

Death
attribute
Magician

3

四度目は嫌いな 死属性魔術師

Written by densuke
Illustration ばん！



The death mage who doesn't want a fourth time

Volume 3: March of the Eclipse King's Army

By Densuke

Chapter 52: What's impossible is impossible. So then let's think of a method that is possible.

On this day, tears of blood fell from every statue of Yupeon, the god of ice serving Peria, the goddess of water and knowledge, in the Bahn Gaia continent and throughout the rest of the world. Those who had received Yupeon's divine protection heard the 'scream of a god' and lost consciousness.

The cause of that was Vandalieu breaking and destroying the soul of Ice Age, the magic spear of ice. But as the Ice Age's consciousness never returned to Yupeon's main body, even Yupeon who had lost a clone of himself did not know this.

The people feared this omen, worrying that it signaled the return of the Demon King or the second resurrection of the fallen champion Zakkart, and the clergymen of every region became very busy.

A heavy atmosphere had fallen upon the audience chamber that was well-organized despite its cleaning being incomplete.

Most of those who had challenged the Dragon Golem excluding the Stone Golems still remained here.

Bone Wolf, Bone Bird and the other Undead animals had turned into a Bone Chimera that let out a strange cry of multiple beasts at once.

The only ones who weren't here were Vandalieu, the one who had repaired this audience chamber, and Bone Man whose spine and hips had been crushed and was still unable to move on his own.

They were still beneath the royal castle.

In order to find out whether the destroyed resurrection device could be

repaired or not.

After Vandalieu destroyed Ice Age's soul, everyone received an incredible quantity of Experience Points that even Borkus had never earned in a single battle before. The Dragon Golem made of Orichalcum by a goddess that had been challenged by the S-class-destined Divine Spear of Ice Mikhail and his companions. It had remained standing even after claiming the lives of all of Mikhail's companions and inflicting a fatal wound on Mikhail himself.

Because they had dealt the final blow to such a foe, everyone gained an enormous amount of Experience Points.

As a result, Vigaro had become a Rank 7 Ghoul Tyrant, the highest, most powerful type of Ghoul that had been historically witnessed. His enormous body was now over two and a half meters tall, matching the height of the Titans, and he had grown two additional arms. He was a powerful, four-armed warrior.

Rita and Saria's armor looked the same as before, but they had become Rank 6 High-Magic Armors and their Spirit Form skills had improved. They looked far more human than their previous log-like, vaguely-human-shaped bodies.

... Though Vandalieu would consider them to be like a full-body, white version of the silhouettes depicting the criminal in a way that their age and gender couldn't be determined in mystery manga.

In fact, their Spirit Forms were bulging in various places; it was like some form of joke.

And the levels of the other members had increased as well. Bone Man, who wasn't present here, had probably increased his Rank and Vandalieu's Job level had likely increased significantly as well.

However, the atmosphere in here wasn't a happy celebration of these facts.

"They sure are taking their time..."

Several hours had already passed, but there was no sign of Vandalieu returning. He hadn't suffered any injuries other than giving Eleanora a little of his own blood, but he had expended a large amount of his Mana and his Surpass Limits skill had been active. There was no way that he wasn't feeling

fatigued.

However, nobody could suggest that they go to see what was happening.

Everyone could remember Vandalieu's shock upon learning that the resurrection device had been destroyed.

Among everyone gathered in this place, Eleanora had known Vandalieu for the least amount of time, and as she had been sold by her parents when she was young, she had no fond memories of her family.

But she knew how much Vandalieu wished for the resurrection of his mother.

His mother had been killed while he was young. That alone isn't unusual; it is an unhappy story one could hear anywhere. Even as the surviving child bears the large emotional wound, the sorrow must be put in the past in order to move on. Just as Eleanora had put the fact that she had been sold by her parents in the past in order to continue living.

Even she, who possessed an affinity for the time attribute, could not erase the past.

But Vandalieu-sama possesses power. So much power that he might be able to achieve the perfect resurrection of the dead that was impossible even for the goddess.

It might be possible. If he reached a hand out, it might reach it; if he tried his best, he might make it happen. That was why Vandalieu was not trying to put his mother's death in the past.

In fact, he had almost reached it. Darcia's resurrection.

But his efforts had been hindered and trampled underfoot for reasons that there was no way he could understand. It was terrifying to simply imagine his rage, shock and frustration.

Vandalieu-sama is someone who hates those that try to take happiness away from him. He feels anger towards them, he hates them, he curses them, he fears them. He feels true happiness at their ruin and takes comfort in their destruction.

Eleanora had felt this more powerfully than anything else when Vandalieu

had destroyed the souls of Sercrent and the Subordinate Vampires who had tried to kill Tarea. That was why he had also destroyed the soul of Ice Age today.

But unlike when he had destroyed Sercrent, Vandalieu was likely unsatisfied with the destruction of Ice Age's soul.

If I could comfort him, I would want to do so, but... I'm not scared, so why am I thinking these things?

Eleanora let out a sigh and placed a hand on her chest. This was the spot where Ice Age's ice had pierced her, and the wound had healed without a trace due to Vandalieu's magic and blood.

Before, she would have been scared if her life had been saved and she had not been of any use. She would have been terrified that she would be discarded for being useless and unnecessary.

But the emotion in her chest now was clearly something other than fear. A nausea-like discomfort and pain, as if her chest was being squeezed.

Do I want to comfort him because of these mysterious emotions? I have not felt the need to gain Vandalieu-sama's favor through straightforward methods until now.

Even if Eleanora didn't do such things, Vandalieu still treated her well. So just why?

"Is the Holy Son still underground?" asked Nuaza, who had entered the audience chamber while Eleanora was deeply reflecting on her inner feelings.

"Yes," replied Zadiris. "He still has not come out."

"I see... There was something that I wanted to apologize to him for," said Nuaza.

"Are you talking about when you, me and the kid went underground two years ago?" Borkus, who had been silently frowning with the remaining part of his face, interrupted. "If so, I'm the one who needs to apologize, not you. I'm the one who asked him to find Zandia-jouchan and Jeena. If he had told me about the resurrection device beforehand and I'd thought about the possibility

of Mikhail's spear being an Artifact with its own mind... If I'd never lost to that bastard Mikhail two hundred years ago in the first place, if I'd broken that spear, things wouldn't have turned out this way."

When they met, Borkus had resisted Vandalieu's Death-Attribute Charm. He could probably resist it even now if he tried.

But he had stopped resisting it of his own will. He had realized that doing so was meaningless.

A brat whose expressionless face made it impossible to tell what he was thinking or where he was looking.

That brat had brought the happiness of energetic, everyday life back to the previously-empty Talosheim.

While being given nothing in return.

Vandalieu could have received plenty of compensation if he had asked for it; for Borkus and the other Undead Titans, such compensation would have been a necessary price to pay.

The safe life they had in the city was because Vandalieu had repaired the walls; they were able to enjoy delicious food because he made flavorings using his magic; he had even repaired the enormous rooms in the royal castle.

The goodwill and respect he had received was only natural considering his actions, and though the title of 'Holy Son' was originally something that Nuaza had started using, it was now a fitting title for Vandalieu to have.

He still hadn't recovered the corpses of Zandia and Jeena, but he had said that he would do so in the next few decades. His enemies would be the Pure-breed Vampires who would likely be impossible to defeat even with all the heroes of Talosheim gathered, so facing them within the next few decades could even be considered too early.

And now that Borkus had been on the verge of repaying the debt that he owed to Vandalieu, it had become so distant again. How pathetic. How could he call himself an A-class adventurer when he couldn't even complete the one job he needed to do after receiving all the rewards in advance?

“No, that is not it.”

However, it seemed that the thing Nuaza wanted to apologize to Vandalieu for was something else.

“Huh? Then what is it?” asked Borkus.

“I have willingly destroyed a part of the Church that the Holy Son was gracious enough to take the time and effort to restore. I have already apologized to Vida and Peria, so...”

“Destroyed?” Eleanora repeated. “Do you mean...?”

“The statue of Yupeon, the god of ice,” said Nuaza. “It had merged with the pedestal, so I carefully detached it and buried it in the ground.”

In many Churches, statues of gods other than the main god of the Church are enshrined. Not all gods have statues gathered in every Church, but even if Yupeon was a subordinate god, he had existed since one hundred thousand years ago.

Unlike Alda and his subordinates who were clearly the enemy, it wouldn't have been strange for Yupeon's statue to be in Talosheim's Church of Vida.

Nuaza had buried that statue.

“I-is it alright for you to do something like that?” Though Saria didn't breathe, she gasped and held her breath.

Though Zadiris and the other Ghouls wouldn't have immediately understood as they had never built Churches themselves, statues of gods have a special meaning in this world.

This is a world where the existence of gods is known to be true, so an action such as Nuaza's would be a literal display of a lack of fear towards the gods. The armies of the Amid Empire and its nations that worship Alda as its official religion often destroy statues of Vida, but that is because their god instructs them to.

However, there was no sign of hesitation in Nuaza's mummified face.

“Of course. Yupeon has clearly declared through his follower in Ice Age that we are his enemies. However, we have not done anything to be ashamed of,

nor have we been punished. So just as we are divine enemies to that god, it is only natural that we treat him as our enemy.”

That god regarded everyone here as enemies, including Vida who Nuaza and the others worshipped. So even if he was a subordinate god of Peria like Tristan, who had sired the Mer-people with Vida, there was no reason to hold back.

“However, it is a fact that I have buried and disposed of a statue that the Holy Son restored,” said Nuaza. “Incidentally, the sun has set and a considerable amount of time has passed. Should we not go and see what is happening?”

“Huh?” Borkus looked surprised. “Has it been that long?”

“Well, we can’t see the sun or the stars from this room,” Rita pointed out.

“I suppose Undead have a duller sense of time. But too much time has certainly passed,” Zadiris said in agreement.

“Alright, let’s go and see what’s happening,” said Vigaro.

Though they had been doubting how wise it would be to all go down together, now that there was an opportunity and because everyone was curious about how Vandalieu was doing, they all descended underground once more.

“Jyuuh? What is the matter, everyone?”

And then they encountered Bone Man before they reached the chamber.

“What about you, Bone Man-san?” asked Saria. “Did you have your bones repaired?”

“Yes. And I have a message from my lord.”

“A message?” Eleanora repeated. “What did Vandalieu-sama say?”

“He said, ‘I will be here for a while longer to investigate the device a little more. Also, I am hungry so please bring me some food. Thank you.’”

“... I’d thought that he wouldn’t eat or drink because of the shock, but it seems that he’s more composed than we thought,” said Vigaro.

“Alright, we’ll all be making a special dish for Bocchan!” Rita announced. “Everyone except me, that is!” she added.

“Rita, you are a maid, so you should at least learn to make simple dishes,” said Saria, scolding her.

“No, now that I think about it, the boy is the only one among us who knows how to cook properly,” Zadiris pointed out.

“I could manage if it’s just roasting meat,” said Eleanora.

“Even I could do that,” said Borkus.

Bone Chimera let out a cry.

If these women were on Earth, they would have been criticized for their lack of feminine skills.

Vandalieu slept properly at night, ate breakfast, lunch and dinner without skipping a meal and, of course, took baths.

After investigating the resurrection device for a month in this way, Vandalieu came to the conclusion that repairing it was possible, but impossible for now.

The resurrection device was truly something that had been made by the goddess Vida; even though Vandalieu had acquired the Alchemy skill, his skills were still average and he couldn’t make any sense of it at all. It was like a caveman who had just invented stone tools trying to hand-build a supercomputer out of semiconductors.

However, Vandalieu had the Golem Transmutation skill. With this skill that was capable of turning inanimate objects into Golems to change their shape freely, restoring the broken device to its original form was possible.

Ice Age’s ice had torn holes in the resurrection device and severed parts of it. But fortunately, the components hadn’t exploded or warped into a different shape, nor had any important parts been blown away completely. It was possible to return it to its original form.

However, the essential Golem Transmutation skill was not working on the components of the resurrection device.

Even with the use of Appraisal, Vandalieu couldn’t learn anything about the resurrection device’s components other than things like, ‘A mysterious alloy,’

and, 'A mysterious gemstone.' They repelled his Mana even more strongly than Orichalcum and refused to become Golems.

It was likely that either Orichalcum had been included as materials or they were made of some unknown god-made metal. This was a fantasy world of swords and magic, after all. Since Orichalcum existed, it wouldn't be strange for Hihirokane^[1] or other legendary divine metals to exist as well.

However, Vandaliu's Golem Transmutation had leveled up after the battle with the Dragon Golem, and he had become able to make Orichalcum stay in a fixed shape after manipulating it. If Golem Transmutation increased in level even further, it might be possible to return this device to its original state one day

... It might be impossible even after the skill's level reached its maximum, or the device might not function normally even after the shape of its components had been restored, however.

That was why Vandaliu wanted to find other ways of repairing the resurrection device other than leveling up his Golem Transformation skill or discover another way to resurrect Darcia.

Using Eleanora's time-attribute magic to return the device to before it was destroyed... would be difficult, apparently.

"I was taken in by Birkyne because I have an affinity for the time attribute; if you look at it positively, this attribute is one that becomes great over time. If you look at it negatively, it is an attribute that fails to live up to its name and cannot accomplish anything great except when wielded by the absolute best of the best," Eleanora explained.

The time attribute is the attribute ruled by Ricklent, the genie of time and magic, an attribute that does not exist in Origin. However, like the space attribute, there are few people or monsters with an affinity for it, and it does not have easily-understood effects like the other attributes.

Of course, once the skill reaches level 10, it would be possible to stop time, rewind it, look into the past and future and reach the limits of human knowledge.

However, a mage of Eleanora's level could only accelerate time around herself to speed up her movements, or spend multiple hours to look several days into the past or a few seconds into the future.

"Even if I received Mana from you, Vandalieu-sama, it would be questionable as to whether I would be able to rewind time by even one second..."

Reassuring Eleanora that her apologies were unnecessary, Vandalieu tried to think of other methods.

If possible, a method that would definitely work would be to ask the goddess Vida who had made this device and her subordinates to repair it. She was the one who had built it, so it should be possible for her to repair it. And since she had been conducting research on how to resurrect the dead, it was possible that there were other similar devices outside of Talosheim.

The problem was that Vandalieu didn't know where those would be.

It was said that Vida was lying dormant in the southern region of the Bahn Gaia continent after her defeat at the hands of Alda. But not only would it take time to search the region that made up a third of the continent's land mass that was filled with Devil's Nests inhabited by unknown, powerful monsters, it would also be too dangerous.

As for methods other than using the resurrection device, Vandalieu couldn't think of any methods other than reading through the documents in the Mages' Guilds and the kingdom's archives in human societies and learning about the ancient past from Liches and the spirits of mages.

"In other words, I've come to the conclusion that I have no choice but to work hard and gather information at the same time," Vandalieu told Darcia. "I'm sorry."

The fifth summer of Vandalieu's third lifetime had passed, and he was now five years old.

"Don't worry about it; it isn't your fault," Darcia reassured him. "And if you wanted, I could even become an Undead..."

"No. And there is no vessel for you anyway, is there?"

If Darcia's dead body was available, Vandalieu might have considered it. However, High Priest Gordan had made a display of burning her alive, so there was nothing remaining of it other than the small bone fragment that Darcia's spirit currently resided in.

Recreating her entire body from just this bone fragment would be impossible even for Vandalieu.

"Hmm, then how about using a suit of armor and making me a Living Armor like Saria-chan and Rita-chan?" Darcia suggested.

"There are no suits of armor shaped like the ones that Saria and Rita are inhabiting readily available," Vandalieu told her.

"N-no, I didn't mean that I wanted armor shaped like theirs. I would like a nice-looking suit of armor, but those ones are a little..."

Vandalieu also felt little desire to recommend that Darcia inhabit a bikini armor or high-leg leotard armor, so he was happy to hear that she wasn't enthusiastic about them.

... Though now that Vandalieu calmly looked back on it, when Darcia was alive, she had exposed more of her body than would normally be expected.

But now that he had spent the past few years in the company of Ghoul women who exposed more of themselves than Darcia, perhaps he wouldn't mind that anymore.

In fact, he was thinking that Eleanora, who had recently joined his companions, exposed herself very little. Of course, he had never voiced that opinion. He could only see a future where she would strip off her clothes if he did.

"But this is causing you nothing but trouble, Vandalieu, I wouldn't mind if you used a suit of armor –"

"You *should* mind. Please mind it." Vandalieu interrupted Darcia, as she seemed to be on the verge of making a strange decision.

Vandalieu somehow managed to take Darcia's mind off the idea of becoming a Living Armor by suggesting creating a body for Darcia by processing the

corpses of creatures like monsters.

Vandalieu had never imagined that he would become Dr. Frankenstein in a fantasy world, but sewing corpses together was likely possible. It would be very difficult to make one that resembled Darcia exactly, however.

Wasn't there a spirit of a bizarre murderer somewhere who could teach him how to do it? Vandalieu decided that he should at least ask the Pure-breed Vampires' souls before breaking them.

"Also, what is this God Slayer skill that I learned?" Vandalieu wondered.

He had acquired a skill that was even more difficult to examine than his Soul Break skill. The fact that it was a unique skill probably meant that only Vandalieu had it; it was highly likely that nobody knew about this skill.

"Hmm, wouldn't it be a skill that kills gods after all?" Darcia suggested.

Vandalieu had tried asking everyone, but nobody, including Darcia, knew the answer.

Vandalieu thought that if this were a game, it would probably be something that simply granted bonus damage against gods and their followers.

As Ice Age was now just a stick of Orichalcum, there were no followers of any gods nearby. There was no way to test it out.

Also, the experience granted by the Dragon Golem had caused the level of his Golem Transmuter Job to reach the maximum limit, so Vandalieu had decided to go and undergo another Job-change tomorrow.

The Attribute Value increases of Golem Transmuter were inclined towards Intelligence, so his Agility had decreased quite a lot, but his Strength and Stamina were close to their base values. His Mana hadn't increased as much as he'd expected, but the bonuses to his skills had come in handy.

These were Vandalieu's thoughts on that Job.

- **Name:** Vandalieu
- **Race:** Dhampir (Dark Elf)
- **Age:** 5 years old

- **Title:**【Ghoul King】
- **Job:** Golem Transmuter
- **Level:** 100
- **Job history:** Death-Attribute Mage
- **Attributes:**
 - Vitality: 115
 - Mana: 224,506,933
 - Strength: 79
 - Agility: 80^[2]
 - Stamina: 83
 - Intelligence: 392
- **Passive skills:**
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
 - Rapid Healing: Level 3
 - Death-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 5
 - Magic Resistance: Level 1
 - Dark Vision
 - Mental Corruption: Level 10
 - Death-Attribute Charm: Level 5
 - Chant Revocation: Level 3
 - Strengthen Followers: Level 7
 - Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 3
- **Active skills:**
 - Bloodsucking: Level 3
 - Surpass Limits: Level 4
 - Golem Transmutation: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 4
 - Mana Control: Level 4
 - Spirit Form: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Carpentry: Level 4
 - Engineering: Level 3
 - Cooking: Level 2
 - Alchemy: Level 3

- Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 2
- Soul Break: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- Multi-Cast: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- Long-distance Control: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - God Slayer: Level 1
- **Curses**
 - Experience gained in previous life not carried over
 - Cannot learn existing jobs
 - Unable to gain experience independently

Job explanation:

【Golem Transmuter】

A Job that influences the Golem Transmutation skill and other skills that can be gained from that skill. It grants bonuses to a wide range of skills, but in exchange, the growth of Attribute Values is quite limited.

The requirement for acquiring this Job is to have a level 1 skill in Golem Transmutation, but there is currently not a single person or monster in Lambda other than Vandalieu who possesses this skill.

Skill explanation:

【Long-distance Control】

A skill that allows the user to continue to manipulate parts of the body that are separated from the main body, such as severed limbs.

It is mainly used by high-Rank Undead of races such as Skeletons, Zombies, Living Armors and Dullahans. On rare occasions, it can be possessed by monsters with tremendous Vitality.

As the level of the skill increases, the distance at which body parts can be controlled as well as the number of parts that can be controlled at a given time increase. Of course, there are no people who possess this skill. Also, there is no known method of training that would allow the acquisition of this skill.

Notes

1. A legendary metal in Japanese fiction. It has multiple kanji reading variations that can mean, “vast fire gold”, “crimson gold” or “sun-red gold”
2. I have no idea why Vandalieu’s agility jumped from 46 to 80 when he said that it decreased, but that’s what is written :S

Side Chapter 2: The only remaining god of the eleven gods

Alda, the god of law and fate. The only god of creation still remaining in Lambda excluding the subordinate gods. The god who possessed the most power even including the evil gods.

The source of that power lay in the followers and servants who respected him and, most importantly, the number of believers who offered him their prayers.

He had suffered deep wounds during the battle against the Demon King and the one against Vida who was supposed to be his ally, but even so, Alda's power was vast.

He was depicted as an austere-looking, white-haired old man holding a heavy book, a stern-eyed young man holding a large sickle of judgment in his left hand and a torch in his right, or as a shining moon. All of these were Alda's forms, his symbols.

Alda had been worried about many things in the past few tens of thousands of years. What he was worried about, of course, was the future of the world of Lambda that he loved.

To be more precise, he had always been worrying. He had contemplated, listened to the voices of the people, thinking about how he could keep the world in the light, how to preserve its order, how to bring about and maintain peace, how to spread these ideals to the people and make them understand them. He was always thinking about these.

However, things had not gone favorably in the past few tens of thousands of years.

"I suppose this means it is time to revise the policy that has been in place up until now. It is truly irritating that I have no choice but to agree with the words of that god of reincarnation. However..." Alda whispered to himself, trying to

gather his thoughts.

“Please wait,” said another voice. Curatos, the God of Records who was a subordinate god of Alda’s and his close aide, had appeared at his side.

Curatos was one of the servants (Equivalent to angels on Earth) created by Alda shortly after the birth of the world who had risen to become a god. He did not possess his own divinity; he was merely Alda’s close aide and this was symbolized by the book that he was holding in his hand.

“My lord, there is no need to pay any heed to the words of one such as Rodcorte,” Curatos advised. “The ‘development’ he speaks of is merely a pretense.”

“Calm yourself, Curatos,” said Alda, reassuring his servant. “It is not that I have acknowledged that there is a need for the ‘development’ of which Rodcorte speaks.”

Rodcorte had told Alda and the other gods many times that this world was inferior to other worlds and that ‘development’ was necessary.

However, these words did not ring true in the hearts of Alda and his companions; it was little more than a vague, meaningless complaint.

The development and passing on of culture and art, the stable continuation of a civilization. These are very wonderful things.

But for Alda and the other gods, these were not the things that needed to be prioritized the most.

For the god of law and fate Alda and his subordinate gods, the gods that supported him such as Yupeon, these were times of war. The Demon King and Vida had been defeated, but the evil gods were still making hidden movements while monsters and the races created by Vida were building their nests.

The first thing that needed to be prioritized was the battle against the evil gods, the monsters and the races created by Vida. What was the use in prioritizing the world’s ‘development’ over that?

And then Alda had realized the true intentions behind the ‘development’ that Rodcorte wished for. Rodcorte simply desired for the population of this world

to increase. Because as the number of souls going around in the cycle of reincarnation increased, that god's power would increase with it.

But in contrast, Alda did not particularly want for the population of people in this world to increase.

If the number of people increased too much, the number of resources required to sustain them would increase, many factions would form and new nations would be established. And then there would be conflict between them, making order more difficult to maintain.

It was already difficult to maintain with the current population of less than one hundred million; if Lambda's total population were to increase to the multiple billions that Rodcorte was requesting, there was no telling what kind of disorder and chaos would be brought about. It was terrifying just to imagine.

"To begin with, 'development' is not needed for the preservation of the world," said Alda. "It is absurd to use other worlds as an example."

He admired science and technology that did not require the use of magic, but was that something that was necessary in Lambda?

Electricity, automobiles, gunpowder and dynamite, aircraft, computers, stock trading. The benefits brought about by these things were surely great, and it would certainly make the lives of the people more rich and convenient. But would this outweigh the disadvantages brought about by the existence of such things?

In fact, the existence of those things caused the destruction of nature for the sake of generating energy. Were they not also the causes of some wars and conflicts?

Automobiles caused tens of thousands of people to die in accidents every year; gunpowder, dynamite and aircraft were utilized in wars. Computers gave rise to new crimes while stock trading caused people to concern themselves over things with no physical form and bring themselves to ruin.

The most foolish thing of all was that in worlds where these things existed, there was still no complete system established to control the people who used them, and the systems that did exist were not followed.

Magic already existed in Lambda. There were drawbacks to its existence; people used it to kill one another.

So why should the seeds of disaster from other worlds be planted in this one to add to that?

That was why Rodcorte's words made little impression on Alda. Alda would simply answer that each world had its own circumstances.

That was the consensus of opinion held by the other gods who supported him as well.

"Then what policy would you be revising?" asked Curatos. "The Demon King's transmigration system and Vida's transmigration system... Without their destruction, this world cannot possibly know peace, my lord."

Alda's objective was to destroy the transmigration systems of this world other than Rodcorte's, bringing ruin to the evil gods, monsters and the races created by Vida.

The transmigration system that Rodcorte had created and was now ruling over, unlike Rodcorte himself, was perfect. However, the other two systems were problematic products.

The transmigration system created by the Demon King was still continuing to spawn monsters in this world. It was even used by the evil gods to willingly reincarnate themselves and be reborn.

It was making some contribution to the people in the form of Dungeons, but that was a matter of a single benefit in exchange for a hundred... no, a thousand disadvantages^[1]. And souls were not needed for merely supplying Dungeons with monsters. It was not impossible for Dungeons to generate and arrange soulless puppets... though this would require Alda to wait for the revival of Ricklent, the genie of time and magic.

And the system created by Vida was a very unstable product. As it was merely an imitation of an imitation of the original system, that was to be expected. It seemed that Vida had been thinking of moving the transmigration of every creature in this world to that system one day, but that would have been far too dangerous an endeavor.

Vida had mated with monsters to produce new races in order to stabilize her system and given birth to Vampires partially to have them assist it. Entrusting such an unstable system with the souls of the world's people was unthinkable.

"Many brave souls have fought for your ideals," said Curatos. "For their sake..."

He had 'recorded' all of history up until this point. Therefore, he was someone who used the past as a reference when making decisions on things.

Alda gave Curatos a bitter smile.

"I am certainly not considering giving up on putting an end to Vida's folly," he said. "I am thinking about whether I should revise the way I am doing things."

Curatos let out a sigh of relief. And then he began trying to record Alda's thoughts.

"How are you going to revise your methods?" asked Curatos.

The way Alda had done things up until now was to make his teachings clear and then leave the specific methods of putting them into practice up to the people.

Gods were those who guided the people, not rulers. This fact was one thing that Alda could agree with the gods of other worlds upon.

Alda's teachings stated that the evil gods and members of the races created by Vida were to be exterminated alongside those who didn't follow his doctrine, and that relying on knowledge that originated in other worlds such as the things left behind by Zakkart was forbidden.

He had delivered these teachings through a divine message to the more capable individuals among his believers.

However, the contents of his divine message had been twisted as it spread from those who received it, and there were many cases where they were not putting his teachings into practice correctly.

A recent example of this had occurred in the main Church of Alda in the Amid Empire. The extermination of Vida's races and the knowledge that had been brought from other worlds had been prioritized too much over the

extermination of the evil gods and their servants. And the Empire had been utilizing this in their politics too much.

Because of this, Hihiryushukaka, the Evil God of Joyful Life, was being allowed to extend his influence from the shadows.

“I will tell them precisely what needs to be prioritized,” said Alda. “Until now, I have been hoping that the people would make the correct decisions on their own, but it seems I have been wishing for things from the past for too long.”

“An unavoidable decision,” Curatos said in agreement. “Even you are far from omniscient and omnipotent after all, my lord.”

“Precisely. Even from this Divine Realm, there are many things I cannot see. That is the reason I had hoped that the people would put my divine message into practice in a way that is suitable for them. However...”

“Then what would you have them prioritize?” Curatos questioned Alda once more. “Should it be the extermination of the races spawned by Vida after all? Or perhaps you would limit their targets to the filthy creatures with monster blood mixed in their veins?”

The influence of the races created by Vida had decreased greatly over the past one hundred thousand years. There were few that possessed their own independent nations, and even those that did exist were on the scale of several thousand citizens. There were exceptions such as the Pure-breed Vampires, but they generally didn't possess much gathered strength. Crushing each race individually to exterminate them all would be relatively simple.

That was likely why Curatos guessed that Alda would prioritize this.

“No, Curatos,” said Alda, however. “I am planning to tell the people that the battle against the evil gods should be prioritized.”

“My lord! There are still many who have preserved their strength, including the Evil God of Joyful Life. Bellwood-dono is still in a slumber after he and the Evil God of Sinful Chains defeated each other. Is this acceptable?”

As Curatos said, the evil gods had preserved their strength better than the races created by Vida had. Not only were there those such as the Evil God of Joyful Life who had spread their roots into the depths of society, there were

those who had established great hordes of monsters who worshipped them and even those that had established their own nations of people who worshipped them on islands separate from the continents.

“I am sure that the battle against the evil gods will be fierce and harsh,” said Alda. “However, if the extermination of Vida’s races is prioritized, the evil gods will utilize that and take advantage of it. You have recorded the events that befell the Divine Spear of Ice, Mikhail, have you not?”

Mikhail, the Divine Spear of Ice, was a hero who had drawn Alda’s attention in recent times. He had been putting Alda’s doctrine and the champion^[2] Bellwood’s teachings into practice. Alda had been planning to one day welcome him to join him at least as a heroic spirit servant, or depending on his achievements, a heroic god like Bellwood, but...

“I have indeed,” replied Curatos. “That valuable individual was robbed from us by the darkness.”

Mikhail’s spirit had been stolen by something. It was likely the doing of the subordinates of the Evil God of Joyful Life or the subordinates of an evil god haunting the region beyond the Boundary Mountain Range.

“Whoever it was, those wicked gods utilized the conflict between Vida and myself in order to benefit from it,” said Alda. “With that being the case, the extermination of those gods should be prioritized over exterminating the weakened races created by Vida. Also, there are some among those races who have already established a position for themselves among the people.”

Among the races created by Vida, those such as Titans, Beast-men and Dark Elves had already established their existence among the people. Commoners, slaves, laborers, miners, prostitutes, adventurers, craftsmen. Most of them were in the lower positions of society, but there were also nobles and royalty among them.

As they were not evil in nature, there was no small number of countries who had accepted them as a part of their societies.

“Even if I instructed for them to be destroyed unsparingly, my true will would not be conveyed. The people cannot be told about the transmigration systems,

after all.”

If Alda were to instruct the people to slay their virtuous neighbors simply for being members of races created by Vida, they would criticize him as an unjust god and many would oppose.

Alda expected that his followers would be able to make the other people understand, but it was still not a favorable choice.

“Therefore, the spearhead must be pointed towards the evil gods first,” Alda concluded. “During that time, we must support the people and build plans for destroying Vida’s races.”

“I see,” said Curatos. “However, would the people understand your intentions immediately, my lord?”

“That is where the problem lies.”

Even if Alda used a divine message to convey his will, he could not meet the people and talk to them directly. Information needed to be reduced so that the people could understand, and even then, his believers who received it would need to translate it into their own words. Only then could the will of a god be conveyed.

If a god’s brain was a supercomputer, the brain of an average person was an older-generation handheld console. That was why it was necessary for Alda to choose a powerful individual among the believers when delivering a divine message in order to ensure that he and the believer were on the same wavelength.

If he were to choose an unskillful individual, they might not understand the meaning of the divine message at all and could misinterpret it. In some cases, they might not even realize that they had heard a divine message.

That was why it was correct to send only short, simple-to-understand divine messages to chosen saints.

It would be different if Alda were to descend upon the earth like he did during the age of the gods or welcome the souls of heroes such as Mikhail into the Divine Realm after death.

“Would they accept your will even if it is conveyed?” asked Curatos. “We subordinate gods and servants have been condemning Vida’s races as evil up until now, after all.”

“As the people could be told about the transmigration system, the extermination of Vida’s races was justified as being in the name of great justice, but... it seems that this has backfired.”

Alda believed that the races that had been created through breeding with monsters were evil. There might be some good individuals among them, but with modes of life such as that of the Vampires, roots of evil would be left behind in the future. They were destroying much of the world’s current order.

The ways Vampires lived, as well as the appearances of Lamias and Scylla, greatly differed from those of the people. Because of this many of the people believed Alda’s words and treated them as targets to be exterminated.

However, as Alda had mentioned not long ago, there were some members of Vida’s races who had been accepted by society. That was why Curatos and Yupeon, the god of ice, had been declaring that those races were evil in Alda’s name – so that they would be destroyed.

Destroying a transmigration system would require the use of an ability to destroy the soul like the Demon King’s, or the elimination of the destinations for the reincarnated souls... the killing of every single individual living creature that the souls could reincarnate in. Exceptions could not be made because they were virtuous or because they were a part of society.

“Now then, how should I handle this?” Alda wondered aloud. His thoughts were hectic, but he was truly devoted to his work as a god.

He was spreading across the world of Lambda the light attribute that he ruled over and the life attribute that he had stolen from Vida.

Normally, Lambda would be operating with the support of the eight gods of the attributes and three other gods, Marduke, Zeno and Gangpaplio.

However, as a result of the war against the Demon King and the battle against Vida, Alda was the only one remaining. The flame and wind attributes were functioning through the remaining subordinate gods of Zantark and Shizarion

sharing their management.

However, in order to take away Vida and her subordinate gods' divinity and prevent them from being revived, Alda had stolen her authority over the life attribute.

Because of this, Alda now had to manage the life attribute that he was not specialized in. His subordinate gods were assisting him with it, but it was not his specialty, so it would not become a significant asset in battle.

This would be like requesting the members of a professional football team to produce favorable results as sumo wrestlers without any decrease in skill.

Increasing the number of subordinate gods proficient with the life attribute would solve the problem, but those possessing vessels worthy of ascending to godhood did not come by so often, and Alda could not monopolize prodigious individuals for himself. All attributes were suffering, after all.

"A certain solution would be to have Rodcorte manipulate his system and introduce us souls that are worthy of becoming subordinate gods," said Alda. "However..."

Bringing individuals from other worlds to become gods temporarily and having them work for Alda, even if for only a few hundred years, would lessen the burden on Alda and his followers while increasing their strength to fight against the evil gods.

But Curatos shook his head.

"That god's response would certainly be, 'I cannot use my system in an arbitrary manner,'" said Curatos.

"There is no doubt about that," Alda said in agreement.

Though Rodcorte had become quiet as of late, that did not mean that he had become cooperative. Seeking help from him would be futile.

"My lord, how about searching for new subordinate gods?" Curatos suggested. "There are three current candidates of at least heroic spirit status." He opened the thick book in his hand and showed Alda the candidates to become subordinate gods in the records within.

The reason that they were mere candidates was because there was no telling how their vessels would turn out until the moment their lives ended. No matter how extraordinary they were, those who did not guide the people could not become gods and those who the people did not admire could not become heroic spirits.

At lamentable as it was, nameless heroes could not reach the Divine Realm.

There was actually a large number of such candidates to exist at a single moment in time. The name of one of them... disappeared.

“My apologies,” said Curatos. “It appears that one of them has turned to Vida’s side.”

“... I see. He has likely either fallen to the temptation of the Vampires or stooped low enough to become a Demon.”

Methods of transforming existing people into members of Vida’s races were harmful to the real world.

“The other two are Bormack Gordan and Heinz, are they?” Alda knew of those two. Gordan was a zealous believer... a little *too* zealous at times, but he was a devout individual who continued to fight Vampires at the frontlines. His power as a hero was rather low, but he was top class in the fact that he was a shining exemplar for the people.

But the expedition into the Boundary Mountain Range that had recently begun was to be his last job; it seemed that he was planning to withdraw from the frontlines and focus on guiding the next generation after that.

He was simply wishing that during this expedition he would be able to slay the Dhampir that had escaped him before so that he could retire with a clear conscience.

... At this moment, Alda was still unaware that this Dhampir, Vandalieu, had been reincarnated in Lambda from another world. He had no method of gaining information about Rodcorte’s or Vida’s transmigration systems; he had no information other than that given to him through prayer by High Priest Gordan.

Though he was a little suspicious about the Dhampir, he was satisfied with the explanation that the Dhampir was a product of the twisted workings of Vida’s

transmigration system.

When Alda and the other gods had summoned champions in the past, Rodcorte had made the unreasonable demand that the champions should be sent back immediately or exploited to their deaths. Considering that, even a god could never have imagined that Rodcorte would have sent humans from another world to this one with no warning, knowing full well that he had prohibited Alda and the other gods from doing so.

Alda ran his eyes over the recording data regarding Heinz.

Heinz was another of Alda's followers, an individual who had become an A-class adventurer in less than ten years. He had more than enough power, but his achievements were a little lacking to be called a hero.

Perhaps it was best for Alda to bestow him a divine protection to assist him, but it seemed that he was wavering.

Wavering was fine. Both gods and people's thoughts grew deeper through hesitation. A divine protection was merely something to assist the one it was bestowed upon, a reward for the things they had achieved. It could not become something that would bind the believer down.

It was likely that Alda would need to carefully observe Heinz, hoping that his hesitation would lead him to the correct answer.

But it was also necessary to make preparations in advance.

"Notify Rodcorte of these two," Alda ordered.

For the conversion of a hero into the follower of a god after his death rather than creating a new servant through divine power, it was necessary for Rodcorte to be notified in advance. Even if he was a believer of Alda, it was not Alda who controlled the circle of transmigration, but Rodcorte. If Alda were to try anything too forceful on his own, it would cause defects in the system.

"As you wish," said Curatos.

"Also, gather those who are not occupied in this place, including the subordinate gods of the gods of the other attributes. I would like to speak to them of what is going to happen from now on."

“Yes, my lord.” Curatos disappeared with a bow. Knowing him, he would soon return after finishing the tasks that Alda had given him.

“It would be good if a second Bellwood would be born among the people...” Alda looked up at the sky of the Divine Realm and his thoughts turned to the distant past.

When Zuruwarn, the god of space and creation, suggested that champions should be summoned from other worlds in order to defeat the Demon King, Alda had been skeptical. He could not understand why champions who had come from another world like the Demon King would risk their lives and fight for the sake of this world. Was there not a risk that they would betray the gods and turn to the Demon King’s side?

However, Vida sided with Zuruwarn, saying that bold actions were needed to deal with the situation that they were faced with.

And because the god of reincarnation could not be relied upon for assistance, the opinions of Zuruwarn and Vida were supported by the others.

Zuruwarn opened a gate to another world and the other seven gods including Alda each chose and summoned a worthy champion.

The one Alda summoned was Suzuki Shouhei, who would later become the champion Bellwood. Vida had summoned Sakado Keisuke, who would later become the fallen champion Zakkart. Five other champions alongside them descended upon Lambda.

They were extraordinary saviors. They did have conflicting opinions, but they managed to have discussions that led to better solutions to problems.

Bellwood in particular was the ideal champion for Alda. Not only was he strong in battle, but he possessed great courage, fighting against large hordes of monsters on the frontlines. Most importantly, he understood Alda’s thoughts.

Bellwood grieved over Lambda’s history, culture and civilization that was lost as a result of the fierce battle against the Demon King, and even regretted that several components of civilizations from other worlds had to be accepted, including the language spoken by the people.

“Alda-sama, I love this world. This world that is so different from the world I

lived in before, this wonderful world. After the Demon King is defeated and peace returns, this world will become a far better than the world I came from.” These had been Bellwood’s words.

It was quite possible that conflict was inevitable between the group of Bellwood and Alda and the group of Zakkart and Vida who asserted that the knowledge from other worlds should be proactively taken in by this one.

Now that I look back on it, that was a mistake.

Alda was deep in reminiscence. The ones who had survived the war against the Demon King were himself, Bellwood and two other heroes who were in agreement with his opinions, and Vida.

But at that point, Vida had already lost her trust in Alda. She likely could not forgive Bellwood for abandoning Zakkart during the battle, even if it was a necessary decision to be made to achieve victory.

No, it seemed that Vida suspected that Alda and the others had planned things in a way that Zakkart would fall.

The rift between Alda and Vida grew deeper, and though the Demon King had been torn into pieces and sealed away, the two surviving gods fought against each other.

I should have given deep thought to Vida’s words, acknowledged that there were parts that I could agree upon and given reasons for the parts that I could not.

This world’s normal state was to have multiple gods existing; even the gods themselves knew this. Alda and Vida in particular were two gods with very different senses of values.

In the past, Shizarion, Ricklent, Marduke, Ganpaplio and the others would step between them and remonstrate them. Zuruwarn and Peria would finalize decisions based on everyone’s opinions. However, they were all now slumbering or had been destroyed.

If trust had been preserved between us, perhaps Vida would not have done reckless things such as creating her own transmigration system and giving birth to new races, thought Alda. But he also thought that he would have only

reconsidered which things should be prioritized; he would never have made large changes such as allowing things that he had previously forbidden.

Because if he were to make changes to his mistaken doctrine, that would mean that all of his believers who worshipped him had also been mistaken.

Most importantly, those who had been victimized up until now would not draw inspiration from such changes.

It was also for the sake of those who had been labeled as 'evil' and buried that Alda could not change the definition of what was 'right'.

"My lord! This is a serious matter!"

At that moment, Curatos returned. However, his expression had changed. Alda had not seen such a look of dismay on his face since the battle against Vida.

"Somebody has destroyed the Artifact that was a clone of Yupeon, the god of ice!"

"W-what did you say?!" Alda showed deep unrest upon hearing Curatos's report.

Because such a thing would only be possible for someone who possessed the ability to break souls like the Demon King.

"The Demon King has been resurrected, or perhaps a new Demon King has appeared... Either way, we must first find out who destroyed Yupeon's clone," said Alda.

Someone possessing the ability to break souls had to be destroyed, no matter who it was. The war could not be allowed to repeat itself.

Notes

1. There is a Japanese phrase that is something along the lines of "A hundred harms and not a single gain" that is something like "All pain, no gain" or "Having no redeeming features" in English. This is a variation of that saying where there is a single gain in exchange for the hundred harms, but then the alteration of "a hundred" to "a thousand" really emphasizes that the

disadvantages are very significant.

2. “英雄/eiyuu” refers to mortal heroes such as Mikhail and Borkus, and “勇者/yuusha” refers to the ones who were summoned from other worlds like Zakkart and Bellwood.

Chapter 53: The horns of war are still distant, but fighting forces must be gathered steadily

On this day, Thomas Palpapek was once again drinking black tea in his personal room with a bitter look on his face.

It had been around two years since he had resigned from the position of marshal; his daily duties had decreased considerably. As he was an earl who owned no land, his schedules were very free when he wasn't assigned to an important position, allowing him to peacefully enjoy his black tea as he was doing now.

What he didn't have was peace of mind.

"Those damned Vampires," Thomas muttered.

The Vampires of whom he was speaking under his breath in a tone of irritation were the Vampires who worshipped the evil god.

They were allies. Not to Thomas as an individual, nor to the Mirg shield-nation. Thomas was fully aware that he and the Vampires had simply used each other when their interests aligned.

However, there was no way that he could not feel angry after being made to do something that was so clearly disadvantageous for him.

Around a year ago, a certain movement had occurred in the Amid Empire.

An expedition into the Boundary Mountain Range. The Empire was considering ordering the Mirg shield-nation to make such an expedition happen. No, it was already certain that they would make this order.

The Empire was giving the Mirg shield-nation a chance to rid themselves of the dishonour of the failed expedition to Talosheim of two hundred years ago.

It was likely that because the Mirg shield-nation's power as a country had increased more than expected due to Viscount Balchesse's reclamation project, so the Amid Empire was intending to shave a moderate amount of that power off.

However, it would normally be impossible for such an expedition to happen even under the orders of the Empire. None of the Empire's vassal nations would obey the command of, 'All of you, go out and die meaningless deaths.'

But with the tunnel that had been built a hundred thousand years ago, large enough for an army to march through... One of the Amid Empire's generals, General Mauvid, had presented proof of the existence of such a tunnel and an ancient document that detailed its location.

The tunnel had yet to be excavated, but once it was repaired, crossing the Boundary Mountain Range would become simple. An army would be able to reach the other side of the tunnel in a matter of days.

They would be able to do so safely, with no fear of monster attacks until they reached the end of the tunnel.

With this, the main reason to oppose to the expedition had disappeared.

And much to Thomas's dismay, the Mirg shield-nation and its current marshal, Earl Legston, were eager to make this expedition happen.

It was likely that they had received permission to add any land reclaimed inside the mountain Boundary Mountain Range to the nation's territory, and they would likely receive financial assistance for the reclamation process as well. These conditions had likely been offered to them.

"Those fools."

The king of his nation and the nobleman who was an earl like Thomas were truly fools.

Thomas could imagine the reasons behind this expedition.

The Dhampir who had led a horde of Ghouls across the Boundary Mountain Range and vanished two years ago.

The Vampire who acted as a contact between Thomas and the other

Vampires, the one who had panicked after learning that the Dhampir had been allowed to escape.

And for some reason, a new contact had come and told Thomas that his predecessor had been entrusted with another mission.

A year had passed since then, and the only thing Thomas had heard from the Vampires was, "It would be wise to stay quiet for now." He hadn't even been able to tell whether this was an order or advice.

In other words, the purpose of this expedition was to kill that Dhampir and the Vampires were planning to use the Mirg shield-nation's army to do so.

Without their influence, there was no way that a one-hundred-thousand-year-old tunnel whose existence hadn't even been confirmed could have been discovered by a general of the Amid Empire who was not even from the Mirg shield-nation adjacent to the tunnel itself.

There was no doubt that the Vampires would get the Dhampir involved with the official reason for the expedition. They would use some pretense such as there being a deposit of precious magical metal in the region the Dhampir was hiding in, or an Artifact that was supposed to have been lost in the battle that had taken place a hundred thousand years ago.

If the Dhampir was living in the ruins of Talosheim, that would be the worst-case scenario. That place was the site of an unforgettable, humiliating victory for the Mirg shield-nation.

They had sacrificed enormous amounts of funds, over ten thousand soldiers, a national hero along with his party and an Artifact, but only gained a small amount of treasure and a meaningless victory.

That was why the Mirg shield-nation had feared the Boundary Mountain Range until now. That place was a demon's gate, a place to be avoided.

However, now that it was clear that there was a simple method of crossing the mountain range, there was enthusiasm among the nobles of the Mirg shield-nation for committing a second expedition to Talosheim, recovering the fallen hero's spear that was an Artifact of Yupeon, the god of ice, and wiping the humiliating victory from history.

This was merely what was happening among the nobles; there would be more enthusiastic movements in the nation if its commoners were to learn of the tunnel's existence.

“I am an earl of the Mirg shield-nation with connections to the Vampires. I had naturally expected that there would be other noblemen within the Amid Empire with connections to the same Vampires, but... to think that there would be one with the position of general.”

A general who knew that the expedition would fail, no less.

Indeed, the expedition that was going to begin shortly would fail. They would dispose of the Dhampir and everything would go well up to that point. But after that, it would definitely come to a halt.

Because the Vampires would never allow humans to step foot south of the Boundary Mountain Range. The ones they feared most were the other Pure-breed Vampires worshipping Vida, who were slumbering in the southern reaches of the continent.

It was particularly likely that the officials of the Church of Alda would announce the beginning of a holy war to purge the Vampires who worshipped Vida. For generations, the Church's Pope had always been radical about denying Vida. Even if individuals were more moderate before becoming the Pope, once they assumed that position, they would become more extreme.

That had always been the case, so it would likely be the case from now on as well.

And so the Vampires who worshipped the evil gods would stop the expedition.

Probably by collapsing the tunnel or making it unusable in some other way.

Two hundred years ago, the tunnel that led to the Orbaume Kingdom had been collapsed; Thomas had heard that it would still be unusable even now. It wasn't guaranteed that this had been the work of the Vampires, but they would surely be able to do something similar to the other tunnel.

“The rewards offered to General Mauvid would be a large sum of money, or perhaps they have offered to turn him into a Vampire. He will obtain

immortality, and after that he will use his son, who is rumored to be incapable, as a puppet in order to maintain his public appearance and authority. I suppose the current situation is something like that.”

Even if the expedition were to fail, by the time it did, he would have used poor health or some other excuse to resign from the position of general, thus no longer being in a position where he would be held responsible.

What a carefree position. The Mirg shield-nation would naturally suffer as a result of the expedition, but even the Amid Empire had nothing to gain from it. Mauvid would be the only one backing the winning horse, after all.

Thomas would have liked to crush the plans of the Vampires and General Mauvid, but this was impossible for him alone.

The moment he made a move, the Vampires would likely dispose of him. That was the meaning behind the words that he had been told: “It would be wise to stay quiet for now.”

It would be a different matter if he had his own fighting force and capable spies that he could use to outwit the Vampires, but...

In reality, if Thomas didn't move, he and the Palpapek house of earls would come out of this unscathed. He owned no land and thus there were no people under his rule who would be enlisted in the expedition, and since he was no longer a marshal, he would not have to take any responsibility.

However, after the pitiful Marshal Legston was forced to retire or hung, he would have to do his utmost to rebuild the strength of his nation that would greatly suffer as a result of the expedition.

“I have to do whatever I can to reduce the homeland's losses... Now that I think about it, I have *him*, don't I?”

There was a former member of an up-and-coming adventurer party, someone whose personality-related problems prevented him from making use of his excellent ability. He would likely ruin himself one day, getting those around him involved.

This was a perfect time to shuffle the cards.

Thomas rang a bell that was on his desk, summoning his steward who was also his confidant, to whom he told everything except the Vampires.

“Was there something you needed done?” asked the steward as he entered the room with a bow. He appeared to have come straight out of a ‘steward’s textbook’; he was more like a butler than real butlers. “If you are lacking entertainment, I can make arrangements for something right away.”

“If it is a marriage interview, I would rather not,” said Thomas. “Do you intend to have me die during intercourse, old man?”

The steward chuckled. “I do pity those who must act as the head of the Palpapek family of earls. It is the duty of a nobleman to take concubines.”

“I believe I already have three wives.”

“That is not even a third of the number your predecessor had. You must take at least two more,” said the steward.

“Then please introduce me to an elegant, tidy lady, seventy years of age or older,” Thomas requested. “If she has few relatives and looks like she will die within a year, that is even better.”

“Thomas-sama, you must moderate your liking for women who are older than myself.”

“I merely want to avoid leaving any roots of evil for the next generation.” Thomas changed the subject. “The conversation about marriage interviews ends here, old man. I want to talk about Riley. Is it possible to indirectly place him at Marshal Legston’s side?”

Though surprise appeared on the face of the steward whose expression was hidden among his wrinkles and beard, his eyebrows did not even twitch.

“The Green Wind Spear, Riley-dono. It is likely possible, but... is this fine with you?” he asked. “My lord, he is the B-class adventurer that you spent much effort in drawing to your own side to replace the Blue-flamed Sword, Heinz. No matter how inferior he is to Heinz, placing him with Marshal Legston... and if you make him approach on his own with no letter of introduction, the marshal will not owe you any favors.”

To the steward's knowledge, Riley had clearly inferior qualities.

There was nothing dissatisfactory about his ability... his strength in battle. He possessed strength worthy of his class and he had talent. Enough talent that he could become at least A-class if he improved himself.

What was actually inferior was almost everything other than his strength in battle. He was inferior as an adventurer, as a nobleman's vassal, as a person.

His personality was a particularly poor quality of his character. At first, it had been thought that he was simply ambitious to achieve things, but he had a strong complex and craving for fame, and... lately he had been displaying elitist behavior, as if he were under the impression that he was a chosen hero.

Learning from the examples of heroes in the past, he had bought slaves, trained them into adventurers and gained a sense of self-satisfaction in doing so, so he was almost beyond saving.

He was a poor product that would fail in the distant future, disguised as a high-quality one. Thomas had already been deceived, but this was the perfect time to send him out and be rid of him.

"I do not mind," said Thomas. "In fact, if I write a letter of introduction, it will be my reputation that is damaged when he makes a mess of something. Make Legston think that this is 'the second coming of the tragic hero Mikhail' or something. Fortunately, Riley wields a spear, so he will be popular among the citizens. Ah, and do not forget to have the Adventurers' Guild make him A-class."

"Certainly. He would be satisfied with becoming a hero as well. I will first order the Guild Master of the Adventurers' Guild to promote him to A-class, and then I will send indirect whispers to him that staying by your side will hurt his chances of becoming a hero, my lord." The steward left the room with a bow.

The work he would be doing from now, sending 'whispers', was clearly not a simple task, but the reason he was serving as the steward for a house of earls was because he was able to do such work.

If he hadn't already been marked by the Vampires, he would have had a little

more freedom to move, however.

“I suppose there is no use giving this any more thought,” Thomas told himself. “If this causes Riley to serve beneath Legston, the strength of the force that I can mobilize will likely decrease considerably.”

If a great hero took part in the expedition, less other men would be needed.

It would be most satisfactory if this move would prevent at least a hundred or two hundred more soldiers from joining the expedition.

“Fortunately, our army tends not to allow the participation of adventurers in military expeditions that do not involve the hunting of monsters. Even in the worst case scenario, we will not suffer an increase in the frequency of monster rampages due to a fall in adventurer numbers.”

Now all Thomas had to do was pray that Riley would be accepted by Legston. *Don't disappoint me.*

The day after Vandalieu had told Darcia that he couldn't repair the resurrection device yet, he headed towards the ruins of the Adventurers' Guild for his third Job-change.

The trading area was busy as usual, so much so that there was apparently a shortage of fish sauce. Talosheim's fishing industry was dependent on Doran's Aquatic Caverns.

The fishermen would walk into the Dungeon, cast their nets, thrust their spears into the water, throw their fishing lines out and then bring the fish home. However, the amount of fish they could bring back this way was smaller than if they could simply pile the fish onto a boat to bring them back.

Apparently this was why supply of the small fish used as ingredients for fish sauce couldn't keep up with the demand.

Even Vandalieu couldn't make fish sauce without using small fish.

“Couldn't they catch small fish in the waterways?” Vandalieu wondered. “We've hunted all of the Flying Sharks living in them, so it should be easier to fish there than in Doran's Aquatic Caverns.”

“Yeah, that’s true, but the fishermen don’t really want to do it. They say that there’s not enough excitement,” the Undead Titan receptionist explained. She had been made of bones and rotting flesh, but Vandalieu had used Preservation to return her to the state she had been in when she was killed.

“... As expected of a fighting race.”

It seemed that the battles that occurred during fishing were exciting events for the fishermen.

“If it weren’t for the katsuobushi and kombu, there would have been a major shortage of fish sauce,” said the receptionist. “In my opinion, the solution for this problem is the development of a new product.”

Her one remaining eye glistened with expectation.

Indeed, if a new product was developed and demand was divided between it and fish sauce, a shortage of fish sauce could be avoided even if its supply stayed as it was now.

“But the one who has to make that new product is me, isn’t it?” said Vandalieu. “The amount of products I make each month has decreased, though.”

“Do your best~♪ Ah, please work on replacing my other eye quickly too!”

“Oka~ay.”

It would be nice if I could get along well with the receptionists of real Adventurers’ Guilds later as well, thought Vandalieu as he headed into the Job-changing room.

『【Undead Tamer】【Soul Breaker】【Venom Fist User】【Insect User】
【Archenemy】』

“... What is Archenemy?”

There was a new Job there. What was this Archenemy Job? Was it supposed to be read as ‘taiteki^[1]’? Did that mean that he would be something like Satan? Satan, not Santa.

It was probably related to the destruction of the Dragon Golem and the breaking of Ice Age’s soul. Archenemy... It would probably grant a bonus to the

God Slayer skill.

But it wasn't the kind of Job he wanted being recorded in an Adventurers' Guild.

"Let's take that one later," Vandalieu decided.

He picked the Undead Tamer Job this time. With this, Borkus and Bone Man would likely be strengthened even more.

《You have acquired the【Strengthen Subordinates】skill!》

- **Name:** Vandalieu
- **Race:** Dhampir (Dark Elf)
- **Age:** 5 years old
- **Title:**【Ghoul King】
- **Job:** Undead Tamer
- **Level:** 0
- **Job history:** Death-Attribute Mage, Golem Transmuter
- **Attributes:**
 - Vitality: 115
 - Mana: 224,557,626
 - Strength: 80
 - Agility: 81
 - Stamina: 87
 - Intelligence: 407
- **Passive skills:**
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
 - Rapid Healing: Level 3
 - Death-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 5
 - Magic Resistance: Level 1
 - Dark Vision
 - Mental Corruption: Level 10
 - Death-Attribute Charm: Level 5
 - Chant Revocation: Level 3
 - Strengthen Followers: Level 7

- Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 3
- Strengthen Subordinates: Level 3 (NEW!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Bloodsucking: Level 3
 - Surpass Limits: Level 4
 - Golem Transmutation: Level 6
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 4
 - Mana Control: Level 4
 - Spirit Form: Level 3
 - Carpentry: Level 4
 - Engineering: Level 3
 - Cooking: Level 2
 - Alchemy: Level 3
 - Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 2
 - Soul Break: Level 2
 - Multi-Cast: Level 2
 - Long-distance Control: Level 2
- **Unique skills:**
 - God Slayer: Level 1
- **Curses**
 - Experience gained in previous life not carried over
 - Cannot learn existing jobs
 - Unable to gain experience independently

The moment Vandalieu's Job changed, he acquired the Strengthen Subordinates skill. This was the human version of the Strengthen Followers skill, a lower equivalent.

It strengthened familiars, beasts, spirits, livestock and Golem accompanying the user, and the amount they were strengthened was about the same as the Strengthen Followers skill. It was mainly used by Alchemists, spirit-users and shepherds.

But as the skill could level up without increasing the number of subordinates, it was simpler to acquire than the Strengthen Followers skill.

“In my case, my followers will have double strengthening from both Strengthen Followers and Strengthen Subordinates.”

Vandalieu chuckled to himself at the fact that this was such an easy, certain and effective method of improving everyone’s strength.

Incidentally, after this, Vandalieu dug up the buried statue of Yupeon and repeatedly destroyed it and rebuilt it in order to examine his God Slayer skill, but nothing happened. It seemed that he would need to take on a god-made Artifact or a god’s subordinate in order to discover its effect.

He got the feeling that the dirt around the statue had turned a little red, but nothing about the statue had changed.

A few days after his job-change, Vandalieu went into the underground chamber beneath the royal castle once more. This time, he was here to recover the wreckage of the Dragon Golem.

Though it was wreckage, it was still Orichalcum; with his current level of Golem Transmutation, he was able to change its shape and preserve it.

However, he knew that he could not genuinely manipulate it as he wanted to.

“If I could beat Orichalcum to turn it into weapons, I would be a god right now instead of an Undead,” said Datara. Orichalcum was a wondrous material for a blacksmith, and yet it was impossible to manipulate.

It could not be melted even by magma. No file could shave its surface off and even if it bent after being struck, it would soon return to its original shape.

Because of this, not even a first-rate blacksmith could turn it into weapons or armor.

It was said that any blacksmith capable of doing so would likely be praised as a divine craftsman.

“But it’s possible to use it in various ways, isn’t it,” said Vandalieu. “Like turning it into flat pieces and using them as shields, or turning it into lumps to use in maces and hammers, or using them as ammo for the catapults.”

Shields boasting the greatest physical and magical defense of any shield in the world, and blunt weapons capable of tearing through any barrier like paper.

Leaving aside the joke of using the Orichalcum as ammunition for the catapults, it should be very useful.

Incidentally, there were no spear-wielders to use Ice Age which was now just an Orichalcum spear, so Sam was holding onto it for now. It would probably make a good lance.

As Vandalieu was splitting the Golem's wreckage into pieces small enough to fit through the entrance to the audience chamber, he found something interesting in the corner of Dragon Golem's chamber.

As he moved aside the broken pieces of the Dragon Golem's wing that Mikhail had destroyed, he found dead bodies covered in cursed ice... probably around five of them.

"These corpses... Whose are they?" Vandalieu wondered.

Though they hadn't decomposed as they had been covered in ice like Zandia's severed hand, they had been horrendously damaged; there was not a single corpse left intact. But they were probably not Titans. And they probably weren't Vampires, either...

"Ah, come to think of it, Mikhail had a party, didn't he?"

Borkus hadn't mentioned them, nor had Vandalieu seen them in Zandia's residual memories. In the stories told in Talosheim and in the Mirg shield-nation, they were simply mentioned as Mikhail's companions; Vandalieu hadn't known their names or how many of them there were so they hadn't made much of an impression of him. But now that he thought about it, Mikhail did indeed have a party.

With that being the case, this was a tomb created by Ice Age. Perhaps because he could not bear to leave the corpses of his master's companions, he had covered them in cursed ice and buried them with small fragments of the Golem in a crater that had been made during the battle.

There was no tombstone, but it was a more extravagant grave than the ones dead royalty and nobles lay in. Considering the price of Orichalcum, it was no doubt equivalent to being buried in one of the pyramids on Earth.

Vandalieu removed all of the Orichalcum and inspected the bodies one by

one.

One of them was an enormous man, almost the size of a Titan. There was a crushed shield next to him, so he was likely a shield-bearer. But as his body had been turned into mince from the neck down, he was very grotesque.

The second was a Dwarf... perhaps? There was no corpse, only shredded lengths of braided hair... No, those were probably only his beard and the scraps of metal were likely his armor. There were some pieces bearing the holy mark of Alda, so was he a zealous believer or some priest warrior?

The third was a female witch. She was wearing a robe and holding a staff, so there was no doubt about that. But it was uncertain as whether she was a human or an elf. The lower jaw was the only remaining part of her head, so it was impossible to see the shape of her ears. Vandalieu did think that she was a human, however.

The fourth was a dark-skinned woman wearing armor made of leather taken from a monster. Her head was intact, but the rest of her body was in pieces, like a disturbing jigsaw puzzle. She had probably been cut by the Dragon Golem's wings.

The fifth was... on close inspection, not a person.

“Isn't this an Ogre?”

It was the corpse of a demi-humanoid monster, an Ogre. It was wearing armor and holding a weapon so it appeared to be a large warrior, but the horn that initially looked like an ornament on its helmet were actually growing out of its forehead.

Incidentally, they were often confused for Majins, which were one of the races created by Vida, but they were different. Ogres only had one horn while Majins had two.

It seemed that this Ogre was a tamed familiar of one of the other four. But there were multiple gaping, fist-sized holes in its body; only its heads and limbs were unharmed.

Mikhail, these four and the Ogre had challenged the Dragon Golem and only Mikhail had managed to return to the ground's surface after suffering a fatal

wound. His encounter with the Vampires that followed shortly after that had spelled the end of the entire party.

These four had not even left their names behind; even if Vandalieu were to try to listen to their spirits, they had probably likely already returned to the circle of transmigration. With the corpses of these heroes before him, Vandalieu didn't even offer them any prayer as he contemplated.

“What kind of Undead should I create using these?” he wondered out loud. He had no feelings of grief over the corpses of his enemies. He would have been more reserved if they were Titan bodies, but as they were the dead bodies of those from the Mirg shield-nation, they were nothing more than materials to him.

This was no different from stripping the meat off the bodies of Orcs and taking the bones and skin of Dragons. If he had felt aversion to doing things like this, he would never have created Bone Man to begin with.

“First, I'll give this big eyeball to the receptionist-san, but the rest of them are too damaged to make them Undead just as they are. Hmm... I suppose I'll take them apart and then join them back together.”

This would also be good practice for creating Darcia's body.

“But I'll do that after the Orichalcum is all carried outside.”

After he put the corpses together, he would need to think about the spirits he put in them. It would likely be fine as he had the Death-Attribute Charm skill, but it would certainly be problematic if the Undead were to turn on him like Frankenstein's monster.

-
- **Name:** Vigarō
 - **Rank:** 7
 - **Race:** Ghoul Tyrant
 - **Level:** 7
 - **Job:** Axe Master
 - **Job level:** 0
 - **Job history:** Apprentice Warrior, Warrior, Axeman
 - **Age:** 171 years old

- **Passive skills:**

- Night Vision
- Superhuman Strength: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
- Pain Resistance: Level 4
- Paralyzing Venom Secretion (Claws): Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with an axe (Medium) (NEW!)

- **Active skills:**

- Axe Technique: Level 7 (LEVEL UP!)
- Hand-to-hand Fighting Technique: Level 2
- Commanding: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Coordination: Level 2
- Deforestation: Level 2 (NEW!)
- Dismantling: Level 1 (NEW!)

Monster explanation:

【Ghoul Tyrant】

The highest-Rank form of Ghoul that has ever been witnessed. They possess bodies as large as Titans and four arms, and it is said that their lion's heads are fearsome enough that even the true kings of beasts would tremble before them.

As they usually rule groups of hundreds of Ghouls, they almost always possess the Strengthen Followers skill.

A Ghoul Tyrant has not been seen in the past thousand years, leading some scholars to believe that they are not a high-Rank version of Ghoul at all, but mutated individuals who are born that way.

Job explanation:

【Axe Master】

A Job that can only be acquired after an individual reaches level 100 with the Axeman Job and possesses a level 6 or greater skill in Axe Technique.

The 'Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with an axe skill' is a perfect example of the skills specialized for the wielding of axes that can be gained with this Job.

This Job is essentially proof that those who have acquired the Job are first-rate fighters when wielding axes. They can easily become servants of noblemen or open their own Axe Technique dojo.

Adventurers possessing this Job are usually B-class.

Notes

1. He's wondering how the kanji, 大敵, is supposed to be pronounced. The kanji individually mean "large/great" (commonly read as dai/tai) and "enemy" (read as teki).

Chapter 54: They approach as I'm playfully bitten and creating forests

"So I've made a new Undead," Vandalieu announced.

"Congratulations!" Saria exclaimed. "It is the first time you have made an Undead that other than insects and dinosaurs since you created us, isn't it?"

"Wah, I'm happy that we're going to get a kouhai!" said Rita.

Bone Chimera gave a cry for attention.

"Knochen, you were transformed rather than created, so you're a little different, aren't you?" said Saria.

Incidentally, Bone Chimera's name was Knochen, which means "bone" in German.

"In any case, this is an auspicious event," said Sam.

The new person(?) was quietly unveiled before Saria and the others.

Vandalieu had decided to create Undead from the corpses of Mikhail's companions.

He thought that even without the original spirits of the bodies, he could make Undead who would be powerful right from the beginning if he used the bodies of a hero's companions and a large amount of Mana as the materials.

First, Vandalieu used the female mage's corpse that was the least damaged as a base. He would use brown-skinned female warrior's head to replace the missing head. Fortunately, they weren't too different in size.

He cut off the lower jaw that was remaining on the mage, making sure to get the cutting angle right, and then attached the head of the female warrior.

However, below the female mage's neck, certain hard-to-see parts of her body had broken bones and torn muscles. Organ damage to some extent

wouldn't cause any problems if Vandalieu was turning her into a Zombie, but since the state of the stomach would affect the Zombie's experience gain, he wanted to have everything in a clean state if possible.

Vandalieu had heard on Earth that focusing on the interior was the secret to creating a good product.

However, the female warrior's body had been torn to pieces; there were no parts of her body apart from her head that were intact. This also went without saying for the other corpses.

Thus, Vandalieu decided to go to the ruins of the Adventurers' Guild to get a supply of monster organs.

He used Golem Transmutation to change the shapes of sturdy Trihorn horns to use as bones, replaced the liver and kidneys with those of a Hydra and replaced the lungs with the resized lungs of a plesiosaur, a creature that appeared occasionally in Doran's Aquatic Caverns.

And because he wanted a companion with the ability to fly, he attached the wings of a pterosaur to the mage's back. This proved to be very difficult; he had to conduct a major surgery in which he altered the shape of the mage's shoulder blades and created the musculature needed to move the wings from muscle fibers and tendons he had taken from the Ogre.

Also, he decided to have a tail growing from the tailbone. To that tail, he attached the stinger and venom gland of a Cemetery Bee that had died of old age, and added the venom glands of a Venom Wyvern, a Hydra and a Shark-eating Anemone so that it would be able to choose which venom it would inject its victim with.

And then he replaced the arms from the elbow down and legs from the knees down with parts from the Ogre. Wouldn't this result in greater strength?

As the female mage lacked the muscles to support this body, he took the necessary muscles from the female warrior and the Ogre while replacing the parts of her skin that had been burned with the female warrior's. Finally, he inserted the Magic Stones of monsters into her body.

"And so this what I built as a result," said Vandalieu.

There was a faint, groaning sound.

The female Zombie, who Vandalieu had named Rapiécage^[1], emerged from below a cover. The name meant 'patching' to Vandalieu's knowledge. It was a word that had been used in Origin, so the actual fine meaning might be a little different.

She had the beautiful face of a girl of an age in between being a child and an adult, combined with the mature, well-trained body of a warrior with feminine curves. But the limbs below the elbows and knees were those of an Ogre, powerful enough to easily crush a person's skull.

Membranous wings sprouted from her back, and a serpent-like tail with the stinger of a bee extended from her hips. Her skin was a mixture of pale skin, brown skin and the dark green skin of an Ogre joined together by stitches, giving her a strange beauty that could be called the beauty of the afterlife.

At first glance, she appeared to be a beautiful and yet strange, unidentifiable Zombie.

And her Status was as follows:

- **Name:** Rapiécage
- **Rank:** 4
- **Race:** Patchwork Zombie
- **Level:** 0
- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision
 - Rapid Regeneration: Level 5
 - Deadly Poison Secretion: Tail: Level 5
 - Physical Resistance: Level 3
 - Magic Resistance: Level 3
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
- **Active skills:**
 - Electrify: Level 2
 - High-speed Flight: Level 1

Her specs were quite high. She had great regenerative abilities because Vandalieu had given her the organs of a Hydra, and she was capable of switching between paralyzing venom, neurotoxic venom or hemorrhage-inducing venom. And perhaps because the female mage or the female warrior had possessed them, or perhaps for some other unknown reason, she possessed resistance against both physical and magical attacks.

She had also inherited the Ogre's Superhuman Strength at level 1.

The unexpected thing was that she possessed Electrify, a skill likely possessed by Trihorns. She had probably acquired the skill because Vandalieu had used their horns in her bones. Touching her carelessly would result in a numbing shock.

Because Vandalieu had used parts of the Ogre's limbs, the female mage who was the base of the Zombie had become slightly taller than before and appeared to have poor balance, but overall, Vandalieu's craftsmanship wasn't bad.

"She's quite muscular, as would be expected," Saria observed. "She is also quite voluptuous."

"If I made her thin, she wouldn't be able to control her movements, would she?" said Vandalieu. "And anyway, muscles are power."

"I'm sure Gubamon would feel bitter about this. After all, even if they were nameless, you have stolen the corpses of a hero's companions from him, Bocchan!" exclaimed Rita.

"It is indeed quite pleasant to imagine what kind of expression he would have," Vandalieu said in agreement. "Though I've never seen Gubamon's face before," he admitted.

She was Rank 4 to begin with, ready to fight, and she was versatile. Though she would need to train as she did not possess any martial-type skills, the experiment had been a huge success.

On top of that, she could even inflict emotional damage upon Vandalieu's future enemy.

"She is wonderful, Vandalieu-sama," said Eleanora, her eyes moist with

emotion. “Not only can you combine multiple corpses, you can even draw out their original functions! You are already capable of doing the same things as Gubamon and Tenecia!”

“I see. I’m still only able to do the same things as them...”

As to be expected of beings who had lived for a hundred thousand years. It seemed that they were still a step ahead even when it came to the creation of Undead. They likely knew methods and secrets that were still unknown to Vandalieu.

Vandalieu didn’t know when he would face them, but he decided to make sure to ask them before breaking their souls.

Rapiécage let out a groan, and then a biting noise.

“Y-you bastard! Don’t eat Vandalieu-sama!” shouted Eleanora.

Rita laughed. “Rapiécage is being spoiled by Bocchan.”

“It seems to be a playful bite,” said Sam.

“It kinda feels a bit painful for a playful bite –” Vandalieu began to say, but then Knochen made a noise. “Wait, Knochen, stop it!”

As if provoked by the way Rapiécage was munching on Vandalieu’s arm, Knochen began pressing its monkey and wolf heads against him as well.

These events made Vandalieu decide not to make any plans to produce Zombies in large numbers in the near future. He knew that he wasn’t quite in the predicament that Dr. Frankenstein was in, but having large numbers of Zombies biting him playfully would be painful indeed.

【You have acquired the Surgery skill!】

Vandalieu made Rapiécage train its Unarmed Fighting Technique in battle while he distributed Orichalcum equipment to everyone else.

And in order to become more experienced with Golem Transmutation as well as to be better prepared against the Vampires, he began repairing the city’s defense installations. The Mirg shield-nation had been sloppy when it came to destroying them, and the installations themselves hadn’t degraded over the past two hundred years.

So fortunately, Vandalieu was able to repair them using Golem Transmutation. The Vampires would never dream that they would have been repaired, so they were certain to become an ace up his sleeve.

Meanwhile, numerous Dragons were fought. Borkus engaged in multiple fierce battles against Storm Dragons, Vigaro fought fiery battles against Burst Ogres that were mutant Ogres emitting flames from all over their bodies, and Zadiris fought battles of magic against Great Treants, tree-type monsters that could cast spells.

These were very profitable in terms of both materials and Experience Points. Storm Dragon sashimi went well with wasabi, Burst Ogre hides could be used in heat-resistant armor and Great Treant lumber could be turned into good staves. The greatest find of all was the discovery of wild garlic.

As it was wild garlic, the smell was harsher than cultivated garlic, so Vandalieu decided to use death-attribute magic to apply selective breeding to it.

“I suppose I’ll have to make items that can remove bad breath... I have a feeling it would be easier to make Magic Items with the Deodorization spell than to produce mint goods,” said Vandalieu.

“You’re going to make Magic Items just to remove bad breath?” asked Basdia.

“Isn’t that pretty luxurious?” asked Borkus.

“Bocchan, even noblemen don’t have Magic Items like that, you know?” said Saria.

“It’s a luxury, is it...? Right, I’ll definitely make it then,” Vandalieu decided.

And so he began his work to cultivate garlic and produce Magic Items to remove bad breath.

By the time the season could truly be called summer, there had been numerous developments.

First, the cultivation of garlic was going incredibly well. With the soil of Talosheim that was a semi-Devil’s Nest and manure that Vandalieu had created with Fermentation, the garlic was growing with incredible vigor. The garlic could

be harvested as often as once a week.

As a result of selective breeding, garlic the same size as the garlic used on Earth with less of a smell had been produced. But the nutritional value and the main components probably wouldn't change... or so Vandalieu thought. That was what he felt after examining it with magic, but since he didn't have proper equipment for examining it, he couldn't say for sure that this was the case.

Garlic was added as another flavoring commodity at the ruins of the Adventurers' Guild, and the demand for fish sauce decreased ever so slightly.

Vandalieu had also successfully created Magic Items to remove bad breath. They were large and barrel-shaped. Water stored in them would turn into gargling water that possessed the effects of Deodorization and Sterilization.

These were placed in the city's plazas, every bathhouse and all the main buildings. The people would take water from these barrels to wash their hands and rinse their mouths after eating.

Braga's Rank increased and he became a Black Goblin Ninja.

After hearing about ninjas from Vandalieu, Braga had used those stories as a basis for his training and pestered the blacksmith Dataro to make him shurikens, kunais and curved swords resembling ninja's katanas. After he leveled up and some time had passed, he had become a magnificent monster bearing the title of Ninja.

Even Vandalieu was surprised by this. He hadn't expected Braga to become Lambda's first ninja after listening to his stories that almost certainly contained fictional elements.

This was likely the result of the Black Goblins' incredible physical abilities and, more importantly, their characteristically quick development.

"King, I can fly like this! Nin-nin!^[2]" Braga looked to be enjoying himself as he hopped around, each of his jumps being over five meters high.

Would he be the first in the world to acquire the Ninjutsu skill, summon giant toads or transform into things like special effects in movies? ... After talking to

him, Vandalieu got the feeling that he'd be able to do any of them.

"I can't lose either!" For some reason, Zran, the Undead Titan who was Braga's Scout instructor, was getting fired up as well. He was training to become a ninja as well, so it was possible that the birth of Lambda's second ninja was close.

One day, the Anubis Zemedo and the Ghouls led Vandalieu to a corner of the city where a tree was growing, bearing blue fruits the size of babies' heads. He had seen this fruit numerous times in the Devil's Nest forest.

"King, there's a Kobol tree growing here!" said Zemedo.

Even in Devil's Nests, Kobol trees normally only grew where Kobolds lived. But there was a Kobol tree growing here.

"These blue things are Kobol fruits, huh. It's my first time seeing them," said Memediga.

"Can you really eat them?" asked Zemedo. "They're really blue."

There were no Kobolds nearby, so the two of them were seeing Kobol fruits for the first time and were bewildered by their color.

However, the reason Kobol trees were growing was clearly because the Anubises were present. As there wasn't a single Kobold in the city, there was no other explanation.

Vandalieu hadn't thought that Anubises could cause Kobol trees to grow.

"Thinking about it another way, the reason the Kobol trees haven't grown up until now has been there weren't many Anubises considering they city's size, or maybe just by chance," said Vandalieu. "Or maybe a Kobol seed from a fruit eaten by someone who ventured far away dropped here by chance. Well, there's no use in thinking about it too much," he concluded.

What was certain was that Kobol trees that didn't grow outside of Devil's Nests were growing in Talosheim, and that their fruit could be eaten.

"But it's still small, King," said Zemedo.

“Indeed it is,” said Vandalieu.

The Kobol tree was still only a meter and a half tall, and it hadn't even produced ten fruits yet.

There weren't enough.

“Hmm, let's try supplying it with Mana for now,” Vandalieu decided.

In Devil's Nests, even normal plant life grew faster than usual, not just monsters. This was due to the Mana contaminating the soil.

With that being the case, would the growth of the Kobol trees be accelerated if Vandalieu deliberately provided more Mana to the soil?

With this idea in mind, Vandalieu discharged a large amount of Mana into the soil around the tree and, while he was at it, he also applied the fertilizer he had created with Fermentation.

The next day, the Kobol tree was over three meters tall and there were dozens of fruit growing on it.

Not only that, but there were more Kobol trees growing around it.

Getting carried away by this success, Vandalieu decided to cultivate trees of other fruits in different places.

The space between the first and second outer walls didn't have a single building there yet, so he planted seeds for various fruits including acorns and walnuts to begin his experiment here.

He used Out-of-body Experience to branch his arms out like tentacles, combined with his physical body and used Mana Transfer on the ground. Holding nothing back, he poured Mana into the soil starting in the morning, straight through the afternoon all the way into the evening. He had recovered some Mana in between, so he had ended up pouring perhaps about 300,000,000 Mana into the ground.

This was because the number of spells he could cast at once had increased due to the Long-distance Control and Multi-Cast skills.

However, the next day, nothing had changed.

Thinking that Mana alone didn't work, he applied his handmade fertilizer and then poured his Mana into the ground.

"If this goes well, we can eat all kinds of fruits every day. When I go to the Orbaume Kingdom, I can bring back rare fruits and seeds... Talosheim will become a kingdom of fruits... Fufufufu." With these ambitions rising up within him, Vandalieu poured 300,000,000 Mana into the ground today as well.

And the next day, Vandalieu headed to the site of his experiment expecting trees to have grown, only to find that they had grown beyond his expectations.

"Wow, I've done something incredible, if I do say so myself," he remarked.

Vandalieu made sure there was no poison in the fruits just in case, then headed straight back to the city to report the results of his experiment.

"Oh, how wonderful!" exclaimed Nuaza. "Holy Son, you have recreated the legends of Vida, who was said to have transformed the barren wastelands into lush forests for the sake of the people! This is a miracle! Truly divine work!"

"No, no, it's not a miracle or divine work. I'm a person, after all," said Vandalieu.

"But it really is amazing," Darcia told him. "I'm sure you'd be able to turn even deserts into forests, Vandalieu."

"Mom, it took me two days to create a single thicket," Vandalieu reminded her.

"That's plenty fast enough. Forests normally take hundreds or thousands of years to form, after all."

Not everyone had gone mad with excitement and religious fanaticism like Nuaza, but everyone did give Vandalieu moderate praise, putting him in a good mood.

"What is this flower used for?" asked Basdia.

"It is a Defeat flower," replied Zadiris. "If I recall, the boy said oil can be taken from this tree's seeds."

This flower was similar to camellias, and until now, there hadn't been large amounts of this flower available. It had been named the Defeat flower because

when the flower fell from the tree, it resembled the severed head of a general who had been defeated in battle falling to the ground. The tree provided them with oil.

The fruit that formed after the flowers fell could be steamed and squeezed to produce oil that could be used as fuel or food.

There wasn't much demand for lighting in Talosheim as its inhabitants possessed the Night Vision skill that allowed them to read just fine with just the moonlight, or the Dark Vision skill that let them see in complete darkness as if it were the middle of the afternoon. But Vandalieu had actually wanted oil to use in food.

“With this, I can make tempura and suage^[3], and also mayonnaise...”

It was possible to take oil from acorns, but the demand for acorn powder had been greater, and taking lard from Orcs and other monsters took more time and effort than extracting it from plants. So now he could make foods and flavorings that he had been unable to make before –

“Bocchan, isn't that tree moving?” asked Rita.

“Eh? No way, there's no way a tree would move, right?” said Vandalieu, coming back from his delicious fantasies that had spread its wings to look at the tree that she was pointing at. But a moment later, he was perplexed. “Huh? Was there a tree in that spot when we first came here?”

Right before Vandalieu's eyes, the tree's roots moved like legs to produce a sluggish motion.

“... It did move, didn't it?” he said.

“It does seem like it moved,” said Zadiris in agreement.

“See, I told you it moved, didn't I!” exclaimed Rita.

“It looks like an Ent... Where did it sneak in from?” asked Zadiris.

“Well, if it's just one tree coming at me, I'll turn it into lumber right away.” Thinking that it would be best to fell the tree just in case, Vigarō, who was now a battle lumberjack, raised his trusty axe.

As he did, the entire thicket squirmed with the loud rustling of leaves.

“... Did all the trees we can see just move?” asked Rita.

“Could it be that all of the trees in this thicket are Ents?” Kachia guessed.

Her guess was entirely correct.

Ents are Rank 3 plant-type monsters.

They use their roots as legs to move and possess faces resembling those of humans on their trunks. Their strength is proportional to the size of their bodies and their trunks are as hard as iron. As they are made of wood, they may look weak to fire, but they possess the Fire Element Resistance skill, so they are difficult to burn.

However, their movements are dull and they are only able to swing their branches and roots around in battle. Because of their folk-tale like appearance and their human-like faces, they are imagined to be intelligent, but their intelligence is not significantly different from that of Goblins.

However, as they possess the characteristics of plants, they do not attack other creatures except in self-defense or if they are in extremely dry, barren land. Even in Devil’s Nests, as long as they are not carelessly approached and no fires are lit nearby, they are relatively unthreatening, rare monsters.

Their fresh leaves can be used to make poultices, and their trunks can be used as high-quality wood. Their faces are used as proof of their extermination.

Incidentally, the cause of their appearance has long been a source of puzzlement for researchers. The leading theory is that there are ‘Ent seeds’ that grow into large trees and form Ents. However, the existence of such seeds is still yet to be proven.

Another theory is that normal trees become Ents when polluted with Mana. Renowned mages have tried pouring Mana into soil in experiments to test this theory, but in the end, no trees transformed into Ents in these experiments.

“So, Van, how much Mana did you pour into them?” asked Basdia.

“If I recall, I recovered my Mana as I worked so it was around 300,000,000 Mana yesterday,” replied Vandalieu.

“... Your Mana is amazing as always, isn't it, Van?”

Upon hearing the mention of Mana in the hundreds of millions, Kachia, who was more open with her feelings these days, let out a sigh. She had been training in magic recently, but her Mana was just over one hundred.

In a single day, the five-year-old boy in front of her had poured three million times that amount into the ground. Wasn't it simply too extraordinary?

“I wish you'd share some of that Mana with me,” she said. “Well, you do share it with me from time to time,” she added.

“Indeed,” said Zadiris in agreement. “No matter how renowned a mage is, they would not possess a hundred million.”

It seemed that as a result of an incredible amount of Vandalieu's Mana being continuously poured into the ground, all of the previously very ordinary seeds had grown into Ents.

This made the truth behind the appearance of Ents very clear.

It did seem like it would be years before this was announced to human society, however.

“By the way, is it alright with the plants like this?” Vandalieu wondered.

“You walked around before you brought us here, didn't you?” said Vigaro. “Isn't it fine, then?”

“It does not seem that they will attack us when we come near,” said Sam.

“Holy Son, how is your Death-Attribute Charm?” asked Nuaza.

“Hmm... It seems to be working.”

Why was Death-Attribute Charm having an effect on plant-type Ents who didn't have death or cemetery in their names?

It was unclear, but there was no denying that it was affecting them.

But Appraisal revealed...

【Rank: 4, Name: Immortal Treant, Summary: Mutant Treants who have been showered in death-attribute Mana as seeds. However, they do not possess evil natures. They are resistant to all kinds of conditions, physical attacks and

magical attacks, and they possess excellent self-restoring abilities.】

In other words, they were Ents that were incredibly difficult to kill.

“Well, I suppose we have more fighting forces and an additional source of food,” said Vandalieu.

For now, he needed to refine the Defeat flower oil. He decided to make Golems and establish a production system right away.

A group of seven people proceeded through a large, dark corridor.

The group of men and women holding lanterns to light the way, wearing various kinds of equipment, looked like adventurers in the middle of clearing a Dungeon ruins.

This would be half-correct.

“There’s less resistance than I expected, for great ruins that were supposedly sealed off a hundred thousand years ago,” said a man in his late twenties wielding a spear as he stabbed a Demon^[4] to death.

Demons are coagulations of contaminated Mana with evil wills that turn into monsters. The Lesser Demon with the head and legs of a black goat that the man just defeated was the weakest kind, but even that was a powerful Rank 6 enemy. However...

“It’s nothing but small fry; this doesn’t even make for good exercise.”

“You are absolutely right, Riley-Aniki!” said a small man in light equipment who appeared to be a scout.

The unamused face of the Green Wind Spear Riley twisted in a small smile.

“There is no helping it; there is no way that a suitable opponent for someone like you who is an A-class adventurer with a Title would be easily to find,” said a woman whose cleavage was visible through her revealing top, who would appear to be a prostitute rather than a mage if she were not holding a staff.

Riley’s smile grew wider.

“Do you think so as well, Flark?” Riley asked.

There was no response.

“Ah, come to think of it, your collar is set so that you can’t talk, isn’t it? Well, whatever.”

The man called Flark was a Shield-bearer wearing plate armor and a helmet made of black steel harder and heavier than iron, holding a shield larger than the smaller man. As Riley spoke to him, he didn’t even so much as glance at Riley. But Riley showed no signs of concern as he chuckled and continued.

“Well, I suppose there’s no helping it,” said Riley. “I’m not foolish enough to think that heroes who leave their names in history are constantly doing flashy work. They have to do this kind of dull work as well. Especially when it’s requested by Earl Mauvid.”

“The words of a hero are really something else!” said the small man in admiration.

“Kyah, how wonderful!” squealed the female mage.

Flark said nothing, letting out only a small, short sigh. The other two praised Riley and flattered him even more unabashedly than before.

This conversation alone would be enough to indicate that the adventurers of this party were not all of equal standing, but the collars worn by Flark and the others made it very clear.

The three of them were wearing hard, black collars on their necks. They were slaves owned by Riley. The marks engraved on the collars showed that they were criminal slaves.

Unlike slaves of debt who would be released and return to becoming normal people once their debts were paid off, criminal slaves could be legally treated in any manner and they wouldn’t be released until their deaths.

There was no way that these were companions of equal status. Riley held their lives and possessions in his hands. With a party formed with just these slaves, it was not unnatural for Riley to become carried away.

However, there were three more people other than Riley and his slaves. They were three individuals with pale skin and crimson eyes, giving wry smiles at the

conversation they were hearing.

“Do you guys think so as well?” Riley asked them.

One of the red-eyed individuals smiled even wider as he answered.

“We are grateful that we were able to make this exchange, Riley-dono.”

There were fangs visibly protruding from his mouth.

Notes

1. “Rapiécage” is a French word that does indeed mean ‘patching’.
2. According to my editor, this is a sound-effect attributed to ninjas for comedic effect.
3. Deep-fried food without batter or breading.
4. This is デモン/demon in katakana, I previously translated 魔人/majin to “demon”... I’m not exactly sure what Majin are so I’ll probably just leave them as Majin in English.

Chapter 55: Sometime after autumn, insects will be drawn to the light

Other than his talent, the Green Wind Spear Riley was a normal adventurer that could be found anywhere.

He came from a commoner background, and he had become an adventurer because he had confidence in his own skill. His objective had been to earn gold. And though he never said this out loud, he held the hopes and dreams of becoming like the protagonists of the heroic tales he had heard as a child.

When Riley was still a novice, he happened to witness Heinz registering as an adventurer. He got on well with this younger man and decided to form a party with him.

And then a female Dwarf Shield-bearer, an intellectual young male Scout who wielded a bow and a beautiful Elf woman who used Spiritual Magic were added to the party and they became known as the Five-colored Blades.

Just like in folk songs about heroes, the four members other than Riley had abundant talent as well. After a hard year of completing Goblin extermination requests, they were comparable to veteran D-class adventurers.

In the next year, they were promoted to C-class, a little superior to average adventurers. In their third year together, they cleared a previously undiscovered Dungeon, acquiring valuable Magic Items and fame, and Heinz, the party leader, was promoted to B-class. He was bestowed with a Title, the Blue-flamed Sword, originating from the magic sword he acquired from the Dungeon.

Around that time, before he knew it, Riley found that he held dark feelings towards Heinz.

Riley had talent himself; he was just as handsome and strong as Heinz. Though Heinz was the party leader, Riley wondered, why was he being treated

as a bonus addition to Heinz?

Heinz was the only one to be promoted to B-class after clearing the Dungeon. Riley had acquired a Mythril spear with an emerald-green jewel that controlled the wind, but he hadn't gained a Title.

Noblemen and merchants were frantic to form connections with Heinz, the individual with such talent that he had become a B-class adventurer in his teenage years. There were numerous talks of officer and specialist contracts and, best of all, he was approached by good women. Even the receptionist at the Adventurers' Guild looked at him with moist eyes.

In contrast to that, Riley was only known as 'one of Heinz's companions.' It was as if there was a sign with those exact words hanging around his neck.

And then Riley came to the realization that it was not him, but Heinz who had become the protagonist of the heroic folk songs.

It was the greatest failure and humiliation he had experienced in his life. But this alone would likely not have made Riley leave the Five-colored Blades. He might have simply accepted that this was how things were, like many other adventurers, and continued to be Heinz's party member.

But the final crack was one particular request the party received.

That request was to capture a Vampire and a Dark Elf witch who had succumbed to his temptations and given birth to a Dhampir. It was an unusual request, but when they actually accepted it, they quickly succeeded in completing it.

The witch's archery and magic were no match for them, and the Vampire was nowhere to be found. Heinz thrust his sheathed sword into her stomach and that was the end of it.

They received their reward and put that town behind them.

However, after completing that request, Heinz began to brood upon his thoughts often and say things that Riley couldn't understand.

Riley had a bad feeling about it, but he remembered how Heinz had done the same when he had just become an adventurer after cutting down a pregnant

female Goblin. Riley forced himself to believe that Heinz would overcome it like before.

He realized that he was mistaken when Heinz turned down an invitation to a party sponsored by an important nobleman.

“Tonight is the Festival of Alda. I would certainly like to hear the heroic tale of how you cleansed the land of that evil witch,” the nobleman’s messenger said.

Heinz replied with a “No.”

That important nobleman was one of the most prominent figures in the Mirg shield-nation, and he was particularly influential at the Adventurers’ Guild.

“Why did you refuse an invitation from someone like that? We can’t stay uninvolved with high society if we want to increase our Ranks, even if it’s a pain! How many times have we said that?!” Riley demanded.

“I can’t believe that she was a witch,” replied Heinz. “I’ve started to doubt whether this country... whether Alda is right.”

Ah, it’s hopeless. I can’t follow this guy anymore, thought Riley, the moment he heard Heinz’s response.

Riley was an adventurer. He accepted requests, fought monsters and earned gold. He would be promoted, gain fame and honor, retire at an older age after a successful career and then live out the rest of his years in comfort.

Riley wouldn’t tell Heinz not to have his ideals and chase his dreams. After all, Riley himself had dreamed of becoming the protagonist of a heroic folk song. That was why he wasn’t so concerned about others.

So I don’t really care about Heinz’s ideals, dreams or sense of justice. But why do I have to suffer for them?

Yeah, sure. You’re a genius. I’m sure all the bards in the future will sing heroic tales with you as the protagonist.

Even if you refuse an important nobleman’s invitation, I’m sure you’ll be fine. Even if you doubt the nation’s sense of values and national religion, even if you go to the Orbaume Kingdom where Dhampirs are treated as people, I’m sure you’ll overcome any problems you face with the powers you believe in and the

bonds you have with others.

On top of that, you'll rush to A-class and S-class, and fame, gold, status and women will come to you one after another.

But I'm definitely different. I don't believe I can go to an enemy nation that we've been warring with for hundreds of years to uphold the unspoken law that nations have nothing to do with adventurers. Even if I overcame the difficulties and somehow followed you, even then, I'd just be 'one of Heinz's companions,' right?

Don't fuck with me!

After leaving the Five-colored Blades, Riley signed a specialist contract with the aforementioned important nobleman, Earl Palpapek.

After that, he reached B-class and acquired his Title, becoming known as Riley, the Green Wind Spear. It was all due to Earl Palpapek's influence, however. But Riley didn't care. He had always possessed the ability that deserved such recognition, and the only reason he hadn't received that recognition was because he had been in Heinz's shadow. In Riley's heart, this had become the absolute truth.

However, not having the same luck that Heinz had been blessed with, he was unable to gather reliable companions.

The more capable ones were audacious and didn't listen to him. Those who didn't listen to him were of no use.

Left with no other choice, he worked solo or in temporary parties to become more well-known and have others begging him to become his companions.

During this time, he joined forces with the High Priest who had been involved in the business with the witch, in order to slay the Dhampir who had escaped at that time and his subordinate Ghouls, which ended in wasted effort. But this was a trivial matter.

However, misfortune befell Riley once more after that.

Frustrated at the fact that he couldn't gather companions, Riley came up with the idea of purchasing slaves and raising them as adventurers.

He had heard the stories of the legendary champion Bellwood, who had rehabilitated criminal slaves at the time, turning them into reliable companions who constantly protected him on the battlefield.

Riley used the money he had saved up until that point to purchase slaves to use in battle and began training them as adventurers. Unlike the adventurers he had encountered so far, the slaves were obedient and quite useful. However, their superficial skills were nowhere near enough to keep up with those of Riley, a B-class adventurer.

Even after acquiring the Slave User Job and acquiring the Strengthen Slaves skill, the improvements were moderate at best.

And in the Mirg shield-nation, a nation of the Amid Empire, slaves possessed rights as humans. If Riley used the slaves in reckless ways, he would be accused of abusing them and slaves of races created by Vida who had no human rights were few and far between in the western regions of the continent.

And then Riley had arrived at the idea of using criminal slaves. This had caused him to be ostracized by Earl Palpapek, his employer, but Riley himself never noticed this.

Rather than believing that the earl had shuffled him away as a card, he believed that it was he who had shuffled the earl away.

“Earl Palpapek is an idiot, isn’t he!” exclaimed Riley. “Holing up in his mansion like a turtle when he could return to being the marshal if he put more achievements to his name in this expedition. I don’t really care that he’s being a coward, but I don’t want him to take away my opportunities to increase my fame as well.”

“But thanks to that, Marshal Legston introduced us to General Mauvid, didn’t he?” said Messara, the female Mage with an overly sensual appearance. “You are capable of more than ending up as the employee of a vassal nation’s earl, Riley-sama.”

Messara had become a master of the Mages’ Guild at a young age, but in order to preserve her youth and beautiful appearance, she practiced the evil sorceries detailed in the forbidden archives. At least ten children were confirmed to have been kidnapped from the village and murdered by her. She

had been a bizarre serial killer who had covered her entire body in the fresh blood of her victims.

“Heheh, you’re completely right,” said Gennie, the small Scout who was a former C-class adventurer. “The entire nation is expecting Aniki to become the successor to the tragic hero, and if things go well, he’ll be able to get his hands on the magic spear Artifact, won’t he? With that, surpassing A-class to become S-class won’t be a mere dream.”

Gennie had been an excellent adventurer who worked solo, but the hidden side of him was that he was a fiend who did evil acts such as setting traps for other adventurers and rob them of their achievements, their fortunes and their lives, and tricking new adventurers to sell them to underground slave traders.

Flark, the Shield-bearer, remained silent.

He looked to be more decent than the other two at first glance; however, that didn’t change the fact that he was a criminal slave. He was the leader of a mercenary band who would earn their living as bandits during times of peace. He had personally killed more people than the other two members of his current party.

In spite of the requests that Riley successfully completed, he had gained a bad reputation by forming a party made entirely of criminal slaves.

He came to the incorrect conclusion that this was why he wasn’t being promoted to A-class. Just as he decided to gather more achievements to his name in the upcoming expedition to turn things in his favor, Earl Palpapek, who had signed a specialist contract with Riley, told Riley that he wouldn’t participate the expedition and would offer Riley no assistance if he wanted to participate in the expedition on his own.

As Riley searched for ways to continue gathering achievements to his name, he overheard that Earl Legston, the current marshal, was searching for skilled adventurers to join the expedition. When Riley accepted, things proceeded so smoothly that everything seemed like some kind of joke.

He was promoted to A-class, his specialist contract with Earl Palpapek was nullified so that he didn’t have to pay an enormous fine for breaching his contract and his interview with Marshal Legston was a success.

And then he had been hired by General Mauvid, the commander of the expedition. And the beings behind that general were...

“But are you fine with this?” asked Riley. “I’m the second coming of Mikhail, the Divine Spear of Ice. I’m Riley, the Green Wind Spear. Won’t your bosses be mad at you for doing business with me?”

The Vampires gave wry smiles in response to his question.

“We don’t mind. We are companions with common goals in this expedition. Isn’t that right?”

Taking advantage of Riley’s ambitions, the Vampires working for the Pure-breed Vampire Ternecia had made him an offer. They had asked him, “Don’t you want to become a hero?”

And then Riley had accepted that offer.

“Yeah, there’s no doubt that I do,” he had replied.

Riley wanted gold, but achievements came first. That was why, as advance payment, he had been given the honor to be the first to clear the tunnel in the Boundary Mountain Range.

And then during this expedition, he would gain the achievements of having exterminated the fiendish Dhampir and the two Noble-born Vampires who were traitors to the Vampire community.

If things fared well, Riley would sign a specialist contract with the Mauvid family of earls. By the time he retired he would have a court rank and be able to live a resplendent life in the Amid Empire.

He wasn’t concerned that his home country would suffer as a result of this expedition.

The Vampires had gained the convenience of having an influential ally involved in the expedition, someone to act as bait for their Dhampir target, and, of course, someone who could be used in battle.

“Or perhaps you wish for immortality?” one of the Vampires had asked Riley.

Messara had an expression of desire on her face, but Riley had shaken his head with a wry smile.

“I’ll pass. I quite like the honor of living an earthly life,” he had replied.

Who’d want to become a Vampire? I’d rather not live hundreds of years and still be ordered around by someone else.

This was how Riley saw the Vampires.

“How unfortunate.”

Seeing through Riley’s intentions, the Vampires had quickly withdrawn their offer. Making use of him just on this expedition was sufficient for them, so there was no need to be persistent.

“Aniki, we’re almost at the exit!” said Gennie.

The tunnel had been sealed off by countless boulders ahead, where Gennie was pointing. But his nose hadn’t missed the smell of fresh air coming from the gaps in between the boulders.

Messara examined the other side of the boulders with magic. She felt a small response.

“There are a few Undead,” she said.

“Are they strong?” asked Riley.

“No. They are Rank 2 at best.”

“Then there’s no problem. You guys step back, it’s time for Zephyr, my magic spear of wind, to shine.” Riley raised Zephyr, his prided magic spear. Wind gathered to him from within the tunnel and –

“Hundred Rending Screw Thrusts!”

He unleashed an advanced martial skill with Zephyr, a rapid series of twisting thrusts with their penetrating power enhanced by the Wind-attribute Mana imbued in the spear.

Letting out deafening sounds, each thrust of Riley’s spear easily broke and blew away a part of the wall of boulders that likely weighed dozens of tons.

Flark leapt through the hole that formed as a result, ensuring that the other side was safe.

He looked around silently.

“What, there aren’t any Undead after all,” said Riley.

Only ruined fields and forests were to be found on the other side of the boulders; there was no sign of anything that resembled an Undead.

“O-oh? How strange... I wonder if they were hit by the boulders you sent flying?” Messara suggested.

Fragments of the boulders that Riley had destroyed were scattered around. Though they were fragments, the larger ones were the size of human heads, large enough to defeat Rank 2 monsters if they were hit.

“I suppose so...” Riley exhaled. “So this is the air of a land unexplored by people. The wind is quite good; how should I describe it in my autobiography?”

“We must ask that you do not write about us in that autobiography,” said one of the Vampires.

As Riley stood there with a smirk on his face, the Vampires walked past him. They took Magic Items resembling compasses from their pockets, poured a red liquid onto them and began measuring something.

“Master Vampires, what might those be?” asked Gennie.

“It is a device that detects the location of Vampires,” a Vampire replied. “With this, we can find out where the traitors are.”

Even the Vampires didn’t know the exact location of the Dhampir and the Vampire traitors. That was why they were using these devices to find their destination.

If Earl Palpapek learned of this, he would laugh at the crudeness of their plan and the fact that they hadn’t investigated the Dhampir’s location beforehand, and then feel disappointed in himself for not being able to stop this plan.

“There’s no response for Sercrent’s blood,” said one of the Vampires. “Has he been killed?”

“The search radius reaches all the way to the Orbaume Kingdom from here,” said another. “I suppose we should assume that he’s dead.”

“What about Eleanora?”

“Wait, I’m taking measurements now.”

They poured Eleanora’s blood that they had stored onto the Magic Items and looked at the response.

“There she is. Northeast of here... The area near where Talosheim should be, according to the records.”

“What? Then does this mean that the Dhampir and his Ghouls are in those ruins?”

“Heh! That’s convenient!” Upon hearing the Vampires’ conversation, Riley’s lips twisted in a good-humored smile. “The failure of the Mirg shield-nation and Mikhail, the hero of two hundred years ago, will be made up for by me, the hero of the modern age!” he exclaimed. “I’ll take back the national treasure Artifact while I’m at it, too! Everything’s going just as I wanted! The goddess of destiny smiles on me!”

Having taken oil from the seeds of the Defeat flower, whose trees had become Immortal Ents, Vandalieu was trying his hand at making his own mayonnaise.

Giga eggs, fruit vinegar and oil. He had gathered all of the ingredients. What he hadn’t possessed was the equipment to make it, but Vandalieu had made those as well.

An iron bowl and a hand mixer...-shaped Golem (made of iron). Though they were heavy, Vandalieu didn’t struggle while handling them due to his Superhuman Strength skills and high Attribute Values.

And then Vandalieu mixed the ingredients on and on. He used Demon Flame, the blue-white flame spell that absorbed heat, to cool the ingredients down and continued mixing.

“Vandalieu, are you alright?” asked Darcia.

“Hmm? Yes, of course.” Vandalieu didn’t know why Darcia was worrying about him, but his silent, expressionless face looked quite unhealthy in the light of the blue flame. It was only natural that Darcia was worried.

“Hey, that’s a flavoring as well, isn’t it? Then can’t you have it made by Golems like Defeat flower oil, nori and kombu?” asked Darcia.

Vandalieu had indeed already automated the manufacturing process for Defeat flower oil using Golems and Magic Items.

“I do intend to do that in the future,” he said in response to Darcia’s question. “When making mayonnaise, you don’t add the oil all at once. You have to add it slowly like I’m doing now. So even if I make Golems do it, mayonnaise won’t be produced.”

The Golems created by Vandalieu had more applications than Golems created through regular Alchemy, but they were not all-purpose.

The Golems wouldn’t know the rate at which the oil needed to be added if Vandalieu didn’t specify it.

Hand mixers, spinning fans and massage Golems were simple, however. He just needed to limit their moving parts and instruct them on how fast or slow, how strong or weak their movements should be.

However, when it came to making food, Vandalieu needed to give them specific instructions.

“I wish I’d tried making handmade mayonnaise on Earth or in my previous life,” said Vandalieu. He had experienced cooking for himself on Earth, but he certainly hadn’t tried making handmade mayonnaise. “Well, once I figure out the trick I am going to automate it with Golems, so it’s just this one time.”

Vandalieu intended to have a food-sampling meeting and hear everyone’s opinions before then, but considering the reactions to miso, fish sauce, kombu and katsuobushi, he could only imagine that the mayonnaise would be welcomed by everyone.

The Ghouls and Undead Titans had a particularly strong liking for foods with thick flavors. The same was true for the Black Goblins, Anubises and Orcuses. He had the feeling that it might cause blood pressure problems, but their physiology was different to the humans of Earth, so it was probably fine.

So everyone would probably take a liking to mayonnaise, but... there was the risk of producing more junkies. No, it would definitely produce junkies.

Even so, Vandalieu wanted to eat food with mayonnaise.

And the onee-san at the trading post told me that she wanted me to make a new product, so I suppose it's fine, isn't it?

“Really? If you’re tired, make sure you rest, okay?” Darcia told Vandalieu.

“Okay.”

And then only the whirring sound of the hand mixer Golem could be heard.

“Vandalieu-sama, did you need anything?” asked Eleanora as she appeared. Vandalieu had called her here to taste-test the mayonnaise once it was completed. “Are you... perhaps researching the cause of a disease?”

“No, I’m making a new flavoring,” replied Vandalieu.

This scene may certainly not appear to be cooking to a person from this world, but wasn’t the misunderstanding a little too terrible? Though he was indeed doing research on diseases as well.

Many of this world’s inhabitants had no concrete knowledge when it came to pathogens. In fact, the great majority of them were unaware of the existence of tiny organisms that couldn’t be seen with the naked eye. The exceptions were very knowledgeable people, those who brewed alcoholic drinks and bread merchants.

This was likely why Eleanora had misunderstood, but –

“I’m sorry, I’d thought that I had been summoned so that you can experiment as to whether it would work on Vampires...”

It seemed that she had come with the intention of being an experimental subject.

“No, I wanted you to try this mayonnaise,” Vandalieu told her.

“I see,” said Eleanora. “But to mistake that for research on the cause of a disease... I am willing to accept any punishment. So you should –”

“Then as a punishment, please taste this.”

A year had already passed since Eleanora’s addition to Vandalieu’s allies, for some reason, she had never changed. She was always begging him to punish

her for something.

Vandalieu had found it tiring to keep up with her at first, but now he was completely used to it. He had decided to treat her well while calling his treatment punishment, but –

“Vandalieu-sama, this is not punishment... You should order me to offer you my blood, or spend the day as a replacement for your furniture,” said Eleanora.

This was how things were. The idea of telling her to let her use her lap as a pillow as a punishment next time suddenly occurred to Vandalieu.

“Umm, Eleanora-san? I think it’s a little too early for Vandalieu to be involved in those kinds of things,” said Darcia.

“N-no, I didn’t mean it in that way...!” Eleanora panicked and shook her head, so it didn’t seem like she was simply an individual with tastes for such things.

Leaving that aside, the mayonnaise was almost finished.

Unlike the vinegar, the Giga eggs and the Defeat flower oil taken from Immortal Ents hadn’t existed on Earth and in Origin. Perhaps because the ratio of ingredients was different because the ingredients themselves were also different, Vandalieu’s attempts to make mayonnaise so far had room for improvement. But this time, it was possible that he had the perfected product.

He decided to first scoop some up with his finger to taste it, and then try applying it to a salad of wild vegetables.

“Now then, time to taste –” Vandalieu suddenly stopped mid-sentence.

“Vandalieu?” Darcia called out to him in concern.

“Mom, it seems that the Vampires’ pawns in the Mirg shield-nation are approaching,” he said.

“Ah, is that so...?” Darcia looked concerned.

“Was there a response from your surveillance Undead?” asked Eleanora, looking surprised. “But to think that they would immediately know where we are.”

Vandalieu set aside his experimental mayonnaise.

“Now then, let’s gather everyone and have a discussion,” he said. “I’ll explain the information that the surveillance Undead gathered. Please listen while tasting the mayonnaise.”

They might arrive as early as autumn or winter. Next year’s spring at latest.

But they were insects being drawn to a light.

- **Name:** Riley
- **Race:** Human
- **Age:** 25
- **Titles:** Green Wind Spear, the Second Coming of the Tragic Hero
- **Job:** Slave User
- **Level:** 47
- **Job History:** Apprentice Warrior, Warrior, Spearman, Magic Spear User
- **Passive skills:**
 - Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with a spear (Medium)
 - Enhanced Attribute Values: Agility: Level 5
 - Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with non-metal armor (Medium)
 - Intuition: Level 3
 - Detect Presence: Level 2
 - Strengthen Slaves: Level 2
- **Active skills:**
 - Spear Technique: Level 8
 - Armor Technique: Level 5
 - Javelin Technique: Level 5
 - Dismantling: Level 2
 - Silent Steps: Level 2
 - Surpass Limits - Magic Spear: Level 4
 - Training: Level 1
 - Overpower: Level 1

Chapter 56: I'm crowned as a result of the Mayonnaise Meeting

Other than those who were absent as they were clearing Dungeons, Vandalieu had gathered his main companions in the hall of the royal castle.

They had to discuss what to do now that the invasion of the Mirg shield-nation and Vampires had been confirmed. They also had to taste-test the mayonnaise trial product.

“Delicious! It’s ridiculously delicious!” Borkus exclaimed.

“I think it needs a little more impact. How about adding some wasabi to it?” Vigaró suggested.

“I see,” said Zadiris. “I think it is quite acceptable as it is...”

“This is...! I have never tasted a flavor like this! Vandalieu-sama, what did you use to create this?!” asked Eleanora.

Bone Chimera made a noise and Rapiéçage let out a groan.

“Eh? Wha –” There was a scream.

“Ah! Rapiéçage is getting a hold of Tarea-san to get the mayonnaise stuck around her mouth!” Saria exclaimed.

“Please stop her instead of just watching!” Tarea shouted.

“Ahah~♪ We can’t hear the words of Tarea-san who gets to try out delicious foods that we can’t eat~☆” Rita told her.

“Nooooooooo! You heartless fool!”

“It cannot be helped, here, I will give you this, so stop –”

Zadiris offered Rapiéçage the mayonnaise on her finger. Rapiéçage put her finger in her mouth and began sucking.

“... Boy, this Zombie girl is sucking on my finger with all of her strength.”

“Hmm, the intelligence of the Undead really does drop if I don’t use the body’s original spirit,” Vandalieu observed. “Adding more spirits turned out to be quite pointless as well.”

Military matters had been set aside, leaving the mayonnaise tasting to be the current topic. Nobody could win against their appetites.

Well, Rapiécage wasn’t intelligent enough to have discussions or anything like that. Other than listening to Vandalieu’s commands, she was just a normal Zombie and couldn’t speak a single word.

Vandalieu had tried adding more spirits to her like with Bone Man, but it had no effect at all. Maybe Bone Man was a special case, or perhaps a suitable amount of learning and life experience(?) was needed? Vandalieu decided to assume that it was the latter and wait for her to develop.

Zombies and Skeletons, like children, could not be raised hastily.

“Rappie, release Zadiris’s finger from your mouth,” Vandalieu ordered.

Rapiécage groaned as she released Zadiris’s brown-gray finger from her purple lips, leaving a sticky string between it and her blue tongue. The color of Rapiécage’s lips and tongue had changed for some reason after Vandalieu had turned her into a Zombie. He had properly stopped her decomposition with Preservation, however.

Zadiris let out a disgruntled noise. “She even went and licked my claws. It is not my fault if she is paralyzed.”

“She is an Undead, after all,” said Vandalieu.

“I am aware of that. Her stitches are clearly visible.”

Tarea let out a sigh of relief. “I almost had my lips taken by a Zombie of the same sex right before Van-sama’s eyes.”

“We must not let down our guards or show any weaknesses,” said Eleanora.

Both Tarea and Eleanora hastily wiped their mouths. Zombies in fictional works on Earth often had poor eyesight but a sharp sense of smell to make up for it, but this wasn’t the case for Zombies in Lambda.

In Rapiécage’s case, since her head was that of a human, her senses were

almost identical to those of a human other than the Dark Vision skill she had gained as an Undead. Wiping the mayonnaise away from their mouths was enough to stop Rapiéçage from noticing it.

Taking that into account, the Zombies in Earth's fiction could actually be considered to have quite high specs.

"Now then, about the Mirg shield-nation's army –" Vandalieu began.

"It's obvious that we're going to slaughter them all, isn't it?" Borkus interrupted. "More importantly, isn't there any more mayonnaise?"

"It was an experimental product, so there's no more," Vandalieu told him.

"What?! Then let's make some more!"

"Vandalieu, how do you make it?!" Vigaro demanded.

"Wait, I am sure it is impossible because there are insufficient ingredients," said Zadiris. "Boy, what do you need for it?"

"... I'll make it, so just listen to what I have to say," said Vandalieu.

It seemed that the Lambda-made mayonnaise was a success.

After that, excluding Rapiéçage and Knochen, everyone including Vandalieu exchanged information and discussed what to do against the Mirg shield-nation while making mayonnaise.

This would later come to be known as the Mayonnaise Meeting of Talosheim.

While Vandalieu was creating mayonnaise, the boulders sealing off the tunnel leading to the Mirg shield-nation were destroyed, and adventurers and Vampires emerged from within. Judging from the contents of their conversation:

- The Vampires who worship Hihiryushukaka, the Evil God of Joyful Life, were utilizing the Empire and Mirg shield-nation in order to repeat the Talosheim invasion of two hundred years ago.
- They had used Magic Items to determine Eleanora's location and concluded that Vandalieu was in Talosheim.

- However, it seemed that they currently had no plans to conduct reconnaissance in Talosheim. Vandalieu and the Ghouls had previously escaped from the Devil's Nest forest without fighting, so they were wary that the same thing would happen again. They were also wary of the risk that if casualties were suffered during reconnaissance, Vandalieu would gain information from their spirits.

Eleanora looked mortified. "I do recall them taking my blood on numerous occasions, but I didn't realize that such Magic Items existed..."

"Well, don't worry about it," said Vandalieu. "It's convenient because they're coming straight here. So now the four members of the adventurer party and one of the Vampires is guarding the tunnel's exit. The other two Vampires have returned to their community to let them know. It seems the Mirg shield-nation has been contacted through Magic Items."

As to be expected of a community of Vampires with Pure-breeds who had lived for hundreds of thousands of years standing at the top. It seemed that they possessed all kinds of Magic Items that Eleanora had no knowledge about. With that said, those Magic Items were tools to locate traitors, quite fitting of them considering the teachings of the Evil God of Joyful Life and Birkyne's personality.

Did they find Valen's... Father's location with this item as well? Well, leaving that aside...

"So when do you think they will arrive?" asked Zadiris.

"It seems they haven't come to a concrete decision yet."

Judging from the adventurers' conversation... adventurers and knights would come through the tunnel to confirm its safety and protect the exit. The adventurers would then return. At the same time, a war council led by the Amid Empire would take place to discuss the tunnel's discovery and the upcoming invasion.

In that war council, things like budgets, the number of soldiers and knights that needed to be mobilized and where they were to be mobilized from would be decided.

There were plans to dispatch priests of the Church of Alda to scatter holy water around the tunnel, under the pretense of 'removing ancient, evil spirits'. In reality, this was likely a measure against Vandalieu who was assumed to be a Spiritualist.

And then the Amid Empire and Mirg shield-nation would jointly make a grand announcement of the expedition. There would be extravagant ceremonies and festivals to increase the citizens' morale.

And then a party would be held in the Amid Empire in anticipation of General Mauvid's victory in this expedition. The Order of Prodigal Knights would depart the Empire and join up with the Vampires who would disguise themselves as mercenaries. At the same time, the soldiers and knights would be gathered from all over the Mirg shield-nation, more ceremonies would be performed, and...

"Considering the above processes, I think that they'll be here around winter no matter how much they rush things," said Vandalieu.

"... Would it kill humans to hurry it up? They don't even live for a hundred years, so how come they're so patient?" Vigaró wondered.

"Indeed, they should come as soon as possible," Zadiris said in agreement.

For Ghouls like Vigaró and Zadiris, the ceremonies and parties happening indiscriminately would likely seem pointless.

Though Vandalieu might have seen the point in having parties, the ceremonies did indeed seem like a waste of time. Well, without them, the morale of the knights and soldiers might decrease.

"Humans like those kinds of ceremonies," said Tarea.

"It's easier to think of them as creatures with those in their nature and way of life," Eleanora added.

Both of them were former humans, after all.

"A long time ago, your father told me that great people must show how great they are," said Darcia.

Well, that was how it was. Vandalieu was aiming to become a nobleman, even

if he couldn't have any successors, so having to do those kinds of things would be a problem.

"Then I'm sure they'll come in spring," said Borkus. "It doesn't snow around here, even in winter, but it'll get cold."

Just as he said, winter was harsh in Talosheim, a city surrounded by mountains. Despite there being no snow, it was ridiculously cold.

The snow would stop on the mountains to both the east and west, but the cold would come straight over the mountains and blow down on the city.

It would be harsh on an army to march in those conditions. At a normal walking pace, it would take five days to reach Talosheim from that tunnel. After coming out of the tunnel, though there would be no snow, the roads weren't maintained and even with the records of Talosheim's direction from two hundred years ago, it would almost certainly be impossible to proceed while avoiding the Devil's Nests that had spread across everywhere.

Considering the terrain that the army needed to march across, if they did it during winter, they would be greatly weakened before even reaching Talosheim.

"Well, I'm sure those guys won't be very familiar with the climate in this area," Borkus added.

"But I think they'll be cautious *because* they're unfamiliar with it," said Vandalieu. "I'm sure Vampires don't care about the cold of winter, but they're planning to make use of a human army this time. It's unlikely they'll force a movement during the winter."

"Indeed, if they were going to push in during the winter, the Vampires would have attacked alone without joining forces with the humans," Eleanora added.

Everyone present was discussing things with serious expressions. However, they all had a hand-mixer-Golem in one hand and a container of oil in the other. They were adding oil to a bowl and mixing the contents to create mayonnaise.

It was a very surreal sight.

"So they'll come in spring after all," Vandalieu concluded. "Ah, Borkus, you're

adding the oil too fast.”

They surely wouldn't drag things on all the way up until summer, so their arrival would likely be spring.

“Hmm, this is quite troublesome,” Borkus remarked.

“Making delicious things is a troublesome process,” said Zadiris. “The boy is always doing these things.”

“We're making them when we can't even eat them yet, so please don't complain,” said Saria.

“So what are we going to do about the adventurers and Vampires guarding the tunnel? Should we dispose of them first?” asked Vigaró.

“Though that is an attractive option, we'll leave them be,” replied Vandalieu.

There were numerous reasons to leave them alone. First, there were nothing to be gained by doing so. Even if a few adventurers and Vampires were killed or captured, they would gain no information and there would be no point.

The enemy was expending its resources to gather an expedition army. Vandalieu couldn't imagine that Riley or the Vampires would know anything about it at this stage. The same went for the Vampires' fighting forces. It was also impossible to imagine that those who would be stationed as lookouts would be in important positions.

It would be quite troublesome to travel to the tunnel entrance where Riley and the others were in the first place. There were no roads or anything of the sort, and they would have to traverse multiple Devil's Nests to get there as well.

Borkus and the others had gone there once last year and defeated quite a lot of monsters along the way, but since a year had passed, other monsters would have replaced them and taken their territory. Stealthily approaching the tunnel while fighting those monsters, attacking the people at the tunnel and then coming back would be quite a lot of effort. There was also a high chance of failure.

And even if they succeeded, it might only make the enemy warier.

“When you say that it's an attractive option, did you mean there was

someone notable there?” asked Darcia.

“An adventurer called the Green Wind Spear Riley,” replied Vandalieu. “I’ve heard his voice before.”

The voices of Heinz’s companions, voices that he couldn’t forget. The voices of the ones who had held a memorial for Darcia by spending the money they earned from capturing and selling her over to High Priest Gordan to buy drinks on the day she was burned alive.

As Vandalieu explained this, everyone’s expressions stiffened and Darcia looked at her son in worry.

“Vandalieu, for now...” she began.

“Yes, for now, we’re going to leave them be. I’m not going to do anything like sneak off by myself to kill them, so don’t worry, Mom,” said Vandalieu, reassuring her.

Vandalieu wanted to avenge her. If he didn’t, there was no telling when they would come again to kill him.

If possible, he wanted to kill Riley personally, but if it was impossible then it was fine.

“It seems he’s participating in the expedition, so if we meet him on the battlefield, please leave him to me,” Vandalieu requested. “But he’s an A-class adventurer, so be careful.”

“Hohoh, an A-class, eh?” Borkus seemed excited.

“I want to see how well my strength holds up against an adventurer,” said Vigarō.

“Jyuh, this incites the fighting spirit,” Bone Man added.

“Yes,” Zadiris agreed. “There is no reason to hold back against adventurers in these circumstances.”

Everyone was fired up for battle. Their opponent was clearly an enemy, and he had even joined forces with the Vampires. He was Vandalieu’s nemesis. There was no reason to show mercy or sympathy.

“He’s apparently named himself the second coming of Mikhail,” said Vandalieu.

“Seriously? An A-class spear-user, this is getting more and more interesting.” Borkus seemed to have a particularly strong desire to kill Riley. And since Riley would be an outstanding, prominent part of the expedition army’s fighting force, the morale of the troops would decrease if he were to be defeated.

Vandalieu definitely wanted to come back to Talosheim holding Riley’s head.

“Borkus-san, everyone, thank you for doing so much for me and Vandalieu,” said Darcia. “But please don’t do anything reckless, okay?”

“Mmm, of course,” said Zadiris. “By the way, boy, is it going to be finished soon?” she asked Vandalieu.

“I think mine will be done soon, too,” said Tarea.

The mayonnaise was complete, and everyone poured it over wild vegetables and mixed it with wasabi, garlic and ginger to smear onto meat, trying various different applications of mayonnaise.

Vandalieu got the impression that the mayonnaise made with Giga eggs and Defeat flower oil had a thicker flavor than the mayonnaise of Earth.

I have a feeling it would go well with okonomiyaki and takoyaki... But the acorn powder production is...

For Vandalieu, the food-related problems were more troublesome than the problem of dealing with the expedition army, for which he had made preparations long ago.

Fortunately, the acorns of Immortal Ents had less of a harsh taste even without being rinsed in water, so they could be turned into acorn powder straight away.

However, because of the number of Immortal Ents, the amount of acorn powder that could be produced in a single day was insufficient for Talosheim’s current population.

Well, if things go well, the problem should be resolved around next year’s early summer or so.

“So, as we originally planned, we will annihilate the expedition army, and after that, we will replenish our disposable fighting forces. Following that, we will deal severe damage to the Mirg shield-nation to cut down their strength before destroying the tunnel.” This was Vandalieu’s announcement of the final plan.

Everyone cheered in unison, except for Rapiécage whose cheer was a little late because she had been busy licking mayonnaise.

Why did the Mirg shield-nation need to be dealt heavy damage and have its strength cut down in addition to the annihilation of the expedition army? Was it because of the resentment Vandalieu harbored towards them? Was it to take revenge for the events of two hundred years ago?

Vandalieu couldn’t deny that these reasons were there, but there was an unexpectedly proper, logical reason as well.

First, it was fundamentally impossible for the current Talosheim to even have peaceful relations with the Mirg shield-nation and the Amid Empire it belonged to, let alone a mutually beneficial relationship. For the human society in the Amid Empire, Talosheim was not a nation. It was simply a pack of dangerous monsters who had settled into the ruins of a city.

There was no difference between them and a pack of Goblins other than the size of the pack and the threat they posed.

Though the Titans were a race created by Vida, they were indeed a civilization of people. Despite that, the Mirg shield-nation had slaughtered every last one of them without sending any messengers, without making any demands for the Titans to surrender, without taking any prisoners.

They would likely accept a request to stand down once they realized that their forces were inferior, but... there was a high chance that they would simply come back with an even larger, more powerful expedition army at a later time.

They would continue to make all kinds of schemes and attempts without being discouraged by their failures and setbacks. If years or decades passed, there might be hope for negotiations on even terms.

However, it was difficult to imagine that the Church of Alda would remain quiet, and considering what Ice Age had said, it was unlikely that words alone would convince the Empire that worshipped Alda.

On top of that, there were influential individuals positioned quite deep in the Amid Empire and Mirg shield-nation, working with the Vampires who worshipped Hihiryushukaka, the Evil God of Joyful Life.

Trying to have friendly relations with them would only end in those relations being taken advantage of.

Vandalieu wanted to strike a blow to the Mirg shield-nation in addition to annihilating the expedition army because he had learned from historical failures.

For the Amid Empire, it was important to maintain its position above its vassal states. Like the invasion of two hundred years ago, the important figures in the Amid Empire were using this expedition to cut down the strength as a nation that the Mirg shield-nation had gathered recently.

In other words, there was a high chance that even if this expedition army was repelled, another invasion would happen when the Mirg shield-nation's strength increased again.

Conversely, the Mirg shield-nation's strength was decreased, they would never consider an expedition to cross the Boundary Mountain Range. This would be true no matter how influential the individuals who were working with the Vampires were, no matter how loudly those of the Church of Alda screamed.

The Amid Empire's enemy was the neighboring Orbaume Kingdom, after all. If they ignored this fact and continued to repeat these expeditions, eventually it would be not only the Mirg shield-nation, but the Amid Empire losing strength as well, and then they would lose the war against the Orbaume Kingdom.

Well, I can't do anything about the Vampires, but as long as I destroy the tunnel, they'll be held back for a while... This time, for a few years, maybe a decade.

The reason Vandalieu hadn't destroyed the tunnel leading to the Mirg shield-

nation after discovering it was to deliberately leave a route for the Vampires and Mirg shield-nation, so that he could sense when they made a move.

If the Vampires found another route across the mountain range, it would have been difficult to know about it in advance.

However, now that the tunnel's purpose had been fulfilled, it was best to destroy it. Even if no more armies came, it would be problematic if adventurers came through individually. There would be nothing more troublesome than A-class adventurer parties to be drawn by the phrase, 'the unexplored southern reaches of the continent,' and loiter around.

"So, kid. It's going to be war from here on, isn't it?" Borkus, who was eating a bowl full of various foods flavored with mayonnaise with a satisfied expression, suddenly opened his mouth to speak.

"I suppose so," Vandalieu replied.

It would be a monster hunt from the enemy's point of view, but from here, it would be a battle to hold the city followed by a reverse invasion. It would certainly be a war.

"Then we're going to need all kinds of things," said Borkus.

"I suppose... But Tarea and Datara have made plenty of equipment, we have enough meat and fish to last us until spring, we can gather acorns, walnuts and oil from Immortal Ents and we're alright on honey as well. There are canals running through the city for water, and there are multiple wells as well... Is there something you had in mind?"

Since there were Dungeons near Talosheim, the city's defenses were powerful. This was true two hundred years ago, but its defenses had become even more powerful now that the Titans had become Undead and Vandalieu had come.

The stockpiled food could be preserved almost indefinitely, and over half of Talosheim's fighting forces were Undead and Golems anyway. Ghouls had a proper need to eat, but, in the worst-case scenario, they could simply use the enemy soldiers as a source of food, so there wouldn't be any problems.

Even if the waterways were poisoned, Vandalieu could immediately use

Disinfect to remove it. He couldn't think of anything that needed to be gathered immediately.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" said Borkus. "You need a general to fight a war!"

"Eh, this again?"

It seemed that Borkus hadn't given up on putting Vandalieu on Talosheim's throne.

Considering that the nation was bankrupt right now, Vandalieu didn't think there would be any meaning to him becoming Talosheim's king.

"Van-sama, I think you should accept it at this point in time," said Tarea.

"That's right, Bocchan, the stone statue of you in the plaza is finished too!" Saria exclaimed.

"There are a lot of things I want to say regarding that, but..." Vandalieu's words became inarticulate as he remembered the statue of himself that had been erected in the plaza in front of the royal castle.

That stone statue had been well-made. Vandalieu did realize that the stonemasons had taken pride in their work to create it.

However... the stone statue's face was full of expression, so it somehow didn't resemble Vandalieu.

"But Vandalieu-sama, the humans of the Orbaume Kingdom cannot come here, can they? Then isn't there no need to worry?" As Eleanora pointed out, the tunnel at the Orbaume Kingdom's side of the mountain range had been destroyed in a manner that made it impossible to repair with normal methods.

Vandalieu didn't know how advanced engineering technology was in this world, but wouldn't it be difficult even if a hundred first-rate earth-attribute mages worked together?

Even Vandalieu, who possessed the Golem Transmutation skill and a Mana pool of over 200,000,000, would need several days to repair the tunnel.

In fact, it would be faster to dig another tunnel in a completely different location, but... there was a story of a nation that had tried to dig such a tunnel several thousand years ago, only for monsters living beneath the earth's surface

to emerge and trample over the surrounding lands, leading to the nation's destruction.

The morale of the story was, don't touch the mountain range.

"Well, that's true, but..." Vandalieu was still hesitant.

"Also, from the enemy's point of view, you are already something like the king of this place. Tell me this, boy. When war begins, who will be giving commands?" Zadiris asked.

"Umm, Borkus, Vigaró, Zadiris –"

"Those are commanders on the battlefield," said Zadiris, interrupting Vandalieu's reply. "Who will be in command of the entire army?"

"... Is it me?"

"Of course," said Rita. "Everything has been done according to your commands, haven't they, Bocchan?"

As she said, the preparations and strategies for war against the expedition force and Vampires that would come in next year's spring had all been made by Vandalieu. Of course, he had listened to everyone's opinions and made adjustments, added new parts to his plans and removed poorly planned parts when they pointed out his mistakes. However, the one who had suggested all of the strategies overall was Vandalieu.

"And where in Talosheim would you find someone who would answer with anything but your name if they were asked who the leader was? I would answer that it's you, Vandalieu," said Vigaró.

"Jyuuuh. Your existence is essential to Talosheim, my lord," Bone Man added. "Even the distribution of items at the trading post would halt if you were to disappear."

Vandalieu was already... No, for a long time, Vandalieu had been a leader to Talosheim's inhabitants. For the Ghouls and the new monster races he had created, he was the Ghoul King. For the Undead Titans, he was the Holy Son. And for the others like Rita, Eleanora and the Cemetery Bees, he was their master.

And as Bone Man had pointed out, Talosheim's everyday life would vanish without Vandalieu. The Golems in his factories would continue to move until they ran out of Mana, and the smoking facilities would continue to produce katsuobushi. The mayonnaise they had made just now would take some effort, but it could be made.

However, miso and fish sauce couldn't be made without him, and kombu would take years to make.

And though the Golems might move for several decades more, they would not continue moving forever.

Vandalieu had never nominated himself for it or made a conscious announcement of it; in fact, he had denied it. But he came to the realization that before he knew it, he had become Talosheim's representative.

I'm not satisfied, but... Well, I'd thought that I would gain the title of 'Prophesized Holy Son', but I never did, so I guess it's alright. And I suppose it's about time I became a leader.

Vandalieu planned to be an adventurer to gain fame in the future, so he had been conscious about his Status being revealed for when he registered at a Guild, but... He finally came to a sudden realization.

Leaving aside Death-Attribute Magic, Death-Attribute Charm, Mental Corruption and Strengthen Followers, he already had the Title of Ghoul King and skills that would be considered abnormal at first glance such as Soul Break and the unique skill, God Slayer.

Well, the only person seeing that would be the receptionist at the Guild. He couldn't imagine that a Guild Master would personally oversee the registration of a child. If he dashed out of the Guild immediately after registration and began working in other towns, it might not turn out to be such a big deal.

"Alright. I'll become the king," Vandalieu announced after convincing himself with these arguments.

【The levels of the Cooking, Long-distance Control and Strengthen Subordinates skill have increased!】

Chapter 57: The Eclipse King is crowned, and a saint receives a Divine Message

A week after Vandalieu was acknowledged as the king of Talosheim, a grand coronation ceremony was held.

“Isn’t it fine for me to just declare that I’ll become the king?” asked Vandalieu. “I’ll even prepare a proper party afterwards.”

“Holy Son, though this kind of ceremony may seem meaningless at first glance, you must change your way of thinking and realize that there is meaning in consciously acknowledging the fact that you are the king,” said Nuaza.

With that, it was decided that a proper ceremony would be held and various preparations were made.

First was the crown and throne, which Vandalieu made hastily out of Orichalcum, saying, “Let’s make do these for now.” They were the color of black metal fragments of the Dragon Golem that were used as materials for them, but apparently this amount of Orichalcum would be worth enough to buy a castle or two.

Tarea had desperately wanted to build them, but Vandalieu had her prioritize the manufacturing of arms. These royal Orichalcum products would probably be used as materials for shields and armor soon anyway, so he had decided that he would have her build more after the war.

After that, the day of the coronation ceremony was announced to everyone and preparations for a feast were made. Vandalieu had the feeling that this took up most of the week.

“For the king himself to be cooking... should I call myself the Cooking^[1]?” Vandalieu wondered.

“Bocchan, what would you do if that actually appeared on your Status?” Saria asked him.

Vandalieu's pun was not well-received.

After that, everyone dressed up (albeit in clothes made of clean furs, making them look like a tribe of savages) and stood in rows in the assembly hall built in front of the royal castle.

"Hey, hey! Why do I have to be a military officer standing at the front?!" Borkus complained. "I'm a free adventurer!"

"B-boy, I am still training myself, so I do not think I am fit to take the position of the royal court mage..." Zadiris mumbled.

"Bocchan! I am but a coachman and caretaker of horses! Being appointed to a civil official position is too much for the likes of me!" Sam exclaimed.

"... I've hardened my resolve, so why has nobody else hardened theirs?" asked Vandalieu. "You all don't know when to give up. Especially you, Sam. Why do you think I made an assembly hall that a carriage can pass through?"

There was apparently a meaning to the ceremony, so Vandalieu had mercilessly filled the vacant positions of military officer, civil official and royal court mage. Well, they were more like the noble's seats in the plaza, however.

"Now then, the coronation ceremony will now begin," Nuaza announced.

He was the one conducting the ceremony. It was customary for the leader of the Church of Vida to conduct it, but as the only current member of the Church was him, a former warrior-priest, it was necessary for him to act as a substitute for the Church's leader.

Nuaza had also shown considerable disapproval at acting as the Church's leader, but when Vandalieu had asked him to nominate another suitable candidate, he had accepted his fate once he realized that there was nobody else to nominate.

"For being able to see this day, we offer our gratitude to the goddess Vida and our ancestor Talos," he said, beginning the ceremony. "I am certain that his majesty the late king, her majesty the First Princess Levia and her majesty the Second Princess Zandia would also be overjoyed."

And then Nuaza would give a small recount of Talosheim's history. Vandalieu

would make a promise to continue that history and bring further prosperity to Talosheim, receive the crown and be bestowed the Title of Sun King. And then the coronation ceremony would be over.

The festivities would follow that, but –

“However, from today, we are stepping into a new page of history,” Nuaza continued. “Holy Son, please accept the Title of the first Eclipse King and make an oath to bear and uphold Talosheim’s royal authority.”

The Title bestowed upon Vandalieu was not that of Sun King. Considering Talosheim’s current state, this Title would not be suitable.

Talosheim was currently livelier at night than during the day. Its inhabitants were the Ghouls who could see things sufficiently with moonlight alone as well as the Undead and new monster races that could see in the dark just as well as on a sunny afternoon.

The only exceptions were the Cemetery Bees and Immortal Ents.

That was why Vandalieu’s Title was Eclipse King. The reason it wasn’t ‘King of the Dark Night’ was because it was bad for his image and because he wanted to have the Titans who had evacuated Talosheim in the past and their descendants to return one day. Once Vandalieu had become an honorary nobleman and secured his position in society, he wanted to conduct various things like commercial trading.

That was why he had decided on Eclipse King, associated with a solar eclipse, something that was neither light nor darkness.

“I am one with Talosheim,” Vandalieu declared.

Well, in reality, I’ll be leaving it and coming back, he thought as he spoke the line that had been announced beforehand and received the Orichalcum crown.

“Vandalieu, the Eclipse King, has been enthroned on this day,” said Nuaza. The moment he finished speaking, a deafening cheer echoed from people.

“UOOOOOH! UOOOOOH!”

“KING! KING! KING!”

Fists and weapons were thrust into the air above the plaza as the Undead and

Ghouls shouted in joy and praise for Vandalieu.

Bone Chimeras, Pteranodon Zombies and Cemetery Bees flew through the air in place of the doves that might be seen in ceremonies on Earth.

Everyone had already been told that this coronation ceremony was being conducted for the purpose of defeating the Mirg shield-nation's expedition army. The army of the Mirg shield-nation, which had destroyed Talosheim once already, was coming back. Knowing that, their desire for battle was seething within them.

Even after becoming Undead, the Titans held the view that the sins of the father should not be passed onto the son.

But, of course, this did not mean that they would accept the harm that the current generation was trying to inflict on them. If this generation insisted on destroying Talosheim as well, they would be crushed without mercy.

Darcia was in tears. "To think that my Vandalieu, who used to be so little... He's still so little, but he's become so great."

Vandalieu was glad that she was happy enough to cry tears of joy, but he did think that her comment that he was still small to be unnecessary.

"This is where Van-sama's legend as the high king begins, isn't it?" said Tarea.

Tarea, that kind of legend isn't going to begin.

Now then, today will end with the feast and celebrating with everyone. As for the explanation of the defense policies against the expedition army and what we'll be doing until they arrive, that can come tomorrow.

It might appear that Vandalieu was taking it easy, but it was currently the end of summer. The enemy would be coming in spring at earliest.

In addition, there were surveillance Undead and Golems placed in set intervals in the areas that the expedition army would pass through once they came out of the tunnel.

Once the army approached, Vandalieu would know right away. Even if a small number of spies were sent separately from the army, he would know about it. The city's walls also essentially acted as surveillance Golems, and even if they

made it past the walls, the city was filled with Golems.

Cemetery Bees were flying about in the air, making Vandalieu's surveillance network even greater.

Mhmm, everything's perfect.

『You have acquired the Title of 'Eclipse King'!』

... I suppose I had no choice but to gain this Title.

Vandalieu had thought it might be possible that he wouldn't receive an additional Title, as 'Prophesized Holy Son' had never become a Title, but it seemed that this wasn't the case.

Well, I already have 'Ghoul King' as a Title. I've just received two king-like Titles, so I guess it's fine.

As he thought this and looked at everyone, something suddenly occurred to him.

Ah, there is a thing, or maybe it should be called a component, that we all have in common. I don't know if I can make use of it, but it's worth testing.

But this wasn't the time or place to test it, so Vandalieu spent the day with everyone, enjoying the feast of foods such as boat-wrapped sashimi^[2], Needle Wolf miso hotpots, dinosaur steaks, and fruit agar made with Kobol fruits and honey.

Bormack Gordan was wearing his priest's garb without his armor, listening to the opinions of the priest-warriors that he led. His appearance was that of a good-natured old man. Not only Vandalieu, but anyone who had seen him fighting, would doubt their eyes at seeing him like this.

"So, you all think that we should not participate in the Mirg shield-nation's expedition, is that right?" Gordan asked his subordinates.

"Yes, High Priest-sama. No matter how many times I think about it, I believe we should use our power for other things," said a young boy, barely old enough to be a priest warrior. He seemed nervous, but he voiced his views clearly.

“We priest-warriors are not soldiers or adventurers. We should not be commanded by the nation’s circumstances.”

“We do not hesitate to fight against monsters. But is there any meaning in serving on the expedition?”

Priest-warriors had originated as priests of Churches in remote areas, armed for the purpose of hunting dangerous wild beasts, long before the Demon King created monsters in this world.

In the present era, they were clergymen who wielded military power to protect the Church and its believers, and to spread their teachings to people living in distant regions.

For such priest-warriors, the expedition into the Boundary Mountain Range that was to occur in next year’s spring was not something that excited them.

They were learned men. It was clear to them that there were political motives behind the expedition, just as there had been for the expedition to Talosheim two hundred years ago.

And there were no people that needed protecting beyond the Boundary Mountain Range.

These two facts made them refuse to participate in the expedition.

“We believers of Alda, the god of law and fate, are taught to fight against monsters,” said another priest-warrior. “For priest-warriors in particular, it is our duty to do so. We understand that there is meaning in fighting alongside the expedition army in the Boundary Mountain Range, where monsters are rampant and the remnants of Vida’s races hide. But should we not prioritize the protection of the people who are directly exposed to the threat of monsters?”

The priest-warriors held the opinion that defending remote villages that were threatened by monsters and hunting down Vampires hiding in society, as well as those who had fallen to their temptations and were working with them, should take priority over fighting in dangerous, unexplored lands with the army.

It could also be considered a conservative opinion to want to choose their sense of duty and strictly adhering to their doctrine.

“Indeed, what you are saying is reasonable,” said Gordan.

However, Gordan was also an individual who would choose conservative ideals over fame among the common people and financial gains. If he wasn't, he would not have refused the recommendations that he become the cardinal, nor would he continue fighting on the frontlines of battle as a warrior-priest even at this age.

“It is not that we are objecting to exterminating that Dhampir as you wished, High-Priest —”

“No, it matters not. That matter is nothing more than my own personal interest. There is no need to take that into consideration.”

In the long life that he had lived up until now, Gordan had never let a target escape him. No matter how cunningly Vampires and Lamias had hidden from him, he had found them and exterminated them. He had returned numerous Dhampirs as well as their parents to the dust. With only one exception.

That exception was a Dhampir. His name was Vandalieu, and though his witch mother had been turned into ash and purified, he had survived as a six-month-old child and then gained the Spiritualist Job and become the leader of hundreds of Ghouls at less than three years old. A truly exceptional case among exceptional cases.

Vandalieu had used some unknown method to lead his Ghouls across the Boundary Mountain Range and escape. Gordan regretted that he had been unable to prevent that.

The fact that he used some unknown method to cross the mountain range means that it is possible that he will use that method to cross the mountain range again to attack us.

The southern regions of the Bahn Gaia continent, on the other side of the Boundary Mountain Range. That place was haunted by the races created by Vida, and the surviving Pure-breed Vampires who possessed immense power were said to dwell there as well.

Several hundred Ghouls might pose a threat to a single town, but if that Dhampir was left alone, a whole nation... No, the entire continent's existence

could hang in the balance. That was how Gordan felt.

If that Dhampir gains even more subordinates, he could organize a monster army that can freely cross the Boundary Mountain Range that we cannot traverse, and the regions both east and west of the mountain range may be destroyed.

That was why when Gordan had been asked whether he would participate in an expedition into the Boundary Mountain Range now that the tunnel had been discovered, his heart had pounded with excitement in a way quite unfitting for his age. He had no doubt that this was an opportunity granted to him by Alda himself.

However, the expedition's objectives were to recover the national treasure that was lost in the expedition of two hundred years ago, and to purify Talosheim.

It was only natural; it was only Gordan who personally regarded Vandalieu as dangerous. Detailed information wouldn't have been passed on to the upper echelons of the Mirg shield-nation and Amid Empire with the exception of Palpapek, who was the marshal back then.

When Gordan thought about it calmly, even if the Boundary Mountain Range was traversed, the southern regions of the continent were vast. There was little hope of finding Vandalieu in such a place. The only way he would be found was if he was already ready and waiting for the expedition army.

That Dhampir is cunning and wary. He will run without hesitation if he believes he cannot win. Conversely, if we do encounter him, it will be only when he believes he will win.

As far as Gordan could imagine, Vandalieu would not appear even if Gordan were to join the expedition army.

Only two years had passed since then. It was impossible for Vandalieu to have gathered enough fighting strength to emerge victorious against thousands of elite soldiers. If he were to barricade himself in a fortified city... in Talosheim, there might be a chance, but large holes had been made in that city's walls in the war of two hundred years ago. They had likely collapsed by now.

That was why it was pointless to participate in the expedition.

“Alright, I understand how you feel very well. I will go and reject the proposal of joining the expedition,” Gordan decided.

But that night, as he offered his prayers to Alda before he slept, he received a Divine Message like the ones he had received on several previous occasions.

【The Demon King’s shadow stirs once more. It must be found and destroyed.】

“This is... Oh, my lord Alda! You are telling me to cross the Boundary Mountain Range and slay that Dhampir, aren’t you!”

Gordan interpreted that it was Alda’s plan rather than coincidence that he had received a Divine Message on the night he had decided to decline participating in the expedition.

And in his mind, he linked the Demon King’s shadow to Vandalieu.

This deduction was hastily made with a gaping hole in its logic in the fact that not even the first letter of Vandalieu’s name was mentioned in the Divine Message. But nobody, not even Alda who was the one who had sent the Divine Message, would have imagined that this deduction was correct.

Vandalieu succeeded in creating a virus to use in the war!

“It’s transmissible through air, across mucous membranes and through blood, and it takes effect within five seconds. Its symptoms are only violent nausea, headaches, dizziness, fevers, stomach pain and joint pain, so it takes several days to kill the target, and it will kill less than ten percent of those it infects. But I suppose this will do,” Vandalieu concluded.

Vandalieu nodded, looking at the Double-headed Tyrannosaurus that was lying on the ground with its tongue hanging out, creating a stain made of saliva, gastric juice and nasal mucus.

“... Bocchan, I think that’s plenty for an incurable disease,” said Rita.

“If this disease spread to the Mirg shield-nation and the Amid Empire, the nations would stop functioning,” said Saria.

“You’re right,” Vandalieu agreed. “But they have life-attribute mages and great priests of Alda, so it should be fine.”

“Treating diseases with magic is considerably difficult, and different spells are needed to cure different illnesses, so I believe it may not go so well,” said Sam.

“There are people who have the Disease Resistance skill and the Disease and Poison Resistance skill that offers resistance against both diseases and poison, but they’re quite rare,” Kachia added.

According to Sam and Kachia, neither the Amid Empire nor the Mirg shield-nation’s plans to deal with an epidemic were very sophisticated.

They knew of soaking affected parts in alcohol or hot water, but there were no antibiotics in this world. Potions, healing spells and resistance skills existed in their place, but as dealing with diseases went, they were imperfect.

Though there were Potions to treat diseases, they were expensive and didn’t work against all kinds of diseases. It was more commonplace to drink antidote Potions to neutralize toxins that had accumulated in the body to lessen the symptoms.

The development of healing spells was slow and they were not very advanced. Even if a cold was cured by increasing Vitality, using the same spell on a cancer patient would cause cancer cells to metastasize all over the body and cause the patient to die almost immediately.

Treating diseases with spells would be impossible without advancements in anatomy and physiology, knowledge of how the body works and how pathogens affect their hosts, and technological innovations.

As for resistance skills, few adventurers and knights possessed skills that granted resistance to disease. Most monsters possessed resistance to poison rather than disease, and assassins and mercenaries used poison rather than disease anyway. That was why Poison Resistance was fairly common, but Disease Resistance was rare.

Those with such weak constitutions that caused them to fall ill frequently enough to acquire resistance skills wouldn’t think to become adventurers.

“Have I created something unexpectedly dangerous?” Vandalieu wondered.

“But I made it so that its effects will stop after half a day, so I guess it will be fine.”

Even if the disease did spread, there wouldn't be any casualties since it stopped working in half a day, and with the population density in this world, it wouldn't spread beyond a single village or town. If something unexpected did occur, Vandalieu would simply have to use brute force with his Mana, casting a wide-area Sterilization.

It was as Vandalieu was justifying the creation of the disease to himself with these excuses that Rita and Saria had come to have a look.

“So, Bocchan, shouldn't we finish it off now?” asked Rita.

Saria nodded. “Or are we going to wait for half a day?”

“No, we should finish it now. Please go ahead,” said Vandalieu.

“Okay,” said the sisters in unison.

Their white buttocks shook side to side as they approached the Double-headed Tyrannosaurus, and the glaive and halberd each swung down into one of its two necks.

White buttocks indeed. It seemed that Rita and Saria's Spirit Form skill had increased, allowing them to eat to their hearts' content and finally gaining appearances that were no different to those of living people.

Like Vandalieu, their skin was as white as if they had smeared thick candle wax over it, making it difficult to call healthy-looking, but it was not really a problem.

Saria, the older one, had a reserved appearance with hair flowing down her back to her waist, while Rita's appearance was that of an energetic, beautiful girl with her hair gathered to either side in twin tails.

And both of them had figures matching their suits of armor.

Their spirit form bodies had previously resembled stick figures or people wearing whole-body tights, making it impossible to distinguish whether they were male or female, but now the chest-pieces of their armor were bulging without leaving any spare space, their waists were narrow and their buttocks

were round and ripe-looking. Because one's armor was high-leg and the other's was low-rise, about half of their surface area was exposed, too.

What a great temptation they are, thought Vandalieu. His body was still that of a child so he only had a mental sense of these kinds of things, but... He was at an age where it wouldn't be strange for him to fall in love for the first time in a few years if he were an ordinary child. He decided that he would make the two of them start wearing capes before then.

Incidentally, when those two had first gained these appearances, they were clamoring about it in high spirits.

"Please look, Bocchan!" Rita had exclaimed. "There isn't any spare space, not even a millimeter! They're filled to the point that there isn't any extra room at all! And my waist is so narrow! I'm really glad that I repeatedly told everyone I'm beautiful and sexy every day!"

"Uwah! This is really delicious, Bocchan!" Saria had cried. "Mayonnaise, miso and everything else! The Orc shougayaki^[3], dinosaur fritters, Flying Shark in miso, and I cannot get enough of eating sashimi with fish sauce and wasabi!"

Rita had been proud of her (spirit form) body, while Saria had been engrossed in eating all of the different kinds of food she had been unable to eat so far, one after another.

I've made them endure a lot and asked a lot of them; next time I make a Living Armor, I should make them learn the Spirit Form skill right away, Vandalieu had thought as the two of them manipulated him that day... Not verbally, but physically.

Spirit Form is a skill that grants Undead and other creatures not only an appearance, but allows them to physically manifest body parts in place of muscles and bones. As a result, Saria and Rita's strength increased rapidly.

Incidentally, as to be expected with high-leg leotard armor and bikini armor, there was no end to the people asking them whether they were sufficiently protected considering that their suits of armor left them so exposed.

No matter how much they resembled humans, spirit form was no more than that, spirit form. Even if their heads were crushed, their chests and stomachs

pierced or their exposed thighs were slashed, they didn't have flesh with circulating blood or bones, let alone internal organs. They would feel some pain, but their spirit form bodies were simply extra parts manifested from their main bodies.

If it was dangerous, they could simply stop manifesting it and return to being hollow suits of armor.

“Bocchan, please laugh at my foolishness,” Sam said suddenly, looking rather unhappy. “Now I understand why you asked me back then if it was really alright to put my daughters in these suits of armor.”

Before Sam's eyes were his two daughters, whose bodies were only slightly more covered than if they were wearing nothing but underwear because their armors had wrist-guards and leg-guards. Their appearances were enough to captivate the eyes of any man.

Incidentally, for some reason, there had apparently been no attempts to flirt with them by Ghoul males. It was probably because they were Vandalieu's personal guards.

“Well, I didn't think it would be this bad, either,” said Vandalieu. “And there are a lot of ways to solve the problem, like making them wear capes or wrapping them in cloths.

But changing the suits of armor would be impossible. They were the main bodies of those two, after all.

“Hey, would it be better if I dressed like that as well?” asked Kachia.

“Kachia, please stay dressed as you are.” Vandalieu had been asked the same question by Eleanora the other day, so he gave Kachia the same answer. If those two dressed like the Living Armor sisters, their bodies would lack protection. Kachia in particular, as she didn't have regenerative abilities like Eleanora.

... Before that, if he made all of the women dress in revealing clothing, it was possible that he would acquire Titles like Erotic King or Lust King in addition to his Titles of Ghoul King and Eclipse King. These would be Titles that caused his social demise if they appeared on his Status with no beneficial effects in return.

“For now, let’s move on. I want to level up before spring comes, too,” said Vandalieu.

“Okay,” said Rita.

“Bocchan, I wish to increase my level a little as well,” said Sam.

“Ah, I leveled up!” Kachia exclaimed. “I’m finally a level 100 Warrior! I can change Jobs~!”

『Vandalieu’s【Unarmed Fighting Technique】and【Bloodsucking】skills have leveled up!』

『You have acquired the【Coordination】skill!』

Name: Saria

- **Rank:** 6
- **Race:** High Magic High-Leg Armor
- **Level:** 35
- **Passive skills:**
 - Special Five Senses
 - Strengthened Physical Ability: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Water Element Resistance: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Physical Attack Resistance: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Housework: Level 2
 - Halberd Technique: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Coordination: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Archery: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Spirit Form: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Long-distance Control: Level 3 (NEW!)
 - Armor Technique: Level 3 (NEW!)

• **Name:** Rita

- **Rank:** 6
- **Race:** Living Bikini Armor
- **Level:** 36
- **Passive skills:**
 - Special Five Senses
 - Strengthened Physical Ability: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Fire Element Resistance: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Physical Attack Resistance: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Housework: Level 1
 - Naginata Technique: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Coordination: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Archery: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Javelin Technique: Level 1 (NEW!)
 - Spirit Form: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Long-distance Control: Level 3 (NEW!)
 - Armor Technique: Level 3 (NEW!)

Title explanation:

【Eclipse King】

The condition for acquiring this Title is to become the King of Talosheim while becoming known as the Eclipse King rather than as the Sun King, and being acknowledged as such by over ninety percent of its inhabitants.

Its main effect is that the Strengthen Followers skill will affect all citizens ruled by the Eclipse King (Even if they are humans, Elves or Dwarves).

In addition, it makes it possible for races without the Night Vision skill can gain the Night Vision skill, and those without the Dark Vision skill to gain the Dark Vision skill.

Finally, it makes it possible for those with a weakness to sunlight or moonlight to gain skills with resistance against them.

- **Name:** Bormack Gordan
- **Age:** 65
- **Title:** Vampire Hunter
- **Job:** Demon-Crushing Holy Warrior
- **Job Level:** 97
- **Job history:** Apprentice Priest-warrior, Priest-warrior, Priest, Holy Warrior
- **Passive skills:**
 - Enhanced Senses: Level 3
 - Intuition: Level 5
 - Holy Enhancement (Alda): Level 10
 - Mental Fortitude: Level 3
- **Active skills:**
 - Club Technique: Level 9
 - Armor Technique: Level 6
 - Shield Technique: Level 7
 - Light-Attribute Magic: Level 6
 - Life-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 1
 - Mana Control: Level 4
 - Surpass Limits: Level 6
 - Messenger Descent: Level 1
 - Clergyman: Level 5
 - Commanding: Level 3
 - Coordination: Level 4
- **Unique skills:**
 - Divine Message Receipt
- **Status Effects:**
 - Fanaticism: Religion
 - Aging (Omen)

Notes

1. In case it's not immediately obvious, this is a pun on the fact that there is the word "king" in "cooking".
2. This is where sushi/sashimi is loaded onto a fancy little wooden boat.
3. A dish consisting of pork fried with ginger.

Chapter 58: The toiling soldiers and the Eclipse King serving beautiful women

“I’ll bet on Ent-user,” said Vigaro.

“Heh,” Borkus snorted. “How naïve. I’ll be betting on Armor Master.”

“Hmm, how difficult...” Zadiris paused to think. “How about the Golem Factory Manager? Those Golems that are lined up are called a factory, are they not?”

“Umm, what are you betting on?” asked Vandalieu.

Vandalieu had come to the remains of the Adventurers’ Guild – which should probably be relabeled as a distribution center or trading post – to get a Job change, and spotted Vigaro and Borkus betting on something.

If there were at least cards in their hands... No, there were no playing cards in this world as paper was a precious material, but Vandalieu wouldn’t have considered this unnatural if they at least had something resembling cards.

Zadiris looked up. “Ah, boy, this is, well, every time you undergo a Job-change, there are new Jobs, are there not?”

Vandalieu had received the ‘Unable to learn existing Jobs’ curse, but every time he visited the Job-changing room, there were new Jobs that hadn’t existed before displayed for him. Vandalieu had consulted the knowledgeable Zadiris and experienced adventurer Borkus regarding this.

Of course, as the Jobs hadn’t existed before, they could offer no knowledge on the Jobs themselves, but he could ask them to make guesses on Jobs that were similar to existing Jobs.

Incidentally, after his coronation ceremony, Vandalieu had explained his circumstances to everyone in Talosheim. The Ghouls, Undead Titans and even the Cemetery Bees and Immortal Ents. Everyone, without exception, was now

aware that Vandalieu had lived two previous lives, that he was a human from another world, that he had been cursed by the god of reincarnation and that one hundred people would be reincarnated in this world from Origin one day.

The reactions to that had been –

“I don’t really get it, but that’s amazing!”

“I knew you weren’t an ordinary kid, but that’s amazing!”

“You lived on a continent called Another World in your previous life? On an island? A country called Earth, huh. Amazing.”

Buzzing from the Cemetery Bees.

Rustling from the Immortal Ents.

Well, it seemed to have been accepted. It also seemed that nobody really understood anything about other worlds, though they did have a grasp of the concept of reincarnation.

There were apparently many among the Undead Titans who had a vague idea of his circumstances. Thinking about it, a child had created the legendary flavorings left by the Champion Zakkart, miso and soy sauce (or, to be more precise, fish sauce). It was only natural for them to wonder whether the Holy Son was also from another world.

Vandalieu had already been marked as an enemy by Alda, the god of law and fate who possessed the most influence in this world, the gods who served him as well as the Pure-breed Vampires who worshipped an evil god. An unknown god named Rodcorte had cursed him, but even Rodcorte was apparently just another god to add to the list of enemies so it wasn’t considered surprising.

What a reliable and happy response.

Leaving that aside, what would happen with Vandalieu’s Job?

“So we are placing bets on what Job will appear for you next,” Zadiris told him.

“Leaving aside which Job you’ll actually choose, kid, there’s going to be new Jobs that you can actually change to, right?” said Borkus.

“What do you think will appear?” asked Vigaró.

Vandalieu looked at them. “... New Jobs are normally discovered once every few decades or centuries, if I recall?”

Right after the age of the gods was a turning point in this world were new Jobs like Knight and Soldier were discovered one after another. However, as time went on, the discovery of new Jobs became more and more infrequent.

That was why each Guild, including the Adventurers’ Guild, offered a cash reward to those who discovered new Jobs.

“But you know, you’ve been discovering new Jobs one after another for the past two years, haven’t you, kid?” Borkus pointed out.

“That’s why we thought that there would be more new Jobs,” said Vigaró.

“... Don’t get angry at me if there aren’t any new ones, okay?” Vandalieu told them.

“So, boy, what kind of new Jobs do you think there will be?” Zadiris asked him.

Vandalieu gave Zadiris’s question a little thought before answering. “Tree Planter, perhaps?”

Vandalieu was probably the first person in Lambda who had created Ents from seeds, so this was the answer that he had come to.

He was also continuing to plant trees found in the Dungeons and Devil’s Nests and turning them into Immortal Ents.

“Tree Planter? There are already people doing that in human countries,” said Borkus. “Not that anyone has a Job for it.”

“Eh? Really?” Vandalieu asked.

In Earth’s history, deforested areas had often been left as they were, causing an increase in bare mountains and wastelands in areas with dry climates. But it seemed that people planted trees in Lambda.

“Yeah, apparently it began from people planting trees in the lands destroyed during the battle between the champions and the Demon King,” Borkus told

him.

... It seemed that even Bellwood wouldn't have advocated to deny the planting of trees and insisted on waiting for the greenery to recover naturally.

But perhaps the champion Suzuki had been a radical advocate of nature conservation on Earth. This might explain why he had allowed afforestation while forbidding technology from another world.

Well, it was certainly possible that afforestation had been occurring prior to the Demon King's appearance and there were simply no records of it remaining.

"So, what are you actually betting?" asked Vandalieu.

As there was currently no currency being used in Talosheim, the trading of goods was being done through bartering. For now, there weren't any items being prominently used in place of currency, either.

Vandalieu thought that food was probably the closest thing there was.

"I am wagering fern tea," replied Zadiris.

"My bet is dried and salted Ammonite," Vigaro declared.

"Mine is the meat I took off a Noble Orc before," said Borkus. "You can hunt quite a lot of them in Barigen's Fall Life-Mountain."

Vandalieu decided to make his own wager. "Well then, I'll bet some honey that there won't be any new Jobs."

"Boy, why is your wager so pessimistic?" asked Zadiris.

"If good things continue for too long, you never know when your good luck is going to run out. I'm scared of that," Vandalieu told her.

With those words, he departed for the Job-changing room.

『Jobs that can be selected:【Soul Breaker】,【Venom Fist User】,【Insect User】,【Archenemy】,【Zombie Maker】,【Tree Caster】』

Despite Vandalieu's expectations, there were two new Jobs.

"Zombie Maker and Tree Caster... I suppose Tree Caster is read 'Ki-jutsushi'^[1]. I'm sure that's there because I've made Immortal Ents from seeds and branches and every other part of a tree possible, but..."

It seemed more like being a magic performer. In Lambda, they weren't known as magicians, but as magic performers who made their living as entertainers at parties or as street performers.

Was it a plant-monster version of the Tamer Job + something that made it easier to create plant monsters?

However, unlike Undead and insectoid monsters, it should be possible to tame plant monsters normally... Well, Vandalieu would think about that later.

The more mysterious one was the Zombie Maker Job. Gubamon and Ternecia, Pure-breed Vampires who created and controlled Undead with the divine protection of the Evil God of Joyful Life, had existed in this world for a hundred thousand years.

Vandalieu had thought that they would have already discovered and acquired Jobs such as Zombie Maker or Ghost Mage.

“Could it be that they haven't acquired Jobs... or can't?” Vandalieu wondered.

Perhaps they had become too much like monsters and lost the ability to acquire Jobs when they began worshipping the evil god. Vandalieu made this guess with no evidence, but as Eleanora didn't know the race titles of the Pure-breed Vampires, it was impossible to confirm this. Vandalieu would leave finding this out for another opportunity.

For now, leaving aside the fact that he had lost his bet, the question was, which Job should he choose next? But...

“For improving our fighting strength as a whole, it would be Insect User or Tree Caster. But Riley, a former companion of Heinz, is going to be among the army coming in spring.”

Vandalieu wasn't thinking that he would kill Riley by his own hand at any cost. Even if there was an opportunity to do so, if it would cause strategic problems, he would give up on the idea without hesitation.

He firmly believed that everyone would be capable of taking revenge for him.

However, if the reason for him giving up on killing Riley personally was his own powerlessness, it was a different matter. Vandalieu wouldn't be able to

stand that.

“... I'll choose Soul Breaker.”

That was why Vandalieu selected the Soul Breaker Job.

『The levels of the Spirit Form, Soul Break and Long-distance Control skills have increased!』

『You have acquired the Parallel Thought Processing and Materialization skills!』

- **Name:** Vandalieu
- **Race:** Dhampir (Dark Elf)
- **Age:** 5 years old
- **Title:**【Ghoul King】,【Eclipse King】
- **Job:** Soul Breaker
- **Level:** 0
- **Job history:** Death-Attribute Mage, Golem Transmuter, Undead Tamer
- **Attributes:**
 - Vitality: 125
 - Mana: 247,013,388
 - Strength: 90
 - Agility: 89
 - Stamina: 95
 - Intelligence: 457
- **Passive skills:**
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
 - Rapid Healing: Level 3
 - Death-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 5
 - Magic Resistance: Level 1
 - Dark Vision
 - Mental Corruption: Level 10
 - Death-Attribute Charm: Level 5
 - Chant Revocation: Level 3
 - Strengthen Followers: Level 7

- Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 3
- Strengthen Subordinates: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Bloodsucking: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Surpass Limits: Level 4
 - Golem Transmutation: Level 6
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 4
 - Mana Control: Level 4
 - Spirit Form: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Carpentry: Level 4
 - Engineering: Level 3
 - Cooking: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Alchemy: Level 3
 - Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Soul Break: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Multi-Cast: Level 3
 - Long-distance Control: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Surgery: Level 1 (NEW!)
 - Materialization: Level 1 (NEW!)
 - Coordination: Level 1 (NEW!)
 - Parallel Thought Processing: Level 1 (NEW!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - **God Slayer: Level 1**
- **Curses**
 - **Experience gained in previous life not carried over**
 - **Cannot learn existing jobs**
 - **Unable to gain experience independently**

The moment Vandalieu changed Jobs, his Spirit Form, Long-distance Control and Soul Break skills leveled up as a result of the skill bonuses. It seemed that the Soul Breaker Job granted bonuses to spirit-related skills.

And he had acquired the Parallel Thought Processing and Materialization skills, but... what were they? Vandalieu guessed that they were probably also

skills related to spirits or souls.

Vandalieu thought it unusual that his fighting ability hadn't increased as much as he'd hoped for.

"... Should I have chosen Venom Fist User? Or maybe I should have just resigned to taking the Archenemy Job."

Well, Soul Break was a skill that granted an additional effect to his magical and physical attacks. It would likely increase his ability to fight.

Vandalieu consoled himself by telling himself this and left the room. He reported the results to Zadiris and the others who were waiting for him on the first floor and treated them to honey.

And then he headed for Borkus's Sub-Dragon Savannah as he had been doing since last year.

Though winter's footsteps could already be heard and Talosheim was surrounded by mountains to both the east and the west, the sunlight was still strong in the afternoon.

In the courtyard behind the royal castle was a stone monument to the Sun Giant Talos and the goddess Vida, and this was the spot in Talosheim that was said to receive the most sunlight.

In fact, the sunlight was very strong in the courtyard for some reason. It was as if it was summer. It was possible that the stone monument to Talos and Vida was the cause of this.

"Ugh, ah, hic."

"Hah, ah, th-there, it's so deep!"

"I... kuah^[2], ah, it's hot, it's like my body's burning!"

"I-I can't take any more, don't pour any more into me, it's going to overflow!"

In that courtyard, there were beautiful women gasping for breath with their skin exposed.

"... I can stop anytime," Vandalieu said to the four beautiful women... Bilde,

Basdia, Eleanora and Kachia. *What a tempting sight*, he thought.

They weren't doing anything particularly immoral or flirtatious.

There was a reason for this.

"N-no!" Eleanora cried. "I can still keep going!" White smoke was rising from her white skin, but this had all began when she said that she wanted to acquire the Sunlight Resistance skill in preparation for the war in spring.

Sunlight, silver and light-attribute magic attacks are universal weaknesses shared by all Vampires. The Status Effect Resistance skill does not offer them any defense against them, and skills like Sunlight Resistance and Silver Resistance cannot be acquired.

However, circumstances were different for Eleanora. As Vandalieu had acquired the Title of Eclipse King, it was possible for her to acquire the Sunlight Resistance skill.

The Mirg shield-nation's expedition army that would approach in the spring would surely attack during the day. No human would dare fight during the night, knowing that their foes were monsters that could see in the dark.

There would probably be Vampire assassins mixed in among the expedition army's forces, but they would cover themselves with a thick coat or full plate armor in order to prevent the sunlight from reaching their skin. There would be nothing more conspicuous if they were to do this in the middle of a town, but among the expedition army, they wouldn't stand out at all.

Also, the Vampires would likely participate in the expedition posing as the private forces of noblemen or as mercenaries rather than as part of the regular army, so the fact that they wore different equipment from the regular army wouldn't cause any problems.

Vandalieu had thought that it would be fine if Eleanora learned from their example and wore a heavy coat and veil or a suit of plate armor, but she was used to being agile in battle. Wearing some metal armor would slow her movements down only a little, but there was still time until spring so she had decided that it would be better to acquire the Sunlight Resistance skill.

And so, in this place where the sunlight was strong despite winter being close,

she was busily sunbathing in order to acquire this resistance skill.

The sunlight was burning her as she was dressed in a stimulating way, having only her chest and her waist covered by pieces of cloth. She was healing her burns with her Rapid Regeneration skill, and Vandalieu was supplying her with Mana when she ran out.

It was quite the Spartan training regime, but for some reason Eleanora had shown incredible enthusiasm at the idea.

Vandalieu hadn't been spoiling her lately, so he had decided to let her have her way.

And then Bilde, Basdia and Kachia had passed by, resulting in the current situation. Of course, as Ghouls, they had no need to acquire the Sunlight Resistance skill. They were simply training in magic while having Vandalieu supply them with Mana.

"B-but Vandalieu, your (spirit form) hands are rubbing me (in stiff spots)..." Bilde mumbled.

"That's right," said Basdia. "Since you keep pressing those things you call acupuncture points, we can't help but let out strange noises, Van."

For Bilde and Basdia, Vandalieu was not only providing them with Mana, but also giving them the same spirit-form massage that he had once given Tarea as their bodies had apparently grown stiff with fatigue recently.

He was using Spirit Form Transformation on his hands, sinking them into their bodies and directly stimulating their stiff muscles and acupuncture points. He was effectively a low-frequency massager that was conscious.

"And... are there these acupuncture point things in places like this as well?" Basdia asked in embarrassment.

"There are," replied Vandalieu.

Acupuncture points are found in places like the top of the head and the soles of the feet, but there are also many in places that people of the opposite sex might be hesitant to touch. Vandalieu was saying, "I'm going to press the acupuncture point here," and pressing the points in such places. He was

carefree about it because his hands had undergone Spirit Form Transformation and had branched out into tentacle-like shapes, so he couldn't feel the sensation, warmth or softness of their skin other than being conscious that he was touching a living creature.

"I see... Then it's fine, but..."

Of course, he wasn't trying to sexually harass Basdia, so he wasn't touching her or pressing her in persistent ways.

Incidentally, in Origin, where science and magic had co-existed, Qigong^[3] had been acknowledged as a form of magic. Eastern medicinal techniques such as pressing acupuncture points, acupuncture treatment and moxibustion were as well-researched as western medicine, and were widely used.

As a result, Vandalieu had been thoroughly subjected to experiments to see whether death-attribute magic could be applied to Eastern medicine.

If he used Spirit Form transformation to examine a creature's body, he could intuitively feel the locations and effects of acupuncture points in the creature's body. Because of this, he had a clear understanding of the locations and effects of Ghoul-specific acupuncture points that didn't exist in humans.

Applying death-attribute magic to Eastern medicine apparently hadn't had much success in Origin, however.

"Ah, it isn't that I dislike you touching me," Basdia said hastily. "In fact, I'm happy, but I'm just perplexed when you're suddenly so assertive."

"No, it's not really a matter of being assertive or not," said Vandalieu. "Of course, it's not that I don't want to touch you, Basdia."

This was a massage. It was rather difficult to describe as Vandalieu's hands had undergone Spirit Transformation and branched out into tentacles, but it was still no more than a massage. There was no lewd meaning behind it.

Kachia was breathing heavily. "Van... You gave me... too much Mana."

Vandalieu was doing nothing but supplying her with magic, but this was how things were.

"Hmm, but I only transferred you a small amount, you know?" Vandalieu told

her.

“That ‘small amount’ is too much! My maximum Mana pool is less than two hundred, isn’t it!”

Kachia, who had undergone a Job-change to Apprentice Mage, had a maximum Mana pool of less than two hundred. Ghoul women had an aptitude for magic, so Kachia’s Mana pool was a little smaller than average, but it was greater than the average Ghoul man’s Mana pool.

This was probably because of the fact that she had once been a human, and that she had once been an adventurer in a frontline role on the battlefield.

Frontline fighters like Warriors and Knights have less Mana than those like mages who fight from the back. However, they have higher Attribute Values for Vitality, Strength, Stamina and Agility to compensate for it.

Unlike mages, the Mana of frontline fighters is not consumed unless they use martial skills, so this is only natural. In fact, those with more Mana than Vitality wouldn’t choose to fight at the front.

Kachia had been a frontline fighter, and the way her Attribute Values increased when she became a Ghoul had been influenced by that. The increase in her Mana had been relatively greater than the increase of her other Attribute Values, but since her Mana value was small to begin with, the resulting value after the increase was still small.

She had undergone a Job-change to Apprentice Mage with this small Mana pool, but because her Mana was lacking, she couldn’t practice magic enough and she was finding it quite difficult to level her skills up.

That was why Vandalieu was accompanying her and providing her Mana for her to practice, but... The problem was Vandalieu’s senses.

A ‘small amount of Mana’ for Vandalieu, whose Mana pool was over 200,000,000, could be in the tens of thousands. Two hundred would be a fraction of ‘a tiny pinch’ of Mana for him.

Because of that, whenever Kachia ran out of Mana, Vandalieu poured into her what he regarded as ‘a tiny pinch’ of Mana, numbering in the dozens.

Nobody could blame Kachia for gasping and saying that she was “overflowing.”

“That’s true, but there’s no harm to your body caused by the overflowing Mana, is there?” asked Vandalieu.

“No, you’re right, but it’s incredibly...” Kachia looked troubled.

“Well, your Mana has recovered, so please continue your practice.”

“N-no way, if I keep practicing, my Mana will disappear again right away...”

“If it does, I’ll transfer you some more.”

Kachia made noises of discontent. For some reason, there were tears in her eyes as she continued her practice. Bilde and Basdia had already restarted their practice before her.

Incidentally, Bilde possessed an affinity for the earth attribute, Basdia possessed an affinity for the water attribute while Kachia possessed an affinity for four attributes – fire, wind, light and space. Though Bilde could be considered average, Basdia’s talent as a mage was meager which was why she had decided in the past that the Ghoul village would benefit more from her learning martial skills and was completely absorbed in learning those instead. In Kachia’s case, she had been told that it would be a miracle if her magic could even be considered useful at all, so she had given up on magic before even starting out on that road.

However, because Basdia’s Rank had increased and Kachia had transformed into a Ghoul and undergone a Job-change, their Attribute Values such as Mana and Intelligence had increased enough for them to be able to practice like this.

Incidentally, like Eleanora, the other three were also wearing revealing clothes. This was because it was normal Ghoul fashion to do so, but they had taken even more clothes off because their bodies were ‘too hot’.

No matter how strong the sunlight was, it was incomprehensible.

Eleanora panted and groaned. “V-Vandalieu-sama, just a little more, with just a little more, the skill...”

“Hmm, controlling the ground is hard. How do you do it, King?” Bilde asked.

“Alright, once more from the top,” said Basdia, firing herself up.

Kachia sighed. “If I don’t hurry and gain more skills, I’m going to become addicted to this.”

Eleanora’s snow-white skin turned a painful-looking red, then back to white. In contrast, the skin of Bilde and Kachia was a beautiful, healthy-looking gray-brown, while Basdia’s skin was of the same color but a little stronger, with red lines running across it and emphasizing her curves.

The exposed curves of their bodies were shaking in a stimulating way. Vandalieu had wondered whether doing something like this in front of the stone monument would cause some kind of divine punishment, but apparently it wasn’t a problem as Vida and Talos were gods who were very open to these kinds of things.

Come to think of it, I wonder if Vida will send me any Divine Messages?

Vandalieu did pray at the Church every day while he was in Talosheim, but it was something like lightly bowing his head to Ksitigarbha^[4] on Earth, so perhaps it wasn’t enough?

Since the prophecy given to Nuaza had been referring to Vandalieu, it was almost certain that Vida had taken notice of him, however.

Vandalieu decided that he would have Nuaza teach him how to pray properly.

In the cold winter air, the soldiers were busy doing hard carpentry work.

“It’s good that we’re getting paid, but when did we become slaves?” a soldier said bitterly. He and another soldier were working in a pair to transport stones.

The soldier he was paired with gave a bitter smile. “Hey, hey, slaves wouldn’t be earning any pay or wages,” he said. “Well, even if they did, they wouldn’t be of any use here,” he added.

The soldiers were at the exit of the tunnel leading to the Mirg shield-nation. They had been given the mission of building a simple fort there.

The inside of the tunnel had been swept clean of monsters by Riley, the hero praised as ‘the second coming of the tragic hero’, so it was safe to travel

through. However, once the Boundary Mountain Range was crossed, the outside world was completely unrelated to the safety of the tunnel.

Rank 3 monsters that would normally only be encountered in Devil's Nests were rampant here, and monsters even stronger than them came to attack as if it were only natural for them to do so.

A fort was necessary to maintain the tunnel that led into the Boundary Mountain Range, into the southern reaches of the continent. Monsters needed to be prevented from entering the tunnel.

However, normal craftsmen wouldn't be able to work in a place where there was a constant risk of being eaten alive by monsters. Therefore, the Mirg shield-nation had dispatched soldiers for this task. A third of them were guarding the site where the fort was to be built, another third did the construction work and the other third would rest. It had been decided that they would rotate these roles in order to construct the makeshift fort.

In addition, dozens of adventurers, mostly consisting of C-class individuals, had been hired to keep watch, scout the surrounding areas and defend the fort if necessary.

No monsters of Rank 5 or higher had appeared after the Green Wind Spear Riley and his party had exterminated several powerful monsters such as Rank 8 Stone Dragons, but it was just in case.

Because their defenses were solid, though some had been injured, no casualties had been suffered. The frontline in the war against the Orbaume Kingdom would be far more dangerous than this.

It was hard to believe that this was a cursed land where Vampires and Dragons ran rampant.

"Still, we're lacking amusement," one of the soldiers lamented.

Naturally, as this place was far from the nearest human settlement, there were no ways for the soldiers to amuse themselves. There were no peddlers, entertainers or prostitutes, and not only the soldiers, but even the adventurers had been forbidden from drinking alcohol so that they would be prepared for emergency situations.

The only thing they could look forward to was food, but even those were wartime rations of hard bread and dried meat with a little cheese and dried vegetables.

Riley had generously distributed Dragon meat while he was still here, but it would be cruel to expect the C-class adventurers, who had been forced to accept this low-pay emergency request without being given a choice to refuse, to be as generous as an A-class hero adventurer who had signed a specialist contract with a general of the Amid Empire.

The C-class adventurers were gathering rare materials from monsters that could only be found in the southern reaches of the continent, and kept the meat mainly to themselves. When they gathered more than they could eat, the army would sometimes buy it at reasonable prices, but... the chances of that meat being distributed to the ordinary soldiers were low.

“Ah man, come to think of it, I heard rumors that the S-class adventurer, the Thunderclap Schneider, declined to join the expedition,” said one of the soldiers.

The other one snorted. “I’m sure an S-class adventurer-sama would be busy hanging out with the women who approach him. Ah, while we’re working like this, I’m sure he’s being served by multiple half-naked women at once... He should just go and die.”

“Don’t say any more. Let’s just make sure we enjoy ourselves once we return to the town. Anyway, this fort-barrier is an important location for the upcoming expedition to Talosheim.”

“That’s true, but... do you think that we can participate in the expedition?”

“... It’s impossible, huh.”

Rumors had it that only the elite of the elite would be selected for the expedition. There was little hope for ordinary soldiers like them to participate in it. There were plenty of ordinary soldiers, and these two were mediocre even among them.

“Well, it’s fine. Everything is according to Alda’s guidance, as they say. I’m sure good things will happen if we just work hard.”

“Yeah, yeah. Alda-sama, Alda-sama, we’re working hard, so please bless us with popularity with the women at the bar.”

“You should pray for a promotion instead.”

The soldiers struck nails with their hammers as they joked around.

- **Name:** Eleanora
- **Rank:** 9
- **Race:** Noble-born Vampire Viscount
- **Level:** 47
- **Job:** Vassal Warrior
- **Job level:** 45
- **Job history:** Slave, Servant, Apprentice Mage, Apprentice Warrior, Mage, Demon Eye User
- **Age:** 8 years old (20 years old at time of Vampire transformation, 28 years old in total)
- **Passive skills:**
 - Self-Enhancement: Subordination: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Rapid Regeneration: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Intuition: Level 3
 - Mental Corruption: Level 3
 - Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Detect Presence: Level 3
 - Sunlight Resistance: Level 3 (NEW!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Mining: Level 1
 - Time-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - Life-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 2
 - Mana Control: Level 3
 - Swordsmanship: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)

- Silent Steps: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Steal: Level 1
- Housework: Level 2
- Shield Technique: Level 2 (NEW!)
- Armor Technique: Level 1 (NEW!)
- Surpass Limits: Level 2 (NEW!)
- Chant Revocation: Level 1 (NEW!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - Charming Demon Eyes: Level 7

Job Explanation:

【Vassal Warrior】

Also known as Gladiator. The owners of this skill can be referred to in various ways, but this is a Job that can be acquired when one gains close-quarters combat skills while being in a slave-like social position, and the Job owner's master grants permission for this Job-change. The slave-like social position is determined not by social structure or the Job owner's mental state, but by a worn sign such as a subordinate's collar or one engraved directly into the Job owner's body such as a tattoo or brand that acts as proof of subordination.

The bonuses to skills are fundamentally the same as the Warrior Job, but it also grants a bonus to the acquisition of skills such as Surpass Limits, Robust Health, Enhanced Muscular Strength as well as Self-Enhancement: Subordination, a skill that increases Attribute Values when acting as a Subordinate to another individual.

But unlike the Warrior Job, there is no bonus for skills such as the Armor Technique skill, so it is not a Job suited for Shield-bearers.

Notes

1. Kanji reading. The three kanji are 'tree', 'art/technique/magic', and 'person', so it literally means "person who uses tree arts/techniques/magic."

2. These lines are meant to be erotic. This particular one, however, has “i” and “ku” separated by the three dots. Together, they form “iku”, a phrase that means, “I’m coming” in certain contexts. Not sure if the author’s done that deliberately or not.
3. Qigong is some Chinese breathing control thing. Moxibustion is some other Chinese medicine thing where a herb is burned on the patient’s skin.
4. A bodhisattva revered in East Asian Buddhism, depicted as a monk. Thanks, Wikipedia.

Chapter 59: The Eclipse King is cursed by the marshal

Talosheim's total fighting strength was quite different now compared to the time when Vandalieu was just approaching his third birthday.

Vandalieu himself had grown strong, but more importantly, those around him had also grown stronger as a whole.

The only Ghouls remaining at Rank 3 were workers like Tarea and those of the newly-born generation. Most of the rest, including those like Bilde and Kachia, had become Rank 4 individuals with race titles such as Warriors, Grapplers, Archers and Little Mages.

Many had reached Rank 5, becoming Ghoul Barbarians, Ghoul Heavy Warriors and Ghoul Grappler Adepts.

They were developing incredibly quickly compared to regular Ghouls.

Though the Undead Titans had developed very little in the past two hundred years, they were now commuting to the Dungeons day and night, and most of them had at least increased their Ranks by 1. Braga and the others were also developing at a hectic pace.

In addition to them, the third city wall was a Stone Golem, and the Cemetery Bees had doubled in number. And though they could only be used in a defensive battle due to their limited mobility there were around a hundred Immortal Ents.

Those who could be called Vandalieu's personal guard don't even need to be mentioned.

There was one girl who raised her beloved mace, refusing to be overshadowed by the others.

"You can't do that."

“Eh...?!”

“Even if you make that surprised face, you can’t,” Vandalieu said to Pauvina, who was holding a stone mace that he had made for her after she had pestered him.

“I-I’m not a kid anymore!”

“No, you’re only two years old.”

“You’re only five, Van, and you’re smaller than me!”

“... Age and body size isn’t the problem.”

Pauvina, now two years old, was far larger than Vandalieu when it came to body size. Not horizontally, but vertically.

Not only was she large, but she had high Attribute Values. Her abnormal Strength value in particular wasn’t something that an ordinary person could compete with. If someone were to have a serious arm wrestle with her, it was fairly likely that their bones would be broken or their hand would be crushed.

In regards to her strength, Vandalieu had sacrificed his own body to raise her, so it was apparent that she could do that without any problems.

“Then why can’t I?!” Pauvina demanded.

“Your skills,” replied Vandalieu. “You haven’t learned any yet, have you, Pauvina?”

Skills were more important than Attribute Values in real battles, unlike arm-wrestling. The presence or absence of skills had a great influence on one’s fighting strength.

“I’ve learned Club Technique!”

“It’s still level 1, so you can’t.”

“Rapiéçage’s is level 1 as well!”

Rapiéçage groaned and moved her eyeballs to look at Pauvina. Just recently, Rapiéçage had finally managed to acquire a level 1 skill in Unarmed Fighting Technique.

Vandalieu had used human spirits when creating her and had even torn up

spirit mass that was floating about and added them into her. But though she could easily level up skills like Physical Resistance and Superhuman Strength, it seemed that it was difficult for her to gain martial-type skills.

But as her skills were leveling up, her fighting strength would certainly be increasing. She was still Rank 4, however. Also –

“If Rapiéçage gets injured, I can just replace her parts, but I can’t replace you, can I, Pauvina?”

Indeed, Rapiéçage was a patchwork Zombie that Vandalieu had created by sewing together multiple corpses. Even if her limbs were broken and her head was cut off, he could cut parts off suitable corpses and sew them back onto her, and then she would be back to normal.

For some reason, not only Pauvina, but Rapiéçage seemed depressed at Vandalieu’s words as well. Perhaps she was hurt by being told that it was fine for her to become injured.

Vandalieu realized that he could hurt others without being aware of it. He reflected on his actions and words, and decided that he would make it up to Rapiéçage with some mayonnaise later. But right now, Pauvina was the issue at hand.

Pauvina was Vandalieu’s... it wasn’t clear if she could be called his daughter, but at the very least, she was like his little sister. He was hesitant to bring her onto the battlefield and risk her life. She was only two years old, after all.

“Pauvina, I’ll bring you to fight in wars or Dungeons when your skills reach level 5 or when you become an adult. So make sure you train yourself until then.” As Vandalieu told her this, he handed her a late birthday present.

It was an iron mace to replace the stone one she had been using up until now.

“Uwah! Can I really use this?!” Pauvina’s face lit up in excitement the moment she saw it... and for some reason, Rapiéçage seemed happy as well.

“Yeah, you can,” said Vandalieu. “It’s a present, after all.”

“Thanks! My stone mace was hard to use because it was too light!” Pauvina happily started giving the iron mace a few practice swings.

Vandalieu gave a satisfied nod as he watched her.

He thought of Pauvina has his younger sister, but that was exactly why he thought it was his duty to raise her to be able to beat ten or twenty ordinary soldiers to death.

This world was harsh for those of Vida's races like Vandalieu, and there was a high chance that those who believed in Alda would consider Pauvina to be on Vida's side if they learned of her birth. That was why Pauvina needed to become strong.

Pauvina grunted as she swung her mace around. But why was Rapiécage also happily swinging her empty fists in the air as well? As this question perplexed Vandalieu, he suddenly realized something.

Rapiécage was imitating Pauvina and learning from her.

"Come to think of it, children like imitating their older siblings, don't they?"

It seemed that there was no need to make an effort to make more mayonnaise for now.

"How to pray to the goddess? What are you saying, Holy Son? Are you not already sufficiently adhering to Vida's teachings?"

This was Nuaza's response when Vandalieu visited him with concerns.

Vandalieu had expected that being baptized or using a proper praying method might cause Vida to send him a Divine Message, so this response was surprising.

In all honesty, Vandalieu had no recollection of praying to her properly at all. Though he had rebuilt the Church of Vida, he never went to it other than short visits with everyone before going into a Dungeon.

"Umm, please give me a detailed explanation," Vandalieu requested. "About Vida's rules, or her doctrine, or something."

"The doctrine of Vida, the goddess of life and love, is simple," said Nuaza. "Celebrate life and love others. There are various smaller details, but even so, they are not what would be called rules."

Simple teachings like, ‘Don’t put your life to waste,’ and, ‘Treat your family, friends and lover with care,’ apparently formed the foundation of Vida’s doctrine.

There were various derivations from those fundamental principles; for the ‘life’ side of things, there were things like, ‘Don’t waste any food in your meals,’ ‘Share your food with the hungry,’ and, ‘Give short words of thanks before and after each meal.’ When Nuaza had said that Vandalieu was adhering to Vida’s teachings, he was referring to these, which Vandalieu had been following.

Japanese was spoken in this world. That was why Vandalieu had been using the Japanese habits of saying, ‘Itadakimasu,’ and ‘Gochisousama,’ without even thinking about it, and he generally ate anything without being picky. And he was sharing his food with others in the form of the new flavorings that he had created, which were being distributed to everyone.

“Ah, I am indeed following them,” said Vandalieu once he realized this.

However, the doctrine was strangely similar to Japanese culture. These tendencies were probably present to begin with, and the doctrine had might have grown even more similar to Japanese culture after Zakkart’s arrival a hundred thousand years ago.

But the ‘love’ part was not very similar to Japanese culture. It seemed that the goddess had quite an assertive nature.

“What about ceremonies?” asked Vandalieu.

“There are none in particular,” Nuaza replied. “Well, there are wedding ceremonies, divorce announcements, prayers for planting crops, prayers for harvesting them and coming of age ceremonies,” he added.

It didn’t seem that there were any complicated ceremonies.

It was told that the champions had said something along the lines of, “The methods don’t really matter. The important thing is to not forget the importance of life and love, isn’t it?”

What a frank goddess. The simplicity and lack of formality is nice, but from the believers’ point of view, isn’t there a lack of blessings...?

Didn't religions normally have strict ceremonies and methods? Well, it likely wouldn't have been a problem a hundred thousand years ago when Vida walked safely in this world and could speak to her believers directly.

Incidentally, the other gods were apparently mostly the same. But in Shizarion's case, songs and art were offered to him while sword dances and the heads of prey hunted by warriors were offered as tributes to Zantark. In Ricklent's case, year-long research results were presented before his statue. It seemed that each god had their own preferences.

"As you would expect, Holy Son, Alda and the gods who support him seem to enjoy ceremonies with confusing, complicated procedures," said Nuaza.

There were apparently many rules such as the baptism of newborn infants, long prayers and obligations to go on pilgrimages. This was closer to Vandalieu's image of a religion.

It was unknown as to whether this was a result of Alda's personality, or because his clergymen had come up with these formal ceremonies to keep his believers together now that Alda, like Vida, could no longer walk on this world's surface.

"But considering that, why does Vida not pay me any attention?" Vandalieu wondered.

Since she had given the prophecy to Nuaza almost a hundred years ago, she should have predicted Vandalieu's existence back then.

With that being the case, Vandalieu thought that she could have at least sent him a Divine Message or something. "How to repair the resurrection device in five minutes," or the locations of other resurrection devices, perhaps.

"Holy Son, the goddess was gravely wounded in her battle against Alda," Nuaza told him. "She cannot send Divine Messages so frequently... At least, that is what I have been taught."

Vida sustained great wounds during the battle of a hundred thousand years ago, and apparently Zakkart and the Pure-breed Vampires were also in a deep slumber. Vida's subordinate gods were in a state where they were completely unable to act as well.

Vida's new races had been growing smaller in number due to Alda's influence, leaving her with few believers. This was just what Nuaza had heard from scholars from the Orbaume Kingdom who had visited Talosheim for research purposes, however.

And apparently talent was also needed in order to receive a Divine Message. With no talent, one would only receive a part of the Divine Message or it would not remain in the recipient's memories at all.

For example, if a god sent a Divine Message of, "The man named A is connected to the evil gods, so he is dangerous," if the recipient was not talented enough, the only thing he would remember would be, "A, danger." And then the situation would be complicated as it would be unknown as to whether A was a dangerous person or whether danger was closing in on A.

"Well, it might just be that there isn't anything she could tell me through a Divine Message," Vandalieu concluded.

It was possible that Vida thought that even if she told Vandalieu how to repair the resurrection device or the locations of other resurrection devices through a divine message, he wouldn't remember any of it.

"But you should be able to acquire the goddess's divine protection one day, Holy Son," said Nuaza.

"That would certainly make me feel a lot better," Vandalieu whispered as he looked up at the cold winter sunlight.

Spring was close.

Soldiers, knights, adventurers. If one were to ask which would win in one-on-one fights disregarding race and sex differences, the answer would be adventurers.

It was the jobs of the soldiers to protect the public order of their nations, fight on the battlefield during times of war and risk their lives to protect the towns when large groups of monsters were on rampages.

With the guards of Evbejia who only borrowed armor and helmet for bragging

rights, soldiers who were not temporary conscripts but formally employed by the army first underwent a Job-change from Apprentice Soldier to Soldier.

These Jobs were more or less inferior equivalents to the Apprentice Warrior and Warrior Jobs. The only aspects in which they were superior was their ease of leveling and the bonuses to the acquisition of the Coordination and Enhanced Attribute Values: Under Command skills. However, these skills were meaningless when used alone.

The reason that Soldier was an inferior equivalent to Warrior was because soldiers, unlike adventurers, didn't fight frequently. Even if they did uphold the public order, they didn't fight life-threatening battles against criminals every day, and if a town were in a situation where monster rampages occurred multiple times a year, their lives would likely come to an end anyway.

Even if one included the skirmishes between the Amid Empire and the Orbaume Kingdom that had been ongoing since their foundation, wars only happened once every few years.

They trained every day without fail, but they had much less experience in real battles compared to adventurers. That was why the Soldier Job was inferior, but easier to level up.

As knights were expected to possess greater fighting strength than soldiers, their Jobs were more powerful than the Soldier Job.

They would begin with Apprentice Knight, then proceed to Sub-Knight. Once they were knighted, they would become True Knights. However, not just anyone could become a True Knight. Talent was indeed required, but no matter how skilled one was, being hired would be impossible without the trust of a noble family.

Knights were also a main source of public order, but depending on the individual, they could also be lords of small regions such as villages. As such, they spent more time doing desk work than soldiers, and they were more often injured during training than in real battle.

The average regular soldier would be considered E-class by the Adventurers' Guild, and Sub-Knights would be similar to them. True Knights were said to be equivalent to above-average D-class adventurers.

Thomas Palpapek smiled as he recalled the above information. Anyone witnessing this smile would certainly feel good will coming from him; it was a gentle smile that would leave a deep impression.

I'm quite good at keeping up appearances, though I do say so myself.

On the inside, he wanted to vomit and scowl fiercely, as if he had swallowed a swarm of bitter bugs.

It was still a season where sunrises and evenings were cold, but as Thomas looked upon the army that the warm spring sunlight was shining upon, he realized that his meager plan had half-succeeded and half-failed catastrophically.

This was Mirg, the Mirg shield-nation's royal capital. A departure ceremony for the expedition army was taking place here.

The Mirg shield-nation would address the expedition army and the Amid Empire's supreme commander, General Mauvid, would promise military success. Chezare was second-in command. He was the second son of the Legston, the current marshal. Mauvid and Chezare would receive blessings from the high priests of Alda, march around in a parade and then depart.

The proud face of General Mauvid, the fresh smile of Chezare and the face of the Green Wind Spear Riley, who was being introduced by the king as the second coming of the hero, were most unpleasant.

But there is nothing I can do now.

General Mauvid had brought several dozen imperial guards from the Amid Empire. There were thirty or so priest-warriors, led by the renowned Vampire hunter, High Priest Gordan. And the rest of the army was six thousand of the Mirg shield-nation's prided elite.

They were elites even among soldiers, having undergone Job-changes from Soldier to Jobs such as Archer, Cavalryman and Heavy Soldier. If they were adventurers they would be D-class; they were capable of exterminating Rank 3 monsters alone and they showed even greater fighting strength when battling in groups.

The knights were all at least True Knights, and most of them had undergone

Job-changes to Guard Knight, Holy Knight or Superior Knight. They would be equivalent to C-class adventurers, and they possessed enough strength to be able to defeat Rank 5 monsters on their own.

They were normally held back as reserve troops, the Mirg shield-nation's trump card. They were the final line of defense to protect the nation when the Orbaume Kingdom conducted surprise attacks that soldiers standing by at forts couldn't deal with, or when large groups of monsters suddenly appeared and went on a rampage.

There were six thousand men here. They were joining an expedition in order to risk their lives in battles that would yield no benefits for the Mirg shield-nation.

Even a single one of their deaths would be a great loss. They were not men who could be lost in exchange for cleaning up a worthless stain on the Mirg shield-nation's history, nor could they be compared to the life of a single Dhampir.

Thomas Palpapek's plan had half-succeeded. As the A-class adventurer Riley and his self-made party were participating in the expedition, as well as the Vampire hunter, High Priest Gordan, the number of men participating in the expedition had been reduced to two-thirds of what had originally been planned.

However, in high spirits due to the hero's participation in the expedition, the king had said, "Our dignity as a military nation would be lost if we do not provide our elite forces," and dispatched six thousand of the nation's most elite troops.

"Oh my, what distinguished personnel we have gathered here, Earl Palpapek."

"You are absolutely correct, Viscount Balchesse," said Thomas in response to this comment.

Yes, you're damn right, Viscount Balchesse.

Saying the same words in his mind as with his mouth, though with a completely different tone, Thomas maintained his composure.

Viscount Balchesse hadn't done anything wrong. He would have been a fool to not extend his hand at the chance to make his own land prosper, and he

wasn't knowledgeable when it came to conspiracies and military affairs. Other than his skills when it came to economics, he was an ordinary nobleman. In any case, he wasn't in a position to be directly involved in this expedition. The most he was doing was helping with the transport of goods.

"The expedition is great, but I hope that as many of the soldiers return safely as possible," said Balchesse.

It was most helpful that he wasn't a foolish nobleman. Helpful for Thomas's sanity in particular.

"Yes, they are important, capable people that this nation needs, after all," replied Thomas.

They were the nation's elite. If they were regular soldiers, they could be replaced by training new recruits for a year. But there was no telling how many years of training it would take for new recruits to become replacements for such elite personnel, and even if they trained, many would not make it that far.

This was even more true for knights.

We will have three thousand elite soldiers left in reserve. There are no signs of monster rampages, and the Orbaume Kingdom shouldn't have regained enough strength to go on another offensive. And there should be no way for them to be able to tell what is happening on the other side of the Boundary Mountain Range.

Things would likely work out during the expedition. That was what Thomas predicted.

The only thing I can do now is pray that the Dhampir is exterminated as quickly as possible and that as many of our soldiers as possible return before the Vampires destroy the tunnel.

"But it would have been more reassuring if the Thunderclap Schneider was participating in the expedition as well," Balchesse commented.

"Ah, that S-class adventurer?"

Of course, Thomas was aware of this person. Unlike Riley who had been artificially raised to his current position, he was a true hero, and he had visited

the Mirg shield-nation on several occasions. He hunted Dragons whose Ranks were higher than 10 as if it were nothing, and Noble-born Vampires were nothing but small-fry before him. He was a superhuman who had defeated an evil god and annihilated numerous packs of Lamias and Scylla... A truly inhuman being.

He was one of the five strongest individuals in the Amid Empire, a hero. It was even said that Alda had sent Divine Messages more than once or twice in order to warn of his life being in danger.

“If he didn’t have bad habits as well...” Balchesse muttered.

Schneider had an unrivaled lust for women.

“It is unfortunate,” Thomas agreed. “But they do say that heroes like their women.”

It doesn't matter if the goddess loves him! Anyone who would be infatuated with womanizing in a time like this should just die!

Though the words that came out of his mouth were civil, Thomas cursed Schneider in his mind.

Parallel Thought Processing was a skill that allowed different matters to be thought about simultaneously. It was likely that it provided Vandalieu with the same ability as dividing his heads.

After trying to use it, he had found that he was able to think about different things as if he had grown an additional brain. He would be able to use thought process A to solve mathematics problems while thought process B controlled his body in a boxing match.

The number of thought processes wasn’t limited by the level of the skill; he was able to have three or four at once. But the more the number increased, the more likely the thought processes were to fail when performing complicated tasks. As the level of the skill increased, it was likely that he would be able to perform more numerous, complicated tasks at once.

Incidentally, when Vandalieu used Out-of-body Experience to multiply his

heads, his extra heads could also use Parallel Thought Processing.

“High-power as usual,” Zadiris commented. “Combined with the Chant Revocation skill, can you not cast multiple spells at once?”

“I can,” said Vandalieu. “If I use Multi-Cast as well, I can cast currently six spells with one head.”

Even with the Parallel Thought Processing skill to increase the number of Vandalieu’s thought processes, he only had one mouth so he would normally be able to cast only one spell. However, with the Chant Revocation spell, there was no need to recite an incantation so casting multiple spells simultaneously was possible.

The Multi-Cast skill only added to that.

And he could cast even more with the use of the Surpass Limits skill.

“Would your Mana not decrease if you do that?” asked Tarea.

“Not particularly, though it is tiring,” replied Vandalieu.

Was it not likely consuming a large amount of the glucose in his body? For Vandalieu, who possessed a vast amount of Mana, he wouldn’t be particularly happy if his body’s nutrients were the price to pay for using his skills, but if he used Out-of-body Experience and used only his soul rather than his body to use his skills, there would be no problem.

As for what Vandalieu was doing right now, he was playing shogi with Zadiris and Tarea as his opponents.

“Despite seeming simple at first, it is quite a strategically deep game,” Zadiris remarked.

“It seems like it would be quite enjoyable if one gets used to it,” said Tarea.

Reversi had already become widespread, so Vandalieu had created a board and pieces for shogi out of stone as another way for those in Talosheim to entertain themselves.

He had considered chess as well, but since Japanese was spoken in this world, shogi seemed more appropriate. Additionally, it seemed likely that everyone would soon become familiar with shogi, as currently-existing board games were

far more complicated and difficult.

And most importantly, Vandalieu himself was not very familiar with chess. He did remember the shapes of the pieces, how they moved and the basic rules of the game, however.

But it was something that he had been forced to play for intelligence tests in Origin, so his knowledge of the game might have been different from the rules of the chess of Earth... there were pieces called mages in the game he knew, too.

Vandalieu was processing the board states of two games at once, and each of his hands moved a different piece on each board with clacking noises. He was spending his time leisurely after having cleared a Dungeon, but it was also training for his Parallel Thought Processing.

“Come to think of it, how was the virus you created?” asked Zadiris.

Clack.

“It went well,” Vandalieu replied. “It only manifested symptoms in the dinosaurs and Goblins that everyone worked together to capture alive.”

Click, clack.

“Then once you create a number of Magic Items imbued with Sterilization, everything will be perfect, won’t they?” said Tarea.

Cli-clack.

And then Vandalieu could see that it would be difficult for him to move and advance his pieces.

“I’ve been defeated,” he said, exhaling quietly. “Also, it’s a rule that you have to declare when you are putting your opponent in check.”

“Boy...” Zadiris looked up at him. “It is fine for you to be more frustrated when you lose, you know?”

“Zadiris, I’ve already lost ten times in a row. I don’t have any pride left.”

Like Reversi, Vandalieu had never played shogi with someone on Earth. His only experience with shogi had been in video games and playing by himself.

Therefore, like in Reversi, he had become unable to defeat the rapidly-improving Zadiris, and though he had won against Tarea three times, he had been losing continuously after that.

Tarea gave a small laugh. “Well then, please go ahead.”

“Well, it is a competition after all,” said Zadiris.

There were rules in place where the loser of matches had to give massages to the winner. And though Vandalieu wasn't aware of this, the skill of giving others massages was not widespread in Lambda. Naturally, the concept of acupuncture points didn't exist.

The wealthy and those who made use of high-class brothels knew of massages as anma^[1], but they had no concepts of using acupuncture points, seitai, needles and moxibustion.

Thus, the massage Golems that Vandalieu had placed in the bathhouses were plainly great inventions.

“Well then, I'll get started,” said Vandalieu.

He used Spirit Form Transformation on his arms, branched them out into tentacle-like shapes and they sank into Zadiris and Tarea's bodies. From the inside, he released their muscle tension while using Materialization to massage them from the outside.

The Materialization skill he had gained when acquiring the Soul Breaker Job, to put it simply, was a skill that allowed him to materialize parts of his body that had undergone Spirit Form Transformation.

It might seem that taking the effort to use Spirit Form Transformation only to materialize the body parts again would be meaningless, but Vandalieu had intuitively sensed that it would be an extremely useful skill... though not because he thought that he would be able to do tentacle play.

Tarea called out to Vandalieu. “Van-sama, you have become distracted.”

“Ah, sorry.”

It seemed that concentrating on three different things with Parallel Thought Processing caused his focus to slip sometimes and produce negative effects on

what he was doing.

“Boy, you are so enthusiastic when it comes to Basdia and the others, but not taking things seriously for us... how shocking,” said Zadiris.

“It seems that he does indeed prefer the younger women,” Tarea lamented.

“No, both of you are young,” Vandalieu pointed out.

Though both of their ages were three hundred years if rounded up, now that they had undergone Youth Transformation, their bodies had reverted to being very close to their physical age. When Vandalieu looked closely at them as they made their lamentations, he could see slight smiles on their faces.

It seemed that they were aware of this.

“... Come to think of it, it's been about three years since I used Youth Transformation on Zadiris, and about a year for Tarea.”

Vandalieu increased the number of his arms.

“Wait, what are you planning to do with so many arms?!” Zadiris demanded.

“I was thinking I should do a little something to turn you into young women,” replied Vandalieu.

“Th-th-that is unnecessary!” Tarea said hastily. “We are no longer tired, so you can end the massage here!”

As Zadiris and Tarea's faces turned pale with panic, Vandalieu refused to allow them to escape and began using Youth Transformation.

“No, no, you don't need to be so reserved,” he insisted.

“Sto – AAAAAAH~!”

“NOOOO! There are more of them than before, HYAAAH!”

Vandalieu was bothered by the fact that he had lost the shogi matches, so he used Youth Transformation on Zadiris and Tarea until their skin was as smooth and childish as a baby's.

『The levels of the Parallel Thought Processing and Materialization skills have increased!』

『You have acquired the High-speed Thought Processing skill!』

- **Name:** Bone Man
- **Rank:** 6
- **Race:** Skeleton Viscount
- **Level:** 67
- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Enhanced Attribute Values: Loyalty: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Spirit Form: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Swordsmanship: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Shield Technique: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Archery: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Silent Steps: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Coordination: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Commanding: Level 1
 - Armor Technique: Level 3 (NEW!)
 - Mount: Level 1 (NEW!)

Notes

1. Anma and seитай are both types of traditional Japanese massage/therapy.

Chapter 60: The conductors and performers watching over the instruments headed for the stage

About half a month after the planting of the spring wheat had been completed, the people living in one of the farming villages built on the land that had been reclaimed from the Devil's Nest watched the expedition army as they marched.

All of the villagers had bright faces; each one of them were cheering for the expedition army in their hearts.

They were the sons born third or later in farming families, former tenant farmers and people who had been living in slums. By participating in Viscount Balchesse's land reclamation project, they had acquired simple houses in which they could live with their families and land that still possessed magical traces of the Devil's Nest, which had allowed it to produce crops from the first year. They had even been exempt from taxes.

Even with this expedition happening, Viscount Balchesse's tax exemption plan had not been cancelled, nor had any of their food supplies been requisitioned. Of course, because the troops in the expedition army were only the elite, none of the villagers had been conscripted, either.

If the expedition succeeded, the Mirg shield-nation would gain new territory beyond the mountain range, and the reclamation of that land would begin as well. If that happened, the crops produced by this village could be sold for use in that reclamation.

The profits would be small at first, but by their children's or grandchildren's generations, their village would be a stopping point between the Mirg shield-nation and the new territory, and it could even develop into a town.

Of course, if the expedition failed, the Mirg shield-nation's economy would

enter a slump. But the villagers didn't doubt that the expedition would succeed.

The soldiers were a collection of the Mirg shield-nation's finest. Even 'the second coming of the hero Mikhail', the Green Wind Spear Riley, as well as the Vampire hunter Bormack Gordan whose name was known across the entire Amid Empire, were participating in the expedition.

The expedition army's sights were set on Talosheim, where the Mirg shield-nation had once been victorious at the cost of significant casualties. They would recover Ice Age, the Artifact left behind by Mikhail, and this time they would suppress Talosheim once and for all. These were the objectives that had been officially announced.

The villagers had heard that the Boundary Mountain Range was a dangerous land, but with an A-class adventurer who could even defeat Dragons and a high priest who had slain numerous Vampires, the expedition army would be fine. Furthermore, Talosheim had already been conquered once before, two hundred years ago. The fortress-city would be in shambles now, and the enemy would be a disorderly gathering of Undead and monsters. They would be no match for the group of Alda-sama's priest-warriors.

There was no doubt that the expedition army would exterminate the fiendish Undead and plant the Mirg shield-nation's flag upon Talosheim.

These were the thoughts of not only the villagers of this reclaimed land, but also the thoughts of many of the Mirg shield-nation's citizens.

"Do your best!"

"We're cheering for you!"

The expedition army headed for the Boundary Mountain Range's tunnel as they received the villagers' encouragement.

A little over a month after the expedition army departed the royal capital of Mirg, they arrived at the Mirg shield-nation's side of the tunnel in the Boundary Mountain Range.

From here, they planned to spend three days traveling through the tunnel

and then another week or so to reach Talosheim.

Today, they would receive their last supplies at the simple fort-barrier that had been built at the Mirg shield-nation's entrance to the tunnel and make sure the soldiers had plenty of rest. The tunnel had been completely cleared of monsters by Riley, but they would be marching while fighting the invisible enemy of claustrophobia.

It was commonly known even in Lambda that spending long periods of time in complete darkness would produce psychological abnormalities. Of course, they would be marching while using Magic Items and lanterns to light the way, but if the soldiers were pushed too hard, a drop in morale would be inevitable.

That was why they would be allowed to rest their bodies, drink alcohol and eat undried meat on the day before entering the tunnel.

"So, what is the situation on the other side of the tunnel?" asked Gordan.

All of the important figures in the expedition army had gathered in a tent, conducting one final war council before crossing the Boundary Mountain Range.

Because the fort-barrier that had been built at the tunnel's entrance was small, it was more comfortable in this tent.

"The terrain is the same as it was two hundred years ago. No matter how much the Devil's Nests have spread, it is not as if volcanoes or lakes will suddenly appear out of nowhere. But the roads cannot be used." Chezare Legston, second son of the current marshal of the Mirg shield-nation and second-in-command in this expedition, pointed a finger at an old map as he answered Gordan's question. "The expedition two hundred years ago approached Talosheim through a relatively safe route through the mountain range, but we will use a different path this time. We must not proceed while clearing through the forest. But..."

"But what? It would be problematic if you do not give us accurate information, Chezare-dono," said Earl Langil Mauvid, a man of an age between the prime years of his youth and middle age, who was wearing a splendid overcoat and sitting in a chair further inside the tent. He was the supreme commander of this expedition.

Mauvid's attitude towards Chezare was as if Chezare was far inferior to him, beyond the difference between a supreme commander and second-in-command, but that was how the Empire treated its nations.

"... But, it seems that there was a large-scale conflict between monsters; traces of their battle have been left behind," Chezare reported. "Considering that, there are few powerful monsters in the area near the tunnel's exit."

"Yeah, that's because I hunted some of them," said Riley.

Chezare frowned in displeasure at Riley's interruption of his report. He wanted to say something about this insolent adventurer, but the supreme commander had instructed that Riley should be treated as if he were of the same rank as the upper officials of the expedition as he was a necessary, core part of the expedition army's fighting force. There is no way that he can pick an argument with Riley here.

And strictly speaking, High Priest Gordan was also no different from a commoner, so forcing only Riley to leave would cause problems.

Mauvid nodded. "Yes, thanks to you, we were able to hold out until the C-class adventurers were deployed. Keep up the hard work in Talosheim as well."

"Leave it to me, General. Even if Dragons or whatever come at us, I'll slaughter them with my spear!"

Chezare and Gordan found it difficult to conceal their displeasure at the sight of Mauvid and Riley smiling.

When one becomes an A-class adventurer, he gains influence surpassing less prominent noblemen, and many of them build relationships of trust that are beyond mere shallow connections with noble families and wealthy merchants. However, Chezare and Gordan felt a strange, unpleasant feeling.

"I don't care if there are huge, unexplored Devil's Nests or whatever; I'm sure they're nothing special compared to the mountain range, which is the dangerous part that we're passing straight through," said Riley. "That means this expedition was made possible by the tunnel you found for us, Earl-sama."

Riley was flattering Mauvid, but everyone here knew that what he said was the truth.

In fact, at the fort on the other end of the mountain range had been attacked by Dragons multiple times, but all of the attacks had been repelled by Riley. The other monsters that had attacked were Rank 3 monsters with some Wyverns and enormous reptile-like monsters (dinosaurs) that were Rank 5 or 6 mixed in.

The attacks had been frequent and ordinary adventurers and soldiers might have been easily defeated, but the Boundary Mountain Range was far from as fearsome as they had been told.

The reality was that this was because Borkus and the others had exterminated a Goblin King's nation and multiple Dragons while searching for the tunnel, however.

In any case, this region, including the area surrounding the tunnel, was close to Talosheim's territory. There were many parts that had been Devil's Nests even in Talosheim's glorious days, but Titan warriors thinned the monster numbers in order to protect their villages in the lands that they had reclaimed.

That was why even now, there were only a few Dragons inhabiting the area. Monsters appeared one after another in Devil's Nests, but it would be rare for an explosive increase in the number monsters over Rank 10 to happen within two hundred years.

There were no such limits on Demi-human type monsters, which bred and grew up faster than Dragons, but it seemed that other than Goblins, there were not many of them and they rarely bred outside Dungeons.

"So, Chezare-dono, we have not yet encountered any Ghouls, have we?" asked Mauvid.

"That is right," replied Chezare. "The only demi-human-type monsters we have encountered are Goblins and a single reported encounter with an Ogre."

Gordan, who had joined the expedition because of the Divine Message from Alda, made a disgruntled noise at the news that there were still no leads on the Dhampir even after passing through the tunnel. But he understood that the Dhampir and his companions would have built their nest further into the mountain range.

It was certainly possible that the Dhampir had occupied Talosheim, the

destination of the expedition. Demi-human-type monsters often set up villages in ruins no longer inhabited by people. Dhampirs and Ghouls would be no exception.

“Now as for what we will do after exiting the tunnel, we will send out a leading force that will confirm the existence of danger as we proceed,” Chezare announced. “I would like you to join that scouting force, Riley-dono.”

“Yeah, of course,” said Riley. “If a big fish like a Dragon were to show up, it’d be tough without me. Ain’t that right, old man?” he added, looking at Gordan.

“Hmph. Don’t underestimate me, youngster.”

After that, things like the planned marching route, the organization of the scouting force and methods of communication with the supply unit that would transport supplies were confirmed, and finally, the conquest of Talosheim was discussed.

They would march on while exterminating the monsters with Gordan and Riley as the core part of their force, and once they arrived in Talosheim, the knights would command the troops and defeat the monster rabble, reducing their numbers. After that, they would search important locations where monsters might hide such as the royal castle and the ruins of the Church of Vida, and then begin the extermination of the more powerful monsters. Such things had already been mostly decided right from the beginning.

Everyone in the expedition force didn’t think of what they were conducting in Talosheim to be a war. They considered it as work to purify the Devil’s Nest and search for the lost national treasure. For Gordan, even if the Divine Message was true, it was merely a monster extermination, so he did not advocate that they needed a more detailed plan.

After that was finished, Gordan quickly departed the tent. As he had no intentions of flattering the noblemen, participating in a war council was an overly-formal, suffocating task. He had never intended to stay for long.

Chezare also left the tent, saying that he would go and check on the conditions of the soldiers and knights.

“So, General-sama, when are we going to get rid of those two?” asked Riley.

“How problematic that would be, Riley,” said Mauvid. “Leaving the senile priest aside, I must have Chezare take the position of supreme commander when I step down for health reasons. If he were to die before that, there would be nobody to take responsibility for this expedition now, would there?”

Now that Gordan, Chezare and Chezare’s protégé subordinate had left, Riley and Mauvid began the real war council with the rest of the people remaining in the tent.

Including them, those left in the tent all knew the true purpose of this expedition; they were people with connections to the Vampires who worshipped Hihiryushukaka, the Evil God of Joyful Life, with the exception of three people.

“Jeez, that’s troublesome talk for a rising adventurer like me,” Riley complained. “Right?”

“That may not be true, Riley-dono. Our world is more complex than it seems, you see.” The one who replied to Riley was a man who seemed to be a veteran mercenary. He had blonde hair, blue eyes and numerous scars on his face.

However, in the next moment, he turned into a woman in her thirties. It was as if the mercenary and the woman had switched places through teleportation. But in reality, the woman had been disguising herself as a mercenary man.

“Sometimes it is even more complex than human societies,” the woman continued. “That is why we understand your circumstances. Do as you please.”

The woman, whose voice had changed as well as her appearance, smiled to reveal sharp, white fangs.

She was a Noble-born Vampire who had been dispatched by the Pure-breed Vampire Ternecia, and she was currently participating in the expedition as part of a mercenary band that General Mauvid had hired specially.

Mauvid nodded. “That is why we are helping you deal with the problematic Dhampir and the Vampire traitors, isn’t it, Isla-dono?”

“Of course,” replied the Vampire, Isla. “Well, the traitor Eleanora is nothing special as long as care is taken with her Charming Demon Eyes, and there is a high chance that Sercrent is dead. If it looks like it will be difficult, I will lend you

a hand. Discreetly, so that I will not be discovered.”

Isla’s role was to dispose of the Vampire traitors. The majority of the expedition army were unaware that there were Vampires in Talosheim, so it was likely that the Vampire traitors would be able to escape. That was why Isla, who was borrowing a Magic Item that indicated the location of a blood sample’s owner, would hide in confusion and dispose of them.

She was also there to assassinate the evil Vampire hunter during the expedition, and most importantly, she was a trump card to ensure that the Dhampir, whom the evil god had even sent a Divine Message to command the Vampires to slay him, would be disposed of.

“That is why Ternecia-sama has sent me here,” she said. “I am a Vampire Countess, one of Ternecia-sama’s five strongest subordinates.”

Vampire Countess. A Rank 10 Vampire named after the court rank of count.

A-class adventurers would be needed to defeat such a Vampire, and even that would only apply if the Vampire were to stand and fight head-on. There was no small number of such powerful Noble-born Vampires hiding in Kyojou^[1] that were even more dangerous than lower-level Dungeons, with many Subordinate Vampires in their command.

As a result, these Vampires were beings that could even turn the tables on a party of A-class adventurers. Even Gordan had never defeated a Vampire Count.

And including the Vampires dispatched by Birkyne and Gubamon, there were thirty Vampires under Isla’s command. The weakest of them were Rank 7, and there were even two Rank 9 Vampire Viscounts, only a single Rank beneath her.

They formed a large fighting force that would be sufficient to annihilate the entire expedition army on their own.

Riley laughed. “There’s no need for that. That Dhampir that you’re all so obsessed about, I’ll get rid of it for you.”

Despite that, Riley regarded Isla and the other Vampires to be no match for an A-class adventurer hero like himself, and sneered at them. He was telling them that the achievement would be his.

Isla smiled, showing no signs of displeasure at this. "I'm looking forward to it, hero-dono."

For her, completing her mission took priority; there was no use in being obsessed over something as worthless as achievements. If Riley were to kill the Dhampir, she would be satisfied with that.

"But is that really alright?" Mauvid asked. "As this is an expedition, we will be fighting in during the day."

Battle would occur in a time of day where the sun, the natural weakness of Vampires would be in the sky. The Vampires would have measures against it, of course, and the enemy traitors would be affected by it as well. But as Isla's side would be the attackers, they were at the disadvantage.

Isla's smile widened as Mauvid pointed this out. "It is not a problem. And in any case, Talosheim is a city surrounded by mountains. You already destroyed the mercury mirrors left behind by Zakkart for us two hundred years ago, so the sun will set quickly."

In Talosheim, which had now become warm and cozy, Vandalieu opened his eyes. He stared silently into the empty air without blinking.

"They're here. Those guys are here."

The surveillance Golems and Undead set up around the tunnel saw bustling activity around the fort that had been built by the Mirg shield-nation.

As Vandalieu switched his vision to that of a familiar he had dispatched, his Lemure, he saw more people inside the fort than he had ever seen since coming to Lambda.

Several thousand. Their numbers were unlikely to be over ten thousand, but there were at least five thousand.

"Are there Vampires?" asked Eleanora.

"I can't make them out just be looking," Vandalieu replied. "There are quite a lot of knights wearing plate armor, too."

Other than their pupils, fangs and their pale skin that appeared as if it had lost

all of its blood, Vampires did not look much different than the races that they had been converted from. But they would have to wear thick capes and hats made of cloth and furs and hoods low over their faces to prevent their skin from being burned by the sun, so they would normally be conspicuous if they went outside.

However, in situations where wearing the armor and a helmet of a soldier was normal, they would not stand out.

“I don’t think there will be any among the knights,” Eleanora told him. “They should be mixed in among the mercenaries and adventurers.”

“In times like these, the Mirg shield-nation has a troublesome custom of doing their best not to hire free adventurers,” Kachia added. “So, if they’re going to be sneaking in, it’s going to be with the mercenaries.”

Eleanora offered her knowledge about the Vampires and Kachia, a former adventurer in the Mirg shield-nation, added to it.

“In that case, maybe it’s that group?” Vandalieu wondered.

Vandalieu noticed one group wearing different armor and holding different shields from the other troops. All of them were equipped with heavy armor and helmets, but they were marching in line with the rest.

There were about thirty of them. And of course, as they couldn’t expose their skin to the sunlight, Vandalieu couldn’t see their faces.

“Well, if we’ve already confirmed that there will be Vampires among them, I should leave before the end of today,” said Zadiris. “East or west, which way should I go?”

“To the east then,” said Vandalieu. “If they come, it will be in the afternoon.”

“Very well, leave it to me.”

After sending Zadiris off, Vandalieu and the others began moving. They recalled their allies from the Dungeons and made their preparations.

Vandalieu had predicted things would come to this and began his preparations two years ago, so there was no reason to be hasty. He had prepared numerous hidden weapons and trump cards. Judging from the voices

that Vandalieu was hearing, there was an expedition army of six thousand approaching the city, but none of them felt any sense of despair.

Even if the expedition army's numbers were double what they were now, their attitude likely wouldn't change.

"Just to make absolutely sure, even if you kill expedition army troops, please refrain from eating them on the spot," Vandalieu told Talosheim's inhabitants.

"I know, King. Make sure you give us lots of mayonnaise instead!"

"Yeah, fried dinosaur with miso is better than human meat anyway!"

"I want a board for that shogi thing!"

"Yes, yes, I'll make lots of mayonnaise, miso and shogi sets to celebrate our victory, so everyone should do their best and make sure not to die," said Vandalieu. "I'm not going over to the next world to give you your rewards."

"You're telling Undead not to die? We got it, Eclipse King!"

The atmosphere in the town was even brighter than usual. Shelters for noncombatants like Pauvina had been prepared, so there wouldn't be scenes like from disaster films on Earth where civilians would run for their lives... not that there was anywhere to run to even after escaping Talosheim.

It didn't need to be said that Talosheim was the only safe part of the southern region of continent surrounded by the Boundary Mountain Range.

"We'll be constantly fighting with our backs to the wall, so it's only natural to take care of yourselves and prepare well before you fight, isn't it?" said Vandalieu.

Even if they were to cross the Boundary Mountain Range again, the Ghouls and Undead Titans would be hunted as monsters in the Orbaume Kingdom.

That was why they had to repel this expedition army. And they were mostly unable to take prisoners.

Even if they were a gathering of the most elite soldiers, they would think about retreating once they lost around a third of their forces. For this expedition army in particular, there were many unfavorable conditions for a war here.

The fact that there were no safe areas nearby was true for the expedition army as well, and for now, they could be on guard against mindless monsters like Goblins and Needle Wolves or small packs of other monsters that attacked where defenses were weak. But if their numbers were reduced and they scattered as they ran, the monsters would slaughter most of them.

Even if they maintained their formation as they retreated, it would take them several days to reach the tunnel through the Boundary Mountain Range.

If Vandalieu were to ask them to surrender, there might be hundreds or perhaps even a thousand who would decide that it would be impossible to escape from the Ghouls and Undead, becoming prisoners of war.

“But taking them as prisoners after that...” Vandalieu began.

“Would be impossible,” said Sam, finishing his sentence. “During times of war, prisoners of war are either released after the enemy pays a ransom or simply sold as slaves, but the Amid Empire and Mirg shield-nation has no intention of negotiating with us, and it would be difficult to use them even as slaves.”

In a normal war, the treatment of prisoners of war was exactly as Sam described it, but the Amid Empire and Mirg shield-nation didn't see Talosheim as a nation or Vandalieu as a king. They were nothing but monsters.

Negotiations would never take place, even if Vandalieu made attempts to make them happen. The Empire and Mirg shield-nation would never acknowledge a nation of Ghouls and Undead with a Dhampir as their king.

Nuaza nodded. “We might be able to manage a few dozen slaves, but a hundred or two hundred would be impossible to control.”

As he said, turning prisoners of war into slaves would be difficult. Collar-shaped Magic Items that forced obedience from slaves existed in this world, but since there were none in Talosheim, they would have to monitor them and force them to work like in prisons on Earth.

They were not hoodlums and ruffians, but elite soldiers who had experienced harsh training and battles.

Even if their minds were broken upon surrendering, they might regain their desire for revenge and faith in Alda as time passed.

“We don’t have the numbers to begin with,” said Vandalieu. “We only have two thousand people; there’s no way we could watch over hundreds of slaves.”

Excluding the Cemetery Bees and Immortal Ents, the current population of Talosheim consisted of around a thousand Undead Titans, seven hundred Ghouls including the children, and two hundred members of the new races Vandalieu had created such as Braga. Around nineteen-hundred in total.

If the monitoring of the prisoners was left to Golems, Vandalieu could only foresee a future where the prisoners would take them by surprise, and the same would happen if he hastily made some Zombies to do the job. They were elite soldiers capable of defeating a Rank 3 monster on their own. Even if they were unarmed, they would likely be able to fight evenly against a Rank 2 monster, and if they cooperated, they might even be able to bring a Rank 3 monster down. With the martial skills of the Unarmed Fighting Techniques of this world, even a boulder could be easily smashed.

These were people who would be able to somehow defeat bears with their bare hands.

And even if they managed to turn the prisoners into slaves, there was the problem of what they would do with them afterwards.

Even if they were to be forced to work until they died, Talosheim had tireless Undead and Golems, so slaves would be inferior as a labor force.

It would be easier to make a miracle happen than try to persuade them to become Vandalieu’s allies. If Talosheim was a nation of humans, the soldiers might be persuaded with some perseverance even if they were born in an enemy of that nation.

But for the soldiers of the expedition army, Vandalieu and the inhabitants of Talosheim were not people. They were monsters. They would be enemies who had taken them prisoner, killed their comrades, enemies that ought to be defeated according to Alda, the god of their national religion.

And most importantly, not a single person in Talosheim had any knowledge in how converting them could possibly be done.

“But could it not be possible if you use your Death-Attribute Charm skill, Holy

Son?" asked Nuaza.

"Meeting the requirements of that skill to take effect would be equivalent to torturing them to death," Vandalieu pointed out.

Kachia and the other former human adventurers had demonstrated that even living humans could be affected by Death-Attribute Charm.

However, for that to happen, they had to be in a mental state of complete despair in life, where they desired salvation in death.

So to convert the prisoners to Vandalieu's side while they were still alive using Death-Attribute Charm, they would have to be tortured in ghastly ways and have their hearts broken into tiny pieces until they were in a state where they were unable to do anything other than whisper, "Kill me," and, "I want to die."

"If I'm going to do that, wouldn't it be more humane to simply kill them and turn them into Undead in order to convert them to our side?" Vandalieu pointed out.

"Indeed," Sam agreed, "Even when it comes to gaining information, it would be faster for you to kill them to make them speak, Bocchan."

"But Holy Son, why are you only now worrying about how to handle enemy soldiers?" asked Nuaza. "Was it not decided long ago that we would slaughter them all?"

"That's true, but now that it comes to it... I was thinking that *they* will definitely have something to say about it," said Vandalieu.

"They?"

"Yes, the others who are going to be reincarnated here."

Vandalieu would slaughter the entire expedition army and cut down the Mirg shield-nation's strength.

Those reincarnating here from Origin would likely see this as an evil act. Vandalieu fell into a gloomy mood as he realized this.

"Well, they'll understand if I explain the situation to them properly... maybe? I have to get stronger for the possibility that they don't understand, too." This was the conclusion Vandalieu came to in the end.

There were too many reasons in this world for him to grow stronger.

- **Name:** Isla
- **Rank:** 10
- **Age:** Approximately 30,000 years old
- **Title:** Ternecia's Hound
- **Race:** Noble-born Vampire Countess
- **Level:** 79
- **Job:** Slaughtering Executioner
- **Job level:** 88
- **Job history:** Apprentice Warrior, Apprentice Mage, Magic Warrior, Warrior Executioner, Shapeshifter
- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 9
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 9
 - Rapid Regeneration: Level 3
 - Mental Corruption: Level 3
 - Slaughter Healing: Level 7
 - Intuition: Level 5
 - Enhanced Attribute Values: Loyalty: Ternecia: Level 5
- **Active skills:**
 - Bloodsucking: Level 3
 - Water-Magic: Level 5
 - Fire-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 1
 - Mana Control: Level 5
 - Swordsmanship: Level 10
 - Armor Technique: Level 9
 - Surpass Limits: Level 7
 - High-speed Flight: Level 5
 - Pursuit: Level 8
 - Torture: Level 5
- **Unique skills:**

- Shapeshift: Level 7
-

Notes

1. I'm not sure what this term is supposed to be. In normal Japanese usage, it means "castle of a daimyo/feudal lord", but that translation doesn't fit here. I'll update this word if the author ever bothers explaining what it is.

Chapter 61: The prelude, played with dissonance and percussion instruments

The seven-day-long march went better than expected.

Because sturdy work horses had been prepared, the transportation of goods had gone well. Even the monsters that appeared on the way had been of a level that could be easily disposed of by the soldiers; there had been no need for Riley and his party to step up. The monsters would then provide fresh, undried meat to garnish the meals of that day.

The hours of daylight were short as they were surrounded by mountains that towered into the sky, but there was no shortage of people who could use illuminating magic, and though they were expensive, there were some with Magic Items that acted as lanterns.

The fact that they had reached a place where Talosheim was visible in exactly seven days was because their march had gone so well.

However, things started going wrong the moment their march was complete.

“It seems that the scouting teams were not hallucinating,” said General Mauvid. He had set up a temporary camp in the plains near Talosheim. The only obstacle on this flat terrain was the waist-high grass; they had a good unobstructed view. This wasn’t the kind of place a stronghold would be built in a real war.

Mauvid had gathered the leaders of the expedition here and was looking at the strange sight of Talosheim.

What he saw was a thirty-meter-high fortress wall. Other than the imperial capital or fortresses in important locations, such a tall wall was rare for humans. But the larger Titans had been twice the height of a human, and since the areas surrounding the city were mostly Devil’s Nests, such a sturdy wall were likely necessary for them.

According to the records from two hundred years ago, the wall had indeed been quite tall, but the army had simply determined its height with eye measurements in the past, so it would not be unusual if there were any measurement errors.

The strange thing was that although the wall looked like a single strike from a battering ram would knock it down, the two large holes that the hero Mikhail created two hundred years ago were nowhere to be seen.

“What could this mean? Were the records from two hundred years ago incorrect...?” suggested Chezare Legston, the second-in-command in this expedition. Military records were inaccurate from time to time. Sometimes, exaggerations were made to spread the news of the achievements made by the heroes and generals of the past.

However, High Priest Bormack Gordan spoke up in response to Chezare. “It is likely the doing of that... Vandalieu, the Dhampir who led hundreds of Ghouls to escape from Viscount Balchesse.”

“The one you are always mentioning, High Priest?”

“Yes. It is likely that the Dhampir instructed his subordinates, the Ghouls, to repair the fortress wall.”

Though Gordan was full of confidence as he spoke, Chezare seemed doubtful. Not a single member of the expedition army had so much as seen a Ghoul yet. Considering that, Chezare thought Gordan’s opinion was quite questionable.

“But would he do such a thing?” he asked, expressing his doubts. “I have heard of cases where monsters settle down in ruins, but I have never heard of monsters repairing the ruins they are inhabiting. Ghouls are a more intelligent type of monster and apparently many are capable of building their own small homes, but a fortress wall would be...”

Gordan snorted. “Chezare-dono, that is a way of thinking that is held back by the rules of common sense. The Ghouls are being led by a Dhampir, a monster that is as intelligent as a human. And look carefully at that fortress wall. If they were left in that state two hundred years ago, they would have long since collapsed by now.”

“I-indeed...”

As Gordan pointed out, with closer examination, it was obvious that the wall was crudely-structured in certain parts, and it was clearly poor craftsmanship. It would likely not even last a decade, let alone two hundred years.

It was difficult to believe that this had been the sturdy wall of the fortress that had repelled the Mirg shield-nation’s army of ten thousand, including the hero Mikhail.

“With this, we can assume that Vandalieu is leading a highly-organized pack of Ghouls and barricading himself inside Talosheim,” Gordan concluded.

“I see. Your hypothesis is reasonable, High Priest-dono,” said Mauvid, giving a solemn nod. But in his mind, he thought that Gordan’s sharpness was troublesome.

Why was this senile old man able to guess the truth despite not being in contact with the Vampires? Mauvid gave a glance towards Isla, who was present in disguise as the leader of a mercenary band, but judging from the lack of reaction from her, it didn’t seem that there were secret deals going on that he was unaware of.

Mauvid and Isla had intended to never tell anyone outside of their groups about Vandalieu and Eleanora, right up until the very end.

They would keep the army uninformed as it marched to Talosheim and then see how Vandalieu, the Ghouls he led and the Vampire traitors would move.

The Magic Item had made it clear that Eleanora was still in Talosheim, and no Subordinate Vampires or Ghouls had scouted the army’s movements near the tunnel or the Devil’s Nests they had passed through

That was why Mauvid and Isla knew that Vandalieu and his subordinates hadn’t noticed the expedition army’s presence.

That was why they would send in the expedition army’s soldiers and knights charging in first, and then if Vandalieu and the Vampire traitors ran, Riley and Isla would give chase and finish them. They would never lose track of Eleanora as long as they had their Magic Item, and Isla had confirmed that Eleanora was not aware of the existence of this Magic Item.

And so Vandalieu was likely to try and escape together with her rather than use her as a sacrificial pawn, as she was certainly his greatest source of fighting strength.

Even if he separated himself from Eleanora and took some Ghouls with him instead, chasing him down wouldn't be difficult.

Though this were unlikely, if he were to put up a do-or-die resistance, Riley and the others would simply slay him.

During the confusion, they would also dispose of the problematic High Priest Gordan.

With that, all of the objectives of Mauvid and his conspirators would be achieved. It wouldn't matter no matter how many of the Mirg shield-nation's elite soldiers were lost in the process. Mauvid would occupy the remains of Talosheim, pick a suitable moment to return to the Empire in order to report their success, fabricate a health issue and then retire. If Riley was still alive, he could be brought back as well.

Isla was a mercenary, so she could simply say that her contract had expired, separate herself from the expedition army and vanish.

After that, the Vampires would collapse the tunnel, leaving the pitiful Chezare and the other soldiers trapped in Talosheim. General Mauvid would become a Vampire and gain eternal life, while Riley and the new earl of the Mauvid family would gain the glory of this world.

That was the plan, so the soldiers learning of Vandalieu and his subordinates before marching forward and becoming hesitant would cause problems.

The targets hadn't noticed the expedition army and were likely in a panic right now, so Mauvid didn't want to give them time to regain their composure.

"So, what are we going to do?" asked Riley. "Even if it is in pieces, a wall is a wall. Scouting inside is going to be hard, you know?"

Despite what Riley said, Isla and the other Noble-born Vampires could fly, so peeking inside the city wouldn't be difficult no matter how high the wall was.

Even if archers were stationed on the wall, they would be bows and arrows

handmade by monsters. As they would not be high-quality weapons, the arrows wouldn't reach if they flew high enough.

However, the fact that she and her followers were Vampires was a secret to all but Riley and Mauvid, so suggesting such a plan would be impossible. Naturally, Isla remained silent.

"Of course, we will take the fight in numbers and close in on them, just as we would do in a normal war," said Gordan. "First, we will use heavy infantry to solidify our outer defense and have archers and mages at the ready, and then use battering rams to break down that city gate. After that, we will have to see how the Ghouls act. They would normally charge at us, but under the leadership of that Dhampir, they are cunning. They might outwit us, split up into smaller groups, hide in the ruins and engage us in urban warfare."

Gordan was a man known by the Title of "Vampire Hunter"; what came out of his mouth were not words of hesitation but a proactive, offensive plan.

"Should we not surround the city first?" Chezare suggested.

"If we surround a city of that size, our troops will be spread thin," Gordan replied. "And though this may look like a plains, it is a fearsome Devil's Nest. If monsters attacked us while we were spread out, we would suffer great casualties. Is this fine with you?"

"... What will we do, General?" asked Chezare.

"Hmm, let us make use of the High Priest-dono's advice," said Mauvid, coming to a decision. "Prepare the battering rams and organize the attack forces!"

The soldiers began moving in a hurry. They had never planned to engage in a siege, but battering rams had been brought along just in case they were needed to conquer Talosheim. The battering rams were brought out and the heavy infantry declared themselves as the spearhead of the army.

Gordan was not watching them, instead taking notice of the sun. The day was already darkening.

"We did not make it in time."

It was still early in the evening, but the Boundary Mountain Range was blocking out the sunlight. Most Dhampirs were not weak to the sun, but his subordinates, the Ghouls, would be able to see in the dark.

On the other hand, the expedition army was mostly made of humans. Gordan had wanted victory to be secured before darkness fell, but it seemed that things would not go so well. A wrinkle appeared between his brows as he frowned.

Not that things would go well with the top members of the expedition having connections with Vampires.

Vandalieu was hiding right above the gate of the third wall, having confirmed the expedition army's presence through the eyes of his Golems. He watched the heavy infantry approaching as they protected the battering rams and looked for his timing.

It seemed that his enemies knew nothing. Ever since the expedition army emerged from the tunnel, Vandalieu had been wary about enemies scouting him out, especially the familiars released by the Vampires, but perhaps the monsters of the Devil's Nests had disposed of them. Vandalieu's secret remained safe.

“Rock Wall! Rock Form!”

The heavy infantry raised their shields and activated their Shield Technique and Armor Technique martial skills, enhancing their defensive abilities. Their defense was on another level compared to the typical soldier equipped with a spear, a shield and leather armor. They were troops protecting themselves with tower shields and wielding axes and maces.

Their skills were likely at least level 3... No, as they were apparently elite troops, around level 4. Vandalieu had heard from Eleanora that normal soldiers had level 2 skills and would be evaluated as E-class individuals if they applied at an Adventurers' Guild, but each of these elite soldiers were capable of bringing down a Rank 3 monster on their own. Several of them might even be able to take on a Rank 4 monster.

This army would be quite the powerful enemy if the other soldiers had similar

skills. If this were a video game on Earth, the player would have to have a high level just to avoid being overwhelmed.

Vandalieu was satisfied with the enemy's moderate strength. With these, he could make plenty of use of them later.

And then he climbed on top of the fortress wall. He exposed himself not only to the charging troops, but to the entire enemy army, including those at their stronghold.

"That's... could it be, the Dhampir?!" As Chezare looked at the magnified image produced by a light-attribute mage, his eyes widened.

"H-he's really here... What a surprise." Mauvid's face and voice were trembling.

Neither of them had expected Vandalieu to show himself in such a bold manner, though the two of them were agitated for different reasons.

"OH! This is the guidance of my lord Alda! Everyone, follow my lead!" shouted Gordan.

"P-please wait, High Priest!" said a young priest-warrior. "He is on top of the fortress wall!"

"That's right, hang on a second! He's my prey!" Riley added, stopping Gordan for an entirely different reason.

On the other hand, Isla, who remained silent among the agitated leaders of the expedition, felt suspicious about Vandalieu's actions.

Why has he shown himself on his own? Has he fallen to despair after seeing this army? Is he planning to use himself as bait to allow the Ghouls and Eleanora to escape?

Isla thought about how she couldn't allow too many Ghouls to escape as Ternecia had ordered her to bring back some Ghouls skins, but the Vandalieu in the image showed no signs of movement.

Vandalieu held up a single spear.

"That's... Ice Age! It's Ice Age!"

“The Dhampir has acquired the national treasure of our country?!”

That spear resembled Ice Age, the national treasure of the Mirg shield-nation.

“That, that’s mine!” shouted Riley. “Damn it, don’t touch it with your filthy hands!”

“Oi, hurry up and use Appraisal! Is that the real Ice Age?! If it’s real, it should be made of Orichalcum!”

“That is impossible at this distance!”

Vandalieu, who was watching the expedition army’s stronghold through his Undead insects, experienced a pleasant feeling as he saw that they were as disturbed as he had expected them to be. It was worth the effort he had made to have Datara create a fake Ice Age of iron.

And then Vandalieu broke the fake Ice Age with his bare hands... or at least, used Golem Transformation to make it look like he did, and throw it to the ground.

At that moment, the entire stronghold fell silent for a moment before exploding with outrage.

“Damn you! How dare you do such a thing to our country’s national treasure!”

“There is a limit to the insult we can endure! I swear on my honor as a knight that I will slay you!”

“You piece of shit! That Ice Age was supposed to become mine! You... You... I’ll slaughter you!” Riley swore.

Indeed, the majority of the expedition army had not come to dispose of Vandalieu and the traitor Eleanora. They had come to wipe their nation’s bitter memories of two hundred years ago from the past.

They had come to occupy Talosheim, recover the lost national treasure and bring glory to their nation. That was all they had been told, so this was the natural reaction from them.

There was no way they would not feel their blood boiling upon seeing that national treasure, the magic spear, broken and discarded.

“Wait!” Chezare shouted. “It is impossible for him to break a magic spear made of Orichalcum! This is a bluff to make us lose our composure!”

“Th-that’s right! Calm down, stay composed, don’t break your ranks!” Mauvid ordered.

The two of them, who remained calm, attempted to suppress the outrage of the rest of the expedition’s leaders, but the expedition army’s internal state was shakier than Vandalieu had expected.

First, for most of the knights and soldiers that made up the expedition army, the supreme commander Langil Mauvid was not a commander worthy of respect, but a nobleman of the Empire that ruled over them, a commander that they did not want.

However, the second-in-command Chezare Legston was the second son of the current marshal, and the knights respected him.

“Shut up!” Riley roared. “Don’t get in my way! Are you telling me to stay quiet after being made fools of like this?! I’m going out! If you’re scared of a Dhampir and a few hundred Ghouls, you can stay sitting here!”

He was enraged beyond what Vandalieu had been aiming for, and as he tried to step out to take his slaves onto the frontlines, all of the noblemen and knights that were supposed to stop him stood up in their seats instead.

“It is as Riley-dono says!”

“Our nation’s pride is on the line! My apologies, but I cannot obey even your commands in this case, Supreme Commander!”

For them, Riley was the hero that their nation had made a show of. Not everyone believed exactly what had been said about him, but at the same time, it wasn’t as if Riley held no appeal at all.

In fact, he was currently vain and craved the limelight, but he had a caring personality at his core. He had shared the meat of the monsters he had hunted with the knights and soldiers, protected the fort at the tunnel the expedition army had passed through from Dragons on multiple occasions, and distributed even their meat among all of the soldiers.

This had caused Riley to gain a surprising amount of popularity among the knights and soldiers.

Gordan made a disgruntled noise. “As I thought, the Divine Message was speaking of that Dhampir, Vandalieu! Devout followers of Alda, ready yourselves! A crusade is at hand!”

Even the renowned Vampire hunter Bormack Gordan had stood up and declared that this was a crusade.

Though there were individual differences in their devotion, everyone in the tent was a believer in Alda, the god of their national religion. With this situation that was straight out of a traditional song where heroes and clergymen stood their ground against evil, their fiery anger grew even brighter.

The enraged knights and noblemen followed his example without thinking.

“You bastards! Your orders, obey your orders! This is a violation of military procedure!” Mauvid bellowed.

“Damn it...! The Black Bull Knights’ Order will follow the lead of the breaching unit! Archers, provide backup! Have the light cavalrymen unit act as messengers!” Chezare barked orders to the army.

“Chezare?! What are you saying?!” Mauvid demanded.

“General, it is already impossible to calm the soldiers! We have no choice but to at least maintain the coordination of each unit –”

“Silence! You are exceeding your authority!”

With this, the poor relationship between the supreme commander and the second-in-command was exposed. Chezare had given up on supporting Mauvid, and in his discomposure, Mauvid had chosen to hurl abuse at him rather than calm the soldiers down.

They’re already half-disordered... To think that a human army would be this fragile. Zakkart apparently once spoke of using the power of the people to help each other, but...

Isla, who was officially nothing more than a captain of a mercenary band, let out a deep sigh behind her helmet. This was the state of things after the

breaking of a single spear. She began to wonder whether there had been any point in enduring the feelings of constraint in order to sneak into the expedition army and regretted doing so.

“Isla-sama, should we make our moves on our own?” her aide asked quietly.

Isla reconsidered her previous thoughts. “No, we will proceed like this,” she replied. “It is not as if there has been any harm to the humans’ greatest strength, their numbers. This is not a problem.”

The reason Isla gave this answer, and the reason the expedition’s leaders were so thoughtlessly outraged, was one and the same.

They wouldn’t lose. Victory was still assured.

They were all still aware of this.

Each of the soldiers in the expedition army was an elite soldier capable of slaying a Rank 3 monster on their own. There were six thousand such soldiers. There was even an A-class adventurer and a Vampire-hunting specialist on top of that.

The enemy also had Eleanora, a Noble-born Vampire among the enemy, but only a tiny portion of the expedition army was aware of that.

And as for the number of enemies under the Dhampir’s command, all of the leaders in the stronghold had heard numerous times from Gordan that the Ghouls were unmistakably inhabiting Talosheim.

A Spiritualist Dhampir and his subordinate Ghouls that would number five hundred at most. Even if he had gathered some more subordinates, there was no way that their numbers would exceed this expedition army. Some of the Undead Titans that had spawned in Talosheim might be among them, but they would simply charge in, incapable of any organized movements.

That was why that at this point in time, not a single member of the expedition army felt any sense of danger.

“I feel like this was more effective than I’d expected... I had lots of other plans in case this didn’t work, but whatever,” Vandalieu said to himself.

The expedition army advanced while maintaining their formation, and the

breaching unit had reached the wall and fighting their battle against their persistent enemy, the city gate.

“Now then, third wall... commence attack,” Vandalieu whispered, now that plenty of enemies had been drawn in. And then he used Flight to move back to the second wall.

“That brat, he’s runni– what the hell?!”

As Riley and the rest of the army advanced, the wall began collapsing. It had indeed been worn out, but they hadn’t expected it to collapse all at once. They stopped unconsciously in surprise.

“It was a trap!” Gordan shouted. “But he was too hasty; it seems that he was planning to trap us under the collapsed wall, but we are still too far away!”

The breaching unit had taken some damage, but their martial skills had already been active. Though some bones might be broken, they would not die.

Now all that was left to do was to climb over the remains of the wall to proceed... or so they thought, but the eyes of every single member of the expedition army widened.

They could now see that on the other side of the collapsed wall, there was another, white wall, slightly shorter in height but sturdy-looking.

“Wha–?! There was nothing in the military records about there being two walls!” shouted Chezare.

“Damn it! That’s why I’m telling you to pull the troops back!” Mauvid said, urging him to give the command.

“Indeed... Archers, back up the breaching unit as they retreat! Each unit should temporarily – huh?” In the middle of giving orders, Chezare makes a foolish sound of confusion.

The wall they had thought to be collapsed had stood up.

Letting out resentful groans, Stone Golems and Rock Golems that had been part of the wall stood up. There were easily more than a thousand of them.

The stone men ran towards each unit of the expedition army with much more agility than their appearance suggested they could move with, and aiming to

strike the soldiers down.

“R-retreat! Retreat!”

“UOOOH! Raise your shields! Show them your front, not your back!”

“Maintain your formations, where’s the pride of the heavy infantry!”

There was some distance between the Stone Golems and the expedition army’s units that had been advancing on the wall. The most pitiful were the heavy infantrymen of the breaching unit.

They had managed to avoid being crushed to death under the wall that had suddenly collapsed, only to be surrounded by stone giants. They would certainly be beaten to a pulp.

And the iron city gate they had been trying to break down had transformed into a Rank 6 Iron Golem.

It seemed that the breaching unit had preserved its morale and wasn’t planning to give up until the very end, but its fate was in a precarious state.

“Rescue the breaching unit!”

“Black Bull Knights’ Order, advance! Do not slow down! There is nothing to fear from these lifeless Golems!”

The expedition army that was shouting heroically was made of the Mirg shield-nation’s prided elite. Naturally, they had experienced the battlefield many times. That was why each of them, from the knights to the soldiers, possessed strong bonds as comrades.

And for them, a thousand Golems were not lethal enemies.

Even with Chezare and General Mauvid frozen in surprise in the stronghold, each of the expedition army’s members were making their own decisions all over the battlefield. The same applied for those led by Riley and Gordan.

They came into contact with the Golems, and using their individual strength and coordinated abilities, they struck down the stone giants that were groaning and swinging their fists.

At this rate, they would be able to defeat all of the Golems and regain their

formation.

At that moment, Vandalieu gave the order to the Cursed Weapons, the crossbows in the second wall and the trebuchets installed on the rooves of Talosheim's buildings.

“Fire.”

“Gah!”

“Gyah!”

“Hyih! Boulders are flying... gyih!”

Some of the crossbow bolts pierced the Rock Golems, but as the Rock Golem numbers had been reduced, around two thirds of them found their targets in the expedition army.

And no matter how elite the Shield-bearers and heavy infantrymen were, they could not avoid being rendered unable to fight by the trebuchet boulders falling from overhead.

Even as they saw the boulders' trajectory and tried to run, the remaining Rock Golems would stop them from doing so and as the word “heavy” in “heavy infantryman” would suggest, they were incapable of fast movements.

“No way! Large numbers of archers and trebuchets?! W-what are we fighting against?! General, what does this mean?! What is the Empire hiding from us?!” Chezare demanded.

“I-I don't know! I don't know anything, either!” Mauvid shouted.

“You intend to keep your mouth shut at a time like this?!”

It wasn't unusual for demi-humanoid monsters to use bows and arrows, but Chezare didn't know anything about them being capable of using trebuchets. Trebuchets were not easy to construct in the first place. In the Amid Empire, Mirg shield-nation and even the Orbaume Kingdom, the technicians capable of building them were forced to join Guilds and monitored constantly so that they would not build them without approval.

But trebuchets existed in Talosheim and were raining boulders on the expedition army.

Despite there being no records of the Titans having the technology to use trebuchets.

Could it be that the Dhampir built these trebuchets? That's impossible!
Chezare thought.

However, the reality before his eyes was that boulders were being thrown at the soldiers one after another, crushing them as they tried to flee.

“Damn it, retr—”

At that moment, the captain of the mercenary band... Isla, interrupted. “With all due respect, I believe this is where the entire army should press on.”

“You bastard, a mere mercenary shouldn't interrupt!”

“That's right, you're just a coward who is still staying in the stronghold! Are you trying to force more losses upon this army?!”

Chezare's aides reprimanded this insolent mercenary, but of course, Isla took no notice of them.

“From what I can see, the soldiers on the battlefield are in chaos,” she said. “We cannot expect a smooth retreat in this situation. And the heavy infantrymen are good targets. Once the soldiers close in on the deeper wall, the trebuchets will no longer be a threat. The enemy is currently only a thousand stone men with deceptive appearances that look stronger than they are. Once we overcome them, we will certainly be able to regain our formations.”

There was some truth to Isla's words. She did indeed possess the cold-heartedness to ignore the loss of soldiers, but it wasn't uncommon on the battlefield for ten sacrificed lives to save a thousand.

And if the heavy infantrymen held their formation with their superior defensive abilities and high Vitality, being hit by some ordinary arrows wouldn't be a problem.

“A-alright! All forces, advance!” Mauvid ordered.

Chezare turned to him in surprise. “General?!”

The truth in Isla's words would only apply if the enemy was out of trump cards.

If the second fortress wall turned into Golems as well, the trebuchet fire would never cease. And not a single Ghoul had been seen yet.

It was possible that they were busy operating the trebuchets, but Chezare had a bad feeling about this.

“Silence! This is my order as the supreme commander!” Mauvid had the same bad feeling as Chezare. He had been shouting for the army to retreat all this time, but he had done a 180-degree turn on his stance.

He had done so based on Isla’s proposal.

His tone remained civil, but his irritation kept showing itself here and there. If he were to disobey, it was possible that the Vampires would deem him as unsuitable for continuing their deal and erase him.

“I-I am going to make use of you lot as well!” Mauvid shouted.

“Of course, General,” Isla said calmly. “We must earn our pay, after all.”

This exchange between them was equivalent to Mauvid looking to Isla for help and saying that he would abandon her if she wasn’t useful.

But in reality, there was no mistake that he was obeying Isla’s command.

“Ngh! Mountain Breaker!” High Priest Gordan’s war club smashed through a boulder.

“Great Whirlwind Thrust!” Riley’s spear pierced through another.

Flark silently sent more boulders flying with his shield.

“Great Healing! Here, stop looking so exhausted and keep fighting!” Messara shouted, healing the wounded soldiers on the frontlines.

“That’s right, get a hold of yourselves, masters!” said Gennie, providing backup with his continuous movements.

Most of the Golems were defeated and even the attacks of the trebuchets were being dealt with, so the expedition army began to recover. With the shields of the heavy infantrymen raised and formations held, the crossbow bolts were nothing to fear.

As the boulders broken by Gordan and Riley had been the ‘Golem projectiles’

that would transform into Golems after landing, they had successfully managed to back up the expedition army's stronghold and make Vandalieu click his tongue in frustration... though Gordan and Riley wouldn't have noticed and simply wondered why they had gained experience from breaking boulders.

But because they had begun to break the boulders mid-air, the rest of the expedition army were late to notice the barrels that were splitting mid-air by themselves.

"Hmm, it seems that even the human army can come in useful," one of the Vampires commented.

"If they weren't, Ternecia-sama would have made all this effort for nothing," said Isla. "Let's go, just don't be conspicuous before they break the fortress wall."

"Yes, Ma'am!"

But obeying the order of, "don't be conspicuous," would become difficult by the time Isla and the Vampires reached the battlefield.

Somebody coughed.

The status of the average elite soldier of the Mirg shield-nation:

- **Name:** Heavy infantryman
- **Race:** Human
- **Age:** In the 20's or 30's
- **Title:** None
- **Job:** Heavy infantryman
- **Job level:** In the 50's to 70's
- **Job history:** Apprentice Soldier, Infantryman
- **Passive skills:**
 - Enhanced Attribute Values: Under Command: Level 2
 - Enhanced Attribute Values while equipped with metal armor: Medium
 - Enhanced Attribute Values while equipped with a shield: Small
- **Active skills:**
 - Martial-type skills: Level 3
 - Martial-type skills: Level 2

- Shield Technique: Level 4
- Armor Technique: Level 4
- Coordination: Level 4

Chapter 62: Let's play the melody of death throes using disease, weapons and the sun

With a dripping noise, cold fluid fell from a helmet.

The soldier wearing the helmet didn't take much notice of it. This was a battlefield. A place where blood would normally be spraying through the air. If he was too concerned over a few drops of fluid, he would lose his life.

But that soldier soon began coughing. A headache followed without warning, alongside terrible nausea, dizziness, joint pain, a stomachache... He could even feel that he was developing a fever.

He coughed some more. "P-poison..."

His throat was in pain; he wasn't in a state to speak loudly. And everywhere across the battlefield, troops were experiencing deterioration in their physical conditions just like the soldier... No, to be more precise, there was one exception. Isla and her group were the only ones unaffected.

It's gone well.

Vandalieu gave a satisfied nod atop the second fortress wall after having used the trebuchets to scatter the virus projectiles packed full of water containing the pathogen he had made.

The soldiers and knights who were trying to regain their composure were unable to walk, kneeling on the ground while coughing and suffering.

Even Gordan and Riley, who had been striking down the boulders, were no exception. The ones who looked like mercenaries were still standing, flustered at the situation around them. They were likely to be the Vampires. It was convenient that they had all gathered in one spot.

The disease Vandalieu had created was a disease that didn't infect those who

by nature could be affected by Death-Attribute Charm.

It had no effect on Ghouls, Cemetery Bees, Pauvina or Vampires, but the humans that made up the vast majority of the Mirg shield-nation's expedition army were infected through every possible infection route and the disease took hold within seconds.

That was the kind of disease it was.

"Guh... Antidote Potions... aren't working..."

"Don't lower your shields, the shield-nation will be disgraced if we fall to a poison like this!"

"Why, even though I have the Poison Resistance skill..."

Many of the soldiers had mistaken the disease created by Vandalieu for a poison. They couldn't be blamed for assuming this, as their physical conditions had simply started deteriorating without warning.

But even as they drank the antidote Potions that they had been equipped with, their conditions improved for only a moment. This was only natural, as even if the antidote removed the toxins within their body, the pathogens continued to produce more.

"Cure Disease! This isn't a poison, it's a disease!" shouted High Priest Gordan. "You lot, heal the ones around you! Mages, hurry and stand up, will you!"

As expected, he was the first one to recover. As his passive life-attribute healing magic healed his disease, he also cast his own spells as he reprimanded those around him.

"Messara, h-hurry... up!"

Messara coughed violently. "W-wait, my throat...!"

Things weren't so simple. Without the Chant Revocation skill, even talking normally with her body in pain was impossible right away, let alone reciting an incantation.

And on top of that –

"Wait...! W-why, this disease is supposed to be...!" Gordan, who was

supposed to have made a complete recovery, began coughing violently once more.

“Unlike poison, diseases can be spread from other people. That’s obvious, though,” Vandalieu whispered as he watched Gordan suffering.

Gordan had indeed cured himself of the disease with his magic. However, there were thousands of infected people around him, coughing and sneezing without masks.

Each cough and sneeze would send large quantities of pathogens flying several meters. This had caused Gordan to become infected once more.

There are some diseases that cannot cause a second infection due to an immunity forming after the first infection, but there was no way Vandalieu would have gone out of his way to create such a forgiving disease.

“This is my special disease that mutates even faster than influenza,” Vandalieu murmured. “You can experience it repeatedly until you die.”

To escape from the disease in this place that was filled with it, one would have to wear a Magic Item with a continuous anti-disease effect, completely heal the disease in those in the immediate vicinity, or do everything possible to escape the battlefield and then treat the disease with magic afterwards.

Alternatively, they could try to survive until the period after which Vandalieu had set the disease to stop working, which was half a day, but that would be impossible.

Isla and her Vampires, who couldn’t contract the disease even if they stopped worshipping the evil god, were forced to make a decision.

“How could this be!”

Ternecia had taken measures so that Isla and the other Vampires could disguise themselves as humans to sneak into the army, but that army had been turned into a mass of pitiful, sick people in an instant.

The Vampires were unaware that the disease would disappear after half a day and that it wasn’t fatal on its own, so in their minds, the army was completely useless, not even something they could use for cover, let alone as a fighting

force.

With this, they had to abandon their original plan.

Isla clicked her tongue. “Everyone, keep going! We’ll fly up to kill the Dhampir and hunt down the traitors!”

“Is that really alright? If we do that, the fact that we are Vampires will be exposed, will it not?”

“We’re already as good as exposed! Who would believe that there are this many humans with the Status Effect Resistance skill!”

The Vampires had noticed that this was a disease, not a poison. However, they didn’t know the exact effects of the disease that Vandalieu had created. Because of this, they had assumed that it was their Status Effect Resistance skills that were preventing it from infecting them.

Though it seemed that the expedition army didn’t have the time to notice it right now, they knew that if the army were to get time to think about it later, they would become suspicious of the Vampires.

“We’ll take care of things afterwards! Think about how to complete our mission first! Or are you bastards planning to become traitors as well?!” Isla was no longer trying to keep up appearances. Her tone was harsh, as if her master Ternecia had possessed her body.

The Vampires shook their heads vigorously.

They knew that if their responses were a moment late, they would be killed by Isla, who was known by the Title of ‘Ternecia’s Hound’.

“Then let’s get moving!” Isla undid her unique skill’s transformation and flew into the air. She threw away her full-face helmet that would only get in the way of using Bloodsucking, and instantly discarded her crude, weak armor that had given her a mercenary’s appearance using a contraption that had been built into it.

She drew her trusty sword with no sharp point, a weapon that would have been called an executioner’s sword on Earth, as she flew straight towards the second wall.

And then Isla sneered as she flew towards the expressionless, white face that was looking up at her.

“You’ve given us a lot of surprises but this is where it ends! Come now, and become rust on my sword, half-breed!”

But before she reached him, her vision was filled with white.

The Vampires around her screamed.

“It’s so hot! I-Isla-sama, the sun, THE SUUUUUUUN!”

It had already become dark in Talosheim to the point that Vampires wouldn’t face any problems, but the warm spring sunlight was shining down on them, burning them.

“The first part of the plan is complete. Commence the second part,” Vandalieu whispered as he watched Isla and her subordinates writhe in agony like live animals that had been tossed into a pot full of boiling oil.

Zadiris, after leading those who could use light-attribute magic to the western side of the mountain range, was waiting on standby.

A skull, large enough that one could barely wrap arms around it, was floating lightly above her head. It was Vandalieu’s familiar, a Lemure.

Lemures would normally be mostly transparent, but Vandalieu had used the Visualize spell to make it visible.

“I think it is almost time, but... Oh, it seems that they have come.”

The Lemure’s teeth had begun chattering.

On that signal, Zadiris and the others turned the nearby mercury mirror.

These mercury mirrors were a legacy left behind by Zakkart, a combination of knowledge from another world and the magic of this world. Because of these magical devices that reflected the sun’s light onto Talosheim, the city surrounded by mountains that would normally have short daylight hours had been known as the Capital of the Sun, and its farmlands had produced abundant crops.

But two hundred years ago, they had been destroyed by the Mirg shield-nation's army. The mirrors of liquid metal had been broken and the pillars that supported them had been destroyed.

Vandalieu had repaired them using his Golem Transmutation skill. It seemed that Zakkart had built them with future maintenance in mind; after Vandalieu had fixed the structures, he had been able to restore their function with his Alchemy skill.

“Take aim!”

Vandalieu had also turned these mercury mirrors into Golems. Given commands like this, they would move as instructed.

“Everyone, align yourselves... Extreme Sunlight!”

Zadiris had become a Rank 7 Ghoul Elder Mage. From her hands emerged a light so bright that it could burn one's eyes.

“Sunlight!”

“Sunlight!”

“Extreme Sunlight!”

The other mages, the Ghoul women, the Undead Titans and the Anubises, released similar spells.

Sunlight was a spell that released the light of the sun.

Extreme Sunlight was a spell that released the sunlight of a midsummer day, powerful enough to burn the skin.

Both were anti-Vampire spells that had been created by Alda's priests, long ago. How ironic it was that Ghouls and Undead were using them under the orders of a Dhampir.

“Everyone, keep releasing your magic until you are out of Mana!” Zadiris instructed. “We will turn those evil-god-worshipping Vampires into ash!”

They were distant from the battlefield, but the sudden influx of Experience Points told Zadiris that their spells had successfully incinerated their enemies.

“Impossible! The relics left behind by Zakkart should have been destroyed! So how can this be?!”

Like silver, the pain of being burnt by the sun was difficult to endure for Vampires. It would easily overcome the Vampires’ immortality that otherwise rendered them otherwise impossible to kill unless their heads were cut off or their hearts were completely destroyed.

Their Status Effect Resistance skills and their high regenerative abilities would be of no use.

In fact, the Vampire Leaders, the weakest of the Vampires, were already back on the ground, unable to bear the sunlight. They were trying to crawl and hide themselves in the shadows of the grass.

“Isla-sama, we should also fly back down and regain our...”

“You fool! Can you not see that?!” Isla pointed at the Vampires below, who were being defeated one by one.

“You damn Vampires!” a soldier yelled.

“Damn it! They’re enemy reinforcements! Don’t let them regroup!” shouted another.

The nearby soldiers were mustering their strength and using their swords and spears to attack the Vampires who were trying to shield themselves from the sunlight in the waist-high grass.

For the soldiers of the expedition army, Isla and the Vampires who had exposed their identities by flying up into the air and being burned by the sunlight, were nothing but enemies. It was likely that they assumed that the Vampires were flying to Vandaliu to regroup with him rather than trying to kill him.

Even the humans, whom the Vampires had discarded as being a group of useless sick people, posed plenty of threat to the Vampires now that they had been weakened by the sunlight. Those who had been unfortunate to fall near Gordan had already had their heads turned into lumps of meat by his war club.

General Mauvid and Riley were unable to tell them to stop, of course, so they

simply looked on with stiff expressions and eyes wide-open.

“Do you understand?! If you do, then hurry up and get over the wall!” Isla ordered her subordinates, protecting her body as much as she could by using water-attribute magic to produce white ice around her body that refracted the sunlight.

The other Vampires imitated her, producing darkness or fog with magic to protect their bodies from the sunlight, and then attempted to continue.

And then a particularly bright ray of sunlight streamed in from one side, striking down one of the Vampires mid-flight and causing him to fall with a scream.

The mercury mirror Golem had adjusted its shape to focus Zadiris’s Extreme Sunlight onto one spot, turning into a sunlight cannon. Even meat and vegetables could be cooked using this light alone. Of course, a little darkness and fog was useless against it.

“Spread out! Don’t stick together, if it hits you, you’re dead!” As Isla gave her subordinates a reckless order to avoid the sunlight and pressed forward, she saw countless enemies emerging from behind the second and third walls, flying up to meet her.

The one leading them was...

“How do you do? Perfect weather for sunbathing, isn’t it?”

The Vampires’ second target, Eleanora, smiling at them.

At the same time, on the ground’s surface, Ghouls and Undead suddenly appeared on the right side of the expedition army.

Vandalieu had never intended to rely on Talosheim’s sturdy walls and catapults to engage in a defensive battle.

Talosheim’s defenses were strong indeed, but since there were no reinforcements to wait on, he hadn’t thought that holing up in the fortress would make any difference.

And if things dragged on, the expedition army would likely request

reinforcements from the Mirg shield-nation, and it would be terrible if the Pure-breed Vampires lost their temper and showed up personally.

That was why he would quickly exterminate them while they were still underestimating him.

To that purpose, Vandalieu had used Golem Transmutation to build a tunnel and a large cave in which his allies could wait.

“UOOOOH!”

“KILL THEM AAAALL!”

“Protect the children! Slaughter the intruders!”

“Don’t you dare set foot in our nation again!”

The morale of the Ghouls and Undead, who had been on standby underground for several hours, was high. None of them would have had any problems with being in complete darkness, and more importantly, this was a battle to defend their home.

There was no way that their morale could fall.

“E-enemies!”

“Rise up and... face them! Uegh...”

The expedition armies attempted to fight back like the elite soldiers they were, but the disease was eating into their bodies and robbing them of their strength. Even as they tried to stand up and regain their formations, many of them succumbed to the violent nausea and spewed gastric juices all over the ground.

“Get up, get up, get up, get up, get up –” Vandalieu, still standing on the second wall, revived the Golems that were supposed to have been destroyed by the expedition army.

They groaned as they rose once more.

“Impossible, the Golems have started moving again!”

“GAH!”

The stone giants trampled over the expedition army, as if taking revenge for

the earlier battle.

The Golems had indeed been destroyed by the expedition army's men. But the spears and swords had not physically removed the boulders that made up their bodies. Though split and smashed, they had still been lying on the ground.

It was a simple matter for Vandalieu to take those materials and turn them into Golems again.

And then Vigaro and the others flooded in. At the same time, the crossbows and trebuchets stopped firing, but a slaughter that rendered that fact meaningless began.

"Follow my lead, warriors!" Vigaro roared.

The knights, who were unable to regain their formations due to the disease and the Golems, had their heads sent flying by his axe.

A knight, enraged by the death of his comrades, began to speak. "Damn you, cowards –"

"Shut up and die!" an Undead Titan shouted as he mowed the knight down with his enormous club.

They slaughtered the enemies that were suffering with the disease. Proud knights or even normal soldiers might have hesitated to do this. But the Ghouls and Undead felt no hesitation whatsoever.

They had a different sense of values from humans, and they felt it was the expedition army's own fault for being foolish enough to come here without gathering information and forming a plan.

"Damn it, Screw Thrust!"

The expedition army wouldn't go down without a fight. Many of them had forced themselves onto their feet despite the disease and were releasing martial skills.

One such soldier thrust his spearhead into Vigaro's stomach with a rotating motion that increased its penetrative power. With his stamina drained, he had put everything he had into this attack as he knew that he wouldn't survive afterwards, but the spear would surely find its mark –

“Huh?”

The tip of the soldier’s spear shattered into pieces. His eyes opened wide as he stared at his spear that was now nothing but a long stick. Vigaró swung the shield held by one of his four arms at the soldier’s head, causing him to fly away and lie still where he landed.

There was an Orichalcum waistband around Vigaró’s stomach.

“That was some fine skill,” Vigaró murmured.

But no matter how good that soldier’s skill was, he had only been wielding the iron spear he was been provided. That spear was one that a blacksmith had made by hand rather than one made from molten metal being poured into a cast, but it had been unable to compete against Orichalcum, a substance superior to all other magical metals.

Instead of landing a blow, the soldier’s excessive force had caused the spearhead to break and shatter. Of course, Vigaró’s waistband didn’t even have a scratch on it.

“... Well, you’re the ones who came to fight us.” Vigaró did pity the soldiers, but he realized that they were reaping what they sowed and continued swinging his axe.

“Fuhahahaha! Here, allow me to turn you into mincemeat!” With terrifying laughter, Sam splattered the soldiers, not caring whether they were charging towards him, fallen on the ground or running away. He was still a Rank 4 Blood Carriage, but for the expedition army that was suffering from the disease, he was a formidable enemy.

“With my Mana as your source, flames, strike my enemies! Flame Bullet!”

A blue-faced mage fired the Flame Bullet spell at him. It was not a bad choice of spell, as the mage had seen that Sam was an Undead.

“Whoops!”

However, the red projectile grazed the spear that had been suddenly swung by Sam, and then it vanished.

“Could that be, Ice Age?!” the mage gasped.

And then he made an indescribable noise as he was run over and killed.

Sam gave a cheerful laugh. “This spear that I received from Bocchan is quite pleasant to use. I must thank him later.”

Vandalieu had destroyed Ice Age’s function as an Artifact along with Yupeon’s clone, but the spear was made of Orichalcum, which had even greater anti-magic properties than Mythril. No matter how elite the mage was, a single Flame Bullet couldn’t possibly overcome it.

“Jyuuh! As expected of my master, we are able to exterminate these supposedly elite enemies as if they were weeds!” Bone Man remarked. He was now a Skeleton Viscount, and he was slaughtering the expedition army’s soldiers.

“I agree! The soldiers that cut me down with a single stroke of the sword two hundred years ago are now like puppets made of dirt!” said Nuaza the Lich, joining him by beating his enemies to death. “But with the enemies’ heads being so low, it will cause problems with my back!”

“Fuhahaha, indeed! Let us see if we can find suitable prey to take another hipbone from!”

“Damn you! Don’t underestimate us!” a soldier shouted. He and some of his companions were standing in the way of Bone Man and Nuaza. They hadn’t completely recovered from Vandalieu’s disease; they were using the Surpass Limits skill to improve their stamina and immunity, making a temporary recovery.

Once the skill expired, the disease would take all of its effects and progression at once, and if they were unfortunate, they might even die. But they had decided that they would be killed anyway if they simply stayed quiet.

“Let’s go! We have to buy time for a retreat!”

The expedition army’s soldiers had already realized that this was a lost battle. They were still ahead in terms of the number of soldiers alive, but they were all

infected and they were at a disadvantage in terms of fighting strength.

The only thing they could do was to slow down the enemy as much as possible, buying time for their allies to retreat.

“UOOH! Shield Bash!”

The soldiers stood in line, raised their shields and charged towards Bone Man and Nuaza.

“Boulder Breaker!”

“Jyuuh! Slicing Moon!”

The shields were broken by Nuaza’s Orichalcum mace and cut through by Bone Man’s magic sword. They had not been underestimating the soldiers or letting their guard down.

They had been provoking them. They had baited the enemy into spending the last of their strength to try and attack rather than escape.

“I-is this an illusion? Or has something happened to my head? There’s a naked woman in a place like this –”

Slice.

“No, this is reality. And who are you calling naked!”

“D-don’t mess with me! A crazy woman dressed like that –”

Slash.

“Please be killed quietly! Also, I am not particularly strange!”

Rita and Saria were swinging a glaive and a halberd, finishing soldiers one after another. They seemed quite displeased for some reason.

“Nee-san, the way we look doesn’t seem to be popular. Why is that?” asked Rita.

“Hmm, even though Bocchan praised us and called us cute...” Saria was puzzled as well. “We’re even wearing capes as he told us to.”

Even as they tried to solve this mystery, they continued to produce large

quantities of dead corpses.

Now that they were wearing Magic Item capes, their stimulating backsides were covered, but the front of their bodies was still exposed. In fact, it was possible that the capes were emphasizing the exposed portions of their bodies.

“But there are other people who expose their bodies a lot as well, right? Like Kachia and Bilde,” said Rita.

“Basdia reveals quite a lot as well,” Saria added.

“I don’t reveal that much!” said Kachia in protest, from a spot a distance away from them. She was right, but the sisters didn’t respond to her words.

“Damn it, you monsters! Die!”

The surviving archers fired arrows at them. The arrows found their marks at the sisters’ exposed stomachs and chests, but they passed straight through their targets.

“Ah, Nee-san, there are healthy enemies over there,” said Rita, pointing at the archers.

“Well then, I’ll back you up with my bow, so you charge at them, Rita.”

“Okay.”

The two of them didn’t pay any attention to the arrows and began their counterattack. Saria switched weapons to her bow, and Rita charged at the archers. She was faster than she looked.

“I-impossible!”

“I mean, you’re using iron arrowheads against our spirit form bodies,” said Saria, firing an arrow that pierced straight through a soldier’s armor and into his chest.

“Though even if you hit our armored parts, these arrows would just bounce off anyway.” With these words, Rita began robbing the archers of their lives with her glaive.

Isla stared at Eleanora with a look of disbelief on her face.

She was a Noble-born Vampire as well, so how could she be wearing such a calm expression in this sunlight?

Eleanora gave a small laugh. “It’s thanks to the power of the great one,” she said, swinging the sword... or rather, the weapon in her hand that had a black rod extending from the handle.

And then roaring, buzzing and groaning filled the air as the immobilized Noble-born Vampires were attacked by Knochen, Cemetery Bees and Rapiécage.

“Impossible, you’re using insectoid monsters?!”

“GYAAAH!”

Surrounded by jaws that could tear through iron plates and cemetery bees who possessed stingers capable of piercing metal armor, the Noble-born Vampires fell in order of weakest first.

“How could someone like me be defeated by mere Undead! Iron Slash! Chaos Slash! Hundred Furious Slashes – GEH?!”

One of Gubamon’s Vampire Viscount who was proficient in Swordsmanship desperately unleashed martial skills, slicing through dozens of bones, but Knochen could not be stopped, sinking his countless fangs and horns into the Vampire.

Knochen let out a roar.

It had been a Rank 7 Bone Chimera, but as the Undead Titans and Ghouls hunted monsters and brought large masses of bones to be added to it, it had become a Rank 8 Union of Bones.

This Union of Bones, which was made up of thousands of bones, had no weak points. Unless all of its bones were destroyed, defeating it with physical attacks alone would be impossible.

But the bones that made up Knochen’s body were the monster bones that Tarea’s working team couldn’t use up. They would normally be used in weapons and armor; some of them were even harder than iron.

For defeating such an enemy, no matter how one looked at it, using magic

would seem more practical, but...

There's no way I can use magic in this situation!

The Vampires would have to recite incantations while taking evasive maneuvers to avoid the Extreme Sunlight cannon's fire, fighting off the enemies coming at them and being burned by the regular sunlight. Only those with the Chant Revocation or High-speed Thought Processing skills would be capable of this.

Even as they moved, Rapiécage thrust the stinger attached to her tail into the solar plexus of one of the Vampires whose movements had slowed down, and the moment the Vampire screamed, she unleashed a lethal punch to finish him.

Rapiécage was clearly inferior to these Noble-born Vampires, but this lethal environment of sunlight had dampened the Vampires' strength.

Isla clicked her tongue. "I will take your head, at least!"

Now that things had come to this, she had decided to take Eleanora's head and then retreat. Too many unexpected things were happening one after another, leaving her with no other choice.

Right now, she had to think about returning with this information, even if she would be executed for not accomplishing her mission.

That was the decision Isla had made, but the fact that she was still aiming to take Eleanora's head despite knowing the importance of returning with this information was her downfall.

Even though Isla couldn't use magic, even though Eleanora was not suffering in the sunlight for some reason, Isla held the conceitful belief that she had the skill to defeat Eleanora. Isla's loyalty to Ternecia, and the fear of her that was even greater than that loyalty, had led Isla to make this half-baked decision.

"Die!" she screamed.

She activated her Surpass Limits skill. Forcing the pain caused by the sunlight to the corner of her mind, she drew closer to Eleanora at a rapid speed. A sneer emerged on her face as she looked at Eleanora's weapon that seemed to be a metal rod rather than a sword.

It seems that he's chosen to prioritize defense rather than attacking and brought this prey out here, but it's meaningless before my executioner's sword if this fool is all he has to defend him!

Eleanora calmly cast the Acceleration spell on herself before meeting her foe, Isla, who was clearly superior to her.

Isla was a Vampire woman who had, under Ternecia's orders, hunted down numerous traitors and Vampires who had run after failing their missions. She had even lived for tens of thousands of years. She was feared for having executed over a thousand such beings in her lifetime; she even had the special Job of Slaughtering Executioner.

Her Swordsmanship was level 10, and her other skills were high in level as well.

However, Eleanora had a vastly more fearsome master than Isla's owner.

Your neck, from the left.

"I understand, Vandalieu-sama."

Eleanora placed her sword to her left and braced it with all her strength in order to protect her neck.

"Dark Night Decapitation!"

Isla unleashed an original, lethal martial skill that she had invented on her own, one that had sent the heads of even other Noble-born Vampires flying in the past, but there was a loud metallic sound as it impacted Eleanora's sword.

Her sword stopped instead of cutting Eleanora down.

"Wha – GAH!"

Her lethal blade had been unable to cut through Eleanora's Orichalcum sword.

Isla opened her eyes wide in disbelief as her hands went numb from the impact, causing her to drop her weapon. But there was nothing surprising about it.

Even the Sword King Borkus with the martial skills of his superior skill, the

Sword King Technique, had been unable to make a single scratch on the Dragon Golem simply because it had been made of Orichalcum.

There was no way that Isla, with her level of skill, could break through the sword of Orichalcum that possessed more physical hardness than Adamantite and more flexibility than Damascus Steel.

The moment Isla saw the smile on Eleanora's face widen, her vision was filled with white once more.

And then she screamed.

Zadiris and the others could see what was happening through light-attribute magic. As Isla's movements stopped, they had burned her with the Extreme Sunlight Cannon, along with Eleanora.

Unable to bear it, no longer caring about her appearance, Isla attempted to escape, but her movements were as slow as a turtle's.

This is... time-attribute magic?! It's Eleanora! But just when did she recite the incantation?! And she's being burnt along with me?!

Unable to do anything, by the time the Extreme Sunlight cannon's fire ended, Isla had become a pitiful sight to behold. The expensive Magic Item she was wearing remained exactly as it was, but the skin at the parts of her body that had been exposed were black and her bones were now visible.

At once glance, one would only be able to assume that she was a burnt corpse.

"W-why..."

As a higher-Rank Noble-born Vampire that was tough and possessed high Vitality, Isla was still alive.

But what was more unbelievable was that Eleanora was unharmed despite being exposed to the same sunlight. Her skin had become a little red, but even that was quickly returning to its normal white color.

"Are you talking about my sword? Or the sunlight?" she asked, grabbing hold of Isla's burnt, black head.

Isla gasped in pain.

“This Orichalcum sword, my resistance to sunlight, everything was given to me by Vandalieu-sama,” Eleanora told her, raising not her sword, but her white hand with its claws extended.

Isla cackled. “I see. We have been defeated. You should kill me. But you all will certainly die! Ternecia-sama will definitely avenge us!”

“That’s rather scary,” said Eleanora. “Well then, can you please fight for us as well?”

Before Isla could ask what kind of foolish nonsense Eleanora was saying, her head was cut off. Fresh blood sprayed out.

“Get up. Come here.”

Before it could hit the ground, the blood coming from Isla’s neck turned into a Blood Golem and headed for Vandalieu’s open mouth.

“How is it, Vandalieu-sama?” Eleanora asked.

Vandalieu drank the rich blood of a powerful Vampire. Before replying to Eleanora’s question, he raised his eyes to look into the empty air.

“Even after death, I will not obey a Dhampir like... I-I will obey. I will tell you whatever you want to know, so please turn me into an Undead. I will serve you with whole-hearted devotion to repay you for the favor you have done by killing me.”

“It seems that it’s simple to work with a powerless spirit before it becomes an evil spirit. It seems that she’ll cooperate with us. The blood was quite rich and delicious as well,” said Vandalieu. He looked ahead once more. “Now then, I suppose it’s about time I head out as well.”

The slaughter scene wasn’t over yet.

『The level of the Bloodsucking skill has increased!』

- **Name:** Zadiris
- **Rank:** 7
- **Race:** Ghoul Elder Mage
- **Level:** 19

- **Job:** Wind-Attribute Mage
- **Job level:** 31
- **Job history:** Apprentice Mage, Mage, Light-Attribute Mage
- **Age:** 295 years old (Has undergone age reversal)

- **Passive skills:**

- Night Vision
- Pain Resistance: Level 3
- Superhuman Strength: Level 1
- Paralyzing Venom Secretion (Claws): Level 2
- Increased Mana Recovery Rate: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)

- **Active skills:**

- Light-Attribute Magic: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
- Wind-Attribute Magic: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- No-Attribute Magic: Level 2
- Mana Control: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
- Alchemy: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Chant Revocation: Level 2 (NEW!)
- Multi-Cast: Level 1 (NEW!)
- Surpass Limits: Level 1 (NEW!)

Chapter 63: Ah, the sound of revenge is so sweet

The stronghold, where General Langil Mauvid, Chezare Legston and several hundred defensive troops remained, was in a state of chaos.

This had been caused by Isla and her subordinates ceasing to hide their true identities.

“General! What is the meaning of this?!”

“Isn't it obvious! They're Magic Items that allow the use of Flight!”

“Then why are those mercenaries being burned by the sunlight?!”

“You're mistaken! That's because of the poison that the Dhampir released!”

“Why were those mercenaries disguised in the first place?!”

“Th-that's... How should I know!”

For Chezare and the rest of the people present, Vampires were evil monsters. They found it difficult to accept that such monsters had been moving in and out of the stronghold as if they owned the place. And those Vampires had been disguised as a mercenary band specially hired by General Mauvid. He had even listened to several of her opinions.

“I-I'm sure that the Vampires replaced the real mercenaries somewhere! I have nothing to do with them!” Mauvid insisted.

But with this many suspicious circumstances, there was no way that his words could be believed.

“You bastard, the Vampires are your accomplices!”

“Your objective is for all of us to be annihilated, isn't it! That's why the mercenaries said that the whole army should advance earlier!”

“You insolent fools, know your place! You dare defy Earl Mauvid, a general of

the Empire?!”

“Shut up, shut up! That means you’re a traitor who’s with the Vampires as well!”

The stronghold was no longer that of an expedition army. There were two groups in chaos, Mauvid with the protégé subordinates he had brought with him from the Empire, and Chezare with the soldiers from the Mirg shield-nation.

Th-those damned Vampires! Were they planning to betray me and throw me away? But it won’t work, I’m not a man who will meet his end here!

And so Mauvid prioritized his own survival and tried to find a way out of this place, but...

“Damn it! Who cares about the general now! Retreat! Start the retreat! Organize the rear troops and slow the enemy down! We’re all going to be killed at this rate!” Chezare was leaving Mauvid aside and ordering the expedition army to retreat.

While they were having this unproductive argument, the enemy was harvesting the lives of their soldiers like wheat.

High Priest Gordan and Riley were still holding out, but at this rate, annihilation was inevitable.

“Have the stronghold’s men go around the back!” Chezare ordered.

“What?! Chezare, what are you saying, you bastard! If you do that, what troops will there be left to protect us?!” Mauvid demanded.

“General, what are you saying at a time like this –”

“Silence! Not a single one of my men will move!”

Chezare made a noise of frustration.

If the argument continued, a deadly battle between the Mirg shield-nation’s troops and Mauvid’s protégé knights and soldiers could break out in the stronghold. In terms of numbers, the Mirg shield-nation’s side would likely win, but this wasn’t the time to do this.

Now that things had come to this, Chezare wanted to organize a rear guard with at least the Mirg shield-nation's troops, but though they were soldiers, they were still humans in the end. There would be an outburst of dissatisfaction at the order to march towards death while the Empire's men remained in the stronghold.

General Mauvid's authority had fallen to the ground now that he had been revealed as an accomplice to the Vampires. Why should the soldiers have to die so that those allied with the Vampires could retreat? That was what the soldiers would surely think.

If only Chezare and Mauvid's positions were reversed...

"Ah! The Vampires have been defeated!"

"It's a miracle from Alda!"

On the image of the battlefield projected and magnified with light-attribute magic, they could see Isla having her head cut off by an enemy woman wielding a sword.

The reality was that it was Zadiris and the other Ghouls who had burned Isla, and the woman was Eleanora, another Noble-born Vampire. But as those here didn't know the exact details of the situation, the light must have looked like a miracle of Alda.

Chezare felt some relief, hoping that this would somehow cause some of the chaos to subside.

"I-Isla-dono..."

General Mauvid and his confidants among his protégé soldiers turned pale. For them, Isla and her subordinates had been the lifeline for this expedition.

They would be safe no matter what happened, as long as they had the Vampires who were individually powerful enough to stand up to a thousand men, especially Isla who would be difficult to defeat without the help of an A-class adventurer. Victory was assured. That was what they had believed.

"I-it's over! Retreat! Cover me so I can retreat!" shouted Mauvid.

"G-General?!"

Mauvid started running to escape the stronghold. He was trying to abandon the soldiers being killed on the battlefield right now, and everything else, in an attempt to save himself.

Langil Mauvid had succeeded the position of general, but he wasn't a heroic soldier or a calm strategist. He was more like a politician who was knowledgeable about military matters.

He would receive information from the Vampires who worshipped the evil god, produce results at their convenience and make various excuses to the finance minister in order to secure budgets.

He didn't possess any fighting power himself, nor did he have the resolve to engage in a fight to the death.

It was the duty of soldiers to exchange their lives for those of the enemy on the battlefield, and as long as he kept the chair in the stronghold warm, his subordinates would bring achievements to him.

That was why he would normally never have chosen to become the commander of this expedition army, but he had agreed to do so because he had been overconfident in the power of Isla and the other Vampires and his own sense of self-worth that they had given him.

"All forces, retreat! Protect me!" Mauvid ran, practically foaming at the mouth.

"General... No, you are no longer our general!" Chezare tried to order arrows to be fired at Mauvid's back.

He would dispose of him for the crime of desertion. His incompetence had been revealed and it would have been better if there were no soldiers who obeyed such incompetence, but even so, he was officially the supreme commander. If word got out that the supreme commander tried to flee, the expedition army would no longer maintain its appearance as an army. It would fall apart and it would become every man for himself. And then they would be killed by their pursuers or by wild monsters.

That had to be avoided.

"Arch... ers! Rangil is... running before the enemy..."

Before he could finish speaking, Chezare began coughing violently. His throat became painful and hoarse, unable to produce words.

As he looked on with blurry eyes, he saw that Mauvid had already collapsed. No, it wasn't just Mauvid; all of his protégé knights had been unable to remain on their feet. The other leaders of the expedition army were scattering the contents of their stomachs across the ground and groaning in pain with their faces drenched in tears and mucus.

Could this... be!

"This is the stronghold!"

"Kill all the leaders! King's orders are to kill them in a way that their faces can still be identified, especially the general and nobles!"

"We'll chase the ones who ran!"

As Chezare tried to get onto his feet, still coughing violently, an Undead Titan dressed in black, a black Goblin with his mouth covered by a cloth and a monster resembling a Kobold, mounted on a Raptor, charged in and broke the stronghold's tent.

One of them, the Undead Titan, was holding a soldier with no arms or legs who was still alive, gasping for breath, in one hand. Seeing this, Chezare understood what had happened.

"One down!" Zran killed Chezare with a strangely-shaped double-edged knife... a kunai that had been custom-made by Datara.

He had made one of the soldiers from the battlefield more portable and brought him here to spread the disease, and now he smashed the soldier's head. By the time he did that, Braga and the other Black Goblins had finished finishing off the expedition army's leaders, so he gave them further orders.

"Let's go, you lot!" he shouted. "This is our first battle as the ninja unit! Let's make a show of it and gain some achievements! Those who do well will get a reward from the Holy Son!"

"I want honey!"

"Tempura for me!"

This was the ninja unit with Zran, whose Rank had increased for him to become a Zombie Ninja, as the captain. Braga, a Black Goblin Ninja, was the vice-captain. A cavalry unit of Anubis Riders led by Zemedo weren't far behind, riding across the battlefield mounted on tamed monsters.

... It seemed that Vandaliu hadn't explained that ninjas were supposed to conceal themselves.

The expedition's soldiers, unaware that the stronghold had been overrun, were still making independent decisions to put up a resistance. In other words, they had been unable to maintain their coordination as an army, fighting in separate, platoon-sized groups.

The messengers had also been defeated by the disease and the stronghold had been annihilated after failing to recover from the chaos. The only orders were coming from the leaders currently on the battlefield.

The reason they continued fighting despite this was not because they were proud heroes who would fight with their lives on the line, but because they were simply unable to escape due to their stamina having been taken by the disease and because to them, the enemy didn't look as if they would accept a surrender.

"GAAAAH!"

"FUGOOOH!"

Enormous bee-like monsters, Undead, Ghouls and Black Orcs holding shields, axes and mauls charged at the soldiers from behind.

But among the elite soldiers of the Mirg shield-nation, there were some whose minds would break after being placed in this situation.

"No, I don't want to die! I'm going to become a father soon!"

"I see. Then you should have trained yourself more," said Basdia. Her axe, imbued with wind from an enchantment she had cast herself, split the head of the soldier who had apparently left his pregnant wife back in his home country.

"I can't die in a place like this! I'm going to go home and propose to Milly! And

then she and I will –”

“I’m going to confess after this battle is over, too,” said the Orcus Gorba as he swung his club at the desperately-struggling man who appeared to be a knight. With a lethal-sounding noise, the knight was sent flying into the air before rolling across the ground.

“W-wait, I have a family –”

“Huh?! There aren’t many who don’t!” Borkus cut down soldiers begging for their lives, one after another. Vandalieu had explained beforehand that no prisoners were to be taken, and there was no reason to listen to the soldiers begging for their lives anyway.

For the inhabitants of Talosheim, the expedition army was an invading force that outnumbered them by more than three to one. They had to reduce the enemy’s numbers as much as possible while they could.

There was no need to feel sympathy for the invaders and their circumstances.

And Death-Attribute Charm would have no effect on those who would beg for their lives because they didn’t want to die.

“You lot! Put some heart into it!” shouted Riley. His mind still had not been broken. After recovering from the disease with the anti-status-effect Potion that he had brought just in case, he had regained his posture and was destroying Stone Golems and using Overpower to mow down the Cemetery Bees that were flying around.

“B-but, Master...” Gennie began to protest.

Flark was wordlessly struggling to breathe.

“Give us the Potion, too...” said Messara, choking.

Riley was the only one able to recover and fight. The three criminal slaves that formed his party were already unable to move.

Gennie was so pale that it seemed that he could collapse at any moment; Flark was holding his shield, but he was out of breath. Messara was already on the ground, unable to stand up.

Riley clicked his tongue at his disappointing slaves as he examined the

situation around him.

The expedition army's numbers had already been halved, and there were more trying to flee than there were putting up a fight. The only ones still fighting in an organized manner were the group of priest-warriors led by High Priest Gordan and a handful of knights and soldiers who had managed to join up with them.

They had formed a circle and were trying to retreat while casting healing magic on themselves.

If only Riley could regroup with them... no, if he couldn't, he likely wouldn't survive.

"Tch! We're grouping up with those guys!"

"You can't do that!"

A grand, sharp, long-ranged Sky Rend attack came flying in. Riley avoided it with Waltz, a defensive martial skill that used his weapon to spin and deflect the attack.

"You bastard..." he muttered.

"Hoh, you just used Waltz to stop my attack. As expected of an A-class adventurer," said Borkus.

Riley's Overpower should have cleared everyone around him, but Borkus was standing there. From his appearance, Riley instantly knew that he was distinctly different from the Ghouls and the other Undead.

Riley's experience as an adventurer and, more importantly, his Intuition, were screaming at him. That he was in danger.

"What's wrong with you? Why is someone like you obeying a Dhampir brat?!" he demanded.

The Sky Rend that Riley had blocked earlier was clearly not a serious attack. Borkus had sent it at him after calling out to him, rather than at the same time.

This was a clearly superior foe. Why was such a being acting as a Dhampir's subordinate?!

“Isn’t it obvious? It’s a request. And I’ve even been made the military officer.” The remaining half of Borkus’s lips rose in a smile as he gave a vague reply, and then he raised his sword over his head. “People call you the second coming of Mikhail, don’t they? I was killed by him two hundred years ago, you see, so I want to see if you’re really his second coming or not.”

“So, you’re a loser who wants to vent his anger. How pathetic,” said Riley. But he felt a physical pressure from the bloodthirsty being directed at him and his survival instincts were screaming. And yet, this wasn’t an opponent he could turn his back and run from.

“You lot! Get up! Stand in front of me!”

Flark, whose actions were restricted by the collar of subordination around his neck, staggered as he obeyed Riley’s command.

“Gennie! Messara! You guys as well! Hurry up!”

Gennie and Messara screamed in response to these orders.

“No way! I’m supposed to be positioned at the back, you know?!” Messara protested.

“Th-that’s right, Master, what are you thinking, using a Scout like me as a shield?!”

Gennie was at least wearing leather armor, but Messara was only wearing a special dress that emphasized magical defense. Against Borkus’s magic sword, both would be equivalent to a single sheet of paper.

“Shut up! You slaves are pieces of equipment for your owner! Die so that I can live!” shouted Riley as he raised his spear and focused his mind. It was pointed at the backs of his three slaves, and it was clear that he was under the assumption that he would sacrifice them.

“N-no way! Haven’t we been doing our best to serve you all this time, Master!” Gennie pleaded.

“Wait! You said you’d release me and make me your mistress when you became a nobleman!” said Messara. “Was that a lie?!”

Borkus did indeed see the screaming Gennie and Messara, and Flark whose

hopeless eyes could be seen through the gap in his helmet, as pieces of equipment for Riley.

Criminal slaves were those who would normally be executed or imprisoned for their entire lives, and as an Undead, Borkus could see the spirits of their victims that were haunting them.

There was no room for sympathy.

“Don’t you worry, after I kill you, I’ll drink the alcohol I’ll be rewarded with to honor your... memory!” Borkus was unsure if Riley remembered these words but said them anyway as he charged forward rapidly.^[1]

“... Iron Wall!” Flark activated his martial skill as his last act of resistance.

“Triple Slaaaash!” roared Borkus as his magic sword went straight through Flark’s shield and severed his torso.

“DAMN IT, GEH?!”

“NOOOOOOOO!”

Gennie swung his knives with tears streaming down his face and Messara raised her staff, but Borkus’s second and third attacks cut them down.

And then Riley roared as he unleashed his most powerful martial skill.

“HUNDRED RENDING SCREW THRUUUUSTS!”

But his Spear Technique skill was level 8. Meanwhile, Borkus’s Swordsmanship skill had maxed out and awakened into a superior skill, Sword King Technique. He was a superhuman with a sword.

Even Riley’s greatest martial skill wasn’t difficult for Borkus to block. He used Flowing Willow, a martial skill that would deflect his opponent’s attack...

“Hmm?”

The flesh on Borkus’s shoulder was torn away.

Riley’s spear had been faster and sharper than Borkus’s Flowing Willow.

Borkus had indeed deflected the attack that was aimed at his head, but his armor that had been made from Dragon materials was pierced and he was losing flesh from his arm and his leg.

As he saw Riley's lips rising in a smile, Borkus remembered something. He could do the same thing that Riley was doing right now.

"If I recall, it's Surpass Limits – Magic Sword. Was this how to do it?"

This was a skill that caused a wielded Magic Item to perform beyond the limits of its ability. Most individuals with Jobs such as Magic Sword User and Magic Spear User had such a skill. Riley had used this skill to slip through Borkus's defenses.

And of course, as a former A-class adventurer who held the Title of Sword King, Borkus could also use this skill.

He swung his sword, remembering how he had used the skill while he was alive.

『The level of Borkus's Surpass Limits – Magic Sword skill has been restored to level 10! The Surpass Limits – Magic Sword skill has awakened into the Transcend Limits – Magic Sword skill!』

"Ah?" Riley let out a noise of surprise.

His spear, which had been caught in Borkus's Flowing Willow, was sent flying from his hand.

"Huh, you're nothing special after all."

In front of Riley's now-empty hand was an enormous swordsman, wielding a magic sword that was glowing with Mana.

"Th-there's no way, right? I-I'm not someone who can die in a place like this, I'm supposed to become a hero –"

"You can't," said Borkus. "Pierce."

As the magic sword pierced his heart, Riley's tongue hung loosely out of his mouth as blood poured out of it, and then he stopped moving.

"By the way, this isn't the end. In fact, it's just the beginning," Borkus told Riley's spirit.

Vandalieu breathed in deep, filling his chest with the air of the plains that was

filled with the smell of blood and entrails.

And then a sense of superiority, a sense of intoxication, a sense of accomplishment, happiness and hunger all came to him at once.

He had to be calm; he was going to take his revenge now, so he needed to stay calm.

This war would end with an overwhelming victory for him and his allies. That was already a confirmed fact for Vandalieu.

Stepping onto the battlefield himself, even for a moment, was something Vandalieu had done completely on a whim. There was some strategic purpose to him doing so, but it was slight in the big scheme of things, so it was just a whim in the end.

But children are whimsical creatures.

“Get up, get up, get up,” Vandalieu murmured as he sped across the ground. By having increased his Agility and using Spirit Form Transformation on just his internal organs, he had mastered a way of moving at the speed of a wild beast.

He was headed for the only group that was putting up an organized resistance, the one led by High Priest Gordan.

“Alda is with us!” shouted a priest-warrior.

“Do not falter! There is still hope yet!” said a knight, encouraging his allies.

High Priest Gordan was leading them at the front of the group.

“Alda be my witness! Steel Crusher!” With his wrinkled face twisted in an expression so ferocious that even a demon might flee from him, he swung his war club at Vigarō.

Vigarō’s Orichalcum waistband received the blow with a clang, but he let out a groan and fell back.

Though it was a piece of defensive equipment made of Orichalcum, it was something that Vandalieu had turned into a wearable shape, attached to a belt and clasps made by Tarea’s working team. Strictly speaking, it was just a crude piece of armor made of a magical metal. As it was indeed made of Orichalcum, it did not break, but it seemed that it was unable to completely negate the

impact.

“Kuh! What is the meaning of this, there are large numbers of Ghouls and Undead wearing Artifacts on their bodies...!” Gordan had no room to work with, despite having repelled Vigaro. The disease had taken his stamina, he had spent Mana on spells to recover from the disease and then he had fought continuously in this state.

During this, he had successfully purged the Vampires who had fallen to the sunlight that he assumed was a miracle from Alda, but other than that, he hadn't achieved anything with the exception of destroying more Stone Golems that were clearly disposable.

Even the anti-Undead spells cast by Gordan and his group were blocked by the magical defense of Orichalcum equipment, so the Undead could not be defeated.

“At this rate, I will be unable to fulfil the Divine Message and everyone will...” As Gordan murmured these words to himself, in the corner of his vision, he noticed a white shadow closing in like some kind of illusion. “That's –!”

“That's him.”

Gordan and Vandalieu both laid eyes on their target and began moving at the same time.

“Take this, Projectile Attack!” Gordan unleashed a Club Technique martial skill that sent a shockwave flying at Vandalieu from his war club.

“... Death Bullet.” Vandalieu released a rapid-fire of Death Bullets, aimed at everyone other than Gordan.

Gordan's Projectile Attack was easily evaded by Vandalieu. As he could sense attacks with Danger Sense: Death, it was only natural that he could avoid an attack that was released from such a distance.

Vandalieu's Death Bullets struck the shields and armor of the priest-warriors around Gordan. As they were in a circle formation, if they evaded these projectiles, their allies on the inside and the other side of the circle could be hit, so evading hadn't been an option for them.

These magic attack projectiles that were the size of a fingertip could be withstood by using the last of their Mana to use the Rock Wall and Rock Form martial skills. That was what they had thought, but...

Letting out surprised groans, they fell to the ground with their eyes rolling up.

“Kaufman?! Erik?!”

“No way, he took two out with one attack?!”

Wow, they're weak.

These two priest-warriors had been brought here by Gordan; they were supposed to be superior to the expedition army's soldiers. Even Vandalieu was surprised that they had died instantly.

But he had cast the spell that had brought down a Hydra, Rank 6 Dragon with powerful regenerative abilities and a large amount of Vitality, with several shots. And he had used even more Mana than he had back then. There was no way that mere priest-warriors with martial skills like Rock Wall and Rock Form could withstand it.

But Vandalieu ignored his surprise as he continued firing more Death Bullets into the two new person-sized holes in the circular formation.

“Guah!”

“Ugh...”

“Alda! Give me your – gyah...”

Vandalieu fired the projectiles rapidly, aiming for their legs. As Death Bullet was a spell that simply consumed Vitality, it had the same effect whether it hit the torso or the fingernail, so the mages and archers in the center were falling in unusual ways.

“Kuh, leave this to me!” Gordan, having decided that they would all be wiped out at this rate, stepped out to face Vandalieu.

“Everyone, fall back! Leave this to Vandalieu!” Vigaro ordered, and the Ghouls retreated.

In the short amount of time this gave him, Gordan offered a prayer to Alda.

“My lord! Please send me one of your familiar spirits so that this foul Dhampir may be destroyed!”

It was not a mere prayer, but a requirement of using the Familiar Spirit Descent skill that only chosen saints could use.

A pillar of light fell from the sky, surrounding Gordan. A halo appeared over his head and a pair of wings made of light emerged from his back.

The god’s familiar spirit that normally possessed no physical body descended upon Gordan’s, augmenting all of his Attribute Values. This was his trump card.

“Iron Form! Steel Wall! Light Blade!” Gordan activated multiple defensive martial skills in succession and even cast a spell with Chant Revocation, something made possible by the familiar spirit that had descended upon him. A blade of light that would cut down even a giant closed in on Vandalieu.

But it was blocked by Vandalieu’s Magic Absorption Barrier and vanished.

“Break! Diamond Club!” Gordan’s movements didn’t slow in the slightest. With his war club made of glittering Mythril, he made a full swing aimed at Vandalieu’s head.

Vandalieu’s head silently flew off his neck.

The priest-warriors cheered, and the Ghouls held their breath.

And then Gordan let out a groan of pain.

He had taken a direct hit from a Death Bullet fired by the headless Vandalieu.

“What’s wrong? Did you think you’d killed me just because I have no head?” Vandalieu had used Spirit Form Transformation on his head and separated it from his body at the right timing.

“You damn monster,” Gordan spat. He knew that without his Familiar Spirit Descent and his martial skills, the Death Bullet would have likely killed him instantly.

And because Vandalieu’s Death Bullet carried the effects of Soul Break, around a third of Gordan’s Mana had been erased.

“I do not know how you have taken my Mana, but with Familiar Spirit

Descent, I am able to borrow the familiar spirit's Vitality and Mana," said Gordan. "I now have 100,000 Mana! It is not an amount you can erase completely!"

"... Is that all?"

Even if you boast about having just 100,000 Mana... Vandalieu thought as he grew a second spirit-form head at his torso.

"More importantly, this is a precious one-on-one battle. Let's continue," he said.

"You monster... What about this is a one-on-one battle?!" Gordan demanded.

"...? I'm alone, it's just that I've divided my body." Vandalieu was using the Parallel Thought Processing and Long-distance Control skills to control multiple bodies, but he only had one soul, so he was still just one person.

"Silence! I will not listen to your tomfoolery!" shouted Gordan. Though Vandalieu had simply spoken the truth, it seemed that Gordan hadn't understood.

Well, Vandalieu would find it unpleasant if the conversation continued and Gordan started spewing vomit from his mouth instead of words, so he decided to carry on.

"Now then, from here this time." Vandalieu extended his claws and used Spirit Form Transformation on his arms. He extended and divided them into whips.

He resembled Avalokiteśvara^[2], who he had seen in art textbooks on Earth. If he recalled, Avalokiteśvara had two... how many arms again? Well, it didn't matter. He was just using Avalokiteśvara as a reference.

And then he began to resemble a hundred-handed giant known as a Hekatonkheire from Greek mythology more than Avalokiteśvara, he brought his arms down one after another towards Gordan, whose face had frozen with astonishment.

"Whip Attack." Vandalieu used an Unarmed Fighting Technique martial skill that could normally only be used by Ghoul men, who had longer arms than legs.

However, the first attack was easily deflected by Gordan's shield.

"Hmph! Using the Ghouls' martial skill! But before my Steel Wall, such a skill is _"

"Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack."

Vandalieu's arms were swinging endlessly. All of them were using Whip Attack.

Impossible! How could he use that martial skill so many times consecutively?!

A normal person... No, even a superhuman's head wouldn't be able to process this. But Vandalieu had already used Whip Attack dozens, hundreds of times.

Could it be... I-impossible!

In the gap between Vandalieu's countless arms, Gordan saw the head that he had sent flying earlier.

"Whip Attack."

"Whip Attack, Whip Attack."

"Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack, Whip Attack."

What Gordan saw resembled a bunch of grapes.

But it was an aberrant sight; each of the fruit in this bunch of grapes was a child's head with a hollow pair of eyes.

"M-monster...!" For the first time, there was fear in Gordan's voice.

Watching him with his countless eyes, Vandalieu felt the urge to laugh.

Back then, Darcia was burned at the stake, but Vandalieu had been unable to do anything but hide in the ground like a worm in order to survive. Now, Gordan feared him.

Gordan was calling Vandalieu "monster" out of fear rather than scorn; he truly feared Vandalieu.

Ah, how wonderful. But choosing this method and going all-out was consuming a lot of Vandalieu's Mana.

“Come.”

Materializing one of his heads, Vandalieu called the Golems that he had made beforehand.

Letting out groans, red Golems... Blood Golems made from the blood spilled by the expedition army's soldiers flew towards Vandalieu's mouth.

It wasn't very fresh; it had the taste of the dirt and grass and even contained fragments of the soldiers' bones, but Vandalieu was in such a good mood right now that he didn't care about that.

Seeing Vandalieu feeding like this put the final crack in Gordan's will. He understood that even if he continued to endure these attacks, Vandalieu wouldn't run out of breath or Mana.

Well, even without replenishing it, Vandalieu still had half... around 100,000,000 Mana remaining.

Gordan screamed.

The claws of Vandalieu's whip-like arms ate into his shield, stripped off parts of his armor and dug into his flesh that was covered in light.

Of course, all of the attacks carried the effects of Soul Break, so Gordan's Mana vanished in the blink of an eye and his Familiar Spirit Descent was forcibly removed.

What was left was a single old man with his entire body covered in blood.

Now, it was time to feed.

All of Vandalieu's heads bared their fangs and attacked Gordan.

“High Priest-sama?! Everyone, help the high priest!”

The priest-warriors had been reduced in number considerably, but they ran out to defend Gordan, who could no longer move properly. It seemed that Vandalieu hadn't noticed that they had come to interfere while he was using Whip Attack, but Vigaro and the others had disposed of quite a number of them.

They broke some of Vandalieu's heads, but it didn't really matter. His extra

heads were just that, extras. No, even if all of his heads were smashed, he would simply have to make one new head, so their resistance was quite futile.

Vandalieu's fangs sank into Gordan's neck.

Notes

1. This is a reference to a line spoken by Riley in chapter 2, which I had to re-read. Damn, it feels like that was so long ago. I also gave that line a more accurate translation so that it fits, so you can go and re-read it if you want.
2. You can Google this. It's the Buddha-like god with a bunch of arms.

Chapter 64: Play and sing a gloomy, unpleasant marching song

“Just what... happened to me?” Gordan was bewildered.

His eyes couldn't see, his ears couldn't hear, his body was cold. He didn't know anything.

“I had... an important mission... Yes, I should have had an important mission from my god...”

“That is right, Gordan, my servant,” a voice said suddenly. From the divinity contained within the voice, Gordan knew immediately that this was the voice of a god.

“?! You are...!”

“However, you were unable to accomplish your mission.”

These next words almost caused Gordan to crumble. He had been unable to accomplish the mission that had been given to him by a great god. The frustration and regret caused pain in his heart.

“But I will grant you one more chance to fight, Gordan,” said the voice.

“What?! Is that true?!”

“Yes, of course. And if you fight as I am expecting, I will erase the sins of ‘this occasion’.”

“Certainly, my lord! I, Bormack Gordan, an agent of your divine will, shall fight until my last breath!” As Gordan made this vow, color returned to his world.

He couldn't feel any warmth, but he felt as if his body was in even better condition than before.

“High Priest! Are you alright?!”

“He's opened his eyes! Hurry and bring the Potion!”

At the same time, Gordan could see the enemies of his god swarming around him.

“Get away from me, you filth!” he shouted, striking a nearby enemy with his fist and springing onto his feet.

“High Priest, what are you –?!”

“What, you ask?! I am killing you bastards, of course!”

Conveniently, Gordan’s war club was lying nearby. He used his feet to kick it up into his hands and struck down another foolish enemy. The priest-warrior let out a scream sounding like a hoarse chicken as his lungs were crushed straight through his armor and he was sent flying away.

“High Priest! It is me, Arjen!” another priest-warrior pleaded.

“Oh, I see! Then die, Arjen, enemy of god!” One after another, Gordan beat down and slaughtered the priest-warriors that he had taught and guided while he was alive. “Fuhahahaha! God! Please witness this!”

At the hands of Gordan, who was now a Zombie Priest, the expedition army was finally annihilated.

He finished those who were trying to flee and those who were on the ground, leaving none alive.

『The levels of the Superhuman Strength, Bloodsucking, Spirit Form, Long-distance Control, Parallel Thought Processing, High-speed Thought Processing, Unarmed Fighting Technique, Surpass Limits, Multi-Cast, Chant Revocation, Soul Break and Death-Attribute Charm skills have increased!』

『You have acquired the Commanding skill!』

『You have reached level 100!』

Vandalieu was satisfied with the overwhelming victory.

There were no factors that could make them lose, so this was the obvious result.

Vandalieu had acted right after Eleanora turned to his side. He had gathered

trump card after trump card, and made all the preparations.

He had anticipated there would be a tunnel the enemy would use and found it first to set up a surveillance network.

He had built walls with Golems, prepared crossbows and built catapults.

He had developed a disease that would only infect the expedition army. He had taken apart the Dragon Golem, created weapons and armor with the Orichalcum and distributed them to his allies. As an anti-Vampire measure, he had repaired the destroyed mercury mirrors and turned them into Golems.

And everyone had put in the effort to increase their own individual strength. The weakest of them were Rank 4, and they even had the effects of the Strengthen Followers and Strengthen Subordinates skills. Their actual fighting strength was equivalent to Rank 5.

In contrast, there were plenty of factors that caused the expedition army to lose.

The stronghold had been in a state where it would be divided if anything happened between Empire and the Mirg shield-nation, and the supreme commander had been a weak-willed traitor who had sided with the Vampires. The second-in-command hadn't been capable enough to create a miracle, either.

Most importantly, they had neglected to gather information on the state of Talosheim.

The expedition army had been made of elite soldiers who were individually capable of defeating a Rank 3 monster, but their destination was a place where there were no enemies weaker than Rank 5.

As a result, though Vandalieu's forces had sustained injuries, they had gained an incredible victory with no casualties.

Pauvina and the others had taken shelter in the royal castle that Vandalieu had turned entirely into Golems, and he had made sure they were safe.

"Now then, let's deal with the aftermath of the battle," said Vandalieu. He had recovered from his fatigue by drinking Gordan's blood, and now he was

turning the expedition army's corpses into Zombies, one after another.

There were around five thousand of them. The reason the number of Zombies was less than the original number of soldiers was because some of the corpses had lost their original shape to the way they had been killed or their legs had been crushed, rendering them useless.

Vandalieu could repair even those corpses with Corpse Healing or make some use of them by using his Surgery skill to stitch multiple partial corpses together, but he didn't intend to spend that much time and effort into making more disposable pawns.

Five thousand would be enough. He would use the other one thousand as experience for the Undead, food for the Cemetery Bees and manure for the Immortal Ents, and add their bones to Knochen. As for their spirits, he would turn them into Living Armors or something.

While busy with this work, Vandalieu gathered information from the spirits. The most important one was Isla, who had been the close aide of a Pure-breed Vampire. Unable to resist the Death-Attribute Charm, she told him everything she knew in order to try and please him.

"I see," said Vandalieu. "So it really was the Pure-breed Vampires who destroyed the tunnel on the Orbaume Kingdom's side. Well, that was after the princess and her companions made it to the Hartner Duchy, so it doesn't matter. More importantly, can Ternecia repair the tunnel?" he asked.

"No, I heard that it is impossible even for Ternecia-sama... Ternecia," replied Isla.

This meant that if the Mirg shield-nation's tunnel was destroyed in the same way, the Pure-breed Vampires would be unable to use it. Vandalieu felt relieved.

Isla told him that Ternecia and the other Pure-breed Vampires had lost their ability to acquire Jobs after turning to the evil god, swearing loyalty to him and gaining his divine protection. They had become true monsters.

That explained why Zombie Maker had appeared as a new Job.

He also learned useful information such as the names of humans connected

to the evil god, especially of those in the Orbaume Kingdom.

After that, he quickly turned her into a Zombie. The Pure-breed Vampires could apparently conduct a ritual that would summon the spirits of the dead Noble-born Vampires and turn them into Undead, so there was a risk that information would be leaked if Vandalieu didn't turn them into Undead first.

“Vandalieu-sama, you can break their souls like you did with Sercrent's instead of doing something like that.” Eleanora made a fearsome suggestion.

But Vandalieu shook his head. “I don't really hate her *that* much.”

Because of his trauma, Vandalieu felt a reflexive bloodthirst whenever he saw women being hurt and tormented. However, to him, Isla was not a woman.

She was nothing but an 'enemy' who had tried to kill Eleanora.

However, Vandalieu had the feeling that it wouldn't be good to destroy someone's soul simply because they were an enemy. He would stop hating them after killing them in cruel ways.

“Ah, but I'm going to have these guys work under you, so if you don't want that, let me know and I'll break them,” he said.

Just because he stopped hating them didn't mean that he would feel anything for them. His negative emotions would return to neutral; they wouldn't become positive.

“! I... will work under this...?!”

“Certainly, Vandalieu-sama,” said Eleanora. “You understand, don't you, Isla?”

“... Yes, Eleanora... sama...”

Without even glancing at the Vampire Zombie who was hanging her head, Vandalieu continued gathering information from the dead.

Putting up with Riley's flattery, he learned about Heinz who had crossed over to the Orbaume Kingdom. He learned the names, faces, Jobs and skills of each member who had been in the Five-colored Blades. However, the information about one of them was useless.

An Elf woman, a Spiritual Mage by the name of Martina, had apparently died

in a Dungeon.

She had entered the same special Dungeon related to the champion Zakkart that Heinz had cleared after crossing to the Orbaume Kingdom and been defeated there.

With that, there were only three enemies left to take revenge on.

“I probably can’t expect to find her spirit... though it would be interesting if she turned into an Undead in that Dungeon.” Vandalieu gave a sigh and then continued.

He learned of an S-class adventurer in the Amid Kingdom, the Thunderclap Schneider.

He was a saint so beloved by Alda that multiple Divine Messages had been sent to warn him of danger; he was apparently a great hero who had saved numerous towns and villages, and exterminated dozens of monsters over Rank 10.

But apparently, he was currently living on an island that he had received as a reward, living a life of luxury that even noblemen would be envious of and constantly surrounded by women serving him.

Having decided that it would be bad if he were to suspect that the Vampires were involved in the expedition, the Vampires had planned to make moves behind the scenes so that he wouldn’t participate in it, but he had simply rejected the request, saying, “I have no intention of going to a place without women and alcohol.”

“I wonder why,” said Vandalieu. “Well, that definitely saved us, though.”

If there had been multiple powerful adventurers in the expedition army, the victory wouldn’t have been so easy. An S-class adventurer who was even more powerful than Mikhail would have been terrible to face.

After this, since he had reached level 100, Vandalieu decided to quickly go and have his Job-change. This war had been great for Experience Points and his skills.

『Jobs that can be selected: Venom Fist User, Insect User, Archenemy, Zombie

Maker, Tree Caster, Corpse Demon Commander^[1], Disease Demon, Spirit Warrior』

“Yay, there are more.” Vandalieu was happy to discover new Jobs, but it was happening so frequently that he wasn’t particularly excited. He had the feeling that if he reported these new Jobs to an Adventurers’ Guild, he’d be able to live off the reward money for a while.

Corpse Demon Commander was probably a Job that had appeared because he had gained the Commanding skill. It would likely be related to skills like Coordination and Commanding that could strengthen an army.

Disease Demon... Was this really a Job? Wasn’t it the name of a monster? Well, it probably was a Job after all.

This battle was clearly the cause of this Job appearing. It sounded rather exaggerated considering that Vandalieu had only created one disease that turned harmless after twelve hours.

Spirit Warrior was there maybe because of his Unarmed Fighting Technique skill and because he had now experienced the Soul Breaker Job? It was likely that this Job would provide bonuses to combat skills like Unarmed Fighting Technique.

But if he chose this Job, wouldn’t he have to wear armor bearing a star sign?

“For now, let’s try going with Venom Fist User,” Vandalieu decided.

He wanted to visit the Orbaume Kingdom next year to see its situation and learn about the adventurers’ school, so he wanted to increase his own individual fighting strength.

At first, he had thought that people would refuse handshakes if he took this Job, but he had come up with various ideas recently, so he wanted to test them out. He would take Spirit Warrior at another opportunity.

『The level of the Status Effect Resistance skill has increased!』

『You have acquired the Poison Secretion (Claws, Fangs, Tongue) skill!』

- **Name:** Vandalieu
- **Race:** Dhampir (Dark Elf)

- **Age:** 5 years old
- **Title:**【Ghoul King】,【Eclipse King】
- **Job:** Venom Fist User
- **Level:** 0
- **Job history:** Death-Attribute Mage, Golem Transmuter, Undead Tamer, Soul Breaker
- **Attributes:**
 - Vitality: 160
 - Mana: 328,116,728
 - Strength: 108
 - Agility: 105
 - Stamina: 105
 - Intelligence: 757
- **Passive skills:**
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Rapid Healing: Level 3
 - Death-Attribute Magic: Level 5
 - Status Effect Resistance: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Magic Resistance: Level 1
 - Dark Vision
 - Mental Corruption: Level 10
 - Death-Attribute Charm: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Chant Revocation: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Strengthen Followers: Level 7
 - Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 3
 - Strengthen Subordinates: Level 4
 - Poison Secretion (Claws, Fangs, Tongue): Level 1
- **Active skills:**
 - Bloodsucking: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Surpass Limits: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Golem Transmutation: Level 6
 - No-Attribute Magic: Level 4
 - Mana Control: Level 4
 - Spirit Form: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)

- Carpentry: Level 4
- Engineering: Level 3
- Cooking: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Alchemy: Level 3
- Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
- Soul Break: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Multi-Cast: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Long-distance Control: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Surgery: Level 1
- Parallel Thought Processing: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Materialization: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Coordination: Level 1
- High-speed Thought Processing: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- Commanding: Level 1 (NEW!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - God Slayer: Level 1
- **Curses**
 - Experience gained in previous life not carried over
 - Cannot learn existing jobs
 - Unable to gain experience independently

“Eh? It’s supposed to be venom fist, but for my fangs and tongue as well?”

Vandalieu had become able to secrete poison from various places. To think that he would literally have a ‘poisonous tongue’... [\[2\]](#)

“Bocchan, we have acquired all of the expedition army’s materials!” Saria reported.

“Well then, shall we depart?” said Vandalieu.

“Vandalieu-sama, may I come with you...?” asked Eleanora.

“We’ll be traveling in basic carriages, but if you’re alright with that,” Vandalieu replied.

“I want to go too!” said Pauvina.

“Pauvina... well, alright.”

“Yay!”

“Now then, the Eclipse King’s army will now begin its march.”

The soldier on lookout duty at the makeshift fort at the tunnel was watching over the wastelands with his partner.

He had already become completely accustomed to the frequent phenomena such as fearsome howls in the distance, pillars of light rising into the sky without warning and lightning strikes.

He had been scared of them at first, but he had decided that they were a good thing, signs that monsters were fighting each other and reducing their numbers.

The C-class adventurers hired by the army had exterminated almost all of the monsters in the area near the fort. It seemed that there had been a lot of very profitable monsters. The soldier had overheard that the fur lining the stomachs of the hedgehog monsters could be used as a material for high-quality woolen goods.

However, the air around the fort was filled with a strange tension.

“Hey, rumors have it that...”

“Shut up.”

“What, I haven’t said anything yet, have I?”

“You’re going to say that something’s happened to the expedition army, right?”

“So you know already?”

Ten days had already passed since the expedition army departed this fort. According to the schedule, they should have reached Talosheim long ago, but no messengers came and no smoke signals rose up in the sky.

There were apparently other signals and communication methods that the ordinary soldiers hadn’t been told, but it seemed that no contact had come

through those, either.

This was the reason for the tension at the fort.

“There’s a fully loaded supply unit on the other side of the tunnel that’s about to get here, isn’t there? Considering that, isn’t it strange that we haven’t heard anything?”

“I do think it’s strange, but... try letting the captain hear you say that, you’ll get a good scolding.”

Of course, if it was discovered that the soldiers were whispering morale-lowering things to each other, they would be reprimanded. They were curious about it, but not curious enough that they would discuss it and risk facing lectures and punishment from their terrifying boss.

They might have considered it if their boss was a young, beautiful woman, however.

“But you know... Hmm? What’s that?”

“What’s what?”

“Look, over there. Isn’t there something glowing there?”

As the soldier looked in the direction his companion was pointing in, he did indeed see something glowing. It was flickering blue and white.

“It’s probably a monster’s eyes or something,” he said. “It’s far-off, too, so just ignore it.”

Perhaps because humans were rare here, monsters frequently observed the fort from afar. At first, they had been terrified whenever they saw monster eyes gleaming in their direction, but now it was well-known that such monsters were intelligent enough to not attack as long as they stayed in the fort.

The soldier thought that the light seen by his partner was another pair of monster eyes, but –

“Hey, those lights, there are more of them,” said his partner. “And maybe it’s just my imagination, but aren’t they coming this way?”

The soldier looked again and saw that there were indeed more lights.

One light turned into two, then, three, then five, ten, dozens. More and more were appearing by the second!

And on top of that –

“There’s a sound... no, voices. I hear voices.”

“Report this to the captain! Those aren’t ordinary monsters!” the soldier said, half-screaming. He blew the horn that signaled an emergency. Hearing the horn, the captain who had sprung to his feet and the leader of the adventurer party that was on night watch came.

“What’s wrong... What’s that?!”

There was no need for the soldiers to make a report; the blue-white lights had clearly increased. There were over a hundred of them already. The sound had grown louder as well.

“If I recall, you can use light-attribute magic, can you not?!”

“I’ve got it, you just need me to make those blue-white things visible, right?” A male adventurer recited an incantation, producing a Flare spell. He threw the glowing sphere that had appeared in his hand into the sky with all his strength.

In an instant, the darkness over the wasteland was dispelled, as if a sun had appeared in the night sky.

The light revealed the expedition army that the fort had been waiting for contact from.

Groans and shrieks rose from them.

Their eyes were rolled back and their tongues were hanging out of their mouths. Gruesome wounds were visible on their bodies and their entrails were being dragged along the ground. But these were the Mirg shield-nation’s elite soldiers, whose march would not stop.

The soldier screamed, but nobody could blame him for doing so.

“Is that the expedition army’s... flag? Does that mean that the expedition army was annihilated?”

“I suppose so. There are thousands of them there; I don’t think there are any

survivors,” said the adventurer.

There were several thousand Undead soldiers of the expedition army revealed by the light. The adventurer wasn't optimistic enough to believe that there were any survivors or that any of these Undead were still alive.

And on top of that...

“The fort! Take! Kill!”

“How dare you... bring us... to this place... I'LL KILL YOOOUUU!”

The Undead were screaming with resentment with furious expressions that made it difficult to believe that they had been humans to begin with.

“Captain-san, commence retreat!” the adventurer shouted, having confirmed what they were dealing with.

Even the spineless soldiers were startled by these words.

“R-retreat?! Don't be stupid, how can we do something like that without crossing blades with the enemy!” said the captain.

“If we cross blades, we'll be wiped out! Captain-san, including us adventurers, there aren't even four hundred of us at the fort!”

There were three hundred soldiers in the fort. There were nine C-class adventurer parties.

Each of the C-class adventurers could defeat Rank 5 and 6 monsters individually, and an entire party could even stand up to a Rank 7 monster.

But the soldiers in the fort could hardly be called elite. One of them would have his hands full defeating a Rank 2 monster, and if they worked together, they might somehow take down a Rank 3 monster.

“But our enemies are just Zombies, right? With you C-class adventurers, things should work out!” said the captain.

“If they were Rank 2 Zombies, even with thousands of them, we'd somehow manage,” the adventurer agreed. “If all of us fought together and you didn't mind the fort being half-destroyed, that is. But you heard their voices, didn't you?”

“Voices? I heard them, but what about them?”

“Lower-Rank Zombies don’t speak words with meaning. They’re like beasts; they can only howl and scream. Sometimes they might have a word or two mixed in there. But these guys looked this way and recognized this fort, spoke discernable words of words of hatred and there were clearly some Undead that are more intelligent than Zombies.”

As the captain comprehended the meaning of the adventurer’s words, his face turned pale.

Among the thousands of Undead, there were some Zombies that were Rank 3 or above.

“If there are even a few hundred Rank 3 monsters, it’s not something we can deal with,” the adventurer continued. “Undead of Rank 3 and above can use the martial skills they used while they were alive. And since they’re Undead, there’s no limit to their stamina.”

A future where everyone would be crushed and slaughtered helplessly flashed through the captain’s mind.

“All forces, prepare to retreat!” he shouted. “Fill the tunnel with all the traps we have, pour oil on the fort and set it on fire! Archers and mages, attack the enemy and buy time until we’ve made our preparations! We’ll have you adventurers work with us as well!”

“Yeah, leave it to us!”

“All forces, prepare to retreat! All forces, prepare to retreat!”

They hastily began moving.

The soldiers protecting the small fort in front of the tunnel had succeeded in their retreat.

After having successfully decreased the number of Undead at least a little without taking any casualties, they frantically proceeded through the tunnel.

They knew that if the Undead caught them, they would meet horrific fates.

Still frantic, they came out of the tunnel. The captain of the fort on the Mirg shield-nation's side of the tunnel had already been informed on the situation by a messenger rider sent ahead. Mages who had been hired just in case the impossible happened collapsed the tunnel with their magic.

With this, the Undead would not be able to come out.

They felt relieved, but a mage sensed that the Undead were digging their way through the collapsed tunnel and carrying on, around a hundred meters from the tunnel's entrance.

"This is hopeless! Abandon this fort and retreat to the town!"

This fort was to prevent adventurers and criminals from trying to cross the Boundary Mountain Range illegally; it wasn't something that had been built to deal with monsters coming out of the tunnel.

"You can't collapse the tunnel one more time?!" the captain demanded.

"What are you expecting us to do something that's already collapsed?! I'll have you know that these spells won't reach them a hundred meters away. Even if you tell us to do the same thing again, it's impossible! All of us will take a day to recover our Mana!" shouted the mage.

The Undead moved without rest, and even now, they were digging through the tunnel at a terrifying pace. The mage could sense that they had already made their way through a third of the collapsed portion of the tunnel.

Retreat was the only option after all.

"What are we going to do about the cultivated land?!"

"Send a messenger, have them evacuate!"

"Hurry up! All forces, retreat!"

Sending a messenger back to the cultivated land, the soldiers retreated.

Fearing the monster invasion, the people living in the cultivated lands were evacuated to the town under the protection of the guards, an urgent request was posted at the town's Adventurers' Guild and adventurers were summoned from even other nearby villages and towns.

At the same time, Viscount Balchesse, the lord of this land, gathered all of the soldiers that he had.

It was uncertain if they would make it in time, but they somehow did in the end.

The Undead had been expected to continue day and night without rest, but for some reason, their footsteps had been a little slower than the human forces. The people were evacuated and preparations, though insufficient, were made.

Even so, the battle to defend Balcheburg, Viscount Balchesse's town, was beyond fierce.

"Hyahahahahaha! This is the return of your herooooo!" The Green Wind Spear Riley, who had been hailed as the second coming of Mikhail, released martial skills one after another, striking down the arrows fired by the soldiers protecting the town.

"I-I am! The Amid Empire's General Mauviiiiiiiiid! Open the gates! Open the gaaaaaaaates!" General Mauvid, who had led the expedition army in imposing, resplendent clothes, now commanded the Undead army in their invasion.

"Guhihihyaehhehehehahaha! You evil flesh of filth! I, Bormack Gordan who serves god, will destroy you aaaaaaall!" To top it all off, Bormack Gordan, the clergyman renowned as a Vampire hunter, was opening large holes in the wall protecting the town with his Club Technique.

"The Undead are coming in – GYAH!"

"Hihihi! Offer your flesh and entrails to your herooo!" Riley's spear pierced the stomach of a soldier who was trying to deal the finishing blow to another Undead.

"You i-i-i-i-impure filth! Diiiiieeeee!" Gordan crushed another soldier, straight through the shield he was holding.

"Fuhahahaha! This is our triumphant retuuurn! OUR TRIUMPHANT RETUUUUURN!" Mauvid's loud laughter and screams filled the air as he led the Zombies on.

However, the expedition army had weakened after becoming Undead and

they weren't as coordinated as they had been while alive. Though Viscount Balchesse suffered casualties, they succeeded in protecting all the civilians and other than its outer wall, the damage to the town was light.

It was also fortunate for them that Riley's spear and Gordan's war club had been replaced with weapons provided by the army and that Chezare and his Black Bull Knights' Order hadn't become Undead.

No, the most fortunate thing was that the Undead had been slow to move.

Viscount Balchesse hired a Spiritualist to investigate what had happened to the expedition army.

But the spiritualist shook her head. "The spirits of those Undead have all gone back to the mountain range; not even one of them stayed behind. It was as if they couldn't hear me calling out to them at all."

"Well, it was all deliberate, though," said Vandalieu.

He and his followers were busy burning and destroying the unoccupied cultivated land on their way back.

Notes

1. This is something of a play on words because the word for "commander" is 指揮官/shikikan. In this Job's title, the first two kanji in 指揮官 have been replaced by 屍鬼/shiki which means "corpse demon". This results in a Job title of 屍鬼官 which is still read, "shikikan" but now has the "corpse demon" meaning added to it.
2. This is a Japanese figure of speech that means "wicked tongue/abusive language".

Chapter 65: Now then, please pay your compulsory fee of goods

Vandalieu used the Zombified expedition army as a makeshift disposable army to begin a reverse invasion on the Mirg shield-nation, where he planned for them to suffer an honorable defeat.

He lit several Demon Fires and had the Zombies make noisy footsteps and groan loudly to ensure that the soldiers at the fort that had been built at the tunnel's entrance would notice them.

He positioned those who had fortunately turned into high-Rank Undead at the front of the army, excluding the expedition army's important members. The reason he did this was because it would have been problematic if Mauvid, Riley or Gordan were to be somehow broken during the preliminary skirmishes.

And the soldiers in the fort retreated, just as Vandalieu had intended.

"Is it fine that we're not slaughtering them all, Bocchan?" asked Sam.

"It's alright," Vandalieu replied. "They're not worth killing, and it's not necessary. With that being the case, I mustn't kill them."

The soldiers at the fort were average in strength, and the commander was hardly an important figure in the army. There were only a few hundred of them, anyway. It wasn't worth taking the effort to kill them all.

And more importantly, it would be more helpful to have them act as messengers.

... Though when they set the fort on fire, Vandalieu did feel some bloodthirst.

He used Heat Leech to extinguish the flames, salvaged the unburnt materials of the fort and continued through the tunnel.

"Wow, it's so spacious. How many carriages of Father's size could fit through side-by-side?" Rita wondered.

“Five... six would likely fit through,” Vandalieu replied.

“I wonder how a tunnel like this could be built,” said Saria.

“GUGAH?!” Rapiécage let out a noise of pain.

“Rappie, if you fly too high, you’ll hit your head on the ceiling,” Vandalieu warned her.

Vandalieu simply proceeded through the dull tunnel, letting the Zombies at the front of the army deal with the fort at the tunnel’s exit, and then used a wide-area Detect Life to dispose of the remaining spies of the Vampires.

And then he headed straight... not for the town, but for the cultivated land that had once been the Devil’s Nest forest.

Sending the army to the town, Vandalieu and around a thousand Zombies remained in the villages in the cultivated land.

The army advanced on Balcheburg, the capital of Viscount Balchesse’s territory, and engaged in a crude, reckless frontal assault.

There were three thousand of them, but since they were between Ranks 2 and 4 and unaffected by Vandalieu’s Strengthen Followers and Strengthen Subordinates, Balcheburg’s defense would likely succeed.

They were moving slowly directly from the front in the middle of the day, the Zombie mages were unable to recite incantations, Gordan and Riley weren’t equipped with their Magic Items and Undead with utility value such as Chezare hadn’t been added to this army. Even in the worst case scenario where the Undead managed to break the city’s wall and get inside, Vandalieu had ordered them not to kill unarmed elderly citizens, women and children.

No matter how useless Balcheburg’s defenses were, its population was around ten thousand. They should have received word in advance and there were Dungeons and Devil’s Nests nearby as well. Adventurers and soldiers would have been desperately gathered here.

If a group of Undead simply showed up there, arrows and offensive spells would rain down on them from the walls and their numbers would be reduced.

Well, the soldiers and adventurers would likely suffer some casualties, but

probably not more than a hundred. The adventurers and soldiers of this world were tougher than those in Earth or Origin because of their Jobs and skills.

At worst, the Undead would make a hole in the wall and run rampant inside for a while before being wiped out?

It would be problematic if they killed too many people, so that would be perfect.

“Corpses are only a temporary burden, after all,” Vandalieu murmured to himself. “That town needs to nurture the refugees evacuated from the cultivated land and suffer from now on.”

Refugees posed a difficult problem even on Earth. All of the refugees from the cultivated land would only add up to two or three thousand people, but even so, they would be a great burden.

The refugees from the cultivated lands would have nowhere to return to. As many of them were people who had been unable to make a living in their hometowns, they couldn't simply be told to do whatever they wanted now that the cultivation had failed. And with the cultivated lands destroyed, jobs for guards and those working in the churches would be gone as well, so the loss would be felt from all sides.

On top of that, there was the disastrous event of six thousand elite soldiers being annihilated, with the majority of them turning into Undead and attacking the town.

With this, the Mirg shield-nation's dignity would be scarred beyond its economic losses and the loss of its personnel. Its relationship with the Amid Empire that had led the expedition would worsen.

The Empire would likely want to push the responsibility for the failed expedition on the Mirg shield-nation just like it had done two hundred years ago, but General Mauvid was now leading Vandalieu's Undead army and loudly declaring his own identity.

But the Undead second-in-command, Chezare who was born in the Mirg shield-nation, was absent. It was obvious which of them would leave a lasting impression on the people.

Even Gordan and Riley would be making a show of their rampage, standing out even more than the damage that they were causing.

They would be making a mess of their own honor and reputations as well as those of the Church of Alda.

There was no TV or internet in Lambda, and though there were things similar to newspapers, they were only available to the wealthy, so information didn't spread quickly and accurately. However, this would be an incredibly devastating event. News of it would spread through the entire western half of the Bahn Gaia continent within the year.

With this, neither the Empire or the Mirg shield-nation would suggest an expedition to the Boundary Mountain Range for the next few decades.

Incidentally, Vandalieu had given up on causing a great scandal by spreading the news that General Mauvid had been connected to Isla and the other Vampires.

As he had slaughtered them all, the Vampires were now Zombies, and even if he added them to the Undead army, the humans wouldn't notice them. Even if the Mirg shield-nation had doubts, the Empire would simply pass them off as Undead that joined up with the army beyond the Boundary Mountain Range.

In fact, there was the risk that the Vampires would appear to be the remnants of those that worshipped Vida and that they were living in Talosheim, putting a false label on Vandalieu.

If Vandalieu had connections to someone he could trust or a position in society, there might have been a way, but he had no connections or position in human society.

That was why he had abandoned the idea.

Also, Vandalieu had taken into account that the Pure-breed Vampires, Earl Palpapek and the top officials of the Amid Empire would now be aware that he was able to utilize Undead.

He thought that they would be more hesitant to try and do something about Vandalieu if they knew how much of a threat he and his allies were, rather than having everything about him stay a mystery.

The fact that the expedition army hadn't made it back alive, everyone would know that whatever was in Talosheim was capable of striking back anyway, so letting this much information leak was necessary.

And though they knew that he could control Undead, the Pure-breed Vampires wouldn't know whether the limitation of only being able to control self-made Undead that applied to them also applied to Vandalieu, or to what extent he could control them.

And he would keep his other weapons such as his Golems and the biological weapon, the disease he had created, a secret.

Even if the Pure-breed Vampires, the Empire and the Mirg shield-nation wanted to try again, they would likely take time to make preparations and even if they did come, they had plenty of weaknesses.

Vandalieu had his companions, who had thought of all of this, plundering the cultivated land.

"Now then, everyone, let's plunder everything," said Vandalieu.

Everyone gave a cheer in response.

Having the remaining one thousand Undead on standby, Vandalieu and the others were looting the cultivated land that was now empty after its inhabitants had evacuated.

"Ah, I found a spinning wheel!" Rita announced.

"Jyuuuh, it seems there are no livestock left," said Bone Man.

"Did they take the animals with them when they evacuated?" Vigaró asked.

"I am sure they simply released them, praying that they will be able to recover them later," Nuaza replied. "Horses and cows are valuable workers in farming villages, after all. And it is common knowledge that they can become meat when the people are hungry."

"... People in farming villages live harder lives than I imagined," Vandalieu remarked.

"What are you trying to say? You're the one who's destroying these farming villages beyond any hope of recovery," Borkus pointed out.

“Well, that’s true.”

The objective of the plundering was to first to acquire livestock... Cows, goats, sheep and chickens rather than donkeys, horses and pigs.

Vandalieu had Golems to perform labor, and horses and donkeys needed more than just grass to feed, so taking care of them would be troublesome. And the environment around Talosheim was too harsh to ride horses through. It was filled with natural enemies for the horses, after all.

Pigs were unneeded as monsters provided plenty of meat.

The reason Vandalieu wanted cows and goats was because he wanted dairy products. Even with the Fermentation spell, making cheese and yogurt would be impossible without the base ingredient. He wanted to make butter as well; the number of things he could cook with these would increase greatly. And he definitely wanted to try the fermented butter he had heard about in the research laboratory in Origin.

As for chickens... The demand for eggs couldn’t be met with the Gigas alone, and since each individual egg was the size of an ostrich egg, there were sometimes situations where they were somewhat inconvenient to use.

But it seemed that Vandalieu’s wishes wouldn’t be granted. None of the farming villages had any livestock left in them.

“Feeding livestock costs money, after all. Though goats eat just about anything,” said Kachia.

In this world where Devil’s Nests were scattered throughout the lands and dangerous monsters like Goblins lived outside them, agricultural land was limited.

Though the grain harvested from this limited land was sufficient to feed the people, there wasn’t enough land to breed livestock in large numbers as was done on Earth.

Because of this, livestock were generally expensive. The farmers of this cultivated land would have taken what livestock they could with them when they evacuated, and set the rest free in the hopes that they would reunite with the animals later.

“What a pity,” said Vandalieu. “Well, I did manage to get this, so it’s fine.”

The next thing he had wanted was machine for spinning threads and weaving fabric. The vast majority of clothes in Talosheim was made of furs and leather.

In the two hundred years since Talosheim’s destruction, its fabric-weaving machines had rotted away.

“I could make sewing machines with Golems, but without threads and cloth, it would be...”

“Did the researchers in Origin not know how to spin threads or build weaving machines?” asked Rita.

“They didn’t,” Vandalieu replied.

Though they were failures as human beings, the researchers were at the forefront of their advanced civilization. There had been some researchers who had wanted to use death-attribute magic for fabric, but they hadn’t possessed this knowledge.

“Well, as long as I have a model to work with, I can imitate it with Golems,” said Vandalieu. “If I make improvements from there, I think I can build a spinning mill.”

It seemed that the day where Talosheim would become a modern city of Lambda with all of the necessities of life was close.

“So, what are we going to do with the fields?” Vigaró asked.

“Well take them, of course,” said Vandalieu.

He and his followers weren’t after only the materials left behind by the villagers. He wanted their harvest and crops as well. In fact, this was the main thing they were after.

“This is good wheat. Let’s take it by the roots. Get up.” As Vandalieu gave this order, the wheat field began to rise. Countless legs extended from beneath the earth in which the wheat was growing. After turning the wheat field into a Golem, he intended to take all of its earth and the wheat growing in it with him!

With this, he could make all of the bread, okonomiyaki and takoyaki he wanted, as well as ramen in the near future! He could make more udon and

pasta as well. There hadn't been enough acorn powder for all of this, so this wheat would be very helpful.

He would even be able to make straw and straw paper. Well, this would need trial and error as well.

"Bocchan, what about this millet?" asked Rita. "I think it's foxtail millet and barnyard millet."

"Millet can be harvested quickly, so let's take it with us," said Vandalieu. "They're nutritious, too."

He had the feeling that millet was greatly popular on Earth. Processing it was easier than acorns as well.

"Ah, this field has soba," said Kachia.

"They turn it into galettes in the Mirg shield-nation, don't they? Let's take it with us."

Soba would be wonderful. It could be added to either cold or hot soups. It even made aromatic teas... apparently.

"What are we doing with the beans?" asked Borkus.

"We're taking it, of course."

The beans being cultivated here resembled soya beans or something similar to them. With this, Vandalieu would finally be able to make normal miso. Soy sauce, too. And tofu, soy milk, bean curd, fried tofu... how truly wonderful.

Also, boiling the beans that were still green and adding salt to them to eat them as 'edamame^[1]', was apparently enjoyable as well.

"The beans over here appear to be of a different species," said Sam.

"These are... adzuki beans! Get up, get up, get up."

With adzuki beans, Vandalieu would be able to make red bean paste. He didn't have sugar, but perhaps honey could be used as a substitute?

"It appears that there are tomatoes growing in this small field, my lord," Bone Man reported.

"Ah, to think that such a versatile ingredient would be in a place like this..."

Among the researchers in Origin, there had been those who believed in tomatoes in addition to the mayonnaise believers. After they suffered heart attacks and died suddenly, the tomato believers would talk on and on about the wonders of tomato sauce while whispering complaints about the food of the laboratory's cafeteria.

Vandalieu liked mayonnaise when he was on Earth, but he was someone who preferred ketchup.

“We haven't had tomatoes up until now, so I'd given up on it. But with this, finally... Get up, get up, get up.”

Well, it wasn't as if he didn't have the other ingredients he needed, so things would probably work out.

Vandalieu also acquired potatoes, carrots, daikon, onions and other vegetables from the farms, taking the whole fields. It would be possible to make potato starch from the potatoes.

Incidentally, Vandalieu was using Golem Transmutation to create piles of dirt to fill the holes created by removing the fields.

“Now then, shall we head back to Talosheim?” he said.

Taking his field-Golems along, Vandalieu and his followers put the Mirg shield-nation behind them. As previously planned, the farmlands had been dealt devastating damage and a thousand Undead were left behind.

He spread deadly poison in all of the irrigation channels and water reservoirs, and also in the fields where nothing but dirt remained.

It wasn't poison that would dissipate with time, but the kind of contaminant that would leech into the ground and moisture and linger for decades.

With this, the cultivated land would become uninhabitable and unusable for humans.

Leaving Undead in the villages was Vandalieu's way of showing 'kindness'.

They served as warnings so that the villagers wouldn't return and unknowingly try to use the poisoned water to raise more crops.

And another point of 'kindness' was that Vandalieu hadn't touched the wells,

knowing that there would be a chance that the contamination would reach all the way towards the town.

“Viscount Balchesse, you stole the Devil’s Nest forest from us, but let’s say we’re even now,” Vandalieu murmured in the direction of Balcheburg, before entering the tunnel through the entrance on the Mirg shield-nation’s side.

“Come to think of it, Bocchan, you can make Wood Golems out of trees, can’t you?” asked Saria.

“Hmm? I can, why?”

“Couldn’t you make thread and paper just by turning the plants themselves into Golems?”

“... Ah.”

Vandalieu had the feeling that he had done things the long way, but he had acquired meat and soya beans, so his efforts hadn’t been in vain.

At the same time, in the Divine Realm of Alda, the God of Law and Fate, the gods were conducting an emergency meeting.

The reason was that Bormack Gordan, the one who had been considered a candidate to become a heroic spirit and possibly even a god depending on his work, had now wandered astray from Alda’s teachings.

“Curatos, show everyone the Record.”

The God of Records, Curatos, opened the book he was holding at Alda’s command. Countless soap-bubble-like spheres rose from its pages. Their surfaces bore images of what the expedition army had witnessed in Talosheim.

They began bursting and disappearing one after another. In the next instant, the last remaining soap bubble with a close-up image of Gordan’s Undead face disappeared.

“This is the record from a child who was a part of the expedition army,” said Curatos.

“... What of the records after that?” asked Alda.

“Unfortunately... It seems that their spirits were trapped after they were slaughtered, or they turned into Undead as Bormack Gordan did. However, please look here.” Curatos opened another page, showing a scene where the wall of Balcheburg was broken and the Undead expedition army was doing battle with the soldiers.

This was the scene witnessed by Alda’s believers, Recorded by Curatos. Curatos had been able to Record the things seen and heard in the instant the believers made the unconscious prayer of, ‘Oh God,’ and now he was able to share those Records with others.

The things shown in these Records were things that many of the gods present here, including Alda, were aware of. After all, they were the ones who had been prayed to when the soldiers whispered, “Oh God.”

However, there was no small number of gods seeing this for the first time. They were greatly shocked.

“This is... A Dhampir child is capable or something like this...”

“How could this be! This disease has never existed before; are you to say that this Dhampir created it himself?!”

“He is making use of Undead... He is just like Za—”

“Silence!” Niltark, the God of Judgment, interrupted the god to prevent him from saying something careless. “I would like to ask you to refrain from referring to this Dhampir by anything but ‘Dhampir’ or his name, ‘Vandalieu!’”

“My apologies. Thank you, Niltark-sama,” said the other god, realizing his mistake after seeing Niltark’s furious expression.

Comparing Vandalieu to be ‘The second coming of Zakkart’ or ‘A being similar to an evil god’ wasn’t a problem of character for the gods.

They wanted to avoid Vandalieu from acquiring a Title.

Titles appearing on one’s Status are not mere labels or second names, but things that have an actual effect. A Title of Goblin Killer would grant increased damage against monsters known as Goblins, and Titles such as Invulnerable or Immortal would make it more difficult for the bearer of such Titles to die.

The conditions for acquiring a Title is for a large number of individuals, or individuals with great influence, to call someone by that Title.

Though their power and positions varied, everyone gathered here was a god. They were the most influential beings in the world of Lambda.

If the gods were to call Vandalieu 'The second coming of Zakkart' here, there was no telling what kinds of powers he would be granted.

"But Alda, why have we been gathered here? This Dhampir has indeed used countless Golems and Undead while being young of age, created a disease, slaughtered an army of six thousand, turned that army into Undead and bared his fangs at the Mirg shield-nation. But looking at it another way, that is all he is capable of, is it not?" The one speaking was Fitun, the God of Thunderclouds. He was a god of a younger generation compared to the other gods here, having only become a god within the past few tens of thousands of years.

Fitun's words could be interpreted as cruelly disregarding human life, but as he said, the things that Vandalieu had done, seen in the Records, were not something to gather all of the gods and make a big fuss over.

Up until now, over ten thousand lives had been claimed with each war, and there had been countless countries brought to ruin by monsters going on rampages. Compared to such historical losses, the deaths of the expedition army and those in Balcheburg, which totaled to less than ten thousand, were very small.

The fact that only soldiers and adventurers had been killed as a direct result of battle only reinforced that notion.

Of course, the family, lovers and friends of the deceased would be tortured by feelings of grief and loss, but it wasn't as if powerless civilians had been mass-murdered.

And as gods, they could not support a single nation too much without causing problems.

"But aren't this Dhampir's actions simply too cruel?" another god asked.

Fitun felt an urge to laugh at him. "What are you saying? This Dhampir's actions seem halfhearted to me."

“Halfhearted?!”

“Yeah. As proof, the disease that the Dhampir used on the expedition army, he didn’t use it in Balcheburg, did he? That’s why the Undead were repelled.” As Fitun said, Vandalieu hadn’t used that disease when attacking Balcheburg. Despite the fact that the town of ten thousand could have been annihilated by three thousand Undead if the disease had been used.

No, the limitation of the disease that caused it to stop its effects after half a day... If that limitation had been removed and it infected a single person in Balcheburg, that alone would have spelled the end of the town.

Its rate of spread and the speed at which it produced its symptoms was probably too fast for it to spread to other towns and villages, but ten thousand citizens would be reduced to crippled, ill people within hours.

Even if they were lucky enough to recover, the disease would simply mutate and infect them again, so there would be no survivors.

The people of Balcheburg would writhe and suffer plenty before all dying. Only materials to create Undead would be left.

“He didn’t do that, so that’s why his actions are halfhearted... no, naïve,” said Fitun. “He is not someone we should be wary of.”

“... Fitun, it sounds to me that you are underestimating the Dhampir. Am I wrong?” asked Curatos.

“What are you suggesting, Curatos-dono? I am simply saying that the things this Dhampir has done are not problems worthy of us gods gathering and discussing them. If we are to discuss anything, should it not be the evil-god-worshipping Vampires squirming in your territory, Alda?”

Fitun, the God of Thunderclouds, wasn’t a particularly zealous supporter of Alda. He was simply a former hero praised by the people with many great achievements against Vida’s races and the evil gods to his name; he wasn’t a devout follower of Alda like Gordan.

My word, the days have been excruciatingly dull since I became a god. I don’t care if it’s Dhampirs or Undead, I wish there was a worthy foe that would have my blood boiling like it did when I was a human.

Alda opened his mouth. Everyone was expecting him to reprimand the young god for his impertinence. “What Fitun says is reasonable.”

The gods, including Fitun himself, stirred at Alda’s unexpected words.

“However, things are not so simple,” Alda continued. “There is reason to believe that this Dhampir, Vandalieu, has destroyed the Artifact created by Yupeon and broken the ‘divided spirit’ within.”

The gods were now making an uproar.

“Impossible! A divided spirit... He has broken something so similar to a soul?!”

“So that is the reason that Yupeon is not here...”

“Perhaps the fact that he did not spread the disease to the town was not due to naïvety as Fitun suggested, but as a warning to us? To say that he can do such a thing anytime he wishes.”

“But he could not possibly be so audacious as to threaten us... If he is, then the ancient –”

“SILENCE!” It seemed that Alda was trying to use this meeting to share his sense of impending danger with the gods who had become so relaxed recently.

Even though Alda had declared that this was a war against the remnants of the Demon King and Vida, with a hundred thousand years passing without any real progress, even gods would feel weary and soft. This was only spurred on by the lack of organized movements from the remnants that were supposed to be their enemies.

“Then will you send a Divine Message that this Dhampir should be exterminated?” asked Curatos.

“No,” said Alda. “There is a chance that that would have the opposite effect.”

If Alda gave the order to exterminate Vandalieu and gave detailed information regarding him through a Divine Message, the clergyman receiving the Divine Message might not be able to receive it fully and there was a high risk that it would be interpreted in a dangerous way, such as, “Kill the children^[2].”

And if they sent knights and extermination forces to Talosheim without being

scrupulous in preparations and information-gathering, they would simply repeat the failures of the expedition army.

As a result of the discussion, it was decided that Divine Messages would be sent to every church, allowing the clergymen to instill vigilance in the humans and encouraging them to be prepared. The Dhampir had already done such great things. The gods anticipated that he would stay holed up in the Boundary Mountain Range for a while, gathering his strength.

And there was someone other than Vandalieu who was also dangerous... Alda had sent numerous Divine Messages, saying, "That man is dangerous.^[3]" But despite that, the man who had signed a contract with an evil god, the Thunderclap Schneider, was still moving about freely. They had to be wary of him as well.

In the meantime, we should use the clergymen to gather candidates for champions and heroes, raise them and prepare... I suppose. Oh, wise Alda, you are halfhearted as well, thought Fitun. He laughed bitterly to himself.

If it were up to him, if there was even the smallest chance that the Dhampir possessed the same power as the Demon King, he would gladly sacrifice ten thousand or even a hundred thousand lives in order to exterminate him. He would make the gods endure the flesh-gouging pain of creating divided spirits and have them descend upon the world, prepared to risk the annihilation of all of the servants and heroic spirits.

He wouldn't grant the Dhampir time to gather more power.

However, Fitun did not voice this opinion. Though the others likely wouldn't listen to him, if by some tiny chance they did adopt his plan, it would only trouble him.

This is the first enemy I can fight to the death that has appeared since I became a god. I have to let him grow more.

A fight to the death is not where the strong kills the weak in a one-sided manner. It is a fight to the death because it is a fight where both have the ability to take his opponent's life.

Now then, small Dhampir. Grow larger, crueller, more relentless and most

importantly, more powerful. I, Fitun, the God of Thunderclouds, will watch over you until I kill you by my own hands!

Job explanation:

【Soul Breaker】

A Job that one who has broken a soul can acquire.

It grants a bonus to the acquisition of skills such as Soul Break, Spirit Form, Long-distance Control and Parallel Thought-Processing, and though it provides great growth in the Mana and Intelligence Attribute Values, growth in other Attribute Values are low.

The Job's name may suggest that it is an offensive Job, but because one must possess enough power to break a soul to acquire this Job, it is a Job that simply provides support for Soul Break.

Skill explanation:

【Materialization】

This is a skill that materializes parts of the body that does not originally have physical form. It is mainly acquired by Astral-type monsters, spirits that have been contaminated with Mana, such as Ghosts and Specters.

The materialized spirit form becomes susceptible to physical damage, but it does not have flesh and blood, so the damage taken is still less than damage from silver or Magic Items.

It has a greater effect than the Spirit Form skill, causing one to be in a state closer to having a body of flesh, but as it allows damage from the aforementioned sources and adds limitations of forces such as gravity, it cannot be said to be superior to the Spirit Form skill.

No people other than Vandalieu have been confirmed to possess this skill.

1. Immature soybeans boiled and served with salt, as described.
2. This misinterpretation would be possible in Japanese because there's often no plural distinction, so "Kill the child" would be interpreted as "Kill the children" in this context.
3. Depending on context, in Japanese, this can also mean "That man is in danger" which is why the Divine Message has been misinterpreted repeatedly up until now.

Side Chapter 3: The conspiracies of three parties

“You’ve gone and done it now, Dhampir!” An outraged Ternecia smashed her fist onto a table that was sturdier than it looked, destroying it. “How dare you, how dare you, how dare you!”

“Calm down,” Birkyne told her. “Although you do seem calmer than when I am having a fit.”

“Indeed,” Gubamon agreed. “Even if you howl from here, it cannot be heard in Talosheim.”

Ternecia clicked her tongue in response to the carefree words of Birkyne and Gubamon, but she didn’t swing her fist a second time, lowering it gently instead.

“So, what are we discussing today? Are we going to have a review meeting about the lost war?” asked Ternecia.

It had been around a month since the Undead expedition army had closed in on Balcheburg and was destroyed. The Pure-breed Vampires who worshipped Hihiryushukaka, the Evil God of Joyful Life, were surrounded by identical tables.

“Of course, we are going to do that, but... We also need to discuss how we will kill the Dhampir at this point,” Birkyne replied.

“Hihi, we have to share information, after all,” said Gubamon.

Indeed, the Vampires had been defeated. They had manipulated the Amid Empire from the shadows, made the Mirg shield-nation send out an army and attempted to kill Vandalieu with overwhelming numbers. However, this plan had ended in a spectacular failure.

Despite that, Birkyne and Gubamon remained quite composed, in contrast to Ternecia’s angry mood. The reason for this was simple – the one who had come

up with this plan and suffered the greatest losses was Ternecia.

The Mirg shield-nation's elite soldiers, Balcheburg's guards, the assets of the villagers in the cultivated lands and their future – these were all trivial matters to the Vampires.

But the loss of a cooperative individual, who had allowed them to sink their claws deep into the Empire, wasn't a happy event for them.

Ternecia had numerous allies apart from Earl Mauvid who had returned as an Undead, but this incident had apparently allowed the Empire to catch their tails. Not all of them had been caught, but quite a lot of them had been disposed of.

It seemed that Earl Mauvid had investigated other Vampire allies and leaked information about them to protect himself.

He had leaked information not only of individuals linked to Ternecia's faction but also those linked to Birkyne and Gubamon's factions. These individuals had all been eliminated by the Emperor's subordinates and the Thunderclap Schneider. However, Ternecia was still the one who had lost the most.

And then there were the Noble-born Vampires that had been dispatched as part of the expedition army. Birkyne and Gubamon had provided ten each, while Ternecia had used ten of her own with Isla as their commander.

Their deaths were a painful loss indeed.

Isla had been a Noble-born Vampire with the court rank of countess. As her Title of 'Ternecia's Hound' suggested, she had been a loyal retainer who supported Ternecia's faction for tens of thousands of years.

She hadn't been insignificant among Ternecia's close aides – she had been performing important duties within Ternecia's faction. In terms of strength in battle, she had been among the three most powerful of Ternecia's subordinates.

One might think that Ternecia's subordinates were relatively weak, considering that she had ruled from the darkness for over a hundred thousand years, but this wasn't the case.

Though those in lower positions obeyed the ones in higher positions, they were always looking for opportunities to take down those above them.

Those in higher positions trampled those in lower positions underfoot so that those below them wouldn't surpass them.

Raising a new generation of capable individuals in a society with such values would take a miracle. And, since none of the Vampires had a limited lifespan, the older generations would never be replaced.

Vampires of Leader or Baron status weren't particularly unusual, but those of Viscount status and above competed with each other fiercely, leaving very few that survived more than several centuries.

Of course, many also lost their lives to the tempers and whimsical, unreasonable orders of the Pure-breed Vampires.

In such an environment, a subordinate like Isla who had reached Countess status was precious... It was possible for Noble-born Vampires to increase their Rank further and become known as Marquises or Dukes, but they would actually be eliminated because they caused problems by being so powerful.

In any case, there was no mistaking that Ternecia's faction had lost a lot of its power.

Gubamon cackled. "I have my regrets as well. I had my eyes on the one who was called the second coming of the hero, but he was completely destroyed on the battlefield and burnt to ashes. I cannot even claim him as an Undead."

Though Gubamon said this, nobody believed that he had ever been truly interested in a falsely-created hero like Riley.

Ternecia glared at him, grinding her teeth loudly.

"The most painful thing is that information has been concealed from us," said Birkyne, interrupting. "Though we have learned one thing. The Dhampir... Vandalieu, is able to control Undead like us."

As he said, they had gained very little information despite the great losses suffered in this incident.

No matter how much they didn't want to admit it, the fact that Vandalieu

could control the Undead was clear from the way the expedition army had risen as Undead.

However, how Vandalieu was creating Undead was still unclear.

“The Pure-breeds who worship Vida are cooperating with him,” said Ternecia. “I’m sure they’ve come up with a new technique over the past hundred thousand years.”

“Hmm, but I wonder, isn’t the number of Undead simply too large?” asked Gubamon. “I have heard that there were thousands of them coming out of the tunnel. Even we would need to invest a considerable amount of effort to create that many Undead.”

“We might manage if it was just Rank 1 Undead,” said Ternecia. “Not all of them, but some were apparently Rank 3 and 4, weren’t they? Even if we used the corpses exactly as they were and created one Undead every hour, it would take us a year to create that many.”

Birkyne nodded. “Yes, that’s what the surviving soldiers who had been on lookout reported. Good grief, what an unbelievable turn of events. With this, tempting humans will probably be impossible as well.”

“The most problematic thing is that Isla and the other Vampires were not among the Undead,” said Gubamon.

The Noble-born Vampires and their commander Isla hadn’t been among the expedition army that had come back as Undead.

Birkyne nodded. “Eighty or ninety percent of information about us has probably been leaked.”

Vandalieu had likely turned the Vampires into Undead and gained information from them. It had already been confirmed that he was capable of creating Undead above Rank 3. This was a headache-inducing problem for everyone present here, not just Ternecia.

Though none of the other dispatched Vampires had been as powerful as Isla, there had been a need to send reasonably strong subordinates. This meant that the locations of several bases, meeting places and information regarding other subordinates had been leaked.

The fortunate thing was that the Vampires sent to Talosheim had been working in the Empire and its vassal nations; these were regions that Vandalieu couldn't freely wander into.

But in contrast, the Pure-breed Vampires who worshipped the Evil God of Joyful Life would find it difficult to gain information about Vandalieu. The lookouts that had been left around had all been hunted down, and the ritual that revived dead Noble-born Vampires as Undead couldn't bring back Isla and the others that had gone to Talosheim.

They were already Undead at Vandalieu's side.

Even if Isla and the others were somehow destroyed, the ritual wouldn't work on Vampires who had already become Undead once. Even if that wasn't the case, Birkyne expected that Vandalieu would have used some kind of trick.

"Fortunately, though we don't know whether he's connected with Vida's lot or another evil god, it seems that he is planning to seclude himself in the southern region of the continent for a while," said Birkyne.

Ternecia nodded. "You're right. He wouldn't have destroyed the tunnel himself otherwise."

"We must come up with a plan in the meantime," said Gubamon. "My word, how troublesome."

They needed to gather a great amount of information and fighting strength.

The next few decades will be busy, thought Ternecia, Gubamon and the Noble-born Vampires who were present.

But Birkyne alone had a different opinion.

He destroyed an army of six thousand, created thousands of Undead... Perhaps I should persuade him to become my pawn, even if it means disobeying Hihiryushukaka's Divine Message. Fortunately, the ones who killed his parents were Gubamon's subordinates, and the one pulling the strings in the expedition was Ternecia. Depending on the conditions, it is likely possible. The next few decades should be quite enjoyable.

Two months had passed since the extermination of the Undead expedition army that attacked Balcheburg.

“He got us good,” Thomas Palpapek whispered to himself, looking down at a single document in his office.

The expedition with General Mauvid as its supreme commander had ended in a far greater failure than he could have imagined, and the losses were far greater than he had predicted.

He wanted to go back in time and call the Thomas Palpapek of one year ago a fool.

Not a single member of the expedition army, comprised of six thousand of the Mirg shield-nation’s nine thousand elite soldiers, had returned alive. This was quite a painful loss. It would take years to train that number of soldiers to the same level of ability, and knights couldn’t be easily replaced as they were men of noble families.

There was no way that the sons of heads of exceptional families who had died in battle could be told that they needed to become commoners as great adventurers would become knights in their place.

There was also the equipment the soldiers had been wearing, the war expenditures paid for the expedition to take place and the cost of building the forts at the mouths of the tunnels... Yes, the loss of the men’s lives had been great, but the economic damage wasn’t small, either.

The next painful thing was the setback of Viscount Balchesse’s cultivation project.

For some reason, the Undead that came out of the tunnel had taken their time going through the villages in the cultivated lands instead of just heading straight for Balcheburg... Their marching speed was reasonable, but for an army of Undead that could move day and night with no need for rest or sleep, it was slow.

That was why the inhabitants of the cultivated land had all been evacuated successfully. All of the Undead were defeated at Balcheburg, and once they were all burned so that no diseases would spread, the people were supposed to

return to the cultivated land.

At that point, the villagers and Viscount Balchesse would have been prepared to see the fields laid waste to by the Undead, the houses destroyed and perhaps even a few Undead remaining in the villages.

But who would have guessed that there would still be a thousand Undead left behind?

Because of this, soldiers and adventurers were gathered once more and organized into an extermination force to get rid of them. Fortunately, the extermination itself went without any problems.

As some of the Zombies had been Poison Zombies that spewed venom from their mouths, a mage investigated the dirt in the fields and the water in the irrigation channels to check whether they were poisoned.

For some reason, all of the dirt in the fields had been contaminated with deadly poison, and the water reservoirs and aqueducts were polluted as well, rendering them unusable. This was the worst possible outcome.

Purifying this poison was so difficult that even a renowned master of the Mages' Guild had said it was hopeless, and leaving it to degrade naturally would take decades or even a century.

The same applied to every village in the cultivated land. There was no way that the cultivation project could continue.

The cultivation project itself was the project of Viscount Balchesse's family, but he had received significant financial assistance from the nation, as well as many noblemen who had been interested in the project. Though it hadn't shown that great an interest, the Palpapek family of earls was one of them.

The fact that all of this had vanished was a shock not only to those in Viscount Balchesse's territory, but to the entire nation.

To top it all off, Gordan and Riley had been leading the Undead in the attack on Balcheburg.

Those who had been called heroes by the people moved in ways too cruel to watch, killing those same people. It could only be described as a nightmare.

That was a thorn in the Mirg shield-nation's side, and blood was flowing freely from the wound.

“Two hundred years ago, we could at least tell ourselves that we were victorious. But now, we are forced to admit that we were defeated,” Thomas murmured. “Because of those fools who kept shouting loudly even after death, mud has been thrown at the faces of the army, the adventurers, the Church of Alda, all of them.”

Keeping such information secret was almost entirely impossible, as soldiers and adventurers had been gathered from numerous different towns to defend Balcheburg.

False information was being spread so that the uproar would be extinguished, but it would be a topic of conversation among the people for some time to come.

Because of this, the air in the Mirg shield-nation was continuing to become darker.

And unfortunately, there was no small number of people in the royal capital and the army shouting that revenge needed to be taken for this incident.

If the target of this revenge was the Amid Empire that ruled the nation, it would not be a stretch to call it a step towards Thomas's dream, that of the Mirg shield-nation's independence.

However, the people were directing their hatred beyond the Boundary Mountain Range, towards Talosheim.

“This isn't a joke. The Dhampir... Vandalieu. He really got us good. I'm sure it can be said that everyone was dancing on top of that half-Vampire's palm.”

Thomas was certain that the numerous losses suffered by the Mirg shield-nation had all been caused by Vandalieu.

The unusually slow movements of the Undead, the unusually low casualties apart from the expedition army and the unusually strong effects of the poison in the cultivated land that was too strong to have been created by the Poison Zombies among the Undead.

Everything was too unnatural to be put down to coincidence.

“He has driven this nation into a corner and baited it into a reckless battle for revenge. And then I suppose he intends to lie in wait, just as he did previously. The reason he killed so few outside of the expedition army was so that there would be as many people left as possible to advocate revenge. I have heard that he is a young child, but he is crafty to the point of being terrifying.” Thomas made a strange misunderstanding of Vandalieu’s intentions.

Oblivious to the misunderstanding, of course, he returned his gaze to the document on top of his desk.

“And I’m sure this is all within his calculations.”

There were all kinds of things written on the page, but it was essentially a request from the Mirg shield-nation for Thomas to be reinstated as marshal following these difficult events.

Earl Legston’s second son, Chezare, had been the second-in-command of the expedition army. Legston had been forced to pass on his family leadership to his eldest son who had quit his job and retired. But because Chezare hadn’t been seen among the Undead army, and because the Amid Empire had hastily named General Mauvid as being primarily responsible, Legston had suffered no further punishment.

The problem was that the position of the next marshal had come around back to Thomas.

“Vandalieu, it seems that you are under the impression that you will be able to dispose of me like you did General Mauvid, but things will not go your way. I will prevent a foolish battle for revenge no matter what it takes. And one day, as you make your nest in the continent’s southern reaches, I will teach you your place in this world.”

A little while after Thomas Palpapek was reinstated as marshal, it became the time of year where the season was transitioning between the beginning of summer and the middle of summer. In a room that was easily three grades higher in quality than Thomas’s office, a handsome man was sitting with his

hands clasped together, listening to the report of his close aide.

His face was young with thin lines in his features, but his eyes contained a strong light and there was an extraordinary air of charisma around him.

His ears were long and pointed, though not as much as an Elf's.

"Is that everything you have to report?" he asked in a beautiful voice that made it difficult to tell his gender.

"Yes, Amid Emperor Marshukzarl von Bellwood," said the man who appeared to be from the army.

Indeed, this young half-Elf man was Marshukzarl, the current emperor of the Amid Empire.

Vandalieu would likely be surprised if he knew this. In most fantasy works he had seen on Earth, half-Elves were subject to discrimination and persecution. But in the majority of the world of Lambda, half-Elves were not treated this way.

In this world, humans, Elves and Dwarves were comrades who had fought against the Demon King's armies alongside the champions, and the Church of Alda labeled these three races as races of 'people'. Many written records still remained, detailing how the champions had formed true friendships with numerous Elves and Dwarves.

And as for races to discriminate against and persecute, the races created by Vida provided plenty in the Amid Empire.

Of course, despite this, there were noblemen who would object to a half-Elf with a long lifespan being on the throne, and there were those who believed in human superiority.

But Marshukzarl had silenced his opposition with his sheer capability and ascended to the throne.

The report he was listening to was about the expedition.

"It seems we have accomplished our first objective of revealing and disposing of the traitors who allied themselves to the Vampires hiding within the Empire, but... this is a rather unexpected situation," Marshukzarl commented, having

finished hearing the report.

When the expedition had first been brought up, Marshukzarl had already been aware that General Langil Mauvid was allied with the Vampires.

While the Vampires' attention had been focused on the expedition proposed by the general, he had been gathering evidence and ordering his close aides to dispose of the traitors.

As a result of unofficial offers, searches and secret maneuvers, the names of many individuals with deep connections to the Mauvid family of earls had come up. From there, several of the Vampires behind the scenes had been arrested and tortured, allowing Marshukzarl to gain information about many more Vampires and traitors.

As a result, the Vampires' influence in the Empire had successfully been reduced a considerable amount.

That was something to be happy about. It was not an achievement that could be celebrated openly, as news that many noblemen had been involved with Vampires wasn't information that could be made public, but it was a great achievement nonetheless.

However...

"Are you referring to how the expedition army was annihilated, with the vast majority of them turning into Undead and attacking the town, the setback of the Mirg shield-nation's cultivation project and the sudden collapse of the tunnel in the Boundary Mountain Range?" asked another aide.

"Of course," replied Marshukzarl. "The original plan was to have the expedition succeed, take Mauvid's head and offer the Mirg shield-nation financial assistance with its cultivation project as an apology, was it not?"

Marshukzarl and his aides had expected the expedition to succeed. At the very least, the Dhampir who had led several hundred Ghouls across the Boundary Mountain Range was supposed to have been killed. The Mirg shield-nation should have lost a moderate amount of its elite soldiers and the power of Earl Palpapek, who desired the Mirg shield-nation's independence, should have been cut down – In exchange, the cultivation project would have been

greatly supported, but the fangs of Palpapek and his supporter would have been blunted.

Marshukzarl wanted a foothold in the continent's southern region, but a foothold that would become unusable with the collapse of a single tunnel would be even riskier.

Also, preventing the independence of a vassal nation and making it easier for the Mirg shield-nation to merge with the Empire in the future would provide greater gains in the long run.

That was what Marshukzarl had thought.

"But who could have expected that an army that outnumbered the enemy almost ten to one would be repelled... overwhelmingly, at that. Just what methods did this Dhampir, Vandalieu, use?" Marshukzarl wondered out loud.

"That is still unclear," replied the aide. "There were no survivors, and the Necromancy of all of the Spiritualists we had prepared has failed."

"I see. The only thing we do know is that he tames the Undead... No, he turns corpses into Undead and controls them." Seemingly greatly interested, Marshukzarl ran his eyes down the document detailing the little available information regarding Vandalieu. "How curious. If possible, I want to acquire him –"

"Would the Church of Alda not forbid such a thing?"

"It will be fine if we have them turn a blind eye to it. It is just as well that the Vampire hunter has fallen. Those priests are too fussy, anyway."

Unlike the Emperors before him, Marshukzarl was not a devout follower of Alda, the god of law and fate. He didn't believe that he was truly a descendent of the champion Bellwood, either.

He was a realist by nature, a pragmatist.

That was why he always took policies that would benefit the Empire most.

The teachings of Alda that emphasized law and order were effective as a tool to rule the people, so he used them. The name of Bellwood was also effective for maintaining his authority.

Vida's races, including Dhampirs, were convenient scapegoats to discriminate against, keeping the people happy, so he had kept things as they were up until now. Changing things would have great effects, and Vida's races were a minority in the Empire anyway.

"But would it not be difficult to capture him?" another aide asked.

"Of course," replied Marshukzarl. "Who said we're going to be capturing him? I said I want him as a subordinate."

"As a subordinate?!"

Some of the aides had served the Emperor for a long time and heard all kinds of outrageous words spoken by him as a result of his realism and rationalism. But even they were taken aback by the Emperor's expressed desire to take the Dhampir as a subordinate.

"I-it is too dangerous! The Empire could collapse if this were ever discovered!"

"You're exaggerating," said Marshukzarl. "How far I will go depends on how much use this Dhampir called Vandalieu can be of to me. Everything can be sorted out if I just have the Pope of the Church of Alda authorize it by saying that it has been allowed by the god."

"This is certainly impossible!"

"I can simply appoint someone willing to say it to the position of Pope. My beloved citizens can't tell whether he has really received a Divine Message or not, can they?"

As Marshukzarl's tone became terrifying, cold sweat began to form on the backs of his aides.

"However, it would be easier to have him work for me from the shadows," he continued.

The aides all sighed in relief.

"But Your Majesty, the only thing we know at present is that this Dhampir can create Undead and control them. Would it not be difficult to make use of him with only this much information?"

In fiction works on Earth, there are sometimes powerful people or companies that turn the dead into undying soldiers and use them for military purposes. However, even if that were possible, Marshukzarl would never do this.

The reason for that was because the Amid Empire was an empire of living people.

It was easy to imagine that doing such a thing would cause religious and moral problems, and more importantly, that the soldiers and people would never accept it.

If the soldiers were told to become Undead and continue fighting after they died, they would begin doubting whether their commanders were building battle plans designed to have them die.

The people wouldn't accept their husbands and sons being made to continue fighting after their deaths.

And it wasn't certain whether the Undead soldiers would swear loyalty after their death, either. All of the Undead could rise in rebellion with a single whispered word from Vandalieu.

"Well, I'm not really planning to turn the Undead into soldiers," said Marshukzarl. "I just thought it would be interesting if we could turn all of the bones lying around on ancient battlefields into Skeletons and sent them all towards the Orbaume Kingdom."

"I see," said an aide. "Undead would rise and head to the Orbaume Kingdom, without any relation to us. This would cause no problems."

"But wouldn't the realistic problem be the difficulty in making contact with the Dhampir?" asked another. "Even if it is possible, there is a possibility that the Dhampir resents you, your majesty."

As for the incident of the death of the Dhampir's mother, it was possible that the Dhampir's hatred would soften when he learned that Marshukzarl's true sense of values differed from the teachings of Alda, no matter what his official stance was.

However, though Mauvid had been allied with the Vampires, he had still been a general of the Amid Empire and the expedition was something that had been

authorized in Marshukzarl's name.

"In that case... that simply means that this is the extent of the worth of this child called Vandalieu," said Marshukzarl. "One cannot do great things without casting aside his personal grudges. However, he is likely planning to spend at least a decade secluded in the Boundary Mountain Range. When he comes out, do not let him get away and make sure to make contact with him."

"Understood. We will observe in secrecy."

"Also..." Marshukzarl turned his mind towards other matters. "The Mauvid family of earls must be crushed. His eldest son who is being held captive, have him commit suicide after leaving a note saying that he regrets allying himself with the Vampires."

"Certainly. There is also a movement saying that the Thunderclap Schneider should be requested to investigate the continent's southern region."

"Ah, my cousin, huh." Marshukzarl sighed as he recalled the face of his cousin with whom he had argued over many things. Schneider was an eyesore, but he was a strangely convenient person. As long as he was kept alive, those opposing Marshukzarl would rely on Schneider and gather around him, making them more conspicuous.

But sending that man to the southern reaches of the continent was too dangerous.

"Schneider would refuse... probably. If he does accept the request, stop him. But do not make him an enemy, no matter what," Marshukzarl warned his aides. "Now is not the time."

"As you will. What will be done about the Mirg shield-nation?"

"Hmm..." Marshukzarl thought for a moment. "I suppose we need to give them something sweet."

He had heard that there were movements in the Mirg shield-nation to fight a war of revenge.

If the Mirg shield-nation did something like that, it would lose more than a moderate amount of its power as a nation. They needed to be given something

sweet enough to dissolve their desire for revenge.

“Then how about constructing a fort in Viscount Balchesse’s territory to keep watch over the Boundary Mountain Range?” an aide suggested. “It would also serve to keep an eye on the Dhampir that you have set your sights on, Your Majesty. Of course, the Empire would fund its construction.”

“I see, that is an excellent idea,” said Marshukzarl.

The people’s broken hearts would consider the fort as more than a defense; it would allow them to regain their composure. It would tell the people that the incident hadn’t been taken lightly, and could even soften the people’s opinions towards the Empire.

Most importantly, the Empire would only pay for the fort’s construction. The Mirg shield-nation would still have to use its own money to maintain the fort and pay soldiers to man it.

In the future, it would also help deter the Mirg shield-nation from acquiring too much military power.

“Well then, make it happen,” Marshukzarl ordered.

And so, thanks to the fort construction project led by the Amid Empire, Viscount Balchesse’s region narrowly managed to recover from its loss.

... In the future, the clearly pointless fort in this territory would only cause suffering, but it would likely be the viscount’s son’s generation who would have to worry about that.

The Pure-breed Vampires, Earl Thomas Palpapek and the Amid Empire. These three parties had two things in common other than having acknowledged Vandalieu’s existence.

The first was that like Alda and the other gods, they were cautious to not carelessly refer to Vandalieu by other names and derogatory terms, ensuring that he didn’t acquire a Title.

The other was that they were all under the assumption that Vandalieu was planning to spend at least a decade secluded in the Boundary Mountain Range,

gathering strength.

Side Chapter 4: At the same time, an S-class adventurer...

A waterside town in a maritime nation called Kalahad, in the Amid Empire's southern region.

This place in that waterside town, which resembled a bar, was the base of the only S-class adventurer in the western region of the Bahn Gaia continent, the Thunderclap Schneider.

It seemed rather unfitting to be used as a base by an S-class adventurer, but he was not using it as a 'guest'. He had bought the entire building and was using it as the 'owner'.

Four men faced each other in seats placed far inside the bar.

Two of them were sitting in the seats. One of them was a man in his thirties with numerous scars on his face, and it was easy to tell even through his clothes that his body was well-trained. Standing behind him were two men who appeared to be accustomed to fighting.

The man facing them was a tall man with blonde hair who appeared to be in his early-to-mid-twenties.

His face appeared to be well-featured and feminine on close inspection, but his body was packed with enough muscle to dilute that impression and there was a wild air about him.

If the beauty and ferocity of a large, wild carnivore were turned into a person, this man might be the result.

"So, you're saying that you're messengers from Duke Marme?" said the man.

He was the Thunderclap Schneider. He was sitting with his legs outstretched and crossed over each other as he gestured for the messenger from a duke of the Amid Empire to continue speaking.

“That’s right. We want to request that you investigate the southern region of the Bahn Gaia continent.” The man who gave this response had sweat forming on his forehead. As he was a lesser nobleman himself, he should have been reprimanding Schneider for his arrogant behavior, but this was something that he would never do.

Schneider had the privilege of the ‘strong’.

Numerous noblemen who had incurred Schneider’s wrath in the past had been buried.

Among them was an earl who had been directly punched to death in a public place without any schemes or hidden plans.

However, Schneider received no punishment whatsoever. No, the earl had forced him to accept an illegal request that would normally have ended in his death, but... he had completed the request easily and returned quickly.

Marshukzarl, the current Emperor, had acknowledged Schneider’s results, acquitted him of his crimes and crushed the family of the earl who had been punched to death.

That had been the moment the Emperor declared that Schneider was more important than foolish noblemen.

“Investigate, huh? How long do I have to investigate for and what am I supposed to investigate?” Schneider asked. “If you just tell me to investigate, all I’d have to do is go there, come back and say, ‘I’ve investigated the continent’s southern region,’ and that’d be it, messenger.”

In reality, however, anyone with superficial skills would become monster food on even a short trip to and from the continent’s southern region.

Even if one took the sea route from Kalahad, there would be numerous Devil’s Seas, seas that had become Devil’s Nests, along the way. They would be crawling with enormous monsters such as Krakens and Sea Dragons that were capable of sinking large ships.

So even if Schneider was able to perform the investigation that he had described, even though it wasn’t really an investigation at all, it would be a great enough achievement to leave his name in history.

“... We want you to dispose of a certain Dhampir, and then come back,” said the messenger.

This was what Duke Marme, the man who had sent the messenger, truly wanted to request. Not an investigation, but the murder of a Dhampir.

Duke Marme, Schneider’s cousin, was a devout follower of Alda and held the honorable position of Cardinal himself.

High Priest Bormack Gordan had become an Undead and attacked a town as a result of the expedition. For Duke Marme, this was a problem that needed to be dealt with immediately.

“Oh? I’ll have you tell me all the details,” said Schneider. “Lissana, it seems that this conversation is going to take a while. Bring some drinks.”

“Okay~♪”

An Elf woman with a sensational, dancer-like appearance brought a pot and cups. The men standing behind managed to resist running their eyes over her mostly-bare legs and bouncing breasts, but the jaw of the messenger dropped.

“Schneider-dono.”

“Ah, sorry, but you’ll have to make do without alcohol. I’m abstaining for health reasons, you see,” said Schneider.

“No, it’s not that. This is a private conversation. If possible, people should –” The messenger suddenly became unable to continue speaking. Being stared down by Schneider’s gleaming eyes, his tongue had become immobilized.

“Did you not investigate properly at the Guild before coming?” Schneider asked. “Lissana is one of my party members. If you can’t trust her, hurry up and get out. Or would you like me to help you with that?”

“N-no! Stop! It was a slip of the tongue! Lady Lissana, I humbly offer my apologies! Please forgive me!” The messenger poured everything he had into his apology. If his apology had been a moment too late, Schneider would have grabbed him by the head and thrown him outside. Schneider’s Title of ‘Person Launcher’ was famous in the Empire.

“It’s fine, I’m not bothered by it.” Lissana seemed unfazed as she poured tea

into the cups, as if this was a regular occurrence.

“So, what did you want to talk about?” Schneider asked, his bloodthirst vanishing as if nothing had happened at all.

The men moistened their dry throats with the tea they couldn't taste or smell to calm their minds, and the conversation somehow continued.

Duke Marme had a pride that couldn't overlook a being who had damaged the dignity of the Church of Alda, but another very probable reason that he had gone out of his way to ask Schneider to exterminate the Dhampir was that he couldn't simply leave a dangerous individual who was somehow capable of taming thousands of Undead.

The reason he had asked Schneider to carry this out was because the Dhampir lived in the southern region of the continent that was full of unexplored Devil's Nests that couldn't be reached by incapable individuals, and, most importantly, because the Dhampir could apparently tame Undead.

If large numbers of men were dispatched in the hope of overwhelming the Dhampir with numbers, there was the possibility that the dead would switch over to the Dhampir's side. Considering that the expedition army of thousands had come back as Undead, this was almost certain.

In other words, it would be preferable to send a small number of powerful individuals.

“So, you want me to do it, huh?” said Schneider.

“That's right,” said the messenger. “And this isn't certain, but the Divine Message from Alda could be related as well.”

“Divine Message? Ah, ‘Be prepared for disease,’ was it?”

The Divine Message that had been made public several days ago was sent by Alda, who had seen through the Records that Vandalieu had rendered the expedition army helpless with a disease, but... Strangely enough, its true meaning hadn't been understood.

But supplementary budgets had been granted to mages of the Mages' Guild specializing in the research of disease, and the priest-warriors were trying to

acquire the Disease Resistance skill. The Divine Message hadn't been entirely meaningless.

"No, not that one," said the messenger. "The one before it."

"The one about the Demon King... So, you're saying he's the Dhampir?" asked Schneider.

"Duke Marme believes so."

"I see..."

As Schneider looked to be deep in thought, still holding his cup, the messenger saw hope and pressed him for an answer.

"Schneider-dono, you are someone so great that Alda worries for your safety. I believe that you are interested. And the fees paid will be substantial. The Duke will pay 100,000,000 Amids, and I have received word that you will be allowed to take up to ten women from the duchy and Amid's Church. Of course, anything you acquire while completing the request is yours without question."

The messenger's words made it clear just what people all over the Empire thought of Schneider.

A worldly-minded person who loved money and women despite being loved by Alda, the god of law and fate. This was the nobles' image of Schneider.

"No, I have to decline." Schneider's answer was one of refusal.

"W-why?! If the Pope-sama accepts this, you can take as many as you want from the monastery; if you want priestesses, they can be made to live secular lives!" the messenger exclaimed. "Please reconsider!"

"Hey, hey..." Lissana whispered. The messenger was saying something that would become a terrible scandal if it ever became public, but she was the only one to take any notice of it.

Alda was prone to being thought of as a god with strict teachings as his teachings included, "Uphold law and order." But in reality, this teaching could be interpreted as, "As long as law and order are upheld, everything else is fine."

The reality was that excuses such as, "This is for maintaining order," and, "This is what the law has decided," were becoming more commonly used

among the Great Church's high officials lately.

One reason High Priest Gordan had refused the position of Cardinal and continued working on the frontlines was because he hated these high officials.

"No, it's not that I'm dissatisfied with the rewards being offered," said Schneider.

"So why?!" the messenger demanded.

"... I've become rather sensitive to the cold lately." Schneider opened his hands for some reason as he answered the question.

"It's summer now, but it will be autumn and then winter soon. Whether I cross the mountain range or take the sea route, it will be cold, won't it?"

"... I-it can't be, you're refusing for that reason?"

The men's jaws dropped.

Schneider gave them a frustrated frown. "Look here. Despite my looks, I'm in my fifties and my body is on the decline. Are there really people who make faces like that when a well-aged old man is worrying about his sensitivity to the cold?"

In fact, Schneider was well over fifty years old. He looked like a man who was only in his twenties, but remaining records showed that he had been registered at the Adventurers' Guild over forty years ago.

His Guild Card and Status displayed the same thing, so it was impossible to doubt this information.

There were all kinds of rumors about how he maintained the strong, well-trained body of a man in his twenties despite his age.

A rumor that he had killed and bathed in the blood of so many Dragons and Elder Dragons that he had become immortal.

A rumor that one of his mistresses was a master of love-making, and it was thanks to her that he was staying young.

There was even a half-slandering rumor that he had signed a contract with an evil god that he was supposed to defeat, gaining perpetual youth.

But if anyone asked him, he would simply answer, “I just look young,” and he was a troublesome man who used his age as an excuse at every opportunity he got, as he was doing now.

“Can your eyes not see these white hairs? They used to be blonde back in the day...” Schneider pinched his platinum-blond hair that he was calling white. There was indeed proof that his hair had once been blonde, but because it was so glossy and abundant, nobody other than him thought that it was white hair.

“Schna^[1], you’ve been complaining about the same thing for ten years, you know?”

“Yeah, my hair had already turned white ten years ago.”

“... This is hopeless.” Even Lissana, who referred to Schneider by a nickname, gave up on convincing him.

“That’s how it is,” Schneider told the messenger. “Sorry, but you’ll have to leave. Tell Duke Marme that I’ve refused because I’m worried about my old age.”

“A-alright... Well then, excuse us.” The messenger and his men slowly got up and left the bar. They were thoroughly unconvinced by Schneider’s reason for refusing the request, but there was nothing that they could do.

They didn’t have the strength to do anything against a superhuman capable of defeating Elder Dragons and evil gods, and if they tried to threaten him, it would be them who ended up destroyed. In the worst case, something could even happen to Duke Marme himself. There would be no need for the Emperor to make a move to defend his cousin who opposed him.

That was why the messengers left, with only the news that the offer had been refused to report.

“Now then, what do you think of the conversation just now?” asked Schneider.

People who had stayed inconspicuous in the background until a moment earlier now opened their mouths to speak.

“Let us see... It seems that the Pope is simply being impatient, rather than Alda being involved.”

“But it's not a problem, is it? It won't make any difference no matter how much noise that fool makes, and if he makes too much noise, he might be erased by that Emperor.”

“That would actually be problematic. What will we do if the next Pope is actually competent?”

“Indeed.”

They chuckled amongst themselves. Those gathered around Schneider and Lissara looked to be an ordinary bartender and waitress, if disregarding the fact that they were beautiful and sinister-looking, and a drunkard who had been drinking and talking drunkenly to the waitress.

But in reality, all of them shared a certain secret.

“Still, they expected quite a lot, didn't they... hic. If it were me, I definitely wouldn't want to go to the southern parts of the continent,” said the drunkard with a mohawk. He was actually a Dark Elf. As he was concealing his long ears with a special Magic Item, he simply looked like a muscular, dark-skinned man.

He was Dalton, a warrior from the great tribe of Dark Elves.

“You drank too much, Dalton. Tea, drink some tea.”

“Geh, you can't expect me to drink colored water! And if you're going to complain, complain to Zod for providing me with this delicious drink.”

“My apologies.” The bartender, who had no notable features other than a slim figure and small moustache, smiled. But those who learned of his true identity would likely scream and flee.

His real name was Zorcodrio. He was a Pure-breed Vampire.

“Here you are, a refill,” he said, handing Dalton a drink.

“Ah, thanks,” said Dalton, drinking a mouthful. “Kah, delicious!”

“Hey, aren't you letting him drink too much?” Lissara complained.

“That is water flavored with mint,” Zod replied to her in a small voice.

Indeed, he had never said, “This is alcohol,” when handing Dalton the drink. Even though the cup contained water, it was a refill nonetheless.

“Health problems aside, the curious thing is that Dhampir, isn’t it?” The Dwarf waitress, Merdin, returned the conversation to its original topic. She was an ordinary Dwarf.

Her occupation was that of an A-class adventurer rather than a waitress, however.

“Leaving the Divine Message of the foolish Pope aside, I can’t stay uninvolved if he has some relation to the Demon King. If by some chance the Demon King were to be revived, I might really be destroyed this time,” said Lissana as her appearance suddenly changed.

Her white skin turned blue-black and a third eye opened as if opening a fissure in her wide forehead. Her red tongue turned a fluorescent pink and her already-abundant chest expanded further.

“Oi, you’re returning to your normal form,” Dalton warned her.

“Sorry, sorry, I was remembering the past and I couldn’t help it.” Lissana giggled and withdrew her tongue back inside her mouth as she returned to her previous Elven appearance.

As written on her Guild Card, she was an Elf woman.

She often skipped introducing herself as the incarnation of Jurizanapipe, the Evil God of Degeneration and Intoxication, however.

She was the evil god supposedly defeated by the Thunderclap Schneider.

“So what are we going to do, Schna?” she asked. “It seems like you’ve refused to exterminate him, but are we going to go and meet him?”

“I do want to go, but... I can’t, can I? There a lot of things to do over here as well,” said Schneider. “And unlike Duke Marme, the current Emperor has become aware of my true nature.”

Schneider. He was without a doubt a human man. He wasn’t a Vampire, an evil god or a member of Vida’s races.

However, he was a follower of Vida.

“That Emperor has known for a long time that I’m not a devout follower of Alda,” he continued. “He knows that the Pope’s Divine Message of me being in danger actually means that I’m a dangerous person and that he should be wary of me.”

In the past, Schneider had been told numerous times by the Pope that a Divine Message warned of danger, but nothing had happened. Alda was warning the Pope that Schneider was a dangerous person.

Schneider was aware of how difficult it was to fully understand the meaning of a Divine Message, however, so he wasn’t particularly inclined to call the Pope a fool.

As a mortal, Schneider was unaware of the gods’ circumstances, things like the circle of transmigration systems. But despite being unaware of them, he had always held doubt towards Alda’s teachings since he was a child.

He had never understood why Vida’s races had to be hated so fiercely. After he became an adventurer and encountered members of one of Vida’s races, Lamias, he became certain.

Alda was wrong.

... It might have simply been that his late first love was a beautiful Lamia.

Leaving that reason aside, he made contact with the Lamias, and during the time he spent in their village, his belief became firmer.

But thinking that perhaps these Lamia were just special, he made contact with other members of Vida’s races.

And then Schneider chose Vida over Alda.

He hid his true beliefs, trained himself and built his achievements as an adventurer. There was the option of crossing over to the Orbaume Kingdom, where the religion of Vida and the existence of Vida’s races were acknowledged to some extent, but that would have been a foolish move for him.

If he ran to the Orbaume Kingdom, he couldn’t help the members of Vida’s races who were currently suffering in the Amid Empire.

There were things he could only do in the Amid Empire. A single adventurer

from a commoner background likely couldn't achieve much, but even so, he would be satisfied with helping as many as possible.

Before he knew it, he had become an S-class adventurer.

Life is full of surprises.

"Well, he likely hasn't noticed the truth about you, Lissana," said Schneider.

"Yes. I wonder why. Nobody ever notices, do they? That there are some among the evil gods who have changed sides to join the champions."

Legends told of gods, giants and Elder Dragons who had surrendered and joined the Demon King out of fear. But they didn't tell of the considerable number of evil gods who betrayed the Demon King and fought him alongside the gods and champions of Lambda.

They were indeed called evil gods, and they possessed powers that most in this world would consider abominable and wicked.

But they weren't the incarnation of pure evil or anything like that.

The champion Zakkart had called the Demon King and his followers, 'Invaders from another world.' This was the truth.

For the inhabitants of Lambda, the fight against the Demon King was a holy war to defend this world. However, looking at it objectively, it was a war between invaders and the native people.

Of course, it could not be said that the Demon King and his followers were innocent and had done nothing wrong. After all, they had come to another world and chosen not to ask its people politely to allow them to move in or make any effort to assimilate by adopting their morals, sense of values and manners.

But there were some who had no choice but to obey the Demon King out of fear despite wondering why a war was being started so suddenly.

One of them was Jurizanapipe, the Evil God of Degeneration and Intoxication.

Zakkart had persuaded her to join the champions' side.

The former evil gods who had changed sides allied themselves with Vida and

the resurrected Zakkart when her conflict with Alda began.

They were thoroughly defeated by Alda and Bellwood. They were either sealed away after having their powers reduced, or forced to discard their bodies and physically incarnate themselves.

And Bellwood, who had opposed the evil gods joining them but had no choice but to reluctantly give in due to their strategic value, buried them in the darkness of history.

“If I headed for the continent’s southern region, the Emperor would probably make a move, thinking that I’m planning to finally make contact with the Pure-breed Vampires who worship Vida,” said Schneider. “He’s letting me swim around because I’m useful to the Empire, but it’d be troublesome if he were to think there was a chance that I’d cause the Empire harm.”

Though Schneider was an S-class adventurer and an evil-god-killer (though in reality, this was equivalent to being a lady-killer), the Empire wasn’t small enough for him to defeat on his own. There were imperial guards as strong as A-class adventurers, and it was certain that there were ten or twenty more individuals being kept hidden as extra fighting strength who even Schneider wouldn’t be able to defeat easily.

“And I’ve received a Divine Message as well,” Schneider continued. “I’m going to obey it.”

“Divine Message, you mean that one?” asked Dalton. “The one that told you to save the mothers and children...”

It had been ten years since Schneider had received this Divine Message. He had been surprised upon receiving a Divine Message for the first time. He deciphered the cryptogram-like combination of vast information and intent that had entered his mind, and somehow managed to understand its meaning, the words spoken by Dalton.

To be more precise, it was a Divine Message saying, “Become a shield, help the mothers and rescue the children from the blood, but without crossing the peak or the sea.”

“Haven’t you already fulfilled that?” asked Merdin. “You saved plenty of

mothers and children, and because of that, you found Zod who had been sealed up.”

“Yes, you really saved me back then,” Zod added.

Schneider, having thought that the Divine Message meant, “Stay on the western side of the Bahn Gaia continent and risk your life to protect mothers and children,” saved numerous mothers and children as Merdin said. There were incidents where he simply saved them from bandits, and in one case, things developed into a great adventure, as a result of which he ended up undoing the seal on the Pure-breed Vampire Zod.

Of course, wondering if there were other ways to interpret the Divine Message, Schneider had visited the grave of his mother who rested in his birthplace and searched for signs of danger approaching the women around him, thinking that one of them might be pregnant.

As a result, it became clear that Schneider had unknowingly fathered children among the Lamia, Scylla, Arachne, Centaurs and Mer-people. Dalton had said, “How’s that for a man?” and Schneider had only been able to retort with, “I was young back then!”

There were funny stories like this, but Schneider finally calmed down, having interpreted the Divine Message as being intended to have him undo Zod’s seal.

However, from the request brought to him by the messengers from Duke Marme, Schneider realized that he had failed.

Schneider shook his head. “No, the meaning of that Divine Message was, ‘Save the mother in the Mirg shield-nation and rescue the half-blood child.’”

“That’s...” Dalton looked doubtful. “But then, what about the second part about the peak and the sea?”

“That meant, ‘If you fail to save the mother, don’t go near for a while.’ Actually, if I’d participated in the expedition, things might not have gone well for me, either,” said Schneider.

“Are you trying to say that the Dhampir is able to kill you?” asked Zod.

“He somehow killed six thousand men; he’s not a normal kid. Well, speaking

as an S-class adventurer, Vida probably wanted to stop me from becoming an enemy for that Dhampir, didn't she?"

"If that's true, then at least he has no relation to the Demon King," said Merdin. "There's no way that Vida would help the Demon King, after all."

"That's how it is... I feel bad that I couldn't save his mother, but I'm not all-powerful, either. I'll apologize when I meet him one day, but until then, I'll just have to do everything I can."

There was no time to be worried over it.

Having finished speaking, Schneider set about making preparations for tomorrow's work – exterminating a group of Krakens to help a clan of Mer-people.

"Hey, do you think it's true that seaweed is good for your hair –"

"Zakkart said so, but I'm telling you, it's a superstition."

"But you know, lately, my hairline has –"

"It's just your imagination; it hasn't receded at all."

"Is that so? But I get the feeling that my hair has become thinner recently –"

"YOU'RE HALLUCINATING!"

Notes

1. In case this isn't immediately clear, this is a shortened nickname for Schneider.

Side Chapter 5: Vida

Vida, half-asleep and half-awake, couldn't tell whether she was looking at a dream on the back of her eyelids or whether her eyelids were open and she was hallucinating.

Though gods were not omniscient and omnipotent, she was still a goddess. But she was in this pitiful state because of her battle against Alda that had taken place a hundred thousand years ago.

A hundred thousand years... Even before that...

After being born in this world, Vida spread the power of the life attribute throughout it, and before she knew it, she was praised by the people as the goddess of life and love.

Everything was peaceful back then. Everything was gentle and quiet.

However, that peace was broken by the invasion of the Demon King. Vida had no choice but to fight alongside the other gods against the Demon King's army, the invaders from a foreign world.

During that time, at Zuruwarn's suggestion, it was decided that champions would be summoned from another world. She agreed with the plan while Alda opposed it, but in the end, things went well and seven champions were to be summoned.

Permission had been granted from the god of that other world, but only Rodcorte, the one who ruled the only circle of transmigration, continued to oppose it. But none bothered listening to a god who could do nothing other than complain.

The one Vida had chosen was a young man who was trying to hang himself in a small backstreet workshop, Sakado Keisuke. He would later become Zakkart.

"Ah, the goddess has come for me. Mother, Father, I'm coming now," Sakado whispered.

“Stop, don’t go, please!” Vida cried.

I was in quite a panic back then.

It seemed that an organization known as a ‘bank’ had betrayed Sakado and the workshop he had been running went out of business, so he was trying to kill himself.

Vida thought that he would happily become a champion with no lingering desires in this world, but Sakado exhibited a fixation on mysterious things.

“Umm, does that mean that you’re going to give me special powers and things like that, then?” he asked.

“Of course.”

Bestowing powers upon humans chosen to become champions was already an established procedure. In fact, if they were to be invited to another world without being given anything, they would simply die.

Different worlds would have different laws of physics and even different compositions of air. There weren’t such great differences between Lambda and Sakado’s world, but if Sakado was simply taken to Lambda without any adjustments being made, it was possible that his lifespan would be shortened or he would transform into a bizarre creature due to the Mana floating about in the air.

Vida would adjust his soul to prevent that, but these adjustments would become what were referred to as “champions’ powers.” The “blank space” of the soul upon which adjustments could be made were called, “the qualities of a champion.”

... The adjustments could have been made more freely if Rodcorte, an expert on this matter, had cooperated, however.

Also, magic didn’t exist in this world called “Earth” that Zuruwarn had made a connection to, so none of its inhabitants were able to use Mana. In addition, only a miniscule number of individuals were capable of fighting with swords and spears; it was already known that there were none among Earth’s inhabitants who had the individual fighting strength to stand up against the Demon King and his army.

Earth's weapons couldn't be taken to Lambda (If they were, since the laws of physics were different in Lambda, it was certain that they would break after being fired once, misfire or even explode), so it was decided that each champion would be granted powers.

That was why even if Sakado never asked for it, Vida was planning to give him things like physical abilities that would allow him to treat protagonists of action films as small fry, an aptitude for magic and powerful equipment that only champions could use.

In addition, the Job and skill system created by Ricklent had already been implemented in Lambda.

With enough experience, one could gain unimaginable powers.

"Well then, please give me a cheat that lets me create things," said Sakado.

"... Huh? Err, we're in the middle of a war."

For some reason, Sakado showed a strong fixation on things related to 'creating'. Wouldn't one normally desire the power to cut down enemies one after another with a sword, or the ability to freely cast powerful spells? *In fact, those are the kinds of champions that we are looking for.*

Vida told Sakado this, but he stubbornly refused to yield on this matter.

"I'm weak when it comes to fighting," he said.

"That's why I'm telling you that I'll make you strong!"

"But I get the feeling that it'll be a waste... I'm not really athletic, either."

Vida sighed. "Even if you say you want to create, I'm the goddess of the life attribute, so it'll have to be something like agriculture, animal breeding, forestry or woodworking. Is that alright with you?"

She had no choice but to give in. There wasn't enough time for her to spend days convincing him and she didn't have any other candidates.

"Please give me those. I'm more knowledgeable about the manufacturing industry than I look."

And so, though this wasn't what was originally planned, Sakado was

summoned to Lambda as a champion who placed more importance on productivity and technology than individual fighting strength.

Vida felt disappointed, knowing that she was probably the only one to summon such a strange champion, but contrary to her expectations, the champions chosen by Ricklent, Peria and Botin had also desired cheats for creating things.

To think that four of the seven had desired creation-related abilities. Perhaps the image of heroes on 'Earth' was fundamentally different to what the gods had imagined? It was very perplexing.

Alda and Zantark had scolded them angrily for not making more serious choices, however.

After that, it was fierce battle after fierce battle.

Numerous islands had been sunk, nations were destroyed and Shizarion's soul had been broken. Even so, Vida, Sakado and the other champions fought earnestly, defeating and sealing numerous evil gods and somehow keeping the war even.

Sakado... had reluctantly changed his name to Zakkart in order to have a more typical Lambda-style name under the recommendation of Suzuki Shouhei, the leader of the champions. Zakkart had distinguished himself in these battles.

"If this world's gods and people are willing to betray us and join the Demon King, the reverse should also be possible!" As he made this outrageous declaration, he began trying to recruit the evil gods obeying the Demon King.

"Zakkart, what are you thinking!" Bellwood demanded. "Their very existence is evil! There is no way that they can be converted. And have you forgotten what they have been doing to innocent people up until now?!"

"Precisely," said Alda. "Even if they were to join our side, it would only be a trap or a wretched way to beg for their lives. Accepting those who have sinned without delivering any punishment is an unthinkable, reckless act."

"Please, come to your senses!" Vida begged him.

Not even Vida's words stopped Zakkart from trying to recruit the evil gods; in fact, the champions who had desired abilities of creation began to actively cooperate with him in his efforts.

And unbelievably, more than ten evil gods, though not in important positions within the Demon King's army, crossed over to the champions' side.

"No way?!" Vida exclaimed in surprise.

"I mean, don't things like this happen often in wars?" said Zakkart, wearing a nonchalant expression.

The evil gods who had changed sides were not particularly exceptional in direct fighting strength, but the fact that there were traitors seemed to have caused greater shock and disturbance in the Demon King's army than expected.

The Demon King was a being who ruled not with charisma, but through overwhelming power and his secret ability that allowed him to destroy souls. There were some who worshipped his power, but many of his subordinates feared him or were simply obeying him to serve their own purposes.

The existence of the traitors caused doubt to spread throughout the Demon King's army, making them wonder, "Has the Demon King's power grown weaker?" and, "Have they betrayed the Demon King because they believe that the champions have something capable of defeating him?"

And the Demon King was successfully driven into paranoia that his other subordinates would betray him as well.

The coordination of the Demon King's army that had been bound together like iron came apart, more traitors appeared and the war that had been even up until now began leaning in the champions' favor. But the champions couldn't let down their guard. They needed to attack before the Demon King's army restored its iron-like bonds.

Under these circumstances, Zakkart declared that he would begin the manufacture of 'weapons from another world.'

"With our knowledge and skill alongside magic, we should be able to create the modern weapons of Earth in Lambda!"

He advocated that these weapons should be used to defeat the Demon King. One of the reasons for this was because the Demon King possessed numerous troublesome special abilities that made him difficult to defeat through normal methods.

A barrier that nullified all magic and a barrier that nullified all physical attacks. With these two different barriers, he would be surrounded by an impregnable defense.

Because of this defense, even the holy sword of Bellwood, who was the most gifted in combat, wouldn't reach him. It would even stop the attacks of the gods.

Zakkart had thought of a way to pierce through those barriers and inflict damage on the Demon King.

“Even if the Demon King came from another world, he has not known a world with a technology-driven culture like Earth,” said Zakkart. “If we press him there, it might work.”

After investigating the barriers, he had noticed that they were not like hard walls that repelled attacks, but had properties resembling membranes that absorbed energy.

He had also determined that the simultaneously-present barriers, the anti-physical-attack barrier and anti-magic barrier, were independent and didn't affect each other at all.

In other words, if the anti-physical-attack barrier was broken by an extremely powerful attack it couldn't absorb completely, the anti-magic barrier would continue functioning as normal.

Only one of the barriers needed to be pierced to make an attack reach the Demon King.

So, Bellwood would use his ability to copy another champion's ability once a day to copy Zakkart's power of nullifying damage taken from a target weapon, targeting Earth's modern weapons.

After that, Bellwood, now impervious to the damage of those weapons, would attack alongside the weapons being fired at the Demon King.

The Demon King's anti-physical-attack barrier would be pierced and he would be defeated. This was the plan that Zakkart drafted.

However, Bellwood was vehemently opposed to this plan. The weapons that Zakkart was trying to create had proved to be problematic on Earth, causing irreversible damage on the environment when they were used.

Invisible poison would be scattered across vast areas and linger for tens of thousands of years. They were terrifying weapons.

"Zakkart, have you gone insane?! You would only create a disaster in this beautiful world of Lambda in the Demon King's place!" Bellwood exclaimed.

"Disaster? At this rate, the Demon King will take everything!" said Zakkart. "And unlike Earth, this world has magic, and it isn't as if the entire world is going to be contaminated. It will be only the continent the Demon King is residing in, and there's not a single person left there anyway, is there?"

"But there are people who were evacuated from that continent! Some of them are in the volunteer army that is fighting with us! Can you say the same to them, when they are risking their lives to reclaim their homeland? Can you tell them that even if the Demon King is defeated, they will never have a homeland to return to?!"

"... I do feel bad for them. I really do, but if we aren't prepared to make sacrifices, we can't win. And Suzuki, aren't you just unhappy with the fact that I want to make weapons from Earth?"

And so, the four creation-minded champions led by Zakkart, who were in agreement with the creation of the weapons, separated themselves from the three battle-minded champions led by Bellwood.

The two groups were prone to argue with one another over various things, and it was always Bellwood who would calm the unyielding, dissatisfied creation-minded champions down, telling them that victory couldn't be achieved without helping each other.

But it seemed that they couldn't put up with it any longer.

Alda and Zantark agreed with the opinions of Bellwood's group, while Vida, Zuruwarn and Ricklent agreed with those of Zakkart's group.

Vida was confident that if she and the other gods did everything in their power, the pollution caused by the weapons could be erased within a few thousand years, or even a few centuries if things went well.

And though those evacuated from that continent deserved pity, the continent was already filled with seas and deserts of poison, and contaminated with forests of monster fungi. Vida believed that they had to give up on the continent to some extent.

However, Alda's side wondered, was it really possible to purify a poison that had never existed in this world before? What if that poison were to combine with the Mana of this world and transform into a new disaster? They advocated that victory was possible without utilizing such a dangerous plan.

The fact that the war had begun leaning in the champions' favor had created room for such arguments to arise.

Meanwhile, Zakkart began creating Earth's modern weapons in order to change the minds of the battle-minded champions and the gods who supported their opinion. To be more precise, he began creating the poison that those weapons would scatter.

He was trying to create a far smaller amount of diluted poison to determine whether it would be possible to purify it with this world's magic and the power of the gods, and if so, how long it would take to do so.

The other creation-minded champions cooperated in this task, while Vida and her companions continued to try and persuade Alda's side to accept this plan.

At this time, the Demon King's army suddenly went on the offensive.

The Demon King separated his army in two and began a large offensive movement with no hesitation to make sacrifices. One of them was a large force that charged at the volunteer army's camp where Bellwood and his companions were, commanded directly by the Demon King himself.

The other was a smaller army that closed in on the weapons manufacture workshop where Zakkart and his companions were, led by the Demon King's close aide.

Bellwood and his companions, alongside the volunteer army, accepted the

challenge of defeating the Demon King that was approaching them. Vida tried to leave in order to help Zakkart and his companions, but Alda and the other gods stopped her.

“Zakkart and the others are champions as well. They will be able to deal with a small army on their own. In fact, they should kill all of the enemies and come here to support us. And shouldn’t we prioritize defeating the Demon King above all else?”

At the time, I thought Alda’s words were right. That’s why... but...

Bellwood and his companions drove away the large army. However, the army had been composed of large numbers of sturdy small-fry and monsters specialized in stamina and defense, designed to hinder the champions. The Demon King leading them was a fake.

Zakkart and his companions had their souls broken by the Demon King who had been disguising himself as a low-Rank monster, and the workshop was destroyed.

“With this, the champions capable of defeating me have perished!” The Demon King Guduranis was said to have made this loud declaration after breaking Zakkart’s soul.

The Demon King had considered Zakkart’s group more powerful than Bellwood’s, and feared them more. He had been worried that the plan that they had made would one day threaten his life.

That was why he had been fixated on defeating Zakkart’s group, despite having to make large sacrifices to do so. He had even destroyed their souls so that they could never be revived.

Vida, Zuruwarn and Ricklent desperately tried to revive them. They planned to piece together the broken fragments of their souls in an attempt to resurrect them.

But Rodcorte had already retrieved the fragments of their souls by then.

“Reviving souls not part of my circle of transmigration system without permission, souls pieced together from broken fragments at that. There is no telling what kind of flaws doing such a thing would cause in the system. If

possible, I wanted to return them to their original world, but I do not have the power to interfere with worlds outside of my jurisdiction. For this reason, I have restored four souls' worth of fragments into a single soul and placed it in my system. This needed a considerable amount of effort, but not as much as fixing unexpected errors and bugs."

The souls of Zakkart and his companions had already gone to a place where Vida couldn't reach them.

"What happened to them is a pity. But for their sake, we will defeat the Demon King Guduranis with our own power and save the world!" Bellwood declared, holding his holy sword high.

After that, events that I don't even want to remember kept happening one after another, didn't they...

In terms of results, Bellwood was victorious. Lambda was saved.

But too many sacrifices had been made.

Bellwood and the other two battle-minded champions survived. However, all of the eleven gods other than Alda and Vida had lost so much power that they had essentially died.

Not a single member of the volunteer army led by Bellwood had survived.

There were numerous regions that remained contaminated, including the continent that the Demon King had made his domain. Many of them remained unpurified even a hundred thousand years later, spreading and becoming known as 'Devil's Nests.'

The surviving people, all of the humans, Elves and Dwarves, numbered less than three thousand.

"Our losses were indeed great. But we're still alive. We have to continue forward. Please cooperate with us, for the sake of the future," said Bellwood, extending his hand. But Vida rejected him.

Time cannot be rewound; no matter how much I regret, what has been lost will never come back. To make up for our losses, I should have taken his hand. Alda wasn't wrong when he said that. But I could no longer trust them.

Wasn't there supposed to be no sacrifices made?

It was true that there was no guarantee that the Demon King would have been defeated if Zakkart's plan had been put into practice. But shouldn't Bellwood have listened to his opinions?

Gunpowder and matchlock weapons, land mines and steam engines – Bellwood had opposed Zakkart at every turn, stopping all of his ideas.

It was true that what Zakkart had in mind was dangerous and would spell disaster for this world if misused. After hearing it, even Vida had countless discussions with him about it, thinking that it would be dangerous to put the plan into practice exactly as he had suggested it.

But even so, she *had* discussed it with him. She hadn't denied him without hearing what he had to say.

And no matter what she did, she couldn't let go of her doubt surrounding the events when the Demon King had closed in.

Didn't Bellwood and Alda abandon Zakkart and his companions on purpose?

Wasn't it possible that they had intentionally allowed themselves to be deceived by the Demon King's trap?

There was no evidence. If someone told her that she was delusional, that would be the end of the discussion. And even Vida thought that it would be ungrateful of her to accuse Bellwood of such a thing, when he had come to Lambda from a completely unrelated world, risked his life and finally defeated the Demon King.

However, she couldn't trust him.

But she distrusted Rodcorte even more. What was important to that god was the souls being reincarnated in the worlds he had jurisdiction over; he probably wasn't interested in anything else. Even with these events occurring, he probably thought nothing more than, "I'm glad the Demon King was defeated."

If the Demon King had told Rodcorte, "I will create as many humans as you want in place of the gods that were originally in this world, so lend me your strength," then perhaps Rodcorte would have accepted. Vida couldn't help but

to think this.

And the loss of Zakkart and the other creation-minded champions was great not only to Vida, but to Lambda as a whole.

After they had fallen, Bellwood was forced to fight a harsh war that was once again tipped in the Demon King's favor. Gods, members of the volunteer army and the refugees that they had been protecting were lost in rapid succession.

And even now, Bellwood and the others were struggling to restore this ruined world. Because their powers were specialized for battle, though they were able to exterminate the monsters left behind by the Demon King, they were nothing more than amateurs when it came to agriculture and manufacturing.

That was exactly why they needed Vida to cooperate with them, but...

Instead of cooperating with them, I made a different decision.

Vida thought of creating her own circle of transmigration system for this world and creating new "people" who could survive even in this world that was overrun by monsters.

She planned to rebuild and restore this world, and reunite with Alda and the other gods.

Alda and Bellwood opposed her as usual, but this was something that she had expected.

They would have acknowledged me if my endeavors paid off. I thought that I had no other way to convince them when words wouldn't reach them.

That was why she didn't listen to the words of Alda and the others. If one asked her whether she wanted to get back at them, she wouldn't have denied it, however.

And then Vida gave birth to numerous new races. She poured Vitality into Zakkart's remains and successfully turned him into an Undead.

She had wanted to fully resurrect him, but her attempts failed thoroughly. It seemed that without the soul at hand or someone who could control death itself, reversing life and death was impossible.

That was why she was only able to create a puppet with fragments of

Zakkart's memories and knowledge, that moved based on the few residual thoughts remaining in his body.

But I don't think he would be angry. He was always saying that whatever can be used should be used, as if it was his favorite phrase.

And so, with the help of the former evil gods who had joined her as subordinate gods, she imitated the circle of reincarnation system left behind by the Demon King, creating her own original system.

Though it did work, it was nothing more than an imitation of the Demon King's system that was itself an imitation of Rodcorte's system, so bugs would constantly appear. It was a dangerous product that she couldn't take her eyes off.

Vida was forced to realize that no matter how unpleasant Rodcorte was, he was a specialist when it came to this field.

But I didn't want to give up. I looked for more help. I created new races with those who cooperated with me, and loaded the souls of the new children onto my system.

Vida thought that the system needed experience to improve. Though it would cause them discomfort at first, it was necessary for the children she had created to turn the wheels of the system and be born anew.

But fortunately, at this point in time, the incomplete system was working well, considering that it was incomplete.

The number of children given birth to by Vida was steadily increasing as well.

Maybe it's because I imitated the Demon King's system, but my children are stronger and live longer than I expected, and some of them undergo large changes in appearance when their Rank increases. But I always intended to produce stronger children, so I thought that it was fine, didn't I?

Things were not fine. It was when Alda and the champions attacked her that she realized that she should have sat at a table and discussed things with Alda and the others sooner.

Bellwood and the other champions should have reached the ends of their

lifespans long ago, but Alda had deemed them to be necessary for this world and preserved their youth.

Alda led the subordinate gods and followers who now supported him after their masters had perished or fallen into slumber, while Vida led the gods allied with her and the children she had given birth to. The two of them formed two separate groups that fought against each other.

Vida was defeated. In the end, her fate was determined by the fact that her enemy had champions on his side while she did not.

And the city for her children that had been created using Zakkart's knowledge was destroyed. Vida's divinity was stolen from her by Alda... Her authority as a goddess was revoked, and she suffered a deep wound.

Even so, she mustered all of her remaining strength, created a tall mountain range to the south of the Bahn Gaia continent and led her remaining children to take shelter there. After that, she collapsed and fell into a slumber.

I wonder how much time has passed since then?

Ten thousand years, twenty thousand years or perhaps even a hundred thousand years. She didn't know. Her power had failed to return, to the point that she couldn't tell.

As Vida's equal, Alda shouldn't have had the power to inflict an irreparable wound on her, but it seemed that he and his followers had brought her followers, the source of her power as a goddess... the ones who offered her prayers, to ruin by preventing them from growing in number.

Currently, all of the gods who had cooperated with Vida had fallen into slumber after having their divinity taken from them, or were worshipped just enough to lie dormant. Vida didn't know whether Talos and the others were unharmed or not. Vampires were strong among Vida's children; there was no small number of them who had fallen to the temptations of those who still tormented this world.

Why did things turn out this way? Why has Alda continued to do such harsh, cruel things?

The Demon King no longer exists, and the gods that were part of his army

betrayed him and became our allies. They were doing their best to make up for what they did. So why do you still hate them? The one who tore their chance to atone into pieces is you. The one who teaches that criminals should atone for their wrongdoings, and that they are no longer criminals once they have finished atoning, is you.

Why do you hate the knowledge and technology from Earth so much? It's thanks to none other than the champions we summoned from that world, Earth, that we even still exist.

Why do you criticize my endeavors so much? The one who couldn't trust Rodcorte, the one who doubted him, is you.

Why do you try to destroy my children? Why haven't you noticed that the truly evil gods have taken advantage of that and built a nest inside your pocket?

At this rate, everyone will become exhausted and only destruction will await us, so why?

I don't understand, I don't understand, I don't understand.

At that moment, a certain premonition crossed Vida's mind. Perhaps it was caused by Zakkart's remains that were resting next to her, or a little of her power had been restored, or perhaps Ricklent and Zuruwarn were lending her some of their power from wherever they were gathering it. She didn't know. But it was a premonition nonetheless.

He will come back. I don't know why, but Zakkart... Keisuke will come back to this world!

The soul that had been formed when Rodcorte forcibly pieced together the broken fragments of the four champions' souls, the one that had been released into his system, would return to Lambda.

But...

In her premonition, Vida could see that he would be reincarnated into tragic circumstances and that he would end his own life, tormented by his own powerlessness. All of this would be instigated by Rodcorte.

"I can't let that happen."

This wasn't something that she could overlook.

He currently didn't have even fragments of memories from the past. His personality was completely different as well. But Vida couldn't abandon him.

Now that she thought about it, she hadn't been able to do anything for Keisuke and the others. She hadn't been able to repay them for anything.

So, to make up for it, she would repay them just a little bit now.

With this in mind, Vida sent several Divine Messages. She was worried that there wouldn't be anyone left to hear her voice, but it seemed that the Divine Messages had been delivered.

And the moment her premonition became reality, Vida mustered all of her power. Her hand was so powerless that her heart felt as if it would break from how pathetic she was, but even so, she extended it.

She supported the soul that had fallen into this world with her hand and scooped it up. As she did so, she noticed that three troublesome curses had been placed upon it.

“Rodcorte...!”

Vida couldn't undo the curses. But before she could feel disappointed, she noticed something peculiar about the soul.

She noticed that the soul was imbued with the Mana of an attribute that didn't exist in Lambda and yet was somehow familiar, and that the soul had an unusually large amount of blank space.

“I see, it has four champions' worth of blank space. And because Rodcorte forcibly put the pieces together, it created even more blank space. Even so, there is simply too much blank space, I have to fill it with power so that he isn't defeated by the curses... ah?”

To begin with, Vida tried to place the power of the life attribute that she had once ruled over into the soul. However, the peculiar Mana that the soul had already been imbued with engulfed that power and absorbed it.

“H-how strange. I wonder if it's because my power has waned. Well then, my divine protection... This isn't working, either?!”

When she tried to bestow it her divine protection, that was quickly engulfed as well. She had been aware that divine protections were difficult to bestow upon those who didn't believe in the god granting the divine protection, but the divine protection had been engulfed. Just what could this mean?

“Umm... Well then, what should I do?”

There were few things Vida was capable of doing now. She had previously been able to grant special powers and cheat-like abilities, but she didn't have the power to do that now. If she pushed herself she might be able to grant the soul a single power, but it would be terrible to see it being engulfed as well.

“Alright, let's do this!”

Vida scooped up the tiny amount of residual thoughts that were left in Zakkart's remains. In those residual thoughts, she wrapped some of her own blood that was running from her wound.

And then she added these to the soul. Perhaps because they had once been a part of the same soul, this time, they unified with the soul without any interference from the Mana.

“With this, this soul has received my blessing. Its unhappy destiny should become a little better. And though his growth may face walls, it won't face any limits. It will become easier for new Jobs to appear, and it should affect the people around him, too. Well, the bad luck in his future will get stronger, though. But this Mana, I've felt it somewhere before... No, it can't be.”

And then Vida released the soul into the system that she had created herself. With his soul's compatibility, he would be born as either a Vampire or a Dhampir. And since most Vampires didn't make children normally now, it was likely that he would be born as a Dhampir.

He might be born into even harsher and crueler circumstances than if Vida hadn't interfered at all.

“Now, I just need everyone to hear my Divine Messages and make their move... I'm sorry that this is all I can do for you.”

You risked your lives to save a world you had no connection to and even had your souls broken. I'm sorry that this is all I can do.

If possible, I want you to love this world.

The air, the wind, the earth, the greenery, the animals, the people, I want you to love everything.

I'm sorry that I'm burdening you with more expectations after I've relied on you so much already.

And then, Vida's consciousness sank into slumber once more.

Chapter 66: The bell signaling the end sounds clear, but it sounds unpleasant to a god

About four months had passed since the pillaging of the farming villages, and it was now well into summer. It was a season where the air conditioning of Demon Lights that absorbed heat from their surroundings was absolutely essential.

Vandalieu, having now turned six years old, was spending his time busily in Talosheim. Establishing systems for agriculture and textile production was a great deal of work.

First, the crops that he had stolen along with their entire fields were growing well... too well. Since the climate would change greatly from crossing the mountain range, he had first planned to use death-attribute magic to prevent the crops from dying while performing selective breeding.

However, the crops quickly adapted to Talosheim's soil. It was likely that because they had been growing in the soil of a former Devil's Nest, they were compatible with the soil of Talosheim, which was a semi-Devil's Nest.

Wheat could be harvested three months after being planted, immediately eliminating the impending shortage of grain in Talosheim.

The other vegetables were able to be harvested earlier than normal as well... though for some reason, they kept producing more flowers without wilting and using their roots as legs to move around. It seemed that the cause of this was the use of Fertilization on unused monster parts to produce fertilizer and the addition of Vandalieu's Mana.

"Well, I suppose it's fine." Vandalieu had no complaints, as the crops they produced were good quality and they didn't have to be constantly tended to like normal crops.

But I do wish that they would stop attacking me as if to say, "Have a taste of me," whenever I go to look at them. No matter how good quality they are, onions were harsh to eat raw. And please stop throwing tomatoes at me. There isn't a festival for that in our nation.

"Stopping them all is quite difficult," Vandalieu complained as he used his arms that had been branched and extended with Spirit Form Transformation to catch and collect the produce that the monster plants were picking off themselves and throwing at him.

This repeated itself numerous times before they finally stopped.

It seemed that plants that threw their own fruits were dangerous. The wheat, root crops and potatoes hadn't turned into monsters yet.

On the other hand, the production of textiles had gone well up to a certain point.

"Get up."

With the same principle that he applied in creating Wood Golems, Vandalieu was able to manipulate the raw materials with Golem Transmutation. Of course, he hadn't been able to simply been able to produce textiles straight from the plant, but he had successfully extracted fibers and created threads after boiling and softening them.

He had been able to create linen with plants from Borkus's Sub-Dragon Dungeon. He had also produced fluffy, warm wool similar to sheep's wool from the belly fur of Needle Wolves and something similar to silk from Cemetery Bees.

Cemetery Bees didn't make cocoons that completely surrounded their pupae as the bees and hornets of Earth did. However, when larvae turned into pupae, they placed lids over the chambers containing the pupae.

The Cemetery Bees created those lids with threads. They were lids large enough to cover chambers containing pupae that would become thirty-centimeter-long adults. He was able to harvest slightly more silk than silkworm cocoons would yield.

Of course, the lids would be broken once the Cemetery bees emerged from

the chambers. But for Vandalieu, who could even create boards using sawdust, turning the broken lids into Golems, restoring them to their original shape and creating threads from them wasn't a difficult task.

Vandalieu named this slightly honey-colored silk 'Honey Silk'.

"Well, it's only making threads and cloth that's going well, though."

The spinning-wheel Golems could create threads. With the looms, which were also Golems, cloth wasn't a problem, either. As for dyes, by boiling down fallen leaves and branches of Immortal Treants, he had access to numerous colors.

The resulting cloth was of excellent quality even in Eleanora's eyes; if it were to be taken to the Commerce Guild, the merchants would be flooding in to buy it, but... In the end, it was just cloth, nothing more.

They weren't clothes.

"Making clothes and accessories is difficult, isn't it?" Vandalieu remarked.

"Well, I suppose so..." Zadiris agreed.

"I-if it's loincloths, even I can make them," said Vigaró.

"No, those don't need to be sewed, do they?" Saria pointed out.

"If my wife was here, she would be able to tailor simple clothes," said Sam.

"Your daughters might somehow manage..." said Borkus.

Everyone lacked the experience and knowledge to tailor clothes from cloth. Cloth was a valuable item that they almost never got their hands on, so most of their clothes were made from leather and fur. The Undead Titans of Talosheim hadn't had contact with the outside world for a long time; they hadn't had the time to be concerned about their attire.

Though there were some who could do basic sewing, like Rita and Saria, there were no needles or craftsmen capable of making clothes from scratch.

Vandalieu wasn't much better; the only knowledge he had was what he had learned in home economics classes at school. If he remembered those times, he might be able to make something like an apron.

Even the researchers who researched the textiles of Origin weren't experts in

creating clothes from the textiles.

“Well, I suppose if I acquire skills, I’ll be able to make all kinds of things,” said Vandalieu.

With skills, he might be able to somehow figure out how to make the clothes he had seen on Earth.

In the end, it was decided that he would go through trial and error with everyone for other things, such as kantou^[1].

『You have acquired the Farming and Clothing skills!』

There were many spirits lined up in front of Vandalieu, who was sitting on the throne in the audience room.

They were the spirits that had been inside the Undead expedition army that attacked Balcheburg. They had taken over four months to return.

However, those present here were those whose personalities hadn’t completely collapsed due to the long time since their second deaths and the journey back, around only a hundred of them. It seemed that since they didn’t count as Vandalieu’s followers, four months passing without death-attribute magic protecting their spirit forms had caused most of them to be reduced to letting out wordless groans.

“Well done, everyone. With this, I will forgive you for the sin of attacking Talosheim,” Vandalieu declared.

The spirits cheered. They felt happy from the bottom of their hearts at the fact that they would formally be accepted as part of those under Vandalieu’s command.

“Now then, General Chezare. Please show them the way,” Vandalieu ordered.

“Yes... Your Majesty.” As Chezare appeared, wearing a military uniform with decorations placed proudly on his chest, the spirits reacted in two different ways.

The great majority of them cheered at being reunited with their former boss, while a small number of them had their already-collapsed faces collapsed

further with an expression of surprise.

“Ch-Chezare! You’re the general?!” said Langil Mauvid, the head of the smaller group.

Chezare had been the second-in-command due to having born in one of the Empire’s vassal nations, so his unexpected promotion caused Mauvid’s eyes to open so wide that his eyeballs looked as if they would fall from his sockets.

Chezare chuckled in response to Mauvid’s words. “Well, well, if it isn’t the former supreme commander, Mauvid-dono. It has been a while.”

“What is the meaning of this, Chezare! You were an enemy of Vandalieu-sama, just like me! So why have you become the general?!” Mauvid demanded.

“Fufufu, the Eclipse King is a forgiving person,” said Chezare. “He has acknowledged my work and bestowed me with decorations as well as the position of general.”

“How could this be?!”

Though Mauvid seemed unable to believe it, Chezare had in fact been very useful.

Chezare hadn’t been a super-capable commander, nor had he possessed unrivaled fighting strength. However, his impressive ability when it came to office work had been preserved even after becoming an Undead. He knew how to organize an army and its supplies, and was knowledgeable about the structure of each fort in the Mirg shield-nation as well as the tactics that each nation employed.

He was also quite well-informed in things outside of military business, such as law and commerce. He would be an important capable person... dead person [\[2\]](#) for Vandalieu from now on.

Borkus was strong, reliable and trustworthy, but fundamentally unable to do deskwork.

“Now then, proud soldiers of His Majesty! His Majesty shall grant you new bodies! You will fight alongside the Black Bull Knights’ Order and myself, for the sake of the Eclipse King!” Chezare declared.

Vandalieu hadn't included the Black Bull Knights' Order in the disposable army. He was having them act as instructors to teach the Titans and Ghouls how to conduct large-scale battles effectively.

And since they were knights, they were able to do deskwork even if not on the same level as Chezare, so they would be handy to have around from now on.

Incidentally, Vandalieu had kept Flark, Gennie and Messara, the three who had been Riley's slaves, because each of them had their uses. Their personal histories were what they were, so he had to be careful with them, but they were obedient for now.

The spirits of the former expedition army grew even more excited. Having heard that Chezare was the general and that the Black Bull Knights' Order still remained, it seemed that they had gained hope for their future lives(?).

"I-I will not accept this! I will not accept you as the general!" Mauvid shouted, but in the next moment, his voice wavered.

"So are you saying that you are dissatisfied with my choice?" asked Vandalieu.

The air in the audience chamber changed as all of the spirits directed angry glares at Mauvid, as if they were looking at their sworn enemy.

"Hyih! N-no, I was simply –"

"I appointed Chezare as my general and bestowed him decorations. Everything was done through my authority and will. If you are dissatisfied with that, that means that you are dissatisfied with me, doesn't it?"

"Th-that is – I-I apologize! Please forgive me for my inappropriate words!" Mauvid lowered his head, but Vandalieu remained indifferent, not speaking any words of forgiveness.

Chezare extended Mauvid a helping hand. "My apologies, Your Majesty. Please forgive my subordinate for his insolence."

Mauvid's spirit trembled in response to Chezare's sneering voice, but he was ignored.

"Are you sure you want to take him as your subordinate?" Vandalieu asked.

“It sounds like it would be troublesome.”

“Of course,” Chezare replied. “Making use of the useless is also one of the duties of those who stand at the top.”

“... I understand. I’ll leave the personnel affairs to you, Chezare.”

“Haha, I am grateful and happy. Now then, stand! You will now start again as a private!”

The former-General Mauvid’s spirit was taken away by Chezare and his subordinates. As a spirit, he couldn’t hide his true emotions, so he was wearing an incredibly furious expression, but it was simply humorous.

The large number of spirits of those born in the Mirg shield-nation went with them, followed by the spirits of those from the Amid Empire who were wearing pitiful expressions. Many of them were to become Living Armors and Cursed Carriages.

Incidentally, the rest of the spirits whose personalities had collapsed were turned into Golems and Cursed Weapons.

Either way, Vandalieu couldn’t avoid preparing bodies for them. He was unable to turn them into Astral-type Undead like Ghosts and Wraiths that consisted entirely of spirit form.

Before, the reason for this was that Vandalieu’s Death-Attribute Magic skill’s level was simply too low, but the problem with his ability had now been solved. The problem now was the spirits that he was using as materials.

To turn spirits into Astral-type Undead, the spirit must possess extraordinary emotions of defeat. Without anger, hatred, regret and grief, they cannot become Undead.

Due to the effects of Death-Attribute Charm, those killed by Vandalieu felt happiness at having been killed. Rather than speak words of hatred, they would bow their heads and say, “Please allow us to repay you for the favor you have done in killing us.”

They were impossible to turn into Undead consisting only of spirit form.

Leaving that aside.

“... Keeping up with this farce is tiring,” said Vandalieu.

It was necessary, but not very interesting.

The earlier conversation was necessary to have all the spirits gather under Chezare. If the hierarchy wasn't clearly established in front of everyone, things might be fine when Vandalieu was around, but there would be no telling what would happen if he went to the Orbaume Kingdom. Though the spirits of those born in the Empire were few in number, Vandalieu needed to make them understand the chain of command.

Factional disputes and having members of the group drag each other down like in the Demon King's army would simply be troublesome. Perhaps it would have been best for Vandalieu to break Mauvid's soul, but if he used his last resort right from the beginning and something were to happen after that, he would have been in trouble.

That final resort would be used if Mauvid did something completely unforgiveable... Vandalieu could only pray that he was smart enough to express his dissatisfaction through no more than complaining to his superiors during his spare time.

“Now then, Riley and Gordan, step forward,” said Vandalieu, calling out to the two remaining spirits.

“You called me, God?” Gordan's expression was that of a lunatic.

“Heheh, heheheh.” Riley approached with twisted laughter.

Certain feelings welled up within Vandalieu as he looked at them.

Vandalieu gave a small cough and forced himself to ignore the taste of blood mixed with his saliva as he continued speaking. “I have a favor to ask of the two of you.”

Gordan and Riley gave a respectful bow.

“Please instruct me as you wish,” said Gordan. “I offer you all that I have.”

“Tell me to do whatever you want, hihi, my spear, as long as I have my spear, I can kill anyone,” said Riley.

Ah, it was really impossible.

“Be destroyed.”

Vandalieu used Spirit Form Transformation on both of his arms and plunged one into each of Riley and Gordan’s spirits. The two of them screamed and froze in astonishment.

“GYAAAHAH! W-what are you, why?!”

“GUAAAAAAH! G-God! Why, you said that you would forgive, forgive my sins – OOGYAGAGAAH!

“... Yes, I did forgive you for your sins ‘this time.’ But I haven’t forgiven you for what you did to my mother.”

As their faces twisted in despair and agony, Vandalieu swallowed the mixture of saliva and blood in his mouth as he continued speaking. “I did consider it. I thought about enduring it. I did my best. But in the end, it’s impossible.”

“AAAAAH, i-i-it wasn’t my FAAAUUULT!” Riley screamed.

“I-I, simply obeyed my teachings!” Gordan gasped.

“I understand that,” said Vandalieu. “I’ve known for a long time that you aren’t to blame.”

Riley wasn’t at fault. He was simply an adventurer. Joining the extermination force to wipe out the Ghouls in the Devil’s Nest forest, joining this expedition army, using his criminal slaves as shields, capturing and handing over a woman who had given birth to a Dhampir to religious fanatics, none of it was his fault.

None of them were crimes in the society that he had lived in. They were deeds that were not punishable by law.

The fact that he made deals with Vampires was the one serious crime that would be worthy of capital punishment, but it wasn’t as if Vandalieu was obligated to execute him in place of the Empire and Mirg shield-nation.

Gordan wasn’t at fault, either. He had simply followed Alda’s doctrine and exterminated Vampires and those obeying them.

Trying to kill a Dhampir, using whips and brands to inflict gruesome torture on a woman who had given birth to that Dhampir and making a show of burning her alive in public, he couldn’t be blamed for any of these.

In fact, these were good acts that deserved praise from the people of the Empire and its vassal nations.

Indeed, the society he had belonged in and his position had simply been different to Vandalieu's.

An Undead Gordan and Riley would be useful. They didn't have bodies, but if Vandalieu provided them with new ones, they would become capable fighters.

That was why he had thought about various things and tried to endure his emotions for four months, but... it was impossible.

"It's so impossible that my Status Effect Resistance skill's level has increased because of the stress it's caused me," said Vandalieu. "Just by thinking about forgiving you, a hole opened in my stomach and I even threw up a little blood earlier."

"I-it cannot be...!"

"AGEGAAHGAGAGAGAGAH!"

When Vandalieu stopped to think about it, it was only natural that the perception of good and evil would differ in different societies and positions. He remembered that even on Earth and in Origin, those in different societies and positions killing each other was something that happened every day.

So then, was there a need for Vandalieu to try to endure? Perhaps if he was planning to enlighten the people of Lambda with some kind of knowledge, then enduring it might be best. He should forgive these two.

But what Vandalieu wanted to do was pursue his own happiness. He had no intention of going through the trouble of enlightening the world in a self-sacrificing way.

If forgiving them and accepting them was impossible, there were other options such as using them as Golems, burying them somewhere or releasing them. But the more Vandalieu thought about these options, the more they became out of the question.

Riley and Gordan were far more dangerous than Orbie, the hunter who had ratted out Darcia, whose spirit Vandalieu had abandoned underground in the

forest near Evbejia. If he abandoned their souls in random places and they were recovered by Rodcorte, Alda, Yupeon or Hihiryushukaka, it was possible that Vandalieu would have to face them again.

That would still be fine, but it was also possible that they would cause harm to everyone from some faraway place where Vandalieu couldn't see them.

Vandalieu didn't know what gods were capable of. However, he believed that gods were malicious. He knew how cruel and vicious they were.

As Gordan had used the skill called Familiar Spirit Descent, a skill that allowed what would be called an angel on Earth to possess his body, there was no doubt that Alda had taken notice of him.

That was why Vandalieu couldn't take that risk.

"And most importantly, I hate you," he said.

"GYAAAAAH!"

Gordan and Riley's unpleasant screams that sounded like shards of glass grinding against each other stopped with a clear, cracking sound.

Their spirits collapsed, and the fragments of their souls that resembled particles of light began to fade away.

The moment he saw this, Vandalieu felt joy from the bottom of his heart. The exhilarating, cool, refreshing feeling of having made the world a little cleaner that he had felt when he had broken Sercrent's soul.

"— Now then. Five enemies left to take revenge on."

Heinz and his companions, Earl Thomas Palpapek and the Pure-breed Vampire Gubamon. Even though he had omitted Alda and Yupeon, as he wasn't sure whether the gods existed in a place he could kill them, this was quite a prominent list of enemies.

Vandalieu had a long road ahead of him.

"Well then, a toast to celebrate our victory in this war," said Vandalieu.

"To our victory!"

There had already been a celebration after they had returned from destroying the cultivated land, but now that everything is over, a new victory party was being held.

Four months ago, the main feature had been hamburgers consisting of Giga eggs, mince made from a combination of dinosaur and Orc meat, and the mountains of hard bread that the expedition army had been using as food.

It was before onions had been harvested, so Vandalieu had felt like there was something missing, but everyone had enjoyed them. It seemed that cooking with minced meat hadn't been invented yet.

And the main feature today was the contents of the bowls of everyone present... Ramen.

"This resembles udon and pasta, but it is completely different, isn't it?" Zadiris remarked.

"Delicious! It's so delicious!" said Borkus.

Vandalieu had finally succeeded in creating the 'lye water' that was crucial for producing the distinct texture of the noodles in ramen. With this, he just needed to make noodle-making machines and come up with something for the tare sauce and dashi to make ramen.

It probably couldn't compare to the taste of ramen made by famous shops that had long lines of customers on Earth, but Vandalieu did think that it was better than the instant noodles that he had eaten before.

"The noodles are good, but the soup is really delicious. Van, how did you make this?" asked Basdia.

"I took the time to slowly produce dashi from dinosaur bones," said Vandalieu.

The kyoukotsu^[3] ramen had dashi resembling dashi made from chicken bones, but with a richer flavor. Incidentally, carnivorous dinosaur bones produced a peculiar flavor while herbivorous dinosaur bones produced a light aftertaste. Plesiosaur bones produced a strangely fish-like flavor.

"Bocchan, you've been rewarded for the hard effort and years of research!"

said Saria.

“Umm, I suppose it’s been around three years,” said Rita. “Lye water is harder to make than a disease, isn’t it?”

“Rita, I don’t know about putting it that way,” said Vandalieu.

“Bocchan, I think this ramen lacks ketchup!” said Saria.

“... You make good use of it, don’t you, Saria?”

“King, what about the Tofu?”

“Braga, putting tofu in ramen would be quite daring.”

“Fugogoh, zubabababababugogoh!”

“Gorba, I have no idea what you’re saying.”

There was plenty for additional helpings, but everyone was eating so much that Vandalieu was starting to feel uneasy.

“Umm, Van-sama,” said Tarea. “Even if you do not do that, we can –”

“Well, this is training as well,” said Vandalieu.

In the kitchen, there were several Vandalieus floating in the air, busily making ramen.

Vandalieu’s spirit, which had left his body with Out-of-body Experience, had split into multiple. With Materialization used on both arms, as well as the use of the Parallel Thought Processing and Long-distance Control skills, he was doing multiple people’s worth of cooking.

“The preparations have all been done, so all that’s really left to do is cooking the noodles, isn’t there?”

“And then they just need to be served in bowls.”

“The sherbet for dessert is ready to be served as well.”

“... Umm, it would be helpful if you could use only one person to talk,” said Eleanora.

“Hmm? Eleanora, I’m just one person, you know?” said all three Vandalieus at once.

Vandalieu then realized that when he was working like this, to others, it appeared that there were many of him.

For him, it didn't feel much different from increasing his number of heads, however. Each Vandalieu was Vandalieu, and their memories and consciousness was unified.

They didn't possess independent wills and egos, nor did they have conversations among themselves.

"There are so many Van-samas... Since there are so many, it should alright for me to take one away, isn't it?"

"No, there are limits on the distance they can be separated from me, so please don't do that, Tarea."

Currently, a few dozen meters was the limit at which Vandalieu's clones could be maintained away from the main body containing his soul. This distance would probably increase if his Long-distance Control skill leveled up.

It would be perfect for creating alibis in murder cases... Though Vandalieu could only imagine a future where a fierce-looking detective would say, "Since you can do this, it would have been possible for you to commit the crime." Perhaps he was just too pessimistic.

"I suppose it's time to hand out the sherbet," said Vandalieu.

"Yay, sherbet!"

"Yay!"

The youngsters, Pauvina, Bilde's daughter Varbie and Basdia's daughter Jadal, showed excitement as the dessert arrived.

Rapiégage showed her excitement as well, though it was a little questionable as to whether she could be put in the same group as the others.

In any case, time passed by peacefully in Talosheim during Vandalieu's sixth summer.

『The levels of the Status Effect Resistance, Strengthen Followers, Soul Break, God Slayer, Cooking, Long-distance Control, Spirit Form, Parallel Thought Processing and Materialization skills have increased!』

In Rodcorte's personal Divine Realm, Rodcorte had just finished maintenance on the circle of transmigration system. Though he called it maintenance, he was actually just having a look to see whether any problems had occurred.

His system was so perfect that even if there were some small problems, the system would solve them on its own.

Suddenly, it happened, just as he was wondering whether one of the people reincarnated on Origin had died yet, and whether he should check if someone had made contact with Vandalieu in Lambda just in case.

An alarm started ringing in the circle of transmigration system.

"What? Impossible, it was working without any problems until a moment ago... A soul has been extinguished?!"

Astonished at this major incident that hadn't occurred in over a hundred thousand years, Rodcorte quickly adjusted the system.

The extinguishing of even a single soul would have large effects on the system. If nothing was done, the extinguishing of a soul that is supposed to be reincarnated would cause a baby to be born without a soul.

It would be different from a mere stillbirth. Without a soul, the baby's brain would still function as normal and its heart would still beat. It would develop, but in the process, a soul not passing through the circle of transmigration would enter it and fuse with the body, being reincarnated on its own and causing unexpected problems.

The system would place another soul to replace the extinguished soul in the now-empty space where it was supposed to be reincarnated. However, doing that would produce another soulless baby.

This would occur repeatedly, causing a serious system error.

If left alone, there would be frequent cases of babies with memories of their previous lives or people born with special abilities.

"Muh, there are two extinguished souls."

Rodcorte investigated the souls while taking emergency measures.

The soul of the human called Bormack Gordan wasn't a problem. Alda had sent a request to turn him into a heroic spirit after his death, so his soul had already been removed from the system. Alda would grieve over it, but the extinguishing of this soul would have no direct effect on the system.

However, the extinguishing of the human called Riley had already caused damage to the system.

"Just what has happened? Has the Demon King been resurrected?"

Because their souls had been extinguished, Rodcorte couldn't look at the records of Riley and Gordan. With no other options, he looked at the records from those close to them.

The records from the soldiers and the priest-warriors led by Gordan before they became Undead, as well as from the soldiers and adventurers in Balcheburg.

And then Rodcorte arrived at an astonishing truth.

"This is... They became Undead. And that Amamiya Hiroto, Vandalieu, was the cause of it."

Rodcorte had been aware that Undead could be made with death-attribute magic, but what he saw was on a larger scale than he had hypothesized would be possible. That alone wasn't surprising, but...

"What is the meaning of this? How does he possess such power while under the effects of my curses? He is not as powerful as when he turned into an Undead in Origin, but at this rate, he might come close to it. And this amount of Mana exceeds the limit that mortals are allowed to possess."

Leaving his Experience Points aside, Rodcorte had expected that Vandalieu wouldn't be able to gain any Jobs, but now he realized that there were large loopholes in the curses he had made.

They were holes caused by Rodcorte's lack of interest in Lambda's system of Jobs and skills. On top of this, the curses were large 'negatives' that produced even more blank space in Vandalieu's soul, an even greater 'empty frame.' Vandalieu possessed even more Mana than he had in Origin.

But what was an even greater problem than his Jobs and Mana was the fact that he had broken souls.

“To think that Vandalieu would possess powers with the same properties as the Demon King’s... This is not good...”

If Vandalieu kept breaking dozens, hundreds of souls, this alone could inflict massive damage upon the system. It wouldn’t collapse, but it would likely produce too many defects to count.

If Vandalieu fell into a state of despair and broke tens of thousands of souls within a short time period, reincarnation would no longer happen in Lambda. New infants wouldn’t be born, and it would become a world of the dead.

“This requires swift action, but...”

The actions Rodcorte could take were limited. He couldn’t do something as dangerous as descending onto the world himself. Even if he asked Alda to descend himself, considering the current state of the world, he was very unsure as to whether Alda could be relied on. And letting him know about his current endeavor of reincarnating more people in Lambda from Origin would be unwise.

Even if he wanted to interfere with the system directly and create Familiar Spirits directly under his control from exceptional souls, such exceptional souls were not readily available.

Was there no choice but to wait for one of those reincarnated in Origin to die?

“There is no other choice... Fortunately, either there is a limit to how many souls he can break, or he has imposed some rules upon himself. If that were not the case, he would have broken more souls than two by now. I shall wait until someone comes from Origin.”

“Mom, Messara told me that I can do a lot of things if I make contracts with the Evil God of Bone Fangs, the Evil God of Obscene Skin, the Evil God of Degenerate Flesh and the Evil God of Entrails,” said Vandalieu.

“Umm, Vandalieu? I think it might be dangerous to make contracts with gods like that.”

“You’re right. I don’t have any leads on gods that are in charge of blood, either. Well then, shall we go with a forbidden spell to create a Homunculus? I’d need to search the forbidden archives of a Mages’ Guild, so it’s still out of my reach, though.”

“Umm, but it’s said that those who do that receive Alda’s divine punishment...”

“Hmm, so it comes down to the resurrection device after all. But I can’t fix it yet.”

Around the same time, Vandalieu was making an attempt to make straw paper while discussing Darcia’s resurrection with her.

『You have acquired the ‘Taboo Name’ Title!』

“What’s this?”

Vandalieu got something new, but he didn’t know what it meant, so he left it alone.

End of Volume 3

- **Name:** Vandalieu
- **Race:** Dhampir (Dark Elf)
- **Age:** 6 years old
- **Title:**【Ghoul King】,【Eclipse King】,【Taboo Name】(NEW!)
- **Job:** Venom Fist User
- **Level:** 9
- **Job history:** Death-Attribute Mage, Golem Transmuter, Undead Tamer, Soul Breaker
- **Attributes:**
 - Vitality: 168
 - Mana: 328,119,451

- Strength: 117
- Agility: 114
- Stamina: 108
- Intelligence: 758

- **Passive skills:**

- Superhuman Strength: Level 2
- Rapid Healing: Level 3
- Death-Attribute Magic: Level 5
- Status Effect Resistance: Level 7 (LEVEL UP!)
- Magic Resistance: Level 1
- Dark Vision
- Mental Corruption: Level 10
- Death-Attribute Charm: Level 6
- Chant Revocation: Level 4
- Strengthen Followers: Level 8 (LEVEL UP!)
- Automatic Mana Recovery: Level 3
- Strengthen Subordinates: Level 4
- Venom Secretion (Claws, Fangs, Tongue): Level 1

- **Active skills:**

- Bloodsucking: Level 6
- Surpass Limits: Level 5
- Golem Transmutation: Level 6
- No-Attribute Magic: Level 4
- Mana Control: Level 4
- Spirit Form: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
- Carpentry: Level 4
- Engineering: Level 3
- Cooking: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Alchemy: Level 3
- Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 5
- Soul Break: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
- Multi-Cast: Level 4
- Long-distance Control: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
- Surgery: Level 1

- Parallel Thought Processing: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Materialization: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Coordination: Level 1
- High-speed Thought Processing: Level 2
- Commanding: Level 1
- Farming: Level 2 (NEW!)
- Clothing: Level 1 (NEW!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - God Slayer: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Curses**
 - Experience gained in previous life not carried over
 - Cannot learn existing jobs
 - Unable to gain experience independently

Title explanation:

【Taboo Name】

When beings who possess a certain amount of influence acknowledge someone while taking care not to give that person a Title, that person gains this Title.

In Vandalieu's case, he gained this Title because Alda and his subordinates, Marshukzarl, the Emperor of the Amid Empire, and the three Pure-breed Vampires were careful to not give Vandalieu a Title.

It doesn't have any concrete effects, but it shows that one is feared at least on a national level, and possibly even feared by the gods.

Because of this, someone possessing this Title is often interpreted as that person being an extremely dangerous individual.

When those who were being careful not to allow the bearer of this Title to gain a Title stop doing so, and a suitable Title is given, this Title disappears.

1. Simple clothing consisting of a large piece of cloth with a hole for the head.
2. This is kind of a joke in Japanese where 人材/jinzai, the Japanese word for “capable person”, has its first kanji replaced with 死 meaning “dead”.
3. 豚骨/tonkotsu is made from “pig bone” which is what the kanji means. 恐骨/kyoukotsu is short for 恐竜骨, “dinosaur bone”.

V3 Character Summary Page

Vandaleu

Our main character, who is now six years old. His personality hasn't changed. However, it is now clear that he prefers ketchup over mayonnaise.

He became a king before becoming a nobleman, but he believes he needs to work hard now that he is the king, so he multiplies his heads and arms to complete his work quickly and lives life just as he did before.

Talosheim has already become his third home. He is trying to set up environmentally-friendly Golem factories for the manufacturing of processed food, flavorings, straw paper, clothes and soap.

He is doing this to increase the quality of life for Talosheim's inhabitants, but he is also doing it to produce future commercial products and tourism features.

Recently, he has been thinking about taking water from the waterways and making pools, wondering if making swimsuits should come first. Chezare, who has recently become his subordinate, presses him to create a currency and a national flag. His days are fulfilling.

Going against the assumptions of Alda, the marshal, the Pure-breed Vampires and the Emperor, he plans on finally journeying to the Orbaume Kingdom next year.

He is actually made from a combination of the souls of four champions, including Zakkart, whose souls were broken a hundred thousand years ago. But as he doesn't have his former memories of the power of the champions, he isn't aware of this. It was a hundred thousand years ago, after all.

Incidentally, if the current Vandaleu's fighting abilities were to be evaluated using the Adventurers' Guild's system... without any magic, he

would be considered to be in the upper D-class.

If using only no-attribute magic, C-class.

If he used death-attribute magic as well, B-class (As death-attribute magic is still an unknown form of magic).

If he were to lead his Undead and Golems and spread disease, he would be equivalent to S-class.

However, he is more suited to fighting large groups of enemies of moderate strength rather than fighting a single, tremendously powerful enemy.

He would also struggle against an enemy who comes at him with a single attack that he has poured everything into. If this enemy has trustworthy allies to back him up, Vandalieu wouldn't be able to avoid being at a disadvantage.

Pauvina

A half-Noble Orc girl who will turn three years old this year. However, her size has already surpassed the six-year-old Vandalieu by a large margin.

Her Status is more like a human's, as she has a Job and no Rank. However, she could be considered equivalent to a Beast-person, a race created by Vida.

She gets along well with Rapiécage and the other children, acting as something of an onee-san to them.

She has been given an iron mace by Vandalieu, so she doesn't skip her daily training with Club Technique. She is the kind of little girl who beats her enemies to death.

It also seems that she has graduated from throwing Vandalieu into the air.

With her current fighting strength, she would easily defeat an E-class adventurer, and although she wouldn't lose to a D-class adventurer, it wouldn't be an easy victory. If she faced a party of D-class adventurers, she would be defeated.

- **Name:** Pauvina
- **Race:** Half-Noble Orc
- **Age:** 2 years old
- **Title:** None
- **Job:** None
- **Level:** 75
- **Job history:** None
- **Passive skills:**
 - Night Vision
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
 - Enhanced Vigor
- **Active skills:**
 - Club Technique: Level 1
 - Javelin Technique: Level 1

Rapiécage

A Patchwork Zombie that Vandalieu created by sewing together the remains of Mikhail's party members.

The body of the female mage whose body had been most intact was used as her base, while her head is that of the female warrior. Her limbs below the elbows and knees are those of the Ogre, and there are Pteranodon wings attached to her back. There is a Cemetery Bee stinger attached to a snake's tail, and her broken bones have been replaced by the reshaped bones of a Tri-Horn (Triceratops).

Her organs are those taken from monsters, and the skin and muscles of her torso were sewed together with materials from the female warrior and monsters. Vandalieu had the spirits floating around Talosheim possess her to turn her into a Zombie.

As a result, she has a youthful, beautiful face and an adult body with abundant curves. Her skin is pale, dark and dark-green skin held together by

subtle stitches, giving a corrupt-looking contrast, and her limbs are those of an Ogre's, capable of easily crushing an adult man's head. There are wings on her back and a tail protruding from her waist, so it is difficult to tell what she is with one glance.

As the spirits of the owners of the bodies weren't present because too much time had passed since their deaths, Rapiécage's intelligence and mental age are equivalent to a young child's and she can't use magic. She has quite a gluttonous personality, and has a particular liking for mayonnaise and ketchup.

During the defense of Talosheim, she successfully increased her Rank after killing numerous Noble-born Vampires who were far superior to her.

Incidentally, she remembers absolutely nothing about the Mirg shield-nation.

- **Name:** Rapiécage
- **Rank:** 5
- **Race:** High Patchwork Zombie
- **Level:** 0
- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision
 - Rapid Regeneration: Level 5
 - Deadly Poison Secretion: Tail: Level 5
 - Physical Resistance: Level 3
 - Magic Resistance: Level 3
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Electrify: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - High-speed Flight: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Unarmed Fighting Technique: Level 2 (NEW!)
 - Whip Technique: Level 1 (NEW!)

Likely the world's only carriage Undead that possesses an Orichalcum spear. Due to Orichalcum's special properties, it can easily break through barriers that aren't cast by first-rate mages with exceptional intelligence, spurring on Sam's rampages even further.

Among those he ran over, there was someone who had a connection to the noble family that he served when he was alive, but he doesn't care.

What bothers him more is his daughters whose bodies are now excessively exposed; he worries about what will happen when their Ranks increase even further.

He has been appointed as civil official of Talosheim, but rather than being busy with work, he is busy making preparations for work.

His Rank also increased during the defense of Talosheim; he went from being a Blood Carriage to a Murder Carriage, becoming an ever-increasingly sinister carriage. As he wields an Orichalcum spear, D-class adventurers are nothing but sources of Experience Points for him. Even a C-class adventurer would find it extremely difficult to face Sam on his own.

Furthermore, due to the fact that he has acquired the Space Expansion skill, the inside of his carriage is three times larger than it appears from the outside, increasing his utility even further.

Name: Sam

- **Rank:** 5
- **Race:** Murder Carriage
- **Level:** 1
- **Passive skills:**
 - Spirit Body: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Rough Road Travel: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Impact Resistance: Level 2
 - Precise Driving: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Comfort Maintenance: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Murder Healing: Level 1 (NEW!)

- Space Expansion: Level 2 (NEW!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Silent Steps: Level 1
 - High-Speed Travel: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Charge: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Size Alteration: Level 2 (NEW!)
 - Spear Technique: Level 1 (NEW!)

Saria and Rita

The sisters who have regained(?) sexy bodies fitting their high-leg armor and bikini armor due to the leveling of their Spirit Form skill. At first glance, they look like young human women, but on closer inspection, their skin is so white it appears as if they are covered in thick candle wax, and no signs of blood vessels are visible, let alone blood.

However, other features would draw the eyes of men before they could inspect them that closely. But the sisters appear to feel no embarrassment, as they consider their armor their main bodies.

Their appearances have changed, but as spirit form is something that replaces the loss of their bodies' flesh and functions, their overall strength has increased remarkably.

As Vandalieu has made them wear capes to hide their stimulating backsides, their physical and magical defenses have increased as well.

They have acquired bodies that cannot grow fat, so the sisters are obsessed with the foods and flavorings that Vandalieu has reproduced in Lambda. However, they have realized that their original occupation of being maids has been neglected because they have only been training in martial skills recently, so they have begun practicing housework and sewing.

If these two are faced together, even a C-class adventurer party would have a high chance of being defeated.

Basdia

As she is raising her daughter Jadal, she has stopped progressing and remains a Ghoul Amazoness. However, due to Vandalieu's Mana boot-camp, her Mana has increased and she has acquired several magic-related skills.

Jadal has been weaned, so Basdia has started learning how to cook recently. Her current specialty dishes are roasted meat and roasted skewered meat.

Incidentally, she is the only opponent that Vandalieu is currently able to defeat in shogi.

Her ability is above that of an average C-class adventurer, but below that of a B-class adventurer.

Zadiris

After the defense of Talosheim, she has been busy leveling with Borkus, Vigaro and Vandalieu by visiting the B-class Dungeon, Barigen's Fall Life-Mountain, once a month. However, because her Rank is high, it seems that her leveling is quite slow.

However, she spends fulfilling days in Talosheim playing with her granddaughter, unconcerned with the fact that they look like sisters with a large age difference.

Although she has been appointed as Talosheim's court mage, there isn't really any additional work for her. Most of her work is work that she has been doing since before she became court mage.

Her Rank has increased and she has become a Ghoul Elder Mage and her field of vision has increased due to the third eye that has appeared on her forehead, but apparently it doesn't provide much use for vision.

If only fighting battles of magic, her ability is close to a B-class adventurer.

Bone Chimera (Knochen)

A Rank 7 monster created when Bone Monkey, Bone Wolf, Bone Bear and Bone Bird – the other Undead made at the same time as Bone Man – were combined. His name, ‘Knochen’ – which means ‘bone’ in German – was given to him afterwards.

It is loyal to Vandalieu, and its favorite game is to have Vandalieu throw a frisbee for it to catch and then throw it back for him to go and fetch.

Vigaro

His Rank has increased and he has become a Ghoul Tyrant, a status that is legendary among Ghouls. He has become so prominent that if he were to be seen in an area inhabited by humans, the Adventurers’ Guild would gather every adventurer around to take him down. However, he himself isn’t aware of anything other than the fact that he has become strong.

The person he is dating now will soon give birth to a child, so he is living life with enthusiasm. The gap between him and Borkus has grown wider as Borkus’s Rank has increased, so he is fired up about battle as well.

Incidentally, he is the one who taught Vandalieu the Unarmed Fighting Technique of the Ghouls. However, he has already been surpassed in proficiency with the Unarmed Fighting Technique itself. Bothered by this, he has started training in Unarmed Fighting Technique in addition to his training with his axe.

He has become one of Talosheim’s military officers, but he simply thinks, “I just have to hunt some monsters, right?” His life isn’t any different from before.

In a one-on-one battle, he would defeat the average B-class adventurer.

- **Name:** Vigarō
- **Rank:** 7
- **Race:** Ghoul Tyrant
- **Level:** 39
- **Job:** Axe Master
- **Job level:** 11
- **Job history:** Apprentice Warrior, Warrior, Axeman
- **Age:** 171 years old

- **Passive skills:**
 - Night Vision
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 5
 - Pain Resistance: Level 4
 - Paralyzing Venom Secretion (Claws): Level 3
 - Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with an axe (Medium)

- **Active skills:**
 - Axe Technique: Level 8 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Hand-to-hand Fighting Technique: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Commanding: Level 4
 - Coordination: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Deforestation: Level 2
 - Dismantling: Level 1
 - Shield Technique: Level 2 (NEW!)

Borkus

In his battle against Riley, he remembered a technique and even turned it into a superior skill. Though his race title hasn't changed, his Rank has increased.

He has dealt with the ghosts of his past a little, so he feels greatly satisfied with his own achievements.

He has mostly regained the ability he had while alive, and his stamina has surpassed what it was back then. A Rank 10 monster would be enough to cause panic in a city of tens of thousands if spotted. But in Borkus's case, as he has the appearance of a Titan Zombie, he can pass for a Rank 3 or 4 monster unless he demonstrates his strength himself or an insightful individual sees his true power.

Because of this, he is thinking of pretending to be a Zombie, but his Zombie friends tell him that it's impossible and he is terrible at acting like a Zombie.

Like Vigaró, he was appointed as one of Talosheim's military officers, but he has now thrown all of his work onto Chezare, who is supposed to be in a higher position than him.

But as he takes the Undead of the former expedition army with him when he hunts, it can be said that he works by training the new members.

His favorite foods are mayonnaise and soups containing dashi.

Nuaza

He has become the leader of the Church of Vida in Talosheim. He protested to this, telling Vandalieu that he is not worthy. But Vandalieu's retort was to say that he wasn't fit to be king, either, so that ended the argument.

However, since Nuaza has basically been managing the Church on his own, nothing has really changed even after he assumed this position.

He is preaching Vida's teachings to the new Undead of the expedition army, but there are Living Armors with no physical bodies among them, so he is having a little difficulty in communicating with them.

His race title is Lich, but because he received an Orichalcum mace from Vandalieu and was proficient in hand-to-hand combat to begin with, his magic has completely become something of a trump card at this point.

Because of this, though he has reached level 100, his Rank has not increased for him to become a High Lich.

Perhaps due to this imbalance, his strength in battle seems strangely close to that of a C-class adventurer, but not quite.

Bone Man

His Rank has increased for him to become a Viscount, and his appearance now sets him apart from normal Skeletons. His presence is so impressive that Vandalieu would be overshadowed if he stood next to Bone Man.

He has recently acquired the Mount-skill, fitting for a knight, but riding Knochen seems like it would cause Bone Man to become incorporated into Knochen, so he is unable to make use of it.

That is why he is requesting Vandalieu to create a Dragon Zombie or a Bone Dragon, but as it is more effective to turn these into materials for equipment to be distributed to everyone rather than creating a single creature that would take time to grow strong, this has been postponed.

But as victory was achieved in the defense of Talosheim, Vandalieu has decided to turn the next hunted Dragon into a Bone Dragon... though he is now facing the harsh reality of the world as Dragons have stopped appearing.

Because of this, he is currently using a Bone Tyrannosaurus as a mount.

When mounted, Bone Man's strength in battle is equivalent to multiple C-class adventurers.

Knochen

Knochen became a Rank 8 Union of Bones before the defense of Talosheim. Its appearance is that of a combination of countless bones, a beast the size of a mansion. Knochen is a powerful monster; attacks that would effectively

break the skulls and backbones of normal skeletons are ineffective on it as it replaces its broken bones with the Bone Form Manipulation skill.

It is noteworthy that the bones of Earth Dragons and Rock Dragons have been absorbed by Knochen's body, while normal Unions of Bones wouldn't have these. Its defense is as solid as steel.

It is a monster that the Adventurers' Guild would designate as a disaster; if it were discovered, the Guild would send out compulsory requests and form an extermination squad. The Adventurers' Guild itself isn't aware of this, and nobody else knows, either. (Knochen's very existence is rare, so it is not as well-known as Goblin Kings.)

It frequently flies in the skies above Talosheim, but apparently Vandalieu is riding inside around one in ten times.

Name: Knochen

- **Rank:** 8
- **Race:** Union of Bones
- **Level:** 27

- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 8
 - Spirit Form: Level 5
 - Bone Form Manipulation: Level 5
 - Physical Resistance: Level 4
 - Absorption Healing (Bone): Level 4

- **Active skills:**
 - Silent Steps: Level 2
 - Breath (Poison): Level 5
 - High-speed Flight: Level 5
 - Long-distance Control: Level 4
 - Projectile Fire: Level 4

Eleanora

She is a beautiful Noble-born Vampire who has become a Vampire Viscount, undergone a Job-change to Vassal Warrior and even conquered sunlight.

As a result of doing her best to get stronger for Vandalieu's sake, she has indeed become strong, but she is a little troubled by the fact that her master is busy with housework.

Vandalieu gave her the power to overcome the sun and executed a plan that allowed her to defeat Isla, a clearly superior foe. Her belief that Vandalieu is a more fearsome being than the Pure-breed Vampires has grown even deeper.

Isla and the Vampires, who became Vampire Zombies, have become Eleanora's subordinates. Her current objective is to have all of them acquire the Sunlight Resistance skill.

Terea

She is an ambitious person who wants Vandalieu to control the entire continent. She feels younger after having undergone Youth Transformation, so she is seriously considering using her own body to curry favor with Vandalieu, something she didn't consider before.

But she believes that being forceful wouldn't be wise, so she diligently made arms for the defense of Talosheim as part of a plan to act as the 'woman who supports him from the shadows.'

She is also the only one in the group of women around Vandalieu who doesn't feel a sense of risk at her lack of ability to do housework.

"I have my craftsmanship," she tells herself as she continues to create arms.

In addition, with Saria and Rita regaining their bodies, there has been a

slight change in the bust rankings since the end of the second volume, but she and Basdia still fight for the top spot. (If Darcia is included, there is a third contestant for this spot.)

Incidentally, fourth place is currently held by Saria and Rita in a tie, while Eleanora is sixth. Seventh place and below belongs to Kachia and Bilde. Last of all is Zadiris.

- **Name:** Tarea
- **Rank:** 3
- **Race:** Ghoul
- **Level:** 1
- **Job:** Arms Smith
- **Job Level:** 97
- **Job history:** Apprentice Smith, Smith → Slave (Forced job change at level 47), Apprentice Prostitute, Prostitute
- **Age:** 269 years old (Physical age and age appearance 18 years old)
- **Passive skills:**
 - Night Vision
 - Pain Resistance: Level 1
 - Superhuman Strength: Level 1
 - Paralyzing Venom Secretion (Claws): Level 1
 - Allure: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Estimation: Level 6
 - Armor Smithing: Level 7 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Weapon Smithing: Level 7 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Bedroom Skill: Level 5
 - Dancing: Level 2
 - Love-making: Level 2

Braga

The first ninja in Lambda. The Experience Points he gained in the defense of Talosheim allowed him to become a Black Goblin Ninja Adept. He can probably be considered to be equivalent to a Chuunin^[1].

His ability in battle puts professional assassins to shame. Possibly because Vandalieu deliberately neglected to tell him that combat isn't the essence of being a ninja and that ninjas are supposed to conceal themselves, he is becoming unusually proficient at assassinating enemies head-on.

He has a mischievous appearance, with a pointed nose and slanted eyes, but he has an earnest personality. Because of this, he and the other Black Goblins were engrossed with their training and have realized only recently that most of the members of the other new races, such as Gorba and Memediga, are now in relationships.

“King, we want relationships with people as well...”

“... Do you want to come with me to the Orbaume Kingdom with me next year?”

A conversation like this has apparently taken place. Of course, there is no guarantee that Braga and the others will find lovers even if they do go to the Orbaume Kingdom.

It seems that Vandalieu has the insensitive, savage idea of buying slaves before returning to Talosheim if they really couldn't find anything in the Orbaume Kingdom.

Incidentally, all of the Black Goblins became Black Goblin Ninjas following the defense of Talosheim. If all of them moved together, they would have the power to kill all of the important people in a small-to-medium sized town of several thousand in a single night.

- **Name:** Braga
- **Rank:** 7
- **Race:** Black Goblin Ninja Adept
- **Level:** 1
- **Passive skills:**
 - Dark Vision

- Status Effect Resistance: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Enhanced Agility: Level 4 (LEVEL UP!)
- Intuition: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
- Detect Presence: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
- Strengthened Attribute Values when equipped with Ninja Equipment (Medium) (NEW!)
- **Active skills:**
 - Short Sword Technique: Level 5 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Javelin Technique: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Silent Steps: Level 6 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Trap: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Dismantling: Level 3 (LEVEL UP!)
 - Unlocking: Level 2 (LEVEL UP!)
- **Unique skills:**
 - Human Slayer: Level 1 (NEW!)

Alda

He was originally the god of the light attribute, but because he took Vida's divinity (something that is necessary for gods to manage and rule over the world), he now also rules over the life attribute and is known as the god of law and fate.

His personality is conservative, and his principles are old-fashioned. He hates change, and believes that people should live each day as they did the day before, under the order that he has created. He believes that this is happiness.

That was why he chose Bellwood as his champion, as (Alda thought that) he shared the same beliefs.

Considering the losses leading up to the Demon King's defeat (the loss of over ninety-nine percent of the population and the incapacitation of all of the gods except for him and Vida), Alda believes that the destruction of the souls

of Zakkart and the other three creation-minded heroes was something that should have been avoided at all costs.

But at the same time, considering Vida's reckless behavior (at least, reckless from Alda's point of view), he wonders if the fall of Zakkart and his companions was a good thing, or perhaps Vida wouldn't have acted so rashly if it hadn't happened.

As a result of all of this thinking, he has decided that there is no use in worrying about events of the past, so he has sealed this away in the depths of his memories.

His objective is to destroy Vida's races just like the evil gods, but he doesn't not truly believe that Vida's races are evil. He is simply destroying them because it is necessary to protect the order in the circle of transmigration. This is why he feels no remorse over it.

He believes that this is something that must be completed for the sake of those who have been sacrificed (including members of Vida's races who have been exterminated), so he has no intention of changing his mind.

His information regarding Vandalieu was interrupted by Gordan and the others becoming Undead, and Rodcorte has not shared any information with him either, so he is unaware that Vandalieu is able to break souls.

However, he does know that Vandalieu commands Undead and Golems, turns even saints into Zombie servants and creates diseases, so he is already beginning to prepare measures to deal with these.

But as there are currently none who can accurately understand his Divine Messages accurately, he is starting with things like, "Raise people who can withstand disease." (People who can understand Divine Messages accurately are rare; Nuaza is a genius in this regard.)

He has subordinate gods such as Curatos, the God of Records, and Niltark, the God of Judgment.

The champion chosen by Alda. In his original world, Earth, he was a university student who participated in environmental protection activities.

He had a handsome face and a charisma that attracted people, was successful in his studies and possessed athletic ability. He was a person blessed with many things, but after he began focusing on radical nature conservation activities, people drifted away from him.

Things changed for him completely when he was summoned to Lambda, and as Lambda was an ideal world for him in which an industrial revolution hadn't yet taken place, he made efforts in various areas.

Things were going well at first, but as his conflicts with Zakkart and his companions grew fiercer, the rift between them grew, causing them to part ways in the end. The Demon King took advantage of this, and Zakkart and his companions were lost.

The Demon King was eventually defeated despite this, but it was a narrow victory with over ninety-nine percent of the population at the time being lost.

After that, he fought against Vida alongside Alda with righteous indignation because she turned the soulless Zakkart into an Undead and gave birth to Vampires and Ghouls, races that have a bad image on Earth. In his eyes, she was toying with the dead and with life itself.

There is some truth to his claims, but he has the kind of personality to not listen to others. He would say words like, "Let's discuss things," and "We'll understand each other if we talk about it," but if one actually argued with him, he would shout his points and interrupt the points of others (especially those disagreeing with him), so that proper discussion was never reached.

Because he simply says things that are comforting to hear, he seems like a good-natured person to those who think like him.

His ideal is a self-sufficient lifestyle with no electricity or steam engines; he believes that this is the true form of man. As magic does not pollute the environment (at least, Bellwood did not think that it does), he does not restrict its use.

Incidentally, most of the things written in the picture book Vandalieu read

in the past are true, and all of the women that Bellwood loved survived the battle against the Demon King.

After death, he attained divinity and became one of Alda's subordinate gods, but he and the Evil God of Sinful Chains struck each other down.

Vida

The goddess who originally ruled over the life attribute. A hundred thousand years ago, she created her own circle of transmigration system for this world and new races to aid in the world's recovery, and build a city using Zakkart's knowledge. However, Alda, Bellwood and the others assaulted her, leaving her with a deep wound and robbing her of her divinity.

That wound still has not healed to this day; she regains her consciousness from time to time, but she spends most of her time in a helpless state of slumber.

Her personality is the complete opposite of Alda's, not caring about formalities and rules. Her teachings are simple; she does not impose complicated ceremonies and harsh training on her believers.

She has a broad-minded personality and doesn't care about the small details. As a goddess, she rules over love and life. But as she also governs the evolution of life and the struggle for existence, she also encourages competition in society. Victors should be praised, while the defeated should be loved so that they can stand up once more. That is what she teaches.

As one might imagine from the fact that she gave birth to numerous new races within a short period of time, she is quite a wild goddess. Her teachings place no importance on virginity, so the female saints who served her acted as sacred prostitutes.

Zakkart

His real name is Sakado Keisuke. He was a young manager of a small factory. Though he dreamed of being a forensic scientist during his days as a student, various circumstances forced him to attend a technical college and inherit his parents' factory after he graduated. He is well-informed on various miscellaneous subjects due to his hobbies, but he was about to hang himself after his factory business failed when Vida selected him as her champion.

His looks were average and he wasn't athletic. The ability he gained was creation-oriented; he was not a very champion-like champion.

This showed in the way he thought in the battle against the Demon King. Bellwood and his companions said that it was a holy war to protect the world, but Zakkart was the only one who thought of it as a war between invaders and the world's native people from the very beginning.

As a result, he was able to successfully make numerous evil gods switch sides. However, this achievement caused a distance to form between him and the battle-minded champions, and also attracted the Demon King's attention.

He had the type of personality that treasured harmony within a team. Before he knew it, he had become the peacemaker among the creation-minded champions and clashed often with Bellwood, the leader of the battle-minded champions.

Though Bellwood shouted his own opinions without listening to those of others and tried to overcome holes in his plans with sheer strength, Zakkart knew that the champions must not be divided. He continued to pacify his companions and support Bellwood. However, unable to endure it in the end, he began following his own path.

He had some radical thoughts as well, creating a plan to develop and make use of the most powerful, most environmentally-harmful weapon among the chemical weapons of Earth.

He and his fellow creation-minded champions had their souls broken by the Demon King. The fragments of their souls were recovered by Rodcorte, turned into a single soul and, through a one-hundred-thousand-year reincarnation, became Vandalieu.

Guduranis

The Demon King who appeared from another world and began an invasion on Lambda. His power is said to have been so great that he could have exchanged blows with every single god on his own.

In addition, he was able to break and destroy souls, something that even the gods were not capable of. With this ability and fear, he ruled a multitude of evil gods.

He possessed the ability to simultaneously shield himself with barriers against both physical and magical attacks, as well as plenty of other troublesome abilities.

He somehow imitated Rodcorte's circle of transmigration system, and using this, he created monsters that had never existed in Lambda before. Most of the monsters that exist in present times originate from the Demon King.

He decided that it would be not Bellwood, who possessed exceptional ability in battle, but Zakkart's knowledge that would one day drive him into a corner. He disguised himself as one of his own soldiers and obliterated Zakkart.

Riley

A former member of the Five-colored Blades and a former companion of Heinz. However, due to a difference in opinions, he abandoned Heinz and left the party.

When he was in the Five-colored Blades, he was obsessed with achievements and deeds, and was even vain at times. But at the same time, he was also a helpful and good-natured person. Riley tried to accept the differences between him and Heinz, but became more unrestrained after he and Heinz parted ways.

He was praised for a short while, just like the protagonists of heroic folk songs that he had dreamed of, because of the deal that he made with the Vampires. However, he is currently known in the Mirg shield-nation as 'the fallen hero,' and it is as if he was never treated as a hero at all.

Just as Palpapek thought, Riley did have talent, but this 'talent' was something that he was only able to display for the first time because of his companions who possessed the same talent. Even up until the moment his soul was extinguished, he never realized this.

Incidentally, the Title of 'The Second Coming of the Tragic Hero' was treated as XX's Jeanne d'Arc or XX's Sakamoto Ryouma^[2], so it didn't bestow any negative adjustments on Riley's Status.

Gennie, Messara, Flark

Riley's three criminal slaves.

Vandalieu resurrected them as Undead after Borkus cut them down, but as he recognized that they were useful, he didn't include them in the disposable army and kept them in Talosheim.

Gennie is useful as he knows about the Mirg shield-nation's underground society, the Adventurers' Guild and can even be used as a Scout, which Talosheim lacks even with the ninja unit.

Messara possesses enough magical skill and know-how that she rose to the position of master in the Mages' Guild, and Vandalieu has acknowledged her knowledge in forbidden spells.

Flark has knowledge about the Mercenaries' Guild, and was born in a farming family.

They are being made to work in Talosheim. Vandalieu has heard about their pasts from the spirits that were haunting them, so he doesn't have a particularly good impression of them, but even so, he has decided that they are better than Riley.

Flark in particular has become a cheerful, talkative Zombie who works hard in the fields where tomatoes are turning into monster plants one after another.

Bormack Gordan

He is a High Priest of Alda. He failed with the third opportunity to kill Vandalieu had he had prayed for, and as a result, he was killed and turned into an Undead. In the end, he mixed up Vandalieu with Alda.

Due to the acts of destruction he committed under Vandalieu's orders, his reputation plummeted to the earth and his influence in the Church of Alda has fallen as well.

Not only the Church but the Empire and the Mirg shield-nation are also trying to extinguish the flames and restore his reputation, but the image of Gordan opening a large hole in the city's wall and emerging through it is so devastating that his reputation won't recover as much as they would like.

The reputation restoration was going well for a while, but the people began blaming the demons on the other side of the Boundary Mountain Range and advocating a war of revenge, so it was hastily stopped.

Other than the Church, everyone is now considering whether it might be better to treat Gordan as an evil person.

Most of the disciples that he was teaching participated in the expedition, with the exception of those who couldn't due to age or injury. The fact that all of them were annihilated is a headache-inducing problem for both the Church and Alda.

Incidentally, there are numerous priest-warriors and saints in the Church of Alda who surpass Gordan in terms of strength in battle. However, Alda had taken notice of him and considered him a candidate to become the next heroic spirit because he was a 'hero' acknowledged by many.

No matter how much power one possesses, if he remains unknown, he is

no more than an 'unknown strong person' and can never become a heroic spirit or a god, beings who are widely-known.

Viscount Berno Balchesse

The person who suffered the most damage in the third volume. However, the Devil's Nest that he turned into cultivated land had originally been the land that the Ghouls were living in, so Vandalieu simply thinks that Balchesse reaped what he sowed.

Of course, Ghouls are treated as monsters in human society, so only Vandalieu and his allies would think that way.

The fact that his cultivation project has stopped caused him economic problems, but a project to construct a fort overlooking the Boundary Mountain Range has begun under the leadership of the Amid Empire, so he is somewhat able to breathe a sigh of relief with that.

His children and grandchildren will likely be severely troubled by the fort's existence, but Balchesse will be praised as a benevolent lord for the fact that Balcheburg was successfully defended and the fact that it recovered economically.

Langil Mauvid

A general of the Amid Empire. He is a member of the army, but he is the political kind, so he possesses almost no individual fighting strength.

He has gained many benefits through his dealings with the Pure-breed Vampire Ternecia. He tried to maximize his glory through this expedition, but met a cruel end.

In the Amid Empire, the Mauvid family of earls has been crushed and Rangil's eldest son and heir has been murdered and covered up as a suicide.

His other children have fallen into tragic circumstances as well.

The more Viscount Balchesse's reputation increases, the more Mauvid's name becomes synonymous with 'corrupt nobleman' in the Mirg shield-nation.

Chezare tried working his spirit hard in Talosheim, but he was deemed to be useless after all and turned into one of the Golems making up the city's walls.

Chezare Legston

The second son of Earl Legston, the former marshal of the Mirg shield-nation.

An unfortunate person who got caught up in the Pure-breed Vampires' conspiracy. He is mediocre as a commander, but he is the coordinating-type of military officer and performs well in doing civil-official-type work, so he is a versatile individual.

Vandalieu has acknowledged this and appointed him as general... Borkus being someone who cannot do deskwork is another reason for this.

However, though he is a general, he works with not only military business but bureaucratic affairs as well.

Though he says that he would have died of overwork if he wasn't already dead, he works like a workaholic and presses Vandalieu to establish things like a national flag, currency and laws.

Incidentally, the Black Bull Knights' Order is working in Talosheim, acting as opponents in mock battles for the Ghouls to learn the art of war and human-style group fighting tactics.

Thomas Palpapek

As a result of Vandalieu's counterattack, he has been reappointed as marshal. However, rather than this being an achievement, he is now drowning in a whirlpool of work that is enough to make his hairline recede.

Now that only a third of the Mirg shield-nation's elite forces remain, he must return these to their original force. But before that, he must put the forts along the border on alert status so that the Orbaume Kingdom doesn't take advantage... He is so busy with work that he doesn't even have time to plan things.

He made a plan to cast Riley away, but it seems that he is now regretting not simply having him murdered.

He believes that this is all Vandalieu's conspiracy, but as Vandalieu possesses no information on the political relationships in the Mirg shield-nation and the Empire, everything is simply a coincidence.

Marshukzarl Von Bellwood Amid

The Amid Empire's current half-Elf Emperor. He is handsome and clear-minded, placing more importance on benefits than emotion, but he doesn't take the emotions of others lightly, either.

He does follow Alda's teachings, but his religious piety is non-existent; it is merely a show.

Even the persecution of Vida's races is something that he maintains out of convenience in order to avoid causing dissatisfaction among the people.

He is interested in Vandalieu who is able to command the Undead; he wishes to acquire Vandalieu as someone to work for him from the shadows.

However, this is an offer to which Vandalieu's only reply would be, "Definitely not." Not only would he be unable to acquire the social fame that he wants the most, but those resurrecting from Origin would see him as an accomplice in a national conspiracy, band together and eliminate him.

Marshukzarl thinks of Vandalieu as someone who can create Undead in great numbers and tame them, so while he considers Vandalieu a threat, he also realizes how much use Vandalieu could be.

However, he believes that Vandalieu is less of a priority than Schneider.

The reason he is leaving Schneider be is because Schneider's power and fame is too much for him to handle.

However, he has several special units under direct Imperial command, so he is confident that even a coup d'état attempt by Schneider could be suppressed. However, in such an event, great losses would be suffered including the loss of the special units. It would be problematic if the Orbaume Kingdom were to take advantage of that or vassal nations began wars for independence, so this is something that he wants to avoid if possible.

The Thunderclap Schneider

The only S-class adventurer in the western region of the Bahn Gaia continent. Though he is known for his countless achievements such as slaying an evil god and slaying Elder Dragons, he is also known for his terrible philandering.

However, he only killed the evil god in a lady-killer sense. He is a believer of Vida who has helped tribes of Lamia and Scylla that he was supposed to have exterminated go further into hiding and is drinking buddies with several Elder Dragons.

He is a human and he appears to be in his twenties, but he is actually in his fifties. He hunted down numerous evil Elder Dragons, bathed in their blood and ate their liver sashimi, and before he knew it, he had become immortal.

He is the owner of an almost two-meter-tall body with sturdy, lean muscles and possesses an unrefined beauty. However, he calls his silver-blond hair 'completely white' and thinks of himself as an old man who simply looks young.

Almost half of his achievements have been forged; he protects Vida's new races, helps them escape to other continents. Meanwhile, in the shadows, he buries Vampires with connections to evil gods, as well as slave traders and adventurers who specialize in hunting members of Vida's races.

His eventual goal is to overturn the Amid Empire's policy of persecuting Vida's races, but the road ahead of him is long. He spends his days whispering, "I wonder if I'll live long enough to see that day..." only to have his companions tell him, "No, you definitely will."

He actually received a Divine Message from Vida telling him to save Vandalieu, but because he mistakenly interpreted this Divine Message, he failed to do so. Obeying the other part of the Divine Message that he was to follow in the event of such failure, which was given to him to ensure that he and Vandalieu do not become hostile to each other, he has been avoiding crossing the Boundary Mountain Range.

One of his companions is a Dark Elf warrior-chief; if Vandalieu had actually headed for Darcia's hometown, he might have actually joined forces with Schneider by now.

When he was young, he was a lively person who loved women, but now he has more or less calmed down and become a health maniac for no apparent reason.

Notes

1. This term is used in Naruto. Might be used in other series.
2. The XX is oo in the raw, which indicates censorship. Not sure what's being censored here. Incidentally, Sakamoto Ryouma is prominent historical Japanese figure who you can read up on yourself if you're curious enough. Both him and Jeanne d'Arc (AKA Joan of Arc) met tragic ends before they could achieve greater things, so the comparison the author is making is that Mikhail was like these two.

Credits

Author	—	Densuke
Publisher	—	Syosetsu
Translation	—	Light Novel Bastion
Book designer	—	Armaell's library