



The different world magic is too behind!

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樋辻臥命

Gamei Hitsuji

Illustration = himesuz

OVERLAP

Isekai Mahou wa Okureteru! [LN]

The Different World Magic Is Too Far Behind!

vol.4

by Gamei Hitsuji

[Novel Updates](#)

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Illustration



帝都昏睡事件のカギを握る4人——



レフィール・グラキス

「君の作ってくれた陣のおかげで、かなり調子が戻ってきた」

「私は、逃げたくありません」

リリアナ・ザンダイク



八鍵水明

「ちよつと昏睡事件の犯人を捕まえようと思っただけ」

「無理にでも押し通らせていただきます！」

フェルメニア・スティングレイ



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異世界魔法は遅れてる！



異世界魔法は遅れてる！

ご購入いただき、ありがとうございます。

今作ではいろいろな魔法が登場し、これまた一風変わった魔法理論が炸裂します！これからもどんどん続きを書いていきますので、今後も「異世界魔法は遅れてる！」をどうかよろしくお願いします！

そして、この月は同じく小説家になろう出身の「リーングラードの学び舎より」と「異世界混浴物語」も発売しましたので、ぜひお手に取っていただければと思います。

樋口十人命

Prologue: Reiji and Company, Once more to the Emperor's Country

Staring up into the air, all that filled his vision was the clear blue sky. Back in his hometown, towering buildings would surround his vision and he would be unable to see nothing but the blue sky, but in this other world there was nothing to get in the way. On this day, they arrived at the border between Astel and Nelferia and were greeted by this piercing blue sky.

It was several days after Suimei had tried to convince Liliana on that evening. Astel's hero Reiji and his party arrived at the fortress that stood at the Nelferia Empire's national border. Reiji finished his inspection ahead of the others, and was now gazing at the land spread out before him. Mizuki who finished her inspection next, quickly brought herself to his side.

"Reiji-kun. We finally reached the Nelferia Empire huh."

"Un. That's right."

Mizuki was pointing a sweet smile towards him as he replied with a gentle expression. After leaving Kurant City, they used horses to leave Hadorious' domain. They travelled on the large highway that connected Astel, Nelferia and the Sadias Alliance's self governed state. Up until the border the entire scenery around them was green. But after passing through the border the amount of green decreased as the geography showed characteristics of a land carved out by rivers. When they reach the Imperial Capitol, the green would once more return, but they would not see such a vast forest again for a while. Mizuki then spoke up earnestly about the scenery.

"Somehow, I thought this before too, but this scenery sure does look kind of like the Grand Canyon right?"

The landscape before her reminded her of a scene she often saw in pictures and on television. Just as she was suggesting, the Grand Canyon was also a terrain that was carved out by rivers long ago. Right before them was a large valley which had a very narrow yet deep river flowing through it.

“What does Reiji-kun think of this place?”

“Eh? Un. It doesn't give off as much of a sense of ruggedness, but it certainly does give a very similar impression.

“Right? Aaaaah, we have to pass through here agaaaain. No waaaay.”

“Is it tedious?”

“I mean, last time we came through here my shoes broke...”

“Now that you mention it, that did happen huh.”

Mizuki was making a face like she was tired of it all and hanging her head down crestfallen. Next she started looking at her feet.

“My feet will also get sore.”

“You have magic so isn't that fine?”

Reiji was being optimistic but it still did not clear Mizuki's mood as she started pouting. Most of the path in front of them was well maintained, however there was a section where they would have to dismount from the horses and walk. That part of the path was very rugged, not only that, bare rocks jutted out everywhere. Mizuki, who was not used to walking on mountain paths had broken her sneakers that she was brought over from the other world. It turned out they were one of her favourites so she was quite depressed when it happened. When she switched to new shoes which were not as comfortable, she only showed a disappointed face.

“But you know Reiji-kun? Using magic to soften the pain all the time is also quite troublesome right?”

“I see. After the effect goes away you have to cast it all over again huh.”

“That's it that's it. Reiji-kun sure has it nice. Your feet don't end up hurting right?”

“That's... Well, that's because I have the divine protection.”

“Hey, hey, can you split a little of that with me?”

Mizuki looked up at Reiji with a charming smile while begging him with her hands clasped in front of her chest, but...

“That’s impossible.”

“Cheapskate cheapskate cheapskaaate!”

Mizuki cutely puffed out her cheeks. He felt bad for her but what couldn’t be done couldn’t be done. If it was something he could split with her he would have done so without her even asking. Reiji then returned his gaze towards the canyon. Passing through a second time was somehow moving to him.

“Passing through here again, it’s kind of a strange feeling...”

As he was getting carried away by his emotions...

“—That’s right isn’t it? After all is said and done, last time Reiji-sama jumped right over it after all.”

“Heeh!? A-ahahahaha...”

Reiji turned around to the voice in a fluster. Titania had finished with her inspection and was now talking to him with a smile on her face. Reiji could only turn back with a cramped smile at her words.

“Tia, I thought I was already forgiven for that?”

“Eeh. Isn’t it fine for me to complain about it just a little?”

“That right. It’s just as Tia says. Do you think I would forgive you so easily too?”

“Au. Mizuki...”

His friend had betrayed him. Next to Reiji who was now making a bitter expression, Mizuki and Titania were smiling and going ‘riiiight’ perfectly in sync. As that was going on, their female knight escort Luka came out of the fortress. Upon closer inspection she was carrying something unfamiliar in her hands. Before long, she came up to Titania’s side.

“Your Highness, you forgot this.”

“Ara, Luka? Was there some—thing!?”

The moment Titania, who had been smiling with Mizuki just now, turned over to look at Luka, she suddenly froze in place. Reiji was confused as to why she was so surprised. It wasn’t that strange to forget something. Mizuki cocked her

head to the side.

“What’s wrong?”

“Th-th-th-th-there is nothing wrong Mizuki!”

She was in a complete fluster towards Mizuki’s question. From her side, Reiji was looking at the package that Luka was holding onto. The package had a long cylindrical shape, upon touching it a metal clang could be heard.

“... This is, a sword right? Is it Tia’s?”

“Haa—!? Reiji-sama when did you!?”

“So you were holding onto something like this huh? A sword, that’s a little surprising.”

“That’s, uuuuum... it’s... um...”

“Aaaah!? Hey! Hey! Could that be the treasured sword of the royal family? That kind of sword which isn’t very useful practically but that royalty absolutely must carry with them when they go out on a journey to establish their authority!?”

“Aah!? That’s right! It’s just as Mizuki says! It’s exactly that!”

“... Tia, somehow, for a while now you’ve been acting awfully desperate though...”

“That is just Reiji-sama’s imagination!”

Titania denied it with such force that sweat was now falling from her forehead. She was unable to calm down. She was very unusually in a complete mess. Beside her, Mizuki suddenly remembered something and looked up into the sky.

“A sword huh... That reminds me, Reiji-kun’s sword has become quite worn-out right?”

“Yeah, that’s right...”

It was just as Mizuki had said, Reiji put on a worried expression and drew the sword from his waist. As he raised his blade from the sheath, he could see it was covered in nicks. The source of the damage came from the fight with the

demons as well as the fight with Rajas. On top of swinging around a sword with only a limited amount of experience, the clashes with Rajas' fists had chipped away significantly at the orichalcum blade. While looking at the blade, Titania unnaturally cleared out her throat and spoke.

“If we go to the Empire I believe there will be a skilled blacksmith. If it can't be fixed there, I think it'll be fine to ask for a new one to be made. Though personally, I would prefer if we could hold out until we reach the self governed state of the Sadius Alliance...”

Titania was making a face like it couldn't be helped to just give up on it. Next, Reiji questioned her about this.

“Tia. Are the blacksmiths in the Alliance amazing?”

“Yes. I believe I've mentioned before that the Sadius Alliance was made up of many countries coming together. A long time ago, when they were deciding on the leaders of the Alliance from all of those countries, the representatives from each country competed with swords.”

“Ah! That's why even now everything to do with swords is quite popular there right!?”

“Yes, when it comes to sword techniques, smithing and the treatment of strong swordsmen, they differ from other countries.”

Reiji then hoisted up his orichalcum sword and was gazing far into the distance.

“A country of swords huh... I also would like to receive sword training there. In that kind of place filled with strong swordsmen.”

Right after saying that, Reiji added on a 'just kidding,' to try and cover it up as a joke, but Titania followed up for him anyways.

“If I remember correctly, of the Seven Swords, three of them should be in the Sadius Alliance. If we have the opportunity to go there, we may be able to meet them.”

“I hear about the Seven Swords quite often but, are they strong?”

“The title of the Seven Swords is given to those who are praised as the

strongest swordsmen in all of the northern continent. It is said that their skills make each one of them the equivalent of a thousand soldiers.”

“A thousand is amazing! One warrior matching a thousand! It’s a real life Lu Bu!”

Titania’s words unleashed the chuuni heart within Mizuki.

“Even in the Empire where we are headed now, there is a swordsman given the name of ‘Arc Shadow’. After raising their military exploits in many night battles and ambushes, they are considered the foremost swordsman in the Empire. The army of the nations at the Empire’s southern border have bore witness to their strength in the most unexpected places. It was to the point where there are even songs about them people use for their disobedient children.”

“The kind of song where they say if you don’t listen, that guy will come right? That’s amazing.”

While Reiji was showing his plain admiration, for some reason Titania suddenly put on the airs of a know it all.

“I’ve spoken with many swordsmen, but I do not think there should be a reason for Reiji-sama to learn swordsmanship next to another right?”

“Why is that?”

“Reiji-sama’s muscles for the sword are good after all. You also learned the fundamentals at the castle. Instead of curiously trying to take in the sword skills of others it would be better to improve yourself as you have been doing.”

“Tia, you can tell about these kinds of things?”

“Eh? Ah, I-I just had that kind of feeling! Reiji-sama is the hero after all!”

“... Just as Reiji-kun said, Tia is kind of weird today.”

“I’m saying it is just your imagination!”

“... Well, setting aside whether or not I take any training, it’s impossible to head towards the Sadius Alliance right away.”

Reiji said this as he returned his sword to its sheathe and then turned a

serious expression to Mizuki and Titania.

“We’re headed off the check on the movements of that princess from the Empire we met earlier right? Tia, what do you think about that?”

“I wonder? I don’t know just what that man’s intent is.”

It was rare for Titania to show her displeasure so clearly. It seemed she really did not get along well with Hadorious. At the time he had told them in Kurant City to go to the Empire, Reiji remembered when she burst out in anger like a raging fire to go and protest. In the end though there was also Gregory’s case. They could do nothing but give up and comply.

“... That man, next time we meet I’ll definitely make him grind his teeth.”

“Uwa, Tia is super motivated.”

“Of course I am!”

It seemed that it was predetermined that she would make Hadorious feel bitter. Going as far as clenching her fists, she was burning with fighting spirit. Reiji then decided to ask about the source of all this conflict.

“It seems that Tia was always like that with regards to that person. Did something happen with Duke Hadorious in the past?”

“Eh...? Yes, well, various things happened.”

Titania let her gaze wander and looked away. She was being quite vague, but Luka, who was standing behind her, spoke in her stead.

“That’s because her Highness the Princess previously had a match with Duke Hadorious and—”

“L-Luka—!?”

“Eh? A match? Tia had a match with Duke Hadorious?”

“Heeeh, what kind of match?”

Reiji asked full of interest, but Titania had no intention of answering and yelled at Luka.

“Luka!! You’re being too careless today!”

As she was raising a fuss, Gregory and Roffrey finally finished their inspection and were walking over with the horses. What came into their vision, was Mizuki cheerfully waving at them, and Titania making an expression completely at her wit's end towards Luka. Looking at the girls with a calm face, Reiji then gazed off towards the Empire. The weather was perfect for a journey, however he was worried about Hadorious' instructions. Just what was waiting for them beyond this point?

Chapter 1: The Geomancy Emperor

After Felmenia rendezvoused with Suimei, the residents of the Yakagi residence were all assigned their own duties. Lefille stayed in the house and took care of the cats and cleaning the rooms. It was decided that Felmenia would be in charge of the cooking. Of course, as the owner of the house, Suimei also had a duty assigned to him.

His time was largely devoted to studying the hero summoning circle and teaching Felmenia about magic. But aside from that, he was in charge of heating the bath and taking care of their account books. Normally at this time, he would be filling the tub with water and heating it up while Lefille would wait impatiently along with the new bath-loving convert Felmenia. But this was only the case normally. However, as the current situation was not normal, he was unable to do so.

A few days had passed since the evening where he went to convince Liliana, but Suimei was still forced to quietly recover in his own home. That evening, the berserk dark magic and the fight with the sinful figure chipped away violently at his astral body. Suimei was unable to move his body the way he wanted to. During the panic when the taller shadow showed up and Liliana escaped, he was unable to take chase. As expected, despite being outnumbered, the tall shadow also managed to evade all its pursuers and escape. After putting up with with Elliot's questions, he somehow finally made it back home. But appearing before Felmenia and Lefille in that state, he was subjected to questions, their worries, and their nursing. He ended up causing quite a bit of inconvenience for them.

In the current situation, they should be out and about in the city. But even now, while they were taking care of their own duties, he had to leave himself in their care. Suimei was half sitting up on the bed in the living room as Felmenia came to refill his water pitcher. He spoke up with both a feeling of gratitude and an apology.

“Sorry.”

“Do not worry about it. Please just take your time to rest until your body gets better.”

Felmenia replied with a smile, but it still didn't sit well with Suimei.

“No, I can't quite do that.”

“What do you mean you can't... Aah.”

With an obvious and clumsy tone, she came to realize his intent. Suimei did not even need to speak about what worried him. It was about Liliana's situation since that evening. At that time, Elliot and his group had seen Liliana's face before she obeyed the words of the taller shadow and disappeared. It was still unknown whether she linked up with the taller shadow or not, however it couldn't be mistaken that her situation had gotten quite bad. There was a sufficient amount of evidence to raise suspicions about her after all.

They had not yet heard that she had been apprehended, but they still didn't know what was going on. Suimei had been worrying about the possibilities in his head countless times since. And then, he suddenly realized. Felmenia was staring at him with half opened eyes and her lips tightly shut. Her expression that looked like she was criticizing him was definitely not just filled with criticism. In her eyes, he could feel sympathy, severity and also worry. Suimei then spoke with resignation.

“I get it. I'll properly wait until I'm better.”

“Please do so. I'm sure Suimei-dono is worried about Liliana Zandyke, but it also can't be helped that myself and Lefille are worried about Suimei-dono after all.”

“Sorry.”

“... I thought you were more of the careful type, but you were quite reckless.”

“Yeah, I hear that a lot.”

“Is that something to laugh about...? If you keep acting like that Lefille will scold you again you know?”

Felmenia reproached him with a bit of advice, but Suimei still just put on a bitter smile. After returning to the house, once his body's condition had

stabilized, what awaited him was the long and angry scolding from the tiny big sister Lefille. 'You always make me worry,' or 'don't be so reckless ever again,' words like this were still fresh in his mind. But she was exactly right. Suimei also considered that his carefulness was lacking in the case that he got caught up in things. That had also been the case this time, but it also applied to the time of Lefille's case. He had thought that it would heal, but it seemed that it was quite the difficult disposition. While Suimei was having this conversation with Felmenia, Lefille came into the living room carrying a pile of baggage.

"Un~sho, un~sho"

She was letting out a voice as she was putting all of her effort into it. It wasn't particularly heavy, but she must have been letting out that kind of voice since it was blocking everything in front of her. However it still looked quite dangerous. Felmenia then spoke up in a gentle tone.

"Lefille. It's dangerous to carry too many things at once. Shouldn't you put some of them down?"

"It's alright Felmenia-jou. A little bit of luggage that is a little taller than me is nothing. At any rate, in my original form, I used a large sword that was taller than myself after all... Un~sho, un~sho."

"Lefi, be careful."

"Yeah, thank you."

As Suimei passed her his considerations, Felmenia was making a confused expression. It seemed she found it weird how a small child like that always made that kind of comparison.

"... Suimei-dono."

"Aah, this? Most of my bodies' functions are dedicated to healing right now. My mind isn't working properly."

After looking closely at Suimei, Felmenia noticed he was lying down blankly staring into space. To use magic to restore his astral body, he had to enter this kind of state. Felmenia was looking at him filled with worry as she sat by his side with care.

“I can’t tell very well from the looks of it, but is it quite bad?”

“If it was a normal injury it could be healed right away with magic. However what was injured this time was my spiritual body, that’s why unlike my physical body it cannot be easily healed with magic.”

“... So you can easily heal the physical body huh.”

“Well yeah.”

As Suimei replied with a foolish tone, Lefille had finished putting away the baggage and returned. She then sat down at his bedside with a stunned expression.

“Injuries to the body are not any kind of special problem huh? You sure do say some amazing things without knowing it... Fumu, the astral body is it? I remember you talking about it before, but did you not prepare defences and resistance for that?”

“Dark magic was too peculiar. The magicians of our world, even the devil worshippers, don’t use that kind of dangerous curse in that way any more after all. To think there wouldn’t be anyone who would use an attack like that was just normal. Well, in short my preparation was lacking or I was simply negligent. Aaah...”

Suimei started fumbling over his words. Since his mind was dulled, he was not able to put his words together well.

“... It seems it isn’t good to ask too many questions right?”

“That’s right. It seems the difficult questions will have to wait.”

“Thanks. Please do so.”

As the two of them took the current situation into consideration, Suimei offered his thanks. Then, Felmenia suddenly remembered something and stood up from her chair.

“That’s right! Suimei-dono, I’ve prepared a meal. Please wait a moment.”

Felmenia ran off to the kitchen with a pitter-patter and returned shortly with a meal in a bowl. Inside the dome shaped wooden bowl was a pure white soup letting out steam. Scattered inside it were perfectly circular, tender looking

beans.

“Here, Suimei-dono. It’s a pearl bean potage. Enjoy.”

“Aah, thank you.”

Suimei received the bowl filled with the pure white potage soup filled with beans, however it seemed that he did not look at it properly. Keeping his eyes closed, he scooped out of its contents with a spoon and slowly carried it to his mouth. However, due to his brain functions being dedicated to his recovery, he was doing so in a daze and his arm’s movements were shaky.

“Suimei-kun. That seems dangerous.”

“Sorry.”

“In that case, Suimei-dono. Please pass me the bowl and spoon.”

“Ou.”

Suimei passed over the bowl and spoon over to Felmenia. She then scooped up some of the potage with the spoon, and put on a smile.

“Okay, Suimei-dono. A~n.”

“Fe-Felmenia-jou? No matter how you put it, Suimei-kun wouldn’t... what?”

“A~n.”

As she made that voice while opening her mouth, Suimei did not hold any doubt, or rather could not hold any doubt, and responded in kind. Doing just as Felmenia had said, he opened his mouth with an ‘A~n’, and chewed down the contents of the spoon. Lefille’s jaw dropped as she witnessed something she could not possibly imagine Suimei ever doing normally.

“... Suimei-kun, are you that defenceless?”

If it was the normal Suimei, there was absolutely no way he would do something so embarrassing. In that case, if he complied as he did just now, it meant that his mind was just not able to function to that extent.

“... Menia, sorry about this.”

“It’s nothing.”

Lefille leaned forward in a daze as she looked at Felmenia who was smiling as she didn't mind at all.

"Felmenia-jou, Felmenia-jou. I also want to do it."

"Yes, by all means."

"Then Suimei-kun. Go A~n."

"A~n."

As expected, Suimei also obediently opened his mouth for Lefille. There wasn't a single hint of resistance or unwillingness from him. While doing so, he quietly chewed the food fed to him. Staring at Suimei in such a condition, the two of them exchanged excited glances between each other.

"What is this? This is kind of good. Suimei-kun is cute."

"Yes, certainly."

If it was the normal Suimei, he would be valiantly protecting the two beautiful girls in an excited state. However in this case, the ones who were excited were the two young girls. It was certain that Suimei would later bury himself into a hole from such embarrassing memories... However this did not matter at all to them.

"Well then Lefille, next is my turn."

"Yeah, Felmenia-jou, we're taking turns right?"

Until the contents of the bowl were completely emptied out, they took turns feeding Suimei the potage.



Sitting at the south end of the Imperial Capital Filas Philia was a huge castle, Groschler. It was the tallest structure within the entire Empire. This was the seat from which the Emperor governed the state and listened to the advice of the nobles. As the centre of all politics in the Empire, it served as a government office. It originally stood quite firmly as a fortress city. Up until now it had endured many crisis that looked to topple the Empire all throughout history. Its impressive shape was widely known even outside the country.

In its administration room, was a crimson red carpet and a crest bearing flag hanging over a luxurious interior. This room could be said to be a symbol of the Emperor's authority. It was also a place where people gathered to push decisions onto others with a strict attitude. However, right now in this room, aside from that tense atmosphere, there was now a wretched and vulgar emotion filling it up. As Rogue Zandyke entered the administration room and felt this turbulence with his body, he kept his usual stiff expression, and knelt before the prince sitting atop his throne.

“Intelligence branch colonel Rogue Zandyke has arrived in response to your summons.”

With his head down, Rogue perfectly conformed to the behaviour of one receiving a summons. After stating his presence, the voice of one of the elderly statesmen told him to raise his head. In accordance with those words, Rogue raised his head. Before his eyes, seated on the throne and looking down at him, was a single young man wearing elegant garments, the first imperial prince of the Nelferian Empire, Reanat Filas Rieseld. Even in Groschler, where the desires of men ran rampant, he was a talented individual who handled all state affairs flawlessly whenever the Emperor was absent. Before Reanat, Rogue once more bowed down.

“It is good to see you in high spirits, your Highness. I'd like to ask you of a trifling matter, but was his Majesty the Emperor not responsible for government affairs today?”

As the Emperor of Nelferia was getting quite old, currently all government affairs were being taken care of in turn between the Emperor and his heir, the first imperial prince Reanat, for the sake of building a firm foundation for handling government affairs in the prince. On this day, it was meant to be the Emperor who was taking care of affairs inside this administration room. As Rogue recalled this fact from memory, Reanat put on a faint smile and looked at the space where the Emperor would normally be.

“Umu. His Majesty is in the Ruby Palace. It seems he will be unable to take care of government affairs today, thus I have come forth. Good grief, his Majesty's moodiness sure is problematic. Kukuku.”

Reanat began letting out a strange laugh as Rogue bowed his head deeper one more time. Thinking of the Emperor who had gone to one of the Imperial villas, the Ruby Palace, to play around with women, the prince must have been letting out a sigh deep within his mind. While holding these thoughts, Rogue was waiting for the prince to settle down. Reanat then suddenly ceased his stifled laughter. The quiet laughter which reverberated in the air was like a premonition for the change in the atmosphere. As Rogue assumed they were moving onto the main topic, he maintained his stiff expression with a hint of tension, and put himself on guard for Reanat's statement. Propping up his hand against his chin using his elegant chair's armrest, Reanat spoke.

"And so, Rogue. Are you already aware of the reason that you have been summoned here today?"

"... Though it may be presumptuous of me, I believe it would be about Liliana."

"That's correct. This is to continue the conversation of whether or not your daughter is the criminal behind the coma incidents. The other day she was spotted at the crime scene, and has since fled without being found. Have her whereabouts been seized since then?"

"No, we have exhaustively searched for her, however we have still been unable to establish her whereabouts."

"Has she not returned to your residence?"

"It is just as I said."

After Rogue's short reply, one of the elderly statesmen spoke up.

"Perhaps, you are sheltering her? She is your own daughter after all."

"No, by no means would I do such a thing..."

"Hou? According to the military police, the victims of this incident were all particularly high ranking nobles. For a young upstart such as you, it is not an impossible story that you have been using your daughter to plot some sort of scheme is it not?"

The elderly statesman's words were roundabout. He was implying that Rogue

was making it easier to raise his own status by removing the people who would stand in his way. However, Rogue denied his words.

“I’ve heard that the victims were not all high ranking individuals.”

“Shameless! The large majority were ones who saw you with suspicious eyes, you aimed after those who were also lower in status than you!”

The statesman’s aggressive and somehow artificial voice echoed through the administration room. At the same time, voices of agreement were raised all around. Suspicions against Liliana filled the room. In this situation, even the nobles who were Rogue’s allies were unable to raise their voices. As the statesmen were heating up, Reanat let out a deliberately loud sigh.

“... Will you cease that? It has not yet been determined that Liliana is the criminal.”

“Ha.”

At Reanat’s words, the loud voices that were reverberating throughout the room unbelievably settled down. Even the statesman who first began to blame Rogue withdrew immediately, and soon all the nobles who had been raising their voices in agreement became completely silent. It was as if they were trying to leave a bad impression of Rogue on Reanat and the other neutral nobles. Or rather that was their exact goal. Rogue could sense stifled laughter in the room. After observing that the atmosphere in the air had calmed down, Reanat began speaking.

“Starting that kind of argument in this place will get us nowhere. First we must search for Liliana who is under suspicion and put all of our strength into investigating the incidents.”

“Naturally.”

The statesman who had been raising a fuss easily let out his agreement with Reanat. However, as if he had an ulterior motive, he immediately stated his own opinion.

“However, I believe there is something that we must decide on before that.”

“Something that we must decide on...?”

“Fumu. Responsibility, is it? Certainly, that’s right.”

Rogue knit his brows at the statesman’s words, but Reanat had immediately caught on to his intent. He then pointed his cold gaze towards Rogue.

“If the investigation proceeds as it has then your daughter will eventually be found. If at that time, Liliana is in fact the criminal, what will you do?”

“Please wait a moment. Has it not yet been determined that Liliana is the culprit?”

“—In the case that she is, how will you take responsibility? We’re talking about deciding that right now.”

One of the statesmen summarized Reanat’s words before Rogue. They were surely being too hasty in determining a punishment so soon. As Rogue discreetly moved his gaze to the statesman, he could see him laughing with a smirk. It was obvious that they were planning on passing false charges onto Liliana. Even so, perhaps because Reanat held Rogue with high regards, he added on to the statesman’s summary.

“Rogue, both you and your daughter are great powers of the Empire. I would also like to believe she is innocent. However, you must also know that our country has strict laws. Thus, to prepare for that case, it is something that we must decide.”

One of the statesmen continued for Reanat.

“Imperial Military Guidelines article 12, clause number 3. You who holds the rank of colonel would not make light of its weight correct? At that time, I believe that you should also wish for a suitable punishment.”

“...”

“In that case Rogue, do you have some sort of answer for us?”

Rogue waited for everyone to be silent, then responded to Reanat’s question.

“... My daughter’s failures are also my failures. I will relinquish my rank in the army, and step down from my seat as one of the Elite Twelve.”

“Understood.”

As Reanat's acknowledgement echoed through the room, one of the statesmen once more raised his voice.

"That's right isn't it? I believe it is appropriate for the colonel to take responsibility for his own daughter right?"

"However, is that not a little severe?"

"We're talking about the ones responsible for driving the situation to its current state. It is only proper... Right? Colonel."

"... I understand completely."

Before the statesman's pressure, Rogue once more bowed down. Gazing at the situation for a short while, Reanat then spoke up.

"... The fact that the resolution of the incident has been lagging behind is something his Majesty is also observing seriously. In the current situation where the demon invasion has been rather active, it is not good for the country to remain in an anxious state without a resolution."

The statesman expressed his agreement with that statement.

"That's right. We must also earnestly dedicate ourselves to the investigation. However, it seems that the holy city's Hero-dono is also involved in the investigation of this incident."

"I'm aware that it will be difficult to get involved. However, it is also true that at this rate we will not get anywhere. Therefore, with regards to the investigation of this case, there will be a change."

"A change, is it?"

"That's right. Up until now the military police and intelligence branch were working together for the investigation. The headquarters of the investigation is integrated between the two of them. For the time being, the command of those headquarters will be entrusted to this person."

Reanat let out a short 'Let them in,' and the door opened. And then the one who walked to Reanat's side was—



A visitor's knock rang throughout the Yakagi residence in the Imperial Capital. After a short while, Felmenia returned from the entrance way with her report, in a sense, it was exactly as Suimei expected.

“Suimei-dono. It's the military police of the Imperial Capital.”

As Felmenia brought this news with a serious expression, Suimei calmly replied with a ‘Got it,’ back to her. Currently, Suimei was now in much better physical condition compared to before after devoting himself to recovery successfully for the last few days. He wasn't quite back in peak condition, however he at least returned to a level where he was able to take part in every day activities. For the time being, he wanted to regain all the time lost while he couldn't move and was wondering what to start with. This happened to be one of his main points. However the other two seemed quite worried as Lefille, who was next to Felmenia as she made her report, spoke up with a severe expression.

“The military police... Suimei-kun, what do we do?”

“Let's see... For now let's just meet them.”

“But, once you meet them...”

“I know.”

Letting them know that he had properly thought it through, Suimei headed to the entrance way where the military police was waiting. Depending on the situation, there was the possibility that this would escalate into a bad state of affairs, however nothing would start if they just left them waiting. As he greeted the policeman who was waiting at the entrance way, they returned a courteous bow to him. Their uniform was very tidily kept, and gave off a very clean impression, their conduct was lively and their words were also very polite.

“It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I am affiliated to the Empire's Military Police, Third Regiment. You are Suimei Yakagi-san correct?”

“Yes. What business have you come here with today?”

“I will get straight to the point, I would like Yakagi-san to accompany us from here.”

The military policeman politely replied to Suimei who was feigning ignorance. As the word 'us' implied, there was the presence of several people on the other side of the door. Suimei guessed that they were planning on taking him to the station and thoroughly question him about the situation on that day. In response, Suimei spoke in a troubled manner.

“Even if you say that... My apologies, but the condition of my body is rather poor right now, would it not be possible to leave it for another day?”

“That’s... We can’t really do that.”

“Meaning?”

“Right. In the case where you do not comply to our request, the higher ups have ordered us to bring you along by force.”

It was a rather violent approach. However, the military policeman who said this was also quite troubled about it and was currently rubbing his forehead with his fingers. This was likely because he sympathized with Suimei’s condition and did not really want to force him. But now that it’s gone as far as having to mention force, going along with them was already something Suimei could not avoid. Even if he used magic to slip by this time, another member of the military police would simply come by and ask again. In any event, the situation would not change.

“We are also aware of your circumstances. Would it be possible for you to comply with our request?”

The military policeman once more asked this of Suimei with modesty. Lefille, who was standing behind Suimei, then tugged at the cuff of his sleeve. As he brought his face closer to her, she put the anxiety she was feeling deep down inside into words with a grim face.

“... Suimei-kun. I have a bad feeling about this.”

“Yeah, me too. But I think I don’t really have a choice other than going along here.”

“Is that fine?”

“I want to get a grasp of the status of the scene’s investigation too.”

There were things he wanted to determine other than just Liliana's location. Currently he had Felmenia gathering information, however he was still in the dark on the current state of the investigation. He was just planning to make his move anyways, so the timing here was actually good. Even after saying that, Lefille didn't seem entirely convinced and was making a sour frown. The one who made a move to convince her was Felmenia. Putting on airs to just leave everything to her, she reliably stepped forward.

"Lefille. I will go along with them. That way there is no need to worry."

"... Un, got it. I'll sincerely leave Suimei-kun to you."

Lefille squeezed out a dejected voice. Aside from just worry, it seemed that she had other sources of distress. Lefille was impatient with the current situation. After becoming smaller, she had to resign herself from taking part in any conflict. She was unable to properly do things that she could easily do before. Suimei glanced at her behind him and could see her frustrated feelings crawling up on her face. Still gripped by the image of her lonely figure, Suimei left the house together with Felmenia.



Suimei and Felmenia were now walking down the streets being lead by several military policemen. The military police were both in front and behind them. It looked a lot like they were in a bad situation and being apprehended, however it was not like they were suspects or criminals. In truth they were being handled very courteously and were not receiving any sort of poor treatment.

According to Felmenia, the soldiers and military police of the Empire had very strict discipline imposed on them. This was generally why the way they dealt with others and their outward appearance turned out to be quite good. When Suimei just arrived in the Empire with Lefille, he remembered hearing a similar story. Since the Empire's army is very strictly disciplined, compared to other countries, the Empire's army was of particularly high quality. After hearing this, it reminded Suimei of the German army's strict discipline. It was entirely possible that like that country, the Empire was progressing down the path of modernization as a military country.

The design of the streets and residential areas of the Imperial Capital of Filas Philia differed from those of the Royal Capital in Astel in that it was more modernized. From what he had heard, this applied when compared to all other countries as well. In the case that they continue like the other world, developed their industry and managed to recreate the first and second Industrial Revolutions, it was entirely possible that they would repeat the failures of that world as well. Nature and mystery were still in harmony, but there was no way of knowing if that would remain true forever.

“Suimei-dono. It’s been quite a while since you’ve had some fresh air right?”

“Hm? Yeah, you’re right.”

Just as she said, it had been a while since Suimei stepped outside. Due to the damage to his astral body, he had been continuously bedridden all this time. He did not even have the leisure to take a relaxing stroll outside. And so, the outdoors that he had not seen in a while, somehow seemed to be restless to him. The citizens of the Imperial Capital appeared to be in an uneasy state where they could not calm down. As he snuck at glance at the people they passed by, it was like they were all being alert for some danger they could not see. Even the children who were running around outside had some fear mixed into their behaviour and did not appear to be enjoying themselves. As Suimei was about to put his impression into words, Felmenia guessed his thoughts.

“While Suimei-dono was bedridden, Liliana Zandyke was put on the wanted list, the Imperial Capital has been in this kind of state since.”

“... I expected this to an extent but, it’s become quite an uproar huh.”

“It’s because the identity behind the culprit has become clear. They must feel like the danger is nearby.”

“However, it’s a soldier from the same country, this kind of fear is a little...”

“From the beginning Liliana Zandyke was someone who used unidentifiable magic. Holding a seat as one of the Empire’s Elite Twelve and also being appointed a special position within the Empire’s military, she has always been a recognized as a symbol of fear within the Empire. Thinking of it that way, this kind of change in the atmosphere feels like a fairly natural flow.”

“To the regular citizens, that’s all it looks like huh?”

Felmenia gave a nod, however Suimei could only let out a sigh at the situation.

“Even though she’s just a child... no, because she’s a child?”

Normally, one must dedicate a suitable amount of years to acquire strength. However, contrary to that expectation, Liliana was a mage who was quite strong. The fact that she held that kind of strength despite being a small child was probably something that stirred up fear in the people. On top of that, there was her overpowering manner of speech and conduct, it only intensified that impression. From the beginning, Liliana had many enemies. Adding on the current incident, pretty much all of the citizens would have become her enemies as well. She wouldn’t really be able to walk outside anymore. Also because of the morals in this world, there was no telling what would happen if she showed up in front of people.

There was the possibility that the taller shadow was sheltering her, but that also couldn’t be said to be a good situation. Those words the shadow passed down to Liliana on that evening seemed very much like words of temptation. If Suimei were to think about it like it was using her, it was easy to think that it would cut her off and throw her away at any time. While Suimei was staring off into space thinking of these things, Felmenia suddenly began speaking to him while casting magic. There was no change to the voice he heard. However, the sound did not leak out to their surroundings. It was a magic whisper.

“... Suimei-dono is quite concerned about that girl right? I’ve heard you only spoke to Liliana Zandyke on a few occasions, why do you go so far?”

“Is it weird?”

“Eh? No, that’s not really what I meant but...”

“It’s fine. Even I understand that it is a little strange.”

Suimei put on an awkward smile and began staring off into the distance.

“... How do I put it? In this world, there are things where nothing can be done but to give up quietly everywhere right? I don’t like that sort of thing. If you don’t give up, there are certainly happy times ahead, so having no choice but to

do so is unpleasant right?”

“Suimei-dono...”

That’s how it was. To Suimei, the fact that these kinds of feelings had to exist was something he couldn’t accept. Those feelings that one had no choice but to drown away in a sea of tears with no hope of salvation. That’s why sorrow only multiplied. For that girl as well, she was bound by these kinds of fetters. Suimei recalled the words he heard on that evening.

‘—Nobody needs me for anything but fighting.’

Those words that came from Liliana’s mouth were nothing more than words she used to grieve about her own misfortune. She continued to be ostracized by everyone, they were words of one who was dearly clinging onto their place in the world to establish their own existence. This was why Suimei was unable to leave her as she was. While Suimei was thinking of Liliana’s current whereabouts, Felmenia suddenly asked Suimei a question.

“The reason Suimei-dono wants to return back to that world, as I thought, is it because even in that world you have something to fight for?”

“Well... Yeah.”

While giving his short and vague reply, Suimei looked at his surroundings. And then he realized something.

“Now that I think about it, did they not impose martial law?”

The atmosphere in the streets was different, but there were still people walking around. Suimei was thinking about how no limitations seemed to be in place on the citizens. In this city in another world where they are restricted in size due the protective walls, unlike the modern world, the likelihood of bumping into criminals was fairly high. Normally, until the criminal was caught, there would be restrictions in place on unnecessarily moving around outside. However, contrary to his expectations, outwardly, the streets were just as busy as they normally were. The tradespeople and dwarves were all still energetically moving around.

“With regards to that, the Hero-dono from the Salvation Church... Elliot-dono’s parade is coming up. The scheduled date is approaching fairly quickly so

if they put on any restrictions it seems it would pose quite the problem.”

“I see...”

If they invoke martial law it would affect the parade that was coming up. Though it was unlikely that kind of notification was actually passed around. If they brought the citizens’ activities to a stop here, their chance to inspire the populace would be completely lost. There were many foreigners pouring into the city to see the parade too, it would pose quite a blow to the Imperial Capital’s revenue. In that case, their policy was to more or less just shut their eyes to the situation. Having caught a grasp of why the atmosphere was how it was, Suimei turned to the military policemen.

“Excuse me. Isn’t it about time that you inform us where we are headed to?”

“We are accompanying the two of you to the south plaza of Filas Philia.”

“The south plaza?”

Suimei knit his brows together at their answer. He was sure they were bringing him to a station where they would inquire about the incident. However he was unable to see through their intent of bringing him to a plaza. The military police, being taken away, a plaza. When Suimei put these three thoughts together, a picture of a guillotine showed up in his mind. Though that did seem very unlikely.

“Why a plaza?”

“Her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella is waiting for us there.”

“...?”

Suimei could only raise his eyebrow at this unexpected answer. An unclear matter had just become even more unclear after all. There was no way he would just naturally understand what was going on. If she was waiting for them it meant that she was the one to summon them there. But up to this point Suimei did not recall ever getting involved with such an esteemed person. Then just why was someone like that waiting for him? As Suimei was mulling on his suspicions, Felmenia brought her face close to him.

“Her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella is the Nelferian Emperor’s third

daughter. It is said that she once split the land on a battlefield and crumbled the footing below her enemies. She is a mage who uses the earth attribute of such renown that she was given the name of Geomancy Emperor. She is called the strongest mage in the Empire.”

“I see... But why is that strongest mage in the Empire summoning me?”

Suimei could not figure out what was going on with this imperial princess and them being taken away by the military police. He didn’t think it was a completely unrelated case to the incident, but still didn’t really have a clue why he was being summoned. He had put these suspicions into words, but even so the military police did not answer him. Could they not say, or did they not know? He didn’t know which it was, but they were showing him a troubled expression.

“Her Highness the Imperial Princess has something she would like to talk about with you.”

“What about?”

“Even if you ask me that...”

They didn’t know. It seemed there was no need to actually tell the ones bringing him over anything.

Suimei gave up on asking the military police and used magic to whisper to Felmenia.

“Menia. What kind of woman is that imperial princess Graziella?”

“Just as I said before, she is the strongest mage in the Empire. She’s the unusual type to calmly do impossible things and has quite the intense personality.”

“... Now that I think about it, when Reiji defeated Rajas she was also there right?”

“Yes, I was also present at the time and we had exchanged a few words. She’s the type to be quite determined to do what she must. Please bear in mind that she is not one that can be dealt with by ordinary means.”

“I see...”

As the southern plaza slowly came into view, Suimei could feel the presence of a storm coming and stroked his chin. Just like Lefille had said earlier, he had a bad feeling about this.



The park at the south end of the Imperial Capital Filas Philia was often called the Nobles' Plaza. The vast majority of its visitors were people of high status. It was situated in one of the upper class sections of the city and since the nearby nobles invested quite a bit into it, compared to other places it was quite pompous. The brick roads and flowerbeds were well maintained. Unlike the central plaza there were no shops in the surroundings. Among the surrounding residential buildings, there was one particularly large mansion which seemed to use the plaza as its courtyard.

The scale of the building was large and the entire exterior was made up of palm coloured bricks. The stairs at the front fanned out to greet many plants. It was genuinely the kind of residence one would expect of someone from a very high position or perhaps their children. However it was currently occupied by the military police and soldiers which gave off the air of an emergency situation. Suimei was not sure about the reason behind all this, however it was likely that the nobles also protested in the hindrance to their lifestyle and were politely turned away by the military police.

Within that heavy atmosphere, Suimei and Felmenia arrived at their destination and were told to wait in the corner of the plaza near a pavilion by the military police. Assuming that Graziella would be there, they headed towards their destination and spotted a familiar figure. He had a body that drew fairly effeminate lines and a supple figure, blond hair and blue eyes accentuated by long eyelashes. At a glance one could mistake him for a girl, it was the pretty boy hero Elliot Austin. He was gracefully seated on the red bricks surrounding a flower bed while talking to his magic priest attendant, Christa.

“You’re...”

Suimei unintentionally let out his voice. Hearing this, Elliot stood up.

“I see, so you were also called here?”

Elliot's surprise only showed for an instant as he brushed back his blonde hair.

And then with a slight amount of cynicism, he began speaking.

“Are your injuries fine already?”

“What, were you worried about me?”

“Don’t joke around. There’s no way I was.”

“That’s true.”

While exchanging these joking words with Elliot, Suimei could feel an unpleasant gaze directed towards him. Looking for the source of it and tilting his head to the side, he could see Christa putting on a sullen expression. It seemed that she had a hard time accepting the frivolous way Suimei was speaking to Elliot. Beneath her green braids, she was making a severe, high-strung face. On the other hand, after Elliot spotted Felmenia, he immediately made a pass at her.

“Fem-san too, it has been a long time.”

“Y-yes. It is good to see you again.”

“There is no need to be so humble. I do not mind if you are more carefree around me. Nevertheless, that platinum blonde is as beautiful as ever.”

Elliot’s brilliant smile carried a drastically more kind air than when he was talking to Suimei. It seemed he had mistaken Felmenia’s awkwardness as nervousness. Obviously Felmenia was mostly feeling self-conscious about being called by the fake name she threw out last time, but there was no way Elliot would know this. After calling out to Elliot two or three times from the side, Christa deliberately cleared out her throat.

“Elliot-sama.”

Christa called out his name like she was threatening him to which he simply responded with a ‘What?’ either because he had no consideration or he was playing dumb. She then put on a transparent expression and urged him to restrain himself.

“Are you not getting too intimate with them?”

“I’m only trying getting along with Fem-san you know? She may become our comrade right? Can I not?”

“That’s...”

Christa was perplexed after being given an actual plausible explanation. Watching Elliot’s expression as he looked down at Christa, Suimei could see a bit of a bully’s expression swelling up on his face.

“Fufu, Christa is a bit jealous after all. Whenever I get along with other women, she always becomes like this right away.”

“Wh-wh-wh-what are you saying Elliot-sama!? I’m not really!”

“Really, what?”

Elliot was now poking fun at Christa waiting for her next words. Looking at this from the outside, it only looked like two beautiful people flirting with each other. After being called out while his condition was still poor and then having to witness this kind of exchange, Suimei was a little pissed. While scowling at Elliot who was trying to build himself a love triangle...

“You should just explode.”

“Ha?”

“Shut up. It’s nothing.”

Despite saying that Suimei started mumbling ‘just explode, just explode...’ like some sort of curse. The other three had no idea what his words meant and could only cock their heads to the side. As Suimei was making no attempts at hiding his irritation, Felmenia turned to the other two.

“Why are the two of you here?”

“... Were you not informed?”

“Yes, we just came along at the military police’s request. We were told that her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella would be waiting for us, but were not told the reason.”

“Is that right? The fact is...”

Felmenia had asked this, but after arriving in this plaza, Suimei did have a sense as to why they were called. If both himself and Elliot were here, then there was an eighty to ninety percent chance it was something related to the

coma incidents. Up until now, this was his only relation to this man after all. If they were both summoned that would be the likely reason. Christa then realized something, and called out to Elliot with a whisper.

“Elliot-sama.”

“... I see, so they’re finally going to show up.”

After hearing her whisper, Elliot turned around. Matching him Suimei and Felmenia also looked in the same direction. Accompanied by several people, a single woman emerged from the pavilion. Her age was around the twenties. Rather than graceful, the term heroic would match her majestic looks better. Yet she was still quite beautiful. Her outfit was far more luxurious than the other soldiers and officers, the general tone of it was a deep burgundy red. On her shoulders was an embroidered Imperial Army coat. From her looks, she seemed to be higher above anyone else in the army.

After spotting her figure, Felmenia cautiously breathed out her name, ‘Princess Graziella.’ This was the person who called them here. The fact that she was dressed in military equipment despite being an imperial princess was likely because of her position as one of the Empire’s Elite Twelve. The way she brushed aside her wavy long blond hair also gave off a very rough impression for a princess. However above all that, Suimei could see the premonition of something bad coming from her blue eyes.

As she drew nearer, the atmosphere in the air gradually transformed. The surroundings became grave and heavy, was this born of her fighting prowess or her status? At the least, her disposition was sufficient to carry the weight of one who stands atop others. As Suimei quickly sharpened his presence, Christa fell to a knee and bowed down. The fact that Elliot simply bowed with a brief nod while standing must have been because he was a hero. Reiji had done the same that time in Camellia. Suimei and Felmenia both knelt down as well.

“—Everyone has gathered?”

With the plaza as a background, Graziella was standing before them. Her voice somehow seemed a little languid as her thinly slit eyes respectfully gazed down at each of them. And then, she began by speaking to Elliot.

“If I remember correctly bastard, I have not seen you since the report that

you were going to take part in the investigation right, summoned Hero-dono.”

“It is good to see you in good spirits, Princess Graziella. I am deeply honoured to be called forth by you despite your busy schedule.”

Elliot responded to the polite yet disrespectful tone in kind. Behind that ill-mannered gaze he was basically saying ‘how dare you call us here,’ with cynicism. The other party was aware of this and narrowed her eyes for an instant.

“You’re the same as ever, bastard.”

As the two finished their greetings, Christa began speaking in a deliberate tone.

“Your Highness. Why have you called forth the summoned hero Elliot-sama without making any sort of prior arrangements with him?”

If it was as she said, then this act was certainly looking down on the hero’s status. This was fairly obvious from the way that she referred to him as bastard, but Graziella simply rejected the question.

“Restrain yourself. Does a mere magic priest intend to push her opinion on me?”

Graziella was glaring at her intensely. In return Christa glared back undauntedly, but as if to mediate between the two, Elliot put his hand on Christa’s shoulder. As if to tell her that she was at a disadvantage with that hand, Christa let out a brief ‘... Excuse me,’ before reluctantly withdrawing. Next, Graziella turned towards Suimei.

“... So you are the damned man who is quarrelling with the hero for some reason.”

“Yes.”

Suimei bowed his head down. She didn’t have anything in particular to add on but was rather more interested into what was beside him.

“I could not possibly have imagined that While Flame-dono would be there beside you.”

“It is good to see you in high spirits.”

Felmenia spoke out respectfully and returned a bow to Graziella. Christa suddenly turned towards Felmenia. She probably understood just who the name White Flame referred to. She discovered that they had been using a fake name and was making a grim expression towards them, however none of that really mattered as Felmenia simply ignored her and focused on Graziella.

“Why have you, a mage from Astel, come to the Empire?”

“I believe my application to stay here was already accepted?”

“I’m asking why you are in the Empire though?”

Felmenia seemed to have already prepared an excuse to the irritated question directed towards her. As if saying ‘it can’t be helped,’ she let out a sigh and answered.

“... In accordance with the guidance of the Goddess Alshuna, I’ve come to serve as Suimei-dono’s aid.”

“Hou? Did you not previously say you were working under his Majesty Almadious’ direct orders? Are you saying that was a lie?”

“After reporting it to his Majesty, he ordered me to take care of it.”

“Fumu... so you say. And so, the one you are aiding, is this man?”

“It is as you say.”

“I see. Well, your reasoning doesn’t quite line up... The Goddess does pass out some seemingly senseless oracles. If I remember correctly the current case also involves the Goddess.”

With this Graziella seemed to be convinced. She was still pointing a suspicious look at Felmenia, however there was something more important for her and decided to drop it there.

“Let’s get straight to the point. The reason I called you bastards here today is none other than the fact that I have taken charge of the arrest of the culprit behind the coma incidents that you have been having your match over.”

“Mu...”

“That’s...”

Suimei had guessed it was related to the coma incidents, but he wasn't quite on the mark. Felmenia and Suimei both had a stern expression. On the other hand Elliot and Christa did not seem perturbed by the news at all. Elliot looked up lightly at Graziella, and formally questioned her.

"Your Highness. If that is all you have to say, there was no real need to call us all the way here correct? Would it not have been enough to simply inform us of the fact by messenger?"

"No, that wouldn't do. For the sake of resolving this situation quickly, I will have you two bastards work under my command after all."

"Wha—!?"

"Oioi..."

Elliot was expecting her to just commandeer the investigation and was at a loss for words as he gazed back at her. Suimei also let his bewilderment show on his face as he let out his voice. As if she didn't care at all about their surprise, Graziella firmly demanded their consent.

"Do you have any objections?"

"Of course I do."

"Hou? Why is that? I've even taken into consideration your damn quarrel you know?"

Towards Elliot's immediate denial, Graziella informed him of such with an expression that challenging her would be useless. For some reason she was of the disposition to get excited towards rebellion. By saying that she had taken their quarrel into consideration she probably meant that if they continued with their investigation then the church would not have any complaints. Elliot was the one who had an objection, but Christa replied in his stead.

"Your Highness. Elliot-sama and that man are investigating the incident in accordance with Alshuna-sama's words. To put both Elliot-sama and that man under your command would mean getting in the way of the match."

"And just how is that a problem? I don't have any reason to look after your damn match."

“That statement would run counter to Alshuna-sama’s intentions. I do not think it is proper for a member of royalty to make light of Alshuna-sama’s words correct?”

“And what is there to being proper? Before this is your damn problem, this is the Empire’s problem. It may be wrong to make light of Alshuna’s words, however after all is said and done it is all a trifle to the people of the Imperial Capital. In this circumstance where we do not know when another victim will appear, should our top priority not be bringing a quick resolution to the entire situation?”

“...”

Upon hearing the word victim even Christa could no longer raise any objections. All she could do was keep her mouth tightly shut. Setting that aside.

“... Is nobody going to say anything after she opposed royalty that much?”

“Hero-sama is dispatched by the Goddess, in other words a saint. In this case it is actually her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella who would be showing disrespect with her attitude. His attendant Christa-dono is under his protection after all... Besides, look closely. As evidence of that it is actually the military police and soldiers who are struck with terror at the situation.”

Following Felmenia’s suggestion, Suimei let his gaze wander around. Just as she said, not only the military police and soldiers, but even Graziella’s attendant had gone pale. Graziella then turned her attention over to Suimei.

“And what about you?”

To this question, Suimei’s answer was also naturally a refusal.

“I will also have to take the privilege of declining. I’m sure a quick resolution is the highest priority, but I also don’t have any intention of being forced to cooperate with you people.”

“This is an official draft. You are currently living in the Imperial Capital correct? As long as you live within the Empire, it is a matter of course that you cooperate with us.”

“Are you implying that if I do not comply you will throw me into prison?”

“Fumu... That is certainly a threat we can use. However in that case it is a little too oppressive.”

After a brief pause, Graziella put her hand to her chin as if she just thought of a brilliant idea.

“I’ve got it. If you bastards are rejecting it that extent, then how about we impose a condition on your draft?”

“What condition?”

“I said that I would add you bastards under my command, but I was thinking I should first verify your abilities. How about it? If you have a match with me and win, then it would be fine to allow you two bastards to freely act on your own.”

“Mu...”

“How arrogant...”

Elliot and Christa both let out a groan as Graziella’s previously aggressive attitude had vanished and she was now presenting a completely unreasonable condition. Graziella was the strongest mage in the Empire. The reason she thrust such a condition before them was surely because she had extreme confidence in her own abilities. However, perhaps Elliot was not aware of this as curiosity seemed to be showing on his face.

“Your Highness will fight herself?”

“Is it strange that I would fight?”

“It isn’t that it is strange, but...”

What he was hesitating to say, was that to measure their abilities it would be normal to leave it to one of her subordinates. But it was probable that that did not match what she had in mind at all. As Suimei turned to look at them, Elliot and Christa were whispering to each other. She was likely giving him information about Graziella. Before long, Elliot, who discovered that he could not be careless, had become quite tense. Seeing this, Graziella let out a fearless smile.

“That’s right. First will be Hero-dono’s power... Fu, shall we have a look?”

“You are quite confident in yourself huh.”

“Confidence is it? If you are able to properly grasp the limits of your own abilities, having confidence would be obvious wouldn’t it?”

Graziella completely cut down Elliot’s accusation that her confidence was leading her to overestimate her own abilities. As she said this, Elliot lowered his stance and let his fighting spirit surge from his body.

“Elliot-sama? Y-you couldn’t possibly be accepting her conditions could you!?”

“Yeah, it should be amusing to indulge the princess in her selfishness right? Besides, if we don’t accept the conditions, they won’t let us leave any time soon.”

“Elliot-sama...”

“Now then, Christa. Fall back.”

With a slightly worried expression, Elliot urged Christa to take refuge outside the immediate area. Suimei and the others also found a safe place where they would not get dragged into things and fell back quickly.

“Hero-dono, don’t show me a boring fight alright?”

As Graziella made this declaration, she received a gauntlet from the attendant next to her and inserted her hand into it. The gauntlet’s silver shape matched well with her white coat. Along the knuckles was a material giving off a black lustre. Even Suimei who was well informed on magically treated materials could not recognize what it was. It did not seem to be metal, but...

“Menia, what is that black stuff on that gauntlet?”

“It is black wood. It originates from trees in the north and carries a hardness like steel. Compared to metal it is much lighter. On top of being the same hardness it is also strong against mana. Thus it is often used as protective equipment and sometimes weapons for mages.”

“Hou...”

Suimei was quite interested in that unknown material, however right now there was the fight between Graziella and Elliot. As the attendants and escorts stepped aside, Graziella leaped down from the top of the staircase. She knocked her fists together as if to check the fit on her gauntlet sending a deep, thick

sound throughout the plaza. While still looping up at Graziella, Elliot drew his shining orichalcos sword from its sheath. The blade of the sword excited with mana let out a glow as he thrust the tip into the bricks on the ground.

“Deploy armament.”

The voice that rung out in the air like a bell was a key word. A rich amount of mana and a spell coiled around Elliot’s body. Before long, his body was wrapped by a dull silver armour. As an eye catching bucket shaped helmet came into shape, his whole body was covered in metal. In deep contrast to Elliot’s usually dainty appearance, it was profoundly boorish equipment. Though it appeared to sacrifice mobility, that armour was woven together with mana from a spell. Its weight would not necessarily match its looks.

This was a mystery from Elliot’s world. It was the type to materialize a physical substance in the world, but the characteristics of the spell were unfamiliar to Suimei. There were magics he knew of that could produce a similar effect, however it was a system of magic that did not exist in his world. As his coat of arms burned into the armour, Elliot finally materialized a shield. It was a kite shield that was also covered in his coat of arms. Observing Elliot’s use of magic, Graziella turned an expression of admiration towards him.

“Hou? Is that magic from Hero-dono’s world? It is an amusing technique.”

“I’m honoured. However, it is not just amusing you know?”

Due to his helmet, Elliot’s voice was muffled. With an air of confidence, he lowered his stance. Seeing that his preparations were complete, Graziella made her move.

“We’ll start with a preliminary test shall we— Oh Earth. Harden thy body and become a stone to smash my enemy. Stone Raid.”

It was magic that Felmenia had used before, a magic which used the earth attribute to shoot out stones. However, her title as the strongest user of earth magic was not just for show, Felmenia’s magic could not compare to the sheer quantity and size of the stones created by Graziella in an instant. In her surroundings, many stones which tapered off to a point were floating around. As she fired off the stones, Elliot pointed his kite shield forward and took a defensive stance.

Though the stones rushed in, every one of them was repelled by the shield leaving Elliot completely unharmed. Judging that the hail had ended, Elliot began invoking magic. After letting out a chant like a mutter, his sword was now clad in lightning and shot out an electric bolt from its tip. Having sensed the movement of mana, Graziella evaded the bolt safely.

“I see. You’re quite capable.”

“There’s still more to come— I present my wish in celebration before the extolled spirit of wisdom. Answer my call, Force Grant!”

As Elliot let out his keyword, nothing about his appearance changed. However, the mana that was unleashed in the air was a spell that reinforced his physical abilities and was now wrapped around his body.

“That magic use...”

Felmenia had her eyes wide open in surprise as she observed Elliot’s magic. This was likely because she had seen that he was using multiple magics concurrently. It was superior to the magic theory of this world that was limited to two spells at most.

With the continuous effect of these magics, Elliot’s battle abilities soared. It was a popular style of magic for fighting, however in this world it wasn’t very common. Graziella closed in on Elliot. This was a rare sight for mages of this world, however it surely signified her specialty in close ranged combat. Without showing any fear of Elliot’s heavy equipment, Graziella drew nearer and thrust her fist at him. Naturally she was using physical reinforcement, it did not seem to be inferior to Elliot’s magic in any way. While attacking with her fists, she was also using earth magic. In response, Elliot wielded his shield, lightning clad sword and sword techniques to boldly fight her off.

“Hero-dono’s way of fighting is splendid isn’t it?”

“It certainly gives off the feeling of a hero.”

“Does Suimei-dono also find it to be good?”

“That’s right. It conforms to the basics, I think it is a good way of fighting.”

Suimei agreed with Felmenia’s opinion. Watching this fight, he could no

longer say that Elliot's confidence was all bravado. His sword skills were obvious, the armour he had made with magic was quite durable, the time to invoke his physical reinforcement magic and weapon enchantment magic was short, but its effect was large. However, it was somewhat dull in that it was all far too standard...

“The shield and armour are different defensive spells. On top of that there's the physical reinforcement spell and that attack magic. It's a perfect fighting style isn't it?”

“As one would expect it is at least worth praising. He has both close combat and magic battles covered, furthermore there's that sword skill. However—”

Considering the amount of mana, the speed of the spells and their effects, Graziella was superior in all of these aspects. Elliot only had his lightning magic, but Graziella was invoking new earth magic many times all while engaging in hand to hand combat.

“I had the image in my mind that mages in this world didn't really use hand to hand fighting techniques though.”

“Her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella is a special case. People who have a firm foundation as a mage and are still able to engage in hand to hand combat to that extent are very rare.”

As Suimei and Felmenia were having this conversation, it seemed that the fighting had reached a stalemate. Graziella and Elliot put some distance between each other and were once more squaring off. Graziella then began speaking.

“That's it. I've seen it.”

“... Seen what?”

“Concerning that damn armour and shield. They both consist of a physical substances, but the shield is used to defend against magic and the armour is used to defend against all other attacks, right?”

“ ... ”

Graziella was making a self-satisfied look as she figured it out, however Elliot

remained silent. Just what kind of look was he making towards her beneath that helmet?

“Suimei-dono, was that right?”

“Yeah. It’s just as that woman said. There’s no mistake.”

While Suimei and Felmenia were talking, Christa let out a scream.

“Elliot-sama!”

Elliot’s shield was sent flying by Graziella’s powerful fist. She then stepped forward in a way to prevent him from picking it back up. Elliot had no choice but to step back in the opposite direction of his shield.

“... Suimei-dono. Hero-dono’s shield isn’t vanishing.”

“The spell must be made so that it won’t vanish until he uses a magic spell to dispel it. If it was a spell that required him to constantly pour mana into it, there’s the possibility of him being completely stripped of protection at any time after all.”

“I see. Certainly.”

As Felmenia was convinced of this, she once more raised her suspicions.

“Suimei-dono, between her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella and Hero-dono, which do you think will win?”

“I can’t say for certain. But, the imperial princess has the advantage. As long as they are equal in close combat, the ability to use magic becomes important. If he does not have something to overthrow that, then he’ll be overcome by the sheer difference in magic.”

“Something to overthrow...”

“That hero still has mana stocked up. Is he not planning on using it, or can he not use it here...?”

Suimei believed that he was still holding something back. The hero’s fighting style still left power in reserve after all. However in opposition to that, Graziella’s overwhelming combat abilities were quite considerable. Looking at this, Suimei couldn’t help but to have doubts as to why there was someone with

power equivalent to a hero yet they still had to go and summon a hero despite that.

In the middle of their exchange, the lightning clad around Elliot's sword vanished. It seemed that the effective time of the spell had passed. Just as Elliot was about to invoke the lightning onto his sword once more...

“—Oh Earth! Become the crystallization of my tyranny! Take hold of unyielding power and crush them! Thus, become a monument which will praise their glorious death! Crystal Raid!”

Graziella brought forth her decisive move. It was a grand move. As the crystals which pierced through the bricks on the ground surrounded Graziella, she flung her arm to the side. The crystals rushed forward. Elliot's shield was far away from him, he also didn't have time to defend with magic. Christa's scream filled the air.

“Suimei-dono!”

“So it is settled huh...”

A cloud of dust filled the air. It obscured their field of vision, however it was completely obvious who had won the battle.



The cloud of dust was blown away by the wind. As it swept away from the area, Elliot was now on his knees making a grim expression gasping for breath. And with an expression with even more zeal and curiosity than before, looking down at him, was Graziella. In the end, Graziella was the victor of the fight, it was just the result Suimei expected. Graziella swept her hair back and folded her arms.

“... So-so would about sum it up. Your fighting techniques are of a high level, but if I had to guess, Astel's hero seems to be more skilled.”

She was comparing the time she was fighting alongside side Reiji in Astel and her fight now while making a triumphant expression. Looking at the figure of Graziella standing before him with her arms folded, Elliot must have felt humiliated. He was still wearing his armour, but the shaking of his fists was still visible. After gulping down a drink handed to her by her attendant, she turned

back towards Elliot.

“It was a promise. Until the incident is resolved I will have you obey my commands.”

“Shi...”

“Or what, after all this, will the hero of all people refuse?”

“... Understood.”

Her way of speaking was quite provocative, but Elliot accepted Graziella’s words. However his face did not have a hint of pleasantness to it and was quite disgusting. Elliot dispelled his armour and shield and stood back up. Christa rushed over to his side and was about to state her opinion, but it seemed that once Elliot decided something he would not go back on it. He only shook his head back at Christa. And then, Graziella turned towards Suimei. She narrowed her eyes into thin slits and was staring at him.

“Now then, next is you.”

In this kind of dangerous situation, Suimei would not fall down to one knee. He only returned the gaze head on.

“I’d like to refuse getting involved in any fighting though?”

“You have no say in the matter, bastard. You will submit to me, or fight me.”

Suimei’s request was repelled by her haughty words. Felmenia then shouted at Graziella.

“Your Highness, please wait! No matter how you put it, is this not too high-handed!”

“If it is too high-handed, do you plan on complaining to someone?”

“Th-that’s... !”

“What, there’s no need to worry. We’ll just have a slightly fierce match.”

Graziella’s way of solving everything with sheer force was amazing in its own right. It was entirely possible for Felmenia to lodge a complaint to Almadious, however she did not seem to care one bit. As the two were glaring each other down, Suimei stepped forward.

“Menia, step back.”

“But, right now Suimei-dono is...!”

“She’s not showing any signs of listening no matter what we say. Her craving is showing in her eyes.”

Suimei pointed towards Graziella with his chin suggesting Felmenia to take a look for herself. Following his suggestion, she turned back towards Graziella.

“In her Highness Graziella’s eyes, craving...?”

Felmenia said this in a puzzled manner. It seemed that she was not able to understand, however, reflected within those blue eyes, was surely craving. They were the eyes of one who pursued conflict, or rather of one who desired a thrill while looking forward to a fight. Suimei stepped forward despite knowing this. Graziella but on an arrogant smile like she was tired of waiting.

“It seems you’ve gotten motivated.”

“Though completely unwillingly.”

The excited voice was brushed away by an exasperated voice. Elliot, who had stepped back together with Christa, was pointing a dubious expression towards Suimei.

“Oi, aren’t you still...”

Recovering from your injuries. To that incomplete question, Suimei confirmed it as the truth with a bitter voice.

“There was your case and then this one, my goodness, after coming here I’ve just been having nothing but bad luck.”

While making light of the situation, Suimei stepped forward. Graziella had already made her preparations and was letting out a ferocious presence. While doing so, she suddenly gazed at Suimei as if already criticizing him.

“It’s dull.”

“What is?”

“Isn’t it obvious? Your face.”

It was a transparent provocation. As Suimei silently hardened his expression,

Graziella let out a thrilled chuckle.

“Kukuku. Don’t be so offended. Certainly you are no flower, however I have judged that a bastard like you is not one to be underestimated... Also, according to the flow of events, you may just compare to the Elite Twelve.”

“...”

From a laugh she made a complete change to a sharp tone with that statement as she looked at Suimei with a sharp gaze. It seemed she was not making light of him at all. Liliana was one of those Elite Twelve, if Graziella grasped that Suimei had fought with Liliana during the incident, it was obvious that she would be vigilant.

“I’m a little late in asking, but you drove the culprit into a corner correct?”

“Who knows, I don’t know who told you such a thing, but I don’t have any memory of it.”

“I’m talking about the thought that Liliana Zandyke is the culprit.”

“Certainly that girl was present at the time, but there’s no proof of whether or not she is the culprit.”

“No proof you say? You bastard, were you not at the scene at the time and fought with her?”

Graziella crushed Suimei’s vague tone as she intensely questioned him. It felt like the air itself had become heavy. However Suimei did not pay it any mind and replied nonchalantly.

“I wonder, my memories of that night are awfully vague.”

“Do you intend to play dumb to the end?”

“... Fuu.”

“Mu...?”

“—Isn’t it about time you shut up, you damn octopus.”

He had enough of her questions. As he blew away her considerate tone with his answer, the surroundings began to stir. He could hear the angry voices of people around him, but it was nothing that concerned him. While he was

holding on to Liliana's secret, such an inquiry was only a hindrance. Since she was trying to get information out of him, it meant that they were still not able to grasp onto the important information of Liliana's movements. The reason they were overbearingly trying to bring him under their command without minding their appearances was basically because they had gotten impatient. As she heard Suimei's recklessness, Graziella let out an oppressive laugh.

"... Fuu, so that is your true character? That kind of disrespectful speech can get you charged with lèse-majesté you know?"

"Like I care! If you can arrest me just give it a try!"

"Ha! You sure can talk!"

Graziella's words were filled with energy as she rushed in at Suimei fiercely. In complete contrast from the time with Elliot, she intended to begin with hand to hand combat. Suimei evaded her fist and blocked her high kick with his arm, and twisting on the spot, he aimed a roundhouse kick at Graziella's head. As she raised her gauntlet and blocked it, Suimei retreated backwards. Graziella did not take any rest and chased after Suimei with her fist.

"Ku!"

"What's wrong? Your movements are dull."

Suimei was annoyed, but just as she said, his body was not moving fluidly. Due to the damage to his astral body, even though his body had no wounds, it did not move as he wanted it to. It took everything he had to simply evade in close combat.

"You are dodging quite well. However—"

Graziella fell back. The reason for that action was obvious.

"—Oh Earth! Thou art a stone bullet shining with evil's brilliance! Strike down my enemy in the blink of an eye! Stone Iridescence!"

As her words came to an end, an amorphous mineral like an opal appeared in the air. From the sunlight and mana shining down on it, the light refracting through it shined like a rainbow and assaulted Suimei's eyes. The constantly changing wavelength of light was strong, if one were weak to the stimulus then

it would likely induce a spasms due to seizure. The mass of minerals served well as a smokescreen and could deceive a simple opponent from the impending attack, however Suimei was a magician. Partially closing his eyes while enduring the dazzle, Suimei deployed his defensive magic.

“Secandum Excipio!” (Number 2 Rampart, Local Deployment!)

The mass of minerals that came flying was completely blocked by the golden magic circle. As expected, Graziella opened her eyes wide like she was looking at something strange. However, she swiftly returned her expression to its usual state.

“... Hou, it didn't work huh?”

Even though she knew there was no effect, Graziella's expression showed that she still had plenty of composure. It was like she was saying that in both terms of mana and spells, she still had much more up her sleeve. This was probably entirely correct. She was standing there without a single drop of sweat or exhaustion, she had the capacity to fire off such two verse chants a multitude of times without any problem. Her title as the strongest mage in the Empire was not just for show. However...

(The earth attribute of all things...)

Suimei grimaced at the bitter taste in his mouth. He had received this information earlier while observing Elliot's fight, yet he still couldn't stop himself from groaning. Among the four or five elements, magic which carried the earth attribute obviously held the most mass and hardness. As the magics were largely composed of sand, earth, rocks and minerals, defending against them had a direct impact.

Naturally, the number two rampart was a spell that defended against mana and the spells they wove. If it was something created by pulling the earth from the ground, then the physical defences of the number one rampart could block it. However even so, even simple magic which used the earth attribute created a large shock on impact. The damage to the surroundings was not insignificant, above all in this situation where it was painful for Suimei to move around too much, he could only complain that it was this of all things. If there was something he could do, it was to simply keep up appearances with a composed

face.

“Is it alright? If you keep firing off such flashy magic, the damage to the district will be pretty serious you know?”

“Like I care. The only ones living in this area are all rich. Just from a little bit of damage, their purses won’t empty. That’s why you also don’t have to hold back, right?”

“... Aren’t you just asking me to break things when you put it like that?”

“If you made my Imperial Capital more spacious, it would be quite refreshing.”

Pretty much asking him to just destroy where the nobles were living was not something someone of her status should be saying. Looking at her expression, Suimei could not read just what she was thinking about. He could not determine just what emotions her words contained. However, he could at least tell that this was not an opponent he could shake up so easily with words. Graziella rushed in once more. However, in complete contrast to her last charge, her footwork was light.

“F-fast!”

The one who yelled out was Felmenia. She must have been surprised by Graziella’s movements. The mage before his eyes was moving left and right with feints to try and throw Suimei off. However, the speed she was doing so at was not normal.

“Earth magic, huh?”

“That’s right. Though just seeing through it isn’t something I will praise you for—”

While messing with Suimei’s sense of depth, she was probably planning to leap in just a step away from him. However Suimei would be troubled if she looked down on a magician’s eyes to such an extent. After getting a rough grasp of Graziella’s location, Suimei snapped his fingers.

“Shi—!?”

As the air in front of her burst while she was in the middle of her footwork,

Graziella was unable to endure it and stumbled a step forward. The effect of Suimei's attack magic didn't end at just stopping her in her tracks, as perhaps due to the shock to her head and body, Graziella was staggering. Spotting this opening, Suimei switched on to the offensive in an instant. He continuously snapped his fingers towards Graziella and unleashed his attack magic in a constant stream. Before the storm of explosions from every direction, Graziella naturally had no time to prepare any sort of defensive magic. She was forced to protect herself with her arms in a defensive stance.

"Guu, you bastard, magic without any chanting...!"

However, with just this attack magic he was unable to bring forth a decisive end to the battle. Suimei was preparing to invoke his next magic spell, but due to the limitations on his mana due to the after-effects of his recovery, the invocation was delayed.

(Fuck—)

While Suimei was cursing in his mind, Graziella started muttering something. She was chanting a spell. Assuming it was another form of earth attributed magic, Suimei paid careful attention to any changes in his surroundings. Sensing the tremors beneath the earth as an omen, Suimei immediately evaded. As Graziella struck the ground, it broke to pieces and turned into a countless number of pebbles which shot out towards Suimei. It was a rain of bullets from all directions, but Suimei still managed to stave off the attack.

"—In that case, how about this!?"

As Graziella yelled, she turned over her military coat.

"—Heed my desires. Fly in beyond the distance. To the one who won't hold an audience with me. My hail detaches you from the world's entangled and inseparable laws, become a power which surpasses any kind of reason— Open! Devil Connect!"

"Do you think using the same kind of magic over and over will— Wha!?"

The end of Suimei's taunt was cut off by his own surprised voice. According to his intuition, he had a fair grasp on the shape the magic that Graziella had been invoking up until now would take. But something was different this time. He did not sense the mediation of an element in her magic. The moment he noticed

this discrepancy, a region of the air became hazy. Suddenly, a giant mass of rock appeared in that space, and Suimei brought forth his number two rampart to intercept it. However, for some reason his defensive magic did not interfere with it. Before the giant mass of rocks, the rampart of the golden fortress was screaming. On top of that, magic power had been building up above him, at this rate...

“Tch—”

“Suimei-dono!!”

Suimei broke off to evade, but his body was still struck by a portion of it. The shock sent his body flying. The massive rock crashed into a corner of the plaza with a thunderous roar and kicked up smoke everywhere. On the other hand, Suimei was forced unwillingly into low altitude flight. And then he immediately began manipulating phenomena to correct his posture. For a magician with sufficient power, without any sort of chant or action, they were able to manipulate phenomena to an extent with only an image in their mind. It was restricted to simple things, but when one was in a race against time it was said to be a fairly useful skill.

The image Suimei had in his mind was one of a large hand pulling on his body. With that, as if his body was being pulled by an invisible power, he unnaturally flew to the side and landed safely. Right after he finished his movement which completely defied gravity, his whole body writhed in pain.

“Guu...”

“So you dodged it. Well you should at least be capable of that much.”

Graziella was knitting her brows at Suimei’s peculiar movements, but did not seem to really care. Unlike the mages he met in town, she was fairly accepting of unknown mysteries. On the other hand, Christa and Elliot could only let out a groan after witnessing the magic that Graziella had used.

“It can’t be, that kind of enormous...”

“To use that kind of magic in this kind of place, just what are you thinking?”

They were saying different things, however they were both the same in that they were astonished by just how extreme the magic they just witnessed was.

The magic she used created a mass of rock large enough to fill their vision and rushed towards her opponent.

Suimei had his golden fortress at the ready and was quickly wracking his brain. This was naturally about the magic Graziella used. The magic she was using ran completely counter to what he knew before, ‘the magic systems in this world all must use the elements as mediation.’ In that case, just what was this magic? It did not use the mediation of the elements and did not use the earth itself as its origin to launch a physical attack. Yet his defence against magic spells was completely meaningless before it. Suimei carefully thought back on what he had witnessed moments ago. The sense of discomfort, and the hazy region of space. That enormous mass of rock that took form far too quickly to have taken the proper course of things. Suimei suddenly noticed something within his line of sight.

“—I see. That magic, it uses the embroidery in the lining of that coat right?”

“—Hou?”

As Suimei used his keen insight to identify Graziella’s magic, her eyes sharpened.

“Interesting, let’s hear it.”

Contrary to her words, her face was making a serious expression like she was not amused in the least. Her face gave the impression that she would not fail to hear every single word he would say. Suimei then began his explanation.

“I don’t like the way you’re saying it, but... That magic, unlike typical magic, does not use the elements. It’s magic that uses summoning techniques as its origin right?”

Elliot was the first to react to those words.

“Summoning techniques? What are you saying? This world shouldn’t have summoning techniques right?”

“No, doesn’t it? There’s the magic that called you to this world, the hero summoning technique.”

“Ah...”

“That magic just now, it likely uses a single part of that spell to tie two places together, it is teleportation magic.”

“Teleportation, magic...”

Felmenia, Graziella and Christa did not seem to recognize the meaning of the words, however there was one person making an expression like they understood in admiration.

“—I get it, it’s a teleportation type spell huh. That enormous rock was stored in a different location, and then using that magic spell she drew it out right?”

“That’s right. If it didn’t, then what just happened couldn’t be adequately explained...”

“What about the possibility that what was created with the spell was an illusion?”

“Not possible. Within the magics that use earth as an attribute, other than spells which move the earth itself, the objects it manifests are simply attributed with the role of the attribute of earth. Since the majority of them are composed entirely of mystical power, a defensive wall against spells is capable of blocking them. However, the magic just now was a completely physical attack.”

The materials that were fired out by magic categorized under the earth attribute were fundamentally vague existences. Whether they were a mish-mash of substances brought together by magic, or a spell itself which constructed it, depending on the method used, it was either a completely mystical power or a completely physical power. In the case of a mystical power, a defence against spells which broke it down was sufficient. However in the case of physical power it would have to be broken down with offensive magic, or decelerated, or repelled. There were many approaches to defending against it, but defending against the spell was not one of them.

The magic Graziella had used fell into the latter category. The massive rock was placed onto a magic circle beforehand and using a spell, she tied together the magic circle with the space before her. Doing so, she teleported the rock over and used it to attack her opponent. The means behind her attack was actually extremely simple. However, this magic could not be so simply criticized with words like ‘There’s no sophistication,’ or ‘It only transferred something

over.’ It had transferred something over easily weighing hundreds of tons while maintaining its size. Its destructive potential was easy to see.

Certainly for Suimei, he was able to stop a tank shell that had even more destructive force than that. However, that was possible because he only had to stop something roughly the size of a bullet. For something so large, even if its destructive power was inferior, it was not something he could stop completely. Of course, there were other approaches to handling the situation, so it wasn’t something that he deemed especially dangerous, but...

“No, wait. If that is teleportation magic then weren’t the preparations to use it lacking?”

“That’s why I said it was the embroidery in the lining. It has the same spell as the magic circle inscribed in it. The compiled spell doesn’t require much of a chant, it’s also probable that the other magic circle has some sort of setup to it as well.”

“Even so, I still think it doesn’t all line up?”

“That’s just how strange the hero summoning magic circle is... It’s just, at the time of the teleportation, the lining has to be exposed.”

“I see, so you got an inkling from that...”

After saying that, Elliot turned to Graziella with an unpleasant expression. And then when he let out a groan, there was an unexpected amount of bitterness in his voice.

“So when you were fighting me you hadn’t yet gotten serious...”

Graziella’s expression remained completely transparent as she spoke.

“... For some reason, the two of you mesh quite well when you talk huh?”

“That’s, also surprising to me.”

Suimei looked at Elliot with a puzzled expression like he also suddenly noticed that fact. Graziella then began speaking in an astonished voice towards the truth that Suimei had conjectured behind her magic.

“There were a bunch of nonsensical words mixed in there, but it is certain that you have seen through it.”

After Graziella let out a snort, she sharpened her gaze considerably and glared at Suimei.

“However, I’m surprised that there is someone who could see through the magic created by gathering the best technology in all the Empire after only seeing it once. Bastard, just who are you?”

“That isn’t something that you need to know.”

“Fuu, well that’s fine. I thought it was strange that White Flame-dono was together with you. But that must mean you are someone who is in one way or another related to the one who defeated that demon general Rajas and his army right?”

“What’s that? Wasn’t the one who defeated the demon general not the hero from Astel?”

“Quit it. You’ve probably heard the truth from White Flame-dono already. Besides, that man is still far too green—”

Graziella’s mana began expanding before she finished speaking and cut off the end of her sentence. This likely meant she was going to go full throttle from here. She largely used common magics which used the elements, but there was also that skill which allowed her accelerate her own body as well as the teleportation magic which she could form in the air.

“... Using a fighting style like a damn Taoist.”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying, but it seems you have more of a backbone than that hero. Though it is a little late, I will hear your name.”

“It’s Suimei Yakagi.”

“... Hou, what an unusual name.”

“Sorry about that.”

Hiding his impatience within himself, Suimei stuck out his tongue like a brat. It was a tough battle. If his physical condition wasn’t so bad, there was an uncountable number of ways he could deal with it. However, in his current condition where his astral body was incomplete, even a two verse chant placed a large burden on his body. Having said that, even the simple to rely on magic

which transformed gases would be fairly dangerous to use due to the ambiguous state of Suimei's mind.

However, that teleportation magic which transferred enormous rocks could not be invoked more than three times in a short space of time. Regardless of the practitioner's abilities, the laws of magic would not allow it. But even though he knew this, the current Suimei couldn't—

Once more, a region of space in the air became hazy. A massive rock was about to fall down. Suimei evaded to the side, but was not be able to completely get away.

“Gu—”

“S-Suimei-dono!”

While the shockwave was still shaking his brain, without have any time to regain his posture, the next magic began.

“There's still more—”

Graziella shattered the massive rock with a fist and shot the scattered stones at Suimei. It was a true volley of rocks. And then, without putting an end to her vigour, the ground began to rise, and struck forth. In the blink of an eye, Suimei's body was covered in pain. As Felmenia witnessed this scene, her face had become completely pale.

“A-Aah...”

Unable to bear it anymore, she screamed at Graziella.

“Your Highness! Please stop this already!”

However, Graziella was not listening to her. Only thinking of bringing things to an end, she struck the ground with her spell. The ground rose and transformed into a tower and pierced towards Suimei. The shockwave spread dust all over the area. Graziella took a single glance, and let out a single phrase.

“... It's over.”

However, it was too early for her to turn her gaze away. As the cloud of dust which was blocking her view cleared away, she could see Suimei standing there breathing heavily. Suimei could see Felmenia's delighted face.

“... Tch, don't just arbitrarily... End it on your own dammit.”

“You still haven't fallen over huh? However, you won't be able to fight anymore in that condition. Give up and cooperate with me.”

Perhaps because she was exasperated by his stubbornness, Suimei heard those words from her. However, even though it was provocative, after hearing those words mixed with disappointment without any hint of her usual abusive language, Suimei let out a strange laugh.

“Give up? Me? Fu, fufu...”

Suimei's eerie and sardonic laughter mixed in with his shortness of breath resounded throughout the plaza. Graziella eyes grew sharp as she looked at Suimei who ignorantly laughing with a provocative attitude.

“... What's so funny?”

“You won't be able to fight, that's what you said right? Just who are you saying won't be able to fight huh?”

“I don't know why you can be that confident, is it not obvious—”

It happened as Graziella was in the middle of speaking. Before she could even finish putting her thoughts into words, the air began to tremble.

“Is this earth attribute magic? No...”

Graziella made a guess in an instant and put it into words, but it was incorrect. It was of course magic. It was a phenomenon caused by magic, not just a regular phenomenon. The trembling which was not caused by any definitive phenomena gradually strengthened with Suimei's power. The abnormal oscillation was caused by nothing other than the enormous amount of mana that was taking shape, causing space to shake with its mystical power.

Within the shaking space which showed no signs of calming down, Suimei's mana was swelling up in proportion to the strength of the vibrations. The effects akin to a nuclear reactor's enormous energy overflowing appeared in an instant and had already caused a vortex covering five hundred metres in all directions. Pulled by the manifested power, the bricks on the ground were lifted in the air and shattered. Many small, blue lightning bolts danced in their

surroundings like an electric current. The sound of their electrical discharge reverberated in the air.

Suimei made his resolve. If he kept fighting while paying mind to his own body, only a dead end lied before him. Right now he was in the dead centre of the plaza, there was nowhere to run. If there was no way of breaking through without using all of his strength, there was no other choice but to strike with his entire soul.

—Archiatus Overload.

However, those words that Suimei had ready in the back of his throat, did not come out of his mouth. He had finished all preparations for using his keyword. He was standing at the border where his mana furnace would be completely released. What stopped Suimei with a fire burning in his eyes, was Felmenia who jumped at his back with all her strength.

“Suimei-dono!”

As Felmenia clung onto his torso, Suimei looked back only by turning his head slightly.

“Menia!? What are—”

“You can’t Suimei-dono! Please restrain yourself! You cannot let out this kind of power in the middle of the city!”

“But...”

“Suimei-dono! Please calm down! Just unleashing your mana is one thing, but if Suimei-dono uses magic like this, the surroundings, no, a single human would not...”

“Tch...”

Certainly, within a fairly wide range, they wouldn’t be getting off lightly. Felmenia was clinging desperately onto him within the raging wind pressure caused by his mana. Suimei gave up on his plans to unleash his mana furnace as he heard Felmenia’s complaint. It was just as she said. In this situation where he did not have the leisure to hold back to defeat Graziella, he naturally thought all he could do was use his magic at full strength. If that came to be, naturally the

damage would not be contained to only this plaza. While grinding his teeth at the pain in his body and his frustration, Suimei decelerated the rotation of his mana furnace. In a moment, a great despondency assaulted Suimei's body. Unable to fight against his strength draining away from him, Suimei left his body in Felmenia's care.

“Gu... Menia...”

“Step aside! It must be painful, but please hold onto me tightly!”

Judging that Suimei's condition was quite bad, Felmenia carried Suimei and attempted to escape. She had reinforced her physical strength before jumping at Suimei. She then immediately started to apply the instant movement magic she had learned from Suimei. As she did, a provocative voice poured down at her.

“Do you think I'll just let you do as you wish?”

“No! Even if it is impossible, I will force my way through!”

As Graziella threw these words at her, Felmenia began weaving her spell.

“—Just as the wind from far and wide conveys, bring the flame that shines as it sways! Hear my voice! Thou art the shimmer dyed in white! Hear my voice! Thou art the shimmer which shakes off all calamity!”

Light was running wild in the air. The light drew the shape of a circle and began drawing letters and symbols within it. A magic circle had taken form. The completed magic circle poured out an intense heat that one could not even imagine after seeing her magic before.

“Mu—!?”

As Graziella saw this she fell back in a panic. As she landed from jumping backwards, Felmenia let out her keyword.

“Truth Flare!!” (White Flame Toss!) (*t.n. Felmenia used English here*)

Like a blooming flower, the whistling white flames stretched out into thick belts and charged at Graziella as if to mow her down. In response, Graziella raised the ground before her and took a defensive stance. Eventually the white flame had died down to the point where it could only burn hair, however, it had

already accomplished its purpose. Felmenia and Suimei were both outside the plaza, and had escaped the effective range of Graziella's magic... From behind, Suimei could hear the sound of Graziella clicking her tongue as he put his gratitude towards Felmenia into words.

"... Sorry."

"Please do not worry about it. Suimei-dono, you were driven into a corner because of your injuries."

"I was meant to be used to feeling completely worn down though... It's uncool."

He had carelessly unleashed his power, and was now unwillingly retreating in defeat. He then thanked Felmenia once more.

"... You saved me. Thank you."

Thus, Suimei's consciousness faded away.



As Felmenia's White Flame Toss vanished, in the middle of the scorched bricks and burnt smell in the air, Graziella closed her eyes as she was not amused at all and suppressed her overflowing mana. As she was seeing off Suimei and Felmenia without moving, her attendant walked up beside her. And then after respectfully bowing forwards to her, spoke.

"Shall we pursue them?"

"It's fine. I don't care if we just leave them be."

"Is that alright? The way that man was speaking earlier, it is possible to take him away on charges of lèse-majesté."

"That is certainly the case, but that man is wounded. Besides, that man is accompanied by White Flame-dono. If we push them too strongly, this time it may result in needless friction with Astel."

"However"

"If you lot will go and capture them on your own, I would not be against giving you permission, but as expected you cannot do that, correct?"

As Graziella said this to her attendant, she turned over her coat. As she took a brief glance at the attendant's face at her side, she knew that the duty would be difficult. The opponent they were to capture was a formidable foe that Graziella had to use her trump card against. Even if they prepared multiple people at the calibre of the Elite Twelve, it would still be a severe task. Even if her attendant, whose abilities did not fall behind Graziella's, said that they would definitely capture them, that would just be a lie.

"Besides, if we go too far then my older brother will just get angry at us too."

Letting out a sigh in exasperation, she then turned towards Elliot and Christa.

"Well then, I'll have you bastards come with me."

"... Got it."

"Fu, you're unexpectedly perceptive huh?"

"Shall I add on that I am also extremely reluctant?"

"No, that was impudent of me huh."

As she spat that out, Graziella returned to the pavilion with Elliot and Christa in tow. Christa was making a grim expression from beginning to end, however, as she was serving Elliot, when he gave his consent there was nothing she could do but obey. Graziella suddenly came to a stop.

"... I have some slight dissatisfaction left, well with this it's fine to call it a day isn't it?"

As she let out those blunt words, her tone certainly gave off a hint that she was not fully satisfied. Graziella shifted her attention to the partially destroyed plaza. In the plaza, there were many things that were destroyed by her own magic as well as Felmenia's flame. However, above all else was Suimei's mana which had an affect on a wide area. Exposed to the wave of mana, crumbled objects were scattered all over the plaza. That enormous power that created such a disastrous scene could still be felt on her skin as its remnants strongly lingered in the air.

Graziella realized that that was only the beginning. Thus, even though she clenched her fist and had sweat running down her face, as expected, she let out

a disappointed sigh.

Chapter 2: The Happy Dream was Certainly in this Place

—She could hear a voice.

‘Vanish, vanish,’ a young voice.

The voice was screaming in rejection. It was a voice which felt despair towards everything in the world.

Lured by the echoing sorrow, she opened her eyes and looked forward, vague figures like they were covered in a heat haze were there. ‘Burn, get beaten’, a small figure tormenting her with words was among the others. That small figure had recognizable features. That young face was always cold, to hide the fear they held deep in their heart, they put on a brave front. However that face was now shedding tears, their eyes stricken by grief and anguish were overflowing.

Was she being assaulted? Was she assaulting...? No, she was being assaulted. Like an insect, burned and stepped on, just like that, until she was reduced to a miserable figure. If that girl was meant to be granted revenge, then just what was that revenge pointed at? Was it not meant to be bestowed on the impossible to redeem fiends who spread atrocities? However, both the screaming voice and the inquisitive voice, held back like a dam, would not come out of her own mouth.

Like that, while just watching the shadows, the small figure’s wailing ended. Before long, the girl began to tremble, and then that figure became completely black. Along with black bubbles bubbling up onto the surface, it expanded. Was the one who would not be accepted, finally accepted? As it swelled in size until its original form was but a mere shadow of itself, it began to swallow all those in its surroundings. The mana scattered in the area, the figure which was tormenting the girl, even the buildings, they all became a black mass and endlessly swelled up. It was headed to destroy the people of the city.

What she heard, was the voice of sorrow. ‘Why? Why?’ she asked repeatedly with anger as she despaired at the reply that never came back, ‘Wait, wait .’

‘Why is it just me?’ ‘Why did I end up with this appearance?’ She questioned the heavens where the highest existence should have been. She only desired an answer, in spite of no longer being able to return to her original form, she only desired to fill the void deep within her chest.

A crying voice remained in her ears. That voice from her heart which desired to be saved, turned inside out and became a voice of resentment. Why does nobody save that girl? Why does that despair brought by the isolation of not having a single person to depend on have to exist in this world?

Even if it was just, the crying voice was certainly there.

—That’s why, it cannot be forgiven.

Even if it was just, the one that would not be saved certainly existed.

—That’s why, she must rebel against that result.

Even if it was just, this wind that blew in her heart, would never stop.

—That’s why, she could hear that voice.

‘Wake up,’ it says.

‘Wake up and go and achieve what you must.’ The voice of temptation whispered closely into her ear.

—This was a curse. This curse born from causing pain to her father and mother would surely never be released until the day she dies.



After successfully escaping from the southern plaza, Felmenia, wary of any pursuers, changed her escape route from the main streets to the alleyways. After a while, she was rushing down the alley where the Yakagi residence was situated. And then, after pushing aside some chairs, she laid Suimei down onto a table. As she did, Lefille, who had been waiting outside full of worry, rushed over with a pale face.

“F-Felmenia-jou! Just what happened?”

Lefille asked in a panic after looking at both Suimei and Felmenia. Felmenia went on to explain what had happened in the southern plaza with an

unpleasant face. About how Elliot was also at the southern plaza. About how Graziella ordered a compulsory draft upon them to search for the culprit. And about how Suimei went to fight Graziella in a magic battle to avoid this. After getting the gist of things from Felmenia, Lefille groaned with a grim complexion.

“... Even for Suimei, having to fight Princess Graziella with those wounds was quite severe huh...”

“I am ashamed after telling you to leave it all to me. That I was absolutely unable to cut into Suimei-dono and her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella’s fight. That I could only run away...”

“No, with that Princess Graziella as an opponent you managed to run away while carrying a single person. It’s something only Felmenia-jou could do... However, that damn Graziella, she really just did whatever she wanted.”

Was the change in her tone of voice due to anger? As if she was glaring at the imperial princess who wasn’t there, Lefille gripped her fist firmly.

“Lefille?”

“... Aah, no, it’s nothing. Setting that aside Felmenia-jou. What is Suimei-kun’s condition?”

“As far as external wounds go there doesn’t seem to be anything that bad. This is likely due to the expansion and dampening of his mana in an instant. It’s just...”

“... He’s in a considerable amount of pain.”

Suimei, who was lying down on top of the table, had his eyes closed while moaning in pain. It was as if he was seeing a nightmare.

“The symptoms do not seem serious, so I believe it will be alright...”

“Then, there is nothing to do but let him rest, huh...”

During this exchange, Lefille suddenly felt a presence towards the alleyway entrance. It may have been a pursuer. As she held onto her ominous premonition, she let out a menacing loud voice as she asked their identity.

“Who’s there!?”

On the other hand, perhaps because the presence was startled by her voice, the shadow that she could slightly see jumped a bit. Before long, the one who appeared from the alley was...

“This is... I seem to have surprised you.”

The one who appeared apologetically was the elf librarian of the Imperial University’s library, Romeon. Felmenia, who had met him once before, called out to him as she recalled.

“If I remember, are you not the librarian-dono from the Imperial University’s library...? Why are you here?”

“Ah, that is because just now I had seen your figures in the streets. On top of that, Stingray-san was carrying Yakagi-kun, I thought that perhaps something had happened with that culprit and came over in concern.”

“Is that so....”

Romeon, who walked partway towards Felmenia and the others, continued by questioning them.

“It seems that Yakagi-kun has lost consciousness, but what happened?”

“He fought with her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella in the southern plaza, um...”

“My goodness, that Geomancy Emperor? Just why would he do such a thing...”

As Romeon’s surprise showed on his face, Suimei regained his consciousness and raised his head while still lying down on the table.

“Suimei-kun!”

“You woke up!”

As Felmenia and Lefille raised their voices in joy, Suimei, who was still dazed from losing his consciousness, looked around his surroundings to get a grasp of the current situation.

“Gu... This is? The house?”

“Yes, we’re in front of the house. After that, I came here in a hurry, not that

much time has passed.”

As Felmenia gave her report, Suimei once more showed her his gratitude.

“Aah, sorry. You carried me here right? Thank y—eh? Librarian-san, you were here...?”

“Yes. I arrived just a moment ago. I had seen the two of you in the streets and chased after you in concern.”

“I see...”

Suimei replied with a stiff expression. As he did, Romeon turned towards Suimei.

“Yakagi-kun, your body seems to be in pretty bad shape. Would you mind if I had a look?”

The reason for him saying so was because he had worked as a magic doctor before. Romeon was looking at Suimei with a serious face.

“I’ll be fine. I understand my own body best after all. I only lost consciousness because I let out too much of my mana at once.”

“Is that so...”

Suimei cleanly turned down Romeon’s suggestion and stood up. He then started walking towards the exit of the alleyway. Lefille called out to him in a panic.

“Suimei-kun! Where are you going?”

“I’m going to search for Liliana. Now that they are looking for her in earnest, I need to find her quickly.”

“S-Suimei-dono? I don’t think that is something you should be saying in this situation?”

Looking at the two of them who were trying to restrain Suimei who was trying to unreasonably depart, Romeon spoke up with a dubious tone.

“... Could it be, that you mean to go search for the culprit behind the coma incidents?”

“... Yeah.”

“Yakagi-kun. Cease this. What do you intend to do with that body? Right now you are about to do something far too reckless. Until your body has properly healed, it would be better to put off your manhunt.”

“ ... ”

Suimei came to a stop in silence as he heard Romeon’s point. From behind him, Felmenia and Lefille once more attempted to restrain him.

“It is just as Romeon-dono says. Suimei-dono, please restrain yourself here.”

“That’s it, Suimei-kun. They’re right. You should not act rashly.”

“... Got it.”

Convinced by the three of them, Suimei gave up and plunked himself down onto a chair while still facing away from them. Seeing this, Romeon worriedly called out to him.

“... Then I will be going. Yakagi-kun Please do not do anything reckless.”

Hearing those words of concern, Suimei raised his hand to reply while still facing away from them. Romeon then bowed to Felmenia and Lefille and returned to the main street... After a short while...

“... Did he leave?”

Suimei looked over his shoulder and asked Felmenia about Romeon’s whereabouts. He had done so in an unusually low tone. Looking at his sharp gaze, she lightly turned her head to look at the street.

“Eh? Yes, Romeon-dono is no longer here.”

“I see.”

Suimei stood up from his chair as he heard this. He was not giving off the kind of atmosphere that implied that he was returning to the house. Catching on the subtleties of his behaviour, Felmenia turned a stern expression towards him.

“Suimei-dono? You couldn’t...”

“S-Suimei-kun! Did we not tell you not to go?”

“... I’m going to rest for a bit. Setting that aside, if we seriously do not make our move now, it may become quite bad.”

“Why now? Why are you in that much of a hurry? It isn’t like you.”

“I’m in a hurry. If it was just that dangerous woman it would still be fine. However it may be the case that there is more than that going on. Sorry but I’ll have to ask the two of you to also split up and search for Liliana. Please.”

A certain amount of urgency could be heard in his voice... Those words were the kind one would use when making a request of strangers. Hearing that, Lefille let out a sigh.

“... Haa.”

“You won’t?”

“That’s not it. But—”

“—How do I put it, what Suimei-dono is saying is odd. Back at the Royal Castle you said you didn’t want to get caught up in any danger, but here in the Imperial Capital you’re jumping into danger by your own will.”

Felmenia’s voice was slightly mixed with a sigh as she said this in astonishment. Her opinion was in line with Lefille’s. Having his lack of virtue prodded at, Suimei weakly winced.

“I-I get it... but for anyone, there are times where one must refuse and times where one must take action right?”

“That’s, well, true but...”

“For me, that time is now. That’s why, I must go.”

Hearing this, Lefille frowned and presented her frank opinion.

“Well, I understand that there are times where Suimei-kun must make your move and take action, if it wasn’t, there will be another scolding.”

“Uu... Lefi, please spare me the scolding.”

“No. It isn’t enough just to look forward. I feel it would be better if we all discussed it together.”

“Got it. I’ll give you as much time as you want afterwards, at least spare me that much... How about it?”

Suimei once more asked them. As he did, Lefille took a strict attitude.

“Under the condition that you don’t act recklessly until your body has healed.”

“Okay. Roger that.”

And then from Felmenia,

“Of course, I will cooperate.”

“Sorry. You’re a great help.”

As he gave Felmenia his gratitude, Suimei began healing his wounds with healing magic. As he touched his hand against the affected regions, a pale green light began to shine. Particles of light and a green mist rose to the air. Like he suddenly remembered something, Suimei turned towards Felmenia.

“Now that I think about, Menia, earlier you were wary of any pursuers, but you didn’t catch on that the librarian-san was tailing you?”

“Eh? Ah, yes. I did not notice at all until Lefille suspected it.”

“I also only caught on after he was close enough for me to see.”

“I see...”

Hearing what they had to say, Suimei fell deep into thought like he was scrutinizing something. Seeing this, Lefille spoke.

“So Suimei-kun. What did you mean when you said if it was only Graziella it would not be dangerous?”

“I meant that it was possible that there were others making their move. I don’t have any proof yet though.”

“So, who would that be? Is it the culprit?”

“With regards to that, I’ll talk about it after I get a bit more conviction about it. Sorry but please wait until then.”

After finishing the treatment of his wounds, Suimei walked towards the exit of the alley.



The Imperial Capital Filas Philia was originally built to function as a fortress city. Because of that, its structure was fairly complex. The city was divided into

districts using the concept of compartmentalization, at a glance it looked like a very well organized city. In truth, it was more of a maze of alleys and dead-ends all throughout the city. Without a firm grasp of its structure, it was not simple to assault. Ancient traps, dead-ends that didn't take into any consideration of the nearby houses, old water ways, many dangerous places were left behind as they were for a long time.

It was a setup which troubled both foreigners and the locals. The ramparts surrounding the city were tall and the exits were located at the north and south end. Passage both in and out of the city was severely restricted at nighttime. Each and every district housed a station for the military police, looking at it from another perspective, it could be said that these were also all jails.

This was also troublesome to the girl who had been forced to escape with no end in sight. Just how much time had passed since she donned her black robe and concealed herself from the eyes of the Imperial Capital's citizens? Thanks to the wanted posters for the suspect spreading around, Liliana continued to escape regardless of whether it was day or night through the restless streets of Filas Philia. She was living through these unpredictable days without getting a sufficient amount of rest while ignoring the condition of her remaining mana.

To navigate the aforementioned maze of alleys, it was necessary to carefully choose her route. It would be unacceptable if she carelessly exited onto the large main streets. It was not just the military police and a portion of the soldiers moving around, even the citizens were talking about and keeping an eye out for her. If she listened closely along the streets, she could hear them saying things like, 'The human weapon was the culprit of the coma incidents,' 'She is running around inside the Imperial Capital,' and 'She may be rampaging in the middle of the city,' everywhere. As long as her characteristics were known, the robe was not enough to hide herself.

“...”

Liliana recollected what had happened up until now as she looked at the cloudy sky. About how she attacked the nobles who aimed to overthrow Rogue, about how she fought with Suimei Yakagi, and about how she obeyed the words of the tall shadow on that evening... Was that really the right choice? Due to the fear of being caught and the anxiety of not achieving her goals, she shook

off Suimei Yakagi's kindness and ran away.

Certainly, Liliana had something that she must accomplish. She had to remove the threat to the person dearest to her. However, if at that time, she admitted to her crimes, threw away her dark magic and became friends with him, it was possible that she could have returned to a proper path. Such a vision floated through her head.

On that evening, he asked if she was really alright with it as she continued to use her dark magic. He was a person who wanted to release her from that path. They had not even exchanged words that many times. Every time they did, she rejected him for her own sake. And then he was struck all over by dark magic. When she thought back on it, up until now, there was never a person like that before. Even when the dark power went berserk, he ignored his own body to save her and showed her a relieved smile.

That was the first time she had ever received a smile from someone. That's why, as she recalled that hand that was extended out to her, an indescribable panic gripped her as she felt a homesickness she never knew about which wrenched her heart. That was probably the last time. That was the last time she would have kindness shown to her.

“Suimei Yakagi...”

Unknowingly, his name spilled from her mouth. It just may have been that she was praying for him to appear, her true feelings. She knew that this longing that came far too late was regret. However, she prayed once more... ‘Fight, Liliana. If you do, depending on the circumstances, you will be needed after all.’

“Uu... Uu...”

Those words she once heard from the tall shadow tortured and condemned her heart. Fight. If she didn't, she would lose her place in the world. Nobody would need her. There was no significance to her life other than hurting others. She had to be strong. She was unable to shake away that voice. Squatting down and leaning against the stony wall of a building, before long, the swaying of her heart came to a stop. The yearning and pain gripping her heart up until now vanished somewhere.

“I, am... for the Colonel's, sake.”

She must fight. It was just as the shadow said. She who possessed the power of darkness would never be accepted by anyone. That was right, from the moment she was born, she had been ostracized by everyone. This was not just limited to the people in the village she lived in. Even her father and mother always looked at her like she was something repulsive.

After coming to the Imperial Capital, nothing had changed. No matter what street she walked down, the gazes pointed at her with hatred did not change. In that case, that person, Suimei Yakagi must also be like that. The act of extending his hand to her had to have been an act to make her let her guard down. After all, that person was moving to catch the culprit behind the coma incidents. That's why, she must fight. For the sake of protecting the only place she belonged called Rogue...

There was still no sign of the tall shadow trying to make contact with her. After urging her to escape, she did not receive any communication from them. They had probably cast her away. Nevertheless, as that thought passed through her mind, she could no longer stop.

“—!?”

While in the middle of thinking of such things, suddenly her shoulders jumped. It was a sense mastered by one who was feared by others. There was the presence of someone behind her. It would be bad if she was found. She had to quickly hide herself. After a short while, there was no voice or presence pointed at her. She had not been discovered. She timidly peeked back out and observed where she had just been standing. What she saw was neither the military police or soldiers.

“Dad, mom, hurry up, let's go~!”

What came into her sight, was a single family walking along harmoniously. A father, a mother and their small boy. As the young boy urged them on to where they were going, the father caught up with him while saying ‘I got it, I got it,’ and took his hand. The mother pointed a kind gaze towards them while chasing them from behind while saying ‘It's dangerous if you don't look ahead properly while you walk.’

All of them shared a smile. Even in the Imperial Capital currently gripped by a

crisis, they were all laughing like they were having fun.

—It would soon be the hero's parade. Where should we go today? There are street performers on main street. She heard voices discussing these things.

“Hey hey, dad, I want to eat some sweets.”

“Didn't you just have some back home...?”

“I want sweeeets.”

“HmMMM... but.”

“Hey, you can't say such selfish things.”

“But...”

“It can't be helped. When we get back to the street shall we look for some?”

“Yaay!”

The young boy threw both his arms in the air in delight. The mother who was watching this let out an exasperated sigh, but she definitely did not show any displeasure on her face.

“...!”

Liliana wanted to run away. This kind of scene was just so far detached from her. As she turned away, the voices of the happy family behind her stirred up her heart. She wanted to get away from here as quickly as possible. If she did not, that appearance of a happy family that one could find anywhere would awaken something dark lurking within her.

She was running away with all her might, and before she knew it, she came out onto the main street. It was far too careless an act considering the fact that she was being searched for, however with this, the peace in her heart was restored.

She let out a relieved breath. That family was not here. The happy voice of the young boy, the delighted voice of the father who moved his heart and the laughing voice of the mother watching over them gently. With the many footsteps and the blend of many sounds due to the hustle and bustle, she could no longer hear them. Her heart was finally at peace. However that did not

continue for long.

“—Oi, the black robe over there.”

“—!?”

As she turned towards the strict voice, what came into sight was several military policemen... She was discovered. As she let out a groan in her mind, one of the military policemen who seemed to be a commanding officer stepped forward.

“The entire city is currently on lookout. Your stature is similar to the one we are on the lookout for. Take off your hood.”

“...”

“What’s wrong? You won’t take it off...? It can’t be, you!”

As she did not comply with his order, the other military policemen sidled up. Liliana reflexively stepped back. The military police officer judged that to be an attempt to escape, and ordered the other military police.

“Capture her!!”

Matching those words, a magic whistle rang in the air. Before long, military policemen who heard it began pouring in from all over the street. Right in the middle of the street, Liliana was surrounded in an instant. At the sudden even, the traffic in the area became an uproar. With Liliana at its centre, the military police had completely fenced her in, and surrounding them was the citizens.

The military police were being vigilant for magic and hesitated to step any closer. However after seeing that Liliana was not using magic no matter how much they waited, they prepared their batons and charged in. Liliana evaded it with light footwork. She would not use magic so lightly. Her mana was largely depleted so she could not use it wastefully. However, at this rate, with the hands she could play being limited, the actions she could take were all poor. While thinking of this, impatience began to heat up within her body. This was bad. These were the only words floating up in her mind. Perhaps because she was gripped by such thoughts, she met the grip of one of the batons.

“Kya!”

As she was sent flying, her hood had come off. As her face was revealed, she could hear the military policemen who saw it gasping.

“... As expected huh.”

Matching the commanding officer’s groan, she could hear the crowd surrounding the military policemen stirring up through the cracks in their formation. She could hear fearful voices, “Oi, that’s the one they’re searching for...” ‘The human weapon...’ ‘It’s the culprit behind the incidents.’ Even the military police around her were staring at her with eyes like they were looking at a demon or monster. As she looked around, that kind of gaze was coming at her from every angle.

“Uu...”

Why does everyone always look at her with those kinds of eyes? Those eyes that were like they were seeing something repulsive. Even though she had not even done anything. Even though she was not born with this power because she wanted it. Even though she never wished for the unhappiness of others.

“Hee—!?”

Along with that trembling voice, the people in the surroundings all became pale. For some reason, they had all been gripped by fear in an instant. And then, before Liliana could determine the reason why they all had such an expression, the answer poured in from the surroundings.

“What’s, with that eye...’

“M-monster! It’s a monster’s eye!”

Suddenly, screams filled the air. She realized the eye patch which was hiding her right eye had fallen to the ground. The shock from being struck by a baton had broken the eye patch’s string. Because of that, the repulsive right eye altered by the power of darkness was revealed. Liliana reflexively looked at her surroundings. All the humans in sight were all staring at her in fear and surprise.

—These were the same eyes as the ones the people of her village pointed at her when they feared that she was a calamity and ostracized her. Filled with dark emotions, those eyes, eyes, eyes, eyes, eyes—

“A-AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!”

From the depths of her heart, the memories of her past that she had pushed down due to emotional trauma burst through and began overflowing. They were the memories of that time that she never wanted to remember again. That time she was determined to be the source of all of humanity’s misfortune, that malice.

“Wait!”

“Don’t let her get away!”

Liliana began to run. The sharp voice behind her took chase. Many footsteps were chasing after her. The reason she was able to get away was because they had been caught off guard by her right eye being exposed. She dived into an alley and ran with all her might.

“Haa, haa...”

Liliana had no idea where or how she was running away. After a while she came to a stop in some alley to catch her breath which had run out. She somehow managed to slip away. No...

(There is still, someone there...)

There was a presence behind her. Did one of the military policemen catch up to her? However, contrary to that prediction, the presence was extremely thin. This kind of skill to hide oneself was not one the military police possessed. As she turned around, within the shadow of a building, a simple black shadow stretched out. And then, that shadow stretched out further like it was creeping out of the building’s shadow. Before long, after the shadow had stretched out completely, what appeared was...

“—So you were here, Liliana.”

“C-Colonel...?”

It was her adoptive father and superior officer, Rogue Zandyke. Seeing that figure, she was fraught with emotions. Perhaps he had come to look for her after she had not returned home. But, why was he unsheathing the sword at his waist?

“Liliana, you have made your resolve right?”

“Eh...?”

A bewildered voice slipped out of her mouth. She could not understand what was going on at all.

“Liliana.”

“Please, wait. What, do you mean... Resolve?”

Just what kind of resolve did she need to make to one who was supposed to come out to receive her? Even though he was coming to save her, why was he making such a strained expression? No matter how much she waited, no answer came. All that came, was the cold and stiff footsteps drawing nearer.

“Col... onel.. What are...”

“Is it not obvious? I have come to take responsibility of what I must fulfill. For the sake of punishing you have who committed crimes.”

“Why... Colonel, why...”

Are you doing that, she wanted to ask. Even though Liliana ran around performing those crimes only to protect the one standing before her. Despite that, why did she have to receive punishment?

“Colonel! I, for the Colonel’s sake!”

“I don’t want to listen to your excuses. If you are also a soldier of the Empire, then be aware of your own liability.”

“N-no... That can’t... Colonel...”

The naked blade drew nearer as Liliana shrank away. It’s point came down towards her. Was she about to be killed? As this thought came into her mind, Liliana’s body moved on its own.

—I don’t want to die.

That attachment to life ran around in her own body. Before she noticed, she evaded Rogue’s sword.

“... Liliana.”

Rogue muttered her name. His expression had become a shadow and was no longer visible. No, she did not want to see it. If even that face was looking at her like something repulsive, her heart would certainly break down after all. Rogue's sluggish and composed movements came into her sight.

Once more, light flickered off his blade. Following the light which pierced her eyes, the tip of the blade thrust forward... At this rate, she will be killed. By the man she called Colonel, the one she idolized as a father. By the person she held dearest in the world.

“No... Nooooooooooooooooooooo!”

“—!?”

Rogue's thrust pierced the wall right next to her. Without pausing to think that the chance before her was indeed a chance, Liliana once more began running.



Liliana ran away from Rogue. Being completely absorbed in running at full speed down these narrow, gloomy alleys, just how many times had she fallen over? Her body was covered in dirt and scratches. The clothes she was wearing had all become completely tattered.

Where she arrived after struggling so much, with a gloomy atmosphere as if she had fallen into darkness, was the city slums. Surrounded by the walls of the tall buildings around her, with the cloudy sky above her which seemed like it could start raining at any time, there was no way day light would reach her.

The area was gloomy and filled with a strong stink. It was as if all of the Imperial Capital's pollution was gathered here. After running and running, the only place she could end up in was here. After having Rogue turn his back on her, she no longer had anywhere she could return to. So that no one would find her, she could only find a corner where shadows piled atop one another and hug her knees while trembling.

—If that man had abandoned her, the only path before her was to die in obscurity like this.

Holding onto these thoughts, tears naturally began overflowing from her

eyes. With no outlet for her emotions, her grief filled scream and the sobbing from the anguish which gripped her heart would never come out. Only her tears flooded out of the corner of her eyes and fell down her cheeks. Her entire life up to this point had been a deception. In the end she could only live in complete solitude. She realized that she was completely powerless.

Thinking back on it, ever since she became aware of her surroundings, she was only ever ostracized by others. Anyone who saw her face would claim that she should never have been born. Why did it have to be her? Why was it only her? She had these thoughts a countless number of times already. Just because she could naturally use the power of darkness, why did she have to be loathed by people so much? Even though she never intended to do anything bad. Even though she never really wanted to hurt anybody. Despite all that, whenever anybody first saw her, they would look at her with those eyes.

Suddenly, Liliana recalled the happy family that she saw earlier. While walking around the streets of the Imperial Capital, they were all making such happy faces. The father, mother and child all had one as if it was obvious.

A father, mother and child. Even though the way a family behaves should not have been different between them and Liliana. Why did the Goddess not share those smiles with her? She wasn't being selfish. Even if it was just a little, even a tiny bit would be fine, she wanted to have a little of that warmth from the smile of a father and mother.

The little boy begged his father for sweets. And his father, while troubled, complied readily. His mother gave a warning, but did not show a single hint of displeasure. The way they were was just warm. The way they were was dazzling. She was envious.

She had not once, not to her father or mother or even Rogue, begged them for something she wanted. Then just why was that young boy allowed to do such a thing? In spite of seeming to know nothing of hardship, pain or sorrow.

“Ah...”

As she heard footsteps approaching, her voice leaked out. Someone had come into this place that was like the depths of a drain. Was it someone who was not used to the Imperial Capital's streets? Or perhaps a vagrant? Was it the

military police patrolling the streets? Or was it Rogue? She turned towards them, and briefly, as the clouded light shined down on them, their appearance became clear. That recognizable face was—

“You people, are...”

“To think that you were in this kind of place haah? Human weapon. No, criminal.”

“It’s just as we heard. Our luck must be good.”

What reached her ears were voices overflowing with cruelty without any intent to hide any of it. The ones that showed up, were the ones hired by the nobles who thought poorly of Rogue, the mages she had previously quarrelled with. It was the man with the vulgar voice and the man with the courteous voice. The gloomy light revealed their eyes that despised her as they glittered.

“What did you, come here for?”

“Ain’t it obvious? That kind of thing...”

“You’ve been utterly making a fool of us until now.”

“That’s why, we’re going to make you fucking pay for all of it!”

The mages were drawing nearer. After reaching the final stop from running away, there was no longer anywhere for her to run away to. The moment she stood up, the man with the courteous voice began chanting magic. Objects in their surroundings were carried up by wind magic, and came flying towards her together with a sudden gust.

“Uu, Guu!”

Unable to endure, Liliana fell to the ground. While gripped by pain, the next attack came rushing in. The one chanting was the man with the vulgar voice. The magic spun together with a violent tone brought forth fire which surrounded her and became a circle.

“A-ah... Gu... Uu...”

As if whispering to her that they had no intention of killing her quickly, the fire’s heat intensified and stole the air, slowly tormenting her. That figure that was squirming in pain from not being able to breathe was just like a fish fresh

out of the water, like an insect with its wings plucked. Hot air was pouring down her throat as the heat from the flames baked her skin.

She sealed her throat in pain and tumbled to the ground. And after who knows how long, she was gasping for air from with laboured breathing. She came to realize that the circle of flames that was torturing her had vanished. In its stead the mages were looking down at her. Pain descended down on her. Her head, her arms, her back, her feet, the men trampled on all of it. She was being treated like trash thrown away into an alley.

In the brief interval where the trampling had taken a pause, she looked up and saw the laughing faces of the two men. They were faces which found tormenting Lilia enjoyable from the innermost depths of their minds. Her head was filled with hatred. Suddenly, Lilia recalled the words someone once told her. She should not get swallowed by the malice. She could not surrender herself to hatred. If she entrusted her heart to it even once, she would lose who she truly was.

“Hey hey what’s wrong? You’re not going to use some fucking magic like last time!? Aaah!?”

“It seems that her mana is already depleted. The youngest of the Elite Twelve sure has fallen low.”

However, if it was this world, there was no need for her to endure it. After all, even if she obstinately fixated on her ego, she could never attain the things she wanted.

“What’s with that fucking eye!? You weren’t only a monster in name, but in fact an authentic fucking monster huh!?”

The man with the vulgar voice kicked her. Her body bounced off the stone pavement of the alley and slammed into a wall. She no longer felt pain. She had forgotten what pain even was. The flames of hatred burning within her was all the torment she could feel right now.

“Oh? What? Got in the mood? In that kind of worn-out state?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!”

“To go through so much punishment and still stand up... A monster like you

That man clad in unfamiliar black clothing, was humming something like a murmur. That figure was somehow lonely, like a god of death calling out to somebody on their deathbed.

—Kalabingka Mahamaya Om Karuma Samkri. (Thou possesseseth the sweet echo, release the original sin.)

The man did not stop, as before, tap, tap, tap, his footsteps rang in the air as he walked.

“... You lot never learn huh. Is it that fun to torment someone?”

The exasperated voice of the man resonated throughout the alley. Liliana could not see just what sort of expression he was making with his head hung down. He was like a quiet surface of water without a single ripple in it, lamenting for the helpless ones before him. The man with the vulgar voice turned around and faced that figure, and as it came into his line of sight, he opened his eyes wide in surprise.

“You’re...”

“That country hick who got in our way at that time... Just what business do you have in this place?”

As the man with the courteous voice asked this, the man with the vulgar voice opened his mouth like he suddenly remembered.

“Aah! That’s right, you’re that punk looking for the culprit of the coma incidents right?”

“Which reminds me, I heard he’s quarrelling with the hero huh.”

The man with the courteous voice held his chin.

“Look, this here monster is that culprit, you got it?”

“The culprit that you are looking for, was this girl. To pretend to work for the sake of the Empire, she is a terrible villain.”

She could hear a laughing voice. And then, the man in black snorted like he was not amused at all.

“A villain? The villains are you guys right?”

“What’d you say?”

“I don’t know what you are trying to say. What do you mean with those words?”

“Being unable to understand without having to ask is a serious illness.”

“Whaat!?”

“—Have even your ears gone bad? Seriously, extravagant idiots like you two just cannot be helped huh.”

Perhaps because they sensed the hostility in that cool-headed declaration, the mages put themselves on guard.

“Oi! Don’t come any fucking closer!”

“Impossible... Are you planning on supporting this criminal?”

“Yeah, it’s just as you say, that impossibility.”

As he heard that, the man with the courteous voice scoffed and shrugged his shoulders.

“Then, you’ve made a terrible blunder huh. That voice earlier, it sounded something like a chant for a spell, it would have been better if you just quickly fired your magic from behind.”

“This time it’s two against one. We’ll fucking beat you to death here too.”

The two mages pronounced a death sentence to the man in black. However, it was like that man was fixated on some words other than that sentence, and was murmuring as if to identify it.

“A blunder... huh.”

The one hanging his head down, changed into one spurring on an indescribable dread. At the same time, a wind blew into the surrounding out of nowhere and it began to get noisy.

“Wha...?”

“Whaaat!?”

The men were bewildered by the change in their vicinity. The man in black spoke as if to inform them.

“... Beyond the land that we live in, in the heavens beyond the distance— In the lands of paradise, there is a being known as Kalavinka with the head of a human and the body of a bird. The absolute beauty of its voice, that excellent bird-like voice, is extolled as one without equal. To a scholar of the mysteries, it is a voice which is heard from the emission of a higher order ego when they advance to the next level as a human. It is considered as a kind of revelation.”

“You punk!”

“Speaking of more incomprehensible things...!”

“This magic is something which manifests the hum of a being which exists beyond fantasy, the Kalavinka. In general, the emission of a higher order ego could only be brought on by a high ranking magician. Those who hear Kalavinka’s hum, are also only high ranking magicians. If that kind of thing was heard by an inexperienced magician— Well, what do you think will happen?”

Behind that inquisitive manner of speech, was not a provocative tone. When they looked closely, the man in black— Suimei Yakagi’s eyes, were tainted in a deep crimson as if they were burning. It was as if he was gazing at an enemy he could not forgive. What shined beneath those eyes, was a strong will of indignation.

—Samadhi Kalpa Devanagarai. (Thou shalt listen, to the voice which will not end for a whole season.)

“Sh-shit!”

“Oh wind! Thou art the power of eternity! Become a—”

Before that humming voice could continue, the mages caught on to his dangerously increasing strength and began to move. However, it was too late.

—Samadhi Kalpa Nada. (Thou shalt listen, to the echo which will not exhaust itself for a whole season.)

The light which engulfed them was an enormous, brilliant scarlet magic circle which drew itself beneath their feet. The shapes, letters and symbols all gave out a blood red luminescence. Perhaps due to this, the stone pavement sank into a black shadow. It was as if the gloomy area that they were standing on was being drowned away. The only thing that remained to be seen was the red

light's brilliant dazzle. The men could not move. Gripped by the bizarre atmosphere, right now, for a moment, even their thoughts were completely bound. Then...

“—Vahana Amanasa Samsakara Buddhi Karanada Thrishna.” (Thou shalt entrust your body to the sublimation of the laws passed down by the three realms, surrender yourself to the sweet voice of thirst.)

The sweet sound of Kalavinka's hum. As Suimei Yakagi released that keyword out of his mouth, the brilliant light began to overflow and disorient all those who saw it. It was as if, in the middle of that light, they were no longer able to distinguish between heaven and earth, top and bottom. When she focused on the boundless light which filled her vision, Liliana felt like saw the sparkling silhouette of something like an enormous flying bird for an instant in a dazzle, but it soared away along with the humming of its sweet voice.

“Ah...”

As the dazzling light on the other side of her eyelids began to calm down, Liliana opened her eyes slowly. What came into her vision, was the two mages, fallen to the stone pavement having had almost all of their mana stolen from them. There was absolutely no sign of them moving. In other words, as that flying bird ascended, it had taken anything and everything with it.

“... For an inexperienced magician, prematurely listening to that gospel is nothing but poison. When a low ranked magician is exposed to that higher order ego, the selfishness of their weak ego will run wild and vanish. The power of mana which is the embodiment of their desires, as well as the means of its use, the control of their spells are all relinquished. Kalavinka's sweet voice. It is an anti-magician magic meant to be used against people like you.”

As Suimei said this, the two men glanced at him.

“Do not ever again hold onto the delusion that you are strong magicians. You stupid idiots.”

And then, after grumbling exasperatingly with a bit of pity mixed in, he left the two mages as they were and walked forward. Tap, tap, the sound of the stone pavement rang in the air, slowly and composed. Before long, he stopped right in front of Liliana's eyes.

“... I was a little late huh.”

The voice that he let out was both apologetic and relieved. Did he, come for her? Going as far as pushing that wounded body. That regretful figure excited the warmth she had lost in her heart. Liliana let out a long breath. And without her knowing, it was flooded with emotions. Even now, this person did not change. Even after being wounded by the power of darkness, even after she turned her back on and ran away from his wishes, even as he looked at her monster like face, he came to save her. She was happy. She was extremely happy. Despite that, for some reason, she could only let out words filled with thorns.

“... Did you come, to capture me?”

However, even towards those words, Suimei Yakagi shook his head.

“Nope.”

“You’ll, hand me over to the military police, right? You should want to, catch the culprit, behind the incidents.”

“I won’t do such a thing.”

“Then, did you come, to kill me?”

Suimei Yakagi once more shook his head. He had no intention of doing such a thing.

“Then just what did you, come here to do?”

“I came to pick you up.”

As she heard these words, Liliana once more let out a long breath. It was just as she was anticipating. After all, this man had come to save her. Just as he did on that evening. However...

“Please don’t, come closer.”

The words that came out of her mouth, were words of rejection. If she took that man’s hand here, it would just result in a repeat of the same thing. Deep in her heart she heard this whisper from herself. But even so, Suimei Yakagi drew closer.

“Don’t come closer...”

As if to shake off the happiness coiling around her, she shook her head at her wit’s end... She didn’t want him to come to her. That was a lie. She was scared of changing herself. If she accepted what she wanted most in the world, she felt like she would once more fall into great despair. More so than the happiness that was filling her heart, she was far more scared of having that feeling betrayed. But even so, Suimei Yakagi spoke without changing at all.

“Liliana. If you just become a tiny existence here, certainly it’ll become easy. That is also surely, something that you desire. However—”

Suimei Yakagi stopped before Liliana who sank into the floor. When she looked up, what was there was a face smiling down at her... That appearance right here in this place, was not a dream. The gentle voice was nothing like the call of a god of death calling one on their deathbed.

“... Liliana. That which you desire can’t be found anywhere in this kind of place. That’s why.”

Yes, that’s why she must...

“—That’s why, let’s go home. The place that you belong to and that you can return to, nobody will ever steal them from you again.”

Before he could put all of her happy dreams into words, she grabbed that hand which was held out to her.



Rain was now falling with a pitter-patter. As if calling the rain, the stone pavement which did not know of the sky was discoloured in blotches as it had gotten wet. His clear heart would also not be able to maintain itself like this. As if pierced by the raindrops, his heart was soaked through by an indescribable loneliness.

—He always thought. Why was this world made to be so relentless against the weak?

To save someone who could not be saved, he would move immediately. The world was surely denying him repeatedly. Just why was the world made like

this? Those who let out their tears in sorrow, only ever had sorrow. Those who held anger with nowhere to let it out, could only fall into a never ending despair.

However, that irrationality may just be the principle of the world. The things he was doing, was to face that principle head on and deny it. Regardless of rationality and reason, he held magic and changed the natural flow, he rebelled against it. This rebellion was against divine providence, he understood it was not something that could be forgiven. When he thought about the fate at the end of his father's path, it was naturally something he understood after all.

He had also lost his family, however it could not possibly be compared to that girl who had continued to be ostracized all this time. His feelings of wanting to save her, were nothing more than the arrogance of one who was blessed.

Even so, even if it was only a little, even just a tiny bit, he wanted to clear away that sadness, that painful loneliness. The young girl who was crying in his arms was now letting out all her tears that she could not shed before. The scream of sorrow that she was unable to let out before, she let burst out and turned it towards the heavens. For what reason did this still helpless looking girl have to be forced to receive such unhappiness? Without ever being given something everyone had, having to suffer, having to build up only painful feelings like a tall pile of curses.

Even so, he believed she certainly had kindness left in her heart, that she was living. He still did not know what kind of violence was pushed onto this girl. However...

“... Cry. When you want to cry it's fine to just cry with all your heart. After that's over, eat delicious food to your heart's content and go to sleep. If you do, you'll forget all of those unpleasant things.”

Saying this, he gently brushed the head of the girl who was tightly gripping onto him while crying to the heavens. He did so with affection, so that even if it was just at this moment, she could be at peace... It was entirely possible that he had come extremely late. If he had come faster, if he had come before even being summoned to this world and come before this girl, the result may have been different. At any rate, it was something unavoidable. However, even so...

“I’ll still make it in time. My magic exists for this purpose after all...”



While still embracing the warmth enveloping her, Liliana woke up. After dozing off from the warmth and regaining her consciousness, after a brief instant, while still in a daze, she straightened herself up. It seemed that she had been put to sleep in a bed in some room. While hugging onto the pleasant and fluffy pure white bed cover, she looked around her surroundings. A really cheap looking fluffed up chestnut carpet was on the ground, on top of it was plain wooden furniture without a hint of gaudiness. She gradually recalled seeing them before, however because her head was still in a daze, she could not properly recall where this was. While still lost in the languid daze from dozing off, she asked nobody in particular.

“Where is this...?”

“—So you woke up.”

A young but dignified voice resounded in the room. It must have been someone working nearby. A young girl with red hair turned up from the corridor. Liliana also recognized that face, but she couldn’t match a name to it.

“You are...?”

“Mu? Are you still half asleep? I introduced myself before you went to sleep right?”

“Ah...”

Liliana remembered everything after she heard the words of the little girl who had both hands on her waist, Lefille Grakis. She was lead by Suimei Yakagi who intended to shelter her, and came to the house he lived in. When she arrived, she was reunited with the girl she meet at the guardroom. She also met the one whose face she saw briefly during one of their night battles, the mage from the Astel Kingdom, Felmenia Stingray. And then, after having her first proper meal in a long time, she was allocated a bad... and fell asleep.

Just as she remembered, she checked her right eye. Just like when she wore her usual eye patch, her right field of vision was not working, so she did not feel anything out of place, but she was given a substitute eye patch.

An unknown shiver ran through her entire body. As she recalled what had happened when she was chased, and then realizing the sheer difference with her current situation, she shivered in fear. The inexpressible emotion that was overflowing in her shook her body with no signs of stopping. What if everything that was here, everything that happened up until here, was all a dream and came to an end? That fear was beckoning her. As if to run away from such a reality, she strongly hugged the bed covers against her body. As she did, Lefille put her hand on Liliana's shoulder. As Liliana raised her face, she was met with a gentle expression.

"Liliana."

"... What is it?"

"I'm going to go and call Suimei-kun, so wait a little bit right there."

Lefille Grakis tapped her shoulder tenderly. Had she seen through that Liliana was gripped by fear? Lefille put on a smile as if to make her fear vanish, and then left the room.



A short while after Lefille left the room, she returned with Suimei and Felmenia in tow. They each sat down in chairs in the room. Liliana peeked at Suimei's face as he sat in the chair closest to her. As if verifying something, he had a polite gaze. Before long, that stiff expression finally became relaxed.

"It seems you've calmed down huh."

"Yes, thanks to you."

Liliana expressed her gratitude and bowed her head. Suimei then pulled a cup out of thin air.

"Would you like something to drink?"

"No, I'm alright."

"I see."

As she said that, he erased the cup. Suimei's expression became quite serious.

"Now then, I'll be cutting right to the chase, but there's something I'd like to

ask you.”

“About the incidents, right?”

There was no need to even ask. It was already something she knew would come. She knew, but the gaze she pointed at him as well as her body both stiffened. She was wondering that if she talked about it, she would be driven away. That anxiety disturbed her heart. Suimei, having guessed what was going on in Liliana’s head, made a gentle smile as if to calm her heart.

“What, I won’t drive you away. Rather, if I think about the statements made so far, I don’t think you’ll say anything out of line with what I already know.”

“... Yes.”

“Well then, tell me about it.”

“I...”

Liliana calmed down after hearing those words. But she was still concerned about the other two besides Suimei. Suimei was one thing, but what would those girls think? However, Lefille was carrying an extremely serious air with her eyes closed and arms crossed, and Felmenia was pointing a friendly smile towards Liliana. She did not think it would be so bad. Making her resolve, she began to speak.

“I’ve spoken of it before, but Rogue Zandyke, affiliated to the army’s intelligence branch, is my adoptive father. He was born a commoner, yet having his skills with magic and swordsmanship recognized, he reached his current position. However, because of that, he was called an upstart and was shunned and harassed by the nobles.”

“I see, those born of high status trying to take over those of lower status is a common story huh.”

“What petty people.”

Lefille relentlessly declared this to Suimei’s observation.

“So those mages were related to that?”

“Yes. They were also, one of the forms of harassment. That malice was as numerous as the light during the day, as expected it ended up affecting the

Colonel's duties and actions. I was unable to look at that, I was impatient, and at that time, that person came into contact with me."

— Do you not want to save your father?

"That other black robe?"

"Yes. Just as I said before, while I was worried about the Colonel, that person's words were like a revelation. I understood that I would be breaking the law, but I did not hesitate at all and accepted that person's words... The rest is just as everyone knows. During the night, I used dark magic to put the nobles who were obstructing the Colonel to sleep."

"So those are the details behind the incidents huh."

Suimei nodded as he was convinced.

"... Even though I wanted to be helpful to the Colonel, now that I think about it, I think it was extremely shallow."

As Liliana made everything clear, after all this time, she became despondent at the gravity of what she had done. This case was not just a violation of the laws of the Empire. No matter how much her opponents were being underhanded, she had done something improper as a person. Suimei was sitting still silently with his arms folded. On the other hand, Felmenia received a handkerchief from Lefille, and was wiping away her tears. Then Suimei spoke up.

"... Well, it could also be said that it couldn't be helped."

"Eh?"

"The things that you have done until now, the fact that they were things that you should not have been doing, you properly understand... No, you believe that don't you?"

As Suimei fired off this obscure question, thinking back on her explanation, Liliana agreed. He then began tapping his index finger against his forehead.

"Liliana. When you were causing the incidents, and when you weren't, you held onto doubts about your own actions correct?"

"Not that much but, the first time, somewhat."

“At that time, it would only be sometimes, but that tall shadow... did you not hear that guy’s voice offering you a suggestion?”

“That person’s voice, is it? Now that I think about it...”

“As expected you seem to have some kind of clue about it huh.”

Liliana took Suimei’s words to heart, and tried remembering. Certainly, when she first caused the incidents and also when she was running away, she could recall that person’s words in her head. However, that should have been Liliana herself rebuking her halfhearted self in her mind. It wasn’t something she really heard. As she looked up at Suimei making that conclusion, Suimei guessed what she was thinking and shook his head.

“It’s magic. At some point, without you realizing, that shadow hypnotized you.”

“... Magic?”

“That’s right.”

“N-no, that’s!”

“Not in your memories huh. That just goes to show how skilled that guy is with magic. In reality, you heard that voice and were strongly driven to continue the attacks right?”

As Suimei said this in confirmation, Liliana was not able to say anything back to him. After having it pointed out to her, inside her head, she gradually began to understand. To think that without her being aware, she was just being used, it was completely unforeseeable to her. Still being completely unable to find any words to say, Suimei shook his head.

“That’s why you don’t need to worry about it. Certainly up until you were being manipulated it was something you shouldn’t have been doing, but the fact that you were being taken advantage of does not change.”

“I understand that, but that magic...”

“I dispelled it while you were asleep. It’s not a problem anymore.”

Telling her it was alright, Suimei shrugged his shoulders. As Liliana bowed her head down in gratitude, he once more continued speaking.

“Did you not return to Colonel Rogue’s place?”

“No. I did not know at all, where I should have gone, besides, the Colonel... abandoned, me.”

“Abandoned?”

“I met him while escaping, he said, that I could not avoid taking responsibility...”

Liliana could not put the rest of it into words. A gloomy atmosphere began to spread through the room. Having hostility pointed at her from Rogue was painful. Suimei and the others seemed to grasp what she meant, and all their expressions darkened.

“Did you tell him about it?”

“No. Regardless of the reason, I acted, in violation of the law. I judged, that the Colonel, would not spare me any time to hear me out.”

After that, Felmenia spoke up.

“Even though it is adoptive, is he not your father?”

“The Colonel, is a very honest person. I believe he would not forgive me for staining my hands with evil deeds.”

He was just that kind of person. He would not forgive anything sinful. That’s why Liliana became a target that he would destroy. That’s all there was to it. It was just, at that time, Rogue’s hand as he thrust his sword forward, had faltered—

“I do not, resent him. The Colonel has always, protected me all this time after all.”

It was her own fault for lending her ear to the schemes of the tall shadow. There was no way she could hate him. After silence enveloped the room for a time, Suimei broke the silence.

“I have one more thing that I’d like to ask about the tall shadow. But do you know their name or any of their defining characteristics?”

“No, I don’t have any specific clues, none at all. That person, always wore that

black robe with the hood. On top of that, using some kind of magic, they're identity became hard to grasp. I have practically no information regarding that person."

Hearing this, Suimei closed his eyes. He must have been carefully scrutinizing her words. It was not clear to Liliana just what kind of thoughts were swirling around in his mind. Watching this, fear once more gripped her heart.

"Umm, from now on, what..."

Should I do. As expected, she thought that she would be forced to leave. As she asked, he met her with a calm expression.

"Hm? It's fine, just stay here."

"Is that, fine? I committed a sin, you know?"

"I said before it isn't only your fault didn't I? If you ask me, those real-fag nobles got what they deserved, there's also the fact that that black robe hypnotized you. Right now, being fully conscious of your own sins is more than enough."

As he recklessly stated this with a single eye closed, Suimei crossed his legs.

"Well, there is a condition for you staying here though."

"... What, should I do?"

"I called it a condition, but its about your dark magic. I want you to stop using it... Or rather than that, I'd like you to learn the proper way of using it."

Liliana's expression stiffened towards Suimei's completely unexpected condition.

"... Why?"

"Did you think I was going to throw out a more amazing condition?"

"That isn't true. What do you mean amazing..."

Suimei let out an exasperated expression as Liliana looked down. She then threw one more of her unresolved doubts before him.

"The proper way to use it... You said the same thing before, but just what is dark magic? You were talking like you understood it."

“I’m also interested in that.”

Felmenia also wanted to know about it. She bent forward and looked at Suimei with a sparkle in her eyes.

“So Suimei-kun is going to start talking of difficult to understand things again huh...”

On the other hand, magic seemed to be one of Lefille’s weak points. She was making a slightly distressed expression.



Suimei had said that he would be explaining dark magic, however he suddenly remembered that he had something that he must ask Liliana.

“Sorry. There’s something I forgot to ask but, can I go ahead and ask that first?”

“What is it?”

“When Liliana uses magic, those words you sometimes append to the end of the chant, did you learn them from the tall shadow?”

As he asked, Felmenia clapped her hands together as she remembered.

“The savage names right?”

“Do you know of them?”

“Someone we know a bit had a connection to it.”

When she cleared this up, Liliana proceeded to explain.

“Yes. I heard that it was magic to amplify the power of darkness and was told to proactively use it when I use magic from now on. I wasn’t fully convinced at first, but when I did as they told and added it to the end of the chant, the dark magic became stronger.”

“And so you used it. Fumu...”

While Suimei was deep in contemplation, he started speaking in a murmur.

“Nomina barbarus...”

“Is something, the matter?”

“Right now, what did you hear?”

Liliana cocked her head to the side at the strange question. Surely she was puzzled as to what meaning that question had at all. Urging her to answer with his gaze, Liliana answered with a puzzled expression still plastered on her face.

“I heard, savage names?”

“... That’s what it sounded like to Liliana?”

“That’s right.”

“Then, Menia too?”

“... Yes. You said savage names.”

“I see.”

Hearing their answer, Suimei closed his eyes like he came to an understanding.

“What meaning, did that question just now, have?”

“No, don’t worry about it. It isn’t something all that important after all— Well then, shall we move on to the explanation of dark magic?”

As he said this, Suimei switched tracks and dove right into explaining.

“Now then, I said before that the origin of the power behind dark magic was resentment and hatred, do you remember?”

“Yes. Though at the time, it wasn’t something, I would suddenly believe.”

“However, there is no mistake. I can tell from the loss to my astral body as well as the alterations to Liliana’s skin and eye.”

After Suimei explained this like a preface of things to come, he hung his head for a short while like he was thinking of something. Perhaps he was putting together his explanation. Before long, he began talking.

“Well, we’ll be going off track a little, but I think we’ll start by talking about my analysis of this world’s magic. I believe the magic of this world is in short, something that can be used because of the concept known as the elements which surround the world itself.”

“Surrounding, the world, is it?”

“Yeah, try imagining the shape of this world, be it a sphere, a curved saddle or even a flat plane, it doesn’t really matter... A wide concept known as the elements exists outside of it and envelops the world. Within it, are the smaller concepts of fire, water and the other named elements. The mages of this world send mana there, and receive an attribute and a part of the spell from the elements, it is this kind of system— they receive a formula... Well, I don’t think the people who use it are conscious of the fact though.”

“Certainly, over here it is normal, they teach you that magic is something that is used by communicating with the elements. There is no detailed explanation like that.”

“Seems so huh.”

Felmenia gave a brief interjection which Suimei agreed with. If they had gone into such details, they should have been able to establish just what dark magic was as common knowledge.

“The pluses and minuses aren’t something that really need to be said at this point, but— a portion of the spell becomes unknown, and they become unable to grasp the technique itself. These two negative effects come out of it. However, in general it is a largely convenient formula. So next, dark magic draws out the deep resentment mixed in within that wide concept as power.”

Liliana knit her brows at the crazy conversation.

“Please, wait. Why is that kind of thing, mixed in within the elements?”

“I also have problems understanding. Suimei-kun just said that magic is something used by communicating with the elements. In spite of that, why does that kind of thing end up being related to magic?”

“With regards to that, it was the intent of the people who created this magic system in the first place. I’ll start by answering Liliana’s question.”

The two of them nodded at Suimei’s words.

“In short, that thing known as feelings of hatred for people and things, as long as there are humans, it will be born. It is also something which never

disappears. No matter who it is, they cannot throw away their hatred and jealousy. Obviously, as the number of humans increase, it also increases. Just like that it simply multiplies without end, and eventually, it will completely fill up the shell known as the world.”

“Just what happens when that occurs?”

“What happens, huh.... In my world it has already happened. As science and medical technology remarkably advanced, the number of people increased far too quickly. That pent-up resentment that could not be held on to accumulated all over the world. It all turned into occurrences of nothing but ridiculous phenomena. To put it simply, when that kind of thing accumulates, the world will become strange.”

Suimei punctuated it with a ‘That’s how it is,’ before speaking again.

“Removing the abnormalities in one’s body is something anybody wants to do. That applies even to the large concept known as a world. That’s why, the world is always ejecting it outwards. I conjecture that what gets ejected, ends up stopping in the place where the things known as the elements reside, and begins to accumulate.”

“However Suimei-dono. I believe that in that case, would it not be a similar power to the elements?”

“However, magic is something that exists. Even without the elements, as long as one follows the proper process, they can create the technique which is the origin of its power.”

“Ah...”

“—When the very first person created the notion of magic in this world, just how did they have knowledge about the elements? We’ll exclude that from the explanation from here. That unknown person, first carefully split the wide concept known as the elements one by one into smaller concepts like fire, water and wind. If it was something like that, I believe that the limited power that could possibly be called is the reason why there are not many complex processes to using magic here. And then, while in the middle of splitting the concept up into categories, they found the thing that they called the power of darkness. That was hatred and resentment. When it manifested as power it was

black and repulsive. That kind of thing is often associated with the darkness of the night. Surely that person also thought the same and associated it with darkness. I don't know whether or not they were seized by the charm of such a strong power, but it is very likely that there is no mistaking the fact that they touched upon it."

"... To summarize what Suimei-kun said, because the first person to give birth to magic here mistook the power of hatred and resentment as the elements, dark magic was created?"

"That's about it."

"... That is, the true form, of the power I've been using?"

As Liliana said this with her eyes cast down, Suimei replied with an affirmative nod. She then spoke while her amber eye sadly shook.

"Then, that ominous being, what was it?"

She was gripping tightly onto the bed covers with a frightened face as she recalled the existence which appeared on that evening.

"The sinful figure right? It was something the secret scholars referred to as a sinister being. It's a coagulation of refined malice. At the time that it reaches the density of Astrosos, it projects the sinful figure into the real world by using the notion of a faceless being, and then appears with another plane of existence."

On that evening, when Liliana's dark magic went berserk, her pent up resentment had become quite pronounced. Due to this, another plane manifested. At that time, when Liliana was no longer able to move, it was because of the sinful figure. Commonly referred to as the spirit of the deceased, it is said that at the time these wicked spirits are manifested by humans, they do so in one of three states. The most common, well known state is the possession of the target. Another was half possession like when Suimei used the sacred guardian angel when striking Rajas with Abracadabra. And the third was the one which tormented Liliana on that evening, the state known as obsession which brought the mystical being into the external world. When exposed to the effects of an evil existence in the external world, the spirit will weaken. Suimei explained up to this point, but...

“... Somehow, suddenly, it’s become quite difficult to understand.”

“... When Suimei-dono starts passionately explaining something he starts using many difficult to understand words after all.”

“... When he first starts he explains everything simply with easy to understand comparisons though. Once it’s become like this, it’s useless.”

Suimei was so absorbed in his explanation that he did not even hear the three of them whispering to each other. Before long, he finished his entire explanation from start to end.

“That’s how it is.”

“Somehow or other, I understand.”

Suimei nodded like he was satisfied, and after a short pause, looked over at Liliana. It was an earnest gaze without a single hint of joking around. In response to that, Liliana straightened out her posture and faced him.

“... If I teach you the foundations of magic, you’ll be able to learn techniques to not get taken by the darkness. If you learn that, the portions of your body and heart that are suffering from the darkness will also become better. How about it?”

As she heard his question, Liliana unconsciously opened her mouth. She was likely about to ask ‘Why would you go so far for me?’ And then she gave up on speaking those words, she recalled that Suimei was just a meddlesome person.

“Understood. I’ll be, in your care.”

Liliana once more took Suimei’s outstretched hand into her own. This was the moment that Suimei’s party gained another new companion.

Chapter 3: Twilight, Dance

As the time for the parade for the hero summoned by the Holy City El Meide, Elliot Austin, came closer, the Imperial Capital seemed unusually crowded with people. The people of the city were boiling with excitement day in and day out at the chance to see the rumoured gorgeous hero. Just for a chance to glance at the hero, tourists from both within and outside the Empire were pouring into the Imperial Capital. There was enough people that the inns in the city could not handle them at all. Even the cheap lodgings at the gates and other sections of the city were completely filled with reservations.

Thanks to the large crowds, the local trade was doing quite prosperously. The shops lining the streets were all specially decorated. This produced a far more glamorous look than usual to the streets of the Imperial Capital. They were putting such effort into it that not seeing the street for a single day could mean new shops showing up without one knowing it.

The ones recruited to build these impromptu shops were not only the carpenters, but also the dwarves. Pouring in far more effort than usual, the craftsmen were putting up the stores, doing carpentry and creating weapons for the warriors inspired by the hero summoning. For the past few days they were working with practically no rest.

Even the citizens who treated their businesses like pastimes were working diligently during this time. It was as if they had all forgotten about the incidents. This was also because of the fact that lately there had been no incidents occurring.

Setting that aside, on this day, in this Imperial Capital that was flooded with more people than usual, Lefille was walking around on her own. Going out to play like a small child— was obviously not the reason for this, she was out to go shopping. Because of the quarrel Suimei and the others had with Graziella in the plaza, they hesitated to move around outside. Therefore, gathering information and buying food became her responsibilities.

It wasn't like the military police were coming over to search or apprehend

Suimei and the others, but just to be sure that the residual excitement had all cooled down an appropriate amount, they decided this would be better. After stuffing foodstuffs and other goods into her bag, she carried it and pushed through the crowd of people. Finding it harsh to move around while being jostled by others, she escaped into an alleyway and took a breather.

“Fuu...”

Setting down her baggage for a moment, she rotated her shoulders and back and loosened her body. After checking that her favourite fluffy one piece dress that she bought in Kurant City was not dirty or torn, she tightly pulled on the ribbon holding up her red hair and put it in order. She then looked at the crowd of people who were still pushing and shoving each other with her blue eyes.

The situation they found themselves in recently had suddenly changed, it was all quite bewildering. There was the Goddess' oracle, Suimei had returned home with major injuries trying to convince Liliana, even with those injuries he fought with Graziella, and then he gave shelter to Liliana.

“It must all be troublesome to Suimei-kun too...”

Even if she told him not to force himself, he would act without restraint right until the end. While claiming it was something that he must do, he would push his way down that difficult path. However, be that as it may, it could be said to be good for them too. Because he is just that sort of person, Lefille was able to walk around like this after all. Even though she should have been letting out a sigh, she realized her face was frozen in fear.

“At any rate, there sure are a lot of people huh...”

It was about time for her to get moving, she picked up all her baggage and began walking down the alley again. She took a brief look back towards the bustling street. After distancing herself a little she could no longer see the people, but the sound of the hustle and bustle still reached her. She could see in her eyes the pain of once more entering such a crowd. And then, deciding it was better to take the side roads from hereon out, she turned around, and bumped into someone.

“—Whoops, I'm terribly sorry.”

“N-no it’s fine, girly.”

As she immediately apologized, the sound of a soft voice came down from above. It was the voice of a man. However, within his tone, she could sense excitement, or rather a somehow restless feeling. As Lefille raised her head and saw the man’s air of completely irrepressible joy, a stiff smile crawled onto her face. She had felt an unfamiliar shiver and stepped back, however she made her resolve to cut through.

“... Excuse me, could you not move out of the way?”

“Sorry about that. I can’t exactly do that.”

“What? What do you mean you can’t exactly do that? —!? What are you!?”

Lefille let out a reproachful shout towards the actions of the man before her. The man that was standing in her way was now moving his hands in a sickening manner. They were such unpleasant movements that she felt like she could hear them creaking.

“Eheh, eheh, why don’t you come and play with big brother?”

“Big brother...? In what way are you a big brother!? Aren’t you more of an uncle!?”

“No way, even like this I’m still in the second half of my thirties...”

“That age is firmly in the category of an uncle!”

Lefille jumped backwards.

“Look there, why don’t you play with big brother over there, guhehehe...”

The look in the man’s eyes was not normal. He must have been the pedophile who had been appearing frequently in the rumours floating around the Imperial Capital recently.

(Uu... What should I do? This is bad...)

If she was in her original form, it would have been simple. But escaping from the crowd of people was a mistake. To think that there was something more dangerous than that crowd of people in a place like this. If she screamed, would someone notice? However, now that she was fairly deep into the alley, the

possibility of someone hearing her scream over the sound of the hustle and bustle was quite low. But it was better than doing nothing. While thinking of this, the man sidled up closer.

“—Stop! Don’t come any closer!”

“Eheh, eheh, even if you say thaaaat....”

Now that it has come to this, there was no choice but to throw her baggage at him and use it as a distraction to escape. As she resented the fact that she had become small and took a stance to throw...

“Wait!”

At just the right time, a ferocious voice resounded in the air.



In the sea of people which resembled some theme park on a holiday, Mizuki barely managed to slip away from them, had both hands on her knees and while wiping the sweat from her brow, she let out a fed up voice.

“Th-there’s so many people riiight?”

Behind her, in complete agreement while being jostled by the crowd of people, was the figure of Reiji and the others sweating from the stuffy air. Reiji let out a feeble ‘I know right,’ while Titania sat down on a convenient wooden box while wiping off the sweat from her brow with a towel she received from her knight escort.

On this day, just as Reiji’s party arrived at the Imperial Capital, the cause of their gasping was the flood of people who also arrived in the Imperial Capital smothering the air. Tourists, merchants, believers of the Salvation Church and all manner of other visitors were filling up the city all over the place, there was nowhere for them to catch their breath. In the explosion of colours assaulting Reiji’s eyes, somehow Mizuki’s long, black hair brought his heart peace.

Blocking the sunlight pouring down on them with only a speck of clouds in the air with his hand, Reiji created a nice shadow over his eyes and scrutinized the sky. Up until arriving at the capital, he was delighted about the great weather, however now he was just hateful. He suddenly realized some blue hair came

into his field of vision. Before he knew it, Titania who was beside him began speaking to the fed up Mizuki.

“This is, probably an effect of the parade for Hero-sama summoned by the Holy City right?”

“If I remember right the parade still isn’t for a few days right? Just what will it become on the day of...?”

As they heard Mizuki’s words, all their faces filled with fear. They all did not even want to think about it. However, the sea of people was one thing, but there was a much larger problem standing before them.

“In the end, we couldn’t find any lodgings huh.”

“That’s right isn’t it? U~n, what to dooo?”

“In that case, if we courteously ask the Salvation Church I believe they should welcome us? Reiji-sama who is a hero is with us after all.”

“I see! We had that kind of hand! Tia, nice idea!”

Mizuki was delightedly sticking her thumb up, however Reiji shook his head at that suggestion.

“Let’s not.”

“Eh? W-why? What’s wrong? Reiji-kun.”

“If I go ahead and name myself, it will end up being well known throughout the Imperial Capital, and I feel we’ll completely be unable to move anymore.”

“Certainly, I can’t deny the possibility that the believers of the Salvation Church would spread the word. If we walked around in the middle city I’m sure we would be instantly swarmed, and just like Hero-sama from the Holy City, they would probably force us to do a parade as well. Regardless, if it comes down to whether or not we receive alms, perhaps we should refrain, there are quite a few of us after all.”

“I’m not so sure about receiving alms either.”

Reiji agreed. Anyways, if they made their existence known on the public stage, there was a danger that they would no longer be able to take action

within the Empire. It was not very surprising, to the public they were responsible for defeating Rajas. Thanks to the word spread around that it was one of the grandest enemies, when they were in Kurant City, they were forced to hole up in the inn most of the time. After remembering that situation, it was fairly obvious what would happen here.

Also, the reason they came to the Empire was to check on Graziella's movements. There would be some benefits to making themselves known, but for the time being they needed to at least act in accordance to Hadorious' instructions. Reiji was also personally interested in Graziella as well.

“Uu~ Then are we going to camp outside? We finally came to a big city so I don't wanna camp~”

Mizuki was not usually selfish, but now she was unusually whining. During their travels, they did not actually camp all that often. When they did it was only when there was no other choice. Certainly after coming to such a large city and being unsatisfied with having to camp outside was something that Reiji could sympathize with.

“Certainly, resting without a proper place to rest is bad for your health. I think it would be best if we could secure some lodgings.”

“I know right. What should we do...”

Rest and duty were both important. However in this situation, they did not have a solution for fulfilling either of these.

“Then how about lodgings in other districts? Perhaps over there...”

As Mizuki said this, the senior knight Gregory grimaced with a stiff face.

“No, Mizuki-dono, that will not do. Even if there was lodgings available outside of the main district, those kinds of cheap lodgings would be cruder than camping outside. It would be somewhat unhealthy for Mizuki-dono and her Highness the Princess.”

“I-is that so...”

Father will not allow it. Recalling those kinds of words from Gregory's intense statement, Mizuki nodded as she shrank back. As she did, the younger knight

Roffrey spoke up.

“If we search around the district I think we’ll at least be able to find a place for her Highness the Princess, Reiji-dono and Mizuki-dono.”

“Just us three, then where will Roffrey and the others stay...?”

“No, there is no reason to worry about us. The top priority should be Hero-dono, her Highness the Princess and Mizuki-dono.”

Matching up with Roffrey, Luka stated her opinion. But even so, Reiji couldn’t really accept it.

“HmMMM. Maybe it would be best to just shut our eyes and go to the church—”

Just like that, as they were all putting the heads together and racking their brains on what to do next, suddenly they heard the screams of a young girl nearby.

“—Stop! Don’t come any closer!”

“Reiji-sama.”

“It’s nearby after all. Let’s take a look.”

Taking the lead, Reiji headed towards the voice. He sensed a dangerous stink in the air. As he came around the corner, he saw a man letting out an abnormal atmosphere, and a young girl being cornered by him.

“R-Reiji-kun. That.”

“Un. I got it.”

Reiji judged in an instant that the man was cornering the girl, and went to stop him. Watching Reiji run off with a dignified expression, Titania’s face flushed red.

“As expected of Reiji-sama. Mizuki, did you see? That gallant face that does not forgive evil?”

“I’m used to seeing that part of Reiji-kun.”

Mizuki stuck her chest out as she said this with a proud face. Titania looked at her both jealously and bitterly.

“... Mizuki, that’s unfair.”

On the other hand, Reiji had already cut in between the man and the little girl.

“Wh-what’s with you!?”

“You don’t need to know anything about me. Get away from that child right now. If you don’t...”

As he said this, Reiji sharpened his gaze and glared at him, overpowering the man. As the man let out a pitiful voice, just to be doubly sure, Reiji suddenly began to draw his sword from his sheathe.

“H-HeEEEEEEEEH!”

Before Reiji who had fought both demons and monsters in this world, there was no way this man who seemed to be planning to kidnap a small girl would be able to keep his spirit. At an extreme speed, the man ran away with all his might.

“Good grief, for an adult to do such things...”

Reiji let out a sigh as he lamented about the man. As he turned around, the little girl was bowing to him.

“Thank you for saving me.”

“No, don’t be concerned about it. Setting that aside, are you alright? Did he do anything to you?”

“I’m fine. After I screamed, you came right away after all.”

Reiji had a brief exchange with the little girl. She had moderately combed back beautiful red hair, and two moles lined up under her eye. She was cute enough that Reiji could almost understand the reason the man wanted to kidnap her, however at a closer look, from her bearing and eyes he was left with a very dignified impression. While Reiji was thinking of such things, the girl casually looked in the direction the man ran away to.

“I’m glad that you saved me and all, but was the way you drove him away not a little too violent?”

“I’ll go ahead and entertain your strange problem, it’s because when things become that odd, being a little violent is the best option.”

“I see, that’s right isn’t it?”

She seemed to be convinced. Those kinds of people are generally not worth talking to. On the contrary when one tries to resolve things peacefully things would tend to become even more strange. Mizuki and the others finally caught up and walked up to Reiji from behind.

“That kind of person exists everywhere huh...”

“In this world they are people we call pedophiles. Do they exist over there as well?”

“Un, once in a while they show up on the news after being arrested.”

Reiji could hear Mizuki and Titania discussing this behind him. On the other hand, the girl in front of him introduced herself.

“My name is Lefille Grakis. Allow me to thank you once more. If it is alright with you, could you let me hear your name?”

“I’m not really someone worth naming... would be a little pompous huh. My name is Reiji Shana.”

As Reiji named herself, Lefille suddenly knit her brows together. Then...

“Reiji-shi right...?—It couldn’t be, the one Suimei-kun knows...”

“Eh?”

“Ha?”

“Suimei as in... You, do you know Suimei!?”

Lefille nodded at Reiji’s question. The two girls who also heard her statement poked their heads around Reiji’s body.



After the dangerous encounter with the pervert, Lefille, who was saved by Reiji, now had Reiji and company in tow and was fairly near to the base. After finding out the they were Suimei’s acquaintances, she was guiding them back there.

“—So Lefille-chan came to the Empire together with Suimei huh.”

“Muu... I’m not very happy to have chan applied after my name but... Well whatever. That’s how it is.”

“Eh? But Lefille-chan. At that time there still should have been demons in that vicinity?”

At Mizuki’s suspicions, Lefille was forced to come up with a suitable deception.

“U-un, well, we just happened to succeed in slipping by the demons. After escaping to Kurant City, we arrived in Nelferia.”

“So that’s how it was. By some chance we might have just nearly missed each other somewhere huh.”

“We didn’t go as far as verifying the registry of names for entry into the city after all. We all thought that Suimei had not yet arrived in Kurant City, what a blind spot.”

Titania was troubled at the blunder they made, however beside her, Mizuki having had the major anxiety that she had been carrying with her all this time blown away, was making a bright face as she breathed a sigh of relief.

“But thank god that Suimei is safe.”

“Yeah, really. As usual he has strong luck in getting out of the trouble he gets himself in...”

“Seriously, even though he said ‘I don’t want anything to do with danger!’, what is he doing?”

“But isn’t that how he always is? At first he always complains, but somehow or another he always ends up sticking his neck into it.”

“That’s right huh.”

Reiji and Mizuki were rejoicing cheerfully from the bottom of their hearts about Suimei’s safety while talking to each other. Lefille smiled as she had a very good understanding of the topics they were discussing.

“From what I’ve heard you all seemed to be very close friends. Seems it was

just as I thought.”

“I’ve known Suimei-kun for about four years, but for Reiji-kun it was five or six years right?”

It was only one or two years difference. In any case, the two of them were what one would call childhood friends.

While talking about things like he’s such a tsundere, or he’s softhearted, or how he’s always acting cool, or how he always ends up the comedian, and all sort of other things regarding Suimei, they arrived at their destination.

“—We’ve arrived. It’s here.”

As she came around the corner, the familiar back alley and dead end appeared before Lefille. It used to be a place smeared with pollution with an ever present stink in the air. But after Suimei used some incomprehensible cleaning method it became neat and clean.

“So he is living in a place like this. We came around an alley so I was expecting a musty place, but this is surprising.”

“How pretty. I thought this kind of place would give off more of a booring image though.”

Mizuki and Titania were making wide eyes at the complete disparity in the scenery compared to other places in the area. This must have been because the dark, gloomy and dirty atmosphere took a sudden change to a bright and clean atmosphere. The reason it was all very white was because Suimei thickly spread alabaster onto all the nearby walls. He kept saying that all the houses in the area were too filthy, that it kept him from being in a good mood. It seems he even cast magic on the tables and chairs that were left outside so that they would not become mouldy. He was of the disposition that the area in which he lived had to be thoroughly treated or else he would not be satisfied. As they came up to the house, Lefille opened the door.

“I’m back.”

And as she did, Felmenia came out to greet her while wearing an apron.

“Lefille, welcome back—eh?”

The expression on her face was exactly what one would expect from someone receiving a completely unexpected surprise. As she looked at each and every person behind Lefille, all her movements came to a complete stop. Reiji and the others were the exact same though. After an unnatural pause, Titania raised her voice.

“White Flame-dono!?”

“Y-your Highness and Hero-dono and Mizuki-dono!? Why are you...?”

Just as she was about to question what was going on, Felmenia suddenly came to her senses with an ‘Oh crap’ in her mind. She immediately took the apron she was wearing and threw it violently. Without verifying where the apron flew off to behind her, she turned towards the full length mirror installed in the entryway. She then thoroughly confirmed her hair, the position of the braids draped down her ears, her face and all sorts of other things with quick and agile movements. After making the same serious and cool expression she always had at Camellia, she bowed down.

“... No, everyone, it has been a long time since we last met.”

And then after enough time had passed to properly show respect to those of superior status, Felmenia raised her head, and met Lefille’s gaze.

“Lefille. Why are you together with her Highness the Princess’ group?”

“They saved me after I got into a quarrel with a strange person. And then after asking for their name, it was something I recalled hearing before... That’s about it.”

A coincidence... Or rather a strange coincidence. Felmenia made a surprised expression. Reiji then questioned her in a curious tone.

“Sensei, why are you here? I thought you were acting under the direct orders of his Majesty Almadious?”

“Umm... That’s right. Let us talk about the finer details inside.”

As she urged them to enter, a listless voice resounded from behind her.

“Ooooi, is there a guest?”

Suimei’s figure then showed up in the entrance way. Before long, he spotted

Reiji and the others behind Felmenia, and then with an expression like he had seen a ghost and a strange face, he scowled.

“Ha...?”

The three of them called out to him as he stood there detached from time.

“Long time no see, Suimei.”

“Yaaho~o, Suimei-kun.”

“It has been a long time. Suimei.”

“HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!?”



After the unfortunate reunion between Reiji’s group and Suimei, after being strangely surprised for a while, he guided them to the living room. With the number of people being what they were, they could not all comfortably fit around the table. Reiji, Mizuki and Titania sat at the table while the knights sat on chairs prepared behind them. Since Titania was there, Felmenia hesitated to sit at the same table as her and abstained to standing behind Suimei. Lefille was uneasy about the arrival of so many people and was hiding herself next to her. As for Liliana, she was sitting on the sofa. Suimei was still completely confused at this sudden visit, and looked at everyone individually before him before moving along.

“Aaah, to think that Reiji would save Lefi...”

“For me as well, I could not possibly imagine that Lefille-chan would be Suimei’s acquaintance.”

“That’s true isn’t it? Fate is a mysterious thing huh.”

As Mizuki cut in, Suimei’s face suddenly turned mean spirited as he smirked.

“What? This must be guidance of the stars... you won’t say it like that?”

“Geez! Right after we get here you’re immediately being mean!”

Mizuki was puffing out her cheeks as Suimei brought up her past with a mean face. Suimei and Reiji both smiled at her charming figure. Of course all of this was either meaningless, incomprehensible or simply strange to everyone else.

Titania, who was sitting next to Reiji, called out intimately to Felmenia who was still standing behind Suimei.

“I was concerned about what would happen to you when you departed from Kurant City, but it seems White Flame-dono’s duty was about Suimei, right?”

“Yes. At his Majesty the King’s order, I have entrusted my humble abilities to Suimei-dono.”

“As expected, White Flame-dono has a strong sense of responsibility huh.”

“Eh? Ah, no, it’s not really that...”

“Again with the humility. To take responsibility for summoning Suimei, did father not request White Flame-dono to support him? If that was not the case you would not have come through danger all the way to the Empire right?”

As Titania came to her conclusion, Reiji added in an ‘As one would expect of Sensei,’ in agreement. He was nodding his head with pride, but surely he was reading too much into it and overreacting.

“At that time, I was certain that White Flame-dono was headed to meet the one who destroyed that army of demons but... It seems my prediction was inaccurate.”

That wasn’t true. They all could not possibly say that. Catching a glimpse of Titania’s sharp intuition, Felmenia and Lefille both put on a difficult expression.

“Why are you in the Empire Suimei?”

“I’m looking for a way to return. So I went on a journey.”

“I see. So that’s why you left the castle. Then, what happened after that?”

“I believe you already know, but I travelled together with Lefi and a trade corps. Partway there we ended up in a little bit of trouble with the guys in the trade corps and split up with them, but we cut through the forest and came out at Kurant City.”

“Then, the demons?”

“Well, we came across them a little. From there one thing or another happened, and we ended up living together—”

Just like that, with a shady smile and a strange self satisfied air full of confidence, he laid out a plausible story. Reiji and the others seems to be listening to him like they believed him too. However Mizuki did not miss her chance at throwing in a quip.

“One thing or another happened and you ended up living together with a cute little girl, what does that even mean Suimei-kun?”

“Aah and that’s when Menia came and started teaching me magic.”

“Suimei-kun just casually ignored it...”

Pretending not to see Mizuki attacking him with her glare, Suimei fluently lined up his story. Felmenia and Lefille who were listening behind him, made somewhat disgusted expressions as they whispered to each other in secret.

(... He really can just calmly spout out such lies.)

(... Seriously, you can say he’s become just a little evil. Not that it is something to compliment him for.)

Naturally they were not admiring his actions. Without having any change in complexion, Suimei was speaking like everything was a matter of fact, the two of them could only whisper to each other in astonishment. Those who knew the circumstances could only see it as shameless, but those who didn’t just heard his words as a matter of fact. The two of them were suspicious whether this was also magic in a sense. As their conversation came to an end, Reiji shifted his attention to Liliana who was quietly sitting on the sofa slightly far away.

“Now that I think about, who is that child over there?”

Suimei turned his head around like he was worried.

“That’s... well there were special circumstances.”

It was hard to say but he had to say it. It was quite the dilemma. As attention was brought to her from all over the room, Liliana stood up and humbly lowered her head.

“My name is Liliana Zandyke.”

“Liliana-chan, right.... Hmmmm? Isn’t Liliana Zandyke...”

It seemed that Reiji had heard that name before. He looked up the ceiling and began to poke around his memories for that name. Even in the noisy melting pot in the streets, talks of the manhunt seemed to still be fluttering around. On the other hand, perhaps as one would expect, Titania grasped onto the famous name.

“... One of the Empire’s Elite Twelve, right now she should be on the wanted list.”

“That’s it! Now that I think of it didn’t we hear that she was the culprit behind some kind of incident!?”

“... Didn’t I just say it? There were special circumstances.”

Suimei let out a sigh as he shrugged his shoulders deeply, and then began to give Reiji and the others the general gist of things.



“I see...”

“That’s, kind of complicated huh.”

As Reiji and Mizuki heard Suimei’s outline of the incidents and Liliana’s circumstances, at first they were making faces full of pity, but by the end they were fairly downhearted as they let out a sigh. Suimei looked at Lefille cuddling up to Liliana and gently brushing her head anxiously as he quietly nodded his head. Perhaps because of her parting with Rogue, Lefille had always been trying to cheer Liliana up. Suimei did not want to do anything that would weigh too heavily on her heart, but he had to explain it. As his explanation ended, Reiji showed him a very serious face.

“And so, what do you plan to do with Liliana-chan?”

“Hm? Aah, I’ll be sheltering her here.”

“But, with only that nothing will get resolved won’t it?”

“That’s right. That’s why our other goal is to find the real culprit and apprehend them. After catching them it’ll be fine to just explain the situation and hand just them over.”

“That may be so but won’t the people of the Empire say to also hand over

Liliana-chan?”

“Well, eight or nine times out of ten they would.”

Suimei agreed with Reiji’s opinion. Even if she was instigated, it did not change the fact that she performed the act. It was not difficult to imagine that the time they demand to have Liliana handed over was drawing nearer. But as long as he was taking care of her, there was no way he would just hand her over quietly.

“Well if it comes to that, should we all just go to a different country?”

In this world, if they left the country borders, they probably wouldn’t really be able to pursue them anymore. In that case, it was fine to just live in a different country. As he said this, he grinned at both Lefille and Felmenia. Felmenia quietly nodded. After a short instant of surprise, Lefille let out a fearless smile.

“You really are an abrupt person.”

Liliana said this and stood up as her complexion began to change.

“B-but, that’s...”

The destination of her changing expression, was an anxious face who did not want to cause trouble for them. However, before she could finish speaking, Suimei showed her a cheerful laugh.

“I don’t mind at all you know. Well if everyone is against it I’ll think of another hand to play.”

“I am here for the sake of supporting Suimei-dono. I will abide by whatever intentions Suimei-dono holds.”

“Same for me. Life in the Empire is good, but I will accompany Suimei-kun wherever he goes.”

“So they say.”

Even as he smiled at her saying that she didn’t need to worry about it, her melancholy did not clear away. However, it was already decided. She had no choice but to resign herself. As they came to that conclusion, Suimei turned his head.

“That’s how it is.”

“I see. Un, got it.”

Reiji closed his eyes and nodded agreeably. Mizuki made a smile like she was looking at her troublesome best friend.

“Suimei-kun is just as equally softhearted as Reiji-kun isn’t he?”

“Ah? Mizuki, don’t put me in the same category as this guy. I’m not really softhearted or any...”

“Heeh, despite saying you hated danger and didn’t come along with us, who is young imbecile that is sticking his neck into dangerous matters after all~?”

“I-I wonder who...?”

Even though he played dumb, obviously there were gazes focused on him from all over the room.

“...”

“Yeah yeah it’s me! Me! Sorry ’bout that!”

The fact that he was stuck in between both bashfulness and anger was because of the attack coming at him from all sides. Suimei raised his voice like he was hiding his embarrassment. At Mizuki’s pinpoint counterattack, he could put up nothing but meagre resistance. To Suimei this was the first time he was in a situation like a bed of nails, but clearing his throat to change the mood, he changed the topic.

“... Aaanyways, what are you guys doing in the Imperial Capital? If I remember correctly you said you were headed to the self governed state right?”

“... Regarding that, I also have some special circumstances.”

Reiji was showing Suimei a melancholic expression. As if being weighed down by his anguish, the atmosphere around him was heavy. Titania continued in his stead.

“Suimei. Do you know about Duke Hadorious?”

“Yeah, I heard about him from Menia.”

“About how he’s the man who ensnared us.”

Lefille let out a sharp tone and pointed her blue eyes towards them. As expected, the flames of rage were still burning brightly deep within that small body. Her voice filled with rage did not contain a single hint of weakness. As Titania bowed down to apologize, Suimei stopped her with his hand and shook his head. Everyone was likely thinking the same thing, it was not her fault.

“We were told by his Grace the Duke to go to the Imperial Capital and check on her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella’s movement.”

Hearing that name from Reiji’s mouth, Suimei’s eyebrow shot up.

“Oi, Graziella as in... that one?”

“Suimei-kun, you know her?”

Suimei showed a bitter expression to Mizuki’s question.

“Weeell a little... Well, setting that aside. Why are you just obediently listening to that order? As a hero can’t you just veto it?”

In Camellia even Almadios treated Reiji with respect. Even when Elliot was faced with arrogant attitude from the Empire’s imperial princess Graziella, it was Graziella’s attendant who was stricken with a pale face. A hero’s treatment and authority was supposed to be far beyond any single noble.

“He took a family member hostage and threatened us.”

“Family?”

Suimei was wondering just who family referred to. It was impossible that they were able to lay their hands on Reiji’s family in the other world. As Suimei was making a puzzled frown, one of the knights who had been sitting behind Reiji and the others, Gregory stood up from his seat and bowed down his head apologetically. As Suimei grasped the situation from that, he slacked back into his chair and spoke up with astonishment.

“What’s with that? That guy really is an unbelievable asshole huh... Good grief, I’ll have to go and slug him earlier than later huh.”

If they just leisurely let him be, there was no telling what he would do. It seemed it was necessary to find a chance to make contact with him. Hearing Suimei’s statement, Reiji’s face took on a severe expression.

“Suimei, Duke Hadorious is strong. He was able to catch and stop my fist.”

“Even if you say that, I can’t tell if that’s amazing or not.”

“So Suimei, would you be able to stop my punch as I am now?”

As Suimei was poking fun at Reiji, Reiji formed a fist while smiling like he was going to send him flying along with that joke. In response, Suimei raised both his hands without putting on airs.

“I’m a pacifist, I’m against violence.”

“... You sure can talk. Despite the fact that you’re surprisingly merciless.”

Reiji’s unamused gaze pierced through Suimei’s shamelessness. Shrugging his shoulders like he was saying ‘What are you talking about?’ he let out one more exasperated sigh. Setting that aside, Suimei suddenly became serious and shut his eyes.

“At any rate, Graziella huh... Making you guys do that sort of thing, just what kind of significance does that noble-sama’s order have?”

“With regards to that, we also don’t really understand.”

Reiji shook his head. He showed just how much anguish this put him in during his journey. Seeing this, Suimei took in what he had heard of the story, and impulsively let out his impression.

“Somehow, it feels like he wanted you to head towards the Imperial Capital.”

“Wanted me to head to the Imperial Capital... but there shouldn’t be any demons in the Empire?”

“That’s exactly why. This kind of place has nothing to do with the hero’s job, on top of that it’s not like you’re here to raise the spirits of the citizens of an allied country. There should be no need to go out of his way to make a hero come here right? If he’s that remarkable, he should have as many subordinates and spies as he wanted to send over, if he was really that curious they would already be here. From what I’ve heard, it looks like from the beginning, that Hadorious wanted you to head to this country by any means possible.”

“Why though?”

Suimei shut his eyes as he heard Mizuki's frank question.

"Fumu... He's taken a hostage and gone as far making threats after all. It must be something big huh."

"But Duke Hadorious didn't say anything other than checking on her Imperial Highness Graziella's movements. He didn't tell us to do anything else...."

Reiji's face had become quite grim as he sunk deeper into thought about what could possibly be going on. If it was just as Reiji said and Hadorious really only wanted Reiji to stalk Graziella, Suimei could only deem Hadorious as helplessly incompetent. If it was only about checking on her movements, then it wasn't worth incurring Reiji's enmity just to send him over to the Empire.

"Certainly it is just as Duke Hadorious says, lately her Imperial Highness Graziella has been moving around very actively. Using her authority in the military, she has been taking very firm political measures towards neighbouring countries quite often. As far as Astel is concerned it is not a very good situation."

He was not saying that Titania was wrong, but even so Suimei had no intentions of dropping the subject. From the flow of the conversation, he could not wipe off the sense that there was something being implied in a roundabout way by Hadorious' actions.

"At the time that her Imperial Highness Graziella penetrated the border, Duke Hadorious didn't really have anything in particular to say though right?"

"—I see, that's it."

As if the answer swooped down at him, Suimei snapped his finger. From Reiji's candid impression, the last fragment fell into place.

"Suimei, what do you mean that's it?"

"You said at the time that that woman penetrated the border right? That imperial princess, how did she go there?"

"How did she go there? Not the reason she went?"

"That's right. The method she went there."

"That's... She said she took her troops and forcibly broke through right?"

“She broke through that fortress on the national border without any trouble at all?”

Felmenia was the one to answer his question.

“That is probably how it went. From what I’ve seen of her Imperial Highness Graziella and the troops under her command, it did not look like they had suffered any damage to me.”

Felmenia was ruminating over her own words. After saying it, she seemed to be recalling the events in her head. As she did, Lefille made a quizzical expression.

“—That’s certainly strange. When I went together with Suimei-kun, the fortress on the national border to Astel was not made so frailly that it would be broken through so easily though?”

“Certainly, now that you put it like that it does seem like it...”

Titania was of the same opinion, a flustered expression floated up on her face at the fact that she did not notice this. The construction of the fortress on the national border as well as its defensive force were both quite firm. Within the ravine, a steel gate was put in place. The times at which it opened and closed were predetermined, it wasn’t so simple to pass through it at will. Certainly, taking into consideration Graziella’s abilities, she was more than capable of bulldozing her way through. Thus it seemed natural to think that she did. Even so if she had used magic to do so, it was unavoidable that it would have turned into a major uproar. However, up until now, talks of that kind of serious situation never came up.

“Besides, the timing that she got there with was too good. I heard it coincided exactly with the time that the army from Kurant City were closing in on the demons right?”

“Certainly now that you mention it that was the case but... Is it not an impossible event right?”

Reiji let out these words of denial like his self-confidence was swaying. Suimei shook his head and continued.

“At the point in time where the demons arrived, the only ones who knew

were the higher ups of Astel and Gregory-san who guided you guys to a safe place. From what I've heard, the only ones who encountered the demons were you guys, the lot from the trade corps and us. The citizens of Astel were not made aware of the presence of demons. To the people within Astel's borders, the only place the demons were present should have been outside the country. Despite that, how did someone from another country get their hands on that kind of information so easily?"

"Maybe they captured a demon within Imperial territory and made it talk?"

"Impossible. Demons are not that kind of being."

Lefille drew a conclusion in no time at all. They were the words of the one who knew the most about the disposition of demons, that's why there was no way they were wrong. From the memories of Suimei's encounter with the demons, he also knew that they were not the kind of beings who would reveal any information even if they were tortured. If it was those beings, he thought that they would self-destruct the moment they were captured. In that case, his conjecture would be...

"Hey, perhaps that guy Hadorious..."

Perhaps, that vague silhouette in Suimei's mind gradually began to take shape. Before his answer completely took form and he could put it into words, Titania was the first to make a guess.

"... Leaked out the information, allowed her Imperial Highness Graziella into the country and schemed with the guards at the national border? Suimei is this what you are implying?"

Suimei returned a nod to her. The tension running through the air bound everyone in silence. Lagging behind a beat, Mizuki threw out a flustered question in a panic.

"B-but what kind of benefit would he gain from doing that kind of thing? Duke Hadorious is a noble of Astel you know? Are you saying he's connected to her Imperial Highness Graziella behind the scenes?"

"Who knows. I don't know whether they're connected or whether he simply leaked out the information yet... Well if it's like that then it would be an easy

excuse to start a war. That dangerous woman crossed over the national border without permission after all. If there was someone important in Astel who held animosity towards the Empire, it would be quite easy for them. And then, he immediately sent Reiji over.”

“Do you think they’re also being provoked?”

Reiji’s expression had gotten quite tense. Suimei replied like it was just as he expected.

“He said himself it was only to check up on things after all.”

Certainly, Graziella’s actions of pushing through the border into Astel may have been reasonable considering the crisis. However, this would naturally cause the leaders of Astel to harbour a sense of an impending crisis. So if right after it happened, Reiji unexpectedly visited the Empire, the tension of those leaders would double up on the spot.

“However, Suimei. There should be no reason right now for Astel to declare war on the Empire.”

“That’s right isn’t it. That’s also the point I don’t quite get.”

This was the point that Suimei could only let out a troubled groan at. In the current situation where the demons were invading human territories, there was no benefit to take actions to cause a falling out between nations. Felmenia and Titania were also both in agreement on this point.

“I also think so. Even if it is Duke Hadorious, he should fully understand the menace of the demons. Besides just from leaking the information, it wasn’t certain that the leaders of the Empire would make a move.”

“That’s true, there are too many uncertain elements for it to be a scheme huh...”

As they were discussing this, Reiji began to stir.

“But...”

“Is there something on your mind? Reiji.”

“No, it’s just, if it is just as Suimei is thinking, I was just thinking that Duke Hadorious’ attitude at that time might make sense.”

“About how he wasn’t really saying anything?”

“Un. If her Imperial Highness Graziella’s arrival was in fact a scheme by Duke Hadorious, then his silence at the times regarding her trespassing wraps itself up nicely. With that kind of personality, he would have at least let out a single honest opinion at that kind of scene after all... But, I don’t think we’re going to make any more progress on this topic.”

“That’s certainly true.”

There wasn’t enough materials for them to make a proper judgment. If possible there would be nothing better than quickly predicting the scheme while they could, but right now that was impossible. However, they at least all agreed that they needed to be vigilant with regards to Hadorious.

“—So, switching topics, what are you guys going to do from here on?”

“Yeah yeah it’s that! Listen to me Suimei-kun! We couldn’t find an inn!”

“Well there’s that parade and all.”

Suimei returned a gaze to Mizuki like it should have been obvious as she looked back at him wondering what they should do. Before they even arrived, they must have all been full. Suimei leaned back into his chair while pondering about it.

“... Want to stay here? With this many people it’ll be quite cramped though.”

“Suimei, is that alright?”

“We don’t have enough beds for everyone though, so the guys will have to sleep together in the living room.”

Reiji didn’t seem to have any objections as Suimei said this. As he looked around the room to see if it was alright with everyone else, the female knight Luka spoke up.

“If that is the case we will once more look for some lodgings. Even if we’re only able to secure a few rooms, we’ll be able to split up between the inns and Suimei-dono’s house.”

As Reiji acknowledged her, the knights all headed towards the entrance way. Reiji and Mizuki went to see them off perhaps to once more show them

gratitude for putting in work for them. Titania also stood up, but instead of following after Reiji, she drew nearer to Suimei.

“What’s wrong?”

Even though he had asked her, Titania did not stop walking. With a whiff, a gentle aroma tickled his nose. When she was within hands reach, she beckoned Suimei over. As Suimei obediently brought himself closer, she brought her mouth closer to his ear to talk in secret.

“Suimei. Tomorrow, would you not be able to keep me company for a bit?”

“Keep you company?”

“I have something to talk with you about. It’s very important.”

Suimei took some distance and looked at Titania’s face. Her deep blue eyes were looking straight at Suimei with an earnest expression, they reflected her seriousness. He guessed that she had some sort of inevitable circumstance.

“... Understood.”



Thanks to the great efforts of their knight escorts, Reiji’s group managed to secure rooms at an inn for three people. After splitting the group up in two between the Yakagi residence and the inn, it seemed that they no longer how to worry themselves about places to stay for the time being. Obviously the way they split the group was that Reiji, Mizuki and Titania would stay at Suimei’s place while the knights stayed in the inn. That evening, for the first time in a while, Suimei and Reiji were able to talk just between the guys. The girls also had their own girls’ talk late into the night while going nuts over something. Though that was mostly Mizuki. And then, the next day arrived.

“I’ve gotten quite used to the air in Astel, but the Empire also has a nice wind blowing through it huh.”

“Doesn’t it?”

On this day, Suimei went along with Titania’s request, and the two of them left the Yakagi residence and were now outside the Imperial Capital to the north west stretching their legs out on a hill overflowing with nature. Looking

out over the scenery, the gently-sloping waves of green stretched out before him, and once in a while a refreshing wind would brush gently against the back of his neck. Standing in a lightly elevated place, Titania brushed her hair behind her and savoured the wind from the hill with her eyes quietly shut. She was not wearing the dress Suimei saw her in at the castle. Instead she was wearing easy to move in clothes wrapped around her body with an overcoat lying over them. Due to the tall collars of the coat, he was unable to see her mouth. If anybody saw her for the first time in that clothing with her eyes shut, they would be unable to even imagine that she was a genuine princess.

Suimei had that sort of impression, but it was blown away in an instant. Titania suddenly stretched out greatly with both of her arms spread out as much as she could. She started to enjoy the air in the Empire in an entirely different way from before. Suimei guessed it was because she was freed from the stuffy air in the Imperial Capital, or perhaps it was because she did not have to keep up her appearances. From Suimei's perspective, her current behaviour was more pleasant than usual.

Right now in this place, other than the one horse they rode here, there was nobody present except for Suimei and Titania. Titania had talked about this to neither Reiji or Mizuki, and unexpectedly the knight escorts also did not come along. When Titania informed Luka of her plans, she requested to accompany them, but was denied. In Suimei's case he also only told Felmenia and Lefille that he was going out and leaving the house to them. After a while, Titania was satisfied with the air on the hill, and turned around as she began talking.

"Thank you very much for the room. To make sure we all had beds even Suimei's bed was especially set aside for us."

"No, I don't mind. For a guy, as long as there is a suitably wide space it's more than enough after all."

"Fufu, is that so? Thank to that I was able to thoroughly enjoy my evening yesterday."

The tone of her voice was very bright without any worries. As Titania gently smiled at him, Suimei returned with a 'Well that's good,' as he shrugged his shoulders. And then, she spoke to Suimei like she was troubled about

something.

“Hey, did Liliana seem stiff to you?”

“Yeah, seeing how everyone gathered together, she was in a state where she didn’t know what she should do. However Lefille has been very concerned about her, so she shouldn’t be all that uncomfortable with it. Besides, Mizuki also talked to her a bunch. If it’s her, I think she’ll open her heart pretty soon.”

“I see...”

For a brief moment, Suimei carefully considered Liliana’s situation. Even though it was temporary, her housemates suddenly increased in number, she seemed awfully surprised by it. Naturally, due to her dark magic, she was not used to people— in short she was extremely shy around strangers. Suimei knew this, but precisely because of that, he was worried about the other night. However, somehow or other it ended as needless anxiety.

Suimei was quite concerned about her, but a large portion of her care was left to Lefille and Felmenia. There was the fact that she was a girl, but one of their other goals was to use Lefille’s spirit powers to expel the evil from Liliana’s body. He wasn’t particularly worried though, the ones who came over were largely the type to take others into consideration.

“I wonder what Reiji-sama and Mizuki are doing now?”

“They said something about having Lefi guide them around the Imperial Capital. It wasn’t really necessary to do so today right away, but she’s a hard worker.”

“Isn’t she?”

Titania let out a laugh. By her gestures which seemed to cover up her voice coming out, Suimei caught a glimpse of her elegance.

“—So, it’s about time to hear about that important thing you had to tell me right? You didn’t bring any escorts and left the two of them out of it after all, you must have quite the reason to do so right?”

“That’s right. It should be fine here.”

In a complete turn from her smiling face, Titania’s face became much more

intense than before. As if she was looking for something she failed to notice, she looked at her surroundings. It did not feel like she was being careful of others in the area. As she turned back towards Suimei, her expression was somehow cold and serious.

“Suimei. I have something I’d like to request... No, that’s not quite right. There is something I’d like you to do from hereon out.”

“That’s sudden.”

“I am aware that it is abrupt.”

“That is to say, there’s something you want from me?”

“That’s right isn’t it... Rather than want, it may be more appropriate to say that I would like to force you to do so.”

Titania corrected herself while maintaining a calm attitude. She was putting on airs quite considerably... Or rather she said such a thing after thinking about it carefully, in short...

“There’s no real need to hold back. Just call it an order.”

“Then—Suimei, return to the Kingdom immediately.”

Suimei did in fact tell her not to hold back, but he wasn’t expecting her to fire off such relentless words.

“... That really is abrupt huh.”

“Certainly, it was abrupt. However, I have a reason why I have no choice but to say so. I believe that it is something easy to understand right?”

“Just in case I’d like to hear it straight from Tia’s mouth.”

“It’s about Duke Hadorious.”

It was just as Suimei expected. Somehow or other he anticipated this.

“At this rate, you will become a shackle to Reiji-sama. That’s why, return to the Kingdom immediately and stay by father’s side quietly. If father makes a few arrangements for you, even if you return you would not be treated poorly. If you speak of the situation and fall under father’s protects, even a Duke would have difficulty laying their hands on you.”

Hadorious was picking a fight. If Reiji paid too much attention to everyone around him, naturally his actions from now on would become hindered. It was obvious from how he returned to Astel's territory the last time.

"Well, that's just as it sounded when you first said it huh."

"If you think about Liliana's case as well, I do not think it is all that unreasonable though?"

Titania presented the validity of her claim quite reasonably, however Suimei shook his head.

"However if it's like that, I'll be troubled."

"Why is that?"

"I mentioned it in passing to Reiji yesterday too, but I'm looking for a means to return to my own world."

Suimei shrugged his shoulders as he once more informed her of his objective.

"With that, you understand right? If I do as Tia says, I'll lose my ability to look for a means to return to my own world."

"That's right isn't it. However that does not need to be done right away right? Eventually, Reiji-sama will defeat the Demon Lord. Once he does, Duke Hadorious would also stop getting involved with him and Suimei would be able to look around to your heart's content for a way to return to your world."

"So, what are you saying? I should just wait until then? To wait until Reiji defeats the Demon Lord and the threat to this world vanishes? Will that be a year? Two years? By any chance it could likely take even five or ten years you know? That will be too late."

"Suimei. I am fully aware of your circumstances. However, this is something that is necessary to resolutely bring peace to this world."

"This world this world. How many times do I have to hear this? Especially lately it's all been about that."

Suimei spat out his complaint along with a sigh. However Titania had a fair amount of consideration for him, and urgently replied at his indiscretion.

“And so, your answer?”

“—I refuse. I’m suffering through this because I was arbitrarily summoned. I have no reason to not just do what I want arbitrarily as well.”

“I said so before as well, but if you act as you want, you’ll become a burden to Reiji-sama did I not?”

“About that Hadorious guy right? I’ll handle it skillfully from my end. If Reiji is uselessly worrying about it, just tell him not to worry about me from your own mouth, Tia.”

“Do you think that kind Reiji-sama would listen to that?”

“I have no intention of taking into consideration that guy’s meddlesome behaviour.”

As Suimei rejected her with a strict attitude, Titania let out a troubled sigh.

“... At this rate we’re just walking on parallel lines huh.”

“Despite that, you’re quite calm.”

“Somehow or other, I thought it would turn out just like this after all.”

“Then, don’t you have another hand ready to play? So, what are those words that’ll make me move?”

If she had predicted Suimei’s answer and arguments, then she should have other things to say prepared already. There was no way she we go this far to talk to him just to have it end like this. Titania made her resolve and pointed her gaze towards Suimei.

“If you will not agreeably obey my orders, I will have you follow them by force.”

“Ha? Oioi...”

Those words were completely unexpected to Suimei. He thought for sure she would say ‘We’ll search for it for you,’ or ‘the troops will look for it,’ however that wasn’t it at all.

“From now on, if Suimei is going to continue searching for a way to return to your world, it would not be quite to Reiji’s extent, but many difficulties would

stand in your way. There will be monsters and demons, and Duke Hadorious. In that case, if you are unable to defeat even me you will be unable to search for a means to return to your world. Is that not reasonable?”

“That’s certainly true but...”

“Therefore, I will fight with Suimei here and you will prove your strength to me. Of course, if you win, I will approve of your actions.”

“So that’s what you mean by force, it’s certainly violent.”

“It’s fine if it is violent. What will you do?”

“I refuse.”

As Suimei flatly refused, Titania let out an unbecoming sneer.

“In that case you will be labelled as a coward you know? Even so will you refuse?”

“By Tia? I don’t really care no matter what you have to say about me... That won’t exactly end our little talk though right?”

“Of course.”

Suimei let out a deep groan as he grimaced at Titania’s declaration.

“... So, what is it? If it is by force, are you deciding it with magic?”

“No, it is this.”

As she said this, Titania brandished a single sword from a bundle that was tied to the horse.

“Ha? With swords? Tia can you use that kind of thing?”

“To a certain amount, I’m knowledgeable about it.”

“You heard from Reiji that I can use kenjutsu right? It should be obvious, but don’t I have the advantage? Wouldn’t that be unfair?”

“I do not mind. Then, what is your reply?”

Titania was piling up her questions like she was cross examining him. Suimei could not grasp her intentions. Before he knew it, her mouth was covered by her overcoat and was no longer visible. Because that hid the subtleties of her

cold and stiff expression, he was unable to read her actions. If she used a sword, Titania should have been at a disadvantage as a mage. However that contrivance disappeared into the mist and he was no longer able to see through her.

Just what should he do? Suimei still did not want to take part in any match, but surely she wouldn't push him that far. If he used magic to give her a hypnotic suggestion, it would be quite simple to get through this situation, but—

—Yes. With this the four of us are all friends.

Suimei recalled the words he heard Titania speak before. She hardly had any close friends and surely did not get many chances to say such a thing. However, the words she spoke at that time were surely ones that came from the bottom of her heart. Thinking back on that, if he used magic to mislead her, it would feel awkward to him. As Titania's gaze was running out of patience, Suimei let out a troubled sigh.

“... I'd like to refuse, but I feel like in that case you'll just take a swing at me.”

“If you understand that, then how about an answer?”

As she said this, the tone of her voice suddenly dropped.

“... I also do not want to mistreat Suimei in such a way. However, there are things that I must do, and the I must take the responsibility to do so.”

She hung her head like she was confessing that she had no other option. She couldn't ignore her mistreatment of Suimei after all.

“I don't really mind. With regards to this case I'm also acting at my own convenience. Then, even if I was summoned at your own convenience, there is no reason for Tia not to act at your own convenience too.”

“You're kind in the strangest places.”

“Strangest was unnecessary.”

“This is as Mizuki calls it, tsundere, right?”

“Oi stop with that, seriously.”

As Titania stared at him briefly in astonishment at Suimei's bitter expression, he swiftly put on a serious expression.

“—Let me ask one last thing. With this you won't trouble me in the future right?”

“Yes. I swear in the name of the Goddess Alshuna. If I lose, I promise I will not say nor do a single thing with regards to Suimei's action from hereon out.”

“Got it. And so, what about my sword?”

As Suimei put out his hand, Titania threw him the sword that she had been carrying. It seemed that she had another prepared for herself. Suimei picked up the sword she threw towards him. It was likely something related to her chance at victory, however Suimei learned kenjutsu since he was a child. Whatever the circumstances may be he was not about to lose. Titania then took another bundle out, and pulled out two long swords from it.

“—Ah?”

“This is my weapon of choice.”

As she said this she drew both swords from their sheathes. They were made of different materials from the one Reiji carried, silver. Seeing such a thing in this place was unexpected, but Suimei thought that it was probably corroded silver. Seeing that she drew both swords out, her style was surely a two sword style. Contrary to the principle of that style, both blades were long. Generally one of them would be dedicated to defence, so that it would be easier to handle, preparing a shorter sword would be common. However both of her blades were the same length. No, using his eyes as a magician, he could tell a slight difference between them, the one on the left appeared slightly longer to him. And then, as Suimei was looking at her with a puzzled gaze, Titania took her stance and then...

“Wha—!?”

Titania hid her mouth with her mantle, and just as she crossed her swords, Suimei's entire body shuddered.

“—As one would expect of one who studied the sword. Once I've taken a stance you're able to grasp my capabilities right?”

Titania saw through the subtleties of Suimei's agitation. Her words of praise rang in Suimei's ears like the voice of the devil. He had just picked up the sword while thinking he was not about to lose, but just how thoughtless had he been? As a ferocious smile overpowered him, he put on a smile to conceal his panic.

"Ha—I want to curse myself for my immaturity for not knowing until you took a stance. What's with this little princess? Weren't you a mage?"

"Certainly I also use magic, but the fundamentals of my fighting style would be this. Ever since I was of a tender age, I wielded a sword."

"Seriously...?"

"With this you understand correct? It is not unfair as you had said before. That is because I am the one who excels more with a sword."

"... My goodness, you sure reeled me in quite skillfully. You're really quite the stubborn spoiled girl."

"I will take that as a compliment."

As she said this, Titania rotated the two swords in her hands like batons. The sound of the wind blowing from them filled the air, and before long she once more crossed the swords before her. And then, at the same time as that she unleashed an intense fighting spirit, with Titania as its centre a wave of power scattered into the surroundings like a spring storm. After the illusion of wind brought on by her fighting spirit, the surroundings were constricted by a silent tension. Finally, across the hill which had been transformed into a desolate place, her name rang through the air.

"One of the Seven Swords, the Twilight, Titania Root Astel. Here I come."

She stood at the ready to confront Suimei who still had goosebumps from her fighting spirit. Finally realizing that he was only a step away from her range, he put on a bluffing smile.

"Heeh, you being such an expert is seriously scary..."

Suimei then took his stance. The fighting spirit pressing against his body was strong and sharp. It was comparable to Lefille when she was fighting the demons. The girl before her had her swords crossed in a stance. Even when he

looked with his eyes as a magician, he couldn't spot anything resembling an opening.

If one were to bring up the famous stances of the two sword style, there would be the one where one holds both swords high above their body and pressures their opponents with a doubled high stance, and the one where both swords are crossed before them ready for both offence and defence. Titania's stance with her arms stretched out in front of her body crossing her swords before her was the latter. There was no doubt that she was planning to lunge from there, her body sank to the floor greatly, a low stance as low as it could go. Just like a leopard. In that case what he should be vigilant about was her speed and charging power.

However, there was those two long sword. Seeing how neither was a short sword it should be hard to handle. Under usual circumstances it would be something to tease one about as an amateur swordsman, but—

No, just like her charging power and speed, this point exceeded Suimei's expectations. Inside his head, he pictured the beginning of the battle with a blue flash followed by a double cross. He imagined that her speed was far beyond his initial estimates. While pondering about this, her sword drew a curve through the air.

“Wai—!?”

Suimei hurriedly stepped back and stuck out his sword to defend. At the same time that the silver light from her slash vanished, Suimei leaped back outside her range. And then once more looking at his own sword, he doubted his own eyes. At a closer look, the blade that he blocked with in a hurry was only half of what it was before. On top of that, the section that was cut off was as if a spoon scooped out some pudding, leaving behind a completely smooth cross section.

“Oi!? Wait a sec, what kind of technique is that!?”

“It is nothing more than this kind of technique. My sword techniques are unlike other swordsmen in that it is a wicked sword style. Normally one would absolutely not be able to cut a blade without a straightforward sword strike, but my sword strikes can cut anything even if they curve in the air.”

Her long swords once more let off an audible wind as Titania declared this

and Suimei's back shuddered once more. Generally, this was something that was physically impossible, however exceptions certainly existed. It was very likely that this girl who was called a princess was also one of the people who stood in that place. Suimei didn't even spend two seconds thinking about these things. However in that small window, Titania had already closed the distance that he created earlier.

"Too fast dammit!"

While letting out a complaint, Suimei leaped to the side. However, because it was an evasive action completely within the realms of common sense, Titania's gaze did not fall off of him for even an instant and immediately took a swing horizontally to deal with it. Suimei used his now shortened sword to ward off the attack, but obviously it put him at a disadvantage. No matter how much he struggled, he was unable to avoid his future situation getting gradually worse and worse.

Suddenly, Titania brandished her right sword slowly. Sensing a strike from an upper stance, Suimei reacted like it was just that without thinking about it. Matching the slow trajectory, the sword fell from above as if to knock him down entirely.

"That move is too naive."

She let out a declaration like the cold touch of a blade. The move she mentioned, Suimei's sudden reaction was a single cheap strike that he could not even stop himself. As Suimei was grumbling about how he was reeled in perfectly, both her swords promptly joined their trajectories together. He wouldn't be able to block it, but suddenly his feet collapsed.

"What—!?"

His legs were swept away. It was too late by the time he noticed. Suimei was unable to maintain his posture and clumsily fell onto his butt. And then, what pierced his eyes was the silver light reflecting off her blade. He was able to react, but his posture was the worst. Right at his neck, was a silver light.

"... You weren't even able to put up a brave fight. Then, with this it is decided. Suimei, I will proclaim your loss here."

As expected, cold words descended down upon him. Her sharpened spirit was telling him to just swallow her conditions as she pressed onto his neck coldly. But—

“... Sorry but I can’t really allow that.”

“The victor has already been decided though?”

As Titania once more declared this, Suimei still did not give his consent.

“Why? Why do you so obstinately obsess about this?”

“I have a promise in that world that I must return to and accomplish no matter what. Besides, I have things over here that I must accomplish as well.”

Suimei spoke as he looked up at Titania. He must return, there was no other option. There was also Liliana and Lefille’s problems. He couldn’t just easily accept his defeat.

“Is that so... Then it is regrettable, but I will have to have you go through a painful experience.”

“A painful experience? And just what do you plan to do?”

“If Suimei is injured the continuation of your search will be impossible. After that it is fine to leave it all to White Flame-dono.”

“You really are violent...”

“I will not apologize. This is the duty that I must bear after all.”

The light from Titania’s eyes had become cold. However, perhaps due to that change she had blinked. Matching up with that brief instant that was not even a second long, Suimei suddenly vanished from her vision.

“Wha—!? Where!?”

Suimei vanished the instant she loosened her spirit. Looking for that figure, Titania turned to her left and right. However he was nowhere to be found, only his voice reverberated in the air.

“You’ve misread the situation little princess. Was it not a little early to declare the outcome?”

“Where are you!?”

“Right here.”

Compared to before, his voice was now filled with determination as it rang through the air refreshingly. At the same time, multiple explosions burst forth from beneath the earth in Titania’s surroundings strong enough to overturn the ground. While maintaining her stance, Titania leaped and landed behind Suimei. He was now wearing a black suit that she was not familiar with. For some reason, his right arm was extended like he just finished snapping his finger.

Looking at Titania’s face which was seized by shock, Suimei quietly took a breath as he resigned himself... The bad after taste of using magic on a friend who was not even a magician lingered in his mouth. It was as if he was holding it deep in his heart so he would never forget. Unless something terrible happened, he had already decided it was something he would never do. However, he had the responsibility to settle the problems of those he took into his care. He could not stop moving in this kind of place. He flipped open the tail of his coat with a thud.

“—So be it. I will also name myself before you, little princess. I am a fellow of the Magic Society, a magician, Yakagi Suimei.”

And with a thunderous roar, the surroundings were swallowed by his powerful mana.



—Now that Titania thought back on it, this young man’s actions were full of mysteries.

Due to an accident with the hero summoning ritual, he was one of the ones summoned other than the hero. Contrary to the hero Reiji’s words, he was the man who refused to accompany them. He said that he himself did not want to take part in any conflict, a completely selfish and wilful statement. He said many times that he did not have to put up with their arbitrary requests. Normally it should not have been strange for the other two to condemn him for this, but unexpectedly Reiji and Mizuki’s trust in him remained faithful, she never once heard them speak ill of him.

This she could still understand. Even if he showed ingratitude once, they were very familiar with Suimei’s disposition, hence they would be able to forgive his

actions. However, Felmenia, who was such a menacing and serious person ended up getting along with him at some point when Titania wasn't looking. Her father Almadius who he once slandered, had given Suimei his trust. He left the safety of the castle and Metel. On his way he was caught in Hadorious' schemes yet managed to escape. In another world, and on top of that in a foreign country, despite the entire land being unfamiliar to him, he set up a base in that place. He was sheltering the young girl who was being pursued by the Imperial Army. All of the things she heard of him and their results were completely mysterious. However with all of these actions, he gained everyone's trust as he met them.

Perhaps this fact was one of the threads guiding Titania, but she could not understand just what was happening in front of her eyes. The green hill and blue sky which extended out all the way to the horizon was now in the middle of a storm of thick mana. And then, in an event that she had never seen until now, an outrageous power manifested itself.

The power interfering with her surrounding was terrifyingly strong. The only expression she could find for it was as if the world itself had changed. The refreshing wind was now howling in the sky after losing its consistency due to the mana and clashing with the other air currents in the sky. Perhaps because they sensed the danger in this place, the birds that were resting on the trees in the distance all flew off at once, the insects and small animals defencelessly showed their figures and ran away without caring.

The one who caused all this, was the young man in front of her eyes, Suimei Yakagi. He was not letting out his fighting spirit like a warrior, but in its stead was a penetratingly cold sensation from the extraordinary mana. The power of the mages she had met up until now, no, even if they somehow all combined their power, it would surely fall short of the power before her. For someone who had just started to learn magic, this was impossible.

"... Yesterday, you said that you had begun to learn magic from White Flame-dono but, was that a lie?"

"Nope, it wasn't a lie you know? I had Menia teach me quite often about the spells of this world after all. It's just that I failed to mention that I was able to use magic from the beginning."

“But I heard that there was no magic in Suimei’s world?”

“That was a conversation within Reiji’s realm of knowledge. Because of the development of science it went underground and just doesn’t reveal itself to the world. It properly exists. Just like this.”

Suimei indifferently confessed exactly what he was hiding. However what he had called himself was not a mage, just what was a magician—

“... Magician?—It-it couldn’t be, the man in black that Rajas was talking about!?”

“Now that you mention, Menia did say that that big guy let that slip in the end.—Yeah, that’s right, I beat down every last one of that lot.”

“E-every last one... That army of ten thousand, by just Suimei?”

“Seems so. I didn’t have the leisure of being able to stop and count at the time, I was also surprised when I heard it afterwards though. Kukuku...”

The man before her eyes began to brag as he let out a strange laugh. It was not the fearless laughter of one who kicked aside a bunch of small fry, it was like he was ridiculing his own thoughtlessness at the time. He was laughing at himself.

“... If you hold that much power, why did you refuse to accompany Reiji-sama?”

“I can say that same thing right back at you right? With that much force I don’t believe you even need a hero though?”

“You did not answer my question.”

As she flatly stated this, Suimei let out a snort like he was not amused in the least.

“I said so before didn’t I? I want to return to my own world. To go out and try and defeat the Demon Lord would be moving in the complete opposite direction from my goal. Isn’t it? Then, there was no choice but to split up and move on my own.”

“Reiji-sama is your best friend isn’t he?”

“That’s right. However, just because we’re friends, there are still things I will and will not do for him. Just as Reiji has his desires, I also have my own ambitions. There are those that I must protect. This time, when Reiji’s desires and my own were placed before me, I just chose to chase after my own.”

“That—”

As Titania was about to speak, Suimei pointed a sharp gaze at her like the tip of a steel blade.

“—‘That kind of reason can’t stand on its own,’ don’t you dare spout something like that. Reiji heard your stupid circumstances and decided to defeat the Demon Lord. I don’t know whether he actually scrutinized the details or not, but that was all something he chose himself. At that time, he didn’t even consider my opinion or even consider how I always was in those situations. In that case, if I took care of him, it would only be meddlesome.”

His words were certainly true. At that time, Reiji never asked Suimei’s opinion even once, he decided to take part in the demon subjugation by his own judgment. If one were to decide which one was dishonourable first, the answer would be Reiji. Reiji who had done so also never demanded that Suimei provide his assistance unreasonably. In that case, the fact that their paths split could certainly be said to be reasonable. Suimei grabbed the lapel under his coat and put his appearance in order. His clean black shoes flattened the grass before him as he stepped forward.

“Let’s start over. If Tia will come at me with her sword skills, then this time I will have you allow me to use my magic.”

Immediately following his declaration, his mana erupted. A violent squall was born, it was as if the air formed an invisible wall that was pushing forward.

—He was coming.

The moment this thought crossed Titania’s mind, she began running before she even noticed. Fighting against the wall which was impeding her movement, she ran diagonally as if to cut through it. She was aiming for Suimei’s flank. She was running at full speed. The moment she decided her aim was to go around and cut in, she held both her swords with a backhand grip and kicked off the grass. As she crossed her swords before her and leaped towards Suimei who

was standing there defencelessly, he stuck out his left hand wrapped in bandages with composure.

“Primum Excipio!!” (Number 1 Rampart, Local Deployment!!)

The moment Suimei chanted his spell, a golden magic circle drew itself in the air before his left hand. The point of both of her blades then collided with the magic circle. However, her swords were obstructed as if they hit a shield and let out sparks like they were rubbing against one. Titania wondered if the circle drawn using the light of mana in that empty space was defensive magic. Even though there should be nothing there, the point of her swords could not advance even a single iota forwards.

“Kuu!!”

Due to her leap at full steam, she was now in a bad position where she was completely stalled on the magic circle. In this state, she would be unable to change her stance, at this rate if he used that power from beneath the earth, she would be unable to defend against it at the time she landed on the ground. It was possible for her to regain her posture, but that right hand that had begun to move did not seem to want to allow that.

“Permutatio Coagulatio vis Lamina!” (Transform, Solidify, Achieve Power!)

He chanted at the same time that Titania landed on the ground. The silver liquid pouring out of the vial in his right hand transformed into a sword. That right hand which anticipated the change as it swung back grasped onto the sword without erring. As the magic circle vanished, a sharp wind assaulted her from the side. She did not think that he was switching to using a sword. And meeting her expectations, Suimei let out a delightful sound from his left fingers, and the ground between Suimei and Titania exploded. This was the technique which blew up the ground earlier. There was not chant at all, a fiendish magic.

“Adcentum transcription. Augoeides maximum trigger!” (Brilliant spell at maximum operations! Continuously deploy bombs from number one to a hundred, Carpet Bombing!)

“—!?”

Suimei’s voice accompanied Titania’s surprised expression, however her next

actions and plans were all thoroughly and utterly blown away. In the empty sky above Suimei, a magic circle had spread out like it was watching over him. Right from the beginning, one after the other, Titania saw circles and the figures inside them drawn by mana appearing.

The blue scenery behind Suimei had been completely painted over by the brilliant magic circles. She could find no other words to describe it. Before that scene which sent shivers down her spine, let alone speaking, she was not even able to exhale. Escaping outside of its range, was not an option. She had no idea just how far its firing range was or how fast the magic coming out of it would be after all. That's why she would not take any major evasive actions. Those magic circles were spread all over. They likely numbered around a hundred. If she escaped to the side, in only a few seconds, she would not be able to cover enough ground.

There was only one thing she could do. That was none other than to sense the moment the light would plunge down using the glimmer in the sky and the presence of mana to predict their path, and then evade on the spot...

In that rain caused by the mana's brilliance, just how much was she being forced to dance? After a while, she then noticed that together with the end of the violent music being played by that magic, the magic itself had also come to a stop.

“—Aah as expected you're quite skilled. Or would it be correct to praise your footwork? To see through all of that and dodge it all perfectly isn't a human technique. Frankly speaking it's to the point where I have no idea why you even summoned someone like Reiji.”

The face of the man as he boasted was cold and hypocritical. He seemed to be praising her for dodging all of that magic, however thinking about the fatal gap she presented before, she couldn't feel happy about it.

—This was bad. The battle instincts that she built up from her experiences up until this point were ringing alarm bells in her head without stopping. Suimei's magic ability, and even the magic he uses was completely incomparable to the magic of this world. Its destructive power didn't even need to be mentioned, but the speed of its use and its versatility were all far beyond what she knew.

Perhaps because Suimei saw the colour of Titania's face while she was thinking of such things, he even let out a meddlesome warning.

"I said this to Menia as well, but the magic of our world and the magic of this world simply have different purposes. You're better off not lumping them together when you think about it, got it?"

The man who named himself as a magician closed a single eye as he said this. After a while, he opened both eyes. What appeared in the reflection of those red hot eyes filled with a strong will, was desire. When they talked yesterday, he said he saved Lefille. There was also talk of him saving Liliana. Felmenia said that she admired his way of life. Then, just what reason compelled this man, who possessed preposterous amounts of mana and who could subdue all creation, so strongly that he must return to his own world no matter what? Just what was awaiting him there?

Titania looked at the man before her eyes once more. He was always cynical, playing the comedian, had a bland appearance, but now his figure was filled with wisdom. If at that time, he wore this atmosphere when he appeared in that place, she would have believed that he was the hero without a shadow of doubt. Right now, Suimei's figure led her to believe such a thing.

"... We, summoned someone who had yet to become a hero, and one who was already a hero..."

Titania was unsure if her flustered muttering voice reached his ears or not. But Suimei Yakagi snorted in dissatisfaction. As if he was saying he never had any intentions of becoming such a thing, that face which seemed completely dissatisfied looked like someone who pierced through their convictions without ever wavering.

"I am who I am. Something you can find anywhere, just a magician."

His words were the signal for the third round of the fight, though to Titania she felt like he sounded completely bored.



After firing off his magic and refraining from continuing the attack, Suimei's fight with Titania was starting over once again. The girl before him fixed her

stance, and once more let out the fighting spirit she showed at the beginning of the fight. Despite seeing Suimei's magic and overpowering pressure, the fighting spirit reflected in her eyes did not weaken at all.

Just as he had surmised before, the materials that made up her swords was very likely corroded silver. It was created by using alchemy to treat silver using decomposition, purification and sublimation. In other words, it was melted and reduced using alkahest, had its molecular arrangement modified, and then transformed into a material with much stronger molecular bonds than before. It seemed that this world also had alchemy, though Suimei was still doubtful whether they were at the level of the other world in terms of technique or whether alkahest existed here. However, from what he could see, the state of the flow of mana and its sturdiness was quite comparable. He could say there was an eighty to ninety percent chance that it was just as good.

However, this was not the point that made her frightening. It was her sword techniques while she wielded those swords that was frightening. Her ability to manipulate two long swords was one thing, but what he admired was her curving swordsmanship. The sword's absurd trajectory drew out a curve in the air. He wasn't sure what kind of technique it was, but it was able to cut the earth and stones like butter, it was truly terrifying.

If it was only its ability to cut it would be one thing. The difficulty in receiving her strikes was what made her sword technique awe-inspiring. When he first tried to take her strike he foolishly thought he would be able to flick it away. However Titania's sword without exception struck on a diagonal path and couldn't be stopped. He was unable to receive or flick it away, his style of leaving the sword to its flow was a complete failure.

The moment Suimei misread what would happen immediately after enduring with his sword was the moment his loss was decided. If he blocked them all using the rampart it would be a different matter, but in his current physical condition that would be quite difficult. Deploying his rampart in all directions would take far too much time, even if he endured using a single rampart in one direction, he would still be open to attacks in the gap between the ground and his circle as well as from the sides. A speed type swordsman was basically the natural enemy of any magician. The instant one stops attacking or defending,

they would unerringly cut them down after all.

However, Suimei also had a reason why he would not lose. His body was still not in perfect condition, but for someone like him who would not spare his own life for a worthy cause, it was just as he wished.

As Titania skillfully rotated the grip of her sword in her hand, as it stopped, she immediately closed the distance and let loose her silver sword. That technique where he couldn't even perceive her exhaling was quite a high level and was always accompanied by the sound of the wind.

Suimei greeted the strike with his attack magic. In the middle of her sword technique, the air in front of her eyes exploded, but it did not hit her. In the small instant right before it exploded, she must have perceived the air warping on her skin. Ignoring the shockwave she leaped and once more let her sword technique fly.

“Sei AAH!”

The point of the left sword came around on him. If he fell back it was far enough for him to evade. Or not, the sword in her left hand was the longer of the two. Thinking to evade by a hair's breadth would be simply foolish. Even if he broke his posture, he would have to throw his body to the ground.

“Tch.”

Clicking his tongue, Suimei evaded the blade aimed right above his eyelids by a hair's breadth and rolled to the ground. After a single rotation, Titania was already greeting him with the next attack. For an instant, he could see a somewhat dissatisfied expression on her face. It was like she was saying that if her sword strike had met its target, the fight would have ended with blood pouring into Suimei's eyes.

However, Suimei sensed her pursuit, the sword in her hand rotated and whirled around. Once more, she slashed at him as she jumped in. That was fine. While evading it, he was trying to judge whether it was an overhand or underhand strike, such was its speed.

“Ku—!”

Striking the ground with all her strength, her body rose. With a speed that

could be mistaken for instant movement, Titania appeared before his eyes. She then spread out the swords that she had crossed. At the same time as that, a flash of silver light drew a wide and straight horizontal line, the air before Suimei's eyes let out a short whistle from the slash. His only way out was to judge her range from the length of her swords and the length of her arms. If she held the same principles of the sword as the sword masters from his world, this was where Suimei would have died.

“Then how about this!?”

Along with a shout to raise her spirits, Titania changed into a gale running along the ground. The figure of her fluttering overcoat vanished from Suimei's sight. By the time he grasped her position and got her back into his field of vision, Titania was headed straight towards him. Before he could finish turning his body, he could see Titania's blade piercing the ground.

Titania was running while cutting the ground with her blade. Leaving behind a trail of dirt and grass, she was running towards him without losing any vigour. By holding her blade in the ground and holding back her sword, she was gathering her strength for a strike. In other words she was using the ground as a stopper for her long sword. The moment the blade separated from the ground, at several times the speed of a normal sword strike, a slashing attack came towards Suimei.

Without any hesitation, Suimei dropped the mercury katana in his hand and built his golden rampart. However, Titania suddenly deviated from her forward attack and was now moving as if to strike him from the side. She was coming from the right. Suimei had given up on determining her precise location, as he negligently pointed his rampart to the right as the incoming slash sent sparks flying. He had blocked the attack, but for some reason he could feel fierce chills running down his back.

Promptly obeying his body and leaping backwards, the point of the sword tore through the air and brushed gently against Suimei's cheek. And then right away, the next stab came flying, and she repeated her actions. The rapid fire of interweaving thrusts from her two swords was a fierce attack with no extenuation. If it was the repeated thrusts of a rapier, there would be feints in the thrusts, but Titania's thrusts were all filled with killing intent.

Without overlooking the destination of the thrusts, Suimei evaded the fierce attack, and then the thrusts stopped. At this distance, it would be best for him to put up the rampart and put some distance between them and begin using magic but—No. Judging that putting up any more defences would be a stupid plan, Suimei advanced. At his sudden advance, Titania’s expression warped in suspicion, but after seeing that he picked up his mercury katana into his hand, her expression changed to surprise. But...

“—You’re making light of me, Suimei.”

As Titania puffed out those words, the joy of victory floated on her face. Faster than Suimei could even prepare his blade, her sword lunged out at him. Her aim was his abdomen, she was surely planning on striking in the gap between his internal organs.

It was a thrust where he no longer had the timing to dodge. It would definitely hit. Comparing their abilities and speed with a sword, her superiority wasn’t even something one had to think about. However, that was something that Suimei was fully aware of, if she wasn’t that good then it would pose a problem for him. Titania’s blade plunged through Suimei’s body and penetrated right through it.

“With this, it is over. Suim—Wha!?”

In the middle of her victory declaration, Suimei’s body suddenly melted away like liquid. Without giving her anytime to recover from her surprise, Suimei wrapped the pitch black coal tar liquid he transformed into around her body and hardened it. With this he stole the freedom of movement from her body. Titania fell over and tumbled on the grass. After enduring the shock of falling to the ground, as she looked up, Suimei was suddenly standing above her.

“That’s my win.”

“—To think you could even transform your own body... You really got me.”

Titania said this in a vexed voice after literally losing the ability to use her hands and legs. From her tone and seeing that she was no longer letting out her fighting spirit, Suimei released the magic around her body.

“So?”

“... I understand. I will graciously accept my defeat.”

“So you don’t care if I act freely now right?”

“With that level of ability, I don’t have any reason to complain.”

With this, the decision was settled. As Titania went to pick her swords back up, she looked at Suimei with a somewhat puzzled expression.

“Suimei, why do you hide your power?”

“In the other world that is something that is completely obvious to do. It’s something like the remnant of that.”

“Is that really how it is...?”

Titania was making a disagreeable face as she wasn’t really convinced. As she did, for some reason, she suddenly changed her expression and suddenly put on a strange attitude.

“And so, I have something that I’d like to request of Suimei though.”

“What?”

“I would like you not to talk about what happened here with Reiji-sama. Even though it is a selfish request from the one who challenged you, could I possibly ask this of you?”

Certainly, she fought him to forcibly make him do what she told him to do. Though Suimei didn’t really want to say this. She was just as she said, being selfish. But Suimei had no reason to refuse.

“That’s right huh. I’m in a somewhat similar situation, so fine. I won’t talk about how we fought.”

However, that wasn’t exactly what Titania meant.

“No, not that. It is about the fact that I use a sword. Um... I said I don’t want to talk about it but... How do I put it...”

“Hm? Reiji and the others don’t know that Tia is strong? Why didn’t you tell them?”

“Th-that’s, um... I have a reason for not wanting them to know.”

“What’s with that. Do you really have such an important reason?”

As Suimei asked her, Titania’s face suddenly flushed red.

“B-because, because! If Reiji-sama considers me to be some tomboy girl, he might come to hate me wouldn’t he!?”

At her sudden scream, Suimei stiffened with a dumbfounded stare. The details didn’t properly get parsed in his head. Even so, as he finally managed to let out his voice—

“Ha...?”

“Ha? Not just ha!? What is with that idiotic face!?”

“Don’t call it idiotic!... Or rather I don’t think he would really care about that kind of thing?”

“That’s just Suimei’s guess right? It is not absolutely the case! That’s why, it’s fine is it not!?”

Titania’s face which was pressing ever closer, was dead serious. Did she really not want Reiji to hate her to that extent? He felt like she was missing the mark, but setting that aside...

“... Well, I don’t mind. I don’t really mean to drag out our previous conversation, but aren’t you also hiding things?”

“Shut your mouth! I just said I have a proper reason not to tell them!!”

Titania was staring daggers into Suimei as she yelled in response. In an instant, her anger turned into a perplexed attitude.

“Aanyways Suimei. I have one thing I’d like to tell you.”

“What is this all of a sudden?”

“That magic that you used to defeat me, it isn’t magic that is okay to use against a girl.”

“... Ha?”

“Ha? Not just ha!? Think about it carefully!”

Titania was quite angry. Suimei had no idea just why she had to get so angry

over it. The magic he just used was an attack which deliberately misled the opponent. After liquefying, he coiled around his target and hardened. It sealed his opponent's movements—

—After liquefying, he coiled around.

Suimei arrived at the answer, and while turning bright red, let out his objection.

“Th-that isn't really anything perverted dammit!”

“Even if Suimei thinks that, the one having it done to them won't! First it's squishy then it suddenly hardens, it is an extremely weird feeling! Pervert!”

“Don't say it in such a weird way you damn tomboy princess!”

As Titania pointed her sword at him with a red face, Suimei quipped back at her magnificently.



Finishing his fight with Titania, by the time that Suimei returned to the Imperial Capital streets, the day was completely over and it was completely dark. Right after getting back, Suimei sealed himself in a room which was decided to be a 'Forbidden Space', and after finishing his work, left the room and headed towards the living room.

When he got there, Reiji was there relaxing on his own. As Suimei was looking for the others, Reiji pointed towards the outside of the house. Suimei opened the door and stepped outside. And then, in the square between the buildings, he stared at the starry sky. After lowering his sight, before long, Suimei found the other reason he stepped outside.

“Hey Mizuki. What are you doing in this kind of place?”

“Un, just enjoying the night wind on my own.”

Mizuki was sitting in one of the chairs left outside watching the moon. Suimei rustled around in his handbag, and took out what he wanted to take care of.

“Here, your shoes.”

“My shoes as in... Why is Suimei-kun holding on to those?”

“Well that’s obviously, to sniff at their scent like this...”

“Suimei-kun that’s perverted...”

As Suimei acted out like her shoes stunk, Mizuki pulled back her upper body.

“It’s a joke, just a joke... I’ve been hearing that a lot today. Anyways, these are brand new you know?”

“Eh? Ah, it’s true. Did you buy them new?”

“Well yeah. Why don’t you try them on?”

Sitting down in the chair beside her, he looked up at the starry sky. As he bluntly recommended the shoes, Mizuki began to put them on.

“Eh? This is, quite...”

After putting them on and verifying how they felt, Mizuki began to cutely jump up and down in place. After a brief moment to check her shoes, she turned a surprised face to Suimei.

“I bought new ones and adjusted them.”

“Hoeh? Suimei-kun’s house was a shoemaker-san’s place?”

“Not at all. I just have skillful hands... Well I used a magic I learned. I think it should be somewhat better and quite comfortable to wear right?”

Suimei made an impish smile. The shoes he just took out were ones he treated in the forbidden space which was his magic laboratory. Having heard the other day that she was depressed from breaking her shoes, he hastily used magic to improve some shoes so that they would be comfortable to wear while also improving the shoes’ durability. Mizuki then threw both her arms in the air in admiration.

“Amazing! Suimei can already handle magic so well!”

“So well you say, can’t you also do all sorts of things?”

“I can’t use that kind of handy magic, I prioritized learning magic that was useful in battles after all... But that’s not the case for Suimei-kun right?”

“Fufufu, so that I could live comfortably, it’s my principle not to hold back my efforts.”

As Suimei joked around, Mizuki sat back down in her chair and made a gentle smile which was truly like her.

“That’s just like you Suimei-kun. Ah, thanks you for these.”

“Ou.”

Suimei replied as he raised his hand lightly. With this her journey should become somewhat more comfortable.

“... Umm, you know what, Suimei-kun.”

Suddenly, Mizuki called out to him with a somehow gloomy expression. She was looking into a corner of the alley where there was nothing there. Suimei grasped that the atmosphere around her changed, however he still listened like he always did.

“What is it?”

“Suimei-kun has already fought with monsters and demons right?”

“Yeah.”

“At that time, were you not scared?”

“I pissed myself.”

As Suimei declared this, Mizuki stood up.

“Liiiiiar! Geez... Suimei-kun is just full of lies. Would someone who had a yakuza-san’s pistol pointed at him and reacted by making a bored face say that kind of thing?”

“What, you still remember that?”

“Of course I do. Cause that, back in that world, that was the most dangerous time in all my memories you know?”

She certainly had a point. In the past, when Mizuki was still suffering from chuunibyou, she picked up a weapon dropped by a man related to a dangerous office and it became quite the disturbance. In the end Suimei went with Reiji to save her at that time. Reiji’s attack filled with his righteous justice and zeal was secretly being supported by Suimei’s magic though.

“Somehow if it is Suimei-kun, even if a monster was right in front of you, I feel

you'd just be completely calm. Somehow, it has been like that since way back? Right?"

"Well..."

Suimei gave a vague reply. However, he could say that she was right on point. At the time he first called out to Mizuki too, she noticed that atmosphere around him, it was part of his immaturity as a magician. Thanks to that, he ended up becoming friends with her though. When he paid attention, he noticed Mizuki's expression had become quite serious.

"But you know, I was scared. That was also the case with the normal demons, but before the stronger demon, I couldn't move anymore."

"Wasn't that guy a Demon General? In that case it can't be helped."

With that Rajas as an enemy, a girl who until recently was just a normal student could not possibly stand and face him. Even Suimei who had a fair amount of experience with fighting faltered when he first met Rajas. However Mizuki shook her head, she couldn't accept it. She couldn't accept the words stating that it couldn't be helped.

"Just a little more, it was only just a little more. If I was able to use magic there, the fighting may have ended right there. In the end Reiji-kun defeated him right after though..."

"That's being a little selfish. Mizuki stood to face a Demon General right? That's more than enough."

"But, after it ended they got angry at me."

"They may have been angry at the time, but I think that deep down they all thought you were amazing."

"... Is, that right?"

"That's right. That's why you have nothing to worry about."

Suimei laughed off Mizuki's worries telling her it was just needless anxiety. She then suddenly gazed at the stars.

"Suimei-kun. Just what is courage?"

“Heeh...? Ah! Owowowowow....”

“Geez! I’m seriously asking you here you know!?”

“Aaaah, what, I completely thought you relapsed or something...”

“There’s no way right!? Geez... This is a fantasy world, it’s a world where you really need courage, that’s why it should be fine to ask isn’t it?”

“... Well that’s fine. Rather, what are you expecting me to say asking me that kind of thing? Why don’t you ask that kind of thing to a real life manga protagonist? Like Reiji, or Reiji.”

“Today I feel like asking Suimei-kun. Hey? Suimei-kun also had to go through dangerous things since coming here right? That’s why I thought Suimei-kun would know that kind of thing.”

“You sure say some difficult things. Or rather I’m mostly acting out of a man’s obstinacy you know?”

“What’s with that?”

“A woman wouldn’t understand.”

“Muu. Why do you only reply with those mean answers?”

As Mizuki was beaten down and swelling up her cheeks, Suimei let out a laugh and then a sigh. He then faced her.

“You, do you want courage?”

“Un. Yeah.”

“That kind of thing, isn’t something you can acquire easily you know?”

“So, how do I acquire it?”

“Dunno, that kind of thing.”

As Suimei coldly asserted this, Mizuki dropped her shoulders and sank into silence. Suimei got a little uncomfortable, and took in a breath, and then began speaking.

“There’s something I’ve heard before. It’ll be something like you’d say, but there’s the saying that a fire burns in your heart, right?”

“That’s the hot blooded type chuunibyou. I’m the cool type evil eyed chuunibyou.”

“What’s with that? There’s categories now?”

“That’s right. It’ll be on the test so you better study.”

Mizuki proudly declared that and then once more returned to the depressed expression she had before. Her change of expressions were hectic as usual. The way she worried too much about things hadn’t changed at all. She must have been thinking of these things all during her journey to the Imperial Capital.

“Mizuki, I don’t really know anything about that thing called courage. But you know, humans have all sorts of emotions. When those emotions become so grand that you would not lose to the ones standing before you, I think that you would surely be able to naturally take a step forward.”

“But, I don’t have that kind of thing.”

“You, you said you’d become Reiji’s strength at the castle didn’t you? At that time that you faced Rajas, wasn’t it because of those emotions that you rushed in? Am I wrong?”

“That’s...”

“It’s fine. You also have courage. I don’t know where that thing that you can’t see with your eyes is so it may be worrying... However, in anybody’s life there is without exception at least one instance where they are forced to do nothing but grind their teeth. When that time comes, you will also surely be able to naturally step forward.”

As he said this, Mizuki made a curious face.

“... Talking from experience?”

“Because I experienced that far too late, father died.”

“Eh?”

“A lie. I said he died from a traffic accident right? Just a joke.”

“That’s, unusually dark for you...”

Suimei slapped Mizuki’s depressed shoulders telling her to just feel relieved.

“Well, don’t worry about it so much. You stood before that kind of monster while holding onto such thoughts after all, being able to step forwards will come soon enough.”

As he said this, Mizuki hung her head down like she was biting on her words. And then, when she once more raised her head, that depressed expression she had was just a little brighter than before.

“Un. Thanks. I think it may be a little easier now.”

Suimei pointed his usual cynical smile towards her.

...While the two of them were talking, it seemed that others were peeping on them from the second floor window. Four people were rustling around. Trying not to be heard by Suimei and Mizuki below, Titania spoke to Reiji.

“Suimei is a lot more reliable than I thought he was.”

“To Mizuki, Suimei was her first good friend after all. He’s a little special. Honestly, I’m a little jealous of the fact that she can rely on him for things like that.”

Reiji let out a lonely smile as he couldn’t be relied on much. As Felmenia looked at him, she made an expression like she figured it out.

“... I see. Is this that thing where you don’t want to show your weakness to the person you love?”

“Eh? Sensei, who’s this person she loves?”

He was deaf. No, rather than his ears being bad it was more correct to say his senses were bad. Titania, Felmenia and Lefille all let out a worried groan.

“No, no, you’re supposed to sense it from the context, Reiji-dono...”

“That’s just Reiji-kun in general...”

Following Felmenia’s exasperated voice, Lefille also let out the same kind of voice in agreement. On the other hand, Reiji still had no idea what was going on, and was only putting on a curious face with his head cocked to the side. As the four of them were peeping on the two below from the window in this manner, the door to the house clapped open. The one who came out, was Liliana.

“Au... Suimei, are you there?”

She was in her pajamas, her reddish violet hair was not done up in her usual twin tails, but was instead let down behind her. She was hugging onto a pillow with sleepy eyes, even her tone was sleepy. Her steps were a little shaky. She must have stepped outside while still half asleep. Seeing this, Suimei spoke up.

“What’s wrong, Liliana?”

“I got lonely.”

“What happened to Lefi and Menia?”

Liliana shook her head.

“The two of them, aren’t there.”

“Aren’t there...?”

As he heard Liliana’s words, Suimei was seized with suspicion. What did she mean by not there? This was the only exit to the house, there’s no way they wouldn’t be inside. And then finally realizing and looking up, he could see shadows moving in the window.

“So that’s how it is...”

He figured out they were peeping in on him from the window. Seeing all their heads dive down as he looked, he let out a sigh and stood up from his chair.

“Then, shall we go back?”

Liliana let out a big yawn, and while still in a daze, gave him a single big nod.

“She’s quite attached to Suimei-kun huh.”

“Hmmmm, it’d be nice if that was the case.”

“If that was the case? It’s just that... Seriously, that part of Suimei-kun is exactly the same as a certain someone else...”

While talking of such things, the three of them returned to the house.



Several days had passed since Suimei’s fight with Titania and his talk with Mizuki. For the sake of gathering information on the tall shadow, Suimei was

going around the city. Perhaps because the lingering heat on them had cooled down, or because they never had any intent on coming into contact since the beginning, the authorities from the Empire never got into contact with them. As such, Suimei and Felmenia were once more moving about outside.

Their current objective was naturally the capture of the mastermind behind the scenes, the tall shadow. For the time being, Suimei had an idea as to who this was, but for the sake of being able to drive them into a corner, he needed to get a hold of more materials.

Both he and Felmenia split up for the purpose of gathering information. Suimei was on his way back to the base when he met up with Reiji, and the two of them were headed back to the house together. As Suimei walked languidly, he looked at the unbalanced look of Reiji in his school uniform with a sword at his waist and spoke to him in admiration.

“To think you already memorized the layout of the Imperial Capital...”

“That so? If you just walk around normally I think it is something you just naturally memorize though?”

Reiji replied like it was completely trivial. He had spent the day strolling around the streets of the Imperial Capital alone to memorize its layout. As Suimei lightly poked him with a fist, Reiji put on a cheerful smile. And then in a complete change, he made a serious expression.

“Come to think of it, Suimei. If I remember right you said you were looking for a way back to our world right?”

“Yeah, I want to return no matter what after all. Ah, of course once I find it I’ll let you guys know.”

“Does it seem fine? Will you find it?”

“Don’t underestimate me eh? Who the hell do you think I am?”

As Suimei reliably struck his own chest, Reiji suddenly burst out in laughter.

“As usual that part of Suimei is weird huh.”

“What is?”

“Even though you said you didn’t want anything to do with danger, aren’t you

just jumping into danger on your own now?”

“I got enough of that sermon last time... If I don't brave those dangers, I won't be able to grasp what I want.”

“Do you want to go back that badly?”

“What, is that weird?”

“No, it's just that I thought you would find it easier here since this world doesn't have any shackles for you like the other world.”

As Reiji stared at the sky, Suimei jokingly retorted.

“It's more relaxing over there you know? There are plenty of delicious things there too.”

“You're working hard because you want to relax?”

“That's just what humans are.”

Suimei declared this in a self deprecating manner. And then as if he had his own worries, he let out a serious sigh.

“Besides, there are tons of things I left behind.”

“That's true...”

Reiji cast down his gaze as he heard those words. As expected, he also had many things he left behind that weighed heavily on his mind. Since Suimei was someone without a single living relative left, it should have been easier for him. For Reiji who still had family in that world, he probably thought about them a countless number of times. Above never seeing them ever again, Reiji was more worried about how they were doing, this was the reason he was currently so dejected.

“Well, once I find the means and get it to work, I'll contact you right away, so look forward to it.”

“Fufufu, thanks.”

While walking back to the house with a lonely atmosphere lingering around them, they came back to the entry to the alley and spotted a familiar face. The one loitering around while peeping at their surroundings had blond hair, blue

eyes and a slender body. As that good looking man turned to Suimei...

“How unusual, today you’re with a man?”

The man who noticed Suimei and let out that sarcastic remark was the hero from the Holy City, Elliot Austin. Seeing as this was the first time Reiji saw him, he asked Suimei for an introduction.

“Suimei, this is?”

“This hunk seems to be the Hero-sama that was summoned by the Holy City El Meide.”

“So that’s...”

Cutting short his surprise at the sudden encounter, Reiji stepped before Elliot.

“I am Reiji Shana. It’s nice to meet you.”

“—Reiji? Could you be the hero summoned by Astel...”

It seemed Elliot had heard the name before, as he spoke like he was questioning him, Reiji abruptly affirmed his thoughts. As he did, Elliot gave him a courteous bow and dressed up his greeting.

“I am Elliot Austin. I have heard rumours about you, it seems you defeated a Demon General correct?”

“No, in truth I didn’t really do that...”

“...?”

Before the bewildered Elliot, Reiji let out a troubled sigh and explained what happened at the time. After a while, Reiji finished giving the general outline of what had happened, and Elliot made a slightly irritated face as he let out a sigh.

“... I see. You got swallowed into politics. You have quite the misfortune huh.”

“That’s why, those rumours floating around are not the truth.”

Reiji’s expression as he explained everything had a hint of depression mixed in. He seemed to be unwilling to have such rumours being kicked around. It all made him quite anxious. He was a very serious character after all, it couldn’t be helped. His normally bright light brown eyes now looked completely dark as they swayed. Elliot also sensed his mental state, and using a considerate tone of

voice with no severity, he gave Reiji some advice.

“I’ll give you a warning while you’re anxious, but it is better if you do not let people like that do as they like. All influential people want to make use a someone who possesses a strong power after all.”

“Are you familiar with such things?”

“Well, to an extent.”

Elliot let out a slight sigh. Judging from that behaviour, in his own world, he may just have experience such hardships.

“That’s amazing. Back in my world I was only a student without any sort of power. I’m always late at being able to cope with these kinds of situations.”

As Reiji said this, Elliot made a surprised face.

“... Is that so? Even so your movements look awfully well balanced to me.”

“Really? I’d be happy if that was the case.”

As he said this, Reiji naturally smiled like he always did. As this happened before Elliot’s eyes, he suddenly winced.

“—!?”

“What’s wrong?”

Without paying any attention to Reiji’s question, Elliot turned his face towards Suimei. And then, making a partition with his hand, he whispered towards him.

“This, it really has a destructive impact doesn’t it?”

“Don’t turn red dammit...”

Looking at Elliot’s expression, Suimei let out a sigh. He was tired of that attitude, but he couldn’t laugh at the fact that Reiji’s smile seriously had an effect on a man. Reiji who was completely oblivious to this while smiling, was also definitely Reiji.

“Austin-San. At any rate, thank you.”

“Fufu, though in my current situation I’m not really one to talk. Also, I don’t mind if you just call me Elliot.”

Elliot shrugged his shoulders like he was showing Reiji a friendly attitude. Seeing the two of them from the side, Suimei took in a breath in admiration.

“... Somehow you two really seem to get along huh.”

“Far more than with you.”

“Shut it.”

As Suimei bluntly replied to Elliot’s cynical gaze, Elliot seemed to have realized something and was now looking at both Suimei and Reiji’s faces.

“Now that I think about it, do you two know each other? I can’t seem to see the connection though.”

“Well, I have a bit of a bond with this guy.”

“A bond huh... Setting that aside, isn’t it bad to call a hero ‘this guy?’”

“... Is it that? Are you saying you want me too speak respectfully to you in a roundabout way?”

“Would you stop that? If you starting talking to me respectfully, I’ll have goosebumps running down my body for the rest of my life”

“Hooou. Then though it may be presumptuous of me.—My my if it is not Elliot-sama, would you kindly hurry along and spend the rest of your life in fright?”

“Uwaaa...”

Elliot dramatically grabbed his shoulders as Suimei talked respectfully to him in a tone filled with sarcasm. Unexpectedly, he was the kind of man who liked to go with the mood.

“... So, I also have something I want to ask, but why are you here?”

“Nothing really, I just came because I heard you were in the area. I came to take a look at just what kind of place you were living in.”

“You sure are a whimsical guy.”

As Suimei said this with an exasperated attitude, he suddenly remembered something.

“Oh yeah, last time you seemed to have played quite the active part huh?”

“Are you being sarcastic?”

“Nope, not particularly.”

As the two started talking about things only known between them, Reiji was being left behind. He then decided to ask Elliot for details.

“Did something happen?”

“I confronted the culprit behind the coma incidents that have been raising a fuss in the Imperial Capital. However, unfortunately, they once more got away.”

“Hm? You didn’t actually fight them?”

“No, there was no quarrel Just like last time that guy just ran away like they were playing around with us.”

Elliot let out a vexed sigh. During his investigations today, Suimei heard that Elliot managed to corner the tall shadow. The citizens of the Imperial Capital were praising him but it seems they were a little off the mark.

“This time her Highness the Imperial Princess was also present though. It didn’t end quite so easily as before.”

“I see. In other words, they’re quite the master huh...”

“...”

Suimei then noticed that Elliot had shifted his attention of to himself. It felt like he was being scanned.

“What’s wrong?”

“... It’s nothing. Do you think you’d be able to defeat them?”

“I don’t know why you’re asking me that kind of thing but... As long as I don’t know that guy’s actual capabilities I can’t really say anything.”

As Suimei wouldn’t put up with that kind of guesswork, he unnaturally acted like he had given up. If both Graziella and Elliot failed at apprehending the tall shadow, he couldn’t be careless about it. While they were in the middle of this conversation, Suimei sensed someone’s presence. As he narrowed his eyes and glared off in that direction, the presence which noticed that they were found

out looked back at him. Accompanied by a thin presence, they drew closer. After confirming the three people before them, they quietly came out of the shadows.

“Hou? To think there would be two heroes gathered together.”

“Colonel Rogue?”

Just as Elliot’s voice implied, the one who drew nearer to them was the man with swept back black hair with a bit of grey mixed into it— the Imperial soldier Rogue Zandyke. As usual, a military uniform using black as a basic tone wrapped around his body and a sword was ostentatiously hanging off his waist. That kind of violent look should have left Suimei with a dangerous impression, but for some reason, what stood out to Suimei was the shadow stretching out behind him.

The reason the impression he gave off felt so small was perhaps because of how large his shadow appeared when cast by the setting sun. It was like he couldn’t tell whether or not it was actually attached to his feet. Rogue stepped forwards with a strange gait. His reddish brown eyes were thin and sharp as he narrowed them to their limit making his severe slender face appear even more severe. Reiji suddenly drew closer to Suimei to talk to him in secret.

(Suimei, isn’t Rogue...)

(Yeah...)

Suimei had also talked about the circumstances around this man to Reiji and the others. As Reiji suddenly focused himself, Rogue faced Elliot and gave him a light bow.

“Elliot-dono. Her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella is calling for you. Hurry up and come to the plaza, she said.”

Did he come all this way just to relay that message? Hearing Graziella’s name, Elliot let out a grand sigh.

“My goodness, that imperial princess really treats her subordinates roughly huh.”

“I can sympathize with that.”

“If you sympathize with it then I’d like you to trade places with me.”

“Shoo shoo! Go away.”

Suimei waved his hand to drive him away but Elliot didn’t really seem to mind at all. As he combed back his blonde hair glistening in the evening sun, he seemed somewhat coquettish to Suimei. Reiji then called out to Elliot before he left.

“Well Elliot, I’ll see you again if fate permits.”

“That’s right. At that time I’ll be in your care, Hero-dono from Astel.”

After Elliot responded in kind to Reiji’s refreshing parting words, he left the area. After seeing him off, Rogue turned only his thin eyes over to Suimei.

“Suimei Yakagi right?”

“It has been a while.”

“Before the search for Liliana began, you seem to have met with her right?”

“... Yes.”

Like Rogue, Suimei was still seeing off Elliot and was not matching his gaze. Rogue then turned and faced Suimei properly.

“I have a fairly obvious question for you, but do you know where Liliana is right now?”

“I don’t have a clue.”

“Is that true?”

“Yes.”

Suimei turned to face Rogue and nodded.

“Is it alright for me to ask something in return?”

“What is it?”

“You seem to be looking for that girl but, if you do find her, what do you plan on doing?”

Rogue returned a gaze filled with a rigorous will. After staring for a while, Rogue replied while maintaining his stiff expression.

“I don’t think there’s any reason for me to tell you that though?”

“As one of the people searching for the culprit behind the coma incidents, I would like to hear your answer.”

“... It should be obvious. I will have her take responsibility for her own actions. That’s it.”

“Even if her reason for doing so was to protect you?”

“Of course.”

Rogue silently turned away. Those words he fired off as he departed were exactly like his temperament, simply stiff. At the time that he cornered that little girl it was surely the same. In that case, Suimei may be unable to topple his will. However even so, Suimei had to say it or he would not be satisfied.

“... It may be none of my business but...”

“Suimei?”

Both Reiji and Rogue turned to face Suimei.

“You’re that girl’s father aren’t you? Then, even if you are not connected by blood, as long as you have decided to be her father, you should act like her father. At the very least, to the very end.”

“...”

“Isn’t that right? If you are her family, then you should be the one who believes in her right?”

Suimei let him know exactly what he held in his heart. However as expected, Rogue’s stiff expression never broke. After having said it, Suimei had cooled down, and his voice was now quieter than before.

“... A parent’s responsibilities... Hearing of such things from someone who is not a parent is certainly impertinent. However, if it is responsibility...”

“—No. I draw the line at calling her my relative. This is my responsibility as her superior officer.”

As Rogue left him those words, he left without ever turning his head back. It was as if his figure was relaying to them his firm determination. Even so, even if

his determination was firm, Suimei wanted to tell him of the things that girl held in her heart. In the end, all he could do was see that figure off. Reiji had an unusually serious expression as he turned away from Rogue's figure and brought his face closer to Suimei.

"... Suimei. From what I've heard, I think that person is awfully suspicious."

"Is this about the culprit? Nope. That person is not the mastermind."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah. Without a doubt. For the time being, I do have a clue as to who the actual culprit is."

While Suimei and Reiji were having this exchange, they heard the sounds of footsteps running towards them from behind. After belatedly noticing it was aimed towards them, they heard a voice call out to them.

"Suimei-dono! Reiji-dono! It's terrible!"

As they turned around, Felmenia was running as she gasped for breath.



Within a single room inside Suimei's base, was a magic circle he installed letting out a mystical light. On top of it, was Lefille, who was down on one knee giving a prayer on her own. That completely immobile figure down on one knee was just like a devout follower earnestly praying to god while waiting for that god's blessing. Or rather, seeing how she was a follower of the Goddess Alshuna's teaching and believed in her existence, it wasn't just like that, it was precisely that. The pure blue beam of light illuminated all the furniture in the gloomy room in a wondrous manner. One would think that no one at all would be permitted to invade that space, such was its beauty. A knock reverberated in the room. As Lefille opened her thin eyes and turned towards the door, she heard Suimei's voice from the other side.

"Lefi. How is it?"

"Aah. It's considerably good. Thanks to the circle you made, I feel like I'm getting back into my stride quite well."

"That's good."

Hearing her cheerful voice, Suimei took in a breath of relief.

“Is something the matter?”

“Yeah, seems like something happened. We’re going to all talk about it together, so I came to get you.”

“... What could it be, I have a bad feeling about it.”

“Me too.”

She heard his agreement and could see an image of Suimei shrugging his shoulders from the other side of the door in her head. Lefille stood up and headed towards the living room with Suimei. As they arrived, Felmenia, Reiji’s group as well as the knight escorts were all already gathered. Everyone crowded around the table and took their seats, then Felmenia cut to the chase.

“I was outside gathering information in the streets just now, but I heard something that concerned me.”

Felmenia had a grim expression on like her blood was curdling as she said this. Suimei cut in to urge her on.

“What’s wrong?”

“I was eavesdropping on the soldiers who were talking in the plaza. But, they were saying that they have ascertained Liliana’s location.”

“Sensei, then.”

“So they found this place out...”

The expected time had finally arrived as Suimei took a breath. He knew it was only a matter of time, but he was hoping it wouldn’t be so soon.

“White Flame-dono. Is that for certain?”

“Yes, your Highness. Using ma... magic, I got the information from deep within the headquarters in the southern plaza. I don’t think there is any mistaking it.”

After replying to Titania’s question, Felmenia continued her report.

“And that isn’t all. I heard a few times that for the purpose of rounding up all those involved with Liliana, they were going to take action this evening.”

“In other words, the Empire— Princess Graziella intends to capture all of us.”

Lefille groaned in ill humour. Certainly if they determined her location, it was only the natural flow that they would want to capture those who were sheltering Liliana. However...

“So the reason that hero was loitering around the area, was for this...”

“Elliot?”

“That’s probably it.”

Suimei gave Reiji a nod. Elliot’s arrival with this kind of timing was simply too unnatural. No matter how he looked at it, where Suimei was living was completely inconsequential to Elliot. It was completely impossible that he came to look out of curiosity. However, if the strategy was going to take place this evening, him coming to have a look made total sense. As for where they managed to get the information on Liliana’s location— Suimei did have a prediction about it.

Next, Lefille turned to face Felmenia.

“Felmenia-jou, will Princess Graziella be coming?”

“Eh? Yes, probably, she would come herself right.”

“Hohou... I see, that’s right...”

Suimei could only see it as appropriate. She just had that kind of temperament, there was no way she wouldn’t come. However, Lefille was quite fixated on this point for quite some time. After becoming small her expression should have been charming, but for an instant, to Suimei she seemed reckless and dangerous.

“Suimei-kun, what do we do?”

Before Suimei could answer Mizuki, Liliana’s trembling voice rang out.

“Like I thought, I should surrender...”

“I won’t let you do that kind of crap. Besides, it’s too late even if Liliana leaves now.”

“But!... At this rate, I’ll cause everyone, trouble.”

“Don’t worry about it. If I stopped to think about everything that troubled me, I couldn’t possibly live in this damn world you know?”

Saying that, Suimei showed Liliana a smile as she hung her head down in gratitude. On the other hand, Lefille turned towards Suimei.

“I agree completely about Liliana, Suimei-kun. So what will we do from here?”

“We’ll go catch the culprit.”

As Suimei replied with his plan, the room became noisy for a single instant.

“In truth I’d like to gather more information before making contact. But that won’t fly anymore.”

“Suimei, you said before that you had a clue as to who the mastermind was right? Do you have any proof that that person is really the culprit?”

“It’s about an eighty or ninety percent chance. I can’t think about anyone but that guy.”

Suimei replied to Reiji’s question with confidence. This time Titania questioned him.

“It’s fine to go and catch them, but if we do that, will everything be put in order cleanly?”

“Absolutely cleanly would be quite difficult. Well, how about we prepare immediately to skip town in the middle of the night?”

As Suimei let out a laugh like he wasn’t thinking about it, Lefille and Felmenia both let out a sigh with a ‘good grief.’ As they did, Titania once more spoke up.

“And so, Suimei, will we all be going to where the culprit is?”

Suimei was slightly taken aback at Titania’s strange question.

“Ha?”

“Why are you making that kind of idiotic face? I’m asking if you have some sort of plan you know?”

“... Could it be, you’ll cooperate with me?”

As Suimei looked at her in surprise, Titania made a face like she was saying

‘why are you even asking that?’ And then, Reiji let out an astonished voice.

“That’s completely an ‘after all this time’ kind of thing Suimei. Isn’t it obvious?”

“Yeah yeah, when we’re in trouble you’re the same right?”

“But in that case things will become quite difficult for you guys from now on...”

“It’s fine. Besides, the one who is always causing trouble is me right? I would say something selfish, and Suimei would follow along. That’s the usual flow right? That’s why, it’s fine to think of it as me returning the favour.”

After Reiji cheerfully said this, his face took a complete change and was filled with determination.

“Besides, I can’t just turn a blind eye to it.”

Reiji’s voice resonated throughout the room. Those words he that he fired off were extremely promising. Suimei then started scratching his head like he resigned himself.

“... Aaah, Reiji’s famous saying just came out.”

“With this, he won’t budge anymore right~ Suimei-kun?”

“Yeah... I know.”

Strung along by Mizuki’s smiling face, Suimei also put on a smile before speaking.

“... Then, that’s right. If you all plan on cooperating, then I’ll take you up on that.”

Everyone present returned a pleasant nod back to Suimei. Liliana then stood up from her chair in a fluster.

“Suimei, if you are going to catch that person, please take me with you.”

“I don’t want to let Liliana fight though.”

“But...”

As Liliana clung to him, Suimei could only remain silent. If their opponent was

the mastermind behind this case, it would without a doubt be the one who manipulated Liliana. Suimei did not really want them to come in contact with each other. However, an earnest light dwelled in the eyes of the girl in front of him. They reflected a strong will telling him that even if she could not bring it to an end herself, she wanted to at least see it through. As he saw her resolve, as one would expect, Suimei had no choice but to give in.

“I won’t let you use magic alright?”

“I know.”

“You might go through something terrible you know?”

“I’ve made my resolve. I do not, wish to run away.”

“It’s really alright?”

“Yes.”

“... Understood. Best regards.”

Saying that, Suimei then moved on to talk about his plans for the evening’s battle.



After finishing their meeting, Suimei called out to Felmenia. She was currently headed to the forbidden space he was using as his laboratory. He called her over without any explanation, and up until now she had a wrinkle between her eyes. Using a special spell to open the door, the one who called her over was deep inside the room arranging some of his research tools.

“Suimei-dono. It is Felmenia Stingray, I’ve come forth.”

“Oh, you’re here. Then just sit wherever you want.”

Without even looking towards her, Suimei gave her instructions by gesturing his hand. Doing just as he said, Felmenia sat down in a chair that was lying around. As she did, Suimei finished organizing his tools and drew closer to her.

“Sorry ’bout that.”

“No, I do not mind. So, just what is the matter Suimei-dono? Calling only myself over?”

“Aah, there’s something I’d like to specially convey to Menia from here on. Also I thought we should talk about tonight’s battle.”

“Just with myself?”

Suimei nodded back at Felmenia’s puzzled question. From the preparations they just made, it was decided that they would split up into one group to defeat the mastermind, one group to confront Graziella, Elliot and the Imperial forces they lead, and one group to stall the chase.

“Just as I said before, I have no choice but to go with Liliana. That’s why I will have Menia take control of another matter.”

“Eh, and so…”

Perhaps because she wasn’t expecting those words, Felmenia was making a slightly different expression from her usual self. Suimei then put his thoughts into words.

“That’s right. Dealing with Graziella is necessary, I was thinking of leaving it to Menia.”

“M-!? Me!? Are you talking about me!?”

“The only one who could face off against that dangerous woman is probably Tia. But we can’t really play that hand. Lefi still can’t fight, in that case it can only be Menia.”

“B-b-b-but!? For me to take on her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella, are my abilities not a little…”

“You can’t do it?”

“It’s obvious! It’s unreasonable! She’s the strongest mage in all the Empire you know!?”

Felmenia was shaking her head with all her might.

“But didn’t they say that Felmenia was the strongest mage in Astel or something?”

“Since the Magic Institute is situated in the Empire, their studies of magic are at the pinnacle of the entire continent!”

Felmenia was unusually faltering with an ‘Awawawawa.’ It seemed she was still not accustomed to challenging someone of higher rank. Suimei pointed a slightly exasperated face with his eyes half closed towards her.

“... Didn’t you stylishly talk her down and run away last time?”

“Ah! That’s what we call a spur of a moment! We’re all sold out so there’s no second time!”

After yelling at Suimei vigorously, she let out an ‘Auu...’ as her anxieties made her depressed.

“Are you still anxious?”

“... Yes.”

“It’ll be fine. Last time it was definitely quite risky, but now you’ve studied all sorts of magic haven’t you? If you move around just as I said and give orders to Reiji and the others— Don’t worry, you should be able to defeat her no problem.”

“I-is that true?”

“Yeah.”

Suimei returned a cheerful nod to her before continuing.

“Let’s put off the talk about tonight’s battle for later. First I’ll have Menia study about an important law of magic theory, mystical entropy.”

“M-mystical en-tro-py... is it...? It seems like quite the amazing name.”

After hearing about new magic theory, Felmenia’s withering figure took a sudden shift as she leaned forward in excitement. It was like the anxiety from her heavy responsibilities was a complete lie. It really showed how much interest she had in the mysteries of magic.

“That’s true, but before we start on that topic, first let’s do a review. Just what is what we call magic in our world? And then what are the necessary actions to use it? Give me the answer. Ah, I don’t mind if you’re brief about it.”

“Yes. Magic in Suimei-dono’s world is so to speak, a phenomenon. Just as lightning will lead to the rise of a storm as long as the climate meets the requirements, in short magic occurs as long as the laws produced by a magician

fulfill its conditions. It is lightning and the storm.”

“That’s right.”

“And then the use of magic. That is to say, what is necessary for a phenomenon produced by a magician to manifest itself, is construction of the spell, the necessary commitment of mana, gestures, drawing of a magic circle, chanting the spell, using magic items, and finally the invocation of another plane. With those varied actions, depending on the magic being used, several of them are combined, and then magic will be invoked.”

Felmenia answered confidentially right until the end as Suimei let her know she was correct with a nod. To create lightning using magic, say the invocation of the magic would require chanting the spell and a magic circle. In this case the magic circle would be the thunder cloud, and the chant would be the trigger for electrical discharge. It was something that reacted to actions. Within that, the manipulation and alteration of matter also takes place. Just as Suimei’s nod indicated, Felmenia’s answer was correct, however...

“There is something else that is necessary other than that, what is it?”

“Yes. For a single magic using those actions, it is necessary to follow the determined processes and dedicate the determined amount of time.”

“Exactly... Un, in terms of the use of magic, there are no problems.”

As Suimei gave a nod like he was satisfied, he started moving around for a little while like he was pondering something.

“Next is... Something for reference. The act of using magic, in general, is by definition something far detached from common sense.”

“Eh? The use of magic is, something that is detached from common sense?”

“That’s right. Well, the people of this world wouldn’t really agree, but please think of it in that way.”

“Haa...”

Hearing Suimei’s reference, Felmenia replied while still knitting her brows. In Suimei’s world, it was something completely ordinary, but it was completely understandable that she was not completely convinced.

Because the amount of knowledge the people of this world accumulated was still quite shallow, they had yet to properly distinguish between physical laws and magic laws. That's why a law which was common sense like 'an apple released from one's hand will fall to the floor,' and saying that 'if one performs a chant magic will occur,' to their world, the two were both explained in the same way as common sense. But for what he was about to say, being able to perfectly understand the distinction was something that was absolutely necessary.

"—Now then, it's about time we move on to the main topic on mystical entropy. From now on I'll just abbreviate it to entropy, it is something that, in a determined place, mixes together 'the components which establish mystical laws' and 'the components which establish physical laws,' and renders them into a jumbled state. Well, that's the standard definition with regards to magic theory."

"H-haa."

It didn't seem that Felmenia quite understood, But regardless, Suimei continued his explanation.

"First let's touch upon the 'the components which establish physical laws.' Since you do not know of science, an easy way to put it for Menia to understand would be the cause of any phenomenon other than 'phenomenon caused by magic,' it is something that cannot be seen with your eyes."

"Something that cannot be seen, is it?"

"That's right. It may be best to imagine what this world generally calls the elements. Next is the 'the components which establish mystical laws,' this one is just as it sounds. In complete opposition to what I just explained to you, they are what cause mystical phenomenon brought about by magic, it is also something you cannot see with your eyes."

"Aah! Like the elements! In short they help in causing things to happen for anything other than magic right?"

"That's not quite right... Well you aren't that far off the track either..."

Felmenia tilted her head at Suimei's troubled way of speaking. However

Suimei kept going as he was.

“Think about the entire world, with the exclusion of exceptional locations, as being largely filled with ‘the components which establish physical laws.’ Because of that, mystical phenomenon does not occur so easily, in its stead... Using a rather extreme example, things like objects falling to the ground, or how rubbing two objects together will produce heat end up occurring quite easily.”

“If the world is largely composed of those components, then just where are those ‘the components which establish mystical laws’?”

“In certain regions, in short in places where phenomenon occur that cannot be clarified by physical laws called ‘mystical locations’ exist. They can also be called places where magicians caused mystical actions. In other words, if one were to use magic, a space filled with ‘the components which establish physical laws’ will give birth to ‘the components which establish mystical laws’.”

“I see.”

“And so with the use of magic, the amount of ‘the components which establish mystical laws’ in the space increases, and naturally in a single space, two different types of components will exist. And so, this thing called ‘the components which establish mystical laws’ really hates the other thing called ‘the components which establish physical laws,’ and right as its given birth it immediately starts fighting with the other type of component.”

“A fight between components... is it?”

“If it is difficult to picture, try imagining those two invisible components as tiny people caught in a melee. This is what I meant earlier by a jumbled state.”

“Tiny people... I can somewhat picture it thinking of it like that... but when those tiny people fight, what happens?”

“When the two tiny people known as components begin to fight, to put it roughly, all phenomenon except for magic cease to occur properly.”

“Are you saying that the phenomenon where objects fall the ground will have difficulty occurring?”

“Rather than have difficulty occurring, it would be more correct to say that

other effects become easier to produce. In general that would manifest in the form of failure of the original phenomenon.”

“So, does that mean the object would cease to fall, and it would be possible to have it fly off in another direction?”

“Speaking very roughly, yes. In practice, as long as it isn’t something big, the effect of simple physical laws would not appear, but more advanced physical laws would freely affect it though...”

Suimei hesitated to say it. To Felmenia who did not understand science, the explanation of advanced physical laws would take quite some time and it didn’t have much relevance to what they were talking about.

“Somehow or other I understand. To summarize, just from using magic, it causes a disturbance which makes it easier to produce the desired result right?”

“Yes. Also the larger the fight, the larger the entropy becomes. Well, it’s an indicator for the scale of the fight.”

Suimei nodded at Felmenia’s reply. However, for some reason she wrinkled her brow immediately and tilted her head far to the side.

“But if it is like that, would it not remain in a disturbed state all the time? Do the tiny people stop fighting?”

“No, it isn’t like that. Because mystical entropy is irreversible, the tiny people will fight forever without making up. However, because there are so many of ‘the components which establish physical laws’ in the surroundings of the tiny people—Though there is a time delay, reinforcements will pour in. The ratio of ‘the components which establish physical laws’ will become large and the physical laws will stabilize.”

Suimei took a short breather here, and then continued his explanation.

“When one uses magic, both components will mix together and the entropy in that place will increase. The amount it increases is in proportion to the scale of the result brought on by the magic. When the result brought on by the magic is great, then amount of ‘the components which establish mystical laws’ given birth to will be quite large after all.”

“So magic which causes a great result desires more components.”

“Okay. Whether the result brought on by magic is great or small is decided by just how hard it is to make the same result occur without using magic. Creating fire is not particularly difficult, but breaking a large rock into very small pieces cannot be done so easily. It is that kind of difference.”

“Certainly, for more difficult magic there are more processes to follow.”

“That’s right. And with that, entropy will increase. And so, the magic I use compiled from modern magic theory is the type which increases entropy greatly.”

“Modern magic theory does? Why? Suimei-dono said before that compiling modern magic theory has less processes when compared to magic from other system did you not?”

“Magic compiled by modern magic theory, instead of looking to produce the same result as other magic, it looks to speed up the use, reduce the processes and increase the power. The time taken from invocation to activation is shorter than other magic. Shortening the required amount of time makes it more difficult right? Producing the same result in a shorter period of time means that the desired result is larger.”

“Ah, I see.”

As Felmenia was now convinced, Suimei spoke as if summarizing everything he said.

“Well, I explained it in fine detail, but this is just as I said before, it is fine to just remember that when you use magic, entropy will increase. And so, the main topic of today’s lesson starts from here—”

Chapter 4: Devil

Late at night in the Imperial Capital, Suimei, Felmenia and Liliana were walking outside. Felmenia, who was sticking close to Suimei, was observing their surroundings and raised her concern of the unnaturalness of the area in a cautious voice.

“It’s quiet, isn’t it?”

“They probably anticipated that a battle would occur and evacuated the area beforehand.”

Looking at the state of the streets, Suimei let her know of his speculation. Just as Felmenia had said, the streets had sunken completely into silence. Not a single soul was in sight. Since needlessly walking around late at night was currently prohibited, it seemed obvious, but he could also not sense the presence of a single person in the houses around them. The sound of the cold and crisp evening wind, and of their own voices and footsteps seemed far louder than usual. Suddenly, Liliana pulled on Suimei’s hand.

“Suimei. That.”

“How quick. They’re already showing themselves huh...”

Many shadows were coming from the direction Liliana pointed towards. From the direction that lead straight towards the southern plaza, along with the sound of running footsteps, the figures of many soldiers appeared.

“... Suimei-dono. Will it really be alright with just you and Liliana?”

“No problem. The losses to my astral body have recovered a satisfactory amount after all. All that’s left is to catch the target.”

As the two were talking, the soldiers left some distance between them and came to a stop. From what he could see, the soldiers came in quite the numbers and were all heavily armed. In their rear ranks, a unit of mages was also standing at the ready. Before long, the soldiers opened their formation, and Graziella, Elliot and Christa emerged before them.

“I see everyone came together.”

As Suimei greeted them frivolously, Graziella answered him.

“It’s been a long time, hasn’t it? Suimei Yakagi. How is your health since then?”

“Thanks to you, my recovery was delayed, it was quite troublesome. Rather, you really brought quite the number of people with you today huh?”

“The opponent is who it is after all. I only made suitable preparations.”

“That is quite the grand assessment.”

“Quit it.”

Graziella spat out her words like she was disappointed after seeing Suimei’s false humility. Next it was Elliot who began speaking.

“... To think that you were the one sheltering that girl.”

“Is it surprising?”

“Of course. No matter how you put it, there’s no way I would think that the person who was competing with me to find the culprit would shelter one of the suspects right?”

“Well, that’s certainly true.”

As Suimei flauntingly shrugged his shoulders, Elliot sharpened the gaze of his blue eyes towards him.

“Why, are you sheltering the culprit?”

“It would take a long time to talk about it. However, I don’t have the time to slowly explain it to you.”

“What do you mean?”

“It means from here, I’m going to go catch the mastermind behind the coma incidents.”

Without hiding a thing, Suimei easily relayed his goal to them. He could hear a snort. It seemed Graziella’s displeasure leaked out. She immediately fired out her denunciation of such actions.

“How shameless. You too are complicit are you not?”

“Even if I said I wasn’t, you aren’t going to listen at all right?”

“If you already know that much, it should be obvious.”

As Graziella declared this, her black lined gauntlet made a clang as she stood at the ready. She was implying that it was about time they start. Her body was overflowing with fighting spirit.

“Tonight I will have you thoroughly show me your damn power. Last time you only gave me a glimpse after all.”

“It is regrettable, but that won’t happen.”

“What?”

Seeing that Suimei had no intent of complying, Graziella made a puzzled expression and glared at him. As that happened, the figure of a person appeared at its own discretion from the alleyway on the side. And that person—

“—Aah. Well well it has been a long time. Your Imperial Highness Graziella.”

The one who came out of the alleyway was Astel’s hero, Shana Reiji. Elliot showed a shocked expression at the arrival of an unexpected figure.

“You are...”

“... Fuu, the hero Reiji huh? I heard that you came to the Imperial Capital, but why are you walking around in the streets this late at night?”

“Lately during the day there are just people absolutely everywhere, it was quite cramped so I thought I would cool myself down in the quiet city streets at night. Besides, I’m not the only one here you know?”

As Reiji said this, Mizuki, Titania and their knight escorts came out from behind him.

“—Your Highness Titania, what is the meaning of this?”

“Even if you ask me what the meaning of this is, I simply followed along after being told that Reiji-sama wanted to go and cool off.”

Titania was feigning ignorance in sync with Reiji. Graziella sharpened her gaze

like a blade as she looked at her. Seeing this far too convenient development, Graziella could sense it was all an act and questioned them in an oppressive tone.

“What are you intending to do here?”

“What intentions? We are simply passing by. Leaving that aside, just what are you all doing out here in the middle of the night?”

“We’ve come to capture that man, White Flame-dono and that little girl.”

“How dangerous. What did they do?”

“Surely you’ve heard of the damn incidents happening in the Imperial Capital? That little girl is suspected of being the criminal behind those incidents, and that man is sheltering her.”

Reiji then let out a deliberately loud voice.

“Is that so? I didn’t hear anything about that. How about it, Suimei?”

“Who knows? I also have no idea with regards to that. We don’t have a single clue as to who the criminal behind the incidents is after all.—Aah! Could it be that? You lot couldn’t produce any results, and to deceive everyone, you’re making us out to be the criminals right?”

“Aah, that’s not good. Aah, I truly think that is not good at all.”

Matching Suimei and playing dumb in an obvious tone, Reiji sympathized with him. Looking at that well coordinated duet between the two of them, Graziella discerned that they were both good friends and that they arranged this all beforehand. She pointed an extremely annoyed gaze towards them.

“You bastards...”

On the other hand, Elliot seemed to find something quite funny and was holding back his laughter. It seemed he found it entertaining to see Graziella get teased. Incidentally from behind them, after seeing this exchange, Mizuki and Titania were looking at Suimei and Reiji in exasperation with their eyes half closed.

“... How do I say it, right? I really think this only looks like two best friends acting perfectly in sync.”

“Yes, the two of you are completely shameless...”

It wasn't just the two of them who were exasperated. Felmenia and the knights also all turned suspicious looks towards them. After their little act came to an end, Reiji made a declaration with his handsome and gallant face.

“I'll say it loud and clear. Your Imperial Highness Graziella. As a hero, I cannot overlook such tyranny.”

“What do you mean by cannot overlook? You couldn't possibly be thinking of fighting us?”

“Of course. That is exactly what I was thinking of.”

Hearing Reiji's declaration, Graziella looked at him like she was asking just what his intentions were. However even so, her composed expression remained unfazed. Her gaze was implying that she had no intention of getting along. Reiji drew his orihalcum sword from its sheathe. The lustre going along the point of the sword flashed like the afterglow of burning metal. A metal clang that was almost like a buzzing in one's ears rang through the air.

“—My deepest apologies, but until they capture the mastermind, it will be impossible to pass through here. If you insist on passing through no matter what...”

“Fuu, then force our way through huh. Then, will you be the one keeping me company, bastard?”

“No, your Imperial Highness Graziella's opponent will be me.”

Felmenia stepped forwards and replied to the question directed towards Reiji.

“White Flame-dono will? Fuu, that in itself also seems interesting. The other day you made me eat quite my fill after all.”

Graziella put on a fearless smile towards Felmenia's challenge. Without letting others notice, Felmenia faltered slightly.

“Uu...”

(It's alright... Menia will be able to do it well.)

“Y-Yes!”

Encouraged by Suimei's words, Felmenia regained her confidence. A fire lit in her amber eyes as she thrust her chest out in pride. Titania, Mizuki and the knight then dispersed. Falling behind them, Suimei and Liliana headed towards their destination by cutting through the back alley.



After separating from Felmenia and the others by running down the back alley, Suimei and Liliana were now running down another street using magic to sprint far beyond the capabilities of any ordinary human and were headed towards their target.

“Suimei. Is it really that person?”

“Yeah, there's probably no mistaking it.”

There was no mistaking it. Suimei had confidence in his answer. Or rather it would be more correct to say that he could think of no other possibility. From everything that had happened so far, based on the circumstances that were far too convenient, and put together with the information gathered by Felmenia, his answer was—

—Located in the Imperial University's library where they were headed...

While running through the stillness of the night, before long, a structure taller than all the buildings in the area came into sight.

“It's, weird.”

“It's a type of spell that clears away unwanted people by making them drowsy. It's set up so that the people who wander into this area will get sleepy and go back the way they came.”

“...It is like a shallowly spread darkness of stupor, right?”

While listening to Liliana's conjecture, Suimei reached the entrance and opened the doors to the library. Greeted by the darkness within that felt like it would suck him in, Suimei threw himself in by his own will and could slightly feel that the end was in sight.

The only light that he could rely on to clear up his view was the moonlight shining down through the skylight. Inside the building, everything was far too

quiet, it made him think of the most silent point in time right before the appearance of a haunted spirit walking around at night.

As he gently stroked Liliana's head who cuddled up to him from anxiety and caution, Suimei took a look around the area. The staff members were not present. This was only natural at this time in the evening—No, there was a single person.

Sensing someone's arrival, a light turned on deep within the darkness of the library. With fair skin and long ears, the figure of a man wearing glasses appeared.

“Are you looking to use our facilities? The library is already closed you know?”

What appeared was a male elf, one of the librarians working in this Imperial University's library, Romeon. Realizing it was Suimei, he made a surprised-like face.

“Oh? Yakagi-kun and... If it isn't Lord Zandyke's daughter. Coming to the library at this kind of time, just what is the matter?”

Suimei made no attempts of concealing anything as he stated his intentions before Romeon who was questioning the reason why they arrived outside of opening hours.

“I just thought I'd go and arrest the culprit behind the coma incidents.”

“...? The culprit behind the coma incidents... is it? However, if that is the case, that girl who you brought along beside you is rumoured to be the criminal herself you know?”

“Publicly at least. However, the truth is that there is a mastermind who used magic on Liliana and manipulated her.”

“My goodness... But this is the library you know?”

Romeon said this as he pretended to look around the area. To the man who was implying there was no way that kind of person was here, Suimei nonetheless began talking without losing any confidence.

“Yeah, they're right here. That mastermind.”

“... Right here as in, just where is there that kind of person?”

“There’s nobody else here aside from us and yourself, there’s only one answer right?”

Hearing those words, Romeon let out an astonished-like expression for an instant and then burst into laughter like he heard a bad joke.

“You couldn’t possibly be saying that the criminal is me right?”

“Unfortunately, that’s exactly what I’m saying.”

“No way, Yakagi-kun. What are you saying? There’s no way I would do something so outrageous is there?”

“When the culprit says that kind of thing there’s no persuasive power you know?”

A troubled-like smile floated on Romeon’s face as he heard Suimei’s provocative words as he tightened his loosened mouth with astonishment. Romeon pushed his glasses back up and adjusted their position. His disposition was as calm as ever, but the friendly atmosphere that enveloped him up until now had vanished.

“Fumu... You have quite the confidence in your words. What basis do you have to believe that I am the criminal?”

“Basis? I have plenty.”

“If you do, may I ask what they are?”

Suimei began speaking of the details that he arrived at.

“What first tipped me off, was that time I came here with Menia.”

“—It couldn’t be from the time I talked with you about dark magic? Treating me like a criminal just from that is what we call imprudence.”

Before Suimei could finish explaining, Romeon took a guess as to what Suimei wanted to say and covered it up with his own words as he let out a tedious sigh.

“Is it not a reckless to decide that I am the criminal just because I know about dark magic? There are people all over the world who know of the existence of dark magic you know?”

“Nope. As one would expect, I won’t treat you like a criminal just because you

know such a thing. It is certainly as you say, in this world, there are people who know of dark magic no matter where you go.”

“Then...”

“However, at that time, you talked about something else with us right?”

“Something else?”

Romeon made a puzzled face like he had new idea what Suimei was talking about.

“Those words used to strengthen dark magic.”

“... Now that I think about, I remember saying something like that. The words the criminal appended to the end of their spell were savage names, right? But, what of it? It couldn't be, just because I know of savage names, you think I'm suspicious?”

“That's right. After asking Liliana, it seems that the mastermind was the one who taught her those words.”

“Therefore, since I know of savage names then I am the criminal? Is that not the same thing as what we were just talking about with regards to dark magic itself?”

Romeon let out a grand sigh as he said this.

“Yakagi-kun, will you stop already? If you do, I will forget everything you've been saying here.”

Romeon's voice returned to its usual amicable tone. He once more put on a troubled smile. That figure proposing to ignore everything as nonsense certainly did appear to be harmless.

“Hey, librarian-san. There's just a teensy thing that I'd like to confirm. How did you explain it to us at that time? Just that okay? Could you not tell me one more time?”

Astonished at Suimei's question, Romeon let out his breath in an irritated fashion and answered ambiguously.

“... Savage names are words used in this world since ancient times to

strengthen dark magic. They have been long lost, but they amplify the power of darkness. Thus one who is struck by the strengthened dark magic would suffer serious harm. What—”

“It’s that. That is where it is strange.”

“...”

As Suimei suddenly identified what was bothering him, Romeon became quiet. However he quickly pointed Suimei a sharp gaze and began questioning the source of his doubt.

“I don’t understand what Yakagi-kun is trying to say. Why do you declare that what I said is strange? I couldn’t be because of my phrasing where I said it was long lost— ”

“I’ll say it before I go any further, but I’m not a person from this world. I was a bonus that came with the hero who was summoned in Astel.”

Hearing Suimei’s declaration, Romeon let just a little surprise show on his face. However he quickly changed to an expression like he already had a clue.

“... Now that you mention it, at the time that the hero was summoned in Astel, there were rumours of an accident. However, I believe that fact has no connection to what we are talking about?”

“That’s not quite true. It has a surprising connection to what we’re talking about.”

“Connection...”

“That’s right. In the first place, those words are one of the mysterious figures of speech from our world.”

Hearing Suimei’s explanation, Romeon’s composure vanished and his expression turned grim.

“I don’t know what you are basing that conclusion on, but that is not necessarily something that only exists in your world is it? Just as different worlds have the same technologies, those savage names could be born in different worlds.”

“That’s true. It’s just as you say. It isn’t an unlikely story that the same

concept was born in this world. However, unfortunately that does not seem to be the case.”

“Why can you say such a thing? You couldn’t possibly be saying that you found the origin of savage names in this world?”

“Nope, I know without having to do something like that.”

Romeon’s irritation was piling up just as Suimei’s observations were piling up. He was starting to get restless. While dusting a nearby chair with his finger, he fired off a sharp voice.

“Why is that?”

Suimei let out a laugh like he knew Romeon already knew the answer despite asking. And then...

“—I mean for a while now, you’ve been saying *nomina barbara* (savage names), *nomina barbara* repeatedly using the language from our world.”

“—”

Hearing those words, Romeon’s expression grew even more grim. He began to open his mouth like he had an objection, but Suimei ignored him and continued cutting forward with his words.

“Normally, the people who are summoned from another world by the magic circle used for hero summoning hear the language of this world in their own native language. However, it isn’t like you people who live in this world are speaking ‘using our words.’ The movements of your mouth still conform to the words of this world. However, if it was just as you said and the concept of savage names was born in this world, the words I hear should have been Japanese and the movement of your mouth should have been something I had never seen before. It would be a word born in this world after all. But at the time, I remember that the movement of your mouth was quite odd. That being the case, there is only one answer.”

“Ah— That’s why at that time, you asked me if I heard *nomina barbara*, right?”

Liliana raised her voice as she came to an understanding. That’s why when he

questioned Liliana about the mastermind, he had asked her that question. All this time he had been referring to it as savage names in Japanese, but he wanted to confirm if it also got through to her when he said it in Latin.

“That’s right, that word does not exist in this world. Because it is a word from my world, the movements of the mouth when saying them are familiar to me. In that case, for someone like you who is a resident of this world to know of it would be quite strange wouldn’t it?”

Having this pointed out to him, Romeon replied by pointing out that there were holes in Suimei’s logic.

“However, with just that you can’t narrow down the criminal to just myself right? Since ancient times, heroes were summoned many times to this world. It isn’t far fetched to think that a hero came from your world long ago and passed on the knowledge of savage names leading to it spreading around the world right?”

Suimei listlessly scratched the back of his head as he heard this.

“Yeah. About that, I have something I’d like to ask you. Exactly how long ago was the last time a hero was summoned to this world?”

“...”

“I don’t know whether or not you actually know, but if you don’t want to say it, I’ll tell you myself. From Menia and my investigations, the last time a hero was summoned seemed to be over one hundred years ago. Of course, anything related to hero summoning is strictly controlled by the Salvation Church and Mage’s Guild, there is no such thing as a summoning outside the record books.”

As Romeon remained silent without saying anything, Suimei fired off his words that would bring this to an end.

“The first time the concept of savage names came to be in our society was during an age called the Crowley era. That was approximately one hundred years ago. However the first time it took a shape that could actually be used was when Kenneth Grant fully established the concept fifty years or so ago. See? That being the case, the words you’ve been saying become complete lies.”

Suimei then shrugged his should like a completely new mystery just emerged.

“Well, in that case there’s the question as to why savage names are even in this world but... Well whatever. The important thing right now, is that the guy aside from myself and Liliana who knows of a concept that should not exist in this world is present in the Imperial Capital.”

“ ... ”

Romeon cast his eyes downward. Just what emotions was he hiding behind those glasses? Suimei had no idea what he was thinking about without being able to see his face. However, deciding it was too soon to back off, Suimei continued chasing Romeon into a corner.

“It’s about time you stop playing dumb librarian-san. From what I’ve heard, you came to the Imperial Capital just as the coma incidents began didn’t you? Isn’t that a bit of an excessive coincidence?”

Romeon still did not comply with Suimei’s questions.

“Do you have any proof?”

“Not at all. Before I could obtain the decisive blow, I was forced to make my move after all.”

Suimei confessed that he was one move away from perfection. However, even without such a thing, he was not at a disadvantage. After all...

“Well, I’m not a detective. I don’t have any proof that strongly points to Romeon. All I have is just speculation. Even you say there are holes in my logic, then all of this becomes meaningless. However, even though I’m not a detective, I’m a magician. In our world, there are techniques to forcefully extract another person’s memories you know? So.”

In an instant, Suimei donned his black suit which was his battle uniform. Thrusting forward the point that he was not an ordinary person, his crimson eyes lit like a blaze.

“—No matter what you say, it’s faster to resort to that method.”

With so many coincidences piled atop each other, even without definitive proof, there was no mistake that this elf man was the criminal. In that case, seeing that he was also the one who played around with Liliana’s memories,

there was no need to hold back.

After a while, Suimei could hear clapping. With his gaze still cast downward, just like he was praising Suimei for finding the criminal, he was generously clapping his hands. Having grasped the meaning of that action, Liliana showed Romeon a bewildered expression.

“Librarian... san. You’re.”

“—My goodness, to think that Yakagi-kun was someone summoned from another world, it was completely outside my expectations.”

“That time you told us about savage names in this library, and that time you came to warn us in the alley, you did that for the sake of keeping us away from the incident right?”

“Yes, that’s right. You’re the person who endured Liliana’s strengthened dark magic and despite still bearing those severe wounds, you fought her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella on even grounds. If possible I did not want to take care of it myself. Well, I never expected it to backfire on me in such a way.”

“Then the one, who gave my location to those guild mages, and also leaked it to the army.”

“Yes. It is just as you guessed. It was me.”

Liliana directed her eyes mixed with fear towards Romeon as she questioned him further.

“... Why, did you, use me?”

“No particular reason, it was just that I also found those nobles that you wanted to do something about to be hindrances. Moreover, above all else, you hold the power of darkness.”

At the same time as Romeon spoke, the power of darkness, the pent up resentment pulled out of the outside world, swelled up rapidly. It seemed this man was also able to use dark magic. Before long, the poorly lit area behind him was dyed black. The power hovering in the background began to stiffen and take form.

“Even though things may appear this way, I have researched the power of

darkness for quite some time. Just recently I was curious what would happen to a being who the the rich power of darkness sympathized with and was just in the middle of investigating it.”

Sensing what Romeon was hinting at, Suimei clicked his tongue with an unpleasant face.

“—And because of that, savage names came up huh?”

“Exactly. Using savage names, the power of darkness is amplified. There is far more influence from the power of darkness than regular dark magic. Especially for Liliana whom the darkness sympathized strongly with already, it could be said that she was the ideal body to accomplish both my tests and my goal behind the incidents.”

“No, way...”

Hearing Romeon’s inhuman confession, Liliana received more of a shock than she imagined she would. Her shaking hands were firmly clinging on to Suimei. Suimei looked at Romeon with scorn.

“My goodness, I already thought you were quite the low-life, but to think it was to this extent...”

“For a mage, the pursuit of knowledge is a simple matter of course. You are also a mage are you not? You should be able to understand my feelings.”

“Fuu— Don’t put me together with scum like you. I would never go so far as pursuing the truth by straying off the path.”

“There’s no need to hide it. You must have also wanted to know what kind of monster someone who the power of darkness sympathized with would become, did you not? You wanted to know right? Just from thinking about it, don’t you just tremble in excitement? HAHAHAAAA!”

Romeon laughing voice became jarring to the ears after being taken in by the power of darkness. Behind him, the power that was brought into existence by Romeon was sluggishly swaying as it appeared and disappeared... This man was already assembling the plane required to invite over a sinful figure. Suimei did not know whether that was his actual intention or not though. As if it was his last question, Suimei spoke to Romeon.

“... In the end, what did you hope to accomplish by studying the power of darkness?”

“It’s obvious! If I’m able to further clarify just what dark magic is, I can save those who even now are struggling from the power of darkness! That’s why, I want to know the depths of the power of darkness! I want to pursue it! I will take hold of that power!”

“Eh...”

A bewildered expression floated onto Liliana’s face as she listened to Romeon’s completely inconsistent explanation. He wanted to save the people who were suffering. Within the twisted laughter warped by the power of darkness, that desire certainly existed. There was no mistake that he pursued the mystery for that reason, but the things he was doing were in direct opposition to his original desire, he was completely buried under the wrong course of action.

Using his own mana as bait, Romeon was expanding the power of darkness. His sense or reason had weakened. This was a man at the end of the road after living only to fulfill one purpose and breaking down in the process. Suimei suddenly looked at him with eyes full of pity.

“... I see. You, are one the guys who lost huh...”

Magicians pursued the truth, they are those who desired the truth following their own ideals. However, there are those who spend too long chasing after their own ideals. Following such a path, they touch upon many mysteries, and as they touch upon them, they are affected by them, Gradually their sense of self becomes weaker and weaker. This must especially have been the case for an elf who naturally had a long lifespan. The man who was currently enthralled by malice may very well have held onto such thoughts before.

“Now come! The two of you will be covered in sin and die right here!”

Romeon sentenced them to death in a voice mixed with joy. The sound of mana pouring out of him had taken on a wicked roar as it blew violently. Suddenly, one of the bookshelves on the second floor took flight like it was next to an explosion, and drawing an arc through the air, it slammed right into Romeon on the floor below it. However, obstructed by the darkness coiling

around him, the large shock did not injure Romeon at all. The bookshelves and the books within it were broken to pieces and sent flying as Romeon shouted towards the place they flew in from.

“Who’s there!?”

And then, from the second floor, a shadow appeared—

“... I would have never thought, it would be something like this.”

Kicking down the railing on the second floor, the one who quietly muttered, was Rogue Zandyke. Suimei had no idea just how long he had been there. Even as a magician, he was unable to sense his presence in this place. Overflowing with fighting spirit, he swept open his military coat and turned his reddish brown gaze down at Romeon like a blade.

“Col...onel...?”

Liliana looked at him in surprise, and on the other hand Romeon was as expected, still brimming with excitement.

“Well well if it isn’t Lord Zandyke. Just what are you doing at this kind of hour?”

“I was chasing the two of them, and arrived in this place... I heard everything you talked about.”

“I see I see is that so? You have my condolences. The number of people that must die right here has increased by one after all.”

Romeon increased those he sentenced to death by one. He had no intention of allowing anyone to leave this place alive. Glancing down at the source of the ominous laughter, Rogue drew his sword. Looking at up Rogue, Liliana rushed towards his side.

“... Liliana, fall back.”

“Colonel!”

Liliana yelled back, but Rogue was not listening to her at all. He jumped down from the second floor and called out to Suimei.

“Suimei Yakagi, I will support you.”

“... I look forward to working with you.”

As Suimei replied to Rogue, Romeon wielded the power of darkness preparing to mow them down.

“So what if the number of people increase by one or two!?”

The tables and chairs in the area were sent flying as they shattered in pieces along with a wave of darkness. Romeon hid himself behind a nearby bookshelf as Suimei, Liliana and their new companion Rogue took cover in separate directions.

“What’s wrong!? Weren’t you going to capture me!?”

Bolstered by his belief in the strength of the power of darkness, Romeon’s movements were sluggish. Peeking his head out of cover, walking at a relaxed pace, he looked like he was trying to decide what prey he was going to start with first. A voice then called out to Suimei out of nowhere.

“... Suimei Yakagi, can you hear me?”

Suimei could hear Rogue’s voice being carried by the wind. It was magic to talk at a distance. Matching up with that, Suimei used magic to reply.

“I can hear you. What’s wrong?”

“I have a question. What is the power that elf is using? It is far too powerful for just the attribute of darkness.”

“No, it is just that kind of power. But because the power is far too strong, from another plane of existence, he’ll end up summoning a so called evil existence. Because of that influence, the power which is the source of the power behind the darkness attribute is flowing out in its pure form.”

“In that case, is it bad to come in contact with it?”

“As long as it isn’t prolonged contact there is no problem. In the end it is a lump of malice and resentment born of people. I can’t endorse fighting while standing around in it.”

“Then, it will have to come down to striking once, creating some distance and repeating...”

“I’ll be going first.”

As Suimei said this, Liliana who was listening from the side called out to him.

“Suimei... It’s a dreadful amount, of power.”

“Liliana. It is still easy for that thing to suck you in. Be careful.”

Leaving those words behind for Liliana, Suimei leaped out of cover. Catching this with his eyes, Romeon immediately swung his arm firing off the power of darkness towards him. However, his aim was poor, it only broke things in the area. On the other hand, Suimei put his attack magic to use. A delightful sound rang in the air repeatedly as the area around Romeon exploded.

“A smoke screen huh—”

Suimei’s intentions were exactly as Romeon said. As if matching up perfectly with that, Rogue fired off wind magic which swallowed up the books in the area. Romeon defended against the incoming wind, but Rogue soared in concealing himself behind the many books in the air. After closing the distance between them in an instant. Rogue let out a backwards slash, however Romeon did not make a single effort to avoid it and used the power of darkness wrapped around his arm to mow down the attack.

“Ku—”

Being struck by the power of darkness directly would be bad. As Rogue perceived this, he jumped backwards in a panic.

“—Et Factus est Invisibilis Instar Venti.” (My blade is invisible, however, it is as sharp as steel, drown my enemy in a pool of blood.)

Covering Rogue’s retreat, Suimei fired off magic. A countless number of invisible slashes flew towards Romeon. The power of darkness chasing after Rogue was cut to pieces by Suimei’s magic. Seeing the power of that magic, Romeon took a step back.

“... As expected, with one of the Seven Swords and Yakagi-kun as opponents, I’m at a disadvantage... However.”

Romeon began chanting a spell. Matching his timing, Suimei also began chanting.

“—Oh darkness. Thou art the one who swallows all existence, drape thyself in jet black gruesomeness. With that indefinite appearance, grant death, an avoidable death before me! Olgo, Lucuila, Ragua, Secunto, Labielalu, Baybaron!”

“—Flamma est Lego vis Wizard Hex Agon Aestua Sursum! Eva, Zurdick, Rozeia, Deivikusd, Reianima!” (Assemble flames. Like the cry of the magician’s resentment. Give form to the agony of death and burst into flames! Eva, Zurdick, Rozeia, Deivikusd, Reianima!)

Suimei and Romeon’s chants completely overlapped. On one hand was dark magic, and on the other was fire magic. What they had in common were the strange unknown words they both appended to the end of the chant.

“Dark Embrace!”

“Fiamma! O Ashurbanipal!” (Shine! Oh Ashurbanipal’s revolving stone!)

Suimei and Romeo let out their keywords at the same time. The darkness born behind Romeon rushed forwards and swallowed everything in its path, spreading out like a large wave. On the other hand, Suimei crushed the shining flame in the palm of his hand as explosive flames crowded around Romeon. Within the library that was shaking with a thunderous roar, the dazzling flames burned the power of darkness to nothing as the flames continued to fly towards Romeon unimpeded.

Romeon took a defensive stance to defend his body against the flames as the excessive, vigorous flames burst through the walls of the library. Fearing another attack from Suimei, Romeon leaped outside through one of these holes.

“Guu... Impossible! Why can you who does not hold the power of darkness use savage names!?”

Suimei came out of the hole in pursuit of Romeon and snapped his finger at Romeon, forcing him to retreat further back into a vacant plot of land. And then, as Suimei strode forward with composure, he appeared from the darkness underneath the moonlight.

“—The thing known as a god’s name is something that is in of itself a strong

power. Since ancient times, many magicians had attempted to make use of that power for magic. However, those gods from another plane of existence did not have names that a human could possibly pronounce. Even if one were able to speak it, it was far too powerful for a human to use. Savage names. This rhetoric, in of itself, are words that hold tremendous power by bringing down the name of gods. It is something that is able to enhance the effect of any magic. Uncivilized names.”

“Wha—?”

“Savage names do more than just strengthening dark magic. I have no idea what conclusion you made while studying them, but it seems you learned it incorrectly—”

Nomina barbara was absolutely not something that only increased the effectiveness of dark magic. By bringing down the name of gods to the level of human speech, their significance were akin to ‘the howl of beasts,’ and became words which held power. They could be applied to any magic.

“So what if it can be used for other magic!? If you are also able to use savage names, then I only need to apply savage names to an even more powerful magic!”

After screaming, Romeon once more began chanting a spell. Seeing this, Suimei let out an exasperated declaration.

“... If one makes use of savage names, the effectiveness of the magic will certainly be elevated. On the other hand, magic which makes use of these become bland and and the ability to fully control it is lost. It has that kind of disadvantage. That’s why...”

“—Oh darkness. Thou art more powerful than any of the eight attributes. The destruction that thou dost bring about will give birth to absolute despair! Olgo, Lucuila, Ragua, Secunto, Labielalu, Baybaron! Ruin of Blackness!”

“Mysterium vis Distortion.” (Oh mysteries. Quickly distort that principle.)

Matching the timing with Romeon’s keyword, Suimei let out a chant in no time at all. With it, Romeon’s dark magic took a sudden change. The enormous sphere of darkness taking shape in front of him suddenly lost its form and

popped right where it was.

“Guu!—Impossible! What the hell, happened...”

Having his dark magic backfire on him, Romeon was struck directly by its power and faltered. Since it was his own power, the damage was not that great, but the shock to his spirit from continuously using savage names was considerable. On the other hand, Liliana, who was watching this from behind Suimei, noticed what was happening and spoke with a surprised expression still glued to her face.

“That was, when I...”

“—Event agitation. At the point in time where a physical phenomenon is decided to occur, it contains all the events that can possibly occur along with their processes and results. All such things will naturally flow towards the most probable outcome, and that result will be brought forth. But if we mix in ‘the components which establish mystical laws,’ then at that point in time, the result becomes unstable. When applied correctly, it is possible to use it against mystical laws like the one just now—especially against bland magics which can no longer be fully controlled.”

Using magic theory, he used the confrontation between components to destabilize the result. The magic Suimei used against Liliana’s magic back during their fight used this law. It was a technique which used ‘the components which established mystical laws’ to confront magic which held the same type of components. It destabilized the magic, and then brought about a convenient result for the caster.

“Give it up, librarian-san. For you who cannot use any powerful magic without using savage names, there’s no chance of winning right?”

Suimei declared that his victory was inevitable. As he did, Romeon dropped his shoulders like he was giving up. However, he still did not have any intention of surrendering.

“... It can’t be helped. I didn’t want to have to play this hand though.”

As he muttered, Romeon once more began expanding the power of darkness. It was far more powerful than before. Also, unlike before, Romeon no longer

took his own self into consideration. His figure was swallowed by malice, and his body transformed into a monster with a black silhouette with an eye and mouth attached to it. It was just like the sinful figure—no, it was just like the sinister being which was its original form.

“It was the same when I came here, but somehow this is always the general pattern...”

Watching the mass breathing before him, Suimei could only look on with a bit of astonishment at Romeon’s withered spirit. Certainly when one’s position weakens, then it seems obvious to call forth a tremendous power. It’s simple and certain after all. Seeing the figure of Romeon turning into something that was no longer a person, Liliana worriedly called out to Suimei.

“Suimei!”

“That is the fate of those who are swallowed by the darkness. Look closely and burn that image into your mind.”

Suimei talked to Liliana like he was teaching her.

“Suimei Yakagi. You seem awfully calm, but do you have a spell to defeat that thing?”

“Wha!... Where did you pop out from?”

“What? I just came through that hole like everyone else.”

Hearing that statement which felt like Rogue thought his actions were completely trivial, Suimei felt just how frightening this man standing next to him looking at Romeon was. He had no idea when he managed to come up right beside him. Suimei could guess he came up to him while he was talking to Liliana, but he had no confidence in this. It was entirely possible that Rogue was standing right next to him ever since he emerged from the building. But that didn’t really matter right now. Pulling himself together, Suimei stared at Romeon.

“... It’ll take a bit of time, but I have a magic that can defeat it.”

“I see, understood. Then I will buy you time.”

Leaving the rest to Suimei, the Imperial swordsman turned his back to him

and began running towards Romeon. Suimei could only praise his fighting style. While avoiding the power of darkness that Romeon was scattering around, he fought him while getting in his way.

“Scurrying around like a bug!”

After an irritated voice which grated their ears filled the air, Rogue’s figure suddenly disappeared from sight. He was certainly still fighting, but for some reason only a haze could be seen. Once in a while he would appear along with an enormous fighting spirit. It was like a hallucination where he appeared to be emerging from his very own shadow. It was the technique of one of the Seven Swords, the one known as the sword master of the lonely figure. It was an exquisite skill which made his existence difficult for others to be cognizant of. Using those hallucinations, he would boldly carry out assassinations. The fight was still completely safe for Rogue. In that case, Suimei would be free to chant. For an instant, he looked towards the stars.

“Velam nox Lacrima Potestas. Olympus Quod Terra Misceo Misucui Mixtim. Infestant Militia. Dezzmoror Pluviain Cessanter. Vitia Evellere. Bonitate Fateor. Lux de Caelo Stella Nocte.” (Within the curtains. The majesty of the tears flowing in the night. Decorate heaven and earth with its symbol. Infest towards the present irrationality. Dazzle and rain incessantly. The lamented one is evil. The extolled one is virtuous. That which disturbs all comes from the radiance beyond the distance, from the twinkling stars.”

While in the middle of chanting his spell, Suimei could hear Romeon’s laughing voice. That broken, loud laughter was proof of Romeon’s consciousness weakening. Go mad, go mad, anything and everything. While laughing like that, he believed in his own victory, he did not have a single shadow of doubt in that fact... However, even that foolish man would soon come to know. An enormous magic circle covered the sky, with its dazzling glint falling down on them, it took form from the starlight colliding against each other. He would soon come to know of the radiance of hope.

Soon, everyone aside from Romeon became dead silent as the moonlight vanished. Sensing the great power in the heavens, Rogue retreated from the front line. Liliana who was standing behind Suimei was completely ignoring Romeon and staring into the starry sky completely dumbfounded. The starry sky

then washed away as a countless number of comets took form.

“Enth Astrarle—” (Oh starry sky, fall—)

Along with Suimei’s keyword, the Imperial Capital was swallowed by the light of the incessantly raining stars. Due to the astral light, all evil that was present along with the spells that created them were reduced to nothing. Before long, the radiance calmed down, and in the vacant plot that was once more dark, the withered figure of Romeon laid there. Suimei drew nearer to the being that was once Romeon and grabbed its head with his hand. Rogue then sheathed his sword as he walked up.

“Did he die?”

“He’s alive. But not...”

Romeon was alive. But after being swallowed by malice and being struck by the brilliance of astral light, he was pretty much the same as dead. His heart was still beating, but he could not move let alone process any thoughts. The moment he took in that malice, he was no longer able to escape this fate. Liliana seemed to be puzzled as Suimei began to use magic, and questioned him.

“What, are you doing?”

“Hmm, there’s just a little something I want to examine.”

After finishing his examination, Suimei let go of Romeon. Liliana then turned towards Rogue.

“Colonel...”

Liliana’s left eye was filled with sorrow and anxiety, however she still called out to Rogue like she still had lingering affection for him. Rogue turned his back on her. And then, as expected, he spoke in a cold tone.

“Liliana, you should go along with that man.”

“Colonel, that’s, what do you...”

Following up on Liliana’s bewilderment over Rogue’s intentions, Suimei also questioned him.

“Is the case of taking responsibility fine already?”

“Liliana was being manipulated by that guy right? Then, there is no such responsibility for her to take.”

Rogue’s tone was severe as usual. But the words he spoke were completely unexpected to Suimei. Deep down, Rogue also must have never wanted to kill Liliana.

“Then, what do you intend by telling her to go with me?”

“Nothing more than what I said. It just means I will leave Liliana in your care.”

“But, Liliana is your...”

Before Suimei could finish, Rogue shook his head as if to tell Suimei not to say it.

“No. I have no right to stay by that child’s side after trying to kill her with my own hands.”

Hearing those words, Liliana yelled in a flustered voice.

“C-Colonel! I don’t, really...”

“Liliana, that is my responsibility. Without being able to believe you, I abandoned the fact that I was a parent. I don’t have any right to receive you once more.”

“—”

Liliana was at a loss for words as she heard Rogue severely condemning himself.

“It is not something that I should be saying, but I feel it would be fine to entrust that child to you who protected her right until the end.”

And then, Rogue turned his back on them and started walking away. Suimei could sense loneliness in that back wearing a military uniform. He then called out to Rogue once more.

“Where are you going?”

“I must go to accomplish what I should be doing.”

Before Rogue's tragic determination, Suimei sank into silence. Rogue, with his back still turned, spoke to Suimei.

"Suimei Yakagi... right? I may not be in a position to say such a thing anymore, but— Please, take care of that child."

Suimei was no longer able to stop him. Even if he forcefully raised his voice, it would only make light of Rogue's determination. Suimei replied with a brief 'Understood,' and could see just the faintest smile on Rogue's stiff face as he looked back over his shoulder. And then he walked off into the distance.

"Colonel!"

A young voice chased after his figure. However, he did not stop walking. Contrary to the young girl's desires, that figure did not turn around once, it simply pushed forwards to face its own responsibilities. But even so, Liliana did not stop calling out to him.

"Colonel! Wait, please wait..."

Liliana fell to the ground as she watched Rogue walk ever forwards. Exactly because she understood Rogue's thoughts, she was unable to cling to him, however, she was also unable to pin down her overflowing attachment to him. However, even so, she raised her head, and mustering all of her courage—

"D...da... Dad!"

That must have been the first time she ever called him her father. As the voice connected the father who was never called in such a way and his daughter, Rogue stopped moving his feet. Liliana's voice pulled on the back of his head. However, without looking back even once, Rogue left. It was as if he was saying that this was his own punishment.



The conflict between Felmenia's party and Graziella's which started in the streets had moved all the way to the Imperial Capital's northern plaza and fallen into a deadlock. Currently the battlefield was split into north and south and became an exchange of shots using magic. Felmenia was the one who started it by firing off magic, but after Mizuki and Titania also followed up with magic, the situation became what it was. Everyone aside from Reiji and Elliot stayed away

from that invisible line in the middle of the plaza as they fought.

The plaza was filled with the sound of chanting and destructive explosions. The bricks on the ground shattered to pieces and flew in the air. The darkness of the night was illuminated by the embers scattered around here and there by fire magic. As the soldiers and mages were firing magic around, Titania hurled orders at the knights.

“Everyone fire off magic without any pause! Luka, take care of defensive magic! Roffrey, fire your magic and oppress the front line!”

Evading and defending against the incoming magic repeatedly while inching forwards ever so steadily, Titania fired off magic at the soldiers to push against the front line. After firing her fire magic, Mizuki drew nearer to Titania.

“Tia! Is it really okay for me to not defend as well!?”

“Please leave that to us! Mizuki, keep doing as you have and fire your magic of the fire attribute to disturb their formation!”

“Un!”

Following Titania’s command, Mizuki nodded strongly and once more began firing fire magic in the surroundings of the soldiers. Though as one would expect, she could not help but restrain herself so that she would not hit any of them directly. On the other hand, the soldiers and mages they were facing off against would not fire large magics due to Titania’s presence. Also, because they knew of Titania’s abilities as one of the Seven Swords, they did not advance to engage into close combat either. Not only that, the knights gathered around her hardened themselves and their defences were firm.

Water magic then came flying towards Mizuki who was still firing off fire magic.

“Whoa!?”

Mizuki dodged the aqua bullet and immediately looked in the direction it flew in from. Elliot’s attendant Christa had separated herself from him and put Mizuki into her firing line. And then, in no time at all, Christa began chanting another spell.

“—Oh water! Thou art a savage mass of liquid which shall fire forth. Aqua Bullet!”

“—Oh wind! Thou shall become a firm shield to protect me! Repel everything before that severe vortex! Vortex Obstacle!”

To defend herself from the many water bullets flying towards her, Mizuki chanted a spell for defence. Air from all directions poured in front of her forming a vortex. As the water bullets met the vortex, they were dispersed and flung away. However, Christa paid this no mind and once more began chanting, and fired more water bullets.

“W-wait, how dare you fire so many at me!?”

“Of course I will! I am one of El Meide’s high ranking magic priests— Wha!?”

After Mizuki let out a complaint about the water bullets flying being sent flying her way, while Christa was in the middle of responding, Mizuki shot out fire magic without any chant, and evaporated all of the water bullets at once. The flames splendidly exploded as they slammed against the ground.

“Sorry! Cause I can’t really go easy against strong people!”

“As one would expect of the one who was summoned together with the hero of salvation, you’re quite capable.”

“Un. Thanks for the compliment.”

The two of them exchanged praise on the battlefield like friendly enemies. Looking at them, Titania let out an exasperated voice during a spare moment between her magics.

“Why did they just get all harmonious...”

Though it was mostly Mizuki who was getting harmonious.

And at the same time, Felmenia and Graziella’s fight was also not reaching a conclusion as they continued the ebb and flow of offence and defence. Graziella’s earth magic fired forth from the south end of the plaza. However, Felmenia met it with defensive magic. As she chanted her spell, a magic circle rose from her feet and that light from the mana constructed a wall around her. In an instant, the tsunami of earth and sand from Graziella assaulted her, and

after it settled down, as expected, Felmenia was standing there completely unharmed.

“—As expected of the White Flame Felmenia-dono. This level of magic is absolutely nothing to you is it?”

“Of course. I am still the mage representing the Kingdom after all.”

Felmenia boasted fearlessly in a bid to cheer herself on. At present, her battle with Graziella consisted mainly of Felmenia defending against the magic Graziella was firing off like she was restraining Felmenia from advancing at all. Even though Graziella specialized in hand to hand combat, she was not forcing herself to draw nearer. If she entered close combat carelessly, she would end up showing her back to one of the Seven Swords after all. Though Titania herself had no intention of using a sword, nobody had any way of knowing this.

Moreover, without turning to look at any of the magic flying around in their vicinity, Reiji and Elliot were moving around the entire centre of the battlefield as they fought. If one were to imprudently get caught up in their fight, they may end up creating a major opening for their opponent. Thus they hesitated to close in to close range combat.

Felmenia fired off magic with a short chant.

“—Oh flame! Soar.”

“It’s been nothing but magic without any motivation all this time—”

Watching Felmenia firing off magic to restrain her, Graziella let out a disappointed voice. Felmenia had only been attacking halfheartedly all this time. Graziella must have felt like she wasn’t even in a fight at all. Graziella’s body was in a state where it was filled to the brim with mana as she received the flame head on. The flame struck her directly, but despite the fact that she did not even use defensive magic, not even her clothes had so much as a burn on them.

(As expected with this level of magic, there is no effect at all on her Highness the Imperial Princess Graziella huh...)

Felmenia was weighing the situation. She was trying to figure out what level of power was required to make Graziella serious. Just as she expected, only

trying to simply restrain her could not make Graziella serious at all.

(Then, it is about time.)

In preparation to unleash her hidden hand, Felmenia turned her attention Reiji and Elliot. What she was concentrating on was not how the battle was unfolding, it was Elliot's magic—



What rang through the air was not the sound of metal clashing violently against metal, but was something more akin to the clear reverberations of a clanging metallophone. Even though swords were supposed to be exchanging blows against each other, all one could hear was more like a high pitched buzzing in one's ears. In the plaza filled with sounds of rampant destruction, this high pitched sound was the one that lingered the longest in the air. Naturally, the only ones who were jumping around the battlefield using swords were Reiji and Elliot.

Only the two of them were fighting in the middle of the magic flying about without being caught by the boundary dividing the plaza into north and south. Reiji was in his uniform with his sleeves rolled up, while Elliot had already donned his armour and was perfectly prepared for battle.

Suddenly, Elliot threw away his shield, and wielding his sword in both hands, he stopped Reiji's blade. Reiji wasn't sure what was on his mind, but after locking up the guards of both swords, a muffled voice resounded from deep within his barrel helm.

"I did not think think that I would end up fighting against another person chosen as a hero like I was."

"I also didn't anticipate this at all."

Due to putting all in strength into his sword, Reiji's voice was somewhat awkward. And then for some reason, the strength Elliot put into his sword weakened. Elliot then spoke like he was smiling beneath his armour.

"It seems that you're at the level of an amateur swordsman who only started learning, but as expected you are quite strong. You have quite the sense for it."

Reiji questioned Elliot in a puzzled voice after hearing him calmly speak to him.

“What do you mean by that?”

“Nothing, it’s just that I haven’t spoken much with you. I just thought I’d like to talk a little.”

“I really don’t think this is the kind of situation where we can do something like having a little talk.”

“Is that so? If you don’t talk while you’re able to, you may just be left with regrets. It is my belief that I should properly speak with those that I seem to be able to speak with.”

Reiji wasn’t sure if the added ‘Though it requires patience to talk with a man,’ was a lie or not.

“Elliot. I heard you were the hero summoned from the Holy City, but why are you doing what her Imperial Highness Graziella tells you to? As a hero, there is no need to follow the orders of an imperial princess.”

“This is just a one time thing. I took her on in a match, and lost after all. I have to keep my promise.”

“—That may be the case but I feel like you’re not very motivated.”

Hearing this, Elliot replied with a dumbfounded yet somewhat amused voice.

“Am I? I don’t have such intentions though?”

“That’s a lie.”

Elliot laughed and quit playing dumb.

“If you believe so, it may be just as you say. In truth, even I do not enjoy bullying a little girl. I may just be holding back unconsciously.”

By little girl he must have been referring to Liliana. While Elliot had eased up on his attack, Reiji looked to the side. Elliot’s attendant mage Christa seemed to be fighting against Mizuki one on one as well. That is to say...

“Could it be, that you know the truth behind this case?”

“—No, I don’t know the truth. However, there is no way that man who holds

that kind of passionate rage would take part in evil without a reason. Any man who gets worn down to tatters to protect a woman couldn't be a bad guy after all... Not that I'm particularly acknowledging the value of that guy though."

"But, nevertheless you don't have any intention to just lose do you?"

"Naturally. On the contrary, if I held back that much it would just make me angry."

As Reiji and Elliot's conversation came to an end, they pulled the guards of their swords apart and distanced themselves from each other. Elliot's movements had gotten a little dull and the lightning clad around his sword began to weaken. The effect of his body reinforcement magic and weapon enchantment magic seem to have run out of time. Seeing that, Reiji suddenly yelled out.

"Sensei!"

"Are you hoping for support? However, her opponent is that Imperial Princess Graziella you know?"

As Reiji signalled Felmenia, Elliot informed him that it would be impossible for her to do anything. On the other hand, Felmenia heard his voice loud and clear. Moreover it was just as she said herself that it was about time. She started constructing her offensive magic against Graziella who was still keeping her distance.

The magic circle at her feet invoked another plane. With her hand formed like a blade she drew a reverse pentagram as she chanted her spell.

"—That which I desire, stands before the fury of the storm. Oh wind, blow fiercely. Raise the cry of despair. For the sake of exterminating anything and everything before my eyes as much as you please..."

After the chant which left an intoxicating reverberation in the air finished, the magic circle showed a brilliant radiance, and with the drawn reversed pentagram at its centre, a sudden gust blew in from the surroundings. The perfectly still scene around Felmenia suddenly transformed. While withstanding being blown away by the extraordinarily powerful wind pressure, Felmenia fired out her keyword.

“Glaunck Air!” (Oh Devil’s Wind!)

The compressed air was released as an intense shockwave assaulted to area. The trees bent backwards from the pressure. Fire magic, water magic, the soldier’s magic and all the bricks on the ground were blown away. Graziella received the shockwave of Glaunck Air with her entire body, however, she endured through it. It seemed she took damage, but Graziella acted like she still had composure.

“—My my, it seems I made light of you. White Flame-dono. To think you were holding on to this kind of hidden hand.”

“As expected, you withstood it...”

“Of course.”

Graziella gazed at Felmenia with disdain.

“White Flame-dono. Is it not about time that you run out of steam?”

“Says you. However, it seems your Imperial Highness is also incapable of capturing me. Even if you spent all eternity firing such small magic at me you will never be able to defeat me you know?”

A smile floated on Graziella’s face as she heard these provocative words, but she did not seem amused at all.

“—So you say. You do understand that if not for the damn Twilight Beheading Princess’ presence, I would have knocked you down long ago right? Besides, you saw it right? That fight in the southern plaza.”

“I’m saying that if you do not put in at least that much effort, then you’ll never defeat me.”

“Then so be it. If you are willing to go that far, I’ll allow you to thoroughly taste my magic.”

Graziella was no longer able to endure Felmenia’s provocation and began chanting the the spell for the teleportation magic she had been refraining from using all this time.

“—Heed my desires. Fly in beyond the distance, to the one who won’t hold an audience with me. My hail detaches you from the world’s entangled and

inseparable laws, become a power which surpasses any kind of reason— Open! Devil Connect!”

Along with her keyword, the night sky warped as it was being twisted and became vague. Sensing the teleportation of a massive object, Felmenia began by yelling.

“It’s coming! Every take evasive manoeuvres until you reach the safe zone! After evading please begin using magic at full power!”

Following her words, Titania, the knights around her, Mizuki who was trading fire with Christa, and Reiji who was fighting Elliot all increased their distance from the combat line. Immediately following that, a massive rock appeared in the sky. It wasn’t quite as large as the one used at the southern plaza, but it was more than enough of a threat. Felmenia then began using her magic at full power.

“—Just as the wind from far and wide conveys! Bring the flame that shines as it sways! Hear my voice! Thou art the shimmer dyed in white! Hear my voice! Thou art the shimmer which shakes off all calamity! White Flame Toss!”

Felmenia’s white flames flew towards the massive rock. Using the reconstructed burning magic she learned from Suimei, regardless of the flame’s temperature, the massive rock burned up.

“The magic from the other day huh!? However, something that I staved off once won’t protect you from this!”

Along with her violent words, Graziella once more began to chant her teleportation magic and called another massive rock in the sky. And then, without stopping her words at all, she began to use the spell continuously. And then, Reiji and the others...

“Reiji. It seems the Imperial Princess is planning to bring this to a decisive end. It’s decided over there.”

“We don’t know that yet.”

“Fuu—? I don’t know where you get the confidence to say that, but do you have some kind of plan? Well, fine. If you do then then it has nothing to do with me. I will simply do what I must over here.”

After saying this, Elliot began applying physical reinforcement on his body which was already reinforced by the divine protection of the hero summoning, and then began chanting his spell.

“Here I come, Reiji. I present my wish in celebration before the extolled spirit of wisdom. Oh lightning, demonstrate your sharpness before me. Blade Discharge!”

As soon as his keyword finished echoing in the air, Elliot’s orichalcos blade clad itself and lighting, and sent off electrical discharge from its tip. Or it should have...

“What—!?”

“What the hell!?”

Those bewildered declarations of surprise came from people of the same camp. The voices owners were Elliot and Graziella. Though Elliot finished the chant for his spell, his magic did not activate. Graziella who should also have been firing magic at Felmenia, for some reason also did not actually invoke magic as she darted around her eyes in surprise. Their magic failed with perfect timing.

The one to suffer from those two spells failing was Elliot. As he was using magic while crossing swords with Reiji, Reiji immediately closed the distance between them, however...

“—Tch. Too naive!”

Elliot let out a cry. The distance between them was still enough for him to act. In this state where he was unable to use magic, he immediately switched to his sword and let out a thrust towards Reiji. But as he did, Reiji kicked the ground with force towards Elliot. The bricks sent flying by his kick collided with Elliot’s sword and averted the trajectory of his thrust. And then, as Reiji ran into him...

“Sei!”

“Gah—!?”

Reiji drove the hilt of his orichalcum sword right into Elliot’s skull. Struck by this impact, Elliot’s body rolled across the ground two or three times.

“Elliot-sama!”

Christa’s scream reached Reiji’s ears. However, paying no attention to her, he headed in a straight line right towards Graziella. Thanks to Felmenia’s scheme, she was still unable to use magic. She prepared her fist in a fluster, but was too slow to counter the brandished sword coming right at her.

“I will apologize in advance for my impoliteness—”

While letting out an apology, Reiji drove the hilt of his sword with all his might past Graziella’s fists and right into her abdomen and defeated her as he sent her to the ground. As she fell on her butt, Reiji thrust his sword at her neck.

“It’s our win.”

“Ridiculous... This kind of...”

Graziella’s surprise was pointed more towards the fact that she was not able to use magic rather than Reiji’s victory declaration. Her face was still gripped in bewilderment. And then, as if demanding an answer, she turned her head towards Felmenia.

“What... Why can I no longer use magic!? Just what kind of magic did you bastards use!?”

Felmenia replied to her.

“It isn’t like I used magic that could render you unable to use magic. The reason you could no longer use magic, is simply because your Imperial Highness had used too much magic.”

“Used too much, you say... Ridiculous, I’m nowhere near running out of mana!”

“Seems so. However, the magic your Imperial Highness is using is based on the magic behind the hero summoning technique. It is not magic which carries an element. Because of that, the elements are not supporting your Imperial Highness’ magic. Due to the massive increase of the mystical entropy in this place, as a result, the phenomenon of magic melt occurred.”

“M-mystical... Mag-ic mel... What is that?”

“Mystical entropy is produced when ‘the components which establish

mystical laws' and 'the components which establish physical laws' end up in a cluttered state. If this increases too much, the throughput of a magic spell will be insufficient, and the phenomenon of magic melt will occur, this will prevent magic from activating."

"But—"

"But 'this has never happened before,' right? That's because, on top of the magic used to teleport a massive rock, you never used magic which heavily increased entropy before—"

As Felmenia began talking to Graziella, she recalled what Suimei had taught her about this phenomenon.



"—What about the magic melt phenomenon that occurs when mystical entropy reaches its limit?"

Felmenia inclined her head to the side as she asked. Suimei then once more began his explanation from the beginning.

"Yes, when entropy in one location increases, we just discussed that physically things will become unstable and become easier to manipulate, but if within a single space and within a certain amount of time entropy is increased too much, magic will no longer be able to be used."

"Such a thing happens?"

"It does. The magic of this world has the portion of magic which is invoked from another plane taken care of by the elements. Because of this, the outbreak of 'the components which establish mystical law' is suppressed, and entropy does not increase much. Thanks to this, it never happens here so I'm not surprised you don't know about it."

After the brief tangent, Suimei returned to his explanation.

"When entropy increases radically within a single space, the fight between the tiny people becomes fierce. Not just 'the components which establish physical laws,' but because of the increase of 'the components which establish mystical laws,' they also receive quite the burden."

“But, did you not say that when you use magic to instigate a mystical action, those ‘components which establish mystical laws’ end up increasing, so entropy ends up increasing and magic become easier to use? Is that wrong?”

“Before the components can scatter in the area, if one gives birth to too many of them in an instant, they will in up crowding together right there. Even components of the same type will begin to interfere with each other. In other words, the tiny people will find it difficult to move around and magic will end up being unusable.”

To add on to his explanation, Suimei began drawing on a piece of paper.

“Think of magic as something which is activated due to the power of these invisible tiny people. It will be a slightly microscopic way of thinking about it, but the tiny people require ‘the time to perform their work to activate magic’ before it can be invoked. When the entropy increases in one location, the tiny people will find it harder and harder to move around which affects the time to perform their work. Eventually, it will end up affecting the use of magic itself.”

“In short, you’re talking about creating a time delay before one can activate magic?”

“That’s right.”

“But why does that lead to being unable to use magic? If it is only a time delay, then once the magic is constructed, shouldn’t it activate after enough time has passed?”

“If you’re doubtful, try remembering the foundation of why magic is activated.”

As Suimei urged her to ruminate on it, based on what she had said before, Felmenia began talking as she thought about it.

“The foundation, is it...? In the first place, I think that what we’re talking about is based on the premise that magic comes into existences, it shouldn’t particularly mean that it will no longer be able to— Ah!”

“Do you get it?”

“It’s the time... right?”

“Yes, exactly. Magic is something that is invoked only when the predetermined mystical actions are combined, the predetermined processes are followed and the predetermined time has not elapsed. Normally, because magic is invoked right as the actions are complete, one does not generally take notice of it. But in truth, this ‘time until invocation’ is something to consider. If a large amount of time passes from the construction to the invocation, naturally this would violate the predetermined time and the constructed spell will begin to dissolve.”

After explaining, Suimei began speaking with a very serious expression on his face.

“To sum it up, that is the phenomenon known as magic fusion.”

If the conditions for activation are not met, then naturally the constructed magic would become useless. Of course there would be no problems with magic whose effects were already active, but magics which have yet to be activated would be severely restricted. If one were to predict the oppressive condition of entropy, it was possible to hold the magic’s activation on standby and adjust the predetermined time to easily solve the problem, but there were many people who never considered things to that extent.

“Just as I said before, modern magic theory especially produces a large quantity of entropy within a single space. In accordance with the grand unified theory, the magic used mixes together many magic systems and can be used both faster than normal and with great effect. Thus the production of components is accelerated.”

“In other words, magic with greater effects would be restricted in proportion to the scale of those effects right?”

“That’s right. And so, the important things here is the fact that the magic that dangerous woman uses also increases entropy greatly, it is one of those magics with a great effect.”

“If I’m not mistaken... It was what was called teleportation magic in Suimeidono’s world right?”

“That’s right. You got a good look at it right?”

“Yes. That also did not have many processes and activated quite quickly. I does not make use of modern magic theory but, even so is it the same?”

“Yes. It didn’t take much time to activate, but practically speaking that’s only because the magic circle was prepared beforehand in the lining of her coat. It does not change the fact that teleportation magic is something difficult to physically manifest. That’s why...”

“Those ‘components which establish mystical laws’ will suddenly be produced, and entropy will greatly increase right?”

As Felmenia arrived at the right answer, Suimei showed her a mischievous smile.

“That’s right. With that, you get what the goal of our lesson is this time right—”

...What Felmenia had been using up until now was the magic she learned from Suimei based on modern magic theory. Due to the fact that she learned it hastily, there wasn’t much to expect from its destructive power, but when it came to increasing mystical entropy, it was quite easy to bring about the phenomenon known as magic melt.

Also, Graziella wasn’t the only one increasing entropy in the area. Though the amount produced was quite small, Reiji, Mizuki, the knights and even Christa and Graziella’s mages were all doing so. Elliot, who used magic from another world, also contributed greatly to this. As his magic did not have the elements taking over a portion of the spell, it increased entropy reasonably well. This was exactly why there was the potential for the magic melt phenomenon to occur and why Suimei adopted this plan. It simply meant he took into consideration dealing with Elliot as well.

—I’m sure you saw it before, but do you remember how Elliot linked together his sword skills and magic? If he suddenly was no longer able to use one of them, an opening would appear, that’s what we’ll aim for.

Precisely as Suimei had said, so that Elliot could maintain the multiple enhancement effects he used at once, he would invoke them over and over multiple times. If Reiji called out when that time came around, an opening would show in Elliot’s defences.

Graziella then spoke to Felmenia in an annoyed tone.

“I see. Your ridiculous magic and the fact that magic could no longer be used, was all that guy’s...”

“—With all due respect, I have no need to answer your questions.”

Felmenia resolutely cut off Graziella as she was talking. Since Reiji and the others were also present, carelessly answering too many questions would only bother Suimei. With his sword still pointed at her, Reiji then requested she follow her obligation as the loser.

“With this it’s decided. Please remove your soldiers and withdraw.”

However, Graziella snorted in displeasure.

“I refuse.”

“Eh—?”

“Do you really think that you’ve won with this? You’ve only thrust your damn sword in front of me right? Or are you saying that you are able to thrust that sword through my heart?”

As Graziella pointed this out, Reiji spoke as if to hide the panic rising up within him.

“If you insist on fighting more then...”

“Cease that. There’s no way that you could kill the imperial princess of a nation with your own hands.”

Reiji was certainly bluffing. After seeing through this, Graziella looked disappointed. As Reiji was not used to threatening others, he was unable to draw out a defeated attitude from her. Soon, from beyond the street, they could hear many footsteps approaching quickly. It wasn’t enough to shake the ground, but they could still guess that there was quite the number of them.

“It seems like reinforcements have arrived.”

As Graziella gave them a provocative smile, Titania let out a cry.

“It couldn’t be, you prepared a rear-guard!?”

“Of course. With an opponent of that much ability, is it not natural to prepare

at least this much? It seems you're planning was far too naive."

Despite the sweat forming on her brow, Graziella let out a fearless laugh. Reiji then repeated himself once more before her.

"But, I still have my sword thrust before you?"

"As long as I give the order, the soldiers of the Empire will not hesitate. Besides, it doesn't seem that White Flame-dono has any more schemes."

"Ku..."

Felmenia ground her teeth. As Graziella sneered at her oversight, she commanded all of her subordinates.

"Everyone, do not hold back! Restrain all these people before you!"

The reinforcements replied vigorously and the soldiers they were just fighting began to move. Mizuki and the knights were cornered until they arrived where Felmenia was. And just as they were surrounded...

"—Graziella Filas Rieseld, you are the same as always. Have you already forgotten how I've rebuked you before for that habit of only fighting those in a weaker position than you?"

Along with a red wind, that cool voice swept through the streets. Immediately following it, the front line of the reinforcements that were on the way were blown away like they were caught in an explosion.

"Wha!?"

"Just what in the..."

Both Reiji and Graziella were at a loss for words. The reinforcements that were coming in from the side alley were sent flying by a wind filled with a red brilliance. The mix of soldiers and mages at the front were all sent flying away and because of that, the ones behind them could only stumble forwards. The soldiers hit by the red wind were not moving. Scattered in every direction, they were all unconscious. As if lurking over them, the red wind which knocked them out was now hanging at the alley's entrance and above the nearby buildings.

The dust in the air was scattered by the red wind as it dissipated. And standing there, having regained her former figure, was Lefille Grakis. With her

large sword taller than her own body resting on her shoulder, she gazed sharply at the soldiers before her. Before the overpowering pressure from this young girl who was not yet even twenty years old, the soldiers were completely bound in place. On the other hand, as Graziella saw the figure of Lefille before her, she opened her eyes wide in surprise.

“It can’t be... Shrine Maiden-dono from Noshias!? You were alive...?”

As Lefille turned back towards that voice, she stopped her eyes where Reiji and the others were, and let out a voice of relief.

“It seems that I made it in time.”

Suddenly, the soldiers freed from Lefille’s gaze regained control of their bodies and began to move as they came to their senses. Perhaps due to their excellent training, they immediately deployed. The soldiers took the front and readied their swords while the mages fell to the back and prepared to fire magic aimed at Lefille all at once.

“Look out!”

Seeing this, Reiji cried out to Lefille, however, with calm and composed movements, Lefille turned back towards the soldiers. Immediately following this, the many magics fired at Lefille came rushing in, but as if she was struck by nothing but a gentle breeze, she stood there perfectly calm.

“Ridiculous... Magic, did nothing...?”

One of the soldiers trembled in fear as they groaned like they were speaking the inner feelings of every single soldier in that place. Seeing that, with her heart gripped by surprise, Graziella spoke.

“The Shrine Maiden’s... spirit power. To think it could even render magic useless...”

The mages turned towards Graziella as they heard her muttering. As if thrusting that ruthless truth before them, Lefille roared out at them.

“Do you think that magic blessed by the Goddess would work on me who has accepted a spirit within my body!?”

Lefille’s thunderous voice drowned out all sound in the bustling battlefield.

Her voice was like electricity in the atmosphere as it pierced the skins of those before her. Lefille then raised her sword overhead once more. As if hailed by that action, the red wind formed a maelstrom with her sword at its centre. And then as she swung it down, not only a whole half of the soldiers deployed before her, but even the walls of the buildings and the pavement on the street were blown away by the explosion brought forth by the wind around her sword.

—It was a single intense swing. Every single person present was at a loss for words and doubted their eyes. That girl accompanied by the red wind was just that overwhelming.

The wind once more began blowing in out of nowhere. As if it had no other choice but to gather in this place, it blew in from all directions of the city and gathered around Lefille as she once more clad herself in a red brilliance. As bewilderment spread out in the area, one of the soldiers raised their voice as if they just noticed something.

“By the power of spirits, you can’t mean, this is, Ishtakney’s...”

After saying this, it seems they were fully convinced. The next voice to come out was one trembling in fear.

“Th-the red wind that comes up in Saint Alshalia’s legend, the Red Storm... They say everything swallowed by that red tempest is returned to nothingness without exception...”

“T-that’s impossible!”

“But that girl just said, she was a spirit or something...”

“O-oi! I’m sure Graziella-sama also just said something like that woman was a shrine maiden!”

As Lefille struck the tip of her sword into the ground, the panicking soldiers all cowered in fear at the sound alone. A few of them fell to their butts. Looking down at them, Lefille once more began speaking.

“If you do not wish to become rust upon my sword created by the spirits, open a path!!”

As Lefille’s thunderous voice rang through the air once more, the soldiers

opened a path in a complete daze. They were clinging to dear life. As if they cared for nothing else, they were scrambling away. Among them, there were those with their heads to the ground praying to the Goddess. Those who did not run away in time, were sent flying ruthlessly by the sudden gust created by Lefille. Lefille glared over those before her. When she turned to the left, all the soldiers on her left cringed with fear. When she turned to the right, all the soldiers on her right began to tremble.

“Oh Goddess... Oh Goddess...”

“S-spare us! Please, please have mercy...”

“We were ordered to... We had no choice...”

The soldiers were already routed. All that was left were those with their heads to the ground begging the Goddess and Lefille for mercy. Looking at the state of her soldiers, Graziella spoke up.

“Ridiculous... To think, even the shrine maiden from Noshias would cooperate... Did I misread him?”

“Of course. There’s no way that Suimei-kun would make that kind of mistake in his plan right?”

Graziella ground her teeth at the completely unexpected outcome. Before her, Lefille proudly boasted like she was talking about her own family. Her behaviour towards Graziella was quite disrespectful, but naturally she was in a position where that was allowed.

“It has been a long time, Princess Graziella. It has been two years since we last saw each other, but it seems you haven’t changed at all.”

“To just shamelessly give your greetings after all that... Surely you did not come to renew the old friendship between Noshias and Nelferia.”

“If you understand that, then there’s no reason to put on airs. The reason I am here today— is so that I can knock you down with this hand of mine.”

“What...!?”

“Oh Red Storm of mine...”

Along with her words which rang out like a request, Lefille’s right arm became

clad in a red wind. And then, with a voice filled with anger—

“This is for putting Suimei-kun through so much trouble when he was already injured. Resign yourself and accept it!!”

Lefille’s fist flew forwards like a heavenly wind and struck Graziella right in the abdomen.

“Gohaa!?”

As if she was thrown like a rubber ball, Graziella was sent flying splendidly. As she settled down and started to get up, she was still not able to move around adequately. After throwing her a single glance, Lefille turned towards Reiji and the others. And then after looking at each of their faces, she let out a slight smile.

“Everyone, it seems you’re all safe.”

Lefille was in fact one of their acquaintances, but naturally Reiji and the others had no idea who she was. Representing everyone’s bewilderment, Reiji spoke up.

“I’m sorry, you speak like we have met somewhere before, but you are?”

“...How upsetting. Were we not living together all this time?”

From those words, the characteristics of her appearance and her tone, Reiji finally figured it out. With a surprised expression plastered on his face, he put his guess into words.

“C-could you be Lefille-chan!?”

“I’m a little self-conscious of having ‘chan’ applied to my name with this appearance, Reiji-kun.”

Following up for Reiji, Mizuki raised a surprised voice.

“B-b-b-but Lefille-chan is a tiny and cute little girl!?”

“Up until recently anyways. But right now is different. It’s just due to certain reasons I ended up in that kind of form, this is my original form.”

“You say reasons... Just how and what could happen to make a person tiny...?”

“I could explain, but it would take a while. To say it like Suimei-kun, it’s

because it is fantasy.”

Hearing that, Titania also let out a breath in astonishment.

“There was also Suimei’s case but, there’s really nothing but surprising things happening...”

Of course Felmenia was also surprised about Lefille.

“A-are you really Lefille...?”

“Didn’t I tell you about this before, Felmenia-jou? About how that small figure was not my true form? Suimei-kun said so as well right?”

“Th-th-th-there’s no way I would believe that kind of thing!! A person’s body can’t just become smaller! I thought Lefille and Suimei-dono were just telling a joke together!”

“So you thought Suimei-kun and I were lying right? How cruel.”

As Lefille shrugged her shoulders in astonishment, Reiji spoke up to her.

“But, why are you suddenly in your original form?”

“A few days ago I prepared a magic circle for the sake of returning. I just returned to this figure moments ago.”

“I see...”

When Reiji finished with his questions, Graziella began to move.

“... What are all of you doing!? Can you bastards even call yourselves soldiers of the Empire like this!? Take up your swords!”

Without losing any of her hostility, she barked commands at the soldiers who were still trembling in fear. As she did, Titania turned towards her with a composed expression.

“You don’t know when to give up, your Imperial Highness. Is it not unbecoming of you to get lost in anger and fight on?”

“Silence. Even if Shrine Maiden-dono and a hero are here, if I use the power of the Empire...”

Graziella threw away her pride and refused to accept defeat. Hearing this,

Lefille looked up at the heavens and spoke to Graziella while stifling her laughter.

“—Hou, then even after seeing that, can you say such a thing?”

“What do you mean by that...?”

Following those words, everyone present looked towards the heavens. In the night sky of the Empire, an enormous magic circle drawn with the ultramarine light of mana drowned out the light from the stars. Seeing this, Mizuki cried out while shaking.

“Th-th-th-th-th-that! What is that!? There’s a giant magic circle floating in the sky!”

“It’s huge... Why is such a large magic circle... Not only that, it’s in the sky...”

Reiji had his eyes wide open in shock as he spoke completely dumbfounded. However Graziella did not let out a surprised voice herself. Meanwhile, Christa drew nearer to Elliot who had been knocked out by Reiji to wake him up.

“Gu... It seems that while I was unconscious, something outrageous has happened.”

“Elliot-dono huh?”

“My goodness, an extremely familiar looking girl has become quite a bit bigger.”

“Save the talk for later. It’s coming.”

Just as she finished speaking, a wave of mana surged forth from the centre of the magic circle. It passed through everything in the distance in an instant, and like fireflies dancing in the air, golden particles began rising from the ground and were sucked up by the magic circle floating in the starry sky.

Within that fantastical scenery, many small magic circles began to appear within the larger ones. Even though they were small, that was only in comparison to the larger circle. Before long, after the ground swayed briefly, the Imperial Capital was engulfed with the light falling from the heavens. Felmenia was the only one who knew just what this spectacle was. Back in the Royal Castle Camellia, it was the magic Suimei used during their battle, star fall.

... Eventually the light calmed down. Everyone who was standing there were obviously unharmed. Reiji turned to Lefille who seemed to behave like someone who knew much of the world.

“Lefille...san. That was?”

“That? That was something Felmenia-jou prepared.”

“Eh!? Is that right, Sensei!?”

“Eh? Ah... Yes, well. The magic was prepared in advance... That’s... ehem”

Felmenia somehow managed to keep up her appearance as Reiji questioned her, and then in a somewhat forced manner, she cleared her throat and turned towards Graziella.

“Your Imperial Highness. You just witnessed the power of that magic right? Even after seeing that massive power, do you intend to keep on fighting? Your Highness’ soldiers are in that kind of state you know?”

Felmenia pointed towards the soldiers. The soldiers had already lost their fighting spirit to Lefille and must have thought that the light from the falling stars was the wrath of god. They were currently all prostrate on the ground praying to the Goddess. It couldn’t be helped. There was no way they would think that kind of power could be drawn out by any single person.

“Shit... Even so...”

Graziella still did not give up. Letting out a curse, she showed her intent to resist further. However, what brought in the decisive blow to make her give up came from a completely unexpected place. From beyond where the soldiers were still prostrate on the ground, several soldiers on horseback showed up. After a while, they formed ranks in an orderly fashion and came to a stop, and from within their ranks the one who came out was...

“—Lyla, that’s enough.”

“E-elder brother...”

Graziella was at a loss at that person’s arrival. Appearing from within the soldiers on horseback on a horse of his own, was the Nelferian Empire’s first prince, Reanat Filas Rieseld. He had the same long blonde hair as Graziella,

wore glasses and wrapped his body in luxurious clothing. He first turned towards Reiji and the others instead of speaking to Graziella.

“I apologize for speaking while still on horseback. Elliot-dono, Shrine Maiden-dono from Noshias, Princess Titania, and you must be the hero summoned by Astel, Reiji-dono right?”

“Yes.”

Reiji gave a brief reply. He did not know just who Reanat was and had put himself on guard. However Titania whispered his identity into Reiji’s ear from behind. While that was going on, Graziella yelled out towards Reanat.

“Elder brother! What do you mean that’s enough!?”

“... Exactly as it sounds. Restrain yourself.”

“But!”

“Lyla. You created too much of an uproar. Besides, it would become quite serious if word of a hero fighting another hero would reach the ears of the Holy City right?”

“... That’s, certainly true, but.”

It seemed that even Graziella was unable to put up much resistance against the man who was next in line to be the Emperor of the Empire. She gripped her fist tightly like she was completely vexed.

“It has been a long time. Your Imperial Highness Reanat.”

“Yes, it’s been a while. Princess Titania. As ever you are quite awe-inspiring. You are a flower who blooms on the battlefield after all.”

“Saying on the battlefield does not count as flattery, your Imperial Highness. Setting that aside, what you had said before...”

“Aah, we shall withdraw. However, about the criminal...”

As Reanat was in the middle of speaking...

“Oh my, it seems something amazing is happening here.”

From an alleyway leading to the street, Suimei appeared along with Liliana while dragging along the ruined body that was once Romeon. Seeing this, Reiji

and Mizuki let out cries of joy.

“Suimei!”

“Suimei-kun! Liliana-chan!”

“Fuu... It seems things have finished on your end right?”

As Titania asked in confirmation, Suimei replied with an attitude like he just finished a difficult task.

“Yeah, somehow or other.”

After separating with Rogue, Suimei took Liliana and immediately traced back his steps. Reiji and the others rushed over to Suimei’s side. After noticing that Liliana was not very energetic, Mizuki crouched down and talked to her.

“Liliana-chan?”

“... Yes.”

“Mizuki. Sorry but take care of Liliana for a bit.”

Leaving Liliana to Mizuki and the others, Suimei began walking towards Reanat and Graziella.

“You’re sure wearing some nice clothes, but are you related to that dangerous woman?”

As Suimei gripped his chin with arrogance, the soldiers on horseback began to stir. They were intending to rush out in front right away, but Reanat stopped them with his hand.

“I am Reanat Filas Rieseld. You are?”

“Suimei Yakagi. I’m a person who was summoned as a bonus to that hero over there.”

“Mu... A guest from another world huh.”

As expected, after hearing of a person summoned together with a hero, he couldn’t put up a strong front. Seeing this, Suimei handed over Romeon who he was still dragging along.

“Here, this guy is the true culprit behind the incidents this time. Take him...”

Though I say that, he's not in a state where he can hear what you're saying anymore."

Having turned completely black, Romeon was not even recognizable as an elf anymore. Seeing this, Reanat knit his brows dubiously.

"You say this is the criminal?"

"Yeah, he intended to use dark magic, but instead got engulfed in it and met his fate. These incidents were all devised by this guy."

"Fumu... Are you telling me to believe this?"

"Well, there aren't any other who can give you a testimony. But, if you just believe me things would be settled quite peacefully right? If you guys accept this guy as your true criminal, at the very least things won't get any more serious than they have right?"

Reanat began contemplating on Suimei's words. He was surely thinking about what option before him was best to take.

"Also, I'll have you leave Liliana in my care."

"Bastard, do you really think we'll let that pass?"

Hearing Suimei, Graziella opposed him filled with anger, however Reanat simply nodded his head.

"... So be it. If you hand over that true culprit over to us, we will let you do as you wish."

"Elder brother!?"

"Lyla, there are both Shrine Maiden-dono and Hero-dono here. Besides, there was also that magic which engulfed the Imperial Capital in light."

"—Well, that's how it is."

He wasn't even sure if Reiji and the others heard this. Having heard exactly what he wanted to, Suimei brought the conversation to an end.

"Bastard..."

At the consecutive events that she could simply not accept, Graziella pointed an annoyed gaze towards Suimei. Seeing this, Suimei shrugged his shoulders.

“Fuu? It seems in that state, you won’t be able to bring forth the devil.”

“... What was that?”

“It’s nothing. If you were able to verify the existence of devils in this world, you could decrease the entropy in the area is all. You would not lose your ability to use magic.”

She did not seem to understand Suimei’s fragmented explanation, but after hearing this, she seemed to realize just who had planned everything that happened here.

“... I will definitely pay you back for this.”

“Of course you will. Next time I will properly beat you to a pulp, so come at me with that in mind.”

Leaving her those words, Suimei walked away from them. Felmenia then ran up to him to meet him ahead of the others. In a quiet voice, she reported her victory happily with all her might.

(Suimei-dono! I did it! I was able to do it just as you explained it!)

(So it went well. As expected of you.)

(Ehehe...)

Felmenia made a slovenly smile as Suimei put his hand on her shoulder. To be that happy from just having her victory acknowledged by Suimei, it was certainly just like her. As Suimei looked at Reiji and the others who were taking care of Liliana, they were making a fuss around Lefille. Seeing that she returned to her original form, they were probably bombarding her with questions. After seeing that figure, Liliana had completely lost her cool and was screaming things like ‘What does this mean!?’ and ‘You’re a fraud!’

On the other hand, Lefille was just going along with all of them. Seeing that Lefille returned to approximately the same height as him, Suimei smiled pleasantly.

“It seems you’ve safely returned to your original form.”

“Yeah, thanks to you.”

As Lefille showed her gratitude, she suddenly embraced Suimei. And then...

“Suimei-kun. Thank you.”

“Heh, eh? Eeeh!?”

“It is all thanks to you that I was able to return to my original body. Including the case in Astel, I cannot thank you enough.”

As Suimei was shaken with surprise, Lefille piled on her gratitude. It was certainly as she said, but Suimei’s mind was in chaos after being embraced like that. Moreover, there was another person who was quite flustered at the turn of events. After a slight delay, Felmenia cried out.

“Wh-what are you doing Lefille!?”

“Ah, no, that’s... I was just gripped by emotion, and, umm...”

Lefille began to fidget as she turned red. She was boiling up in embarrassment to the extent where one had to wonder where her normal gallant self had gone. Eventually, Elliot and Christa came up to Suimei and the others.

“To think that you were someone who was summoned...”

“Oops, you heard what we were talking about? Well, it was just as a bonus, a bonus.”

“Are you in any position to say that? Also, didn’t you say before that Lefille-chan was tiny and couldn’t fight so I couldn’t bring her along? Just how is she not able to fight?”

Hearing Elliot’s words mixed with anger, Suimei played dumb as he replied.

“But you know~, at that time she certainly couldn’t fight right~?”

“Gu...”

“I didn’t really lie right?”

As Suimei showed a devious smile, Elliot put on an annoyed expression as he bluntly spoke back.

“I really do hate you after all.”

“I don’t care if you hate me. But—”

“Yeah, I get it. I will resign myself graciously from this case... At any rate, it seems I’ve only lost repeatedly from this case.”

“Hm? What, didn’t you lose on purpose?”

“When you say something like that I feel that my sense of defeat just piles up.”

“Is that so? I’ll show you my gratitude this time. Thanks.”

As Suimei honestly gave Elliot his thanks, Elliot pouted like he was dissatisfied, but perhaps because he was self-conscious, he had become a bit red. Lefille then turned towards him.

“Elliot-dono. You may not be satisfied with how things turned out. However, the reason Suimei-kun and myself were introduced to each other was also because of the Goddess’ oracle.”

“Is that right? My goodness, just what is going on?”

As one would expect, Elliot didn’t continue and complain about the Goddess. He stopped speaking and only shook his head.

“Elliot-sama.”

“Aah, that’s right. Well then, shall we also return?”

Being urged by Christa’s voice, Elliot turned around and the two of them headed back towards their lodgings at the Salvation Church. It seemed that Graziella, Reanat and their soldiers were also in the middle of returning. Suimei then spoke to Reiji who was drawing nearer with Mizuki and the others.

“I’m in your debt this time around.”

“It’s fine. Don’t worry about it.”

Suimei and Reiji traded a fist bump. And thus, the coma incidents that had been kicking up a fuss in the Imperial Capital and the evening’s battle came to an end.



Late at night, in a church in the Imperial Capital, a single skinny elf man was waiting for someone with unmanageable boredom. The reason he came here

was for the sake of giving a regular report. He would hand over the information he gathered to the person he was meeting with. That's all there was.

However, no matter how much time passed, the person he was waiting for did not show up. The skinny elf was quite high strung, so he would always show up early when they met up. Taking into consideration the time he waited until the regular meeting and the time after that, it was quite considerable. Naturally, due to his nervousness he got irritated quite easily. The tapping of his foot had reached its peak, and he was about to kick a nearby bench when—

“Is somebody there?”

“—!?”

As he was suddenly called, the elf stopped his kick. A soft voice reverberated from deep within the chapel where a statue modelled after the Goddess stood. When he turned around to look, standing there under the skylight and illuminated by the moon, was a therianthrope nun. She walked out from the clean atmosphere of the church towards the man while holding her body like she was protecting her stole. The elf did not expect at all that someone from the church would still be around at this time and stiffened his body. The therianthrope sister called out to him in a sweet voice like that of a cat.

“To come to the church at such a time, do you have some business here?”

“No... I was just using it a little as a place to meet up with someone...”

“Oh my, is that so?”

As he spoke without really making any sort of excuse, the sister let out a gentle smile towards him. Seeing how he entered the church arbitrary, he thought it wouldn't be strange if she was slightly aggravated at him, but it seemed that was not the case. However, this was the first he had heard of someone having a shift at this time at the Salvation Church...

“Umm, Sister, why are you at the church at this kind of time?”

“To speak the truth, just like yourself I am waiting for somebody here.”

Her words should have been kind and gentle. He could hear the characteristic voice that came from a feline therianthrope's throat. However, he felt her

cheerful smile had abruptly fallen into a dark shadow. Seeing that slight change, without knowing why, the elf could feel goosebumps on his skin.

“... What a coincidence, huh?”

“Yes, it truly is.”

The sister’s charming laugh resounded through the room. Hearing her voice, the elf was led to believe that the premonition he just had was a complete misunderstanding. As if talking to a partner in crime, he spoke to her with a vulgar smile on his face.

“Hey, Sister.”

“Yes?”

“By the way, do you mind telling about the one you are waiting for? It’s just that my interest is a little piqued from wondering just what kind of person a Sister would have to meet so late in the night.”

“That is, somewhat hard for me to say though.”

“Could it be your lover?”

The elf man stepped forward with confidence as he closed in on the nun. He did not usually take part in these kinds of conversations, but he had gotten tired of the boredom of waiting for someone. It didn’t matter what it was, he just wanted to amuse himself and kill some time. He was sure the only reason the sister could be meeting someone in secret so late in the night would be for a tryst.

“That’s... Though it is embarrassing...”

Just as he guessed, the sister’s cheeks began to redden.

“—I, have been waiting here for you.”

“Eh—?”

At the same time the skinny elf let out a bewildered voice, the nun’s right hand pierced through his chest. As she pulled her hand out, all the strength left his body. His heart had struck the ground cleanly. His body had become like a rusted puppet as it no longer moved as he willed it and a thick red fluid poured

out of it. All he could do was collapse.

All that he could see as he felt himself being pulled into the abyss, was the figure of the sister with her stole hanging over one hand and her other arm completely dyed red. His consciousness faded as she began licking the blood off her arm.

“Fuu—The elves always extol just how high class their blood is, but its taste is unexpectedly bad huh.”

The therianthrope sister, Clarissa’s disappointed voice reverberated through the interior of the church. Looking at the empty husk of the elf with disdain and she thought from the bottom of her heart that his blood was disgusting, she then turned around as if she had completely lost interest. Behind her, a small shadow appeared.

“...As usual you have quite the nasty way of killing people.”

“Oh my, Jill. You were there?”

“Even though you already noticed... Good grief, you really are shameless. Yeah, I got here just a moment ago.”

The identity of the small shadow was the dwarf woman, Jillbert Griga. She had a body that was about the size of a child from the church’s school, but she was over twenty years in age. Within that small body lied an unimaginable and terrifying amount of physical strength. As if to prove this, she was twirling around a large poleaxe on the tip of her finger like it was a quill pen. The poleaxe was three times as large as her and did not match her appearance at all. However she was carrying it calmly as if it did not weigh anything at all. Before long, Jillbert leaned on her poleaxe and took a seat. Clarissa then raised a question to her.

“What’s the matter?”

“It was terrible... Or rather it couldn’t turn out as anything but terrible. After being sent to the east to fetch drinks, and then on top of that having to take care of that kind of job, that person really does treat their subordinates roughly.”

Jillbert struck her shoulder as she let out a tired sigh. She let out an idle

complaint to somebody who was not present. However, keeping her thoughts on the matter brief, she looked at the corpse of the elf.

“At any rate, is this alright? That guy was supposed to be Romeon’s servant.”

“Not long ago an order was passed down to eliminate both him and Romeon.”

“Hmmm... Is that so?”

A ferocious light dwelt in Jillbert’s eyes. She was like a beast who had found its prey.

“Yes. He had gone too far, and he was too rebellious... That’s why.”

“Hm? I understand the rebellious part, but what do you mean he had gone too far?”

“Jill. At first, you are aware that that person had intended to usher in darkness correct?”

“Yeah. If it was that girl, then she would become quite the asset right? It was for that reason that they first came into contact with Romeon right?”

“Yes. According to the plan we would grant her wish and then usher her in. But using his own judgment he began to use darkness for his own purpose.”

Hearing this, Jillbert let out a grand sigh.

“Haaaa, I see... In the end it turned out like that huh. That’s why I was against it from the beginning you know? I said not to pull in Romeon because he had a vulgar stench to him.”

“Certainly, your nose is quite exceptional.”

“So are we going now? To go bump that guy off.”

“—No, it seems there won’t be a need for that.”

While Clarissa and Jillbert were discussing how the punishment would be dealt out, a man’s voice cut in between them. As the familiar voice arrived, the two of them turned to face him. Standing there was a man with silver horns above his ears, a dragonnewt wearing traditional Japanese-like clothing.

“Oi, you’re late. I’ve never heard of a dragonnewt being so easygoing you know?”

“It’s been so long since I’ve seen the Imperial Capital’s streets, I had gotten a little dizzy.”

The dragonnewt replied frivolously to Jillbert’s criticism. On the other hand, Clarissa greeted him in a cheerful voice like she was greeting a good friend.

“Eanru, it has been a long time. However, what did you mean by there won’t be a need for that?”

“Just a moment ago, Romeon’s overflowing presence weakened. Also, there was an omen of something big coming.”

“...Where from?”

“From the direction of the Imperial University’s library—It’s coming.”

The moment after Eanru finished speaking, they felt the presence of a massive amount of mana and the world began to shake. Pillars of light then began pouring down incessantly from the sky. This abnormal event continued for a while, and eventually the quiet night returned.

“So he kicked the bucket—No, he’s at death door huh... He was completely blown away without a trace without any chance at all.”

“...Oi, dragon, just who did that kind of thing?”

“How should I know? I’m the one who wants to know just what kind of person holds so much power... Fu... To think that in one night, not just one but two people other than the heroes would surpass the power of the Geomancy Emperor.”

“Ah? Two people? What do you mean?”

“It’s just as I said. Right now there is the presence of five different strong presences within the Imperial Capital. One was the one we just saw. Another is around the north gate... It’s probably around where the Geomancy Emperor and the heroes are.”

“Hou...”

After Jillbert’s halfhearted reply, the interior of the church was filled with Eanru’s pleasant laughter.

“You seem to be having fun.”

“Yeah, it’s been a long time since someone appeared who made my blood boil. It makes me excited.”

“Damn battle maniac...”

Jillbert spat out an insult at Eanru’s comment. Though Eanru could only hear such words as a compliment and once more began speaking while still overflowing with joy.

“—Oops. By the way Clarissa, where is Red Pain? Was that man not supposed to come today?”

“Red Pain-dono is still rather busy so he excused himself from today’s gathering.”

“Even though that person is coming? For that man who adores that person just like the two of you to not come, the sky must be falling—Or rather, right now the stars are falling huh? Hahahahaha.”

Eanru’s suddenly laughing on his own was just business as usual. Clarissa did not mind at all as she just stood there as she was. As for Jillbert, she began to speak of that Red Pain’s situation.

“There’s still a few complications left within the area. Those demons are closing in real flashily after all. Because of that he was detained for a while.”

“Demons huh. But didn’t the hero subjugate them?”

“Seems that wasn’t true.”

“Hohou”

“Well setting that aside... It’s the cleanup which is taking up more time. That country is precious to Red Pain after all.”

“I see. Those who have many obligations are quite troubled. Well— that’s why he’s strong despite being a human.”

“That’s really all you’re on about today...”

As Eanru began laughing again, Jillbert could only sigh once more. As opposed to being astonished it was more that she was just getting tired. However, in a

complete change, Jillbert pointed a sharp gaze towards Clarissa.

“So, Clara. What will we do about Romeon’s successor? If we don’t fill in the hole he made it will become a hindrance to our progress.”

“That has already been taken care of.”

“Who is it?”

“I also had someone in mind that I suggested, but on top of apologizing for this case, it seems that they invited someone they had their eyes on much more than that before.”

“Their eyes on...? Like I thought, is it someone who uses darkness?”

“No. Darkness is being put on hold. They will come in contact with us another day.”

Eanru then joined in on the conversation.

“So? Is that guy someone who holds enough power to match us in a fight?”

“It seems their capabilities will not be a problem. After their business finishes, it seems they will meet with us on their own.”

“What are our plans from here?”

“Apparently we are to head towards the Saadias Alliance.”

“... Really. If they were just going to send us back there was no need to call us here in the first place...”

As Eanru let out his astonishment from wasting his effort, Jillbert stared at him like he was out of line.

“Didn’t you just say you were all excited?”

“Yeah, now that you mention it. You’ve got me there.”

Eanru once more burst into laughter as Jillbert shook her head. Looking away from him like she had completely given up on him, she turned to Clarissa.

“Why are we going back to the Alliance?”

“It seems that the demons who slipped into Astel made the schedule slip.”

“Slip, huh...”

Jillbert couldn't figure it out from just those words. She was trying to consider just what kind of effect a slip had from here on out. Clarissa who was told this directly, Eanru and also Red Pain who wasn't currently present surely also did not know. Everything was within that person's head. Even so, having nothing more to talk about, Jillbert took her weapon and began to walk back home. Eanru was all of a sudden at the exit of the church. The corpse that was at their feet had also suddenly vanished.

“Well then everyone, once you have completed your preparations, head to the Alliance.”

As Clarissa's voice stopped ringing in the air, the church was once more completely silent.

Epilogue I: As Long as One Smiles

“Good grief, just what could this mean...”

While knitting his brows, Suimei came to the entrance of the alley leading to his base. The reason for his words was because of the confusing news the knights who went to do reconnaissance brought back with them.

Yesterday, Suimei and the others managed to defeat the mastermind Romeon safely and cleared the suspicions against Liliana. Suimei was thinking about his plans from hereon out after pulling an all nighter as surprising information came fluttering to him. A moment ago, when a bell rang throughout the city, the husk of Romeon’s body was tied to a stake in the southern plaza. That was still fine. The Empire had a need to declare to the public that the criminal behind the coma incidents was caught. Even though their response was fast, it wasn’t something unthinkable.

The other thing they reported was about the leaflets passed around to the citizens informing them of the circumstances around the incident. It was written that the fact that Liliana was a culprit was a mistake. Not only that, it was written that for the sake of capturing the true criminal Romeon, despite bearing that sin and running about, she took a role in his capture. This was also not an unbelievable outcome. The upper echelon of the Empire needed to fabricate an appropriate reason as to why they were unable to capture one who was at the time considered the culprit. However, the fact that official notice came out before even a day had passed and gone as far as to alleviate the sentiments the citizens had towards Liliana could only leave Suimei with his head cocked to the side.

Right now the Imperial Capital was in a far calmer state than when Suimei had arrived. No matter who they talked to, favourable words towards Liliana were overflowing. It was as if all the animosity towards Liliana up until now had completely vanished. On top of that, there were even talks of the nobles who were in a coma regaining consciousness leaving Suimei completely stumped. Lefille, who was standing behind Suimei, lifted the brim of her hat and squinted her eyes.

“What an odd story. This is of course the result of something Suimei did right?”

“I can’t do that kind of thing. Posting about Romeon on a notice board is easy, but to do something like changing the sentiments of the citizens of the Imperial Capital is frankly speaking absurd you know?”

To manipulate the sentiments of an entire city in the span of only a couple of hours was a ridiculous story. The only technique Suimei could think of which could accomplish this was to place magic on the notice board to overwrite the sentiments of anyone who saw it. In a sense it would use the words to infect the populace. The question then was whether the upper echelon of the Empire had a reason to prepare such an elaborate notice board.

It wasn’t completely impossible to do, but they had no reason to do so. In the first place it was also questionable if they had the technology to do so. Naturally there was also doubts as to how they would be able to hide the fact that magic was applied to the notice board. To be able to carry all this out so conveniently was frankly just impossible. Therefore, Suimei was planning to leave the Imperial Capital while things had cooled down.

“Suimei-kun. It seems nothing will come out of thinking about it more.”

“I’m not completely convinced, but I guess we can only give up on finding the answer...”

As he returned to the base with Lefille in tow, Reiji, Felmenia and the others were on their way out. Seeing Suimei come back, Reiji spoke up to him.

“Suimei, like we thought?”

“Yeah.”

As Suimei confirmed briefly that what the knights had told them was indeed the truth, Reiji’s expression naturally became quite stern. With a wrinkle between his brows, he let out a dubious groan.

“... What does it all mean?”

“Who knows? Even if I think about it I don’t get it, so I ended up just giving up on finding the answer.”

“... Is that really alright?”

“It obviously isn’t. It isn’t, but there’s nothing I can do about it.”

“... Hey, could it be that person’s doing?”

“Rogue-san huh...”

It was certainly possible to think that Rogue was moving around in the shadows, but it was difficult to imagine him managing so much on his own. Besides, he was most likely no longer in the Imperial Capital.

“Well, it’s fine isn’t it? With this the people of the city don’t have to live in fear anymore so it’s gotten better at least.”

“Suimei, that’s kind of irresponsible...”

Reiji drooped his shoulders in astonishment. Suimei was also racking his brains over just what was going on and it left a sense of discomfort he couldn’t get out of his stomach. They had managed to settle Liliana’s case this time, but there were still portions he did not understand. There was also the matter of how Romeon came to know about savage names. There was nothing left in Romeon’s memories that pointed towards that either.

Suimei felt like things were in motion somewhere he couldn’t see. However, he wasn’t yet able to judge whether those were good or bad things...

“Also, all of you. Sorry for being so sudden, but in two or three days I’ll have all of you leave this place.”

Hearing this sudden demand to have them depart, Mizuki questioned him in a surprised tone.

“W-wait a sec Suimei-kun! That’s too sudden! Besides, since Liliana-chan’s problem has been solved, there’s no need for Suimei-kun and the others to leave the Imperial Capital right?”

“That’s true. But we’ll be going to the Saadias Alliance soon, so I’m telling you to decide on somewhere to stay while you’re in the Imperial Capital.”

“The Alliance? The self governed states? Why?”

As Mizuki tilted her head to the side, Reiji answered her as a thought came to mind.

“Could it be, to find a way to go back to our world?”

“That’s right. There was something like that written in the book Menia brought over to me earlier.”

Hearing that from nearby, Titania pointed a reproachful look towards Suimei.

“Suimei. You say you’re looking for a way back, but you’re not saying that once you find a way back you intend to just leave Liliana behind on her own right?”

Titania’s words towards Suimei were filled with more thorns than ever before. It was only natural. On one hand Suimei was saying that he would look after Liliana. On the other he was saying he wanted to go back to his world. If one were to hear one after the other, they were contradictory statements. But Suimei had also properly thought about this as well.

“Of course I’m not saying that. Once I find a way back I’ll take Liliana with me and properly look after her. It’s only reasonable that I do something until she is able to stand on her own after all.”

“Th-that’s, obvious. If Suimei left me and went on his own, it would be a problem!”

“I said it’ll be fine.”

“It’s absolute, absolute right?”

Liliana was yelling in a fluster as she worriedly questioned Suimei. Beside her, like she had found some new material to attack Suimei with, Mizuki looked at him with a broad grin.

“She’s really attached to you right~”

“You really have to say that each and every time...”

It was their usual exchange, Mizuki prodded at him and Suimei replied like she was off the mark. Suddenly, Felmenia stepped forward.

“S-Suimei-dono.”

As she called out to him, she pointed a gaze towards him like she was appealing for something. Perhaps she was saying that she was also one of his

students. Her eyes were shaking slightly with anxiety. Which could only mean...

“Does Menia also want to come?”

“Y-yes! Of course! If it reaches the point where I can come and go, then without fail!”

As he asked her, she vigorously and delightfully replied as if something extraordinarily good had happened. Suimei then looked over his shoulder and asked Lefille.

“What about Lefi?”

As he looked for confirmation, she slightly puffed out her cheeks like she was pouting.

“It’s already decided that I’ll go. How cold of you.”

“I see.”

Lefille was also someone without a single living relative. If she had no place to go back to in this world, Suimei thought it may very well be nice to just bring her along to the other world. As their conversation finished, Suimei headed towards the entrance to the house on his own. And then for some reason, Felmenia came bobbing up and down like a puppy behind him. As he stopped at the door and looked back, she began speaking.

“Suimei-dono. There’s something I’d like to ask you.”

“What is it?”

“It’s about what you told me about yesterday, mystical entropy.”

“Aah, that? It’s quite complicated after all, if you have any questions just keep them coming.”

Suimei was about to enter the house and had his hand on the doorknob. Felmenia came in behind him and seemed to be stumped on something as she had her head tilted to the side.

“Even if one increases entropy, the ratio of ‘the components which establish mystical laws’ and ‘the components which establish physical laws’ will return to normal right?”

“Yeah. It’s just as I described yesterday, is something wrong with that?”

“—But Suimei-dono. If that is the case, then wouldn’t it be possible to continuously use magic to the point where all physical laws in the world are disordered?”

Hearing those words, Suimei stayed standing there with his back turned away from her. With his hand still on the doorknob, his body stiffened—or rather, it was more like time had completely stopped for him and he wasn’t moving.

“...”

“Suimei-dono?”

Felmenia wasn’t sure what was going on. If it was Suimei, she was sure he would reply right away, so his current behaviour was strange. She thought that perhaps it was something he didn’t actually know.

“What will you do by knowing that?”

“E-even if you say what I will do... Was it something I should not have asked?”

“No, that’s not it... It’s something about our world, so I didn’t think it had much to do with you.”

“... Does it not have something to do with this world as well?”

“I can’t say it unconditionally. Well, as long as humans are around, there’s an eighty or ninety percent chance...”

“...?”

Felmenia was unable to firmly grasp what Suimei was talking about. As she knit her brows, Suimei began to answer her initial question.

“... Just as Menia said, even when ‘the components which establish mystical laws’ and the ‘components which establish physical laws’ mix, the large amount of ‘components which establish physical laws’ in the surrounding space will bring the physical laws back into equilibrium. However, the mixing of components is an irreversible phenomenon, it isn’t like the components which mixed together returned to their original state.”

“Yes. In that case, if one continues to use magic, would the world eventually

become one where the laws become disordered?”

“That’s right. Even though it returns to its previous state, the place that humans occupy is a closed world. The time where scientific laws, natural order, natural phenomena and the common sense held by humans all end up at threat will definitely come. Until then, humans would have to find a means of running away from it, or perhaps if they manage to solve the mysteries of the cosmos...”

“Mysteries of the cosmos.... you say?”

However, Suimei did not answer her question. Instead he continued explaining in concepts that Felmenia understood.

“The world is made of physical laws known as the ‘theory of universal eternity,’ if those laws are disordered, no matter how many experiments are run using those laws as a foundation, they would be unable to get any results. In other words, at that point, humanity would no longer be able to develop science any further. And then, when scientific development comes to a stop, the profits from similar academic pursuits would vanish and their development would also stop. In the end, even the development of magic would end as it is based on the knowledge of the world.”

Like he was just rattling on, Suimei continued to explain things on his own. Felmenia had chills like it was something she should not have touched upon. Her expression was filled with tension and fear. However, despite that, Suimei continued talking.

“When the development of knowledge is lost, humanity will be unable to attain new knowledge and nothing new will be born. That kind of world is the same as dead. As long as the concept of time exists in the world, humans will always be in a position where they are unable to escape the progress of time. If they lose the ability to oppose the flow of time and create new things, the only course before them would be to slowly die. A world without development is nothing more than a rotten world. In other words, this final moment would be when mystical entropy overflows.”

Suddenly, an icy feeling crawled down Felmenia’s back. Suimei was alluding to things that should be unrelated to this world, but even so her back convulsed from the chills.

“... If so, then is magic something that should not exist?”

“No, that’s not the case. Whether or not magic exists, it means that both mystical and physical laws must be kept in balance.”

“Then, is that possible?”

“It’s impossible.”

Suimei cut down that hope in an instant. Felmenia looked at him with anxiety in her eyes.

“I believe I talked about it when that phenomenon of the end of the world appeared in Astel. The end is predetermined. If magic continues to develop, then the development of the world will come to an end. If science continues to develop, eventually the world’s resources will dry up and the world will meet its end from heat. Of course if humanity spreads too much, one could think of them as overflowing the container known as the world. The pent up resentment I talked about before would gather up and accelerate the deterioration of the entire world. The use of resources and the development of knowledge, even in a world where the population is controlled, it will end in a world where development ceases. Either way, all born into the world is destined to perish.”

There was no hope. Having understood those words, Felmenia was unable to speak. Even if what Suimei was talking about was something in the distant future, it did not change the fact that everyone in that world would one day meet their end in vain as they went mad.

“As long as humans are an intelligent life form, I believe it is very likely that this world, just like ours, is one ruled by the ‘theory of universal eternity.’ If you think about it like that...”

“Our world will also, one day end in destruction?”

As Suimei turned around, Felmenia was standing there with a face like she was asking what they should do. Just like a teacher looking at a troubled student, he smiled gently towards her.

“Well, there’s no reason to be so pessimistic about it. Certainly, the end of the world is predetermined making it a worthless world. But even so—”

As he said that, Suimei beckoned Liliana who was surrounded by Reiji and the others. Seeing that, Liliana slipped out of the circle and came towards Suimei.

“Suimei, what’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing really, there’s the case of looking for a means to return to my world, but after all I think we should look for Rogue too. Having to stay separated from him like this, you hate it right?”

“Ah... Yes!”

As Suimei gently stroked her head, she had gotten bashful. Seeing that from a distance, Reiji and the other pointed a warm and pleasant smile towards him.

“Ah—”

Having figured out what Suimei was trying to say, Felmenia raised her voice. Seeing this, Suimei put on a smile with a tranquil heart.

“Even if the world is worthless, if even a little of the world could stay in a state where everyone could smile, isn’t that a good thing?”

Epilogue II: Man of Mirages

While running through the Imperial Capital at night, Rogue Zandyke recalled the first time he met Liliana. The time he met her was when he had gone to suppress an incident that was happening in a small village. At that time, the intelligence branch of the army had yet to be established. Rogue was just an officer in the military. Having caught wind of an ominous ritual taking place in a village in the northern part of the Empire, he took his subordinates with him and headed there.

He was not sure what exactly the ritual entailed, but after the ritual finished, an ominous being appeared in the vicinity and the corpses of many children began to pop up. After investigating the nearby villages, they learned it was a tradition passed down for a long time. Every year, they would sacrifice cursed children to an evil being who was different from the evil god Zechariah.

When they arrived at the village in question, they were in the middle of performing the ritual. Magic circles were drawn in blood all over the village. The ritual involved all the people of the village, and they were in an ominous situation where they were all spouting hateful words. All those hateful words were pointed towards a single person.

That person was Liliana, who was still a small child. Even her actual parents who should have been affectionate were spouting hatred towards that child. They all treated her like a monster. At a shrine where the ritual took place, they were crowding around Liliana as she curled up and trembled. He could remember the beast like glitter of her eye.

When they tried to stop the ritual, the villagers attacked them. They said that if the ritual did not take place, then evil would assault the village. By the time they realized, the villagers had all lost their minds. Perhaps it was an effect of Liliana's darkness. Rogue did not know whether this was simply the madness of the villagers or something more. However, he strongly thought that it must not be. Crowding around a small child and stripping away her happiness could not be allowed. It was not something people should do. After suppressing the rampaging villagers, the shaman at the centre of the ritual left Rogue with

words as he was on the verge of death.

“—That girl is a child with the natural ability to curse others. Eventually all of humanity will be harmed by her.”

Now that he thought about it, those words left by the shaman may have been a curse in of itself when Rogue took Liliana with him. Because those words were always in the corner of his mind, he must also have thought deep down that she was a cursed child. And then after being defeated by that curse, he no longer had the qualifications to remain with Liliana. He had regrets from never being able to meet her again, but even so if he entrusted her to that young man who had always believed in her, she would surely be able to live happily.

The young man had told him, even if he was not connected by blood, if he was that girl's father, then he should act as her father until the end. He should believe in his own family. That was the source of the young man's anger. However, Rogue was unable to believe in her. Completely caught up only in what was happening, he had abandoned the girl he had saved himself.

“...”

As he looked back at the place he was running from, Liliana's voice rang in his head.

—Colonel. Why do you always have to take nothing but painful jobs?

When he thought about it, Liliana may have always sympathized with him.

—Colonel. If I become a soldier, would I become useful to you?

When he thought about it, Liliana may have wholeheartedly wanted to be of help to him.

—Colonel. Why do the nobles, hate you so much?

Yes, when he thought about it, the things she asked him was always said in concern towards him.

He was ostracized by the nobles. Because she heard of this, she figured out what was happening to Rogue. Liliana was a smart child after all. That's why, she must have thought of saving him this time. It was laughable. To think that he would only understand her thoughtfulness and sorrow after all this time. No,

that was exactly why he had no qualifications to be next to her.

He no longer had the heart to criticize that girl. Surely that brilliant radiance from the falling stars had washed everything away. However, it was not yet over. He still had something that he must do. If Liliana was to live in tranquility and peace, the source of evil known as the nobles would have to be taken care of. Even if that young man was with her, some sort of retribution would surely await them. And so, as the one who drove Liliana to such violence, he had to make his move. Holding those thoughts in his heart, he quietly looked at the sky.

“Even though I have the desire, I doesn’t go well...”

Just why was this world so hard only on those who were weak? It only granted pain to those who lived properly and stole their happiness away. As he asked this of something far off in the sky, there was no presence of any answer coming back to him.

“—One of the Seven Swords, a Colonel of the Imperial Army’s Intelligence Branch, Rogue Zandyke-dono correct?”

As he heard that voice, he lowered his gaze. Having appeared from somewhere right in front of him was a single man. With long light purple hair, it was a man with a somewhat transient atmosphere. His clothing was unfamiliar to Rogue, yet it was still somehow elegant. He was quite skinny, but even under those flowing clothes that looked like they belonged to some country’s noble, Rogue could sense that his body was trained. As Rogue thrust a vigilant gaze towards that man, he questioned him without any context.

“What do you think of this world?”

Not knowing what this man’s intentions were at all by asking that kind of question, Rogue returned a question back to him.

“What do you mean?”

“Do you not also think that the way of this world is simply irrational?”

“ ... ”

Feeling like he had the thoughts deep in his heart seen through completely,

Rogue's body stiffened for an instant. However, he quickly regained his composure and warded off the man's words as nonsense.

"There's no way I would have complaints about the world the Goddess Alshuna made."

"That is a falsehood."

"Why do you think so?"

As he asked the man who had a face like he already knew everything, the man replied with the exact same facial expression.

"Is it not? If it is not a falsehood, then those times you thought of your daughter as you begged the Goddess in prayer every day for a wish that would never be granted would end up being the falsehood."

"So you know about that..."

Taken aback by the man's conjecture, Rogue ended up acknowledging what he said. It was just as he said. He prayed for Liliana's body that was being eaten away to be healed by the Goddess. Every morning without fail he would walk over to the Salvation Church. However no matter how much he prayed, in the end his wish never got through.

"Though it may be presumptuous, I do believe I understand your feelings towards the world."

As he said this, the man pointed his cold grey eyes right at Rogue.

"This miniature garden created by the Goddess is made to be irrational. Is that not why demons exist? The existence of the Goddess itself is a cluster of irrationality after all."

In this world where the Goddess was worshipped as virtuous, this man was showing contempt for her existence without an ounce of hesitation. He must have had a reason he could claim this so loudly despite the fact that if anyone heard him there was no mistake he would be treated as suspicious immediately.

"Zandyke-dono. I would like you to lend us your power."

"What do you intend to do with my power?"

“You already know. If the Goddess spreads irrationality, we will break down the intentions of the Goddess and change the world.”

The words coming out of the man’s mouth were akin to scheming to drag the Goddess down from her seat. Anyone who heard it would be confused. This also applied to Rogue. His voice as he questioned the man was filled with bewilderment.

“Ridiculous. Do you mean to kill the Goddess? That kind of uncertain thing can’t be done right?”

“I mean to understand it. And to grant that desire, I would like your support.”

Rogue stared at the man in front of him. He stood before him, spoke ill of the Goddess and sought his support. Rogue felt like this man looked firm as a rock in his beliefs. He would change this world. He would correct the irrationality of it. There was something there that made one think he was not just a swindler.

Right now, Rogue had nowhere to go and nobody waiting for him. He had not thought at all about what he would do after he finished doing what he must. However, what this man was suggesting, to break down what had been causing Rogue to lament in grief, may not have been a bad proposition to hop on to. Preparing to give a nod to the man, Rogue began to speak at ease.

“Then there is one thing that I would like to ask.”

“Speak.”

“It is about my daughter. Right now, there is a threat to her that must be cleared away. I want it removed as soon as possible. If it is done, I will give you my sword.”

Rogue presented his conditions. He knew it was an unreasonable demand, but if this man was intending to defy god, then such a request would be simple. Or rather, if he could accomplish this easily, then all his big talk wouldn’t just be for show. His request was mixed in with a test, however the man nodded without the slightest hesitation.

“I have received your wish. By tomorrow morning, all those who would shun Liliana Zandyke will vanish from this Imperial Capital.”

He made a declaration. Rogue had no idea just what was backing this man's confidence, but he would know come the morning. Thinking of this, he realized there was still something he had to ask.

"My apologies, but one more thing."

"What is it?"

"I did not hear the name of the one I'll be lending my sword to."

Hearing this, a smile suddenly floated onto the man's face. Was it simply joy, or perhaps he was truly happy? Rogue could not catch the subtleties of his expression, but the man quietly opened his mouth.

"My name is Gottfried. I would also like you to call me so."

The man—Gottfried said this as he turned around and left.