

The Author Reincarnated?!

~I'll Become an Amazing Villain!~

Arc 3

by Umeda Ryosuke

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# Chapter 1 – Mistress Uproar

“Melissa, you don’t have to prepare supper today. I’ll eat outside”

“Oh, even though you came back after a long absence you want to go out?! I put so much effort into it and yet–”

“My bad, leave it here I’ll eat it tomorrow morning.”

I left the mansion while hearing Melissa’s scolding in the background.

I put on my mask on the way to the hideout as to not attract any attention. I passed Doji outside the mansion and he said “I delivered her properly” in a low voice.

But honestly, I thought that Elsa might not be in the hideout.

Aah, though this is the first time seeing her after that time.

But if one thinks calmly about it wouldn’t be weird for that to happen.

She didn’t sign a contract with me so Elsa is a free person and able to go where ever she wants.

Generally being a mistress isn’t normal.

That’s why I decided to be neither disappointed nor angry even if Elsa isn’t there.

That would be too excessively miserable as a man.

If that’s really the case I want to be capable to get through it with a laugh.

That’s what the popular villain Carlo would do, right?

As I thought about such things I reached the hideout with a fast beating heart. I thought about knocking the door first but it’s my own house and if no one is in there that wouldn’t be too cool so I opened the entrance with one of the spare keys the old landlady gave me.

Gacha

When I opened the door– Elsa was standing there.

She waited for me and didn’t run away.

I was deeply moved and approached her to hug her.

“Ei—”

“Kyaaaaaaaaa!”

“What, what happened?!”

As Elsa screamed Crescent moon jumped out from the back of the room.  
Why are you here?

“A, a strange looking person suddenly came in here!”

Elsa quickly hid behind Crescent Moon.  
Ah, I forgot I was wearing a mask.

“You, a strange person you say, but isn’t that Akatsuki?! Didn’t you say you were Akatsuki’s mistress?”

“Eh?”

Elsa became speechless as she heard Crescent Moon’s words.  
This girl, maybe.....That’s natural, huh?

“No, I’m sorry for surprising you, it’s me.”

I took off the mask.

“Carlo-sama”

Elsa suddenly wore a joyful expression.  
I’m relieved, it seems like she is happy to see me.

“What’s the meaning of this, Mister Akatsuki? Explain it to me properly”

I heard Crescent Moon speaking in a harsh tone.  
I mean, why are you even here?

I decided to first sit down in the living room and drink some tea.  
Yeah, the tea Elsa made isn’t bad at all.  
Though I’d prefer it if it was a little more black.

“I came over because I thought I might be able to meet Mister Akatsuki because I didn’t see your face around that much recently and then when I came over I found this girl here”

Crescent Moon started to speak with me.  
Without a doubt the eyes behind her mask were cold.

“So, when I asked her who she was she answered with “I’m Akatsuki-sama’s mistress”.”

Mmm, you should fix that habit of telling every person you are someone’s mistress immediately.  
That will give us a bad image.

“Because I’m really Carlo-sama’s.....I mean Akatsuki-sama’s mistress. Hey, it’s like this, right, Carlo-sama?”

Ehm, she mixes up Carlo and Akatsuki a lot.  
Well, though I think that’s unavoidable.

“Elsa, call me “Akatsuki” from now on”

“Ah, I’m sorry, ehm.....Akatsuki-sama”

So, shall I tell everything to Crescent Moon?

“What Elsa said was the truth. This girl is supposed to stay here from now on.”

“Heeh, “this girl”, huh? Just when one thinks he just had his debut as an adventurer and borrowed this place he’s already surrounded by mistresses as one would expect of “Akatsuki-sama”.”

Why is she so angry?「<sup>1</sup>」

“Didn’t you say something like “I’m no good with women”? Is that so? So it was like that.”

“It’s not like that but various things happened. Well, let’s get along.”

Why is my heart beating like this?

I just share a work-relationship with Crescent Moon while sometimes looking at her mountains, right?

By the amount of money she cheated out of me it should my privilege to take a look.

Besides, I’ve only kissed Elsa so far.

So her being angry while I'm completely innocent<sup>Γ<sup>2</sup>」</sup> is unreasonable.

"Apart from that, do you have any business with me, Crescent Moon?"

"Hmpf, oh well, fine. Yes, that's right, I came over to invite you to go together exploring a labyrinth for a while because the guild asked me to do it."

Was I able to safely change the subject?

Getting angry for some incomprehensible reason is one of the reasons I don't like women.<sup>Γ<sup>3</sup>」</sup>

"Labyrinth exploration, that sounds interesting"

"Doesn't it? Even though I came all the way just to invite you....."

"Then, let's go to the guild at once. Crescent Moon, I'm sorry but could you please go ahead? I'll be coming soon as well."

I was somehow able to send Crescent Moon away and it was just the two of us left.

"You arrived safely."

"Carl.....Akatsuki-sama, can I really live in such a nice house?"

"Yeah. You may freely use it. I'll also usually wear this mask"

I got the mask from the other room and put it on.

"Well, it's a bit scary. But I think it suits you well."

"Is that so? You'll probably get lonely because I can't come here that often so I don't mind if you go outside."

I took out three gold coins and put them in front of Elsa.

"You should be able to live with this for the time being. Of course, you are allowed to send it to your grandparents if something remains. Tell me if it's not enough, okay?"

"Well, this is more than enough. Thank you very much. This not being enough is outrageous."

"But I might ask you to go shopping for me, anyway, just tell me."

Then I stood up and got close to Elsa.

“I thought that Elsa might have already left this place.”

“Why? I did properly promise you this.”

“No, it’s just that we only met once. Thank you very much.”

“I should be the one to thank you. Thank you for treating me this well.”

“I heard it a lot already but is it really okay?”

At my question, Elsa looked down bashfully and answered me in a low voice.

“.....Of course. Because, ehm, you were totally cool and it was love at first sight. And I also gave you my first kiss.”

I couldn’t stand it anymore and hugged Elsa.

I forgot to remove the mask.....Like this, I’m not able to kiss her.

How regrettable!

## Chapter 2 – Exploration Quest

“Then, I’m off. Keep the door locked.”

“Yes, have a nice trip”

I missed my chance to kiss for the third time after all before I left for the adventurer’s guild.

Crescent Moon who left earlier was waiting inside the guild but her gaze was as cold as before.

“Yo, you came, Mister Popular. I got tired of waiting”

I wanted to say something but I stopped myself as it would have been useless. I generally hate arguing with others.

“I’m sorry for keeping you waiting. So, did you get the Labyrinth exploration quest?”

“Yeah. Mister Akatsuki has never been to a labyrinth, right?”<sup>1</sup>

“That’s right. I planned to go to one though”

I wanted to become an adventurer to enter a labyrinth in the first place which Pikaru forbid me so I had to join the guild under a pseudonym.

I wanted to gain some experience in the labyrinth before I would meet the Hero Kazuma.

“So Akatsuki doesn’t even know the basics of exploring a labyrinth?”

“Yeah, you could say that”

Though I wasn’t able to look that much in front of Elsa, but this roundness is excellent as I thought.

Her two perfect mountains and that fascinating valley they produced.

“Then as a veteran it’s my duty to carefully explain everything to Mr. Newbie here, right?”<sup>2</sup>

Crescent Moon proudly stuck her chest out.

I don't know why but it seemed like her mood got slightly better.

I mean, why are you holding out your right hand?

I don't really have any other choice so I gave her one gold coin.「<sup>3</sup>」

“Hehe, thank you as always.”

When the money reached her hand she her mood got even better. But to always get one gold coin or 100,000 yen taken is a serious matter. Though this greedy mercenary wouldn't be convinced if it was just one silver coin equivalent to 2,000 yen.

I don't even want to think about gold coins being something equal to silver coins to me some time soon.

“Hey, what are you thinking? So, when a labyrinth is found a quest to investigate it is given out.”

“Yeah. What should one check while investigating?”

“Let's see, what you can find in it, how big it is, how many floors it has and so on.”

“I see, so you're saying anything is fine? Is it fine to take back things from monsters I defeated inside?”

“Naturally. Moreover, the reward increases depending on what you subdued.”

Even if you defeat this world's monsters it's not like they would drop money or magic stones.

Instead, things like fangs and leather turn into material and one gets a bonus depending on the strength and number of the defeated monsters and the degree of danger.

Apart from the rewards of the guild's quest this is how adventurers earn money.

“So, a new labyrinth was found this time around and an exploration quest got extensively handed out.”

“Is it a usual occurrence for a labyrinth to be discovered?”

“Are you stupid? There's no way that would be the case, right? A new

labyrinth might be found once every few years, it's that rare. You are lucky, Mister."

Often a labyrinth is made by a monster settling down in naturally formed cave or limestone cave or the like.

If the monsters settled in it have a high propagative power and are of humanoid form like Goblins, Gnomes and Orcs they dig holes and expand the cave by themselves and may create multiple layers.

It's the most commonly seen labyrinth called A type.

In the case of such A type labyrinths almost only the same kind of monsters inhabit it.

Though there are some rare cases where a large number of Goblins are led by some Orcs.

In A type labyrinths, valuable things like magic items and treasures are hardly found.

Once it got investigated and emptied out the labyrinth will stay empty.

After some time passes other monsters might settle down in it again.

"Moreover, it seems like the one this time is slightly different"

According to the preliminary investigation conducted before the quest was handed out various kinds of monsters were confirmed to inhabit it.

Besides, the cave itself doesn't look like something that formed naturally.

"It's categorized as S type and it seems to be considerably big."

The S type different from the spontaneously made A type "is something intentionally made".

A high ranking magician or an extremely strong monster possessing intelligence might have made it.

Because they want to protect or hide something special like their residence in the deepest part they kill adventurers who come to investigate it and take their equipment.

Various types of monsters are placed in it and the deeper you get the higher the danger.

Often there are dangerous traps and many locked doors so lock-picking skills are essential.

“How is it, there’s no way someone would want to miss out on that, right? Those who are talented already headed there one after the other and I also want to go there as soon as possible. Because letting other people steal all the sweet spots is unacceptable.”

In the case of S type labyrinths requests outside of the adventurer’s guild are widely spread.

When I asked where the labyrinth is located this time I was told that it was discovered in Earl Mcbell’s territory.

Kouga village, the hometown of the assassins which got send after me, the dark corps, is located in that mantis guy’s territory so I’m interested.

“Some preparations are necessary. Let’s take Knopf, Pick and some other guys with us.”<sup>4</sup>

“That cat-eared magician and the hobbit thief. That thief’s lock picking skills were indeed brilliant and though that magician seems a little strange but she’s skilled. It would have been great if she could use recovery magic but healing spells are of the light magic system so they can’t be used if one isn’t a priest. I’m bad in dealing with priests.”

A priest would certainly be a bad match for that miserly mercenary. However, Crescent Moon still seems to have trouble dealing with Knopf. It looks like the air rifle magic had a great impact on her.

“Then I shall invite Knopf and Pick tomorrow. Shall we depart on the day after tomorrow?”

“Though I want to hurry and go as soon as possible but it can’t be helped. Okay, then I go collect some information tomorrow”

Crescent Moon invited me to dinner and after we ate together I returned to Carlo’s mansion.<sup>5</sup>

I wanted to also invite Elsa but I didn’t because then Crescent Moon’s mood would only grow worse.

I wonder if Elsa is eating properly.

The next day I left the mansion while wearing the mask, borrowed a horse and first went to the windmill Knopf was living in.

“–That’s the story, so, do you want to come with us?”

“Of course, I want to come. Investigating an S type labyrinth is something one could only rarely experience after all.”

“Then is it fine with you to wait tomorrow morning at the adventurer’s guild?”

“Understood, I’ll get ready.”

Next I went to the Rabbit group’s hiding place.  
It’s been a long time since I came here.

“Aah! Isn’t that the head?! Hey everyone, Head Akatsuki came over!”

“Long time no see. Is Pick present?”

“She went out but she should come back any minute now. Please enter.”

My two seniors Bass and Drum greeted me.  
The thin and fidgety Bass and the strongly build, calm Drum.  
A perfect combination as always, seniors.

“How’s work?”

“Hehehe, it’s going really well. Especially the quick horse delivery is profitable as well as increasing the customer’s good opinion of us.”

“On the other hand our income as thieves became less. Recently the number of caravans trying to skip paying the tariff decreased and it’s getting harder to earn money.”

Though it’s good that the merchants paying the tariff increased but ironically the money earned by the Rabbit group decreased.

“The highway connecting the Capital and Braham will soon get a stone pavement. If that happens not only will transportation of people and good via carriage become popular but also dispatching mounted messengers.”

“Ooh, is that true? I never heard about that rumour.”

“Hehe, it can’t be wrong if it’s information from the Head, right? Because the head and this town’s influential people are well connected.”

Well connected, as I’m the feudal lord it’s natural that I’m familiar with this

information.

“Yeah, there’s no doubt about that. It will be completed next spring so arrange a carriage and a horse as soon as possible.”

“Understood!”

If this goes well it might be able to substitute for their decreased income as thieves.

“What about information gathering?”

“About that, there are rumours about this territory’s feudal lord Carlo and the other nobles are about to battle against each other”

“That’s right, it’s a sign that there is conflict between the nobles.”

Hoh, my seniors are pretty good.

But there’s already rumours about that?

Though the matters with the king and the engagement aren’t known yet I have to work carefully in more than one way.

“Is that so? Carefully investigate this matter again. I found a shop which could become a new source for information—”

I was talking about Doloa of “the goddess’s hall”.

“Stop by there and listen to the hostess’ rumours. It’s a high-class shop so avoid making careless mistakes repeatedly.”

“A luxurious brothel, I always wanted to see one~”

Hey hey, Bass-senpai, you can’t do anything, absolutely not.

I have to remind Doloa to not let them do anything.

As we had such a discussion the female hobbit thief Pick returned.

“Big bro, long time no see! So, how can I help you today?”

## Chapter 3 – Departure

“Big bro Akatsuki, long time no see! So, what can we do for you today?”

The female hobbit thief, Pick who returned came over to greet me. Outwardly she looks like an innocent little girl as always. If you know what’s inside it’s fine but if you don’t you’ll get completely deceived by this.

“Yeah, I have some work for you so I came over to meet you.”

“Eh, you wanted to see me? I’m happy”

For some reason, Bass and Drum were staring at us while Pick kept on grinning.

She was acting like she didn’t notice Bass and Drum.

“As I thought it’s like that, huh? Big bro Akatsuki and I were perfectly in sync at that time with the Troll after all.”

“Hey, Pick, don’t be so impudent and call the Head big bro”

“That’s right, please say something as well, Head, she can’t use that kind of tone.”

“Hehe, though it was big bro Akatsuki who said, “You’re my little sister so call me like this”. Right, Big. Bro?”「<sup>1</sup>」

Well, I certainly told you to say this when people would ask you. Even so, I also told you not to act so familiarly.

“Your lock-picking skills are necessary for this job”

“What kind of job is it?”

Seeming interested, Drum and Bass both seriously listened.

“We took the Labyrinth exploration quest. It’s S rank.”

“Is that true?! Will big sis Crescent Moon also go?”

“This time Crescent Moon and also the magician Knopf will come with us”

“I want to go! Big bro Akatsuki, Big sis Crescent Moon and Knopf-san, with those members we are the strongest!”<sup>2</sup>」

“Is that so? Then come to the adventurer’s guild tomorrow morning.”

I intended to return now that I finished my business here but then I noticed that my seniors looked like they wanted to say something.

“You guys, is there something wrong?”

“Head, isn’t that a little too much?”

“That’s right, that’s right, why is it just that fellow? Moreover, even though she looks like a kid she’s already quite old, you know?”<sup>3</sup>」

What, why are they getting angry at me for choosing Pick?

“What’s with you? Being old doesn’t really matter! Generally, it’s Big bro’s and the other’s job.”

“Only you move out with the head, isn’t that too cunning?”

“Besides, since this job is already stable it’s alright if we aren’t there.”

Hey, hey, don’t fight for such a reason.

“Head, please. Leave this place to Bass and please take me with you.”

“Hey, Drum, what do you think you are doing?! Head, please take this one— -”

Jeez, two big, old men acting selfishly like children.

Well, it should be fine if it’s just a few more people.

But Crescent Moon might start complaining because her reward share will decrease.

“I don’t particularly mind taking you but is really everything going well here?”

“Yes, there are the things I told the Head a while ago when you came back but there are no particular problems.”

“As I said before, there are already three people in my group but there’s only one reward, would it still be enough if I take you with me?”

“As it’s an S ranked dungeon it should be enough. Please, take me with you,

okay~?"Γ<sup>4</sup>」

Bass senpai, even if you try talking in a sweet voice it's not cute at all!

"Well, can't be helped, so please properly arrange everything till tomorrow"

"Yes, I'll tell that guy, Flute"

Ah, that guy with the name which doesn't fit in.Γ<sup>5</sup>」

"Then come to the adventurer's guild tomorrow morning, you three. Don't be late."

"All right. Hehe, I wonder what snacks I should take with me."

You, this isn't a field trip!

When I went to the guild the next morning everyone already gathered. Crescent Moon seemed to be complaining to the Rabbit Group's members.

"Sorry I kept you waiting"

"Hey, Mister Akatsuki, is it true that you want to take those guys with us?!"

"No, Big sisΓ<sup>6</sup>」 Crescent Moon, don't say that"

"That's right, we'll work hard."

As expected, my seniors feel deep gratitude towards Crescent Moon as well.

"Well, isn't it fine? If we explore the S-type labyrinth our baggage will increase so I think it's fine."

"Ah, no, well, you're right....."

When the cat girl magician Knopf tried to mediate Crescent Moon gave in. For Crescent Moon Knopf is like an absolute weakness.

"Head, it somehow looks like Big sis Crescent Moon is acting reserved in front of this little magician girl."

Bass-senpai whispered to me in a low voice.  
Pretty observant, that senior.

"It seems like Knopf's way of fighting had a big impact on her the last time."

"Heeh, on that big sis Crescent Moon? She doesn't look like it, but is this

young girl actually amazing?”

“Big bro Bass, you shouldn’t judge someone by their appearance. That magician instantly killed a Troll with one magic spell I never saw before.”

Pick is right.

Seniors, don’t get blown away by Knopf.

I feel scared when imagining Knopf’s boosted magic exploding in the labyrinth’s narrow corridors.

“Head, we prepared these horses for this occasion.”

As expected, Drum is solid.

In times like this, he’s reliable.

“Then, shall we leave? The destination is the Mcbell Earldom.

We started galloping on our horses.

Though it’s a trotting speed as it’s a considerable distance.

The Mcbell Earldom is located in the far south of Carlo’s territory.

It seems like the population is concentrated in valleys and flatland surrounded by mountains.

“Speaking of the Mcbell Earldom, I heard Kouga village is located there.”

While Drum was riding beside me he started to talk.

“Hoh, do you know about the shadow corps?”

“That’s because we are in the same line of work, needs a thief to know a thief kind of.”

Bass also joined in into our conversation.

“The shadow corps? That sounds kind of scary.”

Knopf didn’t seem like she heard of them.

By the way, I had Knopf ride behind Crescent Moon.

Thanks to that Crescent Moon didn’t have her usual force behind her.

“The shadow corps is an organisation specialised in underground work such as killing people destroying things and spreading or gathering information. It’s said that their headquarters, Kouga village, is in the Mcbell Earldom.”

Crescent Moon's attitude towards her is completely different than towards me.

She gave her information free of charge.

"Did you have any connection with the shadow corps?"

"I didn't. I just heard some rumours."

"We didn't have any direct contact with them either."

Even though they are in the same line of work the Rabbit Group isn't as severe as the Shadow corps.

If an opponent defeats them losing means dying.

"I had some fights with them from time to time. I got my revenge each time."

If it's Crescent moon I somehow feel like it's possible.

But every time, you said. How many times did that happen?

Then is it really fine for you to go to such a place?

"That somewhat sounds like a frightening place. I'm kind of scared."

"No, for me your magic is more....."

I heard Crescent Moon muttering without Knopf behind her hearing it.

Yeah, that air gun was pretty frightening, huh?

Well, the only firearm they know in this world are bows so I know it's impossible for them to know about this but I do.

"When will we arrive?"

"If we continue like this I think we'll be there in four days."

As long as four days, to be honest, I'm sick and tired of this.

I wasn't a person who was going out much in the first place.

There was also the thing that I didn't have any friends to hang out with.

So I spend my days reading light novels and manga, playing games and making figurines for fun inside my house.

I never thought something like this would happen in my life.「<sup>7</sup>」

When it was night we would camp outside to take a rest.

Since the three members of the Rabbit group said they would take turns standing guard I left it to them.

I wonder if it was a good idea to take them with us like this.

They told me something like the Head shouldn't be doing this and then they took my baggage and carried it for me.

Like this, the journey towards the labyrinth went smoothly.

# Chapter 4 – Ruins

On the third day after we started our trip the flat road gradually turned into a slope.

Now we approached a gentle hill.

“Hey, you guys, do you know where we are?”

Crescent Moon talked to my seniors.

That face is telling me she’s planning something.

I gradually came to understand her despite the mask.

“No, I don’t know. Does big sis know?”

“Here’s a famous place. Don’t you know about the Orlea hill?”

“Back then there was a huge battle at this place, right? It was called the Battle of Orlea.”

“What’s with that? I never heard about this. Was it like this, big sis?”

Oh, Drum-senpai is quite the knowledgeable person.

On the other hand, Bass-senpai is the type who strayed from the right path.「<sup>1</sup>」

I bet he only did bad things when he was still in school.「<sup>2</sup>」

“That’s right, back then a huge battle between nobles took place here.”

“So what’s with that, big sis?”

Crescent Moon grins at Bass-senpai’s question.

Oh boy, my senior got caught in her trap.

“About this, at this place.....they appear. When night falls, you know?”

“Wh, what about them appearing? Come on, please don’t make fun of me, big sis”

“Tha, that’s right. We aren’t afraid of that kind of stuff, we’re already adults after all.”「<sup>3</sup>」

That's not what your expression tells us, seniors.

"It was a big battle so does that mean a large number of people died here?"

Knopf comfortably listened to this.

Ehm, you don't have to carry on with this topic.

".....That's right. It was a fierce battle until the middle but then a betrayal happened and it became unilateral."

The faces of Pick and my seniors listening to Crescent Moon's story were a little too serious.

"Countless bodies of murdered soldiers and commanders rolled down the hill and it is said the river was dyed red. Look, it should be the river we crossed over just a while ago."

"Eeeeh?! I drank out of it."

"Well, you probably don't have to worry. Since then these bodies wander around when night falls. Saying things like, where is the traitor?"

"Please stoop, I'm not good with stuff like this!"

"Wha, what are you saying Pick, that's just superstition. Hey, Head?"

Drum, please don't call me over.

I was talked to but I decided to ignore it.

Honestly, I'm not good with those kinds of stories as well.

I don't have any supernatural senses, though.Γ<sup>4</sup>┘

"Huh? Why is Akatsuki looking the other way? Could it be that you're weak against this as well?"

Why does that fellow look so happy?Γ<sup>5</sup>┘

But if I reacted now I would just do what she wants me to.

I thoroughly ignored Crescent Moon.

"The clouds are somehow looking weird."

When I heard the cat girl Knopf's voice I turned to look at the sky and black clouds suddenly appeared.

"That's bad, we'll get caught in it."

At Crescent Moon's exclamation, everyone put on their mantle's hood in a hurry.

At that time I got off and put a leather cloth over the baggage.

We hurried our horses but the rain became more intense.

It wasn't much but a hood and mantle had to do.

It's inconvenient that rain gear like umbrellas and raincoats don't exist here.

"Is there anywhere we can take shelter in?"

"Head, there's a building!"

When I looked in the direction they pointed in I could clearly see the shadow of a building behind the hill.

"Alright, we can take shelter from the rain there"

We moved towards the building.

"This, was this originally a church?"

As I approached it seems to be a ruin abandoned a long time ago.

As Pick said, it seemed to have been a church.

The door was locked with a simple lock but Pick opened it in no time and we were able to enter.

"Oh, this somehow looks promising."

Bass-senpai joyfully said this.

We got into a large room which I thought was originally the sanctuary.

Several broken banks were lined up there.

There was nothing enshrined on the shelf in the front, I wonder if someone stole it.

Although it was leaking here and there but at least we had a roof over our heads and it's far better than outside.

We put down our baggage at a place without leaks and then took a break.

Bass, Drum and Pick, those three tore off a part of the floor boards then broke some chairs and used them as firewood to light a fire.

It's blasphemous but it's good to against the cold.「<sup>6</sup>」

Thanks to that I can warm up my body and feel a little more comfortable.

“Finding this good place really saved us.”

“This is probably a church destroyed at the time of that battle.”

Following Knopf’s words Crescent Moon looked around and started talking happily.

The rain got better but the sun was covered and it got really dark.

“Let’s see, looks like this place wasn’t used in quite the long time.”

“It’s kind of creepy.”

My seniors are still pretty shaken by that story from a while ago.

“Hey, you guys, go look if you can find some food in this room somewhere”

Crescent Moon smirked while she instructed my seniors.

“I don’t want to! There shouldn’t be any food in a place like this anyway.”

“That’s right, how long ago do you think it was that people lived here?”

Seniors, don’t resist.

Of course, I definitely don’t want to go either.

In the end, we boiled some water and made dinner with the things we brought.

“But for such a place to appear like this.”

.....It’s starting again, those ambiguous statements of Crescent Moon.

I feigned ignorance but my seniors reacted to this brilliantly.

That’s why, be good and enjoy yourself, seniors.

“The, there’s no way that something will appear here, right?”

“That’s right, this place is a church in the first place?!”

Joyfully listening to my senior’s reactions Crescent Moon answered.

“You guys don’t know about it, huh? In the first place, a church is where ghosts gather. Besides, there were several sword cuts and traces of blood smeared on the chairs and the floor. Didn’t you notice?”

“Eeh? I didn’t notice that at all. Drum, did you notice anything?”

“No, I didn’t notice anything. Where did you see that?”

My seniors shook their heads.

Oh boy, they completely fell for Crescent Moon's trap.

"Now that you say it I definitely saw some cuts on the chair I broke a while ago."

Pick said this fearfully.

Knopf read a book on her own while Pick was taken as well.

Crescent Moon nodded as she heard this and continued to talk.

"There's no doubt about that. The soldiers who lost escaped to this place. Then this place got raided by the winning side....."

Gulp.

I heard the sound of three people gulping.

"Some of them died here while resisting. Then....."

Crescent Moon looked in the direction of the door in the before continuing her sentence.

"The remaining ones surely escaped through there. However, they were completely outnumbered. I bet behind those doors are heaps of corpses."

"Please stop it, big sis!"

"That's right, don't scare us like that. What will you do if we can't sleep?!"<sup>7</sup>

"Hehehe, you guys will take turns to stand guard today, though"<sup>8</sup>

"That's unfair! To be awake all alone in a place like this! Big bro's, I leave it to you!"

"Wait a minute, Pick, don't decide it so forcibly! That's it, Drum, you'll keep watch alone. I'll do it tomorrow and you can rest."

"You, what are you saying? Then you do it today and I'll do it tomorrow."

Finally, a quarrel between friends broke out.

I stared into the other direction as to not get involved in this too much.

Then.

—Goton

"Hey, did you hear that sound just now?"

“D, d, don’t do that, big sis, even if you told us that, there’s no way something would actually come out.”

“Th, tha, that’s right, I know you enjoy scaring us.”

——Goton

“Uwaaaaaa!”

“I, I definitely heard something. No doubt. From where, from wheere?!”

“I think I heard it from there”

The place Pick pointed at was — The door in the back.

“I also heard it. Hey, Mister Akatsuki, let’s go and look what’s going on back there”

“That’s impossible! Head, big sis, because you’re still young please go ahead!”

“That’s right, it’s hopeless even if we go! So, please!”

My seniors desperately begged me but I only said a few words.

“Bass, Drum, go search the back a little.”

“Tha, that’s, Head!”

“That’s mean, that’s so mean, Head!”

Even if you yell and cry I won’t change my mind.

I’m the villain Carlo, I don’t mind if you have a grudge against me.Γ<sup>9</sup>」

I mean, there’s no way in hell I go there!

# Chapter 5 – Phantom

“If there’s something please save us!”

“Head, big sis, if I die I’ll curse you”

My two senior’s eyes were filled with tears but everyone pretended not to notice it.

“Come on, don’t mess around and hurry up!”

With Crescent Moon’s heartless words my seniors unwillingly opened the door and stepped into the depth.

“You can go first”

“Hey, don’t push, we should go side by side. Almost always you – -”

Even in times like this you should get along well, seniors.

“Hey everyone, have you ever fought the Undead?”

After the seniors went inside Crescent Moon posed this question to us who stayed behind.

“I haven’t. How about Knopf and Pick?”

“Me neither. Don’t they make you feel sick?”

“I haven’t either.”

Looks like no one fought those guys before.

“What about you, Crescent Moon?”

“In a dungeon. But as one would expect they don’t really give off a pleasant feeling.”

“How did you fight them?”

“Even if I say undead they are divided into Zombie-types which possess flesh, Skeleton-types which only consist out of bones and Wraith– and Evil Spirit-types which have a spirit body.”

“Are the ways to cope with them different as well?”

Knopf asked Crescent Moon.

“That’s right. You can attack the Zombie-type with a sword like normal. There are also cases where those guys still had some will left in them. Its looks are kind of bizarre but it’s basically just your run-of-the-mill monster.”

“What about Skeletons?”

“They don’t get much damage even if you cut them with a sword because they are made entirely of bones. Even if you cut it into pieces it regenerates immediately and starts to attack you. There’s this guy they call skeleton soldier, he’s equipped with a weapon and a shield and is considerably difficult to defeat among them. Stabbing them is almost meaningless. You have to either completely wreck it or burn it with fire quickly.”

“Does Fire magic work?”

“Yeah. Fire magic works on both the Zombie-types and the Skeleton-types. The most troublesome are the ones with a spirit body like Wraiths and Evil Spirits. Attacking them with physical weapons is completely meaningless.”

“How about fire magic then?”

Crescent Moon frowns at my question.

“I think it would hardly do any damage. I don’t know about high-ranking spells, though. Usually, one should attack them with magic weapons imbued with anti-undead effects or Light– or Darkness Magic.”

As she said so Crescent Moon took out a strangely twisted knife out of her décolleté.

“This is a knife imbued with Anti-Undead attributes. Honestly, this is just a mere consolation. If I would face an evil spirit with just this I would certainly be the one to suffer.”

Well, of course, if you want to attack it with that you would have approach it until you can hit it point-blank.

I wouldn’t want to get closer to things like Wraiths and Evil Spirits.

“I see, I can neither use light attribute magic nor darkness attribute magic. I

wonder if I can't do anything."

The cat girl Knopf muttered.

She can use all the other attributes so it's fine.

"To be honest, I don't want to have anything to do with the Undead either. They are a pain in the ass, creepy and even if you subjugate them often it's not even profitable."

As I thought, that's her basis.

Crescent Moon really likes money.

"I think I would be a little hesitant to defeat them if I think about the fact that they were previously alive."

Though I understand Pick's train of thought if I would act like that I would turn into an undead then.「<sup>1</sup>」

If the Author reincarnates as an undead I don't have the confidence I would be able to finish the story like that.

"I wonder if you are alright, big bros."

Pick said this anxiously.

Even with all, that was said they are still companions after all.

"Well, it should be fine. Though I said things like that it's unlikely that the Undead would walk around here like that. And even if they do they can only move slowly. Those guys can do as much as escape, right?"

"Heh, so Undead can only move slowly, huh?"

As I asked this Crescent Moon answered me with a tone of ridicule for not even knowing that.

"A Zombie running at full speed would be really bad. Well, the only ones who might be able to move quicker would be higher ranked Skeleto—"

"Gyaaaaaaaaa!!!!"

Just as Crescent Moon was talking we hear a scream from the other side of the door.

"Run, run, ruuun!"

“It’s straaaaaaaaange!!!!!”

While screaming, my two seniors jumped into the room with a desperate look on their faces.

“Head, its coming! Those guys are comeiiiiing!”

Two people with teary eyes quickly took cover behind me. Immediately after that one could hear a rattling noise coming from the hallway behind the door.

It sounded like something was running towards us, a lot of them.

“What, what’s this?!”

Crescent Moon immediately stood up and pulled her sword. I took out my two-handed Great Sword, Crescent Moon held her scimitar (Crescent Moon Sword) in her right hand and in the other she held the Anti-Undead knife she showed us a while ago. Knopf had her iron cane and Pick a rapier.

“Sk, sk, skeleton– -”

At the same time as Bass shouted this a group of skeletons ran into the room. They held weapons like maces and swords in one hand and shields in the other. There were about ten of them though there might come more from the back.

“They are those rumoured Skeleton Soldiers! Additionally, they are moving fast.”

Crescent Moon shouted.  
Are those the fast moving, high-ranked Skeletons?  
Additionally I can’t be careless with this many.

As I was told that Fire magic would work on them I called for the small lizard/salamander Reus.

Huh, he seems a little bigger than usual but now’s not the time to think about that.

“Bass, Drum, Pick, their weakness is fire. Set fire to some sticks you can find and hit them hard with it. Don’t let them get near Knopf because she can use fire magic.”

“Understood!”

They always move around together, those three, so they should be able to cooperate with each other.

Knopf’s magic will be the most effective here.

Though my fireball would be effective as well but I don’t think I can hit an opponent of such speed.

I gave up on the fire ball and chanted the aria for the Flame Sword.

My Great Sword is instantly covered in flames.

OK, this should be enough to cause some damage.

Even though the Skeletons saw the flames which were their weakness they stepped forward without hesitation.

Do they not have a sense of fear? Or rather are they able to see in the first place?

As they are Skeletons they have no eyeballs, this is kind of mysterious.

I swung my sword as I thought about such things in the corner of my mind.

As I tried cutting one body another immediately intercepted my blow with their shield.

I hastily parried the sword which came cutting from my side.

Damn it, they are annoying.

There are a lot of them, they move quickly and they are also rather skilled with the sword.

I wonder if they were able to use this technique they are using now when they were still alive.

Next to me Crescent Moon was fighting against several bodies.

I could see how the ones which got smashed apart by her scimitar returned to their previous form after just a few minutes.

Even if the magic effect of the knife is proven right its range is too short.

Crescent Moon seems to have trouble killing even one with this knife.

In the back they were doing their best while saying things like “Waa” and “Yooou!”.

Opposing a Skeleton which had a sword with a torch, giving it their all.

Those seniors were stronger than I thought.

Goooooh, Baaaaaang!

Fireballs which Knopf would occasionally throw smashed into a skeleton. She didn't seem to have added oxygen to it in this narrow place but it was still powerful enough.

As my seniors and Pick were guarding her well she was able to effectively use her spells.

Gashiiin!

My flaming Great Sword hit my opponent.

The skeleton got wrapped in flames and collapsed.

Good, good, their numbers considerably decreased.

There are only two left, it should be alright now.

“Just a bit more, let's do this!”

Crescent Moon blocked her opponent's sword with the scimitar in her right hand and cut it with the knife in her left hand.

When I thought I saw something glittering white at that moment her opponent collapsed.

There are no signs of it reviving.

Is this the great power of a magic weapon?

The last one was in front of me.

I ignored the fact that it was holding a shield and swung down my flaming Great sword down on it with all my might.

The sword simply crushed the wooden shield my opponent held and cut right into its body.

The last skeleton was burning down in flames.

Alright, and there are no signs of more coming out from the back.

“That's all, everyone good— -”

“What on earth do you think you're doing?!”

Just when I was about to praise everyone I heard a sharp voice from behind me.

The door leading outside was open and a girl dressed in black from head to toe stood there when I looked back.

Bishi! She pointed her finger straight at me with a momentum that could have produced a sound.

# Chapter 6 – The Priest of Darkness

“What on earth are you doing?!”

Bishi! A strong-minded beautiful girl wearing black from head to toe pointed at me with such a force that it seemed to give off a sound.

Her black hair stretched to her waist her eyes were glimmering black like two black gem decorating her forehead and in her hand she held a mace unbecoming of such a beautiful girl.

Her expression.....was obviously showing her anger.

But even when she’s angry this pretty girl is still beautiful.

“You, did you hear me? I asked you what you think you are doing. Hey, are you even listening?!”

While she still pointed at me I looked around and then she started walking towards me.

She was neither tall nor small, she was much smaller than Crescent Moon but taller than Knopf.

She wore antique black clothes with a lot of laces which was something a gothloli would wear but it looked good on her.

Such a beautiful girl was standing in front of me and pointed her finger straight at my nose.

But why is she so angry?「<sup>1</sup>」

“I saw you hitting that child hard with that fire sword after I finally came back after a long time”

”Coming back” here?

With child did she mean the skeleton from a while ago?!

“.....I’m not sure what you’re talking about but does this place belong to you?”

“That’s what I said a while ago! What on earth are you doing in my church?”

“Your church or whatever. As we took shelter from the rain those skeletons

came out.....”Γ<sup>2</sup>」

“That’s right we didn’t come to exterminate them rather we were attacked.”

Crescent Moon send me a rescue boat from the side.

“Some woman whose brain is only made out of muscles and all the nourishment went to her chest should just shut up! How could you get attacked when I made them, huh? Why are you saying meaningless things?!”

“Wha, yo.....”

This time that black, beautiful girl cursed at Crescent Moon while pointing at her.

Hey, hey, that strong-minded Crescent Moon let such swears slide and fell silent.

I wonder why this made me slightly excited.

Wait, did she just say „I made them”?!

“By you made them, you mean you made those skeletons?”

“Like. I. Said. I mentioned that just now, right? I made them. It was really hard to do!”Γ<sup>3</sup>」

You didn’t mention that just now.

I don’t get what’s going on.

“Could you calm down a little? I don’t really get what you’re saying. You came back when we were fighting the skeletons you made. So, you got angry because we killed your skeletons?”Γ<sup>4</sup>」

“That’s right, so you do get it. Is there anyone who wouldn’t be angry if some people entered one’s house without permission and broke one’s possessions?”

Well, that’s true if she put it that way.

If the Hero did such a thing no one would get angry at him.

If the person is a Hero even if they open their closets or break some pots and barrels no one would give a damn.Γ<sup>5</sup>」

“Well, of course, but you were holding skeletons in your house. Anyway, how about we first sit down and have a talk?”

“Hmpf, well, fine. Slowly explain to me what happened”

Then that black, beautiful girl lowered her finger which was pointed at me. What a relief, because that was some huge pressure.

“So you generally entered this church without permission, tore of the floorboards and what were you thinking creating a bonfire inside a room?!”

In the end she got angry again as we sat down around the bonfire.

“.....These guys did it”

Crescent Moon blamed my seniors.「<sup>6</sup>」

“What are you saying? We just did it because you told us to”

“That’s right, big sis, you’re being unreasonable”

My seniors who fell silent panicked as they were exposed to the black girl’s excessively angry looks.

I certainly feel sorry for them.

“Please accept my apology. I’m Akatsuki, a mercenary working as an adventurer. You are?”

“I’m Kitora, a priest serving the God of Darkness”

The black girl or Kitora stuck out her chest proudly as she announced her name.

My seniors who heard this were obviously surprised.

“A Priest of Darkness, seriously.....?”

“This is bad, Head. We shouldn’t get involved with her”「<sup>7</sup>」

“That’s right Akatsuki, we should quickly leave. A priest of darkness isn’t the best to be around.”

Crescent Moon and my seniors agreed with each other.

”Priest of Darkness” surely sounds like it but are they really dangerous?

“You said you were a priest of darkness, so you really made those skeletons?”

Knopf who was rather interested asked her a question.

Kitora also softened her expression a little.

“Oh, seems like I can talk to you a little. That’s right, I made them”

“How did you do it specifically?”

“The procedure isn’t that complicated. As there were many bones of dead soldiers around this area because of a war I gathered them. The problem is if you don’t gather enough bones according to a human body it becomes more brittle if there are parts missing. It’s pretty tough as I have to arrange the size.”

“Then did you collect them one by one?”

“Well, since there were many complete ones in the back room of this church it was easy.”

“Isn’t this what big sis told us.....?”

“Right? As I thought my reasoning was correct”

Hey, Crescent Moon, don’t brag about stuff like that.「<sup>8</sup>」

“So, how did you make the skeleton soldiers?”

“I used darkness magic. Specifically, I used necromancy”

“But didn’t those skeletons move fast? They also used weapons and shields.”

Crescent Moon who also got curious asked a question following Knopf.

“My, that’s a good question. Though I thought only your chest was big and your head was empty but it seems like there’s at least a little in there. That’s right, these aren’t common skeletons. I used my secret ability to raise their speed and power and made them able to use weapons. This is pretty hard to do though.”

I see, it’s only reasonable for her to get angry after we invaded her territory without permission and broke her skeletons which she created after much hardship.

Though I’ll still be troubled if you get that angry.

“So, what are you guys going to do? Even just arranging the bones is quite hard. Even if there are dead bodies around I won’t be able to make a skeleton.”

“Even if there’s a body you can’t make skeletons?”

Kitora answered Knopf’s question amazed.

“Well, of course. If there’s still meat attached it will turn into a zombie. Those things are smelly and unsanitary, I don’t want them to be where I’m living. First of all they don’t look cute at all.”

I don’t think that skeletons look much prettier but they don’t seem to stink.

“So the only difference in making a Zombie or a Skeleton is the material otherwise it’s the same procedure?”

“Well, it’s like that. And regarding Zombies, they are hard to use as they still have some of their ego left. In that aspect I like the obedient skeletons more because they do what you tell them”

Though Knopf is listening very attentively for what on earth are you going to use this information?

Sometimes I don’t know what to do with this cat-eared mad scientist.

I’m afraid she’ll try to artificially create zombies and skeletons without using magic.

“Even if you tell us something like that I’m troubled. Well, would you be satisfied with money?”

“Money? Even if I get it it’s not useful to me. Money is the least interesting thing to me.”

Hey, Crescent Moon, did you hear that?

After having heard such an unbelievable thing she stared at her in utter amazement.

There’s a person who isn’t interested in money in this world.

“Even if she said that we don’t know any other method to settle this except with money.....”

I turned my head and whispered to Crescent Moon whose face looked rather bad.

“How about we give her those guys to substitute her skeletons?”

While she said so she gave my seniors some meaningful looks.

“I, isn’t that a little too mean?!”<sup>9</sup>」

“That’s right, big sis, isn’t this awfully exaggerated?”

Kitora spoke coldly to my seniors who hastily and earnestly protested.

“That’s not necessary, I don’t need something like that. If it’s about that, Skeletons are many times more useful than them.”<sup>10</sup>」

“U, umu.....”

My seniors showed an expression not knowing if they should be pleased or annoyed by her declining them and they fell silent.

“So, where do you intend to go from here on?”

I’m a little relieved that Kitora changed the subject. It wasn’t a secret in particular so I told her about the dungeon exploration.

“Heh, I didn’t know that such a dungeon appeared around here .....”

As I said that Kitora seems to be lost in thoughts but then her eyes suddenly started to glitter and pointed her finger at me again.

“You, take me with you there!”

# Chapter 7 – Healer

“You, take me with you there!”

It's Bishi<sup>1</sup> again! As Kitora said this she thrust out her finger towards me.

“You want to come with us? Why do you want to enter the dungeon?”

As I asked her again I got interrupted by Crescent Moon and my seniors.

“It doesn't matter why. It's impossible, impossible. You want to fight together with a priest of darkness?”

“That's right. We don't know when she might curse us, I don't want to be turned into an undead.”

“I'm objecting to that as well. I don't know when this priest of darkness might betray us. Since she's not trustworthy I can't leave my back to her as a comrade.”

Are priests of darkness really that hated?

Exposed to those three's words Kitora had a strained expression.

“You're saying whatever you want, huh? But the God of darkness isn't equal to pure evil. Other than the God of Light's teachings “No matter what you do you have to be just” the God of Darkness doctrine is “For your purpose the means don't matter”. It doesn't mean I absolutely have to do bad things!”<sup>2</sup>

Mmm, it's rather subtle though I understand what you're trying to say. Though I don't particularly want to do bad things but I wouldn't mind doing them if it's for my purpose, something like that.

In any case, Bass-senpai doesn't seem to get the meaning.

It looked like question marks were flying around my senior's head.

“Besides, I can use healing spells as well! There aren't just curses and attack spells among the darkness magic!”

Heeh, I didn't know Priests of Darkness could use recovery spells.

As there is no healer in our party isn't this quite good?  
Just when I thought that Bass-senpai intervened in a hurry.

“Impossible, impossible, impossible. I don't want to be treated by a Priest of Darkness! I'm scared that she might curse me when she tells me she wants to cure me so I just can't!”

“You, your head seems to be quite empty. That's why you're going to stay an underling for the rest of your life. You don't know anything about me so don't messily throw in such meaningless lines”

“Wh, who's an underling?!”

This beautiful Priestess of Darkness has a rather sharp tongue.  
Bass-senpai got furiously angry at being called an underling he even forgot about his former fear.

The female thief, Pick, who watched from the side secretly laughed.  
Could it be that everyone thought that Bass-senpai is stupid?「<sup>3</sup>」

“Bass, don't get so angry. You said you were Kitora? Are you sure about entering the dungeon with us?”

“As I said before, yes! Ah, could it be that you doubt my power? Fine, I'll prove myself.”

As Kitora said this she turned and looked around before her eyes stopped on Drum-senpai.

“Oh my, isn't your arm injured? Fine, I'll cure you”

“No, I'm good. A wound like this will heal immediately. See, it's already healing. Therefore your treatment isn't needed”

Now that she says it Drum-senpai certainly does have a light injury on his arm. It seems like a sword grazed him a little when we were fighting the skeletons a while ago.

But it looks like Drum seriously hates this and tries to refuse her with all his might.

“I said it'll be over in an instant! Stop rambling and come over here!”

The beautiful female Priestess (of Darkness, though) with raven-black hair

grabbed Drum-senpai's arm with no questions asked.

"Now, let's start the treatment. Behave yourself or you might get hurt!"

"Hiii!"

Drum-senpai shuts his eyes tightly like a kid before it gets an injection and his whole body tensed up.

While feeling scared Crescent Moon and Bass-senpai were watching two to three steps away though their eyes were glued to the scene.

"Here I go!"

As she said so Kitora's mace was surrounded by a black sphere. Then she started chanting while covering the wound with one hand. Something like black fog gradually flows out of her palm and appears to cover the wound.

As they stood with their backs turned towards me I couldn't see much.

"Uwaaaaaa!"

Crescent Moon and Bass who watched suddenly jumped backwards while screaming.

While hugging each other they looked at Kitora's face as if they were looking at something unbelievable.

They weren't able to speak out of fear, but what could have.....

Just when I thought that, Kitora slowly turned this way.

"I'm don—"

"Uwaaaaao!"

I also unintentionally raised a surprised voice.

Because Kitora's eyes — the part which should be white turned black so her whole eyeball was shining black.

Scary, too scary.

This is something right out of a Horror movie.

Pick also opened her eyes wide in surprise, only Knopf was curious and started to talk in an interested manner.

"Those eyes are amazing"

“Aah, this? Wait a minute”

As Kitora said this she slowly closed her eyes and held her hands over her eyelids for a bit.

After waiting a bit she slowly opened her eyes again and the original beautiful Priestess (of Darkness though) stood there.

“About this, this is kind of like a side effect of having signed a contract with the God of Darkness in particular.”

“Side effect?”

“Right. Even though I say it’s the God of Darkness there isn’t just one. There are many Gods. Among them, I’m serving Gladis also called “the God of War”. You see this ball, right?”

As Kitora uttered this she raised her Mace and showed us the ball which was attached to the handle.

“This stone is called hematite and symbolises the God of War Gladis. It’s also known as “Blood Stone“. And the same thing is embedded here—”

While saying this she pointed at her own forehead.

A gem with a black lustre was certainly displayed there.

So it is embedded?

Didn’t that hurt?

By the way, it’s absolutely impossible for me to get a piercing.Γ<sup>4</sup>」

“This Hematite is the proof that I made a special contract with Gladis. My power is greatly strengthened by this contract. Additionally, thanks to this I’m able to use some spells even if I don’t have a ball at handΓ<sup>5</sup>」. On the other hand, when I’m using spells they make my eyes look like hematites. It’s only temporary, though”

After she finished explaining to Knopf she turned towards me.

“You asked me why I want to enter the dungeon, right? There are two reasons.”

She put up her index finger after she said this.

“Firstly, there’s a new dungeon and it’s an S-type so there should be various

types of monsters inside, right? If I find a good one there I want to make it my familiar as a substitute for my skeleton. As you're the ones who broke them you'll naturally cooperate, right?"

After she teasingly laughed after finishing her sentence she put up the next finger.

"Secondly, I can't tell you the details now but I want to investigate something. This might be involved in your own investigation. How is it, do you think you would lose anything if you take me with you?"

Yeah, her healing spells are surely attractive. That spell is slightly scary if I think about having to watch her eyes turn black every time.

But, well, normally she's just a book girl, normally that is.

"Akatsuki~ stop it. I'm kind of crept out. It's just.....that."

Crescent Moon said so while looking towards Knopf for an instant. Looks like she's still bad at dealing with Knopf. Unexpectedly Crescent Moon seems to be bad with things like that unlike what her image makes one believe. Although she's someone who likes to mess around with people she herself is actually bad with this kind of stuff.

"That's right, Head, it's like big sis said."

"I will follow your decision, Head. She skilfully cured the wound."

Bass-senpai objects and Drum, well, I guess he reluctantly agrees.

"What about Pick?"

"Anything's fine. Something like a Priest of Darkness serving "The God of War", honestly, that sound pretty cool"

"Oh my, thank you. I wonder if you still have hope."

Pick doesn't actively agree nor oppose, huh? Though she looks like a little girl but she's still a female thief, she got guts. What about Knopf?

"I think this would be good. The effects of her magic got confirmed just now

and from what I've heard she seems to be skilled as well. There are various things I want to ask you about dark magic."

"As I thought you understand it. I like girls of the intellectual type." Even if you call her girl aside from her appearance Knopf is actually 30 years old on the inside.

Well. Let's keep silent or she'll get angry if I say it.

Besides, I don't even know the actual age of this beautiful priestess.

"Then it's decided by majority vote. Kitora, we are in your care."

"Akatsuki-san, right? Likewise, I'm in your care."

Kitora picked her Goth loli-like skirt's hem and greeted us elegantly. She isn't only good looking she's an amazingly beautiful girl.

"Hey, Akatsuki, are you serious? I don't think she's up to anything good."

"That's right, let's stop here, Head"

"As you are stupid, be silent."

"You, who are you calling stupid?! The person calling someone stupid is—"  
-[6]

Good grief, they are noisy.

Like this, a Healer joined out party.

Now, shall we go to the dungeon?

# Chapter 8 – Stone Labyrinth I

“You, you’re handling of the horse is poor. I suppose you’re just as skilled in handling women.”

“.....Please stop talking, good grief”

The pretty priestess of darkness Kitora who was sitting behind Bass-senpai was throwing insults at him as she sulked.

At first, he was trying to oppose her but it seems that he was broken on the way.

Crescent Moon also kept her eyes closed as much as possible, how adult.「<sup>1</sup>」

“Soon we’ll be close to Kouga village.”

After a long time, Crescent Moon opened her mouth and spoke with a low voice.

The dark corps’ stronghold, Kouga village, was located in the Mcbell territory. ....Hm?

Could it be that this “dark corps” has some connection to the “God of Darkness”?

“Kitora, do you know about the dark corps?”

“I do. They are the ones believing in one of the Gods of Darkness “The Wolf God” Skoll. Those guys are gloomy”

So it’s like that after all, huh?

Well, I wonder if it’ll be fine cause Kitora and they might be comrades.

Though I thought like that and advanced cautiously nothing really happened. As we continued to followed the way we reached a deep mountain road. A narrow road leading through a dark forest.

“It should be around here.....”「<sup>2</sup>」

Although Crescent Moon was looking on the map she held in one hand with this poor light one wasn’t able to read it properly.

The only clue we had were the trails left behind by adventurers but we were hesitant to follow them as around here every one of them got lost.

“I go scout a little”

Pick got off her horse and began to run lightly.

As we didn't have much of a choice we also got off our horses and took a break while sitting on stumps.

At some point, Pick came running back.

“I found some kind of opening”

As expected of a thief girl, she got a good nose or should I say she's sharp-eyed?

We led our horses to said opening.

“This is a dungeon, right? It's my first time seeing one.”

Knopf admired the entrance.

Honestly, though I pretended to be calm this was my first time as well and I was a little impressed looking at it.

The Dungeon's entrance was considerably different from what I imagined. How do I say this... I thought it would look more like a naturally formed cave but the real thing was clearly artificially made with a stone arch and stairs. My seniors were looking inside fearfully while still admiring it.

“Hmpf, I see”

The dark priestess Kitora muttered as if she understood something and Crescent Moon who seemed to have regained her pace wore a joyful expression.

“That's what one would expect of an S-type Dungeon. I can already smell the money”

It seems like she'll vigorously rub her hands together at any moment. At that moment I decided to ask her some things.

“Crescent Moon, why do you think so?”

“Well, it looks like it already. Common dungeons are naturally formed caves even if someone made one artificially they would disguise them as such. They

don't give you the feeling of "Here's a dungeon"."

Kitora continued Crescent Moon's words.

"This isn't something depending on intuition and physical strength and we don't know what we might gain from this. In other words, they're "inviting" you"

"Inviting, you say, you mean us?"

"That's why I'm telling you, you're stupid. It's like they are waiting for people like us to enter."

Crescent Moon who got bluntly insulted opened her mouth but no retort left it.

But why would they want to lure us in?

It's not like they plan to take an entrance fee, right?

Could it be there's some attraction inside and they take money from anyone going inside?

Then isn't this like some overpriced theme park?

"Well, isn't it fine? We'll see what the other party is planning when we go inside, right? Hey, Akatsuki."

Well, that's right.

Oh well, we'll somehow manage with these members.

Honestly, this would be the time where I would send someone like F inside first but I never talked about Akatsuki with F.

"Alright, shall we enter then? Pick an Crescent Moon, please go first. Watch out for enemies and traps. Next will be I and Kitora and the rear guard will be Knopf together with Bass and Drum. Don't be careless either."

As soon as we entered, it was completely dark.

I called the spirit the salamander Reus and chanted the incantation for the spell "Light".

Soon a bright fireball was floating in the air and illuminated the area.

"You, you can use fire magic. Isn't that convenient?"

Looks like only I thought that this fire ball looked like a will o' wisp, everyone else didn't think it's wierd.

Knopf also used the same fireball spell and illuminated the back while I illuminated the middle.

Inside the dungeon the ceiling, walls and every road was made out of solid stone.

We walked along a narrow, straight road before we reached a crossroad. I took something like a notepad and a writing utensil out of my pocket.

“What’s the matter, Akatsuki?”

“Ah, no, I just thought about sketching a map.”

I liked plenty old games so I bought old consols as well as old software and played some older RPGs.

As I bought them second-hand they were cheaper, they were tasteful and unexpectedly interesting.

Though the graphics were naturally shitty it had a certain charm.

Unlike in recent games, mapping is absolutly necessary in those old games so I’m used to it.

“Mister sure is diligent. I always made sketches based on my memory after I left the dungeon.

That’s because you’re too careless.

Well, there’s the thing with the writing utensils as well.

It’s not easy to draw with ink and a quill in a place like this.

Actually, today I brought my secretly made pencil prototype with me.

There’s still room for improvement but it’s enough to draw a simple map.

“Shall we first take the right way?”

I tried to use the basic maze capturing methode, keeping your right hand on the wall.

After taking four sharp turnes to the right we suddenly reached a large room.

“This room is so large I can’t see the wall on the other side.”

As Drum-senpai said, the light didn’t reach the other side of the room so it’s a considerably large room.

According to the basic capturing method I went along the right wall.

“Here’s nothing special, wha—?!”

Just as Crescent Moon said there wasn’t anything a black, long thing suddenly fell from the ceiling.

Looking at it, it was a 1 meter long, huge centipede.

It seems like the floating fireball scorched it while it was sticking to the ceiling resulting in it falling down.

Its myriads of legs were moving with a washa washa sound and its winding figure was grotesque to look at.

Furthermore, it seemed to be aggressive as it put up its head threateningly. I could see its big fangs at its mouth.

“A large centipede, huh? It’s not a big deal but be careful, it has poison. If it bites you the place will swell and hurt.”

Kitora reacted to Crescent Moon’s words.

“It’s fine, if you get bitten I’ll cure you.”

As they saw Kitora’s strange smile Crescent Moon and the men swore in their hearts to be careful not to get bitten.

Pick carefully skewered its head and after Crescent Moon cut its still moving body in chunks it finally stopped.

“Phew, well, that wasn’t that bad, right?”

Bass-senpai said this in relief as he looked at this scene weirdly.

Even though he himself didn’t do anything he sure can talk well.

Well, I do understand that feeling though as I wouldn’t want to face such an enemy as well.

We just went around the room along the wall before we arrived at our starting point again.

“There was nothing”

Knopf said.

But we couldn’t check the middle yet as the room was too big.

As it couldn’t be helped, we decided to explore the middle with all members.

We were also careful of the ceiling this time—

“What the hell’s with thaaaaaat!!”

As we looked at the ceiling in the middle of the room it seemed to be painted black for an instant.

But if one looked closer one could see winding figures wiggling all over.

The moment Crescent Moon spotted them they dropped down all at once.

A staggering number of those centipedes from a while ago were crowding the ceiling.

“Uwaaa!!”

“Hiii!”

It’s just pandemonium.

Both Pick and Crescent Moon desperately swung their weapons but it’s just too many of them.

The best they could do is to prevent getting hit.

“Knopf, use magic!”

As I shouted that I chanted the incantation for Fire Wall.

Immediately a wall of flames emerges between us and the large centipedes.

The centipedes caught in the wall struggled while they burned then one could smell the stench of burning insects.

Then Knopf’s successive chants of fireball exploded on the centipedes which fell and made them wriggle on the floor.

“I, is it over?”

Crescent Moon lowered her weapons as she was relieved.

The seniors were also disheartened.

“My, nobody got bitten? You’re unexpectedly skilled.”

Nobody reacted to Kitora’s joke.

“Head, if this is what happens in the first room, what will happen inside the others then?”

Even if you ask me, I don’t know!

## Chapter 9 – Stone Labyrinth II

When we tried to annihilate that horde with magic white bones and weapons of several adventurers rolled towards us from the middle of the room. How pitiful, it seems like they were attacked by those giant centipedes in this room and turned into clean bones by them.

“Oh my, how regretful. Though those are some good bones I can’t use them if they are burned to that extent. If the bones are burned they get brittle.”

Kitora, the beautiful priestess of darkness, looked at the remaining bones before looking towards me.

Even though I got rid of them don’t look at me with those blaming eyes.

“Aaah, they are all burned. Those would have been valuable as well, what a waste. Neither the weapons nor the armour can be sold if they are burned like this.”

The masked female mercenary, Crescent Moon also sighed after she poked the burned things with her scimitar.

Aaah, god damn it, what’s with you?!

Be little happier that you won after all that hard work!

Hey, look, doesn’t the cat-girl magician, Knopf wear an apologetic expression?

However, even if you defeat those things you neither gain experience points nor do the monsters drop magic stones or something.

That’s because this is my novel’s world and not a game’s world.

I should have created a setting to gain some kind of merit after one defeats a monster.

Can’t be helped, next time let’s not only think about winning but also about how to “make profit”.

Can we afford that, though?

This room seemed to be a dead end.

Even though the female hobbit thief Pick checked all the walls in various ways

she found nothings.

As we didn't have any other choice we returned to the crossroad from a while ago and turned right.「<sup>1</sup>」

We continued the right-hand-touching-wall strategy.

This time's path bend left then right and then continued straight.

On the way, there were some doors and entrances to some empty rooms in the walls.

When we entered the first room, for the time being, we encountered two large mice.

Even if I call them mice they were huge rats the size of a dog.

Their front teeth were correspondingly big as well and their bloodshot eyes were rather creepy.

Though they were very aggressive and suddenly attacked us Pick and Crescent Moon calmly killed them.

It was particularly good that no one got bitten.

They seemed like they carried some disease-causing germs.

There wasn't anything special inside.

The next room was completely empty but the room after that had something promising in it.

That's right, Slimes.

A semi-transparent jelly like object was sticking to the back of the room while wriggling.

Its size is about 1 meter in height and breadth and it had a yellowish colour.

Though I was impressed by seeing a slime for the first time but the others didn't really react to it.

Though it was approaching us it could only move slowly and as it didn't seem to drop anything valuable either we ignored it.

Only Bass-senpai was noisy and said "It looks so soft, I kind of want to touch it!" but he got completely ignored.

I kind of understand that feeling, senior.

Incidentally, slimes can absorb damage caused by blades and they are resistant against various magic systems depending on their colour.

Therefore they are a pain in the ass and everyone avoids them.

But there are exceptions as well.

It's the "Metallic Slime" which has a metallic lustre.

Among them are golden and silver ones as well as ones that shine in the colours of the rainbow.

It's popular among the adventurers because it drops precious metal like silver and gold according to its colour but it's difficult to hit as it moves fast and will instantly escape.」

.....According to the setting of my novel.

Though you might have heard that somewhere before it's not plagiarism it's admiration!

By the way, the rainbow coloured slime drops Oricalcum the material which Carlo's and the Hero's sword are made of.

That explains why it's so expensive.

We left the Slime behind and continued on.

"Please wait a minute"

Pick who went ahead suddenly stopped and raised her voice.

She was carefully checking the floor of the road ahead of us.

When she knocked on it there was a rattling noise and then the floor gave in.

The floor completely disappeared on a considerable scale and we weren't able to move forward.

That's a rather large-scale trap.

"Uwa— That was dangerous. Good that you noticed that."

Crescent Moon exclaimed in admiration.

"Hehe, that's my job."

Pick who got praised looked proud.

Then my seniors came from behind.

"That's right, this is a piece of cake for us."

"That's right, that's right, we're used to this so we can recognize those things with just one glance."

I'm sorry but I don't think I can leave the front to you, seniors.

I feel like you'll absolutely overlook a trap.

I don't feel like I can place my life in your hands.

Still, it's weird that the floor didn't already collapse.  
Could it be that nobody fell into that trap before?  
If someone triggered it then the floor should have already disappeared.

"That trap wasn't triggered so does that mean no one came this way before?"

As I asked that I had a slightly puzzled expression on my face then Kitora answered.

"It may or may not be like that"

"Does that mean that the trap can be triggered again even if someone was already caught in it?"

As Kitora gave a vague answer Knopf was listening again.

"As I thought you're rather perceptive. It's a possibility. Well then, let's go back"

After she said this Kitora proceeded to go back.  
Everyone else follows her in a hurry.  
We returned to the crossroad.  
We took the right and only remaining road.

After following this path for a while the surrounding walls, ceiling and floor turned from stone into earth.  
A Rugged rocky surface was exposed.  
The former man-made feeling disappeared and it seemed more like a naturally formed cave.

"I see, so this was made with this natural case as basis after all. So, when everything else got changed then this is....."

While holding her chin and lowering her gaze Kitora seemed to be lost in thoughts.  
Everyone looked at her in silence.  
Not wanting to disturb anyone I didn't know what to say.

Still, this sure is a dreary place.  
Everywhere you look there's earth.

The only thing moving is a little spider running over the ground.

“I think I got it.”

Kitora who was lost in her thoughts raised her face.

“May we hear about it?”

Even though I asked her Kitora shook her head.

“It’s just a simple guess and you’ll naturally come to a conclusion when we advanced a bit further. Let’s go”

“What’s with you? Tell me. This is awkward, don’t you think?”

Even with Crescent Moon asking like this Kitora ignored her without changing her expression.

That beautiful girl is more stubborn than her appearance may imply.

Everyone was rather tense after listening to Kitora so we advanced slowly.

“Di, did you hear something?”

Crescent Moon was whispering in a low voice.

Rustle Rustle.....

As everybody held their breath and listened carefully one surely could hear a faint sound coming from the darkness.

It’s obviously the sound of “something” moving.

“What’s making that sound, big sis?”

“How should I know?!”

“You two, keep quiet or it’ll notice us!”

They kept on quarrelling in a low voice.

I got a feeling we’ll definitely get noticed.

After we advanced for a while the cave suddenly became bigger. The ceiling got higher as well.

Rustle.....

That sound was now clearly louder than a while ago.

I can’t see it in this darkness but it seems to come from behind.

“Hey, you guys, go back there and check.”

“Why are you saying that again, big sis?! You made us go look back at the church, too!”

“That’s right, that’s right, that’s just too cruel, big sis. Don’t you think so as well, Head?”

Are they still troubled by that incident back then?

Please, don’t involve me in this.

“It can’t be helped, then let’s go together”

We left the back to Knopf, Kitora and Pick then advanced with me and Crescent Moon between my two seniors who stood at both ends.

While we were approaching the sound we heard until a while ago suddenly stopped.

Not being able to hear a sound enhanced the tension.

As one would expect everyone is silent and slowly advanced.

Then a cry suddenly broke the silence.

“Waah!”

Didn’t that voice belong to Drum? What happened?

# Chapter 10 – Stone Labyrinth III

“Waah! Sa, save meee”

I heard a scream to my left.  
That was Drum-senpai’s voice.

“What happened?”

As I rushed over—  
Drum got entangled in some kind of thread and hung upside down.  
The thread glitters with a golden shine and draws beautiful, radial, geometric patterns.

“Drum, what are you doing? Are you playing around?”

Bass who was surprised by this view uttered these words.

“Are you stupid? I somehow got caught in this sticky thread and when I thought about untying myself I ended up like this.”

“Can’t be helped. This Bass-sama will help you so wait. Pick, lend me a hand.”

To prevent having two more people soon entangled in the thread they tried to cut it with a sword to save Drum, but.....

“Wha, what the hell?”

“Uwah, this stuff is so sticky I can’t cut it at all. I don’t want this, release me”

Shortly Bass and Pick were also entangled in it.  
The more they struggled the more they got stuck.

“This.....So it’s that after all.”

“That’s right, it does look like it’s that”

Both Knopf and Crescent Moon were nodding at each other.  
Yeah, I think so, too.  
There’s no doubt that this looks like a cobweb.

“Was it this you were talking about when you said “I got it”?”

I asked the beautiful priestess of darkness, Kitora.

“That’s right. It seems like I was proven right in a way.”

Kitora shrugged as she answered.

“That being said, the thing back there is.....”

“A Spider-type monster, huh?”

Judging by the size of its nest it’s probably considerably big.

“So, what are we going to do with those guys?”

Crescent Moon looked at the three people in question.

“Sa, save us, please.”

“Big sis, please get us out of here quickly”

Hearing those words Kitora spoke coldly.

“This is very troublesome. If you touch it you’ll get stuck in it and aren’t able to leave, even cutting it doesn’t work. Though it might be flammable but if that’s the case these people will most likely burn together with it.”

“Stop that! I don’t want to burn to death—!”

Pick shouted surprised.

My seniors were going Wah, Wah as well.

“If you just move around a bit won’t it soon come out?”

“Eh.....?”

At Knopf’s words, the three people suddenly stopped moving.

“It’s surely hiding around here somewhere observing the situation. How about we use them as decoy?”

At Crescent Moon’s ruthless words those three people shook their heads in silence.

Even though they actually wanted to protest in a loud voice they didn’t dare to in fear of luring the spider.

Oh boy, I feel sorry for them.

“It can’t be helped. Well then, you guys, let us know when the spider appears.”

“Head, you can’t be serious?! That’s so cruel”

“That’s right, please save us otherwise we’ll go to the afterlife”

Even though they were protesting like this in a low voice, just a little louder than being silent, I still refused.

Because I’m a villain, sorry.

“Then let’s wait at some remote place.”

“That’s right, we’ll immediately rush over as soon as you shout”

Kitora and Knopf were just as cold.

Crescent Moon quickly turned her back to them and left.

“Shout to let us know when the spider comes out. But until then you have to endure.”

“Shit, when I die I’ll take you with me”

“Uuh, I’ll curse you for real~”

As one would expect from my seniors, their comments were really villain-like. But it didn’t have much force behind it as they spoke in a low voice.

Well, don’t worry because we’ll come save you.

We decided to wait for a bit.

We waited silently.

I felt like time was passing strangely slowly.

Though we just waited for about ten minutes, huh?

Then I heard the sound which stopped a while ago again.

Rustle, rustle, rustle

The sound of something moving slowly and quietly.

You can tell by the atmosphere that it was considerably big.

Finally.

I patiently waited for the perfect timing.

Rustle...Rustle...Rustle...

“Uwaaaah, something’s there, something’s heeere!!”

“Head, big sis!!”

“Noo, don’t eat me, don’t eat me!”

Those three suddenly started to panic.

It seems like they couldn’t endure hearing that sound as it was a sign of it approaching.

All four of us rushed over.

“It came out, there it is!”

Crescent Moon pointed at a place illuminated by a floating fireball.

When I looked in the direction she pointed in—it was there.

It was a huge Jorougumo with a body being about one meter long and its legs extending to up to 3 meters.Γ<sup>1</sup>」

It had a brilliant yellow striped pattern on its black body and had its mouth wide open showing its poisonous-looking fangs.

“Aah, First large centipedes now a giant spider, why is this dungeon filled with those creepy things?!”

While Crescent Moon was rambling on she took out her sword.

I took out my two-handed great sword as well.

They seemed to complain when I burned them last time so should I fight without using fire magic this time around?

I and Crescent Moon took our stances as the vanguard and the rear guard consists out of Kitora and Knopf.

“Let’s go, Akatsuki!”

With her Scimitar in one hand and her Gladius in the other she started her assault.

She did a good job in dodging those eight legs and cutting it but that spider’s movements were fast.

I also slashed at it from the spider’s blind spot as it tried to avoid Crescent Moon’s swords.

This one’s powerful.

My sword hit one of the spider's legs resulting in it getting cut off and spurting out some liquid.

The big spider jumped back.

“Sandstorm!”

“Black Flash!”

Then Knopf and Kitora evoked their magic.

It looked like both spells hit and caused considerable damage.

“Alright, I'll give it the finishing blow”

“Big sis, behind you!”

“There's another one of them coming!”

As Crescent Moon got closer to the suffering spider my seniors' voices echoed through the room.

“Eh?”

When Crescent Moon turned around she saw another giant spider different from that Jorougumo silently approaching from behind.

Its size was about 1 meter, its colour was brown, it didn't have long legs and fine hairs were growing all over its body.

There were multiple eyes with a deep-black shine to them lined up making it seem sinister.

Pyo—n

That spider suddenly jumped 3 meters at once and threw itself on Crescent Moon.

Is that guy a jumping spider?!「<sup>2</sup>」

Crescent Moon's reaction to that spider's excessive speed was delayed. The spider held Crescent Moon down with its legs then it opened its big mouth filled with sharp fangs.

“Shiiit, hey, let me go!”

“I'll help you now, you guys take care of the first one!”

I shouted those things to Kitora and Knopf while I was rushing over to

Crescent Moon.

Crescent Moon was desperately trying to avoid the fangs trying to bite her by twisting her neck.

Subuu!

I pierced the side of the Spider's body while being careful not to injure Crescent Moon.

Kishikishikishi

Still, the jumping spider monster didn't let go of Crescent Moon. It still had its mouth wide open to take a bite. When I pulled my great sword out of its side I pierced its mouth from above using both hands.

Kishikishi...kishi...

Then the huge jumping spider slowly released Crescent Moon before it completely ceased to move. When I looked over to the other spider it seemed like it got stuck to the ground by some black smoke which probably got released by Kitora while it got turned into Swiss cheese by Knopf's air rifle magic.

"Looks like it's over"

"I, I'm saved. I couldn't react to it that quickly. I was almost gobbled up."

While Crescent Moon said this she rubbed her upper arm as she seemed to feel bad.

Well, it was only natural for her to get crept out after being held down by something like that.

But she didn't seem to be injured which was good.

"It seems like you took care of that one rather well"

"It was easy because Kitora firmly kept it on the ground"

"It was already considerably weakened, to begin with. This was just a basic dark spell."

"Hehe, well, everything's fine as long as the results are good. With this, this case is settled."

As Crescent Moon was exclaiming joyfully a criticising voice erupted from the darkness.

“The case is settled my ass! Help us quickly!”

“That’s right, my blood is flowing to my head. I’m at my limit.....”

“Big bro, big sis, please save me.”

Looks like those three are considerably well, too.

Can’t be helped, shall we save them now?

But how do we save them?

“That spider web is definitely acidic so it should dissolve if it’s treated with some alkaline water solution.”

While Knopf was thinking she began to talk.

“Then get that Ali something and dissolve this thing!”

My seniors were immediately reacting to that and went Wah, Wah again.

“But that thread sure is great. One can’t have enough of that. Wouldn’t this be really popular if one takes it back?”

Kira—n

About one person immediately reacted to Knopf’s words with sparkling eyes.

“That’s right, it would be a waste to just cut it, burn it or dissolve it. Hmm..... That’s it!”

Crescent Moon picked up the sword Drum seemed to have dropped when he got entangled.

“Like this”

As she put the sword on the thread she started to turn it around and around. Round and round and round and round she skilfully rolled it up. You’re pretty diligent when money is involved.

“Big sis, don’t do that, quickly help uuuus.”

“Shut up, I’ll help you soon so wait quietly!”

Then she took her time and after Drum’s sword wasn’t enough anymore she

started to use Bass' sword to neatly roll up the spider web.

The two people's swords turned into spool cars.

Besides, it's troublesome as that stuff is sticky and tends to stick together.

After that Knopf made some soapy water put it on the thread which coiled around their bodies and then they were set free again.

Though they were covered in bubbles but that's not a bad thing either as they don't seem to take a lot of baths anyway.

"Thank you, Knopf-san"

"But how should we use our swords like this?"

My seniors grieved over their swords turned spool cars.

"Even if you have a sword you can't use it anyway! Please be careful not to drop it or stick it to other things! If you make a mistake you'll regret it!"

"Th, that's....."

"Please forgive us"

To be treated so cruelly, my seniors are pitiful as well.  
But it's good that you somehow got saved, right, seniors?

# Chapter 11 – Stone Labyrinth IV

After we got rid of those two spider monsters and recovered the spider web, we started to investigate the room and discovered the bones and baggage probably belonging to adventurers in the back of it.

As I thought, they were the ones who became prey to those things, how pitiful.

“My, those are in a good state. 1, 2, 3.....I suppose there are 9 bodies.”

“Oh, aren’t these weapons rather good as well? Those might fetch a high price if I sell them.”

Hmm, so you won’t even let the dead rest in peace?  
But, well, as they might retort to that I kept it to myself.

“Hey, could you please pick up those bones and carry them back?”

“Yeah, this equipment, too, please. Be careful with it because those are my merchandises.”

Kitora and Crescent Moon were instructing my seniors as if it was nothing. As those two heard that their expressions changed and they started to complain.

“Eeeeh, we should carry that?”

“More importantly, is this some kind of payback for you to make us carry back those bones?”

“Isn’t that natural? Who else but you should carry them? That’s the reason why we took you with us.”

“Payback, you say? Who do you think you’re talking to? I’m a priestess”

Those two people’s protest got instantly repelled.  
They were made to reluctantly collect the bones and equipment and carry it back after all.

The baggage they carried on their back which was a lot consisted out of equipment and the bones of the dead and in their hands, they held swords

turned spool cars.

Really, my condolences.

“We can’t go beyond that hole, I guess we have to return like this.”<sup>1</sup>」

“There don’t seem to be any hidden passages either.”

As she heard Crescent Moon’s and Pick’s statements Kitora asked in wonder.

“What are you saying? There are still places we haven’t visited yet.”

“Eh, where?”

“Haven’t you noticed already? Inside of that hole, of course.”

Kitora answered Knopf while she wore an expression as if it’s natural.

Honestly, I don’t think we should go inside that hole.

I have a feeling that this won’t turn out well.

“Are you telling us to go down that hole like this?”

“That’s impossible, Head Akatsuki, big sis Crescent Moon, please do something”

Even if you look at me with a face like that I don’t know what to say.

Talk to Crescent Moon and Kitora.

Oh well, should I interfere a little because I feel kind of sorry for them?

“Even if you come you’d just drag us down so you’ll wait at the entrance.”

“Well, that seems to be the case, our work would increase rather than decrease. I think so, too”

Crescent Moon agreed with my suggestion as well.

“No, but telling us to just wait is.....”

“Isn’t it fine, Drum? Head and big sis said it’s fine. I’ll do as they said.”

Like this, we decided to leave my two seniors with the baggage behind and fall down to the bottom of the hole.

First, the female hobbit thief jumps down the hole with ease a rope in hand as reconnaissance.

Knopf chanted the aria for a light spell so we could see our surroundings.

“It’s alright! There are no signs of there being anything special”

After we received Pick’s report we dropped down the hole along the rope one after another as well.

“Alright, Crescent Moon you drop down first. Then it’s Knopf followed by me and lastly, it’s Kitora’s turn”

“I’m fine with it but don’t look up”

“Yeah, be careful. That mister is quite skilled with girls”

You don’t have to say that to Kitora, Crescent Moon.  
Looks like it’s still because of the matter with Elsa.  
I didn’t want to particularly peek up her skirt anyway.  
I only intended to help her if Kitora might fall.  
Well, it would be something like accidentally seeing it then.

“Stop saying such things. Crescent Moon, hurry up.”

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll go”

Crescent Moon and Knopf dropped down first followed by me as well.

“Kitora, be careful not to fall down.”

“I know even if you don’t tell me”

Aah, this priestess of darkness isn’t cute at all even though she’s so pretty.  
The hole was deeper than I thought, we were 3 metres below the floor.  
It’s all stone here as well—

Dosu!

The moment I thought that the buttocks covered in black Goth loli clothes fell on top of me.  
I received a direct hit and was staggering but I managed to somehow catch her in my arms.

“Ouch, didn’t I tell you to be careful?”

“Isn’t it your fault for absentmindedly standing there? More importantly how long do you intend to touch me?”

Then I noticed I was carrying a beautiful girl in my arms.

She glared at me with a strong-willed expression.

“As I said before, how long do you intend to touch me?!”

I silently put Kitora down on the floor.

She sure was soft but I didn't fall in love.

Ah, that's wrong.

I didn't do it intentionally.

“Well, fine, let's move on.”

It's not fine at all!

While one-sided false suspicion was placed on me we started our underground exploration.

This dungeon seems to be pretty big.

Unlike the first floor which had a simple structure, this floor was structured like a maze.

Anyway, I have to continue mapping diligently so that we won't get lost.

There were curved passages as well which confused one's sense of direction.

“Here they come again!”

As she shouted Crescent Moon cut down a Goblin coming from one of the small side rooms.

Although it's just rudimentary monsters like vampire bats and Goblins who appear there are a lot of them.

Especially the Goblins steadily appear in one to five groups.

“Is there a Goblin nest around here somewhere?”

“Thinking about it, with that many there's no doubt about that, right? I wonder if Goblins will be our only problem.”

Crescent Moon answered Knopf's question.

There are reports that Goblins do not always build a nest alone but there is the possibility of them getting ruled by the higher ranked Hobgoblins or Orcs.

“Please wait a minute”

Pick sent a gesture to everyone to keep silent then she carefully looked around the corner.

“.....Looks like there is some kind of nest over there”

After she was looking around quietly for a while she slowly came back without making a sound and gave us her report.

“The passage is blocked by a wooden fence and there are several guards protecting it.”

“Was there anything else but Goblins?”

“As far as I could see there wasn't anything else.”

“I see, what should we do, Mister? Anything to say about this?”

Crescent Moon who heard Pick's words looked at me.

Mmm, what should we do?

“We'll be found sooner or later if we stay here. Let's return for a bit and think about this.”

We returned to the passage we came from and entered a small side room to work out a strategy.

“We don't know the exact number of our opponents nor do we know if there's anything else but Goblins in there.”

Crescent Moon complained.

If there was really someone among our opponents who was dominating the Goblins then their movements would be completely different from their usual ones.

Although if it's just Goblins they just have huge numbers but if a guy with higher intelligence is among them the risk drastically increases.

“That's right, huh? I wish we could somehow find out if it's just Goblins”

“I suppose it should be fine. Though it's nothing more than my simple guess –  
-”

As Kitora started to speak with a thoughtful expression Knopf urged her on to talk.

“It's fine so please tell us”

“I think this dungeon was made by someone with the intention to draw in

adventurers.”

As she said that Kitora looked into each of our faces.

“Perhaps the centipedes’ and spiders’ purpose was to examine the invading adventurers?”

“By examining you mean their strength?”

“Right, our competency. So, the ones who cleaned up everything up there either fall down here or come down here intentionally.”

“Then are the Goblins part of this trap?”

This time Kitora didn’t make fun of Crescent Moon and answered her question seriously.

That would be the only time when I think about it.

“Of course there’s that possibility. But aren’t Goblins too weak for that? No matter what you say the spiders just now were a lot stronger.”

“Well, if you put it that way, you’re right. Then do the Goblins have another purpose?”

“Yeah, I think so. Well, I thought about it, but— — aren’t they just baits?”

“Baits, you say?! The Goblins?”

Pick raised a crazy voice.

Kitora nodded.

“That’s right, bait. Didn’t we go down the pit a while ago? In other word, this space from that floor to the bottom is completely artificially made and one can’t freely come or go. So the creatures in this basement need food to live. If it isn’t Undead that is. That’s the purpose of the bait.”

“In other words, there are stronger monsters down there who eat the goblins to live?”

Knopf seemed to be able to understand her thoughts.

But isn’t that strange?

Even Goblins have to eat to increase their numbers to complete the food chain. If they don’t do that the Goblins would immediately become extinct.

“But what do the Goblins eat? If the Goblin’s number doesn’t increase the balance would immediately collapse.”

As I posed that question Kitora laughed before answering my question.

“Do you think so? But it’s not like that”

“Then what is it?”

“Goblins are thought to have a generally strong propagative power. That’s true but they can’t breed among themselves. As there aren’t any females among them. Therefore they can only increase their numbers through impregnating females of us Homo sapiens and our sub-races.”

A group only consisting out of males with now females in them. That sounds miserable but I’m a little relieved. But therefore I can’t forgive them attacking females of other races.

“About that, those guys in here weren’t born naturally. Those tribes were created with dark magic. Goblins created with dark magic can only live if they are given dark magical power. Ah, just for your information I didn’t make them!”

“Ehm, well, I don’t really get what you want to say.”

Crescent Moon was rushing her to get to the point.

“What I want to say is that this dungeon might be made by someone using dark magic. If those Goblins were produced by that guy’s magical power they might keep them as bait for some strong monster down here or something like that.”

“So what you want to say is there isn’t anything else but Goblins there?”

“Well, if I guessed right, that is.”

I see, that’s a considerably justified reasoning but what should we do?

# Chapter 12 – Stone Labyrinth V

“Kitora’s reasoning seems justified. That being the case it doesn’t sound like a bad idea to attack.”

As I said that Crescent Moon nodded strongly.

“That’s right, even if what you said is wrong we can’t start anything if we don’t move!”

“But don’t you think this situation is also dangerous?”

As I thought, Knopf is cool-headed.

“Of course it is. That’s why we surprise them and look at the situation.”

I explained my strategy.

“It’s rather simple. Crescent Moon and I will first approach the den. But we’ll just go in and lure them out. If there are higher-ranked guys among them they’ll come out here as well, right? Even if those fellows don’t come out Knopf will throw fireballs at them from behind. Add oxygen to them and put all your strength into it.”

“I see, first you pull them out and then from behind “Baaang”, huh? How nice.”

Crescent Moon who listened to me smirked.  
She seemed to like this strategy.

“There seemed to be a considerable amount inside so like this one will have it easier. I’ll throw rocks with my sling from the right”

“Then I’ll cast weakening magic on those guys. That seems to be particularly effective against Goblins.”

Like this, we created a rough strategy.  
We left the room and returned to the corner from some time ago.

“Crescent Moon, don’t get too close to the fence. You’ll get caught up in

Knopf's magic otherwise.”

“I know about that young lady's power well. I'm not such a daredevil.”

“Well then, are you ready?”

First Crescent Moon and I, weapons in hand, jumped out.

We rushed towards the fence.

The Goblin sentries who discovered us let out a hoarse cry and ran towards us while swinging their weapons.

“This close is fine, right?”

We stopped when we reached a suitable distance from the fence and hit the Goblins.

Following the sentries Goblins came jumping out from beyond the fence.

Warawarawarawarawarawarawarawarawarawara

“Hey, how many are they!”

Crescent Moon shouted.

It's like Kitora expected, there aren't any high-ranking monsters among them but the amount of Goblins is humongous.

Forty, no, a little more than forty goblins instantly started to attack us.

With this momentum it seems like there are still more.

Isn't that kind of bad——?

Shurushurushuru, Dagaaaaaaaaaan!

As I thought that fireballs came flying over our heads and exploded on the fence.

Followed by a huge explosion sound a large number of Goblins got blown away.

It's like the special effects in a Hero, no, war movie.

“Now, let's go, Crescent Moon!”

We cut down the Goblins which looked back in surprise.

Additionally, the Goblins got warped in black smoke.

The ones who got touched by that smoke lost their power and their movements grew dull.

The power of dark magic sure is great.

We have to make sure not to touch that.

We cut down the now dizzy goblins and threw them away. When I swung my Great Sword with both hands using all my power two or three Goblins got blown away every time. The stones which Pick was throwing hit yet another Goblin knocking it out.

As Crescent Moon was dancing with her two weapons in her hands she slaughtered the Goblins. I exterminated most of the Goblins coming my way so I had room to enjoy the view of those wonderfully shaking giant twin mountains with wide eyes. Though I couldn't really see clearly because we were inside the dungeon but they are as sexy as ever.

“Haa, haa, something like this, huh?”

As she defeated many of them Crescent Moon was gasping. Every time she did her huge twin mountains shook. It's truly a mystery. That fellow's personality is like that but her skin is as smooth as a student council's vice president's behind (abbreviated).

“Alright, shall we go inside then?”

We climbed over the blown up fence's debris and entered the Goblin nest. Because of Knopf's extra-large fireball exploding the surrounding area was in a wretched state.

She's already a weapon.

Let's ask her later if she could help me fight against the Barbarians and the conservational nobles.

Thinking like that it was the right choice to have told Knopf “Carlo = Akatsuki”.

“Looks like there's nothing particularly valuable left.”

As Crescent Moon said that she seemed disappointed from the bottom of her heart.

“That's it, this!”

Kitora was eagerly looking around the debris while saying that in a joyful voice.

She held some kind of blackish ball in her hands.

“What’s that? Can you sell it?”

You really only care about that, huh?

“About this, this is a pearl able to distribute magical power. Someone gave the Goblins magical power using this.”

“For what purpose did you look for that?”

Kitora answered Knopf’s question with a smile.

“For now that’s a secret. But it’s something good”

Other than this there wasn’t much to get here and eventually the Goblin nest’s exploration ended.

“So, what are we going to do now? There’s a high possibility of there being a strong one in the back, aright?”

Everyone was brooding over Pick’s words.

“Since we don’t know what kind of enemy it is I think we should be careful.”

Knopf is still keeping her cool.

“The profit of that would be so-so, the reward given for this exploration is quite reasonable. We can always come back here as well.”

“That’s rare, Crescent Moon. I thought you’d want to go further to earn more money, though”

As I questioned her Crescent Moon replied slightly shy.

“Hehe, up till now I was far too greedy and I made some bitter experiences because of that on many occasions.”

“Haha, is that so? What about you, Kitora?”

“Honestly, I’m rather interested in these depths I have a feeling I might get a good familiar there. But I got these bones and this pearl so I can return first. My only condition is that you take me with you when you intend to go back here again. Is that fine?”

Well, my seniors are waiting up there and we shouldn’t keep them waiting for

much longer.

Also if that enemy is much stronger I'd like to bring the reliable F with me to this place.

So shall we leave it at that for the time being?

"Alright, then shall we go back for the time being?"

It was a considerably complicated labyrinth but we were able to easily find our way back because I diligently mapped everything out.

From time to time we met some remaining Goblins but we exterminated them without any problems.

"We're there, it was here, right?"

When I looked up I saw the trap hole wide open and my seniors looking down through it.

"Head, big sis, welcome back!"

"I let the rope down now"

We used the rope thrown down by my seniors to climb up. Pick and I quickly climb up then pull up Kitora and Knopf with four people.

"Compared to your appearance you're surprisingly heavy."

"What are you saying? You're just too weak!"

As I teased Kitora she gave me that retort. Even a priestess of darkness can be that cute. Though her hobby of collecting human bones isn't cute at all.

Finally Crescent Moon climbed up and with that all the members were gathered.

"We kept you waiting"

"No, how was it down there?"

While returning to the entrance Crescent Moon and Pick talked about the events having taken place at the bottom of the hole.

"Weell, I got a bit impatient when I saw that amount of Goblins."

"Right? But that Baaaaang from before!"

“Right, right, there can’t be such a powerful fireball, right?”

“That’s right, that’s like cheating. It’s just too amazing, Knopf-san!”

“Such a thing, that’s just.....”

The cat girl Knopf got embarrassed by Pick’s and Crescent Moon’s praise. Her ears becoming all Funyan was pretty cute. But that power sure is like a cheat.

“Weeell, I’d like to see that!”

“Right, I want to see it, too”

I feel like my seniors will get caught in the explosion if one happens or is that just my imagination?

Like this, my first Dungeon exploration ended.

# Chapter 13 – Reminiscence

After we left the Labyrinth we parted with the beautiful priestess of darkness on our way back to Braham.

We stopped by the adventurer's guild to report about our exploration.

“Hehehe, it turned out to be quite the amount of money”

Crescent Moon looked happy.

Well, of course, as Kitora told her “I don't need my share so I'll give it to you” she got double the amount.

It seems like the spider webs my seniors carried her with much hardship got sold for a small amount of money.

As my seniors had to carry their spool car swords in one hand over their heads on our whole way home they looked dispirited and bitter but Crescent Moon didn't care about that.

Moreover, the promised reward they got was a share for one person divided between them and Pick.

While crying Bass said, “Let's never do this again. We'll never go out with big sis again”.

Like this, I distributed the shares and returned to the hideout.

“Ehm.....Welcome back, Akatsuki-sama”

I met up with Elsa.

Not being used to calling me “Akatsuki” yet her figure is innocent and cute.

As it was been a while since I last saw her I'm also rather tense.

Though I honestly wanted to hug and kiss her but I couldn't because I was somewhat embarrassed.

“I'm back. Were you feeling lonely?”

“A little. But I took some walks and was able to see some interesting things. I'm now pretty familiar with this area.”

“I see, I'm sorry for leaving you alone. But I have to go back to the mansion

again soon”

“Ah, that’s right, isn’t it.....? But I’m fine.”

Elsa gave me a stout-hearted answer.

I feel sorry for always having to leave Elsa alone.

But I can’t take her with me.

Mmm.....

“Elsa, how are your grandparents?”

“According to the letters, Grandfather seems to recover well. I don’t know the details because I wasn’t able to meet them recently.”

I took out the pouch containing my share of this time’s reward and put it in front of Elsa.

“This money is?”

Elsa looked inside it before asking me.

“Elsa, take this and return to your grandparents.”

“Eh? That means.....”

Elsa’s eyes filled with tears at that moment.

“That’s not it, I don’t want to kick you out, Elsa. I’m just worried that you’ll be too lonely being alone like this all the time”

“But.....Is that alright? And this is so much”

“Yeah, I don’t mind. Also, Elsa. Additionally, if your grandfather’s fine again could you come over together?”

“That’s, ehm, there’s the shop, after all”

“Yeah, that’s why couldn’t you try doing business here? I’ll take care of the money”

Elsa’s eyes get round in surprise.

Well, yeah, it’s kind of sudden.

I also just came up with that.

But isn’t that quite the good idea?

If her grandparents came to this town Elsa would be able to meet them a lot more without a doubt.

Elsa would also be able to help with the shop as she has a lot of free time.

“But to cause you so much trouble”

“It’s fine. I promised Doloa that I’d give it my all to make you happy, Elsa”

“Carlo-sama.....”

“That’s not it. I’m Akatsuki. I told you, right?”

Without saying anything Elsa embraced me.

I unintentionally thought about taking her to the bed.....That’s what I thought but I couldn’t move one step forward.

Aah, how cowardly.

How long will I stay a virgin? (Teary eyed)

“Anyway, you should return first and talk it over with them. I think that’s a good idea.”

“Yes, thank you very much! I’ll talk with them”

“That’s right. As I’ll return to the mansion lock the door to this house well when you leave.”

“Yes, have a good trip”

I put on my mask, changed my clothes and left the hideout.

After I walked for some time I took off the mask and returned to the mansion.

“My, where on earth have you been up until now?!”

As soon as I arrived at the mansion I was discovered by Melissa.

No, shouldn’t it be fine because I’m not a kid anymore?

So what if I left without saying anything and being away for some days.

I also wrote a letter saying “I’m going out for a bit, don’t look for me”, right?

“What’s the meaning of this? Leaving behind all the work and just going out!”

Then bald, I mean, Pikaru came over while showing his anger on his face.

No, Pikaru being bald is true.

Though I try not to call him that out of kindness even while he’s that angry.

If I tell him “I went into a dungeon” he’d get even angrier.

“Ahh, I got it, I got it. I’m tired so let me lie down in my room.”

I left Melissa and Pikaru behind and went to my bedroom.

I asked Mirea-san who I met on my way to bring me some tea and then shut myself up in my room.

I originally had some shut-in tendencies.

I felt relieved to be alone in my room.

“Sorry, I kept you waiting. I’ll put it here.”

After a few minutes, Mirea-san brought the tea.

A cookie was lying beside it.

Such consideration sure is nice.

As expected from a mother, or something like that.

“Thank you. Is Lucia-chan well?”

“Thanks to you she’s really well. I’m only troubled by her selfishness.”

“I see, it’s good that she’s lively. Is there anything in your life that you’re troubled with?”

Mirea-san strongly shook her head and said.

“There’s nothing at all. I’m really grateful and can’t thank you enough”

Mirea-san deeply lowered her head and left.

After a long time I fell back on my bed and started to think.

I thought about having met a lot of people after having reincarnated as the villain Margrave Carlo de Medici.

It’s quite different from my original world’s me who only go to and fro between my home and the company every day without having a single friend.

Though among the people I met were a lot of characters of my novel “Yuusha Tensei” but there were also a lot of people not mentioned in it.

The first person I met was the 17-year-old maid, Reina. Though she’s a beautiful girl she’s a BL enthusiast and would pant while watching Carlo (me), F and Lunos. Moreover, her embarrassing side suddenly got revealed.

Next was the head maid, Melissa. Though I think she’s a really good person and always thinking about me she recently started nagging a lot. Well, like a

mother, I guess?

The Butler, Pikaru. He's a reliable bald-headed person not only possessing a high ability in managing the mansion but also high administrative power. Though I'm calling him bald in my mind I won't say it to his face. It's kind of troubling that he's too serious and inflexible sometimes.

F, the leader of the Imperial Guard Order. The strongest knight of this Kingdom called Sir Fitz-Morris Fitzgerald, a hard-to-say name. A straitlaced, stiff, handsome guy who's not used to women. But he is a reliable man.

A stubborn old man looking like the first generation captain of the space battleship YaOto<sup>1</sup> and the former leader of the Imperial Guard Order, General Marcus.

Furthermore, his love for causing mischief is hard to get rid of. But he's also a capable person one can leave the strategic conduct to.

The masked female mercenary, Crescent Moon. She seems to be similar to the masked mercenary, Akatsuki, who appears in my novel. She's greedy and loves money. But she's strong. She got the best twin mountains going Purun Purun and Boing Boing. A sight for sore eyes.

The son of one of the peasants under Carlo, Doji. He's a little slow countryman but he's highly loyal. He has a great body and is able to swing around axes and clubs with his Herculean strength. One of the few people who know that "Carlo" is also "The masked mercenary, Akatsuki".

The cat girl magician, Knopf. Melissa's niece who is half Cat Person and half Human. She looks young but she's actually a 30-year-old researcher/mad scientist. It's currently unknown whether she has a tail. My first magic teacher who uses elementary but super powerful magic.

The Captain of the Imperial Guard Order's first corps, Lunos. The number 1 man women want to marry and said to be the best swordsman of Braham (But he got defeated by F). He's a handsome man who's popular with the women, which is vexing but useful.

White King and Reus are my pets. White King is my favourite horse with a big body and grey fur. It's smart and powerful. Reus is the usually invisible baby

salamander spirit. I made a contract with him and he grants me the power of fire magic.

The duo, Bass and Drum. My seniors as villains. They were originally homeless thieves who kidnapped for a living but after having lost to Akatsuki they became the executives of the evil organisation of subordinates "the Rabbit Group". I can't bring myself to hate them even though they are villains.

The hobbit thief, Pick. Like my seniors, she's part of the "Rabbit Group" and she looks really young outwardly but she's actually rather old on the inside. Her abilities as a thief are reliable and I (As Akatsuki) use her to communicate with the Rabbit Group.

My tactician, Nals. He's not only in charge of strategic matters but also diplomacy and logistics. He likes making figurines and his wooden figurines are rather good. I put him in charge of designing my castle and public work.

The beautiful priestess of darkness, Kitora. A new comrade (?) with whom we explored the dungeon. Though she is an otherworldly beautiful girl she has the hobby of collecting human bones and making skeletons (?). Considerably strong-minded.

Then there is Elsa who became my mistress. The girl with whom I had my first kiss with (But nothing more than that). After redeeming her from a brothel of the Capital Ruan she lived in Akatsuki's hideout in Braham. An absolutely good girl.

The mother and daughter pair I saved from my seniors together with Crescent Moon who became maids at this place, Mirea-san and her daughter Lucia. By the way, Mirea-san is a good looking widow and Lucia-chan is a cute girl.

Yeah, that's it.

I only listed those who are close to me and became my comrades but there are a lot more huh?

But there are some people I'm interested in as well.

I can't leave out Moulin Rouge's Onee-san Rozea-san and Fawn Pavilion's Diva Felica-chan.

I didn't go meet them much recently.

Every one of them is a good characters.

I wonder what kind of story I'm able to create with these people from now on.....

While I thought about such things as an author I fell asleep.