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Illustration

新堂アラタ

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軍師は
何を知っている

The
strategist
knows
everything

The Strategist Knows Everything

Gunshi wa Nandemo Shitteiru

Arc 1: The Rebellion

by Tanba

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Chapter 1: The Beginning

Part 1

As I watched the troops going in and out of the castle with weary eyes, I let out a large sigh.

“Am I really suited for this...?”

There is no one around me. There is a reason for this but in actuality, even if I brought someone along, they would just be teared off by the forces that will be entering the castle.

That is almost a certainty so there's no one with me. Though I don't know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing.

From the balcony, I turned my back from watching the troops leaving the castle. There is a seat at the middle of the room reserved for the highest ranking person. The owner of the seat who should have been sitting there already is nowhere to be seen.

I'll allow you to have your final break, I thought as I took off the black coat covering my body and placed it on the chair's armrest.

The coat is not mine. A friend who said, “Return it no matter what,” lent it to me.

I sat on the chair and was seized with drowsiness caused by fatigue. ‘How did

it come to this?' I thought while I tried to fight against it, and my consciousness went towards the past.



This is sudden but I, Kurei Yukito, is not a human from this world.

I am an eighteen years old male. A country bumpkin from Niigata who left for the capital to study in Tokyo U.

I am taking up History. I have no particular attachment to it, but I thought History seems interesting when I read a book about it so I picked History.

I have always liked reading since a long time ago. It came to the point that when my mother taught me how to read during childhood, I take the book for myself.

The adverse effect of it is that I have few friends. I considered reading more interesting than talking to other people.

My friends did not increase with the mentality I have, but I was satisfied with it. That is because I am basically content as long as I have books with me.

Even though I am like that, there is one guy I can call my best friend. He's a very cheerful and talkative guy. His stories are very interesting probably because he always searched for fun things and had various experiences.

He had many friends by his side, but he meets me regularly in university lectures and forcibly takes me to drinking parties despite us being underage — I was never alone.

To be frank, I longed for that. I had never met someone who could make friends with others and enjoys life like that guy, his smile was dazzling.

That's why, I thought it was a joke when that same guy pointed a kitchen knife to me, at least until the moment he pierced my heart with it.

I am going to die, I knew this for some reason. It felt hot but there was no

pain.

The guy I thought to be my best friend looked at both his bloodied hands, dumbfounded. But he immediately called for an ambulance while sobbing.

It may be ridiculous for the guy who stabbed the victim to call for the ambulance himself, but that guy has always been amusing.

“Sorry, please somehow,” he muttered repeatedly. “I don’t mind,” I tried to say, but I never got the chance as my consciousness was engulfed by darkness.

I haven’t performed my filial duties yet, there’s still a lot of books I haven’t read. I have a lot of regrets, but the thing I regret the most is not noticing the change in the guy whom I consider my best friend. There should be hints somewhere but I only have my eyes turned to books and did not notice.

If I am someone who can understand people’s minds, I can become better at connecting with other people.

It would not end up like this.

At least, if afterlife exists, I want to be someone who can understand human beings well. I sunk into deep darkness as I strongly wished for that.



In the deep darkness, I heard a small but clear sound.

I understood that it was some kind of musical instrument. I was going to check what it was and woke up on a shabby bed.

“Where is this place?”

I do not know why but I, despite receiving a fatal wound in modern Japan, woke up in a different world without any scratch. I had the same white shirt and black trousers I was wearing when I got stabbed.

The moment I said ‘where is this place?’ I knew it was a different world because it was written in the flickering screen floating in front of me.

【Parallel World • Fortuna. An oceanic world where small islands and the huge continent Rodinia floats. This place is the Territory of Earl Yuren, located further south of Veris Kingdom, at southern Rodinia.】

The screen is rectangular similar to menu screens in games, and it disappeared with a flicker as soon as I finished reading everything.

What the heck is this? I thought, and the screen came out again.

“What? Obtutus Skill. A skill able to assess various non-visible information. The embodiment of Kurei Yukito’s wish...”

<Note: Obtutus – Latin word *i.e.* gaze, seeing or looking.>

What a convenient ability. A dictionary containing virtually everything.

Still, it’s true that I wanted to be someone who can understand human beings well. I wished for it.

I intended it for afterlife, but achieving it in a different world is also fine. A miscalculation is a miscalculation, let’s leave that aside.

“But what I meant by understanding people is knowing the significance of their minds’ inner workings or changes in facial expressions, like that...”

While saying that, I thought ‘I want to see my own information’. The screen

appeared again. However, the method of display is different this time.

A while ago it was split into top and bottom, the top containing the question I thought the explanation is written below. This time it's divided into four parts, with several words and numerical values written down respectively.

“Strength is 5... what garbage...!”

I understood the meaning of the words at once as I ran my eyes over them but I was shocked when I saw the numbers. It's true that I did not trained my body but I did manual labor in my part-time job and I have a healthy body that never got cold. For my strength to be a one-digit number, unbelievable!

“Oh? You've woken up.”

The door of the room opened, and an elderly person with gray hair entered. A menu screen opened up right away. It's seems like it immediately reacts to my doubts.

The old person's Strength is 7. It's higher than mine.



The person who opened the door and entered the room is Gordo Hazard-san. He's 73 years old. His straight back muscles and seemingly gentle eyes are impressive. For some reason, he's stronger than me.

Aside from knowing his name and age, I am also thankful that I can understand the language.

Gordo-san said I was found collapsed on the roadside and he took care of me, apparently I've been sleeping for two straight days.

“No, I’m glad you’re awake. I was thinking you would never wake up.”

“I’m sorry to have troubled you. Thank you very much.”

I sat up on the bed and bowed deeply as much as possible. I suppose I would be dead by now if it weren’t for this kind person so it’s not enough no matter how much I bowed my head.

“It’s true that I was the one who nursed you, but the person who found you is different.”

“Is that so? Then I’m grateful to that person, too.”

“Well, meeting him is difficult. It’s because Diorood-sama is a Prince of Veris Kingdom.”

“Prince!?”

To think that a Prince rescued me. My impression of Princes is that they’re generally spoiled and selfish guys but it appears there are also exceptions. Though I never met a prince before.

“He has a weak body. He’s here in the territory of Earl Yuren to recuperate.”

“He does? Is he already better?”

“No, the Prince’s health will probably never improve. But he’s raising an army,

you know? For his father. His Majesty, King of Veris.”

Gordo-san said while sadly casting his eyes down. In the first place, it's more surprising that this world is that dangerous.

A screen suddenly flickered into appearance. Written there is the current state of this world.

Gordo-san cannot see the screen. He should have some reaction if he can see it.

I skimmed the present condition of this world.

In summary, there was originally a huge country named Rodinia Kingdom in this world. Right now, this huge Kingdom is divided and in the middle of something similar to Warring States Period.

I got transported to a troublesome era. It's basically difficult to live in a period like this. Rather than having confidence in my own abilities, my fighting power is... I feel sorry for myself.

“From your hair color, are you from the Insulae? Why are you in the continent? Didn't you know that the continent is in the middle of wars so it's dangerous?”

“That is... I myself don't know that. It's also a mystery to me why I am here.”

“Did you lose your memories? Or were you brought against your will? Either way, you need to have the basics for everyday life...”

I can't let Gordo-san continue taking care of me. An atmosphere that makes it difficult to speak surrounded us. He already looked after me for two days. I can't take advantage of him anymore. I tried to say that I will leave voluntarily, but I was interrupted by the sudden opening of the door.

“Diorood-sama!?”

“Excuse me. Old man. I heard your discussion. I will take him under my custody.”

He had blond hair and high-class clothes mostly black in color. His height is probably around upper 160s, same as mine. His gentle smile is striking.

A screen appeared indicating his name 【Diorood Arkwright】, together with various stats.

“Wha—!?”

“Is there something wrong?”

“N-no, it’s just, I didn’t think I can meet the Prince. I was told the Prince kindly rescued me. I am really grateful.”

I am truly grateful, but the reason for my surprise is different. The stats are too outrageous. All are above eighty. Everything from Strength, Intelligence, Charm and others. As one would expect from a Prince. They’re too out of standards.

“I— rather, it’s was my pleasure.”

I took Diorood-sama’s hand without even knowing the meaning of accepting it. I never imagined it was the greatest turning point.

<Note: Dio changed from informal ‘ore’ to formal ‘watashi’.>

Part 2

I am riding the carriage enroute to Earl Yuren's castle together with Diorood-sama. To be honest, I wanted to wait for another day since I'm still healing but I did my best to push my sluggish body since Diorood-sama is busy.

Across me, Diorood-sama sat while staring intently at my face with his red eyes, or rather, he's looking at my eyes.

"Yukito. Is your eye and hair color natural?"

"Eh? Ah, yes. I had these eyes and hair since I was born. It's the first time someone asked me that question."

"Sorry. It is just a very unusual color in the continent. I heard that only those from the Insulae have black hair and eyes."

"I see. There were only people with similar coloring around me. I was never regarded as unusual or attracted attention."

As I said that, I saw information about the Insulae Diorood-sama mentioned through my skill.

【Insulae. Islands surrounding Rodinia Continent. As marine technology developed, interaction between islands became prosperous, but not much with the continent. A unique culture formed and all people on these islands have black hair and eyes.】

I see. Is it something like Japan? That must be unusual. If they saw someone

they never saw before, it won't be strange for them to kick up a fuss.

"I like black. It's strange, isn't it?"

"How so? Even 'black' has various types. There are shades of black that fascinate people and there are also those that transmit fear to them."

"Fufu. It was the right decision to appoint you as my Advisor. Everyone always reply they also like black when I tell them that. It isn't amusing, you know?"

Following the prince's question with flattery is only natural. Even I am breaking cold sweat right now. That was close. I replied without reservations.

"Do you hate flattery?"

"I hate Father. He only has ears for favorable words. That is why I hate words said for convenience."

"I understand. I'll make sure to use that knowledge properly."

"I do not mind if you talk normally. I do not mind you hurling abusive words at me. If you are angry because that's your true feelings, then I will receive them without complaints."

"You do know I can always say words opposite my real intentions?"

"Then that is just the result of me not having a discerning eye. I will resign

myself to that.”

Diorood-sama said with a smile as he made himself comfortable on the carriage seat.

I’m no match for him. Could this be what they call ‘royalty’? His self-confidence is staggering. Is it because it’s backed up by great effort, or is it talent? At least, I saw a King at Diorood-sama’s figure.

“I’d like to ask one question.”

“By all means.”

“Why are you... raising an army?”

I wiped my hand that became damp with cold sweat on my trousers. I was worried whether it was too impolite, but Diorood-sama’s smile did not falter.

“I said it before. I hate Father. I am not pleased with everything he has been doing. Therefore, I am raising an army. Well, only Earl Yuren supports me though.”

“Going to that extent...to the King who’s your father, that...”

“He’s a useless man. Both as a King and a human.”

I wondered about the King of Veris but no screen came out. Maybe I need to

see the person directly.

For now, I'll learn about the King. Though it seems like I won't make progress at that. Diorood-sama is obviously annoyed. He probably really hate the King.

“As a human, too... has he also stepped off that path?”

“The man who tried to lay his hand on his biological daughter? It would be an insult to label him as a human being similar to us.”

Pardon...?

Right now, I feel like I just heard something terrible. Laying a hand on his biological daughter, is what I heard.

My expression must have been ridiculous. Astonishment, fear and confusion, my mind is in so much chaos that my facial expression cannot keep up.

“Father's specialty is war. He has been undefeated since his first campaign. He likes beautiful women. Anyone will do as long as they are beautiful. The envoy of peace who came, his fellow soldier's daughter, and even his own daughter.”

“...No one said anything?”

“Everyone who opposed are already in their graves. Other countries also do not want to become targets. So recently, he has been doing anything he wants. For trade, for friendship, for marriage, everyone passing by the country for various reasons are being checked. And if there is a beautiful woman, she will be taken to the castle.”

Did no word of this got out? That's overdoing it no matter how you look at it. Other countries must have made alliances if the King did something like that.

"Weren't there any countries who cooperated and made alliances?"

"Twenty three years ago, when the King was fifteen. Father annihilated the allied forces of foreign countries three times. There are a lot of small countries surrounding Veris. These small countries are just nuisances while strong nations which can challenge Veris alone cannot intervene."

I cannot follow with the geographic discussion. As soon as I thought I want a map, a screen rose to surface.

It is really a convenient skill. Even the map is fully-detailed.

Near the bottom of the screen, there are lands and seas written with Veris. On top of it, there are also three small countries.

No wonder. Veris is facing the sea so war potential is basically concentrated on one border. Are these three upper countries small nations?

"It's a troublesome country. All the more that it's powerful."

"So you took action?"

"The whole time, I kept it in my heart. However, I heard about the talks that my older sister was called to the bedroom. It's not for the citizens' sake nor for the country. I am raising an army for the selfish reason that I do not want to hand over my sister to that man. Fufu. It's ridiculous, don't you agree?"

"It's not ridiculous at all! It's not ridiculous to want to protect someone

important to you or to try to protect them. I think it's a noble act that no one has the right to laugh at."

I said it reflexively. I said something absurdly embarrassing. Diorood-sama is also surprised. I've done it. It wouldn't come as a surprise that I'm writhing in agony inside the carriage, either.

"Ha, haha— hahaha! Yukito! You're right! I also think so! What am I worried about... I can't turn back anymore. I can only go straight ahead the path I've chosen! Thanks, Yukito! You have taken it off my chest!"

Diorood-sama grasped both my shoulders with strength that is contrary to his fragile appearance and said that happily.

"I-I'm happy to be of help..."

"Well, there are a lot of things to do. I will go around to persuade lords and personally appeal to participate in the army! Yukito! Follow me entirely!"

"A-alright...also, Diorood-sama."

"Dio is fine. Everyone close to me call me that."

"Then, Dio-sama. Where is Dio-sama's sister? Shouldn't we hide her immediately?"

"Ah, I haven't told you. I have three older sisters. Two among them already fled outside the country. My sister that Father is aiming at..."

Dio-sama paused there and slowly sighed. Why is he sighing at this moment?

“Dio-sama?”

“Yes, that, my sister that he’s aiming at is... an enemy...”

“Pardon..?”

“Holding military ability that surpasses even my Father, named as Black Princess (Kurohime) feared by other countries, the current General-in-chief of Veris. Kaguya Halberd. That is my sister and the woman Father wants to conquer.”

A person with abilities like that doesn’t need rescuing, right? I almost blurted that out without thinking.

Or rather, did his sister opposed to go along the revolt?

But I have one question.

“Dio-sama’s last name is Arkwright but your sister’s is Halberd?”

“The royal family is Halberd. Arkwright is from my mother’s side. Besides, the man who wages war against them cannot call himself as Halberd.”

While I hesitated on what to say after Dio-sama shrugged his shoulders and said that as if he was making a joke, the sound of someone approaching and a voice calling Dio-sama become audible.



“The envoy of Albion was attacked by the King’s army.”

The person running on horseback parallel to the carriage reported shortly to Dio-sama. Dio-sama, who was looking out from the carriage’s window, replied “I understand,” to the messenger and sat back with a grave expression.

【Albion Dukedom. Overlooking Veris, it is a large country on the other side of three small countries. They develop magic and has an army of powerful magicians.】

I pretty much understood the situation as soon as I read the information projected on the screen. Did the bad habits of the King come out?

“...This is bad. The envoy of Albion this time is different from the past ones.”

“Is it a person of high status?”

“Not just high. The person called Celsus Maiden, born under the lucky stars, on the day when magic is extremely abundant, an existence that earned all magician’s reverence. Her beauty is compared to the sun ascending highly at the heavens, and the two moons shining at the night sky. Anything besides that is understatement.”

“I get that she’s a great person and very beautiful, but why is that kind of person in this danger zone...?”

“Danger zone, huh? What a fitting representation. This is probably the most

dangerous place for beautiful women.”

I thought he'll dismiss it after saying the term, but Dio-sama unexpectedly liked the expression 'danger zone'. He muttered it several times and then, "Let's use it from now on," he said with a smile.

“Dio-sama... are you perhaps, not worried?”

“Yes. I'm not impatient. It's true that Veris' standpoint is really bad but that's the only problem at present. All magicians will regard Father with hostility so this might be a good chance to get their cooperation.”

“Uhhh...”

“She is called Celsus Maiden not just because of her birth date or because she's beautiful. She is a supreme magician for she personally has a magic name, and can use it just as her alias states. Celsus Maiden's magic is named Ventus Processus, her magic attribute is wind. Rumors say that she can manipulate the surrounding wind according to her will. I heard that no one can practically touch her without her permission, whether it's true or not, they say she casually walked in the middle of 5000 troops and made the enemy commander faint into submission. Moreover, Albion elites were chosen to protect her. In terms of magic, she's a supreme genius. Therefore, she can come into a danger zone. The only person in Veris who can probably match her is my sister.”

“Then...why did you make such a serious expression?”

Dio-sama smiled wryly to my question, then rested his elbows on both knees and placed his clasped hands under his chin.

“I considered the possibility that they are after me. If the envoy went after the rebel army, well, there will be a lot of problems. While I was explaining to Yukito however, I re-thought that it’s unlikely to happen. If they are returning to Albion, they should use the land instead of sea route. And it doesn’t seem like they purposely sent her away so she can take refuge here. The Celsus Maiden probably came this time to show off that they have enough power even if they start a fight with foreign countries. This is a danger zone after all. They might have judged that there is abundant rebellion in Veris.”

“Is that so? It’s true that they won’t have any problems if they’re that strong. But it was handled very recklessly. No matter how strong you are, a possibility is a possibility even if it’s 1 out of 10000. If it was me, I will object sending an important person...”

“I agree. Should we send a protest to Albion? Something like, ‘Please don’t send fair maidens to our country.’”

“Only Dio-sama will make that kind of protest.”

Dio-sama and I laughed at the same time. Dio-sama is currently laughing because of his father’s stupidity. Still, I want to meet this woman who cannot be compared to anything but the sun and the moon. Err, is it possible that I will be blown away in shock after just having a glimpse of her? I hope not.

While I was worrying about trivial things like that, I heard sounds of a galloping horse again. Dio-sama and I stopped laughing. Somehow, I have a bad feeling.

“Your Highness! A report came in that the envoy of Albion is not at the border

but on the way here! Shall I prepare for the meeting immediately?!”

“Y-yes. I’ll leave it to you... I won’t tolerate mistakes.”

Dio-sama’s face became stiff after the Knight came to relay the information. He began to stare at his linked hands in blank surprise.

“...In my country, ‘there’s a grain of truth in every joke’, something like that.”

“It’s a good phrase... I will remember it.”

There were still some time before we arrive at Dio-sama’s stronghold in Earl Yuren’s castle, but Dio-sama and I remained silent in the carriage after that.

Part 3

When describing the beauty of women, flowers are usually used, otherwise, it will be gems. If that's not enough, it might be the rarely used "stars". Something absolute that has an unreachable mysteriousness, and reaches out to the never-ending space.

Within the stars, the most prominent ones are the Sun and the Moon. The impressions of them are pretty much humongous. Next, it would be either daytime or nighttime. The light that shines down is a blessing that even gratitude would not be able to be sufficiently expressed. If compared to those, even the female side would feel tactful about such a description. If one was told that her beauty is like the sun, she might not reject it, but that would have been too much.

However, women that suit such a description truly exists. I, a modern person, have seen many women through books, television and the internet. Within them, there are those that uses their beauty as their weapon in the society. To be frank, it's like we are living in a different world, and just by looking at her, you know she is beautiful.

Compared to those women, right now, the lady, the Celsius Maiden, right in front of me has a beauty that puts them to shame. Her age is said to be of 17 years old. Though she is younger than me, she has a sense of maturity, whether or not it's due to her conduct or her appearance, I have no idea.

Her golden hair on her back is more charming than any high quality silk. Her blue eyes emits a transparent radiance than any blue sky. Her white skin has a fine texture, and her waist and limbs that slides off her white robe is astoundingly slender. Even all these descriptions are not even enough to

portray her. Her beauty is not something I can compare with.

I understand that I should not use the sun or moon for comparison. However, unless one has a way with words, to not use them to express one's feeling would proved to be difficult.

She might be the manifestation of man's imagination, that's what I really thought.

It's enough that I can watch her from a close distance. How long could I continue to watch her? I wonder.

However, she have been there sitting on the chair, just looking at the scenery from the window for quite a while already. It's the job of the companion to start a conversation and break the ice during times like this, but it hasn't been a day since I am awake.

And besides, I am not really good with conversations. If it's about books, I am still fine but the books here are still alien to me. If I start making a conversation regarding modern books, it will end up as if the books I am talking about are my works or experiences. I do not have the confidence to make that kind of conversation. Even more, I do not have the art of communications.

Let's see, what should I do? Dio-sama had an urgent matter to attend to, so after receiving her in the castle, he immediately left the castle.

Originally, the reason for her coming was to replenish goods and take a rest. I guess being the only safe house in this danger area, it can't be helped.

Even so, I can't really just let her wait on just like this. Given the ability to move around freely, and furthermore, possibly able to attract her interest, is me. On Dio-sama's decision, I was left alone in the room with the Celsus Maiden.

Though Dio-sama simply said to get friendly to the level of calling each other by the name with the Celsus Maiden, that hurdle is too high for me. What are you asking a person, who doesn't have much chance to talk to the opposite sex, not to say a beauty, to do?

"... Celsus Maiden. Is there anything that inconveniences you?"

"... My name is Sophia Leedsberg, not Celsus Maiden."

A voice with the rhythm of a bell floated out from the small mouth. It's been years since I have heard a voice that I longed for more, the previous time being listening to a song of a beautiful voice of a singer. She is truly a person with no fault, not just her appearance, even her voice is beautiful.

"Excuse me for my rudeness. I was warned to not lightly call you by your name."

I will just say that while smiling but, the warning from the escort captain-like huge man has abnormal eyes. I was told not to call her by her name, not to touch her, not to get close her as I was the one chosen to be her partner, and I was really shocked about the warning. Even if you don't tell me, I don't intend to touch or get close to her. How can I do that to a lady I just met.

"Only Captain Larg would say that. It's fine to call me by Sophia."

“Then, I shall call you Sophia-sama. Did you wish to have a conversation?”

“Let’s see.... I wonder what’s with that unusual clothing?”

“It’s my native clothing. It’s not a common item in the market, so I guess it’s unusual if you think of it that way.”

That’s a lie. It’s crazily bulky manufactured, but I doubt that would ever flow into this world’s market. If I wear it, it will mostly attract lots of attention. Since I don’t have any other clothing, I guess I can only ask Dio-sama for assistance.

“The Island’s clothing... Other than clothing, you have other unusual items as well.”

“Why did you think I was from the Island?”

“Was I mistaken?”

“Well, I wonder. Just that, former inhabitant of the island also have children with black eyes and hair. So, just because someone has those, concluding that he or she is from the island might be a hasty one.”

“Then, either of your parents were former inhabitants?”

“Both of my parents were from the island, and that includes me as well.”

After answering with a smile, a strange silence filled the area. It's that. Telling a joke to a person who can't joke, it's quite close to the silence when the person is about to get angry. Damn. I might have angered her.

"In other words.... a lie?"

"No way. I am just saying that there is such a situation. I did not deny it. I was just asking why did you think that way."

"It's the same! What's this about? I don't really understand the reason for the lie"

"It's not a lie, just a joke. It's just playing with words. Though there are times where people doesn't get it, this time, I was just teasing Sophia-sama."

Smiling complacently, Sophia-sama's face turned beet-red, and begin glancing to the scenery outside again.

That was a failure. Planning to make the conversation enjoyable, I was the only one getting into the mood while making the other party angry. Here I thought it wasn't a bad move.

"... I... have neither joke with nor tease anyone before...."

"I think it's quite stifling if it's always about facts. Sometimes I believe it's necessary to add a bit of exaggeration or enjoying meaningless conversations. I believe it's important for people to have some form of composure."

“Stifling.. Composure... What do you see in me?”

“You seemed really oppressed, and lack of any composure at all. Is it tiring?
To act as the Celsus Maiden”

Immediately after saying that, a breeze passed the side of my face. Turning my face to the back like a broken plate, I see a wall with light cracks on it. Seems like bullets of wind, or something along those lines. I shouldn't die if hit by one of those, but I should at least be knocked unconscious.

“Never should I hear that from your mouth again.”

“... This is about a friend of mine, so it has totally nothing to do with Sophia-sama. May I begin my story?”

“Please do.”

After acquiring permission, I take a deep breath. Seeing those wind bullets, what I am about to do is most likely suicide. She was also trying to tell me that the next one would hit, having missed her first shot. Even so, I still wish to release her from her anxiety.

I realized something after getting stabbed by my close friend, and that is anyone would act to some extent. To act as the person others wanted to see. If it's the old self, no one would open their hearts, so everyone is keeping on with it. I believe that was the situation of my friend. It could have been nervousness. It could also have been that he actually didn't like chatting. That's why he was pressurized to that end. As a friend, I couldn't even realize that, not to say to accept my friend's true self.

That regret is also giving me a push on the back. Sophia-sama is without doubt, forcing herself. Coming to such a dangerous zone, it is impossible for a female to stay calm and cool. She is only acting to look that way.

“I have a female acquaintance that is truly beautiful. One as divine as the sun, and as mysterious as the moon. She had been requested to do a certain errand. However, at the point of the objective was a womanizing tyrant.”

“You, that story...”

“I have gotten permission. Please listen to the end.”

“.....do continue”

“I got it. The lady was reluctant to get close to the tyrant. However, she doesn't have a choice. If she doesn't go, someone else will be asked to take on the errand. It was something the lady was unable to shut her eyes from. In the end, she ended up taking the task, where she was discovered by the tyrant. But, the lady knew of a way to repel the tyrant beforehand and was able to do that easily. However, her heart had not been cleared up yet. That's because no matter how many repelling tactics one might have, there is always the “perhaps” or the “possibility” factor. Every time she think of it, she always felt a sense of fear. Once she is done with her errand, she was planning to return straightaway.”

“... then, what happen?”

Slowly, her expression started to get cloudy. Though I didn't intend to get her

to look that way, if she doesn't want to open up her heart, it can't be helped. It might be meddlesome on my part, but I can't help but see that Sophia-sama is feeling really bitter.

“But, the lady got tired. She had to find someplace to take a rest. She then went towards the hero's house who has the highest chance of defeating the tyrant. Even though the hero gladly welcomed the lady, she still hasn't relaxed herself. That is due to.. her thoughts of whether the hero might have been the same as the tyrant.”

“The story is over, right? From what I think, I believe there is no continuation to that story.”

“There is. The conclusion is that she returned safely. That is a certainty.”

“What are you planning? I should have already mentioned that if you continued with your insolence, I will not be lenient.”

“That's weird. I only mentioned the story of an acquaintance of mine. It has nothing to do with Sophia-sama. So, I have a question.”

“What is it...?”

I can feel that my throat is dry. I am not really sure about magic, but without doubt, Sophia-sama is preparing it. In the event Sophia-sama felt any unpleasantness, I will most likely be receiving those wind bullets.

If one were to bottled up one's feelings, it will naturally turn to stress. No matter how you do it, if you release those emotions, you should feel a lot more

relaxed.

Well, though I will be in danger, I don't think I will die.

“What do you think of this lady?”

“What are you trying to say?”

“What are your impressions of the story. To be more direct, ...am I correct?”

In an instant, I am dancing in the sky. Now that I think about it, there was a sudden-gust that blew over, without me hearing it.

That room that Sophia-sama and I are in is spacious. It's even bigger than the classroom of a school. Opposite the window that was close to the area, there was a door that also blew off.

I thought that was really bad, but it's not like I can do anything about it. I don't have the vitality of a martial artist or sports person. Which means I have no idea how to take a defensive maneuver from the attack.

My back strike the bed with full force. The head was shook around, while the back of the head was knocked by the bed multiple times.

While all my limbs are in pain, the main problem is that I can't breathe. I can't breathe properly after being severely struck on the back and also being bathed in the sudden gust. Not only that, because of the continuous knock on the back of the head, my sight is distorted. A total cerebral concussion.

“You...! Didn’t you have the confidence to defend yourself!? And you actually didn’t take a defensive maneuver!”

Seemingly felt that that was bad, Sophia-sama rushed to my side. Crouching close to me, she peeked at my face but she totally couldn’t recognise me due to how bad my face was distorted. I somehow manage to get my breathing back, but that’s all. I have never experienced something so painful since I was born.

“Even though you are the close aide of Diorood-sama...”

“I just became on..e today, ..I didn’t know how to defend ... myself..”

“With such ability.... why did you make such an idiotic comment!?”

Somehow, my sight is beginning to stabilize. Looks like it was a temporary condition. After it stabilized, it seems I am starting to feel the pain. This is the worst. My whole body hurts.

“When feeling ...anxious, I was hoping that... you might listen to me”

“No one would speak their innermost feelings... with such a method.”

“That’s because... since you wouldn’t truly listen to me,.... if I provoke you, you might actually be more inclined to listen, was what I thought.”

“...Are you... an idiot...? You can just leave it alone right? You just meet a lady today, and you say things like... ‘you seem to be suffocating’ and ‘catching a

glimpse of anxiety'... It's none of your business right?'"

From the voice, the impregnable mask had come off. A really soft voice. Though it's a problem she is at the verge of crying, this must be Sophia-sama's true self. It's not a big deal. I won't change. I am a human who will feel anxious and also pain. Before she is a Celsus Maiden, she is a girl after all.

"I didn't... realize that my friend was suffering and I wasn't able to help him. That's why... I decided to help anyone that I see having the same problem."

"...I..."

"You should have felt awful and scared as well. But you bottled up everything without showing it to your surroundings..... It's fine. There is only me in this whole area after all."

It's fine even if you take off that mask of yours.

Exactly after I said that, Sophia-sama started leaking large droplets of tears. Somehow managing to move, I got my upper body up, where Sophia-sama started sobbing after leaning on my shoulder.

There is no one who can anticipate that. In modern terms, it's like holding onto self-defensive tools while walking on a street known to have a serial rapist. This will very likely turn into a trauma for life.

This has nothing to do with strength. It's not something important that must be done, she was just thrown to do it.

If the fellow that sends Sophia-sama towards Veris is right in front of me, I will hit him without doubt. That just shows how frail the appearance of Sophia-sama, who buried her face on my shoulder crying, was.

###

After Sophia-sama stopped her crying a while later, I return to my seat once more. Though my body still hurts, it is a lot better than what I was feeling then. The pain should subside after a while. If it is pain that subsides, I am willing to withstand any amount of it. It's a whole ton better than pain that stays with you.

“Have you calmed down?”

“... yeah...”

Sophia-sama answered with a feeling like she wanted to just disappear. Most likely feeling embarrassed about the fact that she cried, her face was touched up with a slight tint of red.

Now then, since the “wall” of the heart has been removed, let's start the conversation.

“Let me put things straight first. I believe Dio-sama have no intention to harm Sophia-sama. Even if that is the case, though it will be the people around Dio-sama, there will be a notice at that time. If you are about to be captured, I will release you without fail. Please do relax.”

“...I am sorry....”

“Uhm... May I know in regards to what you are apologizing to?”

“In regards to the magic attack.... in regards to doubting you...”

Well, let's just put the magic attack aside. I was the one who repeatedly provoked her. The end result of the magic attack and also the guilt of the final result should be all my fault.

To doubt is not a bad thing. It's a kind of self-defensive reflex. If it's a carefree noble lady that doesn't doubt a thing, even I won't go to such ends for her.

“Please don't worry about it. It's not such a big deal.”

“But... it hurts, right....?”

“Well, it does hurt, but the one at fault was me. Plus... I manage to talk to Sophia-sama face to face like this. That's good enough.”

A while ago, she had been on guard and never look into my eye, but now, I am able to look into her eyes and converse. I would say this is quite an improvement.

“You... are really gentle.”

“It's Yukito. Kurei Yukito. Ah no.. it should be Yukito Kurei, i guess.”

“Oh my, I have not ask for your name.....”

“I have not given my name after all. Even if I gave my name from the start, I did not think you would call me anyway.”

“That’s true. Even if I did give my name, I do not think I would be called as well. Even though I dislike being called the Celsus Maiden, to not call other people by their name.... I am the worst...”

Saying that, she began gazing at the scenery outside. The outside is just a grassland that stretch out, nothing else. Supposedly a scenery where you will get bored off after watching for a while, but it seems to be not the case for Sophia-sama.

“I hate the name of ‘Celsus Maiden’. During catastrophe of the stars or magic-oriented, I am confined to the rooms conferred to me. Including the people met or the actions taken, the words spoken and the steps taken are all limited. All because of the name ‘Celsus Maiden’”

“That sound ...so oppressive. By the way, in regards to being limited to both words and steps, is there any good in that?”

“Words have power in them, and without doubt, not in abundance. However, there is no truth in effectiveness to limit casual conversations and movement.”

Sophia-sama sighed after saying that. Though she was only sighing, it’s troublesome that she would just somehow make a really good picture. Her eyes lightly covered, a young beauty sighing on the chair. If it’s this era, a lot of artists would most likely have requested “Please let me paint you”. The fact that only I was able to see this sight gave me a sense of victory for some reason..

“Your feelings... I think I can understand a fraction of it.”

“Well, most of them totally don’t get it at all. But, Yukito is the first to try to understand a lady by the name of Sophia, not the Celsus Maiden. Thank you very much.”

Thank you. Saying that, Sophia-sama hang a smile on her face. My face was painted in red, and while being embarrassed, just trying to keep my composure was taking everything I had.

Part 4

Dio-sama is having a difficult expression by my side, while looking at the desk. No, actually it's the map of Veris spread across the desk. Basically, if Dio-sama is smiling while having a difficult expression, Dio-sama is most likely rather troubled. After being together for ten days, you will naturally know.

(TL: No gay!)

In these ten days, I got to know various things about myself. First off is that I am able to read the words of this world. Though words that I know nothing of, due to some reason, the words change to Japanese in my head. I am still practising writing, but as it isn't really that different from English, I have pretty much memorised it.

Another thing I found out is my skill. It's a skill that reacts to queries. But, it doesn't automatically trigger if you don't really desire for the answer to the query. That is why when I saw Sophia-sama, there wasn't any reaction. From prior knowledge, I already knew that she was such a person. Though in the case of the automatic activation, when I desire for the information, I found out that basically, it will be displayed on the screen naturally.

"It seems to have weakened."

"Is there a problem again?"

"Yep. That's right. Till now, nobles who were originally still on the fence, turned to our side because of Yukito, so the war potential against Father is pretty much on par. Just that, we can't win on equal terms."

First of all, it is a faulty expression to say that it was due to my assistance. Honestly, it was due to Sophia-sama. Sophia-sama is still in this castle. This fact makes a large number of nobles perceived that Albion is supporting Dio-sama. Or the current king's deed has provoked the wrath of Albion. Whichever it was, the scrambling nobles all came to unite under Dio-sama. Well, even though officially we are receiving support from Albion, Albion isn't really angry. I guess Sophia-sama is having a rather extraordinary disgust for the current king though.

Even then, because of this reason, Dio-sama's encampment ascends from just a rebel army of a certain district to one of the two main armies of the country.

"I don't think it's because of me though...."

"Don't be humble. No matter how you think, Yukito, you are the reason why Sophia-sama stayed in this castle."

"That's true. Yukito-dono"

The person to agree with Dio-sama was a middle-aged male who is carrying loads of documents from a room next to the one we are in, Earl Oswald Uren. Though he is rather aged, his hair is neatly combed down without being tinted with anything white on it, and is still a rather active person, whose tension is higher than even both Dio-sama and I.

"Earl Uren..."

"I am envious! To be called by name by such an unparalleled beauty, and furthermore, to be certainly called for a conversation every night. I, Uren! Is so

envious that I can't help longing to take your place everyday!"

He is serious. As usual, he is really active. At the moment of the exchange, I feel that Sophia-sama would really return to Albion like the wind. Blowing off Earl Uren with it.

"Ah.. well, I am just a companion whom she can speak to."

"Just..., you say. Sophia-sama asked me certainly if it is fine to bring Yukito back to Albion. Quite the serious tone she had, you know."

"...how did you reply?"

"I replied that I will think about it. With this, I don't think she will return to Albion for the time being. It really helps that we are gathering war potential and the morale of the soldiers are rising steadily just from catching an eye of Sophia-sama once in a while."

Dio-sama floated a slightly evil smile. Just to show the soldiers, he purposely called for lunch at the balcony or basically the exterior. I finally comprehended it at long last. Rather than a talking companion, I, being treated like a servant, was obviously helping out with the preparations. Since the preparations are hectic, I was at least hoping for a closer place to have a meal.

"The Celsus Maiden is in this Earl Uren' Castle. I believe the ancestors would be really happy about it! "

"Is it something so special?"

“Yukito-dono has no idea how fortunate you are! Why was there no ‘accident’ when both of you are all alone!?”

“There is no way that would happen, right!? What’s that weird outrage about!?”

“Hahaha, it is really not boring with Yukito around.”

“Dio-sama!? Earl Uren’s words is a little too crude, you know!? A diplomatic issue might develop, you know!?”

“Even though you are the companion of Diorood-sama, to put a finger on Celsus Maiden, I am so envious I won’t forgive you!”

“Like I said, I won’t do that!”

While taking on the Earl Uren continuous barrage, I listened to Dio-sama.

For the past few days, it has been like this everyday. Yep, that is before that notification arrives at the castle.



At night. Even though I say that, it was after dinner, just before one would go to sleep, I was called to Sophia-sama’s room.

Standing in front of a strictly secured room, I received the glance filled with anger, likely mixed with a touch of jealousy from the guards, while I enter Sophia-sama’s room everyday in a mentally exhausted state.

“Excuse me.”

After a single word, I opened the door, and immediately closed the inverting door. That’s because I want to run away from the glance as soon as I can.

“Fu....”

“It’s fine if you do not want to come, you know?”

I can hear a slightly pouting voice across the back. When I look in that direction, I see a figure of Sophia-sama sitting on the bed in a slightly pale white robe, different from the normal clothing she usually wear. I am wearing the mass-produced island clothing that Dio-sama has bought from the merchants that came to the town outside the castle.

I sighed with a ‘fuu’, and asked while tilting my head.

“Then, why didn’t you tell me not to come?”

“‘I am mad so I am returning to Albion.’ Diorood-sama is going to be troubled, right?”

(TL: Her speech here is more in a hypothetical way.)

“That’s without doubt. My head will be in danger, I think.”

While knocking my head with my right hand, I use a rather familiar tone to

speaking. It was a request from Sophia. She wanted me to communicate with her as a friend. Since I am the first person and to communicate with her as friends, I was to call her 'Sophia'. Though I am troubled to differentiate calling her with the '-sama' honorific during the day.

"You are such a tease. You know I will be troubled if you say that."

"If you dismiss your role here, I will also be troubled. See, we are both being a tease. I am not the only one at fault."

While I shrug my shoulder, I single-handedly move the chair close to the bed. Since a few days ago, we have been talking this way. According to Sophia, talking to me seems to result in drowsiness. It's the first time I heard that my voice has a drowsy effect. Now that I think of it, I have a professor in the university that has a voice that makes people really sleepy.

"Yukito?"

"Nhh? Yeah?"

"Pondering about something?"

"A bit about home. There was a person's voice that soothes people to sleep, or so I thought."

When I said that, Sophia started laughing, while putting her hand on her mouth. I wonder if there is need for a laugh at this point of time. I have no idea at all.

“Is it because I said that talking to Yukito makes me want to sleep?”

“Right. I was thinking if my voice do make people sleepy.”

“That’s not true. Perhaps, I am feeling sleepy because I am relaxed. Though I have plenty to talk about, I can’t help but feel sleepy. I might as well call you during the day, is that fine?”

“I have to assist Dio-sama, so I think it will be difficult.”

“Is it no good?”

“That hope is quite slim. But, Sophia, you do go for a walk during the day, right? Do you need me?”

The instant I talked about daytime, Sophia started smiling, came down from the bed, took something from the table of the idiotically enormous room, and showed it to me.

“A Grass....Crown?” (A crown made of grass.)

“Yep! The kids from the village made it! They say, ‘Onee-chan is really beautiful so she’s a princess’.”

I am sure she was certainly happy about it. She is showing the crown expressively by wearing it on the head. So she took a walk to a nearby village during daytime. Though I would say it’s dangerous, Earl Uren’s territory is said

to be relatively safe, and also the escort from Albion, is also with her. I don't think there should be any problems.

But.

“Were you happy about getting the Grass Crown? Or, being praised you were beautiful?”

“Both of them. Ah, you just thought ‘Something like that’, didn't you?”

“Well, just that, I was thinking that for Sophia-sama, who should be tired of receiving expensive presents and compliments, would still be happy receiving such items.”

“I am happy. Very happy, more than receiving those gold and decorative compliments from those people that I have no interest of, the things from the children made me multiple times more, multiple of ten times more happy. Plus.... when I was a child, since I don't have a chance to play with grass and flowers, the moment I was invited to play with them, I was really happy.”

Removing the Grass crown from the top of the head, Sophia hug the crown close to her chest dearly. I wonder how much the people in Albion who wish to be Sophia's acquaintances would grieve if they found out that the present made by the children were more pleasant than their expensive presents of an unknown price tag, no matter how much they wish to know her. Nope, I think there will be a mountain of grass crowns being delivered the next day.

“As I thought, I don't think I am needed during the day time. You seem to be enjoying fully.”

“It’s not that problem though..... It’s the fact that I don’t have any experience having fun with someone close to my age.”

Children are existences that are able to have fun. Naturally, there is also the fact about being adults, but in modern era, students have plans from kindergarten or schools. Even so, children are able to play. However, the time a person can stay as a child is astonishingly short. That’s why I think it’s a really precious period.

But, Sophia has none. It’s possible it is normal to have none. Because she is born that way. However, it’s a really sorrowful fact.

“After the war, I will request Dio-sama to bring me along to Albion.”

“Even if you come to Albion, I don’t think we will have time to talk. I am such an existence in Albion after all...”

“I see. That’s difficult. But, I promised. I will work hard to make time for such relief again, even if Sophia returns. With such a promise, does that ease Sophia’s anxiety?”

I tried my best to show a really gentle smile. I don’t have any experience in trying to smile to make someone feel at ease since I was born. And what’s more, towards a girl.

Though I think it’s fine to just naturally smile, I ended up in a situation where I am rejecting all other plans floating in my head. Even though I promised, I have no idea how long I will take to grant that wish. Just thinking of that makes me

unable to smile.

“If you are planning to smile to relieve my uneasiness, then it’s unnecessary.”

“Eh... Was it exposed?”

“It’s my forte to make an artificial smile after all. To see through that is easy. But, it’s plentiful with your words. Even the days in Albion seems to be enjoyable with that promise.”

“Ah, Uhm... Please give me some time.”

“It doesn’t matter how long it takes. Just that, I should say the person who wish to meet me and can meet me is someone with authority from an allied country.”

Sophia said that while cheerfully revolved around the chair I am sitting in light steps.

Sophia is in a good mood when she can move around like this. And at times like this, she will certainly use wind magic so even in a secure room, you can still feel the wind.

(TL: Secure room here is more to a room that can’t be entered, usually taken as a stuffy room.)

In a good mood, to the point her hum sounds like her singing, Sophia, seemingly tired after a while, threw herself on the bed face-down.

“Fufu, I absolutely can’t do this in Albion.”

“I don’t think it can be done in front of friends as well?”

“It’s fine. If it’s Yukito”

“Seriously, doing something like that. What if someone...”

Just when I say that, a knock came from the door. It’s still not the time for me to leave. Someone has come to visit. Normally, not everyone is able to come over. Dio-sama has made such an order, and Sophia has also requested her escorts to do that as well.

So who is it? There’s only two possibilities. This castle’s owner, Earl Uren and

..

“Is it Dio-sama?”

While murmuring, I approached the door, and opened the door slightly.

The anticipated person was there. And above all expectations, he was wearing armor.

“Sorry, Yukito. It’s an emergency. I wish to see Sophia-sama.”

“I will try to ask. Please hold on for a moment.”

I say that while closing the door, and look at Sophia who is at the bed.

She came towards me nodding after putting on the blue coat that was across her bed. I guess it means it's fine.

"It seems to be fine."

"Excuse me. Diorood Arkwright. I have come to give my greetings."

"Diorood-sama. Greetings as in?"

"Just reported a while ago, my sister who is assigned to the defense of the national borders, has been given the responsibility of suppressing the revolt. Having ten thousand troops, she marched towards the castle in the frontlines. I will be going alongside with Earl Uren and his army to confront my sister to a castle close to the front lines. Since I am leaving the castle, I came to give my farewell."

This development was just what Dio-sama has predicted. Since the strength is on equal terms, the ability of the leader will mean everything. The current foolish king is only well-versed in war. It's fine even if the current king comes out himself. It's also fine if Kaguya-sama close to the national borders is directed out. At any rate, Dio-sama puts his mind to make sure both of them are separated.

If Kaguya-sama is coming out, I don't think Dio-sama will fight her head-on. He said it himself. He is not a match for his sister.

"Diorood-sama. I understand. I shall pray for your fortunes of war."

“Thank you. Yukito, please come along for a while.”

“Roger that.”

While saying that, I apologized to Sophia by eye-contact, and left the room.



In the room that Dio-sama has brought me to gathers many unknown youngsters. Though the screen came out suddenly and started changing instantly, I don't have the time to read every single one of them.

They are all being respectfully, surrounding a big table. They are most likely people of not really high status.

“The last one is Yukito, I see.”

“The people here are.... the people who will stay, is that right?”

“As expected of Yukito. Your conjecture is good. That's right, they are people who have been entrusted to stay.”

“Is it right to think that I am to stay as well, since you brought me here?”

“I really wanted to bring you with me though. But I will have you stay behind.”

As Dio-sama said that, he pointed at one portion of the map that is spread out on the desk.

“As conveyed, my sister has appeared. The castle she is going towards is this.”

The position Dio-sama pointed out is a castle almost in the middle of Veris, Castle Canon.

Castle Canon. Veris’s largest castle. Though not geographically supreme due to being plains, the 3-layered enormous castle walls results in a castle that have never been sieged.

I frowned at the menu that appeared with the contents. What a bad combo of the strongest general and the greatest castle. Well, we can fight properly because of that though.

“It is as anticipated that they will attack here. We will hold my sister at this point, while cooperating with the allied nobles to form an encirclement net to corner the king. Though a tactical defeat, it’s not a strategic defeat. I have tried taking your advice, Yukito.”

“I only said that it’s better not to fight with the strong sister. The person who expanded from that into a strategy was Dio-sama.”

“Let’s leave it like that then. Also, there is a prerequisite to confront my sister and create a stalemate. That role will be taken up by both Earl Uren and I. Of course, high-ranking personnels will be taken along. That’s why in this place, you all here will be the highest ranking.”

A sound of someone gulping his throat can be heard. For people who seldom meet Dio-sama directly, to suddenly be entrusted with the castle, gulping at

that is expected. This is not the time to treat it like other people's affair. Dio-sama is looking over here.

"Yukito. As you know, we are just barely making it. In terms of talented people. Even then, do you know the reason why I am leaving you here?"

"Let's see. I am the most closest to Sophia-sama, is that correct?"

"Right. This castle is at the distance of two days from the castle in the frontlines. As long as the main army is not taken out, I believe the enemy would not attack. Both tactical and strategic reasons are rather weak after all. It's neither an important supply area, nor is it close to stab us in the back. If there's anything, it would be to shake up Earl Uren though."

(TL: All the things said here are referring to the castle that Yukito and others are in right now. Hope this clear up some people's confusion.)

"I don't think Earl Uren will betray Dio-sama. There is only one reason why they would attack such a castle. It's Sophia-sama. You are in a hurry, right? Let's get into the main topic, shall we?"

Unknown of the time Earl Uren entered the room, he was gesturing to hurry up. Though reluctant, taking from Dio-sama's words, I decided to get the topic started.

"Now that I think of it, that's true. Then, let's get straight to the point. Matters with regards to the castle is being entrusted to Earl Uren's younger brother. But he isn't cut out for combat matters. That's why in the event the enemy come with Sophia-sama as the target, Yukito, I want you to be entrusted with full authority."

“...entrusting command to me? To a guy who is a servant that have never went to battle?”

“But, you are my most trusted aide, and Sophia-sama also follows your words. To make Sophia-sama run away, or be part of the defending force to protect the castle, your words are required. If so, it's best that you are given full authority from the start. If there is a need for battle, but you are unable to take charge, you can entrust it to someone else. That's your forte, right? To see through other people's merit.”

That's of course. Whatever one excels in can be pretty much known from the “Status”. Let's put whatever he is suited for, his likes and dislikes aside, but what he is good at, and what he is bad at, can be anticipated from the “Status”. But, from what the people I have seen in this place, though there are those that are taking command, there is no one who fits the role.

And that is something Dio-sama knows as well. That's why he entrusted me with it. Frankly speaking, don't joke about going to battle and becoming a murderer. Normally, I would have rejected even if I am begged. But, I was requested. Nope, the one who order it was Dio-sama.

“Someday..... I believe I will be asked to join in the fight.”

“Are you reluctant?”

“To tell the truth, I am really reluctant. However, my life was saved by Dio-sama. It's because you have found me, right now, I can live without problems in regards to necessities. When I see the people living outside the castle, having problems eating, I always shiver at the possibility that I might have been in the

same situation. So, if it's your order, I shall do whatever you need. Even in hell... or follow you if you wish for it."

"Other than one thing, I have nothing that I can win my sister. If there is anything that I can be of ranked with, that would be the blessing of my surroundings. Except in emergency,Yukito Kurei will be my representative. Make sure you obey his instructions. This is an... Order from Diorood Arkwright."

""""Roger!""""

Everyone in the vicinity kneeled down with one leg, their right fist on their chest and their left hand on the floor. Other than me.

It's not that I didn't know the way of etiquette. It's just that I met with Dio-sama's eyes, and missed the timing for it.

"Yukito. This is my grandfather's dagger. Though he have retired after handing over the crown to my father, he taught me the way of the king. I shall hand it to you as a proof of command transfer."

"...Much appreciated."

Pushing one of my knee out, I received the dagger inserted in a golden scabbard with both my hands.

Continent Calendar Year 312. Month of Sex. The prince, Diorood who rebel against the king, led seven thousand troops with Earl Uren to the frontline.

Part 5

“Step aside from that area.”

A strong voice that seems to be showing its presence resounded from Sophia's room. There are only Sophia and me in the room, and the one who projected her voice was Sophia. While it's rare for her to use a commanding tone towards me, she have not used that powerful voice of hers since the first meeting.

“I won't.”

Sophia glared at me. My stomach reflexively started to hurt. But I can't withdraw. If I withdraw here, there won't be anyone in this castle that can stop Sophia. If it turn out that way, Sophia will likely slip out. Dio-sama left me behind to make sure that doesn't happen. Even with just spirit, I can't back down.

“I said to step aside. You won’t understand if I don’t use force?”

I opened Sophia’s status. Her combat prowess is over a hundred. As there wasn’t anyone with a combat prowess of over a hundred, I thought it was the max, but it doesn’t seem that way. I also found out that the numbers can fluctuate.

When I first saw it, her combat prowess was within the nineties. I wonder if it could be the problem with other factors like concentration level and determination. Anyway, the charm that was of a hundred and fifty points has dropped to ninety points. I think anyone who knew the normal Sophia would surely not find the current Sophia as charming.

“If it could let you regain your composure, why don’t you do it?”

Since it’s impossible for me to defend to begin with, I have no other way than say that. If Sophia plans to advance with force, even if we concentrate the whole castle’s force, we won’t be able to stop her. Of course, if that happens, that will be a continued appearance of the wounded. And in addition to that, if her composure is lacking to an extent of an unknown level, nothing can be done.

Sophia is putting on a green mantle over her white robe. That is the full dress

of the Celsius Maiden, Sophia. And it is also something that she will wear when it reaches the stage that she has to go to a dangerous place. A superior equipment that seems to have defensive magic embedded in it, physical and magical attacks doesn't seem to have much effect on it.

To wear that is for the sake of going out. For what reason is there to leave. Because the enemy is here, and to defeat the enemy. For what reason is there to defeat the enemy.

That's because the village, that Sophia has went down to multiple times, has been taken hostage and it was demanded for her to leave the castle alone. The kidnapping force that consists of around three hundred men seems to be the ruffian force referred to as the Hounds that is under the direct control of the king and whose tasking is to seize beauties. It happened this morning, the fifth day Dio-sama left for the front-lines. And it's afternoon now. The time frame for the reply is till tomorrow morning.

"Yukito!"

"It's meaningless, even if you shout or yell. I will not withdraw. Even if you beg for it, I can't withdraw. I am left behind for the sake of being able to stop you. You do understand it, don't you? Can you calm down first?"

While I kept my mind on the notification, I looked over the status menu and gazed at Sophia. Her combat prowess is dropping and rising. She is probably

wavering. There is still hope if she is wavering.

“Let’s first search for something that we can do? If not, I will go with you. I won’t let you go on your own.”

“But... I was told to go alone..”

“You will be at a disadvantage if you only take the in-betweens. They won’t complain if there is only one servant accompanying. Since their purpose is to bring back the you, who is under the supervision of the king, they have to take care of you until you reached the capital. If you think of that, it is more convenient if there is a servant, and when it comes to it, he can act as a hostage. I believe they have thought to that extent, you know?”

(TL: Most likely some sort of phrase “間に受けるだけ損さ”)

I talked as long as I can to try to delay more time. Seeing the decreasing combat prowess, I felt relieved. I have been successful in stop her for now. Next would be the breakthrough from this situation.

Since the limit is till tomorrow morning, then that would mean that it doesn’t matter even if it’s tonight. If we are to aim for something, it will be a surprise attack, taking advantage of the night.

As I am thinking of various things, Sophia started swaying unsteadily. I closed

in on her to support her by her shoulder in a haste.

“I... had dragged that village in.”

“It’s not your fault. Besides, it’s alright. There is still things to be done. If not for the hostages, it’s not that difficult for Sophia to disable them, right?”

“Yeah.... Not me, but the magicians of the escorts are all elites. If we can fight fairly, I believe we can disable them without sacrifice.”

“Then, I will think of a plan to release the hostages. But, that will have to rely on Sophia and your escorts though.”

“It’s fine! Yukito, I don’t care what happen to me.... The village... the children...”

“My job is to protect you Sophia. I will protect you and the village.”

Seriously don’t joke about fighting. If it’s because of an unacquainted girl, or not entrusted by Dio-sama, I might have thought about passing this responsibility to someone else. But, the one who propose it was Sophia and Dio-sama has given me full authority. It would have been enough to resolve myself for either reasons, but now both are there.

Though I still have the feelings of disliking fights, my feelings of not handing over Sophia and my gratitude towards Dio-sama is a few times more stronger.

To hand over Sophia or to betray Dio-sama expectations, don't joke about any of it. I will neither let it happen, nor do it.



“Please give your opinions without reserve. What do you think should be done?”

I gathered all principal personnel in the room before Dio-sama left for the front lines and gathered the personnel that stayed behind.

The acting castle's representative, Earl Uren's brother had fallen ill, and is unable to move from the bed. After meeting him just now, I was told that I will be given full authority. I felt like vomiting from the overly high expectations and authority.

I am not the only one who thinks that way, even those who have gathered seems that way. In the first place, they were people who does not hold a very important post. They might even be more bewildered than me.

“...I believe it’s better to abandon the village....”

“That’s true. I have already sent a fast dispatch to Diorood-sama. If they could spare even just a small portion of the soldiers, they shouldn’t be any problem. Even if it ends up in a besiege, we could hold for half a month.”

“It’s mortifying, but it’s the only way.....”

The direction of the choice was immediately sent towards the abandonment of the village. Though it’s a choice I would never make, everyone is nodding, saying that that’s the only way. Actually no, there is one person who doesn’t nod to that choice.

It was a girl with a ponytail of light-brown hair. She seems to be younger than me by two to three years. If it’s Japan, she should be somewhere in the 1st-year of high school. Though my sense has been going out of order due to Sophia, if she is a classmate of mine, she is cute enough that I will unconsciously look at her during lessons. But opposite to her cute appearance, she is wearing the knight’s armor and has a combat prowess of over eighty. Most of all, her speed and some status that I can’t grasped is exactly at ninety. Whether she is fast on foot, or on horse. Though there are subtle things, in any case, she was not joining in the discussions, but was looking at me firmly.

“Is there something?”

“I am the captain of the 2nd Cavalry Platoon, Mikana Hazard. Is it okay for me to make an inquiry?”

“Hazard? Are you a relative of Gordo-san?”

“He’s my grandfather. The platoon that was escorting his Highness who found you unconscious was mine, and we carried you to my grandfather’s house which was close by.”

I see. I finally understand the reason why I woke up at Gordo-san’s house. Tentatively, I am holding onto the authority so she is my subordinate as of now, but I don’t think she needs to be so polite.

“Oh, thank you. I have not given my gratitude.”

“Let’s leave that for later. I believe Kurei-dono is capable of having a wider field of insights. Most likely his Highness has also received advice from that point of view. That’s why, is it possible for you to share your point of view on the advantages and disadvantages on the case where we abandoned the village?”

I have to thank the girl named Mikana. All eyes are now gathered on me. With this, they would listen to what I will say.

“Then, let’s start from the greatest problem. If we abandon the village, Sophia-sama is most likely going to leave the castle. Of course, it’s to accept the demand for the sake of saving the village.”

“What did you say!?”

“What’s going on!?”

“Literally as it means. Though I managed to stop her somehow, since it’s to the extent that she is willing to use force, the moment the decision to abandon the village is made, she will most probably rush out.”

“In that situation.... Sophia-sama will?”

Mikana looked at me with a pair of genuine eyes. Rather than looking over, it seems more accurate to say she is sounding out what I am thinking about. Furthermore, rather than holding back, let’s just say it early to speed up things.

“Captured, I guess. Since the village taken as hostage is one that Sophia-sama has entered multiple times, if the village was made to act as hostages, she is likely unable to do anything. If she fought back, even if she managed to escape alone and most probably capable of really doing it as well, the village will sustain casualties. When that happens, Albion will most likely not keep quiet. Albion, which doesn't want the name Celsus Maiden to be smeared, will push all responsibility of it, which is true actually, to Veris, I guess. In that case, there will be diplomatic issues, and those nobles at Dio-sama's side right now have also a high chance of leaving his side.”

“Please tell us in simple terms.”

“How impatient. Well, I believe everyone here would lose their head. As we will be the cause of the aggravation of the relations with Albion, and also if Dio-sama's group loses, we will, of course, not have our lives as well.”

Seeing the steadily increasing number of pale faces, I was just slightly, really just slightly enjoying myself, but I was stopped by Mikana. It's fine to say a bit more, you know. Towards those people who say miserable things like abandoning them and stuff.

“Then, Kurei-dono is thinking that we should save the village. Is it fine to take it that way?”

“And that goes for you, right?”

“I became a knight to save the oppressed that are before me. And that has not changed even now.”

“That’s reassuring. Since it’s troublesome, I will leave out the details. Though it’s weird to say that it’s a plan, there are two. In regards to surprising the enemy, they are either to disable the enemy before they attack the village, or take advantage of the night and send an ambush team to disable the enemies in the village, before attacking the main force..”

“The former will no doubt create casualties. To start with, we have no idea whether we can win. While we lose out in terms of numbers, the Hounds are wild-natured, but I heard their skills are genuine.”

“Protecting with small numbers. Since it was arranged for the assistance of Sophia-sama and her escorts, I believe the battle itself should end rather quickly. But it’s certain that we will have some casualties.”

“The latter would be gamble. It’s over if they noticed the ambush team, and the ambush team will also be in danger.”

While saying that, Mikana started pondering, folding her arms in the process.

Looking at the status, I know her wisdom is also high, but she is quite the quick thinker. Right now, she displayed her ability to calculate risk in an instant. It's helpful to have a person like her around. She is also likely able to cope with sudden state of affairs.

“Though we need more time to polish the plan, we do not have the time. Let's decide whether we will be going with the ambush first. We have only one chance. If we missed that, it's over then, but if we do not do a thing, we will lose everything. Please cast aside any thoughts of turning your back on this.”

“I agree. As a knight..... I cannot overlook the acts of the Hounds.”

From Mikana's back came the voices of agreement one by one. To some extent, we have an unanimous decision to have the ambush. Of course, the opponent is most likely anticipating it as well, so we will need a plan for that portion somehow.

There is one thing I thought of but I wonder if I can call it an ingenious plan. Sophia's assistance would be essential for that.

“Let us be dismissed for now. Please prepare silently for the battle, without letting the enemy notice.”

Since I have something that I have to ask Sophia, I said that to let the group be dismissed from that place.

Likely due to the fact that I am at a higher position, even temporarily, everyone responded “Yes!”. Of course, Mikana as well. At the very least, it seems like there is no one who is expressing their unsatisfied inner thoughts. That’s helpful in its own way. After all, it’s going to end tomorrow. As long as we overcome it this time, that’s fine.

While thinking of that, I moved towards Sophia’s room.



At Night. I was checking the faces of the 200 soldiers in the castle, one by one, or actually, their status.

The reason is simple. I am selecting people for the ambush team. The evaluation standard is based on speed. After asking Mikana, since everyone here seems to be able to horse-ride, I believe simply choosing by speed should

be fine. As Mikana is said to be unbeatable in terms of racing or any horse-riding competitions, if I think about it as the composite ability of various types of speed, it becomes quite the evaluation standard. If the numbers for speed is similar, the ones with the higher combat ability will be chosen. Well, as it will be difficult to resist if they receive a surprise attack, I don't think it will be a problem if the combat ability is slightly low, but since we are dealing with human lives here, we can't choose halfheartedly.

“What kind of eyes do you have?”

To a certain extent, Mikana came to glare at me, asking me that in a soft voice. Though I don't remember doing anything bad.

“Black eyes?”

“That's not it.... Why are you able to select nothing but people who are proficient at horse-riding?”

“I know everything after all. I might also know Mikana's secret, you know?”

“Wha!? I, I have no secret!”

“You are more proficient in the bow, than sword and spear, right?”

“Eh.....? Why do you.....”

Well, if anyone is going to write down bow suggestively, everyone would conclude that you are proficient in the bow. Those who don't write them can either be on the same level, or just simply not skilled enough which I don't know.

“It's also fine if you don't use the bow for the mission.”

“The standard for the knights in an ambush team is the spear.”

“This is an ambush after all. There's no need to be so concerned about that. Just that, it's only if you have the confidence not to misfire at the villagers.”

“...my father was a hunter. I have also went up the mountain to hunt to help my father multiple times. My eyes are good so it's fine.”

“Then, there's no problem. Then, is it okay if I leave the command for the ambush team of 50 cavalries to you?”

“You are the commander. As long as you give the command, I will go

anywhere.”

“Is it bad if it’s a request?”

“I meant to show your dignity please. Haa... I wonder why did his Highness entrust the command to you...”

“Likely because he can entrust the task to another person. Well, this time I will be risking my life though. Now then, when the signal for the ambush team comes, take care to leave from the back gate. Our side will complete our objectives smoothly so please do complete yours smoothly as well.”

“Roger”

After leaving the selected 50 cavalries to Mikana, I slowly move in the direction of the main gate. The gathered remaining 150 people are double timing towards the main gate. Even if they double timed it, if I do not proceed, the plan won’t start though.(TL: Troll..)

As the castle of Earl Uren’s is actually formed with a small castle village, the main gate is actually rather far. Well, because of that, the people supporting my plan were increased though.

“Kurei”

“Captain Larg. Is the preparation done?”

“Of course. When the village was taken hostage, we have already expected a battle. Though I never thought that I will be cooperating with you.”

The big guy on the horse, the escort captain of Sophia, Captain Larg, is striding on the horse, while lining up with me. As I couldn't get on the horse, I am getting Captain Larg to assist me onto the horse. To some extent, he is also my escort. Though the person himself is rather reluctant.

“I am sorry. It will be over soon.”

“I dislike you. Specially the part where you easily enter the hearts of people.”

“I was just imitating my friend. In the first place, I am not that good at socializing with people.”

“Though it doesn't seem that way. The fact that Sophia trust you is still something I can't believe.”

“That's.... Well, it's just a coincidence, i think. It's just that by chance, I found out that Sophia-sama is getting hurt as much as I thought how tough it is to steel oneself.”

“... that’s the thing. We didn’t realize that. That’s why to not let the same thing happen again, we started to conduct in a way to respect Sophia-sama’s feelings as much as possible.”

“That’s so. She was really happy, being able to take a walk.”

“...But, because of that, it ended up in this situation. To protect that lady, I am troubled right now if we should keep away various things from her as expected. ”

Suddenly the troubled thoughts. I am troubled to how to react, even if you asked me. “I see”, is all I can answer, but Captain Larg is most likely desiring for an answer from someone. Denying it is easy, and affirming to it is even easier. It’s just that everything will just return to how it was.

“If we can’t find the answer, I think that it’s not really a concern and it’s just fine that way. Encountering failure, how to make up for the failure is what life is about. If the compensation failed, then life ahead would be a dark path, but if it’s successful, there will be no problem. And, isn’t finding out what to do when Sophia-sama fails part of the job scope?”

“...fuun. The fact that I thought that it’s true makes me feel shameful. And, I feel even more shameful on running away from my own job. Though it is the job of escort to bring one’s master to the place they desire, to restrict the movement of the master is putting the cart before the horse. I forgot about that.”

“Well then, let’s start work from now on. I will help, you know.”

“Show me your true strength that Sophia-sama believes in, you got it?”

As he said that, Captain Larg grabbed me by my neck, lifted me up violently, and easily placed me on the back of the horse. I, in the form of sitting behind Captain Larg, informed one thing to him who suddenly accelerated.

“Please ride safely, okay!”

“Don’t get thrown off!”

“Hey!?”

As we were having such an exchange, Captain Larg and I passed through the

opened castle gate, making loud noises as we go.

Part 6

It would take some time to reach the village from the castle. The unit by the name Hounds left behind around 10 men in the village, with the remaining camping outside the castle. Near that campsite, I got down from the horse, and shouted loudly towards the men who were slowly approaching while watching out for us.

“I have come for negotiations. I wish to speak with the captain of this unit.”

“Hoh. Negotiations, you say. What kind of negotiations? Will you include more beauties?”

As the one-eyed guy who walked over swaying said that, the men who was watching out for Captain Larg and me started laughing loudly. There is no mistake with him being the captain, i believe. His combat prowess is also the highest of second half of the 70s in this area. Thinking that it can rise, he seems to be quite the master.

“I suppose you are the captain though?”

“Yeah, I am their head, Dan. You?”

“Diorood-dono’s subordinate, Kureo Yukito. This is Escort Captain, Captain Larg. I don’t think I will need to say whose escort he is, right?”

“Well, the world beauty, right? We wanted to verify if she is also the best at night that we couldn’t sleep!”

Crude laughing resounded again. It seems like way above my expectations, they are dogs of no upbringing. Seriously, it’s good that I stopped Sophia right there. You have totally no idea what they will do to her.

“You people....!” (TL: Rude way)

“Captain Larg. You should have promised that you will leave the negotiations to me. Please step down. Is it also fine for your side’s subordinates to step down as well?”

“Fine. But we won’t put away our weapons, you got it?”

“I don’t mind. No matter what, I can’t do anything after all.”

“Heii.... You do seem to know your place.”

Subordinates of Captain Larg and Dan slowly stepped away. After seeing that, I first make verifications.

“I heard that your unit is under the direct supervision of the King.”

“Yep, The worst servant of the worst king. Literally getting him to sip plenty of sweet honey. HeeHeeHee”

“I see. Then to be able to sip that sweet honey like always, I have brought a plan of compromise.”

“Plan of compromise? What do you mean?”

“This is a secret we wanted to hide. I wish you would bring this back to your king as present.”

As I said that while raising my right hand slowly, Captain Larg shot a fireball towards the night sky.

Dan promptly reached for the sword on his waist, but realizing that I wasn't

moving, he didn't draw his sword. However, that was a huge mistake. I only moved my hands. To block my ears.

A moment later, a loud bellow in the vicinity reverberated. It was a volume where it still hurts even when blocking the ears. I believe the Hounds who didn't block their ears in the first place are surely suffering.

“Wh, What!?”

“Voices! And it's coming from the castle!?”

“Just how many people are shouting?”

While the Hounds are suffering under the bellow that doesn't stop after a while, Captain Larg and I also suffered. Though it was something I thought of, I can't stand the noise and my head hurts. The bellow that continued for a while suddenly stopped. As it was conveyed to stop the bellow only until after a period of time, I myself have taken damage enough to make my head go giddy.

“Ei, Eight thousand voices are indeed amazing....”

“You say Eig..Eight thousand!? Why is there so much people in the castle!?”

“That’s why, didn’t I already say? A secret that we wanted to hide. Actually it was supposed to be a secret reinforcement that should be despatched towards the frontlines but since it has been exposed, then it can’t be helped. Let’s just openly disclose it.”

“...from where did that army came from...?”

“It’s Albion. Well, though likely there are non-knights within the group, but numbers can become power. They are people gathered because of you people aiming at the world beauty. Even now, we somehow hold down their rampage, so we can come over to negotiate. Please retreat quickly.”

“How can I retreat!? That king loves beauties more than gold and intel. If we let her slip away, we have no tomorrow!”

Fear can be seen from Dan’s expression. I see, it seems like the “choker” on that aspect is really firm. But, that is slightly bad. I will be troubled if they fall to desperation. After seeing the menu, the status has raised at a single stroke. I see, this is what you call dead soldiers. No wonder it’s effective in a last stand.

“Then, fight with 8000 soldiers!? Please leave me out of that! I was given a strict order not to cause a war by Earl Uren. Pardon me from deaths!”

“Noisy! We are risking our lives here! If you want us to retreat, then bring the Celsus Maiden here!”

“Please lower down your volume! If that escort captain wills it, you and I can be roasted, you got it?”

“Why did you bring someone like that!?”

“It’s the other way round! I was brought here! You listen clearly, okay? The Celsus Maiden won’t come out. Reason being because every single time she tries to go out, the escort will stop her. And then, that escort captain brought me to the location of negotiation because he wanted to grant her wish of possibly ending it with the least sacrifices. But, I am the person in charge of the castle, being entrusted by his Highness. It’s fine to say that I am not satisfied by this treatment.”

“Say it in simple terms.”

“Intel to you guys that after the Celsus Maiden came out from the castle...”

I cut my words off there. That’s because I saw the object we were waiting for from behind Dan. Captain Larg most likely noticed it as well. “It” is walking towards this place.

What we saw was a fire ball made from a small magic. For this reason, you can’t mistake it. It means that the ambush team was successful. If that’s the case, it’s pointless to continue stalling time here. We will have Captain Larg lead

us for retreat later, and we will have Sophia and her escorts cooperate with the 150 man, already excluding the ambush team, to fight.

I, who was thinking of that, suddenly have my hand binded, and thrust a dagger before me.

“Don’t move.... If this person in charge dies, wouldn’t it be bad for Albion?”

“Person in charge? What are you talking about?”

Hey hey hey. Don’t tell me. It’s a joke, right? No matter what, that’s terrible. There’s a limit to being unexpected.

“Huh? Isn’t this guy being entrusted as the person in charge for that castle?”

“That castle is being governed in substitute by Earl Uren’s bother. That guy there is only the prince’s servant. If you want to kill him, just kill him.”

“Wh..What!? Y..You! You deceived us, didn’t you!?” (TL: What do you think?)

In the instant Dan put strength into his arms after saying that, Captain Larg was making a move, but stop his movement immediately.

Not just Captain Larg. I, Dan, and though there is some variations between everyone, plugged up our ears while the outrageous bellow was resounding. Dan released his hands from me, and dropped his dagger. Due to my delay to deal with it, my head was thumping hard.

Though it was totally unexpected from all angles, I was running to proceed under Captain Larg in any case. But, my leg was caught and fell down just like that. The one who caught my leg was Dan. Seeing that he is bleeding from his ears, it seems like his eardrums had burst. He appeared to have no longer bother about the pain of his ears.

As if horseback riding, Dan climbed to my back and unaware of when he had retrieved the dagger, he raised it overhead with his right hand.

It's over. Thinking that, for an instant, I remembered about the time when I was stabbed by my best friend. I do not wish to experience that heat or the likes a second time. Dan's movement can be seen in slow motion, with the dagger closing in on me. (TL: Took the last sentence from the light novel, as the web version doesn't make sense to me.)

But, at the next instant, Dan's right arm was pierced by an arrow.

“Guaaa!!!”

Before I know it, the bellow has stopped. At the moment I noticed it, I used both my hands to jostle Dan with my full strength, to be released from my pinned down state.

Somehow, the moment for the relief was also only a brief period of time. Dan's subordinates are coming towards this place. Due to the hearing the high volume sound, everyone is lightly staggering, and I was also unsteady as well.

"Stand down, Kurei!"

"Don't be unreasonable."

Though I somehow managed to crawl over to the feet of Captain Larg, Captain Larg told me to step down further. What a totally absurd thing. I don't think I can even walk, if I don't leave myself as it is for some time.

"Nope. That's more than enough."

“Sophia-sama!? It’s dangerous to come out to the front!”

“It’s fine. If it’s this number.... there are no problems!”

Sophia directs her hands towards Dan and the rest.

A breeze at the start, it gradually turned into a strong wind, that began attacking Dan’s group. It’s not a wind strong enough to blow a human away. But because of that, Dan’s and the rest could continue withstanding it by clenching their teeth. However, Sophia’s aim was likely a different thing.

Even if people don’t get blown away, the weapons do fly. Dropped items are without exceptions, but also items that have nothing holding onto it, and things pinned to the ground. All of those gradually began to soar to the skies. As expected, weapons that are slung at the waist couldn’t be blown away but most of the weapons were raised to the air. Though it will literally end if she dropped the weapons as it is, Sophia did nothing of that sort, as she controlled the wind and dropped the weapons in a different location.

Somehow managed to withstand the wind, what waited for the exhausted Dan’s group were 150 soldiers. Without weapons, Dan’s group, who have lost the will to fight, have no means of resistance and was caught without showing a single resisting-like action.

Unexpected things happened continuously midway, so it was quite life-threatening but well, it seems to have been in the direction of the success.

I gave a large sigh, and surveyed the soldiers that are raising cheers.



“You really have great skill, you know.”

“If I haven’t got the skill to shoot, what were you planning to do?”

When I leaned my back on a large rock for a break, Mikana showed herself, so when I called out to her, she queried me that question.

Even if you ask me how, I can’t answer because I have no other means.

“Well..... Most likely not able to do a thing?”

“You say it in a very cheerful way. It could have been your deathbed, you know?”

“I know. But that fear was the 2nd time after all. It’s possible that after experiencing it the first time, something inside me broke. Or maybe I got used to it? Mysteriously, I forgot everything about fear.”

“There was an attempt of murder on you before?”

“Yeah, well, something like that. That’s why, Thank you.”

After saying my gratitude with a smile, Mikana blinked her eyes multiple times. Looks like it was really unexpected.

“Why the gratitude?”

“You did saved me, and I am also spared from feeling that heat again. Since this is the 2nd time I am saved, I believe a more substantial gratitude is required.”

“...then, please assist me in my dream.”

“What kind of dream?”

“I have a dream to become a general like Kaguya-sama whose fame spread towards various countries. Since I have to be promoted first, I wish that you

would become the mediator for that.”

Seeing Mikana announced that with a serious expression, I couldn't help laughing. An outlook of a knight that is proficient in sword, but actually good in the bow, and though doesn't seem to be interested in promotion, she is actually very interested in it. This girl is really interesting.

“I !”

“I think that's a fine dream. That's a big dream. If it's within my extent of my assistance, I will help. For now, let's hear the report for the result of the ambush, shall we?”

“... within the unit, though there were 2 who were injured, the rest were safe. The villagers, naturally, were fine.”

“It's too successful. I wonder if it's because the opponent were weak?”

“...Though there were problems at the last phase, I believe it's because your plan was good. Strategist-dono.”

After saying that, she faced her back to me and went off.

In exchange, it's Sophia who walked over this time. Though there aren't people around, it's best to go with honorifics here.

“How's your condition?”

“Although I am feeling sluggish and unable to exert any strength, I believe I am still on the better side at the fact that I still have my life. That sudden bellow, was it Sophia-sama?”

“Yep. As it was sudden, I couldn't moderate it though...”

The true form of the loud bellow is the collective voice of the people of the castle town, a loud volume of around 800 people. And it's just that Sophia used Wind to send the sound over as it is. Since it's as if someone is shouting close to your ears, it's a kind of sound wave weapon. Though a magician capable of achieving this scale seems to be pretty much only Sophia.

The real objective of the bellow is to seal the ears temporarily, so as to keep their awareness away from the village. During the interval of the bellow, the ambush team was to set off from the back gate, and gain overwhelming victory. Though the achievements of the ambush team were to an unexpected extent, for now, it went according to what I imagined.

“Yukito....”

“What?”

“I am really sorry.”

“Anticipating a “Thank you”, that was totally unexpected.”

I was shocked when she suddenly lowered her head. It's also right to say I am feeling fear to the point of whether the escort unit saw us.

“.... I manipulate the windto collect voices far away. That's why I know that how much Yukito tried to persuade and work hard. In regards to that, I didn't reward you anything....”

“Wait a minute. Firstly, this time, the fact that miraculously there were no deaths is due to Sophia. It was Sophia who protected it. So it's fine about the rewards. That is not the problem. What kind of conversation... did you hear?”

“Conversation about abandoning the village, and the period of stalling time

just now.”

“Rather than that, a lot earlier, you weren’t listening to the conversation mainly between Dio-sama and I, right?”

We only spoke of crude stuff. It’s really bad that it’s mainly regarding Sophia. Without doubt the words of Earl Uren, but after that, there is also that matter where the two of us, Dio-sama and I, were debating why Sophia is such a beauty. (TL: Seriously? -_-”)

Instantly, Sophia turned red. At the same time, I also turned red, don’t you think? We were heard. That conversation. Even though it’s a conversation because it’s between men.

“I, it’s not like I planned to listen..... Uhm... The conversation between both of you sounds fun... I unconsciously brought it via the wind....”

“...how far is the effective range?”

“Eh.....?”

“How far do you have to separate to not be able to hear?”

“Let’s see..... From the beginning to the end of a large street would be the limit, i think. ”

“I got it. I really understand. I will think of conversation spots seriously.”

“...are you angry...?”

“I am not angry, but seriously embarrassed. I wonder when was the last time I was this embarrassed.... Please tell me earlier. If I knew.... I would be more careful about the topic.....”

While saying that, I let out my biggest sigh ever.

3 days later. After hearing the war results, under Dio-sama’s orders, I ended up being summoned to the frontlines, and Sophia will also be returning to Albion.

The civil war in Veris is gradually entering the climax.

Chapter 2: The Siblings

Part 1

After a war, a clean up would be necessary. There are things like nursing the injured, putting the equipment in order, the treatment to the prisoners and many other things. That's why I am busy as hell for that clean up, having not slept properly for about 2 days. Asking the townsmen for their cooperation was also a problem, as to show our thanks, it's necessary to work out even a bit of remuneration. As most of those 2 days were pretty much for that task, you can say I am reaping what I sowed. Sophia's opinion of driving people's ears mad even with 150 men was rejected, but was pressed in just in case after all.

"Increasing personnel excessively is something to think about...."

As I was saying that not only in the morning, but also on the bed, I, who finally took a long sleep, changed into the usual "Haori", and left the room entitled to me. (TL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haori>)

My intended destination is Sophia's room. As I rarely talk to her the day before yesterday and yesterday, it was a move made thinking to apologize for it, but that was intercepted by an unexpected person.

"Mikana? Is something the matter?"

"I came to report. It's an order from Dio-sama to summon Kurei-dono. Take care to come forward to the front-lines as soon as you can."

"...there is still something you have not mentioned, right?"

“Yes. It will be to make Sophia-sama return to Albion.”

“To return her, you say. Well, I guess it does turn out that way.”

Mikana, as if disgusted, gave a sigh at my muttering. I intend to not be dull enough to not know what the sigh was about from that flow just now. (TL: Basically you are not dull like other harem chars.)

“Telling me to come over to the battlefield was as expected after all.”

“It’s not something to laugh about. Our opponent is Kaguya-dono who has the “Dark Princess” as her 2nd name. She has not lost a single battle till now.”

“It will work out somehow. Besides, there is something else I have to think about no matter what.”

“What is it?”

“Persuade. It’s that sort of order after all.”

After giving a sigh, I left Mikana behind, and quicken my steps towards Sophia’s room.



“I don’t want to.”

Yep. As expected. I already know it. I knew that she won’t obediently obey.

Sophia made the remark, sitting on a chair. As I conveyed “Please return to Albion”, I was given a reply immediately. Though I understand those feelings, there is nothing I can do.

“Dio-sama is saying that. I will also be going to the front-lines. I can’t protect Sophia.”

“Can’t you just reject Diorood-sama’s request? That you are not a military officer.”

“There is no way those words are going to go through, right? I am Dio-sama’s servant after all, and above all, I have just took over command 3 days ago.”

As I said that, Sophia averted her face from me. This is going to be more difficult than I thought.

The distance between Sophia and I in steps is about 10 steps. To shorten that, I move my right left forward. Though I moved it, my body slightly ended up falling back, causing the distance to not shrink. There’s something stopping me. No, I should say that the wind is pushing me back.

It’s the same even I move my left left forward. Sophia have no intention to shrink this distance of 10 steps.

“Sophia”

“What is it?”

“I have come to persuade you.”

“I know.”

Using a tone as if it's natural thing, Sophia replied. That's why I,

“But you have no intention to accept it. A friend's persuasion.”

“...it's because it's a friend that I can't accept it.”

“Then, I will request some other people, okay? Someone you have no idea who it is, got it?”

“I got it! I won't use magic!”

Turning her back towards me and restoring her turned waist, I walked to Sophia who sat on a chair. Unlike just now, there is no longer any push back. That's of course. Sophia won't betray the words she spoke of just now.

“I wish to speak, facing you though?”

“Though I said I won't use magic, I didn't say I would accept your persuasion.”

Even with this flow, you are still going to say things like that. Even with the same method just now, though I think she would comply, that would be too pitiful, and above all, dangerous. I don't have even the least intention of

entrusting the persuasion of Sophia to someone else. If it's interfered that way, I will lose the initiative of the conversation at that moment.

"Let's begin with the talk."

"I also didn't say that I will listen to the talk."

"I see. Then it's fine even if you don't listen to it. I do not have the ability to make you listen to me after all. Just that.. It's regretful that I will departing for the front-lines tomorrow. The fact that I couldn't have a good conversation with you here is truly regretful."

Thinking that I have to push in more, as I was thinking of my next words, Sophia came to face me and spoke.

"For a while now.... Haven't you been having fun teasing me?"

"It's exaggerating to say I am teasing you. It's just making a pass to sound you out."

"... are you really going tomorrow...?"

After slightly glaring bitterly at me, Sophia muttered that in a dispirited and soft tone. It's something you don't have to ask me. I can't deny it. Though I don't intend to say it out.

"I will go. It's possible that I will go off by tonight."

“Why must Yukito go no matter what!?”

“Dio-sama is probably taking a gamble. To try to reduce the possibility of the bad stuff happening, he plans to use everything that he can. Even the few soldiers that are gathered here in this castle, and also me.”

As she said that, Sophia got up from the chair, and stood facing me. As she was 4-5 cm shorter, to match the one's glance, there is a need to face my head lower.

“I don't want.... to return....but if I will become a bother to Yukito, ... I will return...”

Sophia's feelings was conveyed to me, despite hesitating and glancing away a few times.

But, the words have not stopped with just that.

“But! I object Yukito going to the front-lines! If you are going to be forced to go, I will stop it, even if I have to write a protest to Diorood-sama.”

The offense and defense had reversed. Once she accepted to return to Albion, Sophia has no longer anything to protect. The necessity for her to visit to gain favor is no longer there. Though you can also say that she has turned defiant.

“That's.... quite the request.”

“Though you listen to Diorood-sama's request, you won't listen to mine?”

“Dio-sama’s is an order, while Sophia’s is a request. On one side, there is a compelling force that prevents refusal, while on the other side, even if I refuse.... The party will only get unhappy, that’s all.”

“Then, I order it.”

“Is that fine? Sophia and I.... will no longer be on equal standing, you know?”

Even if I desire for a relationship of close standing to Dio-sama, I will never desire for an equal standing. That’s why. I will not include personal feelings in an order. If I judged to make use of something, I will use it. If I refuse an order, it will be handled like all other soldiers, I think.

On the other hand, Sophia desires to be on equal standing with me. Even though there was her willfulness of wanting me to listen to her request, she has never use her status of the Celsus Maiden, envoy of Albion as a pretext of authority to force me into anything. That’s because if she does that, we will no longer be on equal standing.

“.....I wish to be on equal standing with Yukito. To stay as friends. But.... I do not wish for you to go to a dangerous place! You might end up being close to death again! At that time.... I won’t be able to go to save you, you know....?”

“I understand Sophia’s feelings. I am not reliable after all. But, I also have similar feelings. Dio-sama is fighting. He is suffering. I wish to help him. Of course, I also wish to stay by Sophia’s side. However, I can’t handle both sides. That’s why I will go to the dreadful one.”

Not really sure about Dio-sama, but I treat Dio-sama as a friend. And that goes for Sophia as well. However, if I am going to choose any of them, I will choose Dio-sama this time.

That's because I am strongly required.

"I am also troubled..... If Yukito is gone.... I won't have anyone, you know....?"

"Sophia.... Sorry. For just a period of time, please let me go to Dio-sama's side. I will end this civil war. And then, I will go to Sophia's side this time."

"...would you come immediately...?"

"As fast as I can, I will promise to use all my strength to do what I can."

"... then...."

I will endure for a while.

Sophia said that while shedding tears.

Though I unintentionally wanted to withdraw my words, and say to stay by her side after seeing that appearance of hers, I suppressed that swaying heart of mine and left Sophia's room.



"Take this..."

Late at night. At the time where most would have fallen asleep. I, together with 100 cavalries, are about to move towards the front-lines.

With the preparations at its final stages, at the time where what was left was the signal for departure, Sophia came running to where I was.

And then, what was presented with both hands was a green folding fan. Additionally, from what I see, it looks expensive.

“Etto.....” (TL: Ummm...)

“Divine Fan Klarus. A wind magic tool, where just moving it can negate any magic, and fanning it hard can raise a gale. This can... protect Yukito’s life.”

“I think it’s an amazing item but,.... thanks. I will take it. Though I think I am slightly lacking as it’s user.”

After receiving the fan, while surprised at how fitting it feels in my hands, I put it aside in my pocket and look at Sophia. As I can look at the fan later, if I let Sophia run away now, I won’t see her for quite a while.

“Even if the battle is lost, no matter how much you are drove to a corner, please swear that you will never give up and live....”

“Ah.. no matter what happen, I will live. There’s a promise after all.”

“... Please come to my side without fail. I will be waiting...”

“I will come as soon as I can.”

Contrary to Sophia’s seemingly crying expression, I am constantly smiling. It’s not like I am faking it. I am just simply happy about it. Even if there were people who say “Please win it”, “For victory”, there wasn’t anyone who would say that he/she wants me to live.

At the very least right now, there is one person who wish for my safety. And, I have something I need to do after this. As I think of it as a very fortunate thing, a smile is naturally formed on my face.

“Yukito.... Even now, I do not wish for you to go.... but”

“...but?”

“I decided to believe in you.... That’s why I will no longer stop you. May the fortunes of war be with you.”

While lowering her head deeply, Sophia slowly fell back step by step.

There is the coach that I have prepared. If I don’t board it, the knights can’t advance. No, without my command, they can’t advance.

That’s because, in the decree written by Dio-sama to me, I was to lead a hundred knights to the front-lines. The commander in this place is me.

I can’t part my sights on Sophia who is at a place not far away. If I turn my sighs away, though I don’t want to think about it, it’s possible that I might not

even be able to see her the second time. In that case, what is Sophia supposed to do? I wonder if she will continue to live acting as the Celsus Maiden that others desire.

“Kurei-dono... If this moment gets prolonged, it will only feel as tough as it is. For you, and also the rest of the knights.”

“...I see, it was not just me. Everyone also have people waiting for their return, right?”

“Though the male who is being waited upon by the Celsus Maiden is only you.”

“Those willing to wait have nothing to do with status, gender, or anything. That’s why I have to return no matter what.”

“That’s true....”

As Mikana came close on her horse, and said that without turning her eyes to me, I grasped the fan in my chest tightly, breathed in deeply, and turned my sights away from Sophia.

At the same time by back totally faced Sophia, I announced.

“Depart!”

I wish to return to Sophia’s side. But, it’s useless if it’s just that. I have to take responsibility and return the people in this place, Mikana and also the knights

who I do not know. That's the duty of those who lead.

It's very heavy. My insides are being crushed. It's that kind of feeling. You worry for every single thing, you feel anxiety for every single thing.

But, I mustn't step on the feelings of the people who have send us out.

We can only move forward.

After that, around 2 days later, Yukito Kurei, leading a hundred knights, linked up with the main force of Prince Diorood's army of 8500.

Gathering one by one, Prince Diorood's army expanded to a number of 12000 5 days after Yukito Kurei arrived, so many people feels that the decisive battle against the 10000 elite army led by Princess Kaguya of the King's faction is close.

Part 2

Castle Harpe. Able to be called Veris's third largest castle, as it's almost right in the center of Veris, it is also a strong fortress prepared to face attack from all directions.

That's the castle I am in right now.

As an encirclement net is being laid out here, the armies of the nobles continues to gather. While there are armies of few numbers like us who gathered, there are those with armies exceeding a thousand. I guess it's because the encirclement net that is narrowing gradually that we could have a centralized operation. (TL: I believe the gaps in the net are the ones narrowing.)

As I was thinking about that, after taking a glimpse of the fan, I looked at a piece of paper. As it was in between the fan, it's from Sophia.

The content of the letter that was written in very polite words was the explanation of this powerful fan that was called the Divine Fan and also her words at the end of it. Though this would be more of a manual than a letter, but it doesn't only have instructions, so if a letter is what you convey your feelings with, then this would be a letter, i guess.

"Think of it as my substitute...you say"

Please think of it as my substitute.

Though those are the only words written at the end of it, even it's a short sentence, it could convey what needs to be conveyed. I grasp the fan tightly, and release it slowly.

This is already the battlefield. To fulfil the promise, I have to become stronger no matter what. I have to continue showing my strength no matter what. Towards the enemies, even to my allies.

A small knock could be heard from the door. This is a simple waiting room. After reaching the castle, I was brought here immediately.

“His Highness has requested for you to come quickly.”

Though an unknown youngster, he lowered his head while informing that.

Even if the preparation of receiving me has been made, it's still too early. If there's a clock, it's a time where the needle would have already moved to the next day.

“What is Dio-sama doing right now?”

“He’s in the middle of a war council. He wishes for you to join in.”

“I see. I will go immediately. Can I ask you to guide me?”

“Certainly.”

As I walked quickly out of the room, the youngster said “This way”, and started walking in front of me. This castle is enormous. I have confidence that without a guide, I will definitely not be able to reach my destination. Well, though when the time comes, I can always just bring up the map, but it feels like I am wasting the use of my skills. Being too dependent on it would result in a blunder from an opening. You must always use your own strength to do what you can first. For now, I will start with remembering the structure and routes of the castle.

It’s about 10 minutes of continuous walking, i guess. As I have climbed a number of stairs, it’s most likely on the higher levels. Though it’s quite harsh on the legs, I reached the front of the destined room.

“Excuse me. I have brought Kurei-sama over.”

“Kindly enter.”

Likely that it has been conveyed beforehand, the escort soldiers said that without verifying with the insides. Though I am about to leak a smile as I thought that it has been a while since meeting Dio-sama and Earl Uren, I can't let that smile be expressed. This is not to meet up with Dio-sama and Earl Uren. I came for the sake of enabling Dio-sama to win as soon as possible. Not as the usual talking companion.

I opened the 2-metre long door slowly.

It seems like there are various people in armor chatting around a huge table in the middle of the room. No, it shouldn't be something like chatting, right? I guess I should say they are discussing about their opinions.

And that was stopped. The sights of 10+ knights, furthermore knights who lead an army, were concentrated on me. As expected of people who threw themselves into the fight, the glint in their eyes are all bizarrely sharp and strong. To the point I could feel difficulty in my breathing.

It's already like this with your allies, and not the enemies. I think it's even worst if it's against the enemies.

Then, if I am going to be overwhelmed by them to this extent, I don't think I can even face Dio-sama's elder sister Kaguya-sama. If I don't get engulfed here on the contrary, that is.

It seems impossible to make Dio-sama win.

“Yukito Kurei. Reporting at your call.”

“It’s good that you have come. Good work on the escort task of the Celsus Maiden.”

Dio-sama informed me with a casual tone. Though it basically means it’s such a place, if I am going to be overwhelmed, I have no choice but to seize the initiative.

For now, the only thing to do is to gather everyone’s visual.

“If it’s task of that extent, there are plenty. Just that, there aren’t any task that are so gentle to the eyes.”

“Then, sorry for disturbing your fortunate time.”

“Totally. But, I heard that Princess Kaguya is also a beauty. I came all the way here because I am looking forward to that.”

“Ane-ue is definitely a beauty. That dignified beauty most likely wouldn’t lose to the Celsus Maiden as well.”

“In that case, let’s quickly go to have a look. As the victor..” (TL: Uwaki-mono, should be able to search this rather easily 😊)

At the same time I spoke those words, I took out the fan from my chest pocket with my right hand, and lightly strike it on my left hand.

After making a slightly unexpected expression, Dio-sama informed boldly with a smile.

“Do our strategist have a plan of certain victory?”

“If it’s on the level of the Hounds, then I can slaughter them no matter how many they are. When the opponent becomes your Highness’s elder sister, that is very much no longer the case. But, there are a few plans that I wish to try out.”

“That’s enough. As you see, we are unable to come out with anything, even after discussing together.”

As I stepped up to the side of Dio-sama who said that, I transferred my sight to the map laid on the top of the desk.

There were pieces on the map that shows the military force present at that place.

“If we continue to surround them for a long period of time, the opponent will be exhausted after some time. That’s why I advise to create a huge encirclement net. Though that was no doubt a certain victory in its own way, why was it cancelled?”

“Fun~, that’s certain victory? Just taking out a few small castles doesn’t connect to a victory! And the small army sent to take down the opponent’s castle have been taken out by the ambush team led by General Kaguya multiple times! The one who have victory in their hands is the other side!”

A trimmed up blonde man with a large build was looking at me suspiciously while releasing those words.

It’s displaying Lector Paulus on the screen. He is of General rank, and have a combat strength of the upper 80s. His wisdom is exactly 50. If it’s an infantry, there isn’t any problem, but as a commander of a unit, isn’t that problematic? From the words he spoke just now, you can understand that his vision is narrow. He is only thinking about defeating the enemies in front of him and then acquire what’s there.

“General Paulus. Then, if it’s you, what will you do?”

“If it’s me, I will lead the whole army and desire for a big decisive battle! As we have been piling up small defeats one after another, it is necessary for a big victory!”

There were various voices who raised their voices in support to General Paulus who shouted out.

What’s this person talking about, even though he said it himself about taking down small castles just now? Taking down castles are also small victories. And also, that is the development Kaguya-sama is waiting for anxiously. Though Kaguya-sama can achieve victory in whatever the battlegrounds there are, she is prided for having peerless strength in open-field battles above all others. Well, this is something that comes from records that were stored so I am not sure if it’s accurate, but for a rumor to take shape there also needs to be some truth. It’s sheer stupidity to fight an opponent like that from the front.

But

“Then the whole army, let’s see.... Please lead the force of 10000 that is still

gathering and make a frontal attack on Kaguya-dono, and tear them apart. Is it fine for the commander to be General Paulus? Dio-sama” (TL: I am loving this guy!)

“I don’t mind if Yukito is fine with it.” (TL: Your Highness.... LOL!)

“You hear him. Then, all the best!” (TL: I can imagine him smiling and that Yoroshiku face, with his hand up as if saying hi/bye)

“Wai, Wait just a second! The opponent is an army of 10000 directly supervised by General Kaguya! And the one here is an just-gathered army of “not-even-sure-whether-there-will-be-10000”, you know!? It’s reckless to fight like that! The enemy is General Kaguya, you know!”

To the shouting General Paulus, I deeply gave out a sigh. Those generals that caught my intention let it passed unconcerned, while those people who approved General Paulus also realized that he was in a bad situation.

“You were the one who said it. That... ‘If it were me, I would desire a big decisive battle’”

“That, that is only when we gathered an army that overwhelms the opponent, or a composition of a highly skilled army. An army of equal number and skill won’t win against General Kaguya.”

“That’s correct. If you know that, I would like you to refrain from making declarations under the imagination of something that doesn’t exist. With that victorious manner of speaking, I unintentionally make the blunder of having some expectations.”

“You! Are you mocking me!?”

“If it’s not mocking, then what do you call it!? Dio-sama is wise. That’s why he understood that you have been speaking under plenty of assumptions! But, if he doesn’t understand and believe in your words literally, and you ended up taking lead of the army, what were you planning to do!? This is supposed to be a place where you give suggestions to win! It’s not a place for rash conduct!”

Totally lost for words could be the description about General Paulus right now. If he doesn’t even understand after saying so much, I would go to the extent of petitioning to Dio-sama to dismiss General Paulus, but from seeing that he dropped his shoulders and is bothered by the people around, there don’t seem to be that need.

“Yukito. Why don’t you leave it at that? General Paulus is my precious subordinate. If he thinks he is incompetent, he would also reflect on himself.”

“If Dio-sama says that, I won’t say anymore. But, it’s unpleasant to be obstructed by insignificant words. If there’s a second time, I might just shut

your mouth.”

“Fufu, though I would like to see your appearance of shutting people’s mouth, that would be after hearing your thoughts. How do you analyse the current situation?”

Unsure if Dio-sama is considering General Paulus’s feelings, he asked with a cheerful and gentle tone.

The map on the table has here, which is Castle Harpe, on one end, and Kaguya-sama’s stronghold, Castle Canon, and in between them, there are many small castles and fortress drawn on it. As the fact to battle is already final, this map would be suitable for planning tactics, but if we are talking about the strategy side.

“This map is insufficient. Do we have a slightly bigger map.... Let’s see, one that can fit the whole capital?”

“That’s true. I also thought of it. I did prepared it. Bring it over.”

As I said that, Dio-sama immediately instructed to change the map. Within the generals were people trying to voice out, people who were bewildered, people

who kept quiet and also one person who yawn as if saying 'at last'.

Are, that's weird. As this place is a war council, the people gathered here should be all generals, but there is a person who yawn so excessively. Having hair with a slight tinge of red, though he was tall, he wasn't really very tall and his shoulder width isn't wide. Though his grey eyes were angled, making him look sharp, he doesn't have much other feature to his appearance. He also doesn't have the special intimidating air that all people in this place have.

From the screen that popped out, I found out that he is the mercenary captain, Ars Crow. His combat capability is on the lower 90s. Perhaps he is strongest in this place. His wisdom is also around 80, while his speed is on the upper 90s. Without doubt, he is a warrior that uses his speed as his main combat tactic.

Likely noticing my glance, Ars, without saying anything, moved his mouth to convey his intention.

3 words, I, Am, Sleepy. I guess that means "I am sleepy so get this over and done with". Be it his grinning appearance of smile, he seems to have quite the pleasant personality.

Once the change of the map is completed, I started explaining after leaving a breath behind.

"Our aim is to win. What I wish everyone to remember again is not the desire to win the current objective, but for Dio-sama to win against the current king. No matter how many times we lose in the process, if the result ends in Dio-sama winning against the current king, there will be no problem at all. And,

there is no need to proactively fight against Kaguya, Her Highness. Whether we detour or lure them out, the main army will attack the current king. And then the war would end. This is the development of events I am thinking, please do get it in your heads.”

“Well, it’s easy to say but, the problem is how to go about doing it.”

“That’s what we should decide on first. After everyone get that in your head, think about what can be done to achieve that development. This is then a meeting. However, apologies, even though we finally made one step, everyone look rather tired. I am also slightly tired.”

“That’s true. We will be dismissed here, and we shall have our war council again tomorrow. Everyone, you are dismissed.”

“At your will.”

While everyone retired after giving their respects, there was a guy who approached.

It’s Ars.

“Sorry. Did you take my mood into consideration?”

“No problem, nothing good will come out from forcing sleepy heads.”

“That’s not wrong. If the general is lacking of sleep, you can’t win battles that should have been won. It’s the same as the war council, I guess. See you. I am Ars Crow who assembled the mercenary soldiers. It’s a pleasure to meet you. Strategist-dono.”

“The pleasure is mine. Ars-dono”

After exchanging a few words, as Ars left the room, the other generals did the same.

Just then, as I seem to have relaxed, I could no longer put strength into my legs. Though I somehow managed to lean against the table to endure it, my knees were trembling.

“Were you able to relax yourself?”

“Seems that way. I am doing something that I am not used to after all.”

“You have quite the look. Of a strategist, that is”

As I thanked Dio-sama for saying that, I returned to my posture. From now on, I have a few things I need to discuss with Dio-sama.

“I am really tired. As I believe Dio-sama is the same too, let’s finish this up quickly.”

“That’s true. I am troubled that my body haven’t been moving as I want to recently. If possible, I want to get my sleep right now.”

When I looked at Dio-sama who said that laughing, I could see something faint applied on his face. It’s likely cosmetics. Previously, like what Ars said, a sleep-deprived general can’t win a fight that he could have won. Rather than a general’s problem, it’s a morale problem. If the complexion is bad, no soldier would want to fight under a general who would collapse at any time. That’s why, even if tired, a general has to behave normally no matter what, and has to be viewed that way no matter what.

“I will end this soon. Firstly, for the road towards the capital, as expected, we must move past Castle Canon, right?”

“Well, the large army.”

“I see. Then next is other than Dio-sama, is there any other general that can lead the whole army?”

“If there is, I would already be resting. Though Earl Uren is splendidly taking charge of supply so it’s still better, but seriously, managing the army is taking everything I have.”

“I understand. Lastly, please tell me something. Is the reason why you expressly called off the encirclement net that results in the protracted war due to the surrounding voices?”

“Nope. It’s my own will. I can’t let the civil war be prolonged any longer. The aim is a short term battle. I will.....defeat my father. Yukito. That’s why even for just a short period of time, can you draw the attention of my elder sister somehow?”

I can see a resolute will from the eyes of Dio-sama who said that. If your will is going to be so firm, I can’t dare to say to use the safer method of protracted war, can I? Plus, a short term battle is something I desire for too. (TL: To meet your girl, right?)

“At your will. I shall use all possible methods. I will definitely open up the road for Dio-sama.”

As I said that, I kneeled before Dio-sama and started thinking the necessities for the short term battle.

Part 3

I am shocked!

How should I say this? It's towards the versatility of the skill I hold, Obtutus.

During the period where we are concentrating the military force, I was trying to recall the things regarding Sun Tzu for now, trying to do what I can.

As everyone knows, it's the Art of War. Right after the 13th volume, it featured heavily on war concepts. It was written down not to lightly approach it, but I was shocked when I read it.

I have pretty much remembered the content as I have read it multiple times since it was interesting. Just that, a person's memories isn't perfect. As there are parts where I might miss out no matter what, when I tried to recall them, Obtutus is activated and whatever I could not remember are accurately displayed on the terminal.

The 7 Laws of Sun Tzu

Friends or Foes, whose master holds the hearts of the people.

Which general is a superior talent?

Which army is more advantageous in terms of divine luck and location?

Which army is keeping their ranks strict?

Which army is stronger?

Which side has soldiers that are trained well?

Which side defines reward and punishments equally?

Only when after comparing the above 7 and having enough prospects of victory, should one wage a war.

(TL: Sorry, not so much of Sun Tzu guy, so not sure if the above is correct.)

This is good. Really good. I no longer need to have a vague recollection to use strategies and tactics like this. Though I say that, I have to modify it to fit them in this world. In this world, there are magic and the existence of dragon is being written down in reference books. It's hard to think that tactics used on Earth can be used directly just like that.

Even then, there is more than enough worth in it though.

“You say that the ruler that holds the hearts of the people, though Dio-sama is overwhelming superior than the current king, I should say it's on par when compared with Kaguya-sama, I think. As there is Kaguya-sama in terms of the general's quality, it's their side that has the edge. It's similar when it comes to luck and location advantage, i guess. I should treat this as on par, then. Though Kaguya-sama's army seems to be certainly strict on military regulations, our side is likely more firm from an overall perspective. I believe in terms of military strength would belong on the other side. The opponent have Kaguya-sama's army that was recently protecting the borders and the current king's direct controlled army that have been fighting continuously. The experience levels are different. In terms of training, it's also advantageous at their side. There is certainly difference in the training proficiency. The final point on rewards and

punishment is a difficult one. In some sense, if people on the other side acquire achievements, the things they gain are plenty. Even for punishments, from seeing how they are tied down by fear, it seems to be something terrible. But if you talk about the point of being fair, without doubt, it's our side."

After talking to myself for a while and repeating the content just now, I unintentionally gave out a sign. Out of seven of the laws, 3 of them are on the other side, and 2 were on par. The only remaining 2 aren't conditions to win.

Seriously, they have a better advantage in terms of the factors of the battle. I can't anticipate the prospects of victory at all. But, the battle is already a confirmed fact. We can't say to stop because we have no chance of victory at this late hour.

"Excuse me. Kurei-dono. Would you like to have lunch any time now?"

"Mikana? Just nice. I have something I want to ask you though."

"Then let's do that after the lunch. I heard that you didn't eat anything in the morning too. As your attendant was begging in tears, I took the time to come down. Please take your lunch."

Jirori Mikana glared at me. No matter how I think of it, it's my fault, so talking back is difficult.

"Then, I will have my meal. But, could you join me?"

"Me? I don't mind but, as my meal has been prepared at the lodge, I wouldn't be able to take it from here, you know?"

"It's fine. It wouldn't take too long anyway."

As I said that, after I moved my prepared meal on the table, in the form where Mikana can be seen standing in the middle of the room, I started having my meal.

Though I said it myself to accompany me, it's really hard to eat while being looked upon. Let's settle the main stuff quickly.

"Do you know about the people around General Kaguya?"

"I believe you already know all the reputed generals in Castle Canon though?"

“I mean things like who is the best, basically things in regards to abilities.”

“I see. But why ask me?”

“It’s your admired General Kaguya, right? I believe you would be knowledgeable about her associates as well.”

Trying to tease Mikana slightly, Mikana nodded, showing agreement. Not knowing if it was embarrassing, though I thought she would deny it, it seems like for Mikana, her respect for Kaguya-sama is something that is embarrassing, but not to be denied. But, it’s the enemy general after all.

“To the extent of what I know, there are 3 person that can be called General Kaguya’s close associates. One is Anna Dietrich-sama. Though the castle lord, she usually leave it to her representative, and continue to assist General Kaguya, doing government affairs and giving instructions, a faultless lady from what I have heard.”

“Omnipotent, you say..... That’s troublesome.”

“Another person is Bayd Fern-sama. Though I heard that he is a man who is entrusted to the army’s supply and the management of the financial matters, he is basically someone who worked behind the scenes, and likely would not come to the frontlines.”

“I see, so it’s his ability to be able to maintain an army of 10000 without deficiency, then? Who is the last one?”

“Yuri Stratos-sama. Recently, he was picked up by Kaguya-sama during her trip, but at any rate, I heard that he excels in being resourceful.”

“I got it. From an omnipotent assistant to a supply supervisor, and then a strategist. It’s lineup that assumes that she will lead herself certainly.”

As I muttered, Mikana muttered as if amazed.

“Since she is a general, isn’t that natural?”

“True. But, I wonder if we can make use of that nature?”

Well then, I managed to hear what I wanted to know. Though the problem is if there is a person that is able to represent Kaguya-sama to lead the whole army, while maintaining the army is possible, leading seems difficult. If that’s the case, there is a way.

“Thank you, Mikana. That’s enough.”

“No problem, I will go after verifying that you have finished eating. I won’t be able to stand it if you left anything behind.”

“No, I won’t leave behind my food....”

As I could feel a strong will when I looked into her eyes, I gave up and let her do as she pleases. Though it’s not like we were eating together, it’s not bad to have a companion.

“Now that I think of it, I am able to stride the horse now.”

“I believe you mistook that the horse strided for you. But, it was unexpected that you could ride after a few days.”

“Taking Mikana’s advice, I washed and fed the horse after all. To grow accustomed to it is really important.”

“A horse is also a living thing. As the anxiousness of the rider is conveyed to the horse, and above all, the horse is also afraid of letting inexperienced riders

on it.”

I could understand those words now to the point that it hurts. After all, I was thrown off multiple times. At that time, it seems like the horse was angry, but it was most likely afraid. I did something bad.

To some extent, it took about 7 days till I could ride the horse. Along the journey towards the castle, I was under the guidance of Mikana. After being asked why a horse carriage for some reason, and I answered about not being able to ride a horse, “Special Training” was what I was told.

Well, having a commander that can’t ride a horse can only lower the morale of the army, and likely not raise any morale at all.

“Okay, I have finished my meal. Is it fine like this?”

“I have confirmed that. But, please do have your meal everyday. Please make sure that you sleep too. There are voices of worry from your subordinates.”

I scratched my head and averted my sights from Mikana who was showing an expression of worry. Though I feel sorry, but right now, if I don’t force myself, I won’t have the chance later.

There are approximately 12000 soldiers gathered in this castle right now. As the encircling net is still continuing as of now, this can be taken as the limit. Though we could still gather after releasing the encirclement net, if we do that, we will end up in the initial state of being on equal terms.

Right now, the rebel army has acquired close to two-third of Veris's land. If the king's side is to see the land from the sky, there should only be left with a long and narrow trapezium shaped land. To root Kaguya-sama's army of 10000 in the middle, we have used a plan of slowly attacking their flanks, but as Kaguya-sama is still well, the long and narrow trapezium shape most likely hasn't change. The main body at the centre has not moved a single millimetre after all.

“The situation is tensing up. That's why I will manage myself to an extent I won't fall.”

“That will be troubling. For Us.”

As if to interrupt Mikana's words, a knock came from the door.

“Enter”

“Excuse me! Please quickly come to his Highness’s room! His Highness has collapsed!”

From the report that came at such a time, it was something that would shake the rebel armies from its core..



After strongly telling Mikana not to reveal it, I quickly made my way towards Dio-sama’s room.

Though likely due to running, I was out of breath, I knocked on the door without caring.

“Yukito Kurei! Reporting!”

“Enter”

The voice that came from the inside was Earl Uren's. It could be possible that his condition is so bad he couldn't voice out.

While thinking of the worst imagination, what I saw when I entered the room was,

“Dio.....sama?”

“Yukito. If I could see your reaction, it was worth the collapse.”

Dio-sama, walking towards the desk and Earl Uren who was assisting at the side was as usual.

“What's going on?”

“For now, come closer. I wish to keep it quiet.”

Basically, he doesn't want the conversation to be heard. I nodded slightly, and slowly approached the desk.

"First of all, sorry. I need you to be in a panic. Most likely, the people around would think I have collapsed. Well actually, I did collapsed slightly due to overwork though."

"If the supreme commander was to fall, we can't fight a war, you know? What were you planning to do?"

"I had a weak constitution since young. That's why my elder sister would not suspect that report. And then, they will depart for battle with godspeed and if they surround this castle, they will certainly have to form up somewhere close by. After saying that much, you understand, right?"

If the supreme commander falls, the rebel army will be in chaos. Kaguya-sama would certainly not miss that chance. Towards an army that can't function, she can hunt them down no matter how many times.

In the opportunity to attack Kaguya-sama after she came out to hunt, we will make a surprise attack towards the capital and defeat the king.

Most likely, it's a plan like this. Just that, the one who acts as the decoy will

have to endure the attack.

“What’s the numbers of the ambush element?”

“I would want around 2000-3000. As I will have a small reserve element separated for my escort, I believe that 2000 would be the limit.”

“Is the 10000 the decoy?”

“That’s where you come in Yukito.”

Earl Uren smile with a Nyari~. And Dio-sama floated a similar smile too. (TL: Why would the author describe it as if they are up to no good... Lol..)

“I will have to entrust you with this again.”

As he say that, what he took out was short sword sheathed in a golden scabbard. Belonging to Dio-sama’s grandfather, at the time of the Sophia’s protection, it was a symbol to show full authorisation.

“I know it’s a difficult task. I understand that I have entitled a dangerous task to you and also the fact that I have betrayed the people who trusted me. But, I don’t have the time. If I let this opportunity go, I don’t think I would be able to strike at an opportunity of my elder sister again. Long-term wars would only lead to the decline of the country. The other countries are gradually starting to show movement. If we are going to move, it’s now.”

“Dio-sama....”

His eyes are being filled with vigor that I have never seen before. Holding strong determination, Dio-sama is ready to face what the things to come from now on.

“I hate my father. But the reason why I continued to call him Father is to show everyone that I intend to carry all the burden. This battle is a foolish family feud. No one would gain anything, and be happy about it. That’s why I will use these hands of mine to bring a conclusion. But, I have to fulfil my responsibilities as those on the top. So, I.... Yukito, for the sake of the soldiers, I will leave you behind. Though I am sorry for always relying on you, please listen to my request.”

“Do you think I can lead 10000 soldiers?”

“If you can’t do it, you won’t do it. You will search for other means, right? If you can’t lead 10000 soldiers, you will wisely split the responsibilities, and definitely accomplished your role. ”

Though I know I am being praised, I am not really happy. Most likely, I have already seen through the fact that Dio-sama is exhausting all words to appoint me as the acting supreme commander.

“.....how long should I draw Kaguya-sama’s attention?”

“As long as you can”

The requirements are quite difficult. I can’t lose the soldiers here. Whether permission have been given beforehand to retreat, or having instructions to move to another castle, if we do not control the damage to Castle Harpe and a small number of soldiers, we won’t have a second chance. On top of that, we have to keep Kaguya-sama at bay.

Extremely troublesome. The most troublesome one is regarding the upcoming things that Dio-sama did not think of. Well actually, the failure of the ambush would mean total annihilation. So I guess there is no point in thinking what

comes next.

“This life has been saved by you. Therefore, it’s decided that it will be used for your sake.... I have come here to make you win. Please do give your order. If it’s your order.... Even if it’s against a dragon, I shall battle it.”

“Fufu, I must thank your loyalty and the luck of mine that saved you. Immediately after this, I will approve a meeting with the generals and conveyed that I will be stepping back. At that time, I will also conveyed that all authority will be entrusted to you. My elder sister should immediately make a move. It will become a battle before any dissatisfaction is being spouted out. That’s why please make a plan with a peace of mind.”

“Though I can’t guarantee you a peace of mind, I will do my best with all my power.”

“I am relying on you. My strategist.”

The smiling face of Dio-sama who said that, seems to be slightly more tired than usual.

Within the day when Prince Diorood collapsed, it became well-known inside the castle that he have stepped to the back seats.

Though the generals were desperately circulating the different units to hold down the disorder, and somehow managed to restore back a temporary calmness in the castle, the bell that announced the approaching enemy the next morning, envelops the castle in an even worst disorder, compared to the previous day.

The approaching enemy hangs a battle flag of a black bird spreading its wings. There is only one person in the country that hangs that flag, referred to as the 'Dark Swan' flag.

The Dark Princess, General Kaguya Halberd.

It has been around a month since the revolt started. The main force on both sides confronted for the first time.

Part 4

As expected, they are early. The distance between Castle Harpe and Castle Canon would take a horse 2 archaic period of time, basically 4 hours.

But, it was yesterday's noon that Dio-sama collapsed. Though I have no idea how superior of a information network they have, it should be yesterday's night that they had heard of the news.

And for them to lead the army here this morning, it means that they make a decision with unthinkable speed, and make a move.

Though Dio-sama was speaking figuratively with godspeed, it was indeed something to that extent. However, as I anticipated it, it wasn't that surprising. Well, me though.

I could hear the sound of people walking hurriedly and also bellowing from the outside of the room. As it is in the early morning, many people were unable to cope with the situation. It is necessary to stall time here. If we took a surprise attack, we won't be able to stand it. Even if Castle Harpe is a strong fortress, we won't be able to resist if the soldiers are in chaos.

Thinking to that extent, I looked at the long coat made of good quality black cloth right in front of me. It was something made for Dio-sama. Dio-sama told me that he wants me to wear it. As Dio-sama has a physique similar to mine, I could, of course, also wear Dio-sama's clothing. Furthermore, it's a coat of

height long.

The problem is that there is no weird feeling in the black short sleeves after putting on the black coat over the similar black horseback riding hakama. Dio-sama was the one who made the suggestion, saying might as well make the whole thing black, and only prepared just that. Not bothering whether it matches or not. And because of that, I am very troubled by it.

Though I say that, my haori was confiscated by Dio-sama and was told that it will be returned after everything is over, only to be handed this black coat. As I was only given this clothing, I can't not wear it.

“Kurei-dono! Do you happen to be awake!?”

“It's fine to enter.”

Making a side glance to the flustered Mikana who entered, I put on the black coat. As I couldn't go through the sleeves, I wore it like a mantle.

A whole body of a single black color. It is certainly eye-catching. Moreover, it's a rather mixed-up clothing.

“Is it conspicuous?”

“For a commander, to use unusual clothing and color is to.... be conspicuous. To that point, I believe it is conspicuous without any problem.”

“Thanks. Let’s go, shall we? First, we have to greet them after all.”



With Mikana accompanying, I ascend the castle wall facing where Kaguya-sama’s army appeared.

Though many soldiers have gathered, I do not see people above unit officers. If we were really hit by a surprise attack, it would have been a bad situation, but Kaguya-sama’s army started stopping after closing in to a certain distance.

“Would shooting an arrow reach them normally?”

“I believe it wouldn’t reach. If it’s a normal archer.”

“Then, let me change my question. Would Mikana reach them?”

“There is no problem in reaching them. If you are asking me to hit or shoot through, it will be difficult though.”

I see. It's a distance where you will consider those, I see. Whether the other side also has trained archers, we can only simply know from experience, I think. Or is it a different aim, I wonder.

It's only the distance but, I ended up thinking that the opponent is without doubt skillful than us. Even if the opponent doesn't think of it as a significant thing, we will worry, think and finally start losing our ability to think. It's such a time that you lose in a wisdom contest.

Even in chess or shogi, the one who can read the opponent's next move, think of one's move, and think of how to make the next one is the stronger one. If you can win in this inter-deduction, I believe you won't lose in chess or shogi. Ultimately, it's a game where you refrain from making errors.

But, this is a battlefield, and a war is not a game. There are unforeseen factor, and in terms of chess or shogi, it would be like unthinkable situation where the table get flipped, and cases where the soldiers acting as chess pieces are unable to move also exists. Also, the opponent's pieces might also display strength more than what was anticipated. That's why as long as there are considerably little winning prospects, we should not be fighting.

If there is one more thing that I am feeling insecure about, it would be my ability. In chess and shogi, no matter how smart someone is, one will still lose to a certain group of people. They are experienced ones. Experience is a weapon

that can surpass any other thing. It's not something that can be filled up in a short period of time.

And I have to add in the difference of an amateur and top pro for me and Kaguya-sama. On that point, I have no odds of winning. There isn't any amateur that can win a top pro by chance. After all, people at the top don't have negligence.

“Kurei-dono? You are sweating profusely, you know?”

“When I think about fighting that from now on, of course, I will sweat. Cold Sweat, that is.”

“That's unusual. Even though you know everything, you are in cold sweat? Just to report anyway, there are 3 rows on the vertical setup. Twenty battalion of 100 men in the front row. At the back where the flag is raised is the same as the front, where both the 2nd and 3rd row have twenty battalions each as well. To actually line up so orderly, it makes counting easy. ”

“Even if I know, and prepared for it, I am still me after all. I won't change from being a coward. Even then, our side is 10000 as a whole. Don't you think it's quite little to come for a castle siege?”

After hearing my words, Mikana gave out sigh while putting her hand on her brows.

Though I do have a guess, to some extent, towards what that sigh was for, I still shrugged my shoulders, and tried asking “why?”.

“You are not denying that you know everything, aren’t you.....”

“To some extent, that’s my weapon after all. My knowledge-base is without doubt big. The problem is that this weapon cannot be used alone and have to make use of other people, i guess. My ability is just averagely good after all.”

“Am I wrong in my impression that you have been doing just about everything on your own, compared to what you just said?”

“Isn’t it wrong? If you live normally and have knowledge, you should be able to do something about most stuff. That’s I will do it alone. But, in a battlefield, that’s not impossible. I will relying on you. Officer Mikana.”

“What a convenient person I am. But, it doesn’t feel bad to be relied on.”

As I returned the smile to Mikana who floated a smile saying that, I close my eyes and slowly think.

In the event of a castle siege, there are two options.

Short-term or long-term battle.

A tactic used for short-term battle is while mobilizing an overwhelming army, you ensure a safe escape route and the lives of the castle garrison, and also the negotiations of multiple terms for capitulation. (TL: Using the novel version here, as the web version sounds odd for me.)

“A gentle treat”, I guess.

In a large scale engagement or just before the turning point of a battle, for the sake of holding onto a strategic superior position, you will decide whether to make a strong attack against a strategic castle with the resolution of losing war potential. As for other methods, it's also possible to snatch the dominant position of the castle defender by attempting a surprise attack and sneaking into the internals of the castle when the enemy is not vigilant.

For long-term battle, firstly, you will encircle the castle upon securing the supply lines and roads. Next, you will use siege weapons or fire arrows to attack the castle, or the soldiers themselves.

If we go from the perspective of the strategic view, while conducting capitulation negotiations or scheme, it's also possible to push in psychological pressure as well. Fundamentally, you will conduct everything, and when you judged that they are weakened sufficiently, you will initiate an all-out attack, or wait for the enemy to reach food shortage. These are all long-term battles.

Castle siege usually becomes long-term battles. Holding onto multiple times the battle force than the opponent, you will cut off their communications to the outside by encircling their castle. You will be possible to cause despair to the

soldiers and lower the morale as from now on, you can plot to dry up their emergency supplies for water and food and isolate information from them, causing difficulty in making accurate assessments of the situation.

It's usually more beneficial having long-term battles but though the attacking side has minimum losses, it takes too much time. The attacking side, similar to the defending side, also require food supplies, and they also have to prepare for a surprise attack, not only from within the castle, but also the enemies, reinforcement. In other words, they also require the strong vigilance of the surroundings.

Both of them aren't easy. That's why Sun Tzu remarked that it isn't easy to attack a defending side that has devote themselves to defend and the fact that castle siege is a poor plan that must be avoided at all costs.

Kaguya-sama didn't bring a huge army, and also not prepare a surprise attack. Then, what did she came for?

That's easy, right?

"A cavalry is coming towards us."

"An envoy to recommend surrender or to negotiate, i think.... No matter which is it, it will spur the chaos on our end."

"Is this the time to say that so leisurely? The highest authority is you, you know?"

“Well, it’s not that I didn’t think of anything so be at ease.”

As I said that, I came to the front, moved towards the edge of the castle walls and climb up the fence as high as my chest.

A man wearing a black weird outfit has climbed up the fence. It surely stands out. I did it to stand out though.

“Let’s have you stop there! State your business!!”

“Assistant to the General, I am Anna Dietrich! I would like to establish a negotiation dialogue with your side!”

Her chestnut-colored hair, cut and arranged just above the shoulders, swayed on the horse. Though due to the distance, I couldn’t see the details, I can feel that she is a female with considerable beauty. That’s not the problem. It’s the figures on the floating screen that is displayed right in front of my eyes.

Everything are on the upper eighties. There are also those in the nineties. I give up, this is Dio-sama’s level. I heard that she is a omnipotent assistant, but just from the figures, she surpasses all the generals on our side.

“What if say I do not wish for a negotiation dialogue?”

“...may I know who are you?”

“Yukito Kurei. The one who worked as Dio-sama’s strategist! ”

“I see. You are the rumored strategist, i see. Then, what’s your reply?”

“I am not really sure what rumor you are talking about. Well, I shall reply your query. We do not intend to negotiate.”

A commotion started raising from the castle. Many soldiers are already starting to gather on the castle walls. They heard the words I have said just now. And they are making a stir about it. Now that Dio-sama has collapsed, many soldiers should be feeling that the chances of winning is gradually disappearing for this battle.

That’s why we are supposed to be desiring for negotiations but, my role is to draw in Kaguya-sama. Though it will be insufficient to ‘dogeza’ to everyone left in the castle, I shall continue to bring this situation into a battle.

Don’t joke about deaths and murder, not to say war. There are possibilities where you or those close to you might be killed. You might waver, ‘Even so, is

there any meaning to do it?' No, I have always been puzzled over it. I still do not know the dreadfulness of war. Even if I know the fear of death, I do not know of the fear of killing someone and others dying. To withstand all those and move forward is what war is about.

However, I will not yield. Even if it ends up with many sacrifices, I have a friend who desires to accomplish something, and it's up to me in regards to that once in a lifetime fight of his.

Besides, I have a promise after that. If I do not achieve anything after i completed my role, I would not be able to meet her.

The time when we had our lunch at Earl Uren's castle. That was the most fortunate time I had. I want to make that chance of having the three of us gather together again.

“What's your reason for declining negotiation?”

“I can't stand it if we were assassinated after complying to the negotiation.”

I tried to give as much of a provocative smile as I can. Just that, to the point it doesn't seem to be necessary, the other side got on board my provocation.

“We won’t do such cowardice deeds!”

“How can I believe in the people that are under that king! There were people who took hostage of their own country’s villagers to capture the Celsus Maiden! The king they revered is the same king you people revered! We are all people under His Highness, Diorood-sama, and we are fighting for the sake of bringing order and peace to this country! To prevent people from crying of irrationality! To show that there is still light that can depend on! To fight for those numerous people that are oppressed! To call that a rebellion and have come to hinder us..... Kaguya Halberd, I won’t believe in such a person!”

“You.....!”

Though I don’t really understand, I believe she is certainly glaring at me with eyes full of hatred.

If this turns into a battle, I will certainly be marked but this is helpful for me. Since it’s helpful, I believe I should do it more.

“Mikana. Make preparation to call out to his Highness, Diorood-sama. As loud as you can.”

“Okay, roger!”

“Yukito Kurei! I won’t forgive you for your rudeness to my lord! We are different from those hounds!”

“Now is the time! There are only now 2 separated faction! We are the prideful retainers that fight for his Highness, Diorood-sama! Our pride is in our hearts, and there is no need to feel ashamed! Call out the name of our beloved lord!! People in the Castle Harpe, hear this! What’s the name of our lord!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

The people from my surroundings raised their voices from Mikana raising her voice. It’s fine even if it’s soft at the start. As long as the content that should be raised has been conveyed.

“Who is the one who will save this country!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

The soldiers on the castle walls were the ones who raised their voices next. It was already at the level where the body would tremble. But, it still have not reach its peak.

“Who did you pledge your sword to!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

“Who will restore the Veris of our pride!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

“Who shall defeat that king!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

“I shall ask again! What’s the name of our lord!?”

“His Highness, Diorood-sama.”

The voices of ten thousand have become one. There are those that knock their weapons on the floor or their shield, those that raised their weapon up high, those close by that strongly wave Dio-sama’s battle flag, marked by a big star made up of 5 smaller star, and those who raised their fist. What accompany their actions is the raised voices of everyone.

After a while later, seeing that the Castle Harpe has finally calmed down, I announced.

“We can announce it out loud. The fact that our lord is correct. However, you people wouldn’t be able to do that! That is if you think your lord is correct!!”

I believe she realized my aim. Anna turned her horse around. But, her voice was faster.

“Try calling out your lord’s name!!”

After a short while of silence, a large sound started to reach our side, ‘Kaguya-dono’, that is.

Even though they fall behind in terms of numbers, Kaguya-sama’s army, whose voice level doesn’t lose to our side, hit their weapons on the ground rhythmically, while continuing calling out Kaguya-sama’s name.

Without knowing that that was my intention.

“Kaguya, Her Highness!!!”

“Kaguya, Her Highness!!!”

I felt sorry for the soldiers who called out proudly, but I shall be using that loyalty of yours.

“To think that when asked to call out their lord’s name, the name of a mere general comes out.... It looks like the soldiers under the Dark Swan flag has no idea what their lord’s name is! Isn’t the king’s name what should have been called out in this place?”

“It’s just that to them, Kaguya-sama is a lord that they revered!”

“It sounds like her Highness, Kaguya, is an independent existence? Are you planning to act as a third independent force?”

“Don’t talk nonsense! Kaguya-sama would not cause a rebellion”

“Then, what are the words of the soldiers about!? They are admitting it! Right

now, at this time, that the lord to announce is Her Highness, Kaguya! However, Her Highness, Kaguya, did not rise to the call! Even regardless of when the soldiers, the people, or the whole country are desiring for it! Her Highness, Kaguya, do not have the courage to go against her father! You people should know that more than anyone else! That the person who stand above you people is the king whose name won't be called out proudly by the people of this world! And your lord who should have been the person to take down that king isa spineless human!!”

Looking at Kaguya-sama's army who returned silence, there was no feeling of satisfaction towards me. Anna, who is glaring at me, did not realize. The fact that there is a shadow advancing towards this direction. And also because of that, that the soldiers did not make a racket.

“Yukito Kurei! You!”

“Anna. It's fine. I will talk.”

Anna was stopped after speaking a little by a black-haired lady, moving forward on her horse. After reaching a distance close enough to see her face clearly, she named herself with a really clear voice, as if pulling the string of a stringed instrument to the limits.

“Kaguya Halberd. Is it fine if I ask regarding Dio’s safety first?”

If the princess Kaguya of the Taketori Monogatari(Tale of the Bamboo Cutter) really exists, she could have been such a person.

Though her beautiful black hair, appropriate to be called glossy black was done up to the back, even then, the beauty of that smooth hair doesn’t change, while her black pearl-like eyes are deeply transparent like the lake. Looking at me fixedly using her eyes that seems to give the impression that they will see through anything, I calmed down after gripping the fan on my chest.

A dignified beauty that Sophia does not have, so it’s neither a win or loss, as said by Dio-sama, and it was just as he said. Her appearance of wearing light blue japanese-like clothing and blue hakama with a white shawl put on her shoulders might be kind of cliched, but like a goddess, she looks unusual on the battlefield.

Though her appearance should have a familiar look from the black hair and eyes, the Japanese-like appearance, it is different as if a race that have never been seen before. Her presence is immeasurable.

Looking at the status that popped out makes me opened my eyes.

Her combat ability is within the 130s. Most likely, the highest stat is at the 150, so she is without doubt the strongest class of humans. Moreover, the

other stats are also pretty much at the 90s or 100s. Truly said to be someone that Dio-sama couldn't defeat on any case.

“I will ask again, would you tell me the condition of my brother?”

“It seems like having to fight against you caused quite the burden. Though there is no problems to his life, he is resting right now.”

I did not lie. As I would be seen through if I lied, I spoke of the truth. Kaguya-sama possesses something that made me think that way.

“I see...I am relieved. You have my thanks. Yukito Kurei”

“... if you are that worried, why are you fighting...?”

“.....as you said, I do not have the intention to go against my father. That's why what I am able to do is to end the war quickly. And...the fastest way to end the war is to capture the enemy general. What I can do for Dio as a gift, is to not take his life but to capture him.”

For the first time, those honest eyes wavered. Seems like this person has also been troubled. To point a blade towards the parent is the most unfilial thing. And also, to go against one's parent, lots of courage is required. It's not something anyone can do.

If we are to protect reason, no matter what kind of parent, a parent is still a parent. It can be said that it's also the children's duty to protect if one's parent has been pointed with a blade.

I believe that because she is a person that gets troubled like this, Dio-sama decided to make a stand.

"Sadly, Dio-sama is already no longer in the castle."

"But, if we ignore this castle, your side will mercilessly aimed for our back. That's why I can't ignore it. I do not wish to make any sacrifices. I wish that you can surrender. "

(TL: Doesn't sound like a general that has fought for a very long time.....well at least to me.)

".....Is that....your answer!?No one desire that you rise for this! Justice is on our side! That's something anyone is able to see! You helped your tyrannic father but you aren't going to help your brother who is on a thorny path!?"

".....sorry"

My irritation started to grow as I see Kaguya-sama hid her face. Even though if this person pluck up her courage and make a step forward, everything would have ended, however, why doesn't she make that step? Even though she has the power, why doesn't she use it?

I tried overlapping the resolved Dio-sama and Kaguya-sama. One side is very reliable, while other side is very fickle. Perhaps, I believe Dio-sama also saw that. That's why he wanted to protect. But, the feelings I hold is different.

For the sake of saving this person, Dio-sama expended everything. However, this person.....

“My friend expended everything to try to protect you! If you are to trample on it..... even if you are my friend's sister, I shall show no mercy! It's absurd to even asked for surrender! Only when the king is dead, would the battle be over!!.”

“...If it's Dio's friend, all the more do I not wish to hurt them...”

“I am your enemy! I have no words to speak with someone spineless! If you wish to speak no matter what, after the king is defeated, and everything has ended, shall we have that conversation!!”

As I said that, I turned my back and moved my sights to the soldiers on the castle walls.

“Prepare the defense! The battle is going to start!!”

Part 5

Though I thought that I do know of the amazingness of magic as I have seen Sophia made use of the wind, I was naive.

“The enemy’s consolidation magic is coming! Get ready to defend!”

“They are climbing up the castle walls, while using defensive magic! Knock them down!”

There have been fireballs flying over to our side, accompanied by the sound of a cannon-like roar. During the time when the magicians on our side was defending that, soldiers holding onto shields, and magicians that deployed defensive magic that prevents all normal attacks started to go up the ladders to ascend the castle walls in succession.

Though we managed to halt the advance, the firepower of the enemy is so strong that defending is taking everything we have. Those units that were fatigued or injured were immediately replaced by the reserve units, but if this attack continues like this, eventually, there will be likely someplace that the defense crumbles.

“Just when I thought I don’t see any siege weapons, they are using magic, i see. If that’s the case, I can understand the reason for the smaller number of soldiers....”

It’s natural to bring in large cannon during the Warring period. It’s fine if there is a method to defend, but the magicians on our side are scarce and might be washed away when they all push in at once.

“Having numerous magicians using the same magic would result in a consolidation magic that is higher in power. It is necessary to have several skilled magicians to do that. It seems that their side have many capable magicians.”

“Is there any example of using magic to siege until now?”

“I have heard multiple times in regards to that for a magical advanced country like Albion. However, the army of Dark Swan flag is the only one in Veris that make use of that. If you aren’t able to use consolidation magic, there is not enough power to destroy the castle walls, and above all, the flight distance of magic isn’t sufficient.”

“I see. So the reason why we have many magicians on our side is to defend against these consolidation magics.”

Behind the castle walls. I was asking Mikana in regards to this world’s magic battle on a tall watchtower built for the sake of giving commands, while watching over the progress of the battle. Though I could have check it out myself, my concentration would not be reduced if I ask, rather than reading it up right now. If I overlooked a disadvantageous situation when I moved my attention away, our side will be crushed at once. I have this premonition that gave me such a conviction.

The salvation is that magic is not almighty. When used, one will get tired. It seems that high concentration is necessary. The reason why we say “it seems” is because it’s just Mikana having read books, and not actually having used it. It is necessary for magicians to have some form of grounding, as if you do not have, no matter how hard you try, it seems to be useless.

“It’s because of Sophia-sama that we have a lot of magicians. Because Sophia-sama was here, there are several magicians that join us.”

“I am absolutely clear about it. The reason why those magicians were glaring at me.”

“Even then, the reason why they cooperate is because you protected Sophia-sama. I believe that your existence is something higher than a life benefactor

for them.”

“Please stop them. If for that reason they get eager and die, it makes waking up bad. It feels like they might prick a nail later.”

As I say that, I looked at the interior of the attacking force, the rear force which have not shown any movement and is where Kaguya-sama is in.

Right now, the force attacking the castle right now is the 2000-men vanguard. We have 4000-men on the frontal walls being attacked, with the reserve corps at 3000-men, and a total of 3000-men deployed on the left, right and rear walls, with 1000-men on each side.

The reason why we have 1000-men deployed on the other walls is due to how astounding the speed of Kaguya-sama’s army is. If we have to deal with a speed that exceeds our expectations one after the other, the soldiers would not last. We have to prepare for it from the start.

It’s just simply the speed. It seems that making a surprise attack is the tactical forte of Kaguya-sama, to just strike unexpectedly with just the speed. Even though they were originally in front of you, if a surprise attack is made from the side, that is really unbearable. Swift tactics, and elites that are able to make it happen.

The problem is the 4000-men that has not shown themselves. Though the possibility of them being at Castle Canon is high, it’s also likely that they were hidden to make a surprise attack, and thinking of their marching speed, even if

they were at the castle, we won't know when they would link up.

Not firepower, but the form of combat that mainly uses maneuverability to execute is what we call maneuver combat. Well literally, a maneuver combat is a combat that uses mobility as its main point. To that maneuver combat, not just adding the speed of maneuverability, but also the speed of decision-making to the list, you will have a combat form called tactical maneuver combat that also takes the initiative by forcing the enemies into disadvantageous conditions. Kaguya-sama's army is likely said to excel in this tactical maneuver combat. It's possible that it was polished to deal with the battles of the unstable state borders.

Tactical Maneuver combat is a combat that adds psychological effects as a side to maneuver combat, and having supremacy in speed of mobility and decision-making to defeat the enemy's vanguard and force them into disadvantageous conditions, resulting the enemy's to lose their purpose of continuing combat as its main point.

Normally, in a military organisation, the senior commander would be entrusted with decision-making, so it will take some time for the decision to be passed down. Towards this, in tactical maneuver combat, to maintain the supremacy of speed, individual units are encouraged to do decision-making. In other words, as the lower-rank officers make decisions independently, the time spent waiting for the senior officers' instructions would be eliminated, which would allow speed to cope with changes of state of affairs.

However, it might have been possible for the modern era where there are growth in electronics, but for ancient times, the speed of decision-making mainly depends on the independence and dauntlessness of the officers on the field, and moreover, there is no guarantee that that the on-field officer is always able to make accurate decisions and the smooth execution of the tactics involved advanced training and much luck.

Units that make a mistake in their judgement are pretty much sitting ducks to the enemies, so because of that unit, even though that opportunity was temporized, the opponent is able to cut off a portion of the force. That's why tactical maneuver combat is a double-edged sword but I am not able to see any opportunity that looks like an opportunity in Kaguya-sama's army. Even if I increase the numbers on our side and try to forcefully create an opportunity, there won't be any opportunity if the various units make precise decisions and movement.

The quality of the on-field officer. This is as essential as the loss in numbers. If the officers in this field are skilled, they will cover up the slight difference in numbers instantly.

Quantity versus Quality. Right now, such a battle is going on. Of course, ours being quantity and Kaguya-sama being quality. In terms of soldier count, there is a 4000-men gap, and right now a battle of 2000 versus 4000 + reserve units is unfolding. Even though we are pressing in with the number difference, they are not crumbling. On the contrary, our side is on the verge of crumbling.

Though I thought war is about numbers, other than the fact that it's the people that fight the war, as expected, the abilities of individuals are also important.

“Even though it is a battle just after a movement, they are really filled with vigor.”

“They are most likely used to it. Towards such tactics that can be said to be

absurd.”

“That’s troublesome.”

“Our opponents are Veris’s strongest general and strongest army. Thinking that it’s troublesome would already deserve some praise.”

“What I desire is not praise, but winning chances. I believe the other side is most likely not serious today, so it should be fine, but tomorrow, or more like, when that army in the back starts to join the battle, I think we will have to be in the frontlines no matter what.”

As I said that, I instructed to send reinforcements on areas being pressed on.



Since the start of the battle, 3 days have passed.

While Kaguya-sama’s army attacked in a form of the vanguard and middle guard being a frontal attack, and the rear guard attacking with only magic, I am defending against that with 4000 castle defenders, switching with 3000 reserve

soldiers as and when required.

Wondering if Kaguya-sama hated the sacrifice of soldiers, their entire force does not attack. Nevertheless, it's not like it is relaxing. Or actually, it's tough. As Kaguya-sama herself and the rear guard does not move, I am not able to put in all the reserve unit into the battle so as to not lose my guard on the other castle walls. Just because 2000 soldiers doesn't move, 3000 soldiers can't be moved, and the reserve unit is also limited to its movement.

They have totally acquired the initiative. The morale from the initial day is also coming to its limits.

It's not just soldiers. Looking at the status, the general and officers are deployed where each fits their post. But, people have compatibility. Subordinates that doesn't click, having associates, and also the problem of preferences. Deploying someone due to ability-wise might not be truly the best. That's why dissatisfaction are also appearing. Because of that, my fatigue is also accumulating.

“Mikana. What's the activity in the back...?”

“There is no change from yesterday. I wonder if they won't attack today as well?”

“I believe they know that we will ruin ourselves even if they leave us alone.... I would have done the same...”

Due to insufficient sleep and feeling sluggish from fatigue, looking at me who entrusted my body to the chair, Mikana gave a worried expression. But, she wouldn't say a thing. There is no replacement for me. It's likely something that Mikana whose the position is adjutant should know very well.

The advantage of number superiority is equal to having none right now. Even though we called it the reserve unit, half of it comprises of the injured. Sending the most skilled mercenary unit under Captain Ars as a reserve unit, and sending them at pinpoint accuracy, we could barely prevent ourselves from being broken through. That is the only measure we can take, the final measure right now.

If that can't even defend it, and the opponent invades, the damage will exponentially increase. In the closely contested castle wall, as General Paulus, who is superior in military prowess, was deployed there, though it shouldn't be that easy to break through, there are two generals that can repel General Paulus on their side. If two of them or even just one of them were to appear, we can no longer stop them.

Thinking like that, I, who was also entrusting my back to the backrest raised my body and stood up. It was a short rest but it's sufficient. Raising my face, I realized that the vanguard that is moving towards my side was faster than yesterday. And their morale is also high.

Ha, I smacked my lips, and sent out a messenger to the reserve unit.

“Make all reserve units that can be mobilized to move towards the castle walls! Mikana! Let’s move to the frontlines! I will leave the escort to you!”

“If it’s to command the frontlines, leave it to me!”

“If I don’t go, the morale of the soldiers won’t be able to hold on! Kaguyasama has appeared!!”

Saying that, I hurriedly went down the watchtower, and dispatched a messenger to be vigilant to all castle walls. If we end up concentrating here, the rear guard would likely make a move. We have to prevent just that.

“Let’s go out to the frontlines.”

Taking with me Mikana and the hundred knights that has been entrusted to me from Earl Uren’s Castle, we tried moving towards the castle walls but, suddenly, the castle walls was glittered with light in an instant, which resulted in blinding our eyes and stopping our movement.

“They have penetrated!”

“Please reinforce! Quickly!! Quick, ly.....”

Just hearing a voice from a distant, I know that something happened. They have ascended the castle walls. With that, not just defending, it becomes necessary to repel them back.

“I hear that Kaguya-sama can use Lightning magic! Please step back! In that place!”

“Kaguya-sama is there, right? In that case, all the more I have to show myself. Most likely, if I am found, she will target me. In that chance, you must absolutely not let it go, got it?”

“Kurei-dono!?”

As I said that, without listening to Mikana’s attempt to stop me, I ran up the stairs of the castle walls.

Seeing my appearance, a number of soldiers opened their eyes. At the very

least, I am this castle's supreme commander now. To be in such a place is likely quite shocking. There's an effect because it's unexpected.

“Everyone, stay strong! There are many comrades in arms that are ready to fight to the death! That's why do not give up! Giving up is the same as abandoning your friends! Believed in the friends beside you and fight!!”

As I ran towards the place where I think Kaguya-sama had got onto, I requested the soldiers that were desperately trying their best to prevent the enemy from ascending the walls to continue fighting more.

Though the smell of blood and the thickening smell of the dead stimulates my nose, I can only endure. This is a battlefield and the one who brought this disastrous scene is me.

There is discord. There are people dying just beside me. Allies and enemies. Though seriously give me a break, the me right now has something that I want more than anything else.

The values of the modern era Japan and resistance against death and murder can't be compared to my promise.

I swore to my heart that I will definitely protect my promise.

“Those that stand in my way will be cut down. Open up the path.”

A voice that was carried really well. Even within the bellows of the battlefield, I could clearly hear it.

I could grasped that the soldiers are slowly falling back. That's of course. I, who is not well-versed in martial arts, can also understand. It's the overwhelming fighting spirit. I can feel it from beyond the direction of the retreating soldiers.

“Is that path a path to me?”

While there is the fan that was received from Sophia in my bosom, I have the short sword passed to me by Dio-sama on my waist. As I touched them with both my hands, the fear in my heart dissipates.

When the soldiers faintly opened the path slightly, I could see Kaguya-sama's

surroundings. Corpses. I wonder if there are around ten of them. Though piles of blood are gushing out, Kaguya-sama do not have a single spurt of blood.

I wonder if she is holding a katana on her right hand. On the curved body of the sword that gave out a dull glitter, it was slightly stained with blood.

“Strategist-dono!? Def, Defend Strategist-dono!!”

“That will be unnecessary. It will only increase the victims.”

“Then, will you be surrendering?”

Not knowing when, Kaguya-sama had approached to my vicinity. I totally didn't realize it. I should be already in a distance where I can be cut down with a single stroke, i think.

“What a joke. If we surrender here, the deaths we had until now would lose their meaning.”

“It's the cornerstone towards peace. And also, I can stop future victims from now on. I will also be able to finish this without having to cut down my brother's

friend.”

“Cornerstone towards peace.... I think it’s best to not say things that you do not truly believe. Your eyes are wavering.”

Drawing the short sword from the scabbard on my right waist with my right hand, I get into stance with my other hand. It’s a stance Mikana taught me.

“You do not think of me as an enemy, right? There’s no meaning in having a fight you have seen just now, you know?”

“Meanings are to be made. Besides, my life is not cheap at all. I won’t use it in a disadvantageous gamble.”

I cut down horizontally with my left hand. With just that, it is a meaningless action for someone as weak as me.

Just a bit, Kaguya-sama reacted. That is an opportunity enough for a certain-kill sniper.

An arrow came flying from Kaguya-sama’s blind spot. From the back,

diagonally right. It was something Mikana released. That shouldn't be something that can be avoided or repelled.

Or so I thought.

“What!?”

Kaguya-sama repelled the arrow with the sword in her right hand without looking, and have parried my short sword with her scabbard, who knows when she have drawn.

An overly beautiful appearance came into sights. Phrasing words like white skin, glossy lips aren't floating out. What I felt was genuine fear. Like how a figure of a beautiful person can also be seen as eerie in the dark, Kaguya-sama also holds that eeriness because of her beauty.

“Kuu!”

Though I tried to quickly separate myself, using the scabbard that repelled the

short sword, she thrust strongly to my left chest, where my heart is.

Not knowing what happened in that instant, I have kneeled down miserably by the next moment.

“Kurei-dono!!”

Though I can hear Mikana’s voice, my body can’t move. I did not incur any injury, thanks to the fan, but there were damage taken.

I can hear something getting repelled. Likely, it’s Mikana’s second shot. It’s the Kaguya-sama that stopped a surprise attack. I don’t think it works even if you shoot it normally.

“...do you have any last words?”

“.....neglience is.... something to be feared the most....”

In the instant I said that, Kaguya-sama backed off from me. Being late for that

instant, a blade passed by where Kaguya-sama was just now.

“Thanks for stalling the time. Strategist.”

“No... Sorry about making use of you like this.”

If Captain Ars that is taking a stance with a sword shorter than those usually held with two hands had appeared here, it probably means that the reserve unit made it in time before the situation is too late.

“That rascal, Paulus is having a hard fight in the center. If we can somehow keep her in check..... Let's tide this through!”

“Well then, let's try to do something about it”

Mikana who came running over, pointed her bow towards Kaguya-sama. Mikana and Captain Ars. It's a force that can be freely mobilize, the strongest combination. If even both of them can't repel her, we have no more way of winning.

Without conversing with Mikana, Captain Ars plunged towards Kaguya-sama. Swinging the sword quickly with two hands, Captain Ars pressured Kaguya-sama with a barrage. No, I think it only looked as if she was pressured. Kaguya-sama was defending that quick barrage totally with only that one sword.

Losing his breath, just when Captain Ars tried opening up the distance, now it was Mikana who showed her high-speed arrow barrage. But, as it's a distance that can be said to be close quarters, Kaguya-sama displayed her ability to dodge every single arrow.

“That’s bad! It’s just as the rumors, I guess!”

“The rumors are actually still preferable!!” (TL: Preferable, in the sense, that the Kaguya-sama in the rumors are actually easier to deal with.)

Though Captain Ars and Mikana were attacking at no matter what slight opportunities there were, there was no attacks that reached Kaguya-sama.

We are missing a decisive factor. At the very least one person, if there was one person that can stop her movement.

As I thought that, I remembered the fan in my left chest. To be exact, I remembered the content of the words from Sophia and letter.

‘This will protect Yukito’s life.’

That’s what Sophia said. And, this is what was written in the letter.

‘Please be careful of the very first swing. As it has my magical power embedded in it, an outrageous wind will appear.’

As there had been no chance until now, I have never swing the fan hard before. Though it’s been used solely as a commanding rod, this Divine Fan.

“It is a Divine fan.....” (TL: He just remembered it is a magical fan, lol...)

I floated a smile as I said that.

Though I keep saying ‘protect’ and ‘protect’, I am the one being protected. Sophia belongs to the strongest class of magician that holds the magical name of “Gale”.

But, I guess it’s something like that. Being friends are the repetitions of relying on and being relied on. Relationships of friends where only one side rely on the other are not friends.

“Captain Ars! Step back!”

“What!?”

I took out the fan from my chest, and spread it. What was drawn on it was a dragon amusing itself with the wind.

What an elegant fan. Thinking about something like that, I swang the fan using my right hand towards Kaguya-sama with all my strength.

It’s a squall.

I wonder if it's the most appropriate description for it. The squall was only for an instant. But, the power was abnormal. Part of the castle walls were shaved off, and even the Kaguya-sama's army which were standing by behind was affected as well, causing the formation to be broken up badly.

And Kaguya-sama actually endured that to the end. I think it must have been some special defense she put up. She did not sustain any injury. But it seems like she exhausted her stamina. Having gotten her shoulders down to knee height, her breathing was rough.

“Kaguya-sama! Please retreat!”

Kaguya-sama's soldiers that have ascended the castle walls, stood in front of her, stopping our pursuit.

In the end, due to the interference of these soldiers and their fighting with the preparedness of death, Kaguya-sama ended up being able to retreat.

Thought it was good that we obstructed Kaguya-sama, as our damage is huge, it doesn't seem like we would be able to endure another attack. That's why I gathered all the generals and conveyed the plans from now on.

“Hey, hey, Strategist, you serious? ”

“I am serious.”

Looking at my face, Captain Ars shrugged his shoulders while continuing *yare yare*.

I conveyed to all the generals in the vicinity again.

“We shall abandon this castle.”

Part 6

The objective has pretty much already been achieved

Though perhaps Dio-sama might already reach a distance where the capital can be reached within the field of vision. From there, it will take at least 2 days to reach the capital. It should be around 3 days if you advance with discretion. Seeing that Kaguya-sama's army is not retreating, Dio-sama has likely approached the capital successfully.

We have earned a few days. Though what's left is how to reduce the casualty count, concerning this, just abandoning the castle would help in some way. Though Castle Harpe is Veris's leading strongest fortress, with the current situation, it's not something that is necessary. It's not a place where you can instantly use it for anything, just after taking it.

Though the problem is the method of escape, I have to persuade each lord before that.

"Are you not able to assent to the abandonment of this castle?"

"That's of course. What is the meaning of all the fighting we have done? Lots of our subordinates had lost their lives in that process."

General Paulus's words made me feel as if my depths of heart was gouged out. That's right. The people that are here, and also those that are dead, didn't know. The fact that they were made a decoy.

It's easy to say it's a small matter for the sake of mass so if you piled up the words, the battle so far and those who died would be able to carry some meaning in it.

However, I wonder if the people who died would be able to assent to such decorative words. No, the people who died would not be able to assent. Those who cannot assent to it are those that are alive.

For what reason have their friends died for. Have their friends risked their lives for something worthy. The fathers, children, brothers, elder or younger, what did they die for.

I do not have the words to reply these questions. But, I believe Dio-sama holds these.

'For the country after the war'. 'They died for a country with no tyrant where irrationality is slightly removed'. 'They died for the future of this country'.

He should be able to say it. But, I do not have these words with me. It's because I did not have those intentions.

My reason is awfully for my own convenience. Well, if I have to really say it, it's the same as Dio-sama but he have the determination to be burdened with the country's, his father's deeds. However, I do not have such a reason.

I do not have the vision for the future. That's why I have no idea for what reason that they died for. I also did not see them die after all.

That's why.

“Kurei!? Dio-sama had fully entrusted you with the command. But you!”

“Right now....The 2000 elites that Dio-sama has taken with him are in the midst of invasion.... This fight has been a decoy for that from the start.....”

I said it. Unable to find any other words, I just spilled out the truth. This could be for the best. However, there is no way they will assent with this.

Everyone floated a shocked expression. That's natural. They fought believing in Dio-sama. This is similar to an act of betrayal.

But.

“I do admit that that is an action that is similar to be betrayed by Dio-sama. However, I think that this is also the only way. That’s why.....as the duty of the one with highest command, I was left behind for the sake of those that are left in the castle..... The responsibility of those who died because of this battle is with me..... And also, it’s my fault that this castle has to be abandoned.....”

“You are only following the prince’s orders, right? If the aim was to drag time, then haven’t you done a great job? The time you have created will benefit this country. In that case, those who died die for the sake of the country. For the country they desire.”

Captain Ars declared that to me. It sounds gentle and really proper. But, I feel that it’s wrong to rely on it. If I rely on it, I would likely continue to say that from now on. Someday, I will be used to it and lost resistance about it.

In that case, I can’t assent that. Even giving out orders of murder, which is not a joking matter, right now, and also right in this place, it is because I wanted to protect a certain precious person that I gave out orders to live to protect a precious promise.

As long as I affect the battle, as long as the battle is depicted by me.

This battle must be fought for someone. It’s not for the sake of the uncertainty of the country and also not for the future.

It's a battle for the certainty of lives.

“What the country will become will depend on Dio-sama.... That's why I can't say anything about the movement of the country. I also can't say that it's for future. But, in this fight that I have started, if there is a reason for me to hold on for the sake of those that died under my command.... Then it would be for the sake of lives.”

“What do you mean?”

“To allow the soldiers in the castle to retreat, I had the castle in the back emptied. The stalling is also included in this battle. Like this, the large number of soldiers can retreat..... To die for the sake of the large number of comrades. Though it might be self-centered, this is the only reasoning I can give for those that died....”

“There are also people who died without meaning. And also those that can't look back. It's especially so for us mercenaries. That's why.....people who died this time are luckier than those people who died meaningless. They died under a commander who think of them even after they died after all....”

I warped my face towards the words filled with feelings. I feel like crying at once. I feel like shouting out that it's harsh. It seems like I am about to wash away by the sin of forcing into their death. However, I somehow managed to suppress them.

The battle has not ended yet. It's my battle until the large number of comrades have completed their escape. No, if I think about it to acquire victory from a strategic aspect of a portion of a strategy like suppressing the sacrifices to a minimum, taking down the king.

Our fight, you say.

"But, would that Dark Princess let us run away quietly?"

"I have thought about that. I will stall time for everyone to retreat."

"Kurei. What kind of a plan is that?"

General Paulus asked with vigor. This person is really straightforward. Even though I said I would be buying time, he included himself as it's natural. I wonder if Dio-sama likes such people. Being able to do something is quite the rare talent without calculating gain and loss.

"A surprise attack, no, we will make a night assault. Everyone, please retreat during this time."

“Wait. What kind of a night assault are you planning to do? And also, what do you mean by everyone....”

“I have said it earlier. I will stall for time. I will take command for the night assault. I will have everyone make a full retreat.”

While being surprised, a big half of the people nodded. If they plan to begin retreating, preparations is required. And, this night assault unit is close to being a rear-guard. Since I have already took the initiative to take charge of this dangerous role, there was no reason for anyone else to expressly reject that. That’s why they nodded docilely. Other than 2 people.

“I will have you let me stay, you got it? The hundred man under your direct control won’t be enough, right?”

“I will stay too. Letting the likes of a strategist making a night assault is only going to result in a failure after all!”

“Both of you.... I understand that you are anxious but....”

My role is to suppress casualties to the minimum. It’s not to launch a large-

scale night assault. I don't need the numbers or the men of valour. It's just the timing of the night assault that is the problem. After causing them to fall into chaos with the night assault, I will decisively retreat at once. The success rate is most likely 50:50. You can pretty much say it's a rather dangerous gamble.

"I will be the only one to stay."

"Like how you have your responsibility, we also have our responsibility. And, as a general, and as a man, I also have my pride.!"

"That's right. It won't end with only just us taking the damage."

I couldn't say anything more towards Ars who gave out a *nyari* fearless smile and Paulus who floated a stern expression.



Nighttime. The preparation for retreat has ended without problems. Remaining strength is around eight thousand. Approximately having 2000

sacrificed, there are a few times more injured. The door of the rear gate has already been opened, and they have been starting to retreat since a while ago. Besides, in the form of continuing, we will also proceed to make the night assault head-on soon.

It can be said that the difference in the efficient usage of magic and ability of the commander can lead to a different result. No matter the difference in numbers or capability of the soldiers, magic has the hidden power to mercilessly overturn the situation. If there is anything I am regretting, it is being unable to listen more about the feature and weakness of magic from Sophia. I think that if I would have heard it, the casualty count would not increase. Though said, there will be no end to it.

Right now, rather than think about the sacrifices, it's more important to take responsibility of those that are still alive. That is most likely the only action that can amend my sins.

Night assault. Being a battle that starts when the field turns dark, it is a strategy to fight in an environment where both armies can't acquire field of vision. Combat Action. The attacking side proactively attacking in a night warfare is what we call [Night Assault]. [Night Attack] [Night Advance] is also the same. (TL: The translator is using different kanji to show similarity in the kanji.) When attacking the enemy formation at night, as for most parts, the defending side is taken by surprise, historical night assaults has many examples of it being surprise attack.

After changing my mentality, the terminal displayed that, checking out in regards to night assault. There are plenty of problems for a night assault.

Firstly, though we say to make a night assault, due to humans not having nocturnal habits, we are inexperienced to moving in the middle of the dark. To

be able to have field of vision in the dark, you need time after entering the dark. In terms of time, there are individual differences but, it seems to be about 30 mins. Also, Mikana said there is a special way to acquire vision of target things at night by slightly drifting the visual point away from the target, and it isn't something that you can do immediately if you are not used to it.

Leaving aside movement, as the sensory organs of humans are dulled at night, it's not hard to imagine that it's easy to accumulate fatigue during that period. Also, on top of having difficulty confirming the presence of obstacles and its location, inability to guide can be anticipated. I guess I have to include that mobility will drop sharply into the calculation.

Without doubt, as information gain would be less than during the day, it will take some time for decision-making and movement. It will be hard to revoke an erroneous instruction. While absolutely unable to give the wrong instruction, I think we also can't make complex movement.

A strategy to differentiate friendly and enemy in the dark. As during a battle, if differentiating between friendly and enemy is not possible, there is a high possibility that friendly fire might occur. That's why, there is a need for a scheme to differentiate friendly and enemy.

To prevent friendly fire, we have to move while keeping our formation. We will differentiate friendly and enemy via password, marking *etc.* Though I say that, specially for markings, since it is said that the army of Houjo Ujiyasu who commenced a night assault, fought while attached with a white cloth to their body in the battle for Castle Kawagoe, it should be effective without doubt.

Next would be what to do with the lamps. It's the point of whether to move in a state close to having no lamps to slip into the darkness to carry out tactical movement, and to prevent the enemy from realizing our army's movement. In

the battle of Itsukushima, it is without doubt effective from seeing the example of Mouri Motonari successfully making the surprise attack the next day after prohibiting setting bonfire during the night movement. However, the distance is close this time. Though I think the difference in lamp is just trivial, but what should I do.

When I was thinking to that extent, I realized Mikana was here before I know it.

“There is still time before set off, you know?”

“I came to ask if we should prepare torches.”

“I just happened to be thinking about it.”

“I believe it’s not necessary. There is no problem with this distance to me. I will guide everyone to the enemy camp.”

Though she said it like it’s nothing special, it’s something rather outrageous. But, Mikana totally did not change her expression. Or more like, the number of facial expressions I saw she made could be counted.

“Then, I guess we shall do that. Prepare white cloth and tied it to your arms. After that, as it will become hard to see the enemy, we will have Mikana lead the way.....let’s see, get the soldiers in columns of 4, as I will attach General’s Paulus and Captain Ars unit at the back”

“Roger. Then? Is it just me that I think you have something to tell me?”

To the rather sharp retort, I gave a wry smile. Now that I think of it, Mikana have came into contact with me without changing till now. That was really mentally appreciated.

“I was just thinking I should be thanking you.”

“If you plan to seek your death, please give up. I do not have plans to let go of my tool to promotion.”

“That’s terrible. But, I can’t die as I also have my promise with you.....There is one thing I am thinking about. Would you listen?”

To expressly asked ‘Would you listen’, is due to Mikana’s cooperation being essential. If I anticipate the situation, I will definitely be chased. And also by the strong.

I do have the plan for that and also the plan for what's after now. A plan to make Kaguya-sama move.

“What are you planning to do?”

“Firstly, after attacking the enemy, I will retreat back towards Castle Canon. Like this, the unit has to split into two no matter what, so I believe the pursuit on the main force would weaken.”

“However, that is under the enemy's territory. Where do you plan to retreat to?”

“There is a fortress at the hill, on the right side of Castle Canon. As the King's direct controlled unit uses it for logistics, Dio-sama said that normal armies wouldn't use it.”

“Running to the fortress of the Hounds!? Please don't joke about it! It's already under Kaguya-sama's army.”

“Do you think it's been suppressed? No matter what kind of reason, as a General, I am considering that Kaguya-sama is not able to go against her lord. In that case, there is possibility that it has not been suppressed. ”

After saying that, I laughed. It's not like the plan is to run and hide there. Rather, the possibility of not being able to that is higher.

“What are you thinking?”

“The plan is simple. We will bait Kaguya-sama out. And then make a surprise attack. It will be good if it's a fortress, but it's fine as it is. After moving for some distance, Mikana would separate from me, and seek the state of the situation. If it's you, you can do it, right?”

“I understand what you are saying. But, isn't there also the possibility that Kaguya-sama does not come out?”

“The one I am baiting is Anna Dietrich. If I show myself to her, she would definitely pursue me. I am the man who ridicule her lord after all. She will definitely come. But, just because there is a possibility that there is a trap setup by the enemy's general, they cannot not pursue. As a result, Kaguya-sama would pursue me. It includes the purpose of being able to repel any attack and any schemes.”

After going so far to say that, I looked straight at Mikana.

I believe it's half-doubtful on whether the situation would turn out according to my works.. Even so, when I looked into her eyes, I could see fighting spirit overflowing. If that's the case, there shouldn't be any problem. Thinking that, I

made a smile.

“Was ridiculing Kaguya-sama the preparation for this?”

“No way. That was for the sake of raising morale, it can't be helped. If possible, I really wouldn't want to ridicule females.”

“I see. Let's leave that matter as it is. So? Please tell me what I have to do for the plans after everything goes as planned.”

Coldly placed aside, floating a wry smile again after being told to only converse about the plan, I lowered my volume slightly and told her.

“I will have you target someone.”

“Who?”

“That is...”

At the instant when I was about to speak of the targeted person, I unintentionally stopped after listening to the sound from the outside.

As if being bound, my body wasn't able to move. But, listening to the sudden chime that indicates the approaching enemy, my binds were released.

And then, I realized.

The fact that on the contrary of trying to commence a night assault, we were the ones being assaulted upon.



As deployment of soldiers were on the front and back gates, the enemy's surprise attack from the sides went unnoticed.

By no means did I thought that without caring Kaguya-sama was repelled, they made a night assault. No matter how you look at it, it's too aggressive. Who in the world is taking command?

“The ambush unit are to intercept the enemy! The units retreating are to continue retreating!”

“I wonder if the retreating units will be targeted?”

“If they planned to target them, we will attack them from the back. The gate is also opened after all. I believe they would dislike about them inciting expressively and us being able to counterattack. Though I think the opposing side is low in numbers.....”

“Do you have any conviction? However, our numbers for interception is also small. If our numbers are equal, we would not have the odds of winning.”

It's best to think that they have already climbed the castle walls. In that case, the main fortress in the middle of Castle Harpe would be the defensive point that we can use. Though Castle Harpe possesses four huge castle walls, in the assumption when those are defeated, the castle's main fortress is also endowed with defensive capabilities.

“It's possible that the other side have not sensed that we are displaying signs of retreating. Well, though I say that, it doesn't change what we are doing.”

“So it's time stalling until the retreat completes? In the first place, the surprise assault is also just one of the means after all. Just that, the need for Kurei-dono to review the plan has appeared, right?”

“Yeah, seriously. But, after coming to this point, if we do not include surrender into our choices, we will only be annihilated. At that time, I will have you follow me, you got it?”

“It depends on the situation.”

Smiling bitterly to the harsh Mikana, I advanced towards the main fortress of Castle Harpe.

Chapter 3: The Conclusion

Part 1

With just a small number of troops, defending is difficult. The other side is Black Swan Flag army, filled with abled people. Losing in quality and having equal numbers, I am unable to see the possibility of winning.

As I thought of such scornful things, I can see Captain Ars and General Paulus holding back the enemies' invasion on the protective wall that seems pathetic, when compared to the surrounding large walls around the castle.

As Mikana is commanding the hundred soldiers under my direct supervision, our side ended up having three General-class commanders. But, that is regrettably not a definite dominating position.

“She should be rather exhausted though.”

I looked at Kaguya-sama who is commanding just slightly behind the soldiers of the Black Swan Flag army, and whispered as such.

It's an attack filled with Sophia's magic power. It should be fine to basically think of it as an attack the same level as Sophia. To strike a night assault on the night of the same day receiving that attack, she's really energetic.

“Now then, what should I do? Even if I dragged time, the castle would fall without doubt as it is.”

In this situation where I could not prepare reservists, it would likely end up with Kaguya-sama’s night assault force taking down the castle. There is a wide difference on abandoning the castle and having the castle taken down. Though there is also the morale aspect of it, the latter would feel like you lost. I have come to learn that such mood can influence the battle greatly here.

“Strategist! A envoy for surrender have come again, you know?”

Without the sign of cleaning his face dirtied with blood, he said that while coming to my side.

Kaguya-sama have stopped the attack temporarily, so a person that seems to be an envoy approached our location.

Though to take up the surrender is easy, I am troubled if there are no assurance of our safety. For now, I guess I should just do what I can.

“Captain Ars. Let’s establish a place for negotiations. As I will be bringing Mikana along, I leave the command of the soldiers to you.”

“Got it. Please refrain yourself from getting cut down immediately, got it?”

Captain Ars, who stroke his head with his right hand, said something that can’t be joked about. Honestly, such a possibility is high.

While replying “I will be discrete”, I optimistically greet the envoy while thinking that I would likely not die if I bring Mikana along.



While saying it’s negotiating, the reason why the forbid of bringing weapons on yourself is not conveyed is because if the magic-capable Kaguya-sama were to become serious, whether she is carrying a weapon or not, there is no difference in the danger on our side. If that’s the case, it’s better that our side also have our weapons with us. Though that’s what we thought, unexpectedly, it might have been unnecessary.

Within the four person that are negotiating, both Mikana and Kaguya-sama are holding onto their weapon, with the remaining two, me and Kaguya-sama's strategist, Yuri Stratos, were not holding to a weapon. Well, I do have my fan in my breast pocket though.

Though I say that, the problem here is not about this. Or more like, what I am concerned is not that.

Yuri Stratos

The person who was displayed with such a name, is a short-build person, whose face is hidden behind a black robe.

Previously, Mikana said that though he is a very resourceful person, his background is unknown.

Wisdom is at the seventy mark. The rest were also around 70. The only high pointer is magical power. It's at least on the lower 90s. Since Sophia is around the upper 90s, he is surely quite the magician. His combat ability is lower, considering that though. And one more thing, there is a suggestive word of "Inducement" written there. I wonder if that means it's his forte.

However, I just somehow feel that shady about this person. But, Kaguya-sama seems to have really high opinion of this person. To the point she said that he's her strategist.

Though with such ability score, I don't think he is fit to be Kaguya-sama's strategist, I feel that it's Kaguya-sama's freedom to put whoever on her side, so

I just replied, "I see."

If the opponent is incompetent, it will be helpful on our end though.

"Kurei. Will you not surrender?"

"Regretfully, yes, I am unable to say to surrender. From my position."

Though Kaguya-sama has come to ask that, I have already decided on my reply. I can't surrender as long as I still have the war potential to fight.

"I see. Then, we can only fight, is it..."

"Kaguya-sama. Is it fine to say something?"

Stratos on Kaguya-sama's side asked her that. Instantly, I felt that Kaguya-sama's eyes lost focus slightly. Though I feel that it could be my imagination, I felt a really bad vibe from it.

“Ah. I don’t mind.”

“Now then, a retainer of Kaguya-sama, I am called Yuri Stratos.”

“I am Yukito Kurei. So? What is it exactly? I can’t surrender, you know?”

“No, the surrender is fine. Our side can defeat your side anytime anyway, but.... All of you have to protect your retreating comrades. In other words, a bait piece. Do you understand that?”

“Stratos”

“Kaguya-sama. Please leave it to me”

Maybe finding fault in Stratos’s conduct, Kaguya-sama tried to voice out, but as Stratos replied instantly, Kaguya-sama lost focus again for an instant, and nodded.

What in the world is this? Right now, that looked as if Kaguya-sama is following Stratos’s words. No matter how you think of it, it’s weird. Also, this guy has been consuming magical power every time he speaks from a while ago.

“I know. It’s my own thoughts after all.”

“Then, don’t you have no use for this castle after the retreat is completed?”

“What are you trying to say?”

“We will overlook the people retreating. So surrender.”

An extremely proper opinion. But, when he speaks, I just somehow feel suspicious. There is just something that seems to be behind it. As I was thinking about that, Mikana spoke from my side.

“I believe we should accept it.”

For an instant, I doubted my ears. Mikana, who told me that it depends on the situation when I talked about surrendering, is now approving the surrender.

Shocked, I looked at Mikana’s eyes. They are eyes that seems to be looking somewhere far. For now, what I know is that with the some kind of magic

Stratos is using, its effects are affecting Kaguya-sama and Mikana.

“No, I reject. I wish to stop this conversation from going any further. If you wish to speak again no matter what, I wish to have some time. I also want to hear the opinions of those at the back.”

“Is that so? In that case, please send an envoy from your side this time. Is that fine? Kaguya-sama.”

“Ah. I don't mind.”

Averting from the eyes of Kaguya-sama who spoke like a doll, I returned while taking Mikana to my camp.

■■■

“Being controlled?”

Listening to what I said, Captain Ars asked with a troubled expression.

On the side of Captain Ars, General Paulus is also making the same expression. In the form of me facing both of them to talk, I looked at Mikana who is sitting on a chair, slightly further away. Seems like she is rather down from the matter a while ago.

“Most likely, that is the case for Kaguya-sama. I should say that Mikana was induced, is that right?”

“Looks like you also do not certain of it. But, if you think of it that way, I can understand why her highness, Kaguya, would be hostile against Diorood-sama.”

“That’s right. They do not have the hostile relationship. Rather, it’s more shocking that they are cooperating together. Also, there is also that Stratos. It was half a year ago when he was employed. Though he was an underling at the start, he suddenly begins to be recognised by Princess Kaguya-sama, and came all the way up. Unexpectedly, that might be the truth.”

Captain Ars gave me information that I did not know of. With that ability score, it’s weird that he’s a close associate. As expected, with some kind of means, most likely magic, he is controlling Kaguya-sama.

Mind-control. A technique that forcefully induced one to a result that was decided previously, as if it's really your own choice, and also, the act itself.

Hypnosis. It's one of the state of mind that could easily be hypnotised. It can refer to that state of mind and also the technique used to result in that state. (The Japanese word can be used in that way, unlike English, "Hypnotized" and "Hypnotism"). It can also be called Hypnosis. Things that the person really does not want to do cannot be forced.

I was shown the two words that I thought of and I skimmed through both of those information. Though, as this is most likely something induced from magic, I am not sure if modern knowledge would be useful, it shouldn't make everything possible. While hypnotism doesn't allow the person himself to do what he dislikes, mind-control is also just a way to show him doing something as if it's his own intention. Both are just inducing the person himself.

The "Inducement" written on Stratos's status is likely talking about that. Slightly inducing people's thoughts. With the accumulation of that, even Kaguya-sama's actions has been manipulated. The Mikana just now very likely has her thoughts induced. Though that itself is a threat, it is those eyes that don't focus. That is the state of a person being completely controlled. If I don't do something about that, ending up not able to express myself might be something to think about. When that happens, even if he doesn't use magic, I will always be a puppet.

The Kaguya-sama just now has totally no dignity. She was just affirming to things that was told. I wonder how much of a humiliation it is. Having your thoughts trampled upon. That is also one of those things that must not be done.

We have our own mind. Have that suppressed, we are just a puppet. And Kaguya-sama is moving towards that state.

“Can I borrow both of your strength? Of course, Mikana too.”

“Are you planning to do something?”

“I will bait Stratos and Kaguya-sama out. After that, I will save Kaguya-sama from the technique.”

“Hey hey. It’s not confirmed that she is totally being controlled, isn’t it? How are you planning to confirm that?”

Captain Ars gave such words of concern. But, I have my convictions. The word “Inducement” on the status menu and the fact that magic is used every time he speaks. I believe it’s pretty much certain.

“I wish to talk to Kaguya-sama to confirm that. This is likely the final chance. Entitle all soldiers to a horse, break through the encircle and escape from the castle.”

“Without doubt, we will be chased after, you know?”

“That’s not a problem. I will stay here after all. I believe the pursuit would be weak.”

“That’s.... What.. in the world do you mean?”

“I want them to believe that I let just my subordinates escape. And with that as a proof of surrender, I will present this fan to Kaguya-sama. As this is quite the unique item, I will understand whether Kaguya-sama is being controlled from the reaction she get after receiving it.”

As I explained while showing the fan, Mikana who is slightly further away, assents to it.

Slightly... no, quite life-threatening but, I do have enough prospects. The problem is the effect of this fan. As explained by Sophia, it’s a wind-attribute magic tool, which dispel any magic by just touching it and can raise a storm by swinging it hard. If that’s the case and it can be used in any situation which would mean that even if the magic has been cast, it would dispel it, Kaguya-sama would return to her consciousness.

I shall get her to touch the fan successfully. Or though she has to touch it no matter what, I can only skillfully use words for that to happen. If Kaguya-sama is not being controlled, and is acting on her own consciousness, then it cannot be helped. I will only be caught.

Thinking to that extent, I sighed heavily.



As I sat on the chair, I smile bitterly at the flow of events till now. What a comical progress, even if I say so myself.

Not expecting the result would end up like this, I was desperately trying to do what's entrusted to me, and ended up sacrificing many lives.

Though it might not end up worst, I thought of that coming true.

That's why I should atone my sins at the very least. I shall gamble this life of mine.

Kayuya Halberd. Without doubt, she was the hope for this country, but right now, she is turning into an existence that brings harm to this country. Kaguya-sama's will is being disregarded completely at the judgement of a small group of people.

There is without doubt good and evil in this world. However, no matter which it is, it certainly has to do with one's will. When there is no will, it's not good or evil. It's nothing.

Perhaps, it could be possible that Dio-sama knows that Kaguya-sama is in such a state. That's why he doesn't want to fight it himself.

It's useless if you think about it. You can't read another's heart. Even for the married, parent and child, siblings, friends, it's impossible to sense the depths of the heart. It's only from disagreeing when you think that you have understood the other. That's why it becomes necessary to convey.

Even for me, who can read all kinds of information, I can't read the hearts of another. At most, it's on the level of predicting something from the changes in the status. Not just myself, but others as well, we would not understand if one would not convey it to us.

But, I wonder what if those words do not reach. If there is no will. I wonder how empty could that be.

Kaguya-sama, who is falling in that state, call out to me.

“Yukito Kurei... Would you not surrender?”

Towards the sound that resounds the room, I reveal a smile. A self-derision smile.

If I just looked at the result, the retreating unit has safely retreated and the night assault unit also has broken through the encirclement.

But, the price was also huge. No matter how you look at it, around half of the numbers were killed without being able to break through the encirclement.

They were the sacrificial bait for me to make them not feel weird towards my speech.

For the sake of those who died, I absolutely can't fail.

“Though I was at least hoping that my subordinates would survive, the world doesn't let things go smoothly, does it?”

“If you give the word, I can guarantee the lives of your subordinates though?”

“I believe my subordinates would not consent. But, I had enough. I shall surrender.”

As I was saying that, I stood from my chair. There is Stratos's appearance at the back of Kaguya-sama as well.

I don't think I would have a tomorrow if I do not bring Kaguya-sama to our side somehow. Therefore, I can only do it.

Holding the fan with my right hand, I mutter in my heart.

'Now, for the Decisive Point'

Part 2

Towards me who is holding the fan in front of her, Kaguya-sama sheathed her sword in her right hand.

I tilted my head to that unexpected choice.

“Why did you sheath your sword? Though I said to surrender, I am still an enemy, you know?”

“Just by looking at your eyes, I can see whether you have that fighting spirit. Your eyes do have the resolution but do not have the fighting spirit. You do not wish to fight with me, right? Kurei?”

I have been read. (TL: I might have to use “exposed” if this doesn’t make sense to most people reading this.)

Feeling that, I was having cold sweat on my face. I didn’t expect that she could just see through whether or not I plan to fight by just looking at me. As I thought, the feeling of being seen through isn’t just a weird feeling. Is it from experience, insight from birth or from something else. No matter what, those eyes are real.

And also, the fighting spirit released from those eyes are also real.

“... I could be hiding it, you know? For the sake of attacking you on that one chance.”

“You knew that it was impossible, right? That fan is quite the high grade item. However, it is fundamental to compare the user’s magic power. Being able to release that much power was due to having filled in magic power from the very beginning. I could barely feel any magic from you after all. But, even if it’s some famous magician, to pour in that much magic power is difficult. At most, it should be a one-time effect.”

That’s quite the insight. She was totally spot-on. Well, having that read is not a problem to me though.

“.....Correct. However, my weapon is not my combat ability. It’s words. Is it fine if I ask a few questions?”

“I don’t mind. What is it?”

I was shocked when she accepted it so easily. Isn't it normal to be more vigilant? No, more than that, Stratos who isn't interrupting is weird. If it's this fellow, I believe he would have said something though..

“Well then...Why did you take your father's side?”

A upright and clean-handed person should know. The serious sin of cutting down your father. I can understand the reason to hesitate. It's even more so for Kaguya-sama who Dio-sama would refer as a person who lives a life of difficulty. But, I don't understand the reason for going against her brother, Dio-sama.

The meaning in fighting, or should I say, the point to be able to fight while agreeing to oneself shouldn't be different, be it on the side of Dio-sama or the King.

Why did she have to specially choose the path of opposition? Even if it's the king's order, for a battle of no cause, I don't really think she will come forth.

Is the reason because she is being manipulated? Or is that wrong? This is a question to see through that.

“Even you..... would ask that.....”

Lonely. With that expression, Kaguya-sama who said that seems similar to Dio-sama who I just met. It's the same as Dio-sama when he talked about fighting for his sister in the carriage at that time.

"...Dio-sama....is fighting for your sake. Are you.... Fighting for your father?"

"Kurei is trying to understand me, isn't it? A question for that sake, I see.... Looks like if I don't answer, I would be impolite."

"That's correct. I believe Kaguya-sama should reveal your true feelings."

Kaguya-sama smiled sadly. Seeing such a Kaguya-sama, I bit my teeth hard. Her eyes lost her focus. That's because Stratos interrupted.

"Kaguya-sama....."

"It isn't like I fought for my father. I fought for Dio. Not for the country, or the people. I... have fought for my only brother."

Saying that, Kaguya-sama lower her shoulders slightly.

On one hand, I am shocked. That's because it's the exact same reason Diosama has. But, I wonder if this is something Stratos is manipulating her to say against her will. Or is this really Kaguya-sama's real feelings?.

"Then, why.... are you opposing him....?"

"It's to end the war quickly. Father is thinking about a prolonged war."

"Is there no option to work together....?"

"There isn't enough time to defeat Father.... Even if Father is defeated, after that, I will be all alone..... In the fight to defeat Father, precious time would be lost and if it's going to be me alone, then....."

I wish to spend the time left with her most precious brother.

I wonder if it's because she have finished what she has to say. Compared to Kaguya-sama who seems slightly refreshed, I was totally not refreshed. Having

too much to retort about, I have no idea where to start retorting about.

No, there is one point I have to retort.

“Though I don’t really understand....? Why are you saying things on the assumption that Dio-sama would die...?”

Hearing my words, Kaguya-sama opened her eyes widely, floating a shocked expression.

And nodded as if she understood something, she looked at me straight into the eyes, closing her eyes strongly once, and said,

“...Dio’s life span isn’t long. The longest time-frame would be 2 months, and for the shortest, he might.... die even tomorrow.”

Hearing Kaguya-sama’s words, there was some matter inside me that connects. It got connected.

The sickly Dio-sama. Dio-sama who is rushing for a short-term battle. Dio-sama who used cosmetics to cover up his complexion. Dio-sama who collapsed from fatigue. Dio-sama who thought of the next stage.

And, Dio-sama who keeps an extraordinary resolution in his heart.

It's weird if you connect everything up. While saying that you have to defeat him no matter what, Dio-sama is lacking slightly in caution. No, I think I should say that he's rushing for the decisive battle.

There was that weird feeling. However, I did not request for an answer. It's because I didn't turn my eyes towards it.

Again, I have turned my eyes towards a place opposite to what was important. Thinking desperately too much about winning and living on that I did not pay attention to Dio-sama's condition.

Though almost unconsciously losing the strength in my knees, but managed to somehow hold on, I was not able to hide the fact that I was wavering. My brain firmly knows that there is the possibility that Stratos made her say that. But, I felt that that seems to be the truth.

“My wish is for a short period of tranquility with Dio. Once that ends.... I won't wish for anything else..... ”

The time spent with your family is precious. And that's even more so when it's the last time. I heard Dio-sama and Kaguya-sama are raised together. That's why, Kaguya-sama's definition of a family is not about blood relations, and it's likely whether you have lived together or not. If that isn't the case, then the two sisters that have been taken refuge would also be part of the family.

The problem was that Dio-sama decided to use that remaining life to take his father down, while Kaguya-sama is rejecting this decision. What remains is the fact that both of them did not change. It's just that while Dio-sama desires for a country without his father, Kaguya-sama desires for the remaining precious time.

I gradually sort out my thoughts. Though it already has pretty much disappeared, the possibility of Kaguya-sama really breaking down is still faintly there. Having her body being targeted by her father, being informed of her brother's remaining time, and the fact that he is raising an army. It is without doubt a dreadful mental burden.

Adding to the fact of having the responsibility of a general that leads an army, Kaguya-sama also has to think about those under here. Not able to make a move easily, she could no longer be bothered with everything after thinking about whether there was kind of plan. This is also a possibility.

To save Dio-sama, to acquire a mere period of tranquil with Dio-sama, Kaguya-sama can only fight Dio-sama, and to catch him with her own hands. Well, being tied to this only thought is something that isn't possible.

After all, she is breaking down.

But, the possibility of that being inducted is extremely high. Due to Stratos.

Other than this, I can be bothered. I can't think of anything else. I can understand if it ended up that way. But, I just don't feel that from Kaguya-sama. No, I couldn't feel that slightly.

Kaguya-sama does things half-baked. While causing a war, Kaguya-sama is restraining the sacrifices of the soldiers to a minimum. You can't do that if you are not composed. Even if she attacks with force, not only can she win, it would be even faster. If she desires her tranquility with Dio-sama, she should have attack with force from the start.

With just her army.

But, when Dio-sama and I were spreading out the encirclement net, Kaguya-sama was going to reinforce another castle. I don't understand the reason for doing that. Besides, the reason for attacking Castle Harpe should also be due to the pursuit. I wonder if she pay attention to that. In the first place, if they sent a small number of soldiers by the side of Castle Harpe, they should be able to reach the castle where Dio-sama stepped out from. Well, though Dio-sama is no longer there by then, I don't understand why such a choice wasn't made even then.

Her actions and speech doesn't match. It's as if she has multiple personalities. Rather than multiple personalities, I think I should say she doesn't settle down. As if a kid that can't hold still. Doing something randomly there, and then doing something randomly here. If someone doesn't control her well, she wouldn't hold still. There is no longer the need to think who is the one controlling her.

I bit my lips unconsciously. Kaguya-sama's feeling is likely not a lie. As

expected, Stratos's magic is something that induces the thoughts. Making it as if one really think about it.

It causes a small wish to give an impression as if it has to be executed no matter. And, to give Kaguya-sama the impression that only by fighting, can she be able to save Dio-sama.

Her genuine feeling for her brother was used.

“Though Father has good influence, he promised to not interfere after I capture Dio. I can also guarantee your safety. So would you tell me the whereabouts of Dio?”

“Do you think the king would protect such a promise?”

“Fifty fifty, I guess. But, my vassals are all superior. Even without me, they can win if it's a battle. Though the battle would be prolonged.”

And during that time, she will spend her last moments with Dio-sama. Kaguya-sama seems really precarious for saying that. She is really only thinking of that. It's possible that she is already no longer interested in any other matter. She has been induced that way, I guess.

“.....wouldn't assassination be faster?”

“Assassination is not possible for me naturally, and even the continent's best assassin. Father is always surrounded by a hundred of men of valor, and weapons are taken away when meeting him. And plus that, Father himself is an unusually skilled master. He won't fall from just one attack. If I could do it, I would have already done so. It's because I do not have other methods, I came forth. To capture Dio with these hands.”

I see. So it means it won't proceed easily. And I can't ignore what was said just now.

Dio-sama's plan was for me to draw Kaguya-sama over, while Dio-sama take the king down during that time. Though this plan is with the premise of being able to take the king down, it doesn't seem easy from listening to that conversation.

There's a mountain of things to think of. Right now, it became necessary to amend what information is known.

I thought that it is doubtful of Kaguya-sama really assisting Dio-sama after she take down the king. But, as it is now, that thought seems to be really coming true.

To solve everything, we need to quickly get Kaguya-sama released.

But, I didn't expect Dio-sama's sickness is due to his remaining lifespan. Perhaps only Earl Uren knows about this. I was totally deceived. If I had know, I would have stop them, and they didn't even ask me to use my knowledge to cooperate with them. No, maybe that's why he didn't say. For the time being, I should really check Dio-sama status next time. I might find out something.

Well, let's put that aside for now. What I need to save is the person right in front of me now. And what is needed is my words. And this fan.

"I have come to understood Kaguya-sama's true feelings properly. Now then, I pledge on my name that I would not bring harm to Kaguya-sama. However, I think that if I don't present something, it feels somehow lacking in faith. So."

I present the fan in both hands, and kneel in front of Kaguya-sama.

"I shall entrust this fan received from my friend to you. I wish to obtain your trust from keeping this fan."

"This is the thing that caused the storm at that time. Isn't this your last reliance?"

"That's the reason. Please do receive it."

As I spoke, I faced downwards to not have my expression read.

I no longer sweat. But, my throat is getting dry. An instant later, it isn't weird if I am cut down, and I do not have any other way if the fan doesn't have an effect.

I closed my eyes. My life, well, i guess it's fine already. I guess no matter what happens I will be safe. I did surrender after all. But, I am troubled if the fan doesn't work. If this doesn't work, Kaguya-sama will be stay twisted from now on.

“Let's see..... Would you receive it? After doing so much, i believe it is impolite to reject.”

“That's true. I guess I should.”

Saying that, Kaguya-sama grabbed the fan from my held out hands.

Part 3

A black flash is moving fast along the straight path towards the royal castle's gate.

Unluckily, those soldiers who were on the path, especially those that tried to obstruct, were cut down as they were passed and were almost instantly dead. Even if some of them were alive, they were already $\frac{3}{4}$ dead. In other words, they will die soon.

Running at the back, my face cramped towards the quick work, and at the same time due to running at full speed, I placed my hand on the right side of my stomach as a dull pain started to surface from there..

This is a battlefield. And I am weak.

As I breathed roughly while managing to move forward, an arrow came flying towards me.

While I do not have the ability to dodge in the first place, I am tired now. Ways to avoid is an absolute zero. That's if I can dodge though.

I know I do not have the need to dodge. It had occurred three times on the way here. The fact that I was at the verge of death.

I was saved that three times.

The arrow split into half before reaching me. And, the archer that shot it, was blown away by lightning.

“Don’t leave me and not fall behind, haven’t I told you multiple times already?”

“Haaahaaa.... And every time, I replied that I will do my best, I am already giving everything I have....”

“Fumu, is it a bit too fast? I was just doing a light run even like this though.”

“.....I would like to request for a slower pace. With this repetition, it’s a waste of time. If that’s not possible, then please go ahead.”

A soft smile like Dio-sama floated towards my words.

“That’s not a choice. You have saved my life. By the name of Kaguya Halberd, I shall protect you. Yukito.”

That's what Kaguya-sama said.

Though her spoken words were inspirational, I wish that she would consider my condition if she thinks that way.

At any rate, whenever magic came flying over, it's cut down, whenever an arrow is shot over, it's cut down, and whenever someone comes attacking, it's cut down as well. Just a repetition of cutting things down.

"If you are fighting with your actual abilities, I think there aren't any threat here. I believe you should go on ahead."

"Fighting ability doesn't decide the fate of a battle. Though on a direct confrontation, I would win against my Father, my Father would never take me on from the front. And I would likely lose to my father. After all, he should definitely have prepared a plan to defeat me."

"Then, why are you going?"

"My brother is waiting. Plus, there are also prospects of winning. And that's you, Yukito. As my Father is not wary of you, move with all your might."

"I shall do my best on that too..... If possible, I would prefer that you could settle this alone."

“Don’t you think that it is kind of shameful for a guy to ask the girl he embraced to fight alone?”

Kaguya-sama, who floated a mischievous smile, threw such words of tease at me.

Since if I react, it will be to her expectations, and most importantly, my sides still hurts, I continued to give excuses that it can’t be helped in my heart. I am definitely not unfaithful. I am purely just worried. It’s not like I remembered the sensation of the body.

“...I apologize for my impoliteness.”

“It’s fine. That actually saved me in a way. Really..... But, don’t you think they are way too late?”

“To run at full speed in armor can only be punishment and nothing else..... I believe it will take some more time.”

“Fumu, then let’s go ahead a bit more.”

There is no one here that can receive my anger.

Saying something like that without hesitation, Kaguya-sama pulled my arm forcefully to make me stand while I was bending my knees.

“Let’s go, Yukito! Don’t fall behind!”

“.....I shall do my best.....”

I feel that the feeling I am having right now is like the time when you meet a person with multiple personalities or when you meet a girl who is abnormally skilled at feigning naivete.

I wonder. Is this the kind of feeling you would say that you have been deluded by a raccoon? (TL: I think Japanese’s perception on raccoon is that they are cunning and would cheat you and all those kinda of stuff. Someone might want to help explain that in the comment section if you are able to.)

But, I think this is the actual Kaguya-sama.

She had returned to her former self at that time.



In a room in Castle Harpe, it sounds like something cracked. Actually, it's not like something really cracked. Perhaps, it's the sound of the invisible chain that binds Kaguya-sama cracking.

What's spreading in my heart was relief. My eyes were on Kaguya-sama's legs. From then, as I raised my head, there was Kaguya-sama whose expression is twisted by the roughly conceivable feelings of sadness, anger, shock and disgust. But, her eyes still firmly settled. (TL: Why the hell were you looking at her legs? Though I understand your feelings but.....)

And the Kaguya-sama who met her eyes with mine said this one sentence.

“...I am in your debt.”

At the instant of that sentence.

A flash.

With a move that fits that description, Kaguya-sama drove the fan received from me at Stratos's hood, likely where the throat is.

“Gue!?”

Like the sound of a frog being crushed, Stratos was in agony.

Removing the hood with the momentum, we could see the light brown hair, and furthermore, the face of a round plump man appeared. I believe he is slightly older than me. While agonizing over the pain of the throat, he was glaring at Kaguya-sama desperately. What futility. This person is really...

It's not your trick.

“.....I have never..... Felt anger of this extent before....”

Stratos was floating a “Why” expression. He doesn't know the situation.

I believe it was due to fear of reinforcements that Stratos's throat was rendered useless. Not talking about Kaguya-sama, I would be taken out immediately. As expected of her situational awareness. Saved by that one hand.

"A, Aguyazama..." (TL: Kaguya-sama in broken throat language.)

"It's not anger towards you.... It's towards myself...."

Though Stratos is putting in magic in short verses, Kaguya-sama is holding to the fan. Stratos's magic is no longer effective.(TL: Saved by the guy's first girl's item... I wonder how does she feel when she finds out... Shuraba :P)

Swaying closer to Stratos, Kaguya-sama seriously looks like a ghost or vengeful spirit or something close. I could totally understand Stratos who is shrinking away to the the point it hurts. Thought there is absolutely no feeling of sympathy.

"Because of my own immaturity.....I invited needless sacrifice and chaos....Though normally I would take my own life here.... But before that"

You shall take the blow of my anger.

The words were not powerful. On the contrary, the fear is several times more.

Stratos, whose face twisted in fear, turned his back to us and ran. Without the thought of stopping that, Kaguya-sama drew her sword from her waist.

In an instant, she closed in on Stratos and cut his back. (TL:.....OP...)

Being too fast, I have no idea when she got close. If I think of the human stature, no matter how fast you move, the fact that you move should be detectable, but by the time you realize, she already approached Stratos.

Shukuchi(Territory Shrink). Such words floated in my head. (TL: Exact translations should be shrink the land, but i thought that was cooler so... yeah.)

【Shukuchi. Or Territory Shrink Technique or Art of Territory Shrink. The technique or Senninjutsu to instantaneously move long distance by shrinking the distance. While the Senninjutsu version allow instantaneous movement of distance that can be seen long distances away, the technique version is a combat technique to approach with a shorter pace.】(TL: I use Senninjutsu as a way of representing a more holy/OP version of magic. It's like skills that can only be used by God or those hermit wizards/monks that you watch some shows.)(Friendly comment reminded me that this is the same as Death March's Ground Shrink so you can take that as the translations as well.)

The reason why I can't laugh at the information on the screen might be due to having seen a similar phenomenon right now.

Though moving 500km away is pushing it as expected, to be able to approach Stratos at least 10 steps away is truly a technique close to Senninjutsu.

Though since we have magic, Senninjutsu seems possible, I guess I should think of this as the application of magic. Well, nonetheless, I believe it's not a feat that can be easily done.

“Uuuu.....”

Though he moaned after getting cut in the back, Stratos quickly ran off. That's quite the feat. To think that he can face his back twice to Kaguya-sama running away, I can't do something so stupid. Even knowing that she's going to approach anyway.

After thinking that much, I realized that Stratos is running towards the balcony. Is he planning to jump off? Or is he thinking of something else.

No matter which.

“Kaguya-sama! Be Careful!!”

Just after calling out to Kaguya-sama who was approaching with absolutely no caution, Stratos leaked out a smile that causes shiver unconsciously.

“.... should have made her do more stuff.... Kaguya-chan...”

“Die”

The approaching Kaguya-sama decapitated Stratos's head.

Instantaneously. Stratos's body started to release light and exploded.

I couldn't open my eyes from the blast. I pressed down my body to the back. I tried enduring it by pressing my knees and shoulders against the floor while covering up my face with my arms.

After the blast stopped, what was left was only the destroyed balcony and burnt wall.

“Kaguya-sama!?”

“I am here.”

As I faced to the diagonally to where the sound came from, my face cramped up. Not to say injuries, there wasn't even a dirt on her clothes. How in the world did she tide over their explosion?

“It's good that you are fine.”

“...I guess this is what you call living in disgrace....”

Gripping to her katana strongly, Kaguya-sama said that while biting onto her lips before she dropped her sword, strengthless. And then gradually lowering her knees to the floor.

Thinking that she might just fall, I moved to receive her.

Then, Kaguya-sama came falling gradually into my arms. I was shocked from the soft body that makes it difficult to believe that this body belongs to someone who was holding a sword and showing movement of godspeed just now.

In the state of having her forehead touching my chest, Kaguya-sama halted her fall. Though I could see her beautiful nape, my heart wasn't throbbing with the situation after all.

".....I have.....committed an outrageous crime..."

"That's exactly as you said. You have been totally controlled, went against Dio-sama and intensified the civil war that breaks the country into two."

"....."

"However, it's not just your fault. I believe the the main fault lies with Stratos, with the next being the current king. There are also others like Anna who blindly believed in you who was controlled, and also all your retainers who desire a battle of no cause. Besides, I believe I also have the guilt of not realizing that you were controlled before Stratos came. Though it's harsh, there's no helping lamenting about it."

".....what should I do.....?"

"All citizens, all soldiers, the whole of Veris desires one thing from you. If you happen to have the greatest sin, that would be the fact that you slightly hesitated in the things you want to do. That's why you presented an opening to be taken advantage of. Even despite this, please stand up. However, if you can't find the purpose to push yourself up, please stay here. I shall go to do what I need to do. Though if possible, I wish to go with you."

After saying that, Kaguya-sama hit my chest with her forehead with some strength and while using the recoil to raise her face up, she stood up immediately.

“I shall....stop bringing my shame to myself any further. I will go. To take my father down!”

“Then, allow me to accompany you.”

Saying that, I lower my head towards Kaguya-sama. She have finally returned. The person, Veris has waited for eagerly. The person whom Dio-sama wished to save.

“But before that, I guess we have to settle the clean-up here. I also have to apologize to Anna. No, Bayd as well. I ended up locking him in the castle.”

“The final close associate, right? Did he not participate in the army this time?
”

As the 10000-men army function without deficiency all the while, I thought surely that the person who worked behind-the-scenes did come.

“I was the one who locked him up in the castle after all..... Bayd who opposed fighting against Dio.”

“I see. I guess there is a need to apologize.”

It seems that Kaguya-sama’s camp also have various matters. Well, seeing Kaguya-sama’s condition, it’s more scary that there isn’t though.

As I smiled bitterly at Kaguya-sama who is racking her brain on who to apologize, I am thinking of whoever was the one to control Kaguya-sama. Of course, Stratos is the actual one who was controlling. However, Kaguya-sama’s actions are way too unbeneficial to Stratos.

I get that he’s by Kaguya-sama’ side. But, I don’t see the reason to use Kaguya-sama to fight in the war.

Even if she did that, Kaguya-sama’s army will only be exhausted and weaken. Above all, I don’t need it’s something a man who thought of fighting assertively

would do.

I think it's more natural to think that he moved under the instruction of someone. Then, who is that someone.

A person who would benefit from the opposition between Kaguya-sama and Dio-sama. A person who wish for Kaguya-sama to win.

There's no need to think.

The present King of Veris. Braig Halberd

I understand why Dio-sama has been hostile to him all this while. It's because the moment he left your sights, you have no idea what measures you might take. Because he's one to be cautious of than any other person, he have continued to stay vigilant.

Also, Dio-sama anticipated that Kaguya-sama would appear. As to why he knows I wouldn't know exactly, however, he most likely realized that Kaguya-sama's condition was weird.

I believe she heard about the matter on Dio-sama's remaining lifespan from himself. Dio-sama then realized that Kaguya-sama was strange and raised an army. Trying to discuss at the beginning, and when the communication breaks down, he raised an army. If it's this sequence, it's not weird at all. I guess to why I could hear the sensation of anger from him when I asked him why did he raised an army is likely due to the fact that he knows that he(The king) has already reached out to Kaguya-sama.

No matter what, here,

“Kaguya-sama. I have something I have to convey no matter what.”

“Dio-sama right now, is advancing to the royal castle, leading an army of 2000. I believe it’s not weird even if the battle is about to start.”

“Fufu, a Dio-ish plan. However, with just Dio, I don’t think he can win. I will go as well. Yukito. Of course, you too.”

“Roger.”

From then, we quickly prepared and departed for the capital. While even the cavalry corps that showed the godspeed movement were galloping seriously with that outstanding horseback riding, I was riding the horse in the form of being dragged halfway within that group.

And in just slightly less than a day, we reached the capital.

Though a reckless forced march, we managed to reach in time, thanks to that.

The capital is now being attacked by Dio-sama’s army, so riding on the flow, we entered the capital on foot, having assumed to also enter the royal castle

beforehand.



Dio-sama's army and Imperial Guards were fighting it out close to the capital.

The Imperial Guards desperately trying to defend the Royal castle's walls and Dio-sama's army trying to penetrate through. However, Dio-sama's army have many people that are believed to be commoners mixed in it.

“Are those volunteer soldiers?”

“They hate Father after all. By now, I believe I should be the same as well....”

“It's fine. Everyone thinks that you have some form of reason for your actions. For example, something like 'trying to create an opening' would be just fine. If they understand that you are on the side of the people, the fallen reputation would return even in a night's time.”

While viewing from the surround for a while, I advise Kaguya-sama as such. Of course, what I said about a night's time is about the matter right now. If she join this battle on Dio-sama's side, many would change their evaluations of Kaguya-sama. Her popularity is this high. While being on the King's side, she is yearned by the people to the extent of never-ending.

"I see.... I am thinking of going right to the front just like this, how is it?"

"Let's see. Then, in that case, an advice from me. I believe it's better if you can get it as flashy as possible."

"Flashy.... You say. Then, Yukito. Instruct Dio's soldiers to get away from the gates. If possible, as soon as possible."

Saying that, Kaguya-sama closed her eyes and started to concentrate for some reason.

I understood from instinct. Crap. And I found out from the status. Seriously BAD.

Large amount of magic power started to reduce abruptly. Kaguya-sama is beginning to prepare a magic skill that uses magic power of that scale.

At any rate, I ran towards the royal castle gates at full speed. I could quickly

finish this if I can find Dio-sama or Earl Uren, but I don't seem to be able to find them. The numbers are huge after all. Furthermore, they are swarming together as they are trying to break the gates down.

“What should I do?”

Muttering that, I looked behind me. For some reason, the area Kaguya-sama was is shining abnormally. Going like “Bachi, Bachi”.

“This is bad, this is bad”

Taking out the fan from my chest, I swang it strongly.

Causing a powerful wind, many people looked in my direction to verify the strong wind from behind.

“The brave knights of his Highness, Diorood! Those that stands with us! Look

upon that direction!”

Due to the wind, the battle stopped for a short period of time and using that instant, I spoke.

Though only those that I can see their expressions, all of them have stiff expressions. Most likely, that’s pretty much everyone as well.

After speaking out and looking to the back, my face cramped.

It’s a spear. A huge lightning spear. And that’s in the sky on the capital. To say anything more, it’s coming towards this direction.

“If, if you do not wish to be rolled up in the lightning strike from heaven, then gradually get away from the gates! That is the spear for our sake!!”

I raised my voice. With my voice as the trigger, many people at the gates gradually move away from the gates one step at a time.

Though I said gradually to prevent chaos, I am having cold sweat as I have no idea when the spear is going to be released.

“Yukito! Yukito! Why are you here!?”

“Earl Uren!? Rather than tell you later, I believe you will understand soon! For now, please stay back!!”

Pulling away the armored Earl Uren who was approaching, I got away from the gates.

Not knowing how far I have to stay back, I continued to get away with the others, separating in both directions, left and right, until it's released. And then.

That time has come.

The roar of the explosion. I plugged my ears up reflexively. The sound reverberated when the lightning spear dropped onto the gates, pulverizing it.

No, it's not just the gates that got hit. As the royal castle is protected by a two-layer gates, that was also being destroyed. Looking at it timidly, there were many people screaming from within. Literally, heaps of corpses all around.

But, without caring such thoughts, there was a person who walk straight in the middle of the left and right separated Diorood-sama's army with a beautiful posture.

“Kaguya-sama Halberd shall enter the castle! No matter who you are, those that obstruct shall be cut down, be mindful of that!!”

In that instant, many people that sides with Dio-sama sensed it.

That the strongest person has become their ally..

In that instant, many people that side with the King sensed it.

That the worst person has switched side.

“It’s the Dark Princess!?”

Along those words, the screams that can be heard from the royal castle became even louder.

And then, every people that supports Dio-sama raise cheers.

“It’s Kaguya-sama!”

“Kaguya-sama has come!!”

As I listened, I looked at the flabberghasted Earl Uren and informed one thing.

“It’s Kaguya-sama, you know”

“...Ah.... it’s the Kaguya-sama I know.....”

While shocked with Earl Uren who started dripping large drops of tears, I thought that it couldn’t be helped.

Though I am shocked at that change, I believe people who know the original Kaguya-sama would be shocked at the her state until just now.

She has returned at long last. As such feelings really do get conveyed, though

very imprudent, I couldn't help but make a smile.

“Yukito!”

“Y, Yes!”

As Kaguya-sama suddenly called out my name, I ended up replying while straightening my back.

“We are going to force our way through! Don't fall behind!”

“.....Roger!”

Thus, Dio-sama's army that acquired an overwhelming war potential instantly took control of the battle that surrounds the royal castle's gates.

Part 4

A boisterous dance.

That is the impression I get of how easily Kaguya-sama cut down the Imperial Guard. Kaguya-sama and I are breaking into the royal castle, aiming at where the King is.

Even now, knights who swing down their sword against Kaguya-sama were decapitated before they could swing it, dying tragically.

If it's a one-on-one scenario, the enemy would be decapitated mercilessly. If it's a one-on-many scenario, the opponent's arm or leg would be cut down to immobilize, creating a serial of one-on-one scenarios momentarily and again, momentarily giving the finishing blow.

And not only that those were usually done continuously while running.

Though I couldn't see Kaguya-sama's gallant figure and the fighting soldiers, there are faint glimpses of things rolling off at times and things that flew off every time Kaguya-sama swing her sword, to which when I tried to verify, it's without doubt a traumatic experience.

Run while not shifting my sights. That is something I find out that is the only way to keep my calm when I was running behind Kaguya-sama's back, and I

have not think of anything else other than following her.

Overall, though quite far back, Dio-sama's army lead by Earl Uren and Kaguya-sama's knight were pressing in so the suppression of the royal castle should be soon.

The problem is.

“Dio-sama who went to defeat the king in the detached force.....”

“Halt, Yukito!”

Hearing Kaguya-sama's voice, I desperately put in strength in my legs to put in brakes. (TL: LOL! That's how the translation went.)

As Kaguya-sama has also stopped, I almost bumped into Kaguya-sama's back, but I somehow managed to resist it. It's better to be useless, than holding one back.

“What's wrong....?”

“Yo. Princess Kaguya. It’s fine to come to the Royal Castle, but could you come in in a more graceful way?”

Standing in front of Kaguya-sama are 4 men. Their equipment are diverse with no common point. I can only see one thing that they share.

Their combat ability are all above eighty.

“Unfortunately, I have been raised with no affinity towards gracefulness. That’s impossible.”

“About 11 years old wasn’t it? Until before you left the castle, you were really graceful, just like your mother.”

Taking the initiative to speak was Raior Clift. He has a combat ability of 92 making him the highest one among the rest. The values of the others were also high, and not only having “Spear” written in them, they have short spears in their hands, so without doubt, they are spear users.

I believe their age is about the later half of 20s. Having trimmed golden hair and a huge scar on the face as the feature, though rough-looking, he is giving a gentle smile.

Of course, if he's not an enemy, that is.

“Raio. I am thankful that you have recommended me and sent me to follow under Bayd. But, if you are going to stay in my way here, I will not be merciful even if it's you.”

“It's useless to say that from the start. We were picked up by that king, and have come to a point where we can no longer stop. What's left is to perish together.”

Instantly after saying that, Raio, likely due to having the assumption of using it indoors, charged at Kaguya-sama with the short spear. At the moment the silver blade touched Kaguya-sama, lightning repelled it away. Kaguya-sama used magic to defend.

“Raio. You sympathize with Mum's predicament and were also kind to me. I do not wish to cut you down.”

“Oioi. Even if you say that, it won't change. But, if you are going to say that, think about why I came here.”

Though Kaguya-sama charged with the short spear multiple times, Kaguya-sama received all those attacks with magic.

The reason for not receiving the attack with the sword might be either because she doesn't want to cut the opponent down or it was an attack to the extent that the sword would not be able to withstand.

The three behind Raigor did not move. Though I think it's better to attack together, the feeling is as if that they are observing the fight between Raigor and Kaguya-sama. No, are they really watching?

I do not see any sense of wanting to join in the fight. Perhaps they are surveying. So that Raigor would not betray.

So that's what he meant by 'Think about why I came here'. The people behind are somewhat the commanding group.

If that's the case..

"Kaguya-sama"

"I know! Are you looking down on me too much?"

“...I believe you might be getting too engrossed in the fight.”

“I am not a battle freak! After I clean up this people, I will give you a taste of a lightning attack next!?”

Pulling away from Raigor, Kaguya-sama who stepped back to my area, seems to be a lot more calm than I thought. No matter what, due to the impression during the time at the fortress, I always feel that Kaguya-sama is mentally weak when it comes to her relatives, allies or people like Raigor who she's close with.

“I will die, you know. Then, will an instant of opening be sufficient?”

“Hooo? If you can make it splendidly, I shall spare you from the lightning attack.”

Saying that, Kaguya-sama laughed with a broad grin. No matter how I see that, I feel that she can't help but find fighting enjoyable. If I said it, it seems like the sword would come down so I won't say anything though.

This is a straight path. There is nothing that is obstructing the rather narrow path. Such a place just happen to be convenient for me.

If I swing my fan strongly, a squall will occur. But, that is not something I can control.

After waving it, the strength and range cannot be adjusted. But, if it's here, I can control it. Though the squall scatter when I waved it at the front of the gates, if it's here, a squall that is more than enough for the 4 of them can be created.

“Those words..... Don't forget about them!”

At the same time I said that, I open the fan in my right hand and wave it strongly.

Having anticipated what I will be doing, Kaguya-sama has stepped back to my side. Since if she's at the front, she will be affected by the squall. Well, for the Kaguya-sama now, it wouldn't even be a slight tremor though.

But, in that situation, there is a possibility that we might miss the moment of opportunity.

The squall that thousands of men in front of the gate found weird is now turned towards 4 men in a narrow path.

The skillful four not just wasn't blown away, they also did not cover their face

with their hands. They stood there naturally as if they were receiving the wind from an electric fan.

That was fatal.

The first to be targeted was Raigor. At the instant the squall ends, Kaguya-sama came stepping on Raigor from above. I meant literally that. Sheathing her sword in the scabbard, kicking the wall, jumping high and kicking onto Raigor's shoulder while stepping on it.

Without being able to resist, he fell prostrate on the floor but that was good fortune for him. He's after all the one in that place that did not receive the attack (TL: I think the kick can be considered one though...)

Kaguya-sama took a stance to draw her sword with flowing movement, the scabbard in her left hand, the grip in her right hand. From the status, I can see that her magic power is reducing.

Momentarily, both of Kaguya-sama's hands was electrified.

And then, she drew the sword with a speed that the eyes could not follow. I could only see what happen before the sword was drawn and after the sword was drawn. I could only see those. The process was really not projected.

"Yoi no Hiken. Jinrai. Be honored that you received this in the other world." (TL: Wondering if I should keep the names in Japanese while translating it to make it cooler)

During the speech, the 3 men fell over in clatter. Though I didn't want to see, they were pretty much cut into two equal sides from top to bottom. This might come out in my dreams.

“Oi.... How long do you plan to step on a person....!”

“N? Sorry. I forgot about it.”

“Princess, you, didn't you get quite the personality...!”

“Fumu, you never change, do you? But, why are you still under my father? You could have ran away after letting me go, couldn't you?”

Sheathing her sword in her scabbard and removing her foot from Raigor, Kaguya-sama asked him. Raigor shrugged his shoulders at the question.

“I have to protect the prince's mother after all. To you, she's also your parent that raised you, right?”

“.....is Mother safe?”

“She’s likely above. We are talking about that ill-natured king. He’s probably planning to use her as a shield.”

“It’s sufficient to just hear that. Let’s hurry.”

“Ah, do that. As I have something that I have to do, I shall leave the king to you all, okay?”

As he raised his back and said “it hurts”, he rotated his shoulder that Kaguyasama stepped. He actually was okay from that. Though it wouldn’t be weird if his bone broke.

“We are going towards the Inner Palace?”

“Inner Palace? We don’t call it that way. That place is a prison. And that being the case, we are the jailer. If they see the situation are unfavorable, a number of idiots will come, so I have to take care of them. I just got released at great pains, so I can’t just watch this nightmare any further after all.”

“....you are really kind, aren’t you? You have my gratitude.”

“It’s fine. It’s something I want to do. But, be careful. That king was really confident. ‘At long last she have come to attend me at night, I see. I shall let her taste the enjoyment of the night’, Wait wait! That’s not what I said, it’s your father who said it.”

“I came to let my father taste the sensation of eternal slumber though.”

Raior, who desperately stopped Kaguya-sama trying to draw her sword, gave a slight sigh.

Kaguya-sama is slightly displeasure. Well, it’s like Kaguya-sama to end with just displeasure though.

“Then, Raior. After everything end, come to my side. I shall pick you up.”

“I shall think about it. Hey, that weakling there. I shall leave this princess to you. She’s, to some extent, my benefactor’s daughter after all.”

“I shall keep that in my heart.”

Rarior called out to me saying that while wiping his head with one of his hands. I believe the benefactor he's saying is not the king. Most likely, it's Kaguya-sama's mother. Though I have no idea what kind of connection they have, Rarior stayed under the king because of this obligation.

"Okay, let's go, Yukito. We have to hurry."

"Roger!"

Saying that, Kaguya-sama and I separated from Rarior, and went towards some room of the king in the highest floor.



It was going well till before the interlude with the king. Yep, till before the interlude.

“I didn’t think it would turn into a melee fight.”

Dio-sama’s army and the 100-man stalwarts that protect the king is fighting in melee combat. Well, as half of the 100-man were cut down by Kaguya-sama, I believe there are at most around 50 of the stalwarts left, but those 50-man are strong. Just a soldier wouldn’t be able to stand against them. (TL: Stalwarts here also means their ability to fight like Lu Bu from Three Kingdoms, not just being the sidekicks of the king. Actual: 猛者, Direct: Aggressive man? Would man of valour actually be more fitting here?)

“It can’t be helped. I shall..”

“No, allow me to do something about this here. Dio-sama is not here. He is likely already inside.”

“What are you planning to do alone?”

“I shall take command. Even if they are stalwarts, they can’t win against an army that is well controlled.”

As I said that, Kaguya-sama slightly, just slightly twitched her eyes.

“Please do not worry. I will come soon.”

“It’s not that I am uneasy. Just that, you were the one who said to go together. We came all the way here with those words. That’s why I just thought we would fight together at the end.”

“It’s an honour. However, we are fighting together. Right now, the people in this castle, Anna who is moving to stop the battle, everyone is fighting. That’s why we are not alone.”

As I said it that way, Kaguya-sama blinked her eyes as if unexpected.

I was planning to say something cool, so I felt embarrassed when she showed such a reaction. Should I have replied with slightly safer words?

“You.... like to act cool unexpectedly, don’t you?”

“Do you want to fight alone?”

“Don’t get angry. Forgive me. I am already done with being alone. Not knowing what I am doing, and also not knowing what others are doing. It’s as if I

am just following someone, always alone.”

“...it’s already okay. Dio-sama is waiting. Please do hurry.”

By my words, Kaguya-sama’s dark expression changed to a sharp expression. If it’s Kaguya-sama, she should be able to make her way through this chaotic situation easily.

“Yukito.... I am also waiting, you know?”

“I shall come quickly. May the fortunes of war be with you.”

“You too!”

After saying that, Kaguya-sama instantly started cutting into the chaos. As I see that, I sent out instructions to soldiers that weren’t participating in the melee combat.

“We will reorganise ourselves! All officers gather up!”

“S, strategist-dono!? Why are you here!?”

“Explanation will come later. I wish to go to assist Dio-sama as soon as possible. We can't be stopped here.”

Dio-sama's army is about 200-man. It's 4 times if we are talking about the numbers. If we can efficiently use the numbers, even if the other side are all stalwarts, we won't lose.

“Fight while stepping back a little! If the enemy doesn't give chase, use the number difference to charge and press on! If they give chase, attack them from 3 directions at the cross junction behind! Listen well! The opponents are strong warrior! Do not fight alone! Fight with 3-man and above! If the situation is bad, it's fine to retreat! Basically, do not fight with 1 or 2 man!”

Saying that, I emphasized it to the officers and looked at the enemy.

Obviously, the numbers are reducing. That's quite fast. It should be Kaguya-sama's feat. She could just run through but for our sake, she is cutting down those she can cut down.

But, I am thankful.

“Front row, retreat a few steps! The back row are to throw the fallen weapons at the enemy! With such a close formation, it will definitely hit!”

At any rate, as the melee combat would result in a continuous one-on-one situation, the opponent would be too advantageous.

Though the weapons the back row threw were sometimes sword and sometimes spear, they were pretty much deflected. However, during the period of being deflected, our side managed to put distance between ourselves and them.

Trying to advance ahead somehow, Dio-sama’s army aimed for Dio-sama to enter the King’s Throne first, and got caught into a melee combat. That’s why we are putting distance to calm down.

“Form a defensive formation! Those holding to the shield, go forward! Those behind are to support everyone! We are to show that the king’s dogs’ charge are not effective!”

The more skilled a person is, the more irritable a weakling's provocation sounds to them. There should be a few of those people on their side that thought of 'Don't get too elated' and 'I shall show you the real thing'. That's more than enough.

You wouldn't call them an unit. It's just a group of stalwarts. To say even further, I would say they are no different from a beast.

They just chase down as a group and finish the enemy off. It's just that.

The stalwarts attacking the front row holding shields has no cooperation in their movements. That's why I gave a simple order.

"Target those nearby!"

Those that charged in first were penetrated by 10+ weapons flying from behind the front row, and was stabbed to finish off by those holding to their shields with their spears through the opening.

Those who saw that and slowed down also ended up in the same fate. If you can't get close, even if you are a stalwart or skilled professionals, you can't do anything.

“Fall back slightly.”

Seeing the opponent falter, I ordered to move back furthermore.

The opponent could not hide their bewilderment towards us who are falling back slightly in the defensive formation. Well, it can't be helped. We are in a situation we have to attack.

But.

“Everyone, listen! Just now, Kaguya-sama has advanced towards the King's Throne to save Dio-sama! Also, Earl Uren and Kaguya-sama's retainer are aiming for this place fiercely with their elites from the back. If we can hold on till the end, it's our victory! Hold on!” (TL: At this place, I would use “so Hold on!”)

It's not like I am saying these words to raise the morale of the soldiers. I just wanted to create a delusion.

'We are the one attacking', 'we have to attack and break them down', trivial words that I gave to the enemy. I don't mind if it doesn't work, but if it's effective, we can fight with more comfort.

And then, the stalwarts split into two. Those attacking and those that don't move

Half of 50. 25. They are planning to charge with that. For us, that's a very thankful thing.

"Now then, let's finish this quickly!"

Part 5

The battle right outside the King's Throne ended with the enemy's surrender.

When the numbers are already small, that number is even more reduced. Guess I should say that it's natural.

I entrusted the treatment of the surrendered to the different captains, and first made my move towards the King's Throne.

Even though it's just outside the King's Throne, there is a long straight path that continues to the King's Throne. As I ran down that path, I concluded that the corpses that I see lying around is Kaguya-sama's deed. Most of them are beheaded.

Most likely, they are the ambush team. I guess making it a straight path is to make it easy for a pincer attack and also difficult to run away.

"Was it a bad move to come alone?"

"Let's see. It's a bad one."

I stopped my feet as I hear a familiar voice. It 'was' a voice that I am familiar with. But, he should be dead.

".....Stratos....!?! How did you survive?"

Who appeared in front of me is Yuri Stratos whose face is hidden by a black hood.

"I won't die from most things. Well, I have a immortal body after all."

I peeped and narrowed my eyes at the status of such a Stratos. Though the fact that other than magic power stats being high did not change, all the numbers were subtly different. Above all, the place where inducement is written, is now written as 'Misrecognition'. Though look alike, this guy is a different person.

But the voice belongs to Stratos. As long as I am holding my fan, I should not be affected by magic though.

"Are you really Stratos? Try taking off your hood."

"I see. I have been exposed. You seem to have a good hunch, don't you?"

Saying that, Stratos took off 'his' hood, and showed a face different from the man who got his head cut off and got himself exploded later. Firstly, the gender was different. It's girl. To say more, she is definitely younger than me. You can say that there is barely any common point between the appearances.

"Who...are you?"

"It's Stratos. The voice is also the same, right?"

"...did you use magic and took over the consciousness?"

"That's pretty close. Well, it's generally correct."

Saying that, the girl whose voice was Stratos laughed. It's a smile that sends shiver. Without doubt. This person is Stratos.

However, it is the fact that she is able to take over consciousness. Even if anything is possible, that's going to be a limit, isn't there?

"So? Did you come to kill me?"

"That's interesting in its own way, but I just came to give my thanks. Thank

you. Because of you, I could get my hands on something that I have spent a long time desiring for. Owing it to you.”

“I can only remember obstructing you thought?”

Stratos distorted her face to my words. It was an expression that is hard to differentiate whether it's a smile or suffering one. But, I see it as an expression where her expression and Stratos's expression being mixed together.

“That's correct. You have taken my Kaguya-chan. With that Divine Fan, Klarus! It's that annoying fan! The nemesis of magicians! Why is such an ancient instrument in your hands!” (TL: I am hearing Kugimiya Rie voice in this character though....you know, with the voice from the anime Kingdom.)

“My bad. I am loved by the goddess. Also, try calling Kaguya-sama again in that foolish method. I will definitely beat your actual body.”

“Fufufu, well, let's forget that. Though it's regrettable I couldn't get my hands on Kaguya-chan, that's fine. After all, I only made her my puppet as it's convenient to kill this country's king.....Ah, but, you know, I am reflecting on the fact that I should have made her do various things more.”

“You piece of garbage. I will definitely beat you up so you better remember it.”

“If you can do it, then just give it try. You would curse your own existence some day. I am looking forward to that time. Well, now you go ahead and save Kaguya-chan. It's annoying if that king took her away after all..”

Saying that, Stratos draw a square in the air with his finger.

Releasing a red light, it displayed a total different space.

“That magician, Stratos, really did well. Just with words, he made Kaguya not able to move at all.”

“Ku.....!”

A tall man with golden hair and red eyes, whom you might feel that he's the Dio-sama when he grew up, was laughing out loud with a big book in one of his hands. And, in front of him was Kaguya-sama kneeling on one leg, and warping a mortifying expression.

“It's the current King's Throne. I handed over the magic book that allows the King to reproduce the manipulation magic. As actually she is supposed to only listen to me, so when I present Kaguya-chan to the King, I was planning to make her assassinate him when he drop his guard but because of you, it became a trump card to totally seal Kaguya-chan. ”

“.....why is he able to use it instantly when it took you half a year? Is it such a powerful magic book?”

“It's not. The magic book is a degraded version of mine. The problem is on Kaguya-chan's side. She got used to getting manipulated. Manipulation and inducement magic deeply enroots as the target gets accustomed to it. That's why time is essential. Even if it's dissolved, the foundation will be left in Kaguya-chan's heart as it is. It won't disappear so easily.”

So to gradually let the hypnotism sinks deeply, Stratos's magic also took time to control the target's mind little by little. Not passing her the fan was a mistake.

“Dio! Don't bother me and save Kaguya!”

“Mother....”

“Dio! Don't you ever move!”

“Aneue” (TL: Elder Sister.)

On the display Stratos made, the point of view moved to a slightly further point, and also projected a blonde lady restrained to a chain and Dio-sama. I guess that lady is Dio-sama's Mother.

Dio-sama seem to be wavering on who to save. Likely he was told that moving would result in his mother's death. Thus, Kaguya-sama said "Don't move". No matter who he save, the other party is in the hands of the king in the end. It's quite the bitter situation.

"It seems like what the king would do. If it's me, I would just control everyone though."

"It's like saying you aren't the same, isn't it? You and the king, trash are just trash."

"That's awful. That guy lives on instinct. To the point that my control doesn't work at all. Well, though I could control him if I am serious, it isn't interesting to control him after all."

Saying that, Stratos put his hood on again, and walked naturally to my side in the direction opposite to mine.

"Now, how about going off quickly? Strategist-dono."

Glaring at the back of Stratos who spoke those words, I ran after facing my back to him. Most likely now, Stratos is floating that shuddering smile of his.

Though I feel like I am being manipulated by his hands, thinking about that now won't help at all. Right now, I should just think about saving Dio-sama and Kaguya-sama.



The doors to the King's throne was opened, so I know what's the situation on the inside.

I can see the figure of the King, Braig Halberd. At the same time, the status menu was opened, and I gave out a sigh due to the combat stats being over 100, even though I anticipated it.

Even abhorrent, he is after all the father of Kaguya-sama and Dio-sama. The other stats across the board are also high.

If I ran towards the King's Throne, my footsteps would expose me. Passing through the doors, I was glared at by Braig's red eyes.

I guess I can say that I am like a frog being stared at by a snake. Even when I fought Kaguya-sama on the battlefield, I did not feel pressure of this extent. Grasping to my fan, I endured my impulse to run away.

“Who are you?”

He looks like Dio-sama. But, Braig asked me that question while floating a smile filled with bottomless malice.

He only looks similar. This man is bad to the core.

While pondering over such things, I looked at Kaguya-sama who fell at the foot of Braig. Though her clothing is torn at various places and her skin can be seen, she doesn't have obvious external wounds.

However, looking at her status, her magic power has dropped to a single digit. She likely exhausted due to this. Either having used too much magic power or other reasons. No matter what, our strongest battle asset has been devitalized without a doubt.

“.....I am called Yukito Kurei. Your Majesty”

“Yukito Kurei....? Ah, I see. The strategist under Dio.”

Braig, as if showing a smile towards a friend of his son, swung his right hand not holding on to the magic book to the left.

Instantly, I was blown to the right as if being hooked by it. (TL: there is no error in the direction as the directions are said from the perspective of the subject. Braig's left is Yukito's right. Just in case anyone actually got confused.)

I was dragged by something that I can't see.

“Uu!? Gu!”

“Normally, you should have been killed..... You have hindered me way too much.”

Saying that, Braig waved his right hand to the back. I was again hooked by that action, blown off, and has groveled unsightly at the feet of Braig.

I have no idea what's going on. I don't even have the time to look at the status.

“About Kaguya... let's forget that. I managed to enjoy it in a different way after all. As expected, to make a defiant lady submit is a wonderful thing....but.... there should be one more person....”

Having anger filled his eyes, Braig's expression turned into one that is truly dreadful.

There is no need to even think who the other person is. Braig targeted two person. They are Kaguya and..

Sophia.

“.....maybe you need to study the ways of picking up ladies...?”

“That imprudent mouth!”

While my face is still frowning from the pain on my body due to the drag, I

was kicked away after I provoked him, who raised his voice.

It hurts. Feeling that, I now feel the pain of the impact of smashing into the ground. And, I was again dragged by some invisible thing.

No, it's not that I can see it. It's just very fine. If I am going to be drag two or three times, I will know what has been entangled on me.

It's thread. A few strands of threads were entwined on my arms and legs, and with those, Braig were controlling them with his hands. I don't really know why such fine threads can drag people and moreover, his ability to be able to control with such freedom though.

“Gu.....! I see..... thread....”

“As expected, you realize it. That's correct. They are threads that have been hardened by pouring magic power into them. And, I can control them freely on the top of it. Though I can easily cut off your head....do accompany me for a while longer with my distraction, i guess.”

Towards the King that continued to chatter, I smiled broadly and exclaimed.

“...I reject, you idiot!”

I already know where the threads are entwined to. And my right hand is not entwined by thread. Moving my right hand, I cut the threads using the fan. Making contact with the fan that removes all magical effects on contact instantly, the thread is nothing more than a thin thread.

It's not difficult to sever them.

Drawing the short sword on my waist with my left hand, I continued to cut Braig.

To my totally unexpected charging attack, Braig received it with the short sword at his right shoulder. However, due to him bending backwards promptly,

the sword tip only grazed him. It's far from a fatal injury..

But, I managed to get him to step back. And his attention is also oriented to me. I should have earned enough time for Dio-sama to save his mother. What's left is separate Kaguya-sama from the King.

I drew Kaguya-sama to myself with my right hand as if hugging her, and received the kick the King unleashed as it is.

Though the powerful kick blew both Kaguya-sama and I away, separating Kaguya-sama was a success. The other side has no longer any more hostages.

Though my whole body is filled with pain, I covered Kaguya-sama from the impact from the ground and received it in place of her. This time, the weight is two times the impact. It's not longer the level of the pain felt. I really thought my organs were going to rupture.

My vision is blurred with tears. Regretting why am I doing this, I gave out a sigh.

Noticing this, Kaguya-sama quickly moved away from above me, and looked at me worryingly.

“Yukito....”

“Huuuuuu..... didn't you have prospects of winning....?”

“I did say I can't win alone....?”

“Well, sorry about that....”

Saying that, I realized that my left hand wasn't able to move. It's bent in an impossible way. It's due to the kick from Braig just now.

Likely due to seeing it, the pain is coming in bit by bit. Maybe due to the anxiety having cleared away after pulling Kaguya-sama away, the body aches and I am unable to put any strength in.

“Yukito... I shall borrow your fan.”

Just nodding my head, Kaguya-sama grasped the fan, and turned her sights on Braig. (TL: The power of his 'lovers' 😏)

Braig who is in the middle of room, touched the wound on his right shoulder, and seeing the small patch of blood, he started laughing out loud. (TL: Literally LOL!)

“Fufu, Hahaha!! That’s right! It’s this! It’s enjoyable to crush people that struggle! Struggle more! Kaguya! Dio!”

Dio-sama who saved his mother and Kaguya-sama who dispelled the magic book with the fan moved to attack him from both side.

Kaguya-sama’s magic power is not returning. Her combat capability has dropped to around 80 because of that. Dio-sama’s combat capability has raised up to 90 but due to the opponent being that guy, it doesn’t feel reliable.

Seeing both of them moved, Braig make a slight smile and leaped towards the throne somewhere far off his current position. It’s a movement that easily overcomes the limits of humans. In distance, that’s about 5 metres. For the height, I guess it’s about 2 metres. Without any approach runs, repeating the jumps multiple times, he reached the throne where he grabbed a big sword that was left there on the side.

Likely judging that the magic book is unnecessary, he casually threw the book away.

Kaguya-sama also took that chance to pick up the sword she dropped, and confront the King.

“Come at me! Entertain me!”

“Sister, can you still move?”

“Though far from my full ability, I can only do what I can, can’t I?”

Kaguya-sama smiled while saying that. Being drawn by Kaguya-sama, Dio-sama also floated a smile.

While seeing both of them as such, I was thinking of a way to break through this situation.



Using the large sword as if it's his limbs, Braig trifled with Kaguya-sama and Dio-sama.

The dulled Kaguya-sama did not dodge but received the sword attack and warded it off barely with her sword. Dio-sama also couldn't win with strength so he was unable to exchange blows properly.

Not being able to fight properly, and also the fact that body condition will deteriorate if they left it to pure force, the advantage of a 2 vs 1 is not being capitalized upon.

“Gu....”

“You shouldn't be moving.”

I was somehow able to get myself up, but Dio-sama's mother came to stop me, not knowing when she have approached.

Her name is Claire Arkwright. She looks so young that she doesn't seem that she gave birth to Dio-sama.(TL: That's why 2D or even 1D is so good, but boy, do I want a picture of her ... Maybe like Lucy Heartfilia? 😊)

As expected of the person whom that King left on his side, she's quite the beauty. That Claire-sama is actually supporting my body.

“.....my apologies....”

“Please don't mind it. You are the benefactor of my daughter and son. So, sorry about when you are in such an awful state, but,”

Do you have a plan to defeat that guy?

Clarie-sama's eyes were serious, when she asked that. Please stop me with the jokes. If there were such a plan, then I wouldn't have let both of them fight.

"I can't think of anything.... Now that it comes into a direct confrontation, it's no longer a situation where a plan can do anything."

"I see... if Kaguya-sama hasn't her magic power absorbed...."

I was struck when Claire said that. Certainly, no matter how you look at it, both of them are in an unfavourable situation. However, just now, she seems to have said something meaningful.

"Absorbed magic power, is that right?"

"Eh? Yes. That man can absorb the opponent's magic power, and turn it into his own."

Hearing that, I looked at Braig's status again, but that information is not there. There is only 2 things I can think of.

Either Claire-sama is lying, or.

The information that I am looking at is not the exhaustive.

I think I better do everything I can.

Thinking like that, I started staring at Braig without blinking at all.

Part 6

“Yukito! Claire-sama!”

Earl Uren called out to Claire and me from far. As I could hear many footsteps, I believe the suppression of the capital should be over, and the reinforcements should be on their way.

But I don't have the composure to see that. Right now, my sight on Braig's status is blurred.

I feel as if I was about to grasp something, and see something. Just that, the more the status screen is blurred, the sharper the pain deep in my head becomes.

I guess it's best for the body to stop. That's why the pain is spreading. However, there are two person fighting in front of me. Even though they are already worn-out, and tired to the point where you want to call out to them to stop, their eyes absolutely doesn't give up.

Seeing both of them, I also want to persist. And, I also admired that appearance. The both of them who can influence anyone.

Most likely, I like such people because I wanted to become like them.

Being able to do anything, having different people by their side, they are the core of the circle. My close friend being the same, I have always admired them since that time. But because I admired them, I know. The fact to become like them is difficult. While having different people around you means having to communicate with different people, being able to do anything also means you have to do almost anything.

Such a responsibility is something that I do not desire. Even now, I am bad at communicating with other people. Even if I was able to communicate with the different people in this world unreasonably trying to imitate my close friend, I will only be doing it smoothly on the surface, being understood only to a certain degree and the stress would just be accumulated.

Unconsciously, it was to the point that I thought it was Dio-sama's fault. That's the reason I realized it. Perhaps, my close friend was also pushing himself over his limits, and has been irritated on not being understood.

Because I tried imitating, I know. Social disposition is difficult. My heart seems to be collapsing.

But, because I know that, I won't avert my eyes this time.

People who support you during tough times are precious. After being supported myself, I do understand that.

It's because I admire both of them that I wish to support them. Though I would wish to be of use outside of fights if possible, it's right in the middle of the war, and this war has a very big significance to the both of them.

Right now, I wish to be of some help, even if it's just a little.

"...I will sneak a look at everything you have....!"

"Yukito!?"

There is the sensation of liquid flowing down my face. I have confidence that it's not tears. The liquid made contact with my lips. When I tried tasting it, it has the taste of metal in it. It's blood.

I can grasp that Earl Uren rushed over to such a me. Claire-sama has already left my side. Most likely, she have been moved to the back of the knights. I can't stand having her become a hostage again.

However, it is my first experience to have blood flowing down from my eyes. But, I can feel that feeling of doing my best, so it isn't bad.

Within my sights are 4 different screens being displayed, and each of them are displaying information in regards to Braig.

When was he born and his sleeping habits. From his detailed history of his parents to the injuries he got from the battlefield, and even how many people he have killed.

The person himself probably don't even remember but such information that the person himself don't even care naturally flow into my head. It's not that I am reading it. It's pouring into the my head. Without distinction.

“Gu! uu!!”

“What's going on, Yukito!?”

I couldn't reply to Earl Uren's voice. I do not have the composure. My head feels like it's about to get short-circuited. But, just a bit more, I have not arrived at the information about magic power absorption.

Instantly, all the information stopped, and the new fifth screen is displayed in front of me.

Majin. A subspecies of the human that feeds on magic power. Though they are pretty much human, they easily excel in physical and magical prowess, and they prioritise their instinct over reason. Due to the need of magic power to maintain their body needs, they need to absorb magic power at a fixed interval. They, as a race, are pretty much extinct. (TL: Translation was Demon, but in this case, it doesn't make sense so i decided to go with the romaji of it.)

Constitution that absorbs magical power. It's something like a meal for Majin. From the palms to the mouth, or the chest are places where magic can be absorbed from. Majin uses lots of magic power to sustain their body. Due to that, negligence in absorption will result in their death.

I have acquired it. Decisive information. I now know things I wanted to know.

All five screens have became one. It's the status screen as before but, a few additional information has been appended.

Atavism

Vitals: Nape. As that's the organ that controls magic power.

Note: The divine fan that can decompose magic power and negate magic, would result in effective attacks.

“...How kind....”

Murmuring, I close my eyes. As it dried up after opening it wide for a while, and above all, it hurts from overuse. I really wonder why am I doing this. Words of regret just keep passing by my head.

But I did it. What's next would not be my job.

The common thing, no matter the job, is the suitability of it. While there are people capable of grasping the situation of the surroundings using his or her wide vision, there are also people who are good at concentrating on the one work that is right in front of him or her.

And, my task on the battlefield is not to defeat the enemy.

It's to investigate and think of a way to fight, and tell them to the people capable of accomplishing it.

“Earl Uren..... How many people are here...?”

“There are about 100 knights, but... rather than that, are you alright...?”

“I am fine.... Are you able to force your way through that fight, leading 100men...?”

“That... fight, you say..? Is it necessary for victory....?”

Earl Uren's face turned stiff. It's definitely an intense fight. To the point where Earl Uren and his retainers' knights can't go near, even though it's embarrassing for them to let just their lord fight.

However, both of them are reaching their limits. They will be overcome if it goes on. It will be bad if they don't take a break once.

“It's necessary... Earl Uren... I am not dependable, right...?”

“What’s wrong, so suddenly!?”

“I’m not dependable, right..?”

“Yeah.... Very. Honestly, I only thought that you were on the level of a bait to attract Kaguya-sama’s eyes. Of course, it’s not right now, but well, you are not dependable.”

As it’s such a situation, Earl Uren said it bluntly. It’s the worst. I believe Dio-sama is likely the same. I guess he is like his father where he doesn’t choose his means to achieve his objective. For example, Dio-sama even made a slightly close partner a bait for the sake of defeating his father.

Perhaps, it might have been for me to become desperate to befriend me. Even if it’s not like this for every single aspect, I believe there should be some level of calculations in it.

Well, I guess it doesn’t matter for now. I am at fault for being used cleverly. Or more like, it’s because he can do this much, he was able to hold onto the battle with the king on equal terms and brought it to a direct confrontation here. That’s what I think.

Unexpectedly, my eye for people might be good. Though I am not so calculative.

“But... even Earl Uren and I... Very likely, when seen by Dio-sama or Kaguya-sama, we are not dependable, right...?”

“The comparison targets are way too bad, you know... both of them, are the king’s children...”

“That’s right.... Usually, both of them won’t need any help... but... it’s essential now...”

“Yukito...?”

Putting strength in my pain-filled body, I stood up. Particularly, the pain in my

right hand is unnaturally bad. When I fractured my leg during my childhood, it wasn't this painful. Well, it's not like I forced myself to move that time though.

“The people who have worked hard all this while, is now requiring assistance....Right now, even the slightest ability will become of assistance.....Though usually, it wouldn't be of any support.”

My voice slowly raised. There is something I have to convey to the knights in this area.

One's mind would cower when confronting an enormous enemy. It's difficult to appeal to a cowered heart. That's the current state of the knights. Such a heart can only be released by themselves.

Though it depends on how much the knights admired Dio-sama, there shouldn't be any problem on that. What's left is how I am able to address the knights. To shake their hearts.

“We can support them right now.... There is something I have vowed to.... To definitely win.... Right now, the fate of the country depends on the result of this battle, and the future is something slightly after this.... To grasp that future, the current me is insufficient...”

Addressing them. If appealing is used to pull others, addressing to others is used to rely on others.

“Though I am weak and undependable.... Would you ride on my plan?”

There are also people who dislikes relying on people. But I don't really mind. What's important is results. No matter what happen in the process, I don't mind who I have to rely on. Being picky is the privilege of the strong.

I am weakling so I will fight like one.

“...Even if you don't say anything, we are the knights of our lord. We have vowed to cast our lives away if it's for Lord's.”

Saying that, Earl Uren drew the sword from his waist. Following that, one by one, the knights started taking a stance with the sword.

“Speak of the plan. What should we do?”

“First, we will separate Dio-sama and Kaguya-sama from the King. From then on, I am sorry. Please try hard to put the King on check. Surround him with 4 to 5 knights and retreat when hurt and repeat the process. We should be able to somewhat drag time.”

“Then, both of them, who had recovered will stop him, is that it? What, in the end we are leaving it to them, ain't it?”

“If you can, I don't mind, you know?”

“Well, that's true... It isn't bad to take the king down with this hand! Everyone, let's go!!”

Along with the cheer, the knights approached the king.

Sensing the sign of our side, Dio-sama and Kaguya-sama took some distance from Braig in the form of the knights switching position with them.

I dragged my body to approached both of them who were breathing roughly on one of their kness. Though my body is so painful that I felt like fainting, thanks to the pain, I ended up not fainting.

Yep, thanks to it. I can't just faint here.

“For now, please just listen.”

I told them a simple plan, after saying that.



After a few minutes, the knights surrounding Braig were down to half the numbers. Earl Uren had also suffered an injury and have retreated. As expected of someone with combat stats of over 100.

However.

“If he’s not immortal, he will die when he is cut.”

I moved to venture into Braig’s sights. This person seems to be losing interest. That’s why he will instantly pounced onto a new prey.

“What kind of plan have you thought of?”

“A plan to kill you.”

Perhaps due to fighting knights that were unsatisfactory to him, his excitement seems to have settled down. Even though he cut down that many knights, he doesn’t seem to be breathing roughly and is treating the knights coming from his left and right like children while talking to me.

“I am... looking forward to it!!!”

Easily penetrating the encirclement, Braig drew near to right in front of me. But that was anticipated.

Kaguya-sama is drawing near from the back. If we can injure the neck, that person would become unable to control his magic power properly.

“I know that already!”

“Ku!”

Braig received Kaguya-sama’s slash to his back. Though he pushed back Kaguya-sama with pure strength, Dio-sama came plunging in from the side in that opening. A thrust.

Reading that, Braig twisted his body to dodge it. And he then drove his knee into Dio-sama’s abdomen.

Braig grinned broadly but, that exact same expression floated on my face as well.

The short sword that I drew with my right hand is already on its path towards Braig’s nape. He should not be aware of my attack at all, I think. Braig should not be able to dodge it as he was careless.

That’s what I thought.

“I have a personality that quickly change the evaluation of people. My evaluation for you is unexpectedly high.”

Braig who grasped my left hand that is not holding the short sword, put all his strength into my right hand.

“U!? Gu!”

“It’s a pity....?”

Braig looked at my expression and titled his head. It’s too late. You took it lightly.

Dio-sama’s tenacity, that is.

“It’s a pity. You lost to my strategist.”

“W, what?”

Braig who was hit by a fan in his nape realized his irregularity. Majin that uses magic power to maintain their body has his magic power decomposed. It’s more weird to have no irregularity.

From the status screen I am looking at, Braig’s combat and magic power stats is dropping drastically.

“Nuooo!!”

Braig tried mustering his strength to absorb magic power from me. However, that’s meaningless.

“Almost no magic power....how can it be!?”

“If it’s my magic power, please don’t mind me and try absorbing. It’s only ‘1’ though.”

Braig no longer has the power to reply my words. His complexion having turned green, the fighting spirit he was showing a while ago is no longer to be seen.

Dio-sama mercilessly swang the edge at such a Braig.

“Gu.....”

“Allow me to bear your crimes. I shall atone for all those crimes you have committed. That’s why swiftly disappear from this world.”

Saying that, Dio-sama tried to draw his sword.

He wasn't able to.

“Ha Ha Ha.... I was naive.... To Dio, and Kurei, you too... but”

You all too took me too lightly.

In the instant that was said, Braig's body was enveloped in flames.

Releasing his sword immediately, Dio-sama stood in front me and spread open the fan.

After that instant.

The flame that envelops Braig's body engulfed to the whole of the King's throne.



“Yukito! Do not leave my side!”

“I won't leave your side even if you don't tell me!”

Dio-sama and I are in a state of leaning our backs to each other, unable to move due to the surrounding flames.

I could also not grasped if the knights and Kaguya-sama is fine. Well, though it's us that is in a bigger pinch.

“I seem to have make light of Father's tenacity... To think he used magic in expense of his own body.”

“Not talking about the flames that was formed from magic, as the fan has no effect on the flames that was spreaded from the movement and dispersion of burning things, and also both Dio-sama and me are wounded all over..... this is bad, isnt it.”

Withstanding the suffocation slightly, when I spoke to sort out the situation,

Dio-sama started laughing.

Releasing his voice.

“Dio-sama....?”

“Seriously....I don't get bored when I am with you. Yukito” (TL: OMG!!!!)

“Those words should be mine. Hiding all sorts of truth, using me as you like, and on top of all that, to think that we were left in the middle of the flames of tenacity. If it's the previous me, I wouldn't even likely be able to imagine this.”

With the intention to divert my attention from the heat and pain as well, I said that. Of course, it also included various feelings.

“I really do feel sorry. But, it can't be helped, right? It's for that reason I called you after all. To this world.”

“That's true.... eh....?”

“Your reaction is interesting, you know. That's why I can't help but not want to reveal the secrets to you.”

I could not understand well to the words Dio-sama spoke off laughing. I could still understand the portion 'For that reason I called you.', but to say 'to this world' is weird. Firstly, to use the words 'this world' means....

“Stop speaking like that without my permission. Diorood Arkwright.”

As I tried asking Dio-sama 'what do you mean', I looked back to a voice that was not Dio-sama.

Having green hair, a man with surprisingly white skin was standing in the middle of the flames. He is holding onto a harp. Dio-sama started speaking

closely to such a man.

“Yaa, Lerfa. As you see, it’s a bad situation. Would you help us?”

“I would be troubled if you die. Of course, that foreigner too.” (TL: Here, the foreigner isn’t those that you use for people for other countries, but literally something foreign.)

Saying that, the man called Lerfa played his harp. With just that, the flames was extinguished instantly. I have memories of having heard that sound.

It was the sound when I was enveloped in that darkness.

“Thanks, Lerfa. Now then, Yukito. Where should I start talking form?”

Dio-sama floated a gentle smile, asking that.

The Conclusion Special: Kaguya

Yoshiro: This is a scene in the book that I thought was interesting. I won't be doing the full translations but just the love comedy in it. I won't be doing this often so please don't anticipate it too much.

The following event happened when Kaguya, Yukito and the group were taking a rest on the way to the capital. Kaguya is looking for Yukito on his rewards for saving her while thinking of the things Yukito did for her.

Well, it's quite a half-assed job since I skipped the front portion of Kaguya's thoughts. But I thought it might be interesting for some nonetheless.

=====

From Kaguya's perspective.....

"I wonder how should I return the favour....."

"Then, could you quicken the restoration of diplomatic ties with Albion?"

Being called out suddenly, I stretched my right hand to the direction of the voice.

Having grabbed cloth in my right hand, I threw whatever I grabbed due to the habit that have been ingrained in me.

"That hurts!? Did you not want that so badly!?"

"Mu, My apology. It, it was a habit."

"Do you have a habit of seizing someone single-handedly...."

Yukito who was released from my right hand, lightly rotated his shoulders, saying that.

“It’s because you suddenly spoke to me that I thought it was the enemy. Though I do have my faults, you also have your faults, you know?”

The location is on the bank of the river near the resting place. Yukito seems to have come here to refill his water supply.

“Let’s see. Just that, I thought that Kaguya-sama would have realized it when I approached.”

“I was thinking of something...”

“In regards to my rewards?”

“Well, something like that. So? Why do you want to quicken the restoration of diplomatic ties with Albion?”

A naive question.

Yukito is likely a person from the island.

If that’s the case, I thought it would be normal for him to prioritize the island which is his home though.

“I have a promise. That I would go and meet her... I promised her.”

He doesn’t say who is it.

However, it’s not difficult to guess who it is. From what I know, Yukito is only acquainted with one person from Albion.

Of course, the possibility that it’s not is also high. But, my instinct tell me that it’s correct.

“Is it the Celsus Maiden, Sophia Leedsberg?”

“Yes..... that’s why I am hoping for the war to end quickly and after that, I wish to settle the post-war operations promptly. ”

“You are already in the mood of victory? It’s not easy, you know?”

Yukito weirdly tilted his head.

“Wasn’t Kaguya-sama also thinking in regards to rewards?”

“...well..... I did think of it though....”

“Then, isn’t Kaguya-sama convinced of victory as well? So even if I am in the mood of victory, it isn’t wrong, right?”

I wonder why.

Somehow, I feel like I am being mocked.

“You... are you mocking me?”

“No way. I am not teasing you, you know.”

“You are teasing me, aren’t you!? Right!?”

I am going to compare the current Yukito, it will be to a child who is playing a prank.

His smile is slightly giving an unpleasant feeling.

“Well, teasing is an essential method of communication of meaning after all.”

“That’s the first time I am hearing that..... Seriously, at the very least, I am still your master’s sister, you know.”

I said that to get back some dignity.

But.

“I know.”

If you know, then give me some respect.

That was what I thought in my heart, but I didn't speak of it.

If you say something about respect yourself, it will end up like an expression of wanting to be respected.

A person who speak of such desire, would not be respected.

“Then, it's fine.”

“It's fine?”

Yukito somehow made a rather disappointed expression.

Was he anticipating me to ask him to respect him, I wonder?

“I am not as childish as you think I am.”

“I see....If I say it like this, Sophia will definitely pout about it, so I was wondering if Kaguya-sama might pout too.”

My heart is enveloped in cold emotions.

How should I say about this feelings? It's hard to describe it but if I have to, it will be: ‘Unpleasant’, I wonder.

Nope, I am without doubt unpleasant.

After all, I am suddenly being compared to a girl whom I only heard the name of.

Furthermore, the person himself is giving such a disappointed expression.

He is likely hoping for the same reaction. And, as my reaction left something to be desired, Yukito was feeling discontented.

It's unpleasant.

"Yukito.... I heard that you are close with Sophia Leedsberg..... but, don't you think that comparing her to me is kind of rude?"

"That's true. Sophia-sama is the Celsus Maiden. To speak of her name in such conversation is imprudent, isn't it?"

That's not it!

That's not what I am trying to say. Furthermore, he is still staring at me for some reason.

It is apparent from that.

Yukito is looking at me at a lower rating compared to Sophia Leedsberg.

I am still more or less a princess, and a famous general at that.

And even then, to say that it's imprudent to be compared to her in front of me.

It's unpleasant.

"You..... do you wish to anger me.....?"

"Uhm.... did I say something bad?"

Yukito inquired, looking as if he really doesn't understand.

Seeing that my anger seems to be conveyed, I am feeling not as angered as

before.

Seeing such a Yukito, just slightly, really just slightly, unpleasantness seems to be going off.

But, it's not like it's completely alleviated.

Even though we are advancing towards the capital, I can't stand this unpleasantness.

I have to wipe this feeling off.

"Yukito.... Answer me frankly. Sophia Leedsberg and me, who do you think is more attractive?" (TL: Whoa, that's direct and such a bad flag from our princess.... LOL...) "That is regarding the perspective as a female or as a person?"

"Everything in regards to the person. Like me with the talent on the battlefield, Sophia Leedsberg has her talent in magic. Like the position of being the princess of Veris I have, Sophia Leedsberg has her position as the Celsus Maiden. Everything being aggregated."

"Sophia-sama." (TL: Pfftttt.... Sokutou kai.... Means Instant reply.)

Before I could complete my sentence, Yukito announced that.

As if it was just a simple comparison of numbers.

It shouldn't be such a simple comparison.

While there are many servants that have phrased my appearance, I believe that I am better than average looking at the numbers.

I can understand if it's in regards to feminine behavior, but to be given a prompt reply in regards to my attractiveness as a person.

"Yu, Yukito"

"Yes?"

"Why....aren't you brooding over it?"

“Because I get it if I see it, I think.”

You are telling me there is a difference that can be perceived just by seeing.

No matter what, there shouldn't be such a difference.

This is definitely Yukito's biasedness.

“Did you compare partially?”

“Hmm... I believe it's fair, you know? Kaguya-sama.”

“What.....?”

“Sophia-sama is special, so I believe it's better that you don't get too bothered by it.” (TL: Baka Yukito 😊)

Yukito said that with a smile.

And then, the tail of my patience snapped.

“.....IT'S. UN. PLEA. SANT!!”

I stamped my foot as hard as I can on Yukito's right foot, while screaming that.

Though I didn't enhance with magic as expected, that should be rather painful.

“U u u”

“It's time to go! The break is over!”

“...wa... please wait a moment... my.. My foot is....”

“I don't care! Follow even if you use just your willpower or something”

Seriously, why do I have to be so irritated no matter what.

Though Yukito is bad, the origin of evil are people in the capital.

I will have them be the targets of my irritation.

Having decided that, I returned to where the knights were resting without turning behind.

Epilogue

After the fire in the King's throne dissipates, we met up with Kaguya-sama and the rest who managed to escape from the King's throne and now I am in Dio-sama's room after all kinds of post-event cleanup. Having my body applied with medicine, my left arm is being held in place. It was quite a pitiful appearance.

There is one person in the room, Lerfa. Even though I had no idea where he had gone to after dissipating the fire, he was in Dio-sama's room without knowing when.

“Now then, since we have already settled some of the problems, I believe it's fine to reveal the things though?”

“You are planning to talk, even without my permission, right? Also, that foreigner that has become able to see quite a few things, is going to notice a weird feeling between you and him in times to come after all.”

“It sounds as if I can talk, you know?”

“Since you are going to talk about it, say it in front of me. Next, keep it concise. I can't stay for long.”

As Dio-sama nodded to Lerfa's words, and sat on a chair, I was offered to also sit down.

Though I refused once, I sat down, without being able to refuse the second offer.

“Firstly, let's start from main thing. He's Lerfa. To say in a sentence, he's of an ancient race.”

“Ancient Race....?”

My skill was activated from the word I heard for the first time.

Ancient Races. The term for the 5 races that once lived on this continent. In general, though they are overwhelming compared to human, when it comes to physique and magic power, the races ended due to the war between themselves and the low reproductivity.

“There is no need to explain to you, right? You can see anything after all.”

“!?! You knew....?”

“I know everything after all.”

Dio-sama laughed, saying that and added , “It’s a joke.”

It totally doesn’t sound like a joke. That eyes that seems to see through everything have something that can understand Kaguya-sama.

“Quickly say what you need. I don’t have much time.”

“That’s true. Yukito. To defeat my father, I requested assistance from Lerfa and acquired a cooperative by taking a condition of implementing a certain task.”

“A certain task?”

Though I wanted to ask Dio-sama, Lerfa answered instead.

“Dealing with the ancient races that have started to actively interfere with this world. We, from the ancient races, are not allowed to attack each other using magic. Therefore, I am unable to stop it with my own hands.”

“Wai, wait just a moment! Weren’t the ancient races extinct...?”

“Almost, all. A countable amount remains. Though those people no longer

wish to interfere with this world, there is one troublesome person who moved up. That's why I requested Diorood Arkwright to deal with him."

Saying that, Lerfa closed his mouth. Though I am curious on who is that troublesome person, he seems to have no plans on sharing it. Well, I guess that conversation would end up long. However, even looking at Lerfa, the status screen doesn't open. I wonder if I can't see anything against the ancient races.

"And I was getting anxious when I knew that Father has been putting his hands on the surroundings of Aneue. That's why using my already healed sickness as a reason, I left the royal castle, and went towards to the forest where Lerfa stay. I just casually spread rumors of a noted physician and made it such that I am relying on that."

"The surroundings, actually believed that....?"

"Everyone wouldn't realized that. What's important in the royal castle is my Father's mood. Well, from there, I made a certain contract with Lerfa."

Dio-sama gradually rolled up his left arm's sleeve, and showed me what looks like a birthmark somewhere below the elbow. I believe that is likely something like a proof of the contract. However, it's on a place quite hard to see.

"The Dragon's Scar. It's the proof of contract with Lerfa from the ancient race called Ryuujin. In return for Lerfa's cooperation, I ended up having to deal with the person Lerfa said. Then a problem cropped up. Lerfa himself was bound not to interfere with the world more than necessary." (TL: Ryuujin -> Dragon man)

"Why did you make a contract with such a person...."

"I didn't know. That's why a person that can assist to make up for Lerfa is required. That is you. Yukito."

With that, Dio-sama showed a daring smile, unlike the usual.

“Then, I...was called to fight with Dio-sama in placement for Lerfa.... A pawn of Lerfa?”

“What a mean way of putting it. Well, it’s not wrong though. In the first place, if you are going to say pawn, then being Diorood Arkwright’s pawn would be more accurate.”

“What do you mean?”

Lerfa looked at my face and gave out an exaggerated sigh. To the sigh as if saying ‘This person is no good’, my heart floated a slight irritation. Of course, I held it in though.

“Don’t you look at yourself? Why did you, who lived in a world of no wars, have the wisdom to make use of knowledge? Why did you only received damage of the extent of a broken arm when fighting with an atavistic Majin?”

Having been told that, I looked at my own status.

My combat ability is 17. If I think from the point of convalescence, though my combat ability did increased after becoming healthy, it is still slow. It’s to the extent that dying from that king’s kick isn’t weird.

My wisdom is exactly 70. If we talk about the highest of 150, it’s below the half mark. There weren’t any other status that overshoot 70.

That’s right. Why was I able to think of such strategies. My brain worked to that extent with all its strength.

Why was able to fight with such status.

Queries bring about more queries. The more I think, the more my thoughts are stuck in the maze.

No, above all.

For some reason, I didn't find it strange. For some reason, I didn't think of it.

That's my biggest shock. Until I was pointed out, I totally did not find myself weird.

“Why did you not feel weird? That's the kind of face you are showing now. Well, I guess that's fine. There is a reason for it after all. Now, let me make you easier to see it.”

Saying that, Lerfa started playing his harp. At the instant I heard the sound, the side of the numbers in the status screen slightly shook and numbers in brackets are now shown. (TL: Like '10(+20)')

“+40...?”

Numbers like '+40', '+41' or others like that came out on the side of my numbers. I wonder what does that mean. (TL: Hidden Stats 😊)

“You don't feel weird standing and walking, right? It's the same. You know what you can do unconsciously. The power you have right now is calculated with those number added in.”

“So... ah no, but even then, what's are all these numbers about!?”

“That's the power of Diorood Arkwright. No, it should be $\frac{1}{3}$ of his power, I guess.”

“Eh....?”

“You have definitely died. Using your remaining thoughts as base, I summoned you and I bestowed you with $\frac{1}{3}$ of Diorood Arkwright's soul. That is why $\frac{1}{3}$ of Diorood Arkwright's power dwell in you. Due to that, you are a pawn of Diorood Arkwright. You can say a fragment of him as well.”

Saying that, Lerfa started playing his harp again. This time, Dio-sama's status started changing.

It's the status after adding 40. All the stats are over 120. I believe this is the original status of Dio-sama.

"My remaining lifespan was estimated. It's also Lerfa's first attempt at cutting $\frac{1}{3}$ of the soul. That's why I don't know how much longer can I live. Likely due to having my soul cut suddenly, I collapsed and my condition haven't been good, but I have gotten quite used to it. At this rate, I should be able to live longer than the original two months, I think. Well, it's still possible to die tomorrow though."

"Then, the reason why the surroundings did not suspect Dio-sama is sick..."

"It's likely due to not being to move my body at all. In fact, I also find it weird. Honestly, I didn't think I would not be able to move to that extent."

Though he said that as if it's nothing, it's an astonishing thing. To actually have $\frac{1}{3}$ of his power gone.

Though Dio-sama managed to deal with it with his 120 average stats, normal people would likely have their daily lives affected. Even for people in the 90s, they would have 30 reduced from the stats, resulting in 60. It's like a top class prodigy suddenly dropping to an average score. Even though the things he had accumulated had instantly dropped, why is Dio-sama able to laugh?

"Diorood Arkwright had two requests. Being a male and having wisdom. Just these two. It's not like there is any special reason that it have to be you. As I can't interfere with the living and dead, when I tried calling out for those on the boundary, you ended up coming in yourself."

"No, I didn't really ask that though...."

"On that point, I guess you can say you grasped onto life. Oh yeah. Those eyes are close to magic arts but not, magic. Different from the techniques called

Magic Arts, magic are inborn talents. Your strong remaining thoughts, your regrets changed to power, and after I summoned you to this world, the world likely entitled you this magic to your regret.” (TL: Ok, I will start differentiating them from now on. Magic Arts and Magic.)

After finishing saying as he pleases, Lerfa nodded satisfyingly and looked straight at me.

“I will have you accompany me for a while. Think of it as a compensation for reviving you. For these few days, I have been healing injuries and after that, due to teleporting to where Diorood Arkwright is, I am pretty much out of magic power. Though you have, in return, shown work of passing rate, it’s still not enough. Once I find signs of him, I will come to tell you.”

Till then don’t die.

Leaving that message, Lerfa played the harp and disappeared.

I wonder how much does he wants to return. No matter how you look at it, he is forcefully concluding the conversation too much.

“Lerfa likes the beautiful air of the forest. That’s why he doesn’t want to stay in a place with many people as much as he can..”

“I see.... Hm.... can I ask something?”

As I asked that, Dio-sama nodded while still smiling.

Though I am bothered about what he is thinking behind that smile, I didn’t want to see it as the opposite side of him felt scary.

“Why did you not try to solve it yourself?”

“That’s true. I thought that question is going to come.”

Dio-sama laughed while tapping his knee. Well, I guess anyone would be mind about it. If you have status of 120, I felt that you can likely bring about a situation close to the current one by leading the army or making use of other countries. Even the role to attract Kaguya-sama’s attention doesn’t necessarily have to be me.

“I amsimilar. To Father.”

“.....I felt that.... slightly.”

“Perhaps, I hated my father due to the what they call racial hatred, I guess. Well, I am not that lustful though.”

“What does that have to do with me?”

“There are many wars in the alternate world and I heard that currently it’s peaceful. So if I could summon a person with records and knowledge of the war, I can adopt it the alternate world’s tactics and strategies. That’s what I thought. But, more than that, I longed for a friend by my side.”

Dio-sama slowly shook his head. As if rejecting his own words.

“I guess that’s wrong. Perhaps, I wanted someone who can stop me.”

“Stop? From what?”

“Didn’t you see my father? Living by his instinct, there are no one by his side. I do not wish to become like that. That’s why I wanted someone who can definitely stop me.”

Hearing those words, I remembered the time when we talked for the first time in the carriage.

“No matter how much you criticized me, I won’t mind it. If you are angry from the bottom of your heart, I will be contented to accept it.”

That’s what Dio-sama said. Though I was quite bewildered by those sudden words, I understood what those words meant now. Dio-sama wanted me to stand by his side as a friend from the start.

“Well, though being able to use Magic was a delightful miscalculation, I wasn’t expecting you to ensnare the Celsus Maiden.”

“Ensnare....don’t you have a better way of saying it...?”

“Given time, would you ensnare Aneue as well? In that case, you will be automatically my brother-in-law, and there will be no necessity to make the vow of becoming sworn brother expressly.”

Towards increasingly chattering Dio-sama who mixed in voices of tease, I gave out a sigh and took out the fan from my chest.

Due to having Sophia as the topic, I started thinking of the time when Sophia, Dio-sama and I were together for some reason.

“The likes of me won’t become the partner of Kaguya-sama, and I also only see Sophia as a friend.”

“Well, let’s take it that way for now, shall we? Do you wish to meet Sophia-sama?”

“Very”

“But Veris’s and Albion’s diplomatic relations are still severed. Until our country’s matter and the surrounding countries’ relations have been improved, going to Albion is not possible.”

Implicitly indicating that 'if I wish to meet her, I have to take care of all that', I replied Dio-sama with a smile.

Dio-sama floated a gentle smile to my look, and pointed at my right arm.

"Yukito should have the same Dragon's Scar. Mine is on the left arm and yours is on the right arm. Those people who has the same scar carved on them, cannot betray each other. Lerfa was, well, the person who carved them so he's different, but Yukito and I can't betray one another."

Showing bad manners, I folded my sleeve with my mouth. It can't be helped. I can't use my left arm after all.

"Oh it's true. It's there. I didn't notice it."

"Though it's possible that we can lie to each other..."

"I know that. I was tricked after all. However, we can't betray, you say.... If we do that to the whole world, I wonder if conflict will be gone."

"It's an interesting thought but that is rejected. A world that allows people to be able to believe everyone in this world is as dangerous as a world that makes people not trust each other. Going back to the topic, this scar has one more effect."

Raising his right index finger, Dio-sama said that.

Even though being unable to betray each other is already plenty, there is still more? I really have been carved with something quite dangerous without me knowing.

"We are unable to easily abandon each other. Though it's not absolutely impossible, there are strong forces coming into play. That's why even if you do not want to do it, you came to the battlefield to save me."

“I see... However, please allow me to correct one thing.”

“What is it?”

“The reason I came to your rescue is not due to this scar. It’s my will. At the very least, that’s what I think.”

Saying that, after making a flabbergasted face, he rattled his feet and started laughing.

“Ahhaha!! That’s fine! Let’s take it that way! Well, you are really interesting! Honestly, when Aneue called you Yukito, I almost laughed though.”

“What does that mean...?”

“From my understanding, it’s impossible for that Aneue to call a male’s name friendly. After all, the usual feeling is like a blunt refusal.”

“It was Kurei at first, you know. It might have been because it’s difficult to say?”

“No, it’s definitely because she wanted to show you that she trust you that she called you name. Unexpectedly, Aneue is also maiden.”

My spine froze as I heard that obviously teasing tone.

If Kaguya-sama heard such a conversation.

Then, I remembered. I ended up remembering it. Something I was told.

“I have a seriously regrettable notification...”

“What?”

“It seems that Sophia can hear long distance conversation by controlling the wind.... Our conversation appears to have been heard....”

“..... that talk about how wonderful it is to have that golden hair hanging on the ear, is that it?”

“Even in regards to how captivating that white robe is.....”

“...that’s bad....”

Saying that, Dio-sama, for the first time today, gave a expression, other than a smile.