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# Third Prince Elmer

— *Childhood Arc* —

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## I. Childhood Arc

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# 1-1 Death and Wishful Thoughts

In the center of the room lies the boy whose heart had stopped beating after a year, those sounds just now indicated this.

“No! Why does it have to be this child!”

The shrill cry of a woman echoes in the pure white room. A man past his middle age supports the collapsing woman in a hurry. A junior high school male student stood stock still with a stunned expression beside the bed. A doctor clad in a white laboratory robe and several nurses stood across them.

The boy’s request was to always keep the window open. As if the boy’s aspirations was being taken along by the winds, it continued to swing the light blue curtain gently.

I suddenly noticed I was breathing.

Like dozing off, where my consciousness has begun to sink in a low resistance pillow, describes the kind of feeling I’m having right now. It’s fluffy and comfortable.

Why am I breathing?

Strange. At that time, I should have certainly died. Everything should have ended. I tried to wake up using my full strength.

As expected, I’m really breathing! Even if I had my eyes closed, I can feel my chest rising and falling a little.

Calm down! Let’s ascertain the situation first. After dying, breathing is something that shouldn’t be possible. Apart from that being able to breathe is good, isn’t it! To begin with, this could just be a misunderstanding.

I breathed deeply several times, opened my eyes and mentally prepared to confirm the truth. I repeated this three more times. Don’t mind it, don’t mind it.

No... I have become somewhat sleepy. I’ll sleep again. I’ll think after I sleep. It’s because these days, sleeping soundly through the pain wasn’t just possible...

The next time I woke up, I can feel my body being in contact with something.

Surprised, I opened my eyes. What greeted my eyes was the white ceiling.

White ceiling... judging from the same sight I see everyday, I immediately understood.

This place... isn't a hospital room.

Perhaps, a morgue!? Although I often look at hospital's walls and ceilings, as expected I'm unfamiliar with the morgue's ceiling. I'm weak with ghosts and that sort of things.

Waking up in the morgue... what an unusual thing to happen.

I internally lamented while being extremely perplexed and raised my hand.

Hand. It's a hand.

What's the meaning of this? My field of vision was filled with something plump that was brought close to my face. The thinning hand due to being constantly under IV had vanished, when did something like that occurred?

I tried turning and moving it. Exactly as I guessed, the pale hand moved in a similar manner.

No doubt about it. This baby's hand is obviously my hand.

It suddenly dawned on me that it must be the reason I've woken up in the first place. When I lowered the pale white hand, a pale white foot crossed my view this time.

Foot. This time it's a foot. For some reason, I can hear sounds by my feet. I incidentally noticed that there was an uncomfortable feeling from my lower body.

How did I... arrived into this kind of situation?

Isn't my lower part of the body completely naked! Could it be that... I'm actually a pervert?

I looked back on my life up until now by force faster than a revolving lantern.

...Everything's fine. I'm absolutely normal.

While I fell into a panic, a woman with a baby bottle filled with something like milk came. It seemed to be prepared for me. Emptying the baby bottle, the

words I wanted to utter was completely forgotten.

I faced side ward while lying in the bed, confirming that I am the only one in the room. The nursery room seemed to be over sized for only one person.

I opened the hand that had clenched firm unconsciously.

Pachin! Hitting my cheek, I heard a sweet sound.

Eh, right now I've really become a baby?

And then after a while, the room has darkened. The sun is setting. In other words, just now was lunch? Since then, no one has the entered the room.

Usually, even though it sometimes differ for everyone, isn't it unusual to leave a baby for a long time? The person a while ago does not seem to be the mother... what kind of carefree babysitting is that?

Well, that's fine. At any rate, I have moved on and grasped the current situation in these several hours. I seemed to have turned into a baby.

Moreover, from the fact that the room isn't similar to the one I had when I was a baby, this is a completely different body.

In other words, the probable explanation is that I have been reborn.

Who is Mother? How about Father? Do I have siblings? Where in the world is this place, and what date is it?

What kind of person was "I" supposed to be?

No matter how much I think about it, there seemed to be no end to these questions.

Listen! Right now, the job of a baby is to sleep. I'll do the investigation tomorrow.

This is my long-awaited fresh start in life, after all.

While I lamented so in my mind, my eyelids closed once again.

## 1-2 Acting and the Sun

No matter what, in this place... the knowledge I currently have does not apply here, this is an alternate universe.

The door is opening. For the time being I faked unconsciousness as I waited for them to approach. I didn't cry. I wanted to say something but I was embarrassed. Imitating a baby's awkward speech is something I just can't do. For now I'll stay silent, so that be would be my last resort. The possibility of someone noticing that this is just an act is nonexistent.

There were rustling sounds as the two maids approached. So it was time for breakfast. I sneaked a look at a maid. The skin of her right hand was the same as a snake. Not only that. Her iris isn't black either. Her eyes were similar to those reptiles I saw from the zoo at that time.

When I was lifted to change the sheets I incidentally noticed something. I praised myself for not suddenly shouting out loud.

The maid's hair color was yellow green that I found it weird. I mean, it's too flashy. The staff recruitment agency wouldn't be able to ignore something like that, wouldn't they?

And then there's also the language. It's not Japanese or English. It's a language I'm completely unaware of.

These reasons supported my conclusion that this is a different world.

My diapers and clothes were changed as I lay side wards and looked at the sky. The aforementioned two people went out. I examined the view outside the window.

Without any building to obstruct the view, two suns could be seen in the sky.

I woke up a while back thinking that I will not be surprised anymore even if anything happens. This is the result of my efforts.

I found out that I can move my body and get up but the bed's structure prevented me from leaving.

I tried to pull on the clothes I was changed into a while ago. The fabric seemed

to high quality from the way it stretched. The clothes were blue. I did not know whether it was stylish or not because I have absolutely no fashion sense.

Why were my clothes changed even though it's still morning? Could it be that I peed?

How embarrassing... I'll be careful from now on. I need to pay attention to my body's needs.

I lied back down again and buried my face in the bed sheets. I'll just sleep through this embarrassment. Also, I need to stop being careless.

I don't want to look at the ceiling somehow, so I toss about in bed to find a better sleeping position.

Aa, I feel really betrayed. No one cares about me, no one comes to see me. Maid-san, please be be more concerned about me.

Nobody really comes to entertain this baby so there were so much free time. Though it was the same at the hospital, a lot of people came to play.

That reminds me, I was unable to graduate from high school after all. Was it in the beginning of my second year in high school...? Back then, I sensed something wrong with my body and went for a checkup, and then I was hospitalized. The cure for the disease was never found. Gradually, I was robbed of my body's freedom. A year ago I was still having fun doing club activities... however it was only a matter of time before I die.

Why was I reborn? I dimly thought about it, but never came up with a reason.

Reincarnation... This could be my chance. Well, this is definitely my chance.

I'll be able to do what I want. Play with friends, go to school... I'll be able to go back to being a kid... I thought of it, but is this really actually possible?

The thought really lifted my spirits.

I leaned at the edge of the bed and looked down... it's surprisingly low. This might be a good thing.

From that day onward I started to train my body strength secretly by crawling. And then one day... I was able to peel off the bed sheets and remove the bed's frame.

Today's a success!

I held on and got down from the bed. I broke into a smile when it went smoothly.

But I came to a realization while getting down.

Eh? Does a baby act like this?

Of course I can't remember even from my younger brother's time as an infant. Well, nevertheless... surely it was like this.

I landed on the floor and observed my room. It's a somewhat dull room.

Bed, bookshelves, desk, closet... there's nothing but the basic furniture. I took a book from the shelves and leafed through the pages.

I can't read. Of course that would be the case, I haven't taken any lessons and this is an entirely different language. I never had any expectations that it would be Japanese, so I was not a bit depressed as I gathered more books. I'll just learn what I don't understand.

Even though I hate studying for finals and midterms before, I missed doing it the moment it became impossible for me to do so.

The heavy books caused me to further walk unsteadily that I worried that someone might notice that something's moving in the room.

This is bad. There's no doubt that a baby born just after a few weeks behaving like this is too strange.

Sad to say, I unconsciously acted as I did before. I tried playing dead...

No sounds could be heard. After waiting for a while, I raised my head slowly and surveyed the room. When I calmed down, I realized that a baby playing dead in front of a bookshelf is weird. I need to be more careful after this.

Pachi, my eyes met with a baby's. Pale skin and silver hair. Large eyes with pupils tinged of blue. When I stretch my hand it bumped against something. Ah, it's a mirror. That mean's... this person is me.

Entranced, I looked at the mirror again. I understood completely that I really became another person. I don't know what kind of standards these foreigners

have and I also don't know what I would look like in the future but it seems to be normal face. Perhaps, attractive even.

Relieved, I went back to bed. Of course, I didn't forget to place back the bed sheets. It's near dinner time after all. I started reading the book.

Even if I still don't get it, a child's memory is awesome. I was able to learn words and memorize difficult ones immediately... I should carry on reading!

More time passed. As usual I only saw those three maids. But since reading is fun... I decided not to care anymore.

I read several books and understood them. The thing that surprised me the most was the existence of magic.

Now that I think about it, the maid before was most likely not a human. Also, hair color seems to reflect a person's affinity to magic. The stronger the color, the more potent the power is.

I lift my hair and examined it. It seemed to be dyed silver. When I noticed this I was extremely disappointed.

Even so, it doesn't really mean I can't entirely use magic. Though it doesn't really matter whether I could use it or not, I recovered.

That's right. Life isn't something definite.

This is what I understood from dying once.

# 1-3 Fear and Magic

I've been getting along with the maids, they started talking while taking care of me. To be honest, this really saved me. Even if I learned a lot of words I won't be able to use them in conversations if I can't listen to how they are spoken. As of now, I'm able to understand simple phrases.

There were three maids, but one always comes when the other two aren't present. According to my observation, Snake Maid-san doesn't seem to get along much with the other two.

Well, today let's work hard in reading, too. I pulled out the book I hid under the bed. I've finished reading half of it.

Then suddenly, a stabbing pain ran through my chest. I bend over desperately to ease the pain even a little and clutched my chest, trying not to let out even a small sound of pain.

This pain is dangerous. It's like the pain when one is threading the boundary between life and death, similar in my previous life when I was hospitalized.

I still remember.

Mother broke down crying and Father was just dumbfounded, his expression strained. The doctor tried to cure me with all his might. Throughout this, the nurse who looks after me became my confidante.

My breathing soon became rough.

No...! Somebody save me. Someone... anyone's fine...!

Enduring the new wave of pain, I leaned from the bed and stretched a hand forward to try to call out for help. The hand I reached out was starting to blur.

Then back of my hand hit something.

It was a glass containing drinking water. The glass toppled over without any resistance, and water splashed on my left hand.

Aa...! I spilled it.

At that moment, cracking sounds could be heard as my chest lightened considerably.

The glass had stopped midair. It's contents froze beautifully, as if the glass was being supported by the water.

This is a lie, right? I grabbed the glass in a panic. Only the frozen water stayed in it's scattered shape midair.

Amazing! This could be perhaps a kind of magic. Is this common for a baby? Perhaps, this hair color might just be something trivial.

However, I haven't seen any other babies for comparison so I decided to forget about it. I don't want all my acting until now would go to waste.

That reminds me, the pain in my chest suddenly vanished. Does it mean that I have to experience this kind of pain every time I use magic?

I collected the frozen water using the glass while taking those things into consideration.

As I thought, this is unmistakably ice. A cold feeling is transmitted to my palm.

I want to learn more about magic, this desire suddenly welled inside me.

Some time later, the ice have turned back to water inside the glass. I feel like it decreased a little... so this is evaporation, right? They evaporated.

The speed of water turning into vapor exceeded the speed of vapor turning into water.

I placed the glass between my legs and arranged my seating position in the bed cheerfully. I intended to experiment using magic.

I dipped my forefinger to the glass and brought it before my face.

It was said in a low voice as to not be heard from the outside.

However, nothing happened.

I wonder why? My image was for my fingertip to be frozen thoroughly, though...?

As I thought of that, a cracking sound can be heard. My finger really froze!

I tried to bend my finger by its joint but it was futile. This time I applied a greater force and the ice broke, freeing my finger completely.

Just saying [Freeze], having only a clear image, and saying [Freeze] while having a clear image. I repeated these three and understood that a clear image seems to be a necessary condition. When the word is used with a mental image, it seemed to freeze at a faster rate.

[Freeze]! [Freeze]! [Freeze]!

After that, I repeatedly froze it like an idiot and played with the small ice I made.

A while passed by and even though I didn't move, my breathing quickened. I wonder why? As I looked through the window while thinking about it, the sun slowly set until it became completely dark. I noticed that the time when the person comes for dinner was slowly approaching so I returned the glass and the book then lied down.

I wonder if this fatigue I accumulated indicates I won't be able to use magic?

It seems like something worth investigating. I'll start practicing from now on.

I thought about what I'll do tomorrow as my eyelids slowly closed.

Starting from that day, my magic research and practice began.

Because I have no one to teach me, I have to learn everything by myself.

I started from freezing water I scooped in my palm.

I grew up in the six months it took me to freeze water from a distance of three meters without incantation. It took a lot of time.

The barrier that allows one to freeze water without touching was large. Everyday, I continued practicing until my Mana (though I wasn't sure if that was the proper term) run out, so somehow I was able to do it.

As of now, the distance I practice grew little by little.

I read when I get tired... this became my daily routine, until a new guy finally came to my room.

Fortunately, he came by while I was looking at the glass placed a distance away

from my bed. The water it contained wasn't frozen. From the outset, if one were to observe, only a baby could be seen. It's a normal sight, isn't it?

I could not take my eyes off the glass as I inwardly sweat, and I desperately wondered how one should act in this situation.

In the first place, why are you suddenly coming to visit just now despite neglecting me for half a year! You've got guts! You idiot!

While I slightly trembled in annoyance just thinking about it, the man came to a stop and stood in front of me. I didn't notice this at all as I was distracted by my thoughts. The man picked up one of the books from the desk, and then began to read it.

He seemed to be reading the book for me.

Even so, I'm sorry. I had finished reading that. I wanted you to do that half a year ago. Furthermore, even if I thought the illustrations were very beautiful that it could even sell, you don't need to show them to me while you read... not that I particularly mind.

Since I wasn't doing anything, I observed his face. His deep red hair was very eye-catching. His face was... exceptionally good-looking. Extremely attractive. Could perhaps all the people in this world have high-level looks? I'm defeated... Not to mention, if his deep red hair was any indication, his magic power must be strong.

I grew up a little from the past year. So this wouldn't be my father... an elder brother, perhaps? Well, I will know it in due time.

I already knew the contents of the book and I, who was tired from the magic practice I did a while ago, thought that the story would soon be over. I killed time while thinking about things like this.

# 1-4 Retainer and Meeting

When I got the confirmation from the King to leave the room, I lifted my head and stood up from my kneeling position on the expensive carpet. My eyes met those of my father's, who was standing to my right. "Do well," his eyes seem to say. Showing my acknowledgement with a slight nod of my head, I opened the heavy doors of the room in order to leave.

Today's meeting was merely for formality's sake. Since long ago, the King and Father sometimes let me listen in on their discussions.

"Matthias von West Vern, I appoint you as the First Retainer of Prince Elmer de Almerti, Third Prince of Almerti Kingdom."

A thick parchment was handed over and I examined it to see the declaration of my promotion, the words containing a heavy weight. This may perhaps control how my life goes. That was just natural to think so. I rolled it neatly and turned towards the Green Water Palace.

The Green Water Palace is an imperial villa where young princes and princesses live. The King's children are therefore raised there, or if their mother takes custody of them and requested to transfer to a different imperial villa, their retainers have to hand them over.

I showed the appointment document to the gatekeeper and the huge gates were opened. This is the only entrance and exit.

This is a fortress where princes and princesses are taken care of, it's that kind of place.

I made my way through garden which has a variety of flowers in full bloom and went to a building among them. Once again, I presented the official documents to the soldier standing guard. I then proceed towards Elmer-sama's room.

Nevertheless, how long was I going to walk to arrive at my destination? Why can't the prince's room be found! Right now, my anger was starting to reach its climax.

This is the place where the prince will have to spend his childhood. In other words, I will eventually reach my destination if I searched for the biggest room.

Beginning from the center hall, I was able find the biggest room. However, it was the Prince Sveri's room.

"Excuse me for a moment."

Deciding that it would be a waste of time to just walk around aimlessly, I called out to the maid passing nearby.

"Co-could it be m-me?"

She dropped the clothes she was holding, probably for laundry, as she panicked. It was because it was rare to be addressed by an important aristocrat who has high social status.

"I have something I want to ask..."

"E-eh, that..."

Her face flushed bright red. Really, using this kind of method was not a good idea.

"Could you please tell me where the prince's room is?"

"If you walk straight from here, it's the room at the far end..."

"That is Sveri-sama's room. What I want to know is Elmer-sama's room..."

"E-Elmer, was it...? I-I don't have an idea where my room is... it's the truth! I'm really very sorry!"

"Understood."

I turned to left as soon as I uttered that cold single-word reply. Though some words seemed to be uttered from my back, it was completely ignored.

She doesn't know where the prince's room is? Did that maid just came here? She had the expression that showed she completely does not understand the meaning of hearing Elmer-sama's name.

It did not help one bit, only piling up more irritation. Waking a bit more, I called out to a different maid. I wasn't able to hear the room's location from that maid, too. The same happened with everyone I asked afterwards.

The tenth person. The tenth person finally understood me. The woman seemed to be one of Elmer-sama's attendant. If I remembered correctly, the maid's hair seemed darker compared to the other maids just now. However, she kept looking my way from time to time while in the midst of guiding me so I didn't have a very good impression of her.

"Elmer-sama's room is this way."

After having walked quite a long distance from the central hall, the woman stopped and indicated a certain door.

This must be a lie. The door was much simpler than the door of the room a while ago.

I entered the room to ascertain the truth. I straightened my back and arranged my posture into a more proper one. This encounter today will have a big influence in my life from now on.

"Please excuse me."

I knocked and then entered the room. Normally, without the Master's permission to enter, it is absolutely forbidden to do so. However, this doesn't apply in the case where he is still in the age where he is not able to respond, is what I concluded.

I entered the room, then bowed deeply.

"Allow me to humbly introduce myself, I am called Matthias von West Vern, second son of the West Vern House. As it has been decided, from now on I am to be your First Retainer and will endeavor to serve you."

I raised my head slowly.

Surely... this couldn't be possible...

I heard an explanation from the King. However, it was worse than I expected.

"The prince who was born this time... is cursed." Half a year ago, this rumor spread in the imperial court.

"Elmer is a failure." These were the King's word.

The King only went to see the Prince once after his birth, he never once saw

him again.

Pale white skin which was so clear it seemed to be almost transparent and hair which was entirely silver in color. Children of the royal family are expected to have deep blue hair which makes one remember the sea.

The odd thing isn't only that. I can't seem to see his two pupils anywhere. I didn't even see him immediately when I came to the room.

He is not a normal baby... It was as if he is... a doll.

It was a detestable thought.

First Retainer. The one who's constantly by the Master's side, the servant who pledged his absolute devotion to his Master. The person Master has placed absolute confidence on, this is in account of all princes and princesses.

I devoted my whole life to this, a person who would have absolute power in this world, I thought I wanted to such serve a strong person. A companion I can respect from the bottom of my heart.

Almerti Royal Family can manipulate water. Fire was for West Vern House, water for North Teres House, earth for East Cartier House, air for South Tina House. The Four Colored Houses, among them a retainer will be chosen, someone who's close in age as much as possible. Usually, a contest of strength is held among them, since many wanted to get the position. Above anything else, my house also wanted to send someone to be the First Retainer of the Prince who will eventually become a King.

This time it has been decided that I will go considering the age balance. To be frank, I was not interested in the expectations of my House. In the first place, it was doubtful Father had even expectations.

He was a timid man. Still, he was able to retain his position in a world of conspiracy, it was possible he was doing something behind their backs... but there was even a time when I thought that he was just born under a lucky star.

When I was a child, I was told that I was expected to have a Master from the Royal Family, serving that kind of person will surely give extraordinary prestige.

However, the rumor that Elmer-sama was an eerie child who never expressed

any will seemed to be true. A while ago, that maid said that he was similar to a child without a soul.

Disappointed, I presented a book to Elmer. I intended to read the book and brought it. When I read it to my little sister, she was very happy. After that, she keep on pestering me several times until I reached my limit.

I asked him which book he was interested to hear, his reponse was... nothing. It can't be helped, I'll just pick a book of my choice. No matter how many books I read, Elmer-sama didn't laughed or cry, there wasn't a time when his facial expression changed.

The important prince who was cursed... Prince Elmer de Almerti, I am his First Retainer. At the same time, the one to stand guard while simultaneously receiving a secret order from the King.

The spy sent to ascertain whether or not the Prince should be killed.

# 1-5 Determination and Practice

Because I don't know when the young man would enter, I become very nervous when practicing magic. In the old days, it was a similar feeling when sneakily reading a manga in my room instead of studying before a test. Aa, incidentally I even predicted the scenes in the manga, it was strangely amusing to do so. I wonder why?

Moreover, this time my life depends on this.

No... that time was also a life and death situation. Mother was very afraid...

The young man seemed to be in the room connected with the room where I am through the door (It is likely that he lives there). Until now, the maid wakes me up in the morning for breakfast. This time it has come to be that only the young man came to wake me up every morning.

I only just woke up from my dream and opened my eyes nonchalantly, when I was surprised to be greeted with an extremely good looking face turned my way. There really was no question that he was an extremely handsome man [ikemen]. I never had something like a part-time job, but I think it would be an absolutely good idea for him to become a model. He'll surely be popular quickly. I'll keep this in mind and tell you when I reach an age when I could speak.

"Good morning. This morning will unfortunately rain..." (So long.)

When I wake up every morning you always talk to me.

Because I'm a baby, an answer wouldn't be expected. Diligently in my mind, I answered "Even though it was such a clear weather yesterday!"

To be honest, since I can't go outside I really don't care about the weather... The policy of the house was to raise the child inside the room! That's why I never once went outside.

I like the beautiful scenery seen from the window, but I fight something unknown as magic every day so I'm really troubled, is my body going to be alright?

Once in the past, when the class had to read an English text, it was written that children were allowed to play outside to build up immunity from diseases and be strong from gaining injuries.

To begin with, I'm never exposed to the sunlight and with a fair complexion that it's almost white, I worry a little. I'm going to be a beansprout at this rate.

"...today is a personal day, so please don't hold back. My apologies, but if you have some orders..."

Uh-oh, his greeting seemed to be still continuing. I listened to his words again. Yes, my hearing is already perfect.

The young man opened the curtains, placed a pitcher on the desk nearby, then bowed and left the room.

The time when the young man isn't present = the time when I could practice magic. I immediately started.

In fact I'm already doing it.

I lay on the bed, not changing my posture while staring at the ceiling.

10458, 10459 and 10460, 10461.

I was counting the ceiling pattern. Because the time that I should lie without doing anything recently was long, it became a challenge. I continued steadily since then, advancing smoothly, and only a little remains until I'm done.

I count the numbers efficiently before I forgot them.

10768, 10769, 10770...

It's the last spurt.

... 11108, 11109, 11110, 11111.

I counted the last design of the ceiling's lower left corner... it's done!

I really have a good eyesight. My mind was filled with a satisfaction. There might really be rarely a fellow who can finish counting the number of ceiling designs completely.

After resting my eyes since it did too much staring, I got up.

Well then, it's time to begin. Since I had a lot of time, I've been thinking of experiments recently.

I spilled some water from the pitcher to my palm. I intently watched at the water dancing due to the slight vibration of my hand.

“[Come forth, become a beautiful flower of ice!]”

I maintained an image in my mind together with the incantation. With a cracking sound, the water gathered to the center of my palm. No matter how many times I saw it, magic is really interesting. I wonder if it was because I came from a world where magic is impossible? Something like this is common to the people here after all.

I tried to roll the ice which gathered on my palm.

It's not very beautiful. I imagined something more fantastic.

To begin with, when looking at a flower no one thinks about its symmetry. When I looked at the ice flower, I had a hunch that it was because of my lack of understanding my ability.

Why does this happen?

In this world, I can't live if I can't use magic. For the sake of continuing to live, I have no choice but to improve my ability. In other words, it's arts.

If freezing is the only thing I can do, then... In that case, I...

I have no choice but to be a manager of a coffee shop!!

Shake is in demand during summer. A classic music softly flows, giving the store a calm feeling. Juice with shaved ice floats is also pretty popular. Young women and children moderately fills the inside of the store.

I can already see this perfect vision in my mind. Therefore, this is the necessary first step.

Still, it still takes time to make a beautiful flower of ice bloom. I want to reach the point where I would be able to make a big ice statue for the interior of the coffee shop, of course there will be small ones with beautiful shapes, too. I will produce large quantities so they will be available for business.

It was eventually time for lunch. I finished eating with an innocent look. Today is Snake-san's day off. There were only three of us in my room, the young man was present with a maid when I ate my meal this time.

When they both left, I resumed my practice. The baby bottle that was left on the bed came into my view. It's the first time a baby bottle was left. Did you finally notice that it was no use leaving a glass of water next to a baby? Good grief! If it was a normal baby, it would really be a serious matter.

I opened the lid of the opaque baby bottle and peep inside. White, so it must be milk.

Milk, huh... now that I thought of it, I always drink milk every meal time... but why was it not in the usual baby bottle? Was the contents separated ahead of time?

Today's a lucky day! I'm alone in my room with some milk. This is the best situation.

I looked at the contents of the baby bottle and chanted, [Freeze].

To make sure that it went well, I poked at the surface of the milk. The surface of the water shook with the friction.

I pinched a thin piece of the hardened liquid and tossed it inside my mouth. When I moved my mouth, it made a cool crunching sound.

Iced milk completed!

But it tastes somewhat plain. I can freeze all fluids. But if I eat everything frozen, I'll get a stomachache so I reluctantly closed the lid of the baby bottle and put it aside.

I have already known that I can't freeze liquids without direct eye contact, I understood it from an action sometime ago.

This practice is a continuation from before. At any rate, if I use up all my Mana everyday, it increases its absolute quantity. I could already place the glass of water 5 meters away.

Because even the weakest can make the strongest ice.

# 1-6 Mockery and Report

Time passed since I began working as First Retainer.

As usual, today I got up just as the sun was rising and got ready to dress up. Since I became a retainer, I started to live alone. The First Retainer must constantly be at his Master's side in order to serve him properly. For that reason, a room arrangement was necessarily prepared in the Green Water Palace just for me. Though there was some anxiety, I don't have any particular problems in living alone.

Excellent, I'm on time today as well. I confirmed the time from the pocket watch I received from Father the other day, then continued to Elmer-sama's room and knocked before pushing the door open.

"Good morning..."

I approached the Prince to remind him that it was time to get up, and his eyes fringed with long eyelashes snapped open. It was so unlike a child's way of waking up that I doubted whether or not he was awake from the beginning.

Nowadays, I describe the day-to-day schedule while doing various preparations. If Master grows a little more, it is necessary to assist him in changing his clothes, but right now it's too early to do so.

I fully opened the curtains near the bed in order to clear the atmosphere. The scenery seen from here cannot compare to the central garden I have seen when I came to here, it was a lonely sight. Usually, grooming is done so that the flowers will bloom all-year round, but there was only the sight of flowers falling but not spreading. Is there someone in this large country who will believe that this is the private quarters of a Prince of Almerti Kingdom?

...maybe it would be better if the curtains remain unopened.

I looked at Elmer-sama for a moment, but I cannot perceive anything from his facial expression. Because it is unnatural to close the curtains now, I kept it as is.

"Today is a personal day..."

I spoke about how I will come immediately if the Prince if he called. Up until now, there was never a time when he did this.

I asked the maid to take care of Elmer-sama and returned to my private quarters.

I opened the closet and began to change into more formal clothes than what I am wearing right now.

Towards the empty space, I called out the one named [First]\*.

<Note: Ieden(イェデン) – first character indicates order, namely First.>

“Have you called?”

An immediate answer came. Of course, the figure can't be seen.

“I have an audience with the King today. Stay by the Prince's side.”

“As you will.”

I can always place my expectations on Ieden to do an excellent work. As expected of the one holding the position of leader of the [Shadows]. Shadows are mainly employed individually as a spy. Including him, my Shadows hardly reports a failure.

I think other nobles also wanted to have Shadows, but they do not know how to deal with them. I have come across one who called himself with a number. I thought of giving him another name, but the individual himself wanted to have number attached to his name. That's the Shadow's standpoint, I myself don't have a naming sense so I don't really get it.

Showing no emotions, Shadows would carry out their Master's orders no matter what... This was how they are trained to be. Somehow or another, besides their way of life towards emotions, I certainly trust my Shadows.

... Still, there was an error. Alone in the shadows, the problem child was completely forgotten. The foreign country's royal families were already transported, so the child was quiet...

Where did Ieden picked up this child? Even though the child's speech and conduct were a problem, Ieden said that the child was surprisingly skilled. He doesn't seemed to be really worried about it, that guy is really different from

other Shadows.

Preparations are in order, so I went towards the exit of the Green Water Palace.

After ten minutes of walking, a familiar face came into my view.

Orange hair. It's South Tina House's eldest son, Crate.

"Matthias... why are you in a place like this?"

"It's because Elmer-sama stays here."

Now that I think about it, we live at the same place, but it's odd that we never met each other so far.

During that awkward situation, a child came from behind Crate's shadow.

Prince Sveri de Almerti Casariel, the Second Prince also living in the Green Water Palace.

I've seen him many times, Elmer-sama's older brother.

In case an [Explosion] doesn't happen, it's good that the King will have someone to place his expectations on.

"Is it Matthias?"

Sveri-sama seemed to remember me.

"It is. Sveri-sama, please return to your room as soon as possible."

Crate stood to interrupt, and led Sveri-sama to his private quarters by his hand before my eyes.

When he passed by my side, he murmured quietly so that no one would be able to hear.

"Playing house with Doll Prince... oops, excuse my rudeness. Please persevere in assisting the prince as much as you can."

Crate was smiling faintly, I know even if I can't see it.

That statement about the Prince, Crate von South Tina's plain sarcasm made me irritated as I made my way to the center of the royal palace.

Crate is one of the Four Colored Houses' children who is closest to me in age,

and collides with myself often. He never won against me in a duel, so when he was chosen as the Prince's retainer, he became obstinately prideful. It was really bothersome.

To be called as the failure prince's retainer, of course my mood became unpleasant.

I knocked at the door.

"This is Matthias."

A low voice came from the interior of the door I knocked on.

"Please excuse me."

Bowing as I enter the room, the King was already seated, waiting.

"Have I kept you waiting?"

"I don't mind. I want to hear your report."

Without delay, I went into the main subject immediately.

"Regarding Elmer-sama, he doesn't laugh, cry or talk. His actions show no reaction towards anything. If you bring food near his lips, he'll open his mouth and eat it."

The King who received this report fell silent.

With nothing to say, I waited for the King's judgement.

"The [Explosion] hasn't happened yet?"

Explosion. It is a dangerous word, just as it is a dangerous event. If a child exceeds the constant amount of magic power, the child's excess magic power will be discharged outside of the body in the form of an explosion. Because they have no control, it is dangerous being nearby, as the chances of getting involved are high.

This certainly happens to royal family's children. It is because their bodies could not hold that much magic power.

The King thinks that the Prince's hold on his emotions might come off if he personally experience this. The age in which the explosion happens varies from person to person. Elmer-sama's age is still within that range. However, if he

doesn't have magic at all, how will Elmer-sama cause an explosion?

“Six years old. Dispose of him if he doesn't cause an explosion by that time.”

The King stated so.

Approximately five years. I don't know whether it's long or short. However, that is my time limit. I understood that much.

# 1-7 Incident and Judgement

After receiving the order from the King to continue watching Elmer-sama, I went back to the Green Water Palace.

I entered my private quarters to change my clothes before meeting Elmer.

I always think whenever I enter this room.

There is no great difference between my room and that of the prince's, what kind of situation is this? I don't dislike this room particularly, but this room isn't appropriate for someone of a high social status to live in.

"Matthias-sama."

I heard Ieden's voice from above.

"What's the matter? I told you to watch the Prince's room. And yet..."

"Please forgive me. This Ieden wasn't able to accomplish the mission."

My hand slipped, and the three buttons left wasn't properly secured.

Just now, Ieden said what...?

"Report. As soon as the orders were received, I immediately went to the ceiling of the Prince's private quarters. The room's state was the same just as Matthias-sama left, and just as I was holding my breath on my position above the ceiling, the Prince suddenly fixed his gaze at the lower left corner where I was and his mouth moved. At the beginning, I thought I was just imagining it but I judged that he really noticed when our eyes met directly. I withdrew since continuing the mission was deemed impossible."

Did you relaxed yourself just because it's a baby, I stopped myself from asking this. I know that Ieden will never do something like that.

"Did the Prince really noticed you?"

I can't believe it. Elmer-sama noticed a Shadow. No, the reason must not be because it was Elmer-sama. If a Shadow erased their presence, even I won't be able to tell.

“Even I thought that it must be just a misunderstanding in the beginning, however those eyes and that facial expression... They were the eyes of a predator’s when they found their prey. With all due respect, I’m not bragging my abilities but I have survived dangerous situations countless times. However, in that instant my body was miserably restrained with fear.”

I was not able to say anything anymore. After I told Ieden to take a rest today, I entered Elmer-sama’s room.

“Elmer-sama was already sleeping. I quietly got near. It haven’t changed at all. Though I don’t doubt him, I can’t help but wonder if Ieden’s report isn’t actually true.

There was nothing strange with the Prince, but there is something I’m not used to seeing on the bed. When I lifted the thing near the pillow quietly as to not wake him up, it turned out to be a nursing bottle.

Nursing bottle...

I opened the lid and look at its contents.

At that moment, my eyes narrowed slightly.

I called once again for Shadow in a low volume.

“Right here.”

The Shadow I told to rest for today was near as I expected.

“This is an order. Find the culprit. I don’t care how many Shadows you use. You have two days.”

The voice that held no emotions and can be said to be almost cruel resounded in the room. The prince didn’t wake up from this voice.

“As you will.”

The next day.

“This is the truth?”

Inside a room in the royal palace, a young man and two middle-aged men sat opposite each other.

“That is right. They waited until I was out, and then they placed this.”

Matthias placed the nursing bottle made of opaque material on the desk with a thump.

“The contents?”

The King who hasn't uttered anything yet, asked.

“A large amount of Elfarren was detected in the milk that Elmer-sama usually drinks. I got someone from the Royal Palace's Medicinal Department to confirm it, so it's certainly the case.”

Matthias' father gasped. The King said nothing, but he seemed to be surprised.

Of course, it's natural.

Elfarren... it's unknown to the public, but it's a deadly poison manufactured from a certain plant. It boasts a strong level of toxicity that can't be compared to others, but it's said to be unsuitable for assassination due to its unique smell.

That's why it was added to milk this time. It was placed in a nursing bottle that carefully hid its smell.

A teaspoon is enough to destroy an average adult's internal organs in just several seconds, and eventually kill after a few minutes. Such a poison was given to an infant. This case isn't merely meant to be a threat. Simply, it only indicates that the main objective was to kill.

“Right now, search for the culprit.”

Calling out his aide, the King stood up.

“That is not necessary. The perpetrator, and the mastermind. I have already found out everything.”

Matthias answered while fixing his gaze at the baby bottle.

“Even so, the incident was just yesterday..!?”

Cristobal, Matthias' father, who was the only one showing surprise since a while ago displayed an even more surprised expression.

Showing this much surprise, is he going to be alright? The King who originally saw Cristobal as a weak-minded person worried a little.

“Right. It's one of Elmer-sama's maid who gave the poisoned milk. She is

someone who pledged her life to the Head of the Baraash House. Baraash House. I think you are already aware of this, but he is a new aristocrat who has been who has been trying to expand his power recently.”

“Because the daughter of the Head of Baraash House, who had receive the favor of His Majesty among his harem, judged that the day His Majesty would be unable to have another child is near, she planned to kill off the Prince in order for her child to succeed the throne.”

“Moreover another maid was also discovered to be under a noble’s support. As of now, there has not been any action taken as I judged to report this matter about the Prince first.”

The King spitted out these words. Turning their fangs against the royal family, such a thing was absolutely unforgivable.

“Thereupon Matthias, I expect this from you.” Report everything after you have investigated thoroughly.

Cristobal wanted to say something, but the King’s pointed gaze shot at his direction stopped him from doing so.

The weak-kneed father, and the son in front of him. Are these two people really father and son?

Matthias raised his eyes from the nursing bottle.

“They will be handed their judgement.”

Almerti Kingdom’s noble and Head of the Baraash House died in an accident of an unknown cause.

Additionally, two of the Third Prince’s maids burned to death.

“Good morning.”

Matthias opened the window today, too. The garden could be seen.

He discovered the unbosoming tiny flower from the other day now blooming.

Until the end, the King never questioned whether the Prince was safe or not.

If he did not report, would the nursing bottle never fall into the Prince’s hand? He wondered.

Matthias recalled. Certainly, he didn't report anything about it. The Prince is fine. However, there were traces that the volume inside the nursing bottle decreased.

Why didn't anything unusual happened to the Prince?

He doesn't know.

Why was the Prince who took the poison beyond the lethal dose alive?

What was the reason?

Why did he wake up like the usual?

He himself does not know.

# 1-8 Walking and Complication

Today, the weather is fine.

I'm probably no more than two and a half years old right now. I'm not really sure because the hard frame of the bed where I record the number of days disappeared.

Up until now, I've been making ice to carve into the wood to record the days. It's as if I'm similar to a person drifting in an inhabited island.

Recently, my bed was changed. This is because the baby bed was not appropriate anymore. A bed seemed to be prepared from the room next to mine and was carried while I was asleep.

When I got up in the morning, what greeted me was handsome looks + an unfamiliar bed. Just think about what I felt.

By the way, the new bed was meant for adults and it was soft. Also, it's huge.

Therefore, while my original bed which was placed by the window was removed, a seat similar to a sofa was placed in that position. Bed making wouldn't be possible if I'm on the bed after all.

I thought walking at this age normally wouldn't be weird, so I moved by walking.

However, I really can't remember what age a child normally speaks. It might be scary if I'll suddenly be able to talk fluently, but I'm also afraid to talk in faulty sentences. That's why, I plan to continue my reticent character even longer.

Actually, I never went out even once. I'm walking the road to becoming a perfect hikikomori.

\*Hikikomori – someone who had withdrawn from society; simply, someone cooped up in their house.

Nevertheless, I whose heart is still snatched away by magic, I have no desire to go out at all.

Aa, one more thing. The number of people looking after me became two.

Two people other than Snake-san quit, that's why it became a shortcut to her happiness.

One day, those two never showed up, I wonder if the contract period was over. Right now, the young man from before takes care of me. Even though it's a part-time job, I'm sorry the amount of work increased... I always felt guilty about it. You receive overtime pay, don't you?

That reminds me, I found out the young man's name.

Matthias! That's right! The two people who resigned always talk about Matthias-san, how cool and beautiful he was, so I understood from that. There were only two other people so full name wasn't necessary.

Matthias-san is rich, moreover he's strong. I don't understand why he still need a part-time job even though he's rich, but I was convinced that it must be to study about the society.

I'm sorry, I can't tell you anything about the society.

As usual, Matthias-san left the room. I feel like I've seen him more than the usual today.

Aa... I think he's finally starting to think about quitting this part-time job. I'm really sorry.

Today, I didn't freeze the water in the glass. In fact, I've reached the point where I could freeze other thing inside the room. My magic power increase in quantity as well. Aim for 24-hours service! I persevere everyday with this motto.

The plan I've been warming up will be put in place today.

If the coffee shop business wouldn't work out, is there a trump card I can use? I thought about it.

"[What I desire, atmosphere filled with water, assemble, freeze! Vapor!]"

I thrust out my left hand, and together with the incantation, I fist my hand tightly.

*kotsun kotsun*

Something hit my head, then I shrugged my shoulders.

When I held my head, some ice particles were scattered on it.

Was it a success...?

It's doubtful. Anyway, I understood the technique was executed. As I thought, magic is really interesting.

My magic power had become stronger, and I can use various magic, too... As I thought of it, freely making use of my freezing magic is surprisingly fun.

As shown by the incantation just now, I can collect water vapor from the air and use my freezing magic on them. As I thought of a name for this magic, I realized I still don't know what my name is until now...

To begin with, my parents never came to see me so I don't even know whether I had a proper name.

Anyway, no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to manipulate liquids, but I'm able to handle it if I turned it first into ice particles. I can manipulate and freely move them in the air by then. Right now, I can still feel half of the weariness I experienced compared to the first time I tried it, however if I have spare time I just play. I gather them from the air and shape them into forms I like, similar to handicraft.

It's because the arts class I selected from before was crafting. I like construction (I also like music but I hate singing so I refrained from choosing music class).

By the way, even though I'm tired, if they're just particles and not lumps of ice, I'm still able to manipulate it.

From what I read from the books, it seems like this world has no cars. The air is so clean because there are no exhaust fumes, I thought as I tried this magic. An ice sculpture appeared in the empty spot similar to magic.

<Note: magic – (written in English/Katakana) referring to a trick, appearing out of nowhere; aka, our world's magic and not fantasy kind of magic>

I'm practicing how to make a dragon made out of ice, I plan on making it move to please the children. I thought about how I wanted to show it to the children I

often played with in the hospital. Until I was hospitalized, I didn't know such little children were doing their best fighting their illnesses. But I got close to everyone so I was happy. And yet, I can't meet them anymore...

While I pondered on that, I recited another incantation.

I'd like to understand the potential of my magic. More, even further.

"Fer~! Fer~! Fernando!!"

The center of the royal palace was filled with various people. The sound of someone running at an abnormal speed could be heard.

Sitting on the desk in the large office and processing a massive quantity of official documents, Ricardo instinctively stood up and placed himself on guard.

"Fernando~! Oh? What, it's just Ricardo..."

Opening the door without knocking, a man with a brilliant red hair entered the office.

"What was that!? Even though I'm a prince..."

"Come on, Ricardo, it's fine!"

The country's first prince, Ricardo, complained but was merely ignored. The shock the prince received made him crawl under the large fairly-used desk and crouch low. He went timid. A heavy, somewhat dark atmosphere seemed to begin to leak out from the under the desk and the carpet.

"Ah! Isn't it Matt! Wha-Ric, what happened!?"

From the entrance to the room next door located to the right, a brown-haired man carrying a heavy bundle of documents came in.

This man is Fernando von East Cartier. He is the person Matthias was searching for.

He is the oldest son of the East Cartier House known to specialize in Earth magic. Incidentally he is also the First Retainer of the unusual and older prince.

However it doesn't appear like that due to his body's large build and adult-like disposition.

"No. I haven't done anything." Matthias shook his head.

A Prince and two sons of great aristocrats. These three differ in their social standing, but developed a friendship when they went to the academy at the same time, so the three of them have a very frank relationship.

“Fer... I’m really no-good after all... I’m not suited to be a prince.”

“Were you teased by Matthias again...? It’s okay! Ric, you’re a diligent prince. Sooner or later, aren’t you going to be a Prime Minister!?”

“Yeah... I’ll do my best.”

Ricardo slowly came out.

Normally, one would say something like “You’ll become a great King someday,” isn’t it? But unfortunately this man is abnormal.

Prince Ricardo de Almerti Casariel, father is the King of Almerti Kingdom, mother is the Country of Casariel’s Princess who also carried Prince Sveri in her belly, he is a genuine prince. As of now, he works as an aide to his father since he has an interest in parliamentary affairs, but hopes for a political position that has no connection to being the King.

“So, what happened?”

Matthias had rushed by all the soldiers and the office door guard at full speed on the way here. This was because he didn’t want the trouble of undergoing formal procedures. If he wanted to come here, going at night would be easier. To go that far, what could have happened?

“That, Elmer-sama... Elmer-sama moved!!”

“I’m saying, Elmer-sama walked!”

“No... of course he’ll walk... he’s human after all...”

Fernando scratched his hair, troubled.

“It’s the first time! He moved!”

This time, the pen Ricardo was holding slipped and dropped. If he wasn’t mistaken, his second little brother born from a different mother was almost three years old right now. To only move just now... it’s the first time he said!?

He had told his Father King several times that he wanted to meet his little

brother, but he was rejected every time, and therefore had never met his little brother. Ridiculed as the Doll Prince who never showed any emotion, the Prince the country had completely forgotten. Since his Father King always avoided discussing this subject, and he hadn't met Matthias since then, he really didn't know if this was really the truth.

He and Fer always thought the the rumor was just exaggerated. The fact that the child was quiet was misinterpreted, perhaps this was merely the case.

“Then, until now...?”

“He just looked at somewhere in the air... and he always stayed in the bed. He hasn't shown any emotion today, too, but he walked for the first time!”

They understood that he walked for the first time.

Outside his calm exterior, even though they're close friends, Matthias had never been this noisy. It must be the first time they had seen Matthias this excited... it was what Fer thought.

He's not only a high-ranking noble, he has a brilliant mind, and of course being from the West Vern House, who boasts of strength that could rival a royalty. For a person like that to be messed up like this...

“Isn't that great?”

“I wan't to see my littler brother, too...”

After answering, Matthias' expression clouded a little.

Is it really fine...? Certainly, he was glad to confirm that his Master was really a human and not just a doll.

However, what if an [Explosion] doesn't happen, and an assassination order will be issued...? Can he really kill him without hesitation?

He doesn't know.

But his feelings of happiness was certainly true.

... What on earth should he do?

# 1-9 Heavy Rain and House Arrest

Today, it's raining heavily.

The rain violently slaps against the room's window. Before, I would have been depressed in this kind of weather but, right now I quite like this situation.

With this, water is full and overflowing. Since I don't have to particularly gather them, in a day like this, the magic power I need is fewer and it's easier to use.

That's right, I'll say this again, on a rainy day I don't feel unwell.

Also, I had just noticed that I was placed under house arrest today.

I have practiced magic for five years. Every day, I continued on just resting and reading. I was already convinced that I'll be able to open my cafe for 24-hours as I grow into adulthood.

With this, if everyone thought I am someone extraordinary, if something like that would be possible I should be able to do other work. I even thought of working as a barista in a restaurant if the cafe's business is slow.

In my fifth year of being born, I finally had the resolve to go out. Though in reality, it took me one month of preparation after deciding it.

Summoning my courage, I placed a hand on the door.

The door... can't be opened.

I didn't notice it but, I was locked in.

Not going out voluntarily and not being able to go out, their implications are considerably different.

I, who was lost on what to do, went back to my usual place in the end.

Why was I locked in? That is, the only reason would be that they didn't want me to get out. Was the one who thought of that my father? Was it my mother? Or could it be a different person?

I've been thinking of this for years but, my parents who never came to see me are probably dead. I didn't feel sad about it because I grew up without seeing

their faces. The family from my previous existence is still my family.

Even so, I was given meals everyday so someone must still be looking after me somehow. Even until this year, the people taking care of me still bring all the meals and spoon feed me, and even put me in the bath. For the two of them to still work, someone must be paying their salary in some way.

Aa, somehow I seriously feel guilty. Can I just play like this everyday? The anger I felt awhile ago was blown off and vanished somewhere.

That person must be worried about me and locked me in here. Because it's dangerous outside and a weakling will be killed easily, will I have to stay here until I become strong?

This is bad. It's been five years, but I haven't done anything at all! I haven't trained how to be a cafe master, yet. Instead, I was producing ice.

From now on, no... tomorrow, I'll think about methods on how to oppose the frightening people outside. If I won't be able to reach the point where I could defend my body by myself, I'll surely die.

Today, I intend to play with the pitcher nearby so I pulled it to myself. I thrust my hand inside, and pulled it out after it was dripping wet with water. After repeating it several times, I slowly clenched my hands again.

I suddenly fling the water that remained into the air.

Without a sound, my hand froze with just the thought of it and a mass of ice floating in the air appeared. When I thought of it growing in a moment, no sooner after that, it became a dragon the size of the room.

It is my favorite. This guy is the one I skilfully made in my leisure time.

Collecting water from the air to make something of this size is incredibly hard. A lot of already visible water is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, I who have poor magical power, must fully wet my hand. I won't be able to do anything if my hand isn't frozen first. Besides, I can't just do everything I want. My magic isn't omnipotent at all. The only perfect forms I could create is a little bird and this dragon. Other than that, I can do it if it is something small.

Also, producing it without noise just like now was really a pain. The truth is, I

was energetic when I was able to make it without producing sounds. However, when I found out that what I was practicing was a low-level magic, I wasn't able to utter anything except a wry smile and became depressed. That's why, I do it while sneakily practicing.

I wonder if this guy can fight? I gently patted the face of the ice dragon as it comfortably closed its eyes.

... closed its eyes!?

Just now, did I just manipulated it like that!?

I was taken aback in surprise, the face I was patting suddenly had a too huge tongue.

“Y... you, could it be that, you're alive!?”

I frantically whispered in a low voice, and the dragon nodded.

It's alive. Rather than that, saying that it has a will is more proper. I was surprised.

No~ I was really, truly surprised.

Was it because I always admired it during my free time... in the old days, an important thing used for a long time is said to develop a life.

Even if it's a different world, does the same pretext apply in this situation? It can't be helped if I got exhausted while thinking about it. Now that it has reached this point, this fact was accepted.

In the mean time...

“Do you want a name?”

It nodded again. Since a while ago the dragon always wags its tail while nodding, hitting me. It hurts...

“I know~ I don't like Ice Dragon so how about... Dora-chan the Dragon!”

<Note: Dora-chan was derived from “doragon” which is the Japanese' English for dragon.>

I know you don't want to be called by that name. So please stop jabbing me with your talons.

Ice-chan, Dragon-chan, those names were completely refused.

I became fed up with it, and keep saying the names carelessly.

<Note: Kiyo(清) means clear, pure, noble. While ran(爛) means brilliant or bright.>

When I called out, he nodded while letting out clattering sound.

It must mean he's fine with it. Even though he's was created by magic, he appears to be able to communicate his thoughts.

"A dragon made of pure water. This high-class appearance is the symbol of luxury and beauty!"

If I say so myself, it's a terrible symbol. How should I put it... to be frank it's supplementing. Did I overdo it? For the time being, I praised myself for achieving this result.

However, when I look at Kioran, I actually brushed my imaginary mustache in satisfaction. If the one in question is good himself, it doesn't really matter anyway.

"Kioran, can you fight?"

Kioran nodded again. You, can you really fight!? At least say whether it's by magic or not.

If you can fight I don't need to absolutely become strong just for the sake of going out to the world.

"Will we become stronger together?"

... At that moment, those hands joined forces out of mutual envy...

<Note: In reference to a cliché plot development.>

In reality, though, it isn't really like that because there's something different... Kioran isn't human. But well, it gives off that kind of impression.

Then, let's do a special training immediately, I started to say something like that but I realized it was impossible. The room is fully occupied by Kioran. Even if he moved just a little, I'll be blown off.

"If I changed him once again, can I alter Kioran's size?"

Isn't that so, Kioran? I started to ask. When I looked at his way, his eyes seemed to say something like 'how troublesome.' Something like that, at least realize your selfishness! How shameless!

Well, it's fine.

"Alright! Well then, become small!"

There and then, before my eyes Kioran steadily became smaller until he was the size of my palm.

So cute! A hand-riding dragon. His mini-size cuteness made me pat him more than necessary, and I was hit by his tail. Don't hit me! I initially thought his small build isn't strong enough, but he bent his entire body and kicked me. He's not even serious, but it hurts!

"Well, that's fine. With this size, it would be safe no matter how much he moves around. For the time being... let's make this guy the enemy!"

I clambered up the bookshelf, and took out the [Basic Economics and its Practical Application] book near the written dictionary with average thickness. Among them, this is the book I dislike the most. The book is too long, and I don't understand it!

I set it up in front Kioran and myself.

"Our objective is to be able to get away from the enemy. It's still better if we can protect the coffee shop— don't look at me by those disagreeing eyes!! I'm sorry if enemy is low rank. But guys who appear like that are unexpectedly strong. At least... in this level! Anyway! First is, Formation A! Get ready!"

The way I said it was cool, but Kioran didn't move at all.

"Kioran... at least read the atmosphere and take a stance... Haven't you heard me say 'Formation A'? You didn't even respond."

Kioran wasn't able to bear the atmosphere full of accusation, and turned his head away.

"Formation A is when the opponent is the same size as me, a human being. I'll launch icicles to the other party, let's do our best, you and me! Here I go!"

Together with an enthusiastic shout (until now, all the conversations were said

in a low voice), countless icicles were formed.

The aim is... the Economics book!!

Suddenly, it was easily knocked down by Kioran. I slowly lowered the hand which I had pointed to the book and hang my head. The book that was knocked down was gently returned.

“Then, Formation B is... if we come across a situation where the opponent is bigger. I’ll make an ice lance...”

As I explained this in a weak voice, I heard a sound of something hitting hard.

When I raised my eyes which was lowered, Kioran lifted his tail which was pierced through the book’s cover.

Panicking, I hurriedly pulled out the tail from the supposed-to-be-enemy just a while ago and quietly patted the hole in the book.

# 1-10 Little Bird and Picking Up

“Next is~ right here~”

I displayed my palm not grasping anything, and then grasp my right hand tightly. Suddenly, a small bird appeared on my hand when I opened it. The little bird spread its wings with a flapping sound, when it finished wandering around the ceiling it went back to my left hand.

“Then, please have a look.”

Saying that, I placed the little bird on the window pane steadily.

As for this, I am a magician, and my audience for my magic show is Kioran. After completing Formation Z, I gave up. The book has been reduced to a tragic condition. Or perhaps I should say, the only thing left on my hand were several pieces of paper.

That’s why, an impromptu magic show is being held. Or should I say it’s the commemoration of Kioran’s birth?

The little bird made of ice flew out, and headed towards the windowpane. It is the place it wasn’t able to cross awhile ago. However this time, it was able to go through the window pane smoothly.

“What is this! The little bird has flown away!”

It’s a success. Kioran clapped his hands repeatedl... wait a minute!? Its tail also repeatedly hit me. That’s why, I said it hurts! I really need to change this.

Still, he seems to be truly pleased.

Of course, it isn’t just about the little bird going through the closed windowpane. When the little bird hit the windowpane, I turned the ice into water vapor. Then, it was reshaped on the other side. Nevertheless, I still think the trick I did was splendid. Though it’s actually real magic.

Suddenly, I realized. The things I consider to be amazing might just be perhaps something normal in this world... I forgot! Magic is common sense in this world. Even the origins and mechanisms are different, this is not the same situation.

Could it be that my training until now is meaningless!?

I was intending on doing the trick on a customer's glass... it will be a big hit for children, that's what I thought. I even made the shape of the little bird cute.

"Kioran... it's no-good..."

I let a little bird with all my heart out of the window. Because it's ice, it's a little painful in the eyes to look at.

I had been preoccupied by the little bird and noticed too late that the door was opening.

I hurriedly made Kioran disappear, and crushed the corpse(that is what I think of it) of the Economics book.

"It's time for the evening meal."

It was Maid-san and Matthias.

The day already passed by?

Probably because I now have Kioran, the night felt like it came earlier than usual.

[Unknown's POV]

"You're fucking kidding me, that damn Old Geezer, pushing another troublesome work to me."

Feeling annoyed, I kicked the puddle of water at my feet. Mud spilled onto my clothes which made me even more irritated.

The rain made me even more frustrated.

To begin with, that damn Old Geezer is the one at fault. I was just fooling around a little but I didn't expected him to be that angry. Though I knew he'd be angry, I didn't think he'd increase the amount of my work.

I only filled the high-quality dress of that stupid noblewoman with hairy caterpillars for revenge, but I was punished to watch a foreign country's noble for years?

Which reminds me, Pielt mentioned something about Old Geezer making a blunder during a guard duty while I wasn't here...

I can't believe it. It's true that I'm annoyed with that Old Geezer, however I knew his ability is reliable. Yet, he lost to an infant prince. Pielt began to talk, but I ran away in the middle of it. That guy's stories are always long. It becomes troublesome, so it's a common knowledge for every Shadow to run away.

The Prince he mentioned, was it the Old Geezer's master Matthias' new Master... Wait, isn't he a child? Is there such a thing? Well, it doesn't have anything to do with me anyway.

I want to return to the house quickly today, let's cross the corner of the garden... I thought.

Even if I said that, the corner I walked through isn't really a corner, though. The place was just a blind spot that's why it was called that way. Since I understand the layout of the place, I only have to confirm that no one is there and then walk by.

Only someone like me with great potential and reflexes is able to accomplish such a thing easily, it's the reason why I can claim to be on the same group as Master.

<Note: Master(shishou) here means 'teacher', often indicating apprenticeship. Matthias and other Retainers as well as the Shadows(when they refer to Matthias), uses the other Master(shujin) which indicates a master-servant relationship. On that note, a cafe barista is sometimes called Master. Elmer uses this one and often says it in English.>

Even so, despite being qualified, I am still an apprentice.

I'm thankful for the Old Geezer, who is also my Master, for picking me up. My parents sold me off, and when I was living a half-dead life like shit, I was saved by that man. He also taught me how to find a job. Even though the Old Geezer was just training me, I had thought about it, I really think that working as a Shadow is my calling. I don't have to worry about daily necessities and I like the work.

Matthias will surely become my Master if I go with it. I don't dislike him in the beginning. But when I played a prank on that guy, I was unable to stomach the insanely long sermons.

Because of my work, I've seen a lot of nobles and learned that his good nature

is different from other nobles. That's why, if I was asked if I'll pledge allegiance to be a Shadow under Matthias' direct control, I'll say yes even now. But things didn't really go that way.

When we were still in a rocky start, Matthias only talked to me once.

'Your Master works for me, but I won't demand anything from you. At the same time if you sell off any information it would be a problem, so I'll make sure you'll never see my Master. Also, I will not name you so you decide your name by yourself.'

There aren't usually nobles who say those things. In the first place, we aren't even named, because we are shadows and not human. Old Geezer's name Ieden means 1. When Matthias named him, Old Geezer insisted in having a name with a number, in the end Matthias gave in and used a foreign language to name him.

That's why the Old Geezer and the others will follow him no matter what.

Would I encounter someone like that someday? Or am I going to be working under Matthias, too? Whatever is fine. However, the former needs to be someone who isn't hostile to Matthias.

I went to the corner while thinking these things.

The Green Water Palace Garden is something that the public is not allowed to see.

Suddenly, something heavy fell on my head.

It hurts. I grimaced with the pain and instinctively crouched down.

I'm not under attack. It wasn't a fatal wound, and I can't feel any killing intent. Then, it must be just an accident.

I squatted down on the ground. Before my eyes, a clear figure of a bird laid right in front of me. When it fell, it had been tainted by the mud in the ground.

I rubbed the figurine clean with my clothes. I was fascinated by its beauty, it's as if it was alive. I looked around carefully but saw no signs of anyone present.

If it's something this beautiful, it might belong to a noble's daughter.

If they're throwing it away, then I'll keep this, that was what I thought as I

sneaked the small bird in my pocket.

Aa, it might have been just a good day. While thinking something like that, I continued on walking.