



당신과 나의 어사일럼

◎ 하얀 분노 ◎

II

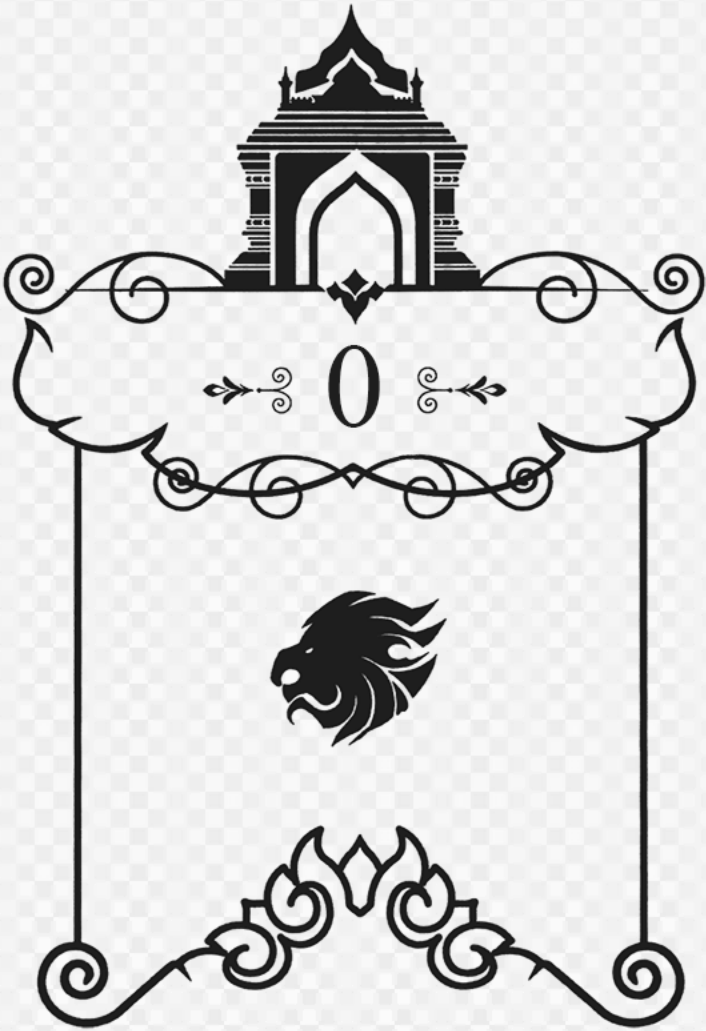
류세린 지음 · SALT 일러스트





It starts from the heart, from the brain, and from the skin. It metastasizes through the blood vessels, through the spine, and through the bones. The pain becomes dull and hesitation disappears, making all sorts of safety measures fall into a state of sleep. Although the self, which you had wrapped around your body on the outside, had disappeared, your true self is maintained. The fact that both sides will face ruin before long was not important. Right now. At least in this very moment. Your self, will become your true self.

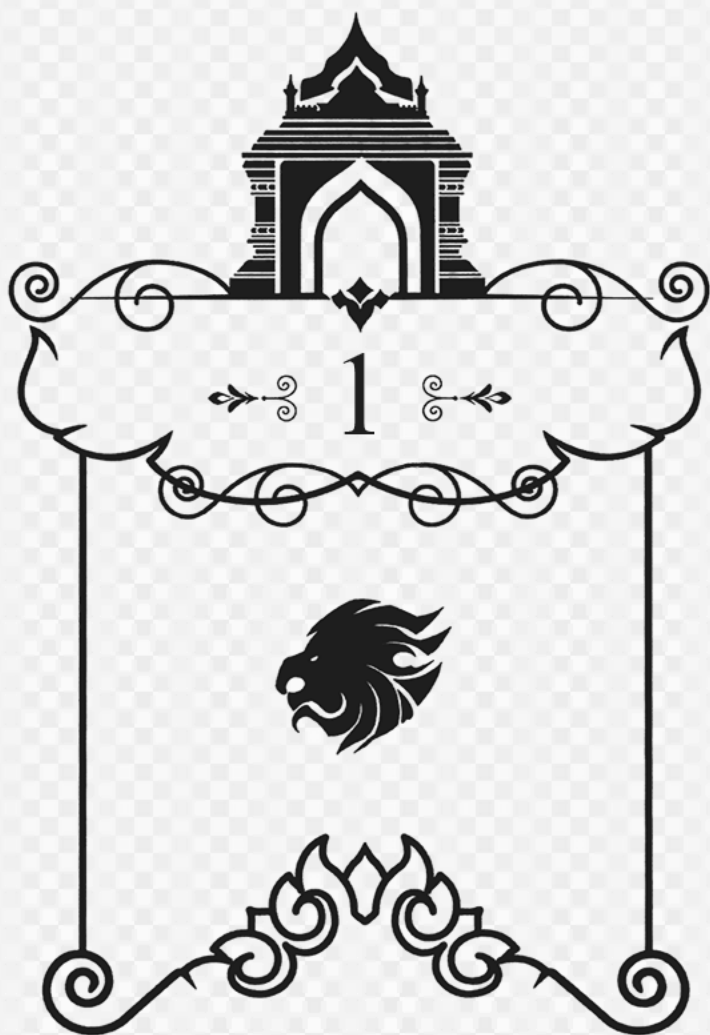
And fear arrived.



All places do not heal.

The incident occurred and the wound healed.

As if it were there from the very beginning, a scar remains.



Once I had fully ascended the stairs, a world of snow was spread out before me.

Although I had borrowed the first line of a certain novel which had received a Nobel prize in literature, the reason why I didn't feel particularly better despite having done that, wasn't because I felt guilty for having used that famous line for such a trivial situation, nor was it because of the fact that the pessimistic prediction, regarding the fact that barely anyone even in my own world would be able to recognize this phrase, let alone this world, had crossed my mind, and, as expected, neither was it because of the fact that I had become aware of the truth that this was indeed reality and not some scene from a novel. Just, how should I say it? Merely because it was cold. It was simply because my current apparel did not match the season of this world.

'Comprehension and experience are unquestionably two different things', this thought went through my mind. It was January in my world. It was also January in this world. Even if the method of counting time was different, if hearing the information that the flow of time was approximately the same was 'comprehension', then this current situation where I was stepping on a pile of snow while wearing only slippers on my bare feet, was 'experience'. That's why my experience was, cold.

"Ah hah ha. Mr. Yujin, are you cold?"

A unique laugh that's difficult to make if you don't take the trouble to intentionally move your tongue in a particular fashion. This silver-haired girl, who smacked her lips as she turned to look at me, was the 'Silver Lion Earl'. I spoke towards the culprit who made me be here while in this outfit.

"Incredibly."

"Hm hm, that's a shame. You should make sure to always be warmly clothed when going outside, Mr. Yujin."

While wearing a coat with fluffy fur attached to each and every seam, she spoke to me in a teasing manner and shoved her hands as deeply into her pockets as she could.

“So the basement was on the warm side.”

“Ukukukuku, that’s because this vicinity is within a crater. The inner areas are fundamentally warm. Furthermore, if it’s for pleasant entertainment activities, I’m not liberal towards the heating bills.”

Although I wanted to make a rebuttal about her entertainment activities, during one’s life, there was probably a much better timing to do so compared to the current situation where I was wearing a sweat suit with my hands shoved into my armpits while my entire body was shivering due to the cold.

Cold. In any case, it’s freezing. Evening, the setting sun, which stretched out from the end of the reddish sky and over it, was unable to heat the air or the earth. In that regard, this location was most likely to blame as well. The sky was open, but there were ramparts surrounding us and the width was narrow. If this courtyard’s goal was to be a military training ground, then even if it drank a lot of milk, it wouldn’t be enough.

Although it’s slightly different from the focal point of being a military training ground, it also appeared to be lacking in traces of people commuting through it often. The individuals who commuted through here were Zia and the Earl, and at most, possibly two other people. If you discerned it by the footprints left in the snow, if you thought about the fact that the form of this snowfield could only appear after several days of piling up and solidifying, and over all else, if you considered the fact that a pathway to the prison was all there was across this courtyard, this was the only conclusion which one could arrive at.

This courtyard was bristling with things which it lacked. If I didn’t also lack the mouth to voice my complaints, then I may have laid out whining words about it every day. Who knows? I could have even

feigned humbleness while also accepting my own deficiency. I could have then blown up afterward. She did say that this was a crater, after all.

“Nya hah ha. Show some backbone like a boy. It’ll be a bit better once we’re inside the castle.”

Regardless of whatever the correlation between being a boy and having a strong will was, it was just as the Earl of the Silver Lion had said. After we passed the courtyard and entered the castle, a warmth, which couldn’t be explained by the sole fact that there was no draft, had enveloped me. For this hall to be so warm despite the fact that there were no heaters in sight. I feel as if my nose might start to run involuntarily.

“Is this also because we’re in a crater region?”

Once I asked while stretching out my retracted neck, the Silver Lion Earl giggled.

“Hm hm. There are three chooices. First, due to the benefit of the terrain. Second, due to the power of magic. Third, because resources were invested and heaters are being used in even pointless places. If it’s the proletarian Mr. Yujin, then you’d want to select option number 1 where no money is spent, wouldn’t you?”

“The fact that I’m a proletarian, does it stick out?”

“Honestly? Ukukukuku. To be exact, it does~ It’s apparent that you’re accustomed to being in the position of the weak.”

A painfully accurate understanding. As expected of Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl, the leading politician of a single city.

“That’s not a bad thing, you know? As the weak, the weak remain powerless. Not only is that correct, but it’s proper as well. Pretending to be strong, is bad---the feeling you get when you look at these people, that is. Know their place, be docile, and don’t try to crawl up, as long as they obey these rules, then aren’t they honestly cute?”

Raising a *Daruta*---If you put it in your world's terms, then it's similar to not wanting to go through the effort to be shown something like the teeth and nails of a dog or cat. You already know that they have them, but if you actually see their teeth and nails, then your impression just shatters."

Pat, pat, the Silver Lion Earl spoke while dusting her coat. Her canines and the movement of her shaking head mingled together, making it appear as if she were truly a criticizing lion who was looking down at the herbivores. Although it was ridiculous for a 16-year-old to be saying those kinds of words, in the first place, not only was she an abnormal 16-year-old, but she was an aristocrat as well---Well, something along those lines. Even Chanmi had said something similar to that before.

Joo Chanmi.

"If I'm to borrow a line from a certain webtoon."

Ah, even though I had won. Even though I had shook it off. Even though I had come to a distant world.

"Despite already being aware, it's common for people to want to show off what they have the more they're struck. Albeit it was fists and not nails in that webtoon, but the nuance is the same."

It's possible to refer to this very behavior of blurting out instantaneously as a 'fist showing action', but for I to have contradicted the words of the Silver Lion Earl who was completely unrelated to Chanmi. Regardless of how many times I resolve myself to not blurt out needless words, truly, each time this happens I become more keenly aware of the fact that I'm just human.

"Hm."

The Earl of the Silver Lion gazed at me vacantly before stretching out her hand. Her left hand, the 5 nails of which were all dyed with black nail polish, reached out like a hook.

My nipple, was grabbed.

“No matter how correct that may be, you know---.”

As if she were riding along her arm, her small body followed after. She then lifted her heels and leaned her entire weight onto my body before, she growled---into my chest.

“Don’t be like that, to me. The pliers are always at Mr. Yujin’s side. If you show your nails, then your nails, if you show your teeth, then your teeth, and if you show your fist, then your fist---will be torn out right from the flesh. Ah hah ha ha ha!”

It felt as if my nipple could be ripped out at any moment. They were terrifying words, and as much as this girl was the opposition, it most likely wasn’t a simple threat either. Nevertheless, it didn’t change the fact that a certain comedic feeling couldn’t be shaken off. It was because a man’s nipple had gained the ability to make any situation into a gag. It hurts.

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

A smile came to the Earl’s eyes. However, despite being like that, she continued to hold onto me and even put more strength into her grip. It wasn’t until she heard me moan---in pain---did she back off with a satisfied face.

“Hm hm, anyway, webtoon was it~? What a nostalgic word. I think I read up to chapter 450 of ‘The Sound of Your Heart’. Did more come out?”

“Exactly twice the amount of that has been released now.”

“Wow. Make sure to download it when you go on your vacation and bring it back. Along with some seasoned spicy chicken.”

“There’s no problem with the seasoned spicy chicken…… but downloading without permission is copyright infringement.”

“It’s a thousand and two hundred years too early for a place like Korea to have an advanced culture like copyright.”

Seriously, why do I have to listen to degrading comments about Korea even after coming to another world? In the first place, if you’ve come to another world, then wouldn’t the cliché be for the people of the other world to claim that Korea’s advanced culture is peerless after learning about it?

While I was thinking about that on one hand, on the other hand, seeing that I felt relieved by the fact that I was certainly going to be getting a vacation, it seems I truly was a proletarian by nature.

It was in that moment.

“Korza!”

Before me, who was a proletarian by nature, comrades appeared.

Females who were wearing uniforms that had an appropriate balance of black and white---in other words, maids. Their numbers were approximately twenty. Considering the size of the castle, which I estimated from what I could see from the courtyard, this might be half of all the maids within the castle. If this castle was a place that put a bit more emphasis on small pay for working passionately, then this might be everyone.

“Korza, Antensimar’ zes!”

“Korza, Antensimar’ zes!”

“Korza, Antensimar’ zes!”

The maids, who gathered and lined up readily, opened their right hands and showed their palms. They then folded their left hands, which only had their index fingers extended, behind their right hands, making it appear as if they had six fingers, and lowered their heads. It must have been something similar to a Chinese martial arts bow or a military salute since the Silver Lion Earl grinned widely and made a

peace sign in response.

“Anten. Merki-zio. Are’ ti zizzlness sozmer-tio.”

“Ah, Noveme! Sii’ el musasima’ zes!”

“Mikatni’ na torro?”

“Noveme! Sii Garno Mikatni’ zes!”

As expected of another world.

Mm…… as expected of another world.

I should quickly learn the language. If I look back at my time in the basement, then ‘Korza’ should mean something like ‘Earl’, and ‘Anten’ is probably the basic form of a greeting, right? Then the term ‘Noveme’, which has been repeated over and over again, must have an affirmative meaning. Since I’m only able to infer this much by the nuance alone, if I want to learn the language, then I’ll have to meet that girl, Zia, a bit.

The blonde maid, who was standing in the front, raised her hand.

“Anto, Korza. Moltros’ ieme, Zia’ heikiss’ na Pelmute Yudia Batsand’ termiel zes.”

“Oh.”

The Earl of the Silver Lion blinked her eyes. After making a face that appeared as if she had just remembered something which she had forgotten about, she turned to me.

“I have to go, Mr. Yujin.”

“Hm?”

“Zia, special summon with a tap!”

Zia was summoned.

She tapped in front of us.

“Uah!”

It seems she was in the middle of running. Zia Batsand slammed her face against the floor. She was literally the female knight of calamity. If I were to rephrase it without the translationese, then the female knight who fell into calamity. The Silver Lion Earl mercilessly rode on top of her while she was in that state.

“Eck? Eh? Korza, uh---.”

“**Shut up!** Tarz!”^[1]

A poof and glimmer. In the next moment, their two figures had disappeared from this small hall.

“.....”

The only ones remaining were me.

“.....” “.....” “.....” “.....” “.....” “.....”

And, all of the maids who were standing in a line in front of me.



Organizing the situation I was placed in.

First, I came aboveground.

Second, it was winter in this world. There was a necessity to acquire equipment that could prevent the cold. Fortunately, since it was warm inside the castle, it seems there wasn't an immediate need to prepare something, thus meaning, I can place that lower on my list of priorities.

Third, I was left by myself. No, that's a misleading expression. I

mean that I was left by myself in a place where I knew no one. In terms of people who I didn't know, there was approximately twenty of them.

Fourth, those very people who I was unacquainted with---all 17 maids were leaning forward a bit and staring at me.

To summarize, I was in a situation where I was thrown out in front of a bunch of unfamiliar girls. If you consider the fact that language didn't work either, then it's as if I was tossed out in front of a bunch of girls from another country. Although it's a situation which I've only experienced twice during the 8 Years' War, if you translate the term 'words didn't work' with a broader meaning, then it becomes a situation that I've experienced a countless number of times.

“Mm…… Anten.”

I copied the hand movement which they did earlier and lowered my head. The maids who were looking at me vacantly flinched and then immediately started to quietly whisper among themselves.

“Habe' te' ziena?”

“Ma' ke?”

“Kemi' von' zes.”

“Mi' na kemi' nov. Anten' ke.”

In spite of the difference between worlds, despite there even being a difference between races, as intelligent lifeforms (and as females), it seems their patterns of behavior were the same.

A gut clenching situation of being cast sidelong glances by a group of girls while they whispered among one another. Furthermore, a boundlessly familiar situation. The words that I'm capable of using(although it's a guess) have all been used.

All I can do next is wait.

There was no need to wait vacantly.

Gathering information was important. Things with a particular form weren't the only things that could be considered as information. Even if it's not some secret written in a file, even if it's not some classified information resting within the data of a disk, information was information, it just depended on how you utilized it. In a situation like this, my understanding of this group of maids will become my information for what's to come in the future.

Contrary to how the color of their skin was limited to the brightness of the tone, their hair and eye colors varied from black, blue, green, gold, and so forth. Although there were only slight differences in their appearances, there was one thing which I was certain of, at least within my own aesthetic criterion, the fact that the citizens of this world---the females appeared to be incredibly beautiful.

Of course, since they're the maids of the Earl, and since the Silver Lion Earl herself was in the disposition of being infatuated by otaku culture, there's a chance that she had deliberately picked out only the pretty girls. If you base it on that very otaku culture, then you could categorize the 17 maids as the following.

One lone wolf type.

One girl who was more of a lone cat type than a lone wolf type, and also gave off a slightly more nihilistic atmosphere. She was probably the oldest.

Three girls who were the idiot trio type with a bright and pleasant atmosphere wrapped around them.

Two coexisting lilies type who, from the very beginning and even to this very moment, haven't let go of the other's hand, excluding the short moment where they greeted the Earl.

A single girl was standing at the front with her arms crossed---the initiative taking leader type who didn't carry out tasks that were forced upon them but had the proactive characteristic of wearing an

armband and going out of their way to step forward first.

Three quiet and introverted lady types who appeared to be slightly scared even now.

Two martial artists types who definitely exercised or did martial arts, to a serious degree at that.

And---four normal types who didn't particularly have anything special about them.

I feel as if my plans to live a peaceful and relaxed other world life would have gone up in smoke regardless of whether the first person I met when I came to this world was the Silver Lion Earl or any of the groups here. If I met the lone wolf type, then a hardcore fantasy. If I met the lone cat type, then a vigilant literature. If I met the idiot trio type, then a love comedy. If I met the coexisting lilies type, then a dramatic play of passion. If I met the leader type and her subordinates, then a show for youths^[2]. If I met the introverted lady type, then a sadistic game that's rated A for adults. If I met the martial artist type, then it feels as if a peculiar supernatural action fantasy might unfold.

If you asked me what I thought about the average types that unexpectedly had no strong characteristic about them, then I would say that those fellows were the most foreboding.

At the very least, an existence such as a normal girl didn't exist where I lived.

The fact that they're pretending to be something that doesn't exist, that practiced imitation, saying it severely---they gave me a bad feeling.

Although things would be settled if you said that it was nothing more than my narrow-sightedness and simple distrust towards females. Although things would have also been settled if I were to consider the fact that even if they didn't exist in my world, they could in this world. In the end, if you said that everything was nothing

more than my trauma, then as expected, it would have just ended there.

Furthermore, although this explanation is a little late, in the example of a sadistic game that's rated A for adults, I'm the teaching target.

Even while I was thinking like that, the maids continued to whisper among themselves.

“Anten' ke?” “So-o-i…….” “Ime akatano' hara…….” “Nov. Akatano' ta' gangeri.” “Nyaa! Mi' ta von' ta' gangeri.” “Ah~ Korza. Toshi weta' ne mersiano? Sii' ta?” “……Nov. Thon' ta Sii' nya' pitkari' zesona…….” “Nov.” “Mi' to noveme' zes!”

They were casting sidelong glances and whispering to each other at first, but they had started to slowly stare at me more openly and even raised the volume of their voices.

That troubled behavior which showed that they were unsure about what they should do, and couldn't necessarily do nothing about it, was directed towards me and the Earl.

If I put myself in the shoes of the maids, then it would be as if a strange man was tossed out in front of them. *A foreign substance*. As a maid of the castle, it wasn't something they could ignore and dissolve. *Something that must be dealt with*. If they consider the fact that the boy was a being that the Earl had brought herself, then they couldn't utilize rough measures. *Fumigation was sealed*. Even if they contemplated on whether they should serve me or not, the Earl's hobby should be widespread throughout the castle. *Bandaging was sealed as well*. According to Zia, since she stated that I was the only one to have ever survived past the third day, then this wasn't a common occurrence either. *No precedent case*. Even if they tried to figure out my identity, words didn't work so they were unable to do so. *Troublesome*.

The Earl was truly, a troublesome existence.

‘I see that I’m being treated the same as a big sore’, I realized this new fact through a fresh method.

It was then that I heard a voice.

“……Mer’ su arhen……?”

It came from above.

It was accompanied by the sound of footsteps. Step, step. The footsteps didn’t sound clear, but they sounded dull instead. Moreover, it also felt as if they were crushing the ground. Despite having such aggressive sounding footsteps, the actual legs that were wearing black boots were scrawny. They were like chopsticks. Since she was wearing white stockings, if you consider the fact that they acted as compensation for the width of her legs, then they were truly like toothpicks. The owner of those legs was another maid.

White.

A pure white maid, was coming down the stairs.



Her age was probably in her mid-teens. Compared to her peers, her height was one head shorter. She had white bobbed hair. Not a silver tone, like the Earl, but a sincerely white shade, a color that was so similar to snow that it felt as if her hair would break apart if you touched it too roughly. Her skin was also giving off a white glow, making it almost seem as if it were snowing.

Except for a single thing.

In her eyes that were half open, it was boundlessly red.

“Sii!”

A commotion arose within the maids. One of the girls among the idiot trio shouted for joy while one of the normal type girls spread out her arms and giggled. If you excluded the difference between the degrees of the other maids, then their atmospheres were similar. It seems they were all welcoming that white maid's appearance.

Not the white maid herself.

But the appearance of the white maid.

“Sii. Anten~ Nace zima kou?”

“Sii! Anten' ziena~”

“Anten, sii~ Koto' me Attoru' ziena ♪”

The idiot trio maids approached the white maid and spoke to her while being all smiles.

It was a smile which I had seen often.

“.....Cenko' zes.....”

The white maid took a step back and responded as so. With her half-opened eyes, she was looking towards the side while lowering her head slightly.

A motion which I had done often.

“Sii~ Korza' ta' se~ ♪”

“Toke' tei Fressend' wa mersiano.”

“Sii' to kiho-eeyo' ziena~ ♡”

The other maids each said one line and approached the white maid as well. With a tentative attitude, the white maid gazed at the maids who spoke to her in turn, before turning to look at me.

In my case, since I was watching her since the first moment she

had appeared, our eyes met.

Pupils that were red like rubies.

Pupils that were like the evening sun.

Solely the scar that was carved within them---was a silver that appeared as if a pickaxe had struck a wall of ice.

“Sii?”

At last, it was at the moment the leader type maid spoke to the white maid while crossing her arms.

The white maid, smiled.

A smile appeared on that face which, because of her half-opened eyes, appeared as if it found everything in the world to be troublesome, a face which seemed as if she had no drive to do anything.

This too was something I did often. The twisted, contorted,

“.....Nov.Mi’ na siilue’ zes’ niano.....”

and seemed as if it were trying to be flattering----that kind of smile.

“Tarine’ ziena!”

The leader type maid snorted strongly and said that. The white maid then bowed her head, the brown-nosing smile still drifting on her lips, and,

“.....Korza’ ro..... Mi, Irete’ hara’ zes.”

said that before---walking forward, to stand before me.

“So-o-i’ zete ♪” “Sii’ nya’ pitkari’ zesona!” “Sii’ ro ★” “Korza’ ro koroyo’ ee ♥” “Sii’ me sihoros’ ziena!” “Sii’ nya!” “Nov. Sii’ ro ★” “Nov.” “Nov!”

The maids squealed and each said one line. The white maid's smile thickened. The sight of her avoiding their gazes while scratching the back of her head as if she were embarrassed almost appeared as if she were some prodigy child who was being favored by her relatives.

However, that hand.

To be exact, her right hand that wasn't scratching the back of her head.

Like a ball of snow which had been compacted to its limit, her hand was clenched so tightly that it seemed as if it would crumble apart soon.

“Sii! Terue' siero!”

The leader type maid spoke once more.

The white maid laughed with an 'Ehehe' before stretching out her hand, which was scratching the back of her head until now, and grabbed my wrist.

---An intense pain.

It was a strength that was strong enough to say that instead of being 'held', 'crunched' or 'chewed' were a more appropriate expression. Similar to how I used to play electricity^[3] in elementary school, I could see with my eyes the color draining from the area below my right wrist.

Although the reason why I was able to prevent myself from letting out a pained cry was because I had somewhat predicted that a strong pressure was going to come, despite that, it was a strength that went beyond common sense. This scrawny girl was hiding a Herculean strength in that body of hers.

However, that superhuman strength---

“.....”

It seems the white maid was a bit surprised by the sight of me trying to hold back the pain. But it wasn't for long. She soon turned her body and spoke.

“.....Mi' ne kotte' mesie.”

The white maid then started to walk. I, who had his wrist gripped, followed after her without a word.

I could hear the sound of the maids giggling behind me.



Comprehending the situation wasn't difficult.

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.

---A sore will be left to another sore.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) She says this in Konglish, Korean+English.
2. [\[↑\]](#) [Seinen](#)
3. [\[↑\]](#) 'Electricity play' is a game where one person grabs the other person's wrist incredibly tightly to prevent blood flow. After a minute or so, the person would let go and drift their finger above the other person's palm. It's supposed to feel as if electricity is going through your palm and to that person's finger.



My cousin, Han Miyeong, was a hysterical girl.

Her eyes were sharp. She wore glasses. She was slightly taller than me, so with a height of 177cm, she had a stature that was tall despite being a girl. She had charcoal-colored short hair that almost appeared as if it were cut with a knife. Her veins were visible on the back of her hands and her feet as well. Her foot size was 270mm. She was on the larger side of girls with the same physique as her, so her hands were similar.

She wasn't fat. Her figure was outstanding. To the point that you couldn't vaguely say something like 'okay' or 'on the good side'. She had proportions that were difficult to obtain even if one were to aim for it while on a nurturing simulation. Her receiving offers to become a model while walking through the streets of Hongdae was a matter of everyday occurrence. Although she would occasionally receive offers to become an idol, it wasn't because of her appearance but because her height and physique were limited to the upper class.

She had a lot of popularity. Mostly from other girls. Second to that was from boys who were shy. Last year, during Pepero Day, one of those boys had even shoved a box of pepero within our newspaper slot and ran away. It seems he was able to squeeze out the courage to come to our house but didn't have enough to take the next step. Of course, even if he did, there's a large possibility that he would have just witnessed the sight of the pepero going into my mouth. Miyeong didn't eat snacks that well. She did buy them. Moreover, she'd even spend tens of dollars not at convenience stores but at imported sweet stores, at that. However, she was a fellow who, instead of tossing the snacks she bought into her mouth, would groan while staring at the calorie label for a long time before coming into my room and throwing it in my face. 69.3kg. Considering her height and figure, she absolutely wasn't overweight.

It couldn't be helped.

She was a girl, after all.

Someone who's concerned about her height, concerned about her own shoe size, and concerned about her weight. Someone who can't even meekly accept any positive evaluations, and would instead inflate the negative parts before harboring it. Compared to her peers, behaving quite her age, behaving no higher than her age, an irritable girl.

My cousin, Han Miyeong, was that kind of girl.



I'll organize the current situation.

I, who was dragged here by the white maid, was thrown aside on top of a bed in a small room.

The end.

If there's something that can be added onto this situation that somehow feels similar to a light novel title, then it's the fact that, in the end, the wrist on my right arm was bruised. As a matter of fact, my body was sore because of the melee I had with Zia yesterday, so I'd like to refuse being injured any more than this.

Though that wasn't in my hands.

“.....Hota' rii, akatu' ziena?”

The white maid asked me something. However, since I couldn't understand her, I responded by looking around the room instead. Approximately 6.5 square meters. There were no windows, but there was one wooden chair and desk. Instead of there being a closet, clothes were stacked on top of the rack that was attached to the wall. In the spot where I was situated, I was on top of a piece of furniture that was similar to a mattress and was stuffed with something that was unknown to me. However, whether it was because they weren't washed for a long period of time or not, the covers that must have

once been white were now a beige color and the areas where the body touched most, along with the pillow, were stained a light yellow.

“Kime’ ke’ kr-mera?”

The white maid spoke once more. As expected, since I couldn’t understand her, I stared at her, or rather, at the door that was right behind her. A door made of wood. As I had stated earlier, since there were no windows, the room was enshrouded in darkness due to the door being shut. If this maid weren’t so white, if her eyes didn’t give off such a boundlessly scarlet glow, then facing each other would have been difficult.

“Hrehesieve…… hreromehe-hieehe?”

The white maid spoke again.

Although I still couldn’t understand what she had said---this time, instead of observing the surroundings, I gazed at the white maid.

There were two reasons for this.

The first reason was because there were no more things in the room that were worth examining any further.

The other reason was because the vocalization method of the words that the white maid had just spoken---I realized that her words just now were different compared to what she had uttered earlier.

If you think about it, the vocalization method of what she said just before that was vaguely different as well.

The reason behind that was revealed in the next moment.

“……is it, this language? Korean? Is correct?”

“……, …… , …………….Yeah, that’s right.”

I nodded---and responded.

The white maid let out a sigh. After raising one hand to brush her hair to the side, she crossed her arms and stared down at me.

“My name is Sii. Sii Garno Mikatni. As maid of Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl, I work in this castle.”

The word ‘Sii’, which was repeated over and over again earlier, the word that I faintly expected to be a name, turned out to be this white maid’s name. Although her Korean grammar was so broken that both grammar nazis and grammar anarchists would most likely never forgive her, it was a self-introduction that could still be understood.

“I’m, Yujin. My full name is Han Yujin.”

“Han Yujin?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay. Yujin.”

Sii nodded her head, walked forward, and stood before me.

She inhaled deeply, making her small chest puff up, before raising her foot.

I was stepped on.

“Kuh……!”

My breath, was stifled. Sii, who had put enough strength into her feet to make it feel as if my ribs, and the lungs underneath them, were being crushed, lowered her back and stared into my eyes.

“Formal speech.”

“……uh, …… , ……!!”

“Formal speech, use it. ……Did you not forget? Because this place is not where you lived, Yujin. Going along with my mood is for your future. Understand?”

Her grammar was still broken. Even while she was talking, the strength in her boot continued to increase. If I didn't show a response, then she truly was going to continue until I broke, that was her intention.

The feeling of anger and indignity from being violently forced to use formal speech to a maid who was younger than me---I can confidently say that I wouldn't have that sort of reaction.

No, I was used to it.

There was a time when I was dragged to Chanmi's house and was mistreated by 5 maids at the same time. Like I would always say, any experience will become helpful in the future.....

"Understood."

Once I obliged immediately, light satisfaction appeared on Sii's face.

She lessened the strength in her leg for a moment, before adding it back.

"Miss."

The feeling of anger and indignity from being violently forced to attach a title to a maid who was younger than me---I can confidently say that I wouldn't have that sort of reaction.

No, like I said, I was used to it.

When I was dragged to Chanmi's place, there was a time when I was tormented by a pair of twin maids. Looking back at it now, it's just a distant memory.....

"Miss Sii."

"Yup."

Sii displayed a satisfied expression and lifted her foot. She then dragged a chair over to the bed before sitting down on it and crossing

her legs. With half-opened eyes, her red pupils appearing like a pair of setting suns that had been cut in half by the horizon and flipped upside-down, she looked down at me as if she were evaluating me.

“Boy?”

“Yes, Miss Sii.” I immediately responded with formal speech and raised my upper body. “I am a boy.”

Sii furrowed her brow as she watched me raise my body but then smiled brightly after seeing me get down onto my knees and lower my eyes with my hands gathered together. It wasn't the twisted smile that she made while in front of the other maids, but a truly happy smile which was apparent on her face. She stomped her heels against the floor multiple times, her shoulders hunched together, before pushing the end of her foot towards me.

As expected, if I were to speak from experience, then the meaning behind a sitting girl sticking her foot out towards a kneeling boy can be narrowed down to six things.

Among them, if it's the reaction that's hoped for by the type of people like Sii, then…….

“…….”

I courteously supported her foot and placed the end of her boot against my mouth.

“!”

Sii twitched. While looking up towards that Sii with upturned eyes, I moved my head and sucked audibly. Lick, suck. The dull taste of leather. The stale taste of dirt and dust. Not avoiding it but accepting it fully---I swallowed. Suck, lick. Each time the wet sound of lips and tongue resonated, her knees twitched. The face of the twitching Sii was dyed red.

Her face was completely flushed.

Not only her eyes, but her entire face was giving off a ruby glow as well.

She wasn't---only embarrassed.

“Yup!”

Sii made me stop by pushing me away with her other foot and stood up from her chair. She then started to skip around with trembling shoulders before pouncing on me and pulling my neck into an embrace. She then (stretched out her hand that was, as expected, bright red) patted my head.

“Yup~~!! Good!”

I think I was on the mark.

“Good Yujin. Yup~~ very good! Because you're good, really! Like this from now on, with sincerity! Have understood? Because if you do, then I won't step on you like earlier.....since I won't make you hurt, this Sii Garno Mikatni promises. It's okay to trust me. Do you understand?”

“Thank you very much, Miss Sii.”

Sii barely listened to the response that I gave her. She rubbed her cheek, which was so flushed that it appeared as if you could feel the heat radiating from it, against my forehead and kept stroking my head. If her pale white skin could be described as fallen snow, then right now, she was like fire spreading on top of oil. Did her entire body turn red? In terms of posture, the lower portion of my face was naturally pressed against her heated chest, so the peculiar feeling from that soft sensation and the scent of milk mixed with sweat---I can confidently say that I wouldn't feel anything from that.

In the first place, it wasn't even soft. If you want to get technical, then it was indeed soft, but it was a softness that was no better than a chicken breast. As I saw with my eyes earlier, this girl had a body that was lamentably skinny.

As I've said multiple times before, I don't like stimulating things.

Before that, this wasn't even stimulating.

The former being me and the latter being this maid known as Sii, this was a situation that was pitiful in several different meanings.....

"Yujin, Yujin. Chest, hurts? The place I stepped on earlier..... Did I make it hurt a lot?"

Sii, who must have been satisfied with her long session of rubbing against me, lifted her head and started to hit my chest as if she were trying to pat it down. If someone were to ask me which moment hurt more, then it'd be now.

"A little..... Miss Sii. You're strong."

Those words, which would have made my cousin Miyeong rampage like a dragon and rain her royal wrath down upon me if I were to ever say that to her, made Sii become redder. She then cleared her throat with an 'Ehem', put her chest out, and,

"Yup! That's obvious. I'm strong! Really strong!"

"Indeed, Miss Sii."

"If I put more sincerity, then even a boy like Yujin is just a twig against my one finger!"

"Thank you for going easy on me."

"Yup yup. Is obvious, Yujin. Be relieved. Since Yujin is a good kid, even I won't go all out!"

Sii spoke while patting my head strongly with her palm. Although, if you consider the fact that there was some end of the century martial arts manga type line in the middle of her sentence, then you can approximately tell what sort of method this fellow had used to learn Korean. Regardless of that, her personality type was just as I

had expected.

Starting from the obsequious smile which she had shown in front of the other maids.

To the pressure of the grip which went beyond common sense on my wrist.

To the fact that she had abruptly stepped on my chest and forced me to use honorifics.

The truth that could be realized just by looking at that figure which lacked in volume.

This white maid, Sii Garno Mikatni, was starving for recognition and respect.

Regardless of who the opposition was, she wanted her strength, her value, to be acknowledged.

It was similar to how a short, scrawny, or any man lacking in a particular physical attribute would be hell-bent on trying to prove his masculinity. As expected, the fact that she got this excited by me licking the end of her boot---was most likely because she felt as if that strength of hers had been confirmed. Moreover, it was confirmed by a man who had a good head on his shoulders. She would be especially ecstatic because of that.

She was someone who was so easy to handle that she couldn't be compared to the Earl. How great would it be if every woman in the world was like her?

.....No, as I thought, that isn't right either, is it?

“Uhm, Miss Sii.....”

Carefully, while lowering my back and looking up at her, I moved my lips while displaying an attitude that seemed as if I were being considerate about her mood. Sii tilted her head.

“Hm? What, Yujin?”

“There is something that I am curious about…… would it be discourteous of me, to ask?”

“Mm? Ah, okay. Yujin was a body summoned by the Earl after all…… Things you want to ask, is there a lot?”

“Yes. ……I would be grateful if you were to teach me, if you were to show me mercy.”^[1]

Since I’m doing it anyway, I should do it with certainty. I backed up slightly and made that request while lowering my head. Sii gazed down at me while grinning broadly and giggling inaudibly to herself before she composed herself in order to let out a proud snort.

“Okay! Talk. If you don’t, then I can’t answer your questions.”

“This room, what place is it?”

“It’s my room! Since I’m amazing, I was allowed to have a personal room. Since I came here through Miss^[2] Mercè Mikatni’s introduction, it’s not without reason!”

Contrary to her words, the room was still shabby, but if I said that out loud then I’d probably be stepped on again. There was no worth in breaking the mood that I was barely able to establish.

“Miss Mercè Mikatni……?”

“The best blacksmith of the City of Confinement. Although an otherworldly creature like you, Yujin, may be unaware, she’s a person with a lot of influence in the city. As that person’s adopted daughter, I came into this castle. And I’m working as a maid. ……Honestly, I want to do a more splendid job, but because I have a disease, it’s difficult for me to move around outside. Until I gather enough money to fix that, I plan to work without voicing my complaints.”

The adopted daughter of a city’s community leader, is it? A disease.

Restricted outdoor activities. Different to the Earl of the Silver Lion, she had truly white skin and red eyes---skin that reddened when excited. A typical disease of melanin deficiency, the appearance of an albino. The reason why she was always narrowing her eyes was probably because her vision was weak.

The part about whether albinism was a curable disease or not---let's put that on hold.

She was either plainly young and thus unaware of the truth or she was deceived into believing that a medicine that could cure her disease actually existed.

There's a possibility that the so-called Alchemy Fortress, the pharmacist association of this world---truly did possess a magical medicine that could cure that disease.

“That's amazing.”

“Mhm! It's no big deal!”

Although I think there's no meaning in you saying those kinds of words when you have such a boasting expression on your face, as I thought, let's ignore it.

“Earlier those maids, those misses…….”

“Don't call them misses!”

She shouted. I expected this response, but it was important for me to act as if I didn't. With a frightened face, and while even uttering a shriek, I went down onto my knees and bowed my head. I put strength into my arms and shoulders, which were supporting my body, and made myself appear as if I were trembling.

Shortly after, once I carefully glanced up at her like a prisoner who was pleading for mercy, both sorriness and satisfaction lingered in the eyes of Sii who was still trying to catch her breath after having shouted.

.....No, like I said, this was easy. At this point, I feel as if I may end up being the one to feel bad instead.

“Sorry for shouting, but calling them Miss is a no. Because the only person among the maids worth calling miss, is this Miss Sii Garno Mikatni. Understood?”

Carefully, while embarrassed, but with an evidently pleased expression on her face, Sii Garno Mikatni rubbed the end of her boot against my lips. Once I pressed my lips against her boot as if I was much obliged by the fact that I could even respond to her like this, Sii crouched down and patted my head.

“Yup~~! Good! It’s okay if you know, Yujin!”

After stroking my head for a long period of time, she patted my forehead with the palm of her hand.

No matter how I looked at it, this must have been this fellow’s habit. It’s been hurting ever since she started to do this.

“In the first place, the majority of the other maids are idiots who don’t even know Korean. They don’t have aspirations, either. No passion to learn. Lazybones who pushes tiresome tasks to others. Because I, will never live like that.”

“.....I see, Miss Sii. However, uhm.....”

“Hm~?”

“How did Miss Sii grasp the Korean language.....?”

“Learned!”

Sii puffed up her chest.

“This castle’s library, it’s open to even the maids. At first, I learned from picture books with a lot of drawings. Because I didn’t know how to read the letters, I asked either Miss Zia or Miss Sophna and.....”

after learning how to read, mm, since it's a picture book, I could understand the situations.”

Picture books, is it? I wonder if she's talking about manga. Seeing that Zia's name was mentioned, then ten to one that must be the case. The person called Sophna…… if I recall the time I wrote that speech, then they were the head vassal of the House. Contextually, it wouldn't be wrong to say that this person knows how to speak Korean as well. Let's keep this in mind.

“That's impressive. It should have been difficult to learn Korean…….”

“Yup~~! That's right, it was difficult…… but the picture books were fun. Wanted to read the next volumes faster and faster. Furthermore, it's another world language, right? I believed something good would happen if I learned it……. No matter the experience, it will be helpful. If you didn't know this, then use this opportunity to learn it well, Yujin.”

Although that common opinion, which you uttered so proudly, was something I've already been using on you to my heart's content, as expected, there's really no need for me to say that out loud. In regards to the fact that she was violent, easy to read, and boundlessly simple to handle, she reminded me of Eun Minseon.

No, would Miyeong be more similar?

In any case.

“It has certainly helped.”

“Hm~?”

“Since that has allowed me to have the honor of conversing with you, after all.”

Sii was dyed red once more. Although it seems that she wanted to make a pretentious expression on her face which displayed that

something on that level was obvious, she was unable to control her facial muscles so her lips trembled like a worm that had found itself on a road of asphalt.

“Uhuhuhuhum! Well, that’s obvious. Because I’m amazing. But certainly, because Korean was really difficult, there were a lot of hardships even after learning how to read…… I was able to manage that one way or another. Since I’m in charge of cleaning---.”

Sii abruptly stopped mid-sentence and shut her mouth.

“……Miss Sii?”

“Ah…… mm. It’s nothing. Nothing at all. Mm mm. In any case, I’m amazing. If you understand, then you have to show some more sincerity!”

Sii, as if to block my mouth with her boot---Mm, it would probably be better to take out the ‘as if’. She blocked my mouth physically.

Let’s think.

This sort of reaction came out after she mentioned that she was in charge of cleaning. There are three possible explanations. First, because their assigned area was under secrecy, there was a need for her to pick her words carefully. Though this could possibly be the case, if she had that sort of sociability, then she wouldn’t have fooled around with me this easily. The second explanation was that in the midst of boasting to me, she stated that she was in charge of cleaning so she felt embarrassed. Compared to the first explanation, this was 100 times more probable.

Finally, the third…….

……Mm.

For now, I removed my lips from her boot.

“Miss Sii.”

“Hm?”

“What type of person is the Silver Lion Earl to Miss Sii?”

Sii twitched and then fixed her posture. Among the three possible explanations mentioned earlier, I could guess what the answer was.

“Mm…….”

The hesitating Sii let out a sigh.

“She’s, a scary person.”

As I thought, she had this sort of evaluation.

“A really scary person. I heard that she wasn’t like this in the past, but…… I wasn’t here back then so I don’t know that well. Just a few days ago, the fact that Aria almost died…… Albeit, Aria is a lowly maid who resorts to thieving, well, I believed that it’d be a cheap price no matter what her punishment was, but…… seeing that she forgave Aria, then she might have a generous part about her. Yup. A difficult person. That’s what I think.”

Theft, maid, near death situation, and mercy…… ..It seems that the maid called Aria was the one who I had helped. I wonder if she was mixed in with the group of maids that I saw earlier. I don’t plan to take advantage of a favor, but if I get the opportunity, then I should confirm it. Winning people over to your side was important.

“Uhm…… Yujin.”

While in deep thought, Sii cautiously called out to me.

“Yes, Miss Sii?”

“……, ……that basement room…… did you see it?”

That basement room---she must be referring to the torture chamber.

In charge of cleaning.

It was something that I had already guessed at. It was a used facility. A room where a person of high status would go to enjoy herself. Although it appeared as if the room was never cleaned before because blood, flesh, guts, and bones were scattered all over the place--logically, there was no way that that would be the case. Furthermore, there's no chance that the Earl herself would clean that torture chamber. If I were to judge Zia while relying on a harsh stereotype, then it's a question whether she'd even clean her own room or not. Rather than that, the people below would have to do it. If that's the case, then what room would be the most appropriate place to clean for a maid who's treated as a sore?

Even the thing which she claimed to have assisted her in learning the language, if she truly did learn from only reading manga, then there's no way that she would be able to converse with me as fluently as this. She needed a conversation partner.

She most likely had---that conversation partner.

Similar to how, in this very moment, there are two otherworldly creatures that exist in that torture chamber.

Those who were unable to get past the first day, the second day, or even the third day. Tortured---there must have been Koreans who were as broken as this child's grammar.

".....Didn't see? That..... room."

Sii asked me while averting her gaze.

I shook my head before giving her a nod.

"I saw it.The torture chamber, you're referring to that, right?"

"Ah.so you saw it, yeah."

The recoiling Sii fiddled with her fingers before clearing her throat.

“Mm~ I understand, the fact that you saw. Mm……. In fact, you immediately used formal speech for me…… and used honorifics. Since you saw, things like that…… That’s right. Mm mm.”

Sii, who had her arms folded while letting out a long ‘Mm~’ sound, then nodded her head.

“Yup, I’ll try talking!”

……?

“Say that Yujin is a good boy! After hearing that she doesn’t have to make you hurt anymore, there’ll be no need to hurt you! Although Miss Earl is a scary person…… she’s also a cool person. After hearing the speech she gave during Aria’s incident before, yup! An amount of…… possibility…… may, slightly…… not be non-existent…….”

…….

“Yujin…….”

Sii trailed off. It seems she had judged that the reason behind my silence was because I was trembling in fear.

Even though that wasn’t the case.

I think I know why she tried to refrain from saying the precise term ‘torture chamber’. It was most likely because she had considered the possibility that I hadn’t seen it. If I were summoned aboveground, and thus never saw the torture chamber, then she probably believed that the very act of mentioning ‘torture chamber’ would instill fear into me. The fact that she flinched on her own when mentioning that she was in charge of cleaning was because of the same context. In order to consciously avoid the topic about that room.

Sympathy---was a bit different.

Consideration.

Especially the fact that she was similar to that fool knight who would pick her words carefully in order to not give me false hope.

This child was currently being considerate of me.

.....That consideration,

May have come from the sense of disappointment that came from the fact that the flatterer, who treated her well, may possibly be tortured to death the next day,

It may have even come from her mid-teens-like emotions, the concern itself originating from something that was similar to how you'd have a slight attachment to a random dog which you had petted once while walking down the street.

Perhaps, no, that was most certainly the case.

A type of consideration that could be tossed, just like some pocket change, at the weak who absolutely couldn't disobey, all for the sake of one's own amusement.

The strong to the weak to an extent.

The weak to the strong to an extent.

Despite that.

"I see that you're a gentle person, Miss Sii."

"Eh."

"Thank you."

Because this pure white maid felt cute to me, I had no other choice but to say that while bowing my head (with sincerity this time).

"Ah..... Uuuu. Yup~~! Mm mm mm."

Sii lit up once more like a red crab and squirmed around with her

arms wrapped around her shoulders.

And then,

“Mm!”

She spread her hand and patted my head.

As expected, I think this is her habit.

Except, the intensity of the blows this time weren't that different to a playful hit you'd receive from a friend.

In other words, it didn't hurt.

She had adjusted it. Her strength.

“Yujin!”

Sii laughed with an ‘Ehehe’ and stood up from her seat. She stretched out her hand in order to grab my wrist, but after seeing that it was now bruised, she let out a light gasp. With her stretched out arm floating in place, she withdrew her smile and hesitation wrapped around her entire body.

That's why I extended my arm instead.

“Ah.”

I went out of my way to let her grab my right arm that had a bruised wrist. Once I smiled for her, the hesitating Sii smiled once more as well. Ehehe. After shivering her shoulders and enjoying herself, she carefully gripped my wrist. Sii Garno Mikatni then spoke to me.

“Yujin. Yujin---are you not hungry?”

“I've just now started to become hungry.”

“Okay~~! Let's go eat. Since it's almost dinner time, we just have to

go to the dining room and eat. Lately, the menu has become rather faithful, so it's delicious."

"Thank you very much. What is the menu like here?"

"In yesterday's case, mm~~ *Memeke* meat that was *Shichi* came out."

"I see. If I knew what *Memeke* was, then it might be easier for me to understand."

"*Memeke* is uh---that. In Korean, it's that animal called tentaclonis."

An apprehensive name popped up all of a sudden.

"Tentacilonis?"

"Yup~~. That pillar-looking animal with a bunch of long tubes attached to it, it came out in the picture book called Princess Knight Tentacle Obedience."

My sudden uneasy prediction was right.

"But different to that picture book, *Memeke* don't..... um, do that sort of thing."

"Since it feels like it wouldn't be a good idea to drag this topic on for too long, let's put it aside. Please tell me about the cooking method called *Shichi*."

"Okay. In Korean terms, it's a cooking method that comes out in the picture book called Archduke Mother and Daughter Predation Appreciation."

Another apprehensive named popped up abruptly.

"Archduke Mother and Daughter Predation Appreciation?"

"You peel the outer layer while it's still alive, fasten it in place, and

while it's on top of a heat-resistant plate, you put in a glass---to be exact, it's a bit different, there's a thing called *Tios*. It's like a lens, but it's slightly different to a lens as well. In any case, you put that inside and take it to a place where there's a lot of sunlight. If sunlight passes through the *Tios*, then it condenses and starts to heat the plate.....”

My sudden uneasy prediction was right once more.

Damn Ahyeon. No, someone else could have brought those books, but still, damn Ahyeon. I dislike you even though I've never met you before.

“I understand now.”

“Okay.”

I, and even Sii, avoided the other's gaze and cleared our throats. A short silence.

“Then that means a meal similar to dried squid was served yesterday.”

“Yup.Ah, yup, the dried part. It being..... a squid, yup. Although they're bigger than squids and live on land..... Yup, squid.”

“I see.”

“Yup.”

Another silence.

“.....” I lowered my head. “I apologize.”

“Mm~~ it's fine! If you saw the torture room, then you know, right? The fact that this world I live in is just as excessive as the Korea you lived in, Yujin.”

She was misunderstanding something.

“If anything, I think that the world Yujin lived in is a gentle place,

you know? I saw it in that one picture book. The book that started with the narration, ⟨In the year 199X the world was enveloped in atomic flames⟩. Even that merciless man said it. ⟨Already you are dead.⟩, the memory of being moved by this line, I have it.”

She was misunderstanding something outrageously.

I’m digressing, but she was sincerely ruining the grammar of a line which all she had to do was memorize.

In the first place, just where in that example of hers did she feel gentleness from……?

“If someone asked me what part of the story I felt kindness from, then it’s the fact that he’d tell even the atrocious villains about how much longer they had left to live. Thanks to that, those villains could comfortably put their lives in order, and accept death within their minds.”

Although I think he did that in order to maximize his enemies’ fear towards death.

“But my favorite line in that picture book is that, ⟨A human who shields someone’s will is not a human! How can a person who prolongs one’s own life through flattery be called human!?. Yup, it was enough to shake my entire mind.”

As expected, Sii recited the lines while sincerely messing up the grammar. As a person who had prolonged his life through flattery ever since the 8 Years’ War and continued to do so even to this very day, where I’ve been summoned to another world, it was a vaguely painful line. I wanted to declare that flattery was an expression of one’s will that was done in order to stay alive.

But I won’t.

“Let us go eat, Miss Sii.”

“Ah, okay~~ Sorry, it became long……. Really hungry? Wait a little

bit, because I will feed you a lot---.”

The unexpected change happened in that moment.

The scenery before my eyes, changed greatly.

“Uah!?”

“**Kyaa!?**”

Both Sii, who was grabbing onto my wrist, and I lost our balance at the same time, making us fall backward. Nevertheless, comfortable fur received our bodies instead of the hard ground.

A luxurious room that had a silver carpet covering the entire floor. Sii looked around at the suddenly changed scenery with a panicked face, however, since I had promptly comprehended the current situation, I fixed my posture and turned my gaze.

“.....Earl. What is it?”

In that place was a black-socked foot, the Silver Lion Earl who was spreading out her ten nails which were dyed black.



“I’m the ooone who should be asking that. I only called for Mr. Yujin, but why did Mikatni’s adopted daughter come attached? Something like 1+1, that’s a commercial law I don’t particularly like.”

“If you don’t like it, then don’t abandon me in front of a bunch of maids in the first place.”

“Oho, are you saying that if you’re placed in front of a bunch of maids, then you gain the properties to try and fuse into a single mass, Mr. Yujin? How interesting. Is that magnetism? Or is that elasticity?”

“Gravity. So? What’s the problem?”

You ditched me earlier so why are you suddenly calling me again--to these words, the Earl giggled.

“What do you think the issue is?”

“Do you need service?”

“In terms of score, that’s 50 points, and if I were to say it in English, then it’s a Good Start. That being said, let’s start with that.”

The Earl of the Silver Lion then laid down on what appeared to be an office desk. Once I approached her and started to massage her thigh, I got an immediate reaction.

“Ahuh. Ang. Ah hah ha, mm, Mr. Yujin. Are your hand movements not devious? Hu-uh, ha ah, uunng. If you go all out like that, hauh, ah hah ha, then I’ll get exciited.”

Let’s say a bunch of choices appear before your eyes whenever you hear these sorts of questions.

1. If you don’t become devious while massaging a girl’s thighs, then you wouldn’t be gentlemanly.
2. Aren’t you always excited?
3. (Just keep massaging.)

Compared to games, if I were to point out a good thing about reality, then it’s the fact that there’s always a fourth option. A subjective response.

“Silver Lion Earl. Haven’t you become a little plumper compared to a few days ago?”

Compared to games, if I were to point out a bad thing about reality, then it’s the fact that that hidden option doesn’t always give good results. I was kicked below the stomach.

“Mr. Yujin. Haven’t you been behaving a bit more recklessly compared to a few days ago?”

“Sorry. But still, didn’t your excitement dissipate now?”

“I’ve actually become excited, in a different sense now!”

“Good. If you ever start getting excited again, then don’t forget about this excitement you’re feeling right now.”

“Nyaang, what a sloppy way to mend things. But I certainly do feel like I heard something goood.”

“I became closer to a eunuch because of that kick just now.”

“Nyahahahaha, you’re exaggerating. Even if you’re kicked to that extent, the distance between you and becoming a eunuch is interstellar. Of course, in order to make that distance zero, I was able to figure out the answer to the gravitational equation due to my 200% worth of training experience.”

It seems that I still had something like instincts as a male still leftover, seeing that the Silver Lion Earl was looking back at me with amusement apparent in her eyes. Honestly, before the Earl could go on about something else, I decided to take the path of adding more strength into my hands since this wasn’t a pleasant topic. Press, press. Her thighs stuck to my hands like rice cakes. I really think she put on a little weight.

“By the way, it seems like you’ve become a little weaker---no, that’s not what I wanted to say. Mr. Yujin. What’s up with that?”

By ‘that’, the Silver Lion Earl was referring to the bruise that was on the wrist of my right arm.

“I don’t recall that being there earlier. What is it? That right arm, were you abused by someone?”

Sii, who was sitting vacantly until now, let out a small yelp. The Silver Lion Earl narrowed her eyes.



I shrugged my shoulders.

“I bumped into the wall.”

“No matter how you look at it, thaaat’s a handprint. There must be hands attached to walls these days, huh?”

“That’s why the thing called wall punching has been trending lately.”

“Was wall punching, that sort of thing?”

“It was like that.”

“Either hitting a wall with your fist or making someone hold a wall in place and hitting it using a piston motion.”

“Those meanings exist as well.”

“I believe it only has thooose two meanings. Hmm. Well, if Mr. Yujin isn’t concerned about it, then I won’t be concerned about it as well.”

Contrary to her words, the shrugging Earl didn’t remove her eyes from my wrist. I hid my wrist by putting my hands behind my back and spoke.

“At any rate, if servicing you is a 50 point answer, then, mm. Did a problem occur?”

“If you say it like that, then doesn’t that make it sound as if I call for you every time there’s a problem, Mr. Yujin?”

“They say people learn from experience.”

“That stereotypical way of thinking is what gives birth to mannerisms^[3] and safety frigidity.”

“People sometimes tell me that I have good manners anyway.”

“I’m also on the side of hearing people call me frigid sometimes---
Gya hah ha!? Uu, for you to tickle the back of my knee all of a sudden.”

“Seeing how you’re sensitive like this, it must be a groundless misunderstanding.”

“Just like the manners which Mr. Yujin claimed to have.”

“It seems I’ve dug my own grave.”

“It’s an ultimatum that befits a villain.”

“Does that mean I’ll come back once episode 2 starts?”

“It means that you’ll die by the episode 2 villain 1 hour into the episode.”

“Let’s see then. Service was half. You said there was no problem…… then did you, perhaps, call me in order to introduce me to someone?”

“Correct. You can stop now. Shoo.”

I did as she told me to. The Silver Lion Earl raised only her upper body, did some abdominal stretches, and sat down crossed-legged. I removed my eyes from that Earl and turned to look at the individual who had been bothering me since I was first summoned into this room.

Zia, who was standing at attention---was, of course, not the person I was looking at, but instead, I was looking at the individual past her.

A glasses-wearing boy with a short stature, who appeared to be in their early teens,

and was letting off a purplish glow.

Was he a boy? ……They also seemed like a girl. I couldn’t tell by their outer appearance. It wasn’t only because of their epicene face. The impact that came from the purple glow which was shrouding

him---I'll call them 'him' for now, refer to this person as a boy---was too large.

There was a chapter similar to this in a manga called 'Hell Teacher Nube'. The chapter was about someone painting a certain kid's hand mirror with purple paint, and then, once they did so, the hand mirror transformed into a gate that was connected to the afterlife and started to pour out all sorts of ghosts, monsters, and ghouls. Excluding that, there was another chapter within that manga that involved the color purple. The vengeful spirit of a grandmother, who had become an evil spirit due to the loss of her grandchild, went around hurting people. The chapter was resolved when her spirit went to the afterlife through a purple light. As such, in that manga, the color known as 'purple' represented the afterlife, the next world, the netherworld---

The color meant 'Hell'.

Although in that manga, the color purple having that sort of meaning was because they used folklores on the afterlife as references, but I was able to feel with my body just why those folklores on the afterlife would put in that sort of detail. It's because those things just exist in the world.

Purple,

I felt that it was just that sort of color.

“.....Korza Gen' tenpeltos. Kie' ta.....?”

While pushing up his glasses and opening his purple lips that seemed as if they were coated in poison, the boy spoke in a way that sounded as if his voice was flowing straight out from Hell. The Earl of the Silver Lion made a tired expression before lifting one of her legs and scratched her temple with the heel of her foot.

“Zia. Translate.”

Zia cleared her throat.

“Your Excellency, please maintain your dignity.”

“I said to traaaanslate. Don’t be cheeky.”

“But…….”

“Ah, it’s fine. In any case, is that fellow someone who would be concerned about this kind of thing?”

“Sii is watching as well.”

“Don’t worry about it. Mikatni’s adopted daughter, you don’t have to worry about it either.”

Sii let out another short shriek.

“……Ko, Korza…… Antensimar’ zes……! Mi’ ta…….”

“I said to not worry about it.”

“Mi…… Mi’ ta…….”

“Should I say it a third time?”

Sii held her tongue. The Earl of the Silver Lion didn’t even glance at Sii who was trembling with her head lowered.

“Zia. Translate. Introduce each other well.”

Zia made a complicated expression but soon nodded. She turned towards the purple boy and spoke.

“Pelmute. Kome’ ii’ zes. Mi’ na hote’ meri’ nov’ zies’ ella.”

The purple boy stared at Zia. Past his glasses and within his pupils, there was a blue---no, a violet-colored malice lingering there.

That malice was directed towards me. The boy spoke as if he were chewing and spitting out his words.

“.....Yudia Batsand. Zia’ na Pelmute ‘zes.”

Zia, who was intensely anxious, interpreted.

“〈Yudia Batsand. I’m Zia’s mentor.〉”

I respond after a short moment. It took me a moment because those hell gate-like eyes were directed towards me, and because of the shock that came from his words.

“Mentor?”

“That’s right---Ah, one moment.”

The purple boy muttered something more. Zia promptly translated.

“〈Tenth Sky Wizard of the Twelve Sky Wizards. Martial Sky, the Draconian Demonic Spear(Prince : Spear) Yudia Batsand. The royal courier of the End Void Gate, one of the twelve factions of the world.〉

“Mm.”

Summing up the current situation.

I was summoned by the Silver Lion Earl. The goal was self-introductions. They most likely wanted me and this Tenth Sky Wizard of the Twelve Sky Wizards, Martial Sky, Draconian Demonic Spear, the person referred to as Zia’s teacher, this purple boy who’s the royal courier of the End Void Gate, Yudia Batsand to introduce ourselves to one another.

Although I had a stack of things that I wanted to ask, I decided to follow their intentions for now.

“Han Yujin. An Earthling summoned by the Earl of the Silver Lion. I’m a Korean.”

“〈Han Yu-zin. Korza Gen’ tenpeltos’ na. Merte-kiespilot’ zes.〉”

Zia translated. Yudia Batsand nodded after having listened with a

demeanor that felt as if he were chewing and swallowing down death.

“Yu – zin. ……Kork – megio’ zes’ tie, Kork – vizimeo’ zes’ niano.”

Of course, those words were translated and spoken to me as well.

“⟨Yujin. A detestable name and a detestable resonance.⟩

Mm.

“For starters, one thing. Zia, is that tone correct?”

“What do you mean?”

“Isn’t this person using formal speech?”

Zia blinked.

“That’s right. How…… no, if it’s you, then it isn’t strange. It’s just as you said. My teacher is currently using formal speech.”

“Then why are you translating it into informal speech?”

“But, if I translate it into formal speech, then wouldn’t it be like I’m the one who’s talking formally to you? If rumors were to spread to my friends, then it’d be embarrassing and…….”

“‘That reason befits you!’ or ‘You had friends!’, which one do you want?”

“Figuring that out is the trial which has been imposed upon you.”

“What trial is that!?”

“Figuring that out is the trial which has been imposed upon you.”

“Are you satisfied yet? Let’s keep this at a moderate level. In any case, are you telling me that as soon as I revealed my name, I received a response saying that it was detestable?”

“Don’t worry about it, Yujin. My teacher is---.”

“No, interpret those words as is. If I need your opinion, then I’ll call your name like I did earlier. What I say, what the opposition says, just stick to interpreting those two things. But if you feel like you need to say something no matter what, then raise your hand and ask.”

Zia made a perplexed face. Anyone who’s told to sincerely perform their role as a translation tool would most likely show this much of a reaction. If you consider the fact that she was a knight, then it wouldn’t be strange for her to even feel insulted.

However---Zia was my sword.

To me, she devoted her sword.

An exchange established solely between the two of us, something which the Silver Lion Earl was unaware of. Without having to even metaphorically hint at it, Zia nodded her head with her gaze lowered.

My words were transferred over and a response was returned.

“〈That is so.〉”

“Zia. It was formal speech this time as well, right?”

“That is so.”

“You’re hoping for a rebuttal, aren’t you?”

“That is so.”

This is a really annoying sword…….

“Translate. Did I, perhaps, do something to upset your mood?”

“〈It’s fine to remove the conditional and interrogative structure. You’re upsetting my mood just by existing in that spot. Thus, I detest you.〉”

It was a resolute response.

I'm being told this by a kid (appearance-wise) who I've known for less than 10 minutes, so the anger and despair I'd feel towards that--- as expected, I didn't feel those emotions even remotely.

I mean, I've already experienced many things that were much harsher than this. Even that Silver Lion Earl, who's sitting on top of the desk and licking her nails, tried to torture me to death 1 minute into our first encounter.

The feeling that my own life was falling into sadness, well, it's not like I didn't feel that.....

“Does my existence in particular upset you?”

“⟨Yes and no. Every hatred is special. Therefore, they aren't special. The thing I'm certain of is the fact that I do not detest people for tepid reasons. An individual, who wishes to abhor someone, must have a clear-cut reason behind their hate and must also detest them while going through a properly established process. Hatred that contains sincerity are the only things that will last forever.⟩”

“Enmity must hold a lot of value to you.”

“⟨It is a way of life that is for the body and mind.⟩”

“I see. In my world, the view that claims that hatred eats away at the body and mind is dominant.”

“⟨That view exists in this world as well. Those people, who go around blabbering as if that view puts them on a high horse, don't even know the obvious fact that the same methodology would apply if you eat and consume a flesh-eating bug. The important thing is taking the initiative. Not through the skin, but through the mouth. The hatred doesn't burrow inside of you, but you chew and swallow the hatred yourself. In that regard, Zia is a peerlessly cute failure.⟩”

“Zia. What part did you add on yourself?”

“Figuring that out is the trial which has been imposed upon you.”

“Then I’ll go ahead and remove the adverb ‘cute’.”

“If you’re going to take that out, then please remove the adjective ‘peerlessly’ as well.”

“No. Furthermore, I forbid you from fabricating or making up new information while interpreting.”

“Yujin, you’re really a ruthless man…….”

“Didn’t you want that type of ruthless rebuttal? How does it feel to receive what you asked for?”

“Only a sense of futility and an even larger craving is left in that spot.”

“Translate. I like green tea and injeolmi.”

Yudia Batsand raised an eyebrow after having my words translated to him. I continued.

“I like soft, tender, and fluffy things. Mild over spicy. Rather than sweet, I like things that give a slight bland feeling. I like things that are neat and tidy, things that leave only slight lingering imageries, things that are harmless, and not changing myself to become something that is beyond my own way of thought.”

In reality, my Goddess Minhee absolutely wasn’t that sort of existence, but if you were to exclude that Minhee.

If you were to exclude---love.

“You can say that in my entire life, the thing which I desire is that sort of soft stimulus. Compared to you, who places such a huge value on the emotion known as hatred, the emotion which can be regarded as the most stimulating in certain meanings, I guess you can say that our points of view on matters are different. However.”

Because that viewpoint is different,

“I believe that we can get along.”

I bowed my head.

“I’ll be in your care.”

Yudia Batsand kept silent for a long period of time. He then,

“Guhuhuhu.”

laughed.

Yudia Batsand’s shoulders trembled as he laughed with his fist placed near his mouth, he then shook his head.

“⟨A man who’s interesting enough to detest. It’s just as my cute disciple had said.⟩”

“Zia. I thought I forbade you from fabricating information.”

“Please forgive at least this one adjective.”

“Translate. If you see it that way, then I’m grateful.”

Yudia Batsand laughed some more. He then turned towards the Earl.

“Korza, Tokari’ me’ kollo’ arme mihoisu’ zes.”

“Myaa, Merk-abrozio’ me. Mi’ to sieru-eltriszioena.”

The Silver Lion Earl grinned and responded. She, after having gotten off the desk, stretched gallantly with her entire body before snapping her finger.

“Ah hah ha, Mr. Yujin. Good job. As expected of my toy.”

“I only introduced myself because I was told to do so and because I

received an introduction first. Since I heard what was important to them, their policy, and their values, I told them what was important to me, my policy, and what I valued. Even if you compliment me for doing what I was told to do, it's not much you know?"

"There are too many fellows in the world who aren't able to even do what they're told to do. Mhm. That being said, should I give you another task? Learn the words."

"If by words, you're referring to the language of this world, then I actually wanted to do that already. The problem is, if I want to do that then I'd need a teacher and some textbooks. Was my current status---Zia's apprentice knight?"

"Uu? Now that I think about it, did we decide to do that?"

"We decided to do that approximately 2 hours ago."

"Hmm. That's like a manga artist's initial character design. It's temporary, weak, and transient."

"Are you going to change it then? I don't want to become your feet mat, though....."

"Tsk. Well, it should be fine to put you as Zia's apprentice knight on the surface. But words---Mm, I'm not sure. Zia is busy, and since Yudia is going to be residing in this city for a while, it'll probably be difficult for her to spare you some of her time. Moreover, even if you learned how to speak from Zia---your vocabulary, your way of speech, and your kamaboko^[4], will end up becoming weird."

"What's fish cakes supposed to be? You don't have to forcefully rhyme things."^[5]

"Do I look like that sort of man, Mr. Yujin? I'm talking about a man's kamaboko. Zia even has abs. If you get squashed by that Zia, then far from fish cakes, your internal bones will break apart and become pudding."

“In the first place, you’re not a guy. A girl shouldn’t go around talking about a man’s kamaboko or whatever. For there to be bones inside, what am I supposed to be? A chimpanzee?”

“Ukukukukuh. Right, Korean males don’t have bones inside their kamabokos, now do they? How could I forget again even though I’ve checked it several times before? Characters who appear perfect like me but make trivial mistakes over and over again, don’t they call those type of people ‘clumsy beauties’ in Korea?”

I messed up. For this to be the result when I decided to give her a rebuttal as a small service. As I thought, I shouldn’t do things that don’t match my personality.

“Your Excellency.”

Thankfully, Zia came to my rescue.

“I’m on the side that’ll end up being squashed.”

Nevermind.

No, in Zia’s perspective, she’s just mentioning something that had actually happened, but…… you aren’t supposed to mention that.

Let’s wrap things up.

“So who do I learn how to speak from?”

“Huu~? Something like that, figure that out on your own. I’ll allow you to use the library, so be like a boy and show some spirit.”

“Is it fine to only show my spirit?”

“You have to get results as well. I’ll test you later on. If you aren’t able to get an above average grade, then I’ll punish you, you know? Ah hah ha.”

She said something ridiculous while grinning from ear to ear. I guess I should study.

Well, I was planning to do so since the very beginning…….

“If there’s a punishment, then is there a reward?”

I took a step forward and turned her statement around. If it’s this current atmosphere, then she won’t get mad but will instead be delighted by the unexpected response.

As predicted, the Silver Lion Earl’s pupils narrowed vertically and she then laughed.

“You sound confident.”

“I just figured that I’d take what I can get when I can take it.”

“Ah hah ha, how greedy of you. If that’s the case, then it wouldn’t be right if I don’t prepare a reward to show my respect towards that greediness of yours. Let’s see, if you score higher than average, then I’ll give you the panties that I’m wearing. This is an irresistible reward to Mr. Yujin who’s a lolicon, right?”

“Thanks. If I keep it in hand, then it’ll probably be useful one day.”

“Uuh. What’s with that half-hearted response? Show a reaction that’s on the level of doing something like a backflip and shouting ‘Oh yeah!’. If you make a girl’s panties be pitiful, then you can’t be caaalld, a reliable young maaan!”

“Sorry. I can’t do that.”

“If you can’t, then learn. I’ll test you on that as well.”

A needless test was added. For the result of trying to take whatever I could get to end up like this, greed truly does bring disaster.

The grinning Silver Lion Earl turned towards Yudia.

“Yudia-ren, Amores’ kata’ ta meisime-zio. Yu-zin’ ta hota’ senno’ aka’ von’ harami, soume’ chi’ akarii’ meoena. Amores’ karo-tio?”

“Pato’ zeskie?”

“Patopato ♡” The Silver Lion Earl made a peace sign with both of her hands. “Kete’ mesia-zio ♡”

“Guhuhuhu.”

Yudia gave his unique laugh once more before adjusting his glasses.

“Noveme. Kete’ mesia’ zesniano…….”

The conversation that only gave me a bad feeling went back and forth. The Silver Lion Earl turned towards me and winked.

“Mr. Yujin. I just ended up promising Lord Yudia that I would show them something interesting ♪”

Mm.

“Although I can roughly guess what it is, can you give me the details?”

“I promised that I will show them the sight of Mr. Yujin, who’s currently completely unable to use this world’s language, fluently speaking in this world’s language soon. Ukukukukuh, Lord Yudia will be observing as well during the day of the test. If it’s you, Mr. Yujin, then you know what that means, right?”

“…….” I let out a sigh. “If I don’t do it properly, then you’ll be humiliated.”

“Correct. Ah hah ha. Of course, if that happens, then I’ll get angry. VeryVeryMuchMuch angry. That’s why, Mr. Yujin, do your best ♪”

Truly an absurd earl…… It was at the moment that I felt a little discouraged.

“In exchange, if you receive full marks and also perform a perfect backflip, then---that’s right. It’d be fine for you to have a vacation for 2 days and 1 night.”

The most ridiculous statement, Her Excellency the Earl had said it.

“By vacation, you mean?”

“Of course, it’s the right to take a trip to the World of Spires---your world. Ah hah ha, congratulations, Mr. Yujin! If you work hard then you can return! Albeit for a short period of time!”



The Silver Lion Earl, who had finished dropping that bombshell, canceled my summon saying that she had to provide entertainment for Yudia. If the Earl cancels a summon, then the target will return to where they were previously located, so I ended up back on top of the mattress in Sii’s room. However, that sort of thing didn’t matter.

I can go back.

While we were in the basement earlier, she said that she would let me return to my world back then as well, but the premise was different this time. Not a permanent return, but a temporary one. Therefore, since it’s more trustworthy and reliable, it’s something that I don’t have to refuse either.

In the first place, I already figured that I would be given the task of being a purchasing agent in order to satisfy the Earl’s otaku-like hobby. However, I didn’t expect for that opportunity to come this much sooner than what I had originally expected and this abruptly, at that. Once again, I was in a situation where I was already planning to learn the language. This has become a good motivation.

For starters, letters. I have to know how to read the letters first if I intend to read the textbooks. If there’s no textbook, then---Mm, would it be fine to memorize an entire dictionary just like I did back when I learned Japanese? If I deduce the words that had been going back and forth until now, it seems the grammar structure itself is similar…… Ah, since a Korean-Otherworld language dictionary

probably doesn't exist like how a KR-JP dictionary does, it'll be more difficult than the time I learned Japanese. In that regard, I guess I'll have to grill the person who'll play the role as my teacher a bit. Now on the topic of that teacher, since that Zia is busy, I'll have to take any of the occasions of seeing her as a chance time and rely mostly on Sii---

The door swung open with a thud.

The light from the hallway flowed into the room that was once dark. Although someone soon stepped into the doorway, since that person was white, instead of blocking the light, it felt as if they were diffusing it. Haa, haa. I wonder if they had run here, the person standing in the doorway while breathing heavily was none other than Sii Garno Mikatni.

“Haa, haa…….”

Sii must have been considerably out of breath since her shoulders were moving up and down. Right, the reason why she was summoned to the Silver Lion Earl's office was because she was in direct contact with me. If the summon is canceled while we're apart, then I'll be the only one to be sent back. Thus, Sii had to come back to her room from the Earl's office with her own effort. Despite that, there wasn't a need to run all the way here. It was at the moment that I had thought that.

All of a sudden, a Bang! sound resonated and light flooded into the room.

Sii had gotten down onto her knees and slammed her forehead against the floor.

“I---I apologize---.”

Those small shoulders---trembled.

“S-Sir Apprentice Knight--- Sir Yujin. T-The discourteous behavior, until now, p-p-please---forgive---.”

While trembling and rubbing her forehead against the floor, she sobbed.

“D-didn’t tell me…… just…… just that you were a toy summoned by Miss Earl…… those people, those people…… I, me, me into a trap---a little, if I knew about Sir Yujin a little more……if I knew that you had a special relationship with either Miss Earl or Miss Zia……B-B- Because I would have never, never done those things……!”

Bang! Sii slammed her forehead against the floor once more. Bang! Again. Bang! Each time she did, a dent formed on the floor and her fingers, that were bracing the floor, audibly dug into the ground.

“Uuuuuuuu……!!”

She burst into tears. Shaking pitifully and begging for forgiveness while pounding her head against the floor repeatedly---this was the Silver Lion Earl’s white maid, Sii Garno Mikatni.

Similar to how I felt it when I had first met her, this was a strength that was difficult to imagine to ever be hidden inside this skinny body of hers. However, just as I had thought since we had first met, she didn’t have the physical toughness to support that strength, so blood flowed from her forehead and her broken nails.

My hand, hurt.

It was only until a moment later---that I realized that I was gripping onto my beads so hard that they left a mark on my palm.

“It’s fine.”

Sii didn’t raise her head.

“M-My discourtesy…….”

“I said it’s fine. I didn’t think that it was discourteous---at all. Really, I didn’t think anything particular of it. Raise your head.”

“Forgive---my rudeness, for me to have dared---.”

I moved forward and gripped the shoulders of Sii who flinched the moment my shadow cast down on top of her body. Her shoulders, that were so pitiful that I could immediately feel her bones when grasping them, were trembling with anxiety and passion, similar to a quaking aspen.

“Sii.”

A shriek and silence.

I closed my eyes and opened them.

“Miss, Sii.”

She twitched---in response.

Only then did Sii raise her head. A face that had become a mess of tears and snot, her dust-covered forehead was swollen, blue, ripped, and bleeding.

I raised my sleeve and wiped her face with it.

“Uu…….”

“I apologize. Does it hurt?”

“Ah, uh---ah, doesn’t hurt…… but why…… formal…….”

“Be it a title or my way of speech, I don’t care. Boorish profanities--I don’t use those that well since they’re stimulating, but excluding those, whether I speak informally or formally, whether I use the most honorific title or the most scornful title, I don’t feel any pain or delight from doing any of those things. If that’s the case, if I choose the side that’s comfortable for the opposition, then overall, wouldn’t a plus occur on both sides? If by speaking formally Miss Sii feels delighted, then I will continue to do so.”

Sii had a blank expression on her face. While she was doing her best

to understand my words, I continued to clean her face. Eventually, Sii opened her mouth around the time when her face was decently cleaned, but she was still confused.

“B-But…… Miss Earl or…… Miss Zia, you use, informal speech? To me, formal? Eh……? I-I can’t understand---well, I---.”

“It doesn’t matter. Be it the Earl or Zia, neither of them requested for me to speak formally to them. Moreover, even if they do ask me to do it, then I just have to start doing so from that point on.”

“But---even so---.”

“Miss Sii.”

Sii twitched.

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Uh…… uuuu, b-but---.”

“Rather, Miss Sii. I require Miss Sii’s help.”

Sii twitched again. I blocked her lips, making it so that she couldn’t utter any more forms of denial or waste time, and spoke straight to her face that was so rigid that it felt as if she were frozen.

“For starters, speech. I have to learn the language here. Please teach me. Back flip…… if possible, help me with this as well.” If it’s impossible for her, then let’s ask Zia. She’s a fellow who looks like she can do a backflip while wearing armor, after all. “Clothes to wear, and a place to sleep as well---since it seems the Earl wants me to handle these things on my own. Although it’s possible for me to ask Zia, I don’t really want to bother someone with something that I can do by myself.”

“Mm---mmm-----.”

“Furthermore, I need to be taught about this castle as well. There

are many things that must be done---sleep, I need to get some sleep as well. But of course, before that.”

I removed my hand from her lips and smiled for her.

“The food that we were about to go to eat, let us go and have some.”

Sii’s face became dyed red.

“U-uh? Okay…… U-Understand. Let’s go eat. Uhm……Sir Apprentice Knight---Sir Yujin---.”

“Call me as you please.”

“……, …… , ……………O-okay. Yujin!” Sii, who had nodded, jumped up and grabbed my wrist. “Let’s go, to the dining room! Because I will feed you a lot…… yup, Yujin!”

“Understood.”

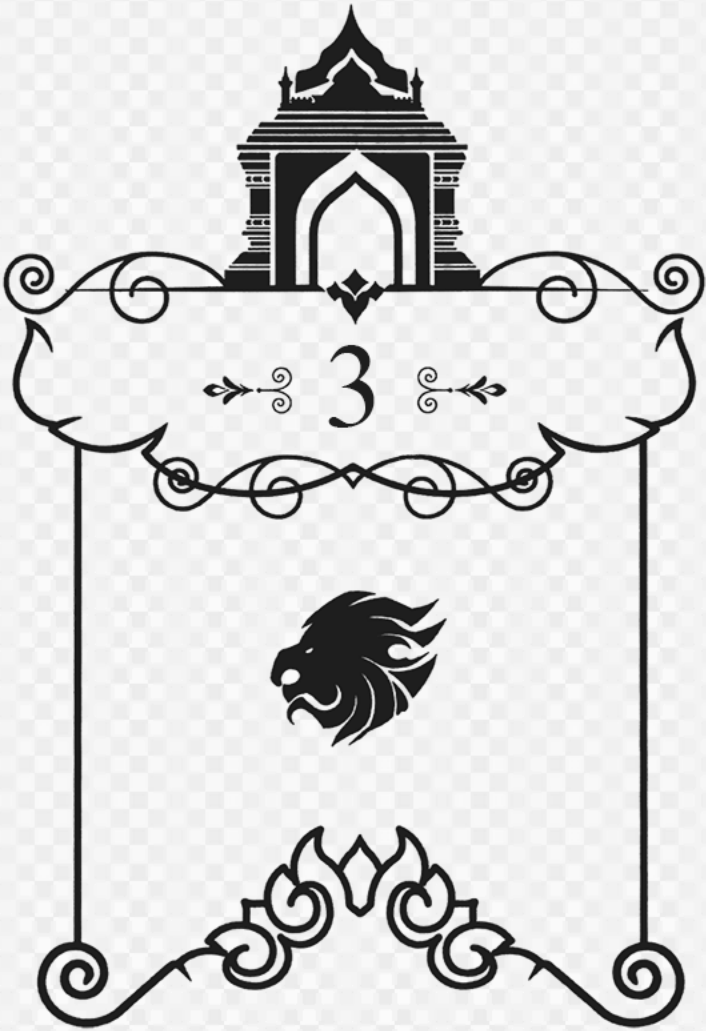
Like so, I met my first night aboveground in this other world.

I started to walk towards the dining room alongside this white maid.

I sort of ate a lot.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) He's correcting himself.
2. [\[↑\]](#) Uncertain about the gender.
3. [\[↑\]](#) '**Mannerism**' is Konglish for '**Habitual behaviors**'.
4. [\[↑\]](#) Kamaboko are fish cakes.
5. [\[↑\]](#) The three things listed by the Earl rhymes in Korean.



My cousin, Miyeong, disliked me.

Was it because I had continued to stay in her home? Was it because her dad didn't like me? Was it because it seemed as if her mother paid more attention to me---than she did to her? Was it because her parents had started to fight? You can most likely find the reason among one of these. Or perhaps, everything above was the reason behind her hatred. Who knows. I wonder what her reason was? If there's one thing that I'm certain of, then it's the fact that, although I can think of over thirty different reasons for why Miyeong would hate me, I can't even ponder a smidgen of a reason for why she should like me. Around the time when I was left in the care of the home of Miyeong, who hated me, and had started to attend the same school as her, the man who was the homeroom teacher of her class was not a bad person. However, if malice was the only thing that could give birth to wicked results, then this world would be much more comfortable to live in. I was able to engrave that truth, which anyone could learn just by looking at my aunt, into my mind once more thanks to that man. I, who had just lost his parents, was assigned to the same class as Miyeong and was seated next to Miyeong who shared the same blood as me. All thanks to that man's kindness.

Miyeong bullied me.

Of course, that isn't the proper expression. Let's add an adverb. 'She easily bullied me.' Let's get rid of the determinacy. 'She was able to easily bully me.' Let's change it to a passive verb. 'It was made so that she could easily bully me.' I can probably continue to do this a hundred times and each time I do so, I can most likely separate them to things that man had done and the results which were inflicted onto me. Interstellar, the distance was as vast as the distance between two stars. However, if I were in a different class, or at the very least, if our seats were placed apart, but because of that man's sympathy.

I was ostracized by my classmates.

Of course, that isn't the proper expression. Because Miyeong had

bullied me. Because I was a transfer student. Because I was a foreign matter that had squeezed into the class' social circles which had already been established. Because I was weak. Because I no longer had parents. Because I had cried after being hit by Miyeong who was a girl. Because I was a book-smart kid who was only good at studying despite being unable to even fight. Etc. Etc. However, if Miyeong didn't harass me, if my seat wasn't beside Miyeong's, if I were in a completely different class. Aah, because of that man's consideration.

Joo Chanmi came looking for me.

Of course, that isn't the proper expression.

If it wasn't.



Several days had passed.

I was able to have a warm meal, change my clothes, and sleep in a proper resting area. If I had experienced a proper school life, then this would have been the golden opportunity to shed tears as I experienced why food, clothing, and shelter were the fundamentals of human life, but thanks to Chanmi and her group, I didn't feel any particular emotion since I had already experienced this sort of 'give and take away' situation a countless number of times before.

"I somehow feel as if I'm at a loss."

Within Zia's private chamber, I, who had smashed his face against the floor for the thirty-sixth time in an attempt to do a backflip, muttered those words. Zia, who was watching my antics while mending her sword, cleared her throat.

"Haven't you been experiencing a loss throughout your entire life, Yujin?"

Ignored. Another backflip, thirty-seventh headbutt.

Zia cleared her throat lightly.

“Of course, you’re most likely curious about how I was able to see through your entire life despite only knowing you for 2 weeks now. That is a poor thought, Yujin. Similar to that one Korean saying, brilliance displays itself even in childhood. If I were to say it in our world’s terms, then it’d be ‘a person who can predict what will happen at twelve before one o’clock has passed is a wise man’.”

Ignored. Another backflip, thirty-eighth headbutt.

Zia cleared her throat some more.

“Of course, you’d most likely want to say that brilliance displays itself even in one’s adolescence. Moreover, you will probably want to point out the fact that the meaning of those two sayings is completely different. Doing something like instructing me to not call you brilliant, you will most likely want to say something along those lines. However, Yujin, that is once again, a poor thought. I…….”

This time, without me having to even ignore her, Zia closed her mouth on her own. Zia Batsand put away the sword she was mending and tried to read my countenance.

“Are you still upset about your clothes?”

At last, I shook my head to signal her that I didn’t particularly feel that way. My face hurt so I was planning to take a break anyway.

“That’s not it. It’s just that I felt as if I’ve been dragged around too much lately so I was making a conscious effort to lower the number of rebuttals I’d make.”

“You’ve started to train me, huh…….”

“You’re my sword after all. I have to tame you enough to be able to grab you by the handle and swing you.”

Zia swung her sword and smacked me with the flat side of her blade.

The anger and repulsion felt from being hit abruptly---surprisingly, after being hit by this fellow, I couldn't help but shout.

“What are you doing!?! My face already hurts like crazy!”

“Y-Y-You, what are you saying!?! Suddenly! Calmly! Without any prelude!”

“Why are you getting upset!?! You're the one who hit me! And why are you questioning what I said!?! I definitely explained it to you in the basement already!”

“Were you unable to say it a bit more smoothly!?! F-For you to say that you'll tame me! How dare you say that!”

“How do I have to say it in order for it to be smoother!?!”

“Figuring that out is the trial which has been imposed upon you!”

“I judged that the best thing to do is to firmly scold the idiotic knight who dragged an already failed bad joke out in this timing!”

“Uuuuu…….”

Zia closed her mouth in frustration. I picked up the headband, that had fallen off after being hit by Zia, and put it back on my head. Zia grumbled.

“Even though you're crossdressing…….”

Just as Zia had grumbled, I was currently crossdressing. To be exact, I was wearing a maid uniform. There shouldn't be a particular need to explain this. The uniform was two sizes smaller than what I would usually wear so it stuck to my body and despite the stockings being a color of white that was extensive, it tightened around my legs so much that it made them appear slim, but as expected, there

shouldn't be a need to explain this.

.....

No, as I thought, I should explain.

“If you had given me some proper clothes to wear, then I wouldn't be wearing something like this.”

“Are those the clothes that Sii gave you?”

“Yup. Her spare maid uniform and stockings. Since my sweatsuit became dirty, I had no other choice but to wear this.”

“There shouldn't have been a reason for you to wear even the stockings.”

“It's better than wearing shoes without socks. The weather is cold as well.”

“But because you're wearing those stockings, I end up feeling skeptical about the size of my own legs.”

“Who cares? Also, it can't be helped since you're a knight. Why do females, including my cousin, throw aside things like their own physique and role, and hang their necks about things like size?”

“Although I'm a knight, I'm also a girl.”

“If you want to know whether you're a girl or not, then you can just place your hand on your chest, right?”

Zia smacked me with the flat side of her blade.

The anger and repulsion felt by the reality that I had just been hit--I shouted as soon as I was struck by this girl.

“What's been wrong with you since earlier!?”

“I should be the one asking what your issue has been since earlier!

For you to sexually harass me, I can't believe it. Yujin, a man like you! How can you say that I would have no other choice but to accept the fact that I'm a female if I grab my right chest with one hand, put my other hand between my legs, and stick out my tongue!?"

"I didn't say that much, you know!?"

"If you had tsukkomi'd like that from the start, then I wouldn't have had to needlessly use violence twice……."

"I fell for your scheme!?"

"It's twelve years too soon for you to try and tame me."

"So if you did want to be tamed by me, then you want to be tamed by the me who's turned into a 30-year-old man?"

"It's an idiomatic expression! If anything, I don't want to give up this current situation where I'm being tamed by a girl who's in her mid-teens."

"Really, this is a hopeless knight……."

"Although I felt it around the time when I went on BTOOL^[1] with Ahyeon, very handsome posters are existences that one would always want to consume. However, I actually wanted to consume the illustrators more."

"Are you satisfied now? Let's stop here."

"Mm. Sorry. That last one was honestly irrational."

Zia sat down and went back to mending her sword. I believed that if she was going to add the term 'honestly', then that would mean that the overall conversation just now could be considered as irrational, but I didn't do so and instead went back to practicing my backflips.

Zia spoke.

“It’d be a good idea if you placed your weight towards your tailbone.”

“If you’re going to give me a piece of advice, then couldn’t you have done it sooner?”

“Also, your outfit. If you wear such tight-fitting clothes and even have on boots that reach up to your knees, then, of course, it would interfere with your backflips.”

“I know that as well, but I have no other clothes.”

“Then you can take it off and do it.”

“I’ll really take it off.”

“Yujin, you really don’t see me as a girl, huh…….”

What are you talking about? I see you slightly as a girl. Honestly, it’d be more convenient for me if that slightness were to disappear, but, well, this current situation is convenient enough for me and she’s an interesting conversation partner as well, so I’ll forgive her with that.

“Well, I, Zia Batsand, have a body that was born as the Silver Lion Earl’s sword. The Zia Batsand as a female had already withered away a long time ago.”

……Although she occasionally says things that are annoying enough to be surprising.

It’s more annoying that I knew the origin of that line.

In any case, I listened to the advice of Zia Batsand, who claimed to be the Silver Lion Earl’s sword since birth, and did a backflip while putting weight towards my tailbone.

After failing five times, I spoke.

“Are you sure this trick is right? Why does it feel like it’s become more difficult……?”

“Yujin. Surely you aren’t doubting me, are you? Yujin, are you unable to believe I---the sword of Her Excellency the Earl and your sword?”

“I’m saying this now, but I have to be able to go to Korea if I’m going to transport new BL books here.”

“Leaning your weight towards your tailbone was a lie. Try swinging the heels of both your feet like a pair of axes while you lower your waist and head.”

“You really…….”

A really annoying sword…….

“But don’t worry. Regardless of whether you pass or not, she most likely plans to send you back once.”

“What’s your reasoning behind that thought?”

“Since the end of the month is approaching.”

End of the month, is it?

“Does it reset monthly? The---nail arts of the Earl, that is.”

The limit to the number of times she can summon things.

“That’s right.”

“If it gets reset, then perhaps, the summon cancel as well?”

“It can’t be done. Since the proof of the summoning would have disappeared.”

In other words, there’s a need for her to cancel the summon and send me back before that time comes. Since she has a catalyst that’s

related to me, she can just summon me back after the use limit has been reset.

Although I understood the mechanism, there was something that was still bothering me.

“For the reset to be a monthly thing, that’s longer than I had expected. Isn’t it incredibly wasteful for her to use her summons for things like getting a ride on you and summoning me because she’s too lazy to call for me?”

If I were to count starting from the time when I was in the basement, then she had squandered almost all of her uses within 5 to 6 days. For someone with such an impressive ability, her skill to plan ahead was lacking way too much.

Skill to plan ahead.

“Ah---was that the case.”

To my words that I had unintentionally muttered out loud, Zia nodded with a solemn face.

“That’s---right.”

Zia said.

“Her Excellency the Earl.”

The Earl.

The Earl with a mentality that has broken down.

Since the act of planning ahead was something that only the people who could love themselves, people who had hope for the future, could do---.

“It may be a surprise, but Her Excellency has a luxurious personality.”

It wasn't bombastic-like but just a luxurious personality.

.....

“No, it isn't particularly a surprise.”

You can tell just by looking at the clothes she wears, right?

“Even when she was still the esteemed daughter, on the very day she received her allowance, she would immediately spend it all on food, so the previous lord, His Excellency the Earl had a lot of worries.”

“She suddenly seems humane.”

“Thanks to that, my stomach became full. It was the worst.”

“Doesn't that mean you were the one who nearly ate everything? Moreover, for you to even say that it was the worst, do you have any conscience?”

A human who was terrible enough to make even me unintentionally give a rebuttal was here in front of me.

“Moreover, Her Excellency got sick of things quickly and also has a small appetite.”

“That's---I figured that was the case.”

“Well, there was also a fault in the fact that the previous Earl was a bit lustful.”

“And the previous Earl's wife?”

“She was a lesbian.”

It was a household that was nonsensical enough to make me believe that the Silver Lion Earl, who was like that, could be born there.

“Because she was a lesbian, whenever the previous Earl would bring home a lover, they would place that person between the two of them and enjoy her together. The relationship between husband and wife was incredibly harmonious.”

“Stop. In any case, what’s the point?”

“In any case, that’s why the previous Earl had set up these and those sorts of pensions for Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl. It was a relief. Since the Earl’s salary---isn’t even remotely enough to handle the maintenance of the castle, let alone the Silver Lion Earl’s own extravagance.”

“So the lord of this City of Confinement is a lord who got paid a salary, huh?”

“It goes without saying that there’s also tax.”

Zia Batsand folded her arms and declared.

“Her Excellency the Earl does not put her hands on the things that are not hers.”

Is that---so?

A rather common situation. Although someone may call her a hypocrite or self-righteous, despite that, even if the Silver Lion Earl’s mentality has broken down, or perhaps because it has broken down, she doesn’t cross her own---

“Only slightly.”

It turns out that she did actually cross it.

“My head is starting to hurt.”

“Why’s that, Yujin?”

“I wonder.”

Was it because the Silver Lion Earl was hastily appearing more and more humane to me in this place, suddenly, without context, and while she wasn't even here?

No, well.

Everyone is human.

In the end, even someone like Joo Chanmi was still a human being.

“If I summarize the story, then, although those pensions were able to maintain Her Excellency's prodigal habits, they weren't able to ease it. It was like that after meeting Ahyeon and even after they had separated. Her Excellency would often spend all of her allowance and use up all of her summons before half a month could even pass. There's a chance that because she had those pensions, Her Excellency was unable to place her attention towards being conservative and premeditating her decisions even more.”

“Is there a need to summarize it, the story, that is.”

I feel like I've already heard it enough.

It was at the moment I had thought that.

“At the end of a certain month, Her Excellency was kidnapped and put in a state of restraint by the 7th branch of the Mage Tower, but as expected, if you look back at it, then you could possibly say that the reason for her kidnapping was because of the pensions that the previous Earl had set up.”

This topic had suddenly come up.

Kidnapping.

Confinement that was aimed for the Earl while she was in a defenseless state.

---Pension and restraint. [\[2\]](#)

“Before the limit of Her Excellency’s summoning ability could be reset at the start of the next month, and before the day Her Excellency could receive her pensions, the 7th branch of the Mage Tower took all possible measures that they could. In that regard, since I already told you what happened next while we were in the basement, I’ll omit it.”

Hostage.

In order to prevent her from having any catalysts, they stripped and imprisoned her.

Restricted and bound.

“If you ask what the moral of the story is, then, although it’s amusing, Her Excellency finally felt the need to have a type of deposit because of that incident. Though it’s probably more of an insurance than a deposit, a type of risk management.”

10 rings.

2 bracelets.

The catalysts of monsters, demon lords, and gods of other worlds.

“Even if her prodigal habits are still the same, she’ll save at least one, but if possible, two of her summons in preparation for any unexpected situations.”

The twelve nuclear bombs that the Earl, whose mind had been shattered, had inlaid into her body.

“If that’s the case, then, as I expected, does that mean the tattoos on the back of her hands count as that proof of summoning as well?”

“That’s right.”

Zia spread both of her hands and showed the back of them to me.

“10 nails as proof. The 2 backsides of her hands as proof.”

12 verifications of summons per month.

“In any case, similar to the monster of the Six Petal City and the creatures that are in the torture chamber, if a month passes by, then the ‘proof’ of their summoning disappears, making it so that their summons can no longer be canceled.”

Returning back to the beginning, the sword of the Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“It’s possible to use a different method in order to send the target back, but that process in itself is incredibly cumbersome. Therefore, the most efficient method is to cancel the summon at the end of the month and then summon them back on the first day of the next month.”

After smacking her lips.

“Though it’s called efficient, it was only ever applied to Ahyeon.”

And smiling slightly.

“I never expected---that the day we used this method again would ever come.”

Zia lowered her head.

“Thanks, Yujin.”

“I said it before back in the basement, but there’s no particular reason for you to be thanking me.”

I responded as so and averted my gaze.

“At any rate, if that’s the case, then does that mean that there was no need for me to practice doing backflips like this?”

“That’s what I think.”

“I would have been quite happy if you had told me this a little

sooner.”

To be exact, before I had headbutted the floor this much. Zia, who had raised her head, cleared her throat.

“Well, that’s just my thought so it isn’t 100%. You should be fully aware of Her Excellency’s fickleness. There’s no harm in putting your all into practicing that.”

That would be the case if you removed from the list of demerits the fact that I lost brain cells every time my head hit the floor. In any case, my mind felt a bit lighter after hearing the inside story and her assumption.

Zia spoke.

“By the way, Yujin. It’s about that Sii who gave you those clothes.”

“Yeah?”

“You’re already aware of the fact that she’s treated badly among the maids, right?”

That’s---obvious.

I was aware of that the moment I first met her.

“If you’re aware, then why aren’t you doing something about it, Miss Knight?”

“That’s a silly question, Yujin. Or was your world---Korea, a paradise where all maladies could be dealt with if someone with a high social status said something about it? There should be a mountain of cases where the opposite of that has occurred.”

A wise answer. Although I felt a bit weird since this fellow was the one to say that wise answer.

“Yujin. I know what you’re thinking. If I had a grasp of the situation, then I should have at least tried to do something in order to

fix it. However, I'm in this castle as a knight and as someone who protects Her Excellency the Earl."

"So you're saying that it isn't your job?"

"That's correct. It's not my job, nor is it within my jurisdiction. Furthermore, if I clumsily tried to do something about that type of bullying, then only the opposite effect would occur. In order to overthrow that sort of bullying in the truest sense, the recipient of the bullying has to stand up while shaking it off on their own."

As I thought, a wise answer.

.....

"Why have you been only saying logical sounding things since earlier?"

"What are you saying, Yujin? I'm always logical."

"Yeah, but, why have you been only saying logical sounding things since earlier?"

"Because of the topic. Bringing out bad jokes when the topic is group bullying is something that only demonic bastards would do. This Zia Batsand, has not fallen into that sort of devildom yet."

Wise answers throughout.

It's the first time in a long while since I've felt this much frustration.....

"Why did you bring that up when you're just going to be cold-heartedly drawing a line saying that it isn't your problem?"

"I'm not trying to warn you. It just seemed like the number of times Sii has been smiling has increased recently so I was grateful."

Hmm.

“You know each other?”

“It’s a vague relationship. Well, let’s just say that we’d sit in the library together and read manga.”

Truly a vague relationship. As much as Sii had mentioned this fellow’s name back when she was talking about how she had learned Korean, this was something that I had already expected. Zia puffed her chest out and added something more.

“You can say that we’re comrades, so to speak.”

“If you say it like that, then it sounds like you two know each other really well.”

“Like I said, not that well. There’s also a gap in our statuses. The most we know about each other is what coupling the other supports.”

“I should have started to feel a sense of incompatibility the moment you started to give wise answers.”

“Except, that fellow consistently insisted NL^[3] couplings. The concept of BL, how should I say it? It seems she couldn’t comprehend it that well. She was a fellow who would ask, ‘If a man and a man get together, then wouldn’t there only be girls left?’ with a serious expression on her face. What a foolish person, that’s supposed to be a good thing.”

“Let’s stop, I’ve already understood it as ‘I have no intention of helping Sii, but it felt nice seeing the bright expression of Sii who was once a fellow otaku’.”

“All right. In any case, it’d be great if Sii could use this momentum to resolve herself in order to overcome her situation, but that’s probably a problem that needs to be waited out. Even I required some time before I could make a similar resolve. That’s the way the world goes.”

These words---were a bit of a surprise.

“You were bullied too?”

“Aren’t I being bullied by Her Excellency the Earl every day? And I’ve been getting harassed by you as well lately.”

It wasn’t actually a surprise.

“In the first place, you enjoy it so that doesn’t count. What have I done to harass you? Moreover, just what sort of resolution did you even make?”

“Yujin. If you give such a sincere rebuttal to my moderate joke, then I’m going to be the one to feel embarrassed.”

No matter how you think about it, I’m the one who’s being harassed.

“Putting jokes aside, even I have experience in being bullied. To be exact, it was during the time I was attending the dojo. Through Her Excellency the Earl---though she was still the esteemed daughter of the earl at the time, anyway, since I became my current teacher’s pupil through her connection, I was an eyesore to the other disciples who had entered through their connections which they established with either money or authority.”

“If anything, I think even the Earl’s connection is sufficient enough to be considered as a connection of money and authority…….”

“That’d be the case by the standards of commoners. However, compared to real money and real authority, the amount of money and authority in the possession of Her Excellency the Earl can’t be considered much.”

“She did say that this city wasn’t that big. Then it must be a connection related to the Earl’s ability. Mm. So, what did you do to those other disciples?”

“I did my best to try and get along with them at first. I failed. Since our teacher was scary, I had no other choice but to latch onto Her

Excellency while crying and plead for help.”

“You’re two years older than the Earl, right?”

“Also, Her Excellency was six years old at the time.”

“Oi.”

“No, Her Excellency was a genius after all. Especially in regards to language. Like I would always say, it’s similar to the logic of molars growing on a lion, but in this situation, the development of the molars---the fact that she had free command of language, meant that her level of thinking was just as high.”

“No, it’s fine. Even if you try to lead me on like that, all you’re trying to say is that the Earl had a higher mental age than you, right? Anyhow, so what? If I read into the context, then that means the Earl wasn’t that much help as well. That’s why you learned the lesson that you had to face things on your own and…….”

“No, she was a big help.”

“Oi.”

“You’ll understand if you listen a bit more. When I latched onto Her Excellency while crying, she said to me the words that I said earlier, ‘stand up while shaking it off on your own’. It felt as if I had received a revelation.”

“Although it’s a turning point that seems likely for an 8-year-old to undergo, for the opposition who gave you that lesson to be 6-years-old, was that Earl of ours Josua……?”

“Then that means I’m Boris^[4].”

“It’s scary how easily you understand my references. It’d be great if you had some self-awareness of the fact that you’re from another world.”

“I’ll try. In any case, Her Excellency said that she would let me borrow her strength if I could muster up the courage to make that kind of resolve. I contemplated it for a couple of days, and in the end, I decided to make that resolve. After that, we summoned one disciple every day with Her Excellency’s power and soundly beat them up.”

“It was wrapped up nicely like some good story, but isn’t that just surprise lynching?”

“Additionally, we would summon them while aiming for the times when they were asleep. Before they can even wake up, we would throw a net over their body and then pummel them with clubs.”

It became the chrysalis of something else that couldn’t even be called surprise lynching.

“It became long, but the conclusion is that: The people who bully others must do so while fully prepared to have their faces be smashed with a full-swing. Furthermore, the people who are trying to overcome that bullying must not fear or hesitate to pull off that full-swing smash. You must take the initiative to request for help only after you’ve gained the resolve to do so.”

“You concluded it as if it were some inspirational story, but, how should I say it…… it’s a bit…… no, it’s not something I should be the one to say, but…….”

If I recall the 8 Years’ War, then I truly can’t say anything about this. If anything, I had experienced and done acts that could make something like summoning someone while they’re asleep in order to surprise lynch them seem moderate.

I felt somewhat solemn.

Zia had an incredulous look on her face as she saw me abruptly shut my mouth, but before she could place her question on her lips, the door opened and someone had entered the room.

“Yujin……. Do you have some time?”

Purplish hair that stretched out like poisonous herbs and wearing glasses that covered his eyes, it was Zia's teacher, Yudia Batsand.

“I do. What is it?”

“This had suddenly Weck' ere(Translating…… Flipped upside down? Broken?- Assuming it to be 'turned off').”

The thing which Yudia then pushed forward was my iPhone.

Mm.

“It must have been to your liking.”

“I ended up detesting it,” Yudia spoke those words and then pushed up his glasses. **“For it to turn off right when I was barely able to beat stage 2-12 with 3 stars, why did it turn out like this?”**

I had downloaded games that would still work even without internet connection, and it seems he had taken a liking to Angry Birds…… well, either way, I received my iPhone and tried pressing the buttons here and there.

The conclusion---the occurrence that was inevitably going to happen had occurred.

“There's no more battery.”

“Battery? What's that?”

“Mm…… It's a proper noun in my world. In other words, the insides are empty. There's no more energy. Something along those lines.”

Yudia made an expression that showed that he had understood. To be exact, he had let out a 'kuh' sound while gripping at his heart, making it seem as if he had just drunk poison, but since I had seen this type of behavior several times for the past several days, I

understood that it meant that he had taken a liking to it.

“How detestable. Can you not fill it back up?”

“I left behind my charger. And even if I did bring my charger, it’s a bit impossible here. You need a thing called electricity after all.”

“Then do we have to call a mage? There’s one on the third floor of the basement here in the central tower.”

It seems he has really taken a liking to my iPhone.

No, it might just be Angry Birds that was to his liking…….

“Leave it for now. If I do well on the test, then I’ll be able to take a trip back to my world after all. I’ll charge it fully at that time.”

“Mmm. It can’t be helped. I understand. Then, while I obediently wait for the next month to arrive, I shall soothe my hatred by defeating the summoned beings summoned by the Silver Lion Earl.”

Incidentally, this was the reason why the Tenth Sky Wizard of the Twelve Sky Wizards, Martial Sky, the member of the ‘Superior(Even) Sky Wizards’ which can only be joined by one’s skill and achievements, the person who has the role as the royal courier of the End Void Gate of the Twelve Factions, Yudia Batsand, was visiting this city which belonged to the Silver Lion Earl. Yudia was extremely powerful, but due to the characteristics of the martial arts which he was proficient at, it seems it was difficult for him to regulate his strength. That was why it was difficult for him to find anyone that was worth fighting among the citizens of this world. However, because of that very characteristic of the martial arts he had mastered, it seems there was a need for him to periodically demonstrate his real ability, so as a result, he would exercise his ability by subjugating the powerful otherworldly creatures that the Earl of the Silver Lion would summon.

An arena.

The most primeval type of entertainment.

A second ago, in the part where Zia had said 'I was able to become Yudia's pupil because of Her Excellency's connection', that was most likely thanks to the Earl's ability. In Yudia's case, it was good for him since he was able to relieve some stress while exercising his real ability, and in the case of the Silver Lion Earl, it was good for her since she was able to get acquainted with a powerful individual such as Yudia. It was quite the exemplary win-win situation, but as one of those otherworldly creatures that were summoned by her, I couldn't help but get a vague feeling from it.

After returning the iPhone to me, Yudia looked at me with admiration. Well, to be exact, he looked at me with a face that appeared as if he were staring at the enemy of his parents, but like I said, after seeing it for several days, it gets filtered automatically.

“But you really were able to learn how to speak well in a matter of days. I understand why the Silver Lion Earl values you.”

“Though it's not at a good level yet.”

For convenience' sake, I've been dramatizing it to make it seem as if I'm fluent, but in reality, my way of speech consisted of simple words, that even kids would most likely know, and practiced through the repetition of those words. For instance, if I were to use this situation as an example in Korean, then 'Not yet. I'm not good. I need a little more. I need time.' this was how I had said that previous line. Well, listening and speaking are two different issues. Referentially, I currently have the most confidence in my reading, but if I told you that I was anxious since there was still a lot of lexemes that I didn't know, then you can get an approximate grasp of where my reading level is at.

“Do you know how the test will be done?”

“I’m not certain. You most likely know this already, but the Earl of the Silver Lion is an individual who is as temperamental as the amount of hatred she shoulders. Reading that person’s inner thoughts is difficult. But, well, if it’s your current level, then wouldn’t that be enough to pass?”

“Mm, there’s still a lot of insufficient parts, but……. Honestly, I think the backflip is going to be the biggest obstacle.”

“Harbor a bit more loathing and apply yourself. If it’s you, then you can definitely do it. In any case, your learning speed is like heaven and earth when compared to my trash-like disciple.”

“Teacher, I am ashamed…….”

It seems that even the fairish Zia was unable to make bad jokes when it came to her teacher since she had meekly lowered her head with a distressed expression on her face. Yudia glimpsed at that Zia with a regrettable expression(to be exact, it was as if he was looking at trash) on his face and let out a sigh.

“Apply yourself further. You are lacking in abhorrence. I accepted you as my disciple because of the Silver Lion Earl’s ability, and although there hasn’t been a single day where I didn’t regret that decision, back during the time when you had crushed your Pellabie(Translating……. Assuming it to be ‘fellow disciples’) I felt that there was a chance in you. A little more.”

Yudia pushed up his glasses and continued.

“A little more, hatred.”

He spoke while keeping his glasses pressed up.

“A just born child, the rising sun, the blowing wind, and the

sound of flowing water. This world is both vast and filled with things to loathe. Detest it. Enmity, and solely enmity will take you to high places. As someone who has lived through 187 springs, I can guarantee you this while putting the name of the Sect of Batsand on the line.”

“.....I’ll do my best, teacher.”

“Of course you will. Although I say this often, are you not serving a good lord who’s filled with hatred? Try to at least shoulder one tenth of the hatred that the Silver Lion Earl bears in her stead. That’s what people refer to as loyalty, nothing else.”

Regardless of his philosophy, those words just now were suggesting at something in an ambiguous way. Zia must have realized that as well since she then inclined her head.

“I want to do so as well, but.....”

“Words like wanting to do so isn’t needed. If you are my disciple and the Silver Lion Earl’s right-hand person, then you must do so.”

After talking in a pressuring tone, Yudia then shook his head.

“Hoo. I haven’t been here in awhile, so when I saw that the Silver Lion Earl’s hatred had slightly faded, I thought that my disciple was finally able to become as helpful as the interest on a deposit of the Fedchants. Do you know how disappointed I was when I found out that I was mistaken?”

Those words---it should have hurt Zia a bit.

Yudia looked back and forth between Zia, who still had her head lowered, and me, before letting out another sigh.

“Please do it well. I’ll be taking my leave now.”

“T-Teacher.”

Yudia, who was about to turn away, stopped mid-turn. Zia spoke cautiously.

“That, about the thing I told you about…….”

“…….” Yudia glanced at me. **“Is Yujin not currently present? He’ll hear it.”**

“Ah, Yujin is fine. ……He knows.”

Yudia displayed a mixed expression. The gaze that was directed towards me blazed like the flames of Hell.

Well, in my situation, even if I were to suddenly receive that sort of glare, all I can do is panic, but, mm, judging by the words that have been going back and forth…….

“Is it, perhaps, about the prophecy?”

Yudia gave a deep sigh.

“Zia. I detest the me of the past, who had taken you in as a disciple, more than I have ever done so before.”

“I-I apologize…….”

“Just why? The Silver Lion Earl herself doesn’t know, and you even told me to keep quiet, and yet, why did you tell this Yujin? Your sensibility, I don’t understand it.”

“I have nothing to say, teacher.”

“That’s fine. If twelve people visit, then one has to at least Voneta’ pie(Translating…… Fake wedding?-Matching the context of what has been said ‘Something that is too late cannot be scooped up’, assuming it to be this sort of idiomatic phrase). Yujin, how much do you know?”

“That an unavoidable calamity will approach the Earl this year.”

Personally, that obscureness---should I call it a gap you can wiggle your way out of? Regardless, no matter how you looked at it, I didn't like the fact that it felt as if the Barnum effect of a pseudo fortune teller was in full effect right now. Seeing that even if the Earl were to get caught on her own foot and fall down, then they could just call that the calamity.

It seems Yudia was thinking along those lines as well.

“Yes, the prophecy that the Seventh Sky Wizard of the Twelve Sky Wizards, New Design Foresight, Touma Soh had given to my foolish disciple. Although the reason why I had advanced my visit to the City of Confinement on my schedule and made my stay period a bit longer laid heavily on the fact that I had heard this news---In any case, seeing as how nothing has happened yet, are you sure you weren't just tricked? It's almost the 2nd month, you know? In the first place, nothing good comes from trusting the words of a piece of trash like Touma, Zia.”

“But according to the rumors, they say that he doesn't lie about the future.....”

“I'm also a gentle person according to rumors. Like I would always say, don't be swept away by rumors and only look at the essentials. Only then can you accurately loathe something.”

“Uuh.....”

Zia had completely shrunk away. Yudia shook her head once more.

“Well, I do plan to stay here for a bit longer. If the Silver Lion Earl disappears, then my method to relieve stress will become complicated. In the very rare chance that the prophecy is true---subjugating a calamity, will be enjoyable.”

Yudia then flashed a smile once he had finished speaking. As I thought, if I were to be exact, then he had actually let out a ‘Guhuhuhu’ sound while placing one of his hands near his mouth. It almost sounded as if he were standing in a safe and high location and looking down while laughing in ridicule at some person who was trapped in a swamp and was sinking in deeper the more they struggled, but let’s put that aside. It was that kind of behavior with that sort of appearance, and yet, rumors about him being gentle seemed to be able to get around quite well. However, seeing that he was certainly gentle, the rumors may unexpectedly be reflecting his essence and not his appearance.

“Thank you very much, teacher.”

“It’s just for my own sake.”

This time, Yudia was able to turn away completely and leave the room. Zia continued to bow her head towards his leaving form.

I spoke.

“That’s a good teacher.”

“That’s the case---when he’s nice. My teacher is a scary individual.”

“Though I think that’s just your prejudice speaking…….”

Though there was a problem with his choice of words, it was baffling to find out that he was actually just an ordinarily nice person. If you exclude the psychopath, Silver Lion Earl, who was the first person I met, and the unidentified creature known as Zia, then this world may possibly be filled with good faith.

“That’s enough comments about my teacher, so resume practicing your backflips, Yujin. My BL novels are on your shoulders.”

“It’d be great if you were aware of the fact that you’re lowering the average standard of the people of this world.”

“What do you mean?”

I literally meant what I had just said.



“But in the end, what am I going to do about the backflips…….”

“Mm~~. Was the advice from Miss Zia useless?”

“Please don’t even bring up that idiot’s name, Miss Sii.”

“Yujin! You can’t say that kind of word!” Sii patted my forehead. “You must be polite when speaking with me! Don’t use foul language if possible, didn’t I say that?”

“I apologize.”

“Mm~~! It’s fine if you know! You just don’t have to do it from now on.”

Sii spoke while giggling ‘Ehehe’. I talked freely with Zia, her teacher, and the Earl, and yet, I continued to use formal speech with Sii who was a maid. Even for me, it felt like quite the peculiar relationship. However, it didn’t seem like Sii had any intention to give up on the idea of being both spoken to with an honorific and being treated like a lady by me---Should I say that it’s just like Sii to comment on my way of speech to her and not the fact that I had slandered Zia a moment ago?---There was no harm in going along with that inclination.

“Yujin, Yujin. Please do a bit of the inner side as well.”

“Yes, yes.”

While I was lost in that thought, Sii, who was receiving a massage while sitting in the shade of the castle wall with her boots off, looked

at me obliquely.



“But Yujin…… is it really fine? I, didn’t wash yet.”

“You asked me to do it, did you not?”

“Yup, I was curious if you’d actually do it…… but, mm, is it really okay? I, naturally sweat a lot. Moreover, my boots, it’s been a long time since I cleaned them…….”

“I can just wash my hands. Rather, is it refreshing?”

“Yup~~ it’s refreshing! Happy! Yujin, good boy! Really good!”

Sii, who was laughing with an ‘Ehehe’, stroked my head. Due to that, the headband that I was wearing came off and fell to the ground.

“Ah, sorry.”

“It’s all right.” I picked it up, put it back on my head, and adjusted it. “Shall I continue?”

“Yup~~! Thanks. So, Yujin, how’s the outside that you said you wanted to see?”

By her words, I turned my gaze towards the embrasure and looked outside.

The City of Confinement, which resided in the territory that belonged to the Silver Lion Earl, was spread out while centering around a protruding hill. The Silver Lion Earl’s castle was on the very top of that hill. If you think about the height of the central tower, then the more appropriate expression one should use in order to describe it would most likely be ‘surging upwards’. If you go to the top of that very central tower, then you can apparently get a complete panoramic view of the city just by spinning around once. However, since you had to have permission in order to go up there, we had come to the top of the rampart since it didn’t require any sort of prerequisite.

This world---the rotation speed of this planet in Earth's terms was approximately 26 hours per rotation. When compared to the Earth, it was 1.1 times longer. However, the intensity of the sunlight here was 1.5 times stronger than my own country. I wasn't sure whether it was because of an astronomical reason or a geographical reason, but I can be certain if it's related to the season, right? Since it was winter, a more transparent and vivid sunlight was mercilessly melting the ice and snow that was covering the city.

The melted snow and ice drenched the city, the remaining water then flowed along the grooves that were created in many places and into the waterways. That's right, waterways---The territory of the Silver Lion Earl, the City of Confinement was a Canal City with several waterways placed here and there. If you could picture waterways as the base, roads on both sides of those canals, and structures proliferating around those roads, then you had an approximate image of this city's appearance. I could see a reasonable number of buildings that were 3 to 4 stories high in places that were adjacent to the roads, and I could even see several towers in places where several canals connected. I had thought this back when I saw Yudia's glasses, but this was impressive enough to make me feel as if I were underestimating the development of technology in this world.

The massive walls that enclosed the city changed that thought into certainty.

They were taller than the castle ramparts, the place where I was currently located, preventing me from seeing past them. Those walls formed the outline of this city. There were two walls that cut through the city and connected to the castle, so it was possible to move directly onto those walls from on top of the rampart, however, in order to do so, you didn't have to go down from the castle, but you had to head up towards the walls instead. If you consider the fact that the ramparts were built on top of the hill, the height and scale of those walls weren't wondrous but they were disparate instead. Furthermore, since they mingled with the canals, which were mentioned earlier, it almost felt even bizarre.

The water that streamed through the canals was flowing from the castle. From there and only there. This castle had complete control over the sole source of water that I could confirm. The entire city's water supply would be cut if they made a couple of floodgates and closed them, and if someone were to walk all the way to the gates of the city wall from here, then this city would literally become a crucible of death where not even a single mouse could escape.

This City of Confinement, in the truest sense, was confined within the palms of the city's lord.

And that lord was the Earl of the Silver Lion.

The psycho, torturer, and pleasure-murderer. The luxurious and cruel magical lord, had the entire city in her clutches.

Fortunately, towards the people of the same world as her, the Silver Lion Earl was---especially to her own citizens, well, she couldn't be called gentle, but since it seemed like she felt something similar to that vague feeling a cool and chic cat would have towards its owner, she most likely wouldn't do anything harsh to them. Nevertheless, I'm only able to say this since I had already experienced how the Earl was like in person, but the majority of the citizens must be going about their lives while constantly filled with anxiety.

Even Sii had said that she thought the Silver Lion Earl was scary.

Ah, now that I mention it.

“Miss Sii.”

“Hm?”

“Miss Sii's adoptive father, the person known as Mikatni, is his relationship with the Silver Lion Earl bad?”

“Mm~~.” Sii leaned her feet back while making a troubled face. “Truthfully, it's the fact that I'm not really close with Mr. Mikatni. That's why I don't know about the relationship between those two in

detail, but…… Ah, no matter what I say, Yujin isn't going to tell Miss Earl, right?"

"Of course."

"Because I believe you. Including Mr. Mikatni, the community leaders all---how should I say it, I heard that they keep away from Miss Earl. Before, Miss Silver Lion Earl had, uh…… because she had tortured not only otherworldly creatures like Yujin, but people on death-row as well. Among those people who were sentenced to death, there was a community leader's relative."

Although the story about the Earl playing around with death-row convicts was something that I had already heard once before when I was still in the basement, for there to be a relative to a community leader mixed in there…… the more I heard about it, the more I thought that Her Excellency the Earl was quite the impressive person. She really did live however she wanted. What's worse was the fact that Sii wasn't done.

"Torture in itself is fine and all, but I heard that the torture method was very severe."

"What did she do?"

"Water and flame, it's a torture method called that. Rather than torture, it was a method of execution."

I had nothing but an ominous prediction.

"Did she boil them?"

"No, water was boiled in a large pot. Then steam comes up, right? With that……."

It leaped over my ominous prediction.

"Yujin, are you okay? The strength in your hand suddenly lessened. Exhausted?"

“It’s just that I don’t like stimulating things…….”

“Mm~~ something like that. Is a little surprise.”

“Is it?”

“Yup, because of the fact that I know what they call kids like Yujin.”

The nodding Sii cleared her throat with an ‘ehem’ and looked down at me.

“Certainly, they call kids like Yujin, a masochist, right?”

I was suddenly acknowledged as a masochist.

“That is not so.”

“Mm~~ but Yujin, think about it. You’re someone who’s impressive enough to speak informally with Miss Earl and Miss Knight, but you speak formally to a person who’s nothing more than a maid and is also younger than you. Also, even though you fiercely bite back at Miss Knight, you listen to the majority of what the servant girl says. Moreover, you’re massaging her foot which she hasn’t washed yet. Politely kneeling and doing your all. This kind of man, if it was you, Yujin, what would you call him?”

A masochist.

“Auh! Ung~~ that hurts! Yujin! Massaging more strongly just because you can’t refute is something bad kids do!”

“It only feels that way because your muscles are stiff here. Also, I am not a masochist.”

“Ah, did you want to be scolded? By making a pointless rebuttal, you’re refuted in return, so by thorough word torture, you wanted to be forced into a corner mentally as well? If that’s so, then I, misunderstood you, Yujin. I’ll reflect on it.”

The nodding Sii uttered an ‘ehem’ and looked down at me.

“Certainly, they call kids like Yujin, a mazohisto, right?”

Just because you said it with a Japanese accent this time, doesn’t mean anything changes.

Regardless, Japanese accents were really interesting. Without a doubt, mazohisto gave a more, how do you say it, perverted feeling than masochist did. I can’t help but get this hopeless sensation from it.

“That is not so.”

“Hmng~~ but Yujin, think about it. The fact that Yujin is wearing a maid uniform right now. It’s strange, even though you’re a boy. Moreover, you’re even wearing a headband and a pair of stockings. Wearing clothes that are 2 sizes smaller than what you would normally wear so those clothes cling tightly to your body. This kind of man, if it was you, Yujin, what would you call him?”

A mazohisto.

“You’re the one who bestowed upon me these clothes, Miss Sii. The clothes I was wearing got dirty as well. The weather is also cold.”

“But those were the only clothes I had. Couldn’t you have requested Miss Zia for some?”

“It’s not like that idea didn’t come to mind. It’s also not like I didn’t carry out that idea.”

“What happened?”

“As you can see, I’m a person who can wear a small maid uniform and a small pair of stockings without any resistance. I’ll just say that something which even I couldn’t wear had come out.”

Sii looked away from me.

“Uh…… it must have been hard, Yujin.”

“It’s fine. That fellow most likely didn’t offer that to me while seriously intending for me to wear it. A tsuk---A rebuttal is what that foolish knight probably wanted. Regardless, even I felt reluctant.”

“Mm~~ like that. Yujin surprisingly has a child-like side to him. Moreover, since you’re earnest, it’s not like it doesn’t feel as if you’re bringing trouble upon yourself. Even now, you’re still massaging…… even though it’s fine to do it moderately. As I thought, Yujin is, a mazo, right?”

“Even if you shorten the word, what isn’t right, isn’t right.”

“Okay. I’m not sure, but the fact that Yujin can tolerate the majority of things. But the fact that there’s also things which you can’t tolerate, I understand this well. A line where you can concede, and a line where you can’t concede. That I’ll one day perhaps make Yujin mad, I’m afraid of that.”

Considering what she had said earlier, not only did she happily accept the idea of me using honorifics, but be it informal language or my service, she seemed to be enjoying them both. Also, if her annoyance wells up, then she would even (albeit while adjusting her strength) hit me. If I’m a mazo, then without a doubt, she was a sadist.

Someone who’s thoroughly strong to the weak.

And thoroughly weak to the strong.

That sadist Sii gazed at me obliquely while carefully stroking my head.

“That’s why, if I, perhaps, make Yujin mad later on, that isn’t my intention. It’s because I, went along with the mood a little, unknowingly, and crossed the line. That’s why, if you’re upset, then I’d like it if you’d tell me you’re upset first instead of getting mad at me. It’s a wanton request, but…… is that okay?”

Well, of course.

“That’s okay.”

Sii’s face turned red like an apple. Her half-opened eyes were filled to the brim with enjoyment and delight, her tightly sealed lips squirming like a worm in the sunlight. The squealing girl pulled me into a tight hug and rubbed her cheek against my forehead.

It was in that moment.

“I said she’d be like that, right?”

“You were right, how amazing. Kazo(Translating…… A proper noun?-Assuming it to be a nickname given to Sii-‘Whitey’) **is really Petto-riero**(Translating…… One pot of soup? Has a big hand? Tanked up?-Assuming it to be ‘their boldness is impressive’).”

“I know right~? Whitey became really Sio’ garen(Translating…… Ridge? Noon? Sunlight?-Assuming it to be ‘going along with the atmosphere’).”

Sii became startled by the sudden voices that could be heard.

My neck was nearly snapped because of that, but let’s put that aside. Three maids were looking this way with folded arms. The leader type, one introverted lady type, and one of the three idiots type.



The leader type maid spoke with her hands on her hips.

“Sii! What are you doing skipping out on your job!?”

The Sii who had flinched looked up at the leader type girl.

“S-Sorry…… but I had…… finished all of my work…….”

“Then you should help someone else with their task. Really, why don’t you have that kind of sense?”

“B-Because it didn’t seem like the others were busy……. You guys are resting as well…….”

“Are you talking back right now?”

“That’s---that’s not, it.”

“Then what is it? Even when your fault has been pointed out, you just make excuses! That’s why you’re Pahuke’ kira(Translating……Stone in water? Lake boulder? Sunken rock?- Assuming it to be ‘out of place’).”

Sii let out a ‘Uuuu……’ sound and lowered her gaze. Her fists were so tightly clenched that you could see her veins.

The leader type maid glimpsed at me with a frown before returning her gaze back down to Sii.

“Really, every time I try to help you, it ends up like this. You ignore the pieces of advice that we’d thoughtfully give you and you only spew excuses and lies out of your mouth. You’re hopeless.”

Sii flinched. Whether it was because of her reaction or because of the leader type maid’s words, but the other two maids burst into laughter.

“That’s right, isn’t it?”

“Eh~ hopeless people need to be cured~.”

The idiot trio type girl grabbed Sii by the wrist. Sii unintentionally let herself be dragged, and after staggering a bit, she became frightened by what was happening. The idiot trio type girl glared at Sii with eyes that said ‘Would you look at this?’ and dragged Sii into the sunlight.

As I had explained previously, the sunlight of this world was stronger than the sunlight in Korea. The albino girl was exposed to the merciless rays of the sun---Sii screamed.

“I-It hurts……!”

“How can it hurt, you Piera(Translating…… A proper noun? I assume it’s a nickname that means a monster who can’t go under sunlight?)~ For you to be unable to go under the sunlight, just what crime did you commit to the Twelve Main Gods in your previous life~?”

“Just why is this sort of defective item Sir Blacksmith’s adopted daughter? I can’t understand the hobbies of the rich.”

The introverted lady type girl scoffed at Sii. Sii tried to cover her body, but the idiot trio type girl was grabbing Sii by the wrist and shoulder, preventing her from doing so. Sii, who was writhing her body like a squid that had gone on top of an iron plate, couldn’t handle it any longer and shook off the idiot trio type girl’s grasp before returning to the shade and curling up.

“Uuuuuuuuh……i-it hurts…….”

Sii trembled while hugging her body. Without even glancing at her, the idiot trio type girl looked at her own hand with a tearful expression.

“Hiing~ My hand hurts~ In any case, she’s a Whitey who only has a lot of strength~.”

“I said she was barbaric. I understand why the rumor about her having Wreck(Translating…… I assume it’s a proper noun) blood in her has been going around.”

The introverted lady type girl stated. The leader type maid, who was looking at those two girls, made a bitter smile.

“Leave it at that. There’ll be misunderstandings.”

“But Mari~ even you said that it was regrettable, since if Aria wasn’t caught in the scene of the crime, then you would have put it all on this girl, right~?”

“Aunette. That’s why I said words like that will bring misunderstandings. That’s something I said merely as a joke, remember?”

The leader type maid called Mari spoke while glancing to the side. The introverted lady type girl chuckled, while the idiot trio type girl giggled.

“Then we’ll take our leave now~ Whitey~.”

“If you’re upset then try doing the ‘Twelve Fingers’. Though it’ll probably be impossible.”

“Hm.”

The three maids then turned away. Although Mari had glimpsed at me once before doing so, that was it. Similar to when they had first arrived, they started to walk away just as quickly.

Leaving behind Sii who was curled up in the shadow.

When we came here, we had moved underneath the eaves of the rampart, through the shade. Even then, Sii still slightly felt pain. This was also one of the reasons why I didn’t refuse Sii’s request to massage her. She had endured the pain in order to go along with my childish request of ‘I want to see the city’. However, that Sii, the girl who was suffering even while in the shade, had received the sunlight--direct rays of the sun. It must have hurt.

The type of pain, that I know.

**“Damn it…… Those damned bastards…… it hurts……
Damn it…… Damn it…….”**

Sii wept while grinding her teeth.

.....

“Miss Sii.”

“Those bitches, those bitches…… one day I’ll certainly, without fail---.”

“Miss Sii.”

“What!?”

Sii shouted. Eyes that were as red as the surface of the sun were directed towards me, but in the next instant, that emotion settled down with an ‘ah’ feeling.

“Sorry…… I’m sorry, Yujin. Yujin’s not the bad one here, but…… I know, but, I…… Sorry…….”

“It’s fine.”

I caressed those shoulders that were trembling enough to be pitiable.

“Really……? You haven’t become mad cause I suddenly shouted……?”

“I’m not upset. As Miss Sii had said earlier, if I’m upset, then I will tell Miss Sii the reason behind that anger at that time.”

I continued.

“In the first place, I believe that Miss Sii is incapable of making me mad.”

“……Why’s, that?”

“That’s because Miss Sii is.”

“.....I, am?”

“Nevermind. More than that.”

I then spoke.

“Revenge, let’s do it.”

“Eh.....?”

I stood up.

I lightly clasped my beads once and then let them go.

“Wait!”

Powerfully, I shouted at the backs of the leaving maids.

The departing maids stopped in their positions. They turned their heads. They looked at me.

Above the rampart, I exchanged glances with the maids.

I organized the current situation.

First, I had come on top of the rampart and was looking down at the city.

Second, Sii was receiving a message from that me.

Third, three maids appeared before the two of us, harassed Sii, and then tried to leave.

Fourth, that’s why---I stopped them in their place.

I spoke.

“Excuse me.”

“Hm?”

The leader type girl named Mari returned to me a reaction that said 'What?'. However, as far as reactions go, her speed was excessively fast. She glimpsed at me when she was bullying Sii, so that means she had been waiting for this. If that's the case, then does that mean the reason why she harassed Sii was because she wanted me to intervene? Considering the fact that the opposition was a maid, and if I also took into account the fact that she must have received education and skill that befit that position, then that was most likely it.

1. She was concerned about my identity. Without having to even look at any other choices, this was it.

For the past several days, I was barely able to pay attention to any of the other maids since I stuck next to Sii all the time, but because of that, a saturation point had arrived for those maids.

I inclined my head.

“This is a late greeting, but I’m the toy of Miss Silver Lion Earl. Currently, this maid, Sii, has been exclusively assigned to me.”

Mari folded her arms. The other two maids exchanged glances for a moment before meekly stepping back and hiding behind Mari.

Then, as I had expected, the person who had the initiative in this group was this Mari person.

I only had to face, this person.

“For someone who once stuttered while giving a greeting, it seems you are able to speak quite well now. “

Mari spoke---formally.

“I know that you are Miss Silver Lion Earl’s toy.” Mari narrowed one eyebrow while raising the other. **“Sii was exclusively assigned to you?”**

“Yup. Miss Earl dotes on me after all. Miss Zia as well.”

I examined Mari as I spoke. She was wearing a perfect fit maid uniform that stuck to her body and didn't show any signs of excess or lacking skin. Her face with the exposed forehead went beyond being tidy and even gave off a refreshing feeling. If there was an armband wrapped around her right arm, then it would have suited her, but there wasn't. Instead, I could at least vividly feel the band that was wrapped around her mind. Those very eyes that were looking at me were drenched in disgust.

“That's right. Why is Miss Earl's toy, who's also doted on by even the second in command of the Silver Lion Royal Guards, massaging the feet of the maid who was exclusively assigned to him?”

“Because I'm a toy.”

“If you want me to refer to you by something else, then I will do so. Please answer the question first.”

“Hm, that.”

As I thought, that---was probably what they were curious about the most.

For the past several days, within the eyes of the maids, including the fact that I would roam around the castle freely, they must have seen me act unreservedly around the Earl, Zia, and even Zia's teacher, Yudia Batsand. Just these facts alone were enough to leave them bewildered, but I also showed a courteous attitude to Sii, who was clearly lower than them. As a result, it went beyond bewilderment and became pure confusion.

‘What's with Sii?’ ‘That man is supposed to be the Earl's toy, but why is he with Sii?’ ‘Sii, that girl, she's doing whatever she pleases with him.’ ‘What is he? That man, wasn't he Miss Earl's toy?’ ‘It's bothering me.’ ‘How arrogant.’ ‘For someone like Sii.’ ‘Something like Sii.’ ‘Sii’

Sii Garno Mikatni.

“Because I’m a masochist.”

The atmosphere that was strained and tense became frozen.

“.....Just now, what did you say?”

Mari, tilted her head and asked.

I calmly responded.

“It’s because I gain sexual excitement from pain and humiliation. Miss Earl and Miss Zia are fine as well, but rather than serving under such high-standing people, as I expected, it feels much better serving someone with a lower status and lacking in some regards.”

A silence flowed by.

That silence---was broken by Mari.

“.....That’s vulgar. Since you were in that outfit, I knew well that you didn’t have a normal mentality, but..... I see that you’re in possession of a shallowness that goes beyond common sense.”

Now Mari spoke while not even suppressing her disgust. From her neat clothes, her gaze towards me, her atmosphere that felt as if she were straightening her surroundings, etc, you could call this side of her as being a neat freak.

No---to be exact, it would probably be better to call it ‘a normal girl’s intuition’.

Honestly, she was the easiest type of person to deal with.

“Yup. It’s just as you say. However.”

I spread out my arms and grinned at her.

“As you said, that statement of speaking down to me, who’s Miss Earl’s toy, is the same thing as talking down to Miss Earl’s hobby as well, right?”

“.....Uu!”

Mari bit her lower lip.

“How could that be the case? I’m just saying that you---to Miss Earl, are someone who is so vulgar that you don’t suit her. If you’re unable to understand the difference between the two, then I have nothing more to say.”

“Hmm. But Miss Earl dotes on that me, you know? In other words, that means you’re scorning Miss Earl’s esthetic sense.”

Opposite to my previous action, I wrapped my arms around both my shoulders, lowered my gaze, and spoke while laughing like I did earlier. As if I had no malice, as if I was slightly lacking in the head, but while directing the conversation towards a path that made it difficult for the opposition to make a rebuttal, that was the trick.

.....Although it’s been quite a long time since I had last done this idiotic bastard act, it seems I didn’t get rusty.

“Like I said, that’s not what I meant! It’s just that I personally, do not like you.”

“Heeh, but that’s not what you said earlier?”

“.....Uu. That’s.”

“Yeah, that’s?”

Once I spoke with a tone that sounded as if I were having fun, I glanced at my surroundings. I could see the two other maids glancing at each other anxiously and Sii was looking back and forth between me and Mari with wide eyes.

The perplexed Mari, took a step back with a face that appeared as if she was chewing on a bug.

“.....That’s because, my words, had come out slightly wrong.”

“I see. Of course, there’s no way that some maid could possess a proper speaking ability. It’s fine, I understand.”

Mari gritted her teeth. The emotion that came from being treated like an idiot by a vulgar pervert---rage.

She was most likely still too young to realize the fact that that anger brought upon a series of mistakes and harm.

“You really must be receiving adoration from Miss Earl. Let’s see how far that takes you.”

“Since you can’t make a retort you say ‘wait and see’? How cute.”

“.....Say what you want. No, right now, if Miss Earl finds out that you’re giving your body, which should be devoted to her, to a maid like this and not to that Earl and Miss Zia, who you said were doting on you so much, then that domineering attitude of yours will---.”

“Hmm, but Miss Earl prefers it like this, you know?”

“.....Pardon?”

“After fully allowing someone to make her own toy become worn out, she enjoys drinking tea while listening to the experiences that toy of hers had gone through. Don’t you think it’s a refined hobby that befits an aristocrat? Even I, as a masochist, am personally grateful to her.”

She probably couldn’t say anything back because of this. There’s no way that a working maid would go to the Earl and inquire if this was

true, after all. Sure enough, Mari let out a groan---while revealing her disgust towards the abnormal information that I had just told her and took another step back.

“Ah, but. You should have been residing in this residence for much longer than I have, but for you to not know Miss Earl’s preferences properly. You’ve been living as a maid quite well despite that bad wit of yours.”

Once I said that to her while tilting my head slightly and placing my hand to my lips, a spark emitted from her eye. However, in that same instant, it seems Mari was finally able to realize that the more she dealt with me, the more harm that came to her. If I left her alone like this, then she would have chewed on her anger and left on her own volition, but.

That wouldn’t be enough.

“But, as I had said, since I enjoy serving that sort of lacking individual.”

I smiled like a flower that had bloomed in a swamp and approached her.

“Should I, ask Miss Earl, if she could change my exclusive maid to you?”

Mari’s eyes that were filled with disgust became mixed with fear as well.

“What are you…….”

“But since that would be a hasty decision, it’d probably be better if I had a taste first.”

“T-Taste? What are you talking about?”

“You’ll understand soon enough.”

Mari backed away hesitantly. I took a step towards her.

“D-Don’t come closer.”

Mari retreated while covering her chest. Although that may be an orthodox defense stance, the person you’re facing against is a pervert--me pretending to be that type of character--- you know? For you to cover your chest, do you think I’d aim for such a logical location?

I approached her, lowered my back, and put my face near her shoulder region---in other words, her armpit.

“A good smell.”

“.....,,!?!?!?!?”

The face of the tidy Mari---became blue all the way to her revealed forehead.

“Uh, uh, uh.....”

“Despite that, it’s quite pungent. Are you sure you’re washing properly?” If I were to speak honestly, then this was a lie. Just by looking at her, you can tell that she paid attention to her cleanliness, but because there really was no scent---If I had to speak, there was a dim scent of grape---I was slightly surprised. **“Well, I do prefer this type of matureness.”**

“Uh, uh, uh, uh---.”

“Ah, can I lick it once? I feel like it might have that perfect bitter and sour tas---.”

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaa!!”

Slap! A lightning bolt struck my cheek.

Since I had already predicted this, I had tried to turn my head the moment I was hit in order to diffuse the pain, but it seems the timing was off since it just plainly hurt. It can’t be helped. I’m not that good

with using my body. That's why, Slap! the fact that I, Slap! kept getting slapped by both her hands, Slap! no, Slap! no, it hurts so it's difficult for me to say this can't, Slap! be helped, Slap! Ah, uh.

“Pervert! Pervert! Pervert! Pervveeeeeert……!! Ren’ is……! Silin……! Pen’ toe……!!”

After shouting words that didn't require translations since I could guess what they meant, Mari ran away with her arms wrapped around her shoulders. The idiot trio type girl who was looking at us with dots for eyes and the introverted lady type girl who was letting out baited breaths with a flushed face(As I thought, my eyes weren't wrong), both became panicked as well and chased after that Mari.

“M-Mari!? Wait for us~!”

“M-Me too…….”

This time, just as they had arrived, they left in an instant as well. Even after their figures had disappeared into the rampart, the sound of their hasty footsteps didn't cease for a while.

I felt as if both my cheeks were red and my lip was torn. But, well.

Pointing my thumb up, I turned towards Sii.

“How was it? Do you feel better now?”

Sii was wordless with a vacant expression.

And then, she showed a response.

“Ahahahahahaha……!!”

It was a huge laughter.

She was leaning her back against the rampart while kicking her legs, holding onto her stomach and laughing as if she were truly going to be out of breath---it wasn't until her entire face and body had turned red did Sii Garno Mikatni say something.

“Ahaha, uh, how…… Ahak, ah, ah---how--- Yujin, hm~~ how!? Ahahaha……!!”

“Generally, that’s the norm. If a girl was suddenly offered service, then feeling appalled and creeped out---especially if it’s a service that involved an area which they considered to be dirty, it’s normal for a girl to refuse these kinds of things even if it’s from their own lover. It’s rarer for a person to straightforwardly demand service and also feel a sense of superiority as they receive it.”

“What’s with, that! Ahaha, mm~~ are you saying that I’m the degenerate?”

“Is that how it would turn out?”

“Yup~~ I, am offended! That’s why, Yujin, give me a massage! Again!”

“Yes, yes.”

I approached her and did as she requested. Sii continued to laugh even after that.

Wiping the tear that had formed at the corner of her eyes because she had laughed too much, and while wriggling her toes that were wrapped in her stockings, Sii spoke.

“Ahaha…… Mm…… Yujin, that was really masterful. I, was moved. You were really like a pervert. As expected, Yujin is, a masochist.”

The western and eastern pronunciation had fused together.

“That’s not so.”

“Wouldn’t it be good to admit it now? For someone who was able to do it so naturally.”

“It was an act.”

“Mm~~ okay! Be relieved because I’ll believe that lie of yours.

Ahaha…… Mm, Mari. For her to have that face,ahaha, it was really pleasant…… Mm, Yujin.”

“Yes?”

“Even among the maids, Mari has influence. Now rumors about Yujin being a pervert will spread throughout the castle, is that okay?”

That’s right, isn’t it? In truth, after I learned how to speak the language here, including the maids, I had planned to take hold of the substructure of this castle, but with things like this, my plan went from being on hard mode to being on lunatic difficulty. Well, even if it becomes like that, I can just adapt to it. I’ll be able to find a method one way or another, so it wasn’t a problem. This was better.

It was better than leaving alone a crying child who had been bullied.

Instead of telling her those exact words, I spoke.

“There are things one must endure as they live their lives.”

Sii reached out her hand and touched my head.

“Ahaha…… yup, that’s right. But I was surprised. Yujin, I thought you had a quiet personality, but you were incredibly sensuous and full of yourself a second ago. The Yujin of now and the Yujin of earlier, which one is the real one? How can you switch so quickly?”

That question was something that I had received several times during the 8 Years’ War.

At first, I said that they were both fake, but after finishing the 8 Years’ War, my answer had changed.

That changed answer, I told her it.

“Both of them, are real.”

While pressing down on the sole of Sii’s foot, I elaborated.

“I’m not different from other people. Changing your behavior and way of speech in order to match whatever role you have at the time is something anyone does, right? Similar to how someone is someone’s superior, someone’s subordinate, someone’s father, and someone’s son. If I use Zia as an example---similar to how she’s a disciple to Yudia, the right-hand person to the Earl, a knight to Miss Sii, and an idiot to me. Regardless of all those, they are all the real Zia.”

All I have is experience in masterfully changing that sort of persona in order to match the situation.

“I’m not different compared to other people. Because, in the end, I’m just a normal person.”

Sii had a face that looked as if she understood and didn’t understand at the same time. Was this a difficult topic for her current self? It wasn’t long before she laughed and scratched the back of her head.

“Yup~~ I get it. In any case, it just means that both sides are Yujin, right?”

“Yes.”

“If that’s the case, then, as I thought, Yujin is a masohisto.”

The western pronunciation went to the front.

“That’s not so.”

“But, didn’t you say that both of them were Yujin?”

“That was a slip of the tongue.”

“Yup~~ you’re making excuses~! For that cowardly mouth, is punishment. Now then, lick it!”

I shrugged my shoulders and did as she requested.

Twitch, twitch. Sii, who’s knees trembled each time stimulus reached them, gave me a sidelong glance.

“Yujin.”

With the end of her foot in my mouth, I tilted my head. Sii spoke.

“Thank you.”

Sii lowered her head with a flushed face.

“I, it’s been a long time since I laughed like this…… thank you. I’m really grateful.”

Removing my lips, I smiled slightly at her.

“Don’t mention it.”

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) BTOOL is a basically a site that was mostly about image sharing.
2. [\[↑\]](#) These two words are spelled the same but they use different Chinese characters, thus changing the meaning.
3. [\[↑\]](#) NL = Normal Love.
4. [\[↑\]](#) Josua and Boris are characters that appeared on a Korean site called 4LEAF. They were profile avatars at first, followed by their appearance in the novel 'Children of Rune' and then in the game 'TalesWeaver'.



Several days had passed once more.

Whether it was because rumors had circulated or not, the maids avoided me. Although there were a couple of them who did the opposite and stuck near us (to be exact, people like the introverted lady type), they didn't have the courage to strike a conversation with us, so Sii and I were able to spend our time peacefully. From practicing backflips and learning how to speak to receiving service from me and teaching me how to speak, as both the two of us were busy, it was fortunate for us.

Of course, it wasn't constantly peaceful.

“Yujin, it's about your attire.”

The Silver Lion Earl looked down and spoke to me while supporting her jaw with one hand.

“What?”

“What---even if you ask that, you know, it's perplexing. Those, clothes used to be worn by Mikatni's adopted daughter, right? Can you not wear some proper clothes? My mental world of aestheticism is receiving DoT^[2] damage.”

This was a little unexpected. Similar to what I had told Mari, I thought that my current attire perfectly suited the Silver Lion Earl's twisted preferences. It seems that compared to what I had originally thought, the Silver Lion Earl had more of a girlishness to her. Well, if that sort of person goes mad, then it's a given that they'd go mad properly.

For starters, let's give a pretentious remark.

“Earl. In the first place, the front and back of what you said just now redundantly use the same words. The DoT of 'DoT damage' already has the word damage in it.”

“I recall hearing the same thing before. Why can't damned-otaku

bastards just ignore these kinds of things? Why do they want to display the things they know so much?”

There was a sharp edge in the tone of her voice. I had said that in order to relieve the atmosphere, but it seems I had upset her mood instead.

I spoke defensively.

“I’m not an otaku.”

“Yeah yeah, you most likely just had a lot of interest in that sub-culture. Ahyeon said the same thing as well. Though, since I was a little meek and docile at the time, I apologized by saying sorry.”

I didn’t ask her what she wanted to do then. If I did ask, then I felt like the Silver Lion Earl would actually do what she wanted directly to my body, so no matter how much I thought about it, it didn’t seem like it would benefit me.

I spoke defensively once more.

“If you give me proper clothes then I’ll wear proper clothes.”

“Did Zia not give you anything?”

“If I wore that, then your mental world of aestheticism would have been overkilled a long time ago.”

The Silver Lion Earl furrowed her brow.

“It seems there are no decent people around me. Those so-called community leaders only worry about their own profits, my summoned-being goes around cross-dressing, the head deity of the house, Sophna, is a hikikomori, Yudia, who came here as a guest, is a hatred enthusiast and also Zia’s teacher, and Zia is, well, Zia.”

And you’re you. Since it felt like it would be dangerous if I were to say these words out loud, I kept my mouth shut.

That seemed to be the correct response.

“Also, in regard to those very city community leaders, one of them is going to come to this Silver Lion Castle soon.”

Without laughing, the Silver Lion Earl spat out while putting pressure on her temple.

Right, I was told that she didn't have good relations with the community leaders. No wonder she was vaguely sensitive.

“What kind of person are they?”

“It's someone related to the adopted daughter of Mikatni who you've been siding with lately. I'm not sure if her foster father, Mercè, is going to come, or if her sister, Abria, is going to be the one to come. Although, I heard that Mercè has been sick lately, so there's a higher chance that Abria will come. Well, not like I'm interested.”

No matter how you looked at it, far from being uninterested, that behavior of talking while shrugging her shoulders gave off a feeling that felt as if she were so concerned that she couldn't endure it any longer. For her to even have a coy property to her, she was an Earl who possessed every decent popular tag.

It can't be helped.

“Do you want to hit me?”

“Hoo? Will you let me?”

“Sure.”

“Okay. If you want me to.”

The Silver Lion Earl then struck me.

Mm.

“No, not this kind of hitting.”

“It was a joke.”

“Zia did a similar joke back when I was still in the basement. Really, master and servant are alike. In any case, I’ll welcome them.”

The Silver Lion Earl drew her brow together.

“Why would Mr. Yujin do that? Welcoming the guest is the job of the maaids. Mr. Yujin is currently a squire.”

“My test is soon, right? I felt like there’s a need for me to have a partner to test out this world’s language.”

“The adopted daughter of Mikatni should be acting as your talking companion. Zia would do it as well. If what you want is a native speaker, well, they’re all native speakers, but if you need a person who doesn’t know Korean, then Yudia is already taking care of that. Is this insufficient?”

“Sii and Yudia are fine, but that Zia…… why is it that when that girl speaks in this world’s language, she becomes so courteous?”

“It’s Zia after all.”

Those were words that explained a lot of things.

The Silver Lion Earl shrugged her shoulders and continued.

“Whether Zia is Zia or not, they were terms that we had agreed on when we learned Korean. We were going to learn a new language anyway, so while we’re at it, we decided to each grasp a different way of speech. That’s why for me, Zia, and Sophna there’s a slightly large difference between our style of speech in Korean and in this world’s language, that kind of feel, you know? Something like that.”

“A type of persona, huh.”

“YesYesYes. Well, at this point, the reason for it has been lost. There’s probably no one around who’s capable of noticing the

difference after all.”

“Don’t be so sure of yourself.”

I spoke.

“I’m here now.”

A moment of silence flowed by.

The Silver Lion Earl stared at me blankly. She, who was wandering back and forth between bafflement and helplessness, spoke in a tone that sounded as if she had tossed her vote towards bafflement.

“Mr. Yujin. Do you know that you occasionally say some incredibly cute things?”

“It’s not cute.”

“That very act of saying those words is proof that it’s cute.”

Another silence.

“Returning to the main topic, Mr. Yujin. Are you saying that you need more people to practice talking to, Mr. Yujin?”

“To be exact, that’s one of the reasons.”

“What are the other reasons?”

“Several things. For example, that Mikatni person is a blacksmith, right? Since I’m an apprentice knight right now, there’s a chance that I may end up being in their care later on for things like weapons and armor. Moreover, since they’re a community leader, if I meet them, then the experience might be helpful when I’m writing your speeches and assisting you with things regarding the city as well. Plus.” I folded my arms. “You, seem to be concerned about it.”

“Hoo? What nonsense. I’m not concerned about it at all.”

That very act of saying those words is proof that you're concerned, instead of saying this, I quietly looked at her. The Silver Lion Earl let out a sigh.

"Well, in conclusion, you're saying that you're doing it for my sake, right? Really, Mr. Yujin, like I said, you say some incredibly cute things sometimes."

"I told you it's not cute." I gave her a disgusted response. "Furthermore, I'm also interested in the medical practitioner of Sii……etcetera etcetera."

"Hmm."

The Silver Lion Earl crossed her arms and nodded her head.

"Aaall right."

She nodded again.

She then leaned her cheek against her hand and looked down at me.

"Though I have to say, Mr. Yujin is occasionally cute at times."

"Hm?"

"No, it's just that you seem incredibly dense at times."

After saying that, the Silver Lion Earl vocalized herself getting up from her chair. Shortly after, she spun around in place and did a pose where she was pointing a finger gun at me.

"You may go. I'll give you the permission to welcome the guest."

The Silver Lion Earl announced.



“.....So that’s why you came to me?”

Mari spoke with a face that looked like she was a girl who had a cockroach latched onto her leg. Of course, as I wasn’t a cockroach or latched onto her leg, I nodded my head fairly.

“Yeah. I heard that you handled everything in regard to greeting guests.”

“I handle the majority of things here.” Mari corrected me coldly. “Different to that Whitey who goes along with that vulgar hobby of yours and goofs around.”

“I believe that using that sort of discriminating word isn’t good.”

“It’s not discrimination but division. I understand that you aren’t used to our language yet, but please say it properly.”

Regardless of the world, I see that racists all say the same thing.

“In any case, what do you intend to do? The guest to arrive this time is Miss Abria Mikatni. As she is Sir Mercè Mikatni’s biological daughter, she’s also the director of the mining industry district. She’s completely different compared to that adopted daughter you worship so much, you know? If you perhaps think that you can satisfy Miss Abria Mikatni with the same perverted things you do that work on that fake Mikatni, then---.”

Leaving her to ramble on, I looked around my surroundings. We were currently in the reception room. There were several cuisines roughly set out on top of a table. As there were things that looked like mini-cakes, there were things that looked like tea, and things that looked like cookies. Of course, there was something similar to a pie as well.

While I was looking around the room like that, Mari continued to talk without resting for even a single moment. A considerable amount

of her words were complaints towards either me or Sii, but she didn't bring up anything that felt particularly new. Instead of giving her my frank opinion saying that she was in desperate need for a renewal of her repertoire, I spoke.

“Is this everything you're bringing out to welcome the guest with?”

“Are you referring to the refreshments? This is everything.”

“Hm. One moment.”

I tossed a cookie into my mouth. Mari quickly became bewildered.

“What are you doing!?”

Instead of responding, I slightly tasted the mini cake and had a sip of the tea. I had also broken off a corner portion of the pie and ate it. The reason why I stopped there was because Mari had rushed towards me with an attitude that befitted an erupting volcano. She must have been incredibly angered since her fingers felt cold as they clutched me by my collar.

“I asked what you're doing! Even if you didn't receive education---.”

“None of these are good.”

“What!? Just now, what did you---.”

“Who made these?”

Mari faltered. Using the opportunity when the pressure on my collar had lessened, I pulled myself free and stared straight at her. Mari regained her senses and tried to glare at me, but after some time went by like that, she hesitantly avoided her gaze.

“Raya, made them.”

If it's Raya, then that was the name of the maid who appeared to have more of a leading role among the coexisting lilies type. I shrugged my shoulders and snapped my finger.

“I’ll use the kitchen a bit.”

There were several things I felt while eating at the dining room for the past several days.

First, the fact that they had an eating culture that wasn't much too different compared to my own aesthetic, taste, and nutritional value. Although it's something that I had grasped when I had received food from Zia on my first day in this world after having been summoned, it was something to be relieved about again. In any case, the citizens of this world didn't drink soup that tasted like pig piss and claim that it was refreshing nor did they eat something that looked like frog eyes and become happy while chewing on them. Considering the fact that this was another world, this was something that I couldn't wish more for.

Second, the fact that the majority of the food that was served here suited my palate. I'd like it if you paid attention to the part about it being not 'the average palate of Koreans', but 'my palate'. I don't really like stimulating food. I prefer mild things and things that aren't spicy or bitter. If I were to use kimchi as an example, then white kimchi or radish water kimchi, moreover things that weren't dipped in cider, these are the types of food that suited my palate.

However, as that taste represented a huge trend, it didn't mean that the quality of the substantive food here was at a level that I could be satisfied with. Ingredients, spices, cooking method, and cooking utensils, these things weren't as well maintained here as they were on modern Earth, so the taste naturally became dull.

Third, that meant that I could probably do it better.

“Try it.”

I spoke while placing a hotcake (ft. otherworld ingredients) on top

of a plate. The eyes of Mari, who was watching me with a doubtful gaze throughout the entire time I was cooking, became conflicted. It seems she couldn't decide whether she should eat it or not, whether she should eat it and give a harsh review, or whether the food I made was even safe to eat in the first place.

I helped her.

“Now then.”

“.....Uhk.”

Once I placed it against her lips, Mari finally opened her mouth and received the thing that I had stuck forward. Her pink lips moved up and down for a moment before her throat moved once.

Mari opened her eyes wide, hesitated for a moment, before averting her gaze.

“It's not an inedible taste.....”

How cute.

“.....Did you think of something weird just now?”

“Not really. One moment.”

I made several other types of cooking and spread them out on plates. Mari made an 'uhk' sound after eating a cookie, made an 'ah' sound after eating a cupcake, and when she drank the tea, she flat out made a depressed face.

“Why is even the tea.....”

“Because I had to become the student body president.”

It seems Mari was unable to understand those words. Well, since I didn't know the corresponding word for 'student body president' in this world's language, I had said it vaguely. In any case, Mari looked at me with furious eyes.

“You, are you perhaps from a noble descent?”

“Somewhat?”

“I see. In that case, this---.”

Mari stopped mid-sentence, her expression having twisted. I followed her line of sight and discovered a scared and curled up Sii. An awkward silence.

“Hmph.”

Mari turned her head away and left the room.

Well, nothing can be done if they’re already gone.

“What brings you here, Miss Sii?”

As was seen a second ago, after my ‘weird rampart’ incident at the castle wall, Mari did whatever she could in order to not be in the same area as Sii, and as expected, Sii did whatever she could in order to avoid the possibility of meeting Mari as well. If that Sii had willingly risked that status quo just to come here, then there must have been a good enough reason. However, instead of answering my question, she glanced at the door that Mari had just left through.

“.....Yujin, are you not concerned about Mari? Is she not scary?”

“I’m concerned but she isn’t scary. She can’t do anything to me anyway.”

“Mm~~ That’s right. But who knows when she’ll explode and cause an accident.”

“I am being cautious of that. However, it won’t happen.”

Sii gazed at me with an expression that looked like she was asking why I was so certain. I explained it to her.

“Because Mari is a person of common sense.”

It seems that Sii found it unpleasant that I had defined the person who harasses her as ‘a person of common sense’. I patted that Sii and comforted her.

“In truth, she’s in the position of directing the maids, so there’s no way that she would put up with a dangerous situation. Of course, there’s a chance that she’ll make a bold decision in order to restore her damaged authority and pride because of that position of hers, but that’d be too trifling to do. In any case, she didn’t become the alpha girl because she bullied Miss Sii, right?”

“Alpha girl…… although I don’t know what that means…… Certainly, Mari was like this when I first came here as well.”

“Yes. She’s able to stand in that position because she’s simply good at her job, which means, her authority comes from her task performance. If that’s the case, then even if bullying Miss Sii can be considered a method to supplement her authority, it can’t be her main method to acquire it. It means that the occasion of her being obsessed with harassing Miss Sii will never come.”

Honestly, I’m not sure why Mari had continued to bully Sii like that. If you recall her reaction during the incident at the rampart, then she wasn’t heavily armed with sadism and perverseness like the Silver Lion Earl or Sii, right? Well, admittedly, bullying wasn’t something that was always done with a reason. A simple motive was sufficient, and Sii had a countless number of things that could be used as a motive.

I shrugged my shoulders.

“As long as there isn’t some reasonable occurrence, there is no chance that she’ll lose her temper and cause an incident. It’ll most likely stop at the line of just being mean.”

If anything, I’m worried that Sii will be the one to cause an accident, but since saying this would be discourteous, I kept it to myself. Sii hesitated with a red face.

“Okay…… In other words, it’ll be fine as long as I don’t boldly provoke her?”

“Yes. To be exact, you can say that Miss Sii will be fine as long as Miss Sii doesn’t run head first into the other maids while they’re all gathered together. Of course, Miss Sii wouldn’t do something like that anyway.”

“Yup~~! That’s obvious. I’m, sensible.”

Regardless of the world, it seems cowardice and sageness were concepts that were commonly used in similar ways. As the target of those two words, I didn’t have the thought or the right to blame that. Therefore, that was why this white maid was incapable of upsetting me. Although Sii was easily angered and cruel to the weak, her essence, which was located much deeper than that, was incredibly similar to my own.

“So, Miss Sii, what has brought you here?”

“My foster-sister is coming. It’s obvious that I would provide reception.”

It was just as I had expected.

Sii Garno Mikatni.

The adopted daughter of---Mikatni.

“Rather, what are you doing, Yujin? I’m, curious.”

“Just like Miss Sii, I’m here to welcome the guest.” And before Sii could ask a question like ‘And so? Why are you here to welcome her?’ I threw her a question first. “What kind of person is she?”

“She’s the director of the mining industry district. Although it’s not as impressive as Sir Mercè Mikatni, she’s a blacksmith with incredible craftsmanship.”

“I know that already. Rather than her status and position, what I wish to know about is something like her personality.”

Sii’s face became slightly red.

“Mm…… She’s a scary person.”

This was another expected response. Was there any other word that the abject Sii would use in order to describe a person who was standing in a position much higher than her own?

However, Sii gave a factual description of the appearance of Abria who was going to arrive in approximately 20 minutes from now.

Her appearance in itself was feeble. With a slender frame and a height that was shorter than my own, her blonde hair was fashioned into vertical rolls and her face had fine lines. Although her modest appearance could be acknowledged as her personal characteristic, her low-exposure dress and her lace gloves, which concealed her arms entirely, made her seem like some lady who had lost her way while going to a banquet. Her charcoal-colored boots looked more like they were for horseback-riding than they did for working. The band that she had wrapped around her shoulder had a symbol that resembled an anvil and a pickaxe, but due to the needlessly refined design, it felt more like some trending accessory. It was an appearance that didn’t look like it would belong to the director of the mining industry district or a skilled blacksmith.

If you excluded her eyes, that is.

They were eyes that made me understand why Sii would be afraid of her. It wasn’t only because of the rift that was within the pupil of her eyes, which was a trait of the people of this world, but her eyes themselves felt like they contained the sharpness of a just forged guillotine. As if she were aiming at me, Abria Mikatni glared at me with those eyes.

“And you are?”

The person to respond wasn't me, or the completely frozen Sii, but a third party who had come in together with Abria Mikatni.

“Oh, it's Yujin. He's an otherworlder that was summoned by the Silver Lion Earl.”

It was Yudia Batsand. Although this side was also incredible for having intimidating eyes, the type was a bit different. If Yudia gave a sticky and viscous feeling, then Abria gave a cold-hearted and indifferent feeling. If Yudia could be considered a pleasant fellow despite his appearance, then the fact that Abria was an individual who behaved just as she appeared was their difference.

“Is that so. In any case, Sir Yudia, if I may continue on from where I had previously left off, I have been put in charge of Sir Yudia's weapon in the place of my father this year as well.”

After quickly losing interest in me, Abria Mikatni spoke towards Yudia.

“You? That's quite the detestable occurrence.”

Yudia made a pleasant smile. If I were to describe it accurately, then it was a smile that appeared like he was looking down and belittling a bunch of slaves that were rolling around in the mud. If you saw the same thing over and over again, then you could understand the essence that was contained within his actions.

Nevertheless, by the looks of it, it seems Abria was unable to read the essence that was contained within his smile since she made an expression that evidently displayed her anxiety.

“.....I apologize. However, my father is currently unwell.”

“That is also detestable. Have you tried probing the Alchemy Fortress for answers?”

“Naturally, we have tried. However, the fee was something

which our household could not cover.”

“I was under the impression that your household was wealthy. For commoners, that is.”

Most likely, all Yudia did was display some interest. It’s just that there was a chance that that face of his, in the eyes of the people who weren’t familiar with him, could appear like the face of a torturer who was inquiring questions while stabbing nails underneath the fingernails of a person. Abria’s eyes shined keenly. Like a swordsman who was focusing on trying to receive the blade that was being swung towards them, she spoke while holding her breath.

“Sir Yudia, you may not know this, but as you have said, as commoners and as a household, there is a need for us to make our choices cautiously and put our focus onto things carefully. My father may have certainly been an outstanding blacksmith, but there is no chance for us to Ex’ia(Translating…… Rise high? Rise to the sky? – Assuming it to be ‘ascension’).”

Ascension? Does this word have some specific meaning to it?

“As much as that is the case, he most likely won’t be able to stay alive for that long. That’s why the estimated price for his treatment from the Alchemy Fortress was also just as substantial. Even if his sickness is cured, if he’s unable to earn enough money to make up for the treatment cost, then it’s more profitable for us to simply leave him as is.”

Abria, who had spoken assertively, turned to look at Sii for the first time since entering this reception room.

“Of course, this is something that my father understands as well.”

Sii clenched her fists. Seeing that she didn’t put that much strength into her hands, that meant the conversation just now and Abria’s cold shoulder towards Sii was most likely a mundane thing.

Yudia laughed.

“Guhuhuhu.”

After uncurling his index finger, placing it at the corner of his mouth, and laughing, Yudia Batsand made a satisfied expression.

“A wise heir. With such a clever successor, it seems the future of the House of Mikatni will be peaceful.”

Really, it felt like an artless laugh. Albeit, that’s a rather bizarre reaction when someone had just declared that they’ll let their father die in order to conserve money. Regardless, Abria’s nervousness didn’t subside. Yudia Batsand was making a face that(in the eyes of the people who weren’t accustomed to him) appeared as if he were saying ‘this arrogantly blabbering depraved child becoming the successor of the House of Mikatni is the funniest thing I have ever heard’.

Mm.

I see what I have to do here.

“Yudia, are you busy?”

Abria made a startled face after seeing me suddenly squeeze into the conversation. As expected, Sii was making a similar expression, but the two foster-sisters soon became even more taken aback by what happened next.

“Not particularly. I have to get my weapon repaired. What is it, Yujin?”

“What kind of weapon do you use?”

“Ah, were you unaware, Yujin? Generally, I use everything, but I prefer spears the most. Swords are too instantaneous and bows are too distant. Spears, provide the perfect angle and distance.”

“You mean in regard to looking into the opposition’s face, right?”

“Guhuhu, as expected, you understand me.”

Yudia spoke while laughing. Although I think that’s a bit of a misunderstanding, **“Are you going to receive those repairs here and now? Or later?”**

“I’ll be receiving it later in Sophna’s lab. It’s on the third floor of the basement in the central tower. Do you want to come and watch?”

“Would that be all right?”

“It’s fine with me. However, Sophna is fussy about strangers. That’s a bit detestable.”

Yudia displayed concern. But, as I thought, in the eyes of the people who didn’t know him that well, he was making a face that could appear like a king who was glaring furiously at a usurper while grasping at an arrow that had pierced through his chest. Even though he’s this small, just how did he have such flexible facial muscles?

“I do want to go, but if there’s someone who’s against it, then it can’t be helped. I still have something I need to do as well. I have yet to succeed in doing a backflip, after all.”

“Still? I see that you’re a bit dull when it comes to using your body.”

“I don’t think I’m on the dull side that much, but there are things that don’t work out that well occasionally.”

I decided to refrain from telling him that it might have not been working out that well because of his disciple’s tip. Yudia, who was tapping the inside of his arm with his finger while his arms were folded, walked towards me.

“Stand right there.”

“Hm?”

“Okay, stay like that for a moment.”

Yudia stood on his tip toes with one foot and grabbed my shoulder while placing the end of his other foot near my heels. For the short Yudia, this was a posture that was close to being considered acrobatics, but I couldn't feel any trembling from both the hand that was gripping my shoulder and the foot that was placed near my heels.

That's why I didn't realize what had happened until the scenery before my eyes had flipped upside-down.

If I were to give a guess, then Yudia must have pulled on my shoulder. Except, if he had done only that, then I would have just fallen flat on my face, so he had powerfully kicked up my heels with the end of his foot first. This kicking strength was absurdly powerful. I couldn't comprehend how he could muster up that kind of strength with that frame and that posture. The moment my legs had reached up to my waist, Yudia tugged on my shoulder. This was a preposterous strength as well.

From what I could tell, I had spun around 5 times in the middle of the air. I wasn't sure if something like that was possible. It's just that my senses were telling me that, so I may have actually spun less. Yudia did the after service with certainty as well. With a tap and tap. He made me stand on the floor by stopping me with his foot and hand before placing his index finger at the corner of his mouth.

“It should be easier for you to get a feel for it now.”

Mm.

I'm incredibly dizzy and I can't tell if I'm standing right now, but certainly, I think I have a feel for it now, so…….

“Thanks.”

“You’re welcome. I hope that you’re able to apply yourself further.”

“Yeah. Wouldn’t it be good if you went down and prepared your weapon?”

“That’s a good idea.” Yudia dusted his clothes and turned towards Abria. **“I’ll see you later.”**

Abria looked back and forth between me and Yudia with an expression that said she was having trouble comprehending what had happened before her eyes just now.

“Yes, Sir Yudia. I’ll be down soon.”

Yudia grinned and turned towards the door.

“Yudia.”

“Yes?”

I tossed him a cupcake. Yudia flicked his index finger and snatched the cupcake. After taking a bite of the top portion of the pastry, he left the room with a delighted expression.

“Y-Yujin.” Whether it was because Abria was present or not, but Sii spoke to me in this world’s language. **“Is that all right? That person, is Sir Yudia, you know?”**

It was regretful that that absolutely harmless guy was being misunderstood because of his appearance and way of speech. However, for people who found it difficult to deal with Yudia because of his status and position, it would certainly be challenging for them to take notice of his actual personality. Even the simplest of truths cannot be seen if you change the angle.

“It’s fine. He’s a good person.” I turned towards Abria and lowered my head. **“Dear guest, it seemed like you were experiencing some trouble because of my friend, so I had**

presumptuously stepped forward.”

Although because of that,

I was able to do her a favor, so it was a good occurrence in my position.

“.....It seems I’m in your debt.” Abria, who appeared to have been contemplating on whether she should use a formal or informal tone with me, spoke to me after having decided on the latter. **“Thank you for your kindness, uh..... Yujin.”**

Even though she had immediately lost interest in me earlier, seeing that she was able to recall my name quickly, it seems she must have a decent memory. I spoke towards the girl who was the heir of a community leader.

“It’s fine to speak casually.”

“.....No, I can’t do that.”

“It’s fine. Speak however you wish. It’d be comfortable for me as well if you did.”

The contemplating Abria eventually nodded.

“All right.”

I knew that another silence would flow. I offered Abria a seat and I also offered her some refreshments. She must have been mentally exhausted since she had obediently sat down and had taken a bite of a cookie. Her eyebrows twitched.

“It’s nice.”

“It’s a relief that it suits your taste.”

“Were you the one who made this?”

“Yeah. I tried making that using my world’s method.”

Abria then ate two more cookies and had a sip of the tea. It was a demeanor that emanated elegance and dignity. The fact that she appeared so much more like an aristocrat than the Earl did was probably because it went by the similar logic of how a private first class would have more military discipline than a sergeant with a month left in the military.

Abria ate another cookie and stared at me.

“So what is it? The fact that you were waiting for me, the fact that you had prepared these refreshments, and the fact that you helped me out earlier. All of these things tell me that you have some business with me.”

“You’re Miss Sii’s foster-sister, right? I just wanted to see what type of person you were.”

“Miss Sii?”

Abria made a surprised expression. Sii made a frightened face, but I simply continued to talk.

“I use formal language to those who wish for it.”

“.....You’re a weird fellow.”

“Yup. If you want me to do that for you as well, then I will.”

“Yes.....,, no, it’s fine.”

“You sure? Then I’ll be talking formally to Miss Sii and informally with you. Would that not be unpleasant?”

“It probably will be unpleasant. However, being treated the same as that girl would be even more unpleasant.”

Sii let out a groan.

Although I understood that Abria felt displeased with Sii, I didn’t

understand the reason for it that well.

Let's ask.

“Why don't you like Sii?”

“.....You, really are candid.”

“I helped you out. I believed that asking this much would be fine.”

Abria let out a sigh. She glimpsed at Sii while her arms were folded.

“Who would like a stone that had rolled into your family? Just why was that clump of calamity brought to our household..... albeit, father isn't someone who would consider that kind of thing in the first place.”

Sii let out another 'uh' sound and raised her head.

“.....My foster-father, Sir Mercè Mikatni is, a kind person.”

“Yes. He's kind, an outstanding blacksmith, and has no political sense. An ideal hopeless gentleman.”

Sii made a tearful expression but was unable to say anything back.

I vaguely understood the situation now.

“Are you showing vigilance because Sii might threaten your position?”

The conversation just now was implying that 'Because the head of the family had adopted a daughter, the original heir's seat to become the successor was now in peril'. It was an easy to understand tale even though it was old-fashioned. A type of story that would occur in any world whenever there was a limited number of seats.

Abria raised one eyebrow and nodded her head, confirming my guess.

“It’s not that she might. She’s already threatening it.”

“I-I don’t have any intention to threaten you…….”

Sii stopped mid-sentence and shrunk back. Abria glared at Sii and let out a sigh.

“It doesn’t matter what intention you have. It doesn’t matter what ability you have either. It’s just that your existence in itself is a threat. You clump of calamity. Haven’t I told you several times to raise your political sense?”

After starting her line coldly and ending it with a groan, Abria Mikatni pressed her hand to her forehead. She turned to glimpse at me.

“Has your curiosity been sated?”

“Yeah. So it isn’t because of personal feelings.”

“There’s that as well.”

So there is.

Well, there are many cases where people who have ‘I look after myself with certainty’ written all over their faces would physiologically shun people like Sii. Mari was like that as well.

“It’s just that my personal feelings aren’t the decisive reason behind it.”

“Position and circumstance, huh?”

“Yup. That’s why, if you’re planning to mediate the two of us, then I’ll tell you now that it’s a waste of time.”

Abria took another sip of the tea and placed her cup down. As she stood up from her seat, her hair that was tied into vertical rolls sprung up and down lightly like a pair of springs.

“I should make my way down now. Thank you for the snacks. It’s been a long time since I’ve experienced this taste.”

.....?

“You’ve had it before?”

Abria, who was walking towards the doorway, turned towards me. She looked back and forth between me and Sii before shrugging her shoulders.

“A long time ago.”

Abria stepped out. The only things that were left in the room now were me, Sii, and confusion.



I thought about the words that Abria had left behind.

Snacks that were similar to the ones I had made, in other words, she had tasted Earth-style snacks before. I wonder if she’s referring to the time when Ahyeon was still around. Albeit, it’s a bit of a surprise that even Ahyeon knew how to cook. There’s a chance that he didn’t make them himself and had just brought them from Korea instead, and there’s also a chance that it wasn’t Ahyeon at all and it was just that the snacks the Earl had gained through the process of summoning earthlings and slaughtering them had ended up in the reception room.

It seems there’s nothing to be confused about.

“Yujin.”

“Yes, Miss Sii.”

I, who had moderately organized the information in my mind, raised my head and responded. Although Sii's expression that was directed towards me was mostly sullen, there was confusion and curiosity within her eyes.

“The thing you said to my foster-sister earlier…… mm. Does Yujin, want to mediate the relationship between me and my foster-sister?”

Mm.

“Doesn't Miss Sii want to get along with Abria?”

“Mm~~ That's right. Even though she's cold and scary, she's a good person. Around the time when I had first entered the Mikatni's estate, I was in debt to her a lot.”

So she was the type of person whose attitude was cold but took care of people when they had to? This was old-fashioned as well, but as much as that was the case, she was a character that was easy to understand.

Well, she had vertical rolls after all.

“The fact that Yujin had come here to welcome my foster-sister, was it because of that mediation?”

“That's a jump in logic. The reason I came here was just to see them once. Furthermore, the Earl's mood seemed a bit down, so there's that as well. The time I started to feel the need to mediate was after I saw the two of you together.”

“……It's a good idea to stop. Just like my foster-sister had said, it'll be a waste of time.”

“There's nothing that's a waste of time in the world.”

I adjusted my glasses and spoke.

“There are only things that forever can't be achieved because people

do not attempt them with the proper method. Although the thought that it will take some time had crossed my mind, I'll do what I can."

Since it wasn't until after I spoke did I realize that I didn't have my glasses, I naturally grabbed the back of my neck as if I intended to do so since the very beginning.

Sii looked at me with her hands gathered in front of her chest as if she were moved.

"Yujin, occasionally does incredibly cute things."

It seems it didn't appear natural.

"Yujin. But, why?"

"Why?"

"Why, mediate?"

"If you're family, then at the very least, you need to be in a relationship where you're able to talk to one another without any burden."

"Mm…… no, not that."

Sii carefully looked up at me.

"Mediating for me itself. Yujin treats me well. The fact that you treat me scarily well. ……But, I, don't know your reason that well."

"If it's a reason, then there's a lot. If you tell me to give you some, then I can. But if I were to summarize it, then it's because the two of us are friends."

Sii looked at me blankly. Her face and body instantly became dyed red.

"……Friend."

“Was that not the case?”

I thought we were---there was no need for me to add this at the end. With her arms folded, Sii Garno Mikatni quickly turned their gaze away and spoke.

“.....I-Is correct. It’s right, but, mm~~..... Friend..... yup......”

“Miss Sii?”

“Ah, uu.” Sii squirmed with her shoulders. “Friend..... yup~~! That’s right. If it’s friends, I have a lot, I had a lot! Mm mm. You’re right! Friends!”

I think I may have hit some sad switch. Sii giggled ‘Ehehe’ as she patted my shoulder while not regulating her strength, which she rarely wouldn’t do.

“Yujin is, really kind.”

That’s not particularly the case.



Time flowed once more.

In a way, I was able to harvest a lot of things from this guest reception. I figured out what sort of situation Sii was in and I was able to get a rough understanding of what sort of individual Abria, the heir of a community leader, was. However, I’d have to say that the biggest harvest came from Yudia. Thanks to him, I was able to get a feel for doing backflips after all.

Should I say that it’s thanks to him or should I say that it’s a relief? If it’s the latter, then is it a relief for me, or is it a relief for Zia who’s eagerly waiting for new BL material and Yudia who wants to beat the next stage of Angry Birds?

Regardless of what side it was.

After several days, I was able to pass the test that the Silver Lion Earl had given me. I also did a successful backflip.

Very perfectly.

I---received a 2-days and 1-night vacation and returned to Korea.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) DoT = Damage over time.



Once I returned to Korea, it was midday.

Although I had twisted the first line of a certain novel which had received a Nobel prize in literature, the reason why I didn't feel particularly better despite having done that, wasn't because I felt guilty for having used that famous line for such a trivial situation, nor was it because of the fact that the pessimistic prediction, regarding the fact that barely anyone in this world would be able to recognize this phrase, let alone the people in the other world, had crossed my mind, and, as expected, neither was it because of the fact that I had become aware of the truth that this was indeed reality and not some scene from a novel. Just, how should I say it? Because, it was just awkward. It was because the clothes I was currently wearing didn't match this room I was in.

A small room. There were 3 monitors placed on top of a desk, 3 laptops stacked on top of each other in a bookcase, and on the wall, there was a cross and the statue of the Virgin Mary hanging above an illustration of Buddha.

There was nothing more than that.

Nothing more than what I had left here.

This private space was my room.

My base, during the 8 Years' War.

“.....”

Instead of lying on my bed, I changed the battery on my phone. I then stretched and looked for clothes to change into. After I had picked up my glasses, took out my jeans, polar t-shirts, underwear, and socks, and put them into a shopping bag, messages started to continuously arrive on my now fully turned on phone. Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding.

I put on my glasses.

I confirmed the messages.

〈Child, are you staying out overnight? …… Child, where have you gone? …… Child, why aren't you answering your phone? …… This is your cram school teacher, but why didn't you come to today's lesson? …… Hey, didn't we have a promise today? …… What's up? …… Did something happen? …… Did you quit gaming? …… Child, I've notified the police. You aren't going through something bad, right? …… Hey, what are you doing? …… Contact me already. …… Hey. …… Did you go somewhere? …… Yujin. …… It's Ryubin. Contact me. …… Child. …… Yujin. …… Child. …… Bro, what have you been doing lately? …… Child. …… …… Child, poor lamb. I do not know what trial you are going through, but make sure to pray. The Lord only bestows upon us trials which we can always win.〉

I turned off that phone and took out the other phone that I had created as a reserved phone number. There were three messages that had arrived. They were from my older cousin, Eun Minseon, and Saei.

Organize.

First, as expected, things became a bit better with my glasses on. It would have been nice if I had these while I was learning how to read the words in the other world. I tried borrowing Yudia's glasses, but those glasses, no, the glasses in that world itself were a bit iffy. Honestly, since it was rather ambiguous to even call those things glasses, there'll probably be a day where I'll be able to explain this.

Second, even though I had spent a long period of time in the other world, surprisingly, it turned out that not even a second had passed on Earth…… something like this didn't happen. The time I had spent in the other world was 5 days in the basement and 15 days aboveground, so a total of 20 days. 26×20 equals 520 hours. If I divide that by 24 hours, then that would make it 21.6 days. The last memory I had of being on Earth was on the 10th night of January, and seeing that it was noon on the 1st day of February right now…… if I roughly say that I was summoned in the middle of the night, then

it should be fine to say that the flow of time hasn't been estranged. Moreover, like Zia had told me, it seems the rotation speed of the planet of that world being 26 hours per rotation was roughly correct.

Third, I was absent for 21.6 days. Among the missed calls, texts, Kakaotalk, Tictalk, Line, twitter mentions, direct messages, etcetera, which totaled at 1278 missed messages, there was approximately only 10 of them that were important. The number of things I had to take care of was around that much as well. The remaining messages--- putting the 421 messages sent by my aunt as the head---were all mundane businesses. If you look at it like this, then I feel as if I've become quite free these days.

In any case, I mustered up some strength once more.

February 1st, Sunday, noon.

My devoted adherent of an aunt should have gone to church and my uncle who was sick of going to church should have gone fishing. Miyeong should have gone off somewhere to play as well. Thanks to that, it would often be possible for me to become engrossed in using the internet for several hours at a time while inside an empty house on Sundays, however, I only had 26 hours left right now. Since it's the Silver Lion Earl, I should consider the fact that it could possibly be plus-minus 4 hours. If that's the case, then that would make it so that I didn't even have a full day.

As much as I didn't know when my next return would be, I had to use this time efficiently.

Pushing my reunion with my relatives behind a bit, I should take care of more urgent things---

“Who's there, you thief!!”

Bang, a shout resonated as the door swung open. The moment I took a step back, Clang! a flash struck the floor. Adding an exaggeration, it was strong enough to shake the entire house, and even while removing the exaggeration, it was a strike that was

powerful enough to dent the floor. The sunlight that was casting down on the landing point displayed a dull and circular outline.

It was an aluminum bat.

I lifted my head and met the eyes of Miyeong who was in a posture that evidently showed that she had put her all into that swing.

“.....”

“.....”

Well, it could be no one other than Miyeong.

“.....What, so it was you?”

Miyeong clicked her tongue and turned away. Her face was slightly red. This was also incredibly Miyeong-like.

“To be concrete, the fact that you had determined the person to be a thief before even asking who they were, went to get something to incapacitate the so-called thief, and had already swung the item you brought, and yet, you still shouted ‘who’s there’. Moreover, for someone who had almost killed a person just now, the fact that you’re more embarrassed about your own misunderstanding than you are about your own murder attempt is also quite Miyeong-like.”

“What are you mumbling about on your own? I’ll kill you.”

That line was also quite Miyeong-like.

“Sorry.”

I gave her a me-like response and adjusted my glasses. After that, Miyeong and I experienced a time which we were accustomed to, being in an awkward silence together.

Like always, Miyeong was the one to break the silence.

“What’s with those clothes?”

“Now you ask?”

“You being in a weird state is an everyday occurrence. But your current state, even if I consider that fact, this hobby is pushing it way too much. Did you finally become gay?”

I was currently still wearing Sii’s maid uniform. I had done the test while in these clothes as well. I’ll have to make sure that I bring my clothes with me when I return.

In any case.

“Throw away your prejudice towards gay people.”

“Are you lecturing me? I’ll kill you.”

If it’s a girl who has an adherent devotee as a mother, then it makes sense that she’d have a repulsion towards gay prejudice and lectures.

“I plan to get changed. I’ll be able to if you leave.”

“Fuck. You’re talking as if this is your home.”

“Then I’ll just get changed like this.”

“I’ll kill you. Ah, hey. I said I’ll kill you. H-Hey! Will you stop!? Ah--jeez! Hey!”

I stopped. The red face Miyeong, who was searching for a place to put her eyes, scratched the back of her head before letting out a long sigh. She then, instead of leaving, sat on top of my bed and crossed her legs.

Another awkward silence.

“Where’d you go?”

1. Normally, people would ask that first.
2. Were you worried?

3. Another world.

Regardless of what option I chose, I'll probably be told that I'll be killed. I was summoned to another world and was nearly tortured to death, and after coming back from that other world, I was mistaken for a thief and was nearly killed by an aluminum bat. I also received countless threats of being killed. Although it was a life that befitted me, that was enough for today.

"There was a place I had to go."

"Ah? That's why I'm asking where."

"It's hard to say."

"Is that so?"

Both Miyeong and I had a moment to push up our glasses.

Miyeong clicked her tongue and spoke.

"So you're back for good now, right?"

I shook my head. Miyeong's expression became fierce.

"Then you're going again?"

"Yeah. I'm just dropping by here for a moment."

"What about school? Winter break ends the day after tomorrow, you know?"

"I'll somehow deal with that myself." As I thought, I should meet Saei. My older cousin as well. "Don't worry about it."

"Who said I was worried about you? Hey. I feel like I'm going to die because of mom. Every time we have a meal, our food goes cold because mom keeps saying that we have to pray for you. How are you going to take responsibility for that? Huh?"

“Buy something to eat. Here, money.”

“What am I supposed to buy with this much? Give me more.”

I handed her some more. Miyeong fanned herself with the money for a moment before shoving it into her pocket.

“When are you going?”

“Probably around 2 pm tomorrow. Do you want to have a meal together before I go?”

“Do you think I’m crazy?”

Was there a need to detest the idea so much even though the cousin who lived under the same roof as you had returned after being missing for 21 days? Well, it was to be expected when among the missed messages on my phone, none of them were sent by this girl. My relationship with Miyeong was like that.

“Oh right, keep it a secret from your parents that I was here.”

“Why?”

“Because I don’t have time. If I get caught by auntie, then an entire day will probably pass trying to explain my circumstances to her.”

“That wasn’t a ‘why’ to you, but a ‘why should I?’.”

“Because I gave you money.”

“You’re really funny. Do you think you can do anything if you have money?”

“Do you want more?”

“I said do you think you can do anything if you have money?”

“Is this much enough?”

“Yup, money, that is.”

“You can use the computer as well.”

Miyeong, who was disregarding me, made a victory pose with her fists clenched tightly.

Once I stared right at her, she lowered her fist with a blush on her face.

“.....Give me your Steam account too.”

“Sure. Let me just backup my data first.”

“Hurry up.”

Since I had mentioned it, I decided to do that first. I backed up my data by distributing it onto the 3 laptops. I then placed a lock on one of the laptops and put it on the bookcase. I packed up the remaining 2 laptops. I also packed up a wireless router.

Like that, while I was taking care of everything I had to do at home and packing up the things that I was going to take with me, Miyeong had gone onto Steam with my computer and was turning on Crusader King 2. I finished up with everything I had left to do here and spoke towards Miyeong's back.

“I'm going.”

“Kay~”

Miyeong responded without even turning around.

.....

“Hey, Miyeong.”

“What?”

“If you sit down and play games for too long, then you'll get fat.”

I dodged the lotion bottle that was thrown at me and escaped outside.



After leaving the maid uniform at a dry cleaner's, I took care of several important matters since I was already downtown. I met with the required people---including Saei---and apologized for suddenly losing contact with them. I explained my situation while mixing in some lies. Post-management. Once I was finished, it was around 6 pm.

I went shopping. First I bought clothes, books after that, and then I roamed around the electronics store in Samwon. In regard to electronics, it would have been better if I had gone to Yongsan for certainty, but since going all the way there would have been a waste of time, I decided to make do with a place that was nearby. However, maybe I should have just gone to Yongsan anyway. Although I was able to roughly obtain everything that I wanted, in regard to the time that I wanted to conserve so much, I actually ended up suffering a loss. 9 pm.

I became hungry, so I decided to get something to eat. The menu was Kimbap Heaven. 10 pm.

Mm.

Although I believe that I had moved around rather effectively, the flow of time was like a shooting arrow. I wonder if this was how military people felt when they're on vacation.

I picked up my clothes at the dry cleaner's and watched a movie. 12:30 am.

I went to a bathhouse^[1], washed up, scrubbed some dead skin off of my body, and went to sleep. I woke up at 5 am on the dot.

I washed up once more and after making both my body and mind neat and tidy, I went to the hospital. My goddess, my love.

My Minhee.

It was 7 am once I had left the hospital.

I had a meal. The menu was a 24 hours chicken place. After I finished eating, I bought 5 more boxes as take-out. 8 am.

I had approximately 6 hours left. If I plus-minus 4 hours, then there was either 2 hours or 10 hours left. To be on the safe side, I decided to act as if I only had 2 hours left. It's a relief that I had already finished my shopping for things that were urgent yesterday.

I went to a 24-hours underground manga café. A manga café that was about to go out of business. After bargaining with the owner of the café, I went shopping while prioritizing mangas that weren't in the Silver Lion Castle library and were currently not being printed anymore but were still considered masterpieces. Manga that Sii may enjoy. BL that Zia may read. While I was getting things related to BL, I decided to log into XMC and purchase a bunch of M rated e-books. Even though XMC lacked in material and were old-fashioned, the reason why I used XMC was because their viewer was one of the few things that didn't require internet verification to use. Similarly, I also bought several stand-alone games that Yudia may possibly play. I bought some ramen packs as well and put them in a stack. While I was at it, I configured the settings on the wireless router.

It was around that moment.

Someone, sat in the seat behind me.

Since the formation of the seating here was two sofas placed back to back against each other, the other person and I were in a state where we were back to back with the backrest of the sofas placed between us.

There were two reasons why I felt that this person's decision to sit

there was special. First, the fact that within this completely empty manga café, this person had gone out of their way to sit directly behind me. Second, the fact that I didn't see this person come in through the entrance.

They weren't originally in the café either. Before I had come down here, the only person that was in this café was the owner. This fellow had sat behind me as if they had spouted out of nowhere.

Of course, this was modern-day Earth.

A fantastical thing like that didn't exist here.

"I recall telling you about 6 times to use the entrance normally."

I spoke. The person behind me, who had obviously used the fire escape to enter the manga café, spoke in a low voice.

"Where'd you go?"

They weren't responding to my words.

Well, this person has always been someone who didn't listen if you spoke.

"I don't feel the need to tell you."

"Should I make you feel the need?"

"How?"

"Your younger cousin, Samwon high school, 2nd grade, class 3, attendance number 39."

.....

"And your little brother is currently in Samwon middle school, 2nd grade, class 5, attendance number 16."[\[2\]](#)

"For you to use my family as a hostage, how cowardly."

“From which mouth are you saying that out of?”

“Which mouth? How lewd.”

I ignored them.

The fellow behind me seemed to be trying to decide what topic to talk about. And then, “What’s with your state?”

“What of it?”

“Are you a refugee or something? What’s with all that stuff you’re carrying? You even have a rope attached to your waist. Even though no one is going to steal your stuff.”

“Because there’s a need.”

“In any case, you aren’t normal.”

I ignored them.

The fellow behind me spoke.

“Our Lady isn’t in a normal state yet.”

“So?”

“Our Lady was a person who was supposed to become a king. You’re the one who broke that sort of individual. If you still have a sense of humanity left inside of you, then you coming to visit at least once should be natural.”

“King, is it?”

King, huh.

“So according to you, a king is a person who bullies others, lynches people, fabricates evidence in order to throw people into a detention center for juvenile offenders, and turns a person into a vegetable, huh?”

“It’s due to youth. For you to be unable to forgive at least that much, it’s because of that backward, savage, and barbaric national character that crooked charismatic people like Jobs aren’t born in this country. That Minhee girl is also just---.”

“Chanmi’s dog. You’re free to say whatever you wish, but if you speak lightly of Minhee, then.”

A long silence.

“Their king.”

The fellow seated behind me continued.

“There are people---who can’t choose their king.”

“That’s your problem.”

“That’s right, but because of you, our path forward has been blocked as well. At least let us complain.”

“It’s fine as long as you don’t talk about Minhee. Complaints outside of that are fine.”

Another silence.

“.....I’ve said it before, but the matter involving Minhee wasn’t done by our Lady.”

“Sure.”

“That’s why it wasn’t us either.”

“Sure.”

“You don’t believe me, do you?”

“Sure.”

“I’m going.”

I could hear the person behind me standing up. Step, step, the sound of something being tossed on the counter could be heard before I heard the entryway opening and the sound of footsteps leaving through the door. They came in through the rear and left through the front. It was a behavior that suited that person.

It was my country, Korea, which I had returned to for the first time in 21 days, and yet, everyone only did the things that were like them and I had only done the things that were like me.

Even though I had returned from an abnormal environment, something like being unable to readjust to my everyday life didn't occur. Even I wanted to experience that kind of common cliché.

Well, even if you call it my everyday life.

.....

“There are people who can't choose their king, was it?”

“Ah hah ha ha, what are you saying all of a sudden?”

“Nothing much.”

I shrugged my shoulders. The everyday life that was like me had ended, and I had returned to the abnormal everyday life.



“I smell something good.”

To the Silver Lion Earl who had uttered that, I tossed a box of chicken. The Silver Lion Earl, who had leaped up and caught it, rolled around the floor with the chicken held tightly in her arms.

“Chicken! Chicken!^[3] Kyochon Chicken! Ah hah hah hah ha, yup~ GoodGood! It's truly been a long time. You did well, Mr. Yujin! Ah

hah hah hah ha!”

“It’s a bit cold, though.”

“In order to distinguish between gold and gilt, you have to bite into them first in order to find ooout. Similarly, if chicken wants to prove its real worth, then it has to cool down first.”

“That’s a plausible figure of speech.”

I untied the rope that was attached to my waist. I then opened the shopping bags that were connected to the rope one bag at a time, taking out the chicken and the ramen first before placing them on top of the table.

I gestured towards Yudia Batsand and Zia Batsand.

“Eat some.”

Yudia, who was looking down at the chicken with a gaze filled with curiosity(=As if he were looking down at a child that was born from an unwanted pregnancy), was the first to approach and opened a box. While he was advertently attempting to make contact with the different world culture known as chicken, I started taking out my laptops and the other things that I had bought.

The Silver Lion Earl, who was basking in delight with a drumstick held in her mouth, showed interest.

“Hm? What’s that?”

To the Silver Lion Earl who had asked that, I tossed a Primary Star Andromeda Tab. The Silver Lion Earl, who had leaped up and caught it, looked at it with sparkling eyes.

“Hueh? Huah, nya hah ha ha ha. Hueh~ What is this. It looks interesting.”

“Science is all-powerful, after all.”

“Yeesss. Ah hah ha ha ha. Mm. But Mr. Yujin. Doesn’t this consume a lot of electricity? The laptop and computer that Ahyeon left behind, in truth, we still have those. But their batteries went out.

As expected---they did have those.

Although I had heard some good information, I didn’t let it show on my face.

The things I had brought, I put on top of the table the items that I had bought while roaming around the electronics store. A laptop, a tablet computer, an iPhone, an iPad, a router, and, “A solar charger.” I tapped on the panel with my finger. “It’s 50watts.”

The Silver Lion Earl opened her eyes wide.

While connecting it to the router and turning it on, I continued.

“The sunlight here, compared to Earth’s---or at the very least, since it seems stronger than the sunlight in Korea. If you put it on the top of the tower during a clear day, then it should be fully charged within a few hours.”

A smile appeared in the Silver Lion Earl’s eyes. The smile was closer to being more goat-like than it was cat-like and more amphibious than it was mammalian.

“Hmm, was it not expensive?”

“When it comes to necessary expenses, I’m the type of person who doesn’t conserve his money.”

“I see. Ah hah ha, you’re similar to me in that regard.”

No, you’re just someone who’s extravagant and doesn’t plan ahead. That being said, once I looked at her hand, her pinky and ring finger on her left hand, her 2 nails that represented the proof of summoning had been dyed black. If that’s the case, then that meant her summoning me just now was her 2nd use. I’m not sure what she

summoned before me, but for her to have used her summons like this even though it was the beginning of the month.

Pension and restriction.

Recalling the unfunny play on words, I turned to gaze at the main instigator.

“Zia?”

“Hm?”

“Why aren’t you eating?”

“.....Ah, mm.”

Different to her teacher who was eating chicken as if he were chewing on the liver of his enemy, Zia, who’s been standing awkwardly this entire time, cleared her throat. However, she still didn’t approach and take a piece of chicken or show interest in the things like the laptop. Perhaps.

“Do you not like chicken?”

“There’s no way that’d be the case, Yujin. What about me says that to you?”

As I thought, that wasn’t it. There’s a chance that chicken may be the only cultural heritage that our country, which has been treated badly by even the people from another world, can put forward with confidence.

“Then that must mean that instead of your physical hunger, your mental hunger has the priority. Though it doesn’t matter since I can sufficiently fill both of your desires up. Here.”

I took out the BL books.

The moment I did so, Zia instantaneously tossed aside her hesitation and dived towards the BL books like how a lascivious man

would dash towards a nude high school girl in one of those erotic doujinshi---something like this didn't happen.

Just as she did a second ago.

She merely looked at me hesitantly.

Mm.

That meant there was a problem.

“Zia. Come see me for a second.”

I gestured towards her and headed outside the office. The Silver Lion Earl raised an eyebrow.

“Huu~? Where are you off to? A vacation plan before going on a vacation and writing a vacation report once you've returned. Something like that, isn't that the fundamental culture of Korean males?”

“I'm still a bit too young to know about that.”

I responded as so and left the office. The Silver Lion Earl made a 'hmm' sound with her nose, but that was it. She didn't prevent me from stepping out.

Once I was in the hallway, Zia came out soon after.

Without preamble, I asked.

“Did something happen?”

“.....Uu.”

Zia lowered her gaze.

.....

“Tell me.”

Zia continued to waver.

I.

“I told you to talk, my sword.”

“---Yujin!”

Spasmodically---abrupt enough to make it so that you couldn't call it anything besides that, Zia called out to me.

Once I pushed up my glasses, Zia Batsand lowered her head and continued.

“You promised back in the basement, right? That you'll look after Her Excellency. That you'll take responsibility. When I heard those words, do you know how much my chest felt, Yujin, Yujin---[4] Her Excellency is a good person. She was a good person. A bit, a very slight bit, just, slightly, it went out of line. Her Excellency, that is.”

A little while ago, when I was still in Korea, Zia was saying things that were severely different to what the person who was sitting behind me had said. Zia bit her bottom lip.

“Please, Yujin.”

She bowed her head once more.

“Her Excellency the Earl, do not hate her.”

Zia.

“Her Excellency the Earl, do not give up on her.”

Zia Batsand, spoke like that.

I.

“Minhee.”

“Mm?”

Was that not it?

That’s not it. It’s not. Ahh, it’s not.

If that’s the case.

“Miyeong.”

Confused responses continued to return.

If that’s the case. No--- I had realized it here, but other Koreans were meaningless. That’s right, the fact that Zia was showing this kind of response.

Was because Zia herself was hurt as well.

“Sii.”

There was a stir.

Zia’s eyes, that trembling, it was too immense.

“Sii Garno Mikatni.”

Zia groaned and dropped her gaze.

Silence.

I turned around.

I walked.

I started running after my second step.

I heard someone calling out to me from behind. I ignored it.

It was night. I ran through the hallways of the night. Thanks to the candles, my field of vision wasn’t hindered. Each time I passed by, the

candles wavered, and the darkness that had filled the hallway swayed like seaweed that was waving in the night sea. My front became distorted. The midnight castle went back and forth from being bright and faint. Occasionally, whenever I passed by a section of a window that wasn't covered by a curtain, something similar to stepping stones flowed down onto the ground due to the moonlight. I ignored them. I ran. I merely ran.

And then, I stood in front of Sii's room.

I opened the door.

The sound of the door being swung open resonated and a shriek followed immediately after. Darkness, darkness, darkness, in the room that was filled to the brim with darkness, a distant pure white girl, was curled up with a blanket wrapped around her. Towards the girl who was trembling so much that it was pitiful, I.

I thought that she was small.

She always had a small frame. However, her current state was smaller than that. At first, I thought that was the case because she was curled up. But she was so small that that wasn't enough to explain it. Small.

To be exact, she was made to be small.

“S-Sii.”

“Ah…….”

Sii shuddered while huddled up.

“Yu…… jin.”

Sii looked at me while lifting her head.

“Yup~~…… ehehe.”

Sii smiled as if she were relieved.

“You’re back…… yup, I was waiting…… waited for a long long time…… ehehe…… yup…… Yujin.”

Sii wiped the corner of her eye.

“Sit, Yujin…… Mm~~! What’s with that face? Hometown, didn’t you take a trip there? Because I, want to hear stories about Yujin’s hometown…… Ah, did you perhaps buy me a gift? Yujin…… mm, Yujin…….”

Sii called my name.

“I…… was trapped.”

Ehehe, she laughed.

Sii smiled awkwardly once more.



The right arm of Sii, was gone.

From right above her elbow, leaving a clean cross section, it was severed.

Footnotes

1. [↑] People in Korea often go to bathhouses and stay the night. It's cheaper than motels/hotels since you aren't given a personal room, but it's convenient since you have access to spas, saunas, and baths.
2. [↑] Yujin says this line.
3. [↑] Kyochon Chicken is the name of a franchise.
4. [↑] Zia is cutting herself off mid-sentence when she says Yujin's name.



“Her Excellency the Earl had said this before, Yujin. That she will make the people who resort to stealing repent their crime with iron and flames. On the very day you returned to Korea, another incident where the jewelry of the previous earl’s wife was stolen had occurred once more. It wasn’t a substantial amount, but, Yujin, Yujin---Are you listening, Yujin?”

It was an accusation. Witnesses, 4 maids had stepped forward in order to testify. They claimed that they saw Sii taking the jewelry, Yujin, stop for a second. Listen to what I have to say, according to those accusations, they conducted a search on Sii’s room and they discovered the missing jewelry there. Although Sii herself claimed that she was being framed, the testimonies---Yujin.

What do you think the Earl should have done? She couldn’t overlook this. This was a point in time where it hasn’t been that long since she had last shown generosity. This time, she had to display severity, coldness. In order to prevent other people from acting up, within that sort of situation---Yujin. Stop. I’m begging you, Yujin. Yujin---.”

I pushed Zia aside and entered the office.

Yudia Batsand was eating chicken. I could see him tilting his head towards me who had slammed the door open. I didn’t worry about it. Yudia Batsand wasn’t related. I looked for the Silver Lion Earl who was related.

The Silver Lion Earl, while sitting with her legs crossed and with her back comfortably leaning against the backrest of her chair, was gaming.

“Hu?”

Raising her head to look at me was---the Silver Lion Earl.

The remains of the eaten chicken pieces were cast aside on the floor like trash.

“What’s this? Knocking on the door before entering a girl’s space should be a basic maaanner. Mr. Yujin, if you continue to live

without that sort of fundamental common sense, then one day you'll--."

I walked up to her,

And slammed down on her desk.

A bang sound, a trembling desk,

And the Silver Lion Earl who was looking at me unfazed.

"Shall I listen to your explanation?"

"Explain."

"I said that I'll listen to yoour explanation. It seems Mr. Yujin's ears must have heard it oppositely. Whether there is a need for you to have those useless ears or not, the Silver Lion Earl, the Silver Lion Earl has contemplated this once before."

"Why'd you do it? Even you should have known that Sii wasn't the one to have done it."

"Huumm~? Sii~? Aha, are you talking about Mikatni's adopted daughter? Who knows---nyaa nyaa nyaa nyaa. Even if I were to suddenly hear such a defense with that kind of emotion mixed in it, you know, it's troubling. The evidence and witnesses had all become a single finger and that finger was pointing towards that Sii, Mikatni's adopted daughter. Do you know about Occam's razor? There is always only a single truth! All the mysteries have been solved! With that kind of feeling in mind, we submitted Mikatni's adopted daughter to a simple trial, and we settled her crime with a single arm. Towards this boundlessly beautiful plea-bargain, Mr. Yujin. Do you have a problem with it, Mr. Yujin?"

My head was hot.

Mm---my head, was hot.

My head.

“How uproarious. Is there a problem?”

Yudia Batsand lowered the chicken leg he was eating and raised an eyebrow.

“It is a query to this young lady as well, Lord Yudia.” When the Silver Lion Earl spoke in this world’s language, she put on airs. **“You know the incident where we had cut off the arm of a thieving maid and settled the matter with that? He’s becoming this unruly because of something like that, so it’s puzzling.”**

“The arm of a thieving maid, is it?”

Yudia tilted his head. Although the heat in my head remained the same, I felt like I was calming down a bit since I had heard the voice of someone other than the earl. Yudia Batsand, like I had proven when Abria Mikatni had visited, he was an individual who was feared solely because of his appearance, behavior, and status. He was a good fellow who common sense got through to.

“The arm that you had severed.”

A good…….

“Ah, that. I had forgotten because it was distasteful to a detestable degree.”

“For starters, she’s just a maid. She wasn’t a master of martial arts or a monster, so she was probably lacking for you to deal with.”

“That is a bias. Every master and monster start off as a normal individual after all. Regardless, that maid certainly lacked in ability. From start to finish, all she did was beg for forgiveness while struck with fear. A coward who doesn’t even have the right to possess hatred. She’s the type of

person who I believe to be worthless the most.”

It felt as if I had gulped down a glass of detergent. My insides ached and my vision felt blurry.

“Why, did you cut it?”

“? Even if you ask me, that’s hard to answer. After the Silver Lion Earl had reached a verdict, she requested for me to carry it out. It was like an after meal recreation.”

A recreation?

“Sii.”

Sii is, is what I had uttered. Sii is.

“Why would Sii, do something like that?”

“Like I said, even if you ask me, that’s hard to answer…….”

Yudia tilted his head like that and the Silver Lion Earl dramatically spread out her arms.

“Welcome, Mr. Yujin! Our minds, which once seemed as if they were crossing each other, have finally fused together into one mass. No, in truth, it has always been fused together. The boy and girl who thought they were opposing one another discovered that they were actually standing in the same position! If I were to say something in accordance to this cliché of a boundlessly beautiful development drama, then, I’m not so sure as well. It’s something that I also want to know. In any case, I’ve only evaded things after all.”

“Yudia Batsand…… Silver Lion Earl.”

I clenched my teeth.

I swallowed down the saliva that felt as if it were burning into my flesh and lowered my head.

“Earl---Earl. Silver Lion Earl.”

“Though there was never a time where I had thought that my title was complicated enough to require someone to memorize the cadence of it. Remove your hand from my desk.”

“Sii.”

“Mikatni’s adopted daughter?”

“Sii, was framed.”

“W-What---!? Even the Silver Lion Earl is surprised by the shock of this revelation! My Lord, are you telling me that my eyes were actually a pair of knotholes!? Aah, I’ve been thinking wrong, Professor Yujin! For Mikatni’s adopted daughter to have not been the true culprit! What should we do about this? **Lord Yudia, as the individual who had carried out the punishment, what do you think about this newly proposed possibility?**”

“Guhuhuhu.”

He laughed.

Yudia Batsand, with his head slightly tilted, had laughed unambiguously.

“If she’s been framed, then isn’t that better? There’s no greater fuel than injustice to make one’s hatred burn. Ah, but, if you look at it from that standpoint, then as expected, wouldn’t that mean she wasn’t framed? I said it a second ago, but that maid was only struck with fear after all, ah, that’s right---How about this, Earl? Should we go right now and sever that child’s other remaining arm? If one were to have both of their arms severed unjustly, then at that time, wouldn’t even that coward be able to properly harbor hatred and aim for a higher goal?”

Yudia---Batsand.

As he was Zia's teacher, he was also the royal courier of the End Void Gate, one of the twelve world factions, and he was a hatred enthusiast.

“Stop right there, Lord Yudia. This young lady governs her domain with thorough rule of law.”

“Although I believe there are occasionally times when one should go outside the bounds of the law, but, if that's how you deem it.”

I thought that I knew.

That I had a grasp of him.

Zia was lowering her head with a face that was on the verge of tears. Her teacher is a scary individual. Right now, those words which she had said before. I, who had believed that Yudia Batsand wasn't a dangerous fellow.

I.

“Why?”

“?”

“Why, did you have to go that far?”

“It seems you only intend to ask weird questions today, Yujin. I've said it several times already, so I thought that you would have understood by now.” Yudia Batsand took a bite out of a drumstick and spoke. **“Humans must harbor hatred in order for them to become stronger.”**

Those were words that Yudia had said several times before.

“Sii most likely never asked you to make her stronger.”

“That's correct. In the first place, that maid doesn't even have the right to say those kinds of words to me---if one

wishes to become my disciple, then for starters, there is a need for you to prove yourself and arm yourself with endless enmity. Detestably, it's difficult to find those sorts of individuals. In truth, I may have never been able to obtain a disciple.”

Yudia Batsand took another bite of the chicken leg that was in his hand before licking his finger.

“If I ‘stayed still’ until now, that is.”

Yudia Batsand.

“Quite a long time ago, there was a time when I had received a request from the Cat Earl to capture escaped slaves. Under the condition that I could deal with them however I pleased, I accepted the request. Before long, I had captured all of them alive and had brought them back to my base. They were all people who had suffered terribly. There were even those among them who had tasted all sorts of humiliation and pain while being raised in a place known as the ‘Cat’s Kiln’. Although even those individuals didn’t have the enmity which I desired, several times they had shown grounds to possess that sort of hatred if something more were to happen to them. That’s why I had.”

“Stop.”

“Ah. You didn’t like stimulating things, did you? Yujin, since I’m not a sadist as well, I will end it by saying that I didn’t particularly enjoy doing it.”

“So you’re saying that you’re searching for someone worthy enough to become your disciple?”

“Detestably, it’s because I’m the royal courier of one of the twelve world factions after all. What can I do when I can’t seem to find a formidable youth? I can’t miss out on an opportunity to plant the seeds. Shouldn’t the side that has

something which they desire be the ones to be diligent?”

It felt as if I was looking at a swamp that consisted of poison.

While supporting his jaw with his hand, Yudia was smiling in a way that appeared as if he were pleasantly watching over the death of his mortal enemy. As I had done so until now, I was able to understand that expression of his as him having fun while talking about his own philosophy, nothing more than that. I was able to accurately understand what mood Yudia currently had and what he wanted to do next. As such, I was able to understand the human known as Yudia Batsand…… I thought that I could understand him…….

I couldn't understand him.

“Saying that you aren't a sadist. You speak quite well.”

The Silver Lion Earl spat out as if she were tired of it. Yudia gripped at his chest and grunted as if he were hit by an arrow.

“I'm speaking the truth.”

“Sure sure, I understand.” The Silver Lion Earl let out a sigh and looked at me. “So, Mr. Yujin, are you done now? There's nothing more to address, right? Take your hand off of my desk.”

“Sii.”

I swallowed down the words that I was about to say in this world's language. There was no meaning. It was useless. I spoke towards the Silver Lion Earl.

“Sii, didn't do it.”

“Sii, Sii, Sii, Sii---aah, it appears that adopted daughter of Mikatni has really grabbed Mr. Yujin's heart in an instant. As expected of a whore's daughter. It's admiraaable.”

“Listen to me, seriously.”

“Mr. Yujin, you’re the one who’s going to be listening to the words that I say from this point forth seriously. Remove your hand from the desk. I’ve said this three times now.”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke while revealing her canines. Even before seeing those eyes, I knew by intuition. The remains of the chicken pieces that had been eaten and tossed aside on the ground. This girl who had a small appetite, cruel, and grew tired of things quickly. I’ll die. If don’t listen to this girl any more than this, if I get on this girl’s nerves any more than this, then I’ll die.

Be cool-headed, me. Hold onto the beads. Calmly. Calmly calmly calmly.

No.

I can’t calm down.

My hand, I didn’t take it off.

“5.”

I didn’t take it off.

“4.”

I didn’t take it off.

“3. 2. 1.”

I didn’t take it off---I was made to take it off.

Forcefully.

I was kicked on the side---and rolled onto the floor.

“You insolent fellow!”

It was Zia Batsand. While biting her bottom lip, her hair disheveled, and with a tearful face--- with a face that was so wretched that it was difficult to describe, she looked at me. Those blue eyes, her cold pupils looked down at me with a magma-like passion contained within them. She was pleading with me. Please. Zia's eyes were saying that to me. Please, Yujin. Please.

Please.

“Your Excellency, it seems Yujin has forgotten his place! This is all because I had supervised and managed him poorly. This isn't something that Your Excellency needs to lift your hand for! I shall take him outside and give him his punishment, so please!”

“Hm.”

The Silver Lion Earl stood from her seat.

She walked towards me.

She stood in front of me, and looked down at me.

“Your Excellency, Yujin is…….”

“No, Zia. I'll be personally giving him his punishment. That's most likely the duty of the lord.” The Silver Lion Earl, who had spoken brightly, smiled with her hands on her hip. “Five lashings.”

“But…….”

“You're noisy, Zia. Stay right there, okay? Each time you take a step, I'll increase the lashings by 10, you know? ---*Larte' gias.*”

The Silver Lion Earl raised her left arm while her right hand was still on her hip. The nail on the middle finger of her left hand became dyed black and something was grasped in her hand as if that something was wrapping around her grip.

It was a snake. No, it was a whip. No, as I thought, it was a snake.

No, as I expected, it was a whip. As it was a snake, it was also a whip, and while it wasn't a whip, it wasn't a snake either. The thing I was certain of was the fact that it was alive. The fact that it was gripped in the Silver Lion Earl's hand and was wiggling.

The Silver Lion Earl took in a deep breath and pulled back her shoulder.

She swung.

My clothes were torn into.

Wooosh, CRACK!

The crack of the whip resonated with a delay. The pain, came together with that sound.

Flesh, and blood, splattered upwards much too slowly before falling to the floor.

I didn't cry out.

I couldn't.

Not me, but Zia---let out a cry, a groan that felt as if it were boiling death.

"That's one." The Silver Lion uttered and pulled back her shoulder once more. "There's four left now."

The whip moved as if it were splitting the air apart.

My consciousness was cut off for a second before continuing on. A thunderous crack. Splattering blood.

"With this, that's two. It's fine. You won't die. You won't die after all. Mr. Yujin? Be relieved. There are only three more lashes left. Now then, since you won't die."

With a tone that sounded as if she were coaxing a cat, the 3rd blow.

I didn't meet, that 3rd blow.

It wasn't because it was too fast. It wasn't because my consciousness had cut off. In truth, my conscious was normal. It was excessively vivid and excessively clear. That was why I could see it. The sight of the Silver Lion Earl swinging her whip. The sight of Zia grasping her head. The sight of Yudia watching us with a glint in his eyes. And.

The sight of someone who had run over and tossed their body in order to cover me.

“Aaaaaaaaaack……!!!”

A scream.

A girl's---scream.

“Sii.”

I spoke. I, I spoke, and,

“Uu…… uh.”

Sii, who had collapsed on top of my body in an attempt to cover me, let out a moan that couldn't be considered a response.

A weird expression. With a weird face that was smiling while crying, Sii looked down at me.

“Mikatni's adopted daughter. What are you doing here?”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke. Sii, who had retracted her shoulders, spoke with a voice that was slow and fading like the blood that was flowing out of the area that was affected on her body.

“**I…… apologize…….**”

“I asked you what you're doing here, adopted daughter of Mikatni. Did you come here in order to see if there was anything else that was

worth stealing? It seems even you lack in education. By the looks of it, it appears that a single arm as compensation wasn't enough to teach you a lesson."

"I apologize……! I apologize……!" Swallowing down her saliva as if it were blood, and swallowing down her blood as if it were saliva, Sii Garuo Mikatni wept. **"I apologize……! But, b-b……but……!"**

"But?"

"Yu, jin."

"Because you wanted to embrace him so much, did your hips end up moving first because you were unable to contain your urge? I expected nothing more from an obscene female cat of a maid. Why is it that there are so many people in our castle who are unable to learn how to 'wait'? If you wish to embrace Yujin, then there should be a better time than this. For example, after he's received his 3 remaining lashes and has passed out as a mess. Or---."

"Me, he said that I was his friend……!!"

Silence.

"Yujin…… Yup, Yujin…… said I was his friend…… for me, back then with the maids…… even now, Miss Knight---Miss Zia, he ignored her when she tried to stop him, yup, to Miss Earl…… he got upset, for me…… me……."

Silence.

"Saying that I was his friend……." Tears streamed down Sii's cheeks. "Me."

Friend.

"So?"

The Silver Lion Earl spoke in a low voice.

“So what of it?”

Sii bit her bottom lip, and then.

“.....Yup~~! Ehehe.....”

She smiled.

In this situation.

In that state.

“I promised him..... in the beginning.”

Sii’s tears fell and wetted my face. Sii’s blood fell and soaked my stomach. It mixed together. Sii and my. At first the blood. And then.

“That I’ll tell her..... Miss Earl, that Yujin is a good boy..... that’s why.”

And.

“Yujin.....”

And silence.

“If you wish,”

The Silver Lion uttered those words.

“Then okay, I’ll do it. Since Yujin said that you were his friend. Since he got mad for your sake. Since you felt indebtedness from that. In other words, you’re saying that you want to receive his lashings in his stead, right? How admirable. How beautiful. If that’s the case, then establishing that admirable story is probably the duty that I can carry out. Okay. If that’s how you want it.”

Her words stopped.

A shadow cast down above me. Above Sii’s white face as well.

“Your Excellency…….”

Zia---Zia Batsand, spoke.

“Please…….”

The sound of a thud.

The sound of kneeling.

The sound of crying.

“Ah.”

With her hand pressed against her temple, the Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“Ah~ah, I told you, Zia. If you move, then that’s 10 more lashes. But why did you move? Why? Just why, aah. What I say. Just why is it that the people in this castle, the city people, everyone, towards what I say.”

Standing still.

“Everyone should die.”

The Silver Lion Earl threw the whip that was in her hand.

Before the whip could touch the ground, its summon was canceled, making it disappear. The Silver Lion Earl headed outside and left the office.



“Her Excellency the Earl, you know.”

After she had ceased her tears, Zia Batsand started off like that.

“Her Excellency, is.”

She stopped talking.

“My teacher is, uhm…… Her Excellency and my teacher are…….”

I let out a sigh and stopped Zia.

“When you don’t know what to say, just don’t open your mouth.”

“…….” The female knight, who was most likely unable to choose her king or her teacher, nodded her head. “All right.”

“Sii. Are you okay?”

I asked Sii a question. Sii, who was groaning in pain, turned towards me and, “That’s Miss Sii, to you!”

Ehehe, while arduously laughing, she said those words.

…….

“Miss Sii. Are you all right?”

“Yup~~! I’m just a bit, tired…….”

There was a lot of sweat gathered on the temple of Sii who had uttered that. She was desperately holding onto her consciousness. As an older male, and as someone who had experience in being whipped a countless number of times by Chanmi and her maids with a riding crop, even I almost had my consciousness sent flying. Even less than that, for a girl who was younger than me and for Sii whose skin was weak because she was an albino.

…….

“What about, Yujin? ……Are, you fine, Yujin……?”

“I’m all right. Zia, you guys have something like magic medicine, right? Bring it here.”

“Okay.”

Zia ran out. Sii and I, for a moment, gazed at each other like that.

That wasn’t an accurate expression. I was looking at Sii, while Sii was doing her best to look at me as she panted with dim eyes.

It hurt.

My chest that was lashed by the whip, and my chest that wasn’t lashed as well.

It hurt enough to make me feel as if I’d die, to make me want to die.

…….

I organized the current situation.

I didn’t want to organize it. But, but, even if I didn’t, I had to organize it. I had to become cool-headed. I had to become calm.

It won’t end with me alone.

A second ago, she harmed Sii as well.

She made Zia cry.

I had to find my composure.

Calm down.

Since, my head is good.

……, …… , ……………, …… , ……………, …… , ……………, …….

First.

I had returned to this world after going back to Earth for 2 days and 1 night.

Second.

Within that time-frame, Sii's arm was cut off.

Third.

Saying that her crime was theft, other maids had stepped forward as witnesses.

Fourth.

The one to have executed the punishment was Zia's teacher, Yudia Batsand.

I finished sorting out the situation.

“Miss, Sii.”

Silence.

“Miss Sii?”

“Hm……!?! Yu……jin…….”

She must have lost consciousness for a second as Sii had abruptly regained her senses. However, it wasn't long before her eyes grew dim again.

There was no time for me to pick out my words.

“You didn't do it, right?”

For a moment, Sii looked at me while not understanding what I had meant by that question. And then, “I di……dn't……!”

“Miss Sii, Miss Sii. I apologize. I wasn’t doubting you. It was just for the sake of sorting out the situation.”

I hugged the Sii who had become red with anger and a sense of betrayal. The struggling Sii soon settled down. Trying to maintain this girl’s composure by patting her small body---her body that had become physically smaller because of the loss of one of her arms, was a difficult thing to do.

Furthermore, it was required.

“Most likely,” I told her the theory that I had thought of. “The Earl knows that as well.”

If she knows, then why did she sever Sii’s arm?

The Silver Lion Earl had mentioned Occam’s razor.

“She was aiming for it.”

“Aimed…… for it……?”

Sii lifted her head while in my arms.

“I’m saying that the very act of cutting off Miss Sii’s arm was her goal.”

Sii seemed to have been unable to understand those words for a moment. A second later, Sii blinked her eyes.

“But…… Huh? But--- the maids…… those girls…… said I stole…… put me in a trap…… that’s why---.”

“That’s nothing more than an excuse.”

“An excuse……?”

Think.

“I thought about it as well. Though I say that I thought about it, I

actually did it only a moment ago. I had provoked that maid called Mari. The fellow called Mari felt anger towards me. Therefore, with the other maids, she aimed for the time when I wasn't here. They then put Miss Sii into a trap. It's not ridiculous to think along those lines. However, there's one thing. It was too,"

Too.

"It was too, fast."

Much too fast.

"The Earl is aware that I go around sticking next to Miss Sii. Even on the day of the exam, I was wearing Miss Sii's maid uniform. However, Miss Sii's arm was severed while I wasn't here. Even though she could have waited until after I had returned. Even though she could have carried out an investigation as much as Miss Sii was able to claim that you didn't do it. Regardless, she went out of her way, as if she were in a hurry, to cut off Miss Sii's arm."

A person's arm, much too easily.

"No."

The Earl had cut it, and I explained.

"She had to, cut it."

"Had to..... cut it..... what are you....."

"This is something that you can guess at if you consider a single fact. Regardless of who had fabricated the incident. Regardless of who had made the accusation. Regardless of who had testified. In the first place, don't you think that the risk is too big? In all ages and countries, deceiving one's lord is something that's punishable by death. Moreover, it's a crime where you won't be executed in a graceful manner."

"Deceiving.....one's lord.....? Yujin..... what those words mean....."

I..... don't.....”

“If the Silver Lion Earl finds out that it was fabricated, that the accusation was false, and that the testimonies were a work of fiction, then what sort of Hell would be awaiting them afterwards---there's no way that the other maids, who have been working here in this castle, would be unable to imagine it. And yet, they carried it out.”

Why?

“Because they were that upset? No, if that were the case, then they would have acted immediately after. Then was it because they despised Miss Sii that much? That's right, if that was the case, then they could have made a plan. If hatred was the source, then them waiting for the moment when I had returned to Korea would have been possible. However, this is absurd as well.”

Why?

“How is it absurd? For starters, how would they know about my return to Korea? Whether I had returned to Korea or whether I had just gone off to someplace where they couldn't see me for a while, how would they know? Using the opportunity that lasted for only a single night, the fact that the maids, who had no method of knowing whether that opportunity would actually appear or not, had acted while moving in perfect order, this is considered cheating even in mystery novels and is impossible in reality. If that's the case, then what was it?”

Because---there was one answer.

“The Silver Lion Earl, wanted to cut off Miss Sii's arm.”

To be exact.

“The Silver Lion Earl wanted to punish Miss Sii. She was searching for a fault to pick at. That's why, while riding on the opportunity that was presented to her during my trip back to Korea, she more than gladly created something to pick at and used that to sever Miss Sii's

arm.”

“Yujin…… I…… don’t…… understand…… what you’re saying…… I…….”

Sii closed her eyes. After confirming that her breathing was stabilizing, I stroked Sii’s head and went into deep thought.

Overlooked.

Until now, I’ve been overlooking a single fact.

The reason why Sii was being bullied by the other maids.

Because she was an albino? Because she was the adopted daughter of a community leader? Those can be motives. However, Sii was a kind girl. Although she was suppressed, contorted, and twisted, Sii was a kind girl. She had two personalities, she was timid, and she was a dark and shady sadist, but despite that, Sii Garno Mikatni was a kind girl.

The fact that someone was kind meant that they were dutiful. The fact that someone was dutiful meant that they didn’t resist against authority.

Was she not like that in real life as well?

Strong to the weak to an extent.

Weak to the strong to an extent.

Someone who could never make me mad.

A servile, human.

If there’s something that I was wrong about, then it was the fact that she had the courage to suppress that servility. This factor was a merit and not a demerit.

There was no reason for her to be bullied. Even if there was, there

was no reason for it to have been prolonged for this long. Even if it were prolonged, there was no reason for her to be treated like this by everyone.

There was one reason that I could think of.

A scenario where she had become the target of the highest predator in a group.

Like when Joo Chanmi had marked me.

The Silver Lion Earl who pleasantly exchanged greetings with the maids, the Silver Lion Earl who had come to visit me while drinking alcohol when it was exposed that a maid she doted on had resorted to thievery, the Silver Lion Earl who felt affection towards her subordinates and citizens in her own way. I should have realized this when I noticed that the Silver Lion Earl wouldn't glimpse at Sii and would only call her by 'adopted daughter of Mikatni'.

The Silver Lion Earl.

Harbored evident malice towards Sii Garno Mikatni herself.



“Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl had a half-sibling.”

Zia spoke as she entered the office with some medicine in her hands.

“A child that was conceived when the lustful Earl of the previous generation had spent a single night together with a city harlot. Not only was there a problem in the social status of the city harlot, but at that time, an esteemed daughter had already been born in the Earl's House. Because it was a vague situation, recognition was impossible. However, the previous Earl adored that city harlot and the child that harlot had given birth to. Even the wife of the previous Earl who was

a lesbian adored that city harlot. Due to that, the city harlot was able to obtain the surname ‘Garno’.”

Sii Garno Mikatni.

The girl who possessed 2 surnames despite being a maid.

“Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl, Her Excellency at that time was a bright individual. The fact that she had a half-sibling, she was aware that she most likely had even more of them. I’m not sure if the reason why she didn’t voice her interest towards her half-sibling was because she thought that it was undignified or because she thought that it was disrespectful, but you can’t blame her for having hope towards her half-siblings existing when the only friends she could rely on was the child of her nanny who was destined to be her knight and a being that she had summoned from another world.”

Zia passed the medicine to me. This medicine was essential. It wasn’t solely because magic existed in this world. After Sii displayed this much movement even though only a single day had passed since she had lost her arm, it was essential.

It was an applied medicine. I rubbed it on the back of the unconscious Sii.

“This was something that happened at the end of a certain month.”

Zia uttered while gazing at me.

“A letter had arrived before Her Excellency who was sulking at the time because she had had an argument with the friend she had summoned from another world. ‘To Big Sister’ was written on that letter. ‘I want to meet you, big sister’, was written on the letter below that. Instead of summoning the owner of the letter, Her Excellency, who had already used up all 12 of her summons that month, packed up a bag. She threw on her backpack, left the castle in secret, stuck her tongue out at the castle, and walked off proudly. She had run away from home. In order to meet her half-sister, the illegitimate child of her father, the child of a concubine and her father. However,

the thing that was waiting for Her Excellency was.”

The 7th branch manager of the Mage Tower at that time and the Second Sky Wizard of the Twelve Sky Wizards.

Sky Prison.

“Her Excellency was kidnapped and confined. I heard that she was full of confidence at first. I heard that she believed she could flip everything around once her proofs of summoning had been restored at the start of the next month. That her situation would be like filming a single action scene and nothing more. Like the animations that her otherworld friend had shown to her until then. Like a drama. Like a manga. A happening that could be sorted out within a single episode. An incident that could be concluded. I heard that she believed her situation was something to that extent. There’s most likely no one who can blame Her Excellency. At the very least, I can’t. The moment I heard that Her Excellency had been kidnapped, I thought so as well.”

Zia grasped her head. That sight appeared as if she were trying to dig into her skull and squeeze her brain.

“A good---she was a good person.”

Zia Batsand uttered.

“Her Excellency, was a good person.”

Zia Batsand uttered.

“I won’t kill anyone! She was someone who would say things like that. You’ll be injured slightly, so be cautious at your own discretion! She was someone who would say things like that. Ah hah ha, this is good enough, I’ll believe that you all have reflected on your mistakes. She was someone who spoke like that as if it were natural.”

After going silent with a face that appeared as if she had peered into Hell, she spoke.

“She was that kind of person.”

As if she were empty.

“.....”

Sii’s back quickly healed.

“All places do not heal.”

Zia took the medicine from my hand. I wordlessly allowed Zia, this girl, the Silver Lion Earl’s sword, and my sword, to apply the medicine on my chest.

“The incident occurred and the wound healed. But as if it were there from the very beginning, a scar remained.”

A hot, painful, and ticklish feeling came from this otherworld magical medicine.

“The esteemed wife and husband of the House of the Earl had passed away. During that time, the city harlot, who had received the surname ‘Garno’, had also died. Her Excellency, who had become an orphan, became the Silver Lion Earl. Similarly, the illegitimate child, who had also become an orphan, was picked up by Mercè Mikatni, the best blacksmith in the City of Confinement and one of the community leaders.”

The reason why Zia was concerned about Sii.

The reason why Zia, who was a knight of the Silver Lion Royal Guard, was friendly towards Sii who was nothing more than a maid.

Regardless of that, the reason why she couldn’t help Sii directly.

“As a community leader of the city, Mercè Mikatni was closely associated with the previous Earl. Although all of the community leaders were like cousins of in-laws, they also belonged within the range of being considered distant relatives by marriage. They had

enough moral obligations and fidelity to take care of the people related to the previous Earl by blood. But if you look back at it now, you can say that that fidelity was too excessive. Mikatni felt sympathy towards Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl who had undergone all sorts of terrible happenings at a young age and had lost her parents, relatives, and friend. Mercè Mikatni thought that the bloodied girl who had tortured a condemned convict to death was pitiable.”

That’s why.

“Even if the wombs to have given birth to them were different, if Her Excellency had a sister there. If she had another vassal like the child of her nanny who stood by her side as a knight and protected her. Rather than some utter stranger, wouldn’t she be able to support the Earl? Mikatni, who was thinking along those lines, sent the child he had adopted, the illegitimate child of the previous Earl, to the castle as a maid. For Her Excellency the Earl. Moreover, for the illegitimate child of the previous Earl as well.”

Meddling needlessly.

Similar to what the man who was the homeroom teacher of Miyeong’s class had done.

“Because he hoped that they would both be happy, they both ended up unhappy.”

If malice was the only thing that could give birth to wicked results, then how much more comfortable would it be to live in this world?

“Her Excellency, disliked Sii, her half-sibling.”

The issued authorization. As it was absolute and overwhelming, the albino maid girl was tossed outside the border by an unprecedented dictator.

“The residents of the castle ended up disliking Sii as well.”

Be it Korea or this world, neither place was a paradise where things

like maladies disappeared if someone of a high status said something about it. On the contrary, they were places where the exact opposite occurred all the time.

“It’s not like no one had tried to help Sii. However, Her Excellency was not pleased by that. Her Excellency got sick and tired of everything that was related to Sii, and the people, no one wanted to lose favor with Her Excellency the Earl.”

The fact that the Silver Lion Earl harbored ill-will towards Sii, to be exact, I had vaguely noticed it. However, I thought that the cause of it was in the word ‘Mikatni’. The community leader of the city who had a bad relationship with the lord. I thought that was the reason why Sii, who was his adopted daughter, was receiving glares. As expected, when the Silver Lion Earl’s behavior became sharp after she heard that Abria Mikatni was visiting, that attitude had backed up that false idea of mine.

But it was actually the opposite. Sii didn’t lose favor with the Earl because of the House of Mikatni, but the House of Mikatni had lost favor with the Earl because of Sii.

Even the simplest of truths cannot be seen if the angle is changed.

“Her Excellency the Earl.”

‘Your existence in itself is a threat to me.’ Abria Mikatni had said that to Sii. ‘He has no political sense’. She judged her own father as such because he had taken in Sii. If she were simply talking about her seat to become the successor and that alone, then there was no reason for her to do so. Abria Mikatni was able to figure out that the Earl was keeping a respectful distance from the House of Mikatni because of Sii.

The Silver Lion Earl had said that I was occasionally weirdly slow-witted. I recalled Yudia Batsand who seemed to be delighted after having severed Sii’s arm. The faces of people who I have never even seen before, although I behaved like a solutionist while also acting as if I had seen through the minds of the people who I didn’t even know

for a long time, in times like this, I came to the realization that I was nothing more than a normal human being, and that my field of vision was limited.

“Her Excellency may have turned the responsibility for her life being ruined towards Sii. If perhaps, a letter hadn’t arrived from Sii on that day. If perhaps, she didn’t go to meet Sii at that time. Ahh, perhaps.”

Of course, that wasn’t a reasonable expression.

It’s not, but.

“Nevertheless, I never imagined that she would do something like this…….”

Zia didn’t finish her sentence. She groaned as if her throat was boiling and she lowered her head.

“I’m sorry, Sii. I can’t face the Earl of the previous generation anymore.”

The unconscious Sii was unable to react to that Zia’s self-reproach.

I changed into another shirt. After pressing my shirt down on top of my wound that was still throbbing slightly, I looked down at Sii and spoke.

“The conversation we had just now, how much does Sii herself know about it?”

“A rough outline. However, I don’t know how much she knows exactly. Confirming that isn’t my duty. I…….”

“Wrong.”

I cut her off.

“That’s not right, Zia. It’s because of that misunderstanding of yours that your days feeling ashamed towards the previous

generation, towards the Earl, and towards your teacher, will continue on.”

“What do you…… mean?”

“I still don’t know how many vassals there are in this Earl’s House. There are probably several other people besides you here. Like that, you guys are most likely supporting both the House and the city. However, the only person the Earl trusts, and the only person who believes in the Earl is you. If you truly wish to assist your king, then you must be thorough. If you lose your king, then at that time, only lament and regret will leave your mouth.”

While recalling the backseat fellow who I had met back in Korea, I continued.

“The fact that you’re not in a situation which you can back out of, the fact that if you don’t move while thinking about each and every little thing, then nothing will work out. You need to realize these things soon.”

“I don’t have a head that’s capable…….”

“You have a head that was capable of deceiving the Earl, Miss Ex-Spy of the Mage Tower.”

Zia gulped down her breath. I lifted up the fallen Sii in my arms.

“If a person shuts up, then they can do anything. You carry out, transfer, and teach the things you know, and you figure out, confirm, and learn the things that you don’t know.”

“……Yujin.”

Zia closed her lips with her hands pressed against her chest. After grabbing those hands, pulling them, and making her stick them both out forward, I passed Sii onto her.

“The medicine.”

While adjusting my glasses, I spoke.

“In regard to medicine, Zia. Is there a medicine that can fix her arm?”

“If the severed arm is completely intact. However, it’s incredibly expensive and---.”

“Yudia.” I turned towards Yudia. **“Where did you leave Sii’s severed arm?”**

Yudia, who was playing Angry Birds the entire time we were conversing, looked at me with wide eyes.

“Surely! Stop, Yujin! It’s too late. There’s no way Her Excellency would keep watch over…….”

“She’ll watch over this. I plan to go and negotiate with the Earl right now. **Yudia, where did you leave the arm?”**

“Negotiation? Currently, Her Excellency towards you…… towards Sii, like you are right now…… Moreover, to ask my teacher that--- I told you that my teacher is a terrifying person…….”

Although I fully understood that, I couldn’t back down now. I looked straight at Yudia.

“Yudia Batsand.”

I spoke clearly.

“You said yourself that you aren’t a sadist. If that’s right, then you most likely won’t give needless pain to others. Although I’m uncertain whether you believed that that needless pain would be able to drag out Sii’s hatred or not, you immediately said that Sii wasn’t a serviceable subject matter. If that’s the case, then you should have cut her arm off in an instant and you wouldn’t have touched it afterward. That arm, where did you leave it?”

The edges of Yudia Batsand's lips became twisted as he looked down at me with eyes that appeared like a pair of poisonous swamps.

“Guhuhuhu.”

After laughing---Yudia Batsand spoke.

“How marvelous. This is why hatred makes people stronger.”

“It's not hatred.”

“Is that so?”

I silently gazed at Yudia. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Calm yourself. Your assumption is correct. And if it's the answer to that question, then---shouldn't there be a place that's already on your mind?”

“Well, there is.”

Additionally, I had an idea of where the Silver Lion Earl's current location was.

I packed up an iPhone, an iPad, and an Andromeda Tab. I also took with me any other tool that seemed as if they'd be required. I took off my glasses, cleaned it, and put them back on. I took some deep breaths. Around the time when I had taken my second breath, Zia clenched her teeth.

“I'll go as well.”

“With me?”

“That's right. This time, I'll make sure that I'm able to help in changing Her Excellency's mind. I'll lead Her Excellency down the correct path. If that's difficult, then.”

After saying that, Zia then glanced down at Sii who was in her

arms.

“At the very least, I can be your shield.”

.....

“All right.”

If that’s the decision you’ve arrived at.

“I said it earlier, but there’s no need for you to degrade yourself. Even without saying something like ‘this time’, you’ve already changed the Earl’s mind once before.”

On the fourth day after having been summoned here.

“If you weren’t there, then my head would have flown off.”

Zia Batsand. The Silver Lion Earl’s sword. Yudia Batsand’s disciple.

And above all else---my sword.

“But for now, look after Sii for a bit. Should I call it an infirmary? Take her somewhere like that and nurse her for a while and follow me down after some time. The time.....one second.” I took out the iPhone and tossed it to her. “Come down once this starts ringing. Okay?”

“.....Will you be fine by yourself until then?”

“I won’t do something that I can’t do.”

I pushed up my glasses and left the office.



I walked through the halls, went down the stairs, crossed the courtyard, and went down into the basement.

The more I descended the stairs, the darker and stuffier my surroundings became. Although it was already night, it wasn't that sort of darkness, and although there were no windows, it wasn't that sort of stuffiness either. It was a darkness that felt as if a dark red color was being painted over my surroundings each step I descended the stairs, and it was a stuffiness that felt as if my lungs were being pressured by a compressor one level at a time. The scenery that was revealed to me after I had reached around half-way down the stairs and my eyes had adjusted to the darkness gave me the reason behind this sensation I was having, but that was a reason which I was already aware of.

Dried blood splotches.

Flesh and fat that were rotting away on top of the steps.

Located at the end of that---a bright red rusted steel door.

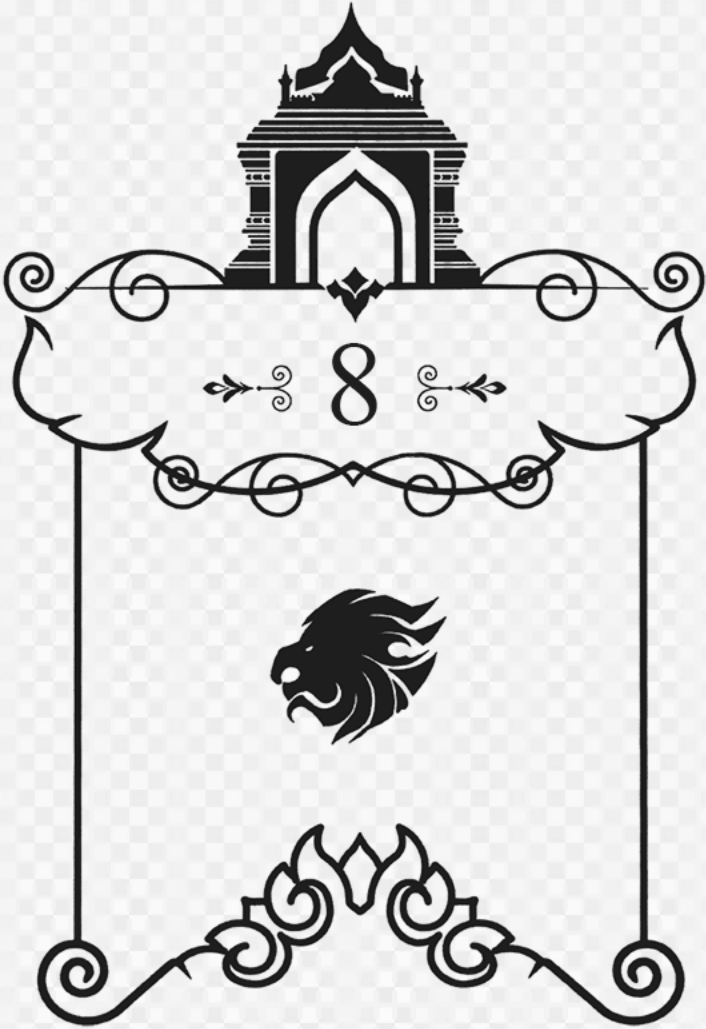
.....

I descended the rest of the steps.

I stood.

I held onto my beads tightly.

I opened the door to the torture chamber.



They say that the people who get mad are the ones who're on the losing side.

Anger narrows your field of vision. Anger prevents you from planning things out and causes your actions to be linear. Anger makes it so that you're unable to control yourself and causes you to thoughtlessly take actions that will bring harm to you in the long-run. However, the biggest problem with anger is the fact that it reveals your true self. It makes you stronger, but it becomes that much dangerous as well. In any case, it makes it so that you have no more extra lives. If that true self of yours is defeated, then that represents your actual defeat. It's like rushing into a situation wearing nothing and swinging your blade around while your opposition hides behind a rampart that's made out of pretense, deception, and imitations. In the majority of cases, that blade will be blocked and your defenseless body will be stabbed until you fall.

People think like that.

I think like that.

Calm down, I tell myself. Be cool-headed, I tell myself. Nothing will change even if you entrust your body to anger, I tell myself. Sort it out, analyze it, dismantle it, and then strike the opening, I tell myself.

That's what I'll do.



A heavy scent penetrated my nose the instant I entered the chamber.

Ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen dioxide, red blood cells, protein, etc, the beings that were summoned from one of the 12 worlds which the Earl could meddle in, including Earth, were all

emanating that awful internal smell together. Well, there's no way that beings which lose the ability to maintain themselves if they're unable to eat would give off a good scent.

Full.

This place was filled with those acrid beings spread throughout the room.

Even in this moment, the very person behind spreading those beings out was absorbed in her task of spreading them out further. With a creature that appeared like an insect laid out on top of a workbench, she stabbed a knife into an organ which looked like the creature's shoulder joint. With careful movements, she pulled. There was a string wire tied to what appeared to be the creature's other shoulder. Like rising interest on a long-term saving, the fact that the creature was given pain even if it were left alone made it a clever move.

A cruel move.

As awful as the atrocious scent that was completely occupying the chamber.

“The thought that I'd return here one day, well, I did expect it was going to happen.”

I spoke while fixing the position of my glasses on my face.

“But I didn't think that it'd be so soon.”

The hands of the very person who was absorbed in her work stopped. Pat, pat, she half-heartedly wiped her hands off on her clothes before turning around.

“Ah hah ha.”

She---The Silver Lion Earl, laughed.

“Ah hah hah hah ha ha ha ha.”

With a twisted smile on her face, which had blue-colored blood smeared all over it, she raised her arms as if she were giving a speech. The fact that every single nail on her left hand was now dyed in black, it meant that she had used 3 more summons within that short period of time, it meant that she had depleted 5 of her 12 monthly summons in a single day.

The creature on top of the workbench---as expected, the thing that resembled an insect must have been summoned like that.

A being that I didn't see back when I had put the torture chamber behind me. Currently, the only new face among the otherworld beings here in the torture chamber was that giant insect.

If that were the case, then.

If that were the case, then---how great would that be?

“How many did you call?”

“Including this one, two. The other one is still confined in its cell. This one---was a bit, ah hah ha ha. It was being annoying. Even though it's just a piece of trash that goes around digging holes like a *Wrick*, it gave me additional trouble. As expected of newly summoned beings. They have good vigor. In order to show it my respect, I planned to give it a full-time service course at my Silver Lion Massage Parlour.”

The Silver Lion Earl, who had uttered those words, then folded her arms. Sticky liquid had seeped into her coat making it appear like the surface of a mire. A quagmire-like existence. The Multi-Dimensional Serial-Summoning Torture-Killer, the Silver Lion Earl.

“Anyway---Mr. Yujin, what are you here for?”

That mire, took a step towards me.

“Does Mr. Yujin have an interest in massages as well? Mm hmm, as you can see, I already have a previous engagement. I’m behind on a lot of appointments actually, but if you think about it, it’s okay! We aren’t strangers anyway, so the least I can do is let you go first. Ah ha ha, Mr. Yujin…….”

Another step.

“I see your chest has been healed, huh? Did you apply medicine? Was it Zia---or, Yudia? Regardless of who it was, that, the side effects are quite severe, you know? Something like a convenient healing potion is something that only exists in Blizzard games or an island country RPG. The medicine and healing magic in this world are things that just drag out your natural healing ability from the future and use it noooow after all. It’ll heal immediately, but in the long-run, Mr. Yujin, it’s no different to buying a house while falling into debt.”

Another step.

“The reason why I’m telling you this, Mr. Yujin, Mr. Yujin---you mustn’t misunderstand. You shouldn’t go with the flow. If you misunderstand that part, then you’ll go under in a blink of an eye. You don’t know what happens to the people whose bodies have gone under, right? What do you think will happen if your natural healing ability starts working in reverse? Your body will start to die even though you’re not doing anything. Just like a zombie! If that happens, then you’ll end up using more medication in order to prevent that and---Well, it’s not particularly different from overdosing on drugs. It’s Hell. Your mind will stay sober even though your body is decaying. A Hell where the vector is backwards. Ah hah ha ha!”

Another step---I spoke.

“I’m sorry.”

The Silver Lion Earl---didn’t stop walking---but tilted her head instead.

“What are you apologizing for?”

“Because I wasn’t well-mannered towards you.”

The Silver Lion Earl stopped.

Towards the girl who was tilting her head and pressing her blue-blood covered hand against her chin, I spoke.

“I should have considered you more.”

“In what regard?”

“The fact that I came looking for you right now, the thing that happened back at the office, and before I even went on my vacation.”

I got on one knee in order to match her eye level and spoke after taking off my glasses.

“I ask you for your forgiveness.”

The Silver Lion Earl stood in her spot. It seems she was thinking about what she had just heard.

Shortly after, she spoke up.

“Forgiveness, is it?”

She repeated it once more.

“Forgiveness, you know.”

The Silver Lion Earl raised one hand. She lowered it. With her hands now behind her back, and while standing, she tapped the heel of one foot with the tip of her other foot.

“It’s not difficult to show tolerance. I’m the earl after all. But if I show it blindly, then the value of that tolerance dropping is the only thing that’ll happen. Stop being ambiguous and say it properly. In what regard were you ill-mannered and in what regard were you not thinking about me?”

“I was tactless.”

“What kind of tact?”

“I should have noticed that me being next to Sii was something that upset your mood.”

The Silver Lion Earl shrugged.

“Hu~? Not really. Something like that illegitimate child, I don’t care about her whatsoever.”

“I should have quickly realized this before I learned how to speak this world’s language and I should have started off by putting my effort in mediating that. I had quite a lot of time before the test, so I can’t possibly use that as an excuse for having neglected this. It was my mistake.”

“I said I didn’t really feel that way and that I don’t care about that illegitimate child. As I thought, aren’t Mr. Yujin’s ears useless?”

“Furthermore, the biggest mistake I made above all else was the fact that I had gone about my business thoughtlessly.”

Silence.

“Through servicing a maid without your permission, I harmed your dignity. It’s an action that’s similar to having abandoned your favor. I’m reflecting on it.”

“Favor, is it?”

The Earl tapped on her cheek, tap, tap. Favor. After saying that as if she were ruminating it. Favor.

“What kind of favor?”

“If I didn’t have the clothes, food, and dwelling, which you had provided for me, then I wouldn’t have been able to survive.”

“You learned the language. It’s probably possible for you to be peerless here with the knowledge you have of modern Earth.”

“Being able to learn that language was also thanks to your protection.”

The Earl closed one eye.

“That’s quite feudalistic. You’re saying that you felt gratitude towards me because I gave you protection, therefore you’re devoting yourself to me because of that gratitude. However, Mr. Yujin, that’s something that can be replaced if you just find another benefactor.”

“It’s like that in regard to you being irreplaceable as well. Without your ability, I can’t go back to my world.”

“That’s right. But Mr. Yujin.”

The Earl tilted her head slightly.

“This is like you’re saying ‘Thank you for feeding me, giving me clothes, and providing me with a place to sleep’, towards the kidnapper who had abducted you, Mr. Yujin, just because they gave you food, clothes, and a place to rest. Moreover, this is also like you’re saying ‘Since you’re the only one who can release me from my imprisonment, I’m thankful for that as well’ towards the kidnapper who had confined you. Normal people would get mad in this sort of situation, you know? Are you not angry? Or perhaps, as I thought, does Mr. Yujin have masochistic tendencies?”

Although you saying that makes me believe that you really do have the same blood as Sii.

“I don’t have enough leisure to get mad at a truth that won’t change even if I were to get upset at it.”

“Suure, that’s right. It seems you really are suffering from masochistic tendencies, Mr. Yujin.”

The Silver Lion Earl opened the eye she had shut.

“In any case, handling you had become a bit troubling. The more intense a person’s emotional range is, the easier they are to handle, but in your case, it didn’t seem like you had something like that. Since it felt like you didn’t care if you yourself received harm or were humiliated. Be that as it may, you didn’t seem like you could be bribed with money either. In other words, you’re a pet whose reaction is difficult to predict. That part about you makes you unique, that part about you makes you interesting, but---Mr. Yujin. That part about you, also troubled me. Be it a hero or an adult, they’re both difficult to handle since they don’t cling onto their own well-being.”

The Silver Lion Earl put her arms behind her back.

“But, there’s also a way to handle those types of fellows in their own way.”

She spoke in a light tone as if she were whistling.

“That’s why, after making you get along with Mikatni’s adopted daughter for a while, I tried cutting off her arm.”

Silence.

“And your reaction, ta-dah. It was dramatic.”

The Silver Lion Earl giggled.

“Ah hah ha. For Mr. Yujin to get that riled up. What am I supposed to do when you showed me such a stereotypical reaction? YesYes, standard procedure---the more insensible a person is to their own harm, the stronger a person’s sense of self-sacrifice is, the more sensitive they are to the harm of the people around them. Isn’t everyone like that? I’ve now found your weakness, your noose. If it were me, Mr. Yujin, then I would be more concerned about this. From this day forth, the days that’ll be awaiting Mr. Yujin, will be days of overwork which even the Mr. Yujin who has masochistic tendencies would find to be difficult to handle---.”

“That’s not right.”

The Silver Lion Earl stopped abruptly.

“You didn’t cut off Sii’s arm with that kind of thought in mind. Something like cutting off Sii’s arm in order to get a hold of my weakness, that’s just something you added later on.”

“Hu~? I added it later on? Why does our Mr. Yujin think that’s the case?”

“Because you aren’t that kind of person.”

“Ah hah ha! What’s with that? Hm? Hm? ‘You aren’t that kind of person’, shock! I never thought that I’d actually hear something like this in real life. Just how do you see me as, Mr. Yujin? I’m,”

“You’re.”

“The Silver Lion Earl.”

“The Silver Lion Earl.”

Her and my gaze crossed.

“Because you’re the Silver Lion Earl.”

I repeated,

“Because you aren’t a fellow whose head is good enough to come up with something like that.”

The Silver Lion Earl had a puzzled look.

I elaborated.

“Of course, there are fellows who’re able to wring out that kind of intrigue. Extremely strange tacticians who feel as if they’d appear in fictional stories actually do exist in the world. I’ve met a countless number of those kinds of monsters.”

Joo Chanmi. Lee Seonha. My elder cousin. Saei.

Although the category is a bit different---Yudia Batsand.

“But that’s not you. You aren’t Josua or Akagi Shigeru. Your head isn’t as good as theirs. Since you were born wrong and raised wrong, you’re just someone who will one day become a tremendously twisted human, thus you’re incapable of squeezing out that kind of intrigue. Silver Lion Earl, the reason why you severed Sii’s arm.”

Isn’t because of some grandiose stratagem like that.

“It’s simply because you didn’t like the fact that the Sii, who you hated, was playing around with me, your toy.”

The Silver Lion Earl stood still.

“My right hand that Sii had bruised.”

Sii’s right arm that had been cut off.

“Zia who took care of Sii.”

Made the person who was nothing more than a guest, Yudia Batsand---Zia’s teacher, be the one to cut off that arm.

“Self-conscious,”

The Silver Lion Earl then uttered.

“Your ego is overinflated---Mr. Yujin. In other words, Mr. Yujin is saying that---this Silver Lion Earl of the world, showed possessiveness.”

“And because Sii bothered you.”

“To some illegitimate child like that! You’re saying that I was throwing that kind of childish tantrum, Mr. Yujin!”

“That’s right.”

“What kind of person do you see me---this Silver Lion Earl as!?”

“After seeing you as the Silver Lion Earl.”

“Something like that, I---.”

“You’ve been doing it to this very day.”

I spoke up.

“In the first place, everything you’ve done until now, were all things like that, weren’t they?”

In order to either vent your anger or pass the time, you tortured people who didn’t have human rights.

Once the maid you cherished stole something, you came to me while drinking alcohol.

You’re boundlessly soft to Zia who’s your close-aid.

You waste your 12 monthly summons and even put your hand on the taxes a bit.

A mass of narcissism.

“A girl who’s turning 16 this year and just has a slightly good head on her shoulders.”

Her directional nature was simply absurdly crooked, the essence of her being was no different to a child throwing a tantrum.

“You’re just human after all.”

The Silver Lion Earl, was human.

Everyone, was human.

“Yujin---Yujin. Han Yujin.”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke while gritting her teeth.

“You came here, to ask me for forgiveness--- but are you here, to insult me instead? Patronizing me, Mr. Yujin---.”

“Silver Lion Earl, the fact that I was unable to be well-mannered towards you means that I was unable to become certain in that regard.”

I folded my glasses, put them into my pocket, and lowered my head.

“I thought that you were a bit more insane. I thought that you had no attachment. That Zia was the only person who was special to you, that you wouldn't care about how I went about my business. There was no way that you would. Even when we were in front of Yudia, you mentioned things like public favor and whatnot. Although you displayed responsibility and possessiveness towards your city, I misunderstood and thought that I wasn't a part of that. That's why, by carrying out actions that harmed your reputation and lowered my value as your property, I ended up upsetting you. ”

The essentials were this.

“Sorry.”

I.

“I'm yours. Regardless of whether I want to be or not, I'm yours. From this point forth, I won't misunderstand this fact even in the slightest degree. I'll be conscious of this at all times. Until the day I'm able to safely return home, I'm your possession.”

I,

“Han Yujin is the Silver Lion Earl's property.”

A drop of blood dripped down onto the floor of the torture chamber.

It was blood that had flowed down the Silver Lion Earl's chin. From her bottom lip, it was flowing from the place where she was biting down onto with her canines.

“That's why, Your Excellency Silver Lion Earl, bestow generosity upon me who belongs to you. Return Sii's arm.”

I bowed.

“Please.”

The Silver Lion Earl stood while biting her lip for a long time.

After standing for a while, she uttered.

“That's funny.”

Silence.

“I said it's funny, Mr. Yujin. Just, how. Me. Ah, what do I look like to you? And even then, whether I'd return that arm to you. If I don't return it, then.”

“I'll ask you to return it every time the opportunity presents itself.”

“That's right. It'll become tiresome so I'll probably just kill you, you know?”

“In order for that to not happen, I'll prove my usefulness and loyalty to you.”

“Ah, just die.”

“Sorry.”

A silence flowed by.

The Silver Lion Earl roughly wiped the blood off of her mouth. One step, two step. As if she were looking at something repulsive, she looked down at me with her arms folded.

I looked straight into her eyes and spoke.

“Sii’s arm.”

The Silver Lion Earl let out a sigh.

“I’ll give it.”

“Thank you.”

“Whatever, a piece of trash like that. If this were Korea, then I would have had to pay a fee for throwing out trash illegally if I kept it around. In any case, I’ll give it to you so go away. Since it seems I, Mr. Yujin, need to relieve my mood which has become a mess because of you.”

After saying that, the Silver Lion Earl turned around and headed back towards the torture rack. She picked up the dagger which she had put down earlier and placed it against the creature that was lying on top of the torture rack.

I didn’t have any particular thoughts about that.

I knew that this was something that occurred even before I was summoned here. Be it Zia or the Earl, they had both raised me up to be some hero or adult, but I wasn’t that sort of impressive existence. Similar to how the Silver Lion Earl was just human, I was nothing more than human as well. In the end, I’m only capable of the things that were within my limitations. I, “I can entertain you more.”

“Mr. Yujin.”

Without turning around, the Silver Lion Earl spoke.



“That’s not it. Right now, you’re supposed to just turn around and leave. While acknowledging your weakness and acknowledging your own cowardice, you’re supposed to calmly nod your head and leave. You did that well back when you were spending your time in this basement, didn’t you?”

However, this creature, was most likely summoned only a few dozen minutes ago.

The other one who was still locked in the cell as well.

If that was the case, then there was still.

“Get lost.”

“Earl. I’ll entertain,”

“I told you to leave three times noow. If it’s the smart Mr. Yujin, then you wouldn’t want to repeat the same mistake, right?”

The Earl turned to look at me. Gray sunken eyes that appeared like crushed snow were directed towards me.

“5.”

I held onto my beads tightly.

“4.”

The Earl tightened her grip on her dagger.

“3. 2. 1!”

“Yujin! I’m here to help!”

The door to the torture chamber was swung open and Zia had entered.

A candlelight entered between the Earl, who was standing in front of the torture rack with a dagger gripped tightly in her hand, and me.

The numerous specks of dust that were drifting underneath the light swirled around. They flowed according to the heavy breaths coming out from Zia's mouth, and flowed according to the swaying of her uniform. The dust swirled around before descending to the floor.

The Earl pressed her hand against her forehead.

“Just die already, seriously.”

“I-I'll summarize what happened just now. I opened the door and entered the torture chamber in order to help Yujin, but the moment I entered the room, Her Excellency told me to die. Although I think that I'll be unable to understand what's going on, I have no idea what's happening…….”

The Silver Lion Earl threw her dagger. After contemplating whether she should dodge it or get hit by it, Zia moved her upper body at the last second and chose the path of dodging it. Despite that, the fact that she wasn't able to dodge it completely and ended up having her cheek be scathed by the blade, that was really a Zia-like behavior.

However, Zia Batsand was also a knight. Not minding the blood that was flowing down her cheek, and with a knight-like behavior, “Your Excellency the Earl. For Your Excellency, I---.”

“Shut up.”

“Yes.”

She shut her mouth with a Zia-like behavior.

It seemed the Earl was brimming with the desire to ask why Zia had come here, but I could tell why she didn't because of the fact that the venom in the Silver Lion Earl's voice had dissipated. With a tired expression, the Earl pressed on her temple with her hand for a while.

“If I were to say it, then.”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke as if she were fed up.

“Mr. Yujin. Certainly, as you said, it was a lie when I stated that the reason why I cut off Mikatni’s adopted daughter’s arm was because I wanted to find your weakness. If I wanted to do that, then I would have done it while you were here. Also, without needing to even do that, there are things in the world which you don’t have to even confirm. If I just summon a Korean and threaten you, even if it’s not a Korean, if I summon something that looks like a Korean and threaten you with them, it’s possible to make you move if I summon any intelligent life form and use them as blackmail. The question is.”

Now then, Mr. Yujin, here’s a question, the Silver Lion Earl continued.

“I, thought of something fun, I tell you. Handing you the knife, you cut them, I tell you. I’ll be watching, I tell you. And if you don’t, then I’ll cut off Mikatni’s adopted daughter’s other arm, I tell you. Can you do it?”

Silence.

“I, thought of something fun, I tell you. Give me the names of five people, I tell you. Five people from your world, I tell you. The people you cherish, are intimate with, and feel affection for, I tell you. Can you tell me them?”

Zia raised her head.

“Your Excellency, you shouldn’t do…….”

“I said to shut up.”

“Yes.”

Zia lowered her head.

…….

“I can do it and I can say it.”

The Silver Lion Earl gazed at me. I spoke.

“I’ll do it. Although I don’t like stimulating things. If I can prevent Sii’s arm from being cut off by torturing that creature until your mood is better, then I’ll do it. Afterwards, I’ll probably search for a way to heal that creature and send them back home. Furthermore, I’ll say it. Even if you summon those 5 people, it’ll be fine as long as I can protect them.”

“Mm hm. So you’re saying it’s possible. That you can even shoulder them. Your reason being because you can still restore them back to normal. However, Mr. Yujin, there are actions in the world that can’t be undone. What if I tell you to not cut, but to kill them? You’re going to kill that precious person the moment I summon them, what if I tell you this? Mr. Yujin.”

Silence.

“Can you say it?”

Silence.

“Can you still, say that Han Yujin is the Silver Lion Earl’s possession?”

With her arms behind her back, the Silver Lion Earl lowered her back. Without even glancing at the panicking Zia, the Silver Lion Earl turned her head.

“Can you still, say that I’m human?”

Silence.

“This, will continue.”

The Silver Lion Earl released the steel wires and snapped her fingers. The insect creature who was being tortured had their summon canceled and vanished.

It would have been great if it had returned to its own world, but I was aware that that wasn't the case. As the Silver Lion Earl had said, this will continue. There was no way to know whether it would happen sometime in the future or within the next few seconds. The moment when the continuation of this situation isn't an assumption and ends up being actually carried out, will occur.

“I only do the things that I can do.”

That's why,

“I'll make it so that I can say it.”

“Ah hah.”

The Silver Lion Earl placed one hand against her mouth.

“Ah hah hah hah ha.”

Grabbed her stomach with her other hand.

“Ah hah ha ha ha ha ha ha hah ah hah ah ha ha ha ah hah hah ha ha ha ha hah ah hah hah hah hah ha ha ha ha ha ha.”

It abruptly stopped.

The Silver Lion Earl dragged Zia and left. Having been left by myself in the torture room, I motionlessly stared at the closed door.



It was in the middle of the night when Sii had opened her eyes.

“Yujin! Don’t overdo yourself!”

Sii, who had listened to the whole story, spoke with puffed up cheeks.

“Really, what did you do while I was unconscious? For you to have charged towards Miss Earl, Miss Earl who was also in that basement room at that! There’s a limit to overworking yourself! Yujin’s arm could have flown off. There’s a chance that it could have not ended with just your arm!”

Sii uttered while patting my forehead. She was using her right arm which she had reattached---not.

I had received the severed arm within that day. I had received the medicine as well. Under Zia’s instructions, I had even attached it. However, Zia said this at the same time.

“Similar to how there are no magic spells that are omnipotent, there’s no medicine that’s omnipotent as well. Yujin, as these words can also be said in your World of Spires exactly, in this world, those words contain the same weight. It’d be a good idea if she didn’t push herself for the time being.”

“Can you elaborate on the definition of ‘for the time being’ and ‘push herself’?”

“The time period is about 1 month. To be more specific, she shouldn’t lift anything that’s heavier than a spoon.”

So in other words, this girl, who was in that state, was currently telling me not to overdo myself.

That’s right.

“Yujin. What’s with your face? ……Are you mad?”

Sii hesitantly drew back her hand and asked.

I.

“I’m not mad.”

Although I actually was, it wasn’t towards Sii.

Moreover, an anger that came from being unable to change anything would only become a poison if you kept it contained within yourself. If you’re going to harbor it, then at the very least, you need to do so after you’ve gained the resolve to change something.

“……Yujin.”

Zia placed a hand on my shoulder. I let out a sigh.

“I’m going to organize the situation.”

“Mm.”

“First off, Sii can’t use her right arm for a month. Maid work will be impossible. Miss Sii, is it possible for you to apply for a long-term vacation?”

Sii let out an ‘eh’ sound.

“Something like that, how could it be possible…….”

“Miss Sii, please think about it a little more and answer. Is it possible, or is it impossible? If it’s impossible, then what’s the reason why you cannot? We can only think together if we know the situation as well. In a calm and orderly way.”

“……Mm, mmm.” After thinking about it for a moment, Sii Garno Mikatni responded hesitantly. “If I go back to Sir Mikatni’s home…… it may be possible. But even if I go back, I wouldn’t be able to spend my time there recuperating. Sir Mercè Mikatni has been bedridden and…… the person who currently has authority over both the house and the forge is Sir Mikatni’s actual daughter. In other words, my

foster-sister. And that person, you should know since you met her last time, but…….”

“Yes, she dislikes Miss Sii, right? How about just living outside of the castle? For at least one month until your arm is healed.”

“That’d be possible if I had money saved up, but…….”

Sii trailed off. I understood what she meant since she was biting her lower lip.

“The pretext was that they discovered you stealing, right? Is it compensation?”

Instead of saying something, Sii responded by showing a flushed face. Her red face didn’t mean that she was embarrassed, but rather, it meant that she was angry.

“It’s most likely impossible to cover that compensation fee with the savings of a maid. For the time being, your savings were taken as a forfeit. Was the rest put under as debt?”

Sii’s red face became even more flushed. If I use the incident that occurred while I was still in the basement as the previous example, then it would be 3 times the value of the pieces of jewelry that were discovered. As I thought, even the Earl wouldn’t request for things without a decent reason…….

“The price of the medicine that helped reattach Miss Sii’s arm…….”

“I paid that part. You don’t have to worry about it.”

…….

“Did the Earl not say something?”

“Whatever, is what she said. She simply said that. That’s why, I simply did whatever.”

“It should have been quite expensive. A medicine that can reattach

an arm, that is.”

“I used up all of my savings.”

Zia spoke while averting her gaze. Sii made a precipitously panicked face.

“Thank you very much, Miss Zia. For someone like me…….”

“……There’s no reason for you to thank me. When your arm was being cut off, and even when Yujin and her Excellency were talking in the basement, in the end, I wasn’t helpful at all.”

That’s why this is the least I could do, it felt as if I could hear these words inaudibly. Zia Batsand. My sword.

“You really don’t have any tact, do you?”

“What do you mean, Yujin?”

It was literally as I had said.

If I were to speak from my perspective, then that insect creature not having to experience any more pain in that very moment was thanks to Zia’s entrance, so she wasn’t entirely unhelpful. But if she was going to agonize over it by herself, then it’ll probably be better off if I let her reproach herself for now. Furthermore, that agony on her face wasn’t solely because she was blaming herself.

“Also, Yujin, for the time being, it’ll be difficult for us to meet.”

“Is it because of Yudia?”

“That’s---right. My teacher plans to stay here through the entirety of this month and the month after. As his pupil and as Her Excellency the Earl’s knight, I must accompany him. Moreover, if you consider the prophecy, then…… with my teacher, while he’s here for this

month, if I don't protect Her Excellency's side.....”

“I see you're still concerned about that prophecy.”

“.....It's fine to scoff at me, Yujin. You have the right to do so.”

“Not really.”

Within this girl, her overall priority will always have the Earl at the top. As much as I was aware of this, there was nothing I could be hurt about or scoff at.

“Just make sure to change the battery on your teacher's phone properly. The solar power generator, you roughly understand how to use it, right? If there's perhaps something he doesn't know, then tell him to come to me.”

“.....Even after going through all that, you're still concerned about my teacher?”

“If I said I wasn't upset, then that would be a lie. But I'm the one who had paid dearly for judging a person wrong. If I'm going to continue getting involved with your teacher, then I should make sure to learn about him properly this time.”

“By those words, then even Her Excellency.....?”

“I won't give up on her.”

I adjusted my glasses and spoke.

“Everything I said to the Earl back in the basement was sincere. Without that girl, I won't be able to survive here and I also won't be able to return home. Furthermore, if I'm unable to get that distant from her physically, then that means I can't leave her alone mentally either. Consistently sticking by her side and improving her by even the slightest amount is for my sake. I won't give up on it.”

I spoke.

“There’s nothing in the world that’s a waste of time, after all.”

If I deduct the optimal situation and go forward while taking steps that only involve tasks that I’m capable of, then one day.

“……Thank you, Yujin.”

“Don’t thank me. I said it in the basement, but this is for myself. That’s why there’s no need for you to be concerned in that regard…… and returning back to the topic of Sii. Miss Sii, it’d be difficult for you to go around the castle as a maid while not working, right?”

“Eh! ……Uu, uuhm. No matter how I think about it, that’s…… people like Mari wouldn’t stay still…….”

“I have an idea regarding that, but…… anyway, it’s fine. While Miss Sii’s arm is healing, I’ll take care of all of Miss Sii’s duties.”

“T-There’s no…… in the first place, isn’t Yujin a squire? Even if you say my duties, they’re all duties of a maid. If asked, it’s already weird that you’ve been spending your time with me until now…… for you to even do my job in my stead, that’s.”

“I wanted to do something about that with certainty anyway. Zia, what’s my current status? I’m still your knight apprentice, right?”

“……That’s, right. As long as Her Excellency the Earl doesn’t prepare a new job for you or give you any verbal promises, then I believe that standing will continue.”

“All right. If that’s the case, then, for the time being, give me the permission to be Sii’s guardian. Inform the Earl about it as well. If the Earl calls, then I’ll dash to her no matter what, so please tolerate this. Tell her that.”

Considering the Silver Lion Earl’s pride, she’ll probably only give a ‘whatever’ as a response, but it’s important that I gave a pledge to her.

There’s a chance that Sii’s arm would have never been cut off if I

had done this at the start.

No.

There's no need for 'a chance'.

"Yujin..... is that fine?"

Sii inquired cautiously. I gave her a nod.

"It's fine. Rather, don't overexert yourself, Miss Sii. If you overexert yourself further than this and strain your arm, then at that time, I'll get angry."

Sii sealed her lips. With a red face, she lowered her head while hugging her shoulders.

"Okay~~! That's obvious. I don't want to live with only a single arm as well! Because I'll be careful..... Mm, I'll be careful, Yujin!"

Sii uttered that and laughed, 'Ehehe'.

.....

"Zia, can you leave for a second?"

"Hm? What's the matter, Yujin?"

"Just leave for now. This is a request."

".....Mm. Understood. It's about time for me to check on the horses anyway. I'll be right back."

Zia looked back and forth between Sii and me before standing up. Zia bowed her head once and headed outside.

Dawn was breaking. From the stables, while the sound of the horses---it's not an exact expression, but if I were to substitute it with something from my world, then it would be difficult to translate it as something else---flapping their wings resonated, Sii and I were left

alone in the office.

I spoke.

“Miss Sii.”

“Hm~~? What is it, Yujin?”

“Are you all right?”

Sii opened her eyes wide.

“Hm? Yup~…… like I said, I’m okay. I don’t have a lot of energy, but I’m fine…… and you said you’ll look after me, Yujin!”

“Are you sure?”

“Yup yup. Really. More than that, Yujin, I’ve been asking since before, but are you o---.”

“I’m not okay.”

I pushed up my glasses.

“I’m, upset.”

The words I couldn’t say while Zia was here, I said them.

“I’m mad at the Silver Lion Earl.”

“Y-Yujin, what are you…… i-if you say, those words thoughtlessly--
-.”

“Miss Sii, are you not upset?”

The smile on the edge of Sii’s lips thickened.

“Up……set, Yujin? What are you saying? If anything, I’m grateful towards Miss Earl’s kindness. Although it hurt a bit and was unfair…… she gave me my arm back, gave me medicine…… and at

that time too! She didn't lash me with her whip more. Yup yup, you should quickly forget the things that can't be helped!"

"Really?"

"Yup~~! Really. Ehehe..... Yujin, as well, should quickly forget it. Because it'd be good, yup. Yujin."

"Miss Sii."

Silence.

"Are you all right?"

Silence.

"It's fine for you to tell me."

That's why, Miss Sii, I continued.

"Are you all right?"

Long.

Long.

Silence.

".....Uu."

Grit.

"Uuh..... uu....."

Grit, grit.

"Uuuuuuuu....."

Gritgritgritgrit---

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah.....!!"

Sii grasped her head.

“There’s no way, I’d be all right……!!”

Her pale face became as bright as a fire. It went beyond that, making her face appear as if it were boiling like the surface of lava.

“My arm…… even though I didn’t do anything, my arm……! It hurt…… I was scared……! Adding to that, what do you mean by medicine…… Don’t make me laugh! In the first place, in the first place…… why…… if you’re going to do this, then why…… if you didn’t cut it off in the first place…… I, just why did my arm…… Money! Whipped! Even Yujin was whipped…… Don’t make me laugh……!!”

While gritting her teeth, while gritting her teeth as if she were grinding a millstone, she spoke---

“I’m mad…… I’m, mad……!!”

The tears flowing down her cheeks mixed together with the blood flowing from her lips and became dyed pink.

“That girl, that girl…… I absolutely won’t leave her alone…… one day, without fail……! No matter what happens, without fail……!”

Without fail.

“Without fail, I’ll kill---.”

I pulled Sii into a hug.

The heated Sii, although I’ve felt it several times before, she was surprisingly hot. And small. She was trembling. It felt as if I were embracing a burning up baby bird. I’ll be burned. It won’t end with being burned. I’ll melt. I was aware of that.

I didn’t let her go.

“Miss Sii, any more than that.”

“Yu……jin, why……? You said it was fine to say it…… that’s why, I, I, as well---.”

“That’s correct. It’s all right, but any more than that is.”

That summer that felt as if I’d melt. The cries of a starling that had filled my head to the brim.

The hospital room Minhee was in. Chanmi and I.

“Because I’ve gone there before, I know.”

My, hands.

“There are people who believe that hatred makes people stronger. If you’re a normal person, then you wouldn’t seriously believe that. Rage is the same as well. Once you cross a fixed line, there’ll only be ashes there. You yourself will burn and disappear. That’s why, any more than this. Just to this point.”

Don’t forget your current emotions.

Don’t be swept away by them.

“Since I’ll help you, you must help me.”

Even if it takes a somewhat long period of time.

“To hear the Silver Lion Earl say, I’m sorry.”

I apologize.

“To make her say, it was my mistake.”

Forgive me.

“Let us make her plead to us.”

Sii grit her teeth. Heavy breathing. Each time Sii let out a breath, it felt as if my chest, which was embracing her, was being singed. Red,

her face that was burning a dark reddish color was slowly returning back to her original white color.

I waited.

Eventually, Sii spoke.

“Okay…….”

She nodded and, tightly, after pulling me into a crushingly tight hug, Sii Garno Mikatni spoke.

“Okay~~! Let’s do it! Yujin! Certainly, without fail, let’s make her do that!”

— **End**



[Short Story]
The Story of the Violet-tinted Mire

[단편] 보랏빛 늪의 이야기

It was around twilight. The vaguely heated wind contained a scent that stimulated one's hunger. Everything in the world was dyed in a color that induced one to drool and raise their appetite. As I had expected, the girl standing in front of that scenery must have felt as if she were standing in a banquet hall.

She wasn't hungry. The girl had already enjoyed the banquet.

“I did it. I did it!”

On this day, in this moment, that girl--- ‘Rupture Spear’, Avin Batsand was rejoicing.

“Finally, finally this bastard! These bastards!”

Although I couldn't see her eyes because of the light that was shining off of her glasses, which were covering almost half of her entire face, the fact that she was passionate could be understood just from her voice.

“I have gotten, my revenge!”

It was around twilight. The scent of protein and fat being burnt continued to emanate. Even without the help from the setting sun, the view that was before my eyes was sufficiently multicolored. Embracing the things that were human beings a second ago and using the things that were houses a second ago as fuel, the flames were spreading.

The massacred village was burning.

“Long…… It was long. However, I was able to obtain my revenge. Aah, may there be the blessings of the 12 Pillar Gods! At last!”

While the short spear that was gripped in her hand trembled, Avin Batsand turned around.

“Thank you very much, teacher!”

There was a glasses-wearing young man standing in the place where the girl was gazing at.

At a glance, he appeared like a maiden as well. Although he had a shining and tall stature, the lines that drew the outline of that person's body were frighteningly feeble. However, engraved on his face was an expression that appeared as if it were drawn with an incredibly thick and unerasable handwriting. The purple light that was emanating from his pupils was also emanating from his hair. Even within this space where the setting sun was making everything give off an orange glow, he stood out with an unsinkable violet color.

“It’s all thanks to you, teacher!”

As if she were worshipping him, Avin Batsand knelt before that violet young man.

“Because you had taught me how to become stronger! Because you had taught me how to kill other people! Because you had taught me how to give others pain! Finally! I was able to achieve my revenge! Aah, Yudia Batsand! My great teacher!”

“Guhuhuhu.”

Towards his disciple's admiration, Yudia Batsand let out his unique laugh while adjusting his glasses.

“As I thought, I believe that it is detestable that I was able to meet such an outstanding disciple such as yourself. Avin, out of all the disciples that I’ve had for the past 20 years, you were the greatest.”

Yudia drew closer and stroke Avin's cheek.

“Aah, teacher……! I’m undeserving of such praise……!”

“It is a reasonable evaluation. Before a year had even passed, you had overtaken every single one of your seniors

who had started to train under me earlier than you did. Once another 10 years had passed, you had become strong enough to face 10 rounds against me. Although it's detestable to say it myself, this is an incredible stage that cannot be achieved easily."

"It is all thanks to teacher's guidance!"

"No, this is your own accomplishment."

A smile that was like a wave washing over a mudflat appeared on the edges of Yudia's mouth.

"Your hatred."

Once more.

"I had bestowed upon you the blindness to not doubt your goal. I had bestowed upon you the earnesty to not carry out that process half-heartedly. I have made you stronger---. Your hatred towards this village."

Avin was moved to tears by her teacher's praise. On the other hand, she was also gnashing her teeth. That's right, hatred. The hatred that couldn't even be concealed by the large pair of glasses that were covering her entire face.

This village, the hatred towards the hometown she was raised in.

"Do you remember the details of how you obtained your abhorrence?"

Avin nodded in response to her teacher's question. Obviously, she remembered.

"I was a tool."

She remembered clearly.

"I was once living a life that had nothing to be envious

about. I was the eldest daughter of the village chief of a pioneer village. I had a little brother and, at the time, we were quite close. My parents were pleased with us as well. However, one day, my father passed away and my mother became somewhat different. Us, no, she started to treat me differently all of a sudden.”

With her head lowered, Avin continued.

“At first it was the clothes I wore. After that, it was my furniture. After that, it was my room. After that, it was my blanket. I had my doubts. I couldn’t understand why I had to sleep with no blanket, no room, no bed, and while wearing ragged clothes. That suspicion didn’t last long. There was suddenly a lot of other things outside of that which I couldn’t understand after all. I.”

Aah, I---, Avin Batsand uttered and gritted her teeth.

“I was soon unable to eat. I endured it at first. However, I was soon unable to bear it. I cried. I pleaded that I was hungry. Like that, after I had begged several times, I was barely able to obtain a meal. Although I couldn’t eat properly at the table, I didn’t care about that. If anything, the only thought that went through my head was the desire to eat more. I was hungry, so I wanted to eat until I was full. I.”

Avin covered her face.

“I, was an animal. Food. Hunger. Because of those things, I descended to the level of animals.”

Once her hunger was gone, she remembered the meaning of what she had done. The refinement she was taught as the daughter of the village head had become a type of poison and chewed away at her body. Her own shallowness that was pushed towards her in a form that couldn’t be ignored. That wasn’t the last thing she had to experience.

“In order to eat, I had to descend into being an animal several times. However, a situation where just turning into an animal wasn’t enough had soon arrived. The moment where I couldn’t eat even if I begged. My mother told me to accept customers if I wanted to eat.”

Her saliva was like lava and burned her throat as it descended.

“I refused at first, but it was clear that I wouldn’t be able to refuse her for long. Both my mother and I were aware of this.”

Moreover, her little brother who was watching over this knew this as well.

“I, started taking customers.”

Her nails dug into her palms.

“While I was being treated like that, my little brother was being educated in order to become the next village head. That child had started to receive the education which I had originally received. He seemed to be puzzled at first. In my stead, he had even appealed to our mother several times about my treatment. Several village people did so as well.”

Past tense.

Once something has continued on for a while, people will grow accustomed to the things that were perplexing at first. It’ll become something natural. To be exact, around 2 years. That is a tool meant for the village---it took just that much amount of time before people started to think like that. For her little brother, that is…….

“If you look back at it now.”

Avin spat out her words as she gazed downwards.

“If you look back at it now, it was close to being a type of

performance. A colosseum in a large city, a whorehouse, the Cat's Kiln. A tool with the purpose of showing off that my mother, who was the village head, and my little brother, who was going to become the next village head, were sacrificing things for the village. A tool with the purpose of fermenting the complaints of the village people. Those days continued. In the end, I…….”

“Until the day you became my disciple.”

Yudia Batsand spoke.

Avin closed her eyes and nodded.

“Yes.”

She nodded once more.

“Yes, that's right.”

She remembered that day. The day when the door that would always be locked, was unlatched. Avin opened the door and went outside. It was night. Coldheartedly, the galaxy was spread throughout the sky. A flashy color that was similar to that of the shell of a beetle that ate corpses. Avin Batsand, who was walking while following after that light, encountered the violet-tinted young man.

The distinguished guest of the village who would visit and take care of the monsters that were nearby.

She had met the person who would become her teacher.

“It's thanks to you, teacher.”

Avin Batsand spoke.

“I was able to run away from that village thanks to you, teacher. In my hands, I was able to obtain the power to get revenge. The power to settle old scores. Furthermore, a

surname. You had given me a surname. You had adopted me as your daughter.”

“All of my disciples are my adopted sons and daughters.”

“Even so, it was special to me.”

Yudia shrugged his shoulders. For a long period of time, he had lived as one of the strong. In regard to what kind of merit that had become, descendants from famous households would all try to obtain his surname. It wasn't a difficult task. Since it was a task that didn't cost even a single coin, Yudia gave out his surname without reserve. However, certainly, there wasn't a lot of people who would throw away their original surnames and solely use the surname that he had given them. In that regard---

“Certainly, you were special.”

Avin blushed. However, Yudia wasn't done talking.

“Yes, you were truly special. Avin, as I had said earlier, you were the greatest disciple I had for the past 20 years.”

“Teacher…….”

Avin's glasses became foggy by her own breath and body temperature. Once more, she started to tremble passionately. Aah, teacher. The teacher she loved and respected was acknowledging her--.

“You were the greatest.”

Past tense.

Avin abruptly realized that fact.

“Teacher?”

“It's vague now.”

Silence.

“I apologize, but what do you mean by that……?”

“Shall I talk a little about the past?”

Yudia adjusted his glasses.

“You should be aware of the fact that I do not reside in the headquarters of the End Void Gate for long periods of time. Although the tasks I carry out at the End Void Gate have their own meaning in themselves, to be honest, I do not enjoy it. What I enjoy is a fight that is appetizing. A fight with an opposition who can provide that skill. In order to obtain that, I’ve been wandering around the world.”

Avin nodded her head. That wasn’t solely Yudia’s problem. The executives of the End Void Gate would occasionally say so as well--- in good terms, he was free-spirited, and in bad terms, he lacked a sense of responsibility. In the first place, if he didn’t have that personality, then he wouldn’t have been able to ascend to a position where he could proclaim that he had reached the limit of the void.

“You should be aware of the fact that those types of fellows are lacking in this world. That is an incredibly regrettable thing. The stronger they are, the greater the position they possess---the stronger they are, they have their own situation---and since fighting with me would be nothing more than a simple risk to them--- in other words, they end up not facing me. Detestably, that is a regrettable problem for me.”

Even if you exclude the executives of the End Void Gate, there were many other strong individuals. From the very beginning, as the term ‘strong’ was relative, it wasn’t only humans but other races as well, and it wasn’t only those within this world but those within other worlds as well. There were many people who could be called strong. However, the majority of those people had something they had to protect. They had things that were precious to them.

“You should be aware of the fact that in order to resolve that issue, I had endeavored in various ways. Accepting disciples was one of those reasons. A long time ago, intelligent beings solved their shortage of provisions through agriculture and stockbreeding. I had decided to emulate that. I didn’t just accept anyone as my disciple. People who would be helpful in various ways if I were to accept them as a disciple, those who had an outstanding skill, or people who had that much of a growth factor---you can say that you belong to that last example.”

Avin was suddenly able to speak. She believed that she understood what Yudia wanted to say.

“So my current hatred after having exacted my revenge..... did you believe that my motive to further train myself has diminished? Please be relieved! Holding my respect and affection towards you, teacher, in my chest, I’ll grow further than now and---.”

She had misunderstood.

“You should be aware of the fact that,” Yudia Batsand continued. **“The world isn’t as overflowing with hatred as one would expect.”**

Avin raised her head. What she was wearing and what her teacher was wearing, the two pairs of glasses were obstructing her gaze like a pair of transparent moons.

Across that, Yudia, the teacher she respected and held dear, was speaking.

“I said that I will talk about something that happened slightly in the past, did I not? Avin, as I had told you, the occasions where I would vacate the End Void Gate and wander around the world were often. In order to find an appetizing opposition, in order to find someone who could become that sort of existence for me. So, while I was

wandering around, I ended up residing within a certain village.”

Something within Avin was telling her that she shouldn't listen to this.

“It was a pioneer village.”

Something within Avin told her that she shouldn't listen to this any further.

“Aah---it was a splendid place!”

Yudia spread out both of his arms. On the face of his tilted head, an ominous shadow was latching onto him like a mask.

“That gloomy and closed off atmosphere, the defining characteristics of a pioneer village! The murky air that was piled up there! The village gave off the same kind of claustrophobic chest-filling feeling which you'd normally get when you enter a small room that had been sealed for 10 years! Also, the seeds of hatred that the place was filled to the brim with---people who begrudged and envied one another, but at the same time, in order to make their rugged lives, which were laid out before their eyes, seem a bit better, they would show one another a forced smile. That banquet of demons. The hatred that almost appeared as if it could be visibly grasped and the aggravation that was piled up inside of that, those things made my heart dance!”

Looking through his glasses that were dyed white like the moon, Yudia looked down at his disciple.

“If it's this town, then I might be able to pick up a good pupil. I was filled with that expectation.”

Avin.

Avin suddenly opened her mouth.

“So that’s why you picked me up just as you had desired, right? My dear teacher! In order to compensate that expectation, I will…….”

“No. Regrettably, it had missed my expectation. It was a bit lacking compared to what I had hoped for.”

She had misunderstood.

The fact that it was a misunderstanding, in truth, Avin Batsand was aware before it was even told to her. She had somehow realized it while listening to her teacher’s lengthy speech. Her teacher…….

“That’s why, Avin, I decided to supplement what was lacking.”

Avin raised her head. What she was wearing and what her teacher was wearing, the two pairs of glasses were obstructing her gaze like a pair of transparent moons. Above that, as if there were fog, a hazy shroud was looming over her vision. Her eyes had become wet.

Past that, Yudia, her teacher was talking.

“I visited that village several times and resolved their problems. Honestly, even if it were called a calamity that was threatening a pioneer village, the creatures weren’t beings that had the skill to entertain me. Regardless, I could endure something of that extent. For the harvest that I’ll one day gather, I had to endure that much. Furthermore, that wasn’t the only village that I was going through……. Returning back to the main topic, the place I was paying attention to was the head of the pioneer village’s household.”

Like magma, tears flowed down Avin’s cheeks.

“The village head and his wife lived in conjugal harmony. However, on the wife’s side, she was harboring hatred towards the fact that her beauty was withering away. Eventually, once her husband passed away, the wife was left

alone with her children. Among them, her daughter grew more beautiful as the days went by and was being raised in order to properly become the next head of the village. Although the missus secretly felt defeat in that regard, she didn't let it show. That's why I whispered something to her."

A trace remained.

"I told her, 'Your daughter, is a bit unpleasant'."

Her teacher spoke.

"It's the words of the savior who had saved their village several times. Even while panicking, the missus apologized. Asking if her daughter had done something discourteous, and to generously forgive her daughter since the fault lied in herself for being unable to lead her daughter properly. I pretended as if I were contemplating for a moment before speaking once more. Missus, you have done nothing wrong. Except, if your daughter becomes the village head, then I may no longer return to this village, is what I had told her."

Avin was kneeling and Yudia was standing. However, the only obstacle that stood between them were the pairs of glasses that they both had on. Avin was able to look up into Yudia's eyes. Even within her hazy field of vision, the violet tint that seemed as if it were surging, didn't appear as if it were even slightly blurred.

"The missus seemed to be hesitant at first. However, I continued to tell her the same thing every time I visited their village. Before long, the missus made a decision. She decided to raise her son as the next head of the village. When asked about what would happen to her daughter, she responded that, for now, her daughter will be taken aside and be put to work as one of the workforces for the village, and later on, she'll send her daughter off to get married to a suitable man within the village and make them create a workforce for the future generations of the village. If that wasn't possible, then

it'd be okay to politically marry her daughter off to someone from a nearby pioneer village and form a connection with them. That's right, it was okay---it was okay, but it was a severely normal idea. It was an idea that didn't match the hatred that had grown within her. It wasn't something that I wanted either. That's why, I gave her a piece of advice. That, it'd be a waste---"

A real waste---

"If it's a competent individual such as yourself, missus, then you should be able to utilize that resource much more efficiently---"

For the village---

"It wasn't long before the missus ended up facing the malice that she was harboring inside of herself. She realized what she truly wanted. She then started to carry out that desire. The people of the village and her son, as expected, they seemed to be hesitant at first. However, even the village people had a malice that had grown inside of them, and her son as well, as expected---"

The sound of the moon shattering cut off Yudia's words.

Using only his thumb, Yudia flicked away the spear that had extended towards him. The spear moved upwards in a large arc and broke Avin's posture. Regardless, she used her collapsing posture in reverse and tried to slash at Yudia. Yudia blocked her by gripping the shaft of the spear.

"Avin, there's something that you didn't say a short while ago, isn't that so?"

Avin roared. As if she were holding onto Yudia's neck and choking him, she drew the spear in her hands close to her.

"Your little brother didn't end up regarding you as a tool

for the village. He didn't end up becoming accustomed to the situation either. As I had watched over him and had given him pieces of advice, I know. Isn't that so? Your little brother---”

“Shut up……!”

“Because he secretly loved you---”

“I told you to shut up……!”

“He couldn't forgive you for having a child with anybody and everybody---”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaah……!”

The clear and high-pitched cry pierced into the boundary between the twilight and the starlight as it resonated. Like a carnivore that was struggling within an iron cage, the favorite disciple of the Violet-tinted Mire writhed. Shaking off the hand of her teacher who was holding onto her spear, she pulled her weapon back and extended it once more. She performed chain movements that befitted the characteristic of a short spear. A bright red air current, which matched Avin's hair color, swirled around her spearhead.

Towards the dignified charge that was heading at him---while looking at the ability that possessed the power of absolute penetration, Yudia shrunk back.

“Splendid……!”

He rushed towards it.

Yudia's body turned into a violet wave. Boom……! He grabbed onto both of his disciple's wrists and leaned his face towards her. The bloody aura that was swirling around the spear surged as if it were trying to brush against Yudia's slender jawline. He wouldn't come out unscathed if it were to even graze him, but without any concern towards that, he shouted.

“Aah, splendid! How marvelous, Avin Batsand! Do you not recall that night, Avin!? The night you lost your child. The night your body could no longer bear any more children! The night you became my disciple! Truly, you’re currently making the same exact expression as you did during those times! You’re harboring hatred! Aah! Avin! My favorite disciple!”

Present tense.

Although she was receiving praises from the teacher who she adored, Avin Batsand could only shed tears. It wasn’t the same as the first tears she had shed. It wasn’t the same tears she had shed when she had first become his favorite disciple. She most likely will never be able to shed those types of tears ever again.

Avin Batsand wept.

“Why…….”

“Why?”

Yudia tilted his head as if he was just asked something odd.

“You should already be aware of the fact that I’m this sort of existence.”

Those words were so painfully true.

Strength started to leave Avin’s body. Yudia tilted his head once more before throwing Avin’s body as if he were tossing her aside. Bam……! Colliding against the rubble of a building that had already become a pile of ash, Avin stayed collapsed like that with clumps of ashes covering her entire body. She, while weeping as her shoulders trembled, curled her body up into a ball.

With his long fingers pressed against the edge of his mouth, Yudia tilted his head.

“Is that your instinct? You should already know that there’s nothing inside of that.”

A dreadful sound came from Avin’s molars.

She pressed her trembling hand down against the ground. A clear handprint was left on the ground that was covered in rubble and ashes. A single tear dropped down onto it. Her tears had been dyed black because they were mixed together with blood and ashes.

Around the time when her violent tears had eventually erased her handprint without leaving a single trace, Avin Batsand stood up.

Her posture felt as if she were having a contest of strength against the earth with her own two feet.

However, she did not fall.

Her short spear, while gripping her spear in her hands, Avin Batsand looked at her teacher.

“Splendid…….”

Yudia Batsand had an intoxicated face. Like a young child who had sampled the finest alcohol, or like a lady who was acting embarrassed, Yudia shrunk his shoulders while pressing one hand against his lips.

“Yes, Avin. That’s what you must do in order to be called my favorite disciple.”

Avin responded by pointing her spear towards Yudia. Yudia pushed his glasses up and spoke quietly.

“Now then, I welcome you. Avin Batsand. My favorite disciple. I hope that your hatred is more immense than my own.”

With a scream-like shout, Avin rushed forward.



Night had arrived.

Yudia Batsand stood alone. Compared to a short while ago, his appearance was different to a certain degree. His build that was once tall had shrunken down while maintaining his proportions, similar to that of a balloon that had been deflated a bit. His face had become young as well. At most, he appeared like a boy who was in his mid-teens.

He looked like a girl as well. He clicked his tongue.

“Is that it?”

There was no response. Yudia let out a long sigh.

“I see that’s it.”

There was still no response. From the side, his appearance as he put away his spear and adjusted his glasses looked as if he were dejected.

“10 years…… Well, I guess this would be around that level.”

Glance, he turned his gaze towards the ground. To be exact, towards the girl who had fallen down on the ground and was completely charred.

“Although it’d be a lie if I said it wasn’t appetizing…….”

He, who had sighed a countless number of times now, suddenly clenched his teeth.

“Aah, really!”

As he gripped his chest as if he had been pierced by an arrow, Yudia Batsand shouted as if he were vomiting blood.

“Avin, Avin! Aah, a bit more! Here! It was here! A little bit more! Deeper!---If you did, then!”

Silence.

“Truly, how detestable…….”

Yudia pressed his hand against his temple. Becoming any more disorderly than this would most likely be impolite to his disciple. However, he couldn't do anything about the complaints that were naturally flowing out from his lips.

“I wonder what I should do now.”

There were many seeds he had scattered here and there throughout the world. There were also some errors he had overlooked in some places. However, it'd take some time before he could harvest those. Does he have to play around by destroying labyrinths? Or should he try starting a fight with the Mage Tower? Yudia, who was thinking about those things, all of a sudden, while letting out an audible 'ah', snapped his fingers.

“The place where Yellow-Green Grass is entrusting her body. They said that a candidate to possibly become an Odd Sky Wizard has been born within the House of the Lion Earl.”

Every Odd Sky Wizard ends up living a life that is as eccentric as the ability they possessed. To be more precise, their ability made it so that they couldn't live a normal life. Although there were repulsive cases like the Seventh Sky Wizard, New Design Foresight, Touma Soh, the majority of Odd Sky Wizards ended up suiting his fancy. It should be fine to rely on those statistics here.

“I may even be able to discover a fellow who is quite useful there.”

If that were the case, then he should establish a connection with them beforehand. Although he may have to wait another 10 years in

order for them to ripen appropriately, that was a time he could endure. Malice tasted the best after it had cooled down.

The excited Yudia hastened his walking pace.

As if he were being swallowed up by a mire, his figure slowly disappeared into the night sky.

-Fin.



Hello, this is Ryu Saerin. It's an honor to be able to meet you all like this once more.

Lately, I've been playing my PS VITA.

Chaos;Child, Demon Gaze, Mystery Chronicle: One Way Heroics, etc etc. While playing these games, I promised myself that I'd make this game console my only sanctuary. That's right. Not like the Walking Dead series on Steam.....! As I haven't played it even once during the 1 year period since I had bought it, and as I don't plan to play it for another year, that sort of back alley.....! I won't make the VITA into that sort of land of zombies.....! PS VITA is.....! Just for the PS VITA, I'll only buy another game after I've already cleared the game that I've already purchased.....! Sanctuary.....! Catacomb.....! My PS VITA will turn over a new leaf as a grave filled with games that have all been played.....!

Ironically, the term VITA means life.

As expected of VITA......

Whether it's because of the ironic meaning the word VITA possesses, but despite my endeavor to turn it into a catacomb, games that I'm occasionally unable to clear have started to pile up. Those are the instances where I buy games thinking they'd match my preference, but they turned out to not suit my fancy. Sometimes I'd discover games that match my preferences, but if someone asked me whether the game matched my preferences perfectly, then that wasn't the case either. If anything, because they match my preferences, I end up discovering many more things about the game that feels lacking to me. A game that's able to intermesh with you perfectly. That kind of game doesn't exist in the world. It has yet to be born.

It's a sad thing.

Ironically, the term VITA means life.

That's VITA for you…….

Similar to how there's no game that's able to intermesh with you perfectly, there's no story in the world that's able to intermesh with you perfectly as well. If you want a story that's capable of intermeshing with you perfectly, then all you can do is supplement it and create the story yourself.

It's quite the sad thing, but if you think about it the other way around, then the reason why creators applied to become creators, the fact that they can eat and live due to their creations is the groundwork for that reason. Through the base of deficiency and sadness, they eat and live. If you look at it from this perspective, then a creator is a job with quite the deep sin.

At times, a truth can be born from within a vice as well. Due to all of the creators who were trying to make a story that intermeshed with themselves, a countless number of creations were born in the world. Certain stories that match certain people's preferences were born like that, and those kinds of stories will continue to be given life.

That's right, ironically, the term VITA means life…….

Truly, VITA…….

To all of you who had picked up my book. If this story was able to suit your preferences even the slightest amount, then I couldn't hope for more.

Then, please treat this story well in the next volume as well.

Have a good day.



CHARACTER
PROFILE

Sii Garo Mikatni



Race: Otherworlder

Gender: Female

Age: 15

Stamina: Average

Technique: Average

Intelligence: Average

Wisdom: Below Average

Charm: Low

Abnormalness: High

Titles

[Uncommon] Adopted Daughter of a Community Leader

[Uncommon] Quarter Marble

[Rare] Illegitimate Child of the Lion Earl Household *(Sealed)*

Inventory

[Rare] Proof of being the illegitimate child of the Lion Earl Household
(Sealed)

Skills

[Uncommon] Physical Strength of the Marbled *(Self-damage is upon use)*

[Common] Low Resistance Against Sunlight

Yudia Batsand



Race: Ascended Being

Gender: Self-controlled

Age: 187

Stamina: Unmeasurable

Technique: Unmeasurable

Intelligence: Above Average

Wisdom: Above Average

Charm: Very Low

Abnormalness: Unmeasurable

Titles

[Unique] Draconian Demonic Spear

[Unique] Royal Courier of the End Void Gate

[Rare] The Ascended Being

[Rare] The Violet Swamp of Poison

Inventory

[Unique] Spear of Hatred

[Unique] Glasses of Appraisal

[Rare] Clothes and other accessories

Skills

[Unique] Dematerialization (*Liquid/Poison*)

[Rare] Dignified Charge, Great Rending Slice, Aloof Smash

(25-30/Day, abilities with the power to penetrate/sever/destroy)

[Rare] Complete Overhaul

(2/Year, once incapable of battling any further, the user's body will condense and automatically revive itself)

[Rare] Various Martial Arts (*Master level*)



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