



5

Third Prince Elmer

— Primary School Arc —

Third Prince Elmer

V. Primary School Arc

Author: せい

Translate: [addnewtab](#)

Epub: [Henkanepubs](#)

Table of Contents

[Third Prince Elmer](#)

[5-1. The Mysterious Transfer Student](#)

[5-2. Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama](#)

[5-3. Test of Courage](#)

[5-4. To the Town \(1\)](#)

[5-5. To the Town \(2\)](#)

[5-6. One day, the Prince-sama... \(1\)](#)

[5-7. One day, the Prince-sama... \(2\)](#)

[5-8. Occupational Experience Learning \(1\)](#)

[5-9. Occupational Experience Learning \(2\)](#)

5-1. The Mysterious Transfer Student

[Elmer]

“I hate you so much!!”

The girl’s shout resounded. It was very sudden.

The spoon that was on the table jumped up then fell down to the floor which has no speck of dirt.

She left her breakfast seat the instant she saw me, and the little girl dashed outside of the door while glaring. Her deep red hair tied into twin tails bobbed and shook, but immediately disappeared from my sight.

The place was just in uproar for an instant, but some maids run after the girl immediately. I looked at the situation in utter surprise for a while, and before I noticed it, the spoon had already been picked up then polished and lined up orderly as if nothing had happened.

I came into my senses and saw Matthias. I was thinking of calling out to Matthias and ask ‘what’s happening?’ but stopped when I noticed he looked as if all blood drained from his face.

“Are... are you alright?”

“Please forgive me! That was my little sister Shenryl. I’ll tell her to apologize properly later. To say such rash remarks to El-sama...!”

“Ah... yes. It’s fine but, did I do something wrong?”

Matthias said sorry apologetically over and over again, but I somehow don’t understand what that was about.

Today would be the day I will finally attend the academy, so I had breakfast at a different time from usual.

As soon as I entered the dining hall, I’ve been told by a girl that she hates me. It should be our first meeting, but it seems like she knows who I am.

“But why would Shenryl do something like that?”

Matthias tilted his head in question as we ate breakfast. In the end, I

eventually ate my breakfast since I'm running out of time.

That's what I want to know. Have I done something? But that should have been the first time we meet.

"What? Matthias doesn't know? That's jealousy, y'know?"

"Jealousy? What could that be directed at?"

Leont who had appeared before I noticed it, declared clearly.

"Matt was stolen so she was angry. Because Shenryl loves her Onii-chan very much~ Even though I say Onii-chan, it's just Matthias though. Cashbar-san was just told 『You gross cross dresser!』 some time ago."

So it's brocon, huh?

<Note: Brocon – brother complex.>

In the first place, an unknown guy suddenly appeared and began to live with them without permission. She must have hated that Matthias was stolen by someone without relation to him. Although I didn't know about the existence of Matthias' little sister, I feel bad about it.

"I did something bad. I'll try my best to get along with her from now on."

I stared at the vegetable where the fork is stuck in and tried to convince myself.

It seems like Shenryl-chan goes to the same academy that I'm planning to attend, though I'm in a lower year. The fact that we live in the same house and go to the same school makes me want to get along with her even more.

The next time we meet, I thought of taking the initiative to talk to her.



"El-sama, please inform me immediately if something happens. I will come and fetch you if it's time to go home. I showed you the way the other day since you need to go to the faculty room, afterwards..."

I controlled Matthias who was hurriedly repeating the same thing since a while ago in front of a academy gates.

"I'll be alright even if you don't worry that much. I already have a map. See you

later!”

There are few people in the school building similar to the day of the examination. I think that it's because the first hour of classes had already started. It was written in the letter from the academy that I'll be received during the second period in the first day.

“I'll go check on Chabo-kun for a while.”

I have the map that I asked Matthias to make, so I have time to spare without getting lost. I decided to go to the courtyard.

“Are you well~? I came to play~”

Chabo-kun looked just like the first time I saw him, his feet are tied in chains and he is lying down.

I feel like the shackles are sturdier than the previous one. I wonder when did I start feeling like there's no need to run away even when Chabo-kun approached me. There may be a reason, but it seems like it would be better if I explained it by words.

“You're still as fluffy today~”

Chabo-kun stared at my way with sleepy eyes. I jumped into Chabo-kun's white and soft feathers.

“I want to pluck these feathers and make them into a futon~”

A natural futon made of feathers is a luxury. Soft feathers that gently brush against my face and feel ticklish. I laughed ‘fufufu’ while feeling this happiness.

Thereupon, Chabo-kun suddenly rise up and began trembling.

“I need to go now. Sorry~”

I think that he's trembling with excitement because he wants to play. I recalled his bored appearance from before and felt sorry.

“Let's play again next time. See you!”

When he heard that, Chabo-kun started to ran around until the extent of his chains' length and acted violently from behind me, while I walked towards the

faculty room.

If he's excited to that extent, he must have wanted to play with a human very much.

"So you're El-kun. I am Saleel. Will you follow me so I can introduce you to your classmates right now?"

"I will be in your care."

The one waiting for me in the faculty room is my homeroom teacher, Saleel-sensei. I said hello while being relieved since he seems like a nice guy.

I talked with Sensei while walking along the long hallway.

"I told everyone that a new child is coming. That kind of thing is rare. The class is surely excited right now."

"Haaa...(sigh)"

I'm quite bothered by that. I understand the feelings of excitement when a transfer student comes over, they will expect something like a cute guy or girl, or that an amazing kid will come. However, in reality, the one who will come over is just me. If a guy will appear in the middle of my excitement, even I, will certainly raise a protest.

"I'll enter the classroom first, so will El-kun wait outside for a while? Then you will enter the moment I call you."

"I understand."

At times like this, time really go by fast. Leaving me behind, Saleel-sensei quickly went into the classroom.

"The new friend that I mentioned the other day is coming today."

I can hear Sensei's voice from behind the door. At the same time, I can also hear the students' shouts of joy.

"Sensei! Is it a girl? Is she cute?"

Wrong. Sorry, you're wrong! While I was alone, I shouted that soundlessly.

“No, it’s a boy but...”

That’s right. Thank you for denying it early. If the hurdle isn’t lowered as much as possible, I won’t be able to open the door in front of me.

“He’s a very cute and polite child. Then, by all means. Please come in.”

Sensei, please stop making the hurdle high!

I resolved myself and opened the classroom door. I looked down so I can’t see the faces of the students to my left, and walked up beside Sensei.

“Will you please introduce yourself at once?”

The greetings and the self-introductions I thought about on the way here were blown off from my mind, and the only thing that my pure white mind can utter is this: “...I’m El.”

It’s no good. I’m afraid of their reactions so I can’t look at their faces. I heard no one’s voice as I continued looking down.

What does that mean? I gathered my courage and timidly looked straight ahead.

Lots of eyes are staring at me. Everyone is looking at my way with astonished expressions. It’s as if they’ve forgotten to let out their voice because of too much surprise. Even though I resolved myself, I can’t really conceal my shock after all. It’s inevitable that I’ve become somewhat teary-eyed.

“You can have the vacant seat at the back.”

“Yes.”

Maybe because he sensed the awkward atmosphere, Sensei came to the rescue. The one he pointed out was the window seat at the very back of the classroom. I walked carefully, step by step, to my seat so as not to trip because of nervousness. Meanwhile, the eyes around me constantly followed my actions. It’s like some kind of torture.

I sat down and sighed while looking at the spacious school grounds spread out through the window to my right .

... Matthias. First impressions are very important, but I think my first

impression it's the worst – I was at lost for words. If it's possible, I want to do it over again.

Afterwards, the second period began at once. They are still preparing my textbooks, and I can't ask the kid next to me to share so I decided to observe the classroom.

There are around 25 students in the class. This is the Grade 4 Class 3 and it seems like there are four classes. There are more boys when it comes to the girl-boy ratio. The one in front of me is a boy, and the kid next to me is a girl.

“El... was it? Why did you just enter in this time of the year?”

I was thinking various things until the academy's break time came. When the class ended, the boy who's sitting in front of me reversed his seat and started talking to me.

“Err... I had to go to a distant place to undergo a medical treatment, but I came back to the Imperial Capital recently...”

What a relief. I was thinking what should I do if nobody talked to me. I have a feeling that the whole class is listening to our conversation in interest while I was speaking.

By the way, Matthias was the one who thought about the reason I said just now.

“Fun~ (*sigh*) But you don't have a family name so you can't be an aristocrat.”

“I'm different.”

“You're strange. No one travels to the countryside except nobles. Besides, you look like you're just six years old.”

“Is that so...? I'm normal, normal.”

“Well, whatever. I'm Rent, nice to meet you.”

“Yeah. Same to you, too.”

When the boy named Rent gave me a smile with his white teeth shown, I had a feeling that we'll be very good friends.



On the other hand, in front of the classroom.

“What’s this?”

A student noticed something white fell into the floor and picked it up.

“Feather...?”

It was a white and fluffy feather.

“I saw it fall from the transfer student.”

Then among his classmates, the speculation that ‘maybe the transfer student is an angel’ flew around, as it also explained the transfer student’s appearance. But El, who was in high spirits after making his first friend, didn’t noticed at all.

5-2. Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama

Inside a room with matching furniture, there was El who remained quiet after finishing his preparations for school.

“El-sama, it’s almost time to leave.”

Matthias, who had changed into casual clothes for going out, called out to the similarly dressed El.

“Yes... I understand.”

When he saw El stand up while looking depressed, Matthias got worried and began to ask a question.

“Is there something wrong? I can send a message of absence to the academy if you are not feeling well.”

“That’s not it. It’s just that I don’t want to go to the academy, somewhat.”

When those words was muttered by his master in a soft voice, the overprotective retainer cannot conceal his discomposure. El was definitely happy during his first day of school and Matthias confirmed that there was nothing unusual with El’s expression yesterday. However El had his head lowered quietly, obviously feeling reluctant today.

“Did something happen? Please tell me everything. I will eliminate the cause at once.”

Various possibilities came into Matthias’ mind.

El’s unusual silver hair might have caused some kind of trouble. It would not be strange for aristocrats to take interest towards El since he was admitted as a commoner, his real social status hidden. Although El requested for surveillance to stop, it looks like Matthias needs to keep a closer watch even more than

before.

He did not show it on his face but he must have felt hurt in reality, Matthias reproached his inexperience as he thought like that.

“I don’t want to go... together with Matthias.”

“If that is the case, it will be unreasonable forcing—- Would you please repeat that one more time?”

While Matthias was plotting on how to eliminate the cause, it seems like his ears heard something strange so he asked El once again.

“I don’t want Matthias, I want to go with Edna today!”

El went out of the room feeling better after exclaiming what he found difficult to say, while Matthias became speechless due to too much shock.

“P-please wait a moment! W-why is it?”

Coming back to reality after a while, Matthias cried out after El, who had his bag in his shoulders and started preparing to leave.

The maids and the butlers of West Vern House were bewildered when they saw Matthias showing an extremely different personality compared to before, however they continued doing their usual work indifferently.

“Because yesterday...”

El looked back towards Matthias while letting out a sigh.

Then, El started talking to explain the reason as he recalled the events yesterday.



[Elmer]

The rest of his classmates also talked to him during break, so when lunch time ended, El thought that he certainly did well for his first day in school. El finished his business in the faculty room and headed back to the classroom for the remaining one hour of lessons.

“It’s an emergency! Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama is at the school gates!”

“I wonder why? Anyway, let’s go take a look!”

The quiet hallway from before had completely changed and became noisy.

Several groups of excited upperclassmen girls made a commotion and run one after another. A lot of male students are mixed among them, too.

They looked very happy, maybe a famous person came to the academy, I was inwardly puzzled when I entered the classroom.

Rent immediately accosted me when I sat down.

“Hey, the hallway was very noisy just now. Did something happen?”

“Everyone was talking about a certain Knight-sama waiting at the school gates.”

“Is that true!”

Rent slapped both hands on my desk and leaned forward while standing up.

“What’s the matter? The class will soon start and I don’t think thing you can borrow what you left behind from the next class.”

I remembered Rent saying a while ago that he forgot something, and that he was just going to borrow from a friend.

“That’s not it~!! Why are you so calm! Hurry up and stand! We’re going to look, too!”

“I don’t really care.”

I’m not interested in a male idol with an embarrassing name like that so I immediately refused.

“Don’t you know him!?”

It appears like he’s so popular to the extent that there’s no one in the country who doesn’t know about him. While I got troubled on how I should reply, Rent pulled my arm and began talking passionately.

“Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama is absurdly powerful you know~? He got an overall victory in the Tournament by landslide! He’s someone acknowledged by the Royal Family themselves!”

“Fun~ *sigh*”

Rent’s eyes are shining like stars. This Knight-sama must really be an amazing person. I can understand your desire to see him as soon as possible, but I wish you would stop forcefully pulling my arm while walking.

“And you know, he’s naturally an alumni here and is very intelligent! When he fights, he stays calm and looks very cool... anyway, he’s very amazing! Despite that, he disappeared recently. And even though I never saw him personally, he appears in books and paintings a lot! But why is he here in the academy? Ah, could it be he’s here for Shenryl-sama?”

It seems like Rent is a fan of Knight-sama. But thinking how crowded it became in the academy, it may be not just Rent who likes that person but several others, too.

Leaving that aside, I thought about Shenryl-chan. I intended to talk to her today but she just averted her face from me... We never met even though we live in the same house so I finally realized that I’m being avoided. What should I do...?

“We’re here! Damn! There’s so much people gathered already, I can’t see anything!”

It’s a large crowd just as Rent said, it’s as if all students from the academy came out.

“It looks like we can see from here.”

I called out to Rent after coming across a space where there are few people, however I became at loss for words when I saw the center of the crowd. I rubbed my eyes, thinking that I was just seeing things. Then I opened my eyes slowly once again.

“What? Did you see?”

“Ah... yeah...? I saw, but I feel like I saw something wrong.”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying! Move a bit. It’s the real one! It’s the real Matthias-sama! He’s as cool as expected!”

I was pushed aside, then got hit at the back repeatedly by an exited Rent who

just saw 『Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama』.

“So cool...”

<Note: The word used here is kakkoi, which can also mean attractive/good-looking.>

I can't believe this scene in front of me, Rent repeatedly said that while looking like an idiot. Inside my head, his words spin round and round.

What the heck is this!? Matthias is Knight of the Purple Blaze-sama!?

“He's always cool...”

<Note: This time, the English equivalent of 'cool' is used, which is 'kuru'>

“Cool, huh...”

Even though I can admit that Matthias is attractive (kakkoi), it's hard to nod in assent when Matthias is claimed to be cool (kuru).

“I want to become like that, too.”

“...I see.”

Matthias is really attractive (kakkoi), moreover he's strong. However, I think that the usual Matthias is not cool (kuru). In the end, I decided not to tell Rent anything. I supposed I shouldn't destroy a pure young man's dream like that.

More than anything, I'm very embarrassed. I want to leave here quickly before it becomes something troublesome.

“Class is starting, let's go back to the classroom.”

“That's right. Ah, the Headmaster is coming!”

When I followed Rent's line of sight, I saw a middle-age man, whose plump body shook while running, wiping his sweat with a handkerchief.

It's my first time seeing the Headmaster since Matthias said it's alright for me not to meet him when I entered the academy.

“Shenryl-sama is also coming, it looks like she went to the Headmaster's office.”

“It seems like it.”

The Headmaster elbowed his way through the rows of students and after arriving to where Matthias is at last, he then guided him to the Headmaster's office's direction while Shenryl-chan drove away the students this time.

However, I felt anxious when Matthias turned his head restlessly as if looking for something. And then from the distance, I saw Shenryl-chan became displeased even though she was just smiling until now.

Is it too conceited of me? Thinking that I am the one Matthias is searching for? I sneered at myself and tried to turn my back. At that moment, Matthias looked at my way...

“Matthias-sama looked at this way just now!”

Rent, who is supposed to be facing the other way, suddenly raised his voice.”

“It's just your imagination.”

“Is that so? But just now he absolutely...”

“Was that Matthias-sama?”

Well, it's only proper to ask which is Matthias-sama since I'm supposed to not know him.

“That's right. There's no way Matthias-sama of the West Vern House, the country's— no, one of the world's Great Nobles, will notice us.”

“Right, right.”

I agreed with Rent as we walked along the corridor.

By the way, the class had already started. Well, there's no student left in the classroom since there's this incident.

I am glad I didn't say anything about being acquainted to Matthias.

No matter what kind of hero Matthias is, even if he has such an embarrassing nickname, even if the world acknowledges a different aspect of him, it doesn't change the fact that he's an important existence who had been with me ever since I was born.

However.

However, when I think about how our eyes met a while ago when he mouthed

“I came to pick you up” and sent an exaggerated wink afterwards...

“Let’s pretend that I don’t know that person,” ...is what I thought.

“And so, I’ll go with Edna.”

“With pleasure.” (Edna)

The academy will be in uproar if Matthias will go, I gave that simple explanation and then left with Edna.

“Please wait! Can I come fetch you after classes?”

“After classes is no good, too.”

The same disaster as yesterday will happen again if Mathias is there. Fortunately, I just barely got away from the students by pretending I had some business in the faculty room, and had to go to the Headmaster’s office to meet Matthias.

“No way...”

Matthias despaired when his last hope was cut off.

“I’m off!”

“I will properly send him off so please do not worry.” (Edna)

Leaving Matthias like that, the two of them left while smiling.

“Matthias, there’s no helping it, y’know? It’s your fault for showing off in high school and becoming famous!”

Leont called out to his depressed friend, but Matthias just collapsed on his knees without saying anything.

“As for me, Edna also refused marrying me today, too.”

Matthias suppressed the feelings of wanting to comment on the words ‘today, too’ and stood up.

He unexpectedly had free time to spare. When thinking about how many hours he’ll spent waiting for El to come back home, Matthias became dejected again.

“...That’s right. I’m going to cook.”

Now that his Master is not here, Matthias can divert his loneliness by being of use to him. Matthias thought so. Thus, that idea just came to him.



When the afternoon homeroom finished, the students began preparing to leave.

I thought everyone would go home like always but the males students gathered at my seat one after another for some reason.

“El, are you free today?”

Soon, one person addressed me.

“It’s alright if it’s after school.”

I don’t have anything planned today.

It seems like Edna-san made the carriage wait for me at a distance from the academy.

Besides, I intended to look around the academy today that’s why I told her I may be late, so I have some free time.

“Then, will you come for a while?”

“Sure.”

I hoisted my bag on my shoulders and followed everyone, who started walking without stating our destination.

I wonder why that kid has a somewhat stiff face...

And then, we finally arrived at the place where Chabo-kun is.

“We’ll run forward from this line at the same time, and the guy who can reach the farthest wins.”

That was declared by my classmate after he finished drawing a long horizontal line using a tree branch.

“The farthest?”

Chabo-kun lies on the other side of the line.

I see.

This is so we can decide who's the fastest among the boys in the class.

I feel like the rank in a race in elementary school is very important.

A boy with good reflexes is acknowledged to be superior than a smart person by those people around him — a hero during sports day.

Popularity among females becomes high, too.

I'm sure it's because a new member is added so they'll re-judge the ranks.

But it doesn't make sense to do it here at any rate.

This is such a large courtyard.

"It's fine to stop if you think you can't go on anymore."

"Yeah."

How rude!

It's true that my muscles look like they're underdeveloped, but I'm not that weak that I won't be able to run such a short distance!

"Everyone, line up."

Everyone started to shuffle to their preferred places with that declaration.

Of course, that would be having the tips of their toes near the line.

That's it!

I lined up at the center, a position where I can dive at Chabo-kun while running.

This place is the least crowded, but it is because of that reason that I chose this place.

I'm sure the first kid to arrive will have the right to play with Chabo-kun.

If that's the case, then I can't lose!

I shall be the one to first plunge into that white feathers by all means!

"Wait!"

The boys near the center like me were similarly put to a stop when Rent shouted that as he came over to me.

“Is it fine for you to be in the center? Being in the edge of the line is better.”

“Here is fine.”

Rent grasp my shoulders in order to persuade me.

However, I didn't yield.

It's better to be in the center than the edge, since it makes competing halfway in the race easier.

I've already experienced it in my previous life — the fastest person is the one who runs the shortest time.

Moreover... Rent also had eyes similar to mine, eyes that aims to get the overall victory.

“Then... you can stop if you think it's impossible to continue.”

“Yeah.”

But even so, I think no one runs away from a race.

However, Rent returned to his place after saying just that and all the boys lined up at their starting position again.

I will absolutely win.

I will jump over there.

One of the girls in the class will give the starting signal.

“Rea~dy!”

Simultaneously, we set one foot behind as preparation.

Only the sound of the sand being scratched can be heard.

“Go!”

I think Chabo-kun also raised his body in time with that girl's voice.

To think that you'll welcome me that much!

I kept running.

I ignored all the shouts and the sounds of kicking in the ground.

I merely pushed forward to aim at Chabo-kun.

There's nobody here.

I am the first!

When I thought so, I finally became aware that the state of my surroundings is strange.

There is neither a call to stop nor a sign of everyone running around me.

I stopped just before my foot reached the goal and turned around as my curiosity got the better of me.

... There really is nobody.

Rather than there's no one around me, all of them traveled the wrong way.

I am at a distance such that going back there is impossible even if I ran backwards.

How shocking!

I stopped running several meters in front of Chabo-kun.

“~~~!”

Everyone is desperately shouting something at me.

But I'm too near Chabo-kun when he let out a cry at the same time, so I don't have any idea what my classmates are saying.

There are a lot of kids pointing at me, too.

“I can't hear you at all!”

I thought they can't hear my voice, too, so I halted for the time being to shout a reply.

“~~~!”

Chabo-kun also let out a shriek at that time so I only heard a their meaningless shouts that reached even higher.

Something fluffy nuzzled against my back.

“What? Ah, it's Chabo-kun.”

'I can't wait to play anymore,' it appears like he's appealing something like that

to me.

“Wait for a moment, okay?”

I must talk with the children from my class before playing with him.

When I said so, Chabo-kun stopped pushing me and slumped down his big body near my feet in protest.

“Well then...?”

The courtyard which was so noisy until now, became silent for some reason.

The children who were desperately uttering a cry before, now have their mouths gaping, too.

A long silence dominated the scene.

Nobody said anything until a loud voice came from inside the school building.

“What are you doing!”

It’s the voice of the teacher whom I’ve seen for the first time.

“Escape!”

“It’s a teacher!”

The courtyard was immediately set in an uproar.

Everybody grabbed their things and ran to the exit.

“Eh?”

Everyone is leaving me?

It will be bad if I get caught by the teacher.

I hurriedly grasped the handle of my bag and proceeded to run away, too.

I am the farthest one.

After running with all my might, I somehow managed to catch up with everyone halfway.

“El, you’re amazing!”

Just before we run past the school gates, Rent called out to me while out of breath.

“I’m surprised! To think you tamed that!”

“I thought you’ll be eaten just after you transfer!”

The kid who was running ahead also purposely turned back and said that to me.

I wasn’t able to hear them properly because everybody is talking while out of breath.

But their praises were transmitted to me.

“But, how did you do it?”

“I thought I just did it like usual...?”

I’ll be embarrassed if you spoil me with praises that much.

I only ran like the usual.

Though I’m sweating and panting, my heart is feeling refreshed.

Even though it began with the feeling of shock, along the way, I felt like I’ve now become a member of the class.



“...and that’s what happened!”

I gleefully narrated today’s events to Edna on the way home. In a blink of time, we arrived at the estate.

“I’m home!”

“Welcome back.”

Matthias greeted us inside the mansion. However, his appearance looked weird.

“What’s wrong, Matthias?”

“It is nothing of concern.”

He’s even more worn out compared to what he looked like this morning. His voice is also lifeless.

“Why is the kitchen missing?”

Right now, the kitchen that is supposed to be located where Matthias is standing, has completely disappeared. The surrounding walls are so charred that I can't even recognize the design. It looks like it was partially caught in a great explosion.

"It is truly nothing. Please do not ask anymore."

"If that's the case, then it's fine."

I was led by Matthias back to my room. Though I'm curious about Matthias' clothes that are singed in several places.

After changing my clothes, I will tell Matthias about the events today, too.

I passed my arm through a sleeve while feeling cheerful.

5-3. Test of Courage

[Elmer]

It was a week after I started to attend the academy that the afterschool became different.

I also started to get used to school life, and the friends who converse with me increased little by little.

“El, let’s go home together!”

“Alright.”

I return home with Rent just as usual.

Even if I say we return together, the routes to our homes are different so we just separate at the school gates.

“El-kun, I have something to say. Will you stay for a while?”

Just as I am leaving the classroom, Saleel-sensei stopped me.

“Yes. I understand. Rent, sorry. Will you go on ahead? If I take too long, you can go home before me.”

After answering my teacher, I apologized to Rent.

After looking at me and the teacher in turn, Rent placed his things on a random desk near the door and said...

“No, I’m going to wait here.”

“Thanks.”

My friends in the class increased but my usual companion whom I do things with is Rent.

Our tempo match.

I can express it only like that, but I am very comfortable when we're together.

"I was shown the result of El-kun's entrance exam. You did wonderfully in your test and had fantastic marks, but I don't know your score in the magic exam. I have to write something in the document I will submit so will you tell me you're attribute? Your address and points are also left out blank."

"Err... I'm earth, probably."

As expected, I didn't have a score...

Even though saying earth is alright since I already passed, I feel complicated feelings when I remembered what happened back then.

Teacher looked doubtful at the new attribute I answered.

"Probably...? Is that so, I understand. I won't mind writing it even if you're unsure. And one more thing. Recently, there are many students saying that they want you to be in charge of taking care of the animals. They didn't say any reason but they all think you're suited for it. What do you think? If you don't dislike it, would you like to give it a try?"

"Taking care of the animals, was it... I want to do it by all means."

It doesn't have any difference at all, but I wonder how is it if there's many of us?

Did I have a face that seems to like animals so much? It's embarrassing when I think about it. I certainly like fluffy animals. I also worked as a keeper before. But in reality, what I took care of were goldfish, crayfish, mantis, frog, guppy or a dragonfly larva, silkworm. I resigned from being a keeper when the white insect, which wriggled and wined a cocoon around itself, came out.

It was my limit. I made use of that reflection and intend to challenge it once again. I can see neither a water tank nor an insect cage in this classroom, so those kind of the insects wouldn't be pushed on me.

"Then I'll be troubling you. There's immediately an activity today..."

"It's alright but..."

I feel guilty about Rent who's waiting for me. Teacher seems to have understood the circumstances when I glanced repeatedly at Rent who's scribbling on somebody's desk.

"If it's about Rent-kun then it's fine. He's also a keeper."

"Tsk! I got exposed..."

Rent sighed, slightly sitting away from us. It appears like he completely heard our conversation.

No way, could this guy be trying to go home without doing his job?

"The class period isn't long and I do not have any plans so I will it," I told Teacher. When I said that I don't mind it, Teacher praised me.

"I'm so happy a child like you came here. I have a staff meeting today so El along with you, alright? Animal Keeper Rent-kun."

Teacher said that reminder while smiling as he left the classroom, while Rent cursed in a low voice nearby.



"Ah, they're here! They're here!"

Students from the same class already gathered in the courtyard, they saw us and waved.

They look like an ordinary keepers, but there's something weird about that scene.

I'm sure it's because there are a lot of boxes placed around them. The boxes that were assembled from brand new trees are piled up like a mountain.

And at the other side, Chabo-kun is dozing off.

"Sorry for making you wait. What should I do?"

Because I do not know what I should do, I talked to one of my classmates surrounding Chabo-kun from a distance.

"That's right! Rent and El is here! Let's remove the core!"

"Core?"

“That guy’s meal are fruits.”

That kid said so and placed a hand on the lid of the box. When the lid is opened, fruits are packed tightly inside. He rolled up his sleeves, and the scattered students started gathering.

It appears like they’re starting the preparations for the work. I followed everyone and rolled my sleeves a few times so I won’t stain it either. I took the knife that was handed down to me and picked up a fruit.

Rather than being keepers, the appearance of everyone silently grappling with the fruit appears more like a cooking self-study.

“It’s done~!”

Someone exclaimed. A too sweet smell permeated the air. We laughed at the fruit juice that stuck on both our faces and hands.

Many hollowed cores are scattered on our feet and even some exhausted kids are mixed in.

Even if the large amount of fruits were divided between all members, it’s still a considerable work. At the beginning, t ‘If we get it wrong there won’t be left for tomorrow anymore!’ exclaimed the voices.

A teacher came over to us while we stagger, as if he’s waiting for the moment when the work is over.

“I was late for the work. I see, you’re over? Good job, everyone.”

It was the man who gave me the magic test during my entrance exam. Because I remembered that time, I got irritated.

However, there’s no use complaining here so I distracted myself by talking to the kid beside me.

“The other teachers always work with us, but that man always make excuses and get here late. He does his job on purpose because he doesn’t want to become dirty.”

They must hate him if those words of dislike is any indication, the kids nearby also have expressions as if saying ‘Again?’ while looking at the teacher. As if the person in question doesn’t notice those glances, he showed a pleased expression

since the task is over.

“Will the chains be taken off now?”

I let out my voice louder than I expected it to be, and I attracted attention even though I only intended the question for the kid next to me. When the teacher saw me, he laughed in derision.

“It’s impossible for you to do something like that.”

‘The royal palace dispatched a specialized Knight for this chains,’ the teacher said and then snorted, ‘Impossible, impossible.’

It must be a complex key for them to call a specialist.

“Then, how about a walk? ”

“Ah, right. If you throw the food from a distance, it will eat as it please. There is a direct order from the royal family to take care of that beast so you have to do something as troublesome as especially hollowing out the core.”

The idle talk gradually ceased, everyone’s attention gathered on the my conversation with the teacher.

“Throwing from a distance...?”

“Who will approach that animal!? When the chains broke the other day, it acted violently—”

“I understand! That much is good enough.”

I puffed up my chest in pride as if to say ‘Naturally!’ and interrupted the teachers words.

“Is that so? Then if that is the case...”

Just as he was trying to give out the next instructions, a voice called ou the teacher’s name from a long distance.

“What?! Listen, wait here for a while.” (Teacher)

“Yeees~” (Student)

Is it an urgent business? The call was repeated several times. The teacher clicks his tongue, and reluctantly leaves.

Only the students remained in the place.

“That guy, doesn’t he want him to walk in a wider area...? Without the chain, that is...”

In the middle of that awkward, heavy atmosphere, I muttered as I saw Chabokun. Ahead us, it was clear that the length of the chain had shortened. Isn’t it possible for him to move at all?

“It’s just as everyone thought, it’s not possible to approach because it’s dangerous. It acts violently very much.”

“But can’t El do it? You saw it before, and everyone recommended El because we thought of the same thing. The point is, it’s fine as long as no one gets injured.”

“But how will we—!”

“Even if the teacher is not present, the key is here.”

Rent let out an indifferent voice, then I and the kids who cast our eyes downwards, raised our heads at the same time.

“Rent, that...”

‘Could that be...’ I thought as I pointed at the thing Rent raised with his hand.

“Ta~daaah! I took it from the teacher’s pocket! That guy is totally defenseless!”

Rent rotated the keys on his index finger as he happily laughed *ahaha*~ The keys knock against each other and made a metallic sound.

“Amazing~! As expected of Rent!”

“Can El really do it?”

“But isn’t it dangerous after all? If he gets injured...”

“Up until now, nobody... there’s nothing like that, on our behalf...”

Everybody began to unanimously give their opinions.

They agreed and opposed and the discussion doesn’t appear like it will be settled anytime soon.

Rent can't stand it any longer and raised his voice.

"Alright! I get it! Let's leave the decision to El. What if we remove the chains without it raging? In that case, we can give it food and water and we can clean it, too. Or should we wait for the teacher to come back and throw the food? When he's the supervisor, that is always the case. That teacher is scared and takes along the students to have the food roll from a distance."

Everyone's attention is focused on me. I feel like being burned with just their glances.

"Uhhh.."

When I opened my mouth, my sight of Rent flickered several times due to nervousness. For some reason, even my heart is pounding rapidly.

"That key, should I just insert and then turn it?"

When I saw the shape of the key that Rent is holding, I thought of that. Even someone from the Knight Order was called, so isn't it a complex key?

"Haaa? That's what you're worrying about?"

All voices excluding me completely overlapped, returning that reply. Everyone...

Did I say something amusing?



There is a sound of metal turning, and the key comes off.

I can hear the sound of my classmates swallowing their saliva while watching from a distance.

I was amazed when it was explained to me that the key really don't have any tricks at all.

When the shackles were taken off, I knew everyone jumped in happiness.

"Alright, let's move to the other side."

Our time is limited until the teacher comes back so I left Chabo-kun in his place at once, according to plan.

At the same time, everyone holding brushes and fruits runs all at once to the place where Chabo-kun is.

“He’s free~”

I told Chabo-kun to behave himself and remain at the same place, I also wanted to help but they declined with all their efforts.

When I approached, ‘Why is Ei here?! Go away as far as possible,’ is what they said.

I reluctantly looked at everybody working happily and energetically from a distance.

“I wonder if they’ll let me feed him just once? Will you wait here alone?”

I asked Chabo-kun which sat down right there instead of nodding, and so I went towards the box.

“There it is.”

I chose the one that looks beautiful from the fruits left in the box.

“So...sorry!”

I heard someone exclaim, and then water fell to my head.

It’s not rain, but water from the hose.

It’s seems like they sprinkled on me by mistake while watering around.

“I’m sorry! I’m really sorry! I didn’t notice you!”

The kid threw away the hose and run up to me while apologizing, so it wasn’t possible for me to blame them.

“It’s fine. Don’t worry about it.”

The child apologized again and returned to work. Is my presence really that thin? Sora told me about it before.

Is the reason this time because I was wandering about without aim?

... Let’s return to the place where Chabo-kun is.

I held the fruit in both my hands and began to walk.

“Uuuu...”

However, I just took several steps when a problem occurred. Water entered both of my ears. By the way, it only entered in one ear just a while ago but now, it seems like it entered the other side, too. The feeling of sloshing water inside my ears is unpleasant. It’s especially worse since water entered in both ears.

Then I saw a boy coming rapidly towards my direction. I don’t recognize him, but this kid might also be a keeper. I stepped one foot forward and passed by the boy.

“Oi!”

Abruptly, my shoulder was violently grasped. It seems like he has some business with me.

“You! Are you that bastard El who was cocky just now!”

Hmmm...

What are you saying?

There’s a sloshing sound of water in my ear so I can’t hear him at all.

I heard the word El, so I’ll just nod my head for the time being. It’s embarrassing to tell someone I met for the first time that there’s water inside my ear, and I think that I can finish the conversation even when I vaguely hear the words. In addition, it’s natural for human beings to greet someone they met for the first time.

“Yes. Nice to meet you.”

I won’t make a mistake if I say it this way.

“A mere commoner like you shouldn’t get caught up in the moment. You must have tamed that strange bird by fluke!”

The boy in front of me said that while looking at Chabo-kun, who’s sitting down away from us.

Condition... bird... get along with...

<Note: In the phrase ‘caught up in the moment’ the word chousi can both mean ‘in the moment’ and ‘condition’. Similarly, ‘tenadzukete’ has double

meaning, 'tame' can be translated as 'gained over' with a positive connotation like, 'gaining over a friend/getting along with someone' instead of 'tame' which implies that the other party is of a lower status.> I have to make these words match my next sentence. I felt more impatient, feeling like I should hurry this up.

I get it.

'I feel worried about him from time to time, how is the condition of Chabo-kun, whom you're getting along with recently?' is what he asked.

Perhaps, he wants to play with Chabo-kun. However, it appears like I got lost in my thoughts too much. He couldn't wait for my reply and began to talk first.

"You have some nerve to ignore me! Do you not know who I am?! I am a high-ranking aristocrat from the Vuelshina House!"

It's useless.

I can't understand what he's saying at all. I want to get the water out of my ears soon, I will just bear the shame and say it honestly.

"Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about. Now I..."

"Wha..."

The boy trembled slightly when he heard my words. He trembled and showed an intense reaction even more than what I imagined.

This is bad.

Even though I can't hear with these ears, I can understand this much.

He is quite angry. So angry that I think he will cry. It's exactly that kind of feeling.

I forgot about it, but he's from the primary department – a grade school kid.

In contrast, I am actually at an age where I should've graduated from high school already. It's bad to make a kid, who is mentally different in age, cry.

I thought about what I should do. Right then, I was struck with a good idea.

It seems like he wants to play with Chabo-kun, maybe I can still manage this one way or another.

I held out my hand holding the fruit.

A delicious-looking fruit appeared between him and me.

I intended to invite him and give the food together.

However, he didn't accept it at all.

When I held out the fruit and prompted him, his face flushed and then he looked at me.

I thought he was embarrassed, but somehow his expression doesn't match.

Did I made a mistake in my response?

I frantically worked out an idea on what I should do, that's when Chabo-kun came into my sight.

Let's call out Chabo-kun here.

I secretly sent a signal to Chabo-kun using a hand I lowered, so the boy wouldn't see it.

(Please! Come here.)

As if my desperate wish was communicated, Chabo-kun immediately noticed and came this way.

The boy is facing me so he didn't notice that the animal he likes is trying to poke his back using his beak.

“Gyaaa—!”

The instant he noticed Chabo-kun behind, he opened his mouth greatly to let out a shout and then ran away.

“Whatever happens to your family, prepare for it!”

I can't hear it if you say it in that distance. I thought about talking to him again when the water from my ears are removed, and waved my hand lightly to his departing figure with a smile.

However, it seems like it wasn't transmitted. Maybe he declined my invitation to play because he was offended. The moment he saw my face, he immediately ran away.

During the conversation, I decided to leave to remove the water in my ears.

To begin with, it's because of this that the conversation with him is not going very well.

“Let me hold on to you for a bit.”

Chabo-kun came after being called and I held on to his body, then tilted my head left and right and jumped several times.

A short time later, my ears gradually became hot.

“Ah, so refreshing~”

“El~”

When I turned to the direction of the voice, it was Shuu who's running to me, it seems like his work is finished.

“What did you and Carl talk about? You don't know each other, right?”

“Yeah. It's the first time we talked.”

Shuu informed me that his name is Carl and he's of the same grade. He is from a different class, so I did not get acquainted with him.

“That guy's incredibly selfish. He made a lot of kids quit the academy. El, you're not going to say anything?”

“I just thought he looks like he wanted to play together.”

I wonder if I'm going to be kicked out from the academy if I get involved with that kid?

“Huh? I think he doesn't have that kind of personality. Well, if it's alright with you then it's all good. Quitting even though you just entered is not a laughing matter. Ah, the teacher is coming soon so let's hurry up and return it.”

“Right. We have to return the key secretly so it won't be found out.”

School is fun. I never thought of quitting in the least. While I muttered that in my mind, I run after Shuu who had begun to walk quickly.



Night of that day, in a room in one of the mansions of the Vuelshina main family.

“Father!”

“What is it, Carl?”

“Do something about that El! He made a fool out of the Vuelshina House!”

“El... it’s the first time I heard that name. Which child is it?”

“I don’t know. Investigate that, too. I will never forgive that boy!”

The father asked what happened, and the boy’s face reddened as he began to get angry.

“Even though my food for the animal is suitable! After that, the animal ran after me!”

Although he promised to his son, the father pondered whether there’s an animal at the academy. It didn’t occur to him that the animal his son is referring to is the gigantic bird that the Royal Family entrusted to the academy.

Maybe that’s inevitable, too. Long ago, Because the Knight Order had difficulty dealing with the bird named a creature of “Golden Era”, it was isolated in the academy. It isn’t possible that it will listen to a mere student.

“Alright, alright. I’ll investigate it at once so go to sleep for now.”

“Make sure you do.”

The young boy who regained some presence of mind became satisfied and went home. The man called ‘Father’ narrowed his eyes and after making sure his son – who will be his heir – left the room, he snapped his fingers and gave out orders.

—- Crush the family members of the child named El, and drive him out of the academy.

5-4. To the Town (1)

[Elmer]

I just arrived at the shoe locker when I remembered that I forgot something, so I returned to the classroom. The classroom, where the sunlight shines through brightly, is still noisy. A while has passed since the afternoon homeroom is over, but today most students are still around.

In the seat a little away from the hallway, boys who get along in our class including Rent and Shuu are gathered, they're talking about something.

There seem to be various types of aristocrats – there are children who only gets along with other aristocrats, but there are others like Shuu who plays with everyone without minding such things.

“...that's why, today...”

However, I cannot hear the contents of their conversation.

“El, are you going home?”

Rent noticed me when I was just about to walk towards the back door of the classroom, so he called out to me.

“Yeah. I have something planned. See you tomorrow.”

“Bye, then.”

“Uh-uh.”

I waved back to Rent who's also waving his hand lightly.

I wonder if everybody's going to play today?

I'm a little envious, but I really have something planned today so I tried to convince myself that there's nothing I can do about it.

“Bye-bye~”

I saw a girl from the class next door in the hallway so I greeted her.

I don't know her name but I worked with her a lot of times as a keeper.

“Eh...”

I only intended to call out to her like normal, but she had a really perplexed expression when she saw me.

“Go...goodbye.”

When the girl saw me she had an expression like, ‘crap!’ and returned a greeting as if she's puzzled.

“Yeah...”

In that awkward atmosphere, I passed ahead and faced the shoe locker.

Perhaps, she doesn't recognize me.

It was not an embarrassed reaction, but rather, more like she's surprised that a guy she never saw spoke to her.

Even though we already worked together a lot of times, is my presence really that thin...

Nevertheless, that reaction.

Even her friend nearby was startled, too.

I took out my shoes while feeling slightly daunted and proceeded to change.

I took a quick look at the school building's glass entrance, and what was slightly projected is a very pale child with flower beds around the school building surrounding him. Red and yellow flowers are vividly in full bloom.

Then I incidentally realized something. Girls never talked to me before.

“Is my face that bad-looking?”

I know it. Most girls in the class became agitated on the day Mathias came, the kid I greeted awhile ago was also one of the girls who went *kya-kya*~.

“I thought my looks aren't bad but...”

I slightly suspected it since before I entered the academy, but Matthias' face has a high deviation value. No matter how you look at it, compared to my childish appearance, Matthias is a perfectly handsome man. Furthermore, that's not the only amazing thing. He has a high stature, he's strong, extremely rich, and intelligent (probably)...

It's to the extent that it makes me wonder why he's not yet married.

I went ahead the path, the one I normally don't use, that leads to the town.

It's the only road to reach the academy so there is very little pedestrian traffic.

I will absolutely make the academy off limits to Matthias soon. For the time being, I'll just hit him once when we meet.

It might have been bad for my head to be filled with such trivial thoughts while I'm in an unusual road which I'm not used to.

There were stairs.

It was already too late when I noticed.

The foot which I stepped forward fell midair.

My body full of momentum was thrown down in the air with surprising swiftness.

It hurts.

I banged my head on stone staircase several times.

In particular, the back of my head is so painful as if it's splitting.

I dimly saw the sky as I tumbled down.

I'll go the edge because it seems like I'll become a hindrance in the passage way.

For some reason, it was the first thing that came to my mind. I stood up unsteadily.

I staggered a little but it doesn't seem like I broke any bone.

Since I fell from that kind of height, I feel like I should have some serious injury.

"Onii-chan, are you al~right? Are you alive~? Are you hurt~? Should I heal it~?"

When I tried to sit down on the lawn, a girl appeared in front of me.

She's looking at my injuries while smiling widely.

"Leave it to Torca! Keep still, okay~?"

The girl took out something from her pocket immediately after that and started to treat my skinned knee.

"It hurts?"

"Just a little..."

She's very reliable even though she's just a small child, and the way she rolled the bandage with her hands is as if she's accustomed to it.

It was really painful but I can't whine in front of such a small child so I pretended to be tough.

"Onii-chan you're amazing! You fell down from that kind of place but your head isn't broken like *bang!*"

"Like bang, you say... You're right."

I laughed at those words from Torca, who had her big eyes opened widely like a perfect circle. Even I, thought that I wouldn't live through that.

It's weird but I feel like I met this kid before.

"It's done!"

"Thanks, Torca-chan... That's right. Have we, by any chance, met in an alley before?"

"In an alle~y? Ah! The Onii-chan from that time!"

That's right.

She was the kid who was accosted by those men during the time Matthias and I went shopping for school supplies.

"After that, were you able to return home properly?"

"Uh-uh! That time, I was surprised so I'm sorry for running away!"

"I'm sorry for surprising you, too. Ah... I have to go now."

We were able to meet after such a long time so I wanted to talk a little more, however I promised to meet someone today.

Once again, I stood up and expressed my gratitude for the treatment.

“Onii-chan, that alley is a road prohibited for Torca-chan~ That’s why, keep it a secret okay~?”

It seems like it was prohibited by her mother because it’s dangerous, but she still used that shortcut.

‘In exchange for me keeping it a secret, don’t go there anymore,’ I left with that reminder.

She appears to live here so it’s likely that we’ll be able to meet again.

I waved my hand to my small friend while thinking of that.

“El-sama!”

“I made you wait.”

Mathias is already there in the meeting place.

It seems like he intends on disguising himself so his identity will be hidden for the time being, but that face wearing sunglasses and that deep red hair is obviously catching the eyes of the people in the surroundings.

“How did you get those injuries?! What happened?!”

“I just tumbled a little. I fell down from the stairs on the way here.”

“Su...such a thing! Is it by chance, that long stone stairway leading to the academy? From a high place like that?! I understand. I will have it take responsibility for El-sama’s injuries! I will destroy it at once! I will convey it to the person from the house on standby. Should it be the West Vern House’s prototype hammer which can destroy everything... no, it should be blown up. I will not permit even one piece of fragment to remain! And the fact the El-sama had gotten injured is also my responsibility, too! I will fall down from all the stairs in the Imperial Capital before blowing them up...”

“Yes, yes. It’s not Matthias’ fault, and also, please don’t blow up the stairs.

Let's hurry up and go shopping.”

It will never end any time soon if he'll be left alone just like that, so I forcibly stopped him from talking.

“That is right. Please pardon me. Let us go.”

Even if he's worrying for my sake, I still think Matthias is strange.

I inclined my head in contemplation on whether the personage Rent was talking about is really the same as this person.

“Hey, is it really here?”

“There is no doubt about it.”

The shop which Matthias guided me to was a compact single house.

<Note: ikken'ya – building resembling a house, occupying a small business.>

I entered inside while being bewildered – there are no products displayed anywhere.

High-quality furniture similar to the ones in Matthias' house is assembled.

If this is a shop, is this even more luxurious than the one from before?

Matthias guided me to the private room in the shop's interior, which he entered without minding at all, so I also followed him.

“Sorry for making you wait. El-sama, Matthias-sama.”

“Yes.”

The room had matching wooden furniture which are dark in color.

They were fully varnished in polishing wax so they appear to be somewhat wet.

A man greeted us in that room.

“It is our first meeting, El-sama. I am the one who manages the Edinnu firm, Eddinu House's first son, Risha. I am pleased to make your acquaintance, hereafter.”

“Nice to meet you, I am El. Please treat me well.”

He appears to be the heir of this shop.

He doesn't look that different in age when compared to Matthias.

His clothes and manner are refined even more than me, I got the impression that this is the brand of this store called Edinnu Firm.

However, even though this is a luxury store, what I want to buy today can't be bought here.

"Well then, I will have the article brought out immediately. I will have the prestige of our firm be displayed. Even if I say so myself, it is something of supreme craftsmanship."

"I look forward to it." (Matthias)

A female in uniform entered the room and came behind Risha-san, then respectfully put out a tray with both of her hands. There is something like a glossy red velvet on the rectangular tray, I realized that there's something sticking out under it. As if it's something natural, the West Vern House's family crest is well-drawn in the cloth.

"Thanks. This is the thing that you have requested."

Risha-san received the white gloves from the woman and put it on his right hand at once, and then he lifted the cloth.

"This is..."

The moment I understood what was placed underneath I sharply caught my breath.

A brilliant blue knife. The blade is sharpened, and it seems like it can cut off anything it touches without resistance. Several kinds of tools which purpose I don't know and a cloth case is lined up beside the knife, and all of them have a golden crest. A long-bodied fish valiantly ascends to the sky, giving off a golden gleam.

...It's totally different.

I'm certain that I asked, 'I want a cleaning equipment'.

The origin of that is because of Sora's proposal.

"Your surroundings, may I clean it?"

<Note: clean, *i.e.* remove trash, including humans. Sora meant people threatening El, specifically the one sent by the boy named Carl.>

During the time when we were both playing like usual in my room, he abruptly asked me that.

The people of the West Vern House are always cleaning perfectly, but it appears like it still looked dirty. I'm sure Sora extremely likes to keep things tidy. I'm the type who doesn't mind it at all, so I told Sora he can do whatever he likes.

I thought that he will start right away, but then he said 'I'll do it next time' and then left.

<Note: Sora used 'kondo' which can mean both 'now' or 'next time'. Sora meant the former but El thought it was the latter.>

There's no helping it since Sora always comes to play at night. But I feel guilty that I made him think I wanted it to be cleaned, that's why I thought I'll give Sora – who likes cleanliness – a cleaning equipment.

That's why I told Matthias I want a cleaning equipment.

Then I was asked what color I like. It's for Sora so I asked for blue. If I remember it correctly, he also asked my favorite thing. I answered animals, but he told me to be more specific. The mental image of 'blue' was still in my mind so what came into me was the figure of Kioran. But did my desire to say 'dragon' transmitted? I judged that it was impossible and mumbled something like, 'Its body is long, it's large, that of sky...' But Matthias nodded and said 'understood'.

Did he comprehend that kind of explanation? As expected, a superior human is indeed different, I thought as I remembered it.

Mathias said that he will have it arranged, and so we arrived to what's happening right now.

How is this a cleaning equipment!?

"I only obtained something this unusual in a coastal town from the neighboring country..."

Risha-san carefully told us what kind of jewel was used, the cloth of the case,

and that it was made by only one craftsman.

Since they spent so much labor and time for this, I can't say that this isn't what I want. In short, accepting this knife is good as a show of gratitude. Even if I have no use for it, I think it's good as a decoration since it's beautiful. I decided to be silent that this isn't a cleaning equipment and accept it.

However, there's still another problem.

I was going to buy today's purchase by my own money.

I grasped the wallet in my pocket tightly. I received this from Lucsher-san under the reason that she got inspirations after I posed as a model.

It looks like a pouch rather than a purse and shaped like the face of an animal which is a cross between a bunny and a cat.

It's fluffy overall and feels good to touch, its red and blue eyes made of gems are also cute so I'm pleased with it.

"Matthias, is this expensive?"

I became uneasy, I quietly asked that close to Matthias' ears so Risha-san wouldn't hear.

"Please do not worry about it. Besides, is there something else you want?"

No!

Matthias is a rich person, that's why in the first place he doesn't seem to have any idea when it comes to buying ready-made goods.

I just experienced a rich person's unimaginable sense and my head reeled.

"I want to buy it by myself. But I only have this much money."

I showed the pouch which gradually became warm from the heat of my hand and appealed to Matthias.

"El-sama does not need to worry about such things."

"No. I have to buy it myself."

We kept on arguing for a while when Matthias suddenly said he remember something.

“I remember. El-sama has proper assets, too.”

“Mine?”

I don't know anything about it at all.

I never worked since I was reborn, so I never earned money.

Even if I earn any money, I don't think I can buy something like this even if I work throughout my whole life.

“That is so. Previously, there was a man who always pained my heart every time I see him, since he reminds me of El-sama. He placed assets under El-sama's name as cost of apology for that incident.”

I knew it immediately – there's no doubt that that man is an embezzler.

“I can pay with that?”

“Yes. I charged an ample amount. Though his crime is not something that money can compensate, I think the properties of that man who is lower than trash, is useful enough. At any rate, I cannot forgive myself. If El-sama gives me permission right now, this life will be...”

“I get it, I get it. I will use that.”

“Fufufu... Matthias is...”

Suddenly, Risha-san's laughter resounded in the room.

“Risha!”

“So-sorry. Wait a moment, I want to laugh... what to do? Kuku...”

“Risha, what is it?”

He's holding his stomach with one hand, and the other is placed on the desk for support. Matthias knit his eyebrows when he saw this. I was surprised with how different he is from his appearance a while ago.

“Risha, what is the matter?”

“It 's my first time seeing Matthias losing composure like that, it's amusing.”

When Matthias saw my blank look, he explained it to me.

“The truth is, Risha and I were classmates. It is not that I intentionally hid it,

but because he is unusually serious about work and I myself just matched the pace...”

“Is that so?”

“There isn’t any news at all about Matthias recently, so I just had to be the one in-charge when the urgent request arrived. To see something that amusing, I’m pleased! Very pleased!”

Risha-san showed a smile that extends over his whole face.

The three of us talked about trivial things for a while, and then the time to leave the store came.

“If there is something you desire, please come by the Edinnu Firm.”

Risha-san returned to his previous manner when he saw us off. After seeing me talk with Matthias, his manner changed as he laugh under his breath while saying, ‘Come again.’

[Third Person POV]

“Matthias, wait.”

The laughing expression of Risha from before suddenly became serious, and he pulled Mathias’ arm with a jerk, just as he was about to follow El.

“What?”

Matthias asks with a somewhat suspicious expression.

“That... Is that really alright? Someone like you should know it, only someone with the blood of the royal family is allowed to use that ‘blue’.”

“I already handed beforehand the documents of approval from the King himself. There is no problem at all. As for those documents, I want you to have it. It is possible that we will use it again.”

“That crest, too... is that matter fine?”

“Yes, it is. That is what El-sama wished for. You can say he never chose it until now. Even if it becomes public, I am a gentleman of a caliber who is capable of using that crest for El-sama.”

Matthias finished speaking without a piece of doubt.

“That age and features, the hair color is different but could that child be Sun Princess’ son? I heard a rumor that she died at childbirth but why is it not revealed? Why was his existence erased?”

“...I have confidence in you so I will trust you.”

You should not be involved in this matter any deeper.

“I understand. I will keep the documents. I will stop meddling into this situation any further. I will manage the documents such that no one will see it.”

“Thank you. The day when everything about El-sama will be revealed will come sometime soon.”

Risha didn’t answer, however, he quietly watched the friend he didn’t see for a long time.

“What?”

Matthias had a puzzled expression.

“It’s nothing. I understood everything. Pardon me for keeping you. When you didn’t follow earlier, your little Master already walked to the direction that is entirely different from the way home. See?”

“El-sama!? Risha, you’re welcome to drop by my house anytime you’re free.”

Matthias chased after El’s small back as he said those parting words.

“I’m glad. You became more interesting than you were in the old days.”

Risha muttered that and turned his back around.

[Elmer]

On the way back, I was fascinated by the things in the town.

“Should I buy this...?”

It’s a hair ornament with a flower motif.

Every time the sunlight hits the lamé, it shines with sparkles.

<Note: – cloth woven from metallic threads, often gold or silver.>

I thought that it's perfect for Shenryl as soon as I saw it.

We never talked personally, but perhaps, we will get along if I gave her a souvenir from the town.

When I looked around me, I saw some girls took similar hair ornaments to the one I have in my hand.

"Excuse me. Please give me this."

It's embarrassing for a man to buy something like this, so I told the cute shop assistant while giving off an atmosphere that I was asked by my sister to buy it for her.

"One silver coin and five copper coins."

I took out one of the coins from my pouch and handed it over while standing on tiptoes with all my might.

I don't know how to count the money here, but when I asked Matthias, he told me this would suffice.

When the shop assistant saw the coin, she carefully received it and then ran to the interior of the shop in panic. I got impatient and thought internally whether I handed the wrong money.

"Please pardon me for making you wait!!"

After waiting for a moment, the one who came out with the change wasn't the cute shop assistant from before, but an old man.

I am not pleased if such an old man will give the change and not the cute shop assistant...

While I was thinking about that, he presented his hand with overflowing coins.

When I gently received it so they won't fall, the old man looked flustered.

"I will receive the change."

I can't hold all the coins so Matthias took over.

"It's no good. It won't fit any further."

The moment we left the store and went outside where there are only a few people, I sighed as I stuffed the change into the pouch. In spite of using both my hands to tightly pack the coins, there are still a lot of copper and silver coins left in Matthias' hands.

"It appears like it will break if you put in more coins. Let's place the remainder in the mansion."

"Yes..."

Just as Mathias said, it was clear that the purse had already reached its limit.

The coins transformed its shape, and the cute animal's face became rugged.

"Here. Let's go home. Turn the carriage."

"Certainly."

A man appeared out of nowhere after Matthias snapped his fingers.

When Matthias handed over the remaining change, it quickly disappeared somewhere.

Unlike at the beginning, I am not surprised anymore.

It already sank deeply into my mind – Matthias is a genuine rich person.

A lot of attendants follow even though it's just shopping at the town.

Even our shopping a while ago is also the same. It was a different person who kept the knife.

Do rich people never buy anything by themselves?

'As expect, huh?' I nodded my head in secret as I thought that, while sneakily placing the hair ornament inside my bag.

This thought never hit me until I received my New Year's money recently.

His sense of money doesn't appear to be something that can be easily changed.

5-5. To the Town (2)

“I just thought this suddenly but, don’t you think there’s a lot of mysteries about El?”

It was after school on a certain day when someone remarked that to the child in a nearby seat.

“Well, that’s right.”

The boy who was addressed stopped his hands from packing his things and after thinking for a while, he replied that.

“No one knows where he lives and what kind of person he is, too.”

Shuu, who was silent a while ago, suddenly joined in the conversation. Several others were also interested in the conversation so they gathered.

“The more I think about it, the more I feel like El is mysterious...”

When he finished saying that while standing, Shuu pulled a nearby seat and sat down.

Probably because he is an aristocrat, Shuu speaks in an adult-like manner compared to the kids around him. He is good at properly taking care of people so he also receives abundant trust from the people around him.

“I wonder if it’s a false name?”

“What do you mean?”

Rent began explaining to the child who appears to not understand what it meant.

“He doesn’t have a family name so it means he’s not an aristocrat, right? But I think El and I are similar. Having said that though, I don’t think he was lying when he said he doesn’t have a family name, too.”

“Well, now that you said that, doesn’t El have this unapproachable aura? I was confused when he first talked to me. I wonder if it’s because of his atmosphere?”

The people listening nodded their head in agreement. When Rent heard that, he realized he was not the only one who thought of that.

“His mannerisms, too. I think he received lessons like someone from the upper classes. If he’s living ordinarily, it wouldn’t be like that. I saw the contents of El’s bag but, don’t all his belongings have excellent prices?”

What Shuu said was reasonable.

Matthias arranged all of El’s belongings, it’s impossible for the natural-born rich Matthias to possess something that’s only half-decent. After being re-trained on fashion by his mother, Matthias distressed for one week on what small articles he should choose for the bag.

El do not care about the what he carries, but Shuu is sensitive on perceiving that, as he is someone surrounded by excellent goods on a daily basis.

“The lunch he carries is also amazing.”

“Amazing?”

“How do I say this... it’s extravagant? He should be considerably fired up if it was made by his mother. But El doesn’t eat at all, only a small portion of it.”

Afterwards, stories on the mysterious aspects of El sprang up.

Meanwhile, the person in question who should have returned home, came back to the classroom.

“Let’s follow El!” (Rent)

“Waa-?”

“When I asked El where he lives before, he said he doesn’t know. But is that possible? I’m sure he have some kind of secret. That’s why, let’s follow him quietly and confirm it.” (Rent) The class quiets down.

The seats are normally already vacated during this time after classes, but a lot of students stayed because of the interesting talk today.

Even though there are kids who did not actively participated in the

conversation, they also listened to everyone's stories.

“Certainly, the fact that no one knows El's house is strange.”

This time, everyone nodded at Shuu's words.

All students in the academy live in the Imperial Capital.

Actually, the cases where they are already acquaintances before entering the academy is not unusual.

That being the case, if El moved recently, someone should surely know about it.

It's unlikely that the intelligent and reliable El doesn't know the address of his own house, Shuu thought. He must be concealing something. Shuu was the most suspicious from the first time he saw El.

If he is an aristocrat's son, it will surely become a rumor if he has such beautiful features.

Shuu never heard anything about what he is seeing right now.

If he doesn't really have a family name, he may be an illegitimate child Shuu heard every about now and then.

His father doesn't know, but Shuu is aware of the rumors among the servants.

That is why, he can understand it a little.

El underwent a medical treatment and was allowed into the academy, he must have a father with considerably high social position and generously used his money for him.

And then, the thing he is most anxious about. Silver hair... Only a handful of people can use magic, and as for the hair of most people, there are various colors intermingled with shades of brown or gray. However, he never saw silver hair. Hair color is a kind of measuring tool that indicates the quantity of magical power. There is a probability that El can only use a little magic, or none at all. It is fatal to be in a family with old history and not have magic power. If El is actually an aristocrat...

It was the worst pattern Shuu thought about.

This is because a rarely born child of an aristocrat with poor magical power is treated cruelly. The strength of the parent's magical power influences it, so such thing is rare. Fortunately, there were few nobles with such a prejudices in this class, and he never heard anyone speak ill about El's hair.

With different feelings from his classmates' pure curiosity, Shuu decided to search for El's secret and see for himself.

"This is the road to the town."

Several boys and girls followed El's back in secret.

In the Imperial Capital, high-ranking aristocrats' neighborhood is off-limits for civilians, it is distinctly separated.

Since he walked along road that leads to the town, then El is not a high-ranking aristocrat.

"Doesn't it smell good just now?"

A girl from the same class tilts her head to one side.

From time to time, a fragrant smell rides on the wind lightly and brushed on everyone's noses.

"It's El's."

"This?"

"Didn't you notice it? El's things and clothes have the same fragrance."

"I noticed it, too."

Several of them who sits near El also agreed.

Shuu breathed the air again. His nose is filled with a sweet liquid that appeased his brain momentarily, then disappeared abruptly like a phantom. Only the refreshing fragrance remained.

"It's true..."

His voice leaked out unconsciously...

"It is El-sama, after all!"

“What’s that ‘El-sama’?”

The girls made a commotion and started squealing *kyaakya*~ so Rent mumbled a complaint as he asked that.

Though they are tailing El, it doesn’t seem like there’s any room for nervousness.

“His level is different from the boys in our class. So I decided to place ‘-sama’!”

“Eeh~ eeh~”

The other girls got excited, seeming to be uninterested in answering Rent.

“Let’s leave the girls and run after El immediately. We’ll lose him if this goes on.”

Just as Shuu said, El’s figure became quite small and then turned at the corner.

Though they might know where he’s go because the entrance to the town is a straight road, it’s better not to take their eyes off of him.

Rent and Shuu quickened their steps to run after their other classmates.

Right then, some black shadow cut across their backs quickly when they turned the corner.

The people in this road should only be their companions who tailed El until a while ago.

“Stop following him. Do not concern yourself in this matter any further. This is a warning.”

“Eh...”

The instant they passed by each other, the voice suddenly murmured that in their ears and made them hold their breath. Even if they look back, there isn’t a sign of a person anywhere. There is only the road which is surrounded by greenery on both sides. Still, the low voice that whispered towards the two of them still remained in their ears.

“Just now, what—?”

Rent tried to convince himself, but his voice trembled with fear.

“I don’t know... about investigating El...”

Rent noticed that the hand Shuu unconsciously used to grasped on him had become wet. Shuu was the type to remain composed and observe his surroundings. However, the incident a while ago made him tense and feel horror.

He began to sort out his head that had become confused, having no idea of anything.

Who was that guy and why did we not notice him at all until he passed beside us? They both did not say anything to each other. Their classmates waves at them until they reached the both of them while running.

“Rent, Shuu! It’s bad! El disappeared!”

“What do you mean?”

The two of them thought that it’s impossible to lose sight of El if he was only walking.

“He should be at the stairs, but he disappeared when we turned at the corner.”

“No way.”

They began running while saying that.

Even if it ran through the stone stairs to forget the fear from a while ago, and reached the town. The figure of El can’t be seen anywhere.

“That’s strange. Even if the El descended from the stairs, we should certainly find him here.”

“Right!? He can’t just suddenly disappear!”

Since El can’t be found anywhere, they decided to give up looking for him.

They sat on the bench in the plaza and discussed with all the members who gathered.

“Either way...”

Shuu who was lost in thought while the conversations went on, started talking.

Let’s stop investigating El any further. I’m sure he has some circumstances he

can't say and that we cannot understand, he persuaded everyone.

He did not speak of the warning given to the two of them.

“Even if we do not know El's house, he is still our friend. ”

Rent placed his arms at the back of his head and lied down the lawn on his back. His expression is hidden by the bright sunlight.

“I see. Let's stop it before El hates us.”

The one who said that was the kid who mistakenly poured water on El.

“That's right.”

That feeling is transmitted to the other children.

Even if they knew nothing at the moment, El already became familiar with the class.

His sense of values is sometimes amusing and there is a problem with his scarce expression, but that El who is good in taking care of people is relied on by everyone.

The members who understood it decided to disperse.

Everyone already went home, but Rent and Shuu had not left the plaza yet.

The most important talk is not yet over.

“...I forgot. El very easily tamed that strange bird. That cannot be nothing. But I can't understand it. That voice...”

Shuu begun to talk bit by bit. As if he's looking for the real nature of the thing that hazily collected in his chest so far.

“I felt a chill. That was dangerous. I think it was right to not tell anyone about it.”

Rent sat down next to Shuu during that time. Though the remark before was Rent's real feelings, it's also true that he wanted to avert everyone's awareness.

“That's...right...”

There's so much they don't understand to confide to everybody.

They thought it was better to keep the warning from that unidentified person inside both of their minds.

They no longer thought about investigating.

“El looks fragile, he also looks weak in a fight. He’s kind, but being tricked by appearances is a painful experience. I wonder when I’ll learn about what El is hiding inside.”

He is expressionless, but he’s not particularly cold. I sometimes can’t predict his actions, but he seems happy being together with everyone, Shuu added with a voice that is somewhat refreshed.

“We’ll know because there’s still the middle school and high school, too. There maybe reasons why he needs to hide it.”

Rent knew that Shuu wishes to enter middle school and high school.

If they graduate from grade school, the dormitory life awaits for them.

Their talk moved on to El’s unusual behavior they saw just after he was admitted.

“I was worried about El at first when we did the test of courage with the class. I think that’s dangerous.”

Shuu didn’t make cracks about it. Only a silence of affirmation. The ominous bird in the academy’s rear yard. Because it is very dangerous, brutal and agile, someone unskilled at magic wouldn’t be able to compete against it.

It is a difficult pet for the owner, but it must be protected at the academy because it is said to be a First Generation animal.

He did not know who proposed it in spite of getting called to the office if they ever approached without a teacher, but it was popular in Rent’s former class – the game of who can approach the strange bird as near as possible.

It is considered that the person who gets the closest is the most courageous.

Therefore, when a boy was admitted, it became natural for them to let him do it.

Meanwhile, the one who appeared is small and thin, they can hardly imagine El's figure confronting that ominous bird.

Rather, it seems like he will fail to escape in time and will be eaten by the strange bird.

As a result of hesitating in letting El do the test of courage alone, they decided to let everyone do it over.

"Nobody can possibly expect him to tame that ominous bird. Everyone ran away the moment it began to rage, I thought my heart was going to stop when he went alone."

"Now that I think about it, he looked confident at that time."

Rent thought that the reason why El ignored the advice to run at the edge was that he's sure about winning over that strange bird.

"El didn't only tame it but also commanded it, that's too out of standard... For him to be weak in magic is ridiculous."

That animal only obeys individuals that it instinctively recognizes to be stronger than itself.

The First Generation is a race from the ancient times and the beings and plants that belongs to it is now almost nonexistent.

It is said that they are beyond the category of the understanding of the general beings alive today, but Rent thought that the ominous bird behaved based on the strength it perceived from El.

Rent saw those eyes. El threatened to use that strange bird against Carl Vuelshina. He did not hear the conversation, but he can imagine the contents of it. Most likely, he made rash remarks towards El. It's difficult to think that an angry Carl will leave El just as it is.

There should have been an unusual economic problem in El's family any time soon.

Rent became worried and pondered anxiously about it for a while.

He thought about El for a while, there was day when El reported that the house was littered with fireworks, or there was also that time when the house

was partly set on fire, and there's also a day when El said that a kitchen had exploded when he returned home.

El had a serious look, as if it's something natural.

Fire seems like a daily occurrence in El's house.

"I don't know what it means..."

He cannot investigate it deeply, so he doesn't know whether it was just El's joke.

I'm sure I won't understand it, he sighed, feeling something similar to resignation.

But it deepened his interest on El. It was at that moment when both Rent and Shuu thought of wanting to be together further with El.



The town leads to the Aristocrat District, commonly called as nobles' avenue. It's wide and paved so that a carriage has a plenty of leeway, and several of them can pass by each other.

Separating from Shuu who returns to his house at that direction, Rent walked from the plaza towards his house.

"Rent! Is school over?"

While he wandered around the noisy shopping street, he heard a woman's voice among the shops that lined along the road.

"Nee-chan! That's right. I'm returning home now."

<Note: Nee-chan, affectionate way of calling an older female. May or may not be used for blood relations.>

The nearby older sister, whom he played together during childhood, waves a hand at him.

Rent calls her as 'nee-chan' affectionately. He ran and came near in order to speak to her after a long time. However, only this part of the street is strangely crowded, and Rent's shoulder was hit several times on the way.

"Good job for today."

“Thank you. Why is it so crowded today?”

There’s no event in the shopping district particularly.

Rent thrust his hands on the stand, and leaned his body closer to ask.

“That’s because...”

The woman referred to as ‘nee-chan’ looked around the street as if to look for somebody then lowered her voice.

“I think he’s not here any more. What a pity. A while ago, an amazing kid came to our shop.”

Rent dropped eyes to the products on the stand where his hands are placed. Female ornaments are placed.

There are daily necessities sold inside the store but the pins and rubber bands marketed outside appears to be popular these days.

“What do you mean ‘amazing’?”

It has been emphasized by his nee-chan before that the designs differ, but everything looks same to Rent.

Still, the girls in his class seems to have it, too, so there’s no doubt that they’re selling.

“I think it’s a child smaller than Rent... and he took out a medium-sized gold coin for payment! My hand trembled when I received it. Dad collects all clan’s coins so when he pulled that out, I thought ‘it’s an emergency’!”

Her cheeks faintly blushed, she was also talkative more than usual, she was that much excited.

“Gold coin! I never saw someone shop with a coin like that! I want to see it, too!”

“Too bad. I already gave it to Dad for safe-keeping so it’s not here anymore.”

“Che, what!?”

Rent clicked his tongue in frustration.

“But why did a Young Master like him came to a shop like this? I didn’t see his

bodyguard's face... he may be a prince in some country.”

“No way, a prince will never come to this area.”

Rent waved his hands and said, ‘no way, no way,’ with an astonished look.

“Right.”

Among the royal family of the present King, there is the country's First Princess Amalia-sama had already married a King from another country, then First Prince Ricardo-sama, Second Prince Sveri-sama who attends the academy, and Third Prince Tim-sama. Holding powerful abilities, they were existences above the clouds that everyone wishes to see even a glance.

Rent wants to enter the Knight Order.

His yearning towards the royal family is of course, high.

“By the way, did you pick up Torca-chan?”

“Is it that time already?”

It seems like he played longer than usual.

He carried his backpack on his back again and began to run to the destination while hearing words his nee-chan 's reminder not to run too much.

The place Rent stopped in was the front of the church that was built properly to adapt itself to the town.

“Excuse me~”

He passed through the familiar gate and said his greetings first at the deserted entrance.

“Rent-nii!”

“Ugh... agh...”

His groan leaked instinctively with the impact of the small mass strongly knocking against his abdomen.

“You're late!”

“Sorry, sorry.”

Rent peels off his younger sister clinging to him, using one hand.

She clung to her older brother's body while being peeled off, and that gave off a tearing sound. In addition, to express maximum anger, she puffed up her red cheeks until they bulged.

"Ara, Rent-kun came."

"Sister, I'm sorry, thank you for today, too. We're going home now."

"Yes, yes. Bye then, Torca-chan."

"I'll come again~!"

The younger sister waved towards the Sister while saying 'bye-bye', Rent also bowed.

The Sister saw them off with a smile

"You know, today~"

Rent's younger sister seems to intend to tell about the people she met today one by one.

Even if they go home, both their mother and father wouldn't be there, yet.

So Rent always goes on behalf of his parents who are busy with work, and picks up his little sister. His young little sister cannot be left alone at home, so they leave her in the church near their house during the day.

"An then I saw an injured kid~!"

"Injured...? Where did you meet?"

"Uhm... in a slope..."

Torca, who started saying she found the child in the slope, suddenly had a panicked expression and covered her mouth with both hands.

The people who looks after Torca works at the church.

Rather, saying that Torca is allowed to play in the premises instead of looking after is more accurate. The Sister also takes care of her but she has no free time.

"Did you slipped out again?!"

Torca shook her head repeatedly to Rent's question.

He grabbed her head and then crouched down, forcibly making eye contact with her. However, Torca still avoided eye contact. When she tells a lie, Torca always turns her eyes away. Rent was convinced that she met the child with injury by slipping out the church.

In the Imperial Capital, the vicinity of the church is relatively safe. Because they lived there for a long time, there are also a lot of residents who know Torca and him, too. Still she might meet someone dangerous if she wanders about.

Rent reminded Torca several times, doing it instead of his busy mother.

“I’m sorry! I’ll never do it again!”

Torca felt despondent when Rent just stared ahead with a grim expression.

It might be very boring. He understood Torca’s feelings, too.

The truth is, he was supposed to look after her. It is a fact that he feels responsible for leaving his young sister alone, as a result of him attending primary school.

“Can you promise not to do it ever again?”

“Yeah.”

“The I’ll forgive you today. So? Is the child with injury alright?”

“Blood flowed from his foot, he fell doooow~n”

“There’s still someone who gets injury from falling down these days?”

What a clumsy person, Rent laughed.

From what he heard the child is bigger than Torca, at an age where it’s not strange for him to be already attending the academy.

He realized that there are really various types of people in this world.

Among his classmates, there’s Shuu who’s a bit of a calculating type and there’s also Carl who can’t accept anyone that didn’t please him.

How about EI?

He has a mature mind, but always goes of somewhere. He has a look of disinterest in everything, but that is not the truth. He’s often absentminded, but

unexpectedly listen to Rent's stories... it's fun being together with him...

"Hey, Torca. Should I go to middle school? Or how about military academy?"

It's not Torca's concern, but Rent called out to her and asked that.

Their Mother works as a physician at the royal palace, and both the brother and sister who were brought up in a household with a military officer as a father, have no doubt about their future dreams.

For the elder brother Rent, to be a knight like his father and the younger sister Torca, to be a pharmacist like her mother.

Should he graduate from high school in the academy then become a military officer? There are two choices in entering the military academy. His parents urged him to choose which he prefers the most. He must enter a dormitory, but the dormitory of the military academy is in the Imperial Capital so he can come back on holidays. But if he enters middle school, his little sister will become sad. He was troubled about it for a long time.

"If I'll go away, will you dislike it?"

He'll enter the army if Torca will ask him to stay. He wants to go to middle school. However, his grades are bad and he thinks that the military academy is more suitable for him.

"Not~at~all! If Rent-nii isn't here I'll have more sweets~ I~don't~mind~at~all~!"

"How cruel..."

He let go of their clasp hands as the surroundings is previously crowded, and then pulled on Torca's cheeks sideways. She retaliated and both of the children now had funny faces. Torca struck Rent's arm, and struggled even when he let go.

"It hurts!!"

He released a Torca after rolling around. His little sister glared at him while rubbing her aching cheeks. It's the usual spectacle.

Their Mother will return home during the night. Their father is on a duty away from the Imperial Capital but he had to report today, and so they at dinner together... As expected, abandoning this daily life... He, himself...

“That’s why, I’m saying, go attend middle school. Rent-nii, will you go together with your friends? You look happy these days.”

“Is... that so...”

Rent had his eyes wide opened with his little sister’s remark that hit the target. Though he spent his days at home like nothing’s different at all, his little sister seems to feel it.

“That’s right. You’re grinning when you come back. You always talk about school.”

“I see. Then I’ve decided!”

Rent’s heart had decided. In the first place, it’s not in his personality to worry about something. Didn’t the answer come out by itself?

“I’ll attend middle school.”

He’ll spend another two years carefully with his little sister and family.

If he admits it himself, the thought that he was worrying about it was a lie since the beginning.

“Hmmm. Then you better study.”

“I’ll study from tomorrow on!”

He took the hand of his younger sister, who nodded in satisfaction.

“Should we play today until mom comes back?”

He began running while inviting his little sister who gladly agreed.

Two long shadows is silhouetted on the road in the Imperial Capital.

5-6. One day, the Prince-sama... (1)

When the freezing cold had started to alleviate, the grade school department was given a long vacation. The students who were given massive amount of homework greeted spring into their homes. El transferred from the Imperial Capital into the West Vern house's main residence, spending the latter half of his vacation there.

“It's leisure time~”

He feebly leaned on the chair by the window and placed his hands on his forehead. His eyes felt hot when he gradually closed them, and he realized that he had finally overused them.

Right now, El is alone in the spacious room.

Lucsher-san forcibly dragged Matthias, taking him along to help in her work. Edna had gone shopping, and Leont – who had also followed them into the main residence – said it was a date, and then stalked her.

The whereabouts of Richard-san, who appears at unexpected places in unexpected moments, is currently unknown to El. Besides, what could Richard-san possibly do if El asked him to pay attention to him? Though he is curious, he does not want to know.

Several books are piled up on the desk since a while ago. The holiday homework, materials used for them, and the reference books from the mansion.

He finished the problem early, but El can't find anything he wants to do now that he is done with them. He can prepare for future lessons, but he wants to enjoy himself if possible. He does not want to use his worn-out mind any longer.

... What had he done to kill time up until now?

Phone, television, internet, games, manga. The things he had taken for granted

are now nonexistent here. In that world, he had to live while being pressed for time each and everyday, so he did not have any spare time at all. When he came into this world, he supposed the time he spent gazing absentmindedly at the skies increased.

“Really, free time...”

There is little entertainment in this world. Still, Matthias told him before that there are card games and board games. Even if the playing cards are different, he will have Matthias teach him time next time. He will learn it, and then invite everyone to play together.

He pondered about various things, then let his waist sink into the soft chair while thinking, ‘I’ve gotten used to this world’ .

Right then, he heard a knocking sound at the door. Matthias might have been liberated from work. He frantically fixed his sloppy sitting posture and answered, ‘Come in’ .

“El-sama, I am here to relay the missive Shenryl-sama sent for you. She will be coming here soon.”

The maid I have seen before in the mansion, bowed down and immediately left.

Shenryl-chan is coming into this room? The same Shenryl-chan who continued ignoring me all this time?

He ruminated over the verbal message in his head several times, then stood up from falling off the chair.

“Why? What do I do? A-a... anyway, I must change for the time being.”

I expected to stay in the mansion the whole day today. That’s why, I am only wearing a house-dress right now.

The frequency of changing his clothes strangely increased when he arrived here. He change clothes when getting up in the morning, he change clothes during midday, then he change clothes at night. Before, Matthias and Edna stopped him when he tried to go out with the same clothes he was wearing. It seems like the clothes for going out is also different.

With that custom, he cannot greet Shenryl-chan with a mere house-dress. He does not understand it very well, but it seems to be an extremely rude thing to do.

Let's change clothes.

El decided, and ran to the room next door. He unfastened the buttons while running then threw off his clothes. He is surprised that he finished earlier compared to when someone is assisting him. It's been a long time since he did it by himself.

He reached his destination at last, while dropping off clothes here and there, and then flung open the closet which is usually off-limits to him. Clothes in hangers are lined up in a row.

"Damn! What should I choose?"

Even if he looked at them, he cannot judge which is appropriate for the current situation. The worst thing is, he cannot reach the hanger since he is too short.

It's Matthias. If it's Matthias, he can reach that height.

Though he is having difficulties with his short stature, God gave him some two or three good points. El restrained his anger since he has no outlet for it, and came up with what he should do instead.

Even if Shenryl-chan arrives any moment now, it would not be strange. If she sees his current appearance, he will never be able to talk to her again.

Time is precious, he thinks, placing a chair right below the clothes so he can grab at their hem. He then extended his arm with all his might and jumped. The hanger successfully came off but several clothes covered his face, and El fell backwards.

"Ouch. I hit my waist. Are these the clothes? No, this one? They all look the same. Ah, really. I'll just choose this."

El rubbed his aching waist while looking among the clothes scattered at the floor.

Even if I claim this for Matthias' credit, the clothes are by no means the same even if they resemble each other.

It's winter so El chose something with a thick material. He slid his hand through the sleeves of his chosen attire. He finished fastening the buttons of the crisp shirt then put on a cardigan. He wore only shorts for bottoms, and then put on the displayed brown boots. He picked up the clothes on the floor using both hands and threw them on top of his bed with a thud. He cannot place them back one by one, so he'll just put them in order later.

"Next is... right, the room! The room is messy!"

He quickly but noisily returned to the room he was in a while ago. He somehow only used the first room today for work. He gathered up the books and papers and returned to the second room again so he can place them on the bed. He repeated this several times, and when he finally finished putting away the last book, someone knocked on the door.

Perhaps, it would be better if I had the time to prepare tea.

While thinking of that, he returned the first room to greet Shenryl-chan. He hastily went ahead. Then, something got in his way and made him sprawl forward. He caught himself with both hands, and his face came into a close distance with the carpet.

And then, there was a sound of the doorknob turning. It's a total one rotation.

What a worst timing! Am I going to meet her with this unsightly appearance?

Shenryl-chan's red hair peeped into the room.

"Excuse me. Is this a good time...?"

"Come in."

I'll lay all my cards in the table. Fortunately, he had time to sit on the chair. El picked up the coat that twined his feet afterwards. It is a bulky coat made of fur. It looks like he dropped it carelessly, but then he frantically changed his expression as if nothing is amiss.

"I'm sorry for visiting so sudden. I have something to ask of El-sama."

"Yes, I do not mind. What is it you request?"

He fiddled with the coat in his hand. This is the first time they spoke directly.

She looks younger than me, but she has a very steady tone. Her appearance is suitable for her age, however she is born as an aristocrat so she is precocious. It is perhaps due to the big expectations of her surroundings. High society exists and Shenryl's teacher come and go out of the mansion everyday.

"This."

She held out a basket knitted out of tree vines.

"I would like to pick some flowers for Oniisama in the forest. Would you lend me your assistance?"

"For Matthias?"

El blinked in surprise due to that sudden remark, and asked that back, but Shenryl-chan only pushed a basket towards him quietly without saying anything.

"It is freezing outside today. Still, I believe that coat will warm you enough. Well then, I will wait for you at the entrance."

When El spared a glance at the coat, Shenryl-chan quickly left in a stylish manner so he wasn't able to see her off.

"Eh..."

Left alone in the room, El alternately looked at the basket and the door.

Why would she invite me suddenly? Is it because our ages are close? The fact that she likes Matthias is true as I expected, and I'm happy that she meet me without being discouraged.

"It will be bad if I made her wait. Shall I go?"

El put on the coat and the fur collar tickled his cheeks.

Should he leave a message for Matthias?

Shenryl-chan took proper measures against the cold weather, I'm sure she told someone that she'll be going out with me. If that's the case, Matthias will eventually hear about it.

He halted in front of the door for a while before he left the room. He retraced his steps once more and reached for something in the second shelf, then thrust his hand in his coat pocket.

El began to walk ahead.

I have a feeling that I can do it today.



“Shenryl-chan also goes to school, right? Will you be in third grade next term?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll be in fifth grade, so it’s a two-year-difference?”

“The difference is three years.”

“Really? I am older than you but you really converse well.”

“This much is natural.”

“Is that so...”

The sound of crunching dead leaves clearly reverberated in his ears. They moved on towards the depths of the forest while exchanging poor words that cannot be considered a conversation.

It was still daytime but the foliage blocks out the light so it was slightly dark. El scolded himself from being discouraged after seeing Shenryl-chan walk inside without hesitation and without stumbling on the tree’s roots.

I did not intend to do something like that, but it is true that Matthias took care of me since before so I cannot blame her for thinking I stole her big brother. But she invited him today. El was sure it’s possible for them to be on good terms.

“That is the flower I wanted.”

After a long time in the depths of the forest, Shenryl-chan finally stopped.

“This red flower?”

“Yes. One basket full of these.”

There are two red flowers at my feet.

“A full basket, huh... It looks like it will take time since they don’t bloom in once place.”

They bloom slightly away from each other, and there were only a few of them El can see in that spot. It seems like filling two baskets of the flowers will be a lot

of work.

I'll pick flowers more than Shenryl-chan. While thinking of that, El reached out to a flower he came across. The stalk broke off after a slight resistance.

When he looked beside him, Shenryl-chan was also diligently collecting flowers. It appears that she isn't worried even when her skirt which protrudes from her coat reached the ground either. She is accustomed to the forest so she might like to play outside. El thought he saw an unexpected side of her.

He put it in the basket and looked for the next flowers while taking uncertain steps. If he wouldn't find a flower, he will call out to Shenryl-chan and then they will move. Then he will let his eyes wander again in the ground. He merely repeated that earnestly.

It was when they had filled the basket with about two-thirds of flowers.

"Hey, this..."

He called out to her while minding his aching neck due to looking below all the time. The appearance of that beige coat which was slightly far away from him is now nowhere in sight.

"Shenryl-chan? Shenryl-chan?"

His voice grew louder and became impatient. He stamped the ground which he walked carefully until a while ago, and went around the same place several times. He did not find her even if he gradually increased his range. He did not see her from her usual position.

"Not here..."

The sky turned red, and the forest is going to greet the dusk soon.

The mushroom with a red speck made a noise when his hand hit it, and he fell into the ground.

"This is my fault. Because I didn't pay attention. What do I do? What do I do? What do I do?"

What do I do? He repeatedly said this in an incoherent mutter. And yet, the circumstances did not changed. Because I took my eyes off her, Shenryl-chan got lost, that fact only unnaturally made the pounding of his chest harder.

As his shadow stretched longer, his steps gradually became fast. He did not see Shenryl-chan even when he walked and walked.

“...ah, I see. It already became this dark.”

The day came to a close. The existence that illuminates the forest sunk, and the world dyed red turned dark. He felt a floating sensation later on, and he was falling before he knew it. He frantically placed his hand on a tree's trunk for support. If he thought about it, it might be the first time he went outside at this time. Is it already time for dinner? There are neither a lamp nor an illumination sold in shops, and the darkness of the forest's depths made his imagination even worse. His body shook due to the cold.

“Shenryl-chan!”

In this dark, it is difficult to walk due to the tree's roots. However, he kept on going forward. This is his responsibility as the older one. From the distance, the howl beasts reverberated. In that place where he did not know what is behind and in front of him, what could he have felt?

He let his foot take a step forward while feeling around for the tree's trunk using his right hand.



Even if his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and both of his legs are complaining of the pain, El did not find Shenryl. His hands and the feet had become dirty from tripping on the ground. He had to use all of his strength for walking on the mud before, so he is worn out mentally and physically.

The bad visibility shaved off El's physical strength. Still, he did not let go of the basket he was holding.

“Shenryl... chan?”

He repeatedly called out her name for the nth time, when before him, he saw the moon casting a fleeting light overhead.

“I came here before. This lake, I remember it.”

Some composure settled into his mind when he realized he knew this place. He approach the huge lake as if he is drawn into it. He placed the basket beside him

and bend down to his knee then looked into the lake. Reflected back to him is an expression as if he would cry any moment now. He wanted to avert his eyes from that miserable sight. El turned his face as if to run away, and the basket came into his view.

... Only several petals and two flowers remained in the basket. He fell several times, and they also fell at that time.

“Haha. What are you doing, El. That’s no good. After getting lost, now you lose the important flowers... Ah, really. What are you really doing...”

El’s dry laughter stopped at once.

How pathetic. He violently gripped the flower and threw it out to the lake with all his strength. But the flower was too light so it did not flew far. It floated on the surface of the water while making a ripple.

It will go underwater before long, El saw at it slowly fall under. To the pitch-dark bottom of the lake.

He unconsciously reached for the flower and gripped it. A drop of the water dripped from its stalk. He clenched his hand around the flower and felt relieved for some reason he cannot understand.

Right at that moment, the lake changed into a bright red color.

“A mountain fire?”

When he looked up, the interior of the forest is burning. That place brightened like daytime.

The instant that the wondrous scenery snatch his mind, he grasped the basket and flowers immediately and stood up.

— — — I’m sure Shenryl-chan is over there.

He began to run without hesitation.

5-7. One day, the Prince-sama... (2)

“...The moment when the hem of Julianna’s shabby dress is almost caught, she heard the sound of a horse’s hoofs from somewhere.

[Julianna!] cried out the man on the horse as he saw Julianna. He is someone whom Julianna met in the town, a young man whom she is secretly attracted to.

However, she learned it in the parade some time ago.

The young man is the sickly Prince of the country who rarely goes out. [He and I are not suited for each other]. The parade she was looking forward to turned out like that, she could not look at it any longer and ran away.

She wandered aimlessly, and thieves caught her right then. She was found by the Prince she wants to see the least, and Julianna’s cheeks became wet with tears.

The young man on a white horse surveyed his surroundings with unsparing glare and then shouted. [Do not touch her!]

He gallantly descended from his horse and pulled out a sword from the scabbard on his waist, the thieves were knocked down with magnificent movements. It was as if he was a different person from the young man who was always next to her. She was captivated by that figure and thought, ‘As expected, he is different from my shabby self’.

The prince sheathed his sword after rendering all the thieves unconscious, then held out a hand to Julianna who is still sitting on the ground.

[I am sorry for keeping silent about it. My true name is Julius. I am a prince of this country. I wanted you to see the real me so I never told you. Come, let’s return.]

[Something like that... where in the world will we return to? Someone of my

status does not suit you!]

[Our social position is irrelevant. Julianna, I've always wanted you to hear this. I want you to marry me. I give you my word that I will never take any concubine, either. You are the only one I love.]

[Julius...!] Julianna wiped her tears and took the hand of the prince.

Later, Julianna and Julius' wedding were held. The whole nation gave their blessing when they saw that both of them looked happy. Julianna was beautiful, and continued staying close beside Julius as a kind queen..."

After reading the book in a monotone and reaching the last page, Shenryl pushed the book away.

"This is also useless. Why are all their contents the same?"

A lot of romance books are lined up in the bookshelves. As the country develops, the literacy rate of Almerti Kingdom gradually goes up, too. A lot of stories that are popular among the people are now published into books. And a large quantity of these books about romance are gathered in Shenryl's room.

"The prince is cool, brave and the strongest in the country – they are all lies. Aren't all the things written in the picture books all wrong? Besides, it would not go so easy with that kind of distinction in social status. Even if the citizens give their blessing, the aristocrats will invariably oppose it. If he does not take a concubine, he cannot produce a child easily. The country will surely be in disorder."

Back when she was still a child, she looked at picture books many times over. She believed that her Prince in a white horse will come sometime.

However, this dream was easily destroyed by adults.

It was the first time she was taken to the Imperial Capital. Thereupon, Prince Tim de Almerti was waiting for Shenryl. The third prince of this country, her younger fiance. She does not have any particular objections to her marriage partner. That is the duty of a female aristocrat, something that they accept as inevitability.

"But he's not like the prince I expected!"

In the room without maids, she raised her voice.

The King did not expect Third Prince Tim to succeed the throne as there is still the Second Prince. That is why they decided his fiancée early... or so it seems. A female with a social position that is suitable for someone with the right to the throne – the West Vern House's eldest daughter was chosen as she is the closest in age.

At present, Shenryl and Tim's relationship is that of close childhood friends. They had no opportunities to play with friends of the same generation, but the two of them spend their time together (playing). Shenryl is ignorant about the intentions of the adults' who live in the royal palace, since she spends time playing with Tim in a different location inside the palace. He played in the sand and became muddy, then got sprained in a mock sword fight — Shenryl's prince on a white horse rapidly disappeared.

“Nevertheless, Oniisama, Matthias-oniisama is the only different...!”
Just like that, Shenryl admired her second older brother, Matthias. She spent her time in the main residence until she entered the academy, so she never saw him. However, she heard the stories from maids and butlers.

Matthias-sama is intelligent, and is believed to be stronger than the royal family.

The story about him achieving victory in the Tournament became a legend.

When Matthias came to the Imperial Capital, Shenryl cannot forget the first time she saw him. She can't help being happy even if he rarely showed himself. Are you busy? You hardly come back home and only drop by unexpectedly when I am busy.

It was clear that Matthias stays somewhere away from the mansion, but Shenryl never heard about his job from her surroundings. However, she thought her Oniisama who have good prospects for the future, will surely be involved in something grand.

And yet...

Shenryl looked outside the window. Noon passed, and the warmest time in the cold season is about to end. She handed over an order to the maid who just

came in. The maid might be a new servant. It would be easier if it's a maid who's accustomed to various things in the house, but a new maid who doesn't understand anything will be convenient for today's circumstances.

The maid went out of the room. Shenryl stood up and let the laces and cloths on her lap fall down to the place she was sitting before. She went towards the room's interior where overflowing winter clothes were lined up. Shenryl looked among them what she feels wearing today.

Her mother, Lucsher is referred to as the pioneer in the clothing section of this country. She entered the academy dormitory and began to lay emphasis on her favorite, which is sewing.

Nevertheless, her mother was not satisfied in the dainty embroidery alone that is aristocrats' taste. She decided to make her own dress. It was said that her novel designs were rejected no matter whom she showed it to. But her mother liked it. Therefore, she decided to wear the dress she made on tea parties.

Female aristocrats like backbiting in their spare time. From an early age, Shenryl often went in and out of places where there are a lot of adults. She never did it, but there are women who can do nothing but amuse themselves in salons and watching plays while spending the greater part of the time on unfounded rumors and slander. I am sure that mother was also criticized behind her back at that time, too.

Her mother showed Shenryl the first dress she wore outside in old times. She was so attached that she never parted with it. Is it because it's a weapon?

Yet, a woman liked one of the styles. Wearing the dress with overwhelming beautiful face, Mother's clothes which began to attract aristocrats' attention, and then gradually left others far behind the forefront of fashion.

Furthermore, children's wear. At the same time her mother gave birth to her Cashbar-niisama, she began to make children's wear compared to the recognized small clothes of adults so far. She received the words of His Majesty, expressing his good luck in starting a new industry in the country. Nowadays, the business had expanded and opened stores across the continent.

"Rather than working hard because the King gave his compliments, Mother likes doing it so it's only natural."

Shenryl muttered alone in the room. She went out of the room when she finished tying her ribbons in knots. The heat from the fireplace that warmed the room disappeared slowly the moment the door was closed. She walked down the hallway in small steps with a click. It was warm in her room but the cold drifted a little here. Shenryl reached the room at last without encountering anyone.

She placed her hand on her chest in front of the door to quiet down her heart that started to race. Bathump, bathump, her heart sent out blood. She closed her eyes and calmed herself down. She placed her hand on the doorknob.

“Excuse me. Is this a good time...?”

“Come in.”

While saying the words that she prepared beforehand, she laid her eyes to the El, looking at him directly for first time. He precisely wore clothes for going out, held a coat in hand, and is sitting on the chair. No matter how she looked at him, it appears as if he is ready to go out any moment soon.

Shenryl was instinctively wide-eyed because of the unforeseen situation, she cannot say anything. But she continued talking to conceal it.

“I’m sorry for visiting so sudden. I have something to ask of El-sama.”

“Yes, I do not mind. What is it you request?”

She cannot read the meaning of El’s actions from his expressionless face. Shenryl encouraged herself not to be overwhelmed by El who listlessly fiddled with his coat.

“This.”

She held out a basket made of tree vines which she brought from her room.

“I would like to pick some flowers for Oniisama in the forest. Would you lend me your assistance?”

“For Matthias?”

He asked again with a mystified tone. “How barefaced,” she almost put that into words. He reacted as if he did not expect that, but he waited with going-out clothes as if he knew her business.

“It is freezing outside today. Still, I believe that coat will warm you enough. Well then, I will wait for you at the entrance.”

It seems like he will really read her intentions if they are in the same room. She quickly told him what she wanted to say and left the room.

“It’s alright. He doesn’t know my plan. I told no one about it.”

Oniisama told me our age difference is not that big. Shenryl walked quickly as she pondered.

Nobody was in the hallway.



“I am older than you but you really converse well.”

“This much is natural.”

Did he like speaking contrary to his appearance? El continued talking while walking into the forest. She invited him and he followed nonchalantly, he must have a very auspicious character as he likes talking.

Though she doesn’t know what his origins are, he must live in the world of aristocrats assuming that he is really under the custody of West Vern House. He mutually conceals his inner thoughts as he lives. Someone will surely pull the rug underneath him if he continues living in this easygoing manner.

Shenryl came back to herself when she reached that line of thought.

There is no need to reflect about it from now on. I have always been thinking about it... because I already decided to drive him out.

The flower she always saw came into sight.

“The one I want is that flower.”

“This red flower?”

“Yes. A basket full of these.”

He raised the basket in his hand a little and looked at it.

They were absorbed in gathering the flowers so there was little conversation. Let’s take a break for a moment or Let’s move on, they only exchanged a few

words.

However, the time is approaching every moment then.

When the day started being cast by shadows, Shenryl stopped her hands' movements and glanced at El beside her.

El diligently gathered flowers without noticing Shenryl's gaze. Though the act did not match neither his handsome features nor his elegant appearance, that image looked good for some reason.

So as not to let her footsteps sound, Shenryl quietly left El's side. Slowly at first, then, as soon as she came to a distance where he cannot hear her footsteps, she began to run.

"I did it! He will never notice."

In a sufficiently remote place, she finally stopped. The sound of her heart beating inside her body echoed loudly. Then the strain in her body disappeared and started running immediately. Suddenly, the thicket near her feet rustled. Tension ran in Shenryl's body. She jumped in surprise and began running away to a different direction right at that moment.

She thought it was a beast, or something that might hurt her. She began to notice that her feet became tired from running, so she stopped.

"There are no marks...!"

Shenryl, who considered the forest as a playground, walked while marking the tree trunks. She cut them with an edged tool and they can be considered old according to one's viewpoint. Yet, she cannot find the signs on any tree around her.

She usually doesn't get lost. Now that it happened to her... it abruptly came to her mind that this is El's fault. In beginning of her walk, Shenryl still have physical strength to spare and thought about such things. She began to walk aimlessly in the forest.

A soon as it became dark, the forest became colder and Shenryl stopped at last. She sat as she lost all her strength, leaned her body on the tree trunk and

embraced her legs. Even if that position is warm, her face and hands are exposed to the air so her body got cold.

“I want to go home... Mother, Oniisama... it’s cold...”

Shenryl let out those words in a weak voice that is more childish than the one she used while talking to El.

The beloved forest where she can play alone to her heart’s content is now very frightening.

They may noticed I am not in the mansion. But will they come here? Shenryl’s mind suddenly became full of anxiety.

“...Maybe, nobody will come look for me.”

She pushed her face against her knees, closed her eyes and remembered what her father told her when she was still a child.

—- Shenryl, God* knows everything we do, even the bad things we hide. Your bad deed will someday come back to you.

Even so, there was no other way.

She was really glad when she was informed that her Oniisama will come live in the mansion.

She wants him to praise her so she studied a lot. She worked hard even though taking lessons was hard.

However, beside her Oniisama who came to the mansion, there was El. A child that is slightly bigger than her. She understood at first glance that her Oniisama especially minded the child.

She hardly believed her eyes. She intended to jump out and meet him, but she was undecided to leave her place as her heart became restless.

That day, she returned to her room without no one noticing.

After that, she she requested a maid by implication to observe the relationship of those two. However, the report is enough to crush her heart.

His name is El. Matthias-sama calls him El-sama, and it appears that he looks after him. The details of his origins are obscure, but he is believed to be a high

noble of a foreign country and now under the custody of West Vern House, as explained by a butler's report.

He shows little emotions, reads and studies, and pass the day by looking outside without doing anything. When I considered his expressionless appearance to be scary, Matthias-sama informed me that it does not mean he cannot get angry.

From what I observed, his manners towards the maids are also polite and obedient. He appears to be a kind child.

Shenryl was frustrated. She realized that reflected in Matthias eyes is not her, but El. The little sister cannot permit her big brother to care for a child who came from nowhere.

Despite this, the child talked to her without being daunted.

Her Oniisama got angry with her for saying rash remarks, and her anger towards El increase even more. Even if it she disregarded and disregarded him, he still calls out to her expressionlessly.

What in the world could he be thinking? She doesn't know, but behind that amazingly well-featured face, Shenryl is certain that he invaded her world. Matthias-oniisama is being deceived.

The moment her mother also became pleased with El, Shenryl decided in her heart. She will treat him cruelly and drive him out of the family.

Thus, the strategy went well.

There was a bird's voice from somewhere, and she stiffened in nervousness. If the forest does not accept someone, they will be caught in an illusion until they are gotten rid of. About this time, she should be having dinner while listening to the sound of popping charcoal fire.

Then, Shenryl noticed something terrible.

"Huh? ...It's not just...me?"

El whom she left behind is probably still in the forest, too. Pale skin as though he has never played under the sun ever. If he is of noble birth, he should have no time to spend time outside. It was apparent at a glance that El cannot return to

the mansion from an unfamiliar forest. She wondered if he also felt cold like her. When she's left alone, she'll surely stop somewhere and cry.

She drove El into a situation like that.

Shenryl cannot shake off the worst possibilities that can happen once she imagined them. She began to feel the importance of what she had done. Perhaps, her punishment for doing such a bad thing is that no one will be able to find her now.

Will I never be able to return home? Tears streamed down Shenryl's cheeks as she considered that.

"I'm sorry... I won't do it again."

She heave with sobs and apologized to whoever there is.

She hates El who snatched away the place she belongs to, she hates Matthias who only pays attention to El. She hates Lucsher who makes clothes for El.

And yet, for a long time, what she hates the most is how everyone looks so happy.

Her inner feelings began to overflow as the recoil of acting like she doesn't care either way.

At the same time, the fire crawled on the ground like a wave-front and spread around the place Shenryl is sitting at. It spreads to the nearby grass and the trees and brightened up at once like daytime. The flames begin to light up the girl at the center.

Shenryl noticed that she had used magic unconsciously, so she stopped it in a hurry.

"Huh? Huh?"

Shenryl waved her hand several times over. However, the fire did not go out, instead it turned up the heat further. Haste became clear in Shenryl's tone.

"Why will it not disappear!? What should I do!? Someone... Someone help me."

The fire spread steadily, contrary to Shenryl's desire.

“I want to go home...”

She lamented several times over in a small voice. Right then, she heard sounds of footsteps amidst the fire’s popping sounds.

Something is approaching. It is coming to aim at her. She half-rise to her feet as if a whip hit her exhausted body. In the dark, her eyes darted left and right in terror.

“Hiii...!”

The footsteps approach. The bush in front of her shook with a rustling sound.

I can’t make it in time! She prepared for the attack, crouched and turned around then closed her eyes in one instant.

However, the pain did not come. She did not hear a beast’s growl either, only the popping sound of fire.

What happened?

Shenryl opened her eyes timidly, then turned around.

“I finally found you.”

What she saw was El’s figure bending down a little and stretching forth his hand towards her. His clothes are so ragged that it can be mistaken as different from what he’s wearing before.

“Eh...”

Why? Why? Shenryl panicked. She cannot move, and only stared at El’s face.

It’s scary. As soon as she thought so, the fire that spread around gathered in the center. It surrounded the two of them and danced near El’s feet and coat. The flame that rampaged intended to attack even Shenryl.

“Let’s go back?”

This time, El said that in an embarrassed tone.

El’s clothes are not only torn and dirty, they are also scorched in some places. He passed through the fire to reach her. Flames still licked along the tips of El’s clothes. If they left that alone, he’ll be hurt soon.

Shenryl is accustomed to fire. Her family, too, of course. Their housemaids and butlers also use fire routinely, too. It was the first time Shenryl became afraid of fire.

The uncontrollable flames encircling the two of them became closer. She knows that they have to run away, but Shenryl cannot move her body due to fear. El's figure in front of her became blurred by tears.

It was El who moved first.

He thrust his hand in his coat pocket suddenly, and presented a flower to Shenryl without saying anything. It was a limp flower. El looked at the flower with sad eyes and put up three fingers in front of Shenryl.

“Just for three seconds, close your eyes.”

She closed her eyes as El said that in a calm voice.

She counted slowly in her mind – 1, 2, 3. She felt her heart calm down as she counted.

“Wh...y...?”

“I dropped all the flowers on the way. I'm sorry. I don't know if these can replace them.”

Overflowing flowers were piled up. At that time, El passed the basket to El. However, the flowers have no color. Several transparent petals were attached to thin stalks that looks fragile. They are flowers made of ice. Light passed through them and made them shine and glitter in front of Shenryl.

“Amazing! They're sparkling...”

Shenryl's eyes were captivated by their beauty.

“They will melt soon, but I'll give these as an apology for not collecting the flowers as I promised.”

“Really?”

At the same time Shenryl's face brightened with El's remark, the flames that burned brightly also gradually lost their power.

“Let's go back. Matthias and Lucsher-san will be worried.”

“Yes... Uhm, that, I’m sorry.”

Shenryl stood up and apologized timidly to El.

“Why are you apologizing? I should be the one saying sorry for not finding you earlier.”

Shenryl was surprised because there was no blame in his tone at all. Shenryl expected that her plan to make El get lost in the forest will be exposed. If that is the case... thinking that, she stole a glance at El who is walking by her side.

El looked ahead, but turned beside him as if he felt Shenryl’s gaze.

“What’s wrong?”

While being illuminated by the flickering flames, such El raised the corners of his mouth slowly.

“Hiiii....!”

Shenryl swallowed back her voice to the depths of her throat, and edged back instinctively.

When she saw El’s face lighted up by the flames that are still slightly smoldering, Shenryl realized it.

He knows everything. He noticed all her actions. To let her live or kill her, everything will be as he wished. She was just rolling around his hand. She was just barely forgiven this time. There will be no second time.

Shenryl saw El’s frightening smile that is enough to make her confess everything. No matter whose face it is, it will be scary if you place light underneath them... Shenryl never thought of that possibility after being involved in that big incident.



“Get on.”

Shenryl was bewildered when El turned his back to her and then crouched down.

It is good that they are united again, but they both don’t know the way back. Meanwhile, they arrived at the big lake in the forest.

“Will you get on?”

Yes, she nodded at El and got on his back. El stood up unsteadily, and began walking shakily while carrying Shenryl on his back.

“Uhm, is it better if I get off?”

“Everything’s fine. Will you hold the basket?”

Everything’s fine , he said, but his body swayed left and right and he walked slowly, too. However, El did not put down Shenryl so she had no choice but grasp the basket tightly in exchange. His unreliable appearance from before completely changed.

It seems like Shenryl have not yet comprehended the existence that is El.

El advanced unsteadily. The truth is, El is already exhausted so carrying Shenryl is difficult. After a while, Shenryl noticed that the direction they are going to is strange.

“El-sama? We will fall down if we proceed forward! That is the lake!”

His feet already reached the lake. Though Shenryl desperately called to him, El did not react. She cannot see his face because El is carrying her on his back.

We’ll fall! Shenryl prepared for it, but she never felt her body fall down.

“Eh? Eh?”

Though she resolved not to cry out, she cannot conceal her astonished voice. Shenryl is mature among the kids in her generation, but it was her first time witnessing someone walk on a lake so it can’t be help if she’s surprised.

“After all, since we got lost...”

The lake froze as El stepped forward. It was an unbelievable scene, but El only begun to babble out, entirely uncaring of what’s happening. They arrived at the center of the lake before long. The whole lake had frozen into ice at that time. El placed down Shenryl who’s at a loss for words.

“Don’t move from that place no matter what.”

Shenryl did not understand what El meant by that, but she carefully listened to his instruction.

It happened the moment El looked at the surface of the frozen water.

“Kyaaaaa!”

Shenryl’s body is pushed up by a strong force. The water gathered at the center, and the place they were standing up rose higher and higher.

The far sky became steadily nearer.

“And it seems like they haven’t noticed us. But if we’re in a high place, Matthias and the others can find us... right?”

While she sat and looked down below, she understood his intention. There are torchlights scattered around the forest, and she can see them approaching to this direction from all sides.

Such a large number of people were gathered to look for them. It became a serious matter more than expected.

“They can notice us if we’re here. I’m glad, I’m glad.”

El gladly said, and Shenryl found her voice at last when she heard El say that.

“What is this? The water froze, there’s no doubt about it!”

“It’s magic. It’s convenient, huh? I thought I can only use it for drinks until now. But now I can also use it for searching people. It’s cheap even if I get lost, isn’t it...?”

“What did you say!?”

“El-sama! Shenryl!”

“Listen! Using something as sacred as magic handed down from ancient times as holy power just to cool drinks is...!”

Matthias arrived at the lake together with the search party while Shenryl was snapping at El on his improper use of magic.

“Matthias-oniisama...”

At last, Shenryl stopped talking and El turned around with an expression as if saying, ‘I’m saved.’

Nevertheless, it was now Matthias' turn to be angry.

“You made me worry so much! When I received the report in the middle of work, how much did you think I searched for you?! When I thought you were kidnapped somewhere, I went around with the thought of killing them! What in the world did you do?! Please give me a sufficient explanation!”

Matthias kept on talking with a tone that shows his almost lost of composure.

“Oniisama... uhm, I...”

Shenryl intended to tell everything. She expected that she will be despised after talking about it.

However, El interrupted before Shenryl can say anything. El faced Matthias and began talking.

“Matthias, I am sorry for worrying you. I invited Shenryl-chan. I wanted to go into the forest. But we got lost on the way, and it was starting to get dark... I thought we will be back immediately so we left without permission.

“Eh...”

As if to prevent Shenryl from letting out a bewildered voice, El began talking again.

“That's why, thank you for finding us. I want to express my gratitude for everyone who looked for Shenryl-chan and I.”

Shenryl was overpowered by El who turned back and sent her a look, so she nodded ambiguously. This talk is not yet over, Matthias left with those words. Then, Shenryl asked El a question.

“What is the meaning of this?! Why are you lying—!”

It is not necessary for El to lie. If they tell everything to her Oniisama, it will eventually end.

To Shenryl who laid her feelings bare, El placed his index finger against her lips and said in a soft voice.

“It's fine. I don't think we'll be scolded. That's why, just do as I say and keep today a secret. Please.”

“I don’t get what you...”

They heard Matthias’ voice calling El right then, it seems like he’s finish with his business. El went to Matthias after placing something in Sheryl’s pocket.

“I’m sorry. I never played outside ever since I was small, I wanted to go to the forest no matter what.”

“Uuu... that is certainly true... certainly...”

Matthias could not retort to what El said. When the maids saw their appearances, the maids who takes care of them came and changed their dirty coats.

“In exchange for keeping it a secret, I have a present for you. You might not be pleased with it since it’s not really expensive, but you can use it if you like. Because that flower will melt soon.”

“I’m sorry for worrying Matthias, but I want to eat dinner now. I’m hungry.” When the worried maids heard El’s words, they forgot about everything and complied instead.

Sheryl dropped her eyes to the basket almost hidden by the warm mantle. In the darkness, the pink flower she took out from her pocket glistened.

5-8. Occupational Experience Learning (1)

[Elmer]

Summer draws near. The students' clothes came to show short sleeves. This is the time where the season changes such that carrying out physical activities outside will make them sweaty.

The academy opened a new school term, too. The vigor that is absent during the break returned. In El's class, Saleel-sensei is conducting homeroom.

"Seven, huh... So few..."

Rent, seated next to El, stared at the blackboard and said that bitterly.

"What is? I mean, what are we doing right now?"

El asked Rent who is running his eyes on the letters in the blackboard. He completely missed everything since he was looking outside. In front of them, Saleel-sensei wrote various occupations in his careful handwriting and numbers are written under them.

"A field trip. Did you listen to the class properly? Teacher is talking about the study visit. We're picking the place we want right now."

"Ah, I remember him saying that. Could this seven be the Knight Order?"

It seems like we will observe the workplace we are interested in for the future. While reminiscing of my former world, I saw "Knight Order – 7" written in front.

"Of course."

As always.

"F~un (*sigh*) After the Knight Order..."

Besides the Knight Order, Royal Palace Pharmacists, Magic Researchers are

lined up. There are no occupations similar to that of Earth.

There are many of them, but work such as a civil officer in the royal palace needs several provisions. I fixed my eyes on the future in full scale rather than examining what work I should choose.

The one I visited for observation in the old days is a place of Edo craftsmen.

<Note: Edo, former name of Tokyo. Also a period in Japan.>

Saleel-sensei explained that it will be decided by drawing lots if the choice gathered more than the capacity. It appears like we have to decide right now. While thinking what I should pick, Saleel-sensei began to ask for our aspirations.

“Then, those who wants to go to the Knight Order, raise your hand.”

“Me!” “He~re!” “Yes!”

“Uwaa?!”

Suddenly, several people in the class raised their voices simultaneously. Not only the voice, a lot of hands were raised, too.

“El will definitely pick the Knight Order, right? Hurry up and raise your hand!”

“Eh?”

Rent gripped my right hand while I am puzzled, and raised it by force. When I looked around me, all boys seemed to want to visit the Knight Order. The Knight Order looks like a considerably popular occupation.

Saleel-sensei confirmed the number and wrote something in the platform.

“I see. There are a lot of children who want to go to the Knight Order. The children who just raised their hand, please come in front to draw lots. If a circle is written on the paper, it’s a win.”

The students stand up while replying ‘Yes~’ to Teacher, and took small a paper one by one.

Rent also picked up a piece of paper with me from the small pile.

“Ah, it’s a win.”

There is a circle drawn when I opened the small folded paper.

“It’s a hit for me, too! I did it!”

When I looked into Rent’s paper, he also had the same circle written. The two of them were happy with their success. Rent jumps up and down and his whole body emitted joy. Against the flow of the students who were returning to their seats after their loss, I went to report to Saleel-sensei.

“Yes. El-kun and Rent-kun also won?”

Teacher wrote the names on the blackboard and seven names queued up. Though all children who were chosen also returned to their seats, the classroom is still noisy.

“By the way, why is the Knight Order popular?”

I asked Rent what I was curious about since some time ago. There are other jobs that involves fighting and related to the military. It was mysterious that only the Knight Order was popular and the cream of the crop.

“It’s the Knight Order, y’know? Elite forces that protects the royal palace where royalty gather from all over. I heard that the Knights directly under the royal family are extremely strong. It’s obvious that it will be popular. We can enter their headquarters. Normally, the headquarters in the royal palace is not open to public!”

“Knights under the royal family, huh...”

“Right. In other words, it’s a gathering of elites. Aaah, I want to go to the royal palace now.”

“Nn? Palace?”

I felt that there is a phrase in what Rent said that bothers me, I thought hard about it.

“Royal palace. Here, in the Imperial Capital.”

“Ah, royal palace? Royal palace!”

I almost missed it since Rent talked so calmly about it. I was taken aback in surprise. The royal palace is unpleasant.

An abominable memory revives at the same time. An event that I started

forgetting. Wasn't that man a member of the Knight Order? That man in the royal palace, with a sword attached to his waist and was called Commander.

Thinking to that extent, I shook my head to wave off the unpleasant memory. Nothing will happen even if I remember it.

He is not here any longer. That incident happened due to the man's selfish convictions.

But I have another thing I'm worried about.

Matthias discussed it with me before when I was still placed under house arrest.

I heard what will happen if the King learns I can use magic. He said it would be better for me to be overlooked, so I will have no worth as a hostage.

"You will be taken back surely. At the very least, there will be no denying that the country will be in uproar," Matthias said with a grave expression.

Even for an instant, it will be a problem if a prince of an enemy nation is left alive. There was something concealed in Matthias' manner of speaking. I felt like he wanted to say that it will not only be lenient confinement next time, but death. Seeing Matthias' countenance, I cannot ask what kind of country I was born in or what kind of parents I have.

"Saleel-sensei!"

I have decided. Rent had a wondering look and gave a side long glance to me, who had raised my hand.

The female's popular job, serving in the royal palace, was easily decided. There are only few girls so I placed my hope on that.

My classmates glances were instantly directed at my remark, seeming that I can't read the atmosphere.

"May I refrain from the Knight Order? Instead... restaurant... ah, I want to be in a tavern."

I say royal palace intentionally, I will not expose my body to harm. I panicked, and wrote the occupation name in the lower part of the blackboard. I looked for something nearest to a cafe, but there was nothing like that. The tavern seems

to be unpopular, there is no written limit to the number of people.

“That’s fine. Will you really leave the Knight Order?”

“Yes. Rather, thank you in advance.”

My name is erased and I felt relieved when I saw ‘El’ written under the tavern alone.

“Yes~!” “El, amazing~!” What an admirable guy!”

It seems like my backing out left another spot and gave hope to the other boys who were not chosen. I got words of gratitude from all directions. Everyone became greatly excited.

I’m glad, I’m glad.

The reason I left is self-centered, but it’s good if it made everyone pleased. The tension in my body left and I leaned against the backrest.

“What a pity. Is the tavern that small thing in the town? I never entered it, but why did you choose a place like that? If you’re not interested in being a knight, you can still be a civil officer.”

“Well, I’ve been to a tavern. I felt like it’s a good match.”

“I did not see suspicious guys enter there, but it will be better if you change it!”

‘It’s fine’, I said to Rent who’s pouting and saying complaints.

... Still, I’m fairly looking forward to it. For example, Teacher and I are the only ones who will visit the tavern. A tavern with a bad reputation. However...

“Sorry, El-kun. The matter regarding the after school off-campus learning, the owner said Elizabeth-chan is missing, they informed me today that they wanted to cancel it.”

“Is... that so. We can’t do anything if that is the case.”

Teacher had an apologetic expression when he heard my depressed tone and said towards me that it can’t be helped.

Elizabeth-chan, she is surely the daughter judging from her name. Her serach is

more important if she is missing.

But I felt that it's regrettable since I even prepared notes.

I looked down, and put away the notes on my hand into my bag.

"That's right! Why don't you join the afterschool visit to the Knight Order tomorrow if you don't have any plans? Today is unfortunate, but let's go tomorrow together. El-kun originally should have joined, so there's no problem. That is better."

Are you trying to encourage me from my depression? Saleel-sensei proposed it with a tone more lively than usual.

"Uhm, the numbers will exceed if I go."

This is bad. Why did the talk returned to the original problem!?

"I will be the only moderator and taking along everyone will be difficult, that's why there is a limit. But you are reliable and far from creating problems, rather you seem to be the one who stops them. The principal also has a high evaluation of El-kun's results and day-to-day conduct, he will give permission immediately."

"Thank you very much."

The limit on the number of people seems to be not required. My strategy of using this pretext to refuse completely failed.

"I know you conceded for everyone's sake. You are a child who thinks of the people around you. That is good but you should also be selfish once in a while. For the time being, I want you to enjoy tomorrow. Then, see you again after school."

"Haa (*sigh)..."

I followed Teacher's retreating back without having the chance to say the truth and straighten that big misunderstanding.

Thus, my royal palace visit was decided like this. The frightening memory from that time seems to revive.

Night of that day.

Back at the residence, I told Matthias the schedule for tomorrow while working in my room.

“Therefore, I will be allowed to visit the Knight Order’s headquarters tomorrow. I think I will return late.”

“That is fine. That shop... Though I understand El-sama’s sentiments... this may still be alright.”

Matthias seemed to agree on going to the Knight Order more than I expected. It was a totally different reaction compared to when I reported that I will have my after school visit at the tavern. I thought he had something against taverns, but his expression changed when I described a concrete place rather than just ‘tavern’. I did not hear the reason, but it is surely something the same as Rent’s.

“Ah, but, what will I do if I get recognized in the royal palace? Is it better to decline now?”

“I do not think that it will happen. Even if it is said to be in the royal palace, the place where El-sama stayed is entirely different from the Knight Order. Of course, that man is not there either.”

<Note: word used can mean ‘not there’ or ‘not exist’.>

He denied immediately, and my feelings start to become firm.

In front of Mathias who is writing in a smooth fine script, it is somehow awkward as I do my homework. It’s the so-called grade school study so I can’t do anything about it. It’s somewhat a pain and when I solved the problems, I let him assist me.

“Really? Matthias is very well-informed.”

“Yes. I worked there and I have been going in and out of the royal palace ever since I was a child, I mostly understand the layout of the palace. It is also because Leo and I walked around it aimlessly.”

When it comes to an aristocrats like Mathias, even as a child, going in and out to the royal palace is considered interesting.

“Your appearance is unknown, too, because you were never acquainted with someone.”

Just as he said, I was never acquainted to elite friends or those working in the royal palace. When I heard that the King's residence is entirely cut-off from the Knight Order, my heart lightened.

"I see. The Knight Order might be cool. Rent seems to admire them, too. I'm really looking forward to it."

Rent will surely be pleased if I say we can go together. It was the feeling of excitement before an excursion.

Therefore, I did not notice. The moment I said 'cool', the pen that's smoothly moving in front of me, had stopped.



"Huge...!"

Even though I've actually been here before, the gates ahead of us gave an intimidating air.

I am dumbfounded as I looked at the gate.

"Please take out your bags."

A man in uniform stood at the entrance, welcoming guests. I opened my bag and handed it over according to the instructions. Our names were then called one by one from the list submitted beforehand, and we were allowed in after the confirmation. I was worried about my sudden addition, but I was able to enter without problems.

The atmosphere became strained with the heavy security before us. Excitement was apparent on the way to the royal palace, but there was little conversation while we walked together with the guide.

I lowered the hat I'm wearing over my eyes. I saw huge buildings around us when I looked at my surroundings restlessly. The guide explained that this is where the royal family lives, but it doesn't look like a place where they perform their official duties. The guide said the buildings are actually small when the other kids expressed their surprise.

Is there something even larger than them?

There are a lot of workers walking to and fro the premises, since this is a

spacious place. I actually felt what Matthias meant yesterday.

“Are you the people from the academy?”

I was surprised when a sudden voice came from in front of us, since I was only looking at my sides.

“Yes, we are. Please take care of us.”

“Please take care of us!”

Following Saleel-sensei, we said our greetings unanimously to the man belonging to the Knight Order.

“I, Keirai, will guide you today. This place is big so it’s easy to get lost. I don’t want you to walk around without permission. I will count on you to do that today.”

The middle-aged man[/ojisan] is at an age when it won’t be strange if he already has a child. Even if I say he’s old, his aura screams “I’m a front liner!” Is this what they call silver fox?

<Note: Actual term is kakkoyoku sai (かつこよく歳). It’s ‘cool old age’ or something, referring to old people that are still cool/good-looking. is the closest slang I can find.>

“Keirai-san is really strong after all.”

Rent turned to me and said that in a soft voice.

“You know him?”

“My father talked about him before. And I met Keirai-san the time I went to fetch my father when he was drunk.”

“Which means, your father is a member of the Knight Order?”

“Did I not tell you? He was a member, but not anymore. He works at the countryside. Because of that incident...”

That incident? Though I asked back since I do not know what he meant, Rent has fallen silent. I don’t think I can forcibly make him tell me and the conversation stopped there.



“This is the building of the Knight Order’s headquarters, and knights hardly drop by here.”

Keirai-san’s voice resounded in the building.

We looked into some rooms and advanced to the interior steadily.

Our last destination is the armory.

“Swords! There’s so many of them!”

Following Rent who entered ahead, the swords displayed in a row on the wall glistened in the dark room.

We pass along the place where the swords are carefully placed one by one. We gathered in front of those comparatively simple ones.

It was said that they are all swords used for training. They are surely not that beautiful in appearance. Keirai-san informed us while unsheathing the sword with one hand.

“Do you want to have a look?”

Keirai-san says so, and handed the sword to Rent who was the nearest.

It’s a little big for his body, but Rent gladly look at here.

“Rent-kun is strong as expected. Did you get it from your father?”

Rent proudly answered that he trains every day.

Do you want to look? And then it was my turn next, so I held out my hands to receive it. As soon as Rent let go, my hand suffered from the weight that is more than I expected.

“Ugh...”

It’s heavy. It’s too heavy. I passed the sword and it immediately fell from my hands. The loud sound reverberated in warehouse and pierced our ears. The sword that shined dimly, fell over the floor.

“It’s impossible...!”

“What are you doing~?”

Rent picked up the sword on the floor while I felt like both my hands felt are

going to fall off.

This time, I received the sword by embracing it in my arms. I held it in my arms with all my strength, but I couldn't simply move like Rent. He waved the sword with composure even when he held it with both hands.

I passed the sword to the next child at once.

"El-kun, was it?" (Keirai)

"Yes."

In the end, only I showed a difficult expression while holding the sword. Though Rent is the most superior, there wasn't anyone around who is powerless more than me.

"You came here, so does that mean you are interested in the Knight Order?"

Keirai-san abruptly came near me so I instinctively stepped back. I know that his serious eyes are assessing me and it's scary.

"Rather than interest... I always wanted to fight with the sword in a very cool way..."

"I see."

Keirai-san had a complicated expression and nodded when he heard what I said. He caught my arm suddenly.

"Eh...?"

I tried to twist my body to run away but it is not possible to do so since my arm is being firmly gripped. After he grasped it for a while, he suddenly let go.

I don't understand what happened but I think that I was able to actually feel the strength of Keirai-san's grip with my body. I looked up at Keirai-san while rubbing my arm where the sensation of being gripped still remained.

"You are... not suited to be a knight. "

Keirai-san said to me while hesitating at the middle of his sentence.

"I will say it bluntly. Your physique is not suited for swordplay. If magic is your strong point, you should place all your efforts in developing your magic. If you're also poor at that, then... I strongly recommend that you aim to be a civil servant.

Do your best, boy!”

Do your best, he strongly clapped on my shoulder while saying that. It goes without saying that I staggered with impact from where he placed his hand. It seemed to be evidence of what Keirai-san said again.

“Then, the last one shall be the training grounds. You’re lucky today. Even if I say so, that...”

Keirai-san walked away, leaving the agitated students.

“...don’t mind it.”

“Good luck!”

“If it’s you, you can do it! Since you’re intelligent.”

‘No way!’ I sighed as my friends said words that I can’t decide whether they are kind or irresponsible. Everyone winked at me, then ran after Keirai-san one by one.

Finally, it was only Rent who remained. He stood in front of me as if searching for the right words to say. If I get praised like before, I will be embarrassed even further.

“Keirai-san is very good at seeing through a person’s skills in swordsmanship. What I mean is, I don’t think El is suited for wielding the sword. But Keirai-san was surprised by El the most! Keirai-san is famous for his composure. That’s why it has a great meaning!”

“...Haa, Rent did not cheer me up at all!”

When I heard Rent’s words that did not comfort me at all, I laughed instinctively.

“They’re moving. Let’s go.”

I was surprised but I also agreed at the same time. I am small and even untrained eyes can assess I am not strong. I vaguely noticed it. Apparently, my height does not seem to change. Matthias will be worried about my insufficient nourishment and it will result to him making me drink milk.

I think while walking.

As expected, I'll give it up and be a cafe master. Just as Keirai-san said, I have to capitalize on my magic. That would be perfect.

Note: Matthias, the idiot-parent. El, the princess unknowing kid who started everything. And Alois, the pitiful victim.

5-9. Occupational Experience Learning (2)

[Elmer]

It was when we are walking behind Keirai-san in the royal palace that it appeared unexpectedly in front of us.

I thought at first that fog or smoke, but I realized it was a translucent white film when we approached closer.

“What’s that?”

Didn’t anybody walking in front notice? Or did they notice it but they didn’t think it was worth minding?

No one stopped and just continued walking even if they are approaching the film in front. As soon as I thought that the film traced the shape of a human, it turned back in the next second. The film shook like *fuwanfuwan* as if nothing happened.

It was a mysterious spectacle.

I stopped walking as I had no courage to pass through this thing which true nature I don’t know.

What do I do? I utilized my position at the rear and poked the mystery object with my index finger. I feel a faint elasticity on my fingertip, the film slightly depressed. It is as thin as soap bubbles. If I use a nail to scratch it, it seems like it will easily tear.

While I did something like that alone, everybody turned at the corner without noticing that I did not follow them. I can’t see anyone any longer. According to what Keirai-san said, the training grounds is just around the corner so I won’t lose my way, but what should I do?

I don't want to pass through here even if I know that I need to hurry up and follow them.

I expected that film ends somewhere, and decided to walk along the film.

There should be many people in the royal palace, but it is convenient that there are no signs of life in the place I am advancing to.

I completely ignore the road and walked ahead. I forcibly elbowed my way through the thicket as I chased along the film. I felt that I walked a considerable distance, but the film seems to continue forever, and I cannot see the end.

“What is this, really? It feels unpleasant.”

I remained standing in the middle of the way, not knowing where it leads to.

“What happened?”

While I worried for a while, I heard a voice from behind and raised my lowered face.

When I looked back, I saw a strange old man[/ojii-san] standing there, smiling.

He didn't seem to be a suspicious person, so I judged that this old man works at the palace. I thought of a proper excuse and tried to run away. I remembered it's not good for me to exchange so much words to people related to the royal palace.

“No, it is nothing. I am being a hindrance while standing in the middle of the way, right? Pardon me.”

I did not see him walking here, so he must have passed from the other way.

I intended to make room for the old man and moved aside.

“Good gracious...”

There should be nothing obstructing the old man since I already stepped aside, but the old man stayed still idly without giving any signs that he will walk forward.

“Uhm. Is there something wrong?”

I thought whether his condition is bad, the old man hardly said anything different from before.

“You.”

The old man started talking without answering my question nor even looking at me with a fleeting glance.

“Why did you stop here? I want you to tell me if it is alright.”

“No... I had some spare time, so I just stood there.”

Are you still fixated over this place? Why won't you just go past me!? While I thought of that, he repeated the same thing.

“I see, I see. It was on my mind since you seemed to be looking at something. Was it my imagination?”

“Indeed.”

I thought the old man saw it to, but it looks like I'm wrong. I do not want to be considered a weird person so I gave a vague answer.

“It is sad, but I can hardly see in this age. I cannot see your face very well. That is why I was worried.”

When the old man finished talking in a hoarse voice, he watched me with a smile.

When I observed him, he is quite surely in his old age. The condition of his body may not be good anymore, either. Even if I say I came across something here or I was just staring absentmindedly here, I feel like it will still be suspicious no matter what.

Maybe I can say it to this person. He appears to know me, but I don't remember meeting this person even for an instant.

“I saw a white film here a while ago. I asked that it was to the people with me a while ago, but they just pass through it... I was thinking what to do.”

“I see, I see. A white film, huh...”

The old man listened to my story without changing his expression. The old man muttered and grumbled to himself, while I looked for words to say.

“Are you easily scared that's why you were afraid of it?”

“There's no such thing! It's normal to be confused when there's something

unusual as that.”

My manner of speaking became rough as I denied it, but the old man said nothing and just narrowed his eyes.

After staring at each other for a while, I became aware that I was just compelled to say this kind of thing to a person I just met. An indescribable discomfort began to precipitate in my chest.

“Ah, really! Please cut it out. I am leaving. You should go, too! This is nothing at all.”

Stubbornly, I declared that to the old man who did not say anything.

If I don't go back quickly, my disappearance will cause a commotion. I also feel bad that it will betray Saleel-sensei's expectation of me, that it will be alright to bring me since I am reliable.

I spit out those words and stand before the film. This time, I stepped forward without halting.

I entered inside while feeling the sense that something soft slowly pats me behind. The surrounding scenery doesn't change and my body didn't experience any pain, either.

<Note: If you still don't get it, it's a magic barrier.>

If I had my eyes closed, I will surely feel nothing.

“Hey, old ma—”

Did you see that? I had a somewhat proud look and said that to the old man.

“It's good to act this much recklessly during youth. Then, boy with the silver hair. I'm glad I was able to talk to you today. Let's meet again.”

Uhhh , I looked behind.

However, the figure of the old man is not there anymore.

“Why...?”

I didn't go that far away. I did not even take a step.

I tilted my head while feeling like I got wrapped up with a fox. Since then, I

never saw the old man again no matter how much I looked.

In the end, from Keirai-san gave other explanations in the room just before the training grounds. Rent began accosting me as I slipped in with an innocent look.

“Oi! Where did you go!? I was so surprised when you suddenly disappeared!”

“Sorry, sorry. I was caught by a weird old man for a moment.”

Rent had an expression that shows he didn't understand what I meant as I said that while apologizing lightly. It can't be helped. Even I myself don't understand it so I was not able to explain further.

“Hah? Well, no one noticed except me so it's fine.”

“I was not noticed after all...”

“You're lucky it wasn't discovered. If they did, it will be a pain.”

Should I be pleased that my presence is thin? It was a very complex feeling.

As the training ground approaches, I hear the shouts of several people.

Several voices mixed and it can't be understood because there are also other sounds echoing. But still, the enthusiasm circulated and the students' eyes began to sparkle.

“You guys are really lucky. Anyhow, today...”

“No way! Whyyy?!”

When we went out of the building, it was wide open in front of us. Rent cried out, as if almost shrieking, and interrupted Keirai-san.

“Lie...”

What!?

I looked up, and was dazzled by the figure moving at the center. I instinctively leaked out a muffled voice.

“It's Matthias-sama!” (Rent)

“M-m-ma... Matthias is...” (El)

My small voice was drowned out by Rent's shout so it did not reach Keirai-san's ears. He might have thought that I was so surprised that I became

speechless. Well, it is true in a certain sense.

Keirai-san laughed quietly when he saw the wide-eyed children.

“That is right. West Vern House’s Matthias-dono came to do some sword training.”

“I didn’t hear about that...!” (EI)

I cannot believe it so I stared hard at the scene.

But even if we are a distance away, that man with vivid red hair is unmistakably Matthias whom I see everyday.

Saleel-sensei asked if our visit today is a bother but Keirai-san shook his head. From Saleel-sensei’s perplexed expression, he was also not informed that Matthias will come.

“Please do not worry about it. It’s inevitable since it was suddenly decided. I also did not believe my ears when I heard it yesterday.”

The students near Saleel-sensei were happily surprised with that response, but I was still confused.

“I have heard that Matthias-sama is recuperating at the main residence but I never even considered that he will come back to the Imperial Capital. I took account of his physical condition and assigned new recruits as sparring partner, but as expected... no one can match him.”

Keirai-san looked at the training grounds while trailing off his words.

At the training area, Matthias is still in the middle of having a sword practice.

They pulled a sword and faced each other.

There is some distance between us so I can’t hear it, but as soon as the young soldier said something, a high metallic sound followed immediately. Time seemed to have suddenly flew after that. From the training area, sand whirled up.

In the next instant, the soldier was sent flying and fell to his backside, while Matthias just lowered his sword without changing his expression.

“Amaziiiing!”

Rent gulped down next to me.

When the cloud of sand settled, the soldier who was blown away hurriedly stood back up. He bowed to Matthias and returned to his colleagues watching over from the surroundings. It appears like they will alternate.

“The both of you are the most surprised at Matthias-sama. Though it’s not possible for you to talk directly, it’s a good fortune that you saw his swordsmanship. You should carefully watch.”

“Yes! Of course!”

Rent cheerfully answered back to Keirai-san.

Good grief... it’s not ‘yes!’ What the heck is this? I put together the situation while pretending to look hard at the training ground.

It looks like Matthias just temporarily came to the Knight Order. For a moment, I actually thought he is in the Knight Order. I do not know what Matthias do while I’m at the academy since I never took a day off.

I still get it until that part.

But why did he choose to be here out of all days? Matthias only has to say it before if he also had the same plan. Although I think that, this is still strange. I saw it in his expression when I told him yesterday. Matthias did not look like he’s lying.

If Keirai-san only heard about it yesterday, then does that mean it’s because of yesterday’s sudden decision?

“I have a bad feeling.”

“What did you say?”

“No, it’s nothing.”

Could it be... I grimaced when it suddenly dawned on me. Rent looked at me in wonder.

“Is that so? Since we came to the Knight Order, El’s expressions increased, and I think it’s strange...”

Are you worried about me? Or are you insulting me!? I complained to Rent and

he laughed.

When we finished laughing, we turned back our eyes to Matthias again. From what I counted before, the third opponent is now retreating. After fighting with two people for a while, Matthias gave some advice and knocked them down again.

Against the people from the Knight Order he started fighting since a while now, it became clear to me while watching from the sidelines that Matthias had plenty of room to relax.

“It’s absolutely...!”

My hunch turned into conviction while I watch Matthias.

Ever since we arrived here, Matthias has been looking at the students several times over. I thought I was just imagining it, but I became certain of his gaze after talking to Rent.

He’s unmistakably looking at this way.

Now that I am conscious of it, Matthias’ unnatural glances made me uneasy.

From what Keirai-san said, Matthias is truly strong. It’s different from my everyday impression of him at home, but he may be in fact, a very amazing person.

If that is the case, repeatedly sending glancing looks at children is all the more not a behavior of a high noble family’s distinguished son.

I am sure Matthias is worried about me.

His worrywart personality sunk deeply into my mind. He terribly worries whenever I do something. Disregarding my mental age, even if I say I will be fine because I am already a fifth grader, Matthias cannot accept that. After he knew I will be going to the Knight Order, I am sure he contacted them so he can watch over me and prevent me from doing anything strange.

“Haa...” (*sigh)

I believe it’s safe since it’s the Knight Order Headquarters, which protects the Imperial Capital. However, it will become troublesome if it gets exposed that Matthias and I know each other.

For the time being, I can do nothing but pray that Matthias will concentrate on the fight for now.

“Maybe I’m just imagining it but Matthias-sama is looking here...”

Holding my breath, I looked at Rent seriously with a puzzled expression.

“Eh, it’s just your imagination! It’s impossible! Really impossible!”

“R-right...?”

I inadvertently raised my voice and Rent looked taken aback. I cleared my throat I feigned ignorance.

Ah, he’s really bad for my heart.

Will Matthias be alright with such a mother-hen personality?

I don’t have parents here so I am very grateful that he is there, but his degree of worrying extremely surpassed the level of those normal mother and father. But even so, I can’t believe he’s somehow called a Knight. He is good looking, but I feel like it’s better if he had a more cool alias.

“I know you still want to watch but do you want to start talking to the Knights now?”

“Yes, the students would like to directly ask the Knights some questions. Of course, if it is alright Keirai-san...”

The two adults had a conversation. It’s just grade school kids’ off-campus learning. Teacher will be troubled if we finished too late. It looks like a considerable time passed since we arrived at the Knight Order.

“It’s a special opportunity so should I call other Knights? ...ah, you guys! Come here for a moment!”

Keirai-sana placed his hand on his chin while pondering over it, but he quickly gave a loud call when some people wearing Knights’ uniform came.

“Ye~s.”

The noisy men with excellent physique came when Keirai-sana called them.

“What is— Huuh!? These children... Vice Leader Keirai’s illegitimate children...!”

One of them placed his hand over his mouth, pretending to be astounded in an exaggerated manner.

“Wha—!? Of course not. Don’t screw around! They’re students from the grade school department who came for a field trip.”

“Is that so? Sorry, Vice Leader.”

Another man pushed the head of the one who made the joke and lowered it to Keirai-san.

So Keirai-san is the Vice Leader. Leaving that aside, I’m puzzled with the light mood before me. I imagined they will be more intense since they’re the so-called military.

There are five new Knights who came. The other kids had amazed looks like usual. I seem to be the only person not doing so.

“Let’s go back to the topic. You guys, you’re free for a while anyway. Stay here and answer their questions.”

“Free time, you say... We patrol group are just having a break now...”

Patrol group? It seems like they just returned from roaming around the royal palace.

“I’ll leave it to you.”

“Wai...! I get it. We will do it.”

Keirai-san went somewhere after tapping their shoulders. He looks like the serious type so he must have some work.

Five Knights lined up while facing the students. After taking out notes, a student who looked at the Knight with sparkling eyes started asking a question.

“How can I become a Knight?”

“It is necessary to attend the academy or the military school. You will be scouted if your grades meet the requirements, then you can become a Knight Order member.”

“Thank you.”

“Please give the contents of your work. ”

“Guards for the royal family and important persons. Patrolling in royal palace. Furthermore, we are also assigned in the maintenance of the town’s public order while cooperating with the soldiers arranged in Imperial Capital. If there is a request from the country, we also dispatch necessary troops.”

“Uhm... public order maintenance...”

My classmates desperately wrote down the answers of the Knights. The questions are decided and given OK by teacher beforehand, so there is no interruption in the order of things.

I looked at the small notebook which I took out from my bag and scanned the contents. I can’t seem to use the questions listed here.

“What are the things necessary to start a coffee shop? How much capital should I prepare? “ “Please tell me the contents of your work in detail.” “If you cannot gather a certain number of visitors, ?”

Because I planned to go to a coffee shop, I expected to do it alone. I wanted to ask about a lot of things, it’s disappointing. I don’t know what everyone wants to ask so I lined up at the very back.

Free time~ I have no questions and I can’t use my notes so I let my eyes wander at the sky, and let them settle in the five Knights.

Then, my eyes met those of a Knight’s.

Oh?

Though I think it’s strange , he averted his eyes awkwardly at once. Moreover, after pretending to look at the notes in my hand, I turned ahead sneakily. I was going to confirm what kind of person he was.

I only intended to check his appearance in secret. However, our eyes met again.

It wasn’t by chance. The knight who looks quite younger than Keirai-san, probably wants to say something since he opened his mouth repeatedly. I only stared at him patiently. Others are concentrating on the answers, and didn’t seem to notice.

What’s the matter? The level of his stare is not just a glancing look.

“Ei? Ei? It’s your turn next.” (Rent)

“Eh?”

“Hurry up and ask a question.” (Rent)

Rent urged me. Everyone finished asking and I was the only one left before I knew it.

They may be wondering why I did not react at all. Everyone’s glances focused on me.

“Uh, uhmm...”

What do I do? As long as I ask something, it can be anything related to the Knight Order.

“Uhm, you’ve been looking here for a while now...”

“You remembered me!” The person looked at me directly when I addressed him.

“Remember...?” (Ei)

When he heard what I said, the Knight showed a big smile and began talking loudly.

“I did not think that you can speak. It’s me, Alois.”

“Alois... ah!” (Ei)

I recalled him the moment I heard his name. When I was still a hostage, he was the person who travelled with me in the carriage.

I don’t have many acquaintances, so there was a warm feeling in my chest.

“It has been a long time. I have been looking forward to meeting you for a very long time!” (Alois)

“Wait... eh?” (Ei)

Something is weird. Just as I thought that, Alois-san stepped in front of me.

With a smooth movement, he walked until he reached before me. It may be because of the cool Knight Order uniform, but he looked bigger than the last time I saw him.

There were sounds of firm steps on the gravel.

“I am sorry for not being able to guard you that time. — Princess.”
[/himesama]

The Knight on his knees took my hand that lost all its strength.

“Princess?” (Others)

“That time?” (Others)

The inside of my head became pure-white. That’s right, it was at that time. I forgot to deny Alois-san’s way of addressing me. Rather, it is more correct to say that I had no time to do so.

I cannot stop him from talking, but I need to do something and follow up this situation at the very least. Suspicious looks from the surroundings gathered at us.

Cold sweat ran on my back.

What should I do?

“Really, you~” (EI)

I clasp Alois-san’s hand and clenched it hard. I went behind him and urged him to stand up.

“I’m already a fifth grader, you know? I’m too old for games like that.” (EI)

“Game...?” (Alois)

I said that in a cheerful tone. As if he did not comprehend it, Alois-san showed a wondering expression.

I successfully forced Alois-san to stand up while losing balance, then continued speaking so no one would cut into my story.

“I was little and you did not see me for a long time so you won’t know!” (EI)

“What do you...” (Alois)

I pinched Alois-san at his back with all my might before he says something unnecessary.

(Listen, just follow my lead!)

I murmured in a low voice so other people won’t hear. Alois-san nodded

repeatedly like a broken toy.

“Right, right! We played the princess game when you were little!” (Alois)

<Note: Actual words used are ‘ohimesama gokko’ (お姫様ごっこ) i.e., make-believe princess.>

The surrounding people clearly wanted to ask a question when they heard that. Alois-san nodded more intensely than a while ago.

“Alois...? Are you former acquaintances?” (Knight-san)

“Eh, y-yes! That’s right. We were acquainted. A long time ago, here in the Imperial Capital. Yes, right.” (Alois)

Is Alois-san’s true nature actually an honest person? He’s so unskilled at telling lies. He shook as he responded to his colleague’s question. No matter how you consider it, he’s really trembling so much.

“Eh, but didn’t you just transferred to the Imperial Capital? It’s weird.” (Classmate-san)

This time, it was my classmate who retorted. Although I lived at the Imperial Capital before the time I entered the academy, I don’t know anything about the town. I also can’t say I was under house arrest.

“It’s not the Imperial Capital. Why did you make that kind of mistake?” (EI)

I hardened my heart and talked towards Alois-san.

The doubtful glances around us are painful.

“Ah, it was like that. I made a little mistake. We played at the countryside before...” (Alois)

“Eeh~ so it’s accidental.” (Classmate-san)

I don’t know whether they actually believed that but I can only nod in agreement.

“Then, EI? What was that ‘princess’ before?” (Classmate-san)

Tch. You remembered?

The small hope I had that they forgot, vanished fruitlessly.

“That, you know, it’s the p...princess game.” (El)

I said noncommittally.

“Huh?” (Others)

The sight of everyone hanging their mouth open is amusing.

“It’s a make believe game where you are given roles to play. And a long time ago, I acted as the princess.”

“Heh... so it was like that.” (Classmate-san)

I can’t take it back! Even if you show sympathy, I can’t take it back! Let’s just go through this.

“The time when we played Princess and Knight, aren’t those just remains of the past? ——— Right, Alois-niichan ?”

I looked up at Alois-san, who had an expression as if he just heard something he never did before.

Nn?

For some reason, the one to smash the frozen atmosphere is not anybody’s voice, but the roaring sound of explosion nearby.

“What?”

Everyone stopped talking and looked at the source of the sound.

“Matthias-sama...?”

Alois raised a miserable voice.

Matthias stood near the site of explosion. The knight close by, the one sparring with him, is unable to stand up in fear. Matthias pursed his lips firmly, his expressionless face spoke of bad mood.

And then, he is glaring this way.

What happened while we were speaking? I did not look at Matthias at all so I can’t read the situation. But I acutely thought that I may be the reason since he’s looking at here.

The knight with soot on his face got up in panic, and went away from Matthias.

The Knights who were answering our questions until now dropped their voices and started talking.

“Matthias-sama is absolutely furious. Was he not satisfied with his sparring partner? But someone with Commander status is not here right now... What should we do?”

“It’s impossible for me! I heard he was taking a rest from an illness, but he didn’t weaken at all! If Matthias-sama become serious today, I’ll become cinders!”

The Knights said that Matthias might be under a lot of stress.

Right then, a good idea hit me.

I floated a smile and tugged the hem of Alois-san’s clothes, he stooped down a little.

“Alois-san, why won’t you become Matthias’ sparring partner?”

“That... it’s impossible! I can’t become his opponent!”

We talked in whispers so that our voices will not leak around.

“It’s fine. Matthias is gentle, I do not think he will turn someone into cinders. Incidentally, I want you to complain. —— ‘Leaving aside that you kept silent about your visit here to the Knight Order, don’t look so much to my direction since it will be exposed to others that I know you.’ ”

Hiiiiii! Alois-san gave a small shriek.

“I cannot say something so dreadful! I will get killed!”

But he’s the only one I can ask to deliver a message. Moreover, Alois-san will just expose things if he stays here since he cannot lie, it’s dangerous.

“It’s alright. Just hitting him once is enough. Come on, please?”

“I am sorry but it’s impossible! It’s absolutely impossible! It’s impossible, impossible!”

I pushed Alois-san, who shook his head in complete denial, towards Matthias.

“Please have mercy on me. I still want to live~~!!”

“Fuu.” (*sigh)

I sighed as I saw off Alois-san— no, Alois who walked step by step while saying these complaints. It was too bad for him, but I have to get rid of the nuisance. Alois repeatedly bowed down several times to Matthias while saying something. He is surely conveying what I asked a while ago.

After speaking for short while, he looked at me with an expression dyed with hopelessness, as if he just received a written invitation to hell. His eyes are asking for help.

It looks he doesn't want to fight with Matthias very much. Sorry Alois, but Matthias' glancing looks will now stop with this. I decided to give him my gratitude, so I smiled and waved my hand.

But when Alois saw me, the color of despair in his expression strengthened even further.

“Is it strange?” (El)

Matthias floated a smile and said something to Alois again. Then, Alois shook both his hands as if he's denying something desperately.

Matthias answers back and Alois lowers his head again, the practice match of two people starts. The surrounding air is strained, too, and attention gathered in the training area.

“Start!”

The voice echoed, and it was Matthias who acted first. It may be due to the rapid speaking or it did not reach my ears, but just as soon as I thought Matthias spoke words I cannot comprehend, a pillar of fire rose in the place where Alois is.

“Uwwaaaaaa!”

From our side, rather than a cry, shouts of joy that contained admiration boiled.

Alois, did you burn? I thought, but just as you'd expect from a Knight. He promptly jumped to the left and dodged.

When Matthias saw that, he repeatedly bombarded magic again without giving Alois time to straighten his stance.

It's not just the heat of the flames, I feel like even the temperature of the grounds went up at once.

Matthias' attacks increased in number, and when the whole place was engulfed in fire, both their figures disappeared.

"...sorry, Alois. Rest in peace."

Matthias has a merciless personality. Those eyes definitely held killing intent. When magic was mixed in, I did not think it will become an attack like this. The training grounds became hell.

Though I was told before that Matthias is strong, I thought it was only a compliment. I can't believe it was actually true.

"Saaave meeurgh..."

I heard a voice of someone crawling on the ground from among the dust storm. I backed away.

"Who?"

"It's Alois. Princess...guh!"

The thick smoke and cloud of dust gradually thinned, Alois appeared at the other side even though I was sure he was still fighting. He's tattered and burnt here and there.

"Huh? Since when were you here?"

"Isn't that cruel?! If I stayed there any longer... Uuugh... I'm absolutely going to get killed."

Alois is in the verge of tears. When I saw the face of a sobbing man, it especially became impossible for me to give kind words.

"I slightly thought you're no-good... This is a practice match so I expected Matthias will attack while thinking that. The spectators aren't damaged at all... Then it just concerns Alois... No way, right?" (EI) That's right. Not even a spark flew to the Knights standing beside me.

"What's with that irresponsibility?! When I conveyed what Princess wanted, Matthias-sama smiled and then said 'I see' and started killing me with Advanced

Magic! Especially after Princess waved at me, his eyes were not laughing!”

While Alois desperately appealed, voices of the other Knights reached us.

“Hey, Alois! You’re still in the middle of the match. Come back!”

“Look, they’re calling you.”

“No, thank you! This is the only safe zone. I continually trained without forgetting my regrets from the time I was assigned to guard you, but I reconfirmed that the Princess and Matthias-sama are stronger. I will only ask this of you, so please save me!”

“That is, Matthias and I...”

When I answered Alois who had his hands in a worshipping manner, we heard someone’s flustered, loud voice.

“His Highness, Ricardo-sama is approaching!”

Ricardo-sama? I inclined my head in question of the name that only I did not know. The peaceful atmosphere of the training area completely changed .

No one spoke. It’s unthinkable for a place as noisy as this, but it was wrapped in silence.

“What is happening here?”

“First Prince Ricardo-sama appears to be coming here. He might have heard Matthias-sama visited.”

Alois told me in a low voice even as he bowed. I answered Alois without raising my head either.

“Matthias?”

“Ricardo-sama and Matthias-sama must be acquainted before entering the academy. Both of their social positions are as high as the clouds so I do not know it in detail. Which reminds me, why is the Princess also bowing her head?”

When I strained my ears, I faintly heard the sound of firm footsteps on the ground. Not just one person’s footstep. The sound grew little by little as the pace became faster.

“Why, you say? Of course, someone as great as a prince...”

Even I, understand that a prince is a person of a high position. It will be bad if he saw my face, but we never met so he may not know me.

“Uhhh... Excuse me for my impoliteness, but what is Princess’s relation to Matthias-sama?”

“He’s something like a guardian?”

I will be troubled if he asks again. Even until now, I still do not know the reason why Matthias kindly looks after me. Before, when he pressed me for questions and I said I was troubled how I should live after suddenly being thrown out, he was angry.

“I just have to make sure I will not abandon you, right?! I will follow Elmer-sama even if I die!” he passionately stated, and it just became something unsaid since then.

“Matthias-sama is someone from the West Vern Family. They govern vast lands in the west, a great family that holds the name of Four Major Aristocrats. I cannot be compared to such an absurd social position. However, Princess addresses Matthias-sama with such familiarity... Then when it comes to it, the Princess is...? What in the world?”

<Note: The actual term is ‘addressing without honorifics’, which indicates familiarity, superiority or of equal status and sometimes disrespect. Note that El stopped using -san with Alois some paragraphs ago.> Alois started worrying and fell silent. By the way, we’re having this conversation while we are kneeling and looking down like everyone.

The footsteps stop, and there are quiet arguing voices instead. Is that the voice of Matthias? It is unbearably anxious.

“That is...?”

As a conclusion, I did not see prince’s appearance. The person who appears to be the prince took the arm of Matthias who is turning to our direction. I only saw his back. Also, there is another tall man who also had his back turned.

Is he by any chance a prince?

I don’t know. But both of them must be great people. He looks like an

important person so I was relieved he did not look here.

I have a feeling that my eyes met Matthias for an instant. He had an unusually troubled expression when he looked at me but since his companion is a prince, it may be inevitable.

“Do your best.”

I wordlessly said that by just moving my mouth, then I lowered my head again. It will be bad if I attracted attention.

After a while, the prince party left with light footsteps. The string of the tension was cut and sounds returned to the training area.

Matthias disappeared when I looked up, it seems like he was taken by the prince. I really felt they are actual friends.

“Amazing~~! I’ll boast about this in class tomorrow!”

“You’re right.”

Including me, it goes without saying that all the students are excited.

For a while afterwards, our classmates who weren’t able to go to the Knight Order will look at us with eyes of yearning. Thankfully, Alois seemed to have faded from everyone’s memory.

from the author Sei-san,

Last status update>> April 4, 2013 (23:16PM)

It’s been a while.

I received a lot of reports on typos and missing words, for those who sent me messages, I am really thankful.

The truth is, I actually forgot to submit the chapter and just finally noticed today. I posted something still have not proofread so it may be hard to read.

I truly did not remember, so I saw several messages that are very impatient. It will mend this in the future.

This is a personal thing, but I safely passed the number one school I wanted to attend. Thank you very much.

Note from TL: It’s a pity that it only has this much chapters posted, but I’ve enjoyed this series. Thank you for everyone who continued reading until here! :)

PS. Side story will be translated in the far future.