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by Bird-loving Pistachio

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Chapter 31: Bandit Arc ① -at The Bandits' Village-

The place where I was brought on the bandits' horse was an ordinary village with nothing unusual. The Sun had already set and the place was clad entirely in darkness so there weren't many villagers outside.

"D-don't tell me this is another village they plan on pillaging from?" That was my initial thought. Nevertheless, there were some villagers who should be night watchers, doing their night patrols and when they saw the skinhead, they greeted him with "Welcome back" "You've worked hard!", so this must be the bandits' village.

The skinhead's bandit party arrived at the village, dropped off their loot and gathered at old man's (likely to be the village chief) house together with 4 other people who looked like they were part of the management team of the bandits. For some strange reason, they brought me along as well. That being said, I am still tied up. What poor treatment for a young child. This is truly the work of the demon! No, more like the deeds of the bandits.

The old man (likely the chief) was probably still asleep up till now and was blinking his eyes repeatedly. I could feel that he was a kind and good-natured old man. That he was the village chief despite so makes him all the more amazing.

"Chief, on the way back from hunting, we spotted a merchant's coach, raided it but we messed up big time. The coach that we attacked appears to be owned by an aristocrat that has blood relations with the house of the Rainforest. We even found a family crest that indicates the identity of the Earl of the Rainforest family, and the owner of the coach had black hair and peagreen eyes too. So there is no mistake about it."

The skinhead reported gravely with a shaken expression to the village chief and gulped down the cup of wine that had been prepared for him.

Was he referring to Claude-san when he said black hair and peagreen eyes?

The chief drank a sort-of tea with a *siip*. At the same time, he took a breath of relief and asked “Then was it a success?” in a barely audible voice.

Is this village chief alright? Is he really the boss of the bandits? He looks like he might just drop dead and die though.

“The loot that we plundered wasn’t anything great and it would have been preferable if we didn’t get involved at all but the youngsters weren’t successful in their hunting and had been impertinent. Well, I suppose this won’t happen but it is possible that the Rainforest Lords would dispatch a bandit subjugation team on us.”

The village chief responded “Hiii” in a feeble voice.

He was still rapidly blinking his eyes moments ago so I guess he had gotten a shock from what the skinhead had reported. Quite likely.

“Well, we have zero intention to cause trouble here so rest assured. Either way, we had long intended to leave this place. Sorry, we might be taking some of the able-bodied chaps in this village too, you don’t mind would ya?”

Glares. The skinhead glared directly into the village chief to confirm things. Please treat the elderly with care!!

“Hii, nay worries.” (TN: this is my attempt at translating this old guy’s かまいましえん)

The village chief was still speaking in his feeble voice and seemed to have acknowledged the hierarchical relationship between them somehow. It can be seen that the bandits' village chief is not necessarily the boss of the bandits after all.

To have gone to the extent of exerting authority over him, please treat this old man more kindly! Also, treat this child (me) kindly too!

“By the way, we will depart by midnight. By daybreak, the spirit users might be able to track us.”

The old man nodded his head sluggishly and left his house. The villagers seemed to have called for him too.

“Incidentally, leader. Are we bringing this fella along too? ”

The monkey-faced person who had tied us with rope, whose name was if I remember accurately, Kuwamaru, was pointing at me while asking.

What a coincidence Monkeyface-san. I have been thinking about the same thing too for some time now.

“Nope, I have been perplexed as to how to handle this kid too.”

Skinhead put his hand on chin and tilted his head to the side in uncertainty while saying.

“Had she been a boy, we could have given her to one of our acquaintance who is in need of labour..... but she is a girl. If she had good proportions, we could have sent her to a brothel, but her figure is, how shall I put it, not too bad but not so great either..... ain't no pretty flower yeah. She has eyes of a dead

frog too.”

What! R-rude!

Nevertheless, no matter how, this is a route that avoids the path of the brothel. I never had that kind of experience so I would be a little nervous about it. It might be preferable to over exaggerate my eye-popping dead frog look. Well, it’s not like I am doing that on purpose though.....

“But what about that, leader. Wasn’t the owner of the coach greatly attached to her? This sort of face might be what those who inclined the other way might prefer.”

Fuhehe the monkey made a dirty laugh.

Stop making those unnecessary suggestions, monkey!

“Hmph. There could be that possibility.”

The skinhead leader took another look at me. Don’t be instigated by the monkey, leader!

As the saying goes, when you are confronted with a wild animal, never take your eyes off it. I trembled while continuing to stare at them. Staring like a dead frog.

“Indeed, I had been delayed because of that merchant’s reaction..... What are you really capable of? Don’t tell me, you are a mage?”

This question again? I feel like every time I start a new journey, this question would be asked.

Would it be better if I pasted a piece of paper that said “I am no mage” on my

chest? How about it?

My mind was assertive but there's no way I'm going to say that. That's because the other party is the skinhead.

I straighten my posture in my tied up state.

I wonder what would be the best answer.

The only route I am being shown as of now is the brothel route. Because I want to go on another route, I need to demonstrate my worth in another aspect other than my worth as a female.

"I am no mage. But I can do arithmetic, I can read and I have good memory!"

I started off with a bit of a stammer. It can't be helped since I am being surrounded by them in a threatening manner. I think a stress interview is no good!

The skinhead leader muttered that if I could use magic, I wouldn't look so much like a servant. He then paused for a moment to think.

"But you can do arithmetic and write? Why are you able to do those?"

"I took lessons together with the young masters at the residence!"

"Hmm.Well then, I shall have you bought at a high price at Bashu's."

Bashu? A person's name perhaps? What in the world would happen to me if I was to be purchased there?

“Umm, what would I have to do if I was sold to Bashu-san?”

I had mustered my courage to ask but the skinhead went “Huhh!?” He looked down on me and said, “Ask Bashu when you get sold.”

Hey hey, is there a need to look so fierce whenever I say anything? I am still a 6-years-old here. This guy's appearance is indeed terrifying.

He had been a foulmouthed delinquent transfer student, but really, I had placed my hopes on the surprise possibility of him flashing a smile as he picked up an abandoned cat. (TN: I believe this is a standard Japanese character)

I had been shuddering because of the skinhead when the door slammed open. Someone with a tall stature stormed in the room while yelling.

“Hey—! What is this about leaving today!? I have been busy with the treatment of the injured villagers because of you all acting violently!!”

This person's way of speaking was peculiar. When chattering away, his waist would twist and turn and his pinky would be pointing up. The voice was evidently that of a male, yet, there is the reverberation of a failed attempt at using a high-pitched voice.

“K-Kouki? Don't be so mad, those are just small cuts aren't they? Well, have a seat.”

“Don’t give me that shit about being small! If we don’t treat yhem properly, it will become a big problem, for crying out loud! Furthermore! Haven’t I told you countless of times, call me Kou-chan!”

Was he a he or a she? Skinhead had faltered since he/she entered.

He? He had reddish-brown hair that grew all the way to the nape, just a like a woman, and that it was plaited. She, or wait, he? would twist his waist in an exaggerated motion every time he moved and walk about with his little pinky pointing up. He wore a tightly fitting animal hide vest that covered up to his mid-riff and another similarly tight fitting pants. Among the people I have met in this world, he was definitely the most eccentric one.

I actually know the term to express such a person. He was, most likely, an Onee. An Onee bandit.

Chapter 32: Bandit Arc ② –sister Bandit–

The bandit head was telling Onee how they got to the current situation of planning to leave the village because they had assaulted a coach from the Rainforest Family. While he was explaining, a skinny guy with a good head on his shoulders from the management team said something like, “this kid appeared to have called her master 'Claude-san' and this 'Claude-san' is most likely the Merchant Lord from the Rainforest Family I think.” Claude-san is reasonably famous.

“Hey, what in the world are you doing! Couldn't you have at least checked out the other party's identity before striking! Really, I give up on you.”

The infuriated Onee was bending over and nagging at the skinhead.

“Get off my case, it has already been done! Either way, we have already said that we will head down to Bashu later.”

“True,” Onee nodded in agreement and she turned her head away from the bandit leader. For the first time, she took a look at me. Why is there a kid there? She looked at me closely.

“Hey, what's with this kid?”

“We kidnapped her today. She claims to be able to do arithmetic and writing. We have made plans to palm off her to Bashu.”

“Hmmm,” she inspected me from up to down.

Could this be the promised Fashion Check!? I am currently tied all up and dirty right now, so please go easy on me.

“Eh! Instead of bringing her all the way to Bashu’s, why don’t you hand her over to me?”

Onee bandit then clasped her palms together in a plea to the boss.

“I don’t really care though.....”

“Aa--n, Alek! Thanks! I love you! I’ll treat like our own and take good care of her--”

Onee bandit threw a sexy wink to the skinhead. Looks like the skinhead is called Alek. Alek boss caught sight of Onee’s wink and made a grimaced expression.

“Don’t think of her as our child! Also don’t put too much feelings into her. Don’t forget she’s our merchandise.”

And Alek skinhead boss made his familiar menacing expression. I froze in fear and my thinking speed dulled immediately but Onee bandit was unperturbed.

“I knooow,” complained Onee bandit. She then came over to my side and tried to undo the rope.

“Oi, you are going to untie the rope!?”

“Isn’t it obvious—. There is much work that I would need help for. I’m the only medical therapist here while everyone is always getting injured! I always

wanted to have a helping hand.”

“Why has it got to be this kid. Can’t you just pick any other villager?”

“Aren’t there no one in the village that can read? I took great pains to bring along a medical book, and if somebody was able to read, it would be more efficient to pick up the skills. Furthermore, her dead-like frog eyes are tickling my maternal instincts—”

Alek boss looked disgusted and murmured to himself, “You don’t have any maternal instincts obviously”. The other people in the management team did not make any additional comments so it seems like there is no one who would go against Onee bandit.

Anyways, does everything think the same way when they look at my eyes? Is that true?

As I held many doubts in my head, the ropes on me were untied and I finally tasted freedom again! But from the threatening glare of the boss, making any hasty movements now is out-of-question and I quietly sat straight up.

“What is your name?” Onee bandit asked me.

“I am called Ryou. Thank you for releasing me.”

“Ara--, this kid has manners--! I am the Okaasan for the hooligans in these parts. I am called Kouki but please call me Kou-okaasan~”

Not a father but a mother. Is that right.

I had thought about it when Claude-san asked me to be his adopted daughter but, to have that kind of family... I really hate it.....

I definitely don't want to call her Kou-okaasan.....!

Alright, let's try and dodge it!

"Yes, please treat me kindly. Kou-sama."

"Ryou-chan? It's not Kou-sama but Kou-okaasan. Okay, one more time!"

"But I am still uneasy about calling you that without reserve....."

Onee bandit glared at me as though she wouldn't take no for an answer.

Yikes, super scary.

Mm, there is no way around it, I can't defy Onee bandit. Even more terrifying is that the boss was nearby and he had been impatiently telling us to hurry up with the farce.

In the end, it is just a name. I would be sold somewhere else shortly after anyways, so I'll just call her that for now.

"Understood. Kou-okaasan. Please treat me kindly."

Onee bandit looked satisfied.

Would I be assisting this Onee-san shortly later? Since I am no longer tied up in ropes, should I just bolt off? But still, where can I run to? I had the feeling that making the return back to the Rainforest residence is too far for a solo trip.

No matter how, it looks like I would have to be with the bandits for now, but what shall I do. The skinhead looks like he has killed countless of people, and that he would kidnap a woman and eat up every inch of her. (TN: not sure how to interpret this: 女と言う女を片っ端から攫っては食べ物にしてそうな貫禄だ。)

The other people from the management team look like they are in their late 30s but I can't discern the skinhead's age because of his scary face. Maybe he is just not human.

Looks like it's still best for me to escape once the opportunity arises.

The dagger that Alan entrusted to me was no longer in my pockets. I will definitely have to retrieve it back and then make my escape.

*

Later, the boss made the other bandits ready themselves in 30 seconds and immediately left. Bandits are so agile.

Just before leaving, Alek boss told the village chief, "If someone asks you about the bandits, play dumb. If by any chance, the village is to blame because of the loot being discovered, just say that you were being threatened by the bandits." He did so with a gentle face that didn't suit him.

From the way the village chief was trembling, it may very well be that he was

actually being threatened. Or it could just be a special characteristic of aged him. Just maybe.

Despite so, Alek boss was making a heinous looking face and actually attracted a sizable following of villagers that looked up to him. Similarly, when he appealed to anyone who was willing to leave the village with them, there were many youngsters from the village, and on top of that, woman who are in their adulthood volunteered to join them.

However, they said that they would be in a bind if they brought many people along so they made do with 3 men from the village.

Could it be that that creepy looking face is considered a ikemen face in this world? If that is so, there is no way I am marrying an ikemen of this world.

The full strength of the leaving party was 8 people. Much fewer than I had expected. The mood felt just like a bunch of people going on vacation.

The guy from the management team with the good brain over shoulders was grumbling that it was foolish to be afraid of the spirit users and try to avoid them by travelling at night since it was quite unlikely that they will be able to simply dispatch a team of mages on them. The boss told him to shut up.

The direction where we will be travelling towards felt like it would make us even further away from the Rainforest residence. Was Bashu's place in the opposite direction (of the Rainforest residence).....?

If that is so, when I make my escape, it would be easier to lose my way. It might be wiser to be sold without protest and spend the effort on considering about the future instead. However, if I were to be sold to a faraway land, the probability of never ever returning to the Rainforest residence would be very

high.

I would be worrying everyone back at the residence huh. The faces of Alan and Cain floated into my mind. My heart throbs in pain just thinking about how much grief I might bring them.

“No matter what, I will stay positive!” I wish I could tell that to them.....

Wait, maybe I am being too self-conscious. Perhaps they would that saddened to that extent by news of what happened to me. After all, we had lived under the same roof for only a year. They might feel some sadness about it but with some time, I'm certain that I would be forgotten.

From my previous world to the Garigari village. All the people I have met so far would have, without a doubt, no recollection of me anymore.

Chapter 33: Bandit Arc ③ -a Journey With The Bandits-

From then on, it was a journey together with the bandits on horse. We would take short breaks occasionally and when night came, we would also set up camp. Nevertheless, these days had been exhausting.

Kou-san sat behind me to support me, but still it is very tiring to ride a horse. My butt aches. As well every single muscle. What is this level of toughness.

Furthermore, the landscape among the mountain was always the same, never changing, so the excitement I had for a horseback life worn out in a couple of days.

All of the bandits looked fine, and could even nock an arrow while riding the horse to shoot birds the moment they caught sight of one. The shot bird would serve as additional food for dinner.

These bandits live up to their name of mountain bandits at least!

We reached our campsite once again and everybody were doing their own camp preparations.

After getting off the horse, I rubbed my reddened thigh with an ointment I received from Kou-san. This ointment is really very effective.

This ointment is able to relieve pain and suppress inflammation. Its name is called "Forget Your Pains with the Maiden's Embrace".

As suggested from its name, it was an ointment personally made by Onee-san. I was explained that the ointment helps with waist pain and other kinds of

pains like the pain that follows after falling on your backside (without any cuts and wounds). I was told that I would be taught how to make it a few days later and I was somewhat looking forward to it,

Kou-san had gave me a very in-depth lesson about medicine and treatment methods in this world along the way here (though she is likely going to use my help).

It is because Kou-san was the only medic among the band of bandits.

Shouldn't healing and treating people be like how it works in games? Just using recovery magic to heal in one go? It could be that there is no recovery magic in this world. The injured and the sick can only rely on the medicines produced by the medic. This means the magic of this world is less convenient than what I had imagined it to be.

Speaking of which, when I had gone to the Rainforest town's market, I was slightly surprised that the pharmacies were well stocked. The reason for that could be that there is no such thing as recovery magic.

Since I have finished applying the ointment, I went on with making preparations for the camp with Kou-san.

Today we are camping by the side of a big tree. It was a good elevated open space.

We were totally surrounded by trees but if we walked further up ahead, there would be a river. Still, I was told to never go towards the river. as there were demonic beasts (TN: In the past, I used "magical beasts" but after consideration, I think demonic beasts would be a better choice) in the area towards the river.

I was also told that there would be demonic beasts beyond the mountains near Garigari village, but it looks like for this area, the beasts can be found in the direction of the river.

The reason the bandits actually set up camp here was that because this place was a relative far distance from the river and they were afraid of the demonic beasts too.

But hey, what are demonic beasts anyways? At first when I first heard about them, I had assumed that they were like wild dogs or bears, but since this is the world we are talking about, I could even expect to see dragons I suppose. If I were to encounter that kind of gigantic reptile type of monster, I would certainly run off in fear.

Everytime we set up camp, the males would be primarily in charge of heavy work while I, who was part of the group of females and Onee (male) would start the fire and prepare the meals.

Onee bandit Kou-san would show me the mountain vegetables and taught me the method to pick them, the way to eat them and also the effects they can have.

This world's treatment concepts is very alike to the concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine in my previous existence. A balanced diet both prevents and cure sickness. It is a principle that treats both food and medicine as the same thing.

The contents of our food would always be simple: Dried meat, hunted bird, grain and mountain vegetables. They would be thrown in together to a pot and cooked. The only seasoning used is salt. Even though each meal is simple, they are reasonably delicious.

After the preparations for the camp is completed, the bandits would all be sluggish as though they were the dead. However, after having their meals and a short break, they would immediately regain the liveliness and sit round the

campfire, drinking wine and making merry. It was the kind of mood that you get from festivals.

So much so that the boss is smiling. A smile that holds traces of scariness. A smile that feels like he was fully enjoying eating a baby whole.

In order to avoid the eyes of the boss as much as possible, I read the medical books handed to me from Kou-san diligently. This was a daily routine.

Somehow, the bandits were more invigorated than usual. After making camp, they were waiting to contact Bashu who lived around here.

It seems that the boss was unable to set foot in the town as he is a wanted man. That's why the only way was for Bashu to come over, I believe. I wonder what Alek boss was being prosecuted for.

Nevertheless, it is definite that showing his face up at the town would put him in a spot. With that face of his, even if he did nothing, there was no doubt that he would be reported anyways.

That's why when tomorrow comes, the musclehead Guy, brainy Rudel and one of the villager that joined the bandits—Polen would be heading to the town to make contact with Bashu. Hence, they were having a banquet before sending them off. But we had the food as usual though.

Incidentally, the people left behind at camp including myself would be house-sitting in the meantime. I felt relieved personally about it since there wouldn't be anymore horse riding. My soft butt has reached its limits.

Ever since the three were told to call Bashu-san here, we no longer travelled with the horses and for me, our life became calm and quiet.

Alek and gang went to hunt while Kou-san and I picked the mountain vegetation, washed clothes and did all sorts of miscellaneous work.

Today was also spent pick vegetables with Kou-san.

As always, Kou-san explained the medical herbs' effect and how to use them while we were on the job.

I had always been curious on who exactly were these bandits-san.

I didn't feel that they were from the bandit village from the start but even so, they didn't feel like feral children living independently in the mountains either.

Both the monkeyface Kuwamaru and the smart Rudel could somewhat do arithmetics and they were extremely familiar with the geography in this area, all the way down to details.

Furthermore, Kou-san expertise in medicine was mindblowing. I'm sure it is not something that can be learned normally.

Surely they have been taught somewhere. Nevertheless, if I remember correctly, there is only one educational institution in this world. However, that school is for nobility so I guess that's not possible.....

“What's wrong? Ryou-chan looks so dazed, are you tired?”

Kou-san was in front of me and was bending back and forth.

“S-sorry. I was having some thoughts. Umm..... I was thinking, who exactly are you all.”

“Oh? You are interested in us?”

“Rather than interested, it is because everyone here seems to possess their own skills and I was wondering how they managed to learn them.”

“Mufufu. I’m glad. That you actually asked something about us.”

Onee bandit was really delighted and she brought her clenched right fist near her mouth while giggling.

“We might be bandits now but back in the past, we were all young masters and young daughters of aristocrats. You can’t believe that right?”

“Then, you all must have gone through the education of the royal school right?”

I knew it! I might look like a child, but I have the brains of an adult detective. However, for these aristocrats to have become bandits, what on earth exactly happened?

“Yes, yes. You do know your stuff--. We all met during our school days. I was from the medicine course while Kuwamaru and Rudel were in the business course. As for Guy and Alek, they were studying some kind of a knight's course but their courses were different yet they became intimate friends. By the way, the Bashu that we are meeting is from the business course. We are also on good terms with another person, my little brother, but we have become more distant and we hardly meet these days.”

When she was talking about her little brother, her face became slightly cloudy but for other things they did while in school, she talked about them to me with ease.

Kuwamaru was initially in the knight's course but the training was too demanding for him so he dropped out and transferred to the business course. Kou-san was not an Onee at that point of time and was just an ordinary boy but still gained considerable attention from the girls. Yet she had already fallen for Alek boss and had always been like that since.

“Various things happened and unfortunately, we became bandits. But that's alright. I have decided that I would live for love. I will continue to follow Alek around.”

Onee-san eyes were completely those of a carnivore staring at its prey.

But from how I see it, Alek doesn't seem to incline that way..... A touching, unrequited love.

Even in this case, the boss is popular. Is his face really the standard of an ikemen in this world?

Speaking of which, I am interested in the 'various things' (not Kou-san's love story) that she mentioned.

“What is Bashu-san working as now?”

“Ahh, Bashu is the master of the Ruby Fallen domain. The Earl of Ruby Fallen, yes.”

'Master' and 'Earl' would mean that he is also an aristocrat? Am I to be his maid?

Since I am already a maid, I have the necessary career background. I see, I see, that wouldn't all too bad huh.

"Incidentally, Bashu-san is no pervert right? He's not a pedophile right?"

"Hm? I don't think he is a pervert. He has married a mage and they have kids too."

I made a magnificent guts pose in my mind.

Won't my new employment have even better prospects? But I still can't let my guard down. There is the possibility that the kids were another unmanageable shitty brat.

While I do not know living conditions of the shitty brat, I am still relieved to know where I might end up before getting sold.

"Speaking of which, Kou-okaasan mentioned about various things happening that caused you all to become bandits. What exactly happened?"

Up till now, she generally had a smile on but her expression hardened when I asked that. It looks like it was a question that shouldn't be asked.

Sorry, I didn't know my place.

"The reason why we became bandits isn't something that can come out from my mouth.I do not want to push our thoughts out. Anyways, how did we end up near to the side of the river. We have to get back now."

Kou-san was no longer in a mood to talk about it and move towards the direction of our tents.

I hastily followed behind but I have become very interested to the topic that she averted her eyes from.

Chapter 34: Bandit Arc ④ -secret Of The Charismatic Boss-

The three who left for Bashu's place have yet to return. As per norm, the men went on hunt while Kou-san(male) and I went outside to pick mountain vegetables, do the laundry and other things.

As of late, I have understood the treatment procedures and could somewhat help treat those who return with injuries after hunting. It might be called treatment, but considering their injuries, all I really did was wash their wounds, apply medication and wrap it up in bandages.

Also, I have been taught how to mix medication and make the Forget Your Pains with the Maiden's Embrace medicine.

In addition, there was something that piqued my interest recently.

The bandits have yet to commit a single act of robbery since we left the bandit village. If that is so, they are no longer bandits isn't?

Actually, there is a path not far from the camp where many merchants on their horses pass by, and yet, they have not made their move on them. All they did was quietly hunt for a living. Currently, we are just a simple hunting group.

Perhaps they held themselves back because of the little child (me) in their group because it would be detrimental for educational purposes? Oh my, what a surprise that they actually had this kind side to them.

"Huh? We didn't really specifically take Ryou into consideration."

I had asked regarding my observation and it was immediately shot down by

the monkeyface Kuwamaru.

Monkeyface Kuwamaru had basically ended all his sentence with “ssuyo(つすよ)”, “ssuu(つすー)” and “ssunee(つすねー)” in the presence of the boss or Kou-san like how a Kouhai of a club would have, yet when he faced me, his speaking style would change to that of a senior.

This bastard!

In order to soothe my irritation, I had devoted myself entirely to work.

Right now, Kuwamaru and a villager bandit Gorz-san were scraping off fats of wild boar skins. The underside of the skin was disgustingly flabby and I found it pitiful for the boar too, hence I wasn't too comfortable with this job.....

At first, the bandits treated me as though I was air and Kou-san was the only one who would talk to me. I myself wasn't comfortable initiating a conversation with any of them either. However, as time with them went by, I found myself increasingly curious about them.

It's also because of what I heard about Bashu-san the Earl from Kou Onee-san, that I was able to calm down and had the leeway to think about what might happen in the future.

With this feeling, since I was already caught up in this, I might as well study sociology – the ways of bandits. As such, I began talking to them.

And of course, this was how I learned about the two-face nature of Kuwamaru. Behaving all proudly to anyone who ranks beneath him while acting servile to those above.

Such loathsome middle management staff!

“If we were to act violently around these parts, it would be extremely troublesome for ourselves later on. I don’t really understand much, but even boss-san is a wanted man. Actually, what on earth did boss-san do anyway? Robbery?”

Currently, Gorz-san was expressing himself like a Kouhai.

“.....He didn’t do anything badass”

Monkeyface Kuwamaru didn’t even bother to turn and face him.

Nono, how could he be a wanted person if he didn’t do anything criminal? Don’t tell me it is really true that with his face alone, he got reported while he was in the town.

“Also, boss is not doing any raids because this is the Ruby Fallen domain.”

“Now that you say it, I remember hearing it from Kou-okaasama. If I remember correctly, the lord of this domain and boss-san are acquaintances? That must be why we aren’t attacking people in these parts.”

I had heard similar things from Kou-san. But I had completely forgotten about it. Their connection was probably that of friendship. Even though he is a wanted man.

“Even though that may be true, it is not the only thing. Boss extremely hates mages and dislikes territories which depend on mages. Ruby Fallen had been

said to be a cursed land, since not a single mage has been born out in it in decades. Boss doesn't pick on lands which have a weak link to magic. Even though this is the only territory which is experiencing such an issue though."

Hoh, this must be what they call a bandit's dignity. Anyways, this is the first time I heard of anyone who actually hates mages. Everyone else more or less respect the mages so it is rather fresh to see someone showing disdain for mages.

"Ka—! It's the will of the boss! Living like a man! As expected, boss-san is coool. My role model. My saviour."

The villager's spirit rose as he said.

Speaking of "saviour", what was he saved from?

"What do you mean by your savior?"

I asked the Gorz-san in a 6-year-old like manner while maintaining an adorable and innocent expression. Even though they think I stare like a dead frog, I am very very sure that is not the case. I am supposed to be a cute young girl.

I smiled as sweetly as I would, when posing for a photograph.

"We were from Guriguri village, a pioneering settlement but the crops could hardly grow and crops that managed to grow were eaten by the wild boars. The mages couldn't care less about us and we were on the brink of starvation. This was when Alek boss and Kuwamaru bro gallantly came to the rescue."

Towards the boss which has been continuously called cool, Kuwamaru gave a not at all dissatisfied expression while bashfully saying something like "Oh

please stop". I am getting a little pissed at his contented Monkeyface.

Wait a minute... Pioneering settlement! So we are comrades huh! And the name of it is Guriguri village too. Are all pioneering settlements named in such a way!? Who the heck named them! I would love to have a word with that person.

"No really, I am in your debt. You taught me how to hunt, how to peel off animal hide, taught me about the various mountain vegetation and even how to rob merchants."

I see, I see. That is good. However, it would be much better if he wasn't taught how to rob though.

"Well, the boss has that kind of personality so there is no way he would abandon others in need."

Kuwamaru boasted with pride.

He spoke of boss having that certain personality but all I have seen from him is that chilling face of his, so for now, I don't see him in that light. But I suppose he does have a hint of humanity huh.....

"Now that I think back on it, it is very strange that when we were on the verge of starvation, we didn't think that we could live on even if turned to banditry. Yet now, in order to protect my family and myself, I would do anything despite the fact that, during that time, all I did was to suffer in hunger while simply doing nothing but wait for the mages. All we did was wait for death."

The villager scratched his head as he spoke with wonder.

Still, robbing others is still no good!? Says the me who had been kidnapped..... Hmm, but there are times when it cannot be helped in order to survive.

Guriguri village should be a pioneering settlement under the Rainforest territory. They blame their starvation and suffering on the Rainforest Family but not on the management of the village?

It may have been unfortunate but Irene-san and Claude-san had been so busy and they have done their very best! This is my perspective as an ex-maid, but nevertheless, I can't say it out to these villagers who had faced near-deaths from hunger.

.....This feels somewhat complicated.

If I had not been born in Garigari village, I wonder if that village would have to turn to banditry as well. No, if that was the case, I'm sure it would have become a bandit village by now.

Hya ha! (TN: this is a sort of gangsterly snigger I think) As they laughed, a fleeting thought came to my mind. It was when Maru-anchan (TN: it's like 'bro') was straddling onto his pony.

.....Totally don't look like them at all. The inhabitants of Garigari village wouldn't have anything like their guts, I believe.

I pray that Maru-anchan doesn't end up "Hya ha"-ing and that he puts in effort to cultivate the fields.

The three men who went to the city to find Bashu-san came back. However, they were unable to meet Bashu-san. They said that Bashu-san went on a long expedition to find an agriculture expert so that he can invite him or her to assist in reforming agriculture. They have no idea when he would be back but it shouldn't take that long, so they think.

Upon hearing their report, Boss decided that we would continue setting up camp here and wait for Bashu-san to return.

Such bad timing.

This would mean my re-employment is a distant away. A blessing from this however, is that I can continue to enjoy this slow pace of life in the mountains; not much damage was done, I can say.

At first, it was very intimidating and I didn't dare to even take a slight peek at the boss's face but in recent times, I feel like I have gotten used to his face.

I took a long look at the boss face by the side. Boss could sense someone looking at him and in that moment when he turned to face me, I looked away and acted nonchalantly.

This little game of "Ding-dong-dash" (TN: press on a bell and run away) has been a favourite pastime of mine.

From the excess time we had together, I became closer to the bandits.

*

Mm. If only I had soap. I was scrubbing away at the bandits' clothes at the river.

Among the bandits, the main person to do all the housework was me. And here I am, hard at work, washing their worn-out clothes.

The water alone isn't sufficient to get the dirt to drop off and if I applied too much force, the clothes would tear too..... What to do.

As a rule, going to the river is dangerous so Kou-san would follow me to the river usually, but yesterday, Rudel-san strained his back while hunting so Kou-san, who was in charge of nursing him, stayed behind. Thus, I am now doing this alone.

Rudel-san was always a careful person and carried himself with intelligence so it would have simply been alright to just get him not to hunt recklessly (in the meantime).

Even though they told me that the river was dangerous, it was actually fine as long as I don't cross into the opposite side of the river.

I have no desire to die right now, so I do not intend to cross to the opposite bank by myself, much less encountering a demonic beast like a dragon. If I did see one I would go all out to escape! With great speed!

Still, washing the bandits' rags was really tiring.

Time for a little rest—

Just when I was about to rest, I lifted my head up and saw something across the river.

I'm sure it was a woman. Her slightly curvy hair had the same shade of gold as mine. The tips of her hair was curved like waves.

She looks like me?

That female across the river gestured for me to come over.

Who could she be, this was the first time I saw somebody else other than the bandits around these parts. Could there be a village nearby?

If that is true.....would I be able to escape?

Could it be that the bandits told me not to cross the river because there was civilisation there? To prevent me from trying to escape?

Franking speaking, I have had no inclination to escape recently. Still, there could be people there.

“Ummm—What are you doing there? Is there a village near?”

I tried to speak to her but all she did was laugh without replying.

What’s going on, could it be that she’s mute? Or could it be that, she knows that there are bandits in the vicinity and doesn’t want me to shout.

As I laid down my thoughts, I went ahead and walked through the river. It wasn’t a very deep river. Its depth was only up to a child’s waist like mine. The flow of the river was slow and there was absolutely no problem with walking across it.

I kept my eye on the female that gestured me to follow her. Initially I thought she bore resemblance to me but, no, I had been mistaken, she was more like mother.

Could it be that she was mother? Don't tell me that mother had been worried and came to look for me?

I wanted to confirm the identity of that person. I crossed the river and reached the other side of the river.

After reaching the other side, the person that looks like mother, continuously gestured for me to come. It looked like she wanted to hug me.

It was mother!

She had been worried and probably came to find me. She must have regretted selling me and she is telling me to come back to her!

These were the thoughts in my mind as I was about to leap into her arms. Abruptly, the image of mother vanished.

Unknowingly, a large black bear with nine eyes appeared in front of me. It swooped down its claws to attack me.

—————Zannnn!

I fainted in fright.

Chapter 35: Bandit Arc ⑤ -kou-okaasan-

I was hit by something from above. However, there wasn't pain as one would expect after being struck by claws.

I opened up my eyes and saw red. It was blood.

Somebody's back was drenched in blood. That somebody got in between the bear and I, and carried me away to protect me. Next, this person tried to run through the river.

It was crimson red from shoulder to back. The person who carried me was likely cut by that monster earlier.

This person was injured but continued to bring me across the river. I was laid down on the river before the person herself and fell to her knees with all her strength drained from her. She gave an intense gaze to the stunned me.

It was the first time I had received such a stare.

“You went all the way across the river to that extent!”

A dreadful trembling voice straight from the depths of hell; Kou-san shouted violently.

This was the first time I heard that kind of voice from Kou-san.

“S-sorr.....!”

Just as I was about to squeeze out an apology, Kou-san fell flat.

Copious amount of blood was oozing from her back.

If I don't stop the blood.....!

I looked around for something to stop the blood loss, and noticed an unwashed dry rag that could be used. There might be germs on it but it is far more dangerous for her continue losing blood like that. I grabbed the laundry and pressed it strongly on her wound.

“Boss! Kuwamaru-sann! Hey! Someone! Help—! Kou-san is...! Kou-san is...!”

I called for help relentlessly. This place isn't really that far off from the camp. Given that they all have good hearing, they should be able to hear me. If they couldn't, this would really be a big problem.

As I screamed out loud, I took a glance at the opposite bank of the river. The nine-eyed bear was gone. No image of mother was left behind.

Surely that must have been a demonic beast.

Until boss and the rest get here, I continued to scream for help while trying to stop the bleeding.

It was because of me that she gotten slashed, if she died on me.....there's no way I could accept it!

*

Not long later, boss and gang came, and carried Kou-san back to the camp while trying to stop the bleeding.

Boss looked at the greatly shocked me and said, “Now you are the only who knows how to treat her injuries! Do it fast!” I took another look at the pale-faced Kou-san and finally regained some composure.

It’s true. Only I could do it. In order to help Kou-san, I have to do it.

I removed the rag that was pressed on her wound, washed off Kou-okaasan’s blood-stained back with water, and smeared a special ointment to stop bleeding. It was a green ointment made from the paste of Yomogi.

In the past, when Kuwamaru’s arm had been scraped by a twig and there was a rather long cut on his arm, wasn’t there a need to stitch the wound? As far as I remember, it was a gaping wound though. I probably won’t need to do that since this ointment could stop bleeding and close wounds too.

I have a feeling that the bodies of the people in this world were more sturdy than the people from my previous world. Or maybe it could be that the Kou-san’s medicine is really effective.

I applied the ointment on the wound generously, and on top of that, I fastened a cloth around her wound that had been sterilised by boiling.

Most likely she will be alright. The wound was big but, it wasn’t as deep as the one Kuwamaru had before.

From then on, I kept night watches on Kou-san to nurse her.

Or it could be that I couldn’t sleep.

A short time later, Kou-san started having nightmares from her fever and pains.

I made her drink a medicated soup that relieves pain and alleviates fever, wiped off her sweat, changed the dressing and placed a wet towel over her head to cool her down.....I tried all I could to reduce her pain and to help her.

Occasionally, Kou-san would shout my name in her nightmares, and to check if she was alright, I would take her hand and tell her that I was alright. Rather than me, Kou-san was the one that wasn't alright!

The other bandits were worried sick too and didn't want to leave Kou-san's side. Boss told them, "With a bunch of dirty dudes gathering around, the one getting treated obviously wouldn't be able to recover comfortably!" And then, he chased them out.

I apologised to the boss about being lured by the demonic beast to the opposite side of the river and it ending up with Kou-san protecting me. I had resigned myself to the possibility of boss becoming enraged at my foolish act. He might have killed me for my mistake but the boss simply muttered, "I see..."

And then, Kou-san who was still in her nightmare, started to shout Alek, the boss's name.

"Alek, don't live dangerously," "defying them....." "Alek, it's impossible....."

Alek replied, "It's fine," to all her incoherent mumblings.

That was how things went for the entire night when we were caring for her. Boss told me to get some rest but I had stubbornly declined. Boss face was entirely impregnable but more fascinating was that he never once left Kou-

okaasan's side.

At the crack of dawn, Kou-okaasan's breathing had stabilised. She stopped having nightmares, and her fever went down. Perhaps she managed to calm down.

As I looked at Kou-okaasan, I, who had been fatigued by looking after her through the night and being anxious, slowly lay down to rest near her. I was reflecting on how all this had happened.

There was no way mother would come all the way here yet I had been successfully tricked into crossing the river. That was a demonic beast wasn't it. It had deceived me and tried to get me over the river. I was under the impression that demonic beasts would be something like a dragon or a slime. I was really that stupid. My hands shiver just thinking about it.

In the first place, why had I been lured by "mother"? Hadn't I given up on that already? I told myself that I couldn't give a damn, and will forget them forever! Even though I resolved myself to forget!

I could feel somebody gently caressing my forehead, causing me to wake up. I had drifted to sleep while thinking about all those things.

It was Kou-san who was gently stroking my forehead.

One way or another, we have made it past the most difficult phase. I was relieved that Kou-san was now safe and that nobody died because of my carelessness. The warmth emitted from Kou-okaasan's hand was comforting.

"S-sorry. It was because of me, sorry."

“It’s okay.I’m glad you are fine. These bandages and medicines are done by Ryou-chan?”

I nodded.

I don’t really know how but, it feels as though the inside of my throat had stopped working and I lost my voice.

“I see, well done. Thanks. This was due to Ryou-chan’s efforts. You are really good at this.”

“But.....why did you stick out your body to shield someone like me.....”

“Wrong. Not ‘someone like me’. It’s because you are Ryou-chan. You are just like how Alek was back in the past. Tinged with hatred for the world and the eyes of a defeated. I couldn’t just leave you alone.”

Boss who was seated nearby was fidgeting restlessly and grumbled, “What the heck man”. It might have been a brusque remark from him but from his voice, I knew that he was relieved that Kou-san had regained consciousness.

I forcefully eked out a hoarse voice from my throat. “Kou-san,” I uttered.

“Didn’t I say this when we first met? I would take care of you. And please call me Kou-okaasan.”

Kou-okaasan smiled tenderly as she said.

And then, I endured the pain in my throat to gather whatever voice I had,

“Yes.....Kou-okaasan. Thank you.”

I was overjoyed. So much so that I gradually could see the world glittering.

Somehow, layered inside my fluffy emotions, another level-headed me whispered: You will be sold anyways. It has been decided. You would be betrayed.

I know that, I can grasp that. Even then.

No matter what, a me that hopes for something remains.

Chapter 36: Bandit Arc ⑥ -the Anguish Of An Applicant To The Organisation-

After a few days, Kou-san's condition had stabilised. She is now able to sit upright and eat on her own.

Since she was able to hold conversations, I have been receiving instructions from her on following treatment procedures.

The scars on her back were still there and looked as though they were slightly inflamed. Nevertheless, because the wound has closed up, whether the scar would disappear entirely depends on the treatment. Right now, I am replacing the ointment which stops bleeding (which also relieves pain and suppress inflammation) and changing her dressing.

In the period when I cared for Kou-okaasan, I felt somewhat blissful. Kou-okaasan is really kind. I feel that she actively tries to cover up for my fallings.

Still, what awaits me is getting sold off to somebody else.

I wonder what Kou-okaasan plans for me exactly. She has been so kind to me, so much so that I have gotten the wrong idea about her. No, it's as though it's already become an expectation. After all, she protected me with her life.

Doesn't this mean she regards me as something very important?!

When treated in such a way, anyone would have their hopes without doubt. That Kou-okaasan obviously loves me. I mean, she even said at the beginning, that she was going to think of me as her child with boss. She told me to call her

Okaasan!

I have believed it again.

However, if I were to be backstabbed again, if I were to be sold again.....

As of now, Kou-okaasan is unable to move so I am the only medic for the bandits. That's why, they allow me to stay by their side all the time though.....

As long as Kou-okaasan is lying down on the bed, I am the bandits' precious medic. That's why, in the meantime, I won't be sold.

That's right, at this rate, if Kou-okaasan can be bedridden forever.....!

Preferably both her hands and legs.....!

That, that's impossible—! I am a yandare?! Scary!

I am definitely not a yandare!

Honestly, I don't have a good idea of how Kou-okaasan thinks of me. Furthermore, asking her would be scary.

But I understand my thoughts clearly.

I want to continue this life with them. I want to continue being with Kou-okaasan, boss and the other bandits.

With this newfound conviction, I'm sure I can muster the courage to achieve anything.

Also, I want to try my very best.

I am very aware that effort doesn't equate to results.

Even in the past, whenever I had an inclining that my parents were getting closer to me, I would push myself harder, but even then, my efforts were not rewarded. Still, even if that was the case, I still want to cling on to this little hope that I have. More often than not, effort goes unrewarded everywhere in the world.

Still, at the very end, I want to hang onto to this hope. This would be the last time.

Alright! This shall be my bandit debut.

I knew in advance that I was going to be the Earl's family maid and I had considered that to be good vocation but being a bandit isn't bad either. I want to continue living as a bandit. The slow life had been fun.

It's just that I don't want to be involved in something like robbery. After all, I hail from the relatively safe Japan.....

Regarding the act of robbing, there would be no problems as long as I correct the ways of them bandits. Yes, that's it, yes. I, who is presently supposed to be a cute little girl, would tell them, "Boss, for my sake, please do not go against me!" With that, they would stop for sure.

However, was it even possible for Boss to change his ways even though evil has seeped deep into his face.....?

No, let's stop thinking too deeply into it.

For now, the most vital thing is to join their bandit gang. I wonder if there are

any formal procedures to join them. Such as a test, a ritual or a baptism.
First of all I need to confirm if Boss would even let me join.

No, wait.

If I suddenly requested to join, he would probably say something like, "There is nothing that a kid like you can do! Don't ever ask of that again!" Even I wouldn't dare to ask a second time after that.

I know, how about increasing my appeal before making my request to join?

Yes, that's it!

If I can get them to tell me, "Please join us bandits!", that would be good.

I swiftly drew up and refined my plan. I would swing into action starting from tomorrow.

*

The morning for a bandit applicant is early.

I woke up earlier than everyone else, and started mixing today's portion of medicine. Next is collecting vegetables nearby. Today, I am also planning to join them in hunting, so I looked around for a long wooden stick that can be used while hunting.

The leftover ashes from the bonfire could be used to make soap so I kept it for later and also did some sweeping around the perimeters of the tents.

Next, I started a fire and prepared breakfast with the vegetables that were gathered and wild boar meat. The bandits eat plentifully during breakfast.

After that, being lured by the scent of food, the bandits woke up one by one.

I greeted them with an invigorating smile.

“Oh oh, boss, good morn’! Wow, you still look as cool as ever!”

“.....what do you want”

Alek boss became unsettled at my invigorating greeting. Oh that’s right, up till now, all my greetings weren’t as casual as how the bandits would greet one another with “good morn’.” Yep, I might have overdone it.

For now, I’ll treat it as though nothing happened and continue in my usual way of speaking. Even though I returned back to my original way of speaking, I still won’t forget to pepper my words with compliments for the boss.

Later, because removing other obstacles are equally as important, I would excessively praise the bandit management team too.

As for Kuwamaru, I told him, “you’re the best bro, as expected!” and he was put into a good mood. As for Gai-san, the musclehead, I complimented his bulging muscles and he twitched his chest muscles in delight. Rudel-san was suspicious of my drastic change in behaviour so my compliments didn’t work well on him. The reaction from boss was equally as bad.

It’s okay, this is just the first day. I will proceed without panicking.

After finishing with things like helping Kou-san with her meals, preparing her medicine and changing her dressing, I conveyed my interest to join them in hunting to boss. However, he rejected me and said, “It’s impossible since you can’t even ride a horse.”

Still, to get here, I rode together with Kou-san so I probably could help out by

shooting with the bow while paired with someone else on a horse. I had achieved decent standards in archery during my previous life.

I told the boss that I knew how to shoot from the bow, and the boss said, “If you say you can, why don’t you show me,” and lent me his bow. I tried to pull the bowstring, but was unable to do so due to lack of strength.

Kuu! If only I had the body of my previous life!

I resolved to add push-ups to my morning program.

In the end, I wasn’t allowed to join them in the hunt. The boss stroked my head (very unlike of him) and said, “Well, if there is a chance in the future, I would teach you how to hunt”.

Ehh, no way, the normally scary him became so kind all of a sudden. How startling.

If the boss was a little bit more handsome, that would so much better. Sadly, from how I see it, the boss has a scary face that looks like a bulldog or a gorilla. Sorry, but that’s definitely not my type.

Furthermore, I don’t want Onee as my rival. I don’t feel that I would be able to win his, oops I mean, her femininity.

With that, the days went by with me contributing to the bandits primarily by being responsible for all the housework.

And then, the hardworking me showed everyone that “I wasn’t just a housework girl!”. I borrowed a hoe from the village bandits, tilled an empty space, fertilised the land with horse dung and tried to grow some potatoes. The very next night, some wild boars dug out everything and ate them. I got scolded

by Kou-okaasan for that too.

I tried to make soap with water mixed with ash and animal fats but the bubbles from it were terrible and the soap reeked of smelly fats. Furthermore, the bandits who do not give a damn to whether they are clean or dirty weren't concerned with hygiene and said, "Won't washing with water do?", rejecting the soap right away.

Using clay from the mountains and heating them with the ashes of bonfire, I made some straw-rope patterned bowls. "But aren't the wooden bowls we're using now good enough?" They said and treated the straw-rope patterned bowls as ornaments.

I tried to flaunt the musical talents I possessed that annihilated all my competition in my previous lifetime. This was a plan to turn them into slaves of my art, so I stole a bucket that was used as armour by the village bandits and used twigs to play drum. However, the hypersensitive Rudel told me to shut up.

And right now, I am in the midst of making bricks from clay. I am making a cooking stove with the bricks. Also, I plan to build a wall as a partition to shield people from eyes when they are wiping themselves with wet cloths. This time for sure, I would impress everyone!

That was how I enjoyed my days to the fullest even though no matter how I see it, it was all fruitless effort.

Could it be because of my impatience? I've never experienced things that haven't gone elegantly until now.

However, it is strange.

Even though things haven't gone smoothly, I am still having lots of fun.

With regards to whatever I do, anyone who had seen it all gave some feedback. Even though I might have failed, and that they show some displeasure, none of them would actually be disappointed.

Could it be because they do not have any strange expectations of me? Somehow, the load on my shoulders feels extremely light.

Chapter 37: Bandit Arc ⑦ -magic Sword-

Please calm down myself.

The me that was in a slump took on a Nirvana pose to compose myself.

Too many things have gone wrong but the fundamentals are holding fine.

I did the housework perfectly and I performed my job as a medic well. I even got to learn how to handle a horse from boss and can mostly ride on a horse now. Also, I can dress the meat of small animals too.

More or less.....even though this is merely it, even though there have been some failures, this should be enough to cover up for it!

I wonder how the boss would evaluate me as of now. Sometimes I have too much fun and I would forget about this. The others around me treated me normally too.

Hurry up and scout me please! I peeked at boss but he showed no signs of wanting to do so.

Speaking of which, aren't everyone treating me too normally? Is this the normal way to treat their latest merchandise (me)? This feels as though I have already become one of them.

In the end, due to being unable to contact Bashu-san, months have already passed since I was kidnapped.

When discussing about Bashu-san, they didn't mention about selling me either.

Could it be that discussion on selling me has not gone through smoothly?

Does that mean all I should do now is continue acting innocently?

If it is good now, won't it be fine?

Ughh, my "live in the moment" personality is whispering to me..... Quiet! The alone me!

Still, I never once thought the day when I aspire to be a bandit would come. Honestly, life like this is difficult, dirty and dangerous.....isn't this 3D? (TN: It was 3K in the original text)

"Yo, Ryou.....what, an afternoon nap? Sorz but won't you lend me a hand?"

Kuwamaru bro came along and saw me in a Nirvana pose.

It seems like he wants to scrape off fats from boar skin.

Of course I readily okayed to it.

At first, I was still sympathetic to the boar and also found it a challenging task but as of now, my hands have gotten used to it.

Furthermore, we used knives to scrape fats from the skin and thus, they would return Alan's dagger back to me. Hence, I agreed to do the job.

Though after I became accustomed to their bandit life, they returned it to me just like that.

Hey, doesn't that mean I'm already part of their gang? Isn't that so?

Nevertheless, even though I am glad to have the Alan's dagger given back to me, I never did expect to use it to remove fats from wild boar skin. Alan wouldn't dream of that either.

"That dagger of yours Ryou, was it a gift?"

Kuwamaru asked me as he scrutinised me from the side as I scraped fats.

"The young master where I was last employed gave it to me."

It seemed that he became somewhat interested in it as he raised his eyebrows in reaction.

"The young master is a mage?"

"Yes. He made it for me with magic. I heard that a sword made by a mage with magic is proof of trust that the mage has for the receiver."

"Trust huh," said Kuwamaru bro as he smiled meaningfully.

"By the way, I personally made this dagger with metal," he said as he showed me a blunt dagger that had been made shoddily.

"Yourself? Hehhh—Ah! Impressive!"

Whoops, that was close. I nearly forget my usual compliments.

Which reminds me, in the legends, the humans made use of swords and armour refined from minerals during the war. Which means that there should be people working as blacksmiths right?

If that is the case, why bother the mages to make swords and the like when you can entrust it to the blacksmiths. Irene-san's job included a decent load of assignments to refine swords and armour from mineral. I think it would be better if humans made these themselves more proactively.

“That's why this is a god-killer dagger.”

God-killer.....? Kuwamaru bro! What a Chuunibyou way of saying it. And sooner or later his right hand would start hurting right! (TN: something to do with how Chuunibyous imagine that they have powers stashed away in their eye, arm, etc)

“Ha, haa”

I had no idea how to deal with people with Chuunibyou so I did was give a half-hearted reply.

A more appropriate reply might be something like, “From a third person's perspective.....that looks dangerous.”

“Oh oh, it looks like you have no idea how awesome a god-killing dagger can be huh!”

O-Oh.

Somehow, Kuwamaru bro was in high spirits. He must be very proud of his dagger. A self-made object with emotional attachment is really different huh, really.

“This was not made by magical powers. Therefore, it is a dagger that is able to slaughter mages.”

Ooh, slaughter, what a disturbing choice of word.

But hey, since this is a sword we are talking about, if it is sharp enough, it

would have the ability to kill any human, regardless of whether it is a mage or not.

“Even a dagger made by a mage would be able to pierce a mage without problem I think.”

After I said that, Kuwamaru bro raised Alan’s dagger up to take a better look. Honestly speaking, it feels much better than the dagger made specially by Kuwamaru.

However, Kuwamaru bro laughed in a mocking manner, “Hah!”

How humiliating!

“Ryou’s one is still very much lacking. A sword made by a mage can easily be erased by magic did you know?”

Eh?

That being said, when Alan was making the sword, he turned the sword into dust countless of times whenever he failed.

This means.....

“.....As long as it is a mage, he or she could erase anything made by magic?”

“Something made strongly with magic by the royals would be difficult to erase but others can mostly be erased. All it takes is the incantation. Well, if that person does not know the incantation then it would be impossible.....but most mages should roughly remember the dispelling incantation. Well, no matter what, the dagger I am holding is totally awesome! Because no magic can erase it yeah!” Said the all-smug Kuwamaru bro.

Speaking of which, that, how should I say it, umm, how?

“.....There are many places where normal people forge and make swords right?”

“Nope. It’s probably only made in a secret underground of the underground world in the capital. Among the demonic beasts, there are some that do not get hurt by swords made from magic. For that express purpose, they have some swords like that? Even for me, when I was attending school, I secretly made it. Actually it was a special lesson on how to make coins and currency but I did it such that the teacher didn’t notice anything.”

And then, because he looked as though he wanted to be praised, I interjected with my compliments.

However, as I was complimenting him, my imaginations could not be stopped.

The fleeting view of a clawless, fangless and lifeless beast living in a big cage came to mind.

Surprisingly, the mages after the mythical era might have been very shrewd. That’s because in order to prevent a second uprising from the humans, they carefully maintained and trimmed their claws and fangs.

Chapter 38: Bandit Arc ⑧ -unable To Contact Bashu-san-

Rudel-san and the rest who went down to the countryside to investigate Bashu-san's movement came back.

“Has Bashu not returned?!”

“It appears so.”

Rudel-san reported emotionlessly to boss who became enraged.

Looks like Bashu-san had been serious about the agricultural reforms and had gone looking for talents in his territory. This would mean that he would only be back in one to two years.

Despite the repeated trips down the mountain by Guy-san and the others, we were never able to meet him.

We had been tangled up in hopes that Bashu-san would return and as such, we had concealed ourselves in the mountains for a few months. I casually turned 7-years-old like this.

Personally, I was greatly welcome this slow pace of life. But as for the boss, all he did was sigh aloud.

“Seriously, the bastard Bashu better be prepared.....”

“Come on, let it go. Wasn't living in the mountains fun? Let's continue this and build a home here!”

Kou-okaasan drew closer to the peeved boss wiggle by wiggle.

“It’s not about this being fun or not! Also, I don’t remember building a home with you!”

The boss made a terribly sickened face and stepped away from Kou-okaasan. This was a usual scenario.

“And so you might claim—. Did you know that I knew? That you have been secretly been giving Ryou-chan horse riding lessons secretly beneath the shadows! Weren’t you talking about hunting enthusiastically!”

What? Boss talking enthusiastically? Boss’s face had always been scary so I couldn’t read anything like enthusiasm from his face.

I see, so he had been enjoying himself then. Ah, what a sinful young girl I am. What? 7-years-olds do not qualify as a young girl? How about no?

Hehehe, my strategy has been rather masterfully executed!

“Shuddup! Enough of it, Kouki! For now, we have no way to meet Bashu-san. Why don’t we make a trip back to Guriguri village? It has been quite some time since we left. Any lingering ruckus should have died down by now.”

“True. I’m also curious on how the village is doing. Shall we go back?”

Rudel-san replied. Rudel-san was part of the planning team it seems. His clever face was not just for show.

“Kouki’s injury shouldn’t be of any problem? Can you ride a horse?”

“Aahh! Alek is worried for me? H-A-P-P-Y! But, shouldn’t you be referring to

me as Kou-chan?”

Again, Kou-okaasan started to creep closer to boss, while boss retaliated in return.

“If Kouki is able to move like then it should be fine. Alek, when are we leaving?”

As he was watching their scuffle obliviously, Rudel-san raised his question to boss.

“Stop fooling around, go away!”

Said boss as he thrusted Kou-okaasan away and recovered his footing.

“Blokes, get ready! We are moving.....now!”

From boss’s signal, the bandits’ meeting had adjourned. All of us moved on to make preparations.

However, to have addressed everyone as blokes.....how troubling that this cute young girl here had been forgotten!

Furthermore—. Poor Kou-okaasan. So sad that she got pushed away—.

I rushed over to Kou-okaasan, and called out to her but she was making an entranced look and muttered, “Aah, as expected, Alek is so c-h-a-r-m-i-n-g.” No problems on her side I guess.

*

My belongings consist of Alan’s dagger and some red pepper seedlings. Sometime ago, I had uprooted the seedlings of red peppers that can be found in

the mountains. I transplanted the seedlings to my self-made clay pots (as a substitute for planters) and placed pots on the horse so that it does not be too much of a burden.

Guy-san who was proud of his strength was in charge of carrying my luggage. I gave him the red peppers planters and gave an amazed expression that in an instant, he managed to heave them onto the horse while saying, “oughs”.

Guy-san has the tendency to end all his conversations with, “Oughs”.

“The things that Ryou-chan had brought along sure is strange huh. It may be true that red peppers may serve as medicine but.....we don't really need it? Also, all we need are the seeds too.”

Kou-okaasan struck a conversation with me after lifting me up to the back of the horse.

It is embarrassing that I am still unable to ride on a horse on my own. I am not of the right size now.

If only it was a pony, only if it was a pony!

“I am thinking of using it to protect the crops from wild boars. We might be able to acquire red peppers there but I am bringing them just in case. I heard from Gozle-san (TN: previously I called him Gorz, but I realised Gozle is a more accurate translation) that the fields at Guriguri village were often ravaged by wild boars and that it is a pressing problem.”

Yes, ever since my potato fields had been ravaged, I have been researching on countermeasures against wild boars. The results of my research are that red peppers can be used to protect the fields. I experimentally found that wild boars no longer approached the fields when they are enclosed by red peppers hedges.

I plan to unveil the fruits of my research at Guriguri village and have everyone say, “Good job! Ryou-chan!” This is a tactic to have them call me “Amazing Ryou”.

“I don’t really know but because it is Ryou, this seems like another one of your dubious stuff again.”

Rudel-san joined in the conversation and knitted his brows. I mean, the only person Rudel-san knits his brows to is me.

Rudel-san does not appear to like children. That is not to say he is a terribly evil person; personally I think he is well-natured.

Still, saying that they are “dubious stuff” is kinda hurtful though!

Right now all he might see are my eccentricity but it is the back from the dead Ryou from now on!

And then, the journey on horse begun.

Perhaps the three villager bandits were delighted that they could finally go home, they looked especially cheerful. Even on the road, I heard them talking about their moms and sisters that they had left behind at the village.

I see, I see. Being able to see their family must be good—!

It’s not that I am p-particularly envious of them!

Chapter 39: Bandit Arc ⑨ -guriguri Village-

When we arrived at Guriguri village, the appearance of the village had transformed to some extent.

The fields are well maintained. When we left the village, even though it was late at night then so I might not have been able to see clearly but the fields appeared to be in a messed up state.

We bandits went straight for the village chief's house, just as we did before.

“Chief, did you encounter any problems when we weren't around? More than anything, it seems that this place has changed. Have you all started tilling the fields?”

“Yes. That's right. The truth is. Some days after Alek-sama left, the mages came. The crops had been grown with magic.”

Sip sip. He had been talking for some time so I guess his throat had become dry. Chief was slurping his tea.

“Mages huh?They came to chase us?”

“It seemed that way. It's just that, instead of being focused on subjugating you bandits, they were more interested on the whereabouts of this girl – who is with you.”

The village chief fixed his eyes on me while sipping his tea.

“Don't tell me the mages were really activated.....”

Rudel murmured with a pale face. That reminds me, before we left the village,

he argued that there was no way the mages would come so soon.

“How did the Chief and the rest answer to their inquiries?”

“I told them we had no idea. They used a light spirit user to search but because Alek-sama left in the middle of the night, they found no traces. And since they made the effort to come all the way here, they assisted us in growing crops. However, because we did not plant any seeds *cough**hack**hack*!”

O-old man! The tea, drink the tea! Don’t talk for so long!

“.....Fuh—, my apologies. Because we did not plant any seeds, there was not much of a harvest. And sho, the mages gave us seeds and something called fertiliser, and that is what we are growing with right now.”

“Ahh, I saw it when we came to the village earlier. Buds have started to sprout in the fields.”

“Yes, that’s the case. Anyhow, that the seeds were able to grow into buds..... it is something to be joyous about. It’s all thanks to the fertiliser. We are now cultivating the field by mixing in ashes of burnt grass and decomposed soil that can be found in the mountains.”

Fertiliser? Speaking of which.....I seem to recall teaching the spirit users of Rainforest about fertiliser.....

“Could it be that the mage that visited the village was a haggardly old man with sunken cheeks and dark circles under his eyes who also looked like he was dying all the time?”

The “could it be” popped into my mind and so I cut into the conversation.

“Yes, indyed.”

I knew it! It is definitely the spirit user from the cruel black enterprise who always look as though death was upon him.

I see, he came all the way here to do business. Well done!

“Your acquaintance?”

Boss turned to face me.

“He might be called an acquaintance. When I was a maid, I gave him some help.”

Also, that spirit user is really doing a great service to the villagers by educating on fertiliser.

“Alek-sama, would you be staying for a short while?”

“.....Ahh, I was planning to do so. I would be borrowing a room.”

As he said, the village chief turned to his back. Boss’s face was stoic.

*

Boss and the rest left the chief’s house and were guided to a vacant house that had been prepared.

En route, the three village-bandits were about to return to their homes and back to their families but for some reason, the boss stopped them and we

entered the unoccupied house together.

No way, this house is so small, how can we squeeze all nine of us here? I certainly wish the villager-bandits return to their own homes though.....

Everyone entered the room and shut all the windows and doors.

“Do you hear it?”

The boss muttered with an indiscernible expression.

“Ah, I hear it. The sound of horse hooves right?”

This time it was not the composed Rudel-san but a slightly flustered Rudel-san.

“Most likely, they have gone to inform the mages so that they can capture us.”

Eh!

In short, you mean that huh? That this bandit village has sold the boss out?

“It can’t be! Why!? There’s no way the people in this village would do that.”

“Retard, keep your voice down!”

The villager-bandit trio were greatly shocked and could not believe it. Kuwamaru raised his voice to remonstrate the bewildered trio.

“But, Kuwamaru bro! Boss and the rest are our benefactors! There is no way that anyone would do that.”

“Everyone may not all think your way.Do not forget that this time, the

magicians have bestowed their help and that there would be some who desire to lead a life dependent on the magicians.”

Kuwamaru looks slightly dejected. Heartbreaking.

“T-that can’t.....! All this time, the magicians have abandoned us, the one that gave us a hand when we nearly died was.....even though it was Boss-san and the rest! And now at this late hour, just because they grew the crops, it can’t be.....”

In order to calm the somewhat agitated villager bandits, Kuwamaru placed his hand on Gozle-san’s shoulder with a *ponk*.

“You understand? This is how a portion of the villagers think. It’s not that everyone think like that, you got it?”

The villager bandits casted their eyes down and nodded.

“If the horses set off from today, it is unlikely for the magicians to be able to reach here by today. We leave by sunset today.”

Boss had carefully timed himself to give these orders only after the villager bandits have composed themselves. The leaders among the bandits likewise agreed with boss.

Next, boss shifted his eyes to the villager bandits that are still in disbelief and who are still frozen in their thoughts.

“Gozle, Porun and Bucket. What about you guys? Will you stay in the village? Once we leave, there will be no return. Are you prepared to never see your family again?”

The three villager bandits slowly lifted up their face and stiffly looked up to boss. Their faces were pale. It feels like they still have many considerations and

that they have yet to sort them out in their heads.

“Boss, can we have more time to decide.....?”

“Nope, decide now. If you have hesitations, I have no need for you.”

Towards boss’s unrelenting words, the three of them could only gulp.

The room became so quiet to that extent that the air in the room froze over. The first to break the silence was Bucket-san. When he left for the village, he was the villager bandit that put a bucket over his head as a substitute for armour, and so he was nicknamed Bucket-san. He was generally shy, and hardly said much but still, he treated me kindly.

When he returned to Guriguri village, he had been worried for his mother that stayed behind in the village, and asked how his mother was doing while stuttering.

Bucket-san removed the bucket that was over his head with his trembling hands, and dropped it. *Clonk* Next he went down to his knees.

He started crying while kneeling down.

“.....Sorry, I cannot abandon my family.”

Bucket-san had decided to remain in the village.

The other two who had been watching him, crumbled down to their knees too.

“I, too, am very sorry. In the end, I want to be with my family.....Being able to be on a journey with boss had been very fun but, that is only because we definitely had a place to return to.”

And then, the three of them kowtowed.

Kou-okaasan said in her teary voice, "It's alright, we'll let you stay by your family's side. Raise your heads," and patted their backs.

Kou-okaasan is easily moved to tears.

"I see. I understand. If the mages were to come, just tell them you had been forced to follow us against your wills."

Boss reveal gentleness in his expression.

As for Kuwamaru-bro, he looked like he was having it tough too, probably because he would no longer have them little brothers around.

"Ryou, what about you?"

All of a sudden, boss directed his eyes to me.

Eh?

"What about me.....what do you mean?"

"In any case, your future husband.....Claude was it? That guy, to the extent of using the mages, he had been crazily searching for you it seems. Would you stay here?"

Ehh!

Even I would be given a choice!?

Being asked this question out of the blue, I took a hard look at boss's face. It was never-changing deadly looking face. I could not read his true intention from his face.

If I chose to stay, does it mean I would be able to meet with everyone back at Rainforest territory?

From Alan to Cain to Irene-san to Claude-san to Stella-san. The faces of everyone with whom I had spent time with over there resurfaced in my mind.

However, if I did that, I would no longer, be able to be with the bandits..... with Kou-okaasan.....

I took a long look at the bandits. They all had their eyes on me. They await my answer.

“I will.....”

Chapter 40: Bandit Arc ⑩ -escaping From The Village-

To say that I was not confused would be a lie.

However, since I have already made my decision, I immediately replied.

“I will go. Together with boss.”

Boss’s grim face changed momentarily into a dumbfounded one as though he was shocked.

He must have found my reply surprising.

“.....is that alright?”

I nodded.

From behind, Kou-okaasan who had been patting on the villager-bandits’ back to cheer them up started to totter towards me. She looked to be in disbelief.

“Are you really, really okay with it?”

“Yes.....do you not want that?”

If they disagreed with me joining them, just thinking about what to do next would be scary. All of a sudden, my body temperature felt like it dropped several degrees down.

“Totally not! You are definitely not happy with it at all!”

Kou-okaasan had tears and mucus choked in her eyes and nose as she hugged me tightly.

As I was hugged, knowing the fact that I was together with Kou-okaasan made me very happy and subconsciously, my cheeks slackened.

“If Kou-okaasan is happy.....I too will be happy.”

And next, I also wrung my hands around Kou-okaasan to hug her.

Why does the sensation of hugging someone feels so good? Her warmth, softness and breathing was being transmitted to my senses through my hands that were on her back.

I wonder if Kou-okaasan could feel the same emotions as she hugged me.

As I filled myself to the brim with a human’s warmth, I heard next to my ear, “Thank you, Ryou-chan, gommzabassjffhhgun—.” Her words were jumbled with voiced sounds.

I could not catch the last few words she said because there were too many voiced sounds but Kou-okaasan was sobbing for me. She embraced me because she was so happy that I would stay together with them.

With this alone, I am satisfied.

I looked at my own arm as I hugged Kou-okaasan. It was the same-old skin-

coloured arm.

I wondered if I had a family, would I grow a horn out of over-excitement or maybe my skin would turn green? But such a thing did not happen.

I had always wanted to be loved and that because I was never loved, I always felt worthless. Still, I had already been in bliss because I had loved somebody else.

Proof of that can be seen in that I had long become fond of all the bandits. I had long been in happiness.

*

Since we have agreed on leaving after sunset, we gave the red pepper seedlings to the three villager-bandits who were going to continue to stay in the village.

It was something that was brought along as a countermeasure for the wild boars that constantly attacked the fields.

In truth, it was my tool to be known as Impressive Ryou and that I wanted to directly unveil and explain it to the villagers, while observing the aftermath of using it. However, doing that would be difficult so I explained it concisely to Gozle-san before entrusting it to him.

To use it to protect the fields from the boars, plant as much red peppers seedlings as necessary at the spots where the wild boars frequently come from. If there aren't enough seedlings to do that, transplant red pepper seedlings from the mountains (where it can be found in the wild). If there still is a shortage, he could try to grind the seeds and scatter it all over the place, I told him. That might be effective too.

Even though the sprouts were able to grow in the fields because of the fertiliser, it does not mean that those sprouts will not be attacked by wild

animals.

Goze-san was half convinced and half in doubt so I don't know if he will put it to the test but for now, I shall teach him all that I can.

And in exchange for the red pepper seedlings, only if it is possible, I hoped that he could help me pass a message to the mages that are coming to the village.

“I am healthy and alive so do not worry. I do not want to return to the Rainforest territory so if it is possible, please do not search for me and the bandits as well, please.”

The villager-bandit (previously) listened to my message with a complicated look but he said he would take care of it anyways.

At the same time when the sun had set, so as to not raise the attention of the villagers, we left in secret.

As always, I sat in front of Kou-okaasan.

Kuwamaru, Gai-san, Kou-okaasan and even Rudel-san; everyone lost their energy and were downhearted.

We planned to head back to the Ruby Fallen territory from here on.

From the discussion we had on where should we go from here, we concluded that our destination would be, as I have thought, Bashu-san's place.

We have settled on chasing after Bashu-san, since we do know that he is

making his rounds around farmlands.

Actually, we don't seem to have any idea on where he might be but as long as we know the general direction he went and ask the locals on the way, we should be able to advance.

Frankly, I do not know how long it would take before we would chance upon Bashu-san. It could take 1 or 2 years.

Despite so, boss said that he had to meet Bashu-san because he had something to tell him.

As we got further and further away from Guriguri vilalge, I looked at the outlines of Guriguri village and got somewhat sentimental. Guriguri village, is to me, a village which I had given me complicating emotions.

Not only was this the village where I was brought to after being abducted, it was the place where I became determined to be with the bandits. It was also the village that betrayed us. That is not to say that all the villagers had betrayed boss though.

Compared to the instability of hunting and pillaging, living a life under the protection of the mages would seem to be more stable and would obviously be a better choice. That is what most people would have thought.

Even for me, if I had been given the same options while I was at Garigari village, I would have definitely picked the more stable choice.

However, by doing so, somewhere inside, I would feel that I have lost something important.

I have some opinions about this village but in no way do I hate this village. Perhaps it is due to the how this village resembles Garigari village.

For a brief second in front of me, boss's back drooped down. Indeed, he must be feeling dejected.

Well, as expected. I get this feeling that boss treats the 3 villager-bandits as though they were his younger brothers. Also, when we started on the journey right after I had been kidnapped, boss had been very popular among everyone in the village.

He must have had never imagined the day when he would have to escape from the village would come.

Keep your spirits high, boss. I would be supporting your back.

Chapter 41: Bandit Arc ⑪ -a Year After All That Happened-

“Isn’t this ground (clay pack) awesome!”

“You are right--. Feels great --”

“I’m gonna spread all over our arms, legs and everywhere else that is exposed to the sun!”

“Ah! Me too me too--. It also helps as a sunscreen too.”

It has been approximately one year since we left and escaped Guriguri village.

Many things have had happened during our journey but the bandits are all doing fine.

However, we have not met up with Bashu-san yet.

Nevertheless, we did not spend the time fruitlessly waiting for Bashu-san. Kou-okaasan and I started a beauty seminar to enhance women’s femininity, spending our days on polishing up one’s figure.

Today was a seminar on clay packs. It was an ointment that had been made with fine soil mixed with medicated water and then thickened into paste.

“Uwaa! Kou-anesan? Is it? What are you doing! I totally thought you were some demonic beast, buahaha—”

Kou-okaasan delivered a clean hit to Kuwamaru-aniki who had been talking straightforwardly!

“What do you mean by demonic beasts!”

After Kou-okaasan's shouted back with dagger-like sharpness, I joined in with, "Yeah right, that's rude!"

After spending more time with Kou-okaasan, I have acquired a womanlier tone. It is a good thing.

"S-sorry! U-um, the boss is calling."

As Kuwamaru-bro held his beaten cheeks with his hands, he stood up unsteadily.

"Oh? Alek called? Well, then I shall make my way."

Kou-okaasan went off while covered in mud.

"A-are you going in that state....."

Kuwamaru-bro interjected with a soft voice after waiting for Kou-okaasan to be some distance away.

"Aniki has returned huh! Have we made contact with Bashu-san?"

"Right on." said Kuwamaru-bro as he gave his thumbs up.

Finally, some days before, Bashu-san has finalised his team to undertake the agricultural reform. However, having boss appear out of nowhere and saying, "Gahahaha, I have finally found you!" would invite suspicions that he might be a demon lord, and we were afraid that we might be subjugated by Bashu-san's escorts so Kuwamaru delivered a message instead.

"Well, it is easy so long as you leave it to me. First of all, I went to a nearby village and approached a girl. I gave her some pocket money and I told to help me pass a bouquet to the person in the carriage. And then, inside the bouquet

was the message addressed to Bashu so..... hey, are you listening!” Bro stopped in the middle of his story to shout at me because I was still smearing the mud on every crook and cranny of my body.

“I am listening. So the size of it is that Bashu-san found the letter in the bouquet and is coming to us right? Impressive, impressive.”

“What’s with that half-hearted praise..... Y-your treating me pretty bad these days y’know? Just one year ago, you were still so docile.....”

“You must be imagining it.”

As I continued applying the ointment, in order to get back to the main topic, I said, “And then?” Kuwamaru-aniki roughly understood my intent and continued with his story.

“And therefore, the strategy worked out well.....just that there was this extra guy--”

“Extra guy, you say?”

“It was Kou-anesan’s little brother. He is together with Bashu-san. He is a spirit user.....from another domain -- Yamato domain. For him, ever since he kind-of eloped with the Ojou-sama, the royalty has been alienating the Yamato Earl Family. I wonder if he would be driven out from Ruby Fallen.” said Kuwamaru as he laughed meanly. Thereafter, Kuwamaru switched to grumbling and complaining that, “--damn, that he would appear was totally unforeseen.” Still, there was some delight hidden in his voice. It was more like he was actually thrilled.

“.....It sounds as if, you were close friends?”

“We ain’t close. Disgusting! All we have is a fatal destiny.”

I see. From his reaction, they must be really intimate friends.

“Boss and everyone are friends from the school yes? I heard about it from Kou-okaasan. Did boss and everyone often hang out with this Kou-okaasan’s brother?”

“.....Well, yeah. Still, he was a mage so the worlds we live in are different.”

Monkeyface-aniki looked somewhat gloomy.

“However, that boss hanged out with him, shows that they got on well with another though? Furthermore, earlier, Aniki said that he actually eloped.....! With a princess at that, doesn’t that mean he was a charming person?”

“What! Charming? No way! He was immature.” He said while laughing and crumpling my hair.

At the part when he said “Charming?”, he made a terrible shrieking voice, he had better not been trying to imitate my voice when he did that! My voice is definitely cuter than that! A cute voice that young girls have!

To display my indignation, I gave Aniki a hug while covered in mud.

“Uwa, hey you! You’ll dirty me—!” Aniki yelling resounded through the mountains.

*

The meeting with Bashu was arranged to be 10 days from now.

Ever since that was decided, somehow, boss had been on his toes and Kou-okaasan was less lively.

After having our dinner around the bonfire, the rest started drinking and making some noises but something felt different about today's atmosphere compared to other days. Everyone seem to be drinking with a tinge of weightiness.

I grabbed hold of a handmade bamboo flute. (TN: specifically, a transverse flute)

I had always played a tune or two after our meal but what should I do today?

A life in the mountains would not have the usual entertainment we have normally, so I was thinking of what could I do before finally choosing music. Hence, I made this bamboo flute myself. It was made such that the notes were accurate.

Usually, together with the party, I would blow a nice "Pii Hyara"(TN: the sound of a party horn) music with a refreshing rhythm and the intoxicated Gai-san and Kuwamaru would dance to it.

However, it looks like the audience do not have that kind of fervor today to dance to the music. From the atmosphere, if I did that today, I would undoubtedly be regarded as somewhat who cannot read the atmosphere.

In the end, I played a solemn classical music as the BGM.

As I blew from my flute, as always, Rudel-san glaringly gazed at my hands.

Rudel-san had a boundless interest in the sounds of the flute.

Even now, as he observed my hands, his hands were vaguely moving too. No doubt that he is practicing in his head right now.

Occasionally, he would secretly ask me to teach him the flute. He was an

excellent disciple that spared no effort.

“Ryou-chan can play it like that too huh.”

“No, it is more like Ryou was originally better at playing these calm compositions.”

Kou-okaasan nodded while Rudel-san went into his analytical mode without a moment’s delay.

That I was good at classical music, I could somewhat agree. In my previous existence, I had endlessly played them in musical performances. They were music from the sheets to allow me to win awards at contests.

I had never imagined in those days that this music would, after I had been reincarnated, for the sake of letting others listen to it, etch on a melody that describes the current state of my heart. I never expected the day when I would play this music so naturally, so much so that I would say that this is exactly my rock!

“However, it is so miraculous—. Despite having no lessons in it, that she can play it so well.”

“True. Basically, only spirit users can play musical instruments without practice.”

It seems that in this world, playing music with an instrument is not common. There is a strong connotation of it to rituals that spirit users conduct to execute large-scale magic and that it has been sanctified too, so it was not something the average person would lay his hands on.

Ultimately, on that day, boss continued to be serious throughout while the curtains on Ryou-chan’s classical concert closed.

The reason for boss being tensed up after having decided the meeting with Bashu-san, was something that I could vaguely guess at since I have been with him for the past one year.

It might be something that boss is trying to do or what he wants to say to Bashu-san.

I pretended not to notice anything and continued with my child-like innocence.

Chapter 42: Bandit Arc ⑫ -the Meeting With Bashu-san-

Finally, it was only a day before we meet Bashu-san.

This time, it was not just boss that was feeling all fidgety, but the rest of the bandit gang too. It was more like they were up on the edges in fact.

Right now, Kou-okaasan and boss have already readied themselves, wrapped themselves up in thin blankets and pretending to sleep.

I want to sleep, but somehow they cannot sleep. That is because, everyone is too anxious.

However, it was nearly the time for children to sleep, so I had to pretend to sleep.

I no longer have to be worried about being sold, hence, recently I could cast delusions, without any worries, on what kind of person might Bashu-san be while sleeping.

He is not only boss's friend, he is only an Earl, so he must be someone with a peculiarity or two, I feel. I get the feeling that he was probably a person with tons of facial hair and chest hair. And then, plucking his chest hair would be too lonely and so the hair on his head would fall too. I am praying for the roots of his hair to be healthy.

It was meaningless to continue my wild delusions so I was about to sleep when I felt something rugged and stiff patting on my head.

It was boss's hand.

Somehow, once in a while, when boss had thought I had fallen asleep, he would pat on my head slowly, with difficulty.

It is likely that if I were to open my eyes up now, the bashful boss would embarrassingly withdraw his hand immediately.

Fufu, therefore, I would go on with pretending to sleep, and enjoy boss's 'There, there' to the max.

I must be overly fond of being patted on the head so, I almost wanted to tear up due to the profound emotions seeping out of me but I would be found out if I started crying like that so I tried my fullest to hold them back.

Hehe, it is all thanks to him I cannot stop pretending to sleep.

".....Hey, Alek, won't you reconsider?"

While enjoying the patting, I could hear the Kou-okaasan's whisper in the quiet tent. Right at Kou-okaasan's words, boss stopped patting me. Oough.

".....What's with this all of a sudden."

"What you are trying to do is reckless. Why don't we take a look first?"

"Ha! What are you saying at this point? I knew from the start that this was reckless. Still, I have to do this for a certain someone. You should very well know that we can't turn back now."

This is bad, is this a couple's squabble!? What now?

I wonder if I should be awoken by their voice. Maybe it would better to laugh embarrassingly and interrupt them after they have changed the topic?

“Then, what about Ryou-chan? What if something dire happens to us? Would this child get involved in it?”

No way, my name came into the topic. Now all the more I cannot wake up. Furthermore, this gives off some turbulent vibes.....

“.....This kid, came with us because she likes us. She shouldn't have any complaints.”

“C'mon, Alek. At the very least, wait till this child grows up.....please. This much should be okay right? Even for Alek, you dote on her yes?”

“Alright, keep it down. No matter what, Bashu's the priority. Anything other than thing, I would not acknowledge it.”

As boss said that, he removed his hand that was on my head.

I turned over in my bed and brushed along the blanket. Probably, if I were to wake up now, boss and Kou-okaasan would lie down and face their backs at me.

From the opposite side, I could hear Kou-okaasan's tiny sigh.

I could guess that boss and gang were attempting to start a peasant's revolt or some revolutions of sorts. Sometimes, I would hear talk about weapons, mineral mines, mages, and gathering the support and unity of farmers.

I do not really understand the workings of the world but I still know that doing so is reckless. Still, it does not matter either way, Kou-okaasan. Do not worry too much about it, it is alright.

If I was told to offer my help to the boss, it is not like I would be hesitant to

lend my assistance. Being family is just like that I believe.

I still hardly know much about family though.....

*

The meeting between Bashu-san and boss started.

The representatives facing us was a spirit user and Bashu-san. Our representatives were boss and Kou-okaasan, a two-on-two dialogue. Well, even though this might be a dialogue, they were actually talking while standing in the mountains surrounded by trees and greenery.

If there were too many people, it might feel too overwhelming for both sides so the two-on-two mode was decided upon. Still, after being told that it was not like we all had to be around to convince Bashu-san to have an intention to join us, or more like just join us, so we were situated some place just a little far away, where we stand-by while observing the 4 of them.

To allow me to have better view, Gai-san gave me a lift on his shoulders. Gai-san was a roughly 2 meters tall and big guy so the view on his shoulders were wide!

Speaking of which, the spirit user who tagged along with Bashu-san looked somewhat familiar. We were looking from afar so I cannot really be sure but, from that red hair, could it be that spirit user who visited Garigari village the last time?

Even Kuwamaru-aniki said that the spirit user was from the Yamato region. Not going to keep it a secret anymore, Garigari village is actually one of Yamato's pioneering settlements.

Still, it is an indescribably far out place in Yamato though.

For the time being, Bashu-san doesn't look a very hairy person. I'm kind of disappointed.

This is despite me imagining every night recently that Bashu-san was a hairy person. And that he laughs like this, “Fou fou fo”. Laughing with his white hair, fou fou fo. Even though that was my Bashu-san, he was in reality, a man with light brown hair and has a kempt look without any normal facial hair.

The discussion proceeded without a hitch and started off with a mood like, “Yo, long time no see –!” and they embraced one another as a form of greeting. Kou-okaasan looked like she was extremely happy to see her old friend and her little brother, to the extent that she wiggled more than usual.

However, I wonder how the little brother thinks of his elder brother becoming an Onee. Or what he thinks of her wiggling. From afar, I could not peek into his mental space.

Boss smiled with his menacing face, and pointed far out to our direction. He was probably trying to say that his other men were in that direction, and would it be alright to bring them here? Bashu-san nodded his head, giving his assent.

And then, I thought he would fling his hand over head to gesture us to all get there now but boss looks strange.

He looked at his feet and panicked. Kou-okaasan too. Or more like all 4 of them look down and got into a fluster.

“Don’t they look strange?”

Rudel-san nodded. And then, boss lowered himself down to his waist and pulled out his sword.

“He drew his sword!?”

At the same time as Kuwamaru-aniki surprised voice, we rushed towards their direction.

While on Gai-san's shoulders, I grabbed on to his head as hard as possible so as to not fall over and continued to observe boss.

Something must have had happened; it did not look like a normal situation. He was looking down and then he became agitated.....

What? Something is fixed onto their feet? Ice?

Boss had noticed that we came to their side and he shouted, "Stop! Don't come here!"

With that shout of his, we could all tell that it was not something ordinary. How could we stop then? As I was thinking, the sword that boss was holding on to, crumbled away into sand.

That was something I have had seen before. Crumbling and disappearing away into sand, that was when Alan or Irene-san wanted to redo their failed swords or armour.

It was magic to undo a magician's work.

"Be careful! There is a mage nearby!"

Chapter 43: Bandit Arc ⑬ -magician Vs Young Bandit Girl-

A magician is here! When I shouted that, it was already too late.

Gai-san seemed to be pulled by something, and suddenly he lost his balance and fell forward. Due to him falling, I was thrown off, and landed on a tree branch. I was caught like a circus performer landing on a trapeze, and spun around with a whirl, before I started clawing back up on the tree.

I was like Tarzan. Good thing I lived in the mountains for some time.

Staring down, I saw that Gai-san, Kuwamaru-aniki and Rudel-san had all fallen to their knees and collapsed. There was ice from the ground connected all the way to their knees.

When Kuwamaru-aniki noticed that I was alright because I managed to climb to the safety of the tree, he took out his god-killing dagger from his pockets and threw it to me.

Throwing it in order to pass it to me is fine but that was too fast! If it was anybody else, it would not have been caught!

As such thoughts occupied my head, I held on to the dagger that I had somehow caught onto safely and took a look at my leather waist-pouch to confirm that my DIY red pepper bomb was still intact. Great, it did not tear.

One of the secret tools when used in a wild boar hunt. Red pepper, Japanese pepper and ashes were grounded into fine powder and then placed inside a small cylinder that was made by heating clay. The cylinder is then covered with a lid.

When thrown at wild boars, the powder would scatter and disperse, causing the wild boars to be unable to perceive with their eyes and smell with their noses. When they try to escape, all they would do is to crash into trees and die like that. It was a deadly hunting weapon.

Even on humans, it can be effective. Thanks to Kuwamaru-aniki sacred sacrifice, it's effectiveness had been demonstrated.

"If I see the mage, I would throw this at him!" As I thought, I looked around but the surrounding trees were in the way, and vision was poor. Walking from tree-to-tree, I moved towards where boss and the rest were.

"This is.....Ryuki isn't it! What is the meaning of this!"

The shout came from the red haired spirit user.

"That is what I want to ask of you instead, Father! I had noticed that you had been acting all strange the past few days, why are you having a secret meeting with these evil-looking people!?"

Immediately, a young man's voice emerged from some distance away from where boss and the rest were.

Eh, from that far out, he was still able to use magic? Isn't this range too wide? Mages are really scary.

Speaking of which, he said Ryuki? If my memory serves me right, that was the mage who visited Garigari village! He was handsome so I remembered him. A pretty youth with light blonde long hair.

In addition, the red hair spirit user was indeed the spirit user from back then. If I was correct, his name was Seki-san.

He did call him father, so these two were actually father and son.....

While thinking, I continued advancing through the trees to get into a range where I could fling the pepper bombs. It seems that he has no idea that I had

climb onto the tree and that I going to help them. It was because I was quite far away.

“Oi! Don’t judge a person simply by his face, you little!”

Boss’s savage-like voice could be heard.

However, boss, aren’t bandits bad people? Ah, but we had been pretty obedient lately so I guess that is fine? Just barely across that line of being bad I guess.

“From that fiendish face of his, he has similar characteristics to Alexander, the ideologist. Even if he is able to trick Bashu-sama and Father, he won’t be able to trick me. I will hear what you all have to say after I have captured him!”

“Ryuki! Calm down! It’s all good so release your ice magic.”

“No, Father and Bashu-sama must have been cheated. You all must be trying to overlook this guy!”

“.....Looks like words can’t reach you.”

That being said, Seki-san the spirit user tried to chant his magic, but at that time, from the shadows of the trees, a knight-like person appeared and wedged a cloth into his mouth to seal his voice.

And then, another knight, while saying sorry Seki-sama, used his hand to restrain Seki-san from his back.

“Wha! What is the meaning of this!”

As he shouted, more knight-like people appeared to restrain Bashu-san in a similar fashion. “Sorry, we are under instructions from Ryuki-sama.” They seem to have said and then brought their arms to their back and restrained them.

“Please be quiet. Bashu-sama and Father. I will capture them. I will hear what you have to say later.” After saying that, he gave a signal to the knights. The knight-like people tied boss and the rest with rope. The rubbing of metals created jarring “Gasha, Gasha” noises.

This is very bad, this is really really bad, this is very bad.

As I realised how nasty the circumstances have gotten, I made some Haiku in my mind to calm myself.

Ryuki-san has entered my range of the pepper bombs though. By throwing this at him, I would be able to seal his incantations! Yay--! Though I feel this can be so easily resolved though.

First of all, since I have to get rid of the magic that is binding boss and the rest’s feet, smashing Ryuki’s throat is out of question. Furthermore, I have to get the knights to retreat or else

Alright, I shall proceed with the hostage plan.

I climbed from tree to tree, getting to a spot directly above archenemy Ryuki, held on to the god-killing dagger from Kuwamaru-aniki and dropped. I was aiming to drop on his shoulder.

A lovely “Toh-soon” sound was made as I straddled on his shoulder. The sudden weight on his shoulder affected his balance out and he fell forward.

Hey, from the looks of it, doesn’t that make me heavy! How rude!

In order not to get flung out, I gripped onto him. Ryuki pushed his hand onto the ground and was about to adjust his position when I placed the dagger on his

throat.

“If you value your life, free boss and the rest.”

“You are.....”

“Don’t say anything unnecessary! I’m ordering you to undo the ropes on boss!”

However, even without Ryuki commanding the knights, they had already realised the tables have turned and obediently removed the restraints on boss and the rest.

Ohh, a good decision by the knights. It is because mages are their gods. Very well.

“Ah, those two are ok.”

That is what he said to the knights that were restraining Bashu-san and Seki-san. Those two are bad though, it would have been better for them to still be tied up. I still cannot trust them yet.

After releasing boss, I had the knights stand back and line themselves with their hands up.

“Cancel the freezing magic.”

Even though the knights had removed the ropes on boss and the rest, the ice was still there and they were still unable to move. I tried my best to sound as scary as possible while ordering Ryuki. Nevertheless, my cute voice did not command that kind of authority with it. There is no helping with my cuteness.

“Fufufu,” Ryuki seemingly laughed in a ridiculing manner and accepted my request at same time.

“Asaborake Ujinokawagiri Taedaeni Arawarewataru Sezenoajirogi.” That was definitely the incantation to cancel magic. It was the same incantation that Irene-san and Alan said when they were canceling their magic.

Yet, the shackles of ice did not disappear at all!

Besides being shocked myself, Ryuki the mage was shocked too. However, Ryuki was looking at the dagger I was holding instead of what I was looking at.

Ah--so that was what happened.

“It is because this is a god-killing dagger. You can make it disappear with magic. Stop with your little tricks, remove your magic now,” that was why he was able to smirk earlier.

In the face of the god-killing dagger, Ryuki turned slightly pale.

Really, just release your magic already! Even for me, I don't like pointing weapons at others!

“Don't think that just because I am a child, I wouldn't stab you! I use this everyday just so that you know!”

Yes, mainly on wild boars. I am always using it on my archenemy wild boars. I kid you not.

And then, Ryuki appeared to have made up his mind and chanted another incantation.

Hearing the start of the incantation, I quickly jumped off Ryuki's back while grabbing his hair and greeted his face with a kick from my knee.

“Hey! Stop trying to be funny! That’s not the incantation to dispel magic!” I shouted at the Ryuki who was now bleeding from his nose and who became greatly frightened.

The one that should be surprised is me! Why is it you!?

He grimaced and looked at me with a face that says, “Even my old man wouldn’t beat me like this!”

Even for me, this is my first time kicking someone with my knees! I was really astonished! That was because I knew that I had to quickly stop the magic from activating, so my legs moved on reflex! My knees are still shaking in pain too! I think I should demand medical fees too!

“You.....can understand the incantations!?”

Rather than understanding, it was more like your incantation was obviously different from the previous one, how did it not occur to you that I would be able to discern that difference.

“I’m telling you, undo your magic now. There won’t be a next time.”

Throwing away all traces of an adorable young girl, with a threatening low pitch voice, I pointed the dagger at him.

With that, Ryuki finally gave in and chanted the dispelling incantation. The ice trapping boss and the rest disappeared.

Chapter 44: Bandit Arc ⑭ -to Think That We Would Meet Here-

Boss and the gang were released and this time around, the knights and Ryuki the idiot were the ones restrained in rope. Of course we did not forget to gag Ryuki the idiot.

Based on boss's decision, we released Seki-san and Bashu-san too.

“Ryuki, you bastard, what is this about causing harm to Bashu-sama. He is an Earl-sama you know.”

“Mu--Mu--,” towards Seki-san's words, Ryuki seemed to be trying to rebut him. Now that was gagged, there was no way to tell what he was trying to say.

“Seki.....no matter what, wasn't calling me that terrible of you? And to think that the person behind it all was you Ryuki-kun! Bringing all these knights along.....what happened to Tagosaku-sama? He had better not be alone!”

This time, it was Bashu-san who was talking to Ryuki the idiot but again, since all he could do was ‘Mu--Mu--,’ and just like a resident of valley, there was no reply. The knight next to him who was also tied up spoke up in an apologetic manner.

“With all due respect, we had believed that we were going somewhere near. We were requested to conceal ourselves nearby. Most likely, that place would be.....,” as he said, his eyes flickered to one side to show roughly where that place was.

As soon as Kuwamaru-aniki entered that place, which was a grove of trees, he came back with a person who wore a hood over his eyes. That person was acting very hesitantly.

“Ta-Tagosaku-sama, my humblest apologies! I have caused you to be shaken! Kuwamaru! Treat him with more courtesy, he is the great Tagosaku-sama!” Boss took custody of the hooded man from Kuwamaru who brought the hooded man as though he was grabbing a cat by its head.

“Who exactly is this Tagosaku?”

“This gentleman is the adviser for our territory’s agricultural reforms!”

Ho, so it is this hooded man huh.

“Anyways Bashu, aren’t these knights the knights at your place? They betrayed you.”

Bashu-san was a bit down upon hearing that. Boss, please don’t say anymore please. Please don’t cause him heart to hollow out.

To fill in the gap from Bashu-san’s silence, the panicking restrained knights started to vindicate themselves.

“W-we have not betrayed you! Ryuki-sama said that Bashu-sama had been acting very strangely and we heard that you were being deceived by a demonic beast so, we came to see it for ourselves! It was certainly not that we have been swayed by Ryuki-sama’s promise to reward us with newly made swords and armour if we cooperated!”

I see, so you guys had been bribed. What an honest chap he was.

“Hah. It cannot be helped. Ryuki-kun would eventually be wedded to his daughter and be the next Earl. Furthermore, he was a mage. That they were convinced to help him could not be helped.....”

Bashu-san's shoulders dropped as he muttered to himself.

Being unable to endure staying in this place any one bit, nobody said anything. It was just the echo from the cries of the valley, 'Mu—Mu—'.

“Ryuki is Seki's son? So he is the child you had with Agnes? He really resembles Agnes. The royal blood in him runs deep.”

Rudel-san spoke to Seki-san as he closely looked at the 'Mu-ing' idiot.

“Ah, he has the makings of a magician.”

“Pff, well, he would be my nephew-chan then. A somewhat handsome youth. Even his nose bleeding posture looks cute.”

To the Kou-okaasan who seemed like she was salivating, the idiot who had been 'Mu-ing' up until now immediately became silent. A direct hit. As expected of Kou-okaasan.

“Nonetheless, despite being excellent as a mage, he was still no match for Ryou.” Boss praised me painstakingly with an extremely pleased voice and carried me to his arms.

And I repeat myself. He carried me to his arms!

“Ufufu, our daughter seemed to be more talented it seems~. But my heart was on my mouth the entire time though—,” Kou-okaasan responded delightfully.

“A child has got to be at least that lively yeah.”

I'm so glad--. I thought that they might be angry at me for kneeling him but he actually praised me for being that full of energy! Boss! (TN: よかったー、人を膝蹴

りしたから怒られるんじゃないかと思ったけど、アレぐらいは元気のうちなんだね！ 親分！ Kind of need help for the underlined part)

“Ah, elder brother, you finally had a child with Alek-san!?” Seki-san commented and turned slightly pale.

Boss immediately sent a sharp glare at him and threatened him to stop trolling.

“Ahh, I guess that’s actually impossible. My apologies Alek-san. Could you come here for a moment.....” Seki-san said and moved away from us and started whispering. Since I was carried along, I could hear his whispers clearly.

“I am sorry. To have allowed my son to get wind of this. Despite what he has done earlier, he is actually an obedient child. It is just that his thinking leans completely to the royalty and that he is surprisingly quick-witted. I am not very confident of this but it seems that he is very suspicious of Alek-san’s motives. Where on earth he got his information from though.....I’m sorry but I think it is best we keep quiet on those motives now.”

“I get the gist of it. If you are planning to do so, don’t call out my name in front of your son. Didn’t you just call me by Alek just then?”

“I see. You’re right. My apologies.”

“Well, what’s done is done. Anyways, we would be leaving soon. But before that, I have to have a word with Bashu. Sorry but I would be borrowing Bashu for a moment.”

“.....Am I not included? I was planning to have an understanding of what Alek-san’s plans were.”

“But you are a mage. Your son too. I’m sure you don’t have that resolve to wager your life for this don’t you?”

Seki-san could only lower his eyes and stay silent.

“.....I got it. In any case, we need to keep a lookout on my son. That leaves me with that job. I shall relay what I want to say to Bashu-san too. I feel bad that we have to talk while standing but I want to privately ask Bashu-san something too.”

“Ahh, I understand,” boss nodded to what Seki-san said and both of them returned back to their gang. I was lowered back onto the ground.

Ohh, is carrying time already over?

Bashu-san was enquiring if Tagosaku Professor was doing fine when boss placed his hand on his shoulder and discreetly told him, “Bashu, sorry for the inconvenience but it’s about the situation. I want you to come alone. Somewhere far away, I wish to have another talk with you.”

I was doing nothing in particular and just stared at the hooded man that was adjacent to Bashu-san. Our eyes met. As soon as that happened, the hooded man opened his eyes wide in shock. Similarly, I was shocked at him being shocked.

Eh? What is it?

The hooded man vigorously removed his hood and with a smile wide across his face he shouted, “Could this be Ryou!? My bad, I mean is this Ryou-sama!?”

Eh? Who? I am Ryou but who are you?

I observed closely and scanned through my memories for him. And his name was Tagosaku Professor too.....

One of his most defining features was his aquiline nose, and next is, well, I feel like I have seen him before. No, I have definitely seen him before. I remember that handsome face, even though it is not within my acceptable range.....pardon me for that.

He was around the latter half of his twenties and he had youthful skin but he was already balding.

A balding head. That... where have I seen that.....

Ah! I got it!

“Garigari village chief!son?”

The eldest son of the village chief (whose trademark was his balding scalp) nodded as he beamed.

Chapter 45: Bandit Arc ⑮ -garigari Village Of Today-

Ooh, the village chief's son. How nostalgic!

Wasn't he the honour student that attended the 'Villager Meeting' (that I launched to discuss the future of the village) nearly all the time?!

Back then, it was a meeting to gather volunteers to talk about improving the cultivar of crops, or about my investigations on fertiliser—basically a discussion platform with the goal of increasing crop yield.

I see, his name was actually Tagosaku!? I have always called him as Chief's son. I see, Tagosaku, looks like you've made yourself a good name in cultivating fields huh?

"Ahh, I had thought that you looked familiar, so you were that child from that time?" Seki-san nodded as seemed to have connected the dots.

Ah, so you have finally remembered? Thanks for the care from then. Much thanks for specially telling me that I was not a mage.

"Ahh, it can't be! To think that I would be able to meet Ryou-sama at a place like this!" Professor Tagosaku cried out with increased enthusiasm.

"Yes, indeed. I believed we would never cross paths again. It's been a long time."

I am happy that we were able to meet after so long. I would really like to hear how he ended up here or maybe about how Garigari village was doing.

However, there is something I cannot comprehend. Something about Professor Tagosaku reaction. For starters, back then, he never did attach '-

sama' when referring to me.

“Ehh!? This child is the divine messenger from the heavens that Professor Tagosaku was always talking about? You are Ryou-sama!?” Bashu-san joined in the conversation with the same mood as Professor Tagosaku.

Wait a second, you called me a divine messenger? Maybe I heard that wrong..... It must be the fatigue from the 'VS mage' episode earlier. I must be hearing things.

“Yes, she is. The saviour of Garigari village, a divine messenger from the heavens!”

Immediately, as soon as Tagosaku said it out loud (louder than I had imagined), the captured knights started a commotion. The 'Mu—Mu— Resident of the Valley that had been silenced by Kou-okaasan not long ago, started to 'Mu—Mu—' excitedly again. (TN: I found out that 'Resident of the Valley' is a reference to Moomin. Look at this video to get a better idea of it: <https://youtu.be/8Mh2du1LV-w>)

“You mean she is the person who said at birth, 'North, south, east, west, nothing in the world is more sacred than me,' –that Ryou-sama!?” Said one of the knights in an uproar.

Don't say such things about me!

Hey, why are you smiling and nodding your head off, Prof Tagosaku!? I said no such thing! Furthermore, it's not like you were present when I was born!

“Yes, not only was Ryou-sama born from the bud of a flower, us villagers at

Garigari village cried uncontrollably when she was born too.”

Born from the bud of a flower!? And that I caused everyone to cry.....are you trying to say that I am the pollen of flowers!? I have no intention to cause nasty allergic reactions to everyone!

“And in the one year that she was born, she gave the people food to eat and invented straw sandals!?”

Oi oi, how could a one-year-old do that.....Ah, I actually did that. That was me.

But anyways, just stop, saying all those is so scary.

“U-urm, what are you talking about from just now?”

“We were talking about Ryou-sama.”

“It doesn’t sound right though.....”

“Haha, you don’t have to be so humble. I understand everything.”

No you don’t. I spoke just because of you spouting all that you know!?

“Are these guys even sane? There is no way a human could be born from a flower.” Boss said in a muffled voice low enough to be inaudible to the Ruby Fallen camp. Hearing that, I regained my composure.

Thank goodness. I knew the weird one was Prof Tagosaku. He lost his rationality together with his falling hair. My sympathies.

I managed to calm down after looking at some of the bandits who reacted normally. I will just forget what Tagosaku just said.

“Um, boss, this Tagosaku-san is the son of the village chief from where I was born and raised. Somehow, he is saying all sorts of things that even I don’t know, so please pay him no attention.” I explained the circumstances to boss as coolly as I could.

Boss glanced at the boisterous knights and said, “Ahh,” while nodding.

“By the way, Tagosaku-san, how is Garigari village now? Why are you here as well, Tagosaku-san?” Tagosaku-san was still blabbering away to the knights with his fictitious story but I asked him anyways.

“The people at Garigari village are cultivating the fields with the wisdom we have received from Ryou-sama. Later, Bashu-sama came after hearing about the rumours of your knowledge in agriculture and invited me to assist him to represent and spread Ryou-sama’s teachings. Currently at Garigari village, the ‘Meeting to Heighten Ryou-sama Teachings’ that Ryou-sama begun to discuss fertiliser or improving the cultivar of crops, is undergoing and continuing.”

Ohh, somehow, Garigari villagers have become awesome after all these years.

However, there is one point that I have to clarify, and that would be that I inaugurated the ‘Villager Meeting’ but definitely not the ‘Meeting to Heighten Ryou-sama’s Teachings’.

“Ha, so everyone is working at the ‘Villager Meeting’. Great. Also, incidentally, how is my family doing?” To ask or not to ask, I lost my control a wee bit. Nevertheless, I was truly concerned!

“Ah, the family that took care of Ryou-sama huh. Quite some time has passed since I left the village but I will just tell you about their situation before I left then. Suburou-kun, Maru-kun and Shuu-kun are mainly maintaining the fields. Especially Maru-kun, he is quite the tenacious worker and is quite well-liked in the village. It is just that your parents and their eldest son, Hajime-shi, are basically lazybones. They are very annoying. Well, they are the ones that did not join the ‘Meeting to Heighten Ryou-sama’s Teachings’ in the first place.The people who did participate grieved when we heard you left. However, no matter how flawed they were, we could not strongly condemn them since they were part of Ryou-sama’s family. Selling of children was a really common thing too.....I beg for your forgiveness.”

“Ah, there is nothing you need to apologies for, it is alright. As long as everyone is doing fine, then it is good! Still.....you did not mention Jirou-anichan?”

As soon as I spoke of Jirou-anichan, Tagosaku-shi groaned and frowned.

“Ah, he was.....as soon as Ryou-sama left, he went off somewhere else too. It was said that he most likely went off in pursuit of Ryou-sama. I suppose you two have yet to meet?”

Eh! Seriously!

“I have not seen him.....”

Jirou-anichan, you seriously went after me!? I wonder how he is doing. Don’t tell me, he died a dog’s death by the roadside!?

Ah, however, it was true that when I was at the Rainforest residence, there were rumours circulating that there was a masked man searching for me though.....could that masked man be Jirou-anichan!?

No, wait, if he was Jirou-anichan, why would he conceal his face with a

mask.....

“Ryou-sama, please do not be disheartened. He should already be an adult. It will be fine.” Tagosaku-san tried to comfort me as he noticed that I gone silent suddenly.

I see, indeed, Jirou-anichan should be 15-years-old back then and would have been considered an adult by this world’s standards.

He was a person of few words but ate a lot so he had a sturdy build. I suppose he should be fine.....that is what I want to believe.

As I was still shaking from the impact of the facts surrounding Jirou-anichan, one of the knights said, “I see. So this secret meeting that Bashu-sama is having was conducted so that he can be bestowed the advice of the divine messenger.”

The other knights went into uproar as they shared their newfound revelation.

Eh, this atmosphere is getting too scary. Even though I am still thinking about Jirou-anichan.

‘Is that the case?’ The knights sent a gaze that seem to ask this question.

Next, Bashu-san extended his one hand to me in a dignified way.

“Ahem, well, that is right. Excuse me, but now we will be having our sacred, clandestine meeting. It is absolutely rude for this many of us to be here so only I will be asking for advice. Please wait quietly everyone.” Bashu-san said eloquently.

Chapter 46: Bandit Arc (16) -i Thought Waiting Obediently Was Good Enough-

In order to have their own private meeting, Boss and Bashu-san move to a place where they the captured knights cannot hear them.

Seki-san the spirit user also requested the wind spirits to temporary prevent sounds from escaping too. Wind spirits are really convenient.

In the end, Bashu-san alone entered a dialogue with all the members of the bandits.

“Alek, sorry! I never imagined that it would so rowdy!”

“Don’t give me that. You are always so careless all the time.”

“Hahaha, give me a break, that was too much. By the way, why are you together with the divine messenger-sama?”

“By divine messenger, you mean Ryou? Did you actually take that baldy’s words seriously? There is no way she was born from a flower.”

“Hahaha! I don’t believe him to that extent! It’s just that, Professor Tagosaku was so passionately in his speech that a portion of the knights and Ryuki-kun idolises him.”

Eww, how scary.

In addition, Bashu-san smiled as cheerfully as ever. He is a totally different type compared to boss. He looks a good person.

“Idolising.....well, it was true it felt that way.We kidnapped Ryou from the Rainforest Merchant Earl, now she is living together with us.”

“You kidnapped her? And from a Merchant Earl no less, isn’t that a semi-aristocratic peerage.....?”

“Don’t fret. She was going to be made the bride of that lolicon man too..... well, anyways, we abducted her.”

“Anyways you say huh.....”

Bashu-san sighed greatly upon hearing how far boss went.

“Good grief, Alek is really crazy. Whatever, that’s fine. Thanks to that, I get to meet the divine messenger and in this way, I am also able to peacefully have a discussion too.”

Bashu said this and that about needing the advice of a god and smiled lightly while also greeting the other bandits, “long time no see,” before springing back into a light-hearted conversation.

Just when I thought this would just be an ordinary class reunion, Boss dropped a bomb. “So, how are the preparations going? I managed to negotiate with the guys at the mines. It’s quiet on the aristocrats’ side and as a result, they are able to sell some to us through a back channel. Also, there are several villages with people that seem to wish to help us.”

Shortly after, Bashu-san’s cheerful expression became distorted and an apologetic aura drifted about.

“I see..... That is, Alek. My apologies but the matter that you have spoken to

me about would have to take more time.”

“Ahh? What happened!?”

“Don’t raise your volume. Your shouts are terrifying. I’m sure you know but, now that we have Professor Tagosaku lending his aid, the productivity of the agricultural sector has gone up. The suffering and hunger of the people might end very soon. I wish to continue observing how it goes.”

“You want to continue watching! Are you for real! Observing up till now, has anything good happened!? Even if the agricultural industry is advancing smoothly, the monarchy would continue! Education will still be restricted, our freedom denied and our ideologies contained! Didn’t you say that last time?! That we might as well be livestock! We are not just any livestock or pets; we are humans aren’t we!?”

Boss shouted at Bashu-san as though there was a parental feud between them. Bashu-san stuck out both his hand and tried to still his anger and calm him down.

“I know, I know. I understand your feelings. It’s just that this feels too impulsive. I do not deny that I have no confidence in this monarchy that discards people it deems as surplus to the pioneering settlements and so I had once thought that we have no other alternative but to do this.....however, the situation has changed slightly. I am now a territorial lord. I have to prioritise the people in my fief ahead of everything else. There is no way I can endanger the people when there are perhaps, other paths left for survival.”

Just earlier, Bashu-san had been intimidated by boss’s shouting but he still took on a heavy posture like a obstinate father. From how I see it, any other arguments at this point would be useless.

“Haa,” boss gave a deep sigh and became silent. The other bandits wore a marveled expression. Even breathing became difficult.

“I can understand your thoughts. You observing how it goes is fine. We would just continue with our plans. It might take more time but.....we will definitely do it.”

Towards boss’s determination, Bashu-san looked down and responded with, “I see.” And then, he nodded gently while saying, “Sorry”.

“Bashu.....if you feel bad about it, there is one thing I like to ask of you.” As boss said, he placed his hand on my head. Bashu-san rose his head up again and met my eyes.

“I would like you to take the trouble to take care of this. I want her to go to school.”

Ehh!?

That, that means, in short, that I would be entrusted to Bashu-san!?

“Alek!? What are you saying!”

Kou-okaasan entered the conversation without a moment’s delay. I agree, what are you saying, boss.

“What is it, Kouki. Didn’t you say it too? That you want this kid to go to school too. Also, you said you don’t want her to get involved?”

“That is.....true, but.....”

Kou-okaasan and boss took alternate glances at me. I was taken aback and rendered speechless.

“If it is Bashu, then I can have a peace of mind. Even for Bashu, won't it be his honour to take care of a divine messenger?”

“Ahh, well, personally, I feel grateful about it.....but is it alright?” Bashu-san said while bringing his line of sight to the other bandit members who have started to become noisy.

“Boss, are you serious? Ryou is.....already one of us.....!”

Kuwamaru-aniki was also dazed.

Yeah that's right, do reconsider, boss!

“.....That way is better for her. She is an awesome fella'. Didn't you see that earlier for yourself? She was able to compete with a mage.Furthermore, rather than being with us retards from now on, she would be better off with more decent people.”

Boss looked like he had ironed his resolve.

Nevertheless, I am against it. Could you not arbitrarily decide that for me! What do mean by more decent people!? Boss and the gang is more decent than the rest! I don't want to be alone again! Please don't leave me behind! Don't go away!

I don't want to be abandoned by anyone else.....

“Ryou is fine with that too right?” Boss asked me like that.

There is no way I am fine with that! Obviously I am against it!

But if I said that, would he be shocked? Would I be hated?

In addition, even if I am hated, and my opinion of it might not be heard either, and then I would be, again.....

While lost in thoughts, I had unknowingly faced downwards. Boss assumed that I looked downwards to nod and continued talking.

“That’s how it is. Please take care of her. I don’t want to stay here for too long. Since I am done talking to Bashu, we can leave now.”

Boss was about to walk away while facing his back at me. The rest of the bandits gazed at me while following behind boss.

Kou-okaasan looked at me intermittently while walking to boss.

It was the same again.

It was the same as when my parents sold me at Garigari village, I could feel my consciousness drifting far away again.

Is this reality? Just not long ago, I defeated a mage and didn’t you declare that I was the daughter of you all.....?

How many more times do I have to go through this?

Once at Garigari village. In my previous life, tens of thousands of times.

In my previous life, when I see the back of my parents who leave the house either for the sake of work or meeting up with their lovers, I would tell them, “Take care, see you”. I would wave my hands, even though I do not know when

they would be back.

If I worked hard, I believed that their backs would turn back one day. I was always being a good kid, waiting for them to turn back once I became acknowledged by everyone.

If I do according to what boss says and go to school, even if I obtain stellar grades, I wonder when would Kou-okaasan turn back. What about boss? Would he turn to look back at me?

I don't want this. I don't want to be separated from them like this. Kou-okaasan, please be aware of my feelings! Boss, please look at me!

I hate it.

But, I could not say a word.

I mean, if I said something that selfish, if I became hated, I would be, I, but.....

Would I be left behind again?

What should I do? Please tell me, someone, anyone.

"I don't want that—! I want to be together! Didn't you say I was your daughter?! You said it all with pride didn't you! You liar! Liar! I want to go with everyone!" From somewhere, a sloppy voice overflowed and shouted as a proxy for my feelings.

Who was that? I thought and everyone stared at me. Boss and Kou-okaasan stopped and turn to look at me.

Everyone was staring at me excessively so I felt my own face. It was sticky

with mucus and tears.

The voice earlier was mine. A voice that I did not think would emerge.

Soon, it became embarrassing. Being childish like this, I wondered if everyone would hate me as I looked downwards.

I had it.

Suddenly, I was hugged by someone with a crazy strong force – a force welled up with emotions.

I lifted my face and saw Kou-okaasan.

“Sorry—. Ryou-chan! Sorry—,” she cried as she apologised.

And then, her line of sight moved to boss side.

“Alek, forgive me, but I am out of this. I want to be with Ryou-chan. Ryou-chan getting involved in this would be my fault.”

“.....Kouki. I can understand your feelings but.....Ryou getting involved would be my fault. I willfully kidnapped her, and willfully invested emotions too.....”

“Wrong!”

Kou-okaasan shouted at boss like that, and continued, “For the child-loving Alek to have feelings for Ryou-chan is understandable. You knew that, that’s why you handed her to me then! I was in disagreement when you tried to do that. I cannot believe that you would go to your death for your ideals. I am still willing to put down my life for Alek but I am definitely will not approve of you dying for a dream that may or may not be realised. Therefore, if there were

things you had to protect, I wondered if you would change your mindset. However, for the half-baked woman me, I was not enough to be something that Alek had to protect. Nevertheless, and that's why, I hate other women that might stick onto Alek. At that time, Ryou-chan came. If by any chance, if this child was around, Alek mindset might change. Therefore, with this baseless idea.....I was the one who got Ryou-chan involved!"

"Kouki....."

Boss muttered her name and froze with silence.

I glanced at Kou-okaasan who was crying in tears as she complained to boss. Soon after, Kou-okaasan looked at me instead.

"Ryou-chan, I am sorry. I am sorry for being such an underhanded adult. But, right now, my feelings for you — that you are important — is the real deal. If you could forgive this kind of selfish male-woman, I want to continue being together with you as your mother."

I said nothing but just nodded repeatedly and hugged Kou-okaasan. So that she would not go anywhere; to confirm that the Kou-okaasan that returned was not just some hallucination.

Kou-okaasan came back to me. She turned around, and came back for me.

Call this an excuse or whatever is fine. Even for me, at the start, I did not think of Kou-okaasan as anything special!

Right now, Kou-okaasan treats me as her daughter and wants to be together with me, and that I am fine just like that. She came back to me because of those words I said, just with those.....!

Why have I been, up until now, been an obedient child and simply waited. That's right, I should have said so right from the start. I had been pretending and was afraid that I would be disliked. Until now, I have yet to say about my feelings.

Right from the start, I had said honestly and plainly, that I was lonely and I want to stay with them more, that would have been better.

"I am as a female a blockhead, also as your comrades, I am a blockhead. But as the parent of this child, I would no longer do half-assed things. I am breaking out from our gang." Kou-okaasan stood up while carrying onto me and said with a firm attitude to boss.

Chapter 47: Bandit Arc ①7 -somehow I Have Become Interested In It-

After bidding Boss and the rest goodbye, it was decided that I would join Kou-okaasan and Bashu-san.

Before we separated, Boss placed his hand on my head and stroked it.

I asked if we would meet again and he replied, "Of course. We live on the very same earth. If we wanted to meet, we could do that anytime."

Kuwamaru-aniki told me, "It was a feast for the eyes to see you take on the mage," and gave me his god-killing dagger. Honestly, I could not accept something this incredible but he said he would forge a new one and forced it back to me.

Gai-san only said, "Uusu," and sniffled. I too responded in the same way, sniffling as I nodded.

Rudel-san brought out the flute that I had given him and asked, "I can't seem to be able to bring out the higher sounds." These are basically the same old things he would ask me, so I once again, I showed him the way to hold and press the flute. Eh, won't you play one more? I considered for a second but that would it would feel too much like a last song so I kept silent.

Also, Kou-okaasan explained briefly to Rudel-san and Kuwamaru-san on distinguishing between the different types of medicine and the usage of medicine that was left in the camp.

And finally, since they had work to do, Boss and the rest left in a hurry. Their departure felt almost too natural, and was freshly imprinted in my mind that I

had the feeling we would meet one another as per normal tomorrow.

I am not sure if it was the loneliness of Boss farewell or the joy I felt because Kou-okaasan was staying with me, or it was the mix of both, that there was a surge in emotion in me. I sobbed and wept like a monster.

My memories were hazy after that – all I remember is that I cried even more after that. When I regained my lucidity, I found myself on a coach with Kou-okaasan and Bashu-san.

The plans from now on would be to first have an agrarian reform provincial tour, and once that is done, I would become an adopted daughter of Ruby Fallen. I would live in the capital and take the school entrance examinations. While waiting for the results to be released, I would be studying etiquette and taking part in the matriculation programmes.

I would be living in the dormitories, whereas Kou-okaasan would live nearby, in the capital and look for a job in the capital too. It was ok to leave the dormitory as long as approval is obtained so I should be able to meet with Kou-okaasan during holidays or after classes.

After one night passed since the parting, I calmed down. My eyes hurt from the swelling after from the nonstop crying yesterday.

I had spent nearly all my time crying yesterday. While we were on Bashu-san's coach, I was crying. Tagosaku looked at the me who was crying uncontrollably and said, "Ahh, Ryou-sama is grieving for this world! She is embracing all the sadness of this world!" His interpretation caused the knights, who are the devotees of the Tagasaku Cult, to react by praying to me. At long last, my tears dried up.

However, honestly, I did not want to do this, I mean, I did not want to stop

the flowing of my tears which contained my emotions. This Tagosaku cult is scary.

Ryuki who had been grandly knee-ed and suffered a nosebleed thereafter was no longer gagged, thus, the Mu—Mu— Resident of the Valley was no more. He was now sitting on the same coach as us.

After taking the knee and being threatened by me, I had expected him to be bear hatred for me but nothing happened. He too was a member of the Tagosaku Cult.

He understood Bashu's secret meeting, as a meeting to assume custody of me so that they could secretly obtain the revelations of the divine messenger from the heavens. The influencing ability of the Tagosaku Cult is terrifying.

He too had believed that I cried the previous day because I was grieving for the world. Just like how the other devotees did, he prayed to me as well.

Even now, Tagosaku was preaching, "At that time, Ryou-sama told me, if you are going to weave the left straw sandal, please weave the right sandal too. That was what she said." Ryuki was furiously transcribing all that on paper.

I wonder if he is noting it down with the same grandeur.

This religion is seriously insane.

I wonder if these devotees are alright.....won't they be easily scammed one day? Perhaps it was already too late. I worry that they have been sold an expensive vase by cult founder Tagosaku. I can only clasp my hands in prayer for them in my heart.

Today, I wore myself out crying and don't have any energy left but once I get my energy back, I must stop that cult.....

Thankfully, Seki-san was not a devotee of the Tagosaku cult and occasionally, he would remonstrate the Tagosaku disciples for making a racket. Thankfully.

Seki-san is Kou-okaasan's little brother but he has not gotten used to Kou-okaasan being completely an Onee, so he looked somewhat perplexed.

Seki-san's appearance looked young so I had assumed that there was quite a gap in age between the brothers, but that was not the case, rather it was because mages age slower than normal humans. How enviable.

I opened my puffy eyes and looked at Kou-okaasan who was next to me. She was leisurely staring at the scenery outside the coach.

I do not hold any regrets saying that I wanted to be together yesterday.

But, now that we are together, I wonder how Kou-okaasan feels.

Kou-okaasan really liked Boss and before then, she always said that she would 'always be following you!' to Boss.

However, due to my selfish desires, she was unable to continue following him. I do not regret any one bit but, for Kou-okaasan, she did not say a word.

"I am sorry, Kou-okaasan. I caused you to be separated from Boss."

She seemed to be startled by my sudden apology and said, "Ara, why are you apologising? I am with Ryou-chan because I want to be with Ryou-chan." She stroked my head at the same time.

From her expression, it does not seem likely that she was lying or faking it.

Seeing as I smiled with relief, she said, "Also, once someone else who loves

Ryou-chan appears and that you want to leave the nest to be with that person, I would continue to chase after Alek! Once I locked in, I won't let my prey get away!"

She had been maintaining her serenity until now but abruptly, she transformed into a ferocious beast. There was no way Boss can get away.

"I think that I, too, would meet Boss and the rest again when I become an adult.Kou-okaasan, you are against what Boss is trying to do right?"

Kou-okaasan was taken slightly aback by my unexpected question. However, I wanted to know the answer badly so I did not look away,

Soon, she sighed with resignation and answered me.

"I do not oppose it because I am against it. In fact, the ideals spoken by Alek is also my ideals. When we were students, we could hit it off and be friends was because of our shared ideals. Still, in the pursuit of these ideals, countless of people would die. I do not want that."

Mm, I see. I agree. I do not like that people would die.

I wanted to share with Kou-okaasan what I think and somehow or another, all at once, the things in my head flowed out.

"I only understand vaguely of what Boss and the rest are trying to achieve but I pretended not to know anything. It was likely because I was hollow. I was just thinking all about what I lacked and did not consider seriously about this world and the people living in this world. I did not consider this world as mine."

Kou-okaasan looked at me with a tinge of worry.

To indicate to her that I was fine, I continued with a wide grin.

“Nevertheless, I finally realised it. That’s why, I will go to school from now on, learn all sorts of things, see with my own eyes, meet with more people and fill up the hollow me to some extent. On top of that, I will form my own opinions. I want to make my own decisions. I want to live like that. Once I have solidified my own opinions, I would meet Boss and the rest. If I believe that what Boss wants to achieve is the right thing, I would assist Boss. However, if what Boss is doing is wrong based on my opinions, I will stop Boss. Probably, this is, doing this would be..... what I can do for Boss as a family, I think.”

Kou-okaasan smiled radiantly at me, who had declared with such vigour.

“.....I see. That may be for the best. For me, living through one’s youth enjoyably, without hoisting such a grandiose objective would be better though.”

And then, saying up till then, Kou-okaasan fixed her eyes on me and continued, “Ryou-chan was totally different when we first met. You have become a fantastic girl. If I was a boy, I would have perhaps fallen for you. To the Ryou-chan of now, I have one advice before you enter school.”

Her eyes stared at me with considerably more force.

I was slightly uncomfortable at the ‘If I was a boy’ part but I pretended not to notice and awaited what Kou-okaasan’s had to say next.

“If you catch sight of a cool man, don’t ever let them go! Then bring them to me!”

“.....What would you do to them?”

“I would check if it is a man worthy of Ryou-chan. To do that I would be

sampling them. It would be troubling if it was some weird man, you see.”

I see, if I have a boyfriend, I would have to keep it a secret from Kou-okaasan.

I nodded my head while secretly hardening my determination.

Kou-okaasan happily nodded likewise.

Later, I entrusted my back at the rear of the coach. I became exhausted from yesterday's crying and today's weather was good, so the sunlight felt comfortable. I shut my eyes for a bit and shortly went into sleep.

School life would last for 5 years. In that time, I would slowly creak open my hollow interior, think about what I want to do, what I want to be. I have lots to think about.

I will meet with all sorts of people, learn from their different viewpoints and at the same time, think about it on my own. That way, I shall move on facing the world earnestly.

That is because, I have gotten interested in the world I live in now.

Credits

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