince him otherwise, so I quietly complied with his intentions. As this was virtually my fault, there was nothing else I could do.

As he obediently moved away to a good distance, I double-checked the improved enchantment. Even if we were to remove the automatic invocation, it still had sufficient endurance. The power of the enchantment used would be significantly more powerful unless the damage was concentrated on a single point, then it would be likely to burst.

It should be fine since Cecil-kun, who doesn't seem like he uses enchantments, is unlikely to use any high-ranking enchantments. By the way, just saying that is like the equivalent to raising a flag, which is scary.

"I'm ready"

Calling out to him, Cecil-kun nodded his head and concentrated. His mouth slightly moved. Dimly, I had a hunch that he was telling himself that it was going to be ok Will this turn out alright?

I'm usually able to use enchantments quickly, but honestly, when it comes to the simplification, I understand that the power weakens when rapidly invoked. Obviously, putting a sufficient amount of magic into the enchantment before invoking it will raise its power. Even so, I chose speed over power. I had significantly more magic power compared to others; the excess that flowed out supplemented the power. The challenge that I faced was the possibility of controlling the flow nimbly and precisely.

And slightly off-topic, but Cecil-kun was carefully putting his magic together. In contrast to my method, he was the type that puts emphasis on power.

.... Was what I thought but there wasn't the slightest bit that seemed strangely out of place. Assuming that the emphasis was on power, there should have been a sufficient amount of magic spreading out. Despite that, the sorcery was not invoked. On the contrary, there was a surplus of magic flowing out uncontrollably from his body.

Shiver From behind my neck, I felt I'd imagined a scorching pain.

By reflex — ah, no — by instinct, I naturally invoked the defense sorcery by my own will.

The next instant.

"—AaaAAAaaahh ! "

The unstable, warped, and overflowing magic burst, scattering around. Countless lumps of magic in the unseen wind flew around me.

Splat Fresh blood spilled out together with a sharp pain that I felt from all over my body. I certainly hadn't expected that the power of the barrier I had created as a guard till now would hypothetically fail. No matter how many times the barrier resisted, it was being destroyed as the wind blades came at it one after another.

Although I tried to immediately release my magic to offset it, because I was delayed due to the pain, my body was torn apart by the wind. Fortunately, the shock blew my body out of the range of the storm. Instead, my back was thrown against the wall.

Mid-way, I cushioned my back by invoking wind sorcery so that my backbone wouldn't be damaged like in the kidnapping incident. I'd like to say my torn up body was in a state of being embraced by a terrible sore but

"Huergh — it hu—rts"

With my back thrown against the hard wall, I coughed violently as I slid down to the ground and steeled myself before casting a glance towards the centre of the storm.

Cecil-kun was crouched down, hugging his own body. Trembling with a clatter, the released magic wasn't settling down. That's odd, judging by Cecil-kun's magic abilities that's supplementing the power of the sorcery, it was likely to run out soon.

..... Let's think about that later, I have to stop Cecil-kun right now.

As if a whip struck my body, I whined at the pain and bleeding from my body,

staggering as I got back on my feet. All in all, there weren't any deep cuts, just gashes here and there. For the time being, as a first-aid treatment, I applied healing magic to myself.

Thanks to the healing magic, the blood stopped and the surface of my skin seemed healed, but the actual condition was at the adhesion degree of haemostasis with light bruising. I'll leave it to the professionals to heal it later. At a time like this, my incompetence was reproaching. Even if I had magic power, it was of no use.

"Cecil-kun!"

This time, I'm going to force him to accept things and, whilst channeling dense magic to get rid of the wind blades, I headed towards Cecil-kun.

As I was walking into the headwind at the centre of the storm where Cecil-kun was, it became extremely difficult to walk. Though I slipped mid-way and grazed my knee, I slowly moved closer towards him.

"Please pull yourself together!"

"-aaa, guhh....."

Compared to the average person, the diminishing rate of Cecil-kun's magic power was abnormally slow even though he seemed to be groaning in pain from using a great deal of it.

The wind blades were unstoppable. And it wasn't limited to just me, the blades were destroying the walls and the floor as well, scattering destruction everywhere. At last, when I finally arrived next to him, the stripped off tiles

from the floor around him were scattered to the edges of the walls.

"Cecil-kun, Cecil-kun, get a hold of yourself"

Even when I shook his shoulders, he simply wheezed back weakly while suffering. His body trembled and was drenched in cold sweat; it was probably from bearing a considerable amount of magic power.

Unless he was fully conscious and stopped it by his own will, it wouldn't stop until he used up all of his magic.

Huuhyuu Enduring the cough ringing from my throat, I supported Cecil-kun. Since I understood what it meant to be unable to control one's magic power, I helped him sit up and just firmly embraced him.



If it couldn't be controlled internally, then it would be fine to put it under control externally by force.

It was easy to say, but it was extremely difficult by nature to intervene in another's enchantment. In the first place, since the magic power will decline,

the magic power that's flowing will also start resisting.

The difficulty was absurd but I had no other choice but to do it.

"Cecil-kun, can you hear me? It's Liz. It's alright, there's nothing to be afraid of. Let's just slowly breathe in. It's alright, I'm here"

When I rubbed his back while calling out to him in a gentle voice, Cecil-kun jolted with a start and then pushed me away. As expected based off the timing of the push, he was mainly suffering in his heart.

Having pushed me away, Cecil-kun incoherently muttered in a pain-filled voice "Don't come, don't come" as he rejected me.

In this situation, if I were to embrace him again, he would likely repeat the same thing again.

It can't be helped. Sucking in a deep breath, I reached my hands out to Cecil-kun.

"You're a boy so get your act together!"

With all my strength, I headbutted him.

As expected, I suffered heavy damage from it. Cecil-kun too was surprised by the sudden pain or, more precisely, looked confounded; his blinking eyes were on the verge of crying. To a certain extent, I'm the one who suffered the most damage, you stubborn kid.

Once again, whilst Cecil-kun was in a frantic state of being stuck in a daze, I embraced him. Though he jolted and trembled, this time, he didn't push me away.

"..... It's alright, just trust me. There's nothing to be afraid of"

As I stroked his back and whispered tenderly to him, his body abruptly weakened and leaned on me. Rather than saying it was for relief, it was because his magic power had seriously depleted.

While remaining in this position, I converted my magic power to match Cecil-kun's and poured my magic power into him. This time, it wasn't rejected.

Slowly, with my magic power pouring into him, Cecil-kun's raging flow eased. That was when I realized, even if it was a different enchantment, the magic in his blood felt out of place. It was horrible; I felt that the magic was compressed.

..... When I first experienced Cecil-kun's magic abilities, I had thought that the amount consumed by the wind sorcery did not make sense. So that's what it was. Was it an idiosyncrasy? That he had denser magic compared to the average person, hence why his powers were so strong. And because of his unstable control over it, it ran wild. Surely, the person himself was unaware of this.

If that was the case, I'll thin down Cecil-kun's magic with mine. If it was dense, then thinning it down would be fine. Even if there were concerns for the side-effects, magic was homogeneously converted so it probably wouldn't be a problem.

Though it was temporary, it should work.

"Cecil-kun, can you hear me? You're probably able to suppress your magic power if you do it now"

"..... But"

"..... It's alright, I'm here. If you're unable to, I'll stop it. Or, Cecil-kun, are saying that you're unable to do it yourself?"

"..... I'll do it"

Slightly restored by my magic that he'd taken in, Cecil-kun reacted to my alluring words with a sullen face. Seeing that he had recovered a little, I smiled.

Although my words were harsh, I still patted his back to relieve his hesitation that appeared to be radiating from Cecil-kun, calming him down. Since it was a state of emergency, Cecil-kun had no reason to refuse, and somewhat spilling a sigh of relief, he concentrated.

Somehow, I felt that everything was going to be alright.

The tiles that danced mid-air fell to the floor with a resounding clang.

Even the torrent of magic power had now completely ceased raging and became a gentle flow. As expected, it appears to have been successfully controlled.

Well done. Instead of saying these words to him, I conveyed it by patting his head, but as if to say I was getting too caught up in the mood, Cecil-kun pushed

me away. That's an awful way to handle a person who overcame the crisis with you, but that's just like Cecil-kun.

"..... ugh!?"

After getting away from me, Cecil-kun examined my state and his face seemingly warped into shock. That reminds me..... I looked at my body as well — oh dear. I reflexively raised my voice as though it was someone else's problem.

Having been cut to shreds by the wind, my clothes were quite tattered. There were minor cuts on the skin on my collar and there were relatively deep gashes around my lower back. Additionally, when I slipped down, I had cut my knee.

Furthermore, I can say that having used magic on the barrier, the healing sorcery, concentrating the magic power and converting it to negate the wind, and pouring them into Cecil-kun, I'm almost out of magic.

As I hadn't used this much in the experiments till now, I didn't think my body would be this sluggish. I was losing focus and my fading consciousness was flying away.

"Ah~, don't worry, I can heal it"

"But, I"

"It's fine. Although, I'm just about at my limits Could you please go and get help?"

Cecil-kun had also calmed down, so everything should be fine..... And just like that, I fell to the floor. My body felt tired, my joints were in pain. The damage

directly corresponded to the loss of magic power in my blood. It's probably alright for me to rest for a bit.

"O-Oi, don't die!"

"..... Don't die, huh"

However, I lost consciousness.

Having reached my limits and with heavy closed eyelids, I decided to leave the aftermath to the others and decided to sleep at ease. Although I heard a flustered voice, please forgive me as I've already done my best for today.

Chapter 37 – Scolding

"So..... Liz, how many times must you be at death's door before you're satisfied"

Father was present when I regained my consciousness, giving me a stern look.

Before I'd realized, I'd been asleep in Cecil-kun's room with my wounds completely healed and a complete lack of pain. It seems that Father had used healing sorcery on me; at least, that's how it felt to me.

Judging by how I was lectured as soon as I awoke, it seems I truly worried Father this time. That's probably why he was mad at me. I don't know how much time has passed since then, but I know that I must have been sleeping for quite a while.

Cecil-kun was also there, standing several steps behind Father and observing me with mixed emotions that were shown on his face. Was he worried about me?

Given that my wounds have already been healed, I slowly stood up to check on my body. Yup, I'm changing my clothes. What will I do if it had been left to Caldina-san?

And then, I reminisced on what had happened so far.

There was basically one attempt of assassination when Gilles thrust a knife at me. Then, there was also the attempted kidnapping. The duel was fine as

there wasn't any danger there, but this incident..... Well, I pretty much almost died? However, I think it was only at the level of being wounded.

Or perhaps I should say that I wasn't injured too badly? However, if it wasn't for healing sorcery, then right now, I would have the body of an unmarriageable woman.

"Including that time with Gilles, this is the third incident. I'm alright. As you can see, I'm not fatally wounded"

"..... I'm reporting this to Gilles"

"YAAA! No, you can't! I'll be scolded!"

The times when Gilles is "smilingly angry" and "expressionlessly angry" happens to be when he's "seriously angry." I'm afraid of both of these personas, and even if he never looks at me with that deadpan face, he would scold me with that serious, smiling face nonetheless.

This time, he'll probably be seriously, seriously politely angry — extremely angry. Although I've been asked to refrain from taking rash actions, it didn't even take half a year before I'd gotten into trouble again, so Gilles is definitely going to be mad with me. I want to avoid that at all cost.

"So it's fine if it's me, but not Gilles ?"

No, I said, accompanied with an imploring look that shocked Father.

..... I mean, it's just no? Father's hardly been seriously angry with me Or rather, he hasn't been so far. Because Father really really values me, what stood out more was his affection rather than anger.

Of course, Gilles is also kind and cherishes me but Yup, if he's angry, it'll be terrifying and it'll be stuck in my head for the next three years, hence why I said I really don't want Gilles to be mad at me.

The only one I would like to avoid this being exposed to was Gilles. Seeing my stiffened expression caused Cecil-kun to stare at me in amazement.

"Close to dying as in?"

"Yes, I have a fair tendency to experience danger like when I was about to be assassinated or killed by kidnappers"

It couldn't be helped since I had a hand in this incident, but I couldn't help but feel that I get into perilous situations once a year. Nevertheless, I'm already fed up with being in pain.

Well, this time I'd provoked Cecil-kun, and because Cecil-kun used sorcery..... So both of us were mutually at fault.

"..... I'm sorry"

"Cecil-kun doesn't have to apologise for this incident. After all, I'm also at fault"

Although I underwent a painful ordeal, the result wasn't too bad; it allowed me to get closer to Cecil-kun. Even though the risk was high, it paid off in the end.

Still, facing Cecil-kun's somewhat apologetic look, I burst out in laughter and

beckoned to him. Although he was startled by my exaggerated reaction, he seemed to still harbor feelings of guilt, shown from how he obediently approached me.

..... Although, like I said, I have no intentions of blaming you.

"Don't fret. I'm alright"

This time, I gently hit my forehead against Cecil-kun's, making sure that it was along his, and said "ne?" with a smile. Cecil-kun just hung his head in shame while his body was continuously trembling. Yosh yosh, I said as I extended my hands to rub his back before turning to glance at Father.

Father seemed to be smiling warmly, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

Why didn't he tell me that Cecil-kun's control over sorcery was weak? Although Cecil-kun wasn't completely at fault for the injuries, there was also the problem of letting him hold onto the painful memories. Clearly, this was just like picking at his trauma.

"Father, earlier you asked me how much more am I able to handle but....."

"That was only because Cecil-kun wouldn't declare nor give his permission..... Well, it's fine now. Cecil-kun has also spoken to me"

"If that's how it is, then I won't complain to you, Father. Ha~~ Well, I've lost a bit of blood so I'll stay put—"

"Liz-sama!"

..... Ah!

..... No no no, why! Why did Gilles come to the Magic Institution? I mean, Gilles should be at the estate and Father has yet to tell him.

whoosh My back started to sweat profusely. The muscles on my face stiffened and I was in the middle of hugging Cecil-kun in my arms. Remaining in that position with me, Cecil-kun was No, seated atop Cecil-kun's bed in that position, Cecil-kun reclined on me. Great, just great. The problem was, how was I going to run away from my valet.

Gilles, who had come flying through the door, glanced at Cecil-kun but didn't tear him away from me. Instead, he glanced at me with narrowed eyes and, while baring his anger, approached me.

"Why were you being reckless! How many times do you think I've told you to not act rashly!"

"Wh—Why do you know—"

"The reaction of the ring, have you forgotten about it?"

"Ah....."

Crap, there was the ring! Since we have a connection, he'll know where I was in the first place and could sense my emotions flowing through it..... So this time, he felt the sense of danger flowing from it. Usually, it's a happy thing, but why did I have to wear it on this occasion? I felt remorse over it.

My valet, who has really treasured me, was now very, very angry and was in a lecturing mode.

Since it's boiled down to this, I have no choice but to meekly apologize to him.

I'm not so foolish as to be all defensive because I could never win against him.

"I told you to refrain from taking rash actions, do you remember?"

"Ye—Yes"

"That's strange, then why did you almost die? Weren't you going to protect your promise?"

"I'm—I'm sorry"

"Have you truly repented? Do you understand? How worried I was"

"I'm I'm sorry!"

"Gilles, don't make Liz—"

"Welf-sama, please remain silent"

"YES!"

Father also couldn't bear Gilles's angry look and retreated. It was in that moment that the inequality of Gilles > Father established within me.

Since I knew I couldn't rely on Father's help from the start, I didn't pay any heed to Father. I noticed that Cecil-kun, whom I was hugging, was also transmitting shivers from the bed, but there was nothing else I could do.

It seems that my fear of Gilles's anger was being directly transmitted to Cecil-kun as he raised his face that was placed upon my shoulder, showing his eyes that were dampened with tears.

It's the first time I've seen him with a genuine non-hostile look. I'm fine, I whispered in a low voice and although it was stifled, I smiled at him. It was obvious that I was trembling in fear.

Chapter 38 – Special Training and Motive

After getting soundly scolded by Gilles, the very next day, I — once again — headed down to the training room with Cecil-kun. By the way, he loaned me his bed again for an extra day; I could feel his attitude has softened up a bit.

"Cecil-kun, let's also defer today's experiment"

"Ha?"

Cecil-kun looked at me suspiciously while being slightly apprehensive. After all, the two of us came to the training room, right? And there was no one else around.

The training room that we were in became a bit worn-down with lingering marks of sorcery everywhere. Seeing the torn-off tiles that had been scattered about, Cecil-kun slightly averted his eyes.

"Today, I was thinking of doing some special training for Cecil-kun's magic"

"Ha—..... HAA!?"

Discussing it with Cecil-kun was meaningless so I informed him of today's objective. Cecil-kun's eyes widened, after which he glared at me. I could understand Cecil-kun's feelings; his magic had rampaged just recently, and yet, the victim declared that they would hold a special training session just for his sorcery.

However, I'm not going to be a prick and pick on his trauma, nor do I have any intentions of ridiculing him. I somewhat have a plan, even if it's rash.

"..... You were injured quite badly last time, you know"

"That's true, but isn't this a good opportunity? Bear in mind, it's best to master it before you forget the sensation of being able to control magic as you did the other day"

The other day when it rampaged, I did lend him a hand but, in the end, it was Cecil-kun himself who controlled it. If he got used to it, then I'll dare say he'll be able to control it completely after this, though that's just my personal opinion.

"Besides, I more or less understand the matter with Cecil-kun, including the reason behind your lack of control"

"..... urk"

"..... If Cecil-kun hates it, then I won't insist. But if you're fine with it, I will assist you with all my strength"

I could only trust him to make the decision for himself. Since it would be Cecil-kun who'll be controlling the sorcery, if he doesn't desire for it that much, then I won't do anything. To me, I felt the special training would be useful for situations in the future.

What will it be? I asked whilst looking into his face. Cecil-kun stared at me as if there was a target on my face but... In the end, he nodded his head in agreement.

I'm sure Cecil-kun also thinks that this shouldn't go on anymore. If he didn't, he wouldn't have accepted my suggestion. He dislikes me, after all.

However, compared to when we first met, he was far more approachable. He no longer smacks his lips whenever he bumps into me after all.

"That being the case, let's tackle it immediately. Err, let's see..... At that time when the sorcery was controlled, I noticed a bit of Cecil-kun's idiosyncrasies"

"..... Idiosyncrasy?"

"Yes. Cecil-kun, compared to others, your magic is denser and right now, it's severely condensed"

Those doubting eyes..... Did Cecil-kun not notice it?

"It seems that using a small amount can display tremendous effects. Therefore, it'll go out of control when you use the standard amount for sorcery"

In layman terms, let's assume there's a canal. When you pour a cup of water into it, the water spreads out and demonstrates its effects. However, Cecil-kun possesses condensed water; pouring a cup of water would be equivalent to two or three cups, and it would cause the canal to flood.

After he familiarizes himself with it, he could increase the volume of the canal

itself, but if he isn't able to first control it, he wouldn't be able to do so.

If the solution was that simple, we would be able to reduce the amount that overflowed. However, because it isn't that simple, he has to practice it.

"So I would like Cecil-kun to remember to economise. Although, rather than economise, it's closer to moderation. When I first diluted your magic, it was possible for you to gradually control it"

Explaining it like that, I grabbed Cecil-kun's hand and tightly grasped it. Cecil-kun, who had listened to my speech, was astonished by my conduct. He tried to shake my detestable hand off but..... I wouldn't let go. I mean, if we weren't stuck to each other, I wouldn't be able to transfer my magic power.

"If you dislike holding hands, we could just hug instead?"

"..... Hands are fine"

It's not a problem for me though? When I said that cheekily, Cecil-kun's face stiffened and he immediately squeezed my hand. I swallowed my displeasure; it must have been quite a shock for him — who disliked me — to go to such an extent.

Using our palms that were stuck together as a medium, I poured my magic powers into Cecil-kun, regulating the density. As expected with Cecil-kun's MAX state magic powers. Taking a look at the possibility to lower an ordinary person's magic density, even with all I've got, it was simply impossible.

Therefore, I did my best to dilute it to the best of my abilities. If it was about 50% less, he should be able to control it somehow.

"..... It's warm"

"Is it? It's probably because of the magic power that is flowing out"

"I would have sensed it if there was an unexpected amount but....."

"Well, if you were unable to, it would have been difficult to control it. To a certain extent, once Cecil-kun's able to control it, you can gradually increase its density"

This was getting tiring. I wished for him to be able to control it as quickly as he could so that I could let go of his hand. Because his magic power has been diluted sufficiently, Cecil-kun should probably be able to control it now.

"Please use a suitably weak sorcery. Ah, the amount of magic should be rather small. Please reduce it by about forty percent"

"..... Are we really doing it?"

"Didn't I suggest it on my own accord? It'll be fine. If push comes to shove, I'll get rid of the magic"

His magic powers had been diluted and even though my power was weak, as long as he used only a bit of it, I'll be able to sufficiently handle it. It would have been better if I'd brought an adult along as I originally intended to, but Cecil-kun would certainly have disliked it.

Do your best, I cheered, making a fist as Cecil-kun bit his lips. He proceeded to initiate a sorcery with his magic powers, going slowly and cautiously.

From what I could make out, there was fluctuation in a bit of the flow and I feared it would rampage like it did previously. What should I do if it rampaged again? Filled with those feelings, I pondered about it.

Quietly, I turned to Cecil-kun's back and, taking care not to provoke him too much, I hugged him gently.

"Don't worry, there's nothing to be afraid of"

While softly whispering, I wrapped my palm against his once more. I wasn't going to help him to control it. Naturally, if it failed, I would step in. This was just to calm him down.

Cecil-kun was surprised by my sudden behavior, but after casting his eyes downwards for a few moments, he took a deep breath and began to even out the flow of his magic power..... Ahh, it's okay already.

Splash and a water sphere fell before Cecil-kun's very eyes, bursting on the ground. It was a simple enough sorcery, but it was definitive proof that we had succeeded.

"..... Well done"

My face softened as I honestly praised him. Cecil-kun hugged me and said, "Yes" happily.

"Ah, that reminds me. There are some things I would like to hear from you"

As expected, he didn't cling onto me for long as he disliked me. While attentively gazing at Cecil-kun, who was leisurely seated next to me, I spoke about the matter that was on my mind.

"In the end, do you still hate me?"

Even though I asked the question, I wanted Cecil-kun to not say his true feelings and tell me yes.

Compared to when I first saw him, he looked much gentler now, and although his words still stung, his hostility had more or less eased. In the first place, if I was still abhorred, he wouldn't have a conversation with me nor would he

obediently hug me.

Cecil-kun opened his eyes and blinked before he looked at me, averting his eyes after giving me a complicated scowl. I could tell that there has been some progress as, in the past, his response would have been to completely ignore me.

"..... You were irritating"

"Is that so? By what, specifically?"

"..... Being blessed. You possess what I yearn for, so it's only natural"

As I thought, that was the reason he disliked me. It was also the reason why I had hurt him. Because I had been quick-tempered in prioritizing my own circumstances.

"I..... Since I was a kid, I've always been somewhat abnormally smart. Feeling sick from my surroundings, my sorcery would rampage and people would be injured. Both Father and Grandfather shunned me"

..... Oh, it was then that I became aware of the true nature of his unusual sentiments.

When we had first met, I thought I had seen him somewhere before, feeling like it was a *deja vu*.

That was probably how my future would have been like. Although, if I had

been in his situation I would have pushed forward despite the difficulty.

I'm blessed. I, who clearly did not have childlike thoughts, am accepted by my surroundings. There were people who loved me. I had people who accepted me.

That was the only difference that led him and I to walk towards different futures.

"I thought you were similar to me..... But you were able to laugh frivolously and looked quite happy. That irritated me"

"..... And that's why Cecil-kun looked at me with such eyes"

Nodding my head in agreement, I somewhat understood why he did that.

..... Cecil-kun must have thought that it was unfair that only he had to suffer. Even though we came from similar situations with similar conditions, the difference in the way we were treated and the abilities we possessed were like heaven and earth; the contrast was so great that it brought about hatred. Of course, it was reasonable. If I had been in his shoes, I imagine that I would also be jealous.

However, for me, it was annoying that he treated me like that despite having understood his circumstances. Hurting someone just to watch them suffer is

somewhat heart-breaking. I could never bring myself to make Gilles angry to such an extent.

"..... You're weird. Normally, I would have been slapped in this situation since I had utterly hurt your feelings. It's okay to even blame me for everything"

"Yeah, but I never once thought of blaming you....."

"I permit it"

"Uh~..... The reality is that it was certainly a painful experience..... However, I'll blame the gashes that were terribly painful"

"..... Uh-"

"Being ignored and being met by the click of your tongue, and having to sleep on the sofa..... Of course, that was Father's fault for not making the arrangements. Then there's the rampaging sorcery. If you had been frank with me, you would not have to use sorcery, no?"

"..... I'm truly sorry"

Then I remembered the things I'd done and, well, come to think of it, they were quite unreasonable but we're starting anew. Father being Father would definitely not say a word..... Oh, good gracious!

Cecil-kun himself isn't mad at me, I think. He had seriously reflected upon it and had yielded when I pushed him. Even if he was being blamed for pretty much everything besides an attempted murder, Cecil-kun would be serious.

"Nnn~..... Then, you owe me one"

Because Cecil-kun seemed quite apologetic, I laughed and smiled while making a fist. Then, I dropped it on top of his head — putting a fist down on Cecil-kun's stubbornness.

I was also suffering from the pain from hitting his head, but it was just like Cecil-kun to be flustered from the sudden pain.

"With this, the matter of being glared at and being ignored is settled. As for the matter where I almost died, I'll view it as a debt. Pay me back in the future with interest"

I won't allow you to jump the bill, you know? and laughed whilst I held my index finger against my lips. Cecil-kun looked at me like I was someone impossible to deal with. And then, he sighed.

"..... Easy-going, aren't you"

"That's something I'm frequently told"

"..... Moreover, repaying you back in the future means I'll be associated with you from now on"

"That's how it is"

Please take good care of me, ne? I tilted my head and laughed. And with some unwillingness, Cecil-kun laughed as well as he nodded his head. Does this mean

we've become friends? Well whatever it is, it's good that we've reached a compromise with each other.

Chapter 39 – Finished

Bzz Bzz. From the low buzzing noise came a satisfying whistling sound, after which a popping noise resounded from the multiple lights formed in the air.

The amount of purple radiance began to increase in volume shortly after and, in the twinkling of an eye, countless bundles had formed, firing straight at me.

The purple light came flying, tearing through the air. However, unlike a thunderbolt, it was slow. Even so, it clearly caught up to me in an instant and dispersed due to the automatically invoked barrier.

As though checking it, I caressed the magic tool that was in the shape of a tear hanging around my neck.

The shining metal that swung against my breasts still had enough magic power stored inside it. At this rate, it could probably be invoked for four more times.

"..... How is it?"

"It can be invoked approximately five times. Any more than that and it'll whittle, and as per discussion with Cecil-kun, that would be its limit"

"That, means it's..... finished?"

"Yes"

As I unfastened the pendant whilst nodding my head, Caldina-san was happy with the approval. Given the amount of time spent researching and experimenting over and over again, it would only be natural that we would produce positive results.

Tentatively, I replenished the magic power in the pendant that had been consumed. Compared to when we first began testing, there was significantly less consumption used in this round, so there was little to add.

Oh how wonderful it is that we were able to reduce the consumption and increase the duration. Although, under normal circumstances, one or the other would have been sacrificed.

"Cecil-kun, it's finished!"

".....Yeah"

I rushed over to Cecil-kun to return the pendant, and he received it whilst bowing his head. However, his face was remarkably formal, or rather, he had stiffened up. I dare say, the cause was the person next to him.

"Good work, Liz-sama"

In contrast to Cecil-kun, standing next to him was the person who rewarded me with a gentle smiling face — Gilles. And it wasn't just for today's verification test; ever since the incident where Cecil-kun's magic rampaged, Gilles has been participating after he returned to his position to monitor and watch over me. He must have finished his work in a hurry to come over.

He didn't have to personally do so, but it appears that his overprotective switch had turned on because of my frequent wounds.

For a daughter of a marquis family who has been scolded for thrusting herself into danger, I regretted not bringing Gilles along from the very beginning, and now, it has become like this. By the way, Father was also scolded by Gilles in the form of a lecture. The master and servant relationship had completely reversed.

"..... Please don't treat Cecil-kun so harshly, alright?"

"I haven't even said a single word to him"

Your eyes says it all, Gilles.

I didn't even say a word, but Gilles didn't like Cecil-kun because he was the cause of my injuries. Although it looked like he had a friendly smile on his face, but typical to his behaviour pattern, his eyes weren't smiling.

A person that was loved by Gilles It was misleading, wasn't it? To people that he had acknowledged himself, he would be kind and would attend to them courteously. The people in the estate, with the exception of the master and servant relationship, were also treated kindly. On the contrary, he was cold to the very end to the people he didn't acknowledge. Although nothing has change from the outside, inside, he coolly observes them.

The look that he was giving Cecil-kun was deliberate, wasn't it? Cecil-kun had become aware of the chilly eyes that were directed at him and was restraining himself.

"..... Your valet's frightening"

It was just like Cecil-kun to mention it unreservedly in front of the person himself. However, to some extent, I think that's gutsy of him.

"Gilles, you can't"

"..... If that's what you want, then hurry back to the estate and I'll be delighted by it"

"Well, if I go back, you'll just lock me up"

"Because you acted rashly"

Towards the seriously unrelenting Gilles, I sucked in and puffed my cheeks, holding air on one side of them. However, I don't think Gilles would give in just like that.

"..... If I give up on the town, can I at least go to the Magic Institution?"

"I still won't allow it"

"Ehhhhh, it's to read books! My main objective was to read the books"

"Though you say that, you'll come into contact with him and be in danger again"

Of course, it goes without saying that him referred to Cecil-kun. He didn't have to go to such lengths to not say the name. Once I'd gotten along with him, I could tell that Cecil-kun wasn't a dangerous person; at least, not to that extent.

Hearing that said directly in front of him, Cecil-kun squinted his eyes in anger

for a short moment. It appears that Cecil-kun also harbors feelings of guilt towards me, but until then, it'll be difficult as I'm being guarded against him.

"It's not a big deal. I was only just helping Cecil-kun practice his sorcery"

"Didn't I say that was dangerous? Wasn't there a previous example?"

"Saying it like that is painful to my ears, but It's not like I'll give up. After all, Cecil-kun won't be rampaging anymore, correct?"

"..... Indeed"

Since then, Cecil-kun has been practicing independently. He had ask me to assist him with diluting the density of his magic power, but now, he's able to invoke simple sorceries with the original density. If he continues to slowly train it afterwards, the problem will be resolved.

"Nevertheless, it won't always be confined for he is a person who will cause such things"

"If it's induced, I will stop him once again. If I can't"

"If you can't?"

"..... I'll use force? It's fine. With just a small cup of sake~~ you'll faint and I'll be in control"

"I never run wild"

"Hey Gilles, I made a firm promise with Gilles"

"No"

Even when I protested with an EH~~, Gilles still wouldn't change his opinion of Cecil-kun. I bet you have it already etched in your head that I'm not allowed to get close to him.

Although I silently protested Gilles, you mean jerk with my eyes, Gilles still looked at Cecil-kun relentlessly. It was only when I started sulking that he stroked my head gently to comfort me; that was when I stopped torturing him. Because it was comfortable having Gilles feel my hair, I was reluctant for him to stop half-way.

Seeing the narrow-eyed Gilles taking care of me like this, Cecil-kun seemed slightly surprised by it.

Even though things may appear like this, he hardly touches me, although I do cling onto him when we're at home. After all, Gilles pamper me a lot and smells good. Inside, I'm still a child so it's alright for me to act that way.

"Look, we're leaving. There's plenty of things I have to do once I get back"

"Un~..... Gilles, I can't go without a guardian accompanying me?"

"I don't like it"

"..... Then, what if I accompany Father"

"Really..... Why are you so fixated with this boy?"

"Because..... He's my friend"

..... He is my friend, isn't he? It should be okay to say that, right?

The word "friend" made Cecil-kun open his golden eyes wide in surprise. Gilles being Gilles faintly stirred his eyebrows with a questioning expression.

"Is visiting a friend's place a bad thing?"

On this occasion, I'm going to capitalize using the fact that I'm a child. Isn't it a saying that a child's job is to play?

In the first place, it was important for a child to expand their circle of friends during their childhood, yup. Cecil-kun is a prospect.

When Gilles saw how unnaturally doubtful I was when I looked up at him, he let out a big sigh.

"..... Understood, I'll be accompanying you"

"YEAH! Thank you so much. This is the side of you that I really love, Gilles"

His face relaxed and when I clung on, with an expression as though saying it was inevitable, he patted me whilst saying good girl, good girl.

Recently, I've been feeling like I've become quite childish, but it couldn't be helped because I love Gilles spoiling me. It was only Gilles who had been looking at me properly and giving me that closeness. It was because Father has Ruby so there was nothing that I could do about it.

"Then let's head off, okay? I'll return for the luggage later"

"O~kay"

"..... Wait a minute"

I had obtained the results that I wished for. And while the decision to head home was being made, Cecil-kun had been observing me smiling and clinging

onto Gilles this entire time with a complicated yet amazed expression.

Although there wasn't anything left to detain me, Cecil-kun had called out to me.

"Here....."

Cecil-kun made a rustling noise as he searched inside his robe. After finding what he was looking for, he threw it at me.

I caught the item in a panic and upon taking a good look at it, I could see that it was a glittering metal that rested on top of my palm. I was already familiar with this brilliance. It was an item that I would not normally possess. Also, there wasn't a chain on it, there was only the pendant portion.

"This is.....?"

"This is engraved with a different enchantment in contrast to the perfected one. By tuning my powers to an exclusively created enchantment, I poured a large quantity of magic into that item. The effect is to nullify powerful sorcery, but it can only be used once. It's disposable"

"Isn't this another excessive output item? why are you giving it to me?"

Shouldn't this be presented to His Majesty? And looking at the enchantment that was personally engraved on the silver disk, I grumbled. This was clearly high-powered even though it appears that this particular enchantment was created by the magic powers of Cecil-kun that lacked versatility.

However, my doubts were settled after "I intend to also present His Majesty with a similar item" was mentioned afterwards.

"..... If I run out of control, you'll be stopping me. That valet of yours would be fastidious if you're injured"

"Please don't say such things, Gilles is also gentle so don't say those things"

"I guess..... Still, this is compensation from me, a form of apology"

Though seven years old, towards those unexpected words, I let out a wry smile and graciously accepted it. Perhaps Cecil-kun too was trying to get close to me? There wasn't any concrete evidence other than just a gut feeling.

"..... And see you again"

With those additional words, his face naturally softened.

See you again means it was okay for me to come and see you, right? Noticing Cecil-kun who had bluntly murmured with a faint smile on his lips, I felt joy swelling from the depths of my chest and smiled.

"See you later, Cecil-kun"

As we both felt slightly awkward, we waved our hands at each other whilst being bashful.

Yes, yes, Cecil-kun. See you next time.

Vol.1 LN Special: Gilles's Suffering

"Good afternoon, Elza-san"

Having received permission to head out as long as I had a guardian accompanying me, which as expected was Gilles, I went to call up on Elza-san.

Gilles disliked the idea of me going out to town, but when I to clung onto his arm, he inevitably gave his approval. As long as I stuck close to him, he didn't need to worry about me straying away.

And so, that was how we turned up at Elza-san's store. Elza-san was a beauty as always — clad in a languid aura and lazing about at the counter.

"Oh? If it isn't jou-chan and Gilles-bouya*. What's up?"

Seemingly bored, Elza-san was running her finger through her ash blonde hair when she saw our figures and broadly smiled. I expect that that look alone would mesmerize any kind of men. However, it wasn't effective on Gilles.

"I wanted to thank you for the magic tool. It was thanks to the ring that I was saved in various ways. Thank you"

"Ah, there's no need to thank me since jou-chan had rightfully obtained it from your purchase"

Don't worry about it. When Elza-san said that with her eyes narrowed in happiness, I bowed my head.

It was thanks to the ring that I was able to avoid death Well, it brought out a bit of Gilles's overprotective side, but even so, it had saved my life; I was grateful towards the ring. Holding it from the chain, I brushed it while giving a wry smile.

Besides, I was also grateful to Gilles. I had said the same thank you to him as well. Like me, Gilles also had the ring dangling from the chain around his neck.

"You're an honest thing, aren't you. So, that isn't all for today, is it?"

"Ah, yes. I was thinking of studying up on magic tools through observation"

"Hee, no browsing around Is what I would like to say, but since jou-chan had seriously thought it through, I'll allow it this time. Look at em as much as you'd like"

"Thank you very much"

I didn't expect Elza-san to be kind to a child. My eyes lit up and a gentle smile appeared on my face. A person who seemed to find things troublesome but was actually good at taking care of others was how Gilles defined her from our conversations.

As I'd obtained permission from the shop owner, I took a turn around the store. Each time I asked what something was, Elza-san would honestly explain it. Occasionally, there would be magic tools that were created entirely for a specific purpose, but there were so many of these type of things in Elza-san's store.

"Jou-chan, how about something like this? It'll be interesting"

"This is?"

When my eyes were captivated by the various assortment of items, Elza-san beckoned for me. While half running, I rushed over and presented before my very eyes was a glass bottle. Something that was blue and the size of a marble was stuffed in it; it glistened and shined under the exposed light inside the store.

"It's a disposable item, though. When this sweet is eaten, something interesting will happen. Ah, but don't worry. There are no risks or side effects"

"..... Something interesting?"

It appears the sphere was a sweet. Just for me to test it out, Elza-san shook the glass bottle and, with the sound of it rubbing against the walls of the bottle with a clink, it came out. Placing the blue sphere on her palm, she presented it to me.

"How about giving it a try?"

"Eh? But—"

"It's not as if I'm charging you for it, and it's not dangerous either. Rather, it'll make jou-chan happy"

"..... Liz-sama, please do not trust Elza-san as she's a hedonist"

I'm a bit interested but Gilles-kun seems wary of the sweet. You don't have to be that concerned over it Although I thought that, but because Gilles made a small grumble with "I've been played countless of times with the magic tools", I couldn't stick up for Elza-san.

..... Don't tell me, he hasn't recovered from the prank that she pulled on him when he was a child?

Ugh~, I groaned while hesitantly looking at the sweet and Elza-san at the same time. While making a sarcastic laugh, Elza-san slipped the candy into my palm.

Finding that such behavior was improper, Gilles threw a sharp glance at Elza-san but Elza-san just shrugged her shoulders.

"If you're going to be that worried, Gilles, you can come along too. Look, she can test it out in that room over there"

"Well then....."

"Liz-sama!"

"..... But I'm curious"

If you're told that something interesting will happen, then wasn't it normal for a human being to check it out? There was a saying that curiosity will kill the cat, but Elza-san said it was not dangerous.

"I seriously won't be in any danger, will I?"

"I guarantee it. If jou-chan's injured, I'll be making both Welf-bouchan and Gilles-bouya angry"

Since she knew that making both of them angry would be terrifying, I nodded my head in agreement to Elza-san's words.

..... At the bare minimum, the two of them had smashed through a large-scale crime syndicate. If they were to be angered, I couldn't imagine what would happen.

Besides, if a customer were to be injured whilst testing out a magic tool, it would affect the shop's reputation. She wouldn't purposely plunge herself into a disadvantageous situation now, would she?

"In that case, I'm going to test it out"

"Ah, go right ahead. Oh, and take these clothes to wear after you've eaten the sweet, it's a freebie"

She threw a cloth bag at me which I caught whilst taking care not to drop the candy. It did not weigh much, but what in the world was this about?

However, when I asked Elza-san with my eyes, she steadfastly responded, "This is for later after you've eaten the sweet"..... Ah well, since it doesn't seem to contain anything abominable, it would be better for me to just obediently receive it.

"Gilles, I'll be fine because it isn't anything dangerous"

"It's because Liz-sama talks like that, hence....."

Elza-san smirked at Gilles when he nodded his head; he seemed slightly disgruntled. It was amusing how Gilles was meekly abiding by my orders. Even when Gilles lightly scowled, Elza-san retained her taunting smile. For some reason, there were sparks flying between them.

"Then, I'm going to borrow that room for a little while. I just don't understand

why I need to change in the room....."

"If it's used in the room with all those magic tools, then on the off chance that something were to happen, wouldn't it be dangerous?"

"I see"

"Liz-sama, please don't trust Elza-san's words too much. This is primarily how Elza-san influences others to do her bidding"

"..... Why are you being this cautious towards Elza-san?"

"This is because I don't want any harm to come to Liz-sama"

Gilles, who insisted that he was a victim, held onto my shoulders just like that and urged me into the room. It seems that if anything were to happen, he would use magic to deal with Elza-san so I felt a bit uneasy.

"I wonder what is this thing that will make me happy"

After entering the small room that looked like a type of storage room and shutting the door, I took a look at the blue candy.

Certainly, I knew it was a magic tool because I could feel magic from it. However, I've never heard of an edible magic tool before. I would like to believe that it wasn't a product that was designed to remain in the body for an extended period of time.

"I don't know, but I doubt it's anything worthless. If anything strange were to happen, we'll go and demand for compensation"

I received a dry comment from him with a straight face.

..... Conversely, I became interested in what kind of suffering Gilles had to endure in the past. Next time when Gilles isn't around, I'll try and secretly ask about it.

"To—to that extent? Then, I'll begin"

If I hesitated, Gilles was bound to stop me, so I decisively threw the candy into my mouth .

Despite calling it a sweet, I couldn't taste any flavor from the candy. And the moment I cocked my head in puzzlement, the solid candy disappeared, dissolving in an instant.

So because it was quickly absorbed by the mucous membrane, the tip of my tongue gradually turned warm, and it soon spread out throughout my entire body. A burning sensation erupted in my body as though it had been lit on fire. Feeling slightly dizzy, I collapsed then and there.

"Liz-sama!"

In a panic, Gilles stooped down and tried to verify my condition. The second he turned his head to look at me, I felt something on me burst open with a snap. Even though it was certainly not a bad feeling, it was a very strange sensation.

There was also a similar sense of discomfort that dominated my entire body. My whole body that was warm felt like it was expanding vigorously from the ends.

The instant I unconsciously felt the heat had reached it's peak, a dazzling light enveloped my body.

To withstand the blinding light, I closed my eyelids. I held them closed for a while until I heard Gilles, who seemed to have recovered his vision, raise his voice and say "Huh.....?" in a panic.

"Urk—.....Why did I light up?....."

Even when I opened my eyes, it was still very dazzling so I rub my eyelids. With slight disorientation, I looked up at Gilles and it was in that moment, before I knew it, that Gilles had stripped off his robe and covered me with it.

Straight away, the scene turned pitch black and because I had been forcefully covered up, I ended up letting out a strange, pouting voice. Having been struck by the fabric, my nose was a bit sore. Mou~ And so, I raised my voice with a bit of dissatisfaction.....

"Gilles, why are you suddenly—"

"Liz-sama, stay right there!"

"Eh, eh?"

When I popped my head out of the robe to complain, I saw Gilles exiting through the door with great haste. I couldn't clearly see his profile, but his face was somewhat bright red. His ears had turned red and Gilles was using the palm of his hand to cover his face.

And then, I heard an angry voice coming from beyond the door.

"What have you done!?"

"Eh~~? I'm just letting Gilles-bouya see something nice"

"Why did you let me go in there!?"

"Isn't it for the purpose of giving worry-wart Gilles some relief? Nevertheless, from the very beginning, I had intended for jou-chan to enter it alone"

"What am I going to do now! It's inexcusable of me and I can't show my face to Liz-sama anymore"

"Since you're this bright red, you wouldn't even want to show it to her in the first place. I say, you're looking really nervous right now"

"!!!"

Elza-san and Gilles were fighting, or rather, arguing with each other. The unusual thing was Gilles that was being overwhelmed by her.

Which reminds me, why did he cover me with the robe?

I stripped Gilles's robe from my body; thereupon was the sense of discomfort I felt at the very beginning.

.... Earlier, it was incomprehensible and I didn't realized it, but why was I naked underneath the robe? I had worn long sleeves when I came over today so I should feel the fabric of the clothing over my body.

Despite sitting down, I looked down at my own body by accident Ahh, I understand now why Gilles was acting so flustered earlier.

I mean, if suddenly I grew up into an adult from a child and was naked, wouldn't you feel self-conscious?

..... Yup, I figured out what Elza-san was aiming at. When she smirked earlier, she smiled because she knew this was going to happen.

"This isn't a manga"

Remembering a certain manga from my previous life, I became a bit troubled by it. Why did this happen? Shouldn't there be a typical pattern to this?

Letting out a sigh, I objectively assessed my body once more.

My limbs have lengthened quite a bit, haven't they? Should I stand up? I would like to see how much height I've gained. I wouldn't go that far, but perhaps I've grown into a typical adult woman.

My chest Ohh, it's splendid. I won't go into details, but they're not huge and neither were they decidedly close to the horizon. They'd inflated moderately; it was appropriate for the body of a young girl. My hips were also slender, probably, I think? There wasn't a mirror so I couldn't tell.

Perhaps I'm now in the body of my ten year old self. That's the feeling that I get. I'm glad that I didn't become fat.

My clothes had completely disappeared. Where it went was quite the question, but Oi, oi! I should have asked Elza-san about that.

What am I going to do about being naked?

The robe that Gilles gave me to put on could only hide so much..... There was definitely a hole in the front. This was an appearance that wasn't good for education, and strictly speaking, Gilles wasn't an adult yet.

Because Gilles and Elza-san were still arguing on the opposite side of this door, I couldn't leave.

What's to be done? And so, once again, I lamented as I caught sight of a cloth bag.

..... Didn't Elza-san tell me to open it after I've eaten the candy? If she had anticipated this, then it wouldn't be strange if there was one or two sets of clothes inside it. Or rather, I'm begging you, please be in there.

"Ah. Found it"

While semi-praying, I took out the contents of the bag and it lived up to my expectations.

Inside it, there was a set of clothes that had been tailored accordingly to my height. Whoever thought of this was extremely thorough, even underwear was prepared..... This was the string that was attached, wasn't it? It was because she didn't know my size, right? This wasn't Elza-san's hobby, right?

There's no way I'm walking out naked so for the time being, I'll just wear it.

"Ermmm..... Er, Elza-san.....?"

The clothes and underwear fit perfectly like a glove, and after putting on the shoes, I smoothly opened the door and made my way to the two of them.

Both of them were still quarrelling, but upon noticing my figure, the conflict temporarily ceased.

The reactions I saw were the exact opposite. Gilles was speechless. Elza-san broadly smiled as she sent Gilles a meaningful look for just a brief moment. When he caught sight of it, Gilles turned bright red which was somewhat refreshing.

"What's the meaning of this?"

"Oh my, you've completely turned into a beauty"

"I wish you had told me about this earlier though"

If you had said that in the beginning, I wouldn't have let Gilles in.

"Haha, but where's the fun in that. So? Doesn't it suit you?"

"I was quite surprised that it fit perfectly"

For a moment, the fact that the clothes matched my dimensions gave me the chills. Well, there was some leeway in the design of the clothes, but considering the measurements around my chest was just right, I don't think it was meant to be a perfect fit.

Pinching the hem of the skirt, I sighed; I was unable to hide the sense of discomfort towards my own figure.

Although I was wearing a white summer dress, I was troubled by the differences in the various parts of the dress.

Under my bust was a tightly constricted ribbon that served to somewhat emphasize the bust. The stretched out fabric around this area was light and it didn't stand out. The material for the skirt portion was thin so it was transparent. This whole set was created with several layers of fabric piled together.

Since it was a type of halter neck that was held up by a ribbon at the neck, my shoulders were exposed. As only the upper arms were concealed by a short type of balloon sleeve that was delicately tied together, the bare skin at the decollete area was still visible so it was extremely awkward. I didn't usually show this much bare skin, therefore the cool and refreshing feeling was very uncomfortable.

"..... Gilles?"

I felt rather uneasy towards Gilles's passive reaction. The attire wasn't

particularly ojou-sama summer resort style, so leaving that aside, if he could honestly tell me whether it looked good on me was what I was expected of him. At least, this was better than being naked.

"Yes....."

"What do you think? Does it suit me?"

When I held the hem of the skirt and twirled around, Gilles looked exceedingly awkward with his eyes wandering around. Ah He has a troubled reaction because Gilles did see me stark naked earlier.

As for me, well, if it was shamefully seen, then of course it would be embarrassing. However, compared to being suddenly ashamed about it, I would first be dumbfounded by it.

Moreover, this borrowed form wasn't something I was accustomed to, and since I didn't think of it as mine, even if he saw my body That was just how I looked at it. It felt like it was someone else's problem.

"It..... It suits you perfectly, Liz-sama"

"Please look me in the eyes when you say it....."

"It suits you!"

If you're getting worked up just by saying this, doesn't that mean it doesn't suit me? I thought as such. I wished there was a mirror; perhaps my appearance didn't suit the clothes. If I had a strong look, such pretty and neat clothes wouldn't suit me.

Elza-san, the main culprit, looked exceedingly happy and was grinning broadly. She too had never seen Gilles look this confused before, so she couldn't help but have an enjoyable expression on her face.

"How do I change back? Is it with a red sweet?"

"No. After three days, you'll turn back on your own"

"That's exceptionally long, can't it be fixed sooner?"

"It's impossible as it wouldn't be good for your body. Moreover, since you've become an adult through such great pains, why don't you just enjoy it?"

In other words, you're telling me to pass the time like this. Got it.

However, it was reasonable for Elza-san to say such things. I should enjoy it for the time being since I've already obtained this impossible body by nature through great pains.

..... Gilles — as usual — kept his mouth shut while looking down at the floor.

"Hey Gilles-bouya, go escort jou-chan back home. If I let this girl out looking like that, she's bound to be kidnapped again"

"Understood"

"It's okay to hold her by the waist nonchalantly"

"I won't! Please stop fooling around!"

Elza-san's jesting tone made Gilles raise his voice. He quickly averted his eyes from me with an embarrassed look.

He didn't have to overreact to this extent..... I'm still the same on the inside even if my body has changed.

"..... Well, it's not like I can't head home by myself, right? If Gilles dislikes it, then I'll go by myself—"

"You can't! Let's go back, Liz-sama, quickly"

"Eh? Ah, waitta— Gilles? Umm, Elza-san, thank you for the clothes and the shoes"

"Hnn~ it's fine, it's fine, I got to see Gilles's amusing reactions. In return, as payment, you'll tell me how Gilles-bouya reacted when you come back again"

When she finished those words that was said with wickedness in her smile, I was forcefully dragged by Gilles out of the store.

"Oh~ When I become an adult, my viewpoint becomes different"

Entering the main street from the alleyway, one could find the bustling stores as usual. Only, they looked different when I was shorter; just about everything seemed fresh. Even the goods lined up on the shop windows looked smaller compared to how I'd seen it before.

Gilles didn't turn around and look at me. As expected, he continued to walk on. It was like he was distancing himself from me and wasn't letting me touch

him.

Of course, I was frightened of getting lost in the crowd so, just like how we were in the morning, I entwined my arms around his, and his body exaggeratedly shook. Like an unoiled machine, Gilles awkwardly turned with a creak to slowly face me.

"Liz-sama, please let go of me....."

"Do you dislike it?"

"Rather than dislike, I'm not sure how to respond to it....."

Gilles's face was slightly red, and he was looking a bit lost. He disapproves of me clinging onto him, but if I had clung onto his arms with my body, then he would have fled.

I just noticed it now, but by entwining my arms around his, his arms were coming into contact with my breast a bit. It was an unlikely phenomenon when I was a child as I had forgotten about the existence of breasts.

"But Gilles still thinks of me as a child, right? If that's so, then you don't need to mind it"

"Even if you say that "

"Then, is it better to hold hands?"

Because I didn't want Gilles to hate me, who was still a child inside, I obediently let go and entwined my palm around his. As soon as I did so, Gilles's face looked relieved I'm not saying anything against it, but if that was the

case, was he dissatisfied? I understand that Gilles is a man, but that's the complete opposite reaction. Is the size of my breasts that intolerable?

"..... Gilles, since earlier, you haven't been looking at me in the eyes, isn't that so?"

"That's not—"

"Well then, why are you averting your eyes?"

When I looked at his face, his eyes were wandering around subtly. Our eyes never met, his eyes were constantly looking somewhere else.

"..... Do you hate it so much that I've become an adult?"

"That's not what I meant. It's just that, since Liz-sama is a woman, it troubles me if you touch me when you're so defenseless"

"It'll be nice if you could at least look me in the eyes....."

Am I that different now that my form is that of an adult?

I understand that Gilles is perplexed. I knew that because, since I suddenly became an adult, he was troubled by how to handle me..... But, how should I put it. I am still me and that won't change.

"..... I understand, then I won't touch you"

Nimbly, I released my hand from where it was fastened and gripped the back portion of Gilles's newly donned robe. My body wasn't touching his, nor would I get lost. Like this, Gilles wouldn't have any complaints.

Since he seemed troubled when he looked at my face, I followed Gilles from behind. Look! There will be no problems if it's like this. I mean, since I'm right behind him, my figure won't enter his line of sight.

"When we get home, let's quickly explain the situation to Father and Mother. As long as I leave it alone, I'll return to normal; I'll just quietly stay in my room"

My lively feelings also took a dive.

It's not like Gilles had done anything wrong, but I felt depressed. I mean, Gilles is a man and if a grown up woman had more or less touched him, I also knew that he would resist. However, I'm not behaving like that sort of woman.

These complicated feelings that I couldn't express were accumulating in the air around me. Even if I wanted to spit it out of my mouth, I held it in. I puffed up my cheeks; it was something like what a typical hamster would do when they were saving up their meal. My face probably looks ugly.

On the way, Gilles did turn around once. The moment he saw my face, his eyes widened but I wasn't aware of it. After that, Gilles decided not to say anything. It's fine if you don't really want to pacify me.

"Is- Is that really you, Liz?"

"Yes"

After returning home in silence, I went past Gilles and went straight to Father's study. The timing was perfect since Mother was together with Father flirting with each other, so even though I felt horrible for being a nuisance, I still

reported it to them.

Father was surprised that I had barged into his study, but after Gilles came in and explained it, he understood. Just saying the words, "It was Elza-san's doing", was rather effective.

"Oh, my You've become surprisingly mature. Thank you so much for escorting her, Gilles"

"Not at all....."

Gilles feebly shook his head beside me. However, I didn't react to it and only gazed at Father. That couldn't have been called escorting It didn't matter if I was the one being "escorted" because, in the first place, Gilles disliked me touching or looking at him.

I saw my expressionless Mother smile and, as though she sensed something, Mother slid her hand against my cheek.

"..... Gilles, what's wrong?"

"Gilles, don't tell me you.....!"

"Gilles didn't do anything"

Father's eyes lit up while his eyebrows raised in question, but I denied it. It wasn't like Father was particularly worried like when I was injured — he wasn't angry.

Gilles's eyes widened at my words. Still, when I just glanced at him from the side, he held back. All the same, although I no longer had the urge to puff up my cheeks, please allow me to make it short.

Seeing as how my mood took a dive from just a glance, Gilles's cheeks stiffened, but I didn't care.

"For the time being, I'll just quietly remain in my room. After a few days, the effects will wear off"

"..... Liz, come here"

Upon finishing our conversation, Mother followed me when I exited the room and held my wrist. She forcibly brought me back to my room and set me down on the bed.

Mother looked at me, who had an unchanged expression, and let out a troubled smile.

"..... Did something happen between you and Gilles?"

"Nothing happened"

"Then you shouldn't be treating Gilles coldly. You've always gotten along so well with him"

Her eyes carried conviction. Even though I knew that she had seen through me, I did not want to answer.

I was Just sulking.

I know, it wasn't particularly Gilles's fault. I was just sulking selfishly. It was only because Gilles was bewildered when he saw the changed me.

The selfish person was me.

"Did Gilles say that you're ugly?"

"He, didn't, say that..... Rather, he didn't say anything at all"

Even though it felt like he abandoned me, those were probably not his true feelings. However, he wouldn't even look me in the eyes so how could I understand him?

It was not like I particularly wanted to receive compliments, but I wanted, just a little, for him to say the words from the bottom of his heart. I wanted him to properly look me in the eyes and say how he felt. If I wasn't cute, then that would be fine with me.

..... Although, that would be a completely different issue altogether.

As I looked down, Mother gently ran both her palms along my cheeks, then she bumped them together on my forehead.

"It's alright, Liz is cute. You are my child"

There was personally no doubt in my Mother's remark.

Although I felt like an extreme narcissist when I thought of it that way there was no element of denial.

Dripping milky-white skin, shiny amber-colored eyes, and thin, lustrous red lips — although these well-placed features looked a little childlike, it was a face that was honestly beautiful. When she put on that soft smile, even if she wasn't my parent, I would be charmed by it.

As Mother had said, I inherited Mother's blood so there was no way that I wouldn't be cute. Well, I think that, relatively speaking, I was no less charming than Mother However, whether Gilles thought I was cute was another story.

"After all, Gilles believes that too"

"There's no way of knowing that"

"Then let's hear it from the person himself? Nee, Gilles. You're eavesdropping, aren't you?"

Mother cast her eyes at the door that had been left open, and having been lured over by her gaze, I looked at it repeatedly With a troubled face, Gilles stepped through the door.

..... He heard it.

What's with that timing? No, it's because of the timing. If he wanted to catch me in a good mood, then the moment after I finished speaking to Mother about the situation would be the opportune time as the conversation would automatically transition from there.

"Nee, Gilles. Compared to that person, I am your ally, but please don't make Liz put on a sorrowful face. You understand?"

"Yes"

"Then, that's fine Do it properly, ok?"

Mother gently brushed my head but looked at Gilles. Her refined smile changed a little into the form of a roguish smile. You wouldn't think a mother in her twenties would be this adorable, and yet, I was thankful I had inherited Mother's blood and secretly sighed.

I'm fine with the way you are, Mother said in a small whisper, leaving my side. In exchange, Gilles made her slightly relieved as he drew closer.

Mother lightly patted Gilles — who in some respects had a stiffened expression — on the shoulder before making her way out of the room. Leaving me behind, there was only Gilles and I. It was probably Mother's intention from the very beginning for this to happen.

"Liz-sama"

As I kept silent, Gilles compromised by standing right in front of me. Because Gilles disliked facing me, I returned to my previous stance of keeping my head down. No, it was because I felt awkward that I looked down.

Without replying to his call, I tightly clutched the fabric of the summer dress while dropping my eyes. Gilles remained in front of me.

"Liz-sama, please raise your head. I wish to look at you properly"

As his words and deeds were the opposite of when we were returning, naturally, my shoulders trembled. Even though I wished and prayed for him to look me in the eyes, I was now getting cold feet. If Gilles deprecated me, I probably would be in a bit of shock and wouldn't be able to recover. It was because the words were from his heart, his true thoughts

No matter how much time had passed, I wouldn't lift my head so Gilles softly let out a sigh. Was he disgusted?

"..... Do you understand why I won't look at you, Liz-sama? And why I hesitated to touch you?"

That was because Gilles was perplexed by my sudden transformation.....

"Because I'm a man. Even if we have a master and servant relationship, Liz-sama's body is still that of an adult woman. Do you understand that it's inappropriate for us to be intimate with one another?"

"..... Does it trouble you?"

"Let me just finish. Afterwards, it's probably Liz-sama who will be troubled. If I were to succumb to my lust, then Liz-sama would become my target"

Lust. Lust

In other words, Gilles Is saying that he wants to do that? Certainly, Gilles is of that age and he's grown up sufficiently for a guy but.....

..... For me?

Timidly looking up, Gilles had a slightly bitter smile and my eyes met his. Gilles properly looked me straight in the eyes.

"Liz-sama should be a bit more cautious of me. Before being your valet, I'm a man. I might do a terrible thing to you"

"You won't do such a thing, Gilles"

"Where are you asserting this confidence from?"

"..... Because Gilles is kind after all, and you would never do something that I disliked"

Because it was Gilles, it was unlikely for him to assault me. On the basis that he would never force me and respects my will. Moreover, assuming that he was unwilling but gave in, assuming I was assaulted I could put up some resistance with sorcery. Afterwards, Father could punish (restrain) him, so I knew such a thing wouldn't happen.

Humans are in control of their actions. Even if they lost control I am certain that Gilles won't do such a thing.

Fixing my eyes on Gilles, I watched him intently and, for some reason, he let out a sigh.

"..... I'm also at fault for staying too close to you. Understood. I won't do anything unless Liz-sama desires it, please be as defenceless as your heart desires"

I felt really amazed by it, but because it couldn't be helped, I continued to gaze longingly at Gilles.

..... That's because, as far as Gilles was concerned, I was only a child on the inside. Wanting to do such a thing was unthinkable. Just going after the body would be something Gilles loathes.

"..... Can I ask you just one more thing?"

"About what?"

"Why didn't Gilles look me in the eyes?"

I understood why he hesitated to get close to me, but it wasn't necessary for him to purposely avert his eyes.

"..... That's, Liz-sama's change I mean, your transformed figure was surprising"

"Did I change that much?"

"Yes. I can finally say this now, Liz-sama You have become really cute"

It sounded like it was the usual compliment, but when I looked at the motionless Gilles, his cheeks were faintly red. It didn't seem like he was lying. To begin with, I didn't think Gilles would gain any benefits from lying to me.

"..... Really?"

"Yes"

Asking to be certain, he properly replied and shyly nodded his head.

Since that's the case, what a relief. Because the person I wanted to be praised from had said it, I was really happy. Naturally, my cheeks loosened and my eyebrows lifted. Even I was aware that I had a sloven face.

Seeing that I was drowsy and my smile was beginning to slack, Gilles faintly stood watch over me before sitting by my side. He gently stroked my cheeks as my smile became loose and the upper tips of my arch-shaped lips bent.

Gilles's firm fingers were ticklish as he traced my cheeks. My itchy throat made a sound and although Gilles slightly hesitated, he extended his hands out wide to me.

There was only one meaning to that. Breathing it in, I leaned my chest into the body in front of me. Burying my head into his firm chest, I made the necessary preparations, holding his back tightly and sticking to it.

"..... This time, since it's me, it's alright, but when you've become an adult, please don't attempt to do this sort of thing"

"I can't promise that. Gilles is the one that calms me down the most"

"I don't know anything even if you were to be attacked"

The amazed tone in his voice was as if he was saying that it couldn't be helped. However, I understood it as that tenderness held sweetness in it.

The pleasant familiar smell of Gilles wafted up my nose. Gilles was different from Father. He had a strong smell, a smell that calmed me down. It was like the scent of refreshing herbs and soap mixed together.

It was because of the current situation that I clung onto him, but Gilles hesitated for some time and, after thirty seconds had lapsed, he put his hand on my back. He used the other hand to comb through my hair with his fingers.

And by doing so, he combed the entire ivory colored hair that reached all the way till my waist, enduring as he brought me closer to his smooth chest with my cheeks rubbing against it.

This act of him passing his fingers through my hair was special. It was only for people whom I allowed. The only ones who could do so were my family and Gilles.

Gilles's warmth and the feeling of his strong embrace, the scent that I was fond of and the feeling of my hair being combed felt comfortable. All of these things together felt very pleasant and fuwafuwa*. The muscles in my cheeks began to loosen as though they had lost all functionality; my appearance was unguarded and sleepy. I just wanted to leave everything to Gilles.

"..... Nnn....."

When I leaned closely to him and made a sound from my throat, he let loose a wry smile on top of my head. You're like a cat. His whisper tickled my earlobes.

Slowly, I raised my head and cocked it to the side, and Gilles gave me a gentle look. It was different from when we were younger, his eyes were close to mine. Those green eyes felt gentle and depressed. If I'm not mistaken, there was only love for me reflected in them.

Though delicate, his strong fingers were moving slowly as he brushed my

cheeks before tracing my lips. The feeling of his fingers gliding on my face was different from uneasiness. They came close to my nose and I let out a sweet sounding voice.

Slightly catching his breath, Gilles panicked and released my lips. And then, because I felt lonely somehow, I sullenly embraced him, stuffing my face into his chest. From deep within Gilles's chest, I found his heart — encased by his ribs — beating faster than usual.

"..... Gilles"

"Seriously, you're so defenceless, Liz-sama"

Slapping my back with a constant tap-tap rhythm, I felt myself enveloped in his warmth and closed my eyes.

Entranced by the sensation that was similarly comfortable, I unconsciously dozed off. The drowsiness made my thoughts melt away. A vague sense of euphoria and the comfortable fuwafuwa feeling was irresistibly pleasant.

Just like the drowsiness that had entered my eyes, my hands around his back gradually weakened and slipped down. I was in such a state that my body was completely leaning on him, yet Gilles supported me so I wouldn't fall down.

With him tenderly clapping my back as though lulling me to sleep, I entrusted everything to him. Or rather, I should say, at this point in time, I surrendered myself to Gilles.

"..... Gilles"

When I called his name with a lisp in my sleepy and unusually fatigued state, he replied in a mellow, soft voice that slightly quivered; it was so gentle that it barely resonated in my eardrums.

I don't know what was said as I was too sleepy to understand but Though I barely understood, the words were very gentle.

It was just that I was very sleepy..... As though tempted by the warmth, my consciousness sank into the white ocean.

When I woke up, I felt lonely that Gilles wasn't by my side and felt so dispirited that my eyebrows drooped, but I'll keep that a secret. By the way, I wonder why Father's smiling face looked angry? And Gilles couldn't be found. Nah..... it couldn't be.

Translator's Notes:

1. The return of jou-chan and bouya. Remember that Elza will constantly be calling Liz "miss".
2. There's no way to describe fuwa fuwa but fluffy and blight. It's just this soft, light feeling in your heart.

Vol.1 LN Special 2: Imposing on Cecil-kun

"Cecil-kun, I've come to play!"

"Go home"

As a favor, Father took me with him to the institute, so I went to bother Cecil-kun, but "go home" being the first words he said when he opened his mouth was really heartless.

Although I did knock on the door, I also hurriedly opened it. Still, the cold glance that Cecil-kun gave me, along with the immediate rejection made me feel slightly dejected.

Even though I didn't tell him that I was coming over, he didn't have to go so far as to give me such a cold response... I'm just going to treat it positively!

"Didn't you say that before~"

"Is there an idiot that immediately comes right afterwards?"

"We're friends"

I won't concede that point, ahem, and shallowly puffed up my chest in pride. With a snap, Cecil-kun's eyes blinked open, and he began looking about in confusion. He probably still isn't used to the word "friends."

He gave me, who was smiling broadly, a complicated and uncomfortable look, and sighed.

"After this is done, I don't mind"

I knew very well that he didn't dislike it, so I cheerfully answered him with the words "Got it!" confusing the slightly blunt Cecil-kun even more.

Trotting over, I approached Cecil-kun from the opposite side of his desk and looked at his work.

Well, it seems he has undertaken something quite troublesome. This time, judging by the paper that's scribbled with numerous patterns, it appears that he's improving a sorcery. By the way, I felt refreshed that I knew what it was. After all, it's only wind sorcery that I don't understand.

"Despite being a child, it's very well-done"

"But, generally speaking, doesn't that also apply to you?"

"Does it?"

"No matter how I think about it, yes"

Cecil-kun, who had decisively declared so, was an impossibly intelligent child. However, as far as Cecil-kun was concerned, I was the same.

These types of thoughts had piled up inside me over the past few years, so my thoughts were similar to an adult's. Cecil-kun was probably new to this kind of situation, but because he was childish and struggled with such thoughts, in a sense, compared to me, he was an extraordinary being.

"Frankly, you're not even at a child's level. Nor are you adorable"

"Doesn't that also apply to Cecil-kun?"

"Shut up"

It's none of your business if I'm not adorable. Even I am aware of that, so you don't need to rub it in.

"Fufu, but that part of Cecil-kun that's so much like a tsundere is adorable"

"..... Tsundere*?"

"Yes. Usually, you're tsun tsun. When you're unexpectedly shy..... Why, that's what dere people do"

As expected, "tsundere" isn't a word that you hear often in this world, but as I thought, Cecil-kun is definitely a tsundere. Compared to when we first met, he has softened up quite a lot, so you could say that that is why I think he's a tsundere.

When we first met, he wasn't a tsundere, but a tundra with no signs of the ice melting away.

Yet, now we're talking normally to each other and I'm glad that we were able to become friends.

After explaining the meaning of the word to Cecil-kun, he more or less seemed to get a general understanding of it and clicked his tongue with the look of someone at death's door. It was just like Cecil-kun to feel dishonored by the tsundere title. While giving me a glare, he continued to vigorously spit everywhere.

"Don't be ridiculous"

"I think Cecil-kun is an intense tsun. Oh well, you'll be affectionate to me sooner or later"

"That won't happen"

Cecil-kun even disagreed with those hopeful words. Instead, he scornfully laughed at me as if he was mocking the fool that I was* and smiled.

Compared to that smile, I would rather see the usual expression of ridicule or even the bashful look on his face, but we've just become friends, so I shouldn't have such high expectations. I would like us to slowly become the best of friends.

"..... But, you're properly giving me the kind care that a guest deserves. Although, your hands have stopped working on work"

"..... Shut up"

But still, being made fun of like this was detestable, so I'll point out a bit of his cute side. One way or another, Cecil-kun has been making eye contact and conversing with me, and he hasn't voiced his displeasure of me approaching him.

After pointing that out to him, Cecil-kun scrunched up his face and looked the other way. Even that was cute — so to speak — but I wasn't going to say it to the person himself.

"Fufu. You aren't honest, aren't you, Cecil-kun?"

"Isn't your interpretation too forward"

"I've learnt that it's important to not be discouraged when dealing with Cecil-kun"

Compared to Cecil-kun's facial expressions and gestures, I knew that his harsh words were the kind that would stick in one's head for several days. Even if we had reached a compromise with each other, this aspect of him won't change. I think those cold words probably come out on reflex.

My words made Cecil-kun instantly feel uncomfortable. It seems Cecil-kun was also a bit concerned by it, as his eyebrows drooped.

"..... Sorry"

"No, forget it. I was basically too persistent "

"..... It's not like I particularly dislike you right now"

Cecil-kun had given his acknowledgement that he wasn't alienating me~~. With the thing from before, I had started to wonder if Cecil-kun minded and if the person himself hated me? However, it looks like he's moderately alright with me.

As his face began to soften on its own, I enthusiastically smiled back at him, causing him to turn away. I could faintly hear the sound of his tongue clicking, but when I looked carefully, I could see that Cecil-kun's ears had turned slightly red.

I imagine he must have felt really embarrassed; however, from my experience and intuition, I knew that if I pointed that out to him, he would snap back, so I decided to step back and watch Cecil-kun as he tried to quietly hide his embarrassment.

However, right from the get go, it didn't seem very believable. After ten-odd minutes of watching him, Cecil-kun relinquished his quill. I wasn't sure why he

looked my way, but it seemed that he was finished with his work.

"..... Oh~ So that's how it works. This would put adults to shame*. Truly admirable; I simply wouldn't be able to do it if it was me"

It was absolutely impossible for me to make such minor modifications or, more precisely, it was impossible for me to even improve enchantments to begin with.

I have to say, for a child like Cecil-kun to pull off this feat is truly amazing. Without holding back, I used my palm to stroke his head. While whispering, you're amazing, in a serious manner, I continued stroking him when, suddenly, tears started trickling down one by one from Cecil-kun's eyes.

Thinking I had imagined it, I looked at Cecil-kun again and saw two to three more large drops flow down his cheeks. Not knowing what else to do, I moved my hand that had been stroking his head to his body.

Cecil-kun had also realized that he was crying, and in a hurry, he used the back of his hands to roughly wipe them away. Although he said "It's nothing", his eyes were downcast. There was no way that it was nothing.

Nevertheless, I didn't understand why he started crying. I frantically tried to think of a reason, but I didn't see how me stroking his head could be a trigger. There was nothing that I could remember, except the part where I was making fun of Cecil-kun, so that's a possibility, but I don't believe that that was enough to make him cry.

I thought to myself Then why? Suddenly, I remembered what Cecil-kun

had said before.

'I Since I was a kid, I've always been somewhat abnormally smart. Feeling sick from my surroundings, my sorcery would often rampage and people would be injured. As a result, both Father and Grandfather shunned me'

Perhaps Cecil-kun was never praised or touched like this before, and he had always wanted it. You've done well, you did great — these were words that he had wished his parents would praise him with.

Swearing on that possibility, I gently hugged his small body closely. Although he didn't resist, his body shook in an exaggerated fashion. Remaining in this position, I gently brushed his head.

"..... You're great, you're great, Cecil-kun is such an amazing, good child"

"Are you making fun of me?"

"It's genuine admiration You've worked really hard, Cecil-kun. I'm sure others will acknowledge you"

..... When I thought about it carefully, Cecil-kun, despite being so mature, was still a child. A child grows with praise and is raised by the love they receive. If there wasn't any love, the child could possibly grow up warped. In actuality, Cecil-kun had already started breaking down.

Whoosh. He was stubborn, yet when I embraced him with my arms around him, Cecil-kun leaned on me with his eyes still cast downwards. He didn't say a word, but most likely he felt lonely.

Being alone was lonely. Since this could alleviate his burden by just a little, I

patted his back whilst stroking his head, conveying my warmth through the gentle embrace.

Calming down after a moment, Cecil-kun raised his head, and I pretended not to notice that his eyes were slightly moist. He would dislike it anyway.

Cecil-kun then noticed that I was rubbing his back and after I smiled, he began sulking a little. Nevertheless, you didn't dislike it, right, Cecil-kun?

".....How long are you going to cling onto me?"

"Weren't you doing that as well, Cecil-kun?"

"Shut up"

The words were cold, but there was no bite in his voice. Rather, a soft, mellow tone could be heard.

When I attempted to look at Cecil-kun, he had an uncomfortable, but gentle expression. That expression was as though he had broken away from his past.

"..... Liz"

This was probably the first time Cecil-kun had ever called me by my name.

Blinking repeatedly, I stared back at Cecil-kun and after Cecil-kun started chewing on his lips, he rested his forehead on my shoulder to hide his face.

"..... I appreciate it"

"Fufu, I see"

That quiet murmur certainly reached my ears.

For that reason, my lips softened and just like that, I gently stroked Cecil-kun's back once more.

Translation notes:

1. Tsundere = Japanese term for a character development process that describes a person who is initially cold and even hostile towards another person before gradually showing a warmer side over time.
2. 口の端を吊り上げて = Kuchi no ha wo tsuri agete = According to Weblio, it means to show displeasure and scorn at someone. There wasn't a better substitute I could think of so I went with the word 'mock'.
3. 大人顔負け = Otona kao make = "Putting adults to shame". Basically, it means that you're more superior than all the adults. An example would be "Children generally put adults to shame".