

# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 Floral One-piece

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## Floral One-piece[[edit](#)]

“Does Ryner have a special girl?”

Towards this sudden question,

“.....Ah?”

Ryner Lute raised his head.

The location was in the office that was abnormally simply, only had bookshelves and two tables—that the Roland king used.

On one of the tables, looking towards Ryner who was almost buried by the documents, that king of this country said this.

“A lover. Don’t you have one?”

The king was once Ryner’s cohort classmate.

But now, he was called the Hero King Sion Astal...

But in Ryner’s eyes, there was only a troublesome devil who forced people to work from day to night and as a workaholic himself.

So he looked at Sion with a troublesome expression,

“What? Suddenly talking about this. What is this for again, an ambush laid to give me new work?”

And Sion laughed and shrugged,

“No. I’m just chatting. I wanted to rest a little after finishing up a stack of work.”

Saying that, he flipped a page he held in his hand.

But Ryner still had a cautious expression.

“You’re saying that, but later you will definitely stuff work to me at some point in time.”

“Eh? Then let’s talk about the new arrangement of work?”

“No, I’m not doing it. If you continue to push work to me I will die of overwork hey...”

Just to mention Ryner had already been working overnight in the office for two days. And the documents that were piled up and formed mountains didn’t reduce, it was really crazy.

And Sion was fighting these documents by himself all the while before this, every day there would be new work flooding before him.

Just by looking at this, he could understand the reason why he was called the Hero King.

For the sake of the operations of this country, the youthful nineteen years was buried completely in paperwork.

Ryner scrunched his face and said:

“It’s hard being a king.”

Sion laughed bitterly too,

“I agree. Speaking of which, let’s talk about something suitable for young people?”

“About lovers and such?”

“Yes yes. Let’s talk about lovers.”

Ryner spun his pen on the table, leaning back on the chair and looking at the ceiling.

He was silent for while in this state, turning his head to look at Sion and said,

“...Uh~eh. I don’t have anything that frivolous by my side. I’m not popular.”

Sion said immediately,

“Here it is again. What is the Ryner-sama who seduces grannies saying?”

“Ah ah? That’s clearly the false rumours that you’re spreading around. And that was what you said two years ago.”

To this Sion raised his eyebrows happily.

“Two years ago, it’s that then? What happened to you and Kiefer after that?”

“Nothing.”

“Really?”

Feeling that Sion was deliberately saying something that made people uncomfortable, Ryner frowned and glared back,

“Who are you?”

And Sion still smiled,

“This kind of conversation has a youthful vibe?”

“.....Ah ah, it is very youthful vibe.”

Ryner laughed too.

The two of them were already, so tired that they were half dead.

At this moment Sion said,

“Actually you’re quite popular, Ryner. Aren’t you dating Ferris now.”

“Ha? You really think of it that way?”

“Not at all.”

“That’s right?”

“But your relationship is really good. So actually the two of you are dating, just that you didn’t let me know at all.”

“No no.”

Ryner denied it simply.

But Sion still continued,

“Uhh. Then is Ferris your type?”

“Ah? That, I can’t say that either... Hey I say, you’re always talking about me, then what about you. Do you have any lovers”

At this Sion revealed a thoughtful expression.

“I... am not that popular.”

“What are you saying, you saying this do you know how many people want to kill you”

Just to mention, although the young and handsome king did not approach females, but the young ladies in the country had almost all taken Sion as their hunting target...

There were no rumours concerning women about him.

Due to that, there was a period of time where there was speculation that the Hero King liked men...

Actually the real reason why his best friend would become like that, Ryner knew it.

Sion did it to prevent creating children who would be born in the same situation as he did.

Although Ryner wasn’t clear, that previous king who was called an evil tyrant let his concubine give birth to Sion, after seeing what was on this throne...

But the reason was only like that.

And actually, Ryner was the same.

Ryner looked at Sion.

Only the focus of his gaze wasn’t Sion, but looking at Sion’s at his eyes.

Engraved in the black eyes, a crimson pentacle.

The special eyes called **Alpha Stigma**.

This was, the evidence of the monster that would cause everyone to hate and have a taboo, no living value, only cause large slaughter.

And this kind of eyes... were hereditary.

So it was like that.

Ryner sighed with an annoyed expression.

“...Ha. The conversation of two people who have no fate with women is really empty.”

But Sion who heard this showed a happy expression. For some reason he suddenly stood up.

“Then let’s not delay matter, the empty people will go on a trip now.”

“Trip? Huh?”

Completely ignoring Ryner’s words, Sion dragged him up from the chair immediately.

Then he walked out of the office like this.

“So I said what are you doing? Hey, where are you going?”

And Sion smiled brightly.

“Because Ryner helped me to finish many many work, so I’m going to reward you~”

“Ah? Don’t tell me I can go back to sleep?”

“It’s something better than that~”

“Better than sleep?”

As Ryner spoke, he started to think of this “better” reward.

Something better than going back to sleep.

Wasn’t that, being able to eat an elegant banquet, then having a high quality bed prepared by his side, after he was full he could lie down immediately to have a good dream... something like that, the mind of the sleeping master was filled with this kind of thoughts..

No no.

Sion dragged Ryner forward forcefully.

“It’s a brothel, it’s opened by the nobles, the most luxurious brothel in Roland. Let’s go there and play with women~”

Saying something like this, the devil laughed evilly.

◇◇◇

In a carriage bounding towards the most luxurious brothel in Roland.

Sion said this.

“Alright~ Are you grateful? Ryner~”

“.....”

Ryner didn’t speak.

The absolute beauty sitting at one side said too,

“What is it? You’re so excited that you can’t say anything? You pervert!”

“.....”

Ryner was still silent as expected. He only raised his sleepy eyes and looked over.

This absolute beauty who was as pretty as a fairy, was his partner, Ferris Eris.

Ryner looked at her with half-lidded eyes, then looked at Sion.

“I say... why is Ferris here...”

The one who interrupted him, was Ferris who was waiting for him to speak.

“Do you need to mention that, of course it is to punish those perverts who uhehehehe laugh as they shuffle into the brothel, let them pay the annual tribute to me Ryner. We have to let them pay for their perverted faces and uhihihihi laughter. Go and die!”

Subsequently Sion said with a serious face:

“I, I’m sorry Ryner. I managed to invite you to the brothel for fun after much difficulty, but I was exposed before your lover... I, it would be better if I paid for my sins?”

“...No, so I said she’s not my lover? I say why do you always say that Ferris is my lover...”

But this was interrupted by Ferris here.

“It’s like this Ryner! You clearly have me, but you’re actually going to a brothel! That’s too lowly. The worst! Men, men are all like that! They treat their wives like ornaments! Why don’t you come home with me quickly!”

She energetically said a woman’s statement that she deliberately came up with.

Just like that she sat in the backrow of the carriage, and started to act out some unknown drama.

And Ryner...

“.....That, how should I say, I don’t know what you’re thinking, it’s up to you to say things about going back or home or things like that... I want to go back and sleep... Ah?!”

When he turned his head and said this he saw Sion, immediately Ryner didn’t continue.

Sion who was before him had worn a set of clothes at some point in time.

He wore a pair of round spectacles on his face. He wore a valiant butler’s outfit. Sion who was tying a butterfly knot at his neck noticed

Ryner’s gaze, so he smiled at him and said,

“Oh I’m sorry to keep you waiting, Master. The preparations to go to the brothel are nearly complete.”

“.....Huh? Why are you dressed like that...”

But this was interrupted again.

Ferris who was sitting behind said,

“Ryner-sama. Is there anything I can help you with.”

Ryner who turned his head this time was shocked...

That was Ferris who was wearing a black maid's outfit with numerous frills and lace. There was actually a slight, embarrassed atmosphere on her expressionless face.

"How is it? Does it fit?"

"Ah? Ah... That, it, it fits you..."

That's right. It was really fitting.

Normally Ferris didn't wear normal woman's clothing, thus when she occasionally wore this kind of clothes, it made people more aware that she really was an impressive beauty.

It didn't have any unsuitable feeling, it was that fitting on her body.

At this moment Ryner suddenly realised something.

Sion's butler outfit.

Ferris's maidservant outfit.

They were going to a brothel now... and it was a brothel opened by a noble.

".....Don't tell me I'm being involved in some extremely troublesome thing... No. I, that, there's something urgent so I'll be going first. I'll go back to sleep..."

Saying that Ryner opened the carriage door immediately, thinking of jumping out like that...

But his shoulder was grabbed by someone. The butler had a worried expression behind him, smiling gently.

"Don't be so nervous. We're already prepared. The first time we visit a brothel... work hard Master."

"So what are you saying? Is this some kind of exhibition?"

The maid by the side grabbed Ryner's other shoulder,

"Master if you do this kind of things, the Lieutolu noble family will cry..."

"No no no, saying that I'm a noble or something is strange hey!"

Ryner shouted. But the two devils who grabbed him didn't listen to him.

Sion said,

"Come come. Master. We'll reach the brothel soon. Please wear that clothes that correspond to your noble status..."

As he said that he started to strip Ryner's clothes...

To this Ryner desperately resisted,

"No, I'm saying what is, wait..."

But Ferris who was beside him had already pulled open Ryner's collar.

"Come, it's time. Strip quickly, and wear the formal outfit."

"Aaaaaaaaahhhhh, wait a moment the two of you! What are you dooooooooooooooing"

Just as Ryner shouted that, and desperately resisted...

Ferris spoke. She pointed at the sword placed by the side.

“...Master is really~ Don't give us trouble. If you're too much... I'll kill you?”

So Ryner gave up resisting.

He sat on the seat dazedly like that.

It was over.

He thought of that.

It's gone.

Although he didn't understand the situation, but there was something he was extremely clear about.

Now he was already, involved in something really troublesome.

Ryner slackened.

Ryner who had slackened like that was stripped of his outer clothes, left his pants on his body, then a mysterious luxurious noble costume that was chosen with care by Sion and Ferris was put on his body.

Ferris said this.

“As expected if it's the master of the Lieutolu family, it would be better to wear something with more style?”

Sion said this.

“Then let's add a moustache?”

“It's that! We need that kind of curly moustache...”

“Alright! If it's like that then let's put some make up!”

“...”

The two of them tortured Ryner as if they were dressing up a doll.

Just before they reached the destination, they gave him a moustache and gave him a wig, and made various kinds of outfits.



This was, a place somewhere outside where the nobles resided.

Pushing open that golden, door with luxurious decorations, a wide courtyard and elegant fountain was displayed before the eyes.

Several carriages were stopped before the entrance, and the nobles who covered their faces, walked into the brothel under the guidance of beautiful women who were dressed well.

At the side of this noble-run brothel, the carriage of Ryner and the others stopped.

The carriage door opened...

Three figures appeared.

Sion who was a butler.

In a moment, several women in the surroundings cheered, starting to murmur among themselves.

“Uah, that butler is very handsome?”

“Will he speak to me”

“Really, they’re talking about that young butler! If you don’t work properly, madam will be angry...”

But these words stopped.

The one that followed next, was a beauty that wore a maid’s outfit.

The women all sighed, and some people were even forced to retreat by her presence.

“It’s, it’s bad. Even the maid is someone of this standard, the customer this time isn’t normal. It must be an extremely big character?”

“Quick, hurry and report to madam! Gather all the beautiful women...”

Suddenly this stopped too.

Lastly coming down from the carriage, was Ryner.

Looking like he wanted to sleep.

The slender body and hunched cat-like back that didn’t seem to have any aura of an important character. Although he should be wearing high-class clothes, but because the measurements were so great that it really didn’t suit him, compared to saying that he was wearing clothes, it had the feeling that he was wrapped in clothes.

And what was even more unfair was, it wasn’t known if it should be called foolish or what, a round mark was drawn on his face with lipstick, and he had a curly white-haired wig that looked like it was in the wrong era. And a pair of thick black moustache, paired with the face that was almost sleeping its suitability was...

“.....Pfff!?”

All the women snorted in an instant,

“It’s fine n, not to call madam”

“If it’s that we can deal with it”

What did this mean.

Sion smiled,

“It’s a success. With Ryner disguised and acting as a stupid noble, we can infiltrate without attracting attention”



These gentle words...

“.....And there’s still phobia of women, I think lately it’s unbelievable if I’m only a human...”

Saying that, Ryner hugged his head.



Previously in the carriage, he had heard the plan from Sion.

A few nobles had gathered in this brothel and carried out anti-government activities, there had been this kind of rumours lately...

Because the opponent was the nobles, so Sion couldn’t start an investigation easily.

Therefore he wanted Ryner to disguise as a noble to infiltrate the brothel, after that they would use sweet nothings to coax those prostitutes, it was this plan!

It should have been like that...

Just to mention where Ryner was now, it was a very large room.

There were bookshelves, sofas, tables, food had even been prepared on the table...

And there was a bed in the corner that looked very comfortable.

That’s right.

This was also, a room that was prepared for that kind of thing.

A woman was on the bed.

It was not unfair to call her a beauty.

Golden hair—or it should be said to be long hair with a slight tinge of orange. Large eyes. A sexy and thin underclothes covered her body, she looked at Ryner like this...

Looked and looked, her body started to tremble...

Then she exploded in laughter.

“M, moustache! That moustache! Ahahahahaha, I, I can’t take it anymore?! M, my stomach hurts?!”

“ ... ”

To this Ryner only turned his head to look at Sion and Ferris behind him,

“...Don’t stand there foolishly, we should go back?”

Sion only happily,

“Don’t give up!”

Ferris too,

“Uuh. Withstand it a little more. Withstand it a little more and her heart will be yours!”

Ryner could only look at the bed again.

That woman was still laughing desperately while hugging her stomach.

“Ah ah really! Don’t look here--! Die! Laugh and die!!”

“...”

“...Then what do I have to do after that?”

Just as he said this and turned his head, Sion had already moved.

Sion walked to the window and pulled back the curtains, then used a finger to push his spectacles.

“...Alright. If it’s like that then there’s enough light.”

Following that Ferris headed to the plate of food on the table, then took off the large cover covering the plate of food... her favourite dango set meal was “coincidentally” in there...

“Uhh. It’s the same as the menu”

“.....M, menu? No, that, the things you’re saying are weird?”

So Sion turned around and tilted his head,

“Eh? Weird? Where?”

“All of it is weird! Wanting to investigate the information on the anti-government information so you infiltrated this place, aren’t I talking about this topic!”

“It’s not right?”

“You denied it too simply hey!”

Ryner shouted like that, and Ferris who was starting to eat the dangos alone said,

“Uuh. The weird thing is your moustache”

“That was what you two forcefully put on me! How should I put it? What on earth is the situation? I’m begging you to explain it clearly quickly...”

Ryner was almost crying...

Sion made an expression I can’t handle you, finally speaking.

The starting of this matter, was like that.

The women of this brothel would had disappearing cases at fixed intervals.

Of course they had discussed this with the public order squad responsible for this about this matter, and had proceeded with the investigation... After investigating they realised, the ones kidnapping these people seemed to be

nobles, thus it wasn't really convenient to make a move.

But, because there were many people kidnapped from this store, the troubled madam went to discuss this with a military person...

At this moment Sion took out a piece of paper.

"The contents of that discussion, were reported to me"

"Ha.....Then, it means that we infiltrated this place to capture that pervert noble?"

But Sion shook his head.

"If it's to capture that noble, we can't do that now. We're only here to threaten him"

Then seemingly understanding what Ryner wanted to say, he said subsequently,

"Ah ah, that is using Ferris as bait to seduce that noble, then beat him until he's half dead to get a phobia of women, it's like this kind of progression?"

"Oh~ as expected of Ryner, you understand quickly. It's like that"

Ryner nodded two three times.

Then he continued to think, deciding to ask the biggest riddle of today.

"Then... according to what you said just now, I was dragged here and had a moustache put on me, was there such a need?"

So Sion and Ferris exchanged glances,

"That's obviously..."

"To laugh at your foolish side..."

"I'm going to kill yoooooooooooooooooooo"

But Sion put a finger up, stopping Ryner's words.

"Be quiet. He's here."

"Ah? Here... that pervert noble?"

Sion nodded soundlessly, then looked out of the window.

A black carriage was parked there...

"It's that?"

And the answering voice came from behind him.

"Yes. According to my investigation, that is the carriage of Earl Fethim Fou. Is this enough, Your Majesty."

Ryner turned around when he heard that, that woman who was still hugging her stomach and laughing just now had changed into a black outfit at some point in time, and was kneeling on the bed...

So Ryner looked at Sion and said,

“Then, this person is your subordinate too?”

“Obviously? We’re going to find the noble later, don’t you think I would be easily recognised in front of normal people?”

“...I don’t think so”

Thus Sion had disguised as a butler.

Sion looked at the spy girl and said,

“She’s very talented. In the few days she infiltrated the brothel, she investigated the timings of when Count Fou would come here.”

And it was today...

Ryner pointed the moustache out of the window,

“Then, my work has ended right. Anyway it is Ferris would will become bait to catch that pervert noble later...”

Just as he wanted to say that and walk off, he couldn’t continue saying again.

He saw Ferris who should be the bait...

...Ryner noticed that she held a dress that was very big in her hands.

“...”

So Ryner was temporarily silent.

“.....Ah~.....Ah~.....That, how should I say it, am I getting something wrong... how should I say it. That dress, Ferris is wearing is a little big... right?”

Sion heard that, in a moment!

“.....Eh?!”

Ryner let out a cry.

Sion was holding a pair of red high heels that was definitely large for a lady in his hands at some point in time.

So Ryner trembled,

“Y, you’re joking... you’re joking right? That, you’re joking right...”

But he stopped speaking here.

Behind him, the girl that was Sion’s subordinate was holding an item and approaching...

Sion, Ferris and the girl said together.

“Come come, I’ll make you pretty?”

“S, save meeeeeeeeeeeeeee.....”

Ryner wailed,



A woman...

But Earl Fethim Fou tilted his head.

“Th, that’s a woman? If it’s a woman she’s too tall...if it’s her shoulders they seem to be too broad...”

At this Ballubo laughed meaningfully,

“Women with tall height may be more interesting. Such a tall woman, it’s a first time seeing such a prey so far. And, please look at that face. And that pair of eyes that seem to be crying, filled with concern. It looks extremely lonely.”

So Earl Fethim Fou looked at that woman again. She did seem to be crying.

She did seem to have encountered something bad.

Wet tears were in her eyes.

A hurt expression. Even her stride wasn’t too even.

Just like that she walked past Earl Fethim Fou, leaving by following the carriageway...

Looking at that extremely lonely figure, Earl Fethim said,

“I’ve decided! It’s her! Just like that we can increase our collection~ Ballubo—catch that woman!”

So Ballubo puffed up his chest,

“Leave it to me!”

He replied loudly.

Just like that the carriage started.

Then shouted at the back of the lady walking on the carriageway,

“Hey, the lady there. Could you wait a bit?”

Hearing that, the woman stopped.

Then turned around,

“Ah?”

For some reason she had a profound expression.

But Ballubo didn’t take heed. He had already forcefully kidnapped many women from this place, he was very clear on the probable reactions that they would have in various scenarios.

Ballubo smiled at her.

“I’m sorry about suddenly calling you, miss, but I’m going to kidnap you now~”

Saying that, his thick arm attacked.

The scream of the women at this moment, was Earl Fethim Fou’s favourite.

“Come, scream. What kind of scream will the woman this time make”

Just as the Earl waited in high anticipation, the woman spoke.

“Don’t call me miiiiiiiiiiiiiss, I’ll kill you you perverted bastard!”

Just like that she suddenly punched Ballubo.

“Guuuuuuuuuuua?!”

Ballubo’s huge body was sent flying with a bang, and rolled on the ground a few times...

He couldn’t move.

Towards this sudden progression,

“Eh? Ah, eh? Ballubo?”

Earl Fou was stunned.

But at this moment, the woman looked over here with eyes of fury.

“It, it’s because of you bastard... because of you bastard I will... k, kill you”

“Eh? Eh? Eh? Wh, why is it me...”

Although he said that, but the woman still approached step by step...

“lihhh?! Wait, guard! Hurry and drive! Escape from here...”

But.

“How can I let you escaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaape?!”

The woman took off the high heels and threw them over.

In a moment, an incredible thing happened.

The high heels passed through the window of the carriage, the portion of the heel scratched the earl’s face and stabbed into the adjacent wall.

“Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee?!”

Although he screamed, her attacks continued.

That hand drew a magic formation in the air at an unbelievable speed.

“WHAT I SEEK IS>>> IZUCHI!”

A strong lightning appeared in the formation, blowing half of the carriage away.

But this was still not enough.

“IZUCHI!”

“IZUCHI!”

“IZUCHI!”

Lightning shot around dizzyingly, the woman wearing a floral patterned dress activated the magic again and again causing everything in the surroundings to be burnt to nothing.

Among that, Earl Fou trembled. He didn't do anything.

"...Ah, auh...wuwuwu..."

Making moans haltingly, he only trembled desperately. At some point in time that tall woman had come before him...

"My<sup>[1]</sup> an... Have you seen my<sup>[2]</sup> anger you bastard! This is punishment, remember this. Swear that you will never kidnap women ever again. Or else I'll kill you"

Hearing that Earl Fou nodded many times.

"I, I swear! I sweaaar my lady... so, so spare me, have mercy!"

"M, my lady... Ah ah bastard, forget it. But your life, is decided by the conditions of the women that you kidnapped. If they are fine then it's alright, if they are dead..."

"I, I didn't kill them I didn't kill them! No, I should say they're living happily..."

"Alright. Then lead the way, release them all."

"Yes, yes..."

So, the woman grabbed Earl Fou's hair, walking with him to the earl's residence.

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Sion who saw this scene from the second floor window said,

"...H, how scary~ Ryner this time is very fierce... did we tease him too much?"

Ferris nodded too,

"Uh, uuh. This is my first time seeing Ryner like that."

"What should we do? We'll have to comfort him later right? But what should we say?"

So the two revealed troubled expressions, hugging their arms and thinking.

Suddenly seeming to think of something, Ferris clapped her hands.

"Uhh. At this moment we obviously have to say, you were very pretty at that moment, or something like that, as a girl she would be happiest to hear this!"

That woman was an oni.

And Sion clapped his hands too,

“It’s that! High heels really suit you, something like that”

This guy was an oni too.

“Then, after we go back we’ll tell everyone that”

They actually decided it like that...

After Ryner came back and heard their plan...

He locked himself in the washroom of the brothel like that, that day, he didn’t come out of it...

(The Floral One-piece. End)

1. [Jump up ↑](#) 俺 an informal, cocky way of saying ‘I’
2. [Jump up ↑](#) 私 In formal or polite contexts, this is gender neutral, but when used in informal or casual contexts, it is usually perceived as feminine.

# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 Extra Stage I

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 [baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php](http://baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php)

[\[edit\]](#)

Genius. That's how people called him.

But Rahel Miller could not understand why.

Someone had once said,

*Rahel Miller was a genius in all areas of magic, combat and tactics.*

But Miller still couldn't understand.

He was merely doing his share of things.

And if as a result of that, he gained enough abilities to be called a genius - then everyone could do the same, Miller thought.

Isn't it strange to call something like that the marking of a genius - talents that you're born with?

That's what he thought, but...

When he voiced his opinions, someone else spoke up.

*If Rahel Miller isn't a genius, then who is?*

*He's not even of noble standing, yet he earned the rank of major in the blink of an eye, became the highest official overseeing the **Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad**, gathering talented people, and revolutionized the Roland Empire from its dark depths.*

With a splendid display of skill that made it seem like he knew the future, he changed this country. Rahel Miller is really a genius, after all. They say...

But Miller still thought that those opinions were misplaced.

To start a revolution in that time period wasn't too hard.

The stage was set.

Corrupted nobility. Commoners being trampled on.

A trigger was all it took.

What Miller did was ensuring that things proceeded as smoothly as they could when the trigger appeared. He prepared and waited, that's all.

He gathered talented people, used the nobles...and waited for the trigger....a brightly shining trigger in the name of Sion Astal.

It was something that could be accomplished by anyone if they just did their share.

Even if he didn't do it himself, someone else would've done it.

The talents of a genius aren't needed at all.

In the first place, if he really was a genius, he wouldn't be so troubled right now.

Miller looked at the door being battered in front of him and frowned.

From the other side of the door came the voice of a woman....or more accurately, a cute girl.

"Major! Major Miller! Please give me an explanation!"

The voice said.

"So she came gain..."

Miller's normally serious face darkened even further, and wrinkled appeared between his eyebrows.

Clear-cut features accompanying a look of fearless determination. A well-trained body. Through his upright posture, he radiated a dignified presence that seemed unfitting for someone who was in his early thirties.

He was currently in one of the official residences of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad.

A table and various bookshelves could be found in the room. Only a few books kept him company, and the room seemed as far from entertainment as possible, but...

Miller liked this office.

All the books and documents were arranged so that he can work most efficiently.

And today, he should've been doing his share of the work in this quiet room, but....

Sounds of knocking battered at him as if to interfere with his work.

Knock knock!

"Major! Major-? Are you in or not-?"

"..."

Knock knock knock!

"If you're in, then please let me know! Please let me....huh? Major-?"

"....."

Knock knock knock knock!

"I'm Callaud, major! Lieutenant Milk Callaud! Please explain! Please explain why I've been taken off the mission of pursuing Ryner Lute...ah, geez! I'll definitely get my answer today! Major! Major~!!"

".....please just give me a break."

Miller felt the signs of an incoming headache and rubbed his temples.

The girl who's knocking fiercely at the door right now came to his office every day and interfered with his work.

And the knocking continued.

Knock knock! Knock knock knock knock!

But he can't open the door.

The reason why Milk Callaud was taken off the mission of pursuing Ryner Lute...she couldn't be told yet. So he had to find some makeshift excuse to send her home....but he didn't think that she'd go home without a fight.

So...if he opened the door.

He'll end up dealing with her for the whole day, not accomplishing anything.

So, what should he do? Miller crossed his arms, deep in thought.

".....should I try the absent trick again?"

The moment he spoke, the girl outside said

"Alright! I've knocked 100 times! Can I come in now? I can, right?"

"Wha...what kind of logic is that..."

But before he could finish, the girl spoke up again,

"Lieutenant Milk Callaud, coming in!"

And the door opened.

But a split second before, Miller grabbed the necessary documents and jumped out of the window.

By the way, his office was on the third floor.

He couldn't really jump off, so he grabbed the tiles of the wall and began climbing.

His quick and swift movements were definitely that of a genius'.

He thought of himself climbing while holding the documents in his mouth...

"....what kind of genius is that."

He frowned again and sighed.

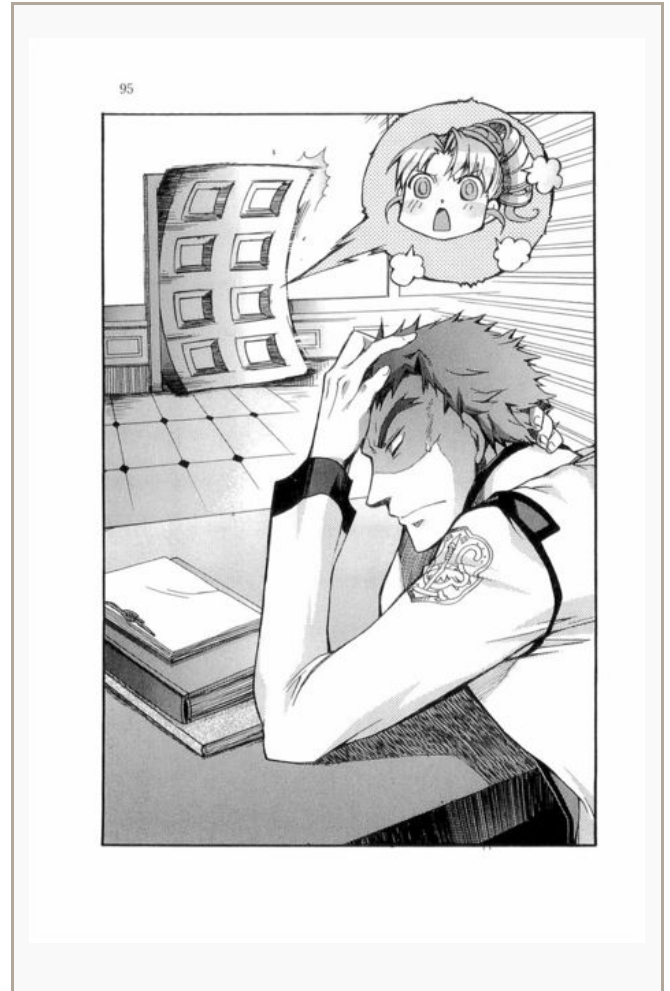
"Huh, he really isn't here. Wonder where he went."

Ignoring Milk Callaud's voice from behind, Miller easily scaled the wall.

Above the fourth, fifth and sixth floor, he emerged on the roof of the house. After confirming that no one was there...

"....hah. Why do I have to do these things...."

He sighed again and jumped onto the roof.



He looked around the roof of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad's official residence that was painted pitch black.

He saw a water tower and a metal door that served as an entrance to the roof. On both sides of the door were redundant signs that said "Entry Forbidden", but Miller knew that nobody actually followed the rules.

"Well...it feels rather nice here."

He turned around and looked at the scenery.

Today was a bright and sunny day.

The wind was calm, and it was neither too cold nor too hot.

He saw the streets of Roland and the plains as well as the mountains beyond that. He stared at the landscape for a while and narrowed his eyes. Even this scene had gone through changes in these few years.

Ever since the revolution began and Sion Astal became king, streets became livelier by the day and changed drastically.

The plains are decreasing in area, the city is expanding, and floods are better dealt with...

He could really feel the Roland Empire's progress from this vantage point.

The country was beginning to grow in a direction that could enable everyone to regain their smiles and all of its citizens to be happy.

Yes, the country had changed.

It emerged from that dark era, and headed towards a good direction....

Just by looking at this scene, he could see that everyone believed it.

That's why Miller loved the scene.

"...."

Because he knew that everyone mistakenly thought that this present happiness was genuine...

"...the situation is getting real bad..."

It should've been easy to see.

Someone's fortune is another's misfortune.

Someone's fortune leads to another's jealousy.

And what will happen as a result of that?

The answer is simple.

"War....but that's to be expected."

Then what he should do is simple enough.

Do whatever he should with whatever methods he should use.

And what he had to do with Milk Callaud....

".....no..."

He stopped his line of thought.

He couldn't do anything about it by just thinking.

So there was no need to...

But he suddenly heard sounds of conflict from beyond the door.

"E-entry is forbidden....gwah!?"

"S-someone back us up...gwah!?"

Familiar screams of guards, followed by the sound of two bodies hitting the floor.

Miller considered his situation at the same time. He looked at the door,

".....hmm. That's quite the killer intent. I can feel it beyond the door."

So was it an assassin on the other side of the door? But do assassins really make themselves known with such an obvious killer intent?

Then what?

"I don't understand. I feel killer intent from you, yet you're not an assassin..."

Unknown enemies are threats.

That much was written in just about every book on tactics.

But Miller smiled thinly,

"If you think you can do something about me with that level of killer intent, then you thought wrong. You broke into the official residence of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad and knocked out the guards, don't think I'll let this..."

But his words were interrupted.

The voice spoke behind the door,

"Where is Ryner Lute?"

The moment he heard that voice,

".....hmm!?"

Miller widened his eyes.

The voice was a woman's voice. But it wasn't Milk Callaud's.

The woman's voice was incomparably sharp and overwhelming. And Miller knew that voice like the back of his hand.

But,

"....."

Her presence signified bad things.

And she got herself involved with Ryner Lute....

"Damn."

It was the worst kind of situation.

What should he do? What's his best course of action?

"...I guess I'll run."

He turned around, but

"I'll kill you if you run!"

".....ugh."

It felt like his actions were completely predicted.

Miller looked towards the door at the sound of it opening.

And the door opened slowly....

"Now~ I guess I need to punish you for doing those things behind my back."

And looking at the woman's figure....

"....."

Miller frowned even deeper, wearing his gloomiest expression of the day.

Another time and place.

Night.

"....I-I really thought I'd die today...."

Ryner Lute said in a tired voice.

Unkempt black hair that made him look like he just woke up, and black eyes constantly tinged with a hint of sleepiness. His long, thin body gave off a lazy image as he fumbled his way from the castle to the inn.

"This is getting really bad. It's been two months since I came back to Roland....and if I keep getting worked to the bone by that bully king Sion, I'd really die from overwork. I wish I'd just disappeared like that..."

He meant half of what he said.

Recently, Ryner had begun considering the very real possibility of death from overwork.

Today, after being threatened and deceived and forcibly made to work five straight days with no sleep,

*"There's no way I can work for five straight daaaaaaaaaaaaaays! I'll really die. I'll really die so please let me go back."*

He had to cry and beg before he was released. On top of that, Sion said,

*"Hmm? Oh, it's been five days already? That's bad. I might die as well. Alright, let's sleep. 8 hours of rest~ Let's have a fulfilling slumber in preparation of work 8 hours later!"*

<!-104--> But right away, he started working on some documents. Thinking of Sion's figure back then, Ryner trembled.

"I-if I had to go along with that workaholic, one body isn't nearly enough...."

".....hmm. That swindler....just because I'd do anything with dango as reward doesn't mean he could force those difficult problems on me....I won't forgive him."

Ryner looked beside him and saw a stunningly beautiful woman. Gold hair and blue eyes, slender body, and a long sword sheathed at her waist.

His partner, Ferris Eris.

She continued with a similarly tired and sleepy-looking face.

"....I can't afford to go along with Sion any longer. Kill that enemy of dango and make him into pig bait first thing in the morning, Ryner."

Ryner attempted to say something at Ferris' ridiculous words, but he couldn't think due to lethargy.

So he simply said,

"....pig bait? Eh~....ah~.....well, that comes first, then. We have to buy a pig."

".....uh? Pig? Why do we have to buy a pig?"

Ryner looked at Ferris.

And saw that she seemed to have been pushed beyond limits and looked like she'd close her eyes at any minute.

Ryner also felt his eyes drooping,

".....hmm? Wonder why. I feel like someone said they wanted to eat pork..."

".....oh. But you thought wrong. I wanted to eat dango."

"Okay. Let's go and buy dango tomorrow."

"Hmm. Let's buy dango. I'm looking forwa.....kuh-"

Just like that, she fell towards Ryner....

Her head hit Ryner in the chest.

Ryner opened his eyes at the impact,

"Woah, did I just fall asleep while walking!?"

He looked at Ferris, who was sleeping on his chest while standing.

"Hey, we're not there yet~ Wake up, Ferris."

"....."

But no answer came.

She was sleeping peacefully while snoring adorably like a kid.

She entrusted herself to Ryner and slept without a hint of wariness.

Looking at her, Ryner said....

".....how dirty.....are you expecting me to carry you home!?"

"....."

But as usual, she was sleeping in peace.

"Hey. You're awake, aren't you?"

"....."

"Y-you....argh, I guess I have no choice. I'll just have to carr.....your eyes are slightly open, aren't they?!"

"No, they aren't."

"They aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaare!!"

The instant he shouted, he heard a sharp sound as if something had cut through air.

"Ah?"

"Hm?"

Ryner and Ferris reacted immediately.

They looked towards the source of the sound.

A knife was flying through the air.

Straight towards Ryner's face....

"Woah!?"

Ryner leaned back while carrying Ferris and dodged. He tried to straighten himself, but,

"F-ferris! Stop leaning on my chest! I'll fall!"

".....kuh-"

"Don't sleep at a time like this! Ah, crap. I'm falling....and the knives are coming again!?"

Ryner lost his balance and fell while carrying Ferris against his chest...

At that moment.

Ferris separated herself in smooth moves, grabbed his neck and stuck him towards the knives like a shield....

"Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaah!?"

Ryner instantly stopped the knives and turned around,

"Are you trying to kill me..."

But Ryner's words trailed off. Behind him, Ferris already settled in a very comfortable position that just screamed

'I'm sleeping' and said with barely open eyes,

"Alright, Ryner. Let's do what we always did. Formation A!"

Ryner stared at her with half-open eyes,

".....um....by the way, it's the first time I've ever heard something like Formation A from you...you mean that? Me against the enemies alone...like I always did..."

"No, that's formation B. Formation A has me supporting you from behind while sleeping...."

"That's meaningleeeeeeeessss and what you're asleep already?! And..."

Ryner turned around.

Knives were already emerging from the bushes. Two, three, four...

They all headed straight towards Ryner.

Ryner narrowed his eyes and made to brush away all knives....

"And I seem to be the target. Now what? What kind of grudge...."

Ferris spoke up behind him.

"Hmm. I'm surprised myself. I heard that the grudges of the women you attacked and impregnated would become knives and soar through the night sky...but I didn't know that it was true...."

"What are talking about!? At times like these, you always....argh dammit, just go to sleep!"

"Hmm. Leave it to me."

Ferris began snoring again, and Ryner said,

"I dooooooooooon't want to leave it to you, but..."

Ryner stared into the bushes.

"I guess I'll have to do it....hah."

He sighed at searched for the enemy's presence. But he couldn't feel it. Even though they're close enough to throw knives, they're good enough that even Ryner and Ferris didn't notice them.

"Geez, I feel like this night's getting long. And I don't get why I'm targeted. I guess it'll end up like that. Me dying of sleepiness before the assassin gets to me."

He began walking.

His expression still looked lazy, but he heightened his senses and stared at the bushes...

"Now, the enemy is...."

Something in the bushes moved slightly. He saw someone wearing a black-hooded cape run out....

"Found."

Ryner took off as well. He jumped over the bushes and closed upon the enemy in an instant. The enemy's

movements were quick, but Ryner was even faster.

"Alright. I might be able to sleep early."

Ryner muttered, and the enemy seemed to have noticed a pursuer. The enemy turned around and threw a knife. It headed straight towards Ryner's left shoulder....

"It won't hit."

Ryner stepped slightly towards the right and dodged....however.

He heard a clanking sound coming from his feet.

"Huh?"

He said stupidly and looked at his foot. He saw that he managed to step into a small magic circle, onto the crystal that served as an activation key...

"Woah, a trap? I guess the knives just now were bait...."

If his foot left the crystal, the trap will activate.

"Damn...trying to stop me...."

Suddenly,

"No, I'm not trying to stop you. Have your skills dulled so much that you couldn't tell, Ryner Lute?"

It was a woman's voice.

"Wha...."

Ryner couldn't help but utter stupidly again.

That voice was familiar....

Ryner raised his head and looked straight ahead.

He saw a woman wearing a black-hooded cape....

Looking at the woman, Ryner said,

"....don't tell me, you are...?"

The woman took off her hood.

And the face that emerged...

Looked to be about the mid-twenties. Shoulder-length blue hair and sharp eyes. Her smile demonstrated her overflowing confidence.

Ryner was familiar with all of that.

It was an old memory.

Back when he was five or six.

He didn't have enough time to sleep every day, and the woman in front of him would say,

*"Now, it's time for some practice matches. I'll beat you up now, so work hard and don't die. Then you'll become strong."*

And he got beaten up...

*"Now, now, don't pretend you're dead! It's time for magic studies. I'll kill you if you don't go right now. Oh, and I'll also kill you if you slack off, so go now!"*

Those kinds of memories....

"Ah, ugh, ah..."

Ryner trembled just from remembering.

Yes, this woman taught Ryner about magic, combat and tactics....

The days he spent with her were hell. His body and heart were battered.

He didn't really care about getting beat up during practice matches. But not having enough time to sleep was really bad. He even developed his special technique of sleeping while walking back then.

And the woman who kept beating Ryner up was standing in front of him for some reason....

"G-Germer Kleisrole..."

Ryner said with a trembling voice, and Germer smiled happily.

"What now. Are you trembling at your long awaited reunion with your beautiful teacher?"

But Ryner replied,

"No, I'm trembling in fea....gwah!?"

*A-a knife came flying!?*

He leaned back and dodged it, but his foot almost left the crystal,

"Woah dammit!?"

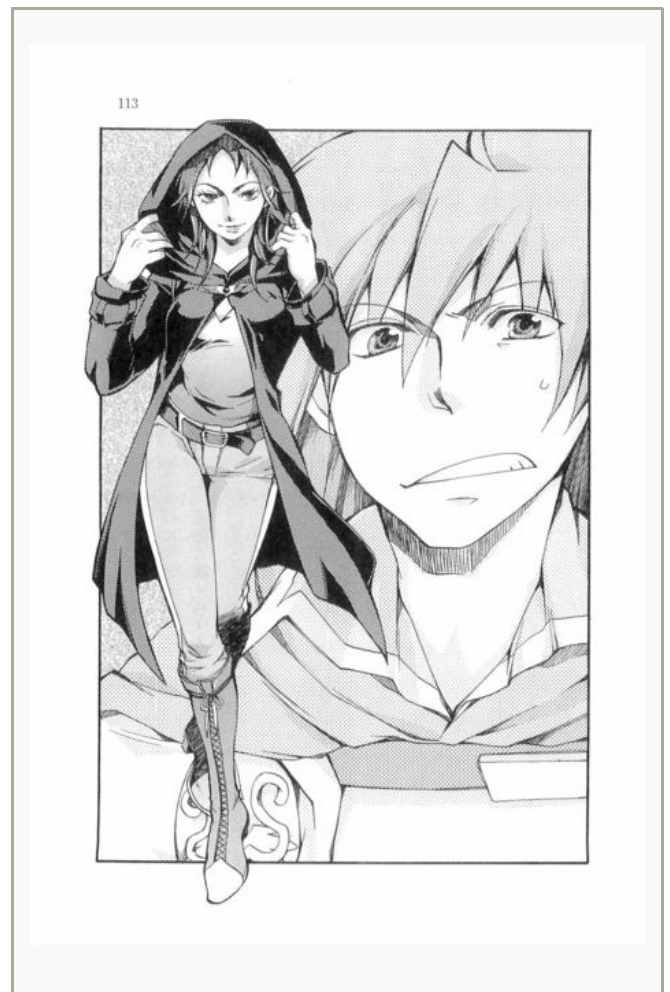
He tried his best to straighten himself.

Germer continued,

"So? Trembling from the touching reunion?"

".....yes. I am simply wobbling with emotion."

Germer smiled slightly,



"You haven't changed."

"...neither have you, Germer."

"Right? People always say that about me. I don't like someone in their thirties."

"T-thirties? Has it been that long..."

"Don't say I'm in my thirties!!"

"Gyaaaaaaah!!"

*A-a knife again?!*

"G-Germer! Don't joke around with knives. I'll really die!"

Ryner shouted.

But Germer said,

"Of course. I threw them with the intent of killing you. I've come to kill you."

She took out three knives.

Ryner looked at her with a tired expression,

".....ahh geez. What kinda joke is that? There's no way that you'd do that...."

Ryner knew it better than anyone else. She was willing to give up her own life to let Ryner and her other two students, Peria and Pia escape from the country alive. There's no way that she'd kill Ryner now...

Germer continued.

"I made a mistake in letting you live back then."

Ryner smiled bitterly,

"Really, what are you..."

"You murdering monster."

"....."

Her eyes were serious when she said that...

Ryner was at a loss of words.

Murdering monster.

He was used to being called that.

Right then, Ryner realized that she was staring at his eyes.

Ryner's black eyes. But vermilion pentacles floated at their center.

Cursed eyes called **Alpha Stigma**, hated and avoided by everyone.

Eyes that can see through all magic.

But once they go out of control, those mad eyes will begin spreading destruction and murder with no regards to the bearer's will.

A monster who cannot mingle with humans.

A monster who cannot do anything but bring harm and death.

That's why Ryner was often called that.

Monster. Monster. Monster! Monster!!

".....ugh."

Ryner immediately made to cover his eyes with his hands, but stopped himself. He looked at Germer with those eyes.

".....so, you were asked to kill me because I'm a monster with **Alpha Stigma**?"

But Germer said while glaring at Ryner,

"Monsters should be killed."

He heard those words before.

He even said them himself.

Murdering monsters should be killed.

Cursed monsters should be killed.

He thought so many, many, many times.

".....so, Germer, did **Alpha Stigma** kill someone dear to you?"

"....."

Germer replied with silence.

But silence was more than enough. Ryner could feel his face contorting.

And he began questioning himself again.

Maybe he didn't have a reason to live.

A monster who'll hurt people by just being alive...

A monster who kills people he thought dear...

I should be killed....

Many, many, many times.

Ryner looked straight ahead. Germer was raising her knives.

If he didn't dodge those knives, he could die.

If he did, he'd definitely be at peace.

He knew that.

But...

"....."

Ryner averted his eyes from Germer and looked behind him. He saw the bushes he just jumped over, but what he was looking at was beyond that.

That troublesome dango girl should be sleeping over there....

And he thought of the troublesome workaholic, working at documents sleeplessly even now in the castle...

"Ah, now that I think about how much they'll abuse me tomorrow, I feel like dying..."

"Then die!"

Just from the sound, he knew that Germer threw the knives.

Yes, if he didn't turn around now, he could be at peace immediately.

It's easy to die.

But Ryner frowned.

He suddenly recalled Ferris words.

*"Formation A has me supporting you from behind while sleeping...."*

He just shouted that her words were meaningless, but...

".....they have meaning."

He whispered.

*I'm...being supported.*

Ryner turned around. Swatting the knives away, he looked at Germer,

"...sorry, I can't die yet."

"Nobody wants you alive!"

"Still. Right now, I don't hate being with them."

Germer prepared another knife.

But Ryner didn't mind. He stepped away from the crystal. At the same time, he closed his eyes once and opened them. Vermilion pentacles began glowing within his black eyes.

Cursed eyes. Those eyes can see through all magic.

Ryner looked at the trap with those eyes and attempted to cancel the magic...

Attempted to cancel the magic...

"T-there's no magic..."

Ryner looked up again, and found Germer looking at him, enjoying his reaction...

She stuck out her tongue,

"I got you?"

"...d-don't tell me, all of that was acting just now?"

"Effects, effects I say. I thought it'd be better to make the long awaited reunion between teacher and student be dramatic."

She said...

"T-that's it? I've been forced to do such troublesome things just for that?"

"Yeah? The build up was quite nice, right?"

Ryner clutched his head. He spoke with a thoroughly exhausted voice,

"...please spare me that. And if you don't have any business with me, I'll just be going ba..."

"Of course I'm here for business. Is that the correct attitude when facing your beloved teacher after some ten years?"

"Beloved..."

But Germer continued, ignoring Ryner's words. She looked at the sky and began in nostalgic tones,

"You were so cute back then, Ryner. You're just a kid, but you still told me that you wanted to marry me. You must've admired me."

*Well I was about to be killed if I didn't say!* Ryner's mental scream went unheard.

Germer continued, now looking at Ryner in sympathy,

"But too bad. I'm someone else's now."

"Oh? You married?"

"Yes. I have a kid in my belly too."

"Eeeehhh!?"

Ryner shouted and looked at Germer's belly. It was a bit hard to tell since she looked thin, but he could see a tiny bit of a lump...

Right then,

"It's my second."

"Eeeeeeeeeeeehhhhhhhhh!?"

Germer nodded, satisfied at his shout.

"I'm sorry that I couldn't respond to your proposal."

"Eh, ah, no, I don't really care, but...huh. Germer, a parent."

*I hope the kid doesn't get beaten up....*Ryner couldn't help but worry.

Leaving aside those worries, Germer continued to talk.

"But well, that doesn't matter now. I didn't call you a monster and hurt you just to tell you that."

Ryner smiled bitterly at her words,

"Haha. I thought you were trying to take out your anger at being dumped on me, just like before."

But Germer didn't respond, merely looking at Ryner with a serious expression. Then,

"...I haven't seen you for a while, but you've grown quite strong. You'd go crazy if I called you monster in the past."

"...would I?"

"Yes. You used to be a death seeker, after all."

"I...don't really remember past things."

But Germer went on,

"And after leaving me, your **Alpha Stigma** went berserk. You must've killed lots of people then."

"....."

"You disappeared right after...then, the next time I heard about you and went to meet you, you didn't try to meet me...what you must've felt then, considering the darkness you've witnessed..."

Germer looked at Ryner. She looked as if she was pitying him...

But Ryner shook his head.

"....Germer...you're mistaken. I didn't really have it that bad...."

But Germer said,

"Don't act strong. You were a weakling since the beginning. If you really didn't have it that bad....you wouldn't wear those sad eyes."

She gazed into his eyes.

Eyes....cursed eyes that everyone despised. Germer looked straight into those eyes...

And somehow Ryner...

"....."

Couldn't say a word.

Germer smiled at him.

"But you told me just now that you can't die yet. Even though you were such a death seeker, you still told me that you can't die. You have my compliments. You worked hard and became strong. You're a good kid."

She raised her hand and patted Ryner's head, even though Ryner had already grown taller than her.

Ryner scowled...

".....really, this? You came here for this, Germer?"

"Yes. Aren't you happy?"

".....yeah."

Ryner said in a strained voice.

Germer nodded in satisfaction and looked around.

"So, I guess I'll have to go say hi to the blond haired beauty who made you say you can't die yet."

"Huh!? What's the sudden need?"

"Isn't it obvious? As your guardian, I have to judge whether she's fit for my son's hand in marriage..."

"No wait! She's nothing like that."

"Oh really? For a swift moving guy like you, she's too..."

"Where did you get that idea! Geez. But still, she really isn't something like that. It's...different, between her and me."

"How?"

Ryner turned around once more.

He looked towards the bushes, and,

"I...made a promise with her. Once, I betrayed this country and left...back then, I made a promise with her."

Germer smiled mischievously,

"Promise? What, a secret promise with a girl? How uncomfortable."

She said, but Ryner shrugged.

"It's not something nice like that."

Germer's smile disappeared.

"True. You're not the type to make those kinds of romantic promises. And the kind of promise you made with that girl..."

Ryner smiled.

"You have a rough idea, right? As expected of my teacher."

But Germer still held a gloomy face.

"The worst kind of promise....no one will be happy from that."

The worst kind of promise.

*Yes. That was the worst kind of promise.*

*I've only ever made her suffer.*

*But...*

"But...because of that promise, I can keep living."

Hearing that...Germer sighed...

"...you...are an idiot, as usual."

"Disappointed that your student didn't grow up?"

"Totally. But even though you're a good-for-nothing...you're still my cute student. So..."

Germer looked around cautiously. After confirming that no one was around,

"I have something very important to tell you. Listen carefully."

"Important?"

Germer nodded, and,

"Ryner. What do you think of Roland as a country right now?"

"Ah? What do I think? ...that's sort of random. I mean, it's a lot better..."

"Than before.....if that's what you thought, then you're mistaken. No, maybe you've already noticed what was about to occur soon, right?"

*What was about to occur soon....?*

Germer's words continued.

"There is only once thing that I can say for sure - it will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country. This is how the country's going around right now. And you are within its cogwheel. So, before that happens, please cut off all connections with this country. You can go and search for Peria and Pia, but just leave this countr..."

However, a low voice came from the darkness of the night behind Germer.

"Hey."

It was another familiar voice.

Germer turned around, and Ryner looked in the same direction. There stood a familiar man. A man with a troubled face, looking like he was trying very hard to endure something.

Those characteristics gave him away. It was Rahel Miller.

Germer said to Miller,

"Honey ♡"

In an instant,

"HUH!?"

Ryner couldn't stop himself from shouting.

"Heh? Eh? This can't be true? Really? So, Germer's husband is...Miller?"

Germer already threw herself into Miller's embrace....and Miller spoke without changing his serious expression.

"That's why I didn't want to tell you where Ryner Lute was. You walk around on a cold night like this...what would you do if you hurt the baby?"

"I'm sorry ♥"

"Now, let's go back."

"Yees ♥"

And the two of them started heading back.

Completely ignoring Ryner.

"So, er, what's happening to our conversation?"

But he was still ignored.

And Ryner,

".....no seriously.....what is going to happen soon...."

Stared at the two of them leaving...

"...whatever."

Ryner sighed, exhausted.

Genius, or perhaps a monster...people called him that.

Said genius, Miller turned around for a split second, and,

".....you can't save him, Germer. He's different from me. A real genius....is simply unfortunate."

He said with a sad expression.

# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 Extra Stage II

 [web.archive.org/web/20141116152313/http://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php](http://web.archive.org/web/20141116152313/http://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php)

[\[edit\]](#)

*Strange.*

*Something is strange.*

*What in the world is happening in Roland right now?*

While thinking those kinds of thoughts,

"... Mumumumumu,"

Looking at her reflection in the mirror, Milk groaned.

With a gently swaying, flaxen ponytail, an appearance that didn't look sixteen years old, an adorable, childish face. On her small body, she was wearing a pink dress that her subordinates had given her...

She looked at that dress. At that pretty dress that made her want to frolic around.

"..... Mumumumu,"

Milk frantically tried to suppress that desire to frolic.

This was a trap. Right now, wearing this outfit, this wasn't the place to be merry.

But after always persevering in her military uniform, it'd been a long time since she'd worn this kind of outfit...

"Kyaaaaaaaaa, this is so cute... No, stop that! Uuuuuuuu."

Hurriedly covering her mouth, she tried to control herself once more.

"Control yourself, control yourself! Don't think like that, Milk. You mustn't be fooled! This is a trick to distract you from Ryner."

Incidentally, despite her young age of sixteen years, she was the captain of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad.

So that the secrets of their country wouldn't be leaked to other countries, those who learned Roland's magic and fled the country were pursued, arrested, and erased—the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad were elites who existed for that reason.

And she had received the task of pursuing the **Taboo Breaker** Ryner Lute who'd fled the country.

Then suddenly, she'd been removed from that duty.

Furthermore, for several days, she hadn't been able to meet with her superior officer, Major Rahel Miller, to discuss the details.

No, or had the task of pursuing Ryner Lute itself disappeared?

But why? For what reason?

"... Don't tell me Ryner's already been killed by someone!?"

Milk cried out without thinking; however, she quickly denied such a thought.

"No way. That can't be. There's no way that could happen. Ryner... He's a genius. There's no way he could be killed so easily."

Milk knew that better than anyone else.

His past.

Afraid of being called a genius by everyone, his past.

His eternally sad eyes...

In the center of a deep darkness.

In the center of a deep, deep darkness, he was alone.

Despite that, he told her this.

*"You cry too much. Don't say that you'll die. You can make it. You're tough. Me, too. I don't plan on dying. So..."*

Continuing those words, Milk murmured,

"... So you don't die, either..."

She stared at her reflection in the mirror again.

She stared at the girl who'd survived up until now.

Despite going through insane training in that facility... being bought by the nobles, being a puppet who was raised and existed purely for the sake of doing well in the army...

"... So you don't die, either."

Fixating only on those words, she'd persevered. Until the time came when she could meet Ryner again, and give him her thanks. Repay the debt she owed him. Fixating only on that... she'd lived.

Despite that.

On that day, everything suddenly changed.

Sion Astal became this country's king.

Milk had suddenly been given the rank of First Lieutenant and entered the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad.

In that squad, everyone was very kind.

Her superior officer, Major Miller. Her subordinates, Luke, Lear, Lach, and Moe. They'd all become very important people to her.

Truly, everything had suddenly changed.

All of a sudden, everything around her had become so happy... Furthermore, the first task given to her was... the pursuit task of searching for Ryner Lute.

"... I can do it, I can do it."

When they'd met again, Ryner had claimed not to know who she was. But, what was his reason?

On top of that, she recalled Ryner's words.

*"First of all, on Sion's orders..."*

"....."

Sion. He'd definitely been referring to Sion Astal. This country's king. And when Milk had realized that, she'd been subdued by black beasts of shadow, abducted by a demon-like man, and lost consciousness; however, by the time she opened her eyes again, she was surrounded by her subordinates...

Luke had said,

*"It's all right now. There's nothing to worry about anymore."*

What was all right, she had no idea.

Even if she were to ask, he wouldn't answer.

And she... not understanding anything, had been removed from the task of pursuing Ryner Lute.

Surely, that had to do with whatever was going on around her.

Really...

"... I don't know anything."

Already, Milk was being completely left out.

Something was happening. Ryner was at the center of whatever was happening in Roland. But, Milk wasn't able to get any closer.

Ryner said that he didn't know Milk, Luke said to Milk that there was nothing to worry about.

Perhaps that was their way of being kind.

In order to keep Milk away from danger, perhaps that was their way of being kind.

But,

"... I want to help everyone."

Then, over there, there was a knocking sound in the room. And from outside the door,

"How is it? Do you think it looks good on you, Captain Milk?"

It was a very gentle voice. Luke's voice.

"Ah, have you not tried it on yet?"

"No, no! I've already put it on! It's really pretty!"

Milk looked at the mirror again.

The dress truly was pretty.

"It's wasted on me, though. Is it really okay to be giving me this?"

Luke then—

"Of course. If you've put it on, then we'd like to see. May we come in?"

"Sure."

And as the door opened slightly, from the crack, Luke's face could be seen. A calm face, long white hair. Still young at twenty-five years old, he was always kind and very dependable.

Looking at Milk, his expression became slightly surprised, and,

"Ah..."

He began, but his words only made it that far.

Suddenly, from behind, Luke's head was flattened.

"Hold on a moment—Luke-senpai, you're really sneaky! Let me see too—!"

Moe leapt forward. His face was always like that of an innocent child's. That said, he was a bit older than Milk. That innocent face looked at Milk. In that moment, he spoke as a large smile spread across his face...

"Uwaa... uwa, uwa, uwa! Super pretty! As expected of Captain Milk!!"

As Moe exclaimed that, his head was also flattened, and now it was Lach who forcefully shoved his head through the crack.

"L-Let me see too!"

A sharp glint in his eyes. Firm and tight mouth. Around the same age as Moe, he had the face of a rough and clumsy boy. That face looked at Milk as it became slightly troubled, and,

"Ah, uh, um... H-Hey now! That dress really suits Captain Milk well... Just like I said, right? I hit it right on the head!"

He laughed happily.

Underneath that smile, flattened by both Lach and Moe, Luke spoke while frowning.

"W-Wait, Lach, Moe. Please calm down. Having two people on top... Guwa—"

He said, as the three of them tumbled to the ground.

And there, as the door slowly opened, Lear entered. No matter what was going on, eternally calm and clever eyes, and pale skin. Older than Lach and Moe, a young man who was their senior.

With an astounded expression,

"Honestly. You two rush too much, Lach, Moe. You should open the door. Are you all right? Luke-senpai,"

He said, pulling Lach and Moe off the fallen Luke, before looking at Milk. Then, with a slight smile on his typically unchanging face,

"As expected. It suits you very well,"

He said what everyone else was saying.

"... R-Really?"

Milk again looked at the mirror, examining herself. As expected of a dress that everyone bought, it was very pretty.

*But... I really don't own any outfits like this or wear any.*

*I've always, always been wearing either the military uniform or outfits suited for training.*

*So even though everyone bought me this...*

She looked at her reflection in the mirror.

At the her who was wearing such a feminine outfit. Her, who after so long, was wearing such pretty clothing... It didn't look like she could pull it off at all.

It really... didn't suit her at all...

"....."

That was why Milk spoke with a smiling face.

"U-Um... thank you, everyone! This dress is really pre..."

She began, but while standing up, Luke interrupted her.

"It's not the dress that's pretty; it's Captain Milk. It truly does suit you."

Even though she was doing her best to put on a smile, he easily saw through her and her true feelings.

Regarding that, Milk became flustered.

"B-But..."

But Luke interrupted Milk's words again.

"No buts. You truly are pretty. It's troubling that our Captain, who is our pride and joy, doesn't have any self-confidence. Isn't that right, everyone?"

Lach, Moe, and Lear all nodded with a yes, yes. After confirming that, Luke again looked at Milk, smiling kindly. And,

"I'll say it again. You're truly pretty. It suits you quite well. Here now, look properly in the mirror one more time, please."

To those words...

Milk looked at the mirror again.

As before, a pretty pink dress. And as before, the one wearing such fancy clothes was the her who lacked self-confidence.

Even so... For some reason, even though she thought that it hadn't suited her before, now when she looked, it looked as if it suited her a bit...

"... Ah."

All of a sudden, Milk felt as if she were about to cry.

"... Uu."



Looking at Luke and co., she wanted to say something. Despite that, her voice wouldn't come out.

Even though she wanted to tell everyone that she was happy, her voice wouldn't come out. But as she felt like crying, her expression changed as she tried to endure.

Luke and the others looked at Milk's face.

In response, though Milk wanted to tell them *"It's not what it looks like"*,

"... Uu, ah,"

Again, her voice wouldn't come out.

Even though her expression wasn't what it looked like. Even though she wanted to say that she was happy.

Even though she wanted to tell everyone *"Thank you"*...

Her voice wouldn't come out.

*Why? Why, now of all times, can't I control my feelings!?*

*Even though I was able to keep smiling whenever it was tough.*

*Why now of all times...'*

If she was making this kind of face, everyone would feel bad...

She tried to put on a smiling face.

But even as she tried, her expression changed.

Looking at that face, Luke opened his mouth.

*Wait.*

*It's not what it looks like. I'm really happy...*

Luke spoke.

"See? Doesn't it suit you quite well?"

"... Eh?"

But Luke continued.

"You're pleased—I'm glad."

As expected, his tone was always gentle.

Again, he saw right through her.

Even though she was making this kind of face, Luke saw that she was happy...

Regarding that, Milk again felt like crying.

But this time, she couldn't stop herself.

Tears began to stream from her eyes...

Moe and Lach then panicked, and,

"Ah, ah, C-Captain Milk!?"

"S-She's crying!? For crying out loud, Luke-senpai, it's because you were bullying her—!"

They said, rushing over.

Luke's expression also became flustered.

"Eh? Ehh? I-I wasn't trying to bully her... Ah, my apologies, Captain Milk. W-Was I bullying you?"

To that, with tears streaming down her face, Milk shook her head.

"... T-That's not it. I'm really... really..."

She began, but again the words wouldn't come out.

Despite that, Luke placed his hand on her head, and while gently stroking it,

"Understood. We're also happy, to have become your subordinates, Captain Milk,"

He said, as if talking to a child. Without saying anything, everything was conveyed.

Milk lifted her head.

"I-I'm also really happy, to have met everyone..."

Then cries erupted...

"Ah, Luke-senpai really is sneaky! I also want to stroke the Captain's head!"

Moe said, forcefully pushing down on Milk's head.

"... Eh? Wait, wha, wha—!?"

Her head shook around in circles.

Following that,

"Ah, me too, me too..."

Lach also shook her head around in circles.

"M-My eyes... ah, ahh... au—!"

And like that, Milk collapsed.

In that instant,

"C-Captaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaain!!!"

Moe and Lach cried out, as Lear sighed.

"Good grief, what are you two doing? Captain Milk, are you all right?"

He said in a concerned tone. But Milk again spoke with a smiling face.

"Yeah! Right now, I'm really happy."

Luke and co. then laughed.

Caught by that, Milk also laughed.

She never would have thought that she could become so happy.

She never would have thought that the world could be so kind.

Because she happened to meet them, everything truly changed.

Luke spoke.

"Now then, since you're all dressed, where would you like to go? It's been a while since we've had time off, so we should enjoy it as much as we can. Where do you want to go, Captain Milk?"

At that question, Milk became flustered.

"Eh? Ah, um... as long as I'm with you all..."

There, Lear—

"By the way, according to my investigation beforehand, there's a sweets fair taking place in the shopping district..."

"S-Sweets fair!? Eh, eh, so, there's a lot of sweets there?"

Lear nodded.

"Though it doesn't seem to be a very large fair, I believe so, considering that it's still a fair."

"C-Cake too?"

"Yes."

"A-And chocolate?"

"Of course."

In that instant, Milk's mind overflowed with cake and chocolate, and by her mental cake, a face appeared.

*"Hey, miss. Do you love sweets?"*

"Y-Yes!"

*"Then, for Milk-chan's sake, I'll create a gingerbread hooouse~"*

All of a sudden, the cake and chocolate started dancing, and in a twinkle, a gingerbread house was built...

"Uwaa...!?"

Milk watched as her eyes sparkled. Surely, at the sweets fair, this kind of development was waiting. They had to go there right now.

And then, and then, the happiness she had right now would multiply hundredfold...

"I-I might collapse from such happine..."

However, Milk stopped her words.

And again, she looked at the mirror.

In the mirror was a girl, wearing a gorgeous pink dress that any girl would be pleased to wear. And like a dream that any girl would be pleased to have, they were about to go the gingerbread houses that was equivalent to a country of sweets.

Already, as she'd said so many times, there was no greater happiness than what she held in her hands right now.

But...

"....."

Milk's expression became clouded.

Over there,

"Now then, let's go and eat some sweets!"

Smiling, Luke said that.

That smile was a gentle smile that eliminated all of Milk's unease and worries.

That already, she no longer needed to be troubled by anything.

That already, she could live as an ordinary girl... He always smiled like that.

And he called Milk family.

He'd said that once.

*"Because we like you, we became your subordinates. Because we like you, we went with you. That's why we want you to regain what you lost and to become happy. We're don't fight for the country itself. We fight for the people. For the important people reflected in our eyes, if we can save even a few..."*

What Milk had lost. The dress. The gingerbread house. Having a family whom she could smile and play with—living like an ordinary girl each day.

That was entirely how her life was right now.

"I'm... really happy."

Milk looked up at Luke, saying that.

As expected, he smiled gently at her.

"That's what I should be sayi..."

He began, but Milk interrupted and continued.

"But I don't want to be protected anymore."

And she looked straight at Luke.

"....."

He was still smiling gently; however, there was a trace of sadness in his expression, and,

"Are you not happy with the dress?"

Milk shook her head with all her might.

"That's not it. It's really pretty, and I'm really happy. But, I don't want to be the only one smiling. I want to be smiling with you and the others, Luke. I don't like being left in the dark, clueless to everyone else's suffering. What is it that you're all protecting me from?"

Being attacked by black shadows.

Suddenly being removed from the task of pursuing Ryner.

Milk didn't know what was going on at all, but without a doubt, something was moving forward.

Ever since she came back to here in Roland, strange things were happening one after another.

What in the world...

"What in the world is happening in Roland right now?"

Milk asked.

Luke's expression became increasingly troubled. After a pause of silence, like he was thinking over something,

"I can't tell you just yet... If I said that, would you begin to investigate on your own?"

Milk nodded deeply. Surely, it'd be simple to investigate. The problem was that if she made a move, she would be unprepared for the risks of whatever might kill her. She'd already been attacked by those black shadows and abducted. To move without knowing at all what was going on was dangerous.

But, nevertheless... Milk spoke.

"I don't want for everyone to get hurt protecting me so that I don't know anything. So even if you all don't stop, I'll definitely start investigating..."

She began, but her words stopped there.

"Ah, ah, but, but if you all get hurt because of what I do... the-then, what should I do? Uuum, uuuuh..."

She said, as she began to frantically clutch her head.

With his troubled expression, Luke watched her for a while, before he made a puff.

"Ah, ah, you don't have to panic. I understand how firm you are in your decision, Captain Milk."

"Eh? Then—"

"Yes. But... if possible, I wanted for you to not see this darkness for a while, Captain Milk..."

"... Darkness?"

However, rather than answer the question, Luke looked around. As if he were searching, even though no one should be spying on them.

Then looking at Milk again, he spoke.

"... No, as I thought, this isn't the place for this. Not for an important conversation."

"... Ah—!"

Milk's entire body became tense. Someone was here. A spy.

She looked at Luke. He was, again, smiling gently. He shrugged once, as if to say *it's all right*. Like that, he continued.

"More importantly, if you want to carry out our tasks, we won't be able to go to the sweets fair today. A mission was issued to me, without Captain Milk,"

He said, taking several sheets of paper from his pocket and handing them over to Milk.

"Eh? T-This is..."

She looked at those papers. They were mission documents.

At the time of the task to pursue Ryner Lute, she'd been given mission documents.

Milk was given a day off, but as expected, her subordinates had been given a different mission.

Milk looked at the documents.

And this was what was written.

*The erasure of the **Taboo Breaker** Fedan Skwara.*

*Erasure!?*

At that, without meaning to, Milk let out a cry.

Erasure... That meant to kill the target on sight. Milk had yet to receive that order. No, from the beginning, she'd never received any other orders except to arrest Ryner. Despite that, Luke, without Milk knowing, and this kind of task...

Milk lifted her face.

As expected, Luke, with a remorseful expression—

"I had thought that we would go with the Captain to the sweets fair, and then pursue the **Taboo Breaker** at night... Shall we prepare at once?"

Like that, he turned on his heel.

"B-But this..."

She began, but Luke interrupted her.

"We can discuss it later. Get ready."

And then Luke left the room.

Following him were Lach, Lear, and Moe, who waved goodbye as if to convey a message to whoever was spying on them, and left.

Once more, only Milk was left in the room.

"....."

Milk, like that, looked at the documents again.

Then she looked at the girl reflected in the mirror.

A pretty dress.

Dressing up so that she could go out.

On top of that, to go see a gingerbread house.

Smiling all the while. Untroubled with everyone.

The girl in the mirror looked incredibly happy.

But...

Smiling sweetly, Milk waved a hand at that seemingly-happy girl.

"I'm sorry. Bye-bye. You can be happy over there. Over here, I'm..."

She turned away from the mirror...

"Over here, I'm going to help the people important to me."

And with that, she began to remove the dress.

◆

They ran. With Milk leading and Luke, Lach, Lear, and Moe following behind, they ran.

Milk looked over her shoulder.

Scanning her surroundings, it didn't seem like anyone was spying on them. Immediately after leaving Roland's capital, they'd tried to shake them off, and now they were considerably far away from the capital, approaching Nelpha's border...

Milk spoke.

"Is anyone still coming after us?"

Luke answered that.

"No, we've likely shaken them off entirely."

"Then, is it all right for us to talk now?"

"Yes."

"Who is it that's spying on us?"

However, Luke shrugged at the question.

"I don't know. It could be various forces."

"Various forces?"

To that, Luke who was following her...

"Well, the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad is that sort of group, after all. We invoke resentment from everywhere. That Major Miller was the central figure in the shadows during the revolution that placed Lord Sion Astal on the throne, ending the reign of the previous tyrant—Captain Milk knows this as well, correct?"

Milk nodded.

"Ah, then, the one spying on us is someone who doesn't think very well of us—the nobles?"

But Luke tilted his head.

"Po~ssibly. Well, there are various forces."

Looking behind them—

"Lear, do you know which group they belong to?"

However, Lear shook his head.

"... No. My apologies. However, they're not an enemy worth being vigilant for. If they truly were a frightening opponent, we wouldn't have been able to shake them off so easily."

Lach continued.

"If we run for a bit, they should disappear immediately."

Moe also spoke energetically.

"This'll be an eaaasy victory—!!"

Milk nodded at that.

If their opponent was only at a level where they should easily shake them off, there was no need to be vigilant.

Milk looked at Luke again.

"Then, to continue the conversation from before..."

She began, but Luke shook his head.

"No, Captain, rather than talk, you should look."

"Look? At what..."

What the meaning of those words could be whirled around inside her head. And she remembered what Luke said before.

*"... If possible, I wanted for you to not see this darkness for a while, Captain Milk..."*

Darkness... What did he mean by that?

Milk's question was what in the world was happening in Roland right now.

Then, did the answer have to do with that 'darkness'?

But, in accordance with the conversation before, this country had changed. When the Hero King Sion Astal took the throne... this country should have changed.

If one looked at the streets, they could tell. Everyone smiled.

This country was different from before.

But...

Milk took out the documents from her pocket and looked at them.

The summary of the document's contents was this.

*The **Taboo Breaker** Fedan Skwara does not only use Roland's magic, but has also had the All Enchantment seal applied on him. The armies of other countries must not be allowed to study Roland's magic. Therefore, he is to be erased on sight.*

"... Erased,"

Milk murmured.

For the record, the All Enchantment was a configuring tattoo in the form of a magic circle forcibly inserted into children's bodies, causing a constant outbreak of enchantments and resulting in the ability to perceive things over a wide radius that normal beings couldn't detect.

However, a great power like that was accompanied by a great price. Out of all the children who'd had the tattoo buried in them, ninety percent died. The survivors lost their sight and hearing—in the previous, insane Roland, that sort of insane human experimentation had been carried out...

In the orphanage Milk had been in previously, a number of children had been chosen to be experimented on and taken away, but the children who returned...

While thinking about that, Milk frowned.

"But, this experimentation already..."

Luke nodded at those words.

"Yes. It already came to an end years ago. In the beginning, this study was done to spy on other countries' situations using a **Far Sight** ability... That kind of study... The amount that could be perceived was less than what was hoped for. And so the study was put to a halt, leaving behind only the deaths of children."

"....."

That was the previous Roland. It wasn't surprising. Milk had also been a part of that place. Ryner had also been a part of that place. No, Luke and the others had also been a part of that place—it was that kind of place.

*But things are different now. Because Sion Astal became king, this country chan...*

She began to think, but Luke continued.

"That's enough with the idle talk, Captain Milk. We must pursue the target. Please give us your instructions."

Instructions... Right. Instructions. As the unit's captain, she had to give out precise instructions.

The **Taboo Breaker**... No, perhaps they were only called such within the Roland Empire... However, if there was a chance that they would reveal the secrets of Roland's magic system, they had to be arrested, and then perhaps...

"... Erased,"

Milk muttered quietly, and then so as to not falter in this situation and to deal with it calmly, hardened her loose feelings.

The other party was someone who could perceive all of his surroundings with his All Enchantment ability. Because of that, he would notice their presences. In that case, how should they deal with this?

Milk took in a small breath, and then gazed ahead.

She looked at what was ahead of her...

"... Eh—!?"

Despite the tenseness of her entire body, she let that slip without meaning to.

Before her eyes. From the highway from Roland to Nelpha was a small plain, with two people... One of them wore the same Roland military uniform as Milk and the others... More than that, it was the same uniform of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad...

And the other person...

It was a boy who was still only four or five years old.

But why in the world was the **Taboo Breaker**...

"The child is the **Taboo Breaker**, Fedan Skwara. The other person is my subordinate."

During the time that that was said, Milk and the others approached the two... However, the **Taboo Breaker**—a young child—in a place where one should be vigilant, didn't look at them.

Instead, with closed eyes, he walked ahead, swaying on his feet unsteadily...

While supporting him, Luke's subordinate looked over at them...

"Ah, Luke-senpai."

To those words, Luke asked,

"The situation?"

"It's not too good."

"I see... All right, this is enough. From here, the Milk Callaud squad will take care of the rest."

"Understood."

Saying that, the subordinate simply left the place. Having lost his support, the boy staggered unsteadily...

And all of a sudden—

"Uah, ahh, ahhhhh—!?"

While vomiting, he collapsed to the ground.

Milk panicked at that, and,

"Eh, what!? Are you all right!?"

On instinct, she held the boy up. Following her, while rubbing his back, Luke said,

"... It's fine if you don't push yourself,"

The boy nodded deeply, and,

"T-Thank you..."

He said that in a young voice. But at those words, Milk became increasingly confused. *What? What's going on right now?*

She looked at the boy. At the boy who continued to vomit in pain. He truly was still young. Apparently suffering from some kind of illness, his expression was that of suffering...

Luke had said that this boy was the **Taboo Breaker** Fedan Skwara.

However, that was strange. This young child had had the All Enchantment tattoo buried in him.

Even though the All Enchantment human experiment was supposed to have ended years ago.

No, when Sion Astal became king, all of those inhumane studies were supposed to have ended...

Milk looked at Luke.

However, he said nothing.

There, with closed eyes, the boy looked her way. Smiling weakly, he—

"T-Thank you, Miss. I... I'm all right now. I can... stand by myself. Sorry... I dirtied your shoes a little..."

To those words,

"....."

Milk trembled.

His eyes were closed. Even so, he could see the situation of his surroundings...

There was no doubt.

He... was a victim of the All Enchantment study...

The boy stood. And again, with closed eyes, he staggered forward.

*Where is he going?* ... As if to answer that question, Luke spoke.

"This year... the All Enchantment, in order to spy on the neighbouring country of Nelpha, has become able to perceive that far."

To that,

"T-This year—!? B-But the All Enchantment study ended..."

Milk began, but Luke lightly interrupted.

"While the study is pressing forward, the number of children who have died is one thousand and fourteen... He will be the thousand and fifteenth. However, today, a problem occurred in the study. While he is able to perceive his surroundings, he lacks the nerves that humans use to do so. The large amounts of information that he is processing is gradually burning away his brain cells... and will eventually kill him. His fate is already sealed."

"... That can't be."

Milk looked at the boy. At his suffering face. Already, without Lach and Moe's support, it seemed that walking was difficult for him. Despite that, he walked forward. He moved towards Nelpha's border. But...

"Where... Where in the world is he going?"

However, to her question, the boy again smiled for some reason. And opposite to that smile, he spoke in a pained voice...

"With a goddess... I'm going so that I can meet with a goddess in the end."

"G-Goddess?"

The boy nodded.

"In Nelpha... A goddess is... My... Uah—"

However, he again vomited and collapsed to the ground. Milk rushed over to help him. As her clothes became dirty with the boy's vomit... he looked apologetic, and,

"S-Sor... Uu, uaaaaah—!?"

He couldn't continue speaking. The boy cried out, clutching his head.

Reflexively, Milk held the boy's head. She didn't know what kind of pain he was suffering from.

But as she held him, he stopped screaming.

But, such a thing had no meaning.

"Why... Why is this... What is..."

Anything Milk said here meant nothing.

However, to the very end, Luke spoke to that Milk.

"Your instructions then, Captain. We've been given orders from the upper levels of the military to erase him."

In response, Milk lifted her face and stared at Luke straight in the eye.

"... Is this a test?"

"What do you mean?"

"We've been given orders from the upper levels of the military to erase him... but the ones who helped this child escape from the military were Luke and the others, weren't they?"

"....."

He didn't answer. Instead, he smiled sadly. However, Milk had already decided her next words.

"... These are my instructions. Bring this child over the border. Let him enter Nelpha."

Luke and the others, all at once—

"Understood,"

They said.

◆

Slipping by the watch of the Nelphan border guards, they were able to infiltrate Nelpha by next morning.

Their destination was a small mountain village by the border.

The 'goddess' was in that village.

The weather was nice on that day. Without a cloud in the sky, sunlight shined down on them.

In this rural village, the villagers' day started early.

Several people were already leaving their houses, hanging their laundry, greeting their neighbours...

Concealed in the mountainside, Milk and the others watched this scene.

Held in Milk's arms and looking at this with closed eyes was the boy, who was even weaker than yesterday night... His face was extremely pale.

However, nevertheless... as he stared out at the village, his expression was bright.

Milk, to the boy—

"Here... Is here all right?"

The boy weakly nodded.

"... She'll come. She'll be leaving her house any moment now... Soon, soon..."

He smiled.

"Your goddess?"

Milk looked at the village again. However, it couldn't be seen by her. Only he, who possessed the All Enchantment, was able to see his goddess.

"Always... I've always been watching. That girl... smiled so happily... Like she had no worries... Even when... her father and mother were angry... Like when she climbed that tree... She was happy..."

Over there, as the door of a small wooden house was opened enthusiastically, a single girl jumped out.

And as she lifted up both hands,

"....."

Whatever she was saying, Milk couldn't hear, but she knew she was very happy.

The boy's expression loosened further.

"... She's in a good mood today too... Because it's morning. Asking what she should play today... but... I... S-She... uah... I know she'd say the same on rainy days... Guaah..."

He moaned quietly. However, he no longer had the strength to clutch his head.

Milk held the boy close, and,



"It's fine if you don't say anything more. So—"

However, the boy continued.

"Uah... Her neighbourhood is... always... peaceful... She's here... Everyone smiles... S-Someday, I also..."

He lifted a shaking hand. Towards her... his hand...

"Someday I also... her... be her friend... that kind of... life...smiling..."

Over there, whether she'd heard the boy's voice or not, the girl ran over. And upon noticing Milk's group...

"What's this? What's this, what's this!? Why—why are you hiding here—!?"

Milk lifted her head at that. The girl truly did have an energetic, adorable face...

She understood the reason why the boy called this girl a goddess.

Milk smiled at the girl, and,

"... Um, right now, we're playing hide-and-seek with our friends."

"Eh—! I'm jealous—! I wanna play tooo!"

"Sure. I'm sorry, though. It's already time to go back."

The girl, after making a cute expression, pointed to the boy in Milk's arms.

"Ah, did that kid become sleepy while hiding? Me too, me too! The other day, when I fell asleep in the mountain until nighttime, Mama was mad at me! So, he should go back home!"

Home... To those words, Milk couldn't say anything. This boy's home was... where those responsible for doing this to him were...

Milk smiled, and,

"Right. If he doesn't hurry up and go home, Papa and Mama will be worried."

After saying that, she stood up.

And as she moved to leave,

"Then, then, tell that kid that I wanna meet again so we can play! We can take afternoon naps together while hidiiding!"

The girl called out...

However, Milk didn't turn around.

In a trembling voice, to the sleeping boy who would never again wake up,

"... Now, you've already become friends,"

She quietly said to him...

Then she looked at Luke. As usual, he was smiling sadly.

She asked him,

"This is how Roland is now?"

"... That's correct."

"This is the Roland that you've been hiding from me?"

"..... That's correct."

Milk looked over her shoulder. The girl was no longer there. Instead, there was the peaceful village that the boy had yearned for...

Milk watched it for a while... and then, she looked at the boy she held in her arms. And—

"... You've worked hard,"

Milk murmured that.

To those words... Luke's expression became increasingly sad. To that expression, Milk again recalled his words.

*For the important people reflected in our eyes, if we can save even a few..."*

Up until now, she'd always been protected...

But, from now on...

"....."

Milk Callaud looked up at the clear sky, and began to think.

# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 Extra Stage III

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 [web.archive.org/web/20141002000422/https://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php](https://web.archive.org/web/20141002000422/https://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php)

[\[edit\]](#)

Wheels turned.

*Gatta gatta, gotto gotto.*

Late at night, a carriage dashed through the streets.

Watching the scenery that streamed by,

"... You know... I've thought a lot that you're a pretty despicable guy,"

Ryner Lute said that sort of thing in his typical listless voice.

Messy black hair like he just rolled out of bed, loose black eyes like his hair. Those eyes looked at a man before him.

At the one who ruled over the Roland Empire: the Hero King, Sion Astal.

Sion raised an eyebrow, and,

"Hmm? Are you talking about me?"

He responded with a question. Conspicuous even in the dark carriage, beautiful, long silver hair that was like that of a noble-born's. Strong-willed golden eyes.

And with a smile brimming with self-confidence—

"For starters, who is it that doesn't like me?"

Ryner replied to that.

"Me?"

Sion smiled wryly.

"Anyone else?"

"Me."

"And?"

"Me."

"Then it's fine."

"How is that fine!?"

As Ryner shouted, Sion laughed.

"Because you don't dislike me."

"I do! Seriously, it's enough! After working for three days in a row, whaaaaaat was with the whole 'Aren't you tired today? I'll send a carriage to bring you to the inn' thing!? This street is in the opposite direction of my inn!"

With a surprised face, Sion stared outside, and,

"Oh, is it?"

"I'll kill youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!"

Ryner exclaimed, half-crying.

However, Sion happily replied,

"No, but after another three days, we'll surely head over to your inn, Ryner..."

"Haa!? Ehhh? T-T-T-T-Three more days—!?"

Ryner yelled without thinking, before asking again:

"U-Um, I'm sorry. My ears are just a bit strained after all the overwork, so they're not working properly. Ummmm, so there's no way you just said that you'll be dumping work on me for another three days, right?"

Smiling sweetly, Sion—

"Do you want to hear the truth?"

"... Oh God—!?"

Ryner collapsed onto the carriage seat.

To that Ryner, Sion said,

"Well, well, you can sleep while we move..."

"Don't call that sleeping—!!"

After shouting tiredly, Ryner stared outside.

"....."

In the dark of the night, the landscape of Roland's streets rushed by. As they'd finished with their conversation, all that could be heard was the sound of the carriage wheels turning.

Wheels.

Cogwheels...

At that, Ryner remembered something Germer had told him some days ago.

Ryner's teacher... Strategy, tactics, combat, magic, the one who had taught him all that—he thought of something she'd said after reuniting with him.

*"Ryner. What do you think of Roland as a country right now?"*

Something like that... He'd thought it'd gotten better, after Sion became king. No, compared to the previous corrupt Roland Empire, it was a lot better?

Ryner had tried to answer with something along those lines, but she'd continued.

*"Than before... if that's what you thought, then you're mistaken. No, maybe you've already noticed what was about to occur soon, right?"*

What was about to occur soon...? What the hell is Germer talking about?

Staring outside the carriage, Ryner dimly contemplated.

Inside his head, Germer's words came to mind.

*"There is only one thing that I can say for sure—it will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country. This is how the country's going around right now. And you are its cogwheel. So, before that happens, please cut off all connections with this country. You can go and search for Peria and Pia, but just leave this countr..."*

There, her words had been interrupted...

"... This country's cogwheel, huh?"

Ryner murmured. His voice was drowned out by the sound of the carriage's wheels.

*Gatta gatta, gotto gotto.*

Around and around, the wheels turned.

"... What the hell was Germer trying to say?"

He turned to look at Sion, who was also staring outside, as his eyes gradually closed.

He was tired. It was only natural. Ryner had been helping him with his work for the past three days, and so his body was exhausted.

Because he was this country's king, he would sacrifice his health.

That was why everyone called him the Hero King, the country's saviour, the benevolent ruler.

He became king and rapidly changed the country. More than that, he'd set it in the right direction.

And so, as bothersome as it was, Ryner helped Sion out.

He felt that he was advancing forward in the right path.

And yet...

*"It will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country. This is how the country's going around right now. And you are its cogwheel."*

"What the hell was that all about? What cogwheel... huh?"

Over there.

Ryner's eyes widened.

Outside the window.

Tearing through the darkness of the night, he noticed a strong light developing...

"... Wait, why is there magic... **Kuuri!**?"

As he exclaimed, the magic was already being fired.

"Wait, crap—ah, damn it!"

Ryner shouted as he stood up and grabbed Sion's head. At that, the half-asleep Sion opened his eyes, and,

"Huh? What is it, Ryner..."

"Shut up and get down!"

Flattening Sion's head against the ground, Ryner also took cover.

In the next instant.

A strange "kaaaa" sound rang out as a strong light burst across. Then, several streaks of light destroyed the upper half of the carriage...

At that, from where he was lying on the ground, Ryner frowned.

"One, two, three... six of them, so there are six mages good enough to be able to use **Kuuri**... ah, geez, this suuuucks..."

There, the Sion who was being flattened across the ground—

"... Oh, are they after you, Ryner?"

"They're obviously after you, aren't they!?"

Ryner yelled.

"Anyway, you're not very popular with the pawns of the nobles or whatever, are you?"

Ryner had seen Sion deal with assassins countless of times.

There were many nobles who resented Sion who, after overthrowing the previous king and taking his throne, set in place a better government for the sake of the people.

They were in a rough spot.

Furthermore, the carriage had stopped...

"Damn it, don't tell me the coachman ran away just now..."

As he was saying that, though, his words stopped.

In front of the carriage. The horse had already been disposed of.

And from the driver's seat, light at his fingertip, the coachman began drawing a magic circle in his direction.

It was clear that if the enemy fired their magic, they wouldn't be able to repel it...

Ryner spoke with an fed up expression.

"... For crying out loud, interview your coachmen properly..."

With a nod, Sion also—

"All right, from now on, Ryner, the coachman's duties fall to you..."

"There's no way I'm doing it!"

After having that sort of exchange, Ryner closed his eyes. Then he opened them again. Now, in the center of his black eyes, a red five-star pentacle suddenly rose to the surface.

Special eyes.

Called the **Alpha Stigma**, hated by everyone—they were cursed eyes.

And those eyes... could see through all magic.

He focused on the developing magic of the coachman before him... and then stood up, before taking a large step forward.

Slowly, he thrust a hand into the coachmen's magic circle.

"Wha!?"

Ignoring the coachman's surprised cry, Ryner lunged forward with a kick. And then his hand began to move within the complex magic circle at an amazing speed...

And he affirmed his surroundings.

Including the coachman, there were seven enemies. Judging by their movements, they were considerably skilled. But for someone from the dark times, hailed as the Greatest Magician in Roland—they weren't a match for Ryner.

He easily moved through the darkness to where he understood an assassin was...

"Ah, you really were taught how to use Kuuri, huh?"

WHAT I SEEK IS..."

He began, but over there,

"Ryner!"

Sion's voice called.

An urgent voice.

At that, Ryner suspended his magic and looked over his shoulder.

Suddenly, the presences of assassins near Ryner increased. Furthermore, they were right behind him.

He hadn't noticed the killing intent coming from behind him at all...

"This is bad..."

Ryner immediately turned around.

Before his eyes, a man moved to pierce through the nape of Ryner's neck with a knife...

Ryner grabbed his arm. Like that, he tried to bend the joints and break them...

So the man grabbed Ryner's arm and tried to twist it...

With this, neither of them could move.

From this exchange alone, Ryner understood.

This guy was incredibly strong.

If it was martial arts, then he was on the same level as Ryner. On top of that, he wasn't Ryner's only opponent.

The other enemies weren't weak. Sion wouldn't be able to handle them alone.

"Uwa... this is bad..."

Then the man before him—

"If that's what you think, then hand over the king there, Ryner Lute."

At those words, Ryner lifted his head.

"Huh? Why do you know my na..."

For the first time, he saw the other party.

Tea-coloured hair, strong and competitive blue eyes. More than that, he was dressed in a special outfit.

It was a familiar outfit.

A black cloak combined with navy light armour—it was a special combat uniform. Unlike Ryner's uniform, which resembled that of the Magic Knights, it was an outfit designed so that one could slip easily into the dark.

And Ryner had also once worn that uniform, as a previous member of the **Hidden Elites** who donned it.

Away from the public view, it was an organization that existed as Roland's underworld...

"... Is it really you, Zohra...?"

A smile rose in the man's face. Looking at Ryner—

"... Ha. As usual, given your standing as an **Alpha Stigma** monster, you're doing whatever it takes to get by? So you're currying favour with the new king to live easily? But that's all gonna end here. Sion Astal will die."

"Like I'd let you!"

As Ryner yelled, Zohra grinned.

"You can't stop me. Even if you're the genius mage Ryner Lute, do you really think you can take on this many opponents? Do it. Kill the king."

At Zohra's command, the surrounding men, all at once, rushed towards Sion.

*Stop!* Ryner wanted to call out.

However.

His voice wouldn't come out.

After all, before Sion... a strange man suddenly appeared.

In the edge of the darkness, golden hair. Beautiful to the point where he didn't seem human. Closed eyes. An unworldly still body.

No, rather than calling him unworldly, his existence couldn't be sensed at all. There wasn't a single sign of his presence.

He was utter nothingness.

"... Lucile Eris..."

Ryner groaned.

He was the head of the Eris family that, for generations, had carried the duty of protecting Roland's king—the sword clan.

Perhaps this man had been here from the beginning... If he didn't wish to be seen, he wouldn't be reflected in anyone's eyes.

This guy wasn't human. Even so, he was Ferris's older brother...

"....."

Ryner glared at Lucile...

Lucile looked his way with closed eyes and smiled.

"Ah, Ryner-kun. It's been a while."

It was a dangerous, transparent voice completely devoid of anything.

Lucile continued.

"But isn't this unfortunate? Just now, you couldn't protect Sion. Is your strength not enough to deal with this level of assassins?"

At that,

"Damn... the sword clan... the rumoured monster, is it? But don't think the sword will be enough to deal with us. Those behind the king. Now, kill him!"

Zohra called, though Ryner didn't understand what he was saying.

No, over there...

Again, a demonic smile rose to Lucile's face, and,

"Hmm? Such curious words, you. Kill me? Whom are you giving those orders to? Could it be that you mean to talk to the cut-up corpses around me?"

With those words just now, the assassins surrounding Sion... they all fell to the ground. Moreover, incredulously, they'd been cut to fine pieces.

Even though Lucile wasn't even holding a blade of any kind...

At that, Zohra:

"... Wha... What the hell is with this guy..."

Ryner interrupted him.

"R-Run away, Zohra. You can't beat him..."

"Shut up, Ryner! What do you know!? It's this king's fault that this country... If I don't kill him right here and now..."

"The one who needs to shut up is you! You don't understand the situation—that guy is incredibly... ah, damn it. Sion, don't let Lucile move. This guy's an old acquaintance of mine."

However, again Lucile laughed.

"Aha, hahaha. A monster like you would say that he doesn't wish for his acquaintance to be killed? You truly are amusing, Ryner-kun. With your dirty, blood-stained hands, you have no right to say such things. Now then, I'll kill him. Would you like to die with him?"

Saying that, he disappeared.

*Shit...* Ryner thought. Lucile was moving where they were. He was seriously going to kill them.

He couldn't see his movements at all.

Frowning, Ryner—

"Damn it, Zohra, hurry up and escape..."

"Too late."

Lucile's voice echoed by his ear. He was already right behind them...

They were going to be killed...

But over there,

"Stop, Lucile!"

Sion shouted.

At the last second, Lucile's movements stopped.

In that moment, Lucile's hand had been about to wrap around Zohra's face...

Ryner and Zohra couldn't even react.

Lucile looked Sion's way and said,

"Ho... of course, if you tell me stop, you must have a proper reason for it, Sion. If you don't, then right here, I'll..."

However, interrupting him, Sion spoke.

"... It's necessary to let an assassin go so that he can report how terrifying your existence is to his leader. He'll be the messenger."

Lucile tilted his head.

"For an internal enemy, by killing and disposing of him, that itself should convey that fear. Therefore, I don't understand your explanation just now. Could you elaborate? If not, then I'll kill him. First him. And then..."

However, Sion continued.

"Of course I can elaborate. But first, we have to make the assassin talk, don't we?"

To that, Lucile...

"... Listening to such a petulant reason is..."

However, he smiled. And pulling his hand away—

"... No, well, it's enough. I won't kill him here. Of course, that's only if he abandons his attempt to kill the king and runs away..."

At that, Zohra:

"D-Don't screw around with me..."

However, Ryner grabbed Zohra.

"You're the one who needs to stop screwing around! Think about the situation! Don't you get what this guy is like? Listen, hurry up and escape!"

Zohra glared at Ryner with an increasingly hateful expression.

"... Damn it... so you're the king's dog."

"Ah, geez, whatever, just withdraw from here! Or do you want to be killed too!?"

At those words, Zohra still looked annoyed, as he stared at Ryner for a while, and then at Sion...

"Damn it,"

He spat out, removing himself from Ryner's grasp. From there, he began to move away in the dark.

Confirming that, Ryner again looked in Sion's direction.

Lucile was no longer there...

At that, Ryner scowled.

"... Monster."

All that was left was the darkness of the night.

A broken carriage.

Six corpses...

And Zohra's words.

*"It's this king's fault that this country... If I don't kill him right here and now..."*

At those words, Ryner remembered what Germer said once more.

*"It will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country. This is how the country's going around right now."*

Those things...

*What the hell is happening in Roland right now?*

Ryner looked at Sion.

With remorseful eyes, he was staring down at the corpses.

He had a face that suggested he was blaming entirely himself.

A face that suggested he'd wanted to save even the assassins' lives.

Looking at that face... Ryner shook his head.

"... I'm going back to the inn. Today reaaally tired me out."

To those words,

"Yeah,"

A quiet voice.

"... Yeah, you're right,"

Sion said in a quiet, strained voice.

◆

Zohra Rom.

Ryner knew some things about him.

Belonging to the 66th squadron of the Hidden Elites.

His strong suit was assassination missions.

And six years ago... he'd appeared in front of Ryner, and after taking a second look at him, suddenly said this:

*"... Huh? You're Ryner? The rumored genius, Ryner Lute, is such a kid? Hey, how old are you?"*

*"Eh? W-what's with the random ques..."*

*"Just answer. How old are you?"*

*"... Um, I'm thirteen."*

*"Thirteen? Then I can't kill you. I don't kill kids, you know."*

*"K-kid... but you look about the same age as me.""*

Then Zohra had made a slightly troubled expression, and,

*"Ahh~ well, let's say that I don't kill people who're the same age."*

*"You're just thirteen!?"*

That kind of conversation.

That was the first time he'd met Zohra and the first conversation they had.

Incidentally, he'd been a huge annoyance constantly after that... going on about how he didn't kill kids and other rules about the assassination missions he accepted...

*"I don't kill women. I won't engage in mindless slaughter. I won't kill if I don't feel like it. I won't kill the weak. I won't kill unless I think it's right to do so."*

Etc., etc... And then, saying that, he'd failed perfectly as an assassin.

Really, he was useless.

In the group of monsters that was the **Hidden Elites**, there was occasionally someone like that.

Their strength was top class. Despite that, nuisances who had a personality problem, who didn't follow orders, who did whatever they wanted, who got by freely—in those days, there were several people like that...

Zohra was one of them.

By the way, Ryner was also one of those people...

Thinking about all that,

"... Has it already been six years...?"

Ryner smiled wryly.

For the record, he'd separated from Sion and had gone over to where the official residence of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad was.

As for why, he had one reason.

He'd come to ask for Germer's whereabouts from her husband—the commanding officer of the **Taboo Breaker** Pursuit Squad, Rahel Miller.

"Geez, this has become a really troublesome thing..."

Walking, Ryner sighed.

He thought of when, several days ago, Germer had suddenly appeared.

*"It will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country."*

Saying something like that...

And now today, Zohra—

*"It's this king's fault that this country... If I don't kill him right here and now..."*

Saying something like that...

He didn't understand any of it.

Only six years ago. It'd only been that long since he met Zohra, and even though everything had been so simple...

Back then, Ryner hadn't wanted to protect anything. He'd always wished to die.

And so he didn't need to persevere for anything.

Despite that, now...

"... It's a world where all I want is to sleep, and yet somehow I've ended up pulling all-nighters doing work for Sion, and now I'm gathering intelligence... idiot!! It's enough already! It's not like the world's gonna end tomorrow!"

He complained over things like that.

It'd really become a horrible and troublesome world.

In these six years, Ryner had found something he wanted to protect...

There.

Ryner's legs stopped.

And quietly,

"... It's only been six years... Wasn't it one of your rules to never kill mindlessly? You've really changed, haven't you?"

He spoke.

In response to his words, emerging from a dark, narrow alleyway and dressed in the uniform of the **Hidden Elites** that blended with the darkness, a man appeared.

Zohra.

Glaring at Ryner—

"... The one's changed is you, no? The genius Ryner Lute who wouldn't follow anyone's orders is now the king's dog?"

"Saying that I'm the king's dog... ah, well, it'd look that way, I guess? That's not good... but for the time being, I'd say I'm friends with Sion..."

At those words, Zohra gave him a serious look.

"You should choose your friends more carefully."

Ryner smiled wryly.

"What's with you? You've been giving me a lot of warnings recently, haven't you?"

"Because I'm such a nice guy, you know?"

"Yeah, you're such a nice guy. Then, if you're so nice, tell me who it's okay to be friends with, Zohra-sensei."

At that, Zohra pointed at himself, and easily—

"People like me."

"*You?*"

Ryner said in an annoyed voice, before laughing.

Zohra laughed at that as well.

But as he laughed, he pulled out a hidden knife.

Staring at that with half-closed eyes, Ryner spoke.

"... Hey, hey, you're pointing a knife at your friend?"

"You're not my friend yet."

"Hmm. I see. So what do I have to do to become your friend?"

Zohra glared at Ryner again as he spoke.

"Kill Sion Astal."

Ryner narrowed his eyes.

"... And your reason is?"

To that question,

"....."

His eyes never leaving Ryner, Zohra didn't answer.

"Then, let's change the question. Who are you working for?"

"....."

But as expected, Zohra didn't answer.

"If you're not gonna tell me anything, then I've got no reason to kill Sion..."

Zohra interrupted Ryner.

"Shouldn't you know the reason better than anyone else?"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

Ryner tilted his head but Zohra didn't seem to care and continued.

"I haven't changed at all. The one who's changed is you. Ryner Lute."

"Ahh? Liiike I was saying, what the hell are you talking about? Germer said something like that recently too, and it's getting kinda tiring. Just say what you mean. Geez, I have no idea what you're all talking about..."

However, again, Zohra interrupted.

He was glaring at Ryner, but his tone was indifferent...

He spoke.

"... Under Sion Astal's orders, the military's human experimentation has resumed. Moreover... everything right now is part of a larger scheme."

"... Wha—"

At that.

In that instant, Ryner couldn't understand the meaning of what Zohra was saying.

However, to Ryner's reaction—

"What, you really didn't know? That you're just being used by the Hero King? You're as soft as ever."

But Ryner shook his head.

"You're lying. That..."

"That can't be? Is that what you wanted to say?"

At those words.

Again, Ryner remembered what Germer said.

*"There is only one thing that I can say for sure—it will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country."*

That couldn't be.

*"This is how the country's going around right now. And you are its cogwheel."*

That was a lie. That couldn't be...

But Zohra—

"You're being used, Ryner Lute. Do you really think Sion Astal would seriously keep an **Alpha Stigma** monster as a friend..."

"... Shut up, Zohra. What the hell do you know about Sion?"

Ryner said.

However, Zohra:

"... He's taking advantage of your loneliness."

"You're wrong."

"I'm not. But whatever, it doesn't matter."

Zohra stared at Ryner. However, unlike before, there was pity in his eyes.

"... Ah, damn it. It's useless. Even though we were the same as monsters from the **Hidden Elites**... just like before, we can't get along. Even though it's been six years since then..."

He held up his knife.

In response, Ryner frowned.

"... I don't want to fight you."

Zohra shook his head.

"I'm not gonna fight you. This knife is a signal. To tell my subordinates to keep you here."

At that, Ryner—

"Y-You can't be..."

However, his words stopped there.

Several men, dressed in the uniform of the **Hidden Elites**, gathered around Ryner, surrounding him.

One person fired a punch.

"Damn..."

Blocking the punch, Ryner pulled away and broke the joints. However, from the next, there was a kick, a hand chop, magic...

And over there, Zohra turned on his heel.

While dealing with several opponents, Ryner—

"W-Wait, Zohra! Stop acting like an idiot! Didn't you see before!? Lucile... No, the head of the sword clan is a monster. You can't win! You'll be killed!"

However, Zohra didn't turn around, and instead,

"I... It's one of my rules not to pick hopeless fights. I've got fourteen of the best **Hidden Elites**. With that many..."

"It doesn't matter how good your companions are—didn't you see from before!?"

Ryner cried out, as Zohra stopped. And looking over his shoulder,

"... If you're worried about me, you can stop. It's pissing me off..."

He said, grinning.

"But, well, if we meet again, let's see if we can become friends?"

And then again, he began to move, disappearing into the darkness of the alleyway.

To that,

"I told you, wait..."

Ryner said, but was again interrupted by attacks from his opponents...

"Ah, damn it! You guys! Like this, your ally is going to fucking die!"

He yelled, punching one person out, and then kicking another...

However, the number of enemies wasn't decreasing.

That was why Ryner cried out. At the alleyway where Zohra disappeared, in hopes that he could hear.

"Why!? Why do you want to die over a misunderstanding!? Sion's not like that! You're misunderstanding things! So I'm begging you, at least—at least give me some time! And then we can find a solution afterwards!"

"....."

But there was no response.

The surrounding men silently attacked him in order to keep him confined there...

Ryner scowled at that, and,

"... You assholes, let's get this over with,"

He muttered in a low voice.

◆

Then, one hour later.

Ryner had defeated all the men trapping him and had raced over to where Sion was.

The royal castle.

By the time he'd arrived at the throne room...

"....."

He was too late.

Perhaps they'd been killed by Zohra and co., but he'd come across many palace guard corpses...

And in the throne room was the personal black uniform of the **Hidden Elites**, torn to shreds...

And covering the floor was blood.

Not a single person remained. Zohra might've been among them. Among the pile of corpses...

"....."

He understood what the situation came down to.

That was why he was so desperate to stop him. He couldn't win against that monster.

He fully understood what the situation came down to.

Despite that...

"Why did it turn out like this? Why..."

As Ryner was saying that, he stopped. And he looked at Sion.

With a pleading expression, Sion looked back...

"... I'm sorry. I couldn't stop Lucile..."

At that, Ryner narrowed his eyes.

"... It's not your fault."

Sion shook his head.

"... You're wrong. It's all my fault. When they came, I understood. That's why, instead of relying on Lucile, I tried to come up with a perfect defence. Despite that, this result... They killed the palace guards... and they themselves were killed..."

His expression changed.

Again, that expression. A face that said that he completely blamed himself for this.

Ryner had wanted Zohra to see that face. Zohra, who said that Sion had resumed the human experiments.

This guy, for the sake of the country...

This guy, who would easily throw away his life to bring happiness to the people?

Even though he misunderstood everything, he attacked Sion...?

Why did it turn out like this?

"....."

For a while, Ryner stared at the sea of blood.

"... Zohra said that you resumed the military's human experimentation. Is that true?"

He asked.

Sion made a surprised face.

"Wha... Human—experimentation?"

Again, Ryner shook his head.

"Ah, that reaction was enough. Just as I thought, it was a misunderstanding. Damn it."

And again, he stared at the floor.

*(... Idiot. Why couldn't you have waited a bit...? Weren't you going to come back so that we could become friends...?)*

Ryner cursed in his heart.

Then, Sion—

"Right now, I know there's an organization falsely using my name for their activities. Sooner or later, the nobles were going to attempt something like that..."

Ryner nodded.

"... Sooner or later, right?"

That was to say, it was like that.

There was an organization falsely using Sion's name to run human experiments.

And Zohra, with his rules that he lived by... He wouldn't allow that.

The consequence of that was...

"....."

Ryner stared at the sea of blood once more.

And,

"... You idiot. You finally met a foe you couldn't beat..."

He murmured in a voice that wouldn't be heard by anyone.

Then he lifted his face.

And looked at Sion.

He was expressionless.

However, looking only at that expressionless face, he immediately knew what this idiot would be thinking.

*"If I had done more, could I have stopped this? If I had done more, could I have decreased the number of victims? Why... is my power not enough? Why, why, why!?"*

At that... Ryner let out a sigh.

"... Good grief, you're blaming yourself agaaaaain? Honestly, you. There was nothing you could've done about this."

However, Sion's expression darkened.

"But..."

"No buts. Anyway, just go to sleep already. We can talk tomorrow. We need our sleep. Like this, my head's just spinning. It's fine if we leave countermeasures for tomorrow, right?"

Even I'll seriously help you out tomorrow..."

Ryner turned on his heel.

"... So you don't have to carry this all on your own, okay?"

He said that.

"....."

Sion said nothing. Without caring, Ryner moved to leave.

He had a pile of questions.

Zohra's words.

And Germer's words.

*"It will be unfortunate for you to remain in this country. This is how the country's going around right now. And you are its cogwheel."*

Unfortunate.

Cogwheel.

To that,

"... Geez, what's going on? What the hell is happening in Roland? What cogwheels are turning?"

Ryner muttered with a fed up expression.

◆

He was a cogwheel.

He was a necessary cogwheel.

As he walked away, he watched his back.

He stared for a while...

"... Help me, Ryner,"

Amidst the sea of blood, Sion Astal murmured.

However.

His words wouldn't reach anyone.

# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 A Genius' Proof

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*Skill Testing Legendary Heroes' Legend*

## A Genius' Proof[[edit](#)]

And now, to go back in time a bit.

In the royal palace.

The wide throne room.

In the center of a sea of blood, a single man stood.

Sion Astal.

The culprit of this disaster.

"... I'm beat,"

Zohra Rom muttered.

Right now, he was standing in the shadow of room entranceway.

Staring at the scene of death before him from the shadows, he muttered in his heart.

"... He's even more of a monster than I thought, huh..."

And looking at the sight, he thought.

Fourteen well-known members of the **Hidden Elites** had rushed into the room; however, they'd immediately been torn to shreds—he remembered that scene.

"... This is the work of the rumoured sword clan, then?"

Zohra said, before frowning.

He'd heard rumours that for generations, the king was protected by the monsters that were called the sword clan.

"... You've gotta be kidding me..."

Honestly, what had happened was unbelievable.

Even though Zohra had seen it for himself, he had trouble swallowing it.

When the **Hidden Elites** had moved to attack Sion, it happened in an instant.

The area had suddenly been dyed red with blood.

He had no idea what just happened.

Perhaps this was the work of the sword clan—they'd been killed by the Lucile that Ryner had warned him about.

"Now then,"

He said, looking ahead.

However, the monster who'd killed the **Hidden Elites** was nowhere to be found. In the wide room, standing in the center of the sea of blood, was only Sion Astal.

Right.

Lucile had moved so quickly that he couldn't be seen... He was in a completely different league.

From the start, he didn't appear. His killing intent suddenly appeared and then just as quickly disappeared.

If he used some kind of magic, it couldn't be detected.

*In that case, what?*

As Zohra's thoughts spun around—suddenly.

It happened.

Before his eyes.

With absolutely no signs of his presence, golden hair, serene like an angel, but with a demonic smile on an emotionless face, he appeared.

Lucile.

Lucile Eris.

Smiling his way,

"... Greetings. You, the only one who's yet to become a corpse, and continues to hide himself like a fool?"

Lucile said.

A fool, hiding.

Even though Zohra was completely erasing all signs of his presence, he easily noticed him.

Furthermore, Lucile released an incredible amount of killing intent. It was the first time he'd received such strong intent. An ordinary person might've lost consciousness after receiving it.

No, an ordinary person would be overwhelmed and be unable to move, at least.

If they were to fight him, they'd die.

He understood that much already. This guy was in a completely different league.

It was the first time he'd met someone like him.

You'll be killed.

That was what he thought.

Right now, you'll be killed immediately.

That was what he thought.

Even so, he was eager. A more dangerous situation. A more critical situation.

He had to become stronger.

And he had to obtain even more strength so he could protect that girl.

For that, he couldn't avoid going up against a monster or two like this.

And so Zohra smiled.

"... Ah~, well, hiding has never been my thing. See, having a fair and square fight is my policy."

At those words, Lucile made a slightly surprised face, and,

"Oh, even after receiving that killing intent, you'd still smile... You seem to be fairly competent."

At that, Zohra nodded greatly.

"That's right. I'm the **hella lot stronger than the Greatest Magician in Roland kyaaaaah how cool please go on a date with me—no, sorry, there's someone else, honey** genius Zohra Rom, you know? You've probably heard of me before."

However, Lucile easily shook his head.

"I don't know that name."

"Haa? You don't even know that much about Roland's underworld—you're pretty clueless, aren't you?"

"Eh. Are you that famous..."

"Yeah, I'm famous."

"Then it seems that I need to study more... My apologies. But it's fine like this, isn't it? After all, you'll die here."

He said, moving his hand in Zohra's direction.

But Zohra smiled, brimming with confidence—

"Liiike I said, you're clueless. You're no match for a genius like me, you know?"

Lucile laughed.

"What an amusing joke."

"It's not a joke. Well, it's fine like this. Let's get this started."

Zohra said, and promptly entered a combat stance.

Withdrawing a concealed dagger, he swung at the monster in front of him. There was no way he'd be able to dodge it.

However, there was no response.

Shimmering, Lucile disappeared, and the knife instead cut through air.

And,

"Too slow,"

A voice rang out by his ear from behind him. Immediately, he was attacked by a wave of killing intent from behind.

However, again, Zohra smiled.

"Idiiiidiot. I wasn't aiming at you."

At the same time he spoke, he released the knife.

And that knife flew straight at Sion. Furthermore, he likely didn't have time to dodge it.

Having seen Sion Astal's movements before, he likely wouldn't be able to avoid it.

Then, from behind him,

"Hmm,"

A quiet voice spoke, as the killing intent disappeared. Lucile then appeared in front of Sion, breaking the dagger.

He then stared at Zohra with a intrigued face.

"You truly came close..."

Zohra didn't stop.

"You see? But it's too early to be praising me just yet. Now, next, next! Get ready to die."

As he was saying that, he already completed a magic circle.

Then—

"WHAT I SEEK IS THE WATER CLOUD >>> MISUMI!"

He chanted, and at that moment, a large sphere of water formed within the magic circle. It was a spell that was meant to release a tremendous force of compressed water to crush the opponent to death.

"Now be swallowed up by the torrent and die!"

Zohra exclaimed, at the same time the water orb was released towards Lucile and co... or at least that was how it was supposed to go.

Rather than that, however, **Misumi** diverged significantly from its destination and moved high above Sion and Lucile's heads, flying towards the ceiling. It didn't damage Sion and Lucile at all, instead breaking through the ceiling and ending there...

Zohra looked up at that, dumbfounded.

"... Uh—"

He said.

Sion also looked up.

"....."

And finally, Lucile also looked up curiously, and,

"... Hmm. I've never seen the spell used like that before. What meaning is there to fire **Misumi** at the ceiling?"

He asked.

At that,

"... Ah, no..."

Zohra mumbled, before from behind Lucile, Sion—

"... No, Lucile, there likely was no meaning. In his enthusiasm while drawing the magic circle, he made a mistake in the structure..."

At those words, Lucile again looked at Zohra.

"... Is that so?"

"....."

"... If that's your limit, then you can die here..."

There, Zohra frantically said,

"H-Hey now, that was just a trial run! Just because I made a mistake, I'll seriously die!? I just need a little more time! Now die! You'll be killed by this spell that you bastards haven't seen!"

And then he began to chant.

Again, another magic circle.

Rather than a spell from Roland, it was his own, original creation. Then, he invoked it.

"WHAT I SEEK IS THE GOD OF ICE >>> FUEN!"

In the center of the magic circle, a small light formed.

Zohra had spent several years working on developing this—his strongest spell.

That was why a smile rose to his face, overflowing with confidence, as he looked at Lucile and co.

And he spoke.

"Now, it's time to seriously end this, don't you think? Small fry like you can't hope to beat this level of magic that surpasses even the Greatest Magician in Roland! Magic, fire!"

He said, at the same time he gave the order.

The light in the center of the magic circle fired...

Or at least that was how it was supposed to go.

Rather than that, however, again... the light simply disappeared.

In that instant.



"Ah—!?"

Zohra's voice leaked out.

In response,

"....."

Lucile and Sion said nothing.

To that, Zohra:

"... Ah, uhhhh, well, see, it's still a new spell, so..."

Lucile let out a quiet sigh, and,

"... Shall we end this already?"

He said.

Zohra lifted his head and looked at the two with a troubled face.

"... Um, right. Let's end this."

"Then, it's time to die?"

Zohra nodded at that.

"Yeah. It's time to die. But..."

Suddenly, Zohra's troubled expression changed entirely into a smile. And,

"But the only idiot who's going to die is you,"

He said, snapping with his right hand before lowering it.

At the same time he lowered it:

"Fall, **Fuen**."

He continued to chant his spell.

In that moment.

Something at the ceiling exploded.

And from the ceiling, giant blades of ice attacked Sion and Lucile.

"Wha—"

Sion said, shock clear in his voice.

But it was too late for shock.

That was right.

This was what Zohra had been holding out for, putting on an act for—his spell's true form.

First, to freeze over the **Misumi** he fired earlier, creating blades of ice that he could then manipulate at will—this

was **Fuen's** true form.

Plainly said, it was a huge relief that he managed to activate it at least once. After all, he had to trigger two spells, **Misumi** and **Fuen** for it to work.

Over there.

"... Hmm. So this is the level of magic that you possess, is it?"

And then Lucile lifted his hand.

Again, in the same way he tore apart the **Hidden Elites**, he cut apart the blades of ice.

But at that, Zohra laughed. This guy hadn't realized it yet. The true extent of his magic—he had no idea.

"It's pointless. Your sword won't be enough for my magic."

Zohra said, before giving another order.

"Explode, **Misumi**."

The moment he said that, the blades of ice that Lucile had cut through exploded into tiny pieces on their own, before turning back into water.

Lucile cut through the water.

As it was cut, the water was scattered through the air—to the scattered water, Zohra gave another order.

"Reconstruct, **Fuen**."

In that moment, there were now twice as many blades of ice than before, attacking the other party.

But they ignored Lucile completely.

Instead, there was a countless number of blades of ice, all aimed at Sion Astal.

However, Lucile's expression was still calm. As a cheerful smile rose—

"Ah, I understand now. It's that kind of magic, is it? You did it, after all."

"You've realized it too late."

Laughing,

"But it's fine. Certainly, this magic is beyond me, but none of it will touch Sion,"

He said.

Nevertheless.

Nevertheless,

"I know. That's why it doesn't stop there. This is—"

Zohra said, pointing to behind him.

Outside, at the entrance of the room.

There, a magic circle floated. Zohra had drawn it there beforehand.

In the instant he saw it, Lucile's expression changed.

Right.

All of what had happened here—Zohra had expected all of it.

For the sake of killing the monster that was Lucile Eris, he'd come up with this plan.

And now, it was time to complete it.

"It's over, monster. Regret that you met a genius like me and die."

Looking at the magic circle he'd drawn beforehand, he chanted. It was a spell meant to slaughter.

It was a spell that would fire light to annihilate the enemy.

"WHAT I SEEK IS IRIDESCENT DESTRUCTION >>> KUURI!"

Immediately.

From the center of the magic circle, a streak of rainbow light was released.

On top of that, it wasn't aimed at Sion or Lucile.

It was aimed at the fragments of ice scattered across the room.

And as that massacring light hit the ice's surface, it started to diffuse with incredible force.

The light completely surrounded Sion.

It was an utter storm of light, swallowing up Sion and Lucile as their figures disappeared.

Ascertaining that,

"It's over..."

Zohra murmured.

They had no chance of winning.

It was his number one spell, created for the sake of having a spell that no one else could develop.

Magic that was forcibly developed for the sake of killing a monster like the one in the center.

With this, if he didn't die...

"....."

There.

Within the storm of light, he heard a quiet voice.

"The sword that cuts through light."

Lucile's voice.

After speaking, darkness appeared within the light, tearing through it.

No, that wasn't accurate. That darkness absorbed the surrounding power.

**Kuuri's** light.

**Misumi's** water.

**Fuen's** ice.

All of it disappeared, as the figures within came to view.

Behind him was Sion, completely uninjured.

Lucile had protected Sion inside the storm of light and easily freed them from it.

And, as expected, Lucile looked at him with a completely neutral face.

"... Fu, fufu. Just now... you're the first human opponent whom I've had to do such a thing for... I'm a bit impressed."

At those words, Zohra scowled.

"... Only a bit?"

"Yes. Only a bit."

"Damn it."

"Fufu. Then, shall I get serious?"

As he said that, Zohra's body was suddenly lifted into the air.

He had no idea what was going on.

Not understanding anything, he was lifted into the air, his neck being strangled by Lucile.

"Gua—"

Zohra grabbed those narrow white arms in that moment. He tried to break their joints...

However, it was no good. With incredible strength, the grip around his neck tightened.

"Ua—ah—haa—"

He couldn't breathe.

He was going to die.

He was going to be killed...

That was what he thought.

However, Lucile spoke.

"Well? I have no reason to kill you. The question here is who you are. Sion would like to know. You know Ryner, correct? Whose orders are you working under..."

"If you won't tell us, then I'll kill you."

At those words, Zohra's eyes turned to behind Lucile.

To this country's king.

To the demon king that was corrupting this country.

There, Sion gazed back with a smile and with a face like he was about to cry.

And he spoke.

"Now, talk. Why in the world are you here?"

In response, while being strangled, Zohra said,

"... You... already know. Everyone's fed up. There's a lot of us in the military who think you've gotten too arrogant. So we remaining members of the **Hidden Elites** got together and decided to kill you..."

His expression unchanging, Sion interrupted.

"Don't lie. That's not why you're here."

Saying that, he pointed to the floor.

Pointing to the corpses of the **Hidden Elites**,

"Even when you saw their bodies, your expression didn't change. Your allies were killed, and yet you didn't seem shaken at all."

"That's because I've been trained to..."

"That's also a lie. Because they weren't truly your allies, you weren't shaken. Isn't that right? Zohra Rom. You deserted this country a long time ago and became a **Taboo Breaker**. In spite of that, you've come back. What was your intention? Under whose orders did you return here for?"

He said that.

Zohra glared at Sion.

"... Yeah, that's right. So you know that much. You're a tricky guy, you know. That's why I don't like people with sharp minds..."

While saying that, he stared down at the sea of blood at Sion's feet, before continuing.

"But look at all this. Looking at all these corpses of the people you killed, what do you have to say? It's amazing to hear that you're actually being called the Hero King, isn't it?"

He spat, and then watched for Sion's reaction.

However, at that, Sion's eyes looked down, before at him, and then at the corpses.

"....."

The Hero King and saviour ruler whom everyone spoke and dreamed of—such a person didn't exist.

The person Ryner believed in didn't exist.

He remembered Ryner's words earlier.

"... *Shut up, Zohra. What the hell do you know about Sion?*"

Recalling that, Zohra became annoyed.

*Ryner, that idiot. What friend? He's really been deceived, hasn't he...?*

Muttering that in his heart, Zohra looked at Lucile before him, who continued to strangle his neck.

And he spoke.

"... Hey, monster. If you want to have a proper talk, then let go of me. It's impossible to talk properly like this."

Lucile smiled, and,

"....."

Then suddenly, he vanished.

Just as it was from the beginning, he shimmered and then vanished.

And Zohra fell to the ground.

"Whoa—"

He landed. Coughing slightly, he rubbed his neck.

"... Monster..."

After that insult, again he looked ahead.

As expected, Lucile wasn't there. In the wide room, there was only Sion. No matter how hard he tried to find it, he couldn't feel Lucile's presence at all.

He wasn't there at all... He was sure of that.

For some reason, he was that sort of person.

He was truly, truly a monster.

A kind of monster that he'd never met before.

"I've come back to a pretty despicable country, huh?"

As Zohra said that, Sion spoke.

"So, why did you come back to such a despicable country?"

"Why, huh?"

Sion smiled nonchalantly.

"... To be killed?"

"Ohhh, I'm scared."

"You're scared? In that case, hurry up and talk."

At that, Zohra stared at Sion with half-closed eyes.

"Whaaat, does Ryner know that Sion-kun says such scary things?"

It was the instant he said that.

All of a sudden, Sion's atmosphere changed.

No, it wasn't his expression that changed. It wasn't anything that could be seen that changed. Nevertheless, there was somehow a heavy atmosphere resting over him.

At that, Zohra went *Ah?* He thought that. *Isn't this a weird development?*

He'd figured that this tyrant who was hailed as a Hero King was just making use of the idiot Ryner, so what was with that reaction?

Zohra continued.

"That guy told me that he chose you as a friend... That idiot thinks you're his friend... That's what he thinks."

"....."

Sion didn't reply. However, his reaction was definitely strange.

Again, Zohra remembered Ryner's words.

*"... Shut up, Zohra. What the hell do you know about Sion?"*

At those words—*no, though I don't know...* He muttered that in his heart.

Though he didn't know, but still, what was with that reaction?

This man who resumed the human experimentation, who killed his own people?

The son of the tyrant?

To be called the Hero King, he'd likely overturned the truth?

Zohra immediately continued.

"So what's with Ryner? His personality's not so great, so he doesn't have many friends, right? And on top of that, one of the few friends he does have is the one he needs to be saved from, huh?"

Finally,

"... Yeah..."

Sion spoke. His voice was tight.

And staring at Zohra,

"... Yeah... that's right. But is that why you're here? Are you trying to save him?"

He said that.

*"Are you trying to save him?"*

Again, a new question was born.

*What meaning is there in that?*

Zohra contemplated over the meaning of those words.

*Are you trying to save him?*

In short, was that guy thinking about saving Ryner?

*Huh? Wait, this is really kind of a weird development.*

Staring at Sion, Zohra spoke.

"What was that just now? Why the hell would you want to save Ryner..."

Sion interrupted.

"I'm the one asking questions. Why are you here? Under whose orders did you come here to kill me?"

It didn't seem like he was going to answer any questions.

Originally, Zohra was going to beat him in one shot and force him to answer his questions, but today ended up becoming kind of troublesome, and instead he got beaten by that monster in one shot, and so they were the ones trying to make him answer by force.

"If I don't answer, you'll kill me?"

"Yeah."

"Some Hero King, huh?"

"... Yeah. That's right."

Sion easily nodded.

At that, Zohra made a slightly thoughtful expression, before eventually replying.

"... No, well, regarding under whose orders I'm working, I already told you—I'm here at the request of my colleagues that you just killed. They asked that if by any chance I came back to Roland, if I would help kill the tyrant who's killed so many people, you know?"

Sion glared at him.

"If you expect me to believe that..."

To that, Zohra—

"No, it's the truth. Well, of course, I only take orders from the Princess<sup>[1]</sup>..."

"The Princess?"

Sion replied; however, Zohra didn't pay him any heed. Folding his arms, he muttered to himself.

"... But I shouldn't return with this little information..."

From the beginning, the plan had been to crush Roland as it began to expand greatly under the rule of the new king...

"... Ah, geez, Ryner has no idea what he's gotten into... In the end, it was impossible for me to face off against Lucile alone... what's with all this? Huh? Should I include the stuff about Ryner in the report to the Princess?"

Then Zohra quickly turned on his heel.

At that, Sion:

"We haven't finished talking yet..."

However, Zohra easily—

"I know."

He began to run.

From behind him, Sion said,

"Don't let him escape, Luci..."

But his words stopped. And then, he moaned.

At that, Zohra looked over his shoulder.

In that instant.

"... What the?"

Without meaning to, his voice slipped out.

Before his eyes.

Sion, who was previously standing in the sea of blood, was now on his knees, clutching his head.

Furthermore, he coughed up blood.

No, that wasn't the most surprising thing. If it were just that, it could be chalked up to illness or some such.

However, the colour of the blood that came from Sion's mouth was strange.

The blood he coughed up... was golden. Glowing with a strange light, his bodily fluids were golden.

That wasn't all. Sion's silver hair shined and flickered brightly.

It obviously wasn't a human figure.

"... You're also a monster...?"

Zohra said, at which Sion looked his way. Blood streaming from his mouth, he laughed.

"... Ku, kuku. A worm who thinks he can run away... Kill him, Lucile. Don't leave behind any traces."

Again, that guy appeared.

Lucile Eris.

At that, Zohra scowled.

"Shit."

Again, he ran. He ran even though he knew it was futile...

Just as he thought, Lucile appeared before him, smiling.

"... Uwa, just as expected?"

Zohra groaned.

Smiling,

"Of course, he's at least somewhat of a nuisance... Now, it's best to kill him,"

Lucile said, reaching towards him.

Zohra frantically reached for his chest pocket. He didn't want to use what was there except as a last resort, but it couldn't be helped.

In the instant he was about to take it out, though.

Again, a voice echoed.

"... S-Stop, Lucile... Don't... kill... him...!"

Thereupon, again Lucile's hand stopped.

Sion had spoken.

And again, a voice echoed.

"Kill him! Hurry up and kill him!"

It was the same voice.

Zohra turned around at that.

Before him, there was Sion, his face distorted in pain.

Sion called out.

"Sto... Don't... If you kill him... You also... Fool, what does it matter if you kill one or two people... You're wrong! There's still time... He's Ryner's... Silence..."

They were strange words.

It looked like there were two people speaking in one person.

Zohra frowned at that.

"... Is he... going crazy?"

Lucile answered.

"That's not it. What's gone mad is this world. However, you weren't supposed to see him like this. Sion, it'll be a problem if we don't kill him."

At that, Sion cried.

"Stop!"

At that, Sion cried.

"Do it!"

Lucile nodded.

"I will..."

His hand reached out.

He was going to die... That was what Zohra thought.

No matter what he did, he'd be killed.

But if he was going to die at any rate, Zohra took it out from his chest pocket.

A puppet, an inorganic object.

Called the **Severed Remains of Menos**, it was a **Rhule Fragmei**.

At that, Lucile's eyes widened.

"That's..."

"Oh, you know about it? Then you know what'll happen if I throw this."

"Don't you dare..."

"No can do. Now, I'll be activating this,"

He said, throwing it.

At the same time, Lucile disappeared. He'd gone to deal with the **Severed Remains of Menos**.

But Zohra didn't turn around.

No, he couldn't afford to turn around.

After all, the **Severed Remains of Menos** was a self-destruction **Rhule Fragmei**...

It was a **Rhule Fragmei** that, upon being thrown, would create a black fire that would explode abnormally and burn all to nothingness.

The scope of the fire was too great to be able to run away from.

That was right. That was why it was called a self-destruction **Rhule Fragmei**. The user who activated it would be unable to escape from the explosion and would burn to death.

"Ah, geez, I really didn't want to use it..."

But Zohra threw it.

He'd decided to resign himself to his death.

But he really hadn't calculated for this at all. If it was that monster, Lucile Eris, then maybe, just maybe, he'd be able to stop the explosion.

In that case, while he was stopping the explosion, Zohra would make his escape...

Zohra was leaving his fate in the hands of the monster that was Lucile.

Thus, while running,

"Dear God, let that monster be just as much of a monster as I think he is!"

Zohra prayed.

However, behind him, black light was released.

The omen of the explosion.

"Crap. This is bad, isn't it?"

At that, Zohra looked over his shoulder just a tad.

Lucile was protecting Sion from behind, cutting up at the puppet and confronting the black fire that was being emitted from within.

It seemed he knew what to do.

At that,

"D-Do your best, monster! I'm counting on you!"

Zohra said while running.

Lucile accidentally looked his way, before returning his attention to the puppet before him. In his hand, a strange sword was created...

But more importantly, that was a relief.

Zohra continued to run with all his strength.

And turning around the corner of the hallway, he immediately smashed through a window.

"All right, I've successfully gotten away from the explosion~!"

While exclaiming, he jumped outside.

◆

And then, two months later.

In a place far away from Roland.

A fortress that rested in a small country in the east of the central continent.

In the corridor of that fortress, Zohra was walking.

"Haa~aa... I've finally returned..."

While saying that, he took out a small mirror from his pocket. And in that mirror, his figure was reflected.

Reflected was tea-coloured hair, strong-willed blue eyes, and a smile brimming with self-confidence. He was no longer dressed in the uniform of Roland's **Hidden Elites**... but rather, a red combat uniform. On his chest, as a symbol, was the design of a vermillion bird taking flight.

It was the symbol of the group that he belonged to now.

No, well, the group wasn't a very large organization just yet.

Nevertheless, it was steadily growing.

He was going to meet with the organization's leader... no, its Princess...

While looking at the mirror, Zohra frowned.

"Ah~ geez, my hair's like this when I'm about to meet with the Princess after a long time... Ah, well, it's fine."

Giving up, he flung the mirror away.

Then, he looked ahead of him.

Leaving the corridor, he entered a wide room.

A red carpet was laid across the floor, and on both sides were rows of soldiers dressed in a red uniform.

One person spoke.

"Zohra Rom-sama has returned!"

At that,

"Keep your voice down, geez,"

He said, while slapping the shoulder of the man who'd called out, before laughing.

The man smiled happily back, and then, all at once, the soldiers bowed their heads.

Zohra shrugged at that.

And then, he looked ahead.

At the only two who didn't have their heads bowed.

There was a throne.

By that throne, with the appearance of a smooth-talker, a man around Zohra's age stood.

Annoying blond hair that reached his shoulders. An annoying, conceited face with closed eyes. And annoying him even further was the fact that the man was slightly taller than Zohra.

With an annoying, composed atmosphere like he knew anything and everything, that guy calmly said,

"Welcome back, Zohra. It's good to see that you're safe."

In return, Zohra calmly said,

"Die, you stupid brat. And get away from the Princess."

"Ehh~ Suddenly asking me to die like that, you're as awful as ever, Zohra... Shall I kill you?"

"Ha. That's impossible for you. Come on, let's fight!"

Zohra said, as the two of them tensed.

However, over there, one more person spoke.

"Yes, yes, don't fight immediately after seeing each other~."

It was a pretty, angelic voice. At that, Zohra looked at the source of that voice.

In the center of the room.

He looked at the ruler of this country, seated on the throne.

There, as expected, was a beautiful woman around Zohra's age.

Well-arranged features, and unyielding, charming eyes.

Unusual azure-coloured hair that, today, was tied up up into a small tail. Furthermore, she was wearing a dress with a butterfly design.

She was incredibly beautiful. After leaving to fulfill his duties and spending months without seeing her, he'd had to imagine her in his mind—but the real thing was even prettier than his mental image, and so Zohra's heart beat faster.

Despite this, as she looked at Zohra with a cute expression and smiled, his head felt dizzy.

And,

"Welcome back, Zohra. It's good to see that you're safe."

To those words—

"I-I'm back, Princess!"

Placing a hand on his chest, he knelt down.

By the Princess's side, the stupid brat spoke in a displeased voice.

"She said the exact same thing as I did, so why are you reacting like that only to her~?"

"Huh? Did you say something, stupid brat?"

"... No, nothing~."

Ignoring him, Zohra lifted his face and looked at the Princess, who was smiling prettily.

As she noticed, she stood up, and,

"Ah, ah, Zohra—look, look at this. I got a new dress,"

She said, slightly tucking up the skirt of the dress and turning around. And,

"What do you think?"

She said, and without even having to think on it, he replied.

"P-Pretty..."

He seriously thought that. That was why he said it.

She smiled, and,

"Thank you ♡,"

She said. That alone blew all his exhaustion from his recent duties out the window. *Ah, today I'm gonna have a good dream*, he thought, but then the stupid brat by her side spoke.

"Right. It really suits you, Pia. You look just like a fairy."

*Saying that so smugly!!*

Furthermore,

"Oh~ A fairy? I like that~. Then, today Peria wins,"

The Princess said happily.

Looking at Zohra, the stupid brat made a triumphant expression.

At that, Zohra took out a hidden knife, and,

"Die!"

He threw it.

The stupid brat easily caught it. For some reason, after looking at the caught knife, the stupid brat smiled lightly and continued.

"Ah, just now, Zohra, when you threw the knife, you were going a bit easy. Finally, you think of me as a friend..."

"Not a chance."

"Still with that..."

"All right. Two more knives..."

"Like I said, would you two please stop!? I'm getting angry?"

At the Princess's words,

"Understood,"

Zohra and the stupid brat said at the same time.

Zohra then went to where the two of them were standing.

Then, as Zohra gazed at the Princess, she smiled again.

"Welcome back, Zohra."

"I'm back, Pia,"

Zohra said, to which Pia nodded. And then, looking at the stupid brat at her side:

"And Peria's returned from Gastark... so your timing is good. Things are rather poor right now, aren't they?"

At that, Zohra looked at the stupid brat.

"Is that right?"

Peria nodded.

"Well, a little. Given their **theology** studies, they have more ancient knowledge than us..."

However, Pia interrupted their conversation.

"But that's enough about Gastark. The problems over there didn't start just now. That's already within our expectations. More than that..."

She stopped her words.

And then again, she sat down on the throne.

Her expression became serious.

Within her strong-willed, charming eyes, intelligence dwelled.

And looking up at Zohra with those eyes, she asked,

"Right now, what's the situation with Roland?"

She asked that question.

Zohra frowned slightly.

And then he recalled what was transpiring there.

Darkness, darkness—it was a place of darkness.

Ryner, Sion, Lucile... and the exact opposite **theology** of the world.

Remembering that, he breathed out lightly.

And then he took in a deep breath.

"....."

With that, he began to talk about that darkness.

### Translator's Notes[[edit](#)]

1. ↑ The kanji used here is 女王, which means "queen", but the reading (i.e. what Zohra is actually saying) is "princess".

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# Toriaezu Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:Volume 9 Salty Dango

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*Legendary Heroes' of Legend Sidestory*

## **Salty Dango**[\[edit\]](#)

"Uwa!?"

Without thinking, Pehl exclaimed the instant he saw it.

Simply cut black hair, but intelligent black eyes.

He seemed to be around ten years old? He was still young, with a tense, quick body.

Right now, that body was running.

He was sprinting with all his might.

He was running at full force without stopping; however, in the instant he saw it,

"... What... is that..."

He forgot to keep running. Flabbergasted, he gaped with round eyes, before overturning a small stone one step in front of him...

Then he looked away from that.

Collapsed before him was an unbelievably pretty girl.

Right now, Pehl was in a grove of trees. He helped out at his family business, and was in the middle of delivering goods to a customer...

But right now, before him, a girl had collapsed.

All over her body—from her to her arms to her legs—were painful-looking bruises.

And with her back against a rock, her eyes were closed.

*Is she sleeping?*

*No, maybe she's dead.*

He thought.

Nevertheless, the girl was pretty.

In the sunlight that was filtered through the trees, her glossy blonde hair shimmered. She had long eyelashes, an unusually well-featured face, and long and slender arms and legs, and was dressed in a clean white and blue outfit.

Looking at her, she seemed to be around Pehl's age?

Pehl couldn't believe he was looking at such a pretty person.

*Is she really human?*

He thought such a thing, as the girl truly was pretty.

Pehl crouched down, staring at the girl, dumbfounded... and then hurriedly stood up.

"Aah!? This isn't the time to be doing nothing! Um... uh, iiiis she all right? Don't tell me she's dead..."

Suddenly,

"... Be quiet. I feel sluggish, my body hurts, and my throat is dry. Go and get me water,"

The girl demanded in a flat voice.

At that, Pehl, shocked—

"Eh? ... Ah, water? T-That..."

"Hmm? On a person's family premises, you'd do whatever you please and say you don't want to?"

"Haa? A person's family premises...? Then, this is your family's...?"

Pehl said, again staring. With numerous trees growing thickly around him, they were in a forest.

He'd always gone through here on his deliveries. He lived in the fourth commerce district of Reylude, the capital of the Roland Empire. Going between it and the eighth commerce district, he'd passed through this forest...

*This huge forest is someone's land...? To own such a big forest...*

Thinking about, Pehl quickly trembled.

"C-Could it be that this place is... a noble's...?"

At that, like before, her face didn't reflect any emotions... However, with clear, blue almond-shaped eyes that she now opened, she gazed at Pehl and nodded.

"Yes. This is the Eris house's territory."

At those words, Pehl hurriedly fell prostrate to the ground and,

"I-I'm sorry. I didn't know. I-I won't selfishly enter your premises anymore, so please spare me..."

He frantically apologized; however, he believed he was going to be killed. His father told him that that was how the nobles were.

The other day, the foolish nobles' carriage raced through the streets where the neighbourhood children were playing and ran them over, but no one said anything. To make matters worse, as they claimed it was the children's fault, the families of those children were killed.

Nevertheless, as expected, no one said anything.

This country was that kind of country.

The strong bullied the weak.

And thus, Pehl thought he was going to be killed. As he thought, the being before his eyes wasn't a human.

It was a cold-blooded noble.

Certainly, she was unbelievably pretty, but her voice was indifferent and her eyes reflected no emotions.

She was another living being entirely.

Pehl stared. I'm definitely going to be killed. Right here and now. What should I do? What should I do to survive? His mind spun around and around.

The noble girl looked at him, before, with a blank expression, standing up and walking over to him, and—

"... What in the world were you saying before?"

"Au... I-I'm sor..."

Interrupting him halfway—

"My body hurts, so I don't want to move—you won't listen to a pretty girl who hurts and needs water?"

"S-So don't kill me... Wait, what? Just now, what...?"

Instinctively, Pehl lifted his face at the girl's words.

"Just now, what did you say?"

The girl,

"No, like I said, this pretty girl's..."

She said, and for some reason her face turned red in embarrassment as she looked away...

"I-It's nothing. Anyway, stop kneeling. Let's talk."

"B-But. Um... if someone from the Eris house says so... then, Lady Eris..."

"It's Ferris. Ferris Eris."

"Then, Lady Ferris..."

However, she interrupted.

"Why are you calling me 'Lady'?"

"Well, you're a noble, and I... that is, this simple person is a commoner..."

"Hou. So a commoner would address a noble respectfully?"

It was said admiringly. Conversely,

"Eh? I-Isn't that normal? The nobles are all proud like that to all of us commoners... Ah, no, that wasn't what I wanted to say..."

The shocked Pehl said, to which Ferris tilted her head to the side, and—

"It's fine. We're talking, after all. I see. So nobles act proudly? Hmm. Like this?"

She said, firmly sticking out her chest. It seemed that she was trying to act proudly.

But, seeing as how she was around the same age as him—still young—it lacked a dignified air...

Without meaning to, Pehl laughed. After he finished laughing, he—

"Ah, I-I'm sorry. That definitely didn't look stupid..."

Ferris stopped sticking out her chest, and dejectedly,

"Muu. As I thought, it's no good? Then, what should I do?"

She asked with an earnest expression.

Looking at that...

Pehl thought it was cute. Even though this girl was one of those frightening nobles... she didn't give off that impression at all. Somehow, with her emotionless face and outrageous lack of manners...

Her honesty was cute.

Staring at her, Pehl asked,

"B-By any chance, has Lady Ferris... No, have you never met any other nobles, Ferris?"

At that, Ferris nodded.

"I haven't. No... since I was born, I've never met anyone other than my parents, big brother Lucile, my little sister Iris... and our servant."

To that, Pehl—

"Eh? ... Y-You've never met anyone else?"

"Right. I never have. I don't have time to meet other people. Each day, I'm busy with swordsmanship training."

She easily said that sort of thing.

To those words, Pehl looked at her face. Her beautiful, well-arranged face. However, that face was covered in bruises...

*I can't believe it. Is what she's saying is true? Outside of her family, she's never met anyone else before, and instead gets beaten up during swordsmanship training...? That can't be...*

Pehl was at a loss for words, to which Ferris curiously tilted her head, and,

"Why?"

"Eh? Why... what?"

Pehl replied, not understanding the question. Ferris, in her emotionless voice—

"Why are you staring at me with a sad expression?"

At those words, Pehl gave a start.

"No, um..."

"Hmm?"

Like before, her face didn't reflect any emotions as she stared at him with pretty eyes.

No, she didn't have social skills. Pehl understood. Having never met anyone else before and never having any friends, she didn't know how to present her emotions. Pehl stared into her sad eyes...

"Hey, Ferris. By any chance..."

"Hmm?"

"By any chance... am I the first person you've met outside of your family?"

Then...

"That's right. You're the first person my age that I've met too. I've only read about it in books, so I was surprised."

The fact that she was surprised at such a simple thing made Pehl sad. She was different from other nobles.

That was what he thought. If he thought that...

Without thinking... He took out the goods he was holding from his family business and spoke.

"Um... uh, this iiiis... really good. I have a flask of tea and this here is dango, so let's eat together? This dango is delicious, you know?"

With a puzzled face, Ferris—

"... Dango? What's that?"

"Ah, as I thought, you've never eaten dango... t-then you'll definitely be amazed. It's seriously delicious!"

"Hou."

And so he sat on the rock with Ferris, before opening up the dango covering, taking one stick for himself and handing the other to Ferris, who spoke.

"This is dango?"

"Yup. Eat it."

"Hmm."

She stared at it for a while, before popping it into her mouth.

"Well?"

Pehl nervously asked.

Ferris, with a muted expression—

"It's sweet."

"Ah... i-is it bad?"

However, she finished the rest, and with an emotionless face,

"No, it's not bad,"

She murmured.

After that incident, Pehl frequently passed through that forest.

She'd told him that "When I have a break from training, I like to read on that rock."

They then played together. Well, saying that, it was more of a one-sided conversation as he led her, and then each time they would eat dango together...

Then, one day.

Ferris spoke.

"By the way, Pehl."

"What is it?"

"Hmm... I was thinking about what was asked before. Why do you always come here whenever I have a break? Do you always know when I have a break?"

"Eh? Ah... t-that's it. Right."

Pehl replied, flustered. However, Ferris curiously tilted her head to one side, and—

"However, my breaks aren't decided beforehand, are they? I take a break when I'm injured too badly to continue with my training—isn't that how it is? As I thought, it's strange. It couldn't be that you come here everyday, could it?"

"U..."

Bulls-eye. At that, Pehl looked away and smiled, embarrassed.

"... That's exactly it."

Ferris tilted her head further.

"Is this your favourite place?"

She guessed wrong. At that, Pehl let out a sigh and spoke.

"That's not it. I come here to meet with you, Ferris. I come here each day hoping to meet with you."

"With me? Why?"

"Eh... why... because I thought you'd be lonely? That... if you're alone without any friends, Ferris..."

Ferris had an increasingly clueless face.

"... Lonely? ... That's... Is that a feeling? I haven't experienced it yet."

"Ah..."

At those words, Pehl lost his voice.

She hadn't experienced loneliness...

Those simple words were sad.

Right now, she had no friends. From the beginning, she'd always, always been alone...

And so she'd never experienced loneliness. She'd been alone from the beginning. Loneliness was something she couldn't imagine.

Each and every day, near the brink of death, she went through unbelievably harsh training.

In that moment, he felt that hers was an incredibly fleeting existence. An incredibly weak existence that could break at any time...

That—

Pehl descended from the rock they were sitting on and stood in front of Ferris.

He stared at her...

And then he spoke.

"Right now... I've decided—!"

"Hmm? What have you decided?"

Ferris asked while eating her dango. Staring at her face...

Pehl continued.

"That... No, uuum, let me say that again, since this is embarrassing... So, um, from now on, I want to protect you..."

Ferris stared fixedly at Pehl's face. She also had a serious expression.

Then, she—

"You'll protect me, Pehl? What meaning is there in that? Are you saying that you're stronger than me?"

To those words,

"Haa?"

Without meaning to, Pehl let that slip. At that, Ferris—

"Hmm? That's not it? This is complicated. Then what in the world were you..."

"No... that's... Ah, that's why... Geez, it took up all of my courage to say just that..."

"Like I said, what..."

Hoever, Pehl interrupted.

"Right. You don't need to know. I've decided for myself. All right! Then, I should be going now, but I'll see you tomorrow!"

"No, tomorrow, my break is..."

Pehl smiled.

"But I'll come. If you want to meet, Ferris, then we'll definitely meet. Then, see you!"

Saying that, Pehl ran through the forest.

From behind him, Ferris murmured,

"Hmm."

Listening to that, she nodded.

The following day.

As always, Pehl took a nap on top of that rock while waiting. Surrounded by the forest, while basking in the soft sunlight that streamed in through the leaves, he closed his eyes.

The hot season had already come, and so to lie in the shade like this felt good. Alone, he'd fall asleep quickly.

"I see why this is Ferris's favourite place."

While thinking something like that, he gradually fell asleep...

"Hey."

Suddenly, there was a voice.

"Eh?"

At that voice, Pehl opened his eyes and jumped to his feet. Over there was Ferris...

"Ah, Ferris? ... Why are you here? Didn't you say yesterday that you'd be busy with training?"

Ferris narrowed her eyes, and,

"What are you saying? Didn't you say that if my training wasn't too difficult and I wasn't badly injured, that I should come?"

"Eh? When did I say that... Ah, well, anyway, then could it be that yesterday, you took my words to heart and specifically came here?"

"Mmm. That's right."

To that, Ferris nodded frankly.

Pehl looked at her, and without meaning to, became loose with his emotions.

"I see... ah,ahaha. I see~"

While laughing in a strange manner, he looked at her.

As usual, her face was expressionless.

Unsociable, possessing an icy voice, didn't seem to feel anything, and beautiful.

But, something was changing...

Pehl felt so.

It wasn't that he thought she liked him or that she gave the impression she needed friends... but for sure, something was changing... That was what he thought.

That was why he happily said,

"Then, what should we play today?"

Ferris's expression darkened, and,

"Play? You called me here for that? If that's the case, then..."

"Come on, come on. Let's go!"

While saying that, Pehl began to race ahead, expecting Ferris to come along...

However,

"Don't move any further, Pehl!"

She suddenly raised her voice.

"Eh?"

He said, and in the instant he turned around, there was darkness before his eyes. There was a large—larger than Pehl's body—dog ahead of him that moved to lunge at him...

"Uwa!?"

He dodged the attack, tumbling onto the ground.

"W-What the!?"

Ferris ran over to Pehl's side, and,

"It's a field dog. There are a number of them in this forest. You've never encountered them?"

"N-Never. Though I think if I had, I'd be dead by now..."

He said, looking at the monster-like dog in front of him. He stared at the dog. The pure black dog. A dog that possessed a flexible body that it moved easily. Sharp fangs, with drool hanging from its mouth and a diminished belly that made it seem like it truly wanted to eat Pehl.

*This is bad...* Pehl thought. This situation was bad.

Like that—with the dog in front of Pehl, he pushed Ferris back behind him and,

"Run, Ferris!"

He called out. For some reason, Ferris tilted her head to one side.

"What are you saying? Don't you understand my power? For a dog like this, I..."

But Pehl shook his head, and,

"N-No good! There's no way I'd let a girl... I'd let Ferris do that! I-I mean, I decided that I'd protect you! A-All right. If you won't run away, Ferris..."

He glared at the dog.

The dog, as expected, began to move. He didn't think he stood a chance at winning at all. But, nevertheless...

*There's no way I can withdraw from here!*

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

Pehl lunged at the dog.

He tried to swing his fist at it. However, the dog easily avoided it and then slammed into him. In that moment, Pehl was easily sent flying before collapsing onto the ground. Like that, the dog moved in a flash to attack...

"Ua... ku—"

He tried to push at the dog's head.

Nevertheless, the dog vehemently moved its entire body, striking against Pehl's head repeatedly.

"Gah... auah..."

Each time, Pehl grimaced at the impact, but even so, he didn't let go of the dog's head.

And...

"I'll... definitely... protect Ferris!?"

He cried out, smashing the dog's eyes against a rock on the ground.

The dog, momentarily blinded, let out a yelp in surprise, before collapsing onto the ground. And then, in one go, it ran off.

"Eh? Ah..."

Staring dumbfounded at the escaping dog,

"I-I won..."

He murmured.

"I did it, Ferris!"

He turned to the nearby Ferris.

Ferris's brows were knit, as she made an expression he didn't understand, and,

"What... were you doing?"

"Eh? What was I...?"

Pehl, not understanding what Ferris was saying, returned her question. Then,

"As I said, what was that meaningless nonsense for? That's what I'd like to hear,"

She said, to which Pehl stared blankly for a while... And then strengthened his heart...

"Ah. That? It's what I was talking about before? I'll protect Ferris."

"Even if it means getting hurt?"

Ferris said, staring at Pehl with his torn clothes and, from tumbling on the ground, the scratches all over his body.

"If it was me, I wouldn't be hurt... No, I would be able to kill it by throwing a rock at it?"

Pehl shook his head.



"But that's no good."

"What's no good? Killing? However, I could repel it without killing it..."

However, Pehl shook his head again, and,

"You're wrong, Ferris. That's not it. What I want to say is... okay... this is it. Right. I haven't had the training that you have, Ferris, and I'm probably not very strong, but that's not important. Well, I don't really know how to say this smoothly, but... what I know is that I want to protect you, Ferris."

As Ferris tilted her head to one side in further confusion, Pehl laughed.

"Ahaha. Sorry. You didn't get what I just said, huh? I don't really get it either. But for some reason, that's what I was thinking at that time. I guess you could say that I wanted to feel like you were an ordinary person, an ordinary kid, an ordinary, weak girl, Ferris..."

"... An ordinary, weak girl...? Do I seem like that?"

She said, lightly holding up her hand. As several leaves fell with the wind, she spread her hand apart... Without looking, she quickly moved her hand. Then, in an instant, those leaves suddenly fell to pieces...

"... In the Eris house, weakness is not allowed. If you're weak... you'll be killed. And I'm strong. So there isn't a problem, is there? Or is there something else that I don't understand?"

But as Ferris spoke, Pehl intently stared at her...

"There isn't a problem...? I guess you're right. You've been raised to think that strength is what matters. That's what you think, right?"

"Right. That's what matters."

But...

Pehl continued to stare at Ferris. Staring at her always expressionless—as if it were completely frozen—face...

"But you know what, Ferris? Why do you make that sad face?"

He said.

"Why don't you smile? Why don't you cry? Isn't it tough? Well, even if it were, you wouldn't say so... Yeah. You couldn't say that you're sad or anything, because you don't even know about that, do you?"

"... What are you..."

"That's why I... really think that you're a weak, ordinary girl, Ferris. Even if someone else—or, well, even if every other person says that you have to be strong, Ferris, or else, I don't think that. Even if it seems like you're always calm, I really think you're sad. I think it must be tough. Honestly, you're kind, weak, and lonely... so that's why I... like you, Ferris. Isn't it normal to want to protect someone you like?"

"....."

To that...

Ferris didn't respond. Her expression still indicated that she didn't understand what Pehl was saying. No, her expression said that she was perplexed over the words she just heard...

But there was one thing that was understood. Ferris didn't hate what Pehl was saying.

And upon realizing that, for some reason, Pehl suddenly became embarrassed over what he said.

*I mean, right now, I just confessed to her. I said that I liked Ferris...*

"Uwa..."

Thinking that, his face became bright red for some reason, as he began to panic, and,

"W-What am I saying? Sorry if that was troubling. Um... uh... t-then, I'll see you tomorrow! Tomorrow, for the first time, Dad's letting me make dango! Right now, he's only been letting me help out, but... but the one I make will definitely be delicious, and you'll be the first to eat it, Ferris! So, um... yeah, see you tomorrow!"

He said, as he ran off.

He was too embarrassed to look back. On account of the evening sky falling upon them, the redness of his face was visible.

Then, the location changed.

Eris house.

In an open, wide dojo, a man, dressed in a white and navy dougi, sat straight.

A man with the same blond hair as Ferris that seemed to shine, with kind—with truly kind and gentle-seeming eyes. An otherworldly beautiful appearance, with an age that was difficult to determine—he seemed to be in his mid-thirties, maybe?

Then—a girl entered the dojo. As she looked at the man,

"Father. Jii<sup>[1]</sup> said that Father called for me?"

The man looked at the girl with kind eyes, and,

"Yes, I told Croselli to tell you that. Come over here, Ferris."

Ferris nodded at that and approached the man.

"Then, what for?"

Ferris asked, to which the man, while stroking her long, blonde hair—

"Right. However, it's not that great of a reason. Ferris, recently, it seems that you've made a friend? What is his name...?"

"It's Pehl."

"I see, Pehl-kun. Have you become close with him?"

"Yes. We've become close."

The man nodded in satisfaction, and,

"I see. That's good to hear. You should cherish your friends."

Ferris nodded again.

"I understand."

"Mm. Then, you may go,"

The man said, releasing Ferris. Ferris tilted her head and spoke.

"What? That was it?"

"What do you mean, 'that was it'? My beloved daughter made a friend for the first time. As your father, should I not give you advice?"

"Is that how it is?"

"That's how it is. But, it truly is good to hear that he's a close friend. That he's important to you. Now, so that you can meet again tomorrow, hurry and complete your training. You must rest your body."

"Right."

And then, Ferris left the dojo.

Then, the man suddenly spoke.

"Lucile. What do you think about that just now?"

Upon that, all of a sudden, a boy appeared by the man's side. He seemed to be a bit older than Ferris? As expected, he had the same blond hair. Sharp eyes with the face of a killer... Those eyes reflected nothing at all and yet seemed to be looking at everything...

Lucile spoke in a calm, controlled voice that didn't belong to children.

"... For the Eris house... Naive, false ideas like friendship are unnecessary."

At that, the man smiled kindly, and,

"Correct. As expected, you understand things well. As for Pehl..."

And...

"Dispose of him."

"... Understood,"

Lucile calmly nodded at that.

The following day.

Pehl woke up early in order to make the dango. He'd already made many mistakes, been yelled at by his father, it looked weird, he wasn't sure about the taste...

Nevertheless,

"Hey, Pehl. You're going to have Ferris-chan eat it, right? Then you can't make bad dango. Work harder, okay?"

His father told him that, and,

"You don't have to tell me that—I know!!"

Pehl retorted, and again began to knead the dough. Looking at that, his father stroked his face while smiling.

"It's good that you're working hard. You're motivated to make tasty dango for someone else to eat. You'll definitely make it delicious."

"Yeah!"

And with that, he whole-heartedly continued making dango.

The location changed to the Eris family dojo. Ferris, carrying a sword by her waist—

"Then, Father. Shall I do today's training?"

However, from where he was sitting, her father,

"No, Ferris. Lucile isn't here, so I think you should rest for today."

"Hmm?"

At those words, Ferris looked around, and,

"Now that Father mentions it, Brother isn't here... Why isn't he? It couldn't be that Brother is skipping training..."

"Yes. I've asked Lucile to run an errand for me. Therefore, I think you should rest for today. Shouldn't you go by the town once in a while? That's right. Aren't you going to meet with Pehl-kun today?"

"With Pehl? ... That's right. Perhaps it's all right that I go by the town once in a while. But, is it all right for me to go to town?"

Her father was calm; however, a cold smile arose in his face as he spoke.

"Of course. After all, Ferris, you should gradually learn about the world... the world's true form. Let the truth be seared into your eyes."

"... What are you talking about?"

"No... Now, go and enjoy yourself. Have Croselli give you some pocket money."

Ferris nodded at that, and,

"Mm. Then, I'll be going."

And so Ferris... For the first time, she left the Eris house...

For the first time, she visited the town, brimming with energy.

She was surprised to see that there were so many people in the world...

Ferris looked blandly at all the people surrounding her, and,

"It's noisy."

After saying that,

"But... I don't dislike it,"

She murmured.

She moved ahead through the large street. She knew that Pehl's house was further down the street. No, a map of all the street's alleyways, shops, and houses were in Ferris's head. Tens of times, hundreds of times, thousands of times, she's stared at the map of this street. Someday, perhaps she would leave the house and visit town...

She'd thought that...

And... now that she was visiting town, she was familiar with it. She was familiar with that house. That was what she thought as she advanced further down the street, looking for the house... No, the shop.

Already, how many times had she looked at the map... The dango shop that Pehl's father owned...

"Is that it?"

There was a shop over there. It wasn't a large shop, with a sign hanging at its entrance, with a kind-looking, middle-aged woman tending to it inside.

Separated from the street, it had to be that shop.

Ferris stared at it.

"....."

However, she stood there, wordlessly. Why, she didn't know. Wouldn't it be okay for her to go and ask, "*Is Pehl there?*" Or that she'd come there for dango?

But this was the first time she'd come to town. She wasn't sure what she was supposed to do.

"Now, what should I do?"

As she indifferently thought that over, a familiar voice rang out from inside the shop.

"Hurray! I did it! Then, Dad, I'll be going!"

"Oh! Go! Go and win Ferris-chan's heart!"

"W-What are you saying!?"

"Hahaha. Don't be shy, don't be shy."

"Geez. Then, I'll be going..."

Pehl said, rushing out of the shop, before looking in Ferris's direction.

"Eh... ah..."

Nodding at that,

"Mm. I've come,"

She said bluntly.

Then Pehl laughed happily, before, for some reason, two more people left the shop—presumably his mother and father—and the three of them pointed at Ferris.

"Hey, hey, isn't she really pretty?"

"Right!? I told you."

"Oh my, oh my. Well, you didn't act very well, Pehl."

"T-That's not... Anyway, Ferris can hear us. Um, so..."

"Yeah, go. Today, it's fine if you leave the shop and play with Ferris-chan."

"Okay!"

Saying that, he turned around. For some reason, he was smiling with his entire face as he waved, and,

"I'll be going now!"

He said, about to run onto the streets, where the violent noise of a carriage running through sounded. Looking at that, Pehl stopped.

He looked over at Ferris, gesturing to her... For some reason, he looked proud as he held out a parcel that he'd been holding to his chest...

Then—

All of a sudden, over there.

"Wha—"

Ferris let a small voice slip. She felt nearby killing intent suddenly swell...

No... it wasn't simply killing intent. It was like a demon had been released, a dreadful...

Her voice... didn't come out. What with this overwhelming sense of intimidation, she couldn't move.

But in only an instant, a black shape jumped out from the carriage... However, she wasn't able to perceive it.

From behind.

An ugly sound rang out.

Followed by a woman's scream. A man's shout.

She didn't understand what was happening.

Then, the thunderous roar of the carriage passing by...

There, an unbelievable sight spread out. The first thing she saw red. She understood that it'd happened just now. From there, she understood that that red was blood... and then finally, she saw it.

On the ground, run over by the carriage, with blood streaming from him, lay Pehl...

Then, several days passed by. Who the owner of the carriage that ran Pehl over was, they didn't know. No, even if they did know, as it was a noble, there was nothing they could do either way... That was what was being talked about. However, such a matter was inconsequential.

Somehow, it felt like there was a hole in her chest; Ferris was confused at that feeling. It was the first time she'd experienced it. This pain in her chest, this suffering, this strange sensation.

Pehl's funeral was modest. Pehl's parents, their neighbours, and Ferris were the only ones who attended.

It was the first time she'd gone to a funeral. Again, Ferris was confused at all the tears around her.

No, it was the concept of crying itself that she was unable to understand. *Why is liquid streaming from their eyes?* She wondered that.

Like that, with emotionless eyes that reflected nothing, she watched the funeral indifferently...

In the end, Pehl's parents,

"This is... Pehl worked hard to make it for you. It's probably too late... but please take it."

With bowed heads, they gave her a small parcel.

And so, the funeral ended.

The following day.

As usual, Ferris sat alone on top of the rock.

Something felt off. Here, Pehl would always run over to talk and then take her away to play...

For some reason, while remembering that, the inside of her chest felt strange.

"What is this?"

As that came from her mouth, there was no answer.

Shaking away the memory of Pehl's face and voice, she looked down at the parcel on her knees. It was dango that Pehl had made for her. *Come to think of it, he said that he wanted me to be the one to eat the first dango he made...*

Once more, she recalled Pehl's face from back then.

"....."

Again, she didn't feel right. She shook her head one more time... and then redirected her gaze to the parcel.

Opening it, inside were sticks of dango that weren't quite shaped properly and a single letter.

Ferris took out the letter and opened it.

And in clumsy writing, this was what was written.

*To Ferris.*

*This is the dango that I've made for the first time. It might not be that tasty yet, but from here, it's only going to get better, so look forward to it. You can be my tastetester each time, Ferris. So whenever it's your birthday, or there's a festival, or something is happening, I'll be ready to celebrate it with you, Ferris. So no matter how tough things are or what horrible things your family puts you through, you won't be lonely, Ferris. You won't have to put up with it alone. I'll always be with you. This dango is a promise. Even if dango doesn't seem like a good promise... still, we'll always, always be together!*

*Best regards!*

*From Ferris's first friend, Pehl*

After Ferris finished reading, she lifted her face.

And,

"... My first... friend..."

She said quietly.

"I... lost my friend...?"

She looked to her side. She would never see the boy again. She would never hear his voice again.

He would never call her name again.

He disappeared so suddenly. She couldn't believe it. After he'd been with her all this time...

He was suddenly no longer there...

Then—onto the dango on her knees, drops of water fell.

"What is...?"

Looking at that, Ferris tilted her head to one side. She first thought it was rain, but none was falling. Then, what... She then noticed that something was streaming from her eyes...

"... Tears?"

Then, she narrowed her eyes. But, she wasn't able to stop the tears. For some reason, her chest hurt terribly. Her throat firmly tightened...

It hurt so badly, but in an attempt to ignore it, Ferris lifted a stick of dango. Putting it in her mouth,

"... It's salty, Pehl..."

She murmured. While muttering that, how she would never again eat Pehl's dango... she thought about that.

For the first time since she was born, she felt lonely...

"So, that's what happened,"

Ferris Eris said. Long blonde hair and an abnormally good-looking appearance. She looked to be around eighteen, nineteen years old, with men after men turning their heads when she walked through the streets...

"So, that's why!?"

Ryner Lute shouted. Messy black hair like he'd just rolled out of bed, listless black eyes. He had a tall and lean figure that was stooped back like he'd been around for thousands of years, but for some reason, right now, he was flailing around.

The reason for this was because of something that he heard that put him at his wit's end...

Right now, they were in some ruins. They'd entered the ruins in search of Hero Relics, with the ceiling gradually falling due to a trap they'd activated, and so presently their lives were in danger.

Thus, Ryner desperately tried to hold the ceiling up, while Ferris, for some reason, was calmly sitting on the ground, eating dango.

"So, that's why you're eating dango right now!?!?"

Ferris looked at him as if he were an idiot who didn't understand what she just said.

"I explained that just now, didn't I? Today is the anniversary of Pahl's death. Therefore, I'm eating dango to pay my respects..."

She said, before,

"Who the hell is Pahl!?"

Ryner retorted without thinking.

"Didn't you say before that his name was Pehl!? So in the end, was everything you just said a complete lie? A lie!?"

"Mmm. Don't yell like that. Besides, aren't Pehl and Pahl the same name?"

"They're not the saaaaaaaaaaaaaame!?! Seriously, in an emergency like this, you'd give that long story..."

However, as usual, Ferris ignored Ryner's words, and,

"Mm-hmm. Well, in any case, today is the anniversary of Pehl's death. That's why, today, I won't do anything but eat dango."

At those words, Ryner, with half-closed eyes,

"Hoh. Then, if it's only okay on the anniversary of someone's death, was you eating dango all those other days just my imagination?"

He said, to which Ferris easily—

"Mm-hmm. Yesterday was the anniversary of Pohl's death. Tomorrow is Tohl's..."

"You're seriously a pain!?"

"Hmm? You don't believe me? Then, let me tell you about Tohl... Let's see..."

"Uwa!?"

Looking at this earth-shattering, otherworldly, drop-dead gorgeous woman by his side, Tohl unwittingly took in a breath...

"Like I said, you're seriously a pain, you know! Geez, stop saying pointless stuff and help me already!"

"Hmm. Interrupting a masterpiece... As expected, the genuine, perverted sex maniac can't handle the words of a pure angel like me."

"Who's the perverted sex maniac!?"

"You."

"I've told you before, you're not supposed to reply immediately like that! Ah, geez, anyway, are you not going to help me? We're going to die at this rate..."

"Mmm. That's correct."

After nodding, Ferris, for some reason, held the dango up. And... narrowing her eyes,

"Well, I already know that feeling,"

She muttered.

Then—

"Hey, sooner or later, we're seriously... This is bad..."

"Mm. Now then, shall I cut the ceiling up?"

"If you could do that, you should've done it from the start."

"Hmm, but then I wouldn't have been able to watch you miserably push at the ceiling."

"... I'll seriously kill you someday..."

While saying that, their day today ended in such an unproductive way...

### Translator's Notes[[edit](#)]

1. ↑ "Jii" means something along the lines of "old man", in this case being used to refer to the Eris house's servant.

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