

転生したら スライム だった件 ⑤

Regarding
Reincarnated to Slime

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伏瀬 イラスト / みつばー



Tensei Shitara Slime datta ken

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Chapter 84 - The Downfall of Falmas Kingdom

On that day, the world fell into terror once again.
The revival of “Storm Dragon Veldora” was confirmed.
This information was quickly passed onto the countries under the influence of the Western Saint’s Church.
The kings of each country, once again tried to rack their brains for countermeasures against “Storm Dragon Veldora”.
.....However, there was a country that had a more pressing issue.

* * *

Falmas Kingdom, inside the audience room of the Royal Castle.
On a certain morning, suddenly in the middle of the throne, something was left on it.
That thing was a lump of flesh.
On that lump of flesh, a face was embedded on the center, its was that of the King’s.
He’s still alive. Although he had a hollow gaze, he seems to still retain some small vestige of his consciousness.
The soldier who went to patrol in the morning noticed a groaning sound, that’s when he found him.
Although the soldiers that served in the royal palace were elite Imperial guards, they can’t stop letting out scream in fear after seeing the body.
Such disgusting appearance, it’s inevitable if they did not realize that the thing they found was the King they served.
However, the lesser cabinet minister who rushed after hearing the soldier’s scream recognized that it was their King which had complete change in his appearance.
And then.....,

「Th... There must be a bottle under me..... Please let me drink it.....」

Understanding the words of the King, who repeats the words in frail and incoherent muttering, they lift the King’s body hesitantly. The bodily fluids linger,

the stench enshrouding the vicinity.

There are people who vomit in fear.

There are some who stumbled on their own feet.

It was a pile of decrepit limbs that were attached something that resembled a human body.

The sight alone would awaken a person basic instinctual fear, a truly repulsive object.

Although their faces expressions stiffened, they endured it with their willpower to continue their duty.

Gathering the remaining magicians in the royal palace, they had finished confirming that the lump of flesh was certainly the King himself.

Even with such an appearance, they still need to pay their respect towards the King.

Having lifted the King's body according to his words, there was a bottle just like what he said.

But, will he be okay if he drink this? From that uncertainty, the magicians decided to appraise it.

The result.....

Complete Recovery Medicine (Full Potion)

It was a legendary class restorative medicine just a little below Resurrection Medicine (Elixir). It has been said that by drinking this, it will completely restore the lost body parts.

The manufacturing method was lost, even the Dwarf race cannot reproduce it, so it was called as a Miracle Drug.

A thought crossed in the magicians mind to use the medicine for their research, but they wouldn't dare let such words escape their mouths in the presence of the king.

Of course, they knew that the only way to cure the King's current condition was by using the medicine.

The change was extreme.

At the same time as he drank the medicine, the King's body was transformed into its former healthy appearance.

The nearest minister quickly came with appropriate clothing.

Wearing the clothes and taking a breather, the King ordered to conduct an

emergency Imperial Conference.

The palace became busy, preparing for the conference.

The King looked at his trusted ministers that remained behind, and said

「Let's change the location..... I will speak about what had occurred. Before the conference begin, I want to hear your opinions.」

So, he said weakly.

* * *

After listening to the King's story, the ministers became silent.

The content was unbelievable and was too much for them at that time.

「Ki, King..... We will ask once more. Did everyone really died?」

「If it wasn't a complete defeat, and if the survivor are not routed..... Then they are really dead?」

「Isn't the supply corps stationed at the rear? Are they safe?」

The King shook his head weakly.

Such an appearance made everyone understand whether they accept this or not. Everyone in the expedition was dead.

One of the ministers broke down in tears after hearing the confirmation.

The minister who asked about the safety of the supply corps, had sent off his own son for his first participation in a war.

He made some arrangements beforehand to make sure his son would not be stationed at the front where it was dangerous but at the rear. But all of it was useless.

In the first place, everyone thought that they would be victorious in this war, so he was sent to participate in his first campaign...

The feeling of imminent victory he held at that time? The King could no longer remember it.

However, on such tragedy only one had survived from the enormous number of participants.

The total casualties enumerated to around 15,000 people.

This was an enormous loss, the likes no one had ever seen before.

「King.... Was it true? Was the opponent only one monster?」

A relatively calm minister asked the King.

The King nods at that question.

「It was true. And, the only one who survived the onslaught was me.」(ED: Formal speech. 余)

Again, he narrated the facts that were hard to accept.
Of the torture he had, of the Monsters situation.
And also on the fact of the birth of new Demon Lord.
And the dreadful future that awaited the Falmas Kingdom, for opposing the Demon Lord.

The ministers turned silent.

According to the King's story, the fall of Falmas Kingdom was a certainty that would occur imminently.

That's why, the Imperial Conference was conducted, it would be held in three days after every Noble had assembled.

And then, the King told everyone about the three choices suggested by the Demon Lord.

『Now then, my proposal. King of Falmas Kingdom.
You can only take one of the three options I present before you.
The First Option is for you to abdicate. You must step down from your position to take the full responsibility for this war.
Naturally, after the war, you must pay reparations, that can be in the form of parts of Falmas's territory or 1,500 StarGold coins.

The next one is the Second Option, you as the King must submit your country to our country, Tempest.

In this case, Your Falmas Kingdom will become a vassal state of Tempest.
The resistance from the Nobles will definitely big, so it can be expected that it will be hard to convince them.

Your treatment, as a vassal state will be dependent upon the decisions made at the conference.

Although it is close to an unconditional surrender, the lives and property of the Citizens will be guaranteed by me.

And the last, the Third Option, I don't really recommend this.
You once again gather the nobles, and continue the war against our country.
If you take this choice, at that time your life will really come to an end.

Although you might be liberated from the suffering of this world, you can protect your pride to the end.

The citizens would starve, and the War will continue for a long time.

You're free to choose any of the options.

Make sure you tell the messenger in a week.

Think about your answer carefully.』

With a lovely smile on its beautiful girly face, she stated it while smiling kindly.
A truly terrifying Demon Lord.

Just by reciting the words, his entire being filled with fear.

To oppose such person, he never dared to even think about it again.

His fear outweighed his pride as a king; he no longer held any desire to oppose that person.

Turning him into a lump of flesh, every day he was made to eat his own appendages.

He wholeheartedly never wanted to taste such fear ever again, but he needed to listen to the ministers' words.

「Unbelievable! A single Star gold coins is equivalent to 100 gold coins. Do you mean we need to pay 150,000 gold coins?!

There are no reasons to pay monsters such amount of money. I will never approve this!』

「That's right. Moreover, the territory too!

Even if it's only a territory of a Count, I won't accept it either. To become a neighbour to Monster Territory!』

「Also, something like submitting is also unreasonable! There is no guarantee that the opponent will stick to the agreement to not interfere with the Citizens.』

「We are determined, we will resist to the bitter end. We swear by all our pride, we will exterminate those monsters.』

For King Edomalis, he already knew that the flow of the conversation would become like this.

The nobles in this place had yet to see reality.

It's not because they didn't have fear, but because they are not the ones who went to war.

From a safe place, they sent people to fight in their stead. There is no need to

think about the consequence when defeat came either.

It was good until now.

Falmas Kingdom was a major power; it was above the neighbouring countries. But this time it will be impossible. After all, the opponent is a Demon Lord who annihilated an army single-handedly.

「.....Is that ok? The opponent is a Demon Lord.

This is not a metaphor or exaggeration, but a Demon Lord that can match against an army and overwhelmed them by herself.

You can call it pride, but are you guys the ones who went to war? My pride has already broken and is already gone.

Like hell I want to taste such fear again.....

I won't permit such madness! If you still want to go to war, you bastards can go to war, I won't stop it!

In the case that we can't trust the monsters, so what?

To submit? Or to go to war?

Is it a good idea? I will not go to war. It's already too late, we can only surrender. This is enough, this is already satisfactory. The Demon Lord had already declared.....

『If you say it was for the sake of the country, I think it's stupid to not consider the state of affair in the enemy country.

If you change the state of relationship with them, perhaps they can become a good neighbour.』

Like that! I was warned by the monster.

If I listened to what Marquis Muller and Count Herman had said, this situation would never have occurred.

It was my own desire, not for the sake of the Citizens, but for myself.

There is no second chance. There is none.

If I make a mistake in choosing the option, not only me but calamity will poured down on the citizens.

My honor, my pride, I don't care about them anymore.

At least, please think of a plan where no calamity will befall on the citizens!』

Hearing the King screaming with all of his spirit, the ministers were frozen. That calculating king that put his own profit as the maximum priority had

personally admitted his mistake.

And he ended up answering that it was hopeless after considering the difference in war potential.

Certainly, just like what the king had said, the possibility for them to win was completely non-existent.

Their prides were just an excuse, they just wanted to protect their own interests, and they were severely self-conscious about it.

The king knelt before his ministers. And

「I am extremely sorry. Please find the best solution. For the Country.... For the People.」

Everyone nodded at that person's words, and they prostrated themselves before him.

King Edomalis also gave a slight nod, and their conversation continued once again.

Before the nobles assembled, they needed to think up some plans to a certain extent.

Persuading the Nobles was an absolute necessity, if it was not done, this Country would inevitably perish.

What should be done to make the situation better? What should be done for the happiness of the Citizens?

The discussion between the King and the Ministers continued without end.....

Three days passed.

The Nobles has assembled and The Imperial Conference was held.

Different from the previous one, there were no composure in the King and Ministers' expressions, only seriousness.

The nobles felt the difference in the atmosphere and tension was showing on their faces.

The nobles were informed about the King's story.

Hearing that speech, the nobles were thrown into chaos.

「This country, was defeated by the Monsters' country Tempest. Therefore, to take the responsibility, I will abdicate from the throne.」

Due to the explosive statements that were spoken by the King, the Conference became complicated.

The disastrous fate of the subjugation army was announced by the minister.

The unbelievable content was the only survivor was the King alone.

The criticisms were flooding against the King's decision to fulfill the demand of compensation.

Such talks was justified.

As Falmas Kingdom was a large country with total population of Thirty million, the taxes revenue that the national treasury received each year was about Five million Gold coins.

That was also the taxes revenue of last year, however the demanded compensation was 1,500 Star Gold coins or 150,000 Gold coins.

Or proportional to 3% of yearly tax revenue.

Moreover, in regards to surrendering territories.

The nobles were furious and speak loudly for the King to take responsibility.

They demand the Royal Family to pay the indemnities, also they firmly refuse to cede the territories.

The Nobles' complaints were not completely unjustified.

However, the nobles had forgotten.

The opponent was a Demon Lord who can crush an army by herself.

Or rather, perhaps they did not want to believe it.....

When that matter was pointed out, there are some who turned pale, but there are some who act impudently too.

Just like what King Edomalis had been worried, the nobles didn't reach any conclusion and the conference was in utter chaos.

「King! Even if you abdicated, you cannot escape from taking responsibility! In the first place, did you think you can escape only by yourself?」

「If this one did not abdicate, then I will receive that Demon Lord's Wrath, is that fine with you?

Moreover if this one don't abdicate and keep governing, there is no other choice than to become a vassal state, are you prepared for that?」

「Gu..... However! To unconditionally surrender to that monster is!」

He kept repeating such exchange many times.

The ministers look at this situation and remembered their previous conversation

with the king, their face become red from anger.

King Edomalis certainly can be considered a greedy person, but not to such extent into avarice (blind greed). Moreover he is not a foolish king and his eyes see what lies ahead.

Even the mistake this time was surely also originated from his desire to protect his country's interest.

To push all the blame into the King was a mistake. That was not something that can be tolerated.

The Nobles as always were just wanted to protect their own interest, and as for the sake of Falmas Kingdom itself, it was obvious that they never cared for the lives and properties of the citizens.

In the end, the conference ended without reaching any agreement. It was going just like the prediction of Rimuru (Or rather, Wisdom King Raphael), civil war erupted in Falmas Kingdom between the King's faction and the Noble's faction.

The result was the Downfall of Falmas Kingdom.

Henceforth, it was passed down on the later generation as a country that was destroyed because of the Demon Lord's Wrath.

* * *

It's said that at the time there came a single Youth from the Domain of Count Nidole Maidam. This man would be known as a New hero.

As he went, he gathered volunteers to protect the citizen's properties and fought against the greed of the Noble class.

Those who were quick of wit, as well as those who were prudent, chose to join the side of this Youth early on in his quest.

The name of this Youth, was Youmu.

Youmu was the commander of the Frontier Garrison, and as such, quickly gained popularity with villages and peasants alike. Especially in the outlying villages that were under threat from monster raids.

The man himself was very charismatic, and in the blink of an eye, his power and influence had expanded greatly.

From the words of those villages were the words that would describe him, The

Invincible, Undefeated, Always Victorious. These led to rumors about this man. The disunited Noble armies were too few and too scattered to oppose him, and as he went on, he began to show his overwhelming power.

Not only was this young man, Youmu, backed by Marquis Muller, Count Herman and other such influential noblemen, but he also receives the very backing of the Royal Family's heir.

The Son of the Former King Edolmalis, Edgar, was still a boy, yet he played an active role as Youmu's personal staff officer. His father King Edomalis, however, was executed at the time of his abdication.

The story of the Former King's execution had become popular ghost talk as of late. At the time the Guillotine blade fell upon him, a young girl's laugh could be heard reverberating at the scene. Then, as if by an otherworldly force, the head and body began to float in midair and vanished into the far horizon.

Certainly it could not be a mass hallucination, the proof for this was the pool of blood that was left behind after the corpse vanished out of sight.

Though this part of the story would be made to vanish from the chronicles of history, to fade into the depths of the void.

Although in the ages to come such a subject would come to controversy and theory, there was evidence that claimed Marius, the hero King Youmu's right-hand man, possessed a spitting image of the Former King Edomalis. Though by that point, there was no noblemen that could judge the authenticity of such a claim.

In just two years, the young hero-King Youmu the Great had completed his noble quest, and succeeded in uniting the scattered territories of the former Falmas Kingdom.

This was only made possible through the noble efforts of the Dwarf and Burmund Kingdoms. This sole factor would be known as the greatest piece that led to the successful unification.

However, even beyond this was a piece that shocked the country.

That was the nonaggression treaty that was bestowed upon the noble hero-King Youmu by the Great Demon Lord, Rimuru Tempest, a member of the mighty Eight Star Demon Lords.

In the end, this treaty was used as a pretext as securing postwar investments and indemnity in support of Youmu.

The signing of the nonaggression pact between the Great Demon Lord, Rimuru Tempest, and the hero-King Youmu signified the end of a war that brought terror to the peoples of the Kingdom. The fear of a Demon Lord’s wrath and terror, capable of causing an entire army to vanish without a fight.

While it isn’t spoken, this pact also served to establish the legitimacy of the young hero-King.

With the Former King dead and the hero-King taking the throne with justice as his witness, a friendship was said to have been born between the hero-King Youmu and the Great Demon Lord, Rimuru Tempest.

With the support of these mighty countries, a new country was born.

This country’s name would come to be known as <<Falmenas>>.

The meaning of the name was “A country born through the greatest Peril”

Youmu formally assumed the position as the Founding King, changing his name from Youmu to Falmenas.

By his side were two mighty Devils, as well as his trusted staff officer and wise political advisor. Though the latter’s history is faded into obscurity, the hero-King had surrounded himself with skilled and wise individuals of unquestionable loyalty and grace.

With the trust of his companions as his guide, Youmu thus set out on his road, his road as a hero-King of the country of <<Falmenas>>.

The new era.

Against such turbulent era, the progress of history does not stop.

TL: the hero used in this chapter is eiyuu different from yuusha

Chapter 85 - The words that reached

Storm Dragon Veldora has been reborn.
This report caused a great panic within the Western Saint's Church.

The connection that was lost with the subjugation team was quickly discovered.
They were strictly ordered to report at regular intervals, so a loss of connection indicated some misfortune.
So upon hearing this report, Hinata immediately decided to set off to Tempest.
But, at that moment came the surprising news of Storm Dragon Veldora's revival.

Which resulted in Hinata, who was preparing to set off, to be summoned by the Holy Empire Ruberion's most influential officials.

The Seven Celestial Sages these wisemen are called.

It is said that each has transcended a hero-class existence and is a legendary being that is often in charge of rearing new heroes.

These beings are completely secluded and never appear in public,
And are only discussed as legends in fairy tales and other such stories.

Nor are the Seven Celestial Sages an existence that Hinata could talk about.
Obviously, they are not an existence that the Templar Knights would know about.

So why does Hinata know of them...

Because she is the last disciple of the Seven Celestial Sages.

They typically train their successor personally, and no one knows when the successor takes over.

In other words, the fact that they all trained one person is beyond unusual.
Hinata was just that excellent.

And because she was so excellent she was able to learn all the skills and battle abilities that they could teach her.

In a sense, you could call her a work of art.

Few people from the Holy Empire of Ruberion could order Hinata around.

In other words, you could even say that all power was vested in her. After inheriting her post from her predecessor, she began her reign in the top echelons of the country.

Who could order her?

The current emperor and the Seven Celestial Sages.

Furthermore, only the Seven Celestial Sages can directly meet with the emperor, so Hinata has never met him.

Nor has she even heard this voice.

Which is why, when discussing beings who can order her, only the Seven Celestial Sages remain.

This time, she was summoned directly by them via telepathy.

And she was told about Storm Dragon Veldora's rebirth.

Thus, though she had prepared troops to set off to Tempest, she decided to put that order on hold.

As a result, her attack on Tempest while Rimuru was away did not occur.

Which was fortunate.

Had she attacked Tempest along with her Knights Templar while he was away, there's a high chance the battle would have went in her favor.

Anyways, Monsters' Country Tempest narrowly escaped death.

Was this a failure on Hinata's part? By no means.

What surprised her, that is, wasn't only the report she received from the sages.

As a messenger she sent to Tempest, Reihim, has returned.

But his appearance was completely different. A thin layer of dirt and tattered clothing covered his body.

His eyes darted, his body vehemently convulsed.

He looked as if he tasted unimaginable fears.

100 trusted Knight Templars guided Reihim into the main chamber.

Cardinal Nicholas also came to hear his report.

Reihim was brought into the chamber as he was. He was offered to change, but he adamantly refused.

And, insisted that he had urgent information that had to be shared.

Thus he stood in the main chamber, inside the towering cathedral in the center of the Holy Empire Ruberion.

In all of the empire, this was the most holy and impregnable place.

And there he knelt.

Hesitantly, he lifted his face to confirm Hinata's presence.

He seemed a little relieved seeing her there. And then he stood, his expression quickly turning into even a deeper despair.

Reihim removed the tattered clothing that covered his body.

Seeing what was beneath, the Templar Knights covered their faces.

Even Hinata looked repulsed.

Everyone's gaze was focused on Reihim's exposed body.

As a myriad of faces were protruding from it.

Still alive, some showed anguished expressions, others of despair. There were even some mad ones smiling...

As if mocking the holy land upon which he stood.

「First... behold my body. It is the punishment for evoking their King's wrath... I was a fool. A terrifying, a truly terrifying enemy I have made! A demon lord.

By our hand we gave birth to a new demon lord!」

Perhaps even proudly, Reihim declared in a loud voice, his eyes bloodshot.

And thus he told them of the terrifying demon lord and his birth.

Without concealing any of Reihim's wrongdoings.

He was not ordered to do so. Rather, he himself was obsessed to disclose all this.

To free himself from the torment, to be forgiven by god.

He thought he needed to confess his sins. But... surely he could not be forgiven with just this much...

The templars trembled upon hearing of a new demon lord's birth.

And when they heard about his absurd power, they could no longer hide their astonishment.

Before his light attack, every anti-demon barriers, large scale magic barriers, and even holy barriers are utterly foolish.

And none have ever heard of such magic.

If faced with an attack that cannot be blocked, even those gathered in the room could not survive it... perhaps.

But Hinata did not tremble.

Based on what Reihim reported, it was an attack that used the rays of the sun,

she figured.

And if you understand the nature of the attack, it's easy to counter it.

Seeing the stoic Hinata reassured the Templar Knights; thus, they calmed down.

If their commander Sakaguchi Hinata did not fear the demon lord, then there was no chance they would be defeated.

Their confidence was directly tied to their unwavering faith in her.

The report continued.

The news that Arch Demon had appeared again provoked an uproar.

This wasn't something they could ignore any longer.

It is absolutely crucial that an arch demon, which harbors the Demon Lord Seed, be immediately destroyed.

Besides, if it was a simple Arch Demon that was born depending on abilities, three Knights Templar should be able to destroy it.

And if they brought five knights, there was no way they could lose.

But this would prove difficult if they allowed it to continue existing and accumulating experience.

They had to destroy it now. Such was the rule regarding dealing with an appearance of an Arch Demon.

「Hinata-sama, this is an urgent matter. My team will subjugate this demon. Please order us!」

「In that case, we shall also go. Please order us to attack!」

The young templars exclaimed following their elders example. The others too, in lieu with common sense, did not oppose the measure.

After all, the sooner they subjugate the Arch Demon the better.

But...

Reihim's story did not end.

He still had things to say.

... Rather, he hasn't even mentioned the main points yet.

But the templars could not have known of this.

Which is why they could discuss such pointless things as subjugating an arch demon.

「Please wait a moment. Do not pay any heed to the Arch Demon subjugation. The light magic I mentioned. As I just said, when it hit us, we were completely

wiped out.

However, that doesn't portray the scene appropriately.

There were 15 thousand of us. And this elite force was completely destroyed by a single monster's terrifying attack.

I meant that literally.

Not as an army, but every single individual...

Massacred. That's no exaggeration. That's exactly as it happened.]

Silence enveloped that holy room.

A heavy atmosphere in which no one could utter a single word.

A monster which could massacre 15 thousand men. It made them recall a certain legend.

A legend speaks of a monster which became a demon lord after destroying a city. Truly, the monster fit the description of the word "Demon Lord". The monster sowed chaos and destruction.

Beings that exceed human capabilities are usually limited to the Special S Class Dragons.

Currently, three of them remain and one has been sealed until now.

These three beings are designated Special S class.

But in reality, it wouldn't be unusual to recognize two more special s ranked individuals from among the demon lords.

The reason they are not recognized so is simple.

They were mostly active before the church has been formed and have yet to produce any further casualties.

In other words, should they resume their rampage, they will be recognized as Special S ranked beings.

They will be recognized as a being that cannot be defeated by human hands. That's what Special S rank means.

As for their activity before the church had been established, that's a tale of a thousand and a few hundred years ago.

According to traditional records, it would have been a thousand and two hundred years ago.

Even then, two beings called demon lords and which would now have been recognized as Special S rank existed—Lord of Darkness Guy Crimson and Destroyer Milim Nava.

Furthermore, some believed that other demon lords awakened as true demon lords, but none of these openly wrought havoc.

Which is why, in order not to increase the people's anxiety for no reason, every demon lord has been classified as S ranked.

A being that can't be opposed with human strength alone.

Because when a generation lacks a hero, they had to declare that humanity would not lose against demons.

But, this new monster...

Just became a demon lord but may be immediately recognized as a Special S rank.

Heavy silence continued to rule the room.

A silence which displayed a desire to reject accepting the birth of a new demon lord.

Simple demon lords and true demon lords are an existence that towers over humans.

But...

「Hmph, it's pointless to stand here in silence.

Hey, Reihim. Did you see it awaken?」

Ending the silence, Hinata asked.

In response

「Yes. I believe an offering of 15,000 lives was sufficient...」

He replied, confident.

「Is that so...」

Hinata muttered and began to think.

As things stood, she was fortunate not to have gone to Tempest yet.

If her opponent was an awakened, if he turned into a True Demon Lord, then the number of troops didn't matter.

Even if you gathered powerful soldiers, should they lack the strength to oppose that monster directly then they are useless.

The subjugation army's disaster only proved this point.

Moreover, even though the monster hasn't awakened by then it was still capable of destroying the army alone.

From time immemorial a hero and her carefully selected team would venture to defeat the demon lord.

And since that's the case...

「I guess I'll have to go, huh?」

She muttered.

If the opponent is a demon lord, Hinata would have to go herself.

And since there was no need to further increase the number of corpses, there was no need to send out normal soldiers.

An elite few.

Perhaps... a hundred knight templar could win this battle and have a higher chance of victory than a larger force.

Hinata accelerated her thoughts.

Again and again and again.

Because she had to ascertain her victory.

And as if interrupting her thoughts a pained expression appeared on Reihim's face.

And, from within his chest a new face arose.

Reihim's pained expression quickly turned serene...

「Ah ah, test test test. Can you hear me?

(It's already recording)

(Eh? Already? Seriously?)

... ah, whatever?

Cough

Should I say: pleased to meet you? I am the lord of Tempest, Rimuru.

I'll say this in advance, this is a message.

Even if you address this messenger, I won't hear you, so keep that in mind」

The face said.

A number of soldiers came at Reihim sword drawn but were stopped by these words.

That's a speech they probably had to hear.

The Knights Templar couldn't hide their surprise.

Whereas Hinata's expression did not change. She was merely awaiting the next words.

Her head was calculating various possibilities. But her expression did not show it. That's just how much control she had over her heart and mind.

「Did the messenger suit your tastes?
Good taste, right? Oh, but I didn't design him.
Don't get any weird ideas.
(Umm~ this wasn't my idea either...)
(Shut up. They might be listening in on this!)
(Is that so. Good thing they didn't hear this)
But let's forget about tastes.
Let's get to the question at hand. I'm wondering how much you're planning to pay me to end this fight.
I'll say this in advance: you started this fight.
I have witnesses so you can't overturn this fact. So what will you do?
Personally, if you apologize for this incident, I am willing to forgive you this time.
But, should you refuse to make amends with "monsters", then we will crush you with our entire force.
Without any reserve, without any mercy, without a second thought we shall crush you.
(Eh? Even if a time to rethink this comes up?)
(Didn't I tell you to shut up? What will you do if they hear you? I won't look cool anymore!)
Which is why, I ask you to carefully consider the next step

That being so... is Hinata there?
This message will only be played if your presence is recognized.
But that aside, here's what I wanted to say.
Well done attacking a person without listening to a single thing they had to say.
A wonderful funeral you planned for me! But, too bad.
I am alive.
The next time you come at me, I will respond with my true power.
But... I want to hold a serious conversation before that.
So I'd appreciate it if you gave it some thought.
If you still desire to fight me after that, then that's that.
Let this messenger know your response.
The ones embedded in his body are the Blood Shadows—I think they are called.

They killed my friends so I cannot forgive them.

So, I killed them and embedded their heads into this guy.

This messenger is also dead. Yet I made him undead so that “they” continue to suffer.

After receiving your reply he will come back to me, so don’t worry about that. Should you decide to dispose of him, he’ll automatically disintegrate thanks to your skill that I analyzed.

But if you choose to only half kill him, that’ll only increase his suffering so keep that in mind.

Currently, I’m headed off to the Demon Lords’ Walpurgis Banquet.

So if you want to talk, decide upon it, and we’ll talk after I return from there alive.

Chances are it’s going to be a week from now, so keep that in mind.

Well then... I’m looking forward to your reply!J

And ending this monologue, the message conclude.

The templars, their mouths agape, looked at their trusted Hinata.

Without being perturbed by it, she met their gaze.

She was busy processing the newly obtained information.

There were a few things worth of note but there was not time for that.

Though he had an aloof attitude, the message’s content could not ridiculed.

The most important point was that “Disintegration” had been analyzed.

Now, should she fight, she probably wouldn’t be able to use it on him.

Perhaps he was only bluffing, but she could hardly depend on such empty optimism.

Her biggest mistake was that she didn’t notice his survival during their last battle.

She felt a sense of... regret! Yes, that rare feeling burned in her chest.

He also mentioned other important things.

When he spoke of making amends with monsters, he must have had the Church’s doctrine in mind.

So he’s probably searching for a chance to make peace with them.

But that’s something that everyone, Hinata included, would describe as naive.

And, lastly,

That, monster Rimuru was most definitely not lying during their last meeting. The fact that he was also a World Traveler and that he reincarnated as a monster.

That... was probably true.

His Japanese was far too natural.

That was the nostalgic Japanese that could only come from that world.

At some point in time Hinata had opened her previously closed eyes. And, without a word, she erased Reihim with Disintegration. If Rimuru's words were true, then quickly erasing him would be his salvation. And,

「Do not be tempted by him. Our creed is absolute. We should pay no heed to some lowly monster!」

She declared to the knights. Though she may have just contradicted herself, that wasn't something she could admit to. That is, if they were to ignore the monster's words, there was no need to disintegrate Reihim. It was because she believed him that she did it, but the knights didn't notice it. She was the "Emperor's Personal Guard Captain" and led the knights herself. As their captain she had to serve as the absolute example. Thus leading the hardened templars was the reason for her previous words.

(Now then, what should I do...)

She wasn't sure she could win this time. Though Hinata fell into melancholy, her face did not show it. What a difficult dilemma befell her! But for Hinata, this was something she could just solve by continuing her calculations. So she thought.

Chapter 86 - Those who move in the dark

After being recognized by the other demon lords without any problems, I returned to the Monsters' Country Tempest.

Coming over here was one thing, but returning was a quick leap via Spatial Movement.

"I came back and the country wasn't there!" Scenario didn't happen and seeing everyone's happy faces put me at ease.

As I ordered, various divisions have dispersed in a defensive formation.

And thus improving their skills, they are even contributing to the safety of the region.

Truly, our country's defenses are so superior to other countries' that they can hardly pose a threat to us.

After all, our average soldiers are mostly B ranked.

Such that surrounding magic beasts and *youma* steer clear.

And while it's great that the vicinity has gotten rather peaceful, I worry that the monsters chased away from here would wreak havoc elsewhere.

I guess we need to investigate that some time.

While thinking these things I brought Veldora and Shion into the city.

When I entered the city, the citizens and the patrolling soldiers bowed on the the edge of the street—opening a road.

Maybe they were practicing while I was away at the Walpurgis Banquet because they moved as one.

Just what are they doing, I thought, and then saw the Department Heads coming over.

And,

「Hither we sought to honor Your ascension to the seats of the demon lords! We are filled with endless joy that You have returned to us!」

Rigurdo exclaimed as the representative.

Well, this has gotten rather embarrassing.

Every time, every single time, his performance gets even more grandiose.

Honestly, I'm happy, but far more embarrassed than happy.

And since every time we have a banquet follow so hasn't nearly every day of this month been spent in festivities? At this rate every week will attract tourists. I guess it's fine?

Our lord (well, me...) had officially become a demon lord.

So I do understand if they wanted to celebrate. Though I guess the humans disagree, right~?

And because of this and that, before returning to my house, we held a banquet.

On the day following my return I decided to hold an urgent meeting with the department heads.

In the mean time, I ordered Souei to observe the movements of monsters in the region.

Souei accepted, albeit added that「There' probably no longer a reason to worry about that」

What does he mean there's no longer a reason to worry about that? Are they all coexisting happily now?

Well, I'd be happy if they were.

Eliminating the brainless monsters is probably a good idea. And besides, since so many of us radiate powerful auras, the chance of a *youma* appearing has decreased.

After all, we need to insure that the human merchants are able to traverse our roads safely.

Moreover, the weaker monsters could also be a threat to the humans. So I guess exterminating the said groups is our only option.

In response to my worries,

「In that case, how about we set up an anti monster barrier along the roads?」

Bester suggested.

And as if planning this in advance,

「Danna, we have succeeded! A magic tool that creates barriers!」

Kaijin exclaimed with a satisfied smile on his face.

Seriously?!

These old geezers are too amazing.

I did know that they were developing this in secret, but it's a real shame that it didn't come in handy during the earlier incident.

But to be able to create test products in less than a month, aren't they just geniuses?

Kaijin, Bester, and I guess Gabil have developed quite a few things already. By now, Kaijin had completely left the smithy to Kurobee and wholeheartedly devoted himself to research.

Well, as someone who represents our entire Development Staff, I guess he can't spend all his time on research.

From what he said, the magic energy concentration around here is now able to gather easily. Moreover, superior auras tends to drift freely around here.

Even the concentration inside the cave, where B+ ranked monsters tend to spawn, has gotten denser. In other words, our country is rather abnormal.

As a result, they have been analyzing the effects of change in atmospheric magic energy concentration on the formation of demon crystals.

It seems that at the same time as magic concentration decreases, "Demon Crystals" tends to appear.

Moreover, as the concentration decreases, the chance of a monster or a *youma* spawning also decreases, thus rendering my worries meaningless.

It's a truly wonderful discovery.

This is crucial for our country to release competitive products.

And as a byproduct of their research, we have now obtained a way to obtain Demon Crystals and have also discovered the creation methods for Magic Stones.

Seems like the Magic Stones I acquired in the Ingracia Kingdom came in handy.

Well, they did tell me that creation of magic stones involved various large instruments, but it truly is an arduous process.

Even if we had discovered the method for creating them, it will take time for us to produce any.

On the other hand, we can easily use demon crystals alone as fuel.

Unlike the more purely concentrated energy sources that the Magic Stones are, using Demon Crystals is easy.

Now, what was recently developed was a barrier inscribed on top of Demon Steel.

It uses the artificial "Demon Crystal" as a fuel source.

It's currently shaped like a cube with a volume of 1 meter. The thickness of the

barrier is 50 cm.

Thus, it's pretty heavy and hard to carry.

But, once you start it, it will naturally absorb magical energy from the surrounding and continue functioning indefinitely.

It would be great if we could reduce it to a single sheet of demon steel, but at least it's easy to use.

So when we put this simple magic circle – we named it “Barrier-kun” by the way – into operation along the 10 km long road we will ensure security along the route.

But I guess adjusting it so that it runs just along the route of the highway is the most praiseworthy part.

I've been told that it took the combined knowledge of not just Bester and Kaijin, but also Shuna and Kurobee.

It wasn't something they've been designing for the last month but something they were imagining for that long.

It's a bit moving.

I quickly gave my approval and had them plan to set it up along the highway.

I altered the order I gave to Souei to include observing the effects the barrier will have.

And so, the Monsters' Country Tempest has been steadily trying to become the center of this world's commerce.

Next, I heard the current state of affairs.

I really should have heard this first, but people speaking out of turn got us sidetracked.

Things have gotten rather quiet.

There have been no changes in the region and no country is taking any visible measures.

I also heard Youmu's circumstances. The King we released is also moving according to our expectations.

It really would be impossible for Youmu, who had never been a king, to control the nobles. So, it might be fun to watch the old king try to befriend us and use us to his advantage.

If he does befriend us, it might come in handy to Youmu later on.

While hearing the report I made this mental note.

Thus the report paused.

Everyone has been trying really hard to secretly resolve all my worries, so I just asked whether there were any new problems.

「Not a problem, but I want to let my brethren know about Rimuru-sama's ascension as a Demon Lord.

Would it be acceptable for me to visit every village as transportation skill practice?」

Gerudo raised his hand and asked.

Now that he mentions it, we've been so busy with the creation of the highway that I have no idea how the High Orcs are doing.

I had heard that the food situation was solved as expected but nothing after that.

I permitted his journey. And,

「Oh by the way. I hadn't mentioned this, but I have been given the Jura Forest as my domain.

Which is why – and I don't think it will happen – but if anyone comes to invade, we'll need to repel them.

Oh and how should I declare my reign over the region? Or should I just leave it as is?」

My words caused everyone to stare at me.

What? Did I do something wrong?

「Umm... the whole forest? Really?」

Rigurdo asked hesitantly.

「Hey, hey, seriously? This area had been treated as neutral zone!

The treants being our acquaintances and them being mostly immobile is not a problem...

But how the secret villages of the Elves react could be problematic.」

Benimaru added.

「Well, that shouldn't be a problem.

Unless they decide to fight us.

I mean, all the rights of the forest have been bestowed upon Rimuru-danna by

the demon lords.

Which is amazing.

Until now, cities and villages have been developing into the forest taking the resources as they pleased.

We have done the same and didn't ask for permission. Because we didn't need to.

But now, even the Elves would have to ensure that they can still continue living in their hidden villages.

They will have to ask permission from Demon Lord Rimuru.

So this will be big you know?」

Kaijin said, full of anticipation.

As he says, no one needed permission to live around here until now.

「But, will that go as you say? They've been living here for so long, so isn't their presence already recognized?」

I asked.

「No, no, the question is: will they come seeking the Demon Lord's protection or choose to live as they please.

Of course, they'll decide that by themselves.

But that would mean that they are opening themselves to an invasion.

If anything, our race will come to greet you. I will let my father know!」

Panicked, Gabil said.

Somehow, I feel like this might become an important event.

Ignoring the carefree Veldora, Shion for some reason has a very proud look on her face.

If it was this important, I wish you'd tell me earlier... not that Shion would have noticed it.

By the way, Shion, this domain was not earned by any of your efforts, you know. Seriously, unlike her secretary-like appearance, she can't do that job at all.

I despaired.

「Fufun! That's only to be expected of Rimuru-sama!」

And other similarly haughty lines Shion said with a proud expression.

In short, in order to get the Demon Lord's protection, you have to come meet

him first.

From now on we will be conducting an investigation of the Jura Forest to find out what kind of intelligent races live here.

Even though we had just finished building the highway we'll be busy again.

Well, we haven't built one leading into the Sorcerers' Dynasty Sarion yet, so we have a lot of work left over.

As for Rigurdo, being sure that guests would come soon, he issued orders to our city's citizens to begin preparations for their welcome.

Seriously, I had expected that becoming a demon lord would be a pain, but to think that I was right to such an extent!

After ending the Department Heads' meeting, I remembered a question I forgot to ask.

Right, did we get a response from Hinata yet?

「By the way, did the messenger we sent to the Western Saint's Church safely deliver the message?

Did we get a response?」

To my question,

「Kufufufufu. My master, of course it arrived safely.」

「Right, the region's defenses are impregnable but we didn't see anyone approach.

We have yet to receive a response.」

Diablo confirmed the message's arrival and Benimaru noted the lack of a response.

Well, they might be still busy thinking.

I wouldn't want to fight Hinata, but that depends on her.

I don't think I would lose now, but I won't be letting my guard down against her.

Honestly, and I know this is impossible, but I would rather they just apologize.

I want to focus on expanding as a country already.

And thus, facing problems the same way I did before I became a demon lord, I ended the department meeting.

* * *

In an unknown land of perpetual night, into a deep burial chamber, a single

beautiful silver haired girl ventured.

Her name was Ruminas Valentine.

She is the ruler of this land and a demon lord known as the Queen of Darkness.

Inside a chamber sealed behind Ruminas' powerful barrier sleeps her beloved girl inside a coffin of holy spirit energy.

There were few people who could venture this far and no one who could dispel her barrier. Or at least there should have been no one...

Ruminas

Her heart throbbing loudly, she proceeded towards the girl's burial chamber.

And the moment she entered she noticed that something was off.

The chamber had been disturbed, and there's a left over smell of another human along with that of her beloved girl.

It was faint but her Vampire nose could not be deceived.

But that was a trivial fact...

Hidden within the burial chamber, the coffin of holy spirit energy had been erased.

Confused for the first time in her life, she couldn't accept what she was seeing.

As a demon lord, Ruminas thought this situation completely impossible.

But, her logical part winning over, she was able to recognize the situation at hand.

No matter how much she wanted to emotionally reject what she was seeing, calm reasoning displayed otherwise.

That her beloved coffin had been stolen.

And soon her expression turned to one of anger...

While screaming her lungs out in anger she released all her hidden magic energy.

At the same moment, the burial chamber collapsed forming a whirlpool of raging magic energy.

One that no being could enter, a space of death itself.

And separate from her displaying her anger, she was calmly analyzing the situation.

Only she could break the barrier erected here.

No, truth be told... ones like her. In other words, Demon Lords could dispel this barrier.

Or perhaps those beings that could rival demon lords in power.

And, it had to have been someone who knew of the holy spirit coffin that was here.

Otherwise, there was no need to enter.

Moreover, they would be unable to achieve their goal while Ruminas was present.

In other words, to take advantage of her absence, they had to know of the Walpurgis Banquet.

There's no way they invaded the moment she was away.

If so... the culprit is...

Ruminas thought.

The current seven other demon lords; should she also include the no-longer demon lords too...?

But after thinking about each one of them, she couldn't find any grounds to suspect any of them.

But.

「Wait a second... aren't I forgetting someone?」

She muttered.

That was the currently dead demon lord.

Clayman.

He was so weak that she had already forgotten about him.

What was that he said before he died?

That... "Cursed Lord" Gazalim was now reborn or something?

He wasn't a demon lord but someone that rivaled them.

And if it's Gazalim, then he would probably know of the Walpurgis Banquet from Clayman.

And if that's the case... then his real objective was to acquire the coffin all along...

「He ordered Clayman to hold a Walpurgis Banquet and sought to obtain the coffin in the meantime...?」

So it didn't matter who called the Walpurgis Banquet.

He manipulated Clayman thinking that if he managed to subjugate any of the participants then that would be great.

So if that's his real objective, then the rest was just for show?

Ruminas' anger turned redder as a sense of humiliation filled her heart. She was certain that her conjecture was correct. Anger towards he who stole her beloved, anger towards the demon lords who kept her away from home. She lamented the fact that she didn't want anyone to touch her beloved and thus kept all the guards away. But perhaps the guards would have not changed the outcome in the slightest. Whichever the case...

「Unforgivable. I won't forgive you. When I find you, I'll tear you limb from limb!」

The dark ruins of the burial chamber were filled with the silver haired girl's screams and her rampaging power. That anger was not at all like the time Veldora had turned her country to ash, as this time her own heart had been torn. And her unfulfilled lust caused Ruminas to change.

《Verified. Conditions have been fulfilled. Unique skill『Lust』has evolved into ultimate skill『Lustful King Asmodeus』》

The Voice of the World declared to the silent Ruminas. And,

「I don't care! I don't care about that!!!」

She shrieked. Evoking one of the ability's skills: Life and Death. She was truly fortunate that there was no life in the near vicinity. In an unknown land of perpetual night resounded the never ending screams of a silver haired girl.

Chapter 87 - The Holy City

A city enveloped in a tranquil light.
A holy city protected by a holy barrier.
This was a high level defense barrier developed through many years of arduous study.
This barrier prevented uninvited outsiders from entry and protected the city for over a thousand years.
It is truly the embodiment of the citizens' prayers.
It can even block sunlight allowing the city's natural light to be regulated. It is thus brighter in the afternoon and darker at night.
The temperature inside the barrier is mostly fixed throughout the year creating pleasantly cool summers and warm winters.
And thanks to the isolated farmlands, they are able to harvest any season's crop throughout the year.
A paradise where no one starves.
Every child receives equal education and every citizen is employed.
A paradise of law and harmony.
Such is the Holy City Ruberius of the Holy Empire Ruberion.

Hinata walked down the path leading to the Great Holy Chamber.
The gentle warmth that enveloped her seemed to sooth her heavy heart.
This country is wealthy.
No one hungers or sleeps in the streets.
Everyone is given a role that they respect.
They wake up at the sound of the morning bell and fall asleep at sunset.
Those with superior abilities help those with inferior ones. And this harmony ensures that the citizens' happy life continues.
A land of equality under god. This reality called the Holy City unfolded before her.
Hinata looked at the faces of nearby citizens.
They all had a tranquil smile on their face.
But, she couldn't help feel that something was wrong whenever she was in the city.
She could transfer from the Grand Cathedral in the Holy City Ruberius to the

Ingracia Kingdom's Western Saint's Church in a split second.

These two cities were connected via a grand magic circuit.

Ingracia's capital was the most advanced city in the world and housed both the Council and the Freedom Association.

Thus, in order to spread the church's teachings there they prioritized the creation of a direct access into the city.

In fact, around six hundred years ago Ingracia Kingdom and the Holy Empire Ruberion exchanged barrier magic for transfer magic and decided to connect their cities.

As a result, rather than on this holy land, they gained the ability to establish the church's headquarters in the Ingracia Kingdom.

Hinata, however, found the holy city to be the ideal and sought to create a society that would not need to fight with neither Ingracia Kingdom nor any other state.

She sought a society where the weak was not devoured by the strong.

However, Ingracia Kingdom and the Holy Empire Ruberion were too incompatible.

And that caused her to feel out of place.

The Free city Ingracia and the Harmonious city Ruberius; truly, they are polar opposites.

And her discomfort only intensified when looking at children's faces.

She could hear children's voices coming from the school built adjacent to the Great Holy Chamber.

Perhaps running late, a few children were desperately running towards the building.

Those who could run faster were grasping the hands of those who were slow.

A common scene that was hardly problematic. Yet Hinata found it uncomfortable.

What would happen in Ingracia?

There was a school next to the Church.

So she often saw children playing outside. What was it like?

At the crack of dawn, the belated children ran out the gates with a smile. Those too slow would not be able to learn.

At that time, those who were quick had the proud look as if they obtained what

was naturally theirs.

What do you think would have happened to these children who would help others like the kids of Ruberius?

Certainly, none of them would make it to the lesson and be yelled by the teacher. Of course, they only had to wake up earlier.

Yet this was a trivial difference.

But for some reason Hinata's discomfort just wouldn't fade.

What was different?

Are those faster not kind? No, that's not it.

Though they ignored the slower kids, they did not make fun of them.

Moreover, the slow kids just sheepishly laughed.

They were having fun even while getting yelled at by the instructor.

In that case, what about here in Ruberius?

The kids all have the same facial expression.

A tranquil smile.

The same one as worn by the adults—satisfaction.

And somewhere within that expression was a sense of abandonment, hence the cause of Hinata's displeasure.

She only started paying attention to this after the Slime Rimuru mentioned his anger regarding the children.

Though it must have been simple nonsense, Hinata unintentionally mulled over his words.

Hinata shrugged off these thoughts.

She couldn't possibly show such an unsightly appearance before the Seven Celestial Sages.

Last time, immediately after being told that Veldora was reborn, she received a report from the Monsters' Country Tempest.

As a result, though the Sages had called for her, for some reason they weren't able to meet with her.

Thus, a week has passed.

That being said, that might have been the first time she had met them as the Seven Celestial Sages. And noticed something she hardly cared about.

Last time, when they were telling her about Veldora, was the first time she had seen them together.

Previously, she would study under each one and move onto the next one immediately after finishing the training.

And, after graduating as a disciple, she had never met them while receiving her orders.

At most, no more than six had gathered at the same time.

That's just how strange these people were.

They've been probably running around the world for some unknown reason.

If that's the case, then Veldora's rebirth is an unimaginably important event.

Since Hinata had never personally endured Veldora's rampage she was not surprised at the news but could still judge its importance based on the response from the other nations.

So she was probably right in delaying the trip to Tempest.

But she couldn't just ignore a demon lord who was reigning so close to humans.

And the presence of dangerous monsters only underlined the urgent need to subjugate them all.

But, was this fellow Japanese who reincarnated as a monster truly a hindrance that needed to be removed?

According to their creed, he was undoubtedly a wicked demon.

So why does she feel so lost...?

Moreover.

(I see, I feel lost, huh...)

Hinata was self-reflecting.

Feeling uncertain was unlike her. Thus mocking herself she hardened her heart.

Right, even she could feel lost.

She lived in order to create a "An equal world without struggle".

A world where children abandoned by their parents could live happily.

Perhaps that was an idealistic and impractical goal. But for Hinata, who was about to resign herself to this fact, the church appeared the embodiment of that ideal.

Since then, Hinata would never doubt the Church's Creed and systematically worked to propagate it.

Unlike her mother who clung to religion, she was at a position where she protected the creed.

And that was the source of Hinata's confidence.

Though she didn't believe in god, she would recognize it as long as it was of use. Achieving one's goal was more important.

Thus, she had never faltered since joining the Western Saint's Church.

And now, for the first time ever, a conflict arose between her thoughts and the church's teachings.

So she decided to seek advice from her instructors.

Satisfied with this decision she found herself standing in front of the Great Holy Chamber's doors.

Without faltering, she opened the door and entered.

Ahead sat her instructors the Seven Celestial Sages.

.

Upon passing through inner chamber she felt the air change.

She was now inside the empire's absolute defense barrier.

This area was isolated from the outside by a barrier that would prevent anyone not invited from entering.

Hinata proceeded forward in confidence.

The path led along the mountain towards an estate. That's where she would meet her instructors.

When Hinata arrived, four of them were already seated.

Four among the Seven Celestial Sages.

「I apologize for the delay. I am truly grateful for meeting with me in spite of your busy schedules」

Hinata greeted them.

She lifted her eyes to see the four calmly nodding.

Their faces hidden behind a mask, she couldn't read their expressions.

「Relax. No need to sit so formally」

「Thanks for coming, Hinata. Are you here about Veldora countermeasures?」

「What a dejected face! That dragon is a natural disaster. Not something we humans can oppose」

「Is something worrying you?」

They asked.

As always, she could not tell which one of them said what, perhaps a single one

said every one of those lines.

That's how strange they are.

Even the instructors said that it's pointless to fight Veldora.

But does that not go against their creed?

When she asked, they responded that『Dragon Veldora is a monster and is also not a monster』.

A dragon is actually a holy spirit and is thus a ball of energy.

Therefore they were nearly intangible beings.

And further, they added,

「That annoying dragon recently joined hands with a newborn demon lord」

「Right. That demon lord massacred Farmas' army」

「Never thought a single being was capable of such a feat」

「An evil dragon and a demon lord joined hands... if we don't proceed carefully, humanity will fall」

Presently, they weren't in a state where they could offer resistance.

But that was not something they could permit.

They couldn't simply consent to an enemy's rampage just because they were strong.

Hinata lifted her head and looked them in the eyes.

And,

「Pardon this interruption, but I will not run away.

Whether a dragon or a demon lord, I shall bring home victory」

She declared.

She couldn't forgive herself for thinking that just because the demon lord was a compatriot she could speak to him once.

Perhaps they insisted that we couldn't handle them out of fear for the demon lord.

Human hearts are weak. Judgment is often clouded by fear.

Moreover,

She found it ridiculous to permit a rampaging being to continue existing.

They should immediately destroy him.

「Don't be conceited, Hinata. Normal attacks will not hurt that evil dragon」

「Even a hero could only seal him!」

「Your attacks could hardly cause it much damage」

「Angering the opponent would lead to further problems. Do you still insist on trying to defeat him?」

But Hinata would not waver.

If he needed to be defeated, then she would defeat him.

「I have come with a request today」

She replied to their questions.

Honestly, she had wanted to seek advice on how to treat her compatriot who was reborn as a monster, but listening to the report that he joined hands with Veldora and massacred Farmas' army caused her to reconsider.

As she thought, humans and monsters cannot coexist. They need to be destroyed before they produce further casualties.

Her heart free of worry, she felt at peace.

And she continued quietly.

「I have come seeking permission to use the spiritual weapon」

She quietly waited for their reply.

The Sages' movements stopped and the room was filled with silence.

Suddenly, boisterous laughter filled the room.

『Fufufu, fuhahahahahaha!!!』

Hinata did no move.

She silently waited for their response.

「She's serious」

「Very well, we have witnessed your resolve」

「Perhaps you can defeat him」

「I'll permit it, this generation's "Hero" Hinata. We will permit you to use the Spiritual Weapon!」

Spiritual Weapon.

That was a weapon reserved only for heroes and developed in secret by the church as an anti-monster weapon.

As an anti-monster weapon it could only be used by someone loved by the spirits—a hero.

Hinata is loved by the holy spirits.

But, having never sought this ultimate weapon she hadn't called herself a hero. Her abilities overwhelmed her enemies so much that she hardly had need for the spiritual weapons...

But not this time.

For Hinata, a hero was something that her original instructor Izawa Shizue spoke of.

A being which was both overwhelmingly strong and overwhelmingly kind.

A being which could make people's wishes come true.

Hinata understood.

She, whose face were a cruel expression could not become an instrument to fulfill other human's hopes.

But this time she decided.

She could not permit the existence of monsters.

Perhaps she could not become the people's hero or grant their wishes... but she could become a sword that would destroy anyone that could do them harm

Even if that was a mistake, she could not allow monsters who would slaughter people without reason to continue existing.

Thus, Hinata called herself a hero.

And she drew a large sword.

One that was larger than she was used to. It was so heavy that a grown man probably couldn't swing it around.

Swinging it as a human would only harm oneself.

Even a professional weight lifter would not be able to lift this sword.

As someone who favored the rapier, Hinata's muscles were not overly developed.

Hinata fought by beating her opponent's speed.

No matter how specialized this weapon was for fighting monsters, it simply did not suit her.

But, with no hesitation, she approached the sword and lifted it with one hand.

With a carefree look on her face, she glanced over the sword.

She could easily swing the tip at the speed of sound and wield the sword as if it was her own body.

Her movements resembled a sword dance.

No problems.

But this was not due to her strength; perhaps a giant could wield it with strength alone.

Hinata was simply using『Weight Manipulation』and『Inertia Manipulation』at the same time.

So this hefty weapon weighed absolutely nothing to her.

And if she increased the weight the moment it made contact with her enemy, she could land a devastating blow.

Furthermore, no matter how fast her opponent, as long as she nullified their inertia she could deflect their blow.

Thanks to her flexible swordsmanship and these skills, Hinata boasted invincibility.

The extra skills included in her unique skill『Usurper』were perfectly managed by the unique skill『Mathematician』.

That was her strength's secret.

Not because of the spiritual weapon.

The sword was the product of many years of the Celestial Sages' research on developing a weapon to counter Veldora...

And Hinata has long ago acquired it.

She did not need the Sages' permission to wear it; she was herself rejecting it.

She convinced herself to only use it when permitted by the Sages.

And they permitted it.

Hinata released her limiter and returned to her true form.

A thin membrane covered her body transforming into armor.

That was the reason why she did not wear any. That is, she was always wearing it.

That was the hallowed equipment, Saint Armor "Holymail".

It was woven from high level spirit power and could only be worn by those who surpassed human powers.

Thus transformed clad in holymail, she had the appearance of a true hero.

Clad in the strongest holy armor, with the strongest anti-monster weapon in hand, she set off.

Chapter 88 - Towards the second encounter

Hinata left the inner mansion.

When they confirmed that her presence disappeared, the four continued their conversation.

「What a pitiful child. She seriously thinks herself a hero?」

「Yeah... she's far too inexperienced compared to the previous one」

「She wouldn't even reach the last one's feet!」

「But it is true that she is the strongest we got」

「But was this fine? To send Hinata without the princess' permission?」

「She'll be angry... but if we send Venus, Saturn, and Sun to comfort her, surely her displeasure won't last...」

「Last time, all seven of us went and she still hasn't completely recovered」

「But Hinata cannot be compared to that person...」

They said, exchanging glances.

Each one was confirming the other,

「We don't know what that being is, but I'm glad it appeared」

「Indeed. Thanks to it, the princess has awakened」

「But we can't leave it as is」

「No matter the cost, we have to recover that person...」

They said nodding.

What the Seven Celestial Sages deemed important was the true hero.

The current representative was far too inept.

Though she was as much a replacement as gathering bits of salt from the table for want of a full salt shaker, she was nonetheless the strongest material they have come across for the past few years.

But her heart was far too weak.

Obtain mental strength and soul that far surpasses that of normal humans.

The weakness of her heart prevented her from achieving this.

She's defective merchandise.

And she doesn't even notice this herself. Also that her flesh has stopped

growing.

She stopped growing two years after joining the church.

With her body frozen at the age of seventeen due to the spirit's blessing, she can no longer age.

Even though she is loved by the spirits to such an extent, she could never get over her trauma.

Cool and logical.

Trying to save the weak—herself included.

But where she lacks the most is emotion.

She doesn't love people.

Never being loved as a child has corrupted her heart.

Receiving the love of the spirits had not awakened her.

Regrettably, they could not expect a further awakening from her.

So as long as she scouted the power of the new demon lord, that would be enough.

「Have we reached an understanding?」

「Of course. If she wins—great, if she loses...」

「We'll declare that she acted on her own」

「Right, and then we will grandly declare our recognition of the Monster Country Tempest!」

Hinata was a disposable pawn.

Good if she won, disposed of if she lost.

And they knew how to avoid taking responsibility.

All was done for their dearest wish.

All was done for the ... shrouded in darkness...

And soon enough the Sages' presence faded into darkness.

* * *

I soon find out that Sakaguchi Hinata has set off towards my Monster Country Tempest.

She's bringing a hundred fully armed Knights Templar with her.

Without doubt, she only chose the strongest knights who would not hinder her in the slightest.

As expected of Hinata.

She immediately noticed that half-baked soldiers would be completely worthless.

But... I thought with regret.

That action identifies us a naturally dangerous existence and rejects any chance for future reconciliation.

Frankly, what is she aiming for in the future?

If you don't seek to understand your opponent, your only option is to destroy them...

But that would inevitably lead to a great war.

Though modern Japanese know how much blood has been shed in the name of god.

In the end, Hinata and the church are moving by forcing their ideals onto others.

Such actions completely disregard what the other party believes or has to say.

I do not believe any justice can be found in these acts.

Does Hinata not understand that?

I did realize she was a person who disregards what others have to say.

If the enemy is a monster, there's no need to listen.

Does she believe that they would be able to display their true power when a war starts?

Moreover...

Just a thought, but I had been expecting her to act according to modern Japanese common sense, but doesn't she completely lack it?

If she came over here when she was 15, does she not know the history of our world?

Moreover, I don't know much about modern education, so how much do they teach these days?

Well, whatever.

At the end of the day, whether you can put your knowledge into practice depends on the person themselves.

Not knowing something is hardly an excuse and one that doesn't matter to us at all.

There's nothing we can do about the fact that she was given great power while still a child.

Besides, she declared us her enemies.

There's no point in saying anything anymore.

I shake my head chasing these thoughts away.

I have to crush my enemy.

I gathered the department heads and went over the situation.

First, Souei reported on Hinata's advance.

On my decree, he had sent spies into major cities of Ingracia Kingdom and Farmas Kingdom.

Obtaining information is the basics of wars.

When we sent an emissary to the church, I also sent spies all the way to the Holy Empire Ruberion.

But, to my surprise, a squad of knights suddenly transferred and departed from Ingracia Kingdom's Western Saints Church headquarters.

Since entering it was dangerous, further confirmation was obtained by the power of gold, so whether the information can be trusted or not...

Seriously Souei... though I taught him the basics of being a ninja, he developed it to suit his own tastes.

Even I, who taught him, am surprised how much it fits him.

Well, in reality, the most important points were taught by Fuze.

Though he probably taught him a bunch of devious things, so it's not like anyone could accomplish this much. I see, I thought satisfied.

Souei sent out Souka and the other ninjas to various countries and is using natives to gather information.

And among the information they acquired was the fact that there were strangely too many Knights Templar in the Ingracia Kingdom.

What is strange about it is the speed at which people move to Ingracia Kingdom from the Holy Empire Ruberion.

No matter how many roads they make or how safe they are, they move far too quickly.

And, more people enter the Church than leave.

In the end, over the course of three days, a hundred templars had set off.

And the decisive evidence was the appearance of Imperial Guard Captain Sakaguchi Hinata.

She's quite famous so information bureaus immediately found out.

The hundred soldiers naturally saddled horses and departed towards Farmas Kingdom.

In other words, they are taking the fastest route towards our country.

They'll be here within two weeks.

With that mind, I should praise Souei for obtaining the information that quickly.

He calmly presented his findings at this emergency department head meeting.

He has become truly reliable.

「As expected, you've obtained crucial data within a short period of time. Keep up the good work in the future」

「No, at this point I still have many things to improve」

When I praised him, Souei thus quietly accepted the praise.

Truly, a shadow.

His beautiful face is completely expressionless.

Now then, using the acquired information we can come up with a plan.

Though we have not been able to confirm that her party is in fact composed of templars, I decided to proceed with that in mind.

In that case, they are an army of 100 A ranked individuals. Led by Hinata.

Unlike the previous 15 thousand army, the current one is overwhelmingly more hazardous.

I am not planning on going out alone this time. Not planning on a suicide, you see.

So what should we do?

I asked the department heads for their opinion.

「How about we cut them all down?」

I won't say who said it, but let's just say that this person is an idiot.

Completely ignoring whether we can or cannot do it, she only mentioned the outcome.

That's why she wished for such a useless unique skill.

「Fight them all head on? If we do that, there will certainly be casualties」

Yup. Benimaru seems to have abandoned prideful thoughts.

He seriously considers abilities and can accurately judge our fighting strength.

Well, he often trains with Hakurou so this is the evidence of his growth.

I always say that we should leave it to our general, but maybe that's actually a good idea.

「How about we use my Hiryyu Division to attack them from the sky?」
「That might be a good idea, but they are templars. Each must be A ranked at least.
Even if we attack from above, we won't be able to pierce through their barrier. We might be able to stop them that way, but surely Gerudo would do better at that」
「As you say. My division is numerous. And if we just need to stop them, they won't be able to harm us all that much」

That's how the conversation proceeded.
Casualties, huh.
Just when everyone was safe and sound. I won't stand to see my friends die. But our enemy is Hinata, and she's dangerous.
When we last fought I was able to run away—my goal, but if we fought to the death I would have certainly died.
Moreover, she didn't go all out.
Presently, only I can oppose her.
I can't imagine myself losing, but I don't know how things will go if the knights will fight along with her.
Moreover, the knights pose a different problem. How should we treat them? Should we slaughter them all or let them go?
They are humanity's guardians blessed by the spirits.
I can't ignore the casualties created by monsters in this world. And protecting the villages and cities is the duty of these knights.
They prevent further casualties. Most of them hate monsters. And these templars are the embodiment of hopes, expectations, and prayers of every victim.
Such are the Knights Templar.
Maybe this time if I can talk to Hinata I can clarify the misunderstanding. But unfortunately, as we are monsters, she treats us as the plague in need of immediate cleansing.
Not that I don't understand their point.
Surely many of them lost friends, family, and lovers to monsters. And it is true that many mindless monsters pointlessly rampage. Monster Country Tempest prevents such casualties.

And, we displaced no monsters from these lands, it seems.
But in some other land a monster may be killing a human right now.
If we massacre all the knights, who would protect those lands?
I can't just ignore my responsibility for those lost lives.
How annoying. It's all because Hinata doesn't listen.
That being said, there's no way to make them trust us or to avoid battle...
Nor are they an opponent we can fight while holding back.
They are anti-monster experts. If we underestimate them we will be killed.
If we win with overwhelming strength maybe we could convince them of our good intentions.
This sucks.
Anyways, I want to win without producing a single casualty.
In that case, a personal duel.
If I defeat Hinata, the knight's will break.
What a pain.
Without knowing her true strength I cannot expect things to go according to plan...

「Alright, I decided. We will win without killing a single knight.
But that's as long none of us fall in battle.
Which is why,
First, the Yellow Numbers led by Gerudo will form a defensive line around Tempest.
Do not permit a single knight to enter our city.
Benimaru, leading the Green Numbers, Crimson, and Yellow Numbers will be stationed inside.
Support whichever section is engaged in combat.
Listen up, Gerudo's group is our primary line of defense.
If the enemy reaches it, annihilate them.
Shion's Yomigaeri.
Gabil's Hiryu.
And, Gobuta and Goblin Riders are our main force this time.
Yomigaeri will engage in battle directly. Even if they can't win, they are immortal so they will slow them down.
Next, Gobuta and the Goblin Riders will support Yomigaeri.

Engage in a hit and run tactic to disturb their movements.
Don't allow them to trap you in so focus on mobility.
Last, Hiryu will engage from the skies.
Rescue the troubled riders and close any gaps in our defense line.
And, engage with the intention of fighting a single one at a time.
It would be good if the templars can witness the whole battle.
Souei will observe the battle from the shadows.
Diablo will avoid engaging directly and observe from the skies.
If you see exceedingly strong knights, I'll leave them to you.
Benimaru, I leave the final defense line to you. Gerudo, obey his instructions.
Also, should the enemy prove far stronger than expected and our chances of victory next to none, Benimaru, immediately begin the retreat.
Escape to High Orc settlements.
If I fall, Veldora will face Hinata.
That is all.」

I decided on what could hardly be called a strategy.
In a one-in-a-million chance that they invade our city, Benimaru's and Gerudo's will protect it.
I made the plan while considering all of their propositions.
I closed my eyes and ran a few battle simulations.
Frankly, Wisdom King Raphael believes this to be the course of action that produces the fewest casualties.
Actually, Raphael doesn't doubt my victory at all.
This whole plan collapses if I have a hard time fighting her or lose.
Is Raphael okay?
I think this every time, but isn't Raphael an exceedingly confident individual?
If anything, Raphael trusts me too deeply.
Well, the Wisdom King trusts my strength. Which I don't trust—hence our greatest difference.
Ah, whatever.
I look at the department heads hither assembled.
They are all looking at me.
And,

「In other words, we decapitate all of them, right?」

「...」

「Just kidding.

In other words, we're fighting without killing any of them and without losing a single one of us.

In the meantime, Rimuru-sama will bring us their general's head!」

Seems like they got it.

For a second there I wondered if they're all ailed in the head.

But if Shion understood, then everyone else did too.

I'll punch the sleeping Gobuta later, so that'll also be fine.

「Now then, just so that everyone understands, I will say it again.

If the enemy is stronger than I expected, if the battle goes poorly, escape.

I leave that decision to Diablo and Benimaru.

Also, don't forget to share information via the Thought Network.

I hope we can all weather this storm safely. That is all!」

「「「Ay, your will be done!!!」」」

They all consented.

Now, we await battle.

In order to assure my victory, I've set some devices up.

These "devices" are nothing major.

Me aside, the department heads will have a hard time if the enemy sets up a holy barrier.

On a one in a million chance the knights erect the holy barrier, we will lose.

These devices prevent the barrier from working.

They were devised thanks to Raphael's analysis.

The simplest such device would purify magical energy using spirits. But, you need a lot of spirit power for that.

And spirits of right affinity are rare. Furthermore, you would need four such high level spirits.

So, what is the alternative?

In the first place, spirits naturally counter magical energy... and there's an easier way to achieve the desired results.

Open up a hole in the barrier.

To do that, create a large tunnel leading out of Tempest.

Of course, the exit to the tunnel is located such that Benimaru can easily hit it with all he's got.

So it's no problem even if they notice the tunnel.

The entrance will be laid at a spot on the battlefield we deem most appropriate. Since the enemy is coming via Farma Kingdom, we can easily predict their path. I don't want any casualties within the forest, so we'll fight them on an open plain.

Other than that, I'm going to be liberal and reinforce the tunnel with Demon Steel.

And that's when I thought of having Veldora guard the tunnels. And we'll have him release his usual aura when the battle starts.

Thus we are prepared to counter the Holy Barrier.

Everything is in order.

Now, I am merely looking forwards towards the second encounter.

Chapter 89 - Different Plans

Hinata is taking a break at a certain location one day's trip away from the monster country Tempest.

And then, the last meeting had commenced.

Judging from the situation, the opponents probably aren't battle ready and they are waiting for a reply.

However, this is a group of monsters, she cannot afford to be careless.

More than anything, even in a battle that will result in a complete victory, to reduce sacrifices even by a little is Hinata's fighting style.

Resorting to anything, even cowardly tricks, this is the natural thought patterns of monsters when fighting.

According to the Church's doctrine, monsters must be killed without sympathy for them. Everyone was affirmed about that.

Naturally, the knights weren't happy about this.

Winning is a certainty, however they also understand that should they lose, this will become a threat to human society.

It's precisely because they can't lose, they believed that this must be achieved through any means necessary.

In this battle, the enemy's kingdom is too large to cover it in a barrier.

Thus, through the use of decoys, they wanted to lure the enemy's main attackers out to the battlefield.

However, if it arouses suspicion, this plan will be jeopardized.

Originally, Hinata proposed a plan to send forth a messenger, but this was opposed by the holy knights and dismissed.

Firstly, even though there is only 100 of them, each holy knight can match a thousand men.

Amongst them, 15 individuals consisting of the captains and their 2 vice captains of the 5 squadrons all desire the title of the strongest holy knight.

Their influence has made a clear distinction between them and the others.

This time, the plan is for 5 captains, their 2 vice captains, as well as 5 escorts to form a cubic barrier.

Measures are taken for the worst case scenario, three captains will form a

triangular barrier, and the effects will still show. For that purpose, instead of a cube, a pentagonal barrier will be activated instead.

Even if the enemy has taken measures and manage to interfere with the erection of the barrier, the location where the barrier will be erected can simply be changed.

The main fighting force will now have 40 less combatants, but in order to neutralize the battalion lured into the barrier, this is the best method.

The plan is simple, the remaining 60 will be used as decoys to lure the enemy into the strategic location.

The fighting spirits of the holy knights are sufficient.

After all, the enemy this time are merely evolved orcs and goblins. For some, they are foes already encountered numerous times in the past, and have already lost the ability to feel fear.

Amongst them, there are also evolved Lizard men and evolved ogres, anyone aside from the main forces will probably not be able to match their strength.

What they should be wary of is the existence of the arch demon.

While Hinata whom they worship slays the enemy demon lord, they must hold back the other monsters to make sure they don't interfere.

Their biggest obstacle here is believed to be the arch demon.

However, they encouraged themselves there's nothing to be afraid of. After all, they're wearing spirit armor.

The spirit they contracted with made the materialized armor easily adjustable, called holy mail.

Hinata is also wearing it, albeit inferior to true holy mail, it is still better than average equipment.

Hardly being able to feel its weight, it's a superior kind of armor that feels as light as feathers.

The weapons they wielded are also articles used to vanquish evil, a weapon that can nullify resistances and deal true damage.

(Yuuka: Pure damage for you Dota players)

It is rare to require this much power in a single battle.

The equipment used were so powerful to the extent when subduing an arch dragon, 10 people with such equipment is sufficient.

It could be compared to a country's army of 10,000 elite soldiers, but compared

to the monsters they can't hope to make a comparison.

The holy knights were scattered in various places, but all the knights that could be contacted with were gathered.

For the holy knights, this was one subjugation war they could not possibly lose.

Hinata looked at the knights while in thought.

Must we really fight this battle?

Usually, she harbors no doubt about decisions made till now. Although she had already decided this in the holy capital, a sliver of doubt had sprung forth.

It was her first time experiencing this.

Firstly and foremost, the predicted outcome of the battle. The predicted results seemed too good, too convenient.

The forces on this side are few in number; in an open spacious field this would prove to be inconvenient.

On the contrary, the enemy can easily make use the vast terrain, making escape difficult.

The terrain is simply too convenient.

However, to predict all this would simply be impossible. It feels as if she was dancing on the palm of someone's hand, but she dismissed it as she's probably thinking too much.

To begin with, the opponent had thought that Hinata was staying in the holy kingdom Ruberius. Yet they had taken no measures against this.

The existence of teleport gates are a secret, they even conducted the practices at the wilderness around the outskirts of the Ruberius kingdom just in case.

TN Note: ...yea um Hinata, hate to break it to you but I'm pretty sure the demon lords and the dwarves had already been using teleport gates for quite some time now...

There's no questioning this, her whereabouts had been found out. She had confidence in her actions as she did them carefully and cautiously.

But, even so...

If she trusted her intuition, this is a dangerous place to be at.

Even though this is an irrational way to think, it can't be dismissed.

Thus, Hinata stopped thinking and opened her mouth.

「Attention!」

Hearing this, the holy knights stopped talking and focused on Hinata.

Hinata, looked at each and everyone of their faces and said,

「I'm going to give you your commands now.

Decoy team!

It's likely the predicted battlefield location is a trap.

By chance, any disturbance to the activation of the barrier is a disadvantage.

However, we will deliberately go along with the flow of the opponent's strategy.

We will deploy the barrier in order not to arouse suspicion in the enemy.

However, there will be no captains, and the vice captains will take their place.

The captain and the escorts will defend the vice captains with their life on the line.

However, there's no need to think of anything else other than the maintenance of the barrier.

Acts of hostility in order to protect the barrier will be permitted.

It will be great if we could fight as planned. But if we are to be scattered due to a preemptive strike, fight back at full force. I will say this again, don't stubbornly try to put up the barrier, everyone's survival is top priority.

Depending on the assailants, permission to stop maintaining the barrier and join the fight is granted.

For the barrier group, take into consideration that the enemies will be scattered.

Central decoy troops, you guys, rely on the assistance of the barrier.

And don't overconfident try to take on a surprise attack head on out of pride.

Lure the opponent towards the playing field, where we will claim victory.

Take into consideration that your own powers may end up annihilating your comrades.

In addition, while you guys act as the decoy I will go slay the enemy general.

Do not ever be careless! Take into consideration that there will be no reinforcements, then act! 」

Yuuka: That's one long speech.

She trusted her instincts, and gave out the orders.

Either way, this is their only fighting force.

Any other battle forces apart from this one will only end up as a hindrance.

The troops conducted another meeting to review the elaborate maneuvers after certifying the role of each holy knight.

Any signs of cockiness had instantly disappeared from their eyes.

* * *

It has been two weeks since the scheduled meeting with Hinata.
If it's Hinata, we thought a surprise attack might be a good idea; she even dutifully let out a fireball explosion in the sky to let us know.
She's either extremely confident, or an complete idiot.
Well whatever.

Here we will proceed as planned.

.....I thought of this and even though I still had time before the battle, I can't understand what's what.

My head somehow feels....

What is going on, why is this happening?!

I am at a lost for words at the spectacle before me.
This is what happened.

TN Note: Don't ask us what this chaos is all about...not even we're 100% certain as well...

As expected, 60 holy knights came to attack.
This is good. This is because it's all going according to plan.
However, if they've came to attack us, it means they had a specific battlefield.
Moreover to dig this tunnel into the open field took much effort and hardship, but there was a slight complication; I virtually declared that I will set a trap here, and yet they went and triggered it.
The opponent might also have a trap here, and if we take the bait things would get painful.
Mentally, 『I'm sorry Veldora! It's your turn, or it might not be』, I apologized, and moved to another location.

TN Note: Please check who or what is Suman.
Yuuka: Many others and I laughed so hard at this XD
Silly bear.

TN Note:....I see why Clown san gave me a Japanese lesson now...wait, whom are you referring to when you said "Many others" ?

The place where Hinata and I will face each other.
This is why; a battle has commenced on the side.

The first notable thing was the situation where the Yomigaeri clashed with the Holy knights.

「Ba, bakana! Our attacks aren't effective against them! 」

BAKANA-Impossible, but in a very intense and dramatic way.

「They aren't even undead, what is happening? 」

The Holy knights spoke in surprise.

Instead of replying, with knife in hand, the soldiers of Yomigaeri swiftly wounded the holy knights.

It appears they used their own body as the decoy in order to deal a blow to the holy knights.

TN Note: So they're like deadpool without the mental disorder, using only a knife, and can even come back from the dead. Nice.

Using their immortality to fight, it's looking impressive so far.

And just like this, the holy knights braced themselves as they witness what they believed to be a one-sided development (game), however...

The holy knights collapsed in less than 3 minutes

It is as I expected, the Yomigaeri were able to corner them in just 3 minutes.

Due to the major difference in potential, it's impossible to think that the immortals will lose.

The results were that the Yomigaeri resurrected intact, and the paladins had fallen.

The wolf riders swiftly collected the fallen holy knights, binding their shadows and sealing off their movement.

「Hehe, holy knight-san, from the moment you attacked us, it was already our win. In addition, this knife is coated with a powerful sleeping drug.

Or did you previously prepare an antidote? You know it's not going to resist anything other than poison right? 」

Thus, the lower ranked soldiers explained with a smug look.

Seriously.

The holy knights chuckled in response to their preaching and my mind had fallen into a state of confusion.

Of course, that wasn't the only situation in the war.

In this clever scheme, only the Yomigaeri had such an effect on the opponent. The subsequent groups attacked without being careless and without even receiving a single blow.

Even so, the enemy was donning shiny armor to begin with; almost covering their entire body, hurting them was difficult.

It was precisely because they lowered their guard after delivering the fatal blow, that the Yomigaeri were able to put a scratch on them.

However, the dozen individuals who managed to leave the battlefield with a scratch evaluated this.

To fight the holy knights, a trinity formation was used to support them.

The Yomigaeri as the main, the Hiryu and wolf riders in turn as support.

By cooperating in perfect formation via communicating with thought transmission, they were in par with the holy knights.

They were able to greatly reduce the enemy numbers at first because they had set the foundation and were able to cooperate well.

Or rather... huh?

Was there such a strategy?

While I was having my duel with Hinata, isn't the fighting location rather isolated?

While I was thinking this, Shion sent a signal.

Diablo who was hovering in the air on cue made a wicked smile and nodded.

(Kufufufu. Leave it to me. However, please take responsibility Shion-san.)

Parting with such words, he flew away happily.

Huh? Were you not supposed to be monitoring from above?

About that gleeful smile earlier, the holy knight squadron must have something in mind. Perhaps, they were planning to put up a barrier.

Thanks to the monitoring network via Souei's shadows linked with thought link, a wide range of information regarding the situation of the war is flowing in.

That's why, there was no need for Diablo to move anywhere...

While I was thinking about this, Shion jerked her chin up in a kind of cute yet flirtatious motion.

Earlier, Gobuta and Gabil looked at each other,

(Um, It feels like this is slightly different from what was discussed during the

strategy meeting, what...)

(That's why! I'm not sure why, but I have the feeling I was supposed to be fighting someone stronger?)

Gobuta and Gabil questioned this.

Right.

I already thought something was amiss. I'm glad, I am not wrong.

Even so,

(Are you guys idiots? Work quickly and do as you're told, or do you want me to test my new masterpiece (dish) on you?)

I was convinced yet that's what Shion thought.

No, I might not be convinced,

(I understand! We wanted to go all out anyway. Of course, I'll pass on the dishes!"

(Then get a move on Gabil-san. If you don't go over I'm going to get you.)

And he went away in a hurry.

No, you guys aren't wrong.

But, it's strange. For some reason even with Gobuta and Gabil, the flow of the battle had taken a turn for the worse.

Then, while those two were joined together, Souei and his 5 subordinate started to make their move.

They matched the number of the small holy knight squadron of 8 individuals perfectly. Apparently, the 8 of them had decided to suppress the opposing small squadron.

Wait, huh? Shion, since when did you separated? It wasn't this kind of strategy?

(Shion, I have reached the location, I'll become the opponent of this one squadron.)

Souei's thought had just been transmitted.

Ah, is that so. Souei has also have been convinced... well, Souka and co. has already returned and will be going to support Gabil was what I thought at the time.

Yuuka: Up to this point I just feel like a blind kid playing football. What is going on anymore~

Smoggy: I think Souei's group is attacking the barrier-erecting team.

Thus, they split into 3 directions, but the enemy still had two forces left. I alone would be able to do this. I am willing to do it! I have to say it. Now then, where are the rest of the troops?

(My lord, please give me permission to commence attack!)

(Ranga, you're up)

(Yes! My body feels light. I want to have a light exercise after waking up.....)

I wonder what's with that.

It's dangerous to let this guy loose! It seems this is what my risk prediction notified me.

Well, it's probably not me who's going to be in danger, but my enemies...

(O, ok! But don't be too reckless. I'd prefer if you don't kill them.....)

(Leave it to me!)

Ranga let out a happy howl, and gleefully ran off.

Now, I can only pray for the safety of the Holy Knights. Good luck! Though the fact I cheered for the enemy is a secret.

Shion looked at them with satisfaction, and licked her lips.

I glanced at the pink tip of her tongue, but there was something suspicious about that wetness.

Yuuka: This really is turning into an ero novel.

Smoggy: A lust for battle perhaps?

She turned around and faced me,

「Now then Rimuru-sama, I'm be going on ahead! 」

Nodding as hard as possible, she jumps out with great force using both feet and flew at a momentum as if she was trying to pierce the heavens.

Ah, good luck... eh, what?

It's already been a series of events now.

The reason my head is going crazy, I wonder will I ever know?

Yuuka: I'm literally banging my head against the table at this point.

Smoggy: Make sure to fix it afterwards ok? oh, and there's a 'slightly'-used ice block to cool down yours head afterwards in the fridge.

One way or another, the battle plan seems to be largely revised.
Indeed, a 1 vs 1 situation with Hinata was brought about as intended.
The environment surrounding the area was made so that no one can interfere with the fight.

Even so... Hm? I thought I didn't plan for it to become like this?

Let's change my viewpoint for a moment.

Even so, I probably had the feeling to schedule things to turn out like this from the start.

I also changed my emotions, the situation is ideal.

There is no problem.

I said that to myself, I went to meet Hinata.

Yuuka?: WHAT YOU HAVEN'T MET HER YET?! WHAT WAS I EDITING JUST NOW THEN?
Smoggy: Rimuru's observation of the battle?

Hinata looked like she had something to say, but she had a bitter look on her face.....

Suddenly, she burst into laughter for she had made a breakthrough.

「Is that so, yes that's right. In the end.....

I'm probably thinking too much. Am I correct, am I wrong.

Let's settle this with the most ancient way.

Will you accept this? Single combat.

Slime demon lord.....no, Rimuru.

I admit this. At this point, petty tricks are pointless.

The tactics that I planned vigilantly, all wasted.

This is the first time I feel like laughing at my own powerlessness.

Based on the situation we're already gradually losing, meaning that this fight here is probably also planned by you.

But, if you want me to accept your thoughts, show me and beat me.

If you triumph over me, I'll listen to what you have to say!

Not just you, I will believe that monsters and humans can come to a mutual understanding.

Of course, if you feel like I still can't receive your thoughts, I'll just die fighting to the bitter end. 」

Without a hint of confusion in her eyes, Hinata stared at me.

Her facial expression, losing all acrimony, made her look younger than she actually is.

No, based on look alone she looked like a high school student.

Compared to the previous Hinata who was like a grown-up, this Hinata gives off a more natural feeling.

Throwing away everything that she shouldered, she simply wanted to challenge me.

It is as she said, based on the situation I had already won. However, unlike what she thinks, there is still a reason for me to fight her.

This is a situation I desired, there is no reason for me to refuse.

I'm doing this in order to open her eyes.

「Ok, I accept your challenge! I'll make you open your eyes!」

At that moment, a promise was exchanged between the two.

The presence or the absence of the promise made no difference.

Words are no longer necessary, the fight between the two signaled the beginning of the end.

Chapter 90 - vs Holy Knights part 1

Kufufufufufu.

The Demon let out an evil laugh.

With its deep crimson hair fluttering, it gently descended in front of the Holy Knights.

Spreading its bat-like wings wide, it was something that could truly be called the embodiment of evil.

「It's a pleasure to meet you all. Now, let us begin the test without delay. Whether or not you are worthy to be my opponents...」

The Holy Knights, after witnessing its appearance, immediately scattered and took up a defensive stance.

They don't have the leisure to erect a barrier. They need to make a split-second decision.

Their cautiousness was due to the arrival of the Arch Demon. Unfortunately there are no other teams that had the capability to erect a barrier.

However, this situation could be considered fortunate if you look at it from a different point of view.

The opponent that came before them was only one in number. And in this squad was Arnaud Baurman, the strongest Holy Knight that leads an undefeated party. Arnaud sprouts a fearless smile and encourages his companions...

「Don't be afraid! Their enemy is only one. Even though it's an Arch Demon, it's not a threat to us!」

True.

They already have battle experience against Arch Demons from the past.

When fighting the heretics, there were some who could summon Arch Demons using the High Demon Summoning. Until now they had never lost once against these people.

For Arnaud, he was confident he could come out victorious, even in a one on one battle.

「Everyone, spread out! Two sub leaders shall support me; the other members

will set up a simple Holy Barrier. Begin!!」

The Holy Knights reacted immediately to Arnaud's instructions.

They were the movements of well-trained first class warriors. Having lived through scenes of carnage many times, they were confident in their abilities as the fort that fights to protect the human race.

Without hesitation they dispersed. They moved into a pentagram formation and erected a Holy Barrier that confined the commander and the two sub leaders with their opponent, the red haired demon, inside the barrier.

But eerie as this was, during that time there was no movement from the demon. Sprouting an evil smile, the demon looked on happily at the Holy Knights' movement.

「Oi, What's wrong? You're not going to interrupt us?」
Arnaud asked, trying to provoke it.

「Why would I do such a thing? You are all working hard. I will not interrupt you.」

A response that was clearly underestimating them.
Arnaud stood with composure facing his opponent, but inside he was truly boiling with anger.
As an expert-class knight, he's trained himself to have control over his emotions in these situations, as not to lose his sight in anger. But the opponent's response was humiliating.
How can an Arch Demon be so impudent! Arnaud thought this, and being extremely thorough, he made sure to keep it as just a thought.

There was no doubt that this was a threat to his troops.
He was trained as a Holy Knight, so he had a clear grasp of it's true strength. In their present condition, five people would be enough to take down an Arch Demon. Provided that the opponent was a common Arch Demon.
Arnaud calmly observed the demon in front of him to measure his opponent. The opponent in front of him now was not just a common Arch Demon. With an air of composure, it stood there elegantly. The cloth it wore was elaborate, as if it signified it was not just a lowly demon.
The purpose of these clothes were to show that it's level was high.

Where it's concerned, the possibility that this demon has been "named" is very

likely.

A named demon in itself is a big threat. And yet, his opponent was a high ranking named demon.

He could not be careless.

Even if he's angry at the opponent before him, he can't afford to lose his composure and cloud his own judgment.

Arnaud unsheathed his sword.

「Oh? Are your preparations finished?」

「Yes, sorry to keep you waiting. Shall we begin? But before that there's something I want to ask you... your name.」

To the demon's question, Arnaud answered.

And he took that opportunity to ask the Demon his name.

Although he might not get an answer, if he does, he could know whether the opponent was “named” or not.

The opposing demon,

「Oh! How rude of me. My name is Diablo.

Even though this name was granted to me by the His Highness [1] Rimuru, I forgot to introduce myself.....

I'm still so inexperienced.」

[1] Gender Neutral actually

Happily, it introduced itself.

Arnaud felt a cold sweat drip down his back.

Dangerous. His instinctive alarm rang at it's maximum.

Introducing itself without any hesitation. It means that the opponent was an existence that was already gifted with a name.

If the master dies, it's “Named” status will disappear as well. Also, if it introduced itself with it's real name, then that name can be used to manipulate it. Therefore, not introducing oneself was common sense among demon-kin.

So it was named by the Demon Lord Rimuru. It seems that the demon was telling the truth.

Was it even feasible for a Demon Lord to grant a name to the likes of an Arch Demon? But right now it was useless to harbour such doubt.

Even so,

Arnaud prided himself as the one called the Strongest Holy Knight.

He was the right hand man of Hinata, the Leader of the Holy Knights. And he had confidence in his place as No. 2.

Supported by such confidence, Arnaud smiles fearlessly.

「 My name is Arnaud Baurman, the strongest Holy Knight.

Engrave it into your soul, the name of the person who going to destroy you.

Enjoy your trip to hell!」

At the same time he declared that, he performed a Spiritual Power Release and activated his Spirit Armament.

Instantly, five colors of light dazzlingly glistened and wrapped around Arnaud's body. He was a Holy Knight who possessed the five attributes of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Space.

For a normal person, possessing two attributes was rare, but he was loved by five.

His title as the Strongest Holy Knight wasn't just for show.

During this time, the other Holy Knights also performed a Spiritual Power Release. Each were clad in armour of their own attributes.

In the middle of the shining multicolored lights was a shining pentagram.

A simple-type Holy Field was cast.

It wasn't full powered due to the short amount of time to perform the ceremony... but with five Holy Knights, it was effective enough.

Inside the barrier, besides the two skilled Holy Knights, was the strongest one, Arnaud.

Against an Arch Demon, there shouldn't be anything to fear.

Fortunately, Arnaud held in his hand a new type of armament, the Demon Slayer: a supreme sword made by the Seven Celestial Sages solely to fight against demons.

Against the flesh, the sword was endowed with the ability to tear apart the magic power in the monster's magic power configuration, so that it can't reconfigure again.

In other words, it can suck out the opponent's magic power.

This weapon was developed with the purpose to inflict damage against

“Dragon Types”.

It was the only sword that had been developed to have the same power as Hinata’s sword. The decision to equip Arnaud with it was correct.

With this sword, any type of demon would surely be destroyed.

At that time, Arnaud had absolute confidence in his weapon, but...

「Well then, let us begin the test.」

The demon casually said so.

And the meaning of those words were quickly understood.

「U, Uwaaaaaaa!! Don’t come, stop it, don’t come!!」

「Hiiiiiii! He-help!!」

Etc. The members stumble where they stand while unanimously shouting. As Holy Knights, these members should have been accustomed with this kind of thing.

Just what happened?

Arnad couldn’t understand. This-this overwhelming fear was...

The coercion released by the demon before him.

It simply unleashed its suppressed Demonic Aura. That’s all.

「Oh my? Only three people were able to pass the test?

Well, I offer you my praises. To be able to endure my『Demon Lord’s Haki』...

I will shall permit you to be my personal opponents!」

The Demon excitedly declared.

The Pentagram Barrier disappeared in an instant. The other Holy Knights, whose minds had snapped, didn’t have enough energy left to maintenance the Holy Field.

Arnaud was sweating bullets. Trying to wipe it off, he couldn’t even keep up. He was desperately trying to comprehend the current situation.

Unbelievable. He didn’t want to accept it.

The demon before him, just now... what did it say? Certainly it had said『Demon Lord’s Haki』...

He’d never heard of such an ability. With it’s aura release alone, it reduced the Holy Knights to this powerless state. Even for a Demon Lord, that shouldn’t be possible.

No. It might be possible for one legendary class of Demon Lord...
He didn't previously think it was possible for a "named" to be of that class.

「You....., The heck..... are you?」

Trying to squeeze out the words, Arnaud asked in a hoarse voice.
Mustering all his willpower, he kept his fear from showing.
Calmly he drove away his negative thoughts. Somehow, he succeeded in maintaining his composure.
With Arnaud like that...

「Kufufufufufu, I am Diablo. The faithful servant of Rimuru-sama.
If I perform brilliantly this time, the one getting the seat of first rank will be me.」

Such an answer came.
In addition, making him dumbfounded.

「While I'm at it, allow me give the answer to your next question.
I am not an Arch demon like you had previously said.
But a Demon Duke. Even though the difference is slight, please don't make that mistake again.」

It added that in, more words of despair...

「It's over, everything is over.....」

The female aid Sofia bent down, and began to weep like a child.
Her mind has also snapped.
Demon Duke... that was the legendary existence.
It was ranked higher than a self-proclaimed Demon Lord.
Their previous appearances in this world were not documented, so it couldn't be confirmed. But this legendary demon now certainly exists.
Just like a Common Spirit can't be compared to a Great Spirit Class. And a Great Spirit Class can't win a fight against a King Spirit Class, even if several of them banded together.

「Oh? What are you doing? You have passed my test but you don't seem happy in the slightest!」

The demon called out to the female aide whose mind had snapped. This situation never crossed Arnaud's mind.

While shedding tears she tried to run away, desperately.

To the demon who had called out to her, she was unwilling to make eye contact and shook her head in denial.

As a Holy Knight, she was a brave and dependable aide that survived situations of great peril before. But for the first time, she was showing signs of fear.

She had great knowledge in Demonology, as a countermeasure against the heretics. Because It's best to know your enemy. Not only that, but she also studied Summoned Demons and Demon Summoning.

Because of that, she was very familiar with Demonology.

The fact that this woman was frightened stiff was proof enough that the existence before them was in fact, a Demon Duke.

Therefore, measures must be taken against that.

「Can you still fight, Bacchus?」

He asked his other aide.

His reliable partner and trusted right-hand man.

Bacchus nodded with a pale face. To overcome this crisis with just them two they must make a breakthrough.

After linking with Hinata, this demon would meet its end.

Arnaud gathered up the resolve and concentrated on stirring up his willpower.

「Oi! Do you have to torment my aide and subordinates? Leave them alone! Your opponent is me!」

Arnaud shouted and conducted his attack with all of his might.

From Arnaud's left palm, a mass of light was discharged.

That was the Holy Cannon.

Among the magic types that Holy Knights are fluent in, was〈Divine Magic〉. It was a simple type of magic and the effects depend on the ability of the user. The attack has holy attributes and was able to inflict damage to any type of monster.

However.

The demon caught the ball of light and crushed it in its palm like it was nothing.

「Kufufufufufu. This is quite painful. My palm has gotten burnt. Then, next is that person's turn?」

The demon said in a calm manner, like nothing happened. However, Arnaud's true aim wasn't to damage it with the Holy Cannon. While the opponent was taking the attack from the Holy Cannon, Bacchus took a roundabout path to get at it from behind and struck it in the back with his Great Axe.

The Great Axe was called a Demon Killer, a magic weapon used to cut down Devils.

Even a Demon Duke couldn't avoid taking damage from that attack. Moreover, the attack didn't stop there. At the same time Arnaud fired the Holy Cannon, he also prepared his own Demon Slayer.

〈Spirit Beheading〉was an ultimate technique using the basic technique of 〈Fighting Sprit〉. By cladding the weapon in Fighting Spirit it can cut down anything.

Fighting Spirit and Magical power can be applied on various techniques, but... Arnaud was the strongest Holy Knight. He clad his sword in his Fighting Spirit, and it glistened in fives colors.

So, converting his five attributes of Spirit Power into Fighting Spirit, he fused them together and with it, clad his sword.

The Genius Arnaud.

It was because of this special technique that Arnaud was called the Strongest Holy Knight.

「Shut up, monster! Eat this and die! Ether Break (Kanji: Five Colors Spirit Virtuous Sword)!!」

A flash from Arnaud's sword runs along the ground in a line. By using the Earth Spirit's 『Weight Manipulation』, the user can decide on the swords desirable impact.

At a speed that transcended the speed of sound, the sword's edge reached Diablo.

The strike was clad in Holy Attributes, an absolute killing power against monsters, along with the attribute to crush evil.

A deadly sword that should cut down an Arch Demon with a single strike. It was impossible for even a Demon Duke to be uninjured.

Not to mention he dealt the blow at the same moment it was being attacked from behind. A perfect surprise attack.

Arnaud had no doubt it was the opponent's certain death.

However, at the very moment Bacchus' Great Axe would clash with Diablo's head, Diablo lightly tapped his toe to the ground.

With just that, the ground was upheaved and Bacchus, who was approaching from behind, was blown away into the air.

Even so, Arnaud's sword, exceeding the speed of sound with its imagined trajectory would still cut the nape of Diablo's neck. It couldn't be stopped.

He can do it! Arnaud was convinced of the victory he played out in his mind and put all of his strength into his hand that was grasping the sword.

At the same time, he lightens the weight of the sword and then reverses it, driving it towards his target with double the power.

Grasping the sword, he doubled its weight by several times by abruting the generation inertia from gravity's force.

This technique's trait also doubled the sword's momentum just before it collided with the enemy.

For someone seeing this technique for the first time, it was impossible to evade it. Arnaud had certain belief in his victory. You could say it was a matter of fact. But, unfortunately... from the very beginning Diablo had no intention of evading it.

Arnaud's sword cut through the barrier Diablo had erected, and cut Diablo's body.

He felt the resistance. But...

Arnaud immediately ran to Bacchus' side.

He confirmed Bacchus' condition. It turned out that Bacchus was alright and was able to stand.

Feeling relief, he switched his focus back to Diablo.

「Kufufufufufu. I see. What a wonderful technique.

Especially the sudden acceleration the moment it makes impact. Even I had difficulty seeing it.

And above all else... that attack that incorporates various attributes. Few would be able to withstand that attack.

Splendid, truly splendid!」

He began praising Arnaud's sword art.
But Arnaud doesn't feel the least bit happy hearing it.
Obviously. Because clearly the demon wasn't suffering any damage after taking his sword strike.

「Oi..... You didn't suffer any damage at all?」

Though he didn't want to ask, the words unconsciously slipped from his mouth.

「Oh? Does it seem that way to you? That is just an overestimation.
I planned to offset only the Holy attributes with my magic barrier, but unfortunately I felt your strike.
It seems my magic power had been deprived, just a little though.
Thanks to... your sword; It seems to possess the ability to steal the opponent's magic power.
I overlooked it. But even so, it is also wonderful!」

What it was not enough?
It's like it didn't receive any damage at all from the technique.
This wasn't a joke. That ultimate move definitely hit it.
An attack that possess various attributes and can easily pierce through several layers of defense barriers.
And despite that...
That attack was supposed to be the decisive blow. Arnaud's chance of victory was nonexistent.
And acting as the final blow to Arnaud were these merciless words from the demon:

「That's right. With this level of damage, I need to receive about 4.000 hits before I will be annihilated.
But... a point of advice, I can recover about 40% of that damage in 1 hour.
How is that? There is still some hope for you.
Now then, shall we resume again?」

So it said, while spreading its hands.
Next to him, Bacchus gave up with a sigh.

「Hey, Arnaud, It's impossible. We can't hold out like this.
Though this might be better than doing nothing at all...
I'll buy you some time, so please call Captain Hinata.
That's a Captain's class with inhumane power, it's not an opponent we can
fight.」

He whispers to Arnaud.

「No, I will buy you time. You.....」
「You Fool. Your feet are quicker than mine!
Above all, there's hope if you and Captain are together.
It is no good if it's me!」

Bacchus shouted and pushed Arnaud away.
Arnaud, hearing those words, bit his lip and started to run.
But, the reality was cruel.

「Kufufufufufu. Oh my! Where do you think you going?
My mission is to hold you all off here. I will not allow any of you to get past me.」

Forced to stay? For a moment he didn't understand what it meant by that, but
there in front of Arnaud, his companions who were previously on the ground,
were now blocking his way.

「You guys, step aside!」

Arnaud shouted, but the demon pointed him to the harsh reality before him.

「Oh my! Your companions still seem intent to play.
I only asked them if they would be so grateful to betray their ally?」

So it said. Arnaud looked at his companions properly.
They each wore a blank expression, as if they were in some sort of trance.

「So-Sofia! Stop it! Come to your senses!」

Arnaud turned to face Bacchus who was vomiting blood while shouting to the
other aide Sofia, who was sobbing in front of him.
She had the same trance-like look on her face as the others, standing across
from Bacchus who was holding out his sword.

「You bastard..! What have you done to my companions!!!」

Arnaud glares at Diablo and shouts.

The demon replies with a sneer.

「Kufufufufufu. What are you implying.....

Nevertheless, I only tempted them.

Because they feared me, they seem to have accepted it easily.『Temptation』, that is.」

Arnaud suddenly realized.

There was a characteristic of monsters that were Demon-kin called the Temptation skill.

To mesmerize the target. An ability that can manipulate someone's mind as it likes. But, he'd never heard of a Demon that had the ability to mesmerize a Holy Knight.

To save someone under this mesmerization you either have to defeat the demon who is manipulating them... or kill the person.

To sum it up, the only thing that can be done now is to evade his companions attacks and defeat Diablo. If not, the only option left was to kill his comrades.

He can't go easy on the Holy Knights. Even subconscious, these guys were pragmatic. Someone who is mesmerized moves their body subconsciously. This was too much... their awareness was cursed through temptation.

This opponent was... This Demon was... clearly a Disaster Class. A threat that stood on equal grounds with a Demon Lord.

Bacchus who was holding off Sofia, was strangled from behind by two Holy Knights.

And just like that he lost consciousness. He had remained fainted, but now that meant Arnaud remained alone.

To get through this situation alone... was not an impossible feat.

Furthermore...

The red haired Demon's gold oblong pupil glistened a bewitching hint of red as he held up Sofia with one hand.

Suddenly, Sofia's beautiful blonde hair turned a deep crimson red, as if it were soaked in blood.

She showed an ecstatic look on her face.

Her hair turned back into blonde.

He looked at her suspiciously. Sofia lost consciousness and fainted.

No way! His worry suddenly turned frantic.

「Kufufufufu. whoops, that was dangerous. I unintentionally turned her into a Fallen.

If I do such things, there's no way Rimuru-sama will give me the seat of first rank.」

Leaving Arnaud with these uncertain words, Diablo turns his head in his direction.

What he'd just seen was the demon making the Holy Knight Sofia into its companion.

He didn't want to imagine what would have happened if it succeeded. The demon was for some reason concerned about his actions and stopped halfway through. Thus, Sofia was saved.

But it was still too early to be relieved.

After all...

「Well then, Let's resume. Launch whatever attack pleases you.

Until I get tired, I will be your opponent!」

Left alone without a single reinforcement and surrounded by five Holy Knights. It was impossible to escape this.

Even so, Arnaud refused to give up.

His last hope was held in Hinata defeating the enemy's boss and coming to his aide.

Arnaud prepared himself.

The curtain on "Arnaud's hopeless fight" has risen.

TL Note:

- Haki = If you watch or read One Pi*ce you will know the meaning, can be translated as Ambition/Force of Will.
- Holy Knight can also read as Saint Knight/Sacred Knight.
- 悪魔公 (デーモンロード) Clown-san Translates this as Demon Official, I translate it as Demon Duke.

Chapter 91 - vs Holy Knights part 2

At the same time as Arnaud abandoned himself to a desperate struggle, Every other division too abandoned any hopes of being able to set up a barrier. For example, let's see how one squad fared...

Auburn haired team Captain Grenda.

Her squad was smoothly setting up the barrier.

And suddenly they saw a single young lad walking towards them.

He was strolling in their direction, his blue hair parted by two horns.

These horns signified him as a non-human being.

Grenda clicked her tongue, left the setting up of the barrier to her adjutant, and readied a squad to engage.

「Are you also this city's denizen?」

Though it was obvious, she asked in order to buy some time.

And though she didn't expect a response,

「Correct. Let me give you a warning. Peacefully sit down and wait.

If you do, no harm will come to you, you know? That's the best outcome for you lot」

He said completely looking down on them.

Grenda snorted and rebuked the offer.

In the first place, you can't make a deal with a monster and there was only a single one before them.

Though he seems like a high ranked ogre he would hardly be a threat to them.

Ogres tend to favor combat focusing on raw strength.

They slaughter their enemies by wielding heavy weapons with their brute strength.

Furthermore, these are also individuals who can protect themselves with incredibly tough muscles and high regenerative abilities.

Ogres are an adventurer's natural enemies.

But they are the knights templar. Not a group that could possibly lose against an ogre.

They have never seen an A ranked ogre.

The monster before has an appearance of a particularly weak ogre. But, he carries the air of dominance about him.

Chances are, it's a named unique monster.

Its confidence must come from the fact that it's among the strongest beings in the forest.

If so, they needed to teach it the strength of the Templars.

Like teaching a frog that has never left its birth-swamp how wide the world is. So that it would never look down on them again.

(Well, we will kill it here so it won't have that chance)

Grenda thought closing her eyes.

「Attention! Single target. Danger rating A-! Three members, dispose of it!」

She had thought to wait until her subordinates set up the holy barrier, but there was only a single enemy.

It didn't release a powerful aura, so its danger rating was rate low.

That rating, however, decided Grenda Squad's fate.

「You are being careless. Aren't you looking down on your enemy too much?」

As soon as the three knights approached the lad the scene turn hazy for a split second.

And, passing right through the knights, the lad continued the leisurely stroll.

Why did he pass the knights... no, the knights have already collapsed.

The moment they were in range he had completely immobilized them.

These three powerful knights were rendered defenseless. In a single moment.

「W-what did you do?!」

「You bastard... what are you?!」

She heard her adjutants cry out and an intense feeling of deja vu assaulted her.

She was remembering what Commander Hinata has said so many times...

And the enemy before her emitted strength that could make you despair.

At this point, she understood the meaning of Hinata's warning. But, it was far

too late...

Shadows creeping from behind her have already disabled her entire team. Completely expressionless, a group of lads with identical face disabled them and disappeared.

It seems that he had cloned himself and encircled the enemy from the very beginning.

Just like Hinata, the moment he warned them the battle had been decided. He did not look down on them at all but prioritized results.

Grenda lost.

「I could tell you my name, but it's a pain.
I have a reason to keep you alive.
Tell me everything you know about the church.
I'm currently studying torture, so if you don't answer I'll be experimenting on you.
Of course, feel free to resist.
Now then, what will you do? I don't care either way」

The lad muttered, completely uninterested, his expression unchanging. Coupled with his beautiful face, the scene filled Grenda's heart with fear. Resistance is futile. If so, will she choose to talk or to die? Then she noticed that he had left all her friends alive. Maybe, if she were to choose death he would offer the same to every one of them. Thinking that, she decided to buy some time by choosing to be tortured...

「Torture me or whatever you wish! We shall never bow before a monster」

Grenda said as if she were giving up. She drew her blade and filled it with spiritual energy. While thus awakening her spiritual weapon, she confronted the enemy. Even if her strength wasn't enough, she would at least satisfy her pride. The blue-black haired beautiful lad, Souei, looked at her with a slightly displeased expression. And sighed at her foolishness.

「I see, you chose to resist. I care little about ranks and such, so I'd rather you just tell me whatever you know」

Faster than he could complete the sentence, Grenda moved. Her sword quickly pierced the body before her. But, perhaps she cut only a clone because the enemy simply faded away. Grenda understood. If she couldn't find his true body, she had no hopes of victory.

「Now then, let's begin the torture. Let me know when you decide to talk」

A sweet voice whispered into her ear. Grenda intended to fight but Souei did not consider her as a being that could hurt him at all. And suddenly, Grenda felt waves of pleasure overcome her. Souei had begun to stimulate her erogenous nerves with a thread. Rather than pain, a heavenly pleasure attacked her.

「Now then, I have sealed your ability to faint. So do talk before you go mad」

Grenda struggled inside this hell of pleasure. But... unfortunately, she soon gave up.

* * *

As if threatened off the battlefield by Shion, Gobuta and Gabil headed towards a small group of knights. As some point Hakurou was running beside them and Souei's Shadow squad had joined.

「Don't hold us back, dearest brother!」
「Who asked you to come?! And *you* should make sure you don't hinder *me*」

That was Gabil's and Souka's exchange. Though they always seem hostile, everyone knows they actually treasure each other. Only they themselves don't notice it. And after this exchange they had finally reached their destination.

The knights too felt a group of monsters approaching them and finished their preparations. They filled their weapons with spiritual power and were thus fully armed.

「Beware! Those monsters don't seem like small fry!」
「By Captain, there's six dragonewts among them?」

And those monsters that aren't wearing armor are ogres, right?」

「No, though it's hard to believe, those are not ogres. They are the fair oni. Unlike ogres that depend on raw strength, these unique beings utilize special abilities!」

「Oh, sounds annoying. But their dragonewt vanguard also seems to have unusual air about him」

The knights discussed.

The approaching monsters were surely the main force of the monster country. The captain clicked his tongue in annoyance. But, even if they abandoned constructing the barrier here surely another site would succeed.

That just proves how well Hinata has read their plan.

It's a good thing that their main force had come here.

「Alright! I will defeat those large dragonewts.

You two defeat the oni!

The other five deal with the other five dragonewts!」

「Understood! Wait, didn't you forget about that hobgoblin?」

Captain Gregory gave the inquirer an incredulous look, and

「Tch. So what that I overlooked some small fry. I'll deal with him in a single moment later!」

He said and the knights nodded in response.

They knew the captain's power. The likes of hobgoblins would not even be able to land a single hit on him.

But... why is the hobgoblin included with the rest of them? A few of them thought, suspicion growing.

Not a single monster introduced themselves.

Nor did they intend to allow them to do so,

「Drop dead you hindrance! *Haou yougekizan* "High King Spirit Beheading"!」

Swinging his halberd, he fired a powerful shockwave at the monsters.

The energy that escaped Templar Gregory's body intended to annihilate the monsters in a single striker.

In addition to that, he fired the Holy Cannon from his hand, the bullets spiraling around the halberd's attack.

The energy from the halberd and the bullets combined into a single energy bolt. This *yugekizan* was Gregory's secret anti-monster certain kill technique. This shockwave pressed on in a straight line as if light itself. Right in the direction of Gabil and Souka, who had already avoided the attack. As for the remaining Gobuta and Hakurou... Hakurou had jumped onto the trees and moved via branches towards the knights. So only Gobuta remained.

「Wha! Seriously~su?!」

The path was exceedingly narrow, so only someone with Hakurou's agility could avoid the attack. For Gregory, as long taking out two or three enemies with this attack would have been ideal, but he would be satisfied as long as he killed that small fry. And thus, completely forgetting about the Hobgoblin, he diverted his attention to the dragonewts approaching from the sky. Thus began this battle.

The one in most danger was Gobuta. Anyone and everyone that could have saved him have gone on ahead.

「Seriously, what a joke~su! How cruel to leave this frail me behind~su」

Gobuta grumbled preparing for an attack. Unlike the ridiculous department heads, there was little he could do. Nor did he want to be treated the same as them. (Excuse me, Wisdom King Raphael-san! It's an emergency~su. What should I do?) <<Solution. If you, individual: Gobuta, get hit by that, you will perish. You should『Unite』with the Star Wolf, slip into the shadow, and attack the enemy from behind>>

(Understood~su! Thanks for always saving me~su!)

Surprisingly enough, as long as a thought link was established, Gobuta could communicate with Raphael. And, using Raphael's calculations, Gobuta immediately sprung into action. After uniting with the star wolf and diving into the shadows, he was able to avoid the shockwave. And in this state he continued to move. He felt a great increase in his abilities and his raw strength at least double.

Without doubting Raphael's calculations at all, Gobuta sneaked behind the knight who had attacked him.

He was completely oblivious to the fact that this enemy was the squad captain and one of the more powerful opponents. In fact, he blindly obeyed the Wisdom King's directions.

Knight Templar Gregory by no means let his guard down. That is why he was able to respond to that presence.

When he felt a monster suddenly appear behind him, he rolled forward to escape that place.

Moreover, he was able to dodge the attack of the wolves fangs coming at him from behind. And even launch a counterattack with his halberd.

Gregory was surprised that the hobgoblin whom he had written off as dead a second ago had come out unscathed and attacked him.

But, on this field of battle, he quickly recovered and focused on the opponent. The thought that he had underestimated his enemy was now gone from his mind, and he deemed the one before him a worthy foe.

Gobuta and Gregory.

Without losing or letting each other gain a single inch, a violent battle erupted between the two.

Since he traveled via the shadow, Gobuta appeared amidst the enemy faster than anyone else.

This surprised not only the knights but Gabil and the rest as well.

「Shadow step, huh. How disgraceful. To think he could use the shadows better than we could...」

「No, Gobuta-chan is amazing!」

「Yeah, yeah. He's stronger than us, you know?」

Touka and Saika responded to Souka's complaint.

Though she had never heard anyone describe Gobuta as strong until now, she knew he was not weak.

Truly, the Monster Country Tempest simply had too many strong individuals. The extent of her master Souei's power she could not even fathom. She could hardly be surprised by him.

「Right, I guess we also need to show off our powers a bit」

She said, and took to the skies in order to fight off the soldiers who advancing towards Gobuta.

Thus effectively crippling their communications.

Souka's group was thus able to fight the knights one on one.

Gabil immediately set off to overwhelm the two adjutants.

As Gregory's direct assistants, by no means were they weak.

But their choice of weapon failed them this time.

The weapon which was meant to cut off the opponent's magic energy just couldn't pierce Gabil's natural armor.

Though these knights certainly had other skills to use, Gabil himself was a first rate warrior.

Blocking Gabil's spear, snapped their swords in half.

Moreover, the knights' prided ability of using spirit magic without an incantation had no effect on him.

So they couldn't gain an advantage by suddenly firing off magic at him.

In short, they couldn't deal him any damage and even the most pettiest of tricks—throwing sand in his eyes wouldn't work due to『Magic Perception』ability. They were completely powerless.

「Guwahahaha! What's wrong? Is this all you can do?

With this much you wouldn't last even an hour of Hakurou-dono's training session!」

Gabil said, while freely playing with the adjutants.

From the very beginning, Gabil had a resistance to the Holy Attribute and paid little mind to their〈Spirit Magic〉archive.

Besides, they were inferior in sword skill and other physical abilities.

Thus, Gabil was a monster who could overwhelm two Adjutant Class Holy Knights.

Unable to accept the existence of such a monster, the adjutants decided to try to buy some time.

As long as they could hold out until Gregory would cut down that Hobgoblin, it would be their victory.

It seems that these men have long forgotten about the fair oni who was no longer in sight.

The rest of the squad too, though called a force that could crush a thousand enemies by themselves, were barely able to hold back the dragonewts. And thus the battle continued, with every group resisting their respective opponents.

There was someone who overlooked this battle from the treetops.
Hakurou.

While looking at this scene,

「Hmph. Gabil is having too much fun.
Souka's group was able to find good opponents. If a battle is too easy, it doesn't teach you anything.
Thank goodness they were able to find good opponents. Practice cannot teach one to feel danger」

He muttered, observing their battles.
Of course, should any one of them had wound up in trouble, he intended to support them right away, but that was clearly unnecessary.

「Gobuta you bastard, if you can do that much why were you running away then...
But I guess he's doing his best now. 'Tis all the guidance of our Wisdom King Raphael-sama」

He said with a satisfied nod.
Everything was going according to plan.
When Shion suggested they stage a fight with similar ranked people – though it was completely idiotic – Hakurou and Raphael decided to turn it into training. Though Hakurou could see Benimaru finding out about this arrangement later and demanding that they do the fight over.
Truly, he hoped that Shion would learn the fear of pain.

「No, it's probably useless even if she gets hurt...」

He muttered and sighed.
Now then, with regards to the plan...
Using the thought link he could communicate with the Wisdom King.
Chances are, it was Raphael who had decided what abilities would be given to them.

After having decided what kind of servants would most benefit their common lord—Rimuru.

At the present moment, without any doubt or suspicion, they fully depended on Raphael's advice.

Though Raphael often saw no need to reply, this time Raphael did.

And this carefully designed battle continued. With this, Gobuta and Souka's proficiency may increase.

But,

「Gabil's no good. He's having too much fun. When this is over, I'll work him to the bone」

Hakurou muttered dissatisfied.

But the pitiful Gabil did not know these things, and haughtily fought the knights. His fun times would continue a little longer.

Chapter 93 - vs Holy Knights part 3

Ranga was running through the battlefield, his body was light, as light as if it were a feather.

The sensation of being upon the Earth gradually began to fade, and before he knew it, his body was already running in the sky.

Naturally, the acquisition of the skill <Soaring Run> ^[1] was a skill that could only be acquired by one who belonged to some of the highest ranks of Magical Beast. However, such things were no more than trifling matters to Ranga now. The wave of strength he now exuded gave him a certain feeling of delight.

His body was now overflowing with power, as if his very energy was pulsating. His limbs, now covered with a jet-black fur, now had Golden Lightning pulsing through them. Demonic energy was seeping out like an electrical discharge. A large Golden Horn now grew on his forehead, on the left and right was the unchanged jet-black horns from his earlier form.

The Golden Horn in the center was releasing rays of crystallized energy, pure energy it gave off continuously.

As he was, he gave off the dignity of a King. A majestic beast of noble presence that demanded the respect of his domain.

The jet-black fur, that covered his majestic body, was clad in lightning. The deep black color, akin to darkness itself, was clad in a near divine radiance that fluttered delicately in the wind.

However, in contrast to the gentle visage he possessed, the speed that he achieved while soaring in the sky had long since passed the speed of sound. But, only within Ranga's surroundings, the airspace retained its utter calmness as if nothing could disturb it.

A Space-based Barrier that he used consciously.

As Ranga vigorously soared through the sky, he caught sight of a group of Holy Knights positioned below him.

Using thought link, he had already confirmed that there was no one else currently headed to that direction.

Making a sharp nose dive, all the while killing his great momentum, he made his

rapid advance towards the Holy Knight's group.



The Holy Knight Squad Commander Fritz steadily made progress on the necessary preparations. All according to Lady Hinata's plan. So far, there was not a single error in her judgement.

There was nothing suspicious and, therefore, no problems whenever she took the lead.

This time was no different. Although, he was still taking precautions, since it was never a bad idea to be cautious.

It's only a group of monsters, even though these same monsters had proclaimed themselves to be a country, there was no need to take this as a major event.

This was Fritz's opinion on the matter, however, Hinata had no use for the opinion of someone only at his level.

It was only something natural to follow and make Lady Hinata's opinion his own as she was someone that he adored.

It was for that reason that he made the various preparations, so that as soon as the signal from the other groups came through, his group would also be able to immediately begin. It was possible to invoke the barrier at any time...

Then, then disaster itself came crashing from the sky.

Fritz had never neglected his guard.

He felt that the need for such an excessive strategy was exaggerating the threat of the situation, but he was still faithful and trusted Lady Hinata's orders.

For this reason alone, it can be safely said that he and his companions were brimming to the rim with self-confidence. Not a single one of his companions were neglectful or slacked in their duties.

Despite all of this, a single black lump came crashing from the sky to blow away one of his companions, a mighty Holy Knight.

Even with that, there was no reason to be careless. This instantaneous event that sent a Holy Knight flying was not cause for panic.

The proof for this reasoning was that the Holy Knight who had been blown away was still certainly alive.

Of course, it would be a whole other story if he weren't, but since he was still

alive, there was no need for excessive thoughts.

Fritz gave his first order like lightning and took actions to carry it out.

They had already erected the anti-magic barrier that covered not only every direction in the sky, but also underground, so they were sure their safety was certain.

It was a standard defensive plan in case of surprise attack, to sense and defend against magical attacks.

Furthermore, they also had set up the Spirit Barrier, a complex network of barriers that held multiple functions such as regulating temperatures or detoxifying airborne toxins.

Holding faithfully on the standard plan of actions taught by Lady Hinata herself, Fritz had the outermost barriers established to detect the enemy so they would be able to conduct counterattacks immediately in the chance of a surprise attack.

But, this was all in vain, for the enemy's attack this time was simply too fast. When the barrier perceived the attack and sent the warning about the encroaching monster, a Holy Knight had already been blown away.

The extend of the barrier was nearly two kilometers from their position, to think that something could reach them before they had enough time to react was unthinkable.

The purpose was to be able to detect the danger and react with long distance attacks to weaken the target, this was standard procedure.

Certainly, it won't react if an ally were to pass through it or touch it. Only when a monster that wasn't recognized by the barrier's settings.

But it was certain that this monster had passed through these high-classed barriers, the evidence of such was due to the very moment it arrived. At that very moment of it's arrival, that monster had carelessly crashed into the outermost barriers, and in that instant, all of those high-classed barriers were obliterated.

There were some that had hypothesized that if there was enough energy involved, there was nothing that could pass through or resist a barrier.

It was because these barriers were spread out at this very moment, that the Holy Knight that was attacked was spared near certain death.

This was what emphasised the point that barriers aren't useless things.

However... .. To be capable of breaking through several barriers, no, obliterating them instantly. Besides using a spirit armament, there was simply nothing that should be capable of doing such a thing.

The monster that had suddenly crash landed, using a Holy Knight as his landing pad, had begun walking calmly and advanced to the Holy Knight it had blown away.

Fritz's eyes opened widely as his gaze locked onto the monster in his presence. All he could do was to wait for an opening. His aim was to wait for the right opportunity to rescue his companions somehow.

However, this Large... Black Wolf emitted such a terrifying density of coercion. Fritz couldn't find any opening at all.

This was the same monster that cleared two kilometers faster than a Holy Knight could react to. This same monster was now within mere meters of them.

Its limbs were clad with Golden Lightning and possessed a magnificent horn that none of them had ever seen before.

A Holy Knight who was equipped with Spirit Arms and was cloaked in their Spiritual Power from the beginning, and surrounded with various barriers, had been incapacitated from just one hit. Just the mentioning of this alone could be called a terrific, yet horrifying action.

Fritz wanted to reject it from his core, but he had to come to the conclusion that the monster in his presence was an obvious "Disaster Class" monster. Now it is no longer a situation to be concerned about fallen companions. A single mistake would surely end with the entire group's complete annihilation.

「ALL HANDS, BATTLE FORMATION! ABANDON THE BARRIER. STRIKE IT WITH YOUR FULL POWER!」

Like this, Fritz shouted out his battle order with frightening precision. Lady Hinata's prediction once again was proven to be completely accurate. When he made this realization, even in a situation that could be called a crisis, he felt a certain joy.

(As expected from Lady Hinata-sama, she had predicted this situation from the beginning!)

On Fritz's face sprouted a small smile, of course without neglecting his guard towards the might monster in his presence. Like this, he continued to instruct

the battle formation using eye movements and minor gestures.

A skilled Holy Knight, without overlooking a single gesture, were capable of promptly assuming the battle formation to exterminate a demon.

The members of Fritz's group immediately regained their composure with the help of one of the party's magic, Thought Acceleration.

As they rapidly made out their battle preparations, they continued to observe the target before them.

But, then something unthinkable broke the tension of the battle.

「What are you doing? Quickly now, go and heal that injured person.」 (Ranga)

Using its forelimb, the Demon Wolf tossed the blown away Holy Knight over to their formation.

For a moment, Fritz's composure was confused.

He had already made his resolve to abandon injured or slain companions, but this monster had just given the wounded Holy Knight right to them instead of finishing him off.

It was an action that Fritz couldn't understand.

「Oi.. Quickly now, if you don't do something pretty quick, he might die you know!」(Ranga)

The Demon Wolf, clad in majestic Golden Lightning, seemed to have concern for his companion's life for some reason and had uttered these words.

His deep, baritone voice was very frightening.

「Vice commander Rama requires treatment, everyone else, follow me!」 (Fritz)

Fritz quickly returned to reality and let out his voice to give orders to the other group members. Kicking the ground in order to force his body, that was still confused, into action.

Even though he had no idea as to what the aim of this terrifying monster was, he could at least fight without worry.

Putting all of his strength into his Elemental Sword (Spirit Sword), he offered his prayer to the divine spirit.

The energy in the atmosphere began to wrap around the sword blade and the sword itself began to radiate with light.

Wrapped in the spirit's ambiance, the whole sword began to emit a pale light.

「I don't know what you're trying to do, but don't you dare underestimate us you monster! Eat this, Dispersal Sword ^[2]!!」 (Anon Holy Knight 1/Fritz)

「I offer you my prayer, please seize the enemy with your divine might! Earth Jail (Great Gravity Prison) ^[3]!!」 (Anon Holy Knight 2)

「Oh the Blazing Flame Prison, burn my enemy into nothingness! Hellfire (Blazing Prison Sphere) ^[4]!!」 (Anon Holy Knight 3)

「Oh, chilling Ice and Snow, clad my enemy in your mighty snowstorm and freeze them! Icy Blizzard ^[5]!!」 (Anon Holy Knight 4)

「Oh blowing Wind that passes through all things, become my blade! Wind Blade (Wind Cutter) ^[6]!!」 (Anon Holy Knight 5)

The other Vice commander, Gerard, held his breath as he watched the simultaneous attacks of the other Holy Knights.

He stood back to protect and aid his recovering companion. While filled with the resolve to not become a hindrance, he continued to observe the Demon Wolf situation.

It was then, that he was astonished beyond his capability for reason.

The Demon Wolf, before his own two eyes, had received all of the attacks. All the while wagging its tail happily.

Fritz's Dispersal Sword can cut through anything and everything.

From the tip of the sword, the divine protection of four attribute spirits was blended with an intense fighting spirit. The edge releasing the full accumulated power of each.

It was a special sword technique designed for a long ranged attack.

Though it couldn't be compared with Arnaud's, Fritz could certainly use the skill because he was loved by the spirits.

Since the structure was fairly simple, it was difficult to predict the energy released from the attack just by observing the technique's execution.

It was an attack that simply wouldn't give any chance for evasion, and could cut through any cornered enemy.

The Demon Wolf, however, didn't attempt to do anything and just received the attacks, then extinguished them all with a flick of its jet-black fur. Something beyond what any of them could imagine occurring before now.

Fritz's special attack had also been supported with the Earth Attribute's

<Elemental Magic> which increased the gravitational force in the targeted place. The purpose of such magic was to prevent the monster from moving, though, since the monster had no intention of moving in the first place, such efforts were meaningless.

To completely burn the cut body, and to prevent the enemy from regenerating, Hellfire magic was used. But there wasn't a chance that such flames could burn this monster's fur.

The Blizzard was to prevent the enemy from escaping, and the Wind Blade was prepared to attack if an attempt to escape was made. Every move was completely ineffective from even damaging a single follicle of its fur.

There were no words to describe this spectacle other than one. Nightmare. Even if this monster stood as an elite A or A+ ranked monster, to come out unscathed by such a string of coordinated attacks could only be said to be something close to impossible.

「Wh... Wha....」
「You... Damned Monster...」

The other Holy Knights could only exclaim their utter disbelief. Even their Vice Commander Gerard held the same opinion. The Demon wolf continued to stand where it had been, calmly just as if it had not received an attack at all.

「Y... you... What the hell are you!? Even for the Elite demons of the Fang Wolf Race, such a Unique monster.. No beast such as you shouldn't ever exist!!」(Fritz, AKA Anon Holy Knight 1)

Fritz could no longer endure and had begun shouting. As one of the commanders of the Holy Knight squadron, Fritz has extensive battle experience against various groups of monsters. In his youth, he had fought against many Elites from the Fang Wolf race. However, this Demon Wolf before his very eyes was outlandish no matter how you could describe it. Clearly, it had enough power to make it akin to a Demon Lord!

Such a creature, was it originally a Guardian Deity that was enshrined in this area? Or perhaps, was it an unrecognized Demon Beast King who spread calamity in its wake?

Nevertheless, neither he, nor any of the other Holy Knights knew the answer either. The group who put the protection of the entire world on their shoulders were dumfounded.

「Fumu, little humans, my name, is Ranga.
This noble and mighty name was granted upon me by the Great and the Wise Rimuru-sama.
For the likes of you, I will permit the uttering of this name as a true blessing, be thankful.
I am a member of the Star Wolf race. I, however, am Unique.
I AM RANGA, THE FENRIR (STAR NOVA DEMON WOLF KING ^[7]) RANGA!
I am the one who shall crush, and annihilate all of Rimuru-sama's enemies!」

The monster declared it while facing Fritz and his compatriots, all in its deep baritone voice.

What it had just said, was clearly a threat.

A being that gave death to anyone who would oppose it.

Without even being able to wipe away his now gushing sweat, Fritz was frozen where he stood.

Thinking about his current condition as calmly as he was capable, to defeat this monster, there was no other option than to weaken it with the sealing power of the Holy Field

However, to even enclose this monster, who boasts such an overwhelming speed, it was not going to be a simple matter.

After all, if everyone were to set out alone to accomplish such a thing, this beast Ranga would simply wipe them out one by one.

Since the very beginning of this engagement, they had already been in checkmate.

Desperately, Fritz churned his mind, trying to find some way to turn the tables on this overwhelming being.

Even with the supporting magic of thought acceleration, to find such a method as to allow them to defeat such a foe could not be found. No matter how long one were to look for it. Certainly not in such a dire situation as this one.
However....

His eyes were dazzled by a blinding flash followed immediately by a thunderous

roar that sounded from behind his position.

The Vice Commander, Gerard, had attempted to make a slight movement.

This, however, was instantly responded to with a blast of Plasma.

It was accurately aimed at the ground near Gerard's feet, causing him to instantly stop moving.

In any case, Fritz wasn't sure of just how high the temperature of such an attack was, but the ground near Gerard's feet was melted and turned to glass.

The heated air created a pulse of boiling hot air, as well as causing serious mental strain. As such, Gerard stopped moving foolishly.

Even if they were the mighty Holy Knights, up until now they had never encountered such a powerful monster such as this one. Their once overflowing confidence had now been shattered.

Despair wrecked havoc on the minds of Fritz's group.

Even if they had their mighty Spirit Equipment as protection, there was no way to resist an attack akin to that bolt of Plasma which was capable of turning the ground into glass.

Moreover, to even evade an attack which was akin to lightning, even an expert Holy Knight would not be capable of such things.

The defensive barrier and Spirit Equipment was the subject of their unwavering trust, they were certain there were no foes within the Monster City capable of resisting such mighty existences.

Even if they had to meet their deaths here, they could not afford to surrender to this monster...

「Sorry, you guys weren't lucky. It seems we ended up getting the most troublesome fellow here...」(Fritz)

Fritz's words were mixed with resignation.

「Commander, I suppose we'll just have to hope next time we'll be luckier!」
(Anon Holy Knight 2)

「That's Right! Besides, we always end up receiving the short straws..」(Anon Holy Knight 3)

「So what does it matter, we'll just manage this one and return back just as always.」(Anon Holy Knight 4)

Each of the Holy Knights began cracking jokes.

To each of them, they already understood a clear fact. Not one of them were getting out of this alive.

Even so, for the sake of their honor, their pride as a Holy Knight, they would certainly slay it!

「Alright you cocky fellows! If we make it out of this, I'm treating you guys to drinks for a whole month!

IT'S AN ORDER, EVERYONE, LET'S MAKE IT OUT OF HERE ALIVE! LET'S GO!」(Fritz)

Fritz shouted out, and began to run with the full resolution to throw his life away.

Those who had been taken out early on had finally been rejuvenated.

Along with Fritz, the other seven Holy Knights began to advance simultaneously.

Just like in training, no, even more than that. Their movements far exceeded their norm, born out of the desperation to not fall short for the sake of their comrades, they brought forth the strength they had never had before.

In perfect clarity of mind and spirit, they performed a complex maneuver with ease.

With this, The Holy Knights executed their desperate assault on Ranga at once.

Then, darkness came.

.....

.....

...

Feeling his consciousness faintly return, a sense of pain began to shoot through his entire body. A Groan was let out and Fritz woke up.

To even think of fainting with the sheer level of pain he was experiencing was difficult.

However,

(Wait a minute?! I'm conscious? So... I'm still alive? But... if I'm here, wasn't I defeated..?)

Immediately after collecting his senses, Fritz began to take in his surroundings.

Thereupon noticing a windstorm whirling with such strength to be akin to a tornado that was carving the earth with its might.

... He was certainly glad to be alive. Just as he thought this, he thought of his companions.

While uttering a silent prayer that they was still alive, he began to search for any signs of them.

In his vision, he came across his defeated companions.

They were all scattered around as if they had been struck by the winds.

Fritz made an effort to get up, but there was no strength within his body. So, he somehow used all the energy he had to crawl and close the distance between the nearest person.

That person was Vice Commander Lama who was fortunately also still alive.

Filled with a bottomless joy, Fritz had already forgotten about the intense pain he was experiencing.

Like that, just as Fritz had confirmed the survival of each of his compatriots, a certain voice announced the ushering of true despair.

「Humans, we shall continue our match after you have made your recovery. I am yet satisfied with our fight after my great rebirth. Look upon me here, I have brought Full Potion (Complete Recovery Medicine). I do believe these will be more than enough. Now then, hurry and recover, shall we enjoy this more?」

It said with such a cheerful tone as its tail wagged back and forth happily.

Like a demon, no, this Demon Wolf spoke words just as if he were a Demon himself.

Hearing those words, Fritz's consciousness was devoured by a great and unending despair.

(Aaaah... ... It may have been more fortunate if I had just fainted earlier... ...)
Fritz's mind became more and more despondent as he thought on his situation. Of course, such a happy ending to his story would not happen now...



TL Notes:

[1] 飛翔走 = Hishousou

[2] 飛斬剣 = Hizanken

[3] 大重力獄 (アースジエイル) = Daijuuryokugoku (Āsu Jeiru)

[4] 獄炎球 (ヘルファイア) = Gokuendama (Herufaia)

[5] 氷吹雪 (ブリザード) = Koorifubuki (Burizado)

[6] 風切斬 (ウインドブレード) = Kazesetsuki (Uindobureido)

[7] 星崩魔狼王 (フェンリル) = Hoshihoumaookamiou (Fenrir). Hou (崩) actually mean destroy/collapse/crumble but because a star destroying process is Nova, I use Nova.

TL: From now on I going to use Elemental Magic rather than Chemical Elemental

Chapter 93 - vs Holy Knights part 4

Having jumped high into the heavens, Shion observed the ground below. Her eyes glistened with a light of a king who had gone off to hunt a treasured prey.

A fearless smile appeared on her face and she released an ominous aura (*haki*). Having easily found her prey, she descended upon a small squad of knights.

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Leonard is, in fact, not a Knight Templar.

He is a genius who reached the pinnacle of magic arts and is the Saint Wizard. Only he who has mastered the Saint magic archive and the Elemental magic archive can call themselves with this title.

The Saint Wizards are those who truly understand the laws of the world.

However, holy sword in hand, Leonard had engaged in many battles.

Even while hiding his identity as a Saint Wizard, his name is far more famous now as a templar.

And at some point he had become division vice captain.

Without question that was the result of his power.

A beautiful sword hand. Where Arnaud's sword symbolized power, Leonard's embodied harmony.

Though they had comparable power, Arnaud was a little stronger. Moreover, Arnaud specialized in persistent combat.

That endurance elevated Arnaud as the strongest among the knights.

But Leonard was in fact a Magic Swordsman. That is how he now fought.

His sword skill would not lose to Arnaud, and his current fighting style would certainly not fail him.

No, certainly Leonard was now stronger.

However, the Templars did not base their evaluation on〈Elemental Magic〉archive.

Even though there are those among them that have an affinity for Elemental Magic and use it, they silently cast it during battle.

Thus, Leonard convinced himself that true power consisted in reaching the

pinnacle of the holy affinity.

If he were to achieve his goal, surely he would have the power to cut down any opponent.

That was his delusion born out of being saved by a hero during his childhood.

The hero was strong.

Simple, perfect strength.

The attacking monsters were decimated with the hero's sword.

Even wicked spirits far larger than a human were vanquished with a single stroke of the sword.

Thus his hidden village, which had resigned themselves to death, were saved by a hero.

Since then, Leonard was fascinated with that mystical sword.

And while mastering the ways of magic he imitated the hero's sword with a stick.

After becoming a Saint Wizard, he finally left for Ingracia Kingdom.

There, he learnt the Sacred Magic and awaited his opportunity to journey to the Holy Empire Ruberion.

For an outsider to be allowed the pilgrimage, one would have to attain certain proficiency with the Sacred Magic. |

In the end, Leonard reached a high level of the Sacred Magic archive and was allowed to become the Knights Templar's apprentice.

Afterwards, during the spirit contract ceremony, he formed a contract with the Light and Darkness spirit.

With a serious expression, he reported to have formed a contract only with the light spirit. For him, the Darkness spirit distanced him from the "Hero" and hence was pointless.

Thus, began the life of the Light Templar Leonard.

A nightmare incarnate descended from the sky.

Lightly landing upon the ground, she looked up at the knights.

Without panicking, Leonard had already begun to order his men.

He had the target surrounded by two knights from each direction.

And had the rest set up a simple Holy Barrier as soon as possible.

He decided that they should end this fight quickly in order to focus on Hinata's order.

Leonard's magic perception identified the monster before him as unreasonably

powerful. Even among A ranked monsters, she was far stronger.

Perhaps she is the highest existence in this city. Maybe they were beset upon by the Demon Lord himself.

On this battlefield, Leonard felt powerful existences in various direction through his perception magic.

He couldn't feel the other knights, but that's because the magic power is unnaturally dense in these areas.

There was only one enemy before them.

Negligence would result in death. He decided to dispose of her immediately.

「Set up the barrier for the target before us!」

He issued the order, judging that there was no time to analyze the enemy.

The knights surrounding her in four directions immediately got to work.

This is an excellent barrier which probably cannot be broken from the inside.

But it is not perfect. It is a simple barrier, after all.

The space created is narrow, so could it block every attack is the question.

The space is created is twenty meters in diameter, but if one were to immediately absorb all the magic energy and fire off a large scale spell, then perhaps it would break.

That's why the barrier is normally made to be far larger.

In the first place, though this barrier sealed the very ability he was so proud of, he couldn't complain in the present situation.

Just in case, he had the second squad surround them all with a defense barrier.

They couldn't kill the target trapped in the purification barrier.

They could attack from the outside, but they had to confirm the target before that.

On the off chance that the enemy had a rare reflect affinity, such carelessness would only lead to unnecessary casualties. He could hardly commit such a blunder.

When the dust settled, a single monster stood before them.

She was slender, with purple-black hair.

It was long enough to flow onto her back, and it suited her well. She had a beautiful face. But, two horns adorned her head.

Her white skin peeked from inside a kimono.

She was clad in jet black armor. A bewitching beauty.

Her eyes, like two amethysts, focused on Leonard and she opened her mouth.

「My name is Shion. Rimuru-sama's first servant.

Now then, gentlemen. So says my lord.

“Obedience or death!”

O wise knights, certainly you can discern which is better option.

Abandon your weapons and join me!」

She declared greatly emphasizing the words “first servant”.

Leonard felt power emanate from the monster who introduced herself as Shion.

She was clearly unnaturally strong. The enemy was probably an oni.

Oni are powerful beings from the ogre family who have evolved such after many long years.

Sometimes called divine, there have been oni that have brought many calamities upon the world.

Yet she was a named monster on top of being an oni.

At this point, it may be more accurate to refer to her as a land god rather than a monster.

But the Holy Empire Ruberion recognizes the existence of only one god-Ruminas*.

Bestowing happiness upon a hero with a kiss, this heavenly child could bestow a holy blessing upon them.

Thus, land gods, gods who protected people, and the like absolutely cannot be recognized.

「Silence! Wicked monster. We will cleanse the world of your unclean presence!」

Leonard called out and ordered the men to fire Holy Cannon at her.

This attack would be meaningless to those with resistance to holy attacks, but monsters should not be able to block it.

Unlike Earth, Water, Fire, or Wind resistances, Holy and Dark attacks cannot be nullified.

Other than monsters with an angelic affinity, Holy Cannon is not an attack that can be blocked.

Upon Leonard's order, the knights began their assault.

Thus, an incessant rain of attacks fell upon Shion.

「Is that your answer? I'll kill you?」

She said with a face of “Why do these people not listen to other's words?”

And while she was asking the question, an odachi appeared in her hand, stopping every energy bolt coming her way.

However, that would hardly make her a threat.

Even if she were recognized as a Land God class, she was already trapped within the holy field.

They only had to keep up the barrier long enough for her to weaken.

But... Leonard was simply impressed that she could still display the sword speed of a master.

The sword which had received so many Holy Affinity attacks showed no signs of breaking—so it could also be called abnormal.

And then one of the knights screamed.

Seems like one of the attacking knights had their bullet returned to them.

She had absorbed the holy magic with her sword and sent the attack flying back at them.

Which is normally impossible.

That is, it required such precise timing that it required godly skill.

Panicking, Leonard ordered the onslaught to stop.

The knight who was hit previously was not seriously hurt and got away with a scare.

But being able to return their attacks from within the holy field far exceeded Leonard's expectations.

Not a single knight could hide his surprise.

While suppressing his surprise, Leonard clicked his tongue thinking about the next step.

Shion being Shion was simply upset at the fact that her attack did not go as intended.

In the first place, attacks would only pass into the barrier but would not get out.

While this barrier permits holy magic to pass through it, other attacks it blocks.

Moreover, she tried this earlier, but it seems『Spatial Travel』has been sealed.

Shion's irritation was reaching its peak. She is hardly a patient person, but she

had decided to bear it as long as possible.

By now, her rampage was imminent.

「Hey... hey, guys. I'll ask nicely, how about you drop the barrier, hmm? I promise I won't kill you and will even let you eat a special meal made by me? How about it? Isn't it a wonderful proposal? That's the last warning I'll give you, so how about it?」

She put effort into stifling her anger and asked them with a forced smile. She was completely looking down on the knights who she deemed couldn't even scratch her, but seriously believed they could accept the offer. But, of course, the knights would not even consider it...

「Silence! Trapped within a barrier, how dare you act so high and mighty?!」

One of the knights replied.

Yes, a monster does weaken greatly within the holy field.

That is caused simply by the fact that magical energy dissipates within it.

And a monster which is a mass of magic energy must abstain from using skills in order to preserve its existence.

Which is why they limit themselves to using only the simplest skills.

Let's say that she creates a large explosion inside the barrier. The shrapnel will pass through the barrier and hit the knights.

Thus, just to be safe, Leonard had them set up a physical attack barrier. Setting up a barrier in regards to specific types of attacks is the norm.

Even though he had gone to these lengths, Leonard was still anxious.

He saw Shion pick up fist sized stones from the ground.

He immediately figured out what she was going to do.

So he had the knights, especially the ones up close, guard against the attack.

A thunderous roar, and an explosion appeared in front of one of the knights.

Shion had thrown a stone at the knight. The stone reflected on the physical attack barrier.

What amazing strength.

And that's her power in her weakened state, with her powers sealed.

How terrible would it be had they not set up the holy field in time.

The oni in front of him seemed upset and was stomping her feet.

Her stomps are creating cracks in the earth, so just how much power does she...

Though she looks like an intellectual young girl, how cruel that lie is!

「Keep up the barrier with your lives if you have to! Those free, attune your spirit power to mine.

I'll use Disintegration.

Converge the barrier on her to seal her movements! We can't let her live!!」

When Disintegration captures its target it never lets go.

It is a spell that can vaporize any kind of enemy. But, using it on such a large area will cause it to disperse.

Moreover, it's not a skill that every knight can use.

This time, it's only possibly by using the other knights' energy. By simultaneously using it from every direction, you can activate the Area Disintegration.

“Thank goodness I was here” Leonard thought, relieved.

In the first place, only he and Hinata can use this spell. Moreover, Area Disintegration is a high level forbidden spell that even Hinata cannot use.

It uses too much energy that it threatens the caster's life.

But.

Consider the rampaging demon before him.

He could not possibly let this demon loose upon the world.

Having thus decided, Leonard gave the order.

The other knights, as if reading his thoughts, have already gotten to work.

They all found the thought of this monster, who exerted so much strength inside the barrier, rampage freely too terrifying.

Their teamwork impeccable, they first created a twenty meter square of light around her.

Collapsing the barrier on top of her, it turned into a pyramid shaped cage.

Shion looked at the cage of light.

That looks dangerous, she thought. But, she could not break the barrier nor did she have any skills to protect herself with.

The humans are looking down on her too much, Shion thought, and

「Begone demon! We cannot let such a dangerous being live!

This world needs only one god! Disintegration!!」

The strongest one of them cried.

At the same moment, from the four corners and the zenith of the pyramid she

was in a violent light assaulted Shion.

「Don't look down on me, human! Rimuru-sama, protect me!!」

Shion wrapped herself in all her magical energy, and prepared for the attack.

In a split second,

Without an explosion or heat, the light consumed her.

The knights thought that power to be supreme. But they still did not neglect to keep up the barrier.

Though the monster's death was certain, they would keep it up until ordered otherwise.

As for those that supported Leonard's spell, they all collapsed where they stood.

Having used such an extreme spell, their fatigue was expected.

Even tempered knights could not avoid exhaustion. The fact that none of them died evidences how well superb they are.

Leonard turned and sighed in relief, confirming that everyone was alive.

But, he sighed too early. He should have done so after confirming that the monster was dead.

He had used the highest anti-personnel skill, and the impossibility of what he saw caused his feet to become unsteady.

He had looked up to confirm the state of the target.

In the center, the remnant of the oni... no, that burned thing began to move.

They were not able to burn everything away; some of it remained.

But that cannot possibly survive. A limbless monster, a mere torso, can only crawl into a hole awaiting death.

Leonard sighed again, preparing to crush the target.

It was a terrifying monster, but they had managed to defeat it.

They were truly fortunate to have been able to destroy it without a single

casualty. Had they not made the first move, they might have all been killed.

But, their goal was not to kill this monster. Leonard so remembered, changing his mood.

And he began to consider his mission.

At the present, he was supposed to set up one corner of a large scale Holy Field.

It was to support Hinata—a crucial mission. However, the oni's attack had left his men exhausted.

Fulfilling the mission may prove difficult. He thought, and finally noticed that

something was wrong.

He did not feel that a single division had succeeded.

If he was attacked, were the other groups also attacked? But even so, there's no way they could have been attacked by equally powerful monsters, so they are just running late.

(Slacking aren't they... what a good opportunity. I'll forge them anew when we get back)

Leonard thought, and intended to contact Arnaud, but...

「B-b-bastards.... U-unforgivable. I'll never forgive you, human trash!!」

He felt a wicked presence behind him, and turned around.

An unbelievable sight unfolded before him.

In the middle of the holy field, like a zombie or a ghoul, something was gathering itself together.

The knights, their faces deathly blue, looked at Leonard.

「I-impossible! How can you still live after being hit by disintegration?!」

He couldn't help but exclaim.

A rare mistake for the calm and collected Leonard.

But, it couldn't be helped. If anything, it's the monster that survived Disintegration that exceeds the laws of the world.

And before him, the zombie-like oni began to regenerate into her original beautiful form. Which only increased their fear.

Returning to her original form in less than a minute, this is what she said.

「I'll show you the same level of pain, the same level of suffering, and twice the fear, humans!!」

An ominous crimson light shining in her eyes, Shion bellowed.

And charging forward she hit the barrier with her sword.

It wasn't simply effective. And the relieved knights' faces were covered in fear. Cracks ran across the whole barrier. And...

「Hmph, as I thought. It's not a high density barrier, but one that tampers with the laws of the world a bit.

Well, something like that can be changed with one of the effects of my『Cook』 skill」

She said and cut the surprised knight standing in front of Leonard.
Though he should have lost his head, that's not what happened. Only his limbs fell to the ground.

Did she surpass his sight by that much? While feeling the sense of dread intensified, he casted full recovery magic on the knight.

But...

It did not activate.

Which caused Leonard to tremble,

「Kukuku, you fool. I made that human's limbless state the *norm*.
What good would recovery magic do? He's *perfectly fine* already!」

Shion happily explained.

Leonard understood what she meant which caused his heart to tremble in terror.

In fact, he had noticed, but did not want to accept it, when she had rewritten the effects of the Holy Field.

And, now before him, was undeniable proof.

She overwrites the nature of the object itself. She has a skill that allows her to obtain a desired effect.

In front of a skill that necessarily grants the user's desire, defense may be completely impossible.

Even if you try to oppose her, she'll just overwrite it with a stronger wish. Only those who possess a similar skill can oppose her.

Because Leonard was a genius, he noticed this, and despaired.

He figured there was no way he could oppose her.

So he thought. Understanding that a demon had been let loose upon the world.

「No way.... it's impossible... this kind of fiend cannot possibly...」

Fear.

As she had declared, Leonard was overcome with fear.

Leaving Leonard for later, she first went for the despairing knights and the exhausted who could no longer run away.

And in front of Leonard's eyes, his men, now limbless, were carefully arranged in a few moments.

Leonard felt as if he were going mad from fear.

And in his ear,

「So you are next?」

A sweet voice whispered.

Now Leonard would come to know true fear.

Chapter 94 - Mastermind

Sakaguchi Hinata thought herself fortunate to have been able to meet Izawa Shizue.

Though the time they spent together was truly short, only to Shizue was Hinata able to truly open up her heart.

A single month.

In that short time, she had stolen all her skills and left her.

She was afraid to be rejected. As her theft ability was terrifying.

Moreover,

「We're bothering Shizu-san.

The Association is not so rich as to support people who don't work.

So would you like to work together with me?」

So said a boy from her world.

She understood that he was simply trying to recruit her, but his words – that they were being a bother – deeply hurt her.

That's when Hinata decided to leave.

When she was setting off, these were the boys parting words,

「We'll definitely meet again! When we do, help me!」

She took those words literally.

Lacking in information, Hinata opened her heart up to the boy just because he was a fellow World Traveler.

So she nodded at his words without any hesitation.

And set off on a journey.

A world filled with despair, where life could be taken easily, such a world. She obtained power in order to survive.

A country she was staying in got attacked,

By a Disaster-class monster, leaving many people dead. There were plenty people fighting to protect the children.

The adults would not run away, but would desperately attempt to shield their children.

Even though she had thought they would run away without a second thought trying to save themselves.

Those fighting were called the Knights Templar (Holy Knights).

They would at times be passing through this city on patrol, protecting the people and enforcing justice.

“That’s where I want to live,” Hinata felt.

And thus without a doubt...

Ten years had passed.

Though Hinata did not believe in god, she had reached one of the highest posts in the church.

An ironic tale perhaps, but she was performing the sacred duty of protecting the lives of people and the citizens of the Holy Empire of Ruberion.

Hinata did not doubt anything, and believed this to be her justice.

Live for others. Even at the cost of your own life.

If you did so, then everyone could be happy. Similarly, the monsters must be destroyed.

Since every single time, it was the monsters that threatened the peoples’ happy lives.

Though the capital was protected by a barrier, the same was not true for the cities and villages in the region.

The patrolling knights decreased the number of casualties while fighting off daily onslaught of monsters.

Unlike the monsters of Jura Forest region, these had no other food source.

A desolate wasteland spread to the west.

A result of a battle between two demon lord-like beings.

This wasteland has many areas of dense miasma from which monsters spawn.

Thus, the knights embody the peoples’ hope itself.

There have been times when the knights have been deceived and killed by monsters.

Due to these occurrences, the church decreed dealing with a monster was strictly forbidden.

This creed conveyed the many hundred year long wisdom of the knights who had survived while protecting people.

And at some point, Hinata had decided that peoples’ happiness was directly

connected to this creed.

Though she did not originally believe the creed, she was won over by its logic.
And, at some point...

She decided that protecting the creed was her justice, a truly ironic tale.

The days spent fighting the monsters.

When was it that she found this routine boring>

The day she became squad captain and started drafting plans, the number of casualties greatly decreased.

That was thanks to her Monster Spawn point prediction and Casualty prediction.
Methods of communication, and patrol timing.

Thus people began to see the results of her optimization of the system.

This is why the knights have so much faith in Hinata, she thought.

This is why she absolutely could not violate the creed.

She has the responsibility, the mission to protect the people.

Having received the trust of her subordinates, she created a place to return to.

Even Nicholas claimed to love her...

In the end, Hinata was simply afraid.

Even though she tried not to get attached to anything, she was still afraid of losing everything.

People could live happily only under complete control.

Hinata so believed.

And the existence of the Controlled Society Ruberius only proved her point.

That's how it was supposed to be.

Which is why, like always,

She only needed to defeat monsters; that is all.

A simple point. But that's how it was.

Protecting the creed was her reason to exist, her justice.

Such was her warped heart that never knew parental love.

This belief was the only thing that supported her heart.

To protect that belief, she decided to fight.

And, now.

Things were so bad, she wanted to laugh.

But as a result, she made a breakthrough.

She simply stopped worrying, stopped thinking.

Was she right, was she wrong? Not even that mattered anymore.

She could not see the amount of power of the enemy before her even with『Mathematician』skill.

An enemy clearly above her. Worlds apart from his previous strength. She could only lament having let him escape last time.

Her tedious days,

Would now come to an end.

Fighting a losing battle is a fool's action. Even so, Hinata was excited.

(Am I wrong? In that case... prove it, Demon Lord Rimuru!)

She drew the large sword, Dragon Slayer, from its scabbard to oppose the demon lord.

A thin smile appeared on her face.

And with her heart elated, sword pointing at Rimuru, she advanced.

* * *

I again considered my fight with her.

This girl leaves no openings.

Thanks to thought acceleration, I am currently able to perfectly receive her hits. After a brief exchange, though my attacks don't even scratch her, hers seem to be able to scratch me.

Not that they don't though—not that I can be proud of that.

Which is why, we're currently trying to exploit an opportunity or a mistake made by the other, but none had presented itself yet.

Hinata is a real beast to be able to fight me like this even after I awakened as a Demon Lord and have Raphael's support.

Frankly, I had expected myself to overwhelm her.

She seems to be able to easily read my sword, and blocks it without fail. And, responds with accurate slashes.

Last time, I was truly not a threat.

Moreover, she didn't even go all out last time.

While lightly blocking her attacks, I observe Hinata.

A faint smile on her lips, she is looking straight at me.

But, her eyes don't reflect our movement. Her eyes are moving like sensors trying to observe the entire area around us.

Her posture does not waver, she is able to keep up a natural pose ready to counter any attack.

Her movements don't depend on strength and seem to originate from nowhere. I am not sure how she is able to so easily predict my attacks, but it's clear that she knows.

Whereas I, when I see her attack, I just desperately try to evade it.

Of course, I'm the one with lots of wasted movement.

Because I have enough power to overwhelm her, I can dodge without being hit.

Our proficiency levels cannot be compared—Hinata is far higher.

Even so, she does not let her guard down.

At this point, all her tricks and skills have been rendered meaningless, so she fights me with a sword clad in her fighting spirit.

That spirit being of the Holy Affinity, I will probably be hurt if I get hit by that.

According to Raphael, the special ability of that sword will let it cut through even my barrier.

Well, I guess depending on the reliable sword rather than on gaudy skills is just what I would expect from Hinata.

In reality, other than me, only Hakurou could defend against her attacks.

But, Hakurou would not be able to win by relying on magic attacks.

Whereas Hinata has decided that magic attacks would not be effective against me, hence decided not to use them.

She is a fighting genius.

Even if I send out my clone to fight, she will probably cut it down in a second.

One of the only weaknesses of ultimate skills is that only the true body can use them.

In other words, even I were to project a copy or create a clone,

While I could use the skills by moving my consciousness to them, multiple "me" cannot.

I cannot leave ultimate skills to clones.

The same is true for unique skills, although the copy does possess some of the skills of the true body, these are not perfectly copied.

Souei has gotten good at this and can bestow only the useful skills to his clones.

At a time like this, where I am fighting with the support from an ultimate skill, a cheap clone will quickly be hit and vanish.

It would be great if a clone could create an opportunity for me to strike at her, but if that backfires... I'll die from embarrassment.

A simple plan would be to focus on Hinata's endurance. I mean, I never tire. Even if neither one of us lands a hit, time still passes.

But, it seems like the surrounding battles have finished.

Some people are lying down, others are sitting on the ground, all seem to be exhausted and unable to move.

But, their eyes are glued to our battle.

They certainly cannot follow our attacks, so are they just trying to ascertain the result?

Anyways, I don't have the time to be looking around.

I have to resist Hinata with all my strength.

The land is filled with the sound of our clashes.

The sword Hinata held, the one as large as she is, had an edge that looked like as if it was made of blue crystal.

It was a beautiful sword.

As if not feeling its weight, with a speed unimaginable for its size, Hinata wielded it freely.

She's probably depending on some skill for that, but it's still marvelous sword play.

And her expression,

Now... it is that of an innocent girl, a smile on her face.

Not the cold sneer that she carried before.

She is simply swinging her sword. Without thinking about anything else, focused on the battle.

A genius, huh.

If I think about it, I was fortunate.

I've had my share of troubles, but after being born as a monster, I made some friends and had lots of fun.

What about Hinata?

According to what Shizu-san had said, after obtaining all her skills in a single month, Hinata had left.

I hadn't noticed it before, but there's something strange about this.

Would Shizu-san really allow Hinata to go off on her own? That's a point I find

strange.

And that it truly is.

A power too strong for a girl with a mind of someone who was going through puberty or just finished.

Is it because I am an adult that I noticed it?

Aside from Hinata as she is now, in that unbalanced state she was given a Dominance-type skill.

Could you possibly allow her to leave?

Considering this suspicion, and using other information I had gathered, I had Raphael run an analysis.

The result was a truly questionable possibility. That is, Hinata's thought process has been restricted.

That could only have been possibly in the first months of coming to this world. Though I haven't obtained all of Shizu-san's memories, the original Hinata was rather meek.

To suddenly decide to go on a journey after a single month...

Moreover, considering the presence of one more person by Shizu-san's and Hinata's side...

「Hey, why did you decide to leave Shizu-san's place?」

I asked as if catching my breath during our sword fight.

I have gotten used to her timing. Blocking her attacks is not much of a challenge now.

Seems like I had lots of room for improvement.

In comparison, Hinata is not struggling, but sweat had appeared on her face. An obvious result considering that she is fighting with all her strength. Moreover,

「Why do you ask so now? I don't want to remember, but let's see...

Cause I didn't want to be a bother, I think」

She honestly replied.

I didn't expect an answer, thinking she was going to just ignore the question, so I'm surprised.

But when I heard the response, I felt pain in my heart.

Hmm? Pain in my heart? What a strange sensation.

Thinking that it's not a problem even if I were to ignore the response, I put more strength into my sword. Our clashes now created shockwaves.

「Shizu-san had never thought you a bother though?」

(Yes. I never thought so...)

「Fu, now of all time... And please don't speak of Shizu-san」

She increased the sharpness of her attacks.

Seems like she has yet to go all out.

Let's wait and see.

While desperately blocking the sword and countering,

「But, she was worried! That she made you lonely!」

(Right... I was worried. But... there was someone else I had to worry more about)

Eh?

I wasn't just hearing things a second ago, right?

Hearing Shizu-san's voice...

「Ha! Don't say it like you know! What could someone like you understand!!」

My words angered the calm Hinata.

She seems very mad. Faster than I could think about the reason,

「You let your guard down, it's my win! Melting Slash!!」

The speed of her swings again accelerated becoming light itself.

That sword, wrapped in various types of magic,

《Announcement. Impossible to block. Impossible to evade!!》

(Damn! That can actually kill me?!)

First time I heard Raphael's worried voice.

And, accelerating my thoughts to 10 million times the norm, I could only slowly watch as the sword approached me.

At that angle, with such timing.

I cannot evade, barriers are useless, but I guess I can try to move my consciousness into a clone.

But, since that attack fires off a light that erases everything. If I use the skill a moment too late, I'll be burned to death.

Did she respond to get me to lower my guard?
Didn't seem that way, but as a result she got me.

《Announcement. I propose annihilating it using Gluttonous King Beelzebub.
Please do not give up》

Raphael advised the course of action that the highest chance of success.
And as Raphael said, I will be activating Beelzebub.
The moment her sword touches me, I'll have Beelzebub eat the sword and the skill.
If that fails, I might disappear.
But there's no room for hesitation.
I trusted Raphael, and activated Beelzebub at that precise moment.

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.....
...

The result, I survived.
I thought I would die, but I survived.
Hinata opened her eyes and looked at me.
For but a brief second.
She soon readied her sword and came at me again.
I, personally, was still in the process of being happy about surviving, but I guess fighting her comes first.
Seriously, this girl, so dangerous!
Honestly, the moment her skill touched me, a lot of my magic energy had disappeared.
If converted into HP, I'd say about 50% was gone.
Well, I did survive though...
I won't let my guard down again.
Actually, the only reason I did in the first place was because I started hearing Shizu-san's voice for some reason.
While thus complaining and blocking her attacks...

《Announcement.『Future Attack Prediction』has been acquired. Activate?
[YES]/[NO]》

I almost screamed in surprise.
Suddenly, Raphael had acquired a new skill.
What a great person Raphael is.
While observing Hinata I had been trying to predict her movements, so maybe because of that... let's just go with that.
I hastily activated it.
A number of lights appeared before me. Though it's a sense, I actually visualize it?
A single light fired at me.
I moved my sword in anticipation of the light, and interestingly enough it blocked Hinata's sword perfectly.
It seems like that light
That light originates from her posture and displays possible attacks which follow a displayed trajectory.
If she's trying to do something, the lights turn black.
In this case, prediction is impossible, but it means a real attack is coming soon.
In other words, feints and the like can now be calculated.
A master like Hinata can certainly use attacks that cannot be anticipated.
But what's scary about this skill is that it does not predict the attack but the result.
That is, even if the chances are low, only a specific attack could follow the prediction line.
If that's the case... Hinata's not a threat anymore.
Her flowing attacks all predicted with『Future Attack Prediction』, I easily flick away her sword.
It's the end! I won't kill you, but I'll have you feel some pain!

While I was thinking this, I lowered my sword, only to have an unbelievable illusion appear before me.

Both of her hands outstretched, Shizu san stood in front of me.
With no burn marks, a face of an adult without a mask.
Her face older than mine, and a calm aura about her.

Hinata seemed to also be able to see this illusion as she angrily scowled at me.
And to both of us,

(Rimuru, and Hinata. No one else)

No way...

An illusion can talk?

Hinata seemed to be able to hear it, cause she just sat there.

And... suddenly, my sword was pressing against her neck.

At that moment, time seemed to stop.

This is... though acceleration? And I am linked with Hinata?

「What did you do? What the hell are you planning?」

Her eyes bloodshot, Hinata asked.

I don't remember thrusting at her at all.

But, I am the one who wants to ask.

「No idea! I want to know myself!」

Though she seems as if about to disappear, I can see a phantom of Shizu-san.
A slight smile on her face, she so said to us.

(I'll borrow a little of your time. Would you listen to me?)

And, the phantom began to speak.

Her words dispelled all of my suspicions, or rather, it confirmed all of my hypotheses.

In other words, the original cause of all of this.

Why did Shizu-san abandon Hinata?

And, are Hinata's thoughts limited?

These questions.

These were all answered by her words.

(I'll be frank. I worried about Kagurazaka Yuuki.

I knew that Hinata was strong. But even so, choosing him even I found strange.

Now I understand. My thoughts were restricted. By his ability...)

「No way! Yuuki would never do that!」

Interrupting Hinata, Shizu-san shook her head and continued.

(You are also affected, Hinata. Even now you are...)

She said with a pained voice.

Hinata had nothing to say in response.

That's to be expected. She was just told she had been manipulated up until now. But, these words confirmed my own conclusions.

"Right..." I said, satisfied.

Now the doubts have been cleared.

As there was a person who willingly manipulated a single girl who thought that if she tried hard enough, someone would one day be nice to her.

That culprit is...

「In other words, Kagurazaka Yuuki is the mastermind behind all of this?」

Surprised at my question, Shizu turned around and with a distraught face nodded.

As I thought.

Now everything makes sense.

At this moment, a flame of anger against the mastermind was lit within me.

Chapter 95 - Complete Victory

Inside the time that had been prolonged by 1 million fold, we faced each other. That was, a thought space created by Wisdom King Raphael, that dragged Hinata into this space.

It succeeded in creating a forced thought link with Hinata's consciousness, which I could have not predicted.

Well, why did it do such a thing?

The answer was Shizu-san.

(It was my request. To Rimuru's ability, Wisdom King Raphael.)

Shizu-san says so, while smiling gently.

The Izawa Shizue who was seen by Hinata and I was not the real person.

It was the remains of the real person's Soul. A fragment of her mind.

At the time I absorbed her, her soul was also taken. Thanks to the evolution of Wisdom King Raphael, it seems that the analysis of her soul was a success.

Really.....

Since the time it was still 'Great Sage', what has it done secretly and silently behind me? This fellow...

Wasn't the true Mastermind Wisdom King Raphael-san? I thought so too, but it might also not be true.

Inside the constructed thought space, Hinata was being embraced by Shizu-san.

"You have done well", Shizu-san said while praising Hinata.

That ruthless Hinata had a relieved expression like a child. Seeing such an appearance I felt a strange feeling.

Then, Shizu-san's hands plucked the wicked insect that was coiling around Hinata's head, and burnt it completely with her flame.

That was, the "Curse's Crystal" that had started Hinata's Thought Restraint^[1].

「Wait, hey! Wisdom King Raphael. I also met Yuuki, could I also be under Thought Restraint?」(Rimuru)

Although I didn't think so, I asked to make sure.

This Wisdom King Raphael fellow maybe doing something without permission, but it was not a negligent fellow.

《Notification. Master is not under Thought Restraint.

However, the traces of Thought Guidance were confirmed.

Because of the ability's evolution, the effect of Thought Guidance has disappeared now.

The report came nonchalantly from Raphael as if it was a trivial matter. This fellow, if there were signs, then the probability that Yuuki was the mastermind was high.

Even I was not convinced to doubt at that level! This fellow (Raphael), really..... Oh well, perhaps to obtain definitive evidence, it attempted to reproduce Shizu-san's soul.

This fellow was too much of a perfectionist, it won't report to me, if the information was not absolutely 100% correct.

Since my analysis was imperfect, it will trouble and confuse me, if it reported every trivial information one by one.

As if it understood what my intentions were, I don't have any complaint about it. And thus, time passed for a while.

Hinata raised her head, did she calm down?

Her expression was calm, her previous tense mood had been eased.

Perhaps she was actually a kind child, but she might have acquired her ruthless and brutal tendency to survive through the harsh world.

If you think about it, was this what Shizu-san had regrets about?

Maybe for this reason, Wisdom King Raphael reproduced Shizu-san's Soul, because it wanted an opportunity to exchange information with her.

(Hinata, I'm sorry for neglecting you.

Please live strongly, faith is important, but don't misjudge the reality/enemy.)^[2]

「Shishou (Sensei).....But, even now, I am still confused.

I believe the condition in Holy Empire of Ruberion was not wrong.」(Hinata)

(Hinata..... Which is correct? Which is wrong?

To decide it one-sidedly is not good. Be flexible, okay?)

Shizu-san admonishes her gently.

She still wanted to talk more. This woman (Hinata) even if she was smart, she

was too stubborn.

She doesn't really lend her ear to any of my words, but there are occasions when she showed her flexible nature.

But just as expected she still didn't listen to my words.....

「I understand. One more time, I will start over. Seeing with these eyes, and deciding with my own heart.」(Hinata)

Hinata nodded honestly.

Oi..... was it because Shizu-san's the one who was talking that she became this obedient? Or, because she was released from Thought Restraint that she became obedient?

It was because of the Thought Restraint. Yes, there's no mistaking it.

After all, it's not like I expected anything while having a hard time persuading Hinata.

That means, the bad one was all Yuuki.

Was there a possibility that guy was also manipulated....?

Could Raphael give me an answer about this?

「Oi, I understand that Kagurazaka Yuuki is the mastermind. But, for confirmation....

Is there a possibility that Yuuki is also being manipulated?

If I say accurately, by the "Sorcery King (Curse Lord)" Kazaream!」(Rimuru)

I press the question about the real issue at hand sternly.

If it is not inquired now, the core issue may never come out.

「Yuuki is manipulated by "Sorcery King" Kazaream, how?

Wasn't he a former Demon Lord that was slain by Demon Lord Leon, right? How can he still be alive?」(Hinata)

「Nn? Ah! Before this, that person's subordinate Clayman said that Demon Lord was still alive.

He said that person's Spiritual body seemed to have revived.

Because he had detailed information from the human side, I guessed that he was possessing a human.」(Rimuru)

「He is alive? And, he is in a place where he could gather information easily.

In the first place, to apply Thought Restraint on me, it doesn't seem possible for Yuuki to do it at the same time when I arrived at this world.

Above all else, his intention or objective was unknown. But, if you say that Kazaream is the mastermind.....」 (Hinata)

「Nn? Do you know something?」(Rimuru)

To my question, Hinata only replied in silence.

This fellow was still not being honest with me.

Oh well. What I wanted to hear was not from Hinata.

「Answer me, Wisdom King Raphael」

To my question, I felt relieved as if it was answered.

A Spiritual body can't use their ability excessively. Additionally, there was a possibility that it could possess a body and move from one to another.

Or, there was a possibility that somehow, through the protection of the Spiritual body, the soul did not vanish. Kazaream was left roaming around and fused with Yuuki when he accidentally came into this world.

Although the probability of the former was higher, the communication with Clayman came too slowly. As Clayman said, the contact suddenly came several tens of years ago^[3], until then his movement was a mystery.

In case of the latter.

The probability was too low, it was something unimaginable, but..... There was a dying person who reincarnated as a Slime, so it can't be said to be completely impossible.

Eh? Wasn't that was about myself?! I let out such a Tsukkomi.

If one can't be said with certainty, Kaguzaka Yuuki's personality might have already vanished or not.

However, there was also a possibility that Yuuki's personality could have been swallowed or dominated by Kazaream.

Wisdom King Raphael considered various possibilities, but it doesn't want to declare until there was certainty.

Since its perfectionist nature could be considered a merit and a demerit.

「Anyway, currently without any doubt, Yuuki is a dangerous opponent. Because of that, we must be cautious.」

So, I concluded.

(However, that child was seen as a really normal and kind child. There was no

uncomfortable feeling.

That was why I worried about him, Hinata. You must never get close to Yuuki.
I have a very unpleasant premonition.....

Good bye, Hinata. Please live and become happy)

Shizu-san said so at the end, she then disappeared from Hinata and my sight.
She was finally able to tell Hinata what she was worried about, what she
regretted had she disappeared.

After Shizu-san disappearance, Hinata kept offering a silent prayer towards that
direction. That appearance, I will always remember it.

And then.....

《Notification. The purpose was achieved. Now releasing the thought link》

Immediately after it said that, I felt like I was wrapped in a bright light.

(Rimuru, thank you about Hinata. As expected you really are a kind person.....
This place is very comfortable.....)

I thought I heard Shizu-san's voice.

Was it only my imagination? Or, was it an illusion? However, Shizu-san's anxiety
certainly disappeared.

While sprouting a gentle smile, Shizu-san bowed her head to me.

I opened my eyes after the signal from Wisdom King Raphael.

The time that had been prolonged 1 million fold was returning to its normal flow,
and thought link was released.

The vicinity was shrouded with scent of the battlefield and we were glaring at
each other with the same stance we had a little while ago.

In real time, half hour had passed since the beginning of the fight.

Even though I felt like the fight took place a long time ago, did my one on one
fight with Hinata start only 30 minutes ago?

Though I felt like time had already elapsed for several days, it looked like it never happened.

「Well then, shall we continue again?」(Hinata)

Like nothing happened, Hinata drew her sword.

Eh, wait a minute.

「Hey! The last time I had the advantage over you, I stopped! So, why did you nonchalantly ignore it!」(Rimuru)

「I don't know. Isn't it common sense to end a battle after delivering the final blow?」(Hinata)

「Ku..... This bastard.....」(Rimuru)

「Besides, after my subordinates became like that, I cannot afford to withdraw silently, right?」(Hinata)

What was she saying?

So I thought, and looked around at my surroundings.....

「Impossible, it is already impossible. Do as you like, you damn monster!」
(Anon Holy Knight)

「Kufufufufu. It was more enjoyable than I thought. Let's us have a break for a while.」(Diablo)

「What, rest!? Whatever! Damn it!」(Anon Holy Knight)

「Kufufufufu. Oh dear, don't say so!」(Diablo)

Such was exchange between Diablo and the Holy Knights.

「Go away! You nuisance.」(Souei)

「Aa, Souei-sama.....how mean!」(Tortured Female Holy Knight)

For some reason, a redhead and beautiful onee-san leaned coquettishly against Souei.

How should I put it, what were you doing in the fight? My anger was about to gush forth slightly, you know?

「I am terribly sorry, Rimuru-sama. I was torturing her, but it seems I made a mistake.

Somehow it became like this.....」(Souei)

Souei apologized to me while he pushed aside the redhead Holy Knight while

being annoyed.

Although I was puzzled by what kind of torture he had conducted, I was more worried about what kind of torture that could cause such a reaction.

I really don't understand what's going on there.

「You, get away from Souei-sama!」(Souka)

Souka shouts vigorously with loud voice.

But the voice doesn't match with her completely exhausted appearance. She looks like she was unable to stand up.

If you look around, Gobuta, Gabil and also Souei's Shadow squad were exhausted and looked like they wanted to collapse.

Next to them was Hakurou sighing.

「You guys, will be drilled and tempered by me」(Hakurou)

So he grumbled. As the words became the final blow, Gobuta and the others suddenly collapsed.

Next to Gobuta and others, the Holy Knights were also similarly worn-out and laying around. It seems like an intense battle had unfolded there.

But it seems their battle was not satisfying for Hakurou, didn't they do their best with Holy Knights as the opponent?

「I was deceived-ssu. My opponent was the strongest one, so cruel-ssu!」
(Gobuta)

「To end up drawing a Hobgoblin as an opponent..... That? I am also not in a good position.....」 (Gregory)

「It can't be!..... I have tried my best! And yet why!?」(Gabil)

Unanimously, they were complaining about something. Oh well, I have nothing except to say except my condolences.

Well, this was still okay, even though I still don't understand what happened to Souei's opponent, I will just leave it behind.

But I soon caught a glimpse of a grievous scene that made me want to avert my eyes, I think they were Holy Knight who had become playmates of Ranga and Shion

Looking by a glance, lying in front of Ranga were eight people that were left with only tattered pants.

Ranga seemed to have carried them with his mouth, while wagging his tail energetically.

「My master! These people were the best to check my condition after my evolution」(Ranga)

Ranga said so happily.

Although I told him not to do things excessively.....Well, at least he didn't kill them.

「O, ou. Good for you then.....」(Rimuru)

「Ay! Can I play more?」(Ranga)

「No, please stop. Those people might be tired already....」(Rimuru)

「Is that so? I understand.」(Ranga)

Was he not playing enough? His tail has hung down but.....

Were they relieved by my words? I think I heard relieved voices from the people under Ranga's feet.

Yup, it was their voice, all right.

If Ranga played another round with them, those people will die.

Frankly, they were saved! Their faces, with their thankful eyes, were directed towards me.....

Was it alright for the Holy Knight to do that? I became a bit worried, but it can't be helped, since their opponent was Ranga.

The main problem was about Shion's opponent's condition.

Why? Why did everyone's limbs disappear and their body left to squirm on the ground?

I believed that Shion's smug face was a bad premonition. It really was.

「.....Oi. Shion. What did you do to those people?」(Rimuru)

「Ay! For the commendation, thank you very much!

These things (people)^[4], because they dared to try and oppose Rimuru-sama, I punished them a little.」(Shion)

I'm not praising you! You idiot.

Although Shion proudly answered, but.....

No matter how you look at it, it was too overboard. In the beginning, except for my subordinates, I didn't really care about the people who opposed me or trash

or something like that.

「Oi..... Although I said do your best, no matter how you look at it you are overdoing it! Don't kill them! Didn't I say that?」(Rimuru)

「It's alright. Everyone still lives energetically like this!」(Shion)

No no!

Even if they are alive, they were not in a good condition. Didn't those who lost their arms and legs have a blank and hollow expression?!

What's more, since they were protecting people, if they lack arms and legs, how could they fight against monsters?

She doesn't understand what I want to say, this fellow.....

「Shion, it seems like it's just you that did not obey my order. If you don't have any explanation.....」 (Rimuru)

Just when I attempted to speak,

「Oops! I forgot! You guys, be delighted and express your gratitude to Rimuru-sama!」

While saying such words, in a great haste she collects all the squirming Holy Knights under her feet in one swoop.

And then sprinkles over the Full Potion (Complete Recovery Medicine).

In front of my sight, the Holy Knights' limbs were growing back.

Although I don't understand her ability, she obtained a very terrifying ability, that Shion.

Did she manipulate the system's effect? An absurd dangerous skill had awakened in this troublesome girl.

I cannot stop myself from sympathizing with her opponent.

The Holy Knight that had their arms and legs restored, were sharing their joy with each other.

Their joy was great since they weren't turned into a disabled person, which is understandable because of how many daily training they had.

Well, it's because of Shion's rampage, from now on I decided to pay more attention to her.

Well, as long as Holy Knights safety was confirmed, so I thought.

However, oh well.....

About Hinata, is it because she saw her subordinates in a miserable condition?
You reap what you sow, but this is just an excuse.
It couldn't be helped. To set up the fence again, so let's become an enemy, huh?

「I understand. It can't be helped, I will be your opponent.
However, no hard feelings in this! Can you swear if you lose fairly, you will not
meddle with this country?」 (Rimuru)
「..... I understand. Let's promise, this match is the last!」 (Hinata)

I believe in you, Hinata.
Unlike the previous time, the hesitation inside Hinata's eyes was gone.
It also didn't look like she was exacting the revenge for the poor treatment of
holy knights, maybe it's because she had properly listened to my words.
That's good. You can't stay stubborn all the time.
Well then, this was the last match.
While holding each one's sword, we closed our distance together.
Everyone, including the holy knights, were watching us intently.
What is Justice, tedious talk is also not good.
In the end, although it was annoying to resort to violence, it was easy to
understand.
To bet their beliefs, the fight between two people had restarted.

.....
.....
...

However.
Frankly, there was no possibility for me to lose.
After all, there was 『Future Attack Prediction』.
Although Holy attribute can pierce through Covenant King Uriel's Absolute
Defense, I already have eyes that can see all the sword lines.
Having such thoughts, I must never think carelessly.
In my vision, 『Future Attack Prediction』 emitted light for the line of all predicted
attacks
Nn???
Surprised. What was the meaning of this? To me, who was having such

thoughts,

《Notification. The Individual: Sakaguchi Hinata's growth was confirmed. She most likely possesses "Hero's Egg".

Because of this reason, she has become an existence that surpasses logic, and because of this result, she seemed to gain a resistance against Result Prediction System's ability.》

In other word, I must avoid using my own power?

Why did this happen! Didn't I have the upper hand during the previous positions?

To grow in the middle of the fight, although it was wonderful, to happen at this time was too much!

Damn, what the hell does this mean! Seriously,

Even the Gluttonous King Beelzebub vanished in the fight before.....

While thinking such things, I desperately warded off Hinata's sword.

Even though she became "Hero's Egg", it seemed to not strengthen her suddenly.

That was a relief. Because I can still deal with her somehow.

However, I can't win just by evading. There must something that I can do if not....

Towards me who was lost in thoughts,

《Notification. There is no problem. Gluttonous King Beelzebub's revival is possible.》

Huh? Wasn't it annihilated.....

《Notification. Although it was annihilated, it was possible to revive it, there was no problem.》

What the past tense for! Even so shouldn't you say that earlier! Shouldn't you? I was wavering between delight and annoyance, Wisdom King Raphael let out an even more explosive statement.

《Notification. Should Covenant King Uriel's Absolute Defense be activated? YES/NO》

Hey! Why didn't you activated it since a little while ago?
To my question, Wisdom King Raphael answered about this matter, I almost reached the limit of my surprise.
Anyway,

《Solution. Holy attribute can pass through Covenant King Uriel's Absolute Defense.
Therefore, there was no point to activate it. 》

Etc, so it announced.
Even a perfectionist has a limit.
During the fight with Hinata before, it said that the movement of Holy attribute's attack was impossible to predict.
Based on Raphael's analysis, about why it was possible to penetrate the Absolute Defense was because its substance was only "Spirit Substance" and "Shadow Substance". It could pass because Absolute Defense's barrier which only protects against Magic Power.
Raphael had reasoned that because it makes small scale moves at random, prediction of its contact point was impossible.
So why was Raphael talking about this while filled with confidence?
In other words, it means that Raphael had devised a perfect way to defend against Hinata's attack, right?

《Solution. Not long ago, the data of Melt Slash^[5] that annihilated Gluttonous King Beelzebub was collected.
The result, Holy Sword technique: Melt Slash was acquired.
In this case, it was an event not covered in the prediction; it was now possible to percept the law of Spirit Substance's movement.》^[6]

Hmm.....
Nn? Wait a minute, waaiiit a minute.
Eh? So that means, even If I received a direct hit from Hinata's sword a while ago, there was a possibility that I wouldn't receive any damage?

《.....》

Oi! You ignoring me? This bastard.....
So it means, not answering was the answer, huh?

Eh? But.....

Wait a minute, even if I received the direct hit from Hinata's Melt Slash before, I would not die?

《Solution. Of course. There was a possibility to receive large damage, but it was also possible to regenerate immediately.》

Then, why did it seem like you were panicking? Perhaps..... it was because you wanted me to eat and analyze Melt Slash, right?[7]

《.....》

Oh! You still don't want to answer again!

This fellow, gradually the response becomes high class. If it is compared to Human, it was good at scheming.

Even if it had an ego, I could honestly believe it.

.....But, certainly. It's because that was something I had wished for.

Can I withstand that attack? Can I also use it?

In that moment it understood my wishes and immediately executed it, huh? This ability (Raphael) was no joke (overpowered).

This ability was way too good for someone like me.

《No. I only exist for Master's sake》 [8]

You immediately refuted it.

Humph, thank you.

Hereafter, I will be relying on you, Partner! But... I beg you to not do something secretly.

Inside Thought Acceleration, the exchange between Wisdom King Raphael and I ended instantly.

And, invoking Covenant King Uriel's Absolute Defense, my left hand caught Hinata's sword.

Astonished, Hinata opened her eyes wide.

That was so. In my life, that was the fastest strike.

Facing Hinata,

「Complete victory for me, Hinata!」[9]

So I announce it, I use Melt Slash.

A shining flash.

A strike flash that even eyes cannot follow, the sword in Hinata's hand was broken, and then the strike stops right before Hinata's neck.

The match was decided.

Hinata was frozen because of the surprise but,

「It was my complete defeat, Rimuru. You may do anything you like.....」

So she muttered, and closed her eyes.

The fight was over with my victory.

Well then.

Finally, it seems Hinata has become meek to me, did she finally agree to listen to my words?

Thus, the Holy Knights' attack was completely fended off.

Or precisely, I felt it was too one-sided. I think I would deliberately pretend to have never seen it.

The cleaning up afterwards will be difficult, but the problem was solved for the time being.



TL Notes:

[1] Thought Restraint (思考制御) will change after there more explanation about this ability

[2] 本質 (テキ) = Reality (Enemy) double meaning

[3] It means 10-19 years ago.

[4] Shion use Kono monotachi.... Mono rarely used for people, it mainly used for things. So Shion really look down on them.

[5] 崩魔霊子斬(メルトラッシュ) = Houmareikozan -> Spirit Destroying Magic Slash (Melt Slash)

[6] I dub this Spiritodynamic. (The study of movement / change of Spirit Substance)

[7] Rimuru was tricked by Rimuru's own skill?

[8] Damn it Rimuru, just take it/she as your main waifu, and ditch Shion!

[9] TITLE DROP!

Chapter 96 - Chance to Speak

I called Gerudo over to help with putting things back in order. The Yellow Numbers' manufacturing ability is surprisingly high. So I'll have them work hard returning things to normal around here. And though Gerudo was quite upset at having no opportunity to fight this time around, he happily accepted my request. Thus, they quickly got to work. The demon steel reinforced tunnels we had built proved unnecessary, so I'll have them fill those in as well. Since demon steel is very useful, we can't just leave it lying around, now can we. And that's the thought that made me realize, That I had forgotten about a very serious matter.

「Crap... I forgot about Veldora...」

The moment I thus muttered, the surrounding Department Heads all froze. They exchanged glances as if seeking advice from each other with their eyes. The knights looked at us with a face full of suspicion, but we have no time to alleviate their worries. Now then, what to do... Whenever I tried making eye contact with any department head, they would turn away. How reliable! I get it, you hate it. Well... it is really hard to come up to a guy who was raring to go and tell him「Just kidding, we're done already, all good!」 He'll definitely rampage. Not that there's another choice here.

「It can't be helped, I'll go and explain. The rest of you return and rest up. The knights too, take a bath and relax. Those with ruined equipment will probably need no clothing too...」

The knights looked at me as if they could not understand what I was saying. Well, I guess bath culture exists only in Ingracia Kingdom, so it's not a surprise if

they don't know...

And they probably can't imagine monsters taking baths.

Hmph, prepare to be surprised! Our baths are far better than the ones in any royal capital around.

We have great reviews, so rest up.

As for clothing... Those partnered with Ranga have lost everything but underwear.

To advertise our country, let's give them some of our newly developed hemp jackets.

The girls can choose to wear a yukata, so there's plenty to choose from.

Seems like with effort we can eventually restore their armor, but that's impossible right now. Not that it will stay like that for long.

From the looks of it, Shion is also not wearing armor. Though she seems to be able to call up clothing at will.

It's just a feeling, but she probably had some grand battle with the knights.

Those that can't walk are being carried by Ranga's pack.

I decided to leave the knights with Hakurou and had Souei deliver a message to Rigurdo.

Rigurdo can probably manage to prepare baths and clothing for all of them.

Now it feels like we're preparing for a banquet... well, I guess it's fine. I mean, we're always at it anyways, and we recently expanded our fields as well.

It's that, you know? Party after some big event?

I think it's a custom basically wherever you go.

Thinking these things, I ventured off to Veldora.

Afterwards, out of rage, Veldora destroyed the tunnel in an explosion and flew into the sky.

Aiming for the tired Knights from above, he gracefully aimed at them.

He's been releasing his aura the whole time in dragon form, so his anger seemed to have abated slightly.

Good thing I had him release it before he started his assault on the knights.

Basically, this old geezer (not that he is actually) just wants to rampage. He's only dangerous if he doesn't get to unwind once in a while.

I think we'll need to prepare such a place for him for future use.

For us, though, this was all a story we could laugh about.

For the knights he attacked, it was a nightmare.

I mean, imagine being completely drained, and then having a nightmare-like being descend upon you.

「Geeeeh!! Veldora!!」

And,

「Abababababa!!」

They screamed.

What a funny reaction they showed.

I would have loved if you could see it, but I guess I also felt sorry for them.

Well, I wanted to make sure they would not assault us every again, so this might have been perfect timing for his appearance.

Hmph, I wonder if Raphael had also planned this?.. Nah, I guess not.

There's no way Raphael could have predicted this far, so let's not overestimate Raphael too much.

I mean, the fight with Hinata had gone completely according to plan, so this was just a thought I had.

So with this and that, I guess we can close this confrontation story by saying that it was our complete victory.

* * *

When I returned to the city, the knights were already taking a bath.

Rigurdo, as always, was running around handling food preparations and the like.

Souei should have notified him a while ago, so there's no need to rush, I think... it's probably just his personality.

But to think that he even ran around asking whether there was any food they couldn't eat because of their religious preferences! Really have to respect him for his diligence.

I bet that he's been talking to merchants and adventurers learning about the human culture for a while now.

Rigur, after making Gobuta the garrison squad leader, has been supporting his father Rigurdo. Isn't he a fine successor for Rigurdo?

But who'd believe that he was a simple goblin until not too long ago?

The banquet hall.

We're often having banquets, so make it! I declared a while back, and they quickly built the building.

It's about the size of a gymnasium, and is dome shaped.

The inside has wooden floors with a tatami floored seat of honor.

In worst case scenario, since this building can house so many people, it can be used for evacuation purposes.

The building is quite large so it had to be built sturdy.

The skeleton of it we had reinforced with steel, but we're planning on changing that to demon steel eventually. If I think about it, just how privileged is our country?

Just when I began thinking this, I saw food brought out on waiter tables.

Well done. As you'd see in an expensive restaurant, the food is inside a hand crafted bowl.

When I had some time, I tried baking one out of clay, and the children, who saw me do that, decided to imitate me.

As a result, every house now uses such bowls made by children.

Moreover, the bowls have gotten rather pretty recently.

Their vividly colored, whether using medical herbs or some other dubious method, and appear truly grand.

Seems like a lot of experimentation went into making them.

The table they are carried on is also an example of intricate craftsmanship.

To think that it was made with the leftover material...

Looking at all of this, from the onsen to the tableware, my tastes are reflected in all their actions.

Considering my current pleasant lifestyle, the time I spent munching on grass seems unbelievable.

I can also enjoy food now. I've really been working hard, right?

Today's menu is tempura. Wonderful.

Looks exactly right, and the taste is great. Made by Shuna. Not, I repeat, not by Shion.

Shion's all brawn and no brains, and even if she has a cook skill, I cannot leave everyone's meal to her.

This Tempura was slowly developed after showing Shuna my memories.

She's worked really hard. But, it was only possible because I had memories,

albeit vague, about its taste.

Even Ingrasia Kingdom, which had an abundant variety of food, did not have Japanese meals.

True Japanese meals, even among the World Travelers, must be truly rare.

She really has worked hard.

I mean, in order to make something like dried bonito, we've gone off to the sea to catch fish in large quantities.

And since we can easily transport it while preserving its freshness via spatial travel, we've gotten our hands on a great variety of ingredients.

We are at the pinnacle of food culture.

I, personally, think that a country that has a poor variety of food is pointless.

Among the three basic necessities—Food, Water, Shelter—the most important one is food, after all. Though I guess that might depend on the person.

Which is why, even by going to absurd lengths, we've developed many dishes.

The current problem is white rice. Wheat, on the other hand, we've easily acquired.

I mean, I've seen rich people eat white bread in the royal capital. So, we've been able to reproduce that product easily.

The problem is: rice.

I couldn't imagine that this grass family did not exist, so I passionately set off to look for it.

But, compared to millennia of selective breeding that Japanese Rice had undergone, what we found was nowhere near as tasty.

But that's only to be expected. I didn't think this would be easy.

So, we're currently in the middle of modifying the plant.

The thing is, my plan is actually really simple. I asked Raphael if there was a way to quickly fix it, and a simple answer was presented before me.

That was: altering the plant's properties using Shion's『Cook』skill.

But how will that go? I can't imagine the properties taking root permanently.

So, I've been doing that with my ability to change just a small portion of the rice (in fact, just my portion).

Shion would get a big head if I let her do it, so I did it myself.

This time, however, I had Shuna allow me to do it to the knights' portions as well.

Today is special. They don't know the beauty of my country, so I plan to show it off to them.

Carrot and Stick. Crush them with overwhelming power and then treat them very nicely.

The knights might not be that easy to sway, but I have a feeling that this will be pretty effective.

Well, white rice is my obsession though, so maybe the knights will hate it.

Tempura is widely popular, with Adventurers and merchants loving it.

By the way, we also tried growing some rice on magic energy-rich water.

The result was a pitch black rice, as if squid ink was mixed into it. It's also unbelievably tasty.

But it doesn't look very appetizing. And it's poisonous to humans.

We called it demon rice, and it has a surprisingly high nutritional value (for monsters).

At some point it has become the primary food of Tempest.

And just the fact that it can hold that much magical energy makes it a rare good.

Thus we finished the preparations for the banquet and were awaiting the knights' return from the baths.

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The knights got out of bath, dressed in either the yukata or the jacket and came to the banquet.

It wasn't clothing they were used to, but they seem to have taken a liking to it.

Well, that jacket is basically like a jersey—really comfortable to be in. It's the best type of clothing to wear indoors.

Some fear on their faces, they were guided to their seats.

The Goblins leading them weren't at all worried, and moved naturally. They are surprisingly good at this.

The knights are also surprised I bet. There's no extraneous movement about them.

And, thanking the Goblins, Hinata seemed to have made up her mind as she looked at me.

「This incident... I bear sole responsibility for the trouble we have caused you, and wish to apologize.
I do not believe I can be forgiven for this, but please treat my subordinates leniently...」

She said, bowing before me and lowering her head.
And when she did... that.
I could see. Two gentle slopes within her yukata.
Crap, things are getting heated up here. Though I wish it was my son that was getting heated up... real shame.
But, nothing I can do about that. Men are creatures who can never forget the heat of an “adventure”!
At times like this I am truly glad this body doesn’t get nosebleeds.
But, yukata, huh. Amazing, I must say. It has terrifying potential.
And the sight of a woman right out of a bath is the best.
Compounded with the fact that this woman is a beauty... the combined effects are truly terrifying.
I lost... I’ve been defeated. Complete defeat.
Everything is forgiven, so I say.
But then,

「Rimuru-sama, whence would you be looking?」

Shuna asked with a smile on her face.
Hmm? Her words are kind, so why do I feel a chill...
Why... how did she know?!

「No no, I’m not looking at anything.
Anyways, Hinata...
Do not apologize to me but to Shion and the Yomigaeri.
They are the victims」

I said, pointing at them.
There’s no reason to deceive them.
Shion jumped in surprise. She hadn’t expected to be called.
And to her,

「I’m sorry.

I have convinced myself that monsters are evil.

That they will attack you when you least expect them, and that they cannot be trusted...

Please forgive me...」

Hinata said, bowing even deeper.

When Hinata did so, the other knights followed.

All together, they cried『We're sorry!』

Shion started fidgeting, making a distressed face.

「Shion, forgive them. I understand your anger and pain.

But, they are not completely evil.

Just so you know, humans are beings that surpass the errors they make.

So do consider them thoroughly. There are noble humans as well」

Shion's discomfort intensified with my words.

She probably thinks humans are evil incarnate.

But, I wouldn't want her to think that all humans are like that.

Her discomfort lasted a second longer,

And then with a resolved face,

「Okay! Whether a person is good or evil, I'll decide after seeing their soul!」

She said, and faced me with a cheerful smile.

She seemed as if she had conquered some inner demon and was now cheerful again.

The Yomigaeri also forgave them.

What a good bunch. They are my pride and joy.

Let bygones be bygones.

What can and cannot be forgiven is hard to decide, but this time we were able to reconcile.

If you meet people who listen to what you say, you can almost always learn to understand their point.

And thus, one problem was solved.

Now then, it's not a good idea to stay gloomy.

The delicious food will get cold.

Besides, the agitated Veldora just might get even more agitated.

In fact, he's currently occupying my clone and enjoying a meal.

He doesn't need to eat just like me, but has been stricken by the beauty of cooking.

Now he's just as fussy about his meals as I am.

And thus we began the banquet.

After a good bath a cold beer is must.

Of course, we have it. It's our country's special alcohol.

Made perfectly.

Ingracia Kingdom specializes in wine.

They do have beer, but it's not very good. It lacks a punch... or maybe it's not carbonated enough?

Or maybe the fact that it's lukewarm makes it unpleasant.

Anyways, we have greatly improved upon it.

Don't underestimate my passion for food even for a second.

In fact, if I say "I want this!" everyone immediately gets to work on making it; aren't I scary?

I guess this is proof that I have become a demon lord, huh?.. Wasn't it like this before?

Ah, whatever.

Thus the alcohol diversity of our country has also increased.

We import the wine and produce the beer.

Along with potato and barley shochu.

So it's natural that the frequency of banquets has increased. My orders are faithfully being carried out and our food has gotten seriously delicious.

Even if I say let's have a dinner, it'll just become another banquet. No question about it.

I don't even need Raphael's input on this to predict the outcome.

It's just that obvious.

The knights are awed by our dishes. I mean, for seafood, we have even made sashimi.

We don't yet have soy sauce, but we have made a similar spice.

It's a bit lacking, but soy sauce is currently being researched. In the meantime, we might improve this to perfection.

Oh, and then a knight who got interested in trying the black rice put some in his

mouth and screamed,

「T-this! Recovers magical energy?!」

Hmm? That wasn't a shriek I was expecting.

It's supposed to be poisonous to humans, but I guess it is akin to medicine for those stronger?

Actually, they were essentially exhausted a second ago, so maybe that's why.

While I was thinking these things, the other knights also expressed interest in the black rice.

It can't be helped, let them have it.

To think that I went out of my way to make white rice and they preferred the black one...

Well, the appearance of it is bad but the taste is good. Those without extreme prejudice just might eat it without a complaint.

Tempura, Sashimi, and restorative rice has shocked them... I am looking forward to the tales they will spin about my country.

Moreover, I'm just happy to see templars and monsters enjoying a meal together.

It's a good scene.

Maybe alcohol had a role to play here, but if such a scene can become the norm, maybe we can truly befriend each other one day.

Eat good food and spend days happily.

Such is my goal, for which I ardently struggle.

Protecting this kind of sight is my job.

So I decided yet again.

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We got drunk and everyone was pretty merry.

Arnaud, a person said to be the next most powerful after Hinata, said

「By the way, Rimuru-san. Who's the strongest in this country?」

A truly ridiculous thing.

Of course, Veldora and I were excluded from this question.

But the monsters, all immediately rose.

Arnaud said a simple phrase with no real intent behind it, but the monsters didn't take it that way.

Chances are, there's secret hierarchy battles going on behind my back, or maybe they decided that a strength-based ranking was a taboo.

Actually, if they made it a taboo that doesn't solve a problem in the slightest.

At the time, even though I don't get drunk, I think I was drunk.

Cause Veldora and I suddenly began to add oil to the fire.

「Kuahahaha! Shouldn't that question be solved with a battle?」

「Hmm? You planning to argue about it? How about having a tournament?」

We said...

I wasn't drunk... well, I was drunk on the atmosphere.

I just said the first thing that popped into my head.

And the moment a tournament was mentioned, the light in their eyes changes.

Though the atmosphere was light until then, things suddenly got serious.

「Kufufufu, what a wonderful idea!」

Diablo decided to join in,

「Isn't it fine? I'm personally not against it.」

And then Benimaru. And following him,

「I guess I'll go all out」

「You guys. You've done well, I guess I'll let you taste some extra training」

「I-I will also participate!」

「I'm also in~su! I'll seriously aim higher~su!」

「Sounds good. I'll cut everyone down!」

「I haven't had enough fun. I want to fight proper opponents!」

「I as well, rather than constantly leading my men, want to test out my powers!」

In short, everyone wanted to participate.

By that moment, I noticed my mistake but it was far too late.

Veldora's also having fun, and frankly, I don't even care anymore.

Thus, the Tempest Tournament has been decided.

Chapter 97 - Compensation and future relations!

Well, this and that happened, and now for some reason it's suddenly become a banquet.

There was a large quantity of various alcohols available. Well, it's probable that it's just various forms of diluted whisky and other beverages, but there was ample quantities of ice prepared. We spared no means to bring such a necessary item out for the festivities.

But, well, as expected, it was simply too much to ask for Japanese style sake, but since I had desired them, an abundant variety of drinks had been prepared.

As it would turn out, the drinks were rather popular amongst the Holy Knights.

In their semi-drunken state, I had hoped that talks of a regular "Tempest Martial Arts competition" would be forgotten, but it would seem that my hopes won't be fulfilled.

This chain of events will probably proceed steadily.

Thus, the next day came.

The discussion between Hinata's group and my own will finally be completed. Various discussions about the future relations between Tempest and the Church will probably ensue.

As it would stand, as we're the victim's side and the one that had received the most substantial level of heavy damage. A lenient response in light of the current situation is simply not possible for the sake of future face and general common sense.

However, a specific increase in the severity of the charges placed on the actual criminal sect known as the Blood Shadow was emphasized. It was certainly different from the desired intentions of the Church.

Because of a little thing known as management, the responsibility for recent events have not fallen completely from a certain party's responsibility.

Although the Holy Knights should end up paying a certain amount of war

reparations for their subjugation war's failure this time around. Well, since the location of Tempest is too far away from the territory they control, even if territory was to be passed onto me, I wouldn't be able to use it that much.

Not to even think about mentioning the fact that this can simply be solved with money.

To be honest, I see establishing friendly relations abroad as a priority above the acquisition of gold and whatnot.

While thinking of such things, the meeting had finally begun in earnest.

The participants from Tempest would include Rigurdo, Benimaru and myself. Aside from that, we also have the Goblin Chiefs who were, for this purpose, promoted to Minister status.

From the Church's side would be Hinata and her 5 Captains.

At first, I had wanted both sides to acknowledge reciprocal recognition. As this was my main goal from the beginning, gaining any additional compensation can be brought up afterwards.

With that said, before we truly started the conference, both parties decided it would be beneficial to exchange general information. Such information generally consisted of each party's respective situations, such as their current exportable goods and so on.

After that, the main conference started.

While watching from a middle ground perspective, I watched for any changes in the balance of the negotiations.

If there were to be any misalignments or complications from either party, it would be best if they were corrected in the early stages of the negotiations.

After a few minutes, I began to gather how the negotiations are panning out.

Needless to say, from our side, the list of grievances began with the Church's sponsored invasion from the Farmas Kingdom.

The direction of the negotiations changes depending on the attitudes of the other party, yet the stances of each party remained unchanged.

As for the Church's position, Hinata mentioned that there was a problem with the current request from the Church's perspective.

Basically, the acknowledgement of the Monster Country is something that contradicts the very teachings of the Church. This is an important matter that could very well lead to the mistrust of the believers.

If there was nothing done, this matter could very well lead to the estrangement of the believers. Thus resulting in the loss of the Church's influence, or at the very least the diminishing of it.

This was apparently the reason why the annihilation of said Monster Country was of the utmost necessity.

That's why, according to Hinata, the Church needed a just cause and a cover story to deal with the situation.

Hence, they chose to utilize the fact that the Farmas Kingdom had openly showed their desire to secure their profit. Giving the Kingdom a suitable level of claim to act, they attacked Tempest along with the Farmas Kingdom.

Well.... they have admitted that they are completely at fault here but... the fact that they were manipulated into action was unexpected.

(Hinata)

"Fufufuf... I suppose it can't be helped. We're completely defeated, so I doubt we'll be able to make headway if I don't give you some acknowledgement. Besides...

I, the representative of the Church, believe in the sole existence that protects the lands and people.

Those very people that convert to the Church find their salvation, and they cut off all other beliefs besides the Church.

There is a limit to the number of people I can save alone. I had believed that only saving those who followed the Church's teachings was true justice.

That's also how I think even now... but...

I think that I have been mistaken.

I should have lent my hand out to those who had striven to survive, to life and be happy. In such, I suppose my actions was not true justice at all.

I... no, if we had helped others for the simple reason of helping them, perhaps we

would not have become so overpowered by this sense of arrogance. For, if we are true believers, we should help all those in need, not merely those who follow our teachings. That is the blindness of our arrogance. To even seek to accomplish this with every ounce of our power is probably the least we can do.”

As if making a mental breakthrough, and as a result finding some level of fulfillment, Hinata’s face showed a bright smile as she spoke.

For the old Hinata, to only save believers was the logical choice. To abandon those who do not believe in the Church’s teachings.

She didn’t have the strength to save every last person who needed help, who looked into the sky begging for a savior. It was a wish she probably thought was something that could never be realized.

That’s why she decided that those who followed the teachings of god should be given priority to be saved.

Her logical and calculative personality had cut off the non-believers cold-heartedly.

While she stayed true to her personal dogma, in her heart, she was only lying to herself up until now.

In the end, the number of people she saved was quite limited. The very lines she drew limited the life that could have been sustained. She could never be everywhere at once, but limiting the choice of who to save ended up leading to making incorrect decisions.

In the end, while it is impossible to save everyone, there were far more lives that could have been saved.

The line that Hinata had drawn before her own heart was whether a person was a believer or not. To not acknowledge someone as a true person unless they were a believer to forget the pain of not saving them.

That’s why Hinata greatly feared a decrease in the number of believers. If the number of people who believed decreased, it was like saying the number of people she could protect was reduced.

Well, she's a little hardheaded in the beginning. Her train of thought is also a bit skewed, though I can understand her reasoning more or less. I too came from the same world as her after all.

Those who place all of their trust in god, leaving their decisions to those who interpret said god's teachings often end up narrowminded. Those who lack the capacity to make their own decisions will often make the wrong ones, leading to a spiral of decay.

I'm only treated like an enemy because of the current interpretation of the Church's doctrine. With that alone, I don't mind their actions, though religion in general becomes suspicious.

If people were just more flexible and tried to see other points of view, the number of conflicts would be reduced severely.

Well, there's always the other reason for conflicts. Human nature. Often war ends up being waged over profits, authority, and the like. Leading to them beating each other until they're black and blue.

In the end, there are those who seek to enrich themselves to obtain an advantage, whereas those who are devout adherents to their faith will often be left crying in defeat.

Well, it is a story that's quite easy to gauge really, I simply need to be the one who doesn't cry in the end... Or rather, I should say the one who strives to not fall behind.

In short I need to consider my own intentions.

Rather than complaining to others, if they use their heads, they will be able to come up with better solutions. Well, most people are quite formidable in turning a viewpoint around to place themselves in an advantageous position. It's almost second to human nature if one thinks about it.

Well, it might just be an idea, but it's a good idea to not just believe in a partner blindly.

In this regard, I think Hinata may be a bit too serious.

From now on I recommend that she should live more freely. Get some proper

life experience besides her narrow minded upbringing.

At any rate, thanks to Hinata being so candid and admitting to her own faults, the talks were able to proceed smoothly.

It seems that there were no objections from the Captains either.

It's probable that they have a strong belief in Hinata, so they wouldn't voice any objections to what Hinata says.

A large part of the discussion was examining both the situation, as well as both parties' recognition that the conflicts between both sides are now over with the Church admitting to their faults.

Now comes to the point of discussion compensation, but before that happened...

(Hinata)

"My apologies, but there are certain things that I want to say in that regard."

With that, Hinata began to share her thoughts.

After listening to what she said, it seems that her higher-ups in the Church within the Holy Kingdom, Ruberius, had no involvement with her attack.

It seems that the hierarchy of the Church, or at the very least the positions relating to it are rather complex.

The Pope, the Sage King, or whomever, it seems that there are multiple individuals who stand at the 'top' of the Church's hierarchy.

However, the true person that reigns at the top is the Holy Knight leader, Nicolas Cardinal.

The rampage that had been unleashed this time, as well as the subjugation war had nothing to do with the Kingdom where the Church is located.

Therefore, in the end, the involvement of the Holy Kingdom Ruberius is limited to only Hinata.

So even if I had demanded some form of compensation, Hinata's confession ended any hopes of me pursuing that direction.

From her viewpoint, it's because she held the post as the head of the Pope's

personal knight that things had become rather complicated.

To note, Personal Knights and Holy Knights are two entirely different groups.

Taking action solely from the Pope's demands, the so called "Personal Knights" never leave the vicinity of the Pope without his command.

Only the head of the Personal Knights, Hinata herself, was given permission to act freely and protect the growth of the Church. That basically included overseeing the growth of the Holy Knight branch.

It's because of her position that the Holy Kingdom isn't completely unrelated to the current incident.

While it wasn't said openly, the responsibility of this incident falls completely on Hinata. It was in order to prevent any blame to the Holy Kingdom that Hinata had withdrawn from her position as the Head of the Personal Knights.

It's not like this was the end of the story either. Hinata had already been informed by her teachers that she could have been disposed of at any time.

These teachers are known as the "Seven Celestial Sages" as it were.

Though it's not necessary to be too suspicious about this matter, I'd wager a guess that these first-class sages are rather brave and powerful.

Since the Holy Kingdom of Ruberius had already made thorough preparations to cut ties with Hinata should she fail or cause trouble with her current actions, it's impossible to hold them accountable anymore.

In this case at least, we will have to consider this as a separate issue from the Western Church as it were.

I suppose it will be necessary to consent with the Western Church this time.

Hah... then what's going to be done about the compensation?

As I had previously mentioned, I'm not aiming for money for this situation.

The aim was for the Church's side to acknowledge our existence, so after they give their acknowledgement, I want to press for a non aggression pact.

Well, my thoughts were interrupted by the Holy Knight named Arnaud.

(Arnaud)

“I don’t really see any problems with this. If you or your people were truly evil, there’s no reason for us to still exist right now.”

With those words, he showed his approval.

In contrast to the Holy Knight Arnaud’s opinion was the Vice Captain, the Holy Knight called Leonard.

(Leonard)

“However, there’s still a problem. How are we supposed to deal with the current teachings of the Church? Especially when the entire authority of the Church depends on it...”

When he said this, his brow furrowed, conveying he is rather unconvinced.

With both this, and Hinata’s worries being conveyed, they seem to be the same.

In the worst case scenario, there’s even the chance of the Church’s dissolution.

The important issue is to protect the people during the resolution of current hostilities. I don’t care what happens to the Church in all honesty, with that I’ll be focusing on the protection of the people first.

Unlike the rational pragmatic Hinata, the believers of the Church will likely focus all of their contempt towards the Church.

If the Church itself vanishes, the Holy Knight order that defends the people from monsters will likely scatter.

As if to break my train of thought, the deeply troubled Leonard spoke again.

(Leonard)

“Even so, the inhabitants of this country are certainly not ‘Wicked beings’ like we had previously thought. Why not simply let this information be announced instead?”

In fact, even the Goblins and Orcs, which makes up a majority of the population, have figures quite similar to that of human beings. As for the Lizardmen, well, they were already considered to be demi-humans anyways. There’s no need to think about the Dragonewt class’ position.

Even in the case of the Onis, rather than be considered a low class monster,

there are many humans who even view them to be within the ranks of land Gods and Deities.

In short, there's no teachings that state that Demi-humans and Demigods are 'Wicked' right?"

In short, the monsters aren't monsters, and thus aren't "Wicked" as the Church's doctrines teach. Basically what he's saying is to admit my entire population into Demi-human status, allowing us the same treatment as the Dwarves.

This can probably lead to, at the very least, some level of mutual understanding.

This is similar to points that Arnaud had mentioned before in the discussion, but he wasn't able to really drive the point home.

Basically, this is a point of compromise that is entirely political.

We decided to adopt this opinion and were then able to rapidly carry out a negotiation examining every possible detail.

In this fashion, we managed to create a basic draft for the compromise.

By the way, it seems that the Hierarchy of the Church accepted and recognize the current status of our citizens. This was accompanied by us being informed that the Holy Knights would be performing a regular cultural in place of a regular compensation.

Above everything else, as an additional compensation, we were given a failed experiment of theirs. Basically a set of experimental equipment that they weren't able to complete.

As for Hinata's broken sword, we were given that as well, and the few pieces of spirit armor that weren't completely destroyed. Analyzing them was fairly simple. At any rate, I passed over a duplicated sword to Hinata to replace her sword since she was pretty much defenseless currently.

To note, the analysis of the Spirit Armor was actually a major development. I also had the chance to analyze the Spirit Equipment the Holy Knights used.

My current attributes are Darkness and Magic. Basically I wouldn't be able to

use the Holy attribute affiliated equipment as is, but I think there's a possibility to modify them.

It would seem that these are State-Secret class weapons, yet we're sitting here, perfectly fine to just analyze them. If I were to take this as a compensation, I suppose there's no problem with this much.

With this country of ours, things will gradually grow more advanced and sophisticated. Not to mention, more well armed.

After we received our 'compensation', we began to chat and I ended up gathering some ridiculous information as a result.

I mean, to most others, this would just be common sense, but this is the first time I've ever heard of it.

Basically, it was information on the Great Tenma wars that occur roughly every 500 years or so.

This came about when I was discussing future policies.

To begin with,

(Hinata)

"Well... Tempura, a bowl of white rice... even sashimi... Rimuru, you are, without a doubt, a fellow Japanese. There's no longer any doubt in my mind about it.

But to reproduce our world's food here, I have to say i'm both surprised and amazed. What you've said is true, you've managed to achieve your desired environment in just two years....

If I hadn't already seen all of this with my own eyes, I would never believe it for my entire life!"

Hinata had begun with these casual segments, but....

(Rimuru)

"No, there's still far more to do.

Logistics are still far too slow, communication is still out of the question.

Since there's magic, casual life and food preservation are possible for the time being.

The worst part right now is definitely culture. There's still just far too little depth in our environment.

It will take some time, but one day it will be worked into the society.

My aims currently are the main developments of our highway network and its maintenance. I want to get a safe and secure passage to be developed. We're currently working on it, and it's progressively taking shape.

Following that I want to work on information transfer. I gave up on wireless communication a while ago since I just have no knowledge on the subject.

However, though transmission is greatly enhanceable via the incorporation of Magic Steel, so I plan on taking advantage of this for the short and mid term.

When the magic steel is connected intercity through a space through the use of shadow step, it's possible to communicate with them without the use of an excessive quantity of magic.

What do you think? Convenient isn't it?"

Well... I boasted a little.

In reality, not only between our cities, but a network that will connect even the villages is planned.

Bester's been developing a long range telecommunication technology he's calling Comm-Gems.

It's too magic intensive if a visual image is also being conveyed during the communication, so it's currently impossible to include each village. It's something to look into for the future.

If the steel wires were to be processed and finally stretched out, it's possible to handle it with manpower alone.

If the Shadow Step space were to be used instead, then this process could be done effortlessly without any obstacles.

After that, we'll have to just wait for the development and refinement of the receiver point.

As expected, from a person who lived in the Era of Information, the speed of

transferring information takes a special place in my desires.

Hinata was obviously amazed by my plans.

(Hinata)

“Uh... um... well... er, that’s all well and fine...

Be careful not to go too far... you’ll be attacked by an angel...”

Hinata said this with a casual tone.

Angel!? What the heck was that? What about an Angel?

Hinata seemed to notice my puzzlement and continued.

(Hinata)

“Ara? You didn’t know?

Every five hundred years, the gates of heaven will open, allowing the Angels to commence their invasion.

Based on fundamentals, they don’t attack human settlements all that often, but overly developed towns end up destroyed.

Research indicates that the Angels despise civilization as yang to their ying if you will.

The only one’s that have managed to escape from their onslaught is the Dwarven Kingdom.

Their domain only has two entrances. Large scale invasions don’t work either because dragons inhabit the mountain ranges.

Therefore, they’ve managed to defend themselves somehow.

That’s more or less the reason why civilization is stagnate to a certain level.

The only exception is the Ingrasia kingdom. It’s also the reason why the council is there in the first place. It’s in order to perform research and try to mitigate the damage of each invasion.

Every five hundred years, the Imperial Capital is redesigned based on how much damage is caused after an invasion. It’s basically trial and error.

This is something that each country has unanimously agreed on and something

that all residents understand completely.

It's also because their research hasn't been over the top that the destruction and devastation has been kept to a minimal.

Each nation gives out support and carries out their research in total secret. Any discoveries are generally concealed and only the Kings of each country can utilize the latest in technological development.

If they were to spread the results to the people, the angels would certainly unleash their full wrath upon them.

This system was carefully determined and agreed upon. Only discoveries that are determined to not cause incident are released to the masses.

The purpose of the angels are to eliminate monsters as well.

I suppose it's something that you really shouldn't be overlooking."

Is this something that everyone knows about?

This is always the kind of feeling I get when I get explanations like this... Arg...

But what was that about Angels? How have I never heard about them....

(Rimuru)

"Oi, did you know anything about this?"

Well, at least it's not everyone. When I questioned Rigurdo and the others present, they didn't know anything about this at all.

I don't know anything about the Angel's invasion, but I do know that when the Angels do come to attack, it could only mean a war between the Demon Lords and the Angels.

Well, I did wonder about that war that occurred five hundred years ago. I was curious if it was a war between the Demon Lords or a war against Humankind.

No... when you think about it, if it were merely a fight with humans, it would have been a joke and a half if any form of truce were ever really made or honored.

Although I never really thought deeply about it, now I'm starting to get an idea based on everything I've been told. I suppose it makes sense now.

However... every five hundred years the Angels invade huh... and only the technologically advanced...

They don't make a move on humans, but what's with this hatred for civilization?

Is it just that they want to interfere with humankind, or are they afraid of something?

Honestly, I couldn't make heads or tails of the meaning behind their actions.

(Rimuru)

"So? Do they leave some countries alone? What happens if someone defeats an Angel?"

Well, the answer to my question was rather obvious.

It's a really bad idea. If you really wanted to make an enemy of a race that's higher than most monsters or demons, well, you can figure out the rest yourself.

Indeed, demons are troublesome enough, I probably don't want to go out and make another enemy.

As it stands, there's no need to conduct any interference with undeveloped humans. However, what's the cut-off line for technology that will be destroyed?

Do they hate the otherworlder's tastes perhaps? Maybe gunpowder isn't any good then.

It seems that the Angels are individually close to a B+ rank, so they always come in armies of roughly... 1,000,000 strong or more...

In addition, there are leaders of Captain/ Commander classes that are stronger and organize the invasion.

It seems like there are General level classes as well, but the combat capabilities of these individuals are unknown.

A Demon Lord's Body is probably stronger though.

They're also under the Holy attribute, so any real attacks or intervention from the Church will probably be useless.

Though, even if nothing is done, the helpless monsters will generally be

slaughtered under the Angelic invasion.

However, they don't seem to be allies of humanity either, not even Hinata knows that much about them.

Well, it's to be expected since no humans currently have seen an Angel for over five hundred years. The only reason they are known is through the recordings of history and rumors.

Given that, there's a good reason as to why the Church considers monsters as the enemies, and also why demons exist.

Amongst the monsters, there seems to be an organization that is exceptionally hostile towards humans. There's even a Demon Lord in their midst that clearly hates humans as well. Well, was of course...

Clayman was the representative of that faction, but he's beyond dead now.

With Clayman dead, there aren't any Demon Lords amongst the Eight-Star Demon Lords that have a clear cut hostility towards humankind.

(Hinata)

"HUH?! Clayman's dead?!"

Oh, it surprised Hinata.

(Rimuru)

"Yep, he's dead. I killed him and destroyed his soul."

While I went for a nice, salty and oily potato chip, I offered my carefree reply.

Ah, potato chips are the perfect snack..

Rather than talking about that small fry, I much rather talk about the Angels that were coming. But it was clear that she was conflicted on whether or not she should give up on this matter.

That kind of small fry... what happened to him doesn't matter at all if i'm perfectly honest. Well, that's what I thought, but....

From what Hinata told me about him, Clayman had always been acting secretively and they were never able to get any leads on him.

However, his extreme hostility towards humanity was clear, and if there

weren't an internal balance check between the Demon Lords, and the necessary agreement of several other Demon Lords, he would have probably went to war with them ages ago.

Then I remembered.

(Rimuru)

"Oh right, I just remembered that Clayman mentioned his lord being the Demon Lord Kazaream or something of the nature. Ah, he's likely to have some connection with Yuuki, so best to be cautious.

The Holy Knights who hadn't heard this yet were thusly told.

(Anon Holy Knight 1)

'Hah? The Leader of the Freedom Association might be the Demon Lord Kazaream?'

(Anon Holy Knight 2)

"However... we can't just openly examine him on this... If handled wrong, this could lead to an all out war between the Church and the Freedom Association..."

(Rimuru)

"Well, Kazaream is alive and we assume he managed to manipulate Clayman...

That would mean the boss of the hostile demons is Kazaream. Even if he isn't the de-facto leader, the chance that he's monitoring them is possibly very high."

I said that while eating a few potato chips.

But, contrary to their serious facial expressions, their hands continued to bring new potato chips to their mouths.

These guys... aren't you acting a bit too familiar?

Heck, even Hinata was reaching her hands out and nibbling on various items.

Wait, what's this about?! Is this really a topic that you can so casually discuss?

So on and so forth, but I ended up just muttering rashly, especially since it doesn't really have anything to do with me anymore anyways.

(Rimuru)

"Oh well. It's just a possibility anyway. It's best that we don't act careless though.

However, I do admit that there are plenty of people going after the “Otherworldly” children, so I don’t want to alert them if I don’t have to.”

(Hinata)

“Regarding that, I think I might know of a place. I’d like to go and examine further, but do you mind if I do so?”

(Rimuru)

“Eh? Uh... Ah.. Did you need to ask so carefully? Is there some professional informant in the Freedom Association?”

Hinata probably had a similar idea.

I could probably figure out what she was planning, and if it’s what I think it is, it isn’t a bad idea to entrust it to her.

Thinking this, I tentatively nodded in my agreement.

Indeed, even though there is no tangible evidence, this isn’t something that can be just left alone as is.

This matter will all be determined by the information that we manage to gather. Hinata’s eyes showed me that she was also aware of the importance of the situation at hand and we nodded at each other.

Thusly, our future relations with the Church have been successfully laid out. We were able to complete a friendly meeting and spent our time meaningfully.

I was even able to obtain some unexpected information, but it’s best I leave ‘that’ person to examine it.

Hinata also stayed around for another two or three days before she returned.

For the sake of an emergency contact, allowing either party to instantly contact the other, several people were left behind. However, monitoring us is no longer their purpose here.

Since we’ve already ceased all open hostility, it’s best to just establish friendly connections in the future.

If possible, i’d like to maintain relations as is.

Like this, the series of Conflicts with the Church, has officially reached a

tentative completion.

End of the Saint Demon Confrontation Arc