

The Author Reincarnated?!

~I'll Become an Amazing Villain!~

Arc 5

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Chapter 1 – Bonus

The end of the year finally approached.

I asked Melissa if there were any special end-of-the-year events but she told me there weren't any.

I see, in that case, I have a good idea.

"Melissa, could you call Pikaru, Reina and Mirea?"

"Certainly"

"You called?"

"Ooh, Pikaru. Reina and Mirea came as well. The end of the year is approaching, isn't it?"

"That's right, I feel like this year was rather different in various ways."

Well, of course, as Carlo's, the lord's, insides got replaced.

Though it hard for everyone, but the last months were like a surging wave for me.

For me to become the villain of the fantasy novel I wrote myself.

What kind of career change is that?

"Umu, everyone worked hard this past year. Therefore, I thought about giving you a bonus"

"A Bonus? What's that?"

"Yeah, a special reward. Additionally, I'll give you some vacation you can comfortably spend in at home."

"Thank you for your consideration. However, aside from the bonus, if everyone takes a vacation all at once then there would be no one to take care of Carlo-sama. Because of such reasons we should take turns in taking some days off."

That's troublesome.

Then, with my idea ruined, I had to think of another way.

“I’m glad that you say that but then my mind won’t be at ease. I want everyone to spend some time at home. Reina, don’t you want to see your parents after such long time as well?”

“Carlo-sama, thank you very much! I haven’t seen my parents’ face in such a long time, I’m sure they will be pleased and I can even buy a souvenir with the special bonus!”

Reina is such an obedient, good child.
Disregarding the fact that she’s rotten.

“I’m always troubling Melissa. You should just relax at home on these holidays.”

“That’s.....Thank you for your kind words. But as my duty is to take care of Carlo-sama, I’m content with just the thought.”

Melissa clearly declined with tears in her eyes.
Looks like she won’t take a day off so easily, what should I do?

“Melissa-sama, please leave Carlo-sama’s care to me. I don’t have a home to return to and I’m grateful to both Melissa-sama and Carlo-sama. So leave this to me by all means.”

Mirea spoke passionately to Melissa.
That’s right, Mirea-san didn’t have a place to return to.
But if it’s just Mirea-san who stays behind it should be fine.
As a mother, she has to take care of her daughter, Lucia, after all.

“Melissa, this is a precious offer. You should do as Mirea said. I also intend to spend these vacations comfortably without minding government affairs, so Mirea is enough to care for me.”

“Well, Carlo-sama, that’s no good. Are you making such a racket because you want to get rid of me?”

Alright, Melissa laughed.
Looks like I was able to do it somehow.

“That’s why, Pikaru. I don’t intend to do any government related work during these holidays. If something happens I shall immediately contact you so you can

spend your time with you family in peace.”

“Understood. If that’s what you say I shall take some days off. I should show my face to my wife and son from time to time as well.”

I did it, everything went well.....That’s not it, I mean, eeeh?

Pikaru had a wife and son?!

Even though I’m the author I never knew about that.

I wonder if he still had hair when he married or did she like his baldness?.....I’m curious.

However, there are many settings I as the author didn’t know about.

Well, fine, the stage is now set.

“Well then, Carlo-sama, I shall take a few days off if you insist. Please take care of yourself”

“Got it, Melissa. Be at ease, I won’t act recklessly.”

“I hope so. Mirea, please take good care of him”

“Certainly. Leave it to me”

“I told General Marcus and the Imperial Guard Order to take some days off, but is that really fine?”

“It’s alright, Pikaru. F is close by as well. As soon as something comes up I shall contact you so be at ease.”

“Certainly. Then I have nothing to worry about.”

As I said that Pikaru deeply lowered his glittering head.
The biggest cause for his shining head is certainly psychogenic stress.
I didn’t tell him that as to not upset his stomach.

“Well then, Reina, make sure to listen well to your parent”

“Thank you, I will. Please take care of yourself.”

Reina, what’s with that thin book peeking out of your bag?
Could that be your new work?.....I don’t want to hear about it as I’m scared of what I might see.

“Then we shall be off”

Like this, everyone left the mansion.

“Everyone has left”

“That’s right. But are you really fine? Why don’t you take Lucia somewhere?”

“No, that child seems to look forward to playing with her friends she made in school.”

Mirea-san smiled at me who sat on a sofa.

Well then, let’s get to the main subject.

“Mirea, I have a request, is that fine?”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Actually, I intend to leave this place for some time. So, you see, the thing is, somehow.....”

“You want me to keep this a secret from Melissa-sama and Pikaru-sama?”

Mirea completed my sentence with a smile.

Di, did I get exposed?

“Ah, no, well, if you want to put it simply.”

“Ufufu, I thought as much. With those two people around it’s hard for Carlo-sama to spread your wings after all.”

“Is that fine with you?”

“Of course. Carlo-sama saved mine and my daughter’s life while also giving me work and her an opportunity to study. This is a debt I can never fully repay. I’ll obey your orders, no matter what”

Shit, I became slightly tingly.

You’re grateful to such an extent?

Though I’m happy, please think of me as a villain.

“Besides, Carlo-sama is already a splendid adult so Melissa-sama is slightly overprotective, isn’t she? Please take this opportunity to spread your wings to your heart’s content.”

While saying that Mirea teasingly winked at me.

Shit, is that an adult woman’s composure?

As expected of a widow, she understands.

“I’m sorry and thank you. You shall get a bonus fitting your actions, so look forward to it.”

“Well, about the bonus, thank you. I’ll buy something nice for Lucia.”

Like this, I gained some freedom.

Chapter 2 – Plan

“Phew, finally I got some free time”

As I left the mansion I stretched out both of my arms and took a deep breath.
I continued to watch Braham’s cityscape from the hill.

The red roofs forming lines which one could clearly see through this clear winter air looked beautiful.

The Saint Perrier Cathedral in its middle, the Holms River flowing through the area close-by.

The river was shining brightly as it reflected the sunlight.

I used Italy’s Florence as this town’s model.

Though I’ve never been there my father travelled there in his younger days and would talk about it a lot.

It seems like the view one could see from the Michelangelo hill was very beautiful.「¹」

The cuisine is delicious and the town is full of art.

It was a town I absolutely wanted to visit sometime.

The part with the windmills kind of got inspired by the Netherlands, lol.

Well, it’s more like a mix of various cities, huh?

“Oh, Carlo-sama, alone today?”

As I was called out and turned around I saw Doji standing there.

Ah, I forgot to give Doji a bonus (sweats).

“Ah, no, everyone took the day off. Why don’t you go home as well, Doji?”

“It’s just around the corner and even if I return, Mum just makes me help around the house”

“Is that so? How about you go buy your mother something nice?”

I gave Doji two gold coins from my wallet.

As it is equivalent to 200,000 yen that should be sufficient as a bonus.

“That’s, is it really fine to give this to me?”

“Yeah, everyone got this much after all. Besides, you took care of me a lot this time around, Doji”

“Really, thank you”

“I was going to go through the town a bit, do you want to come with me?”

“I just got some free time so I’ll accompany you.”

I went to the town accompanied by Doji.

On the way, I didn’t forget to cover my scar with a scarf as a substitute for my mask so that my face won’t stand out as much.

“Carlo-sama, those clothes suit you”

“Don’t call me Carlo from now on, call me Akatsuki.”

“Ah, I see. It’s Akatsuki-sama then. Understood”

It was a good decision to tell Doji about Akatsuki.

On our way, as we walked through the town I bought some Hobbit wine at a liquor shop.

I requested something of the blacksmith, Mohkan.

I entered Mohkan’s forge leaving Doji at the store front.

“Old man, I’m coming in”

“Just when I was wondering who it might be it turned out to be Mister Akatsuki. I couldn’t immediately recognise you because you aren’t wearing your mask.”

“Yeah, today’s a little, you know. Is the thing I requested ready yet?”

“Hey, hey, wait a minute. After requesting for such a large quantity don’t ask for the impossible. Half of it isn’t done yet.”

As Mohkan said that he took out one of the spears.

“Here it is, how is it?”

The length of the spear Mohkan was holding was 5 metres like the long spears Nals and I created for the military reform.

Just, different from a normal spear, there’s a sickle under the spear’s tip.「²」

“Hoh, it looks very good”

“It’s a strange spear. However, is it really true that Margrave Carlo ordered these?”

“Yeah, no doubt. You received your payment from the Margrave, right?”

“That’s true but what kind of relation do you have with the Margrave?”

Ehm.....I’m him.

Doji must have had a strange expression on his face as he heard that. It was a good idea to leave him at the shop front.

“Well, several things happened. It’s none of your concern”

“Even the matter about the Oricalcum sword, it seems like you got various people backing you. However, as far as I’m concerned, as long as you pay the proper price I won’t complain. You always bring me my favourite drink as well like this.”

After he said this Mohkan drank the wine I brought straight from the bottle. Hey, hey, it’s still noon and a work day. He’s a dwarf though, so he should be able to hold his liquor.

“I’m not done yet, but you should take the finished ones to the Guard Order’s arsenal. As we discussed”

“Yeah, fine. I’ll get them tomorrow.”

“Sorry for troubling you, have a happy new year then.”

“You too”

Like this, I left the forge.

“Are you done?”

“Yeah, our next destination will be the hideout. Come”

There’s only one reason why I wanted to have some free time during these New Year’s holidays.

I only wanted to spend some time together with Elsa, that’s it.

I wanted to settle this whole DDT matter by the end of this year!

Fortunately, Doji also knew about Elsa being inside the hideout as well.

I intended to ask Doji to inform me if anything happens at the mansion while I'm here.

While I explained these things to him as we walked, we arrived at the hideout.

Knock, Knockknock, Knock

I made Doji wait and knocked the door in the manner I agreed with her beforehand.

After hearing the sound of some things getting knocked over the door got opened.

"Elsa, it's been a long time"

"Akatsuki-sama, welcome back"

Elsa greeted me, but, I wonder, she seemed kind of impatient.
I felt someone's presence in the back.

Hahan, is Crescent Moon loitering around in there again?

"Is someone in there?"

"Ah, yes, ehm....."

Elsa looked into my face with slight uneasiness in her gaze.
Why, though?
Could it be an affair?!

"It's the matter we talked about before, Akatsuki-sama....."

What we talked about before, what was that?

"I called my grandparents over, was that okay?"

As she said that Elsa waited for my answer.
Aah, I certainly said that.
Though that's fine and all, but why nooow.
But, as she already called them over it can't be helped now.
I can't just tell them to go now.

"Yeah, of course. I told you, you may call them over. I'm glad that you can spend time with your family."

"Yes! It's all thanks to Akatsuki-sama. Ehm, may I introduce you?"

“I see, let’s do it like that. But could you first fetch my mask?”

“Ah, yes. I shall bring it to you right away”

“– I really wanted to give you my thanks.”

“No, don’t mention it. I just wanted to see Elsa’s happy face.”

“Elsa, aren’t you lucky to be the bride of such a good guy?”

Ehm, what was that about a bride?

Elsa’s cheeks also redden in embarrassment.

Though I know she couldn’t possibly tell them she’s my mistress but couldn’t she have chosen something else?

Besides, shouldn’t they say something about me wearing a mask as if it’s normal?!

Are you fine with your important granddaughter marrying some strange masked man?

“My, that mask also seems like a somewhat luxurious item, don’t you think, grandma?”

“That’s true, grandpa. Besides, he’s such a filial bridegroom to help us out with the shop”

They are clearly just aiming for the money!

As one would expect from merchants, trying to make money through their granddaughter.

It absolutely can’t be exposed that I’m Carlo.

How much will they extort out of me if they find out the groom is actually a feudal lord?

I shall remind Elsa to keep silent about that again.

“Anyway, you should look for affordable shops and houses and move in soon. Until then they can stay here, Elsa”

“Well, thank you very much. So what brings you here today?”

I wanted to take your virginity.....I mean, I can’t say that!

“No, I just came to get the mask and sword. I’m going to leave for some time again.”

“You go out at such a time? Please take care of yourself”

“Yeah, have a happy new year, Elsa. Use this and see the old year out happily”

I produced some money out of my wallet and gave it to Elsa before I left the hideout.

Her grandparents suggested to have dinner together but I politely declined. I shouldn't get involved with those two more than necessary.

“Huh? Car, I mean, Akatsuki-sama, you're already leaving?”

Doji who waited outside asked with a wondering expression on his face.

“Yeah..... change of plans. I'm going out for a while.”

I'm not crying, I'm not crying.

My eyes are just filled with tears because the cold winter wind blew into them.

Chapter 3 – Lack of Money

Well, this is troubling.

I don't have a place to sleep for tonight.

I gave all the money I had to Elsa and am now penniless.

Though I could go back to the mansion but I'm too ashamed to face Mirea-san again after I left like this.

It can't be helped, I should go and do some quests as an adventurer to earn some money.

"Doji, we're going to the adventurer's guild. Come"

If push comes to shove I make Doji help me out.

Anyway, I have to get out of this beggar-like state no matter what.

"Heeh, so that's how the adventurer's guild looks like from the inside, huh? It's my first time entering"

As we entered the guild Doji looked around curiously.

As it's the end of the year there aren't a lot of adventurers here.

"Yo, isn't that Mister Akatsuki? Long time no see!"

Crescent Moon who sat at her usual place waved her hand.

She showed just as much skin as ever, even in winter.

How can't she be cold with her valley being exposed like this?

Well, I don't particularly dislike this though.

"So, who's that huge big brother?"

After having scanned Doji from top to bottom Crescent Moon uttered those words.

Huge, you say, you're mountains are huge as well!

"This is Doji. I'm in his care."

"I'm Doji. I'm Car, I mean Akatsuki-sama's right-hand man"

Doji stuck out his chest as he said this.

When did you become my right-hand man?

Though I wanted to say something villainy like “I’m here with my right-hand man” but I withstood the temptation.

It didn’t want to offend Doji who took care of me a lot.

“Hmpf, I’m Crescent Moon. So, what’s the matter? It’s the end of the year, you know?”

Crescent Moon’s answer was rather curt.

Please be more aware of what you are saying and have a little more interest in Doji!

“No, I was just wondering if there are any good quests around as my job came to a standstill.”

Crescent Moon shrugged at my words.

“Well, my condolences. Unfortunately, there are nothing but rookie requests. And there aren’t any adventurer’s stupid enough to do them around here either”

Then why are you here?

Well, I wonder if she doesn’t have anywhere else to go or if she just has too much time to spare.

But that’s troubling, I have to earn money after all.

Just to be sure I looked over the bulletin board filled with requests.

Search for a pet dog.

Help with the year-end cleaning.

Need someone to watch out for fires during midnight.

Guard my house while I’m on my trip.

.....There really isn’t anything else but rookie requests!

I mean, don’t they treat adventurers like handymen?

“I told you, didn’t I? There’s no one to submit any requests because those idiots are resting around this time. But well, I could search for some work and hand it over to you, how about it?”

Crescent Moon grinned as she said that and stretched out her right hand.

“Too bad, Crescent Moon. I’m penniless right now. Therefore I can’t pay the

information fee.”

“What did you say?! But mister, you’re this place’s feudal.....”

I quickly interrupted Crescent Moon who was about to shout out in a loud voice.

Don’t announce someone’s identity in an already quite place.

“There are some circumstances why I can’t go back right now. So I thought about earning some money.”

“Hmpf, so it’s like that, huh? Then..... How about I’ll lend you some?”

I could see right through that scheme by looking at Crescent Moon’s smile. Even if you’re wearing a red mask I can still understand that. That’s probably how the devil looks like when he approaches you with a contract to sell your soul.

“Please stop, I bet the interest rate will be terribly high, isn’t that so?”

“Hehe, did I get exposed? Can’t be helped”

She shrugged like a child which caused some mischief and stuck her tongue out.

Even if you act cute it won’t do you any good.

One can clearly see your true intentions after all.

“Hmm, well, then how about ... we go to that place after such a long time?”

“With that place you mean.....”The Stone Labyrinth”?”

“Good answer! I was rather curious about that place. I bet that priestess of darkness is also impatient and burning to go there”

I see, I won’t die from just going there and I can take my time exploring, just what I like.

I hope Pick and Knopf are free.

Also, let’s not take my seniors with us this time.

I’m sure they will be happy about that as well.

“That certainly sound nice, but as, I thought, I don’t want to go while still being penniless.”

“That’s why I told you I would lend you some!”

Hey, hey, your drool is dripping out.
You’re the only one I will never borrow money from.

“Ehm, Akatsuki-sama, you don’t have any money?”

Yeah, we were talking about that for some time now.

“Yeah. That’s why I wanted to earn some money quickly.”

“Then, use this”

As he said that Doji handed me two gold coins.
This is.....?!

“Are you really fine with that? This s your”

“I don’t mind. I can buy my mother something on another day”

You’re such a good guy for returning the bonus I gave you.
Doji, you certainly are my right-hand man.
While my insides grew hot I gratefully received the money.

“I’m sorry, I’ll return it by all means”

“Please don’t worry about it. More importantly, where are you going?”

“Yeah, we’re going to a dungeon we explored a while back.”

“Of course, you’ll take me with you, right?”

Doji’s eyes were sparkling.
Mmm, what should I do?
Doji had a lot of fighting scenes in my novel as well, he would make a great vanguard.
But the weapons he’s proficient with are huge axes.
It would be rather obstructive if I swing my great sword and Doji swings his battle axe at the same time inside such a small cave.
Let’s stop him after all.

“I’m sorry, but could you stay behind this time?”

“Eh, can’t you take me with you? I’m Akatsuki-sama’s right-hand man after all!?”

“Even so, this time it’s a little, you know”

“.....Then could you give me back the money I gave you just now?”

“He?!”

“I thought you would take me with you so I gave it to you. If you’re not taking me with you please give it back!”

That’s troubling, really troubling.

If it turns out like this I have to borrow it from Crescent Moon.

If that happens she’ll surely rob me of anything I own.

It can’t be helped, haa.

“I got it, I got it, we are taking you with us”

“Really?! I’m happy”

“Is that so? That’s good. Before we go there’s something I want to ask of you first, Doji”

“What is it?”

“Crescent Moon, give me some paper and a pen”

I wrote a letter.

I got close to Doji’s face and spoke in a low voice so that no one could hear me.

“Get your weapon, go back to the mansion and give this letter to Mirea.”

“Understood. I’ll give it to Mirea-san”

“Tell Mirea to immediately give this to the Knight Leader if there’s an emergency”

“I’ll tell her to hand it to the leader if something happens”

“Right, I’m counting on you. This is a secret mission for my right-hand man”

As soon as he heard secret mission Doji became self-confident.

He likes this kind of stuff, huh?

“Alright, it’s decided. Well then, Crescent Moon, let’s get Knopf and Pick.”

“Yeah, fine. Just for confirmation, but I lend you some paper and a pen just now, so”

Shi, shiit.

Crescent Moon's smirking was just too scary.

I have to be careful to never borrow anything from Crescent Moon.

Chapter 4 – Church of Orléa

I asked Crescent Moon to get Pick and Knopf.

Luckily, Knopf was inside her windmill.

As she didn't have any special plans she said she would participate in the year-end dungeon exploration.

“Still, Carlo.....I mean, Akatsuki-san's improvement in magic is remarkable.”

“It's thanks to Knopf who often taught me.”

“Still, this is too fast. I guess the spirit's power is also relevant. Though I had to go through so many hardships”

Right, the practice I did here, considerably improved my magic!

Looks like it's because of my spirit, the salamander, Reus.

Right now he just looks like a small lizard.

While talking about such things we walked towards the agreed upon place where Crescent Moon and Pick were already waiting.

“Big bro Akatsuki! Thanks for inviting me”

Pick waved at me in a grand fashion as I approached.

“Sorry for inviting you so suddenly”

“I'm fine whenever! It seems like big bros Bass and Drum already have plenty to do, hehehe”

As she said so Pick told an inside joke.

Well, from someone else's view this might sound normal.

Doji who was late rode on a horse.

He properly carried his huge axe on his back.

Added to Doji's weight everything is considerably heavy and the horse seems to have a hard time.

“I successfully completed my mission”

“Good work. Pick, Knopf, this is Doji. Try to get along.”

“I’m Akatsuki-sama’s right-hand man, Doji”

After the self-introductions were over the five of use departed and first, rode to the Orléa hill.

“Hey, hey, big bro, is that tall man really big bro’s right-hand man?”

On our trip I heard Pick talking to me in a low voice.

“Hmm, well, yeah. Right-hand man or whatever, he’s a reliable guy”

“Though I can hardly imagine that. He looks like a doggie”

Pick gave Doji some doubtful looks for an instant.

Though I can see where you’re coming from but he’s a good guy.

“Even with the way I look I’m useful. I’m good at pickpocketing and even picking locks”

No, I don’t really need you to pickpocket.

Well, though I won’t particularly stop her because I’m a villain.

But as I thought this kind of feels like rivalry.

“I got it, I got it. I’m also counting on you”

“Really? Then is it fine for me to be your right hand as well?!”

Then I would need two right arms.

I’m not an Asura statue, you know?

“As Doji is already my right hand how about I make you my left hand?”

“Though the right hand sounds cooler but okay. Well, then I’m big bro’s left-hand little sister!”

Left-hand little sister, I don’t know what I should think of that.

But rejecting her doesn’t seem to lead anywhere as she is persistent so I agree to it for now.

“Well, let’s go with that”

“Hehe, I did it! I’ll go brag to big brothers Drum and Bass later”

Pick was full of smiles.

I'm sure my seniors will get noisy again saying it's unfair.

Haa, just thinking about it is a pain.

"The view is nice around here but when night falls it'll be quite desolate"

As we were climbing up the Orléa hill, Doji suddenly muttered that.

"Wha, what's with that so suddenly?"

Crescent Moon who heard Doji looked at him weirdly.

"No, I just thought that this place somewhat feels like a place where ghosts might appear"

Doji was talking carelessly.

"Why are you saying things like that now?"

Not only Crescent Moon but Pick was also frowning.

Looks like they suffered a trauma from that time.

Well, it can't be helped as Doji doesn't know about last time's incident.

"Crescent Moon, didn't you tell ghost stories before as well?"

As I heard what she said Crescent Moon wore an expression showing she doesn't want to remember it.

"Don't remind me, that story is already troublesome enough"

"Eh, what's the story about? If everybody already knows about it I want to hear it as well"

Without being able to read the mood Doji came closer.

Knopf who also wasn't able to read the mood answered.

"In the past there was a huge battle around here and a large number of people seemed to have died here"

"As I thought. I'm sensitive to that kind of stuff. I'm naive, that's why."

The word naive doesn't have anything to do with that!

I mean, I'm amazed that you even know that word.

"Well, let's stop already. From this point on we will go into that place."

Crescent Moon sighed as she pointed toward the building which looked more

like a ruin.

It's the priestess of darkness, Kitora's church.

Kon, Kon.....Giii

Even after I knocked on the door there was no answer so I pulled on the doorknob and it opened while making this sound.

That dark room didn't change at all since the last time we came here.

Some floor boards were torn off and one could still see traces of a bonfire.

"It looks like it got somewhat damaged"

Doji looked around the room but no one reacted to his comment.

Well, that's natural, because it was us who damaged it like that.

"No one's here..... How about we check the back room?"

"Wa, wait a minute! Going in there isn't a good idea!"

Crescent Moon hastily stopped Doji who was about to enter the back rooms.

"Hm? What's wrong?"

"Ehm, look, there are lots of things back there"

"I don't get what you're talking about"

Pick had also trouble explaining this.

Surely a lot of things were made with the "material" we gathered during our last exploration.

Also I wonder how angry Kitora will get if we were to destroy those things again.

But it's kind of troublesome to explain the whole story to Doji from the beginning to end.

Kitora will probably return soon as well, right?

"Anyway, Doji, we'll wait here"

"Will someone come here?"

Or rather, she lives here.

"Well, something like that"

"Then should we make a fire and eat here?"

While looking at the place where we made a bonfire before, Doji said such things.

We absolutely can't do that!

"No, let's make a fire outside. But first, we should wait here a little while longer."

Just when I finished that sentence the door opened making a loud sound.

"You, what on earth are you doing here again?! How many days have passed since that time?!"

The beautiful girl wearing black gothloli clothes pointed her forefinger towards me with a force that seemed to give of a whack sound. Her figure with her left hand on her waist looks brilliant.....or something, it's not like you think.

"Ah, no, since then many things happened."

"Do you know what position you're in? You owe me. Did you forget that maybe?"

"Of course I haven't forgotten but a lot happened."

Right, various things happened.

I went to the Fawn Pavilion and enjoyed Felicia's song and dance and then I went to the Moulin Rouge where I had my hand grasped by Rozea.

Above all, there was the important mission of finishing Operation DDT with Elsa. I had to unwillingly put that on hold.

So even if I forgot about it for a moment you shouldn't blame me that much (cries).

"Aha, what would that be? Generally, what "things" do suspicious looking people like you have to do?"

I don't want to be called a suspicious person by someone who works as a Priest of Darkness!

"Wait a sec. That rude way of talking directed towards Akatsuki-sama, his right-hand man won't allow it"

Doji stood in front of Kitora who thrust her finger in my direction.

What a brave man you are.

Chapter 5 – Zombie Drugs

“Hah?! Right hand? Won’t allow it? I have no idea what you are talking about!”

Kitora’s eyes were directed towards Doji who stood in front of me. That beautiful girl’s look was just as cold as ice. Her voice even affected the others, freezing. Go for it, Doji, my right hand!

“Though I don’t know who you are, but I won’t allow any more rudeness towards Akatsuki-sama, that’s what I said”

“Rude, you say? Even though the one being rude is that man over there! He failed to contact me for all this time even though I waited for this long. Do you think such a thing is forgivable?”

Then Doji suddenly turned around. He looked at my face as if he has a hard time talking to me about something.

“Ehm, Is this girl.....the same as.....Akatsuki-sama’s, ehm, that kind of ... person?”

Did Doji mean Elsa by saying “That kind of person” and “The same”? For your information, I, like you, am still a virgin!

“Doji, I’m not in ... that kind of relationship with this person over there. Rather this girl is a Priestess of Darkness, right? There’s no way she would become that kind of person, I guess”

“Ah, so it was like that? I’m relieved.”

Crescent Moon’s back which was facing us trembled slightly. That fellow, she’s laughing at mine and Doji’s exchanges. Shall I make you realise now what happens if you make fun of the villain Carlo de Medici?

“Oh my, don’t say that. Even I am just a common girl”

Kitora pouts and complains.
You see, I don't think a Priestess of Darkness is something one would call common.

"Kitora, I get that you're angry. It's my bad, therefore I came here to invite you. Will you come with us?"

"Of course I will come along. Wasn't that clear already? And you over there!"

This time she pointed her finger towards Doji with a whack sound.

"Wh-what? What do you want with me?"

Doji's voice somewhat shook.
I know, the angry voice of a beautiful girl is a scary thing.

"If you talk in the same manner as you did just now in the future I won't overlook that!"

"I, I only follow Akatsuki-sama's orders. I won't allow this either."

Eeeehm, Doji, I'm happy that you feel this way but I think it would be better not to defy her on this point.
It's fine to be scared so you don't have to act tough.

"If you speak to me in such a manner again I will turn you into my eternal slave!"

Aah, I knew it would turn out like this.
Doji, if you're not careful you'll be turned into an Undead.

"Akatsuki-sama, what does this girl mean by slave?"

Doji seemed concerned. He felt threatened even though he didn't understand what she meant.

"Be careful, that girl is serious. Kitora, you as well. Don't do anything weird. If you turn Doji into a zombie I'll be troubled."

"Zo, zombie?! I absolutely don't want that!"

"Hmpf, then be careful with your manner of speaking. Let's depart at once."

Disregarding Doji who become teary eyed and fell back, Kitora immediately left the church.

Those heartless guys who turned to look towards the day after tomorrow to make sure they won't get rolled up in this affair soon followed her in a hurry.

"Ehm, Kitora-san"

"Oh my, you are that magician. What was your name?"

"My name is Knopf. I wanted to ask you some things if that's fine."

As we were having a meal after we found a place to build a camp Knopf started to talk to Kitora.

For some reason, the strong-minded Kitora also had a soft spot for the cat girl, Knopf.

"That's fine, what is it?"

"Is it possible to turn a living human being into a zombie?"

Hey, hey, what's the cat-eared mad scientist interested in now?

"I can do it, of course. Though to make a Skeleton you have to kill them first and wait until they are reduced to bones or you have to shave off the meat."

Kitora casually answered Knopf's question.

Excuse me, could you please stop otherwise we'll lose our appetite?

"What would you have to do specifically?"

"I use this"

As she said that Kitora took out a potion from one of the bags. Just taking a glimpse at that muddy, dark, green medicine would make one understand that this stuff was of suspicious nature.

"That is?"

"Nekrokinine, or otherwise known as the "Zombie drug". I'll let the other party drink this."

"Ah, I kind of heard about this. Will one become a zombie just by drinking this?"

"How's that possible. This medicine will bring one into a state between life and death. Black magic is necessary to ultimately make one into a zombie."

“I see, so black magic is necessary after all”

Why do you sound slightly disappointed, Knopf?

I mean why are you carrying around such a medicine as if it's normal, Kitora?!

What kind of state is a state between life and death anyway?

This stuff is a tremendously powerful drug, be careful with that!

“Isn't that enough already?! I, if you don't stop talking I won't be able to sleep!”

Doji couldn't take it anymore and raised his voice.

No wonder, if one thinks of themselves as the experiment material.

His dialect got worse out of fear, poor guy.

Crescent Moon and Pick were eating indifferently at a remote place.

I should have eaten with them there as well.

Even though the meat is cooked deliciously I don't seem to have any appetite.

Like this night fell.

Chapter 6 – Exploration

“Crescent Moon, Kouga village was around here, right?”

“Yeah, you remembered well. Don’t get careless, they might watch us.”

Crescent Moon answered my question earnestly.

“What’s that Kouga village you are talking about?”

“You, you don’t even know that? Is that what they call ignorance?”

Kitora who sat behind Doji on the same horse hurls biting words at him. Doji looked offended for an instant but didn’t say anything. I get it, he doesn’t want to anger her and be used for “that”.

“Doji do you remember the men wearing black who attacked us in the capital?”

“Yeah, the time Ca.....Akatsuki-sama and Frau-san had their secret date, right?”

Oops, that was dangerous, those were things I did as Carlo. Though Crescent Moon and Knopf know that Akatsuki and Carlo are one and the same person, Pick and Kitora don’t. Doji, good job for noticing that. But this confusing setting isn’t something I can handle, I think.

“Secret date, huh? Mister does this at other places as well?”

Crescent Moon looked at me coldly. Isn’t it fine? It doesn’t have anything to do with you anyway!

“Ehem. Anyway, those fellows come from Kouga village. They seem to be called the dark army.”

“The dark army, huh? That sounds kind of cool”

“The Rabbit Group is also cool! Right, big bro?”

Pick, that’s slightly different.

Though I gave them this uncool name to punish you it seems to be well liked.

“What might a Rabbit Group be?”

“It’s the name big bro Akatsuki gave our group. Cool, right?”

Pick proudly explained this to Kitora.

“Ye, yeah.....that’s right. I think it’s a good name.”

Even Kitora with her sharp tongue wasn’t able to give her honest opinion when faced with those sparkling eyes.

She answered awkwardly while avoiding her gaze.

“Right~? Big sis Crescent Moon is also included. Why don’t you enter the Rabbit Group as well, Kitora?”

“Eh, ehm, I’ll have to decline. Look, I’m already serving the god, Gladis”

“I see, that’s a shame”

Crescent Moon and Knopf who heard this exchange butted in from behind.

“Hey, hey, I think I heard something dangerous there. Who entered the Rabbit Group at what point of time? I don’t remember entering such a strange group!”

“Eeh~, big sis was our honorary member since a long time ago. Kind of like a vice-head!”

“Give me a break. I’ve been a one-woman-group, a lone wolf up until now. There’s no way I’d become your comrade”

As she said that Crescent Moon charged ahead at full speed with her horse.

“Good grief, big sis sure is shy”

Pick wasn’t discouraged at all.
You’re pretty optimistic.

Meanwhile, we arrived at the Stone Labyrinth’s entrance.
Nothing noteworthy happened on our journey either.
The stone arch and the stairs were unchanged from the time we last came here.
It’s an S grade dungeon which claimed many victims so we can’t be careless.

“Well then, what’s your purpose for participating in this exploration this time?”

Knopf looked around into each of our faces.

“For me, it’s money, of course. I’ll make a profit by finding treasures no one was able to find before”

Crescent Moon’s eyes have already turned into \$ marks.

Though I say this I agree with her this time.

Anyway, it’s hopeless if I don’t earn any money.

“I only came along to protect Akatsuki-sama, I don’t have any special purpose other than that.”

“I came along as it seemed interesting though I’d be happy if I could earn some money.”

Doji and Pick gave such reasons.

“As for me, let’s see. I’d like to confirm something I was a little concerned about last time.”

“What does that mean?”

“Hmm, well, I’ll talk about it later. For now, it’s a s-e-c-r-e-t.”¹

The beautiful Priestess of Darkness Kitora winked at Pick and the cat-eared magician.

Though I have that feeling it’s nothing good or is that just my imagination?

“Understood. I just have an academical interest so I don’t have any particular purpose in doing this exploration. Akatsuki-san, how do we do this?”

“Let’s see, in battle Doji and I will be the vanguard, Pick and Crescent Moon will be the attack group and Kitora and Knopf will support us with magic from behind.”

“Mister, is it fine if Pick and I take the front when we walk through the labyrinth’s passageways?”

“Yeah, because there might be traps, huh? Then please do so.”

“Okay, then Mister will take the back in case of a raid or surprise attack.”

Like this our formation was decided.

During the exploration Pick and Crescent Moon form the vanguard after them there are Knopf, Kitora and Doji followed by me who forms the rear-guard. This formation is great for letting Knopf and I illuminate the way from the back and front with our light ball spell.

I take out the sketch I made last time and writing instruments from my bag.

OK, shall we go?

“Going into the right passageway of the first crossroad leads to the room with the centipedes and the left one leads to the spider’s room. What should we do? Should we take a quick look just to make sure?”

“I’m good. I couldn’t sell the spider threads for much and it was uselessly hard to get as well. Therefore it’s fine already.”

When I asked Crescent Moon let her shoulders slump and shook her head. Was the yarn which my seniors painstakingly took back that much less worth? A waste of energy for a thankless job, wait, Crescent Moon wasn’t the one who had to go through this hardship! Poor seniors, please sleep peacefully.

“Let’s advance deeper then. To the place where that trap was.”

The two in front nodded to Kitora’s words. As no one objected to this we went straight to the passage paved with stone. On our way, we also went through the room with the slime in it.

“It was probably around here”

As Pick said this she immediately starts to check the stone on the floor. As we expected, the trap door mechanism on the floor has returned to its former shape.

It’s evident that someone is managing this labyrinth and restored this trap.

Chapter 7 – Underground Labyrinth

“Ah, it’s probably here. Please be careful”

As Pick warned everyone she leant down and knocked on the stone pavement.

As she jumped backwards the floor collapsed with a rattling sound.

“That surprised me. Is that a trap?”

“Yeah, I discovered it when we came here a while back.”

“Hooh~, that’s incredible. If it was just me I would have fallen for this probably.”

After seeing Doji’s surprised, round eyes Pick looked proud.
Not probably, you would have most certainly fallen for this.
Me as well but I can’t tell the others.

“Then, let’s get down quickly.”

“Right. Then, Pick, if you would”

Pick nods to my words.

“Then I’ll go down”

I have Knopf send down a light ball along with Pick who climbs down a rope.
Crescent Moon went down next this time as well.

“Heeeey, Mister, all clear”

After hearing Crescent Moon’s voice from the bottom the remaining members go down, too.
First, it’s Knopf’s turn then Doji’s.

“Could you go next?”

Kitora told me.

But, you see, something like last time might happen.

Though I'd be happy getting such a lucky pervert moment 「¹」 I'd like to be excused from her anger.

"If I fall who will catch me beside you? Go down quickly!"

Kitora thrust her finger towards me who was hesitant and said that. I didn't have a choice ... I went down.

When I climbed down and arrived, sure enough, I saw a butt falling from the top.

As I anticipated it I had some margin this time around.

"Come on, let me down quickly! For how long do you want to keep touching me?!"

I'd like it if you wouldn't get so angry every time.

This is my dignity as a villain.

Also, Crescent Moon, stop looking at me with those eyes.

But I'm satisfied as I got to enjoy this soft feeling.

We went on the same route as we did last time. And just like last time Vampire bats and Goblins come out one after another.

"There are a lot this time. I bet the nest was restored."

Just as Crescent Moon said, the Goblin's nest was restored as well. There was no fence like last time, though. It feels like they didn't have enough time.

"It feels the same as last time so we don't have to worry too much, right?"

"That's right, they are easily dealt with if we blow them away with that magic."

Crescent Moon winks at Knopf. It seemed like her inhibitions towards Knopf were completely wiped away.

"Time is of the essence, let's force our way through here. First, Knopf and I will shoot some fireballs inside."

Knopf nodded.

"Then Crescent Moon and Doji will form the vanguard and head inside there. Pick and Kitora will attack from behind them. Although this is pretty aggressive

we can go with this.”

“So it’s my turn. My arms are tingling with excitement”

Don’t get too fired up either, Doji.

“Then, let’s go!”

I call the spirit salamander, Reus, and shoot a fireball together with Knopf while letting out a shout.

The Goblins who saw us headed our way while screaming Giiii Giiii.

The two fireballs drew a great parabola and landed inside the nest behind the Goblins before exploding.

A powerful explosion, like the ones one could see in war movies, occurred and blew the Goblins away.

At that moment Crescent Moon and Doji headed inside.

“I show you my axe skills!”

Whenever Doji swung his huge axe the Goblins in the circumference got blown away and beaten down.

Crescent Moon who was swinging her swords as well took some distance from him as to not get rolled up in his attacks.

There didn’t seem to be any upper-class monsters around either so it was an easy victory.

Pick attacks with her sling and I also got to practice my fireball throwing.

My accuracy was fairly good as well, better than before.

“Injured people are unlikely to appear so it seems like I’m pretty much free.”

“Right, it doesn’t seem to matter if magic is used or not.”

Knopf and Kitora were comfortable chatting in the rear.

Meanwhile, the Goblins seemed to have been exterminated.

How disappointing.

“So, from this point on it’ll be the real deal.”

“Cause we’ve no idea what’ll appear”

Crescent Moon advanced deeper into the destroyed nest while being fired up. Pick also moved while carefully checking the area.

“Ah, watch out. Poisoned arrows”

While saying that, Pick tries to deactivate the trap.

Her profile looked unusually serious.

It seems to be a device which would shoot arrows from one's blind spot if one stepped on the stone floor.

“Hey, be careful”

“I'm fine, big bro.....Okay, that should do it.”

Pick stood up while wiping off the sweat flowing from her forehead.

Anyway, this hobbit's age is still unknown.

“Though there are traps here don't you think it kind of doesn't feel like “I won't let you advance no matter what”?”

“Right, if anything, their purpose seems to be to sort out the intruders”

Kitora answered Knopf.

For what reason would one choose to test the intruders' ability?

“It's enemies!”

We entered a place which seemed like a large, open hall when Crescent Moon briefly raised her voice.

I and Doji grabbed our weapons and replaced Pick and Crescent Moon as the vanguard.

“Where's the enemy?”

Doji looked around with his axe in hand.

Certainly, an enemyish figure is.....hm?

“It's that, take a closer look”

There were three pillars which seem to support the high ceiling of this hall.

Eerie stone statues with the appearance of birds were embedded in the upper parts of the pillars.

Don't they seem to move slowly?

“A Gargoyle”

“Mister, good answer — look”

Crescent Moon took the bow she had hung over her shoulder and took out an arrow.

As we are in a labyrinth she gave priority to manoeuvrability rather than range. As one would expect she's really skilled.

The shot arrow flew towards the closest stone statue and struck wonderfully. It's not a stone statue after all as the arrow got stuck in it.

As I was thinking that, the stone statues took off all at once.

"What's this?"

Doji who looked up towards the demonic beasts, which he saw for the first time today, raised a loud voice.

When they opened their wings they revealed an even more abominable figure which literally screamed demonic beast.

Of course, this is my first time seeing the real thing as well.

I have often seen them in games.

"Be careful, they will attack from above and their claws are drenched in petrification poison."

"Uhya, I don't want to turn into stone."

I agree as well.

I don't want to be turned into a stone statue and end up as decoration for this place.

"Don't they have a weak point?"

"They were stone statues originally so their skin is hard and blades can't really cut through it. But they are surprisingly fragile when physically hit."

"Hitting stuff is my forte!"

Doji got fired up.

My Great Sword seems to be better in smashing than cutting as well.

The only annoying thing is that they fly around somewhere above.

"First, we'll restrain them with my arrows and the cat-eared magician's magic. As it's difficult to hit any vitals when they are flying around, shoot over its eyes and drag it down to a level where we can hit."

“If that’s the case I’ll lend a hand as well. Miss Thief, I will bestow on your sling an explosion buff so shoot steadily.”

As she said this Kitora started to chant.
Then Pick’s sling starts to shine in a suspicious, black light.

“Uwa, amazing. I’ll go, too!”

Chapter 8 – Gargoyle

Three Gargoyles danced over our heads.
They have an abominable appearance. Is the reason for their silence them being stone statues, I wonder?
It's even weirder that they attack while not uttering a single sound.

“Here they come.....Shoot now!”

At Crescent Moon's command, a sling and a bow were fired at once.
The arrow which Crescent Moon shot hit the right Gargoyle's wing which aimed for Doji.
The Gargoyle lost its posture while trying to attack for an instant because of the shock.

“Oops-a-daisy!”

Not missing this chance, Doji jumped up and swung his axe down on it.
The fellow that got blown down by the shock hastily tries to fix its posture in the air.
Mmm, it's rather resilient to not get torn from that.
However, the damage seemed to take its toll on it.

Pick slung a stone with her sling at the Gargoyle which came from the furthest end of the hall.
The stone leaving the sling which got buffed by the beautiful Priestess of Darkness Kitora exploded as soon as it hit.
As it wasn't able to come over here anymore this attack had enough power to confine it.

“This is great, isn't it?!”

“Right? Well, though it's simple magic it's useful. You, shall I bestow this onto your sword as well?”

Kitora turned towards me and asked me proudly.
A Great sword that explodes whenever it cuts something is dangerous and I

can't bring myself to use something like that.

"No, I'm good"

"What, how boring. It seemed interesting."

While saying such things Knopf shot her storm magic towards the Gargoyle on the left.

The Gargoyle got rolled up in a cyclone.

Because of its hard skin this, too, seemed to be ineffective but it lost its balance.

But he kept pushing towards me even while being like that.

Okay, let's try and see if flames are effective against you, shall we?

"Fire Sword"

I call Reus and chant the incantation.

The Great Sword I held in both of my hands was instantly covered in flames.

I slashed at the Gargoyle heading towards me with the sword coated in flames.

Bang!

A strong shock as if I hit rock rings through my hands.

Isn't this too hard?

If this sword wasn't made out of Oricalcum it would have absolutely shattered.

Oh well, it may be more common to smash things instead of cutting them with a great sword like this.

"Oh, you did it, Akatsuki!"

For a moment, I took my eyes off the enemy and unintentionally looked at the blade before Crescent Moon's voice brought me back to my senses.

When I looked back at the Gargoyle it fell and hit the ground.

It seems like my sword hit the root of its wings and now couldn't fly anymore because they are half torn off.

Looks like my author's cheat is in good health, huh?

Anyway, I'm glad I was able to deal some damage.

"I'll finish it -- Stone Spear!"

The moment Knopf cast her magic a pointed, inverted cone-shaped, stone spear appeared over the Gargoyles head.

The lump of stone which exceeds 40 centimetres in diameter is more than a

meter long.

Isn't that thing considerably heavy?

Even though it's magic, for something like this to float in mid-air.

That gigantic spear — too humongous to call it just a spear — dropped straight down on the Gargoyle.

Dooooon!

It blew up dirt and dust as it crashed into the Gargoyle.

This is the power called weight.

Despite the Gargoyle originating from a stone statue and in conclusion being hard, it got smashed into oblivion not even leaving a piece of stone in its place.

“Uoo, this is amazing as well!”

Crescent Moon raised a surprised voice addressing the power of Knopf's magic.

“It's impossible to aim with something of that size so I just dropped it down on it”

Knopf answered casually.

Despite it being magic one can't completely ignore the mass, huh?

By the way, from where did you take the stone to form this spear?

While I was troubled about such things, Crescent Moon cooperates with Doji and tossed around one of the Gargoyles.

Crescent Moon shot the wings which seem to have low defence and Doji strikes it while its speed was low.

That fellow was visibly weakened by the repetition of those actions.

Its wings were already torn up.

There didn't seem to be an issue there.

“Big bro, here comes the next one!”

The black Gargoyle which got confined by Pick's sling came over here.

Meanwhile, stones were exploding around it one after another.

Black magic sure is handy.

Let's experiment with it a little more.

I instructed Reus to convert the flames of my Fire Sword into heat.

The flames disappeared from my sword and before it flared up with a red-hot

shine.

As it would become too soft if it's too hot I asked Reus to be careful regarding that.

I tried to slash at the Gargoyle which came into the range of my red Great Sword.

—Oh.

There was less shock than a while ago and as an effect of the heat, it somehow was able to cut.

“Big bro, it works!”

Yes, I think so, too.

It made a crack rather than a big scratch on its body and the Gargoyle flew back in reactionary motion.

It couldn't fly high and its movements seemed pained.

I can do this!

I flew towards it and slashed at it in a flurry.

Kashing!

The Gargoyle's body split in two under the shock and then shattered.

“We're done over here as well”

Crescent Moon and Doji blew down the right Gargoyle safely, too.

It somehow seems like an inorganic monster.

I thought such things while I watched the pieces turn to dust.

“Those Gargoyles are the same as golems and are artificial demonic beasts made with black magic”

As if she read my mind Kitora explained this to me.

As I thought, this dungeon is managed by someone and probably made by the same person, isn't it?

This seems to be complicated.