

無職転生

異世界行ったら
本気だす

24

理不尽な孫の手
Rifujin na Magomote

MUSHOKU TENSEI

– Jobless Reincarnation –

- VOLUME 23 -

Young Man Period

– *Decisive Battle Chapter* –

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無職転生

異世界行ったら
(本気)だす

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理不尽な孫の手

Rifujin na Magoronote





ルイジェルド



エリナリーゼ

クリフ

ノルン

人物紹介



ドーガ

シャンドル

ルーデウス

「ルーデウス」

これから、きっと聞きたくない話を聞かされる。
そんな予感があった。もしかすると、と頭の隅を不安な予感がよぎっている。



無職転生～異世界行ったら本気だす～②④

CONTENTS

第二十四章	青年期 決戦編 上
第一話	「作戦会議」
第二話	「探し求めていた物」
第三話	「探し求めていた者」
第四話	「スペルド族の村」
第五話	「冥王ビタ」
第六話	「疫病」
第七話	「天才」
間話	「誰かにとつての誰か」
間話	「ビタとラクサス」
第八話	「首都」
第九話	「三泊四日 スペルド村見学ツアー」
第十話	「消失」

「天才などいない。」

There is man who accomplished a great achievement.

著：ルーデウス・グレイラット

訳：ジーン・RF・マゴット

CHAPTER 1

STRATEGY MEETING

1

The conference room in the Orsted offices.

There, I sat directly across from Orsted.

On both sides, Eris, Roxy, Sylphy, and Zanoba could be seen respectively.

Roxy was keeping the record of proceedings.

“——Is what happened.”

I gave Orsted the report of the last sequence of findings all at once.

Gisu, North God Karlmann III.

When I told him that the two of them were discovered in the Kingdom of Biheiril, he was in a good mood.

It never came from his mouth, but he had an atmosphere as if he wanted to say “Good job!”

I also continued my report in high spirits.

“ ... ”

However, as soon as I reported that Ruijerd has been discovered, that good mood disappeared.

To put it plainly, his expression clouded.

“...Ummm, is something wrong?”

He seems kind of mad, but kind of not.

Seeming like a negative aura was overflowing, he glared at me.
After all this time, just being glared at won't cause my legs to quake.
However, if I don't know the reason, I become a little anxious.

“...In the Kingdom of Biheiril, the Ogre God is also there.”

Ogre God.

That reminds me, Ogre Island, where the Ogre God lives, is to the east of the Kingdom of Biheiril.

No, I didn't forget.

However, I need a confirmation.

“Didn't you say something about the Ogre God becoming an enemy easily?”

“The current generation Ogre God has been an apostle in a past loop.”

I see.

Then, the chance that Gisu's location is a trap has increased.

Alternatively, Gisu's objective may be the Ogre God.

Even if we discuss that in the conference room, we won't understand. Not unless we go there directly.

However, we are currently in the conference room.

Let's focus on things that can be discussed in the conference room.

“I'd like to discuss our plans from now on, that included.”

“Yeah.”

“For the present, we have this many materials gathered, so I don't think putting it off and not going to the Kingdom of Biheiril is an option.”

For the time being, I'll present my strategy.

“There is the chance that this is a trap by Gisu, or rather Hitogami. However, we don't know when we'll have another chance to catch Gisu, who keeps running about, so this could be seen as the perfect chance. I regret not being able to call out to the Sword

God, but I think I should head to the Kingdom of Biheiril. Is this okay?"

"I have no objections."

In any event, immediately after hearing of Gisu's discovery, Atofe began moving on her own.

I didn't hear what route she'll be taking, but I'm certain it will be a while before she arrives.

One or two months, or possibly longer.

In order to meet up with her, as well as to tell the people there about her, going to the Kingdom of Biheiril is unavoidable.

"There are 4 things we need to do.

Find Gisu, and crush him.

Find North God Karlmann III, and persuade him.

Find Ruijerd, and persuade him.

Find the Ogre God, and either persuade or crush him.

In that order of priority... if that's okay with you? Orsted-sama."

"...Yeah."

Personally I'd like to meet Ruijerd before anything else, but even so the North God should be first.

As for the Ogre God, it would be easiest if Atofe ran into him when crossing the sea.

If I don't get in contact with her, that's probably what will happen.

Or rather, how should I go about contacting her?

I don't think there's any way other than the communication lithograph established at Fort Necross.

...Well, it may be better to put off thinking about that until Atofe arrives. Or rather, there may be no other option. Not having a means of emergency contact is pretty inconvenient.

"Furthermore, upon locating Gisu, if his gathered war potential is high, I'll call in for reinforcements for our side."

The enemy is in the Kingdom of Biheiril.

However, if after gathering our forces in Biheiril, it turned out that he had already escaped then I would look like the boy who cried wolf.

I'm sure it's something that happens from time to time, but trust in us will still lower.

“I don't think it'll be too late to call in reinforcements after Gisu has been discovered.”

The enemy is there, and we're going to have a decisive battle.

It's better not to call in our allies until after that has been decided.

If we repeatedly discover Gisu, call in allies, let him run away, and disperse, and are unable to gather any allies when the time is right, it would be meaningless.

“For that sake, I think we should establish teleportation circles at each location for calling in reinforcements.”

The Kingdom of Biheiril is a small country, but even so it has three large cities.

The capital Biheiril.

The second city Irel.

The third city Heilerul.

“In the vicinity of each of the three cities, I will set up teleportation circles.”

I throw a glance at Roxy.

“The number of people who can accurately draw teleportation circles is limited, but I thought something like this might happen, and asked my great teacher to prepare a number of teleportation scrolls. Applause, please.”

A thunderous applause began.

Confetti danced and fell on Roxy standing on stage.

Roxy held a mic while waving her hand to her fans from around the world gathered in the hall, and they fainted one after another.

In my mind, at least.

“Regardless of whether we do or don't discover Gisu, we'll cut off all his escape routes. We'll send people to the neighboring countries and monitor the highways. For this, we'll use the Rudo Mercenary Corps here in Sharia.”

Rinia and Pursena.

Aisha will also move, I'm sure.

“Once the escape routes are closed off, we'll search for Gisu. As soon as he's found, we'll call in reinforcements and crush him in one go.”

What's important is being certain the enemy is there.

After that, is to make sure the opponent doesn't run away before our forces are gathered.

Fortunately, Biheiril is enclosed by forests, mountains, and the sea, and doesn't have many neighboring countries.

It won't be that difficult to prevent him from escaping.

Of course, when Kishirika found Gisu with her magic eye, she sensed the presence of Hitogami.

In that case, the chances are high that she was detected by Hitogami in return.

There's a chance that he has already escaped.

According to Gisu's letter, if he was trying to make comrades then he would even be able to escape the forest.

Securing the surrounding countries is just for peace of mind.

“I see. Then who will establish the teleportation circles?”

“Let's split the work. The three of us will divide the locations between us.”

“...Wouldn't that be a problem, though? After all, Rudi's the one being targeted.”

“Yeah.”

At Sylphy's words, I nodded.

Putting whether or not to believe it aside, Gisu's letter said that the one being targeted is me.

If I act independently, it's quite possible for me to fall into a trap.

The danger of each of us getting crushed separately also exists.

“However, thanks to Orsted-sama's bracelet, I can avoid Hitogami's surveillance.

Gisu and Hitogami can't sense me or Orsted-sama, or the people around him.

Nonetheless, this is Gisu we're talking about; he may be able to find me with anachronistic methods.

In other words, finding me with normal information-gathering methods.

That's why I'll disguise myself.

Before I'm discovered, I'll quickly establish the teleportation circles.”

Regardless of whether or not it's a trap, I shouldn't show myself too quickly.

Thus, I'll use a disguise.

Even disguised, if I gather information to try and find Gisu, I'll be exposed sooner or later.

However, I'll be able to avoid a scenario where immediately after entering the country, I'm surrounded and destroyed.

If I'm lucky and go about it well, even if Gisu has placed a trap, I can still take the initiative.

If there's no trap, it means that Kishirika finding him with her magic eye was outside of both Gisu's and Hitogami's expectations.

In that event, Gisu will probably run away.

On the other hand, Gisu should have business that brought him to the Kingdom of Biheiril.

Until I arrive, he may try to finish his business up until the last minute.

By disguising myself to delay my discovery, I may be able to lengthen the amount of time before he runs away.

There's no reason not to.

“If Rudi wants to hide from Gisu, it may be best to have a diversion.”

Roxy gave that proposal.

A diversion.

In other words, make him think that “I sensed a trap and decided not to go to Biheiril.”

If the chum they scattered gathered fish, but they could only catch small fish and the one they were aiming for wasn't there, they may become confused.

“A diversion, huh? Any specific ideas?”

Roxy nodded.

“Yes. How about having one of us go to the Sword God?

Queen Ariel said she'll send reinforcements at any time.

Ghyslaine and Isolte should be included in that.

Those two are familiar with the Holy Land of the Sword, and won't turn against us or fall behind.

Even if the Sword God were to become an enemy, it won't be a problem if we gather information beforehand and return without making contact, and even if we can't get the Sword God, we could at least bring Sword King Nina with us.”

Sword King Nina, huh?

The person I met in the Kingdom of Asura.

The one who Eris herself wanted to make a comrade, which is unusual for her.

She's no substitute for the Sword God, but if she's on par with Eris, she'll certainly be a battle asset.

If he's an enemy, then quickly return with just Nina. Putting aside whether we can do it, if both Ghyslaine and Isolte are there, I don't think anything is impossible.

“Ah, in that case I'll do it.”

Sylphy raised her hand and said that.

Sylphy will go to the Sword God... well, she should be able to handle negotiations. She's more or less acquainted with Ghyslaine, Isolte, and Nina, after all.

Furthermore, just the fact that Sylphy is going will act as a diversion.

Since the children have already been born, there shouldn't be much merit in killing my wives, but Hitogami is well aware of who I want to protect.

If my wives go different ways, my whereabouts become harder to discern.

However, there is one concern.

"...Isn't it dangerous?"

"Of course there is danger. However, we know Gisu's whereabouts, so I think the danger will be little."

That's certainly true.

Gisu won't want to have the people he had won over as comrades crushed one by one.

If Gisu is somewhere else, his allies should be there with him.

Or so I think, but those thoughts may have been read.

"I think Hitogami knows what is most important to Rudy. If we go, wouldn't it be successful as a diversion?"

Roxy said what I was just thinking as if to emphasize it.

But... Huh?

If you think about it that way, isn't my plan problematic?

Establish teleportation circles within the Kingdom of Biheiril, and gather my forces. However, moving from place to place should take half a day or more.

Isn't it possible for my forces to be crushed individually?

Somehow, it's starting to seem like an all-out war.

This isn't a flag for my scattered comrades to die one by one, is it?

No, since coming to this world, I should have well understood that flags and such have no meaning. However...

“But, I'm a little worried... Maybe it would be better to stop with this plan...”

“Rudi...”

Roxy suddenly heaved a sigh.

As if she can see through my timid thoughts.

“Listen up, Rudi.

Adventurers entering a labyrinth aim to finish the adventure without losing a single person.

If everyone does everything that they can do, the chance of returning alive increases.

Until now, what we considered the [something we can do] was staying home and watching over the children.

After all, to me and Sylphy, Rudy and Eris were fighting in a far-off place beyond our reach.

However, right now, the plan I suggested is [something we can do], and I think it will raise the chance of everyone returning safely.”

Chance...?

However, that's true. Nothing is ever certain.

Even if you think it's completely safe and certain to succeed, unexpected situations can occur, and something you didn't think about can cause it to fail.

“I know that Rudi wants to keep us safely locked up at home.

However, even if we're locked up, if you lose, it's the end. We'll all be annihilated.

There's a risk to everything.

Let's brave the dangers, so that we can all be smiling in the end.”

If anyone dies, would I be able to smile?

I go to the Kingdom of Biheiril, and when I come back, Roxy, Sylphy, and Eris are gone.

Would I be able to smile then?

No, I wouldn't.

“Rudi, we're already parents.

Let's not just look at ourselves, but into the future.”

At those words, Paul's face suddenly crossed my mind.

If Paul were alive, at this moment, what would he say?

When he went to the Teleportation Labyrinth, he took me along.

During the teleportation incident... he had a lot going on, so I'll set that aside.

Before then.

When we were living in Buena village.

At the very least, Paul didn't lock me away at home.

I'm sure he was doing his best to protect me, but in that village where if you walk away a bit you may come across something dangerous, he let me walk around on my own.

Zenith, too, when she wasn't pregnant, worked in the village's clinic.

Even when she was pregnant, during her stable period, I think she went toddling out a few times.

Paul wasn't always right.

He didn't have any clear enemy.

However, right now, I'm still alive.

Thinking of it like that, saying no to everything is a bit overprotective.

No, but the circumstances are completely different...

“Yeah. It's just as Roxy says.”

Sylphy gave her agreement.

“We'll bear the risks. When the enemy's defeated, as long as one of us remains to take care of the children, it will be fine.”

“...That's right!”

Eris nodded to Sylphy's words.

I don't know if she was able to follow the conversation up to here, but at least she was in agreement with Sylphy.

“ ... ”

Zanoba and Orsted didn't answer, but they didn't voice any opposition, either.

“Okay, then let's go with that. Any objections?”

No objections.

Then, let's go with this plan.

While hiding my presence, we'll split up to find Gisu, and if he's found, we'll close off his escape routes and wait for reinforcements, then crush him.

“Then next, let's work out the specifics.”

All that's left are the details.

2

As a result of our discussions, we were split into the following teams.

- The team going to the neighboring countries to close off Gisu's escape routes:
Aisha, Rinia, Pursena, and the rest of the mercenary corps
- The diversion team going to the Holy Land of the Sword to get Nina:
Sylphy, (Ghyslaine, Isolte)
- The team going to the capital:
Zanoba, Julie, Ginger
- The team going to the second city:

Rudeus

- The team going to the third city:

Eris, Roxy

After each team sets up teleportation circles, they will separate and search for Gisu and the North God.

Just like Sylphy proposed earlier.

Zanoba will mainly do information gathering.

Eris and Roxy will deal with the Ogre God.

The team that eliminates the escape routes will take orders from Aisha, so it'll probably work out fine.

My job became related to Ruijerd.

The Ogre God who has been referred to as this and that since long ago.

The North God Karlmann III who just so happens to be going to the Kingdom of Biheiril.

Ruijerd who has deep connections with me.

We can't quite predict Gisu's movements, so we ended up splitting our forces.

It would probably be best to leak some information and play it by ear.

The members going to the Kingdom of Biheiril will move out immediately.

If we waste time, Gisu's whereabouts may become uncertain.

I don't want to have to search for Kishirika over and over again to get her to find Gisu.

Sylphy will move out a little after that.

Ariel said she will send reinforcements immediately, but she has her own circumstances.

Ghyslaine and Isolte probably won't arrive in just a few minutes.

Julie, Ginger, Rinia, Pursena, and the rest of the mercenary corps have their own jobs that they're still in the middle of, so we'll tell them to prioritize this instead.

It may be unreasonable, but this is the critical moment.

We have to do this, even if it's unreasonable.

Is this a chance or a trap?

It may be optimistic, but I'm hoping for the former.

Using the communication lithographs, we told the plan to Ariel and Cliff as well.

Ariel immediately responded "I'll give you my utmost support," but Cliff still hasn't replied.

Unlike Ariel who has a lithograph in her room, in Milis we have to send messages to Cliff through the mercenary corps, so it probably takes time.

"Any questions?"

I looked over the surroundings, but nobody raised their hand.

There don't seem to be any.

The one who looks a little worried is Zanoba.

Looking at the state of affairs, higher priority is given to the third city which is closest to Ogre Island and the second city which is closest to where Ruijerd was spotted, but the capital has the most people, so it may be the most dangerous.

Ginger's information gathering abilities are high, and Zanoba's a powerful combatant, but he's weak to fire magic.

'Don't end up dying now.' or so my thoughts.

"Zanoba, be careful."

"I know. However, rather than for myself, I'm worried about the shop."

"Oh, that's right..."

For the record, whether it's the store or the factory, they should still go on even if the top brass isn't there.

However, if neither Zanoba nor Julie are there, if some major trouble occurs, I don't know how it will fare.

“So you wanted to leave Julie behind?”

“Hahaha, I promised I wouldn't leave her again.”

Zanoba's really loved by Julie...

Or rather, I wonder how Zanoba feels about her.

I wonder if they've made love.

That's kind of a hard thing to ask.

Zanoba has times when he kind of pulls back one or two steps from women.

If someday he has children then I fully intend to tease him and call him a lolicon bastard, but I don't want to butt into his affairs too much as an outsider.

“Eris too, are you alright?”

“...I'm fine.”

Eris looks dissatisfied.

It seems she wanted to go with me.

However, if she did that, there wouldn't be anyone who could guard Roxy.

Furthermore, if I'm with Eris, we'll stick out like a sore thumb.

She can't do anything covertly.

That's why I put her with the one who stands out the second most, Roxy.

They're also a kind of diversion.

“I'm worried about Rudeus being alone.”

Certainly, I'm also worried about myself.

I wonder if I can properly avoid Gisu's attention while gathering information.

Gisu's information skills are top-class.

Unless I move very well, as soon as Gisu knows that someone's searching for North God Kalman or Ruijerd, I'll be noticed by him.

If he notices me too early, he'll naturally run away.

In the first place, nothing good ever happens when I act on my own.

“Well, I'll make it work out somehow.”

It would have been better if I had gathered one or two people who are good at gathering intelligence.

Regretting it now won't change anything.

I couldn't predict the situation turning out like this.

“What will Orsted-sama be doing? I'd be thankful if you could stay here to manage the communication lithographs and protect my family.”

“...Sure.”

“Thank you very much.”

Orsted is house-sitting.

He stands out, so he's not really suited for information gathering.

There may be times when we need him, but it's best if he stays here whenever possible and comes to help when the battle starts.

Of course, there is the matter about his mana, so it would be a problem if he participates too much in battle.

He's something like the last trump card.

Or rather, it's for the sake of preserving his mana that he has me as a subordinate.

As such, having Orsted fight can be considered to be our loss.

“...”

Orsted stays silent.

I get the feeling he wants to say something, but I can't see his facial expression because of the helmet.

I wonder if he's concerned.

No, we're about to undertake a massive plan, so he must be tense as well.

“Rudeus. Just in case, you should wear that ring.”

“Ring?”

The Death God's ring.

Suddenly told that, I looked at my hand.

On my finger is a rather creepy ring with a skull design.

It's what I got from the Death God. After meeting Kishirika, I started wearing it for no particular reason.

"Can I ask the reason?"

"It's just in case. Simply wearing it has an effect."

"...Understood."

I don't really get it, but if simply wearing it has an effect, then I guess it's fine.

When the time comes, I'll probably understand.

"Also, there's one..."

"Ummm..."

Someone raised their voice.

Orsted held his tongue.

Who's the foolish employee who cut off the president's words?

But looking over the surroundings, no one's saying anything.

No one's raising their hand, either.

However, it was a woman's voice.

Which means the offender is one of those three.

"Chairman——"

If she's calling me chairman, that means it's... huh? She's not here.

"There's a visitor——!"

No, I get it.

The voice is far off.

Everyone's gaze turns to the door.

This is the receptionist Lil elf-chan's voice.

What was her name again?

“Excuse me, I'll go check it out.”

I told everyone not to disturb the meeting, but...

It may be an emergency.

I moved from the president's office to the lobby.

3

“...Uo-”

The instant I entered the lobby, golden light flew into my eyes.

He's golden.

From head to toe, he's covered in gold.

A person wearing shining gold armor was standing there.

“Wha...”

“Hey there.”

The golden light casually raised a hand.

In that voice and those movements, I saw the phantom of a certain being.

An even more golden suit of armor.

A golden knight.

I've heard that the Fighting God's armor was gold.

I've also heard that Badigadi once, as an apostle, donned that golden armor and fought with Laplace.

That's it, he's coming to attack.

Gisu was a decoy!

Hitogami salvaged the golden armor and sent in his vanguard!

“This person seems to have come here using the teleportation circles under Her Majesty Ariel's orders.”

...As if that could happen.

Looking closely, the armor looked to be gold because of the light, but it's actually a dull ocher.

“Ah, nice to meet you.”

The man took off his helmet.

What was under it was a head of black hair, which is rare in this world.

He looks around 50 years old.

He had many wrinkles, and the appearance of a veteran.



“It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I am Her Majesty Ariel's knight, Sándor von Grandeur.”

“Ah, very pleased to meet you. I am Rudeus Greyrat.”

He bowed to me, so I returned his bow.

That's quite a name.

I've never heard of the house of Grandoire, but he's probably a noble.

“Earlier I received secret orders from Her Majesty Ariel, and thus came here.”

Saying that, Sándor presented the box he was carrying under his arm.

Earlier... Just now, huh?

We had just finished telling her the plan. That was quite fast.

“I see. And this is?”

“Inside is a magic tool to change your appearance. I was told it was necessary.”

Oooh.

Come to think of it, the Kingdom of Asura had those kinds of magic tools.

It's what was used to disguise Ariel.

At any rate, she was quite prepared.

She may have prepared it from the beginning, in case it became necessary.

“Please confirm the contents.”

“Yes.”

I peeked inside, and certainly, there was a green ring and red ring set that I remember seeing.

The person wearing the green ring takes on the facial features and hair color of the one wearing the red ring.

Using this, I can transform into a completely inconspicuous villager.

“Also, this is the Kingdom of Asura's insignia.

If anything happens, feel free to use this and her name, her majesty said.”

He handed over another box.

Looking inside, there certainly is a medal bearing the crest of the royal family of Asura.

Since it's brand new, she probably thought writing a letter each time was bothersome and had it made for me.

It looks like I have another debt towards Ariel.

“Furthermore, we were ordered to give assistance to Rudeus-sama.”

Assistance...

In other words, a filler until reinforcements can come.

As expected, it's hard to send a Sword King and Water Emperor on a sudden trip, so she sent some knights that seemed to have some free time.

No, calling him filler would be unfair to him.

He's also a fine reinforcement.

Ariel should have chosen someone who can maintain confidentiality.

Someone who won't talk about the teleportation circles.

“Hm? We?”

“Yes. Come on, say hello.”

Sándor gestured with his chin, and the wall moved.

The large suit of armor that was standing like an ornament in the corner of the room moved.

I didn't notice that armor being there... he really has a weak presence.

However, once you notice him, he has quite a presence.

Heavy dark grey armor. He's very wide, and on the back is a gargantuan battleaxe.

It's an axe warrior.

“...I'm, Doga.”

“...Ah, nice to meet you, I'm Rudeus Greyrat.”

It seems his name is Doga.

He seems to be an armored knight, not an axe warrior.

However, even though his name and build are very rough-seeming, he has a kind face.

He doesn't talk much, but he has the feeling of a kind giant.

He seems to be in his 20s... no, he may even be in his teens.

Sándor, on the other hand, is a middle-aged man with decent looks covered in ocher.

He's also a little wide, but if you compare him to Doga, he's quite skinny.

It's the kind of pair that would appear together during a boss fight in some castle.

“Now, please give me orders. I can do anything you want.”

“Uh, well...”

He went through the trouble of coming here, but what should I have him do?

Would the proper thing to do be putting him with the mercenary team...?

No, putting him with Zanoba would also be good.

However, there will probably be fighting.

“...Chandell-san, can you fight?”

“Yes, of course. I'm the strongest knight of the Kingdom of Asura.”

The strongest, huh?

However, Ghyslaine and Isolte probably aren't included in that...

“It'll probably become a fight with someone on the class of the major world powers. Is that alright with you?”

“It's alright. From the moment I decided to serve Her Majesty Ariel, I've been prepared to throw away my life.”

Hnnnn... then I guess it's fine.

Ariel may also have sent him intending for him to be disposable.

I'll put him with Zanoba.

...No, wait a second.

Isn't it a little strange?

Wasn't it just now that I contacted her?

Even if you say that Ariel works fast, isn't this too fast?

There's also the fact that his timing was too good.

He may really be Hitogami's——

“It's you, huh?”

I turn around, and Orsted was standing there.

Seeing him, Sándor bowed his head.

“It's nice to meet you, Dragon God Orsted-sama. I'm glad that you seem to be able to suppress your curse more than Her Majesty Ariel has said.”

I look over, and Lil' elf-chan looks up at Orsted with her hands held together, as if she's deeply moved.

What is this...?

Could this be her first time seeing him?

It's true that he's wearing the helmet, but the curse seems to be surprisingly ineffective.

No, more importantly, what about Sándor?

“Are you serving Ariel now?”

“Yes. I have a certificate, too.”

Saying that, he took a note out of his pocket and showed it to us.

It certainly says [Chandell von Grandoise is appointed as the leader of the Golden Knight Order of the Kingdom of Asura].

It bears Ariel's signature and the Kingdom of Asura's coat of arms.

Did he bring it with just for this purpose?

Since I suspected him earlier, that looks suspicious instead.

"You guys go with Rudeus. Gisu shouldn't know your faces."

"Acknowledged."

"Rudeus, that's okay with you, right?"

"Huh? Uh, yes."

He suddenly appeared, and it was suddenly decided.

Well, if Orsted says to do it, it's fine, but...

"Ah, no. It's not okay. Wait a minute. Please don't suddenly decide for me. In the first place, who in the world is this person?"

"Ah, he's——"

Orsted cut off there.

When I look over, Sándor has his finger to his lips.

"If you don't know, it's best if you don't find out.

Right now I am Ariel-sama's knight, and will be giving my assistance to Rudeus-sama."

Since he's saying that, he must be a well-known person.

Who is he?

I don't get the feeling that he's one of the world powers. He looks weak.

A famous person that seems to know Orsted... for example a member of the Dragon Race, like Holy Dragon Emperor Shirard, or Dark Dragon King Maxwell.

Ah, but he doesn't have silver hair.

Can't he just have dyed his hair?

"Will it be okay?"

"If it's him, there's no problem. I was also worried about you acting on your own.

However, he's suitable. There's little chance of him being an apostle, and he should be good at information gathering."

If Orsted says that with confidence, then it'll be fine to trust him.

He showed up too quickly, so it was hard to judge him.

"Please leave it to me."

If he's good at gathering information, is he that kind of famous person?

Orsted knowing about him is only natural, and he treated Sándor knowing about him as being natural, so he does seem like someone who deals with information.

I was also worried about acting on my own. That said, I'm also worried about working with someone I don't know.

However, if he's someone Orsted trusts, then there's no reason to doubt him, right?

There's also the fact that he is the reinforcement sent in by Ariel.

Hmm...

Orsted said that as if he's just what we needed.

Which means this man's ability is high, and is very safe.

That's what how Orsted judged him.

Ariel also sent him in as help.

She knows about my situation.

Above that, she sent him as reinforcements for the time being.

At the very least, she trusts him enough to have him use the teleportation circles.

In that case, I'll trust in Orsted and Ariel's judgment.

"I understand. In that case, please participate in the meeting. But though I said that, it's currently about to end."

"Yes, Sir."

After I finish explaining everyone's jobs, I'll ask Ariel.

Thinking that, I invited these two unidentified people to the conference room.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT THEY WERE SEARCHING FOR

1

Biheiril Kingdom.

To the east of the Central Continent, the country is surrounded by mountains, sea and forest.

It's not a very powerful country, and it only has 3 major cities.

They are:

In the centre, the capital Biheiril.

To the south, the second largest city bordering the forest, Ilel.

To the east, facing the sea is the third largest city, Heilelul.

Those are their locations.

It doesn't have any special features worth talking about.

I guess the one thing worth mentioning is how large it is.

Despite not having the same level of combat power as the neighboring countries, it covers twice as much land.

It's connected to two other countries by highway.

However, the Biheiril Kingdom doesn't get attacked.

In the east of this northern land is the continuation of a powerful Era. ^[1]

This kingdom lacking in fighting force, for some reason, isn't attacked.

The reason behind this is the existence of the ogre tribe.

The Biheiril Kingdom has close ties with ogre tribe living on the lone island of Onigashima.^[2]

Long ago.

Although I say that, the Biheiril Kingdom was only formed after the Laplace war, so it's 50~100 years ago at most.

At that time, the ogre tribe living on Onigashima, and the humans living on the northern peak of the continent didn't cooperate.

Although there may have been small exchanges with those living in the sea, at the very least, the ogre tribe members in human cities didn't selfishly swagger around.

At that time, the ogre tribe had a problem.

The ogre tribe living on the island were being invaded by the ocean race living in the sea.

The ogre tribe fought. And although they were a combat race, the ocean race's fighting power was too much.

At that rate they would have been wiped out, their only choice that of becoming the slaves of the ocean race.

In front of the ogre race, a human adventurer party appeared.

The adventures, hearing rumors of gold and silver, came to the island.

Where they came from and who they were, the ogre race did not know.

It was most likely a party of 4, no doubt comprised of a group of swordsman, dog, monkey, and pheasant-faced people. ^[3]

The adventures dreaming of treasure and battle.

What they saw was an impoverished ogre tribe.

The wounded ogre tribe soldiers, numbers reduced through fighting.

The women, living in fear.

The smileless children of the ogre tribe...

The adventurers who saw it, stood up.

It lit the fires of justice.

They swore to save the ogre tribe, and it was then that they conspired with the Ogre God.

Together with the ogres, they infiltrated the labyrinth that was the Ocean race's base.

After a fierce battle, they managed to kidnap the chieftain of the ocean race.

But the price for that was great.

The human adventurers' party had been wiped out except for the swordsman leading it.

Looking at his appearance, the indebted Ogre God swore to be his lifelong friend and offered any help the ogre race could give.

And the shocking truth.

He was the prince of an emerging country on the other side of the sea.

The prince returned to his country, and when he became king, he and the demon tribe took an oath of mutual protection.

To this day, the humans and ogre tribe live in peace together.

Well, that's roughly the story behind the foundation of the Biheiril Kingdom.

I don't really know how much of it is true.

In any case, the Biheiril Kingdom is protected by the ogre tribe, a large combat force. So despite its fertile land, it isn't invaded by neighboring countries,

It is being protected.

The Biheiril Kingdom is that kind of place.

2

As a group, we are heading towards the second largest city of Irel.

There are 3 members.

Claiming to be a knight of Ariel, the man in sand-coloured armour: Shandor.

His subordinate in grey armour: Doga.

And me.

Using their magic tool I changed my face, and on top of the magic armour [MK II], I had on another set of armour.

In addition, mounted on the back of the MK II are magic tools that Roxy developed. If the button near the waist is pressed while pouring magic power into it, the scroll in the corresponding slot automatically activates.

With 5 by each hand, there are 10 types of scrolls in total.

Because you don't have to take out each scroll, it's extremely convenient.

But to carry all those folded scrolls ready for activation, it's become like a rather bulky backpack.

Because it looked somehow steampunk,^[4] I decided to call it [Scroll Vernier].

Along with the gatling gun, it is the second Roxy Machine.

Magic armor, scroll vernier, and armor.^[5]

I, wearing all those and a mantle on top of it all, was a more than 2 meters tall, and looked like a walking suit of armor.

It's the perfect disguise.

While working as bodyguards, practitioners of the North God Style are all over the place, but in this area, for no particular reason, you get people coming here and thinking, "Is there anybody strong around here?"

Visually, it should seem like Shandor is the leader, and we followed him here.

By the way, I'm going by the name "Clay" here.

We're getting around by carriage.

Currently, I'm one of three armored knights, travelling by rumbling cart.

The number of armored knights is three.^[6]

Although we do stand out, in this world, it's not too rare a sight.

In the Magic City Sharia, you wouldn't see too many armored adventures, but in the Biheiril Kingdom, you'll see all kinds of people like that.

So, while moving towards our location, allow me to provide a simple introduction for my 2 companions.

Shandor von Grandeur.

Asura Kingdom's golden knight leader.

He was originally a mercenary with no affiliation.

He spent a lot of time in the strife zone, but at the time of Ariel's coronation, headed towards the Asura Kingdom.

He liked the look about Ariel and attempted to serve under her, but during the time he spent trying various methods to work for her, he caught Ariel's eye and she asked him to appeal to her. It was then that he rose to his position.

When I heard the story, it made it seem like all he was good at was kissing ass, but Ariel wouldn't make someone whose only skill is sucking up the knight leader.

In any case, something about him must have stood out.

When I asked Ariel for information on him, there was nothing shady, and the reply I got was that he was a man worthy of trust.

However, she didn't tell me anything regarding his identity. "I don't know~, ufufu~, then it's a secret~" I got the feeling she was messing with me.

But Ariel's knight didn't seem fishy, so I let it slide.

The Golden Knights.

Contrary to the name, the armor isn't all that sparkly.

Even if you change the light, you still can't see any gold. Although, if you polished it, it might shine.

And it's not gold; it's more of a yellow.

The Yellow Knights.

Oh, that sounds kinda strong in its own right. Like the yellow 14.^[7]

"Does the Asura Kingdom even have Golden Knights?"

I'd heard of the black knights and the white knights, but I have a feeling there were never any gold.

"It is a band of knights created by her majesty after she was crowned. Their official duty is that of protecting Queen Ariel, but if it be by her majesty's order, wherever it may be, we will complete our mission. Through the use of forbidden teleportation

magic circles if necessary.”

In other words, Ariel’s own private army.^[8]

“Originally, it was founded for “Helping the Cooperators.”^[9]”

“Oh.”

So it was established for us.

She is indeed loyal.

And scary.

What will Ariel request in the future?

Although if Orsted says to return...

“Although since it has just been established, its numbers are but an elite few. I may not look it, but I am a practitioner of the North God Style.”

Although he said that while laughing, Shandor did not have a sword.

“Even though you don’t possess a sword?”

“I think this is far stronger than a sword.”

He said while spinning around a metal rod.

He seems to fight with a polearm.

A polearm user, this is my first time seeing it in this world.

Originally, in this world, because of the impact of the Supard race, pole-like weapons aren’t looked upon very well, and as a result, only swordplay was developed.

That said, whatever weapon the Sword God himself used, it wouldn’t be odd.

Although he’s most likely no longer a swordsman, the North God is probably something closer to a ninja.

“The long reach gives it an advantage.”

“Ah. So that’s how it is.

With the Sword God Style, it's possible to make someone go flying at an unimaginable distance.

In the Water God Style, no matter what direction the attack comes from, it can be deflected.

Which is why it's strong. By not using a sword, you can use a longer weapon from the beginning."

It's a simple theory.

In my previous world, such thinking was commonplace, and weapon range kept extending.

But it was different here.

Following that thinking, swordsman wouldn't be considered special.

The strength of swordsmen is the fact that their wounds can be healed in an instant with healing magic. Because the people in this world possess such high vitality, enemies must be taken out in a single hit.

So, unfortunately, Shandor's polearm technique is on the losing side.

He may be able to overpower a human opponent, but against something with a high recovery ability, it would be a bad mad matchup.

"Doga over here is also a member of the Golden Knights."

"Yup."

Doga.

He doesn't have a last name.

He was born in the Donati Providence of the Asura Kingdom.

Originally, he was a soldier of the Asura Kingdom.

He was a gatekeeper for the Imperial Capital.

But when Shandor was appointed, he saw excellence in him and he was scouted.

"I'm also scouting."

"Creating the ideal knight band is the job of the captain, after all. From here on out, it is my intention to continue to recruit strong forces."

Job of the captain, huh?

Now that I think about it, Therese, the captain of the Miko's guard squad was the weakest of them all.

In an organization, the leader doesn't always have to be the strongest.

The important thing is their commanding ability.

"But Doga-san, contrary to the name 'Golden Knights', your armor isn't remotely gold?"

"Hah, besides formal occasions, only an idiot would wear such conspicuous armor."

Reasonable point.

Which means, Shandor would usually wear much flashier armour.

"Aah! I get it now. That's why when I showed you the letter, you gave me a suspicious face. If it was going to be like this, I would have worn my formal armor."

"I can tell you it wasn't like that."

With Shandor laughing cheerfully.

It's impossible to see him as a bad guy.

But Hitogami's apostles are neither good nor bad.

Orsted and Ariel both said it was okay, but I alone will remain vigilant.^[10]

"Anyhow, there's very little snow around here."

As Shandor said that, I surveyed the surroundings.

The plain around us is lightly decorated with snow.

However, it's not enough to interfere with the carriage.

Originally, it was too much for farming.

The ground was barren and chapped, and the fields wouldn't grow anything.

Even far away, the ground here is known to be lifeless.

Speaking of the ground around here, at this time of year it's usually buried in snow. But the Biheiril Kingdom has less snow than I thought. Although the wind is cold and dry, there is simply very little snow.

"I wonder if it's because of the mountain."

"What does the mountain have to do with this?"

"Because the mountain to the west compresses the clouds, I was thinking that's what was stopping the snow."

"Oh... As expected of Rudeus-dono, you're quite knowledgeable."

"I don't know if I'm right."

The weather of this world may not follow the common sense of my previous one. After all, in the Great Forest, it rains for 3 months straight, or a fertile continent can become a desert.

Unrelated to the mountain, it's a perfectly reasonable possibility that the magic power coming from the forest slightly to the west could be the reason for the lack of snow.

"My uncle was also interested in such things."

"Oh, was he some kind of researcher?"

"Where did clouds come from? Where did they go? How are people born? Why do they die? He spent every day looking at the sky, pondering such things."

I wonder if he was a philosopher.

Although,

I, in my old age, might spend my days like that.

As a 60-something year old man, sitting with Sylphy and Roxy spending our days as grandmas and grandpa...

Ah... no, Sylphy is of the mixed blood Long-Eared Race, and Roxy is from the Migurd race, so they would still be young.

Eris, even as a grandmother would give off an energetic vibe.

I would be the only old-seeming one.

“That’s another philosophical thought.”

“Philosophy?”

“Philosophy is... Hmm, a magical^[11] thing.”

“Leave it to me.”^[12]

On the way, we were attacked by something demonic.^[13]

It wouldn’t be wrong to say this country has a lot of forests. The highway we were on ran right next to one.

As we were attacked, it gave them a chance to demonstrate their abilities. “The Asura Kingdom is the greatest”, is often said, and these men definitely had the ability to support it.

The excellent Shandor with pace and finesse, and Doga, defeating enemies in a single hit with his giant axe.

Is what I saw, or it more accurately, is all I could see.

That said, even the worst of swordsman would understand the situation.

Although it wouldn’t even be a fight against a world power, at the very least they would be considered more than a slight nuisance.

As I realized that, we had arrived at the second largest city, Irel.

3

Second city, Irel

As far as I can see, it’s a nondescript city.

It’s completely surrounded by walls and street vendors are lined near the entrance.

It’s this world’s most popular structure.

Even more so than Magic City Sharia, the number of wooden buildings would be a feature if I had to call it that.

A wooden building with an extremely tilted roof is distanced from its neighbors.

Being surrounded by forest, it’s only natural that they’d have a lot of wood.

Leaving the horse and carriage at a stable, we walked to the inn.

It was then that I noticed that the number of street vendors began to drop.

It was somewhat quiet.

Because there aren't many customers, the number of vendors is just as small... is the reasoning you would expect, but contrary to that logic, there is a large number of adventures.

Since earlier, we've been passing lot of armor-clad warriors and magicians wrapped in robes.

The number of adventures and street vendors don't match.

There has to be a reason for this, or maybe the problem isn't so clear-cut.^[14]

"Woa."

While I was looking around, I had bumped into someone on the road.

"Oh."

They were a large person.

Standing at about 2.5 meters.

Even in my armor, I have to look up.

If there was a Half-Giant race, they would have this kind of feeling.

His skin was reddish brown, and hair, dark red.

Covered in muscles, his arms, legs and neck were all thick.

Most notable was his head.

It was huge.

His jaw was even bigger, sticking out.

And peeking through the mouth were fangs.

Coming from the lower jaw were two fangs protruding upwards.

And on top of that, from the messy dark red hair, two horns were standing out.

It's an ogre.

"Careful now."

The ogre I had bumped into took one look at me and continued down the street. On his back was a massive pack that he was carrying like it was nothing.

That was my first time seeing an ogre up close; it was very intimidating.

Here in the Biheiril Kingdom, ogres walk around like it's a natural thing.

The humans here also accept it as a matter of course.

Seeing a multitude of races living together would be a rare sight in other countries.

"Clay, don't look around too much, you aren't some country hick."

"What? Oh, Ahh..."

Sharp words from Shandor.

It's a completely different tone from during the journey, for the purpose of disguise.

"There wouldn't be anybody strong around here anyways, looking around would be a waste."

"Yeah."

That's right, we're practitioners of the North God Style.

I should look like I don't have any interest in anything that isn't strong.

Otherwise it would be a waste of the disguise.

"First we have to find an inn. Right, Clay, Doga?"

"Yes."

"Yup."

The coachman-like^[15] Doga is the same as ever, but Shandor is completely opposite; he's doing a great job in his role.

Shandor is moving as the leader in order to hide my presence.

I'm Shandor's little brother Clay. Job: Warrior.

Alright.

“Shandor. Arrival celebrations. After the inn is decided, wanna hit up a tavern?”

“Haa, You’re pretty stupid sometimes, but every now and then you have a good idea. Doga, take note.”

“Yessir.”

After that, we headed to the inn.

4

The moment we entered the tavern, there was a somewhat uncomfortable atmosphere.

“...Hmm?”

It’s different from any tavern I’ve been in before.

That said, it looks perfectly normal

There are plenty of adventurers. There are also a couple of villagers.

1-2% of the customers are ogres, but I can’t say that they’re the source of the discomfort.

A crowded tavern with many races is not all that uncommon.

I wonder what it is.

There’s nothing special to draw everyone’s gazes.

There’s nobody particularly odd around.

There’s nothing particularly odd around.^[16]

But something is off.

“What’s up, Clay?”

“Doesn’t something seem off about this tavern?”

He takes a look around.

But it seemed like I was imagining it.

“...I don’t understand. Do you want to leave?”

Shandor suggests that in a low voice.

“No, I want to know where the feeling is coming from.”

“Understood.”

As Shandor said that, we walked into the tavern with an unsuspecting gait,^[17] and headed towards an empty table.

Behind Doga, I followed suit.

As Doga sat down, the chair creaked under his weight.

The chairs of this tavern are unusually sturdy.

While wearing the magic armor, I usually have to keep note not to sit in a chair, but here, sitting normally should be fine.

I wonder if this was causing the feeling.

No, it couldn’t be.

“Bring us some food, booze, and introduce us to someone who’s knowledgeable about the area. Make it quick, I’m exhausted from the journey. Ahh, put this guy on a different bill. You’re a guy that focuses on fruit aren’t ya? If you don’t have any milk, water will do ya.”^[18]

While I was focused on the chair, Shandor had already handed the attendant 4 copper coins.

“Thank you for your patronage.”

The attendant was also an ogre. A female ogre.

Maybe because she was a woman, she was a lot slimmer than the male ogres.

She had a wide frame and huge breasts... But overall, she looked quite human.

She might be half human.

She's probably not the source of the discomfort. [19]

"Like. I. Said. I told you to stop peekin' 'round like that."

"Ma bad."

Shandor wacked me over the head.

"But ya didn't needa hit me."

"Haa? You wanna go me brah?"[20]

His words may be rough, but the look in his eye says that he doesn't intend to hurt me. Simply, I should take note that my current actions are suspicious, is what he's saying.

"Nah, it ain't like that... It's just I's a little fidgety is all."

"Fidgety? You got a bad feelin'?"

"No... It doesn't seem bad."

The feeling isn't unpleasant.

It feels like something I've been searching for, for a long time.

It doesn't seem possible, but it could be that Gisu or Ruijerd is here.

I want to quickly confirm the origin of this feeling.

When I think that, it causes me to look around.

The inside of the tavern is rather busy.

It's the kind of tavern you can find anywhere.

With laughter and noise, people eating and drinking.

Even the food is normal. It's the kind of river fish you can find anywhere.

But something is still causing this sense of discomfort.

Something that other taverns don't have that this one does.

"You guys want some information?"

As I was looking around, a man came to our table.

A human.

He had a sly rat-like look to his face.

“Are you the informant?”

“Yep, I know everything about this city. The number of adventurer parties, the peddlers’ routes, even the blacksmith’s mistress.”

“K then, I’ll have you teach me a bunch o’ things. We just got here, so we’d like to avoid any trouble.”

As he said that, he handed the man a couple of copper coins.

“Won’t be a problem.”

“I don’t need to know anything major right now. I understand that you’re an informant with a wide range, so can I leave finding work up to you?”

Along with Shandor’s shaking question, I gave a fearless smile.

Right now my face is from one of the Rudo mercenary guild, so it should be rather intimidating.

“Jeez that’s scary.”

The Informant shrugged at my smile and turned to Shandor.

“So what is it you want to know?”

“What I want to know is what’s common sense in this city, people’s turf, the geography, anybody we shouldn’t make an enemy of... Aah, and if any work that seems doable comes up, could you let us know?”

“Ok.”

It’s not like we’ll suddenly hear of Gisu.

I can’t get greedy

We are only warriors. Mercenary-like ruffians. We do not carry any demon trinkets.

“Common sense... Quite the request.

The country upholds the laws, and in turn cities can exist.

Aah... But there are a lot of ogres, so take note of that during your travel.

The people of this country live closely with the ogres. Even if you're devout Millis believers, keep any ill will towards the ogres to yourselves.

“What happens if I don't?”

“Nobody will sell you anything and the inns will refuse you.

Even this bar is owned by an ogre. You'd be thrown out and be forced to eat garbage.”

Ogres are good neighbors.

Therefore, speaking ill of them will, more so than ogres, make the humans angry.

Sharia also has many races, but there is still discrimination.

They do not live as harmoniously as here.

“The geography... Roughly speaking, if you head north you'll reach the capital, and in the south is a single village.

It's a small village with nothing important; there are a few woodcutters and there's an ambassador, so it's well protected.

There's a labyrinth to the southeast. Information on that will be extra.”

“Tell me.”

Shandor handed him a couple more copper coins.

For the location of the labyrinth.

We don't have any intention of going, but it wouldn't hurt to know.

After learning about the labyrinth, the conversation will continue.

“People you shouldn't make enemies of, like I said before, ogres.

In this country, ogres and humans receive the same treatment.

Next is... Ahh, that's right.

This isn't someone you shouldn't cross, but there's a place you should stay away from. The valley of the Earth Dragon."

The valley of the Earth Dragon.

It seems like a few important words have been skipped over.

The place where Ruijerd was discovered was also in a village near it.

"The valley is behind a large forest... But that forest is called the 'Forest of No Return.'^[21] Since ages past, the forest has been haunted by invisible demons, so entry is forbidden."

"Invisible demons?"

"Well... Invisible demons are more like childish superstition.

The Valley of the Earth Dragon, like the name says, is home to earth dragons.

Some budding adventures entered the forest and messed up their lair.

An angry herd of earth dragons couldn't be defeated by the country, and so it was made off-limits."

The man then furrowed his brow as if he was trying to remember something.

"But recently... Since about a year ago, there have been rumors of demons coming out of the Forest of No Return."

"Oh."

"The town's lord created an investigation corps to investigate inside the forest

But even after a couple of days passed, they didn't return.

The invisible demons probably got them, or they fell into the earth dragon nest or, perish the thought, they were taken out by a single magic beast.

Although it wasn't as if they were wiped out.

After giving up on the survival of the first investigation corps, the lord organized a second investigation corps.

One person came back."

That's when he bent down and looked me^[22] right in the eye.

The atmosphere's a little like a horror film.

Not at me, but looking at Shandor.

"But he'd gone insane.

He had exceptionally scary eyes.

When the lord asked what happened, he simply muttered, "The demons are here, the demons..." with a vacant look in his eyes.

After witnessing that, the lord became quite frightened and ceased the investigation effort.

'Killed by earth dragons' was the official cause of death announced, and because of this incident, the other word used was forbidden...

The truth is hidden, and has been processed as another unsolved case.

This was... about half a year ago."

"..."

"When you think about it, it was a good thing.

Recently the story has reached the palace in the capital.

The king said "Even though there is a village so close, we cannot leave it alone while we know nothing!"

And so, the King has organized a punitive force.

So currently, members are being gathered in the capital for the force."

The man looked up.

"And so. For the identity and location of the demon, there's a special bounty; we're talking 10 Biheilil gold coins. It seems like the kind of work you can do?"

I see.

Invisible Demons...

It's a little different from the information I heard about Ruijerd's location.

I wonder if it's that kind of thing?

Originally, Ruijerd went to the village without any purpose, and he heard about the

demon.

“A demon came out of the Forest of No Return.”

And then, “There are invisible demons in the Forest of No Return.”

“Invisible demons came out from the forest,” would be the information he received.

Hearing things left and right, the information would get mixed up.

The information from the mercenary corps also passed through a lot of hands.

That’s why we have to search to pinpoint our opponent.

Although it might be the opposite.

It could have gone: “An invisible demon really came out.” → “The demon is a Supard.”

→ “Come to think of it, I think I saw someone with green hair.”

No wait, but I have no idea where any of this information came from.

Well, no matter what rumors spread, it wouldn’t be odd.

Although with Ruijerd, he wouldn’t show mercy to an opponent; it’s possible he wiped out the investigation team.

Why would he go into the forest?

Did he go into the forest because it would be a problem if others saw and knew about him?

Hmmm...?

“Ahh, That’s great. I got it... Seems interesting. Clay? Don’t you think so too?”

“Hmmm, a demon huh... It does seem interesting. The 10 gold bounty is also appealing.”

Although an appropriate answer, my head is full of other things.

In any case, we’ll have to go to the forest.

With this much information, I can’t think that Ruijerd is uninvolved.

“But with the bounty, it’s first come first served.

You’ll probably need to form a party to participate.

I'm not an adventurer, so if I were to participate, it would be as support."

Shandor winked at me.

I get it.

"That's right, we should get looking."

"Alright. Informant. Additional charge."

Shandor handed him several more copper coins.

"Find us a thief.

The condition is that it be someone that can do a lot as an adventurer and be good at information collecting.

It'd be good if his combat ability is low. We'll do all the fighting.

About the reward... What to do? It's a pain, so when you find our guy, send him to us to negotiate."

"Deadline?"

"It would be good if it was before the punitive force sets out. But that's still far away, isn't it?"

"They set out in a month."

"Well then, for the time being, how about we meet again in this tavern in 10 days?"

"Sure, leave it to me."

The man took the coins and hurriedly put them in his pouch.

And when we stood up, the noise of the tavern disappeared in an instant.

Impressive, Shandor.

With the information on the forest, the search for Gisu has advanced a step.

Although we didn't hear anything about the North God, the conversation didn't head in that direction so it couldn't be helped.

Although I wanted to see a little more of that ability.

“We did it.”

“My wife is good at these kinds of things. Seeing it up close, I picked it up.”

So he’s married.

All the more reason we have to return home safely.

Although he said it rather regrettably.

“Ahem. So, what do you want to do now?”

“While we wait for the informant, we have nothing to do for 10 days... We could take a look around. Doga, is there anywhere you want to go?”

“...I want to see a woodcutter.”

“Then a little reconnaissance, We can go take a look at the village in the south.”

Although the conversation made it seem like we decided, we had already planned to go to the village in the south since the beginning.

10 days.

From the conversation before, the village is at most a day away.

Tomorrow morning, I’ll install a magic communication lithograph and head to the village.

Tomorrow afternoon we’ll enter the forest and spend 5-6 days searching the inside.

After that, we’ll return and hear the informant’s information on Gisu and conduct a progress report over the lithograph.

That is what the schedule looks like.

“Yes, sorry for the wait!”

While I was thinking, the food arrived.

Boiled fish and beer.

Doga had a dark liquid placed in front of him.

It’s probably some kind of juice. I’ll have him let me try it later.

Alright, in this situation I have no intention of getting drunk.
But not drinking in a tavern would stand out.
Just one.

“Then, to our success.”

“Cheers!”

“...Cheers.”

Cup in hand, we drank.

When the drink entered my mouth, it was warm down my throat.

The aftertaste was—.

“—PFFFTT!”

Doga spat out his black drink.

“Cough... Cough...”

“Oi!?”

While the surrounding people were looking to see what was going on, Doga was coughing with his head down.

I put my hand on his back and chanted detoxification magic.

But Doga was facing the ground open-mouthed, drooling.

“Oi, get a hold of yourself!”

Dammit, what did he drink!?

Poison!?

This was that feeling!

I thought something seemed off!

And I still don’t know where the feeling is coming from!

Is the detoxification working?

Calm down, at times like this, you have to stay calm.

First, if I knew the poison in this drink.

“You! What’s your excuse!”

“Ahh! I’m sorry!”

Shandor yells at the nearest person. I have to be calm; I reach for the cup Doga was drinking from.

I hold it up to confirm the smell.

...Huh?

This smell, could it be...

“He was human... I thought because of his size, he was an ogre; I made a mistake.”

“Like I said! What did you give him to drink!”

I dip my finger in the liquid and try it.

This taste, I’m sure.

“Umm, it’s a drink made from beans, It’s a favorite of the ogre-tribe, but it’s too strong for humans, so it usually is diluted... I’m terribly sorry!”

“You sure it’s not poison!?”

“Umm, it can be if you drink too much... About a mouthful.”

“Dammit! Oi Doga! You OK?! OI!”

While Shandor was panicking, I had regained composure.

Now that I think of it, I could smell this ever since I entered the tavern.

It was most likely mixed in with the smell of cooked fish.

The identity of the feeling...

And at the same time I figured out the identity of this drink.

It’s true that if you drink too much it’s poisonous, but Doga spat most of it out.

He’ll probably feel a little sick, but it’s nothing too serious.

“ ”
...

I dipped my finger into it one more time and licked it.

Yup.

So it was this.

No doubt.

I cannot be mistaken.

This is soy sauce.

CHAPTER 3

THE PERSON THEY WERE SEARCHING FOR

1

Summary up to now.

Rudeus finally discovers the thing he has been searching for for all these years.

However, it's ultimately inconsequential.

So he paid for it then and there, thus obtaining the small bottle of soy sauce, and hurried back.



The next day.

Our group headed towards the suburbs of the second city Irel to establish the Teleportation Magic Circle and Communication Lithograph.

After that, we headed towards the village where Ruijerd was spotted.

The village near the Earth Dragon Valley was about half a day's travel from the second city of Irel, Bihaeril Kingdom.^[23]

<The village of the Earth Dragon Valley> and <The Forest of No Return>, or so they are called, but the official name is Marson Village on the map.

Although it's called Marson Village, the official name isn't well known, so calling it <The Village of the Earth Dragon Valley> works fine.

An empty village.

It's not a tourist attraction, nor does it have any notable features.

Logging and farming on the fertile land near the forest is done, but it isn't a village which was established by gathering people to build something like the Buena Village of the Fedora Region.

The people residing in this village simply came under the jurisdiction of Biheiril

Kingdom, with little care being given to who ruled over them.

Probably something like that.

The country isn't the point, it's the people.

As the distance between houses increased, the land became desolate with few signs of civilization, and apart from the quiet... there was nothing.

The village wasn't completely deserted when we arrived; it was inhabited by humans. However, they were not villagers.

People who obviously weren't villagers were gathered in a group in front of the village's entrance.

They were equipped with armor and swords on their backs.

Probably adventurers.

No, the atmosphere is a bit too risky if they were just adventurers.

Are they mercenaries or possibly bounty hunters?

"Sandor, is this what it means for too many people to try and get a head start?"

His strength and quick-thinking during the incident in the bar yesterday... Sandor really is a useful guy.

I was in doubt about his usefulness until now, but I can see why Orsted assigned him to me.

I always want to hear opinions in situations like this.

In comparison, Doga isn't very useful.

I'm not saying that he's slowing us down, but...

It feels like he's just tagging along for now.

Well, I too, am not that great in criticizing a person.

I hope that he becomes useful somewhere along the line.

"No, they might've just come for a preliminary inspection. It would be advantageous for them to start immediately after they obtain information from here."

“But, aren't there too many people here with a head start to hunt one target?”

“Even if there are, there won't be too many. The government is just taking the initiative to dispatch a subjugation force. Even if they jumped the gun and started hunting demons, there is the possibility that they won't be rewarded.”

Joining the task force, entering the “Forest of No Return” with the Chivalric Order of the government somehow, confirming the true identity of the demon, defeating it, and then returning safely.

Only after all of that is done will you be rewarded with gold.

Although if you're following the crowd, then it ends up being a contest of luck whether or not you can secure that reward.

And not just luck, but also taking a step ahead at key moments and snatching first place.

As a result, the preliminary investigation is for the purpose of taking a step ahead to snatch first place.

“Then that means we have no involvement with them.”

“I completely agree with that statement.”

As he laughs, Sandor starts entering the village.

Lodging at a suitable building in the plaza.

At the plaza, you wouldn't believe that the village was deserted considering the crowds of people that were gathering there.

Everyone is frantic.

However, it's somewhat convenient that there is a crowd.

It should be easy to mingle in the crowd and begin gathering information.

“Leave!”

Or so I thought, but I was told instead to leave.

Well, of course, it wasn't actually directed at me.

I heard the voice from the entrance of the plaza.

Some members of the task force are leaving the plaza with unpleasant looks on their faces.

When I looked at the spot where the shout came from, I saw an old woman with a cane yelling.

“Get out! There ain't any demon coming out of this forest! The forest people have been kindly protecting the forest and us! Anyone who wants to hurt the forest people, get out!”

Though unsteady, the old woman was thrusting her cane; she got closer to the large group of men in the plaza and started hitting them with it.

Snap! The sound reverberated in the plaza which could be heard even from where we were.

“You hag...”

“Oi! Forget it, if we cause a ruckus, the Ogre tribe will...”

“Tch!”

The man who was hit tried to draw his sword in a fit of rage, but was stopped by his level-headed comrade, and retreated hastily.

The old woman didn't hobble after them.

While shouting, she was kicking all the other groups in the plaza.

In order to get away from the old woman, the groups were scattering.

What's this?

As she saw the wide space getting clear of people... ah, she looked in our direction.

She's steadily drawing closer.

“Get out!”

The old woman's cane hit my armor and made a loud “clang!” sound.

There is no damage.

My armor is reliable against an agitated old woman, with its Asuran mark.

“You must not lay waste to the forest!”

The old woman was hitting my armor with a clanging noise while shouting.

“Granny, please calm down.”

“What demons! The forest people have been our saviors! And now you're going to kill them when they seek our help! You brute!”

She is in a very agitated condition, looks like she won't listen to anything I say.

There is one thing on my mind though.

People of forest.

It's a new phrase.

I want to hear more about what they are.

“What does ‘the forest people’ mean...?”

“If you make the forest people disappear, the demons will attack!”

If the people of forest disappear, then the demons will attack.

Which means, the people of forest are probably defending the town against the demons.

“The people of the forest and the demons, are they separate beings?”

“Obviously! Don't confuse the demons with the forest people!”

“Clay, just stop, this old lady's sanity is long gone.”

Sandor came to check on me.

Certainly, a sane person won't hit a stranger with a cane.

But I want to hear about the old lady's story.

“I haven't gone insane! The people of the forest exist! During my youth, I was rescued by them when I was lost deep in the forest! Apart from that, my great grandfather was

also saved when he was a child!"

During her youth means possibly 20 to 30 years ago.

This old lady looks a little over 60 years old.

And, the great grandfather of such an old woman, possibly a little over 100 years ago.

But, it's been at most 10 years since I parted from Ruijerd.

Then, perhaps, Ruijerd isn't related to the people of the forest?

But... ah.

"The people of the forest aren't demons! Why would you try to kill them!? Stupid! Get out stupid! Stupid! Haa... Stupid... Haa... Haa..."

The old woman had been striking at my armor for a while, but before long she ran out of steam and sunk to the ground in exhaustion.

"Granny, would you tell me your story in more detail?"

I estimated that she was calm now and smiled at her.

Ruijerd might not be here.

But, by some chance...

"I may be friends with the people of the forest."

They may be the survivors of the Supard village that Ruijerd has been looking for all this time.

2

She was unable to conceal her agitation.

Despite her attitude being like that, she had been calmly talking to me for some time.

Based on this development, is it the Supard race or Ruijerd?

I don't know.

But because of the flow of events in Bihaeril Kingdom, I somehow understood what was going on.

Forest people.

It seems even before the old lady was born, the so called people of the forest were already present.

They rarely ever showed themselves outside of the forest.

But, sometimes, ever so rarely, whenever a villager was lost within the forest and was being hunted or on the verge of death, they were saved by the forest people.

The villagers, including the old lady, don't know who or what they are.

But there was folklore surrounding them.

A long time ago, just shortly around the time when the war against demons was about to end...

Demons that couldn't be seen by the naked eye were inhabiting the Forest of No Return.

At dusk, the invisible demons came out to kidnap livestock and children to consume them.

The villagers hoped to defeat the demons one day, but were ultimately powerless and thus lived in fear.

And then at that time, the people of the forest appeared.

They made a proposal to the villagers.

<We'll take care of the demons, but in exchange, we want to live in the forest. However, our existence must never be known outside the village.>

The villagers agreed to the proposal and the people of the forest took up residence deep inside the forest.

They don't know how the forest people dealt with the demons.

After that, the demons stopped coming out of the forest. Even now, the people of the forest are still protecting the villagers.

Upholding their part, the villagers raise their children to give their gratitude to the forest people, but are taught to tell no one about it.

“To lay waste to the forest people like that, what an outrageous thing to do.”

The old lady bought it to an end with that.

“I see, thank you very much.”

I don't know if what she said was true or not.

It's such an old story, it seems almost completely fabricated.

But, let's just assume that the people of the forest are the Supard race.

The Supard have a third eye on their forehead.

It's a kind of demon eye that can sense any living being.

If they use that, then even the invisible demons can be located and defeated.

The Supard race coexist with the village while hiding their own existence.

But about six months or a year ago, tragedy struck.

A disease, or perhaps an injury.

A large quantity of invisible demons sprung forth, and the people of the forest may have not been able to keep them under control.

The Supard who had been concealing themselves for so long came to the village to buy medicine.

Everyone had already forgotten about the shopkeeper who interacted with that Supard.

However, the news spread.

The news that an extremely suspicious guy came out of the forest.

The villagers should've hidden his existence. Especially if was true that he came to the village to seek help, but...

Just how did the story end up like the one I heard at the bar yesterday?

<We must exterminate the demons that came out of the forest>

Just what happened for it to result in this?

Since it was a year ago, blaming Gisu would definitely be rash...

Anyway, the Supard race live deep in the forest.

It was a belief that I held close.

But then.

A question came to me as well.

Why was I just now hearing about this?

I had been searching for Ruijerd.

Everyone should know that.

Everyone.

For example, even Orsted.

...If the Supard had been living here for so long, then why was I not aware of it until now?

3

The Forest of No Return was a quiet place.

In general, a large amount of monsters inhabit the forests of this world.

The concentration of magic is also great in forests, but one would encounter only one monster per day in the Forest of No Return.

Mostly treants.

Treants can be found anywhere in the world, but they are even more commonplace in forests.

You could even believe that forests are actually nests of treants, so encountering them would be the norm.

But in this forest, there is no sign of them.

It's completely silent.

There are creatures here, but no monsters.

A tranquil forest that is deadly silent.

Of course there are birds and small animals, but that's it.

It's as if we're inside a nightmare.

"Weird, eh?"

"Yeah."

Looks like Sandor is feeling uncomfortable about this place, again.

"..."

Doga is silent.

Is he unable to read the mood? He's not even surveying the surroundings.

"..."

We keep walking deeper into the silent forest for a while.

The presence of animals diminishes the farther we go.

Insects and birds are present, but no small animals.

Of course, no monsters as well.

The trees were getting larger too, and the overgrown leaves covered up the sky.

In this atmosphere, you begin to dissociate and believe you're the only living thing there, which you occasionally snap out of whenever you hear the sound of birds.

Whether the invisible demons are following us or not right now...

Paranoid, I turn around to look.

And each time I do, my eyes met with Doga's unaffected ones, making me believe that it was all in my head, as I turned forward again.

"Oh?"

Suddenly, when I glanced towards the roadside, there was a stone monument that I recognized.

It's the Seven Great World Powers stone monument.

Before, I was unable to recognize the markings on this monument, but...

These days, I can more or less understand them.

Looks like there are no changes in the rankings.

“So this thing can be found in such a place, eh?”

“It's probably not that unusual. Since the Seven Major World Powers stone monument can only work in places of high magic concentration.”

“Yeah... they are magic tools.”

You know quite a bit about it, eh?

That this type of magic tool can only be found in places with high magic concentration.

Not many people know about that.

But well, it isn't like those in the know, know it very well.

“The sun will be setting soon. Let's make a camp around here.”

“That's right, then, Doga, the firewood.”

“...Yup.”

That day, we decided to set up camp near the stone monument.

As an added precaution, I made a tent with Earth Fortress, and there we slept.

4

The next day.

We continued our walk in the silent forest.

Then, Sandor suddenly thought of something.

“It feels similar to the Red Dragon Mountain Range, doesn't it?”

“Meaning?”

“The other animals don't draw near in fear of the dragons.”

They won't approach a stronger animal's turf

Earth Dragon Valley exists deep within this forest.

Earth dragons are, needless to say, powerful creatures.

The wild animals won't approach a dangerous place, such is the basis of nature itself.

“So you've been in the Red Dragon Mountain Range, Sandor-san?”

“Only to the foot. It had a similar feeling; as you get closer to it, the presence of animals diminishes.”

The earth dragons build their nests in the rock cliffs of the valley.

They fundamentally don't come out of the valley. They can't fly in the sky, but they can use earth magic to build holes.

Their nature is quite gentle for dragons; they won't attack humans as long as their territory isn't invaded.

Again, holding a very strange nature, they'll be defenseless to anyone who comes from above, but they'll attack in excess anyone who comes from below.

By the way, according to Orsted, the red dragons and earth dragons are mortal enemies.

Although the possibility of these two species, what with inhabiting such different environments, encountering one another is almost nonexistent.

Thus, the danger in approaching them from above is less.

For the time being, it would be alright as long as you don't end up falling to the bottom of valley.

“Oh.”

Was it because I was thinking all this time?

It suddenly unfolded in front of my eyes.

A steep cliff appeared out of nowhere within the dense forest.

A cliff so deep that the bottom couldn't be seen.

It's probably 4500m^[24] to the opposite side.

It gave the sensation of standing on top of a mountain.

I'm not very well-informed on valleys, but this size makes me think of the Grand Canyon.

“Is this the Earth Dragon Valley?”

“Seems so. What should we do? Looks like we've arrived without any incident...”

“Well.”

As I worried, I put mana inside my left eye.

When I keep my vision open, I can use clairvoyance.

For now, I peered into the valley's bottom.

Since I am not accustomed to using this demon eye yet, I can't measure the distance to the bottom.

But, I immediately saw it.

There are bluish-white mushrooms and moss growing at the valley's bottom, and near it, a lizard-like monster with a boulder-like body was slowly moving.

Is that an earth dragon?

It looks like a King land tortoise rather than a dragon.

It might be defenseless to anything from above since it can't possibly win against a red dragon with that body.

Now that I take a closer look at the rock cliff rather than the bottom, a lot of them are clinging to the sides - it's a bit gross.

I activate my demon eye again and survey the surroundings of the valley next.

There is nothing to the right of my vision.

Before long, my vision gets interrupted by the cliff and forest.

According to the map, the Earth Dragon Valley is supposed to be a straight line, but it looks like it's curving.

There is a mistake in the map.

To the left of my vision.

There's also nothing to see at this si-... ah, no, wait.

“It's a suspension bridge.”

The place where the cliff's width was less, there was a hanging bridge

"I see, to get to the opposite side, is it?"

"Let's try to cross it."

There are still 7 days left until we meet with the information broker again.

Calculating the time it would take to return back, it should be safe to remain in the forest for one or two more days.

Deciding on that, we began walking along the valley.

It wasn't too far till we reached the bridge.

It took about 1 hour on foot.

I was glad that I was able to see the location of the suspension bridge.

5

The suspension bridge was worn-out.

Where the distance between the two banks was smallest, two thick vines were laid across. On top of them was a wooden board, and that was it.

The overwhelming sense that the bridge was made by an amateur and its lack of safety were real concerns.

Although I call it unsafe, if a single adult with luggage crossed the bridge, then they should be fine.

"Should we cross it?"

But I am wearing the magic armor. If I go on, it will definitely fall down.

I can't embarrass myself by falling to the valley's bottom, after stating we should be fine so long as we stayed out of the valley.

"No, let's pass on crossing this bridge."

"Then, shall we head back?"

"No, let's build a different bridge."

While saying that, I stood at the edge of the cliff.

If the bridge can't be crossed because it's unsafe, then I'll just make a bridge of my own.

From my hands to the surface. I raise the earth with magic.

Making use of my magic by putting Earth Lance to practical use.

Strengthening it so much that there shouldn't be any concern for safety, even if I crossed it.

Apart from the durability, I should make the lance so that it reaches the opposite bank.

“...Ho.”

When I release my magic, the earth lance appears.

The earth lance silently extends and pierces into the other side of the valley.

No sound could be heard.

I repeat this three times over.

Just to make sure, I increased the width so that people can pass by one another.

Over the earth lance, I build a board.

This is, again, an earth board.

A sturdy board as far as the opposite bank.

Finally, I reinforce the other side along with the base of the bridge with earth magic, and the stone bridge is now complete.

The handrail... well, it's fine for now.

“Splendid... I've heard from the talks, but to do this much...”

Even though I'm being praised by Sandor, we can't let our guard down.

Since I don't know anything about architecture and stability of bridges.

There is no need to strike the bridge before crossing it, but I must rebuild it again if I were to get on with the magic armor and it collapses.

“For the time being, hand me the rope.”

I fastened the rope to a nearby tree and began crossing over slowly to examine it.

After several steps, I was smoothly walking on the bridge.

The stone bridge was solidly-built and holding up my weight.

It would be extremely stupid if one were able to fall from this, but it looks like this should work fine.

Just in case, I reinforced weaker spots along the bridge as I slowly crossed it.

Midway was as far as the rope could go; Sandor extended it with what he had and I finished crossing.

One rope was 50m long, and considering that I was barely able to cross with two, the bridge should be a little less than 100m.

“Alright.”

I signaled with the rope to the other side of the valley.

Sandor and Doga easily crossed over the bridge while grabbing onto the rope.

They were on the bridge at the same time.

Do they think that it won't collapse?

Or do they trust me?

That I would immediately come save them if they fell.

“Now, let's continue shall we?”

As I was feeling uneasy, Sandor and Doga easily finished crossing.

“But from here on out, looks like we must stay alert.”

Sandor spoke as he looked deep into the forest.

The dark, endless forest.

There was only one change since we began walking in the forest.

It's the presence of monsters.

6

No less than 100m in and we were attacked.

It was just a noise at first.

The noise of leaves rustling together.

But, I didn't think there was a monster near us because of the wind blowing.

It felt like a person from far away was approaching us.

It was still a ways off.

It's alright for now.

The moment I thought that, I heard a noise close to my ear.

“Wofuu... Wofuu...”

As soon as I heard that sound, I noticed the scent of blood hanging in the air.

Shortly after, something was clinging onto the trunk of the tree right next to us.

“.....!”

The moment I noticed it, the tree bent for an instant, and the leaves and branches rustled.

We were paused for just a moment, and then something, like a heavy mass, dropped down behind me.

When I turned to face it, I saw Doga had fallen with his face up.

I could only see Doga.

But, Doga's head was shaking as if it was moving against his will.

Doga's hand grabbed something mid-air that was shaking his head.

There is something there.

The moment I realized that, I hit the thing on top of Doga with all my strength since I couldn't use magic.

My hit, strengthened by the magic armor, sent the thing flying from on top of Doga.
It felt like flesh and broken bones.

The thing that was on top of Doga hit the trunk of a tree, and red blood spread in excess.

The color of blood started to reveal some kind of figure.

A four-legged animal.

I couldn't identify any specifics, but it is certainly four-legged...

I reflexively hit it with rock bullet and kill it.

Almost simultaneously, I was hit on my back with a thud.

I turned around immediately, about to use magic to defend myself when...

"Doga! Stand up!"

It was Sandor.

He was standing as if to protect my back.

"...Yup!"

Doga stood up while grabbing the axe from his back, and he positioned himself in front of me.

Oi, I can't see in front of me if you do that.

"It's an invisible opponent! Their numbers are unknown! Doga, don't rely on your eyes, use your ears! Only deal with the enemy in front of you!"

Rudeus-dono, please use magic! Clear them away using your ranged magic!"

Sharp instructions fly out of Sandor.

As expected of the person known as the Golden Knight leader, his judgment is fast.

His title isn't just for show.



I load magic in both my arms as I think that.

Should I use fire magic?

No, using fire in a forest would be problematic.

It'll be double the effort in extinguishing it.

Let's go with water magic, Frost Nova.

“.....Uu!”

As I was about to cast my magic.

It was only for an instant.

Doga moved in front of me.

Swinging his giant axe in an arc

Wielding a huge battle axe in this forest resulted in broken tree trunks and limbs every time it is swung.

There is no resistance from the monster, however.

As blocks of wood scattered around, I felt something slip by Doga's flank and approach me.

The magic armor is heavy, but hard.

Even if I was attacked by a monster's nails or fangs, it's likely that I won't be injured.

I judge that in an instant and was going to cast my magic when...

“Rudeus-dono!”

I was knocked away by Sandor.

What the!?, but I had no time to think that.

Before I realized it, a spear was standing at my side.

The spear looked like it stood by itself in mid-air, but... that's wrong.

It was because something transparent was pinned to the ground by it.

It's a white spear.

Exceedingly white, as if it was made out of chalk.

It was similar to some kind of monster's bone.

Ah, how nostalgic that spear is.

A single person jumped to the ground to recover that spear.

Green hair.

A white body as if stricken with disease.

A native dress, similar to a poncho.^[25]

Ah, I have no doubt.

I know after looking at his height, I can't possibly be wrong.

“Ruijerd!”

I got up and called out to him while extending my hand as much as I could.

He looks back at me with his spear in hand.

“Nh?”

“.....Huh?”

It was a face I didn't recognize.

A beautiful face, he had a Ruijerd-like appearance... but it's not him.

My Ruijerd was more like... the side of his chin was a little...

“Sorry, I mistook you for someone else.”

I feel...

Really disappointed.

There is a different member of the Supard here.

Which means, my beliefs were right to some degree... this is a Supard, right?

Damn, my face is all hot because I shouted Ruijerd with so much determination and confidence.

“...Do you know Ruijerd?”

The Supard male that I didn't know asked me with a curious look on his face.

Ah, that's right.

If he's a Supard, then he knows about Ruijerd.

And even if it wasn't Ruijerd, there isn't any problem.

Yeah.

There aren't any typical problems that are rising in the Bihearil Kingdom right now.

Yeah.

“Eh? Ah, yes. Comrade... no, friend... maybe a patron?”

“If you’re a guest, come with me. I'll introduce you.”

The man turned around as he said that.

“Eeh... please wait a moment, is he here?”

“He's here.”

The Supard male nodded at the dumbfounded me as if it was obvious.

CHAPTER 4

SUPARD RACE'S VILLAGE

1

The village was very similar to the Migurd village.

It was surrounded by two meter high walls, and humble log houses lined the inside.

Near the log houses, there was a rather small field.

Unlike the Migurd's, they were growing many different types of vegetables.

The soil seemed like it's fertile.

On top of that, behind the log houses, an animal was being prepared for cooking.

It was a 4 legged beast with whitish fur.

That is the true identity of the invisible demon.

A short while after they die, their invisibility gets released, and even the one who attacked us just moments ago started showing its color.

It seems they're called [Invisible Wolf].

Rather frank.

In the centre of the village is a fountain, and near it is a large pot that looks like it's used to prepare food for the whole village.

Their culture really is similar to the Migurd Tribe.

But there's one difference.

The Migurd village was filled entirely with blue haired people that looked like middle schoolers...

But here, everyone has a red gem on their forehead and emerald green hair.

They are Supards.

All of them.

And so, it was here that I had a surprising revelation.

The Supards not only had red gems on their forehead and emerald green hair, but...

They are beautiful.

They are all, without exception, beautiful.

No, in this world, there are people with much more beautiful forms and stronger faces.

But they are beautiful nonetheless.

Of course, it's not just nothing but pretty boys; everyone's features are regulated well.

Over there is a young girl with a shortcut hair, super cute.

She is slender, isn't too tall, but her shoulders are quite muscular, she has a strong-willed look, and her chest is fairly large. She gives off the impression of having the best parts of both Sylphy and Eris...

No, it's different, this isn't cheating, I'm looking at it objectively, OK?

It's a village of beautiful men and women.

This is evil.

The people of this forest are evil.

"It's a frightening village."

"...Yup."

In response to my comment, Doga gave off something that sounded like an agreement.

For a while now, Doga has been squeezing behind me as if to hide himself.

It seems he's scared of the Supards.

He was born in the Asura kingdom, so he must have grown up on stories of the Supards being evil demons.

Although I want to deny it...

Though the Supard race as a whole are not that bad, whether or not this village is taking the trouble to welcome us is a different question.

So for now, I'll hold off on consoling him.

"Now, I wonder where they'll take us."

Sandor doesn't seem all that scared.

Maybe because he was raised in the strife zone, he hasn't heard many stories about the Supards.

Actually, it seems that seeing so many Supards has him excited.

"It would have to be where Ruijerd is, right?"

"We won't necessarily be heading there first."

"Then following this pattern, wouldn't it be the village head?"

"If we're following the pattern then a jail might be likely... they don't seem to need to deliberate anything."

The Supard warrior headed towards us and said, "Follow me," so we did.

As a result, we blindly followed him and arrived at the village.

We walked in silence.

"In any case, the village doesn't seem all that energetic."

It's as he says, the Supards don't look all that healthy.

There's also someone with a cough preparing the meals.

Although the children are healthy.

The children with tails are running around playing.

Ah right, so supard children have tails...

"Considering the size of the village, the number of people is rather small."

"Have they gone hunting?"

"They have livestock, they wouldn't need to go hunting would they?"

"Ah, you have a point."

Just now, we saw an animal being prepared for food.

Which is why they would be back from hunting.

Rather than a group, it might be just one person that leaves, since that animal might

be stored as food...

"It would have to be the disease."

The village has that "sick person" smell to it.

I might be biased because of the medicine information we received... but the village still seems to have a sickly vibe.

I should be fine, but would it be better if I wore a mask?

"It's here, hurry up."

The Supard who talked to us before led us in single file.

In the village, it's the oldest house.

However, it's also the largest.

It's gotta be the village chief pattern.

"Chieftain, I am entering. I have brought Ruijerd's guests."

As he said that, he opened the door to the house.

The inside looked like some kind of hall.

Rather than the house of the Chieftain, it seemed more like an auditorium or a conference hall.

Anyhow, inside there were five Supards.

Most likely, five old men.

They had a calming atmosphere, more so than the Supard who brought me here.

All of them had green hair and white skin, they're beautiful.

Age was difficult to understand.

"Unh."

And so, one of the five.

He stood the instant I entered the room.

With a familiar native dress...

Facial scars.

White spear.

With a familiar metal head band.

His hair grew. He's no longer a cue ball.

This time there's no doubt.

"Ruijerd-san!"

A natural smile overflowed.

Out of nostalgia, I wanted to rush towards him instinctively, but I held back a few steps before I entered.

But when he saw my face, he gave a puzzled look.

"Are you... Rudeus?"

I wonder if he's forgotten about me.

That would be rather sad.

"...Have you forgotten?"

"No, the face in my memory is different."

"Aah! I get it, this is for a disguise."

I remove the ring and show them my actual face. It caused a buzz among the Chieftains.

I understand that face... is what I would like to say, but it's probably thanks to the Supard's third eye.

"I see, it has been so long."

"It really has."

Aah, how nostalgic.

There are so many things I want to say.

There are so many things I want to tell.

About Eris and Paul.

There are loads of things I want to hear.

About this village and what he has been doing up to now.

No, if you look at this village you can tell.

Ruijerd found it.

What he had long been searching for, he had found at last.

“Ruijerd-san...”

I might cry.

My memories of him are coming back to me.

The time when I first met Ruijerd.

When we met, he was alone. Near the Migurd village is where we began our journey.

He did not appear to be alone, but he was.

But Ruijerd is no longer alone.

“Well, congratulations. You found the Supard tribe.”

“Ah.”



Ruijerd nodded while fondly looking at me and gave a smile.

He is surrounded by his comrades.

...the surrounding 5 don't seem all that moved, but Ruijerd is happy.

“But Rudeus... why are you here?”

Ah, right.

This isn't the time to be immersed in sentimentality.

Now is not the time to reminisce.

“It's a long story. There are also many things I want to hear from you. So may I have a little of your time?”

While sitting in the conference hall, I said that with a serious face.

“Chieftain, is that alright?”

Sitting furthest in the back, the pattern on his clothes was much more exuberant than the other four.

He would have to be the Chieftain.

In response to Ruijerd's question, he made a difficult face.

“Can we trust this human?”

“We can.”

“Then why not hear it?”

With the permission of the Chieftain, the conversation began.

2

Before I told my story, Ruijerd gave me an explanation of how he reached the Supard Village.

The story started after he had delivered Norn and Aisha to my place.

After that, Ruijerd set out on a journey to find any remaining, living Supards.

While moving from country to country he planned to search the northern part of the Central Continent.

But after he left town, Badigadi quickly caught up.

“He said, 'I know where you can find the remaining living Supards'.”

Ruijerd was skeptical.

But he had nothing else to go on, so for the meantime, he listened.

During the next couple of years, their journey together ended at the Biheiril Kingdom.

And so, they entered the Forest of No Return, the backwoods of the Earth Dragon Valley.

He then guided him to the place where the Supards were living.

Ruijerd was kindly accepted by the Supards.

There was much talk regarding the war of the past, but all that was taken to kindly.

He began life in this village and gained peace.

“But a plague struck the village.”

An unknown plague.

The initial symptoms are similar to that of the common cold, but then you begin to lose energy and start trembling. The forehead eye gets cloudy, and it eventually leads to death.

As Ruijerd saw the villagers dying one by one, he ran about in order to search for the treatment.

Ruijerd himself was also infected, but to save the village, he forced his trembling body to Irel.

And so he succeeded in buying medicine from a peddler.

As of now, the village was heading towards recovery.

“But outside the village, demons of this forest had exterminated the investigation squad. Those kinds of rumours are circulating, aren't they?”

“When the plague hit, the beasts of the forest most likely went outside.”

In the first place, why would the Supard race make their village here?

It was the same as what the old lady from the village in the Earth Dragon Valley said.

Several hundred years ago.

When the Supard race was chased from the Magic Continent, they spread all over the world.

They were persecuted wherever they went, at times they were chased by Knights or the military, day after day.

The Supard refugees, avoiding plains, walking along the forests and foot of the mountains, sought for a safe-haven.

A land where the humans couldn't tread, a place where the Supards could live.

Seeking that place, persistently, to the ends of the world.

And so, the place they found was here, the place called the Valley of the Earth Dragon in the Forest of No Return.

Because of the earth dragons, large demonic beasts didn't approach. The forest was inhabited only by the [Invisible Demons].

Of course, the [Invisible Wolf] is not on the same level as a common demonic beast.

Because of the benefit of invisibility, 3 of them could wipe out the average adventurer party.

But, the invisible demons, to the Supards' [eye], were a simple matter.

And so their strength, compared to the Supards' who had lived on the magic continent, couldn't match.

So they became livestock.

Before long, the Supard race had settled in the Forest of No Return.

Of course, they had trouble.

No matter how few humans enter the forest, as there was a human village near, their hiding place was not absolute.

After the Supards had been living in the forest for a while, the villagers began to enter.

The villagers frequently went in and out of the forest, sometimes coming close to the village.

At that time, the Chieftain of the Supards decided that the demonic beasts in the forest were to be reduced, and at the same time ordered the protection of any villagers lost in the forest; that was the promise he made.

If it's the legend of the village, and what the old lady told us before...

But this is a story from 200~300 years ago, so it's possible that she was wrong.

Whatever the case, they have kept their promise and the humans are still alive.

Anyhow, the Supards have successfully done this while maintaining a reasonable distance.

But with the uproar caused by the plague, the balance was broken.

"The country intends to destroy this village."

After hearing that story, I reported about the rumors that were circulating in the Biheiril Kingdom and what the country intends to do.

"I see..."

Upon hearing that, the Chieftain's face showed a look of disappointment.

Not the expression of wanting to fight if destruction is imminent, but disappointment.

With a tired look, and an expression of resignation.

"It seems we can no longer live here either..."

"Where can we possibly live now...?"

"If it wasn't for that war..."

The Chieftains gave a numbed look and Ruijerd looked apologetic.

"I am sorry."

In response to Ruijerd's apology, the Chieftains hurriedly shook their heads.

“We are not blaming you Ruijerd. We had decided together to follow Laplace as well.”

“There may still be some hard feelings, but at that time, everybody looked at the warriors with pride, and would have been glad to join you. We share the same sin.”

“...But why must only we meet these gazes?”

“Why would Laplace do such a disservice to the Supard race...?”

Voicing blame is useless, nobody is entirely at fault.

It was not because of regret.

Just the voice of a man who had lost normality.

Nothing can be done.

There is no choice but to run.

Those feelings, through their tones and actions, are being expressed.

The war of 400 years ago.

To the humans, it is an event of the distant past.

But for them, it's a similar stretch of time to that which has passed since the teleportation incident for me.

For the Supard race, the Laplace campaign has probably yet to end.

“If it is alright with you, should I inform the Biheiril Kingdom?”

Before I could think, the words had leaked out.

“Eh?”

“I am a human. That, in a way, gives me power.

Up until now, the Supard race have been exterminating dangerous beasts in the forest and protecting a human village.

That is to the benefit of the country.

In short, with that explanation, I will request that they allow you to live in your corner of this forest.”

Now I know what to do.

To defeat Gisu, that is my job.

Although Ruijerd and his comrades are part of the plan, if that causes us to be unable to find Gisu, then it would be better to avoid doing it.

I'm also thinking that.

But can I leave the Supards to die?

Up until now, I have been selling Ruijerd dolls and picture books.

For what purpose?

To look for Ruijerd?

But why dolls and picture books?

To help recover the honour of the Supard race.

I have always been trying to help the Supard race and Ruijerd.

My priorities might be off.

But who else besides me is in the position to save the Supard race?

"The humans hate us. Do you think they'll accept us?"

"The hate for the Supards within the human race is already fading.

In the Biheiril Kingdom, the humans and the obviously different Ogre tribe exist in peace, I feel there will be little resistance.

Within this area, the Millis Church has little influence,

While spreading good rumours of the Supard race with my own hands, if you let me help, then I'm sure they'll accept."

They began talking rapid-fire.

At the very least, there isn't any meaning for the Biheiril Kingdom to destroy the Supard race.

Without the Supards, the invisible wolves will flood out from the forest, and the village will perish.

We don't know how far the invisible wolves will spread, but it will most likely reach the second city Irel.

It should be fine to ask them to ignore the Supard race.

Rather than getting wiped out, this would be better.

“If the Bilheiril Kingdom does refuse, I'll have you be allowed into the country of someone I know.”

The Asura Kingdom... would be tough.

In that country, the Millis Church is beginning to thrive.

But to the north of the Asura kingdom, there is a large forest.

That place doesn't belong to any kingdom.

As long as no real harm comes forth while they live there, it's possible to say that the Mills Church won't be too obstinate about it.

More so, in that forest is the band of thieves that know Ariel. It would be good if they could get along and share.

With Ariel, I might be able to use the good condition of the Supard race...

“Will it be alright?”

“Before that, can we trust this man?”

“If he is an acquaintance of Ruijerd...”

“But can we believe what he is saying?”

Those around the Chieftain began arguing amongst themselves.

So much so that you wouldn't think they were the same race as Ruijerd.

Since they all look so young, it kind of looked like a youth group meeting.

If you brought a video like this into human society, they would at least realize that they aren't demons...

“It does not need to be decided now.”

The Chieftain said that and the discussion ended.

Indeed, if a man appears out of nowhere and suddenly says something like that, you would get confused and be unable to decide.

“I understand. The humans will come to attack in 16-17 days. Although there is time

for discussion, please decide quickly.”

Although, if negotiations here were to break down, I would help protect the Supard village.

“...I understand. We will have our decision in a few days.”

As the Chieftain said that, he stood up with a hard to understand face.

“Huh? But you still haven't heard the reason I have come here.”

“Currently we are too divided to hear your story. And the sun will also set soon. For now, the meeting is adjourned. I would like to make arrangements.”

I've been rescheduled.

They're an excellent company.

“We must prepare food and lodging for our guest.”

“I'll do it.”

Well, hearing what I came here to say tomorrow shouldn't be a problem.

Even if this village's problem isn't solved, I won't have to fight Gisu or Hitogami over it.

Priorities.

Tomorrow I will explain them why I proposed such a suggestion.

And like that, I finished my meeting with the Chieftains.

3

That evening, we were given a vacant house to stay in.

Doga shut himself in and Shandor, at dusk, went looking around the village out of curiosity.

I was in Ruijerd's home.

It seemed he had the position of an advisor, and was living retired in the village.

Home, Ruijerd's home.

When I see it, it somehow warms my heart.

He is no longer on an unending journey, being persecuted wherever he goes.

This is the place Ruijerd belongs to.

Even if he is absent for a time, this is a place he can return to, with a warm bed and a smiling family.

A home is a great thing.

Ah, no good, I think I might cry.

“You can sit there.”

“OK.”

The inside was quite plain.

The structure is definitely similar to the Migurds' homes.

There is a pelt draped over something like a fireplace, and clothes hanging on the wall.

The inside is divided into three sections, and Ruijerd seems to be in the storeroom.

It seems food, water pots, and the like are put in a separate room as the sound of water dripping could be heard from there.

But the appearance isn't that impressive.

Although the floor is covered with fur, there are grains of wood sticking out from the wall.

While a trophy of the invisible wolf was decorating the wall...

Ah, the thing that's hanging from it, it's Roxy's pendant.

How nostalgic, so he was still holding on to it.

Still... the house is quite spacious.

“Excuse me, Ruijerd-san.”

“What is it?”

“Are you perhaps living alone in this house?”

“Yeah.”

Living alone in a house this big.

Suddenly, I thought of living alone in my current house.

The bedroom would be the same as before.

I would cram anything useless in the basement like now.

I'd make use of the bathroom, dining room, and kitchen but... probably not the living room.

Other rooms as well aren't of any use to me.

As the head of the house, I can change the layout of my private room as much as I want.

All of this would result in an empty and dreary room.

If it was the me from before, I would've thought of it as fine, but the me right now can't stand it.

"...Are you not going to marry or something?"

"Do you think I can?"

Ah.

Damn it.

Now that I recall, his wife and child, by his own hands, were...

So he obviously wouldn't.

"Sorry."

"Don't apologize. It's not because I'm being pulled by the past, but because I simply don't have any sort of companion right now."

Ruijerd sat in front of me while smiling.

"So what has been happening to you?"

He seems to be relaxed.

This sense of distance.

I should've brought Eris along if it was going to be like this...

No, I'll do it after all of this is over.

We can meet whenever we want if we're all alive.
Therefore, we must act together if we all want to live.

"It's a long story, is that fine?"

I thought that it would've been fine tomorrow, but I guess I should at least speak with Ruijerd ahead of time.

I, too, can't help but want to talk to him.

"Let me hear it."

"Yes."

I started talking about the time after we parted.

About my sisters, about Paul's death, about my marriage with Roxy.

My reunion with Eris, and how I reconciled with her.

Ruijerd was calmly listening to all of that.

He had a little clouded expression regarding Paul's death, but as a result of me not being particularly sad, we didn't talk about it.

Rather, the thing we did talk about was Eris.

"As I thought, so Eris did have the disease of a warrior?"

"...Ah~, I wonder. It still looks like she's suffering from it even now."

"Even so, to marry three women, it's just like you. Are there any kids already?"

"Yes. There are four."

"I see."

He didn't say 'I want to see them'.

But I'll bring them along next time.

Especially Ars.

Ruijerd wants to see mine and Eris's child.

Well, this and that can be done after defeating Gisu.

“Ruijerd-san.”

I correct my posture thusly.

The order of things was sequential but now comes the main question.

“I have currently become Dragon God Orsted’s subordinate.”

I started talking about the present situation.

About how the Dragon God Orsted had been fighting Hitogami since long ago.

How I took Hitogami’s side, but he was deceiving me from the start.

How he tried to kill my family as he deemed my descendants a hindrance.

But the future me came and how I was barely able to prevent that.

How the angered Hitogami suggested that I fight Orsted and how I did.

I lost to Orsted, but he was a surprisingly nice guy and I was able to escape from the hands of Hitogami.

And after I became Orsted’s subordinate, I joined in the fight against Hitogami.

How I am currently in the midst of assembling personnel in order to bring down Demon God Laplace, whose resurrection is to be 80 years from now.

How everything was progressing smoothly until Gisu took Hitogami’s side.

About Gisu’s letter. About the possibility of Gisu being in Biheiril Kingdom.

In order to defeat Gisu, I sent in every trustworthy comrade towards the whole nation of Biheiril Kingdom.

While reporting on the current situation, I said at last.

“Ruijerd-san.

I’ve been searching for you ever since I decided to fight against Laplace in the future.

Please become my streng-... no, please fight alongside me.”

I requested as I bowed my head.

Ruijerd, too, is a person who holds resentment towards Laplace.

“.....”

Therefore, I, as if it was to be expected.

Was dreaming about his acceptance to my request with all my heart.

“.....”

But Ruijerd didn't answer.

He just made an unpleasant face and looked away.

“Eh?”

I hadn't even thought about the possibility that he would refuse.

When Laplace's name was mentioned, Ruijerd's face became expressionless as usual, though I always thought that when the time came he would just nod as if to say 'Got it'.

But I was wrong.

He averted his eyes from me.

That made his refusal apparent.

His attitude was saying 'no'.

'This is a lie', or so I would like to think.

But, 'so that's how it is', or so I was assenting to it as well.

Isn't it obvious?

It's because he found the members of the Supard race.

He still holds resentment towards Laplace.

There is still some residual anger.

However, that fight ended long ago.

During the final battle of Laplace's military campaign, it was all over when he struck his blow of revenge.

Not to mention that the Supard village is currently in a grave situation.

There is no need to promise until the present situation is resolved.

“Is it because of the Supard village? If it is, please leave it to me. It’s been several years after our separation, and I’ve reached the point where I’ve become so influential that I can even do something rash.”

“It’s not that.”

Looks like I was wrong.

But I hadn't given up yet.

I needed an answer immediately, so I thought of anything else I could use to persuade him.

What kind of life had he lived after Laplace disappeared?

What had been Ruijerd aiming for?

To protect the remaining Supard race?

To protect the long lost brethren that he finally found?

There is that.

But, there is one more thing, which has a greater impact.

“Then, is it restoring the Supard Race’s honor? Asura’s ruler and Mills’s miko are also participating in the fight against Laplace. If the word gets out that you stood by them in the fight, then even the Supard Race’s honor----”

“It’s not that.”

Is that it, or so I thought, but my suggestion was rejected without a second thought.

Ruijerd stood up.

His expression gave off a thirst for blood and could also be seen with hints of bewilderment and hesitance.

Perhaps, there may be a different reason that I'm not aware of.

“Rudeus, come with me.”

Ruijerd picked up the spear that was leaning against the wall and walked towards the exit.

I got up in a hurry and followed him.

As a result of talking for so long, outside it's already pitch dark.

Although the moon is peeking from the gaps in the trees, you can't even see your feet.

Ruijerd headed towards the outskirts of the village.

I took out a light spirit from the scroll in my hand and illuminated the surroundings.

Ruijerd kept walking for several minutes as if to say that there is no need for light, and stopped in a clearing within the forest.

"Rudeus."

"Yes?"

From here on out, I'm going to be hearing things that I didn't want to hear.

I had that premonition.

Perhaps an uneasy premonition flashed through my mind.

「ルーデウス」

これから、きっと聞きたくない話を聞かされる。
そんな予感があった。もしかすると、と頭の隅を不安な予感がよぎっている。



“Regarding the discussion before, there’s just one lie.”

“.....”

“The Chieftain and all the warriors as well believe in that lie.”

A lie.

“There is no cure for the plague. The medicine didn't have any effect. We're not going to recover.”

The figure of a woman coughing in the village comes to mind.

The symptoms of a disease that can be felt from everyone in the village.

The number of villagers that Sandor had said was rather low.

“Currently, the advancement of the illness has just been suppressed.”

“...How?”

When he heard that, Ruijerd put his hand on the metal headband that was concealing his forehead.

“This.”

The thing that appeared from under the headband.

It was not the red gem.

The gem that should've been red, had turned into a deep blue.

Furthermore, it was surrounded by a black pattern.

Something like... like a drawing made by a fourteen year old using their left hand, a pattern like that.

“That is?”

Ruijerd's mood and the ominous presence from the pattern is probably the reason why I can't bring myself to make fun of him.

I feel like I've become more aware to others' powers and danger since I've become

stronger than before...

“Currently, my body has been possessed by <Dark King> Vita.”

Dark King Vita.

The one who lives in the labyrinth of the Heaven Continent <Hell>, one of the possible candidates for Hitogami’s apostles.

“Dark King Vita fissioned and distributed himself to the infected people in the village. Due to the power of Vita’s fissioned parts, the plague’s progress has been suppressed.”

“Pos-Possession... are you all right?”

“There isn’t anything out of the ordinary. Only the progress of the plague and its symptoms have been suppressed.”

“Did he say something or do anything?”

“No.”

The only thing that I heard from Orsted was his name.

From what he looked like to what goals he may have, I hadn’t heard anything about it.

So he’s the type who can possess.

Fission... that means, he’s a life-form that can split himself.

Or possibly a bacteria type?

“But, <Dark King> Vita should’ve been living in the labyrinth of the heaven continent <Hell> ... just why?”

“When the village was caught in a dilemma, a male appeared in front of me with Vita in a jar.”

“One male... don’t tell me!”

“It was Gisu.”

So it was him.

“Gisu said that afterwards, a great war is going to happen in this country. When that time comes, he wanted me to assist him.”

“.....”

“I accepted.

I had doubts about relying on an unfamiliar person like Dark King Vita, but we didn't have any choice. Then, the plague's progress was actually suppressed and everyone was saved.”

And then, Ruijerd expressed a disappointed smile as if mocking himself.

“To think that the enemy Gisu was fighting with was you, I never even dreamt that...”

My heart is pounding.

Even though I considered the slight possibility of Ruijerd becoming an enemy.

Now that the possibility is true, the pounding won't stop.

“It's not that the plague has been completely cured.

If Dark King Vita dies, his fissions will also die or so I've heard.

If that happens, the village will again be swallowed up by the plague.”

“.....”

“I must fight you.”

Ruijerd said that expressionlessly with a sober face like always.

“Of course, even I don't want to fight you. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't have been able to come this far. I may still be loitering around the Demon Continent with foolish thoughts.”

“...Even I feel that I have a debt to repay you. I don't want to fight you.”

“Fighting is a necessity. It's been like this since the beginning of time, it's immemorial.”

“...I guess so.”

The fellow that I feel indebted to is going to become my enemy.

Helplessly fighting against one another, when the other dies, the heart of the survivor becomes scarred.

Something like that may happen due to the war.

But this should be different.

Why should there be any need to fight?

Exception. Right, there should be an exception.

There must be a way to avoid the war.

In order to avoid the war, the source of it should be eliminated.

That's right, as long as the source is removed...

What's the source...?

Orsted and Hitogami?

It's certainly that, but I've already reached a point where I can no longer betray Orsted.

Currently, it's the relationship between me and Ruijerd.

The reason Ruijerd must fight me.

It's because of comrades, the brethren of Supard race.

If the Supard race is no longer... no that's wrong.

It's the plague.

The plague gnawing at the Supard race.

If a way to cure it is known, then the Supard race should become our comrades.

"If there is a method to completely cure the plague, will you come to my side?"

Betray them.

Hearing those words, Ruijerd gave a unwavering glance and wore a rigid face for a little while.

But I didn't leave from his sight.

Gisu had dibs on Ruijerd before me.

But Ruijerd informed me about the situation.

If he had really sided with Gisu, he wouldn't have said anything and just killed me. Yet...

The reason he brought me to this place and explained the situation is certainly because

he was swayed as well.

“.....”

Ruijerd was straining his lips and furrowing his brow.

I intend to make him my comrade.

He, too, should be thinking that.

But, he may also have an obligation towards Gisu who saved his brethren as well as Hitogami, who gave the instruction.

Since it's the honest Ruijerd.

“I said it before, but I was betrayed by Hitogami. And I can definitely say that the same could happen with the Supard Race. Gisu was betrayed once as well and I was told that my entire family will be killed. There is also the possibility that if you keep following him, then after the war is over, Dark King Vita will willfully leave and the Supard race will be doomed anyway.”

Even if you feel indebted, the possibility of Hitogami eventually betraying you is high. Hitogami is that kind of guy.

Of course, it is nothing more than just a malicious guess.

But I ought to tell him about the things that have happened in the past.

“.....”

Ruijerd is still silent.

He remains silent and continues to look at me.

I continue to look at him as well.

And then, he slowly opens his mouth.

“If there really is such a method. Then, all right. I also wish to fight alongside you.”

“Ruijerd-san.....!”

A sigh of relief escapes me.

I'm glad.

I'm glad that we don't have to kill each other now.

"But, is there such a method?"

"Orsted knows a lot about this world. If we listen to him then there is a possibility."

But, will Orsted tell us about it?

He hasn't told me so far.

That the Supard race was here, he didn't inform me about it.

No, based on the situation, I'll properly listen to him.

Whether or not I'll be fighting with Ruijerd may be decided later.

"In any case, there should be a countermeasure to the disease.

Until then, don't say that you'll become my enemy, please wait."

The problem is the delay.

But, there isn't any countermeasure, that's understood but it's still not too late.

"Orsted came once, before Gisu."

"Eh?"

He abruptly spoke, causing me to tilt my head.

Orsted came?

"When?"

"Approximately two years ago, when the first patient was discovered."

"....."

"But he didn't do anything. Of course, we didn't know that he had a connection with you and drove him away, but... if what you say is true, at that time, Orsted should've been your comrade."

What does that mean?

What does that mean?

“Do you have absolute trust in Orsted?”

Orsted didn't do anything about the Supard race.

Though, there is the possibility that he wasn't aware of the illness, but if what Ruijerd says is true, then that can't be the case.

Trust.

The method to a cure.

Can't do it, don't know it.

“I do.”

But I said that.

Orsted and I have gotten along all this time, until now.

Perhaps, even this time he may have some reason.

For example, the Supard race may become some kind of hindrance to him in the future or the like.

But, if we talk things through then a resolution can be found.

At least, Orsted had already visited the village once, it isn't like he wants to kill off the entire village.

Perhaps he came to do just that, but wasn't able to.

Now that is something to think about.

“You can trust in Orsted.”

I've been working together with Orsted until now, that much is certain.

Surely, communicating with him can be difficult since he doesn't say much. But he can be trusted as he aims to defeat Hitogami and always moves towards that goal.

“He doesn't like talking too much, but please believe in me and not Orsted. I would never come to loathe the Supard race.”

“.....”

Ruijerd turned back.

Folding his arms as if to think, he stood like that for several seconds.

Suddenly, as if he realized something, he raised his face.

A large moon could be seen in the sky.

“...Gu!”

In the next moment, he suddenly grasped his chest and squatted.

“Ruijerd-san!?”

Just what happened?

Immediately after I thought that, I rushed over to him.

He abruptly raised his head and grabbed my shoulder.

“.....!”

That was strange.

Ruijerd’s face was changing.

His eyes were stained deep blue.

The whites and blacks of his eyes were transforming into a deep blue color.

His mouth was partly open; it didn't look like his face was under his control at all.

The gem on his forehead was turning red, but the surrounding pattern was releasing an ominous glow.

Looking at that, I understood.

“Are you being manipulated!?”

Damn it.

Just because he told me that nothing happened until now, I shouldn't have immediately had that conversation.

Even though I was told he was being possessed...

It was too late to think about it now, Ruijerd approached my face.

And kissed me.

At the same time, some kind of liquid infiltrated my mouth, and crawled into my throat as if it was a living animal.

CHAPTER 5

DARK KING VITA

1

“Uwahh...!”

I jumped up.

A familiar room leaped into my vision the moment I opened my eyes.

My legs wrapped in the soft blanket.

The door which exited into the hallway from the bedroom.

The gentle breeze blowing in from a partly open window.

When I turn around, I see the pillow made from treant’s material.

Roxy’s figurine is placed on the side-table.

This bed, which I’ve grown accustomed to sleeping in.

Located in the Magic City Sharia, it’s my house.

“Haa... Haa...”

I feel like I had some kind of strange dream.

“Huh...?”

But I couldn’t remember what happened in the dream.

Just that it was unpleasant.

If it wasn’t, I wouldn’t have jumped up like that.

Well, a dream is just a dream.

“Nh... Ngh!”

I got out of bed and stretched.

The weather today is nice as well.

In a little bit, summer will end and autumn will take its place.

I can't help but look forward to it.

As I walk down the stairs while thinking that, two children noisily ran up to me.

Children with dark brown hair and animal ears.

"Don't fall down now~."

"Yeeessss!"

I escort the running children into their room and continue down to the first floor.

Passing the hallway, to the dining room.

In the dining room, one female was preparing breakfast.

A voluptuous body hidden by simple clothing, but the clothing was cut, a tail coming out from behind.

When she noticed that I was in the room, she turned back while twitching her sharp ears.

"Good morning, Rinia."

"Good morning-nya."

To be told with a somewhat blunt tone of voice,

I was suddenly overtaken by a vague, uneasy feeling from when I had that unpleasant dream, so I hugged her.

"Rinia!"

"U-nya!?"

Rinia is my wife.

Just why was I married to her?

Right, now that I recall, it was during my days as a student.

I had been worried about my ED, and was trying to cure my son by various means.

At that time, Rinia and Pursena appeared in front of me...

Two people, possessing bodies overflowing with a vibrant youth, throbbing impression, and wild styles.

When I fought them, restrained them, and peeled them naked, my ED was yet to be cured.

But, after one or two years, I kept encountering them in the classroom and cafeteria, and I was gradually becoming more aware of their presence.

Soon, it reached the point where the two of them lewdly tempted me; and at that time my son, little by little, was regaining its response.

It had completely recovered when they reached their 7th year, during autumn.

It was then when the two of them, both excited and unable to control themselves due to the mating season, brought me to their room.

It's nostalgic.

That night was the best.

After that, on the day of graduation, the two of them dueled and Pursena became the victor.

Pursena went back to the Great Forest and Rinia came to my place.

And then every year, whenever autumn arrived, we made children.

"Fushaa!"

"Owww!"

My hand which was massaging her breasts was hit.

"It's forbidden until mating season! We decided on that-nya!"

"It should be fine with just a hug..."

"It's you anyway, it won't finish with just a hug-nya! A wife is nyot her husband's sex slave!"

"That wasn't my intention though..."

While sighing, I sat on the table.

Rinia's mood is always like that.

According to the rules of the beast race, it's only allowed during the mating season.

Of course, when the mating season arrives, the opposite side willingly invites you.

The children are cute, and having children with Rinia during the mating season really satisfies my sexual desires.

But still, that's not it.

Just a little bit of, how should I say this, shouldn't a little bit of touchy-feely be alright in ensuring our love?

"Hey, Everyone-nya! The meal is ready, get down here-nya!"

"Yeessss!"

Rinia strikes the empty pot with a clanging noise and the children come running down from the second floor.

It's not just the two children that were going up the stairs a while ago, there were twelve children in all.

The beast race can give birth to two to three children at once, that's why it's a large family.

My house is filled with children's rooms.

"Eat quickly, there is work for you to do-nya! The students are waiting-nya!"

"Yeah, yeah."

Being pestered by Rinia, I began eating my breakfast.

Her cooking is quite delicious.

When we were newlyweds, she was only able to roast meat, stew fish, and boil vegetables.

These past few years, she has learned quite a bit from Sharia's home cooking.

Seasoning is a bit weak, but that's because the beast race's sense of taste is different, so it can't be helped.

"Thank you for the food."

“Yes. It wasn’t much-nya.”

Once the meal is finished, as always, I change into my robe and go to work.

I entered the magic guild once I graduated and am now a teacher at the Magic University.

I’m teaching chantless-magic invocation.

This kind of magic style is extremely high in practical usage; that’s why it’s a fairly popular course.

Like this, my teaching method for chantless-magic invocation is established, and if my students produce results, someday becoming the vice-principal or even principal will no longer be a dream anymore.

“Well then, I’m off.”

“Have a good day-nyan.”

While parting with few words, I headed towards the front door.

For my wife and children, I’ll work hard today and every day.

“Nh?”

I suddenly saw the living room door was slightly ajar.

From inside, I could feel a person’s presence.

It’s an awfully nostalgic presence.

“..”

As if I was being lured in, I opened the door.

There was a man.

Pretending not to see me, with one hand on the back, he’s sitting on the sofa.

The back of his head had bright brown hair that was tied into a ponytail at the base of his neck.

“Nh?”

The man turned around.

“Yo.”

It's Paul.

Why is he in such place?

Wasn't he dea-...

Ah, no, he's not dead.

He gave up on the teleportation labyrinth and came back to my place.

Thereupon, coming to Magic City Sharia, he's living in the neighborhood.

Yeah, that's definitely what happened.

Lilia, Aisha, and Norn are currently living in Paul's house.

They condemned me for not going to Paul's aid, but now we're on good terms with one another.

Yeah, definitely, I'm sure that was the case.

“She's a fine wife, eh?”

“A fine wife... it's not like you're seeing her for the first time, right?”

“No, it's my first time.”

Paul laughed heartily and waved his hand.

“Are you fine with how things are right now?”

“What's that? Do you have something that you want to say?”

“No, not really? There's nothing really. I just asked because I wanted to know whether you have any complaints or not.”

“.....There aren't any complaints.”

Rinia is a fine wife.

That is, I'm just unhappy that I'm not allowed to touch her except during the restricted

period once a year.

Even that, I don't particularly mind it.

The mating season is soon; when that time comes she'll become more clingy than usual, and with a level my body is not able to endure, she'll love me.

And to be able to make kids, as a male, my instinct is satisfied.

If I have to condense a year's worth of 'action' to one season, then it isn't such a big deal.

My work is going smoothly as well.

I'm a popular teacher at the Magic University.

My teaching method is successful and widely known in the top classes of every school.

There are many students who wish to take the class, and the other teachers' trust is great too.

My future is bright.

"I see, so there are no complaints. That's the best of all."

"...Right?"

"But, something, are you not forgetting something?"

As if scolding a foolish child with a tender voice but continuing to look down on me.

"For example, look, the work you're doing right now. Who did you imitate to gain the popularity of your students and teachers?"

"That is obviously..."

Who was it again?

For a moment, I felt like a blue-coloured something flashed in front of my eyes, but I immediately shook my head.

But, the noise in my heart grew.

"Isn't there a person who taught you that? In this world, the technique to become successful."

"...From some time ago, just what are you trying to say!? Say it clearly!"

I gave into my irritation and approached the sofa.
I walked to the front of Paul and grabbed him by the collar.
Then, my hand stopped.

“Then, I’ll say it clearly... I’m already dead, ya know?”

The lower half of Paul’s body wasn’t there.

2

“Uwah!”

I jumped out of bed.

“Haa... Haa...”

My breathing was rough, my throat dry, and my back was drenched with sweat.
It was a bad dream.

I saw an impossible dream.

What was that... What was that...

“What a nightmare...”

“...What’s the matter?”

“Aah, no, I just had an odd dream.

“When I came to Magic University... There was someone from the beast race named Rinia, right?

I had a dream where I was married and had children with her.

I had become a teacher, and was teaching chantless magic to our children.”

“That’s a nightmare?”

Was it a nightmare?

When you put it like that, it doesn’t really feel like a nightmare.

Baby-making with Rinia for a short period of time each year while looking after the children, teaching the students each day.

It was a quiet and happy lifestyle.

But—.

“It was a nightmare.”

As I said that, with my sleepy eyes, sitting up on the canopy I saw my wife.

She is a goddess of beauty.

Her frame neither too large nor too small, but just right.

Her breasts neither too large nor too small, but just right.

Her butt is slightly small, but it perfectly matches the size of her chest and height.

Overall, her waist is slender but also wide, it's neither one or the other.

But she is impossible to view as a whole.

It can be said she embodies symmetry, she has the perfect body.

If a flaw must be found, it would be her messy bed-hair.

Her normally beautiful flowing blond hair was somewhat disturbed.

But it does not detract from her charm.

With her messy hair, no human capable of reproduction could resist her charm.

To put it simply, erotic.

The messy hair, most likely caused by the actions with me last night, made her 30% more erotic.

“Being married to such a perfect woman, I have everything I desire in my hands. Why would I be a teacher in a rural town?”

“Is that a compliment? Such flattery.”

My wife.

Ariel Anemoi Asura.

She began to giggle.

“But maybe you wish for such a life.

Lately there have been many parliamentary affairs, right?

Royal life is by no means easy.

Our work, no matter how small, bears huge responsibility, but we’re not guaranteed the same amount of happiness.

The happiness people feel, it’s not that important.

Perhaps teaching in a rural area, spending time surrounded by children, that living as royalty now makes the balance between responsibility and happiness different...

More so than a woman like me, a child like Rinia may be more to your liking?”

Ludicrous.

Ariel is the perfect woman. She doesn’t have a single flaw.

She would indirectly rebuke me for my failings and would even flaunt me in front of people.

She doesn’t have any problem with other female relationships and would even allow concubines.

And on top of that she is great at her work, she is trusted greatly by those around her. She is the ideal boss and a national idol, she is that kind of woman.

No, perhaps there may be some flaws.

She can be argumentative, and values logic more than feelings.

She also has a somewhat peculiar fetish.

But, for me at least, these are not enough to be called shortcomings.

“Aah, I apologize. Did I say a little too much?”

“No, I was just thinking that it just might be so...”

“If a vacation is needed, please say so.

Lately the kingdom has been calm, so taking a little breather should be fine.

Wherever you go... Why not take a concubine with you?”

“If I got a vacation, I would just want to hold you all day.”

“Geez... nothing but jokes with you.”

“It’s true.”

I wonder how long it has been since I held Ariel like that.

The first time, we welcomed a lot of concubines, it was the sumptuous feast I had always dreamed of, but recently such things don’t appeal to me.

She alone is fine.

If someone were to ask me what currently makes me happiest, it would be that I can love the woman named Ariel Anemoi Asura.

“*giggle* Then let us make that kind of time, next time.”

While she was giggling, a maid dressed Ariel.

I also got out of bed and opened my arms.

A maid immediately rushed to me.

When I saw the two maids dividing the work and quickly dressing me, I felt I had become important.

The time at Magic University seemed very nostalgic.

When I enrolled in Magic University, I met Ariel.

After being chased out of the country after a political loss, Ariel did not give up and began assembling allies.

Being the only one at the school capable of chantless magic, I was scouted.

She was beautiful from the beginning, and possessed charisma.

But as I was suffering from ED, I had an unwelcoming demeanor.

That changed because she fixed my ED.

The approach was a little rough.

She forcibly used an aphrodisiac to get me excited and made me attack her.

Initially, I didn’t realize it was a ploy on her part.

I had done something unthinkable and out of a sense of guilt, I joined her side as a form of atonement.

At first, I was a high powered escort.

I did not have any special authority, I was just to protect Ariel.

That began to change when I became familiar with Ariel.

Ariel, who strived to be royalty.

But occasionally showed an expression appropriate for a girl her age.

Little by little, I became captivated by that girl.

I will not deny that I initially had ulterior motives, but it was not her body, but rather her heart I was attracted to.

I collided against my colleague Luke many times.

He surely loved Ariel as well.

But Luke died in the decisive battle for the Asura Kingdom, leaving Ariel and me behind.

Finally, I confessed to Ariel and obtained everything.

The world's greatest woman and the world's largest country.

I became the king of the Asura Kingdom.

Rudeus Anemoi Asura.

That is my current name.

Only as an extra to Ariel, my existence is something like a puppet.

Ariel reigns as queen, but it's easier to call me the ruler, that's the only reason.

From the start, my lineage was pretty high profile in the Asura Kingdom, so there were no complaints.

Magic King Rudeus.

The world has taken to calling me that.

When I power up, I might just become Super Rudeus.

Whether or not Ariel loves me is unknown.

I can't say for sure that I'm not being used only for my power and position.
The wedding may have only been to help smoothly govern the kingdom.
That causes my feelings to waver; there is also the large amount of concubines.

However, recently I've come to think that whatever she thinks is irrelevant to her true feelings.

After I married Ariel, she has been continuously maintaining the attitude that she loves me.

She is a hard worker.

She will possibly commit herself to love me.

This act might be a lie, but at least I feel satisfied enough.

Even if I am being deceived, I can say that it felt good to be tricked.

If I cause more harm than benefit, Ariel will probably betray me.

That depends whether or not I work hard.

Let's try harder.

"Well then, shall we go? We have a mountain of work today."

"Yes."

I left the bedroom by Ariel's side.

The two knights guarding the entrance bow their heads.

As we walk down the hallway, no matter who we meet, they bow their head.

This is power.

If I, for example, said I didn't like the way one of these people bowed, that person would go pallid and fall down to their knees.

If I told them to lick my feet, they just might do it.

Fufu, of course, I wouldn't do something like that, but knowing I have the position to do so is an excellent feeling.

Well then, the first job is any incident that may have occurred during the night.

There was no major emergency last night, so there shouldn't be any pressing jobs.

From experience, that should take two hours, and just before noon we have a meeting

with the Knight Captain.

After a meal, we have an appointment with some nobles.

We also need to finish up with the petitions from the afternoon, was it?

I hope we can make plans for the vacation; I want to make children with Ariel soon.

Since one of my roles is that of a stallion.

“Your Majesty!”

As I was thinking that, the Knight Captain came running.

He immediately kneeled in front of me and raised his voice.

“The knight sent to exterminate a demonic beast in the forest to the east has come back on the brink of death! He wants your Majesty to hear his last words directly!”

“Huh!”

A demonic beast in the east forest?

So that happened...

“I have not received this report.”

Aah, that makes sense.

“This is the last request of the knight that have fought for your Majesty! Please, please hear out his last request!”

“Dear. There is no need.”

Ariel is cold.

But today isn't especially busy.

“Why not meet him?”

It is the wish of the knight that fought for this country.

Just hearing him out should be fine.

Listen to his name and remember it.

With those feelings, I hurried to the audience room.

Ariel seemed unhappy, but followed without excuse.

In the room of the audience, subordinates had gathered.

Notos house, Boreas house, Euros house, and Zephyrus house.

Along with those were many VIPs of the Asura Kingdom aristocracy.

And so surrounded by those people, a single man was waiting on the red velvet carpet.

Resting on a stretcher, he is covered with a blanket.

He had a familiar face.

“Father...”

Paul.

Why is Paul here?

Aah, I know.

Paul heard that I became king and joined the knights.

And so, even though his relationship with the Notos was bad, he bowed his head.

As a knight, he wanted to protect me.

“Yo, Rudy.”

Paul raised his hand to greet me as if he wasn't injured at all.

“Father... the demonic beast, exterminating it, I heard from the Knight Captain...”

“Demon? What are you talking about?”

“Huh?”

I tilted my head as Paul shrugged his shoulders and sighed.

“That's not why I came here.”

“As I said, what are you saying... ngh!”

While I was talking, Paul removed the blanket.

He had no lower body.

With injuries that would cause instant death, Paul was speaking.

“Continuing from what I said earlier.”



“Uwah!”

I woke up

I had a bad dream.

A nightmare.

“What’s wrong, dear?”

The woman next to me asked while wiping the sweat from my forehead.

She had a curvy body and a youthful smile.

My wife Aisha.

She is, umm, how did we end up married again?

Yes, that’s how it is.

Errr, I could no longer put up with her getting in the bath with me.

Aisha, every day, came to tempt me, and each year her body... Wait, but?

“Hey~ what is it...? Do you still want me to call you Onii-chan even after we got married? Geez, it can’t be helped, Onii-chan is a pervert after all.”

“...”

...On the other side of Aisha was Paul.

Having lost the lower half of his body, he was sitting in a chair.

He’s looking here and laughing.

“It’s useless. You understand that too, right?”

Paul murmured that.

I know.

Aah.

Well yeah.

I should get it by now.

The reason the nightmare continues.

Why I've been feeling nothing but discomfort.

For a while now, I have been constantly waking up.

It was all a dream.

And so, this is also a dream.

"I finally noticed. <Dark King> Vita. The farce is over."

Dark King

That's right.

The Dark King Vita.

I remembered.

4

Before I noticed, I was in a room without a door.

The room without a door had three chairs.

There was no other furniture, but it gave off a feeling similar to my room.

The room from my previous life and my current bedroom.

It feels like a mix of both rooms.

And in that room I was sitting in one of those chairs.

In front of me are two people.

No, two creatures?

One was a skeleton.

Wearing a crown, it was a dirty, blackish skeleton.

The other was a slime.

It's most likely a slime.

An object shaped like blue jelly was sitting on the chair.

At least it appeared to be sitting.

“Nice to meet you. I am the the <Dark King> Vita.”

Is what the slime said.

The translucent blue slime.

That is the true identity of the Dark King Vita.

Then I wonder what the skeleton is?

It's not Paul, is it...?

I don't remember what Paul's skeleton looked like, but that crown wouldn't suit Paul.

“This fight is my loss.”

The slime made a seriously rotten face and... no, I don't know where its face is.

He said it in a seriously rotten voice.

Defeated, as in this battle.

He showed me dreams.

It was a very happy dream.

If I hadn't noticed, I would have continued forever in that happy dream.

“...You used some kind of illusion technique on me and showed me that vision.”

“Yes. Using your memories, I predicted the future that might have occurred, and blended it with your desire. The finest of illusions.”

Illusion techniques, eh?

It seems those kinds of things exist as well.

The unusualness of... the future that might have happened... now that I recall, I feel as if it had a lot of defects.

A world without Sylphy, Roxy, and Eris.

“Your sexual desire is very strong, it was quite easy.”

“Abstinence does that to you.”

Oh dear me! That’s embarrassing.

And being with Rinia, Ariel, and Aisha is also...

I probably am a little...

Although it would probably be a lie to say I had absolutely none of those feelings.

No, nothing, I have no feelings of that kind for Aisha, no means no!

“But my feelings towards my wives and my memories of Paul were the catalyst that broke the illusion, right?”

I had seen this type of illusion countless times in my previous life.

Although it was mainly in manga... anyhow, I knew how to defeat it.

I probably put that into practice unconsciously and it led to this result.

“...No, that’s not it. I had you completely under the illusion. Certainly, the effect was shallow because of your special spiritual body... but that much would never break the illusion.”

Huh?

“Then how did I escape?”

“That would be... this.”

Vita pointed to the skeleton from earlier.

The skeleton which assumed a proper posture.

“This is?”

“Quit playing the fool... You already foresaw the fight with me and prepared this in advance, didn’t you? My natural enemy, <The Bone Ring of Laxus> ”

“ ... ”

“And now that I think about it, you dramatically removed the disguise ring in front of

Ruijerd to hide the ring on your left hand.”

The Bone Ring of Laxus.

I have no memory of preparing something like that...

“The Bone Ring of Laxus was a ring made by the Death God Laxus in order to kill me. It uses the death of the person you most relied on to break the illusion, prevent the escape of the practitioner, and corners them.

Although, if you hadn’t experienced such a death, the ring wouldn’t activate.”

Death God Laxus... The Death God’s ring!

The one I got from Randolph.

I put it on! It’s true that I had it on!

“I seemed to have made light of you a bit too much.”

I didn’t see this far ahead.

I also didn’t mean to hide the ring.

“I failed.

If it was going to turn out like this I should have controlled Ruijerd and threatened you.

Ruijerd was resolved in the destruction of the village, but then you showed up and I got impatient.

And because you didn’t look particularly vigilant, I thought I could take care of you easily.

I didn’t think that a plan to take care of me had been prepared... I could not have predicted a trap to hunt me down...”

It wasn’t a trap.

Somehow, I’m sorry.

But Orsted or Randolph might have predicted such a situation.

Although I wish Orsted would tell me about these things in advance...

No, now that I think about it, he did say to take the ring.

That might be why he kept quiet about it.

By simply wearing the ring, it renders the Dark King powerless, that sort of thing.

Words without worth.

Well, this wouldn't be the first time Orsted has left out important information.

This also isn't the first time I didn't need to hear important information.

"...Well there is the saying that overconfidence leads to defeat."

"Yes, truly."

As Vita regretfully says that, he shrinks.

It's as if he's rapidly losing power.

And at the same time, the skeleton also begins to collapse.

"To think that I, the history's strongest king of the Glutinous race, will be finished off in a place like this and in this way, I had never even dreamt of that. Rudeus of the <Quagmire>. Splendid work."

...I wonder how I'll get back.

I hadn't predicted these turns of events.

Luck, I wonder if I can chalk it up to that.

I went to see Randolph myself, so I wouldn't call that luck.

Then, would it be better if I told him not to call himself the history's strongest?

No, there's still something left that I need to hear from him.

"There's one thing I want to hear. Are you an apostle of Hitogami?"

"That's right. I am greatly indebted to that God.

He set me free from the demonic hands of Death God Laxus and told me about the route to the Heaven Continent's Hell.

Thanks to him I have lived a long time...

And this is the result that came of that.

Is it cause and effect, or fate?"

Vita continued to shrink rapidly.

When I first entered the room, he was as big as an average human, but now he's no bigger than a fist.

"Rudeus, let me say one last thing."

"..."

"The Human God is a bad God, but there are those, although few in number, like me that he saved."

As he said that, he had shrunk to the size of a fingertip.

At the same time, the skeleton was disappearing into sand.

"Wait! Tell me who the other apostles might be...!"

My consciousness also began to fade.

5

I awoke.

My consciousness was clearing up.

I remember the contents of the dream and the last conversation in that room.

"Uuh..."

There was an abrupt pain in my stomach followed by nausea.

"Blughh..."

I dropped to all fours and the liquid was vomited out from my mouth.

A blue liquid.

A blue, slime-like substance, mixed with bile and dinner, spread on the ground.

Is it... the corpse of Dark King Vita?

As I thought that, a sense of discomfort began radiating from the ring on my left finger.
When I took my gauntlet off, the Death God's ring broke and fell to the ground.
The ring sank into the vomit with a plop.

“...”

The fact that the ring is broken,
it means that the conversation with Vita earlier was real.
...Basically, Vita entered me and the ring caused him to self-destruct.
Pitiful.

That said, it wasn't that Vita miscalculated.
If I had been manipulated, Hitogami's victory would have been assured.
And I wouldn't have been able to do a thing...
A coincidence.
Or should I say inevitable.

The bone ring of the Death God Laxus.
It wasn't just used to have Kishirika listen to its wearer.
It's possible that Randolph didn't even knew what it could really do.

“Aah, I wonder where Ruijerd went?”

I scan the surroundings.
I'm inside a building.
The floor, walls, and layout... all seem familiar.
It's Ruijerd's house.
From the turn of events, after Vita transferred to me, Ruijerd brought me here...?

“.....”

It's bright outside.

I wonder how many hours have passed.

It seems to already be dawn.

I'll clean up the vomit later.

“Ruijerd-san?”

There was no reply from the landlord.

Did he go outside?

Or is it something else?

For now, I stood up and started looking around.

I have to confirm the situation.

No, there he is.

Ruijerd was lying on the other side of the hearth.

“Ruije-”

He was lying there, pale faced with wheezing breath.

Holding his own trembling body.

The moment I saw that, I was at a loss for words.

This was clearly not normal.

<Vita was halting the progression of the disease. The moment Vita is killed, his fissions will die and the plague will spread again>

I remembered him saying that.

In other words, Ruijerd's current state is...

“The plague...”

It didn't seem like the Dark King Vita had only died.

His self-destruction might have destroyed himself, but...

It was suicide bombing.

traitorAIZEN: this should be somewhere here in the LN in one of the dreams



CHAPTER 6

PLAGUE

1

If Vita were to die, the progression of the plague will restart.

I was told in advance, but to think that it would be this extreme...

Perhaps Vita wasn't delaying the progression of the disease, but had merely paralyzed it.

The paralysis was undone when he possessed me and then died, resulting in the disintegration of his fissions.

As a result, the symptoms surfaced all at once... or something like that.

'I brought Vita down', I'm not going to say that.

That was a suicide bombing.

I'm relieved that someone with the same level of stupidity was on Hitogami's side, but I can't be relieved about the present situation.

"Rudeus-dono!"

Unaware of what to do about the suffering Ruijerd, brooding over whether or not there was anything I could do, I suddenly rushed out of the house only to find Sándor running up to me.

"Sándor-san!"

"So you've finally awoken, just moments ago the people of the village suddenly started collapsing, just what on earth is going on?"

"Dark King Vita has fallen. The progress of the plague may have been affected as a result of that."

"Eh!? When? Where did you defeat the Dark King!?"

"Just now, he selfishly chose defeat!"

It's fine either way.

"Please give a full explanation!"

"Well..."

I started explaining.

What I heard from Ruijerd last night.

How Vita was transferred to me through oral contact, how I was shown illusions, and how the Death God's ring defeated him.

"...I understand. In other words, the Dark King challenged you but the tables turned on him, and that... Ruijerd-dono was just being manipulated, right?"

"...I didn't realize it until I woke up, but if he had been an enemy, he wouldn't have carried me to the village."

"Got it."

"Next, a question from my side. Just how many are there?"

"For now, have whoever is mobile go and recover those who were out hunting.

"I also intend to give those same people the order to defend the entrance."

As expected of Sándor, he works quickly.

It hasn't been very long since the spread of the disease, he's excellent.

"And Doga?"

"Doga is assembling the sick people at one place."

I turned my gaze to see Doga noisily running while carrying a woman in his arms.

And as if to chase him, the children of the Supard race were following him with concerned looks on their faces.

They're probably headed towards... the chieftain's lecture hall.

It is the largest building here, so it's perfect.

According to Doga, there are no deceased yet.

But more than half of the people, just like Ruijerd, are experiencing symptoms to the point of immobility.

“Rudeus-dono, what should we do?”

“...What to do.”

I find myself at a loss for words being asked what to do.

This situation.

What must be done?

The village is being invaded by the plague.

We must do something to cure them.

Therefore, right, detoxification magic.

But I just tried it on Ruijerd.

Obviously, there wasn't any effect.

It's not that I was able to use every form of healing magic, but I feel as if the possibility of detoxification magic not having any effect is very high.

Since there are many such diseases and poisons.

If detoxification magic won't work, then I should leave it to the disease specialist.

Although I say that, who fits that description?

Should I ask Ariel to make preparations for a doctor?

But the one who is the most knowledgeable about diseases is Orsted.

But Orsted, and the Supard race...

No, let's just try and ask him.

First of all, a means of communication.

Three days left until the establishment of the magic formation...

No, I knew something like this would happen, so I had already prepared a teleportation magic formation in the basement of the office in advance.

Let's install the Communication Lithograph and magic formation in this village as well.

I'll teleport to the office and report to Orsted about the current situation.

I'll also report to the branches, from the main office, the condition of the Supard race.

If all of that was useless... we'll think about that when the time comes.

Alright.

"We should set up a teleportation magic formation in the village, move to the office, from there contact the branches, and thus call for someone capable of a medical examination."

"Roger. Then I shall defend the village and nurse the patients."

"Please do."

We quickly exchanged words, and then I hurried towards the end of the village.

Since we're inside a deep forest, the concentration of magic is high.

A teleportation magic formation can be set up without the need of any magic crystals.

Just to be sure, I should bring what's needed for the lithograph and set it up in the village.

While deeply thinking about that, I headed towards the other side of the village.

Exiting out of the fence, cutting down the trees with magic to make an open space, I then made a hut with earth magic.

A hut with no entrance.

I dug a tunnel from beneath the hut and connected it with the inside of village. With this, the monsters won't come.

I took out my memo and verified the magic formula with compliance to the preliminaries of the magic formation.

Now to make sure that the drawing doesn't vanish from the floor, I created a lithograph from magic and drew upon it.

Impatience is a taboo.

If I make the slightest mistake, the magic formation won't be completed.

Rather than wasting time debugging, I want to make it work in one go if I can.

When you're in a hurry, that's when you should calm down.

"Ah, damn..."

Or so I was thinking. I ended up making a small mistake.

“Fuu...”

Deep breaths.

Composing myself, I decided to draw it slower than I normally do.

A plain magic formation with a diameter of 2 meters.^[26]

If I draw it hastily, I will make a mistake.

Carefully drawing.

I’ve drawn the teleportation magic formation myself many times over.

I should have the confidence to draw it accurately from the start.

With that in mind I calmed myself, and I carefully finished drawing the teleportation magic formation.

“How is it?”

I pour my magic into it as soon as it was completed.

The entirety of the drawn magic formation is poured with my magic. On which it began emitting a dim light. It’s a success.

“Alright.”

I immediately jumped on it.

2

After my consciousness disappeared for an instant, the basement of the office appeared in front of me. Normal operation of the magic formation was confirmed.

And at the same time, I set out for the door at a quick pace.

Not even abiding by the written message <Those who have business with Orsted and Rudeus. This way.>, I go towards the upper levels.

I come out of the basement, which is adjacent to the teleportation magic formation room, and ascend the stairs to enter the lobby.

“Ah, chairman, welcome ba----”

“Is the president here!?”

To my threatening attitude, the receptionist twitched her ears. While lowering them, with a slightly frightened look, she gave an answer.

“H-he’s here.”

Without hearing her words, I continued towards the president’s office and opened the door before she’s finished.

I passed through the corridor, which was rather short, and opened the door to his office.

I thought of myself as not that rude, but I forgot to knock.

As a result, I saw Orsted without his helmet on.

“Orsted-sama.”

“.....”

Orsted was showing a seemingly awkward-ish face,

But he didn’t hide it and was looking straight at me.

When I stared at it for several seconds, it seemed like he was saying ‘Do you have any problems?’, to which I felt my anger swell up.

I know that this was not the time to get angry.

Still, the words that came out of my mouth were demanding, distracted by my irritation.

“Say, the Supard Race’s illness, were you aware of it?”

“I was aware of it.”

“And a way to cure it?”

“There is none.”

I was told bluntly.

It wasn’t that he didn’t know but there was none.

"If you had told me sooner, I should have been able to at least search for a cure. Why didn't you tell me about it sooner?"

As I said that, Orsted shook his head.

"When you became my subordinate, the Supard race was supposed to have already perished."

"Supposed... are you talking about if it were the usual loops?"

"That's right. And Ruijerd Supardia never even got to meet the surviving Supard race."

They were supposed to have already perished, that's why he didn't say anything.

Ruijerd was normally unrelated to that event.

Since he was reminded of that as a possibility, he didn't say anything, is that how it is?

"But you visited them a few years back, correct?"

"...Yes."

"At that time, you found the Supard race, got in contact with Ruijerd, confirmed that a plague was spreading and yet, you kept quiet?"

"That's right."

"If you had kept quiet then the Supard race would perish and Ruijerd too would disappear. Since I wouldn't know, you gave up, is that what you thought!"

Before I realized it, I was shouting.

I felt like I was betrayed.

"Wrong. I thought it was a waste of time."

"A waste of... time?"

"That's right. Even I tried to save the Supards.

I tried every detoxification magic, gave them medicine that would likely cure them, I tried everything.

But they weren't cured. That plague can't be cured."

So Orsted tried everything that he could think of?

“The ruin of the Supards was a pre-determined fact for me. But you wouldn’t give up if you knew, and would possibly look after them until their ruin.”

“That is... of course.”

But, two years ago... or even before then?

As for the timing, possibly after that one assignment in Shirone Kingdom, unaware of the location of Laplace’s rebirth, I proposed assembling war potential.

At that time, if I had been told about the Supards, I would have been running around thinking of how to tackle the situation.

At least, I wouldn’t have been able to do all the work this past year.

I wouldn’t have been able to call out to Atofe, Randolph, and the rest of the demon kings.

Or perhaps I wouldn’t have even gone to Milis.

It’s also possible that I would be unaware of Gisu being an apostle.

“But, deciding whether it’s a waste of time is... I... then, no... it might be...”

I understand the reason.

But my heart can’t catch up yet.

A good excuse doesn’t come to mind.

This time, Orsted hadn’t forgotten.

He just didn’t say it.

He intentionally schemed so to not let me help the Supard race.

Even though I understand the reason, I cannot, at any cost, forgive him.

Orsted tried to let my benefactor die without any help.

Orsted is like that, so it can’t be helped.

Even though such words come forth normally.

I can’t forgive him.

Not good.

At this rate, I'll think of Orsted as an enemy.

In the midst of such an operation.

With the enemy in Biheiril Kingdom, while everyone's there...

An excuse, I must think of an excuse... an excuse to forgive Orsted.

"...Is Ruijerd a hindrance to your plans?"

Those were the words that came out.

Words that don't go with the flow of conversation.

If this was to be true, then what would I intend to do?

But Orsted said this.

"He's not a hindrance. His daughter, who is going to fight Laplace, is the most important piece."

"His daughter? How is she important?"

"Laplace, who has become a Demon God, is immortal. But he has a weak point. The Supards, with their third eye, are the only ones who can see it and deal the fatal blow."

The only ones who can take advantage of the Demon God's weak point are the Supards.

"Ah."

Then, something suddenly struck me.

The reason why Laplace transferred his curse to the Supards to destroy them.

The reason why Ruijerd, who inferior in fighting strength against Laplace, was able to put a blow on him during the fight of the three demon slaying heroes; to the point where even Perugius expresses his gratitude.

The reason why the Supard race was struck with the plague.

The reason why the plague was slower than expected, but progressed after Ruijerd's arrival.

...The reason I travelled together with Ruijerd to the Central Continent.

“So... it’s Hitogami.”

Strength leaves my body.

Unsteady on my feet, I step back.

Something caught my foot and I sat in a chair.

Putting my weight on the armrest, the chair stopped sliding.

“In the original history, Ruijerd-san survived, correct?”

“Yes.”

“Since he didn’t die on the way, he created a child at the end, correct?”

“Yes.”

“Orsted-sama, you would make use of that child to defeat Laplace, correct?”

“In the beginning, yes. After I learned that Laplace is mortal the moment he’s born, I didn’t use her or anything.”

“Is that so.”

Then, this is also one of Hitogami’s plans.

I see.

And now, this time he coordinated in order to erase me... huh.

Aiming to kill two birds with one stone, a strategy most befitting of Hitogami.

“Orsted-sama. Looks like we’re being manipulated at the hands of Hitogami again.”

“.....”

“The ruin of the Supards, the rampancy of the plague isn’t a natural phenomenon, it’s Hitogami’s work. Looks like it’s convenient for Hitogami as long as Demon God Laplace is alive.”

Rather than the Demon Dragon King, Laplace who became the Demon God is no harm to him.

Since he has forgotten about Hitogami anyway.

On the contrary, he’s destroying the humans.

Unexpectedly, it’s possible that during Laplace’s military campaign, he himself was

being manipulated by Hitogami.

I don't think he could manipulate the dragon race directly, possibly through an apostle.

"Haa..."

I somehow felt refreshed because of this unexpected result.

Orsted didn't talk about the Supards. Well, that's still lurking in the back of my mind though.

Even if I direct my anger towards Orsted here, there won't be any agreement anyway.

It will only delight Hitogami.

He'll just laugh with a broad grin while saying 'Just as planned.'^[27]

"....."

It didn't occur to me before, but I thought up of a good excuse as a result of feeling refreshed.

Unaware of a method to cure the plague, thinking that they were already doomed, Orsted neglected them.

Before, he thought that the ruin of the Supard race was not related to the life and death of Ruijerd.

He may also be thinking of Ruijerd's whereabouts.

But then he thought 'perhaps' and went to see it for himself, only to find Ruijerd there.

Moreover, Ruijerd had gotten infected as well.

He didn't know how to tell me about this, perhaps it might even be better to not tell me. He couldn't help but think that.

"How did you intended to defeat Laplace without the Supards?"

"Using the Godsword is not that absurd of a choice. I can't avoid a hard fight, but you're currently assembling comrades, so we'll somehow pull through."

"But if I recall correctly, that Godsword? Using it takes a lot of mana, doesn't it?"

"You can't substitute your back for your belly."^[28]

On top of that, Orsted intended to take responsibility as a penalty.

“I thought about apologizing to you. But I couldn’t speak, and now it took this shape. It was inexcusable.”

Orsted said that and bowed his head in apology.

“...I understand.”

Orsted isn’t perfect.

These things may also happen.

Let’s just forgive him with a big heart.

“Orsted-sama, I’ll forgive you only for this time.”

“Yes.”

With this, it’s settled.

All~right, let’s face forward.

That is, for now.

“I’m just making sure, but you do need mana to defeat Hitogami, yes?”

“Yes.”

Hitogami prevented the specific place in the Shirone Kingdom where Laplace would revive.

Moreover, he tried to exterminate the Supard race’s last survivor by letting Ruijerd find the Supard village; Ruijerd who is the key to defeating Laplace.

If the entire Supard race is exterminated, then Laplace can be thrown at Orsted.

Orsted, in order to defeat Laplace, will have to use a large amount of mana.

This should be the winning move for Hitogami.

We’ll crush that winning move.

We better not use the Godsword then.

Avoiding fights as much as possible, and minimizing mana consumption as well.

I will assemble the war potential in order to bring down Laplace, making Orsted's mana explode during the fight with Hitogami.

But for that purpose, the Supard race, who are a key point in defeating Laplace, must be kept alive.

"I've heard it already, but there isn't any method to cure them, right?"

".....At the very least, I have no knowledge."

"Although you say that, there are things even you don't know of, eh?"

"That's... right."

Orsted said that and wore his frightening face as usual.

I've grown accustomed to that angry look these days.

This is the face when he's ashamed.

"Then perhaps there just might be a method. Let's struggle for a bit more."

Even Orsted might not have been able to try many methods, because of his curse.

He should've been able to do something, but couldn't because of the current state of his curse.

Then, we should try and do it.

"Got it... I'll head towards the village as well."

Orsted said that and nodded.

3

We came back to the village after three hours.

During that time, I reported about my encounter with Dark King Vita.

I explained Vita's suicide bombing by the Death God's ring, to which Orsted hid his surprised face by instead showing an angry look.

By looking at his face, it seemed he didn't know about Vita's possessing power.

Maybe it was truly a great insurance.

After that, we used the Communication Lithograph and contacted the branches. About the nature of the disease of the Supard race, and arrangements for a doctor. The number of C.L was too high, so it took time contacting every branch by transmission.

The functionality of a carbon copy is necessary.

While I was waiting for the reply to my message, I drew the preliminary sketch of an additional teleportation magic circle.

To set up a teleportation magic circle, you first have to draw two. After confirming the activation, you erase wherever you had written the other down. There is a need to go through this process.

There is no need to charge it now, but when it is used, it has to be charged thoroughly.

The receptionist's job was to stand by at the office; during Orsted's absence, she would answer the mail and guide anyone who comes through the teleportation magic circle. These days, the teleportation magic circles have grown so much that it's becoming difficult to remember which is connected to which. A guide map may be necessary for first time guests rather than me and Orsted.

I should also write down where to move in the forest after getting teleported.

By the way, Sylphy had already left to the Holy Land of Swords with Ghyslaine and Izolte.

During that time, Ariel visited as well and had a talk with Sylphy.

The receptionist and Orsted didn't hear any details, but there wasn't a message left, which meant that she just came to visit for a while.

Because I had that kind of dream, I may become a little self-conscious if I met her. I don't want to blush in front of Sylphy while looking at Ariel.

After that, the establishment of the teleportation magic circle and communication lithograph by everyone else who went to Biheiril Kingdom had been confirmed.

Everything was operating favourably.

It looks like the others are doing well too.

I contacted them as well.

There's no problem with Aisha+Mercenary group.

Zanoba reported about a subjugation force being assembled in the capital city.

Roxy reported about investigating the whereabouts of Ogre God.

I sent them messages regarding the present situation.

At the end, I added <We'll somehow manage over here, so please carry on with your respective duties.>

If I don't, I can expect Eris flying to me.

Then, there were a lot of favourable replies from many countries.

A lot of countries gave the reply <We'll investigate about the disease from past documents.>

Asura Kingdom was ready to send over a doctor by tomorrow.

The only reply that's left is the one from Milis, regarding reinforcements.

Sending in the Temple Knight Party via teleportation magic circle is rather difficult, so it's discouraged.

At any rate, the reply from Milis is late nonetheless.

Anyhow, after doing all of that, I came back to the village.

Together with Orsted.

“.....”

Orsted is currently looking at the fallen Supards one by one.

He probably has better medical knowledge than the average doctor, but he still couldn't understand the cause for the disease, so it's not like he would understand it at this stage.

In the first place, he's not a doctor.

He may have tried to cure some diseases in the previous loops, but never had actually medically treated someone.

If pushed, I'd say it's like a RPG errand event.^[29]

On X day of X month, Rudeus becomes sick.

Rudeus, on X day of X month will die, so we must cure him before then.

At this point, you do not know the cure.

However, before that time comes, we come to know that Sylphiette-chan is experiencing the same disease.

And then Sylphiette-chan has an item used on her by Roxy and the disease is cured.

Orsted uses the item used by Roxy on Rudeus on the next turn.

That kind of feeling.

Well, by reconciling the past cases and the present cases we can look for a cure, that kind of diagnosis is possible, but I'm not a doctor so I wouldn't know.

In short, Orsted isn't too potent regarding affairs that are beyond expectations.

"I still don't know."

After examining everyone, feeling powerless, he shook his head.

"I feel like the symptoms differ a little from the plague I know of..."

"Differ, in what way?"

"The deterioration wasn't supposed to be this rapid."

"...So Vita was paralyzing it after all, I wonder if that's the only thing that came to light."

"If it's Hitogami's way of doing things, then it's possible."

Pretending to suppress the disease, but in reality he didn't do anything.

It's Hitogami's way of doing things.

"Do you have something on your end?"

"...No."

While Orsted was examining the illness, I was listening to the people helping out with the medical treatment how they used a remedy when the disease first struck.

They collected some popular herbs from the Central Continent or vegetables with high nutritional values and cooked them together to make a mash of it and gave it to the affected.

I'm not that knowledgeable about the nutritional value of vegetables or herbs, but I can't think of it as a big mistake.

This is a dead end.

We must change our way of thinking.

For example... right.

Originally the spread of the plague was supposed to be faster.

Which means, Hitogami can control this plague. Then, some kind of poison was brought in from somewhere, so that possibility also exists?

Or perhaps the timing when the Supards were struck with the plague simply deviated because of the teleport incident.

Hitogami can simply use that and be able to...

Ah jeez, just which is it?

The thing that is important right now is finding a cure for this disease, not Hitogami.

The more I think about it, the more I feel my thoughts sinking into a quagmire.

I somehow felt that perhaps, there might not even be a method.

An unpleasant premonition.

But, not yet.

At least, Orsted and I, together with Sándor and Doga, can't come up with anything.

But after this, a doctor is coming.

Let's just concentrate on maintaining the patient's hygiene and providing them with nutrition.

While thinking that, I spent the whole day nursing with Sándor and Doga.

4

The next day, a team of doctors from the Asura Kingdom arrived.

Two doctors and four nurses along with numerous food and medical supplies.

For the time being, it looks like they're all people who don't fear the Supard race. After looking at the patients, they immediately started their medical examination. Whether or not they would disclose info about the teleportation magic circle, I have no choice but to rely on Ariel's charisma.

"We were told in advance about it, but we've never seen these types of symptoms."

Not to mention, we took such a risk and yet the team of doctors were useless.

"We have performed medical examinations of demon race in the domestic, but... if we're to handle a specific demon race under specific circumstances, then there's nothing we can do."

I don't get it at all.

Those are the opinions of the doctors.

At least, it doesn't come under the category of past cases.

That's understood, since the human doctors have seen them and Orsted as well.

"We will continue the examination just in case, but it would be better to not expect too much."

The doctor said that and went back to treat the patients.

But... even so, I see.

I hadn't expected much, but to be told that clearly... My disappointment was greater than I thought.

"Fuu..."

While breathing a sigh, I survey the surroundings.

There, a great number of Supards were arranged in a line.

The ones who are moaning, ones who are dead tired and aren't moving, ones who are sleeping.

The ones who are lying down being nursed, a scene just like a field hospital.

There aren't any deceased yet, but there are many with severe symptoms.

And Ruijerd is also included among those with severe symptoms.

Currently, he has lost consciousness and is in a comatose state.

At times, he suddenly opens his eyes and starts coughing violently. By looking at him, I understand that he doesn't have much time.

I want to cure him somehow.

I think as I sit near Ruijerd.

But, we don't have anything to go with and no breakthrough solution comes to mind.

Only the time is passing by.

With this, even if doctors came from the Milis and Kingdom of the Dragon King, the possibility of finding a cure is low.

If we couldn't find a cure, what should be done next?

Whom should I ask, would that person understand?

What should be done...?

What can I do?

"Rudeus-dono."

When I came to, Sándor was standing in front of me.

"What is it?"

"I apologize within this situation, but what would you like to do about the information broker?"

Information broker... was there someone like that?

Ah, that's right.

In the second city Irel, we requested an information broker to investigate about Gisu.

"How many days are left until the agreed day again?"

"It took one day from the city to road, two days from village to here, you were asleep

for one day, also yesterday, today is about to end, so I guess 4 days. I think we can somehow make it even if we're late by one day."

So it's already time to return.

I mean it wasn't like I slept for too long.

"The teleportation magic circle has been established as well, so the number of days are flexible..."

"That's so. When that time comes, I'll be off."

I don't want to move from this spot, but I must search for Gisu.

I don't have any choice but to go.

"Let me accompany you as well."

".....Are you going to leave only Doga with Orsted behind?"

"Rudeus-dono, going outside alone is dangerous."

I suddenly became suspicious that he has some ulterior motive, but I guess it's only fair.

It's not good if I act alone like this.

"Rudeus-dono, enough about the information broker, what would you like to do about the subjugation force?"

"Subjugation force?"

"The subjugation force being assembled by the country. Did you not hear about it being formed for about a month and coming here to attack in the future?"

"Ah..."

There was also that.

"I think we should take steps ahead of time that way as well, what should we do?"

Certainly, in order to protect the Supard race, we should move quickly and negotiate

with the country.

But that is only if I have the proof that the Supard race is safe; otherwise, it's impossible.

Of course, the Supards have no hostility towards the humans.

Is it still possible to verify that...?

"I find it difficult to say that we should leave it aside, but because of the current situation, because of this plague... At least, until we see whether or not the disease would be cured..."

"Then, should we leave it alone?"

"...That is not a good thing to do, what do you think should be done?"

"After contacting the information broker, go to the royal palace, report about the present condition and the true identity of the demon, I think this much is significant. If we leave it alone saying it's because of the plague then we'll face war, but if we want to help the Supards, then the conclusion should be negotiations. Right?"

"Ah... quite so."

At first, try it.

That's how it is.

In any case, the next move is in 4 days.

There is a heap of things to do, but a clue for a solution can't be seen.

I feel frustrated because of no progress at all.

Don't get tired...

While thinking that, I fell asleep that day.

In Ruijerd's empty home.

5

I woke up as I was being shaken.

There was a beautiful girl in front of me.

Blonde and silky-smooth hair, which were trimmed evenly above her eyebrows.

I don't even need to remember who she is.

“Nii-san, please wake up, Nii-san...!”

It's Norn.

Ah, that dream, is it that illusion again?

This time Norn is my wife, huh?

That would happen if Vita was still alive.

Then I would like the current situation to be a dream as well.

“Vita is so boring.”

“Vita? Are you still half-asleep!? There are a lot of things I want to ask!”

Norn seemed to have gotten angry.

Although recently she doesn't, but the Norn before did nothing but get angry at me.

I've missed this Norn.

“Why has Ruijerd-san become like this, why did you not tell me about it!”

Ruijerd has become like this.

My consciousness was suddenly awoken by those words.

“...!”

I rose my body.

The animal fur covering the floor.

It's Ruijerd's house.

Not a dream.

“Even though I was also so grateful towards Ruijerd-san...! To not tell me about it at such a time, isn't that unreasonable...?”

Tears start flowing down from Norn's eyes.

She didn't wipe them and was powerfully gripping the fur.

I wiped her tears with my finger for no apparent reason.

“Yeah, sorry...”

And at the same time, a question wells up in me.

Why is Norn here?

If I recall correctly, she should have been busy right now.

“Norn, errr, perhaps this is not the right time to ask this, but wasn’t there supposed to be an event at the school?”

“That was already over long ago!”

Huh!

Which means her graduation ceremony is over as well?

That’s impossible...

Well, no, that’s not it.

“...How are you here?”

“Cliff-senpai told me everything and brought me along!”

Norn spoke with a high-pitched and unstrung voice and looked back.

At the entrance of the house.

Two shadows stood against the backdrop of the back-light.

One of them has a slender silhouette.

Blond hair glittering because of the falling sunlight.

The figure of a long-eared woman which was bewitching in her austere build.

And, the other person is a male.

Height lower than the average.

Even his breadth isn’t that wide.

Yet, why is it that he seems to be greatly reliable?

Probably because of that eye-patch covering one of his eyes.



Cliff Grimoire was standing there.

“Sorry for coming late.

Various formalities delayed me... the Milis Religious Organization isn't just a large slab of rock. Please forgive me.”

He had come.

After reading the letter of the communication lithograph, he came at once.

“Now that I've come, it's all right. I took lessons in medical techniques just for these times.”

“But, Cliff-senpai...”

“Yeah, I know. I've already heard everything. But I have this.”

Cliff said that and opened his eye-patch with a pop.

One of the demon eyes he received from Kishirika.

Identification eye.

“Is something possible with one or two demon eyes?”

“Perhaps nothing can be done with just the demon eyes. But you know Rudeus, the one who is holding the demon eye, is me.”

Cliff said that and puffed his chest with pride.

“I'm a genius.”

Perhaps he might have said this only to let Norn have some peace of mind.

Ah, but.

Cliff's figure looks big.

Was there ever a day I saw Cliff's figure this big?

Cliff gets bigger each time I see him.

He's growing while exceeding my imagination.

Hasn't he already grown twice as large as me?

If it's Cliff-senpai.

If it's the Cliff-senpai who somehow removed the curse!

"There is nothing this genius can't do, leave it to me."

He'll somehow do it.

Even though it was supposed to be a groundless remark, I seemed to have thought it naturally.

CHAPTER 7

GENIUS

1

The first place Cliff went to was where the patients were.

“It is the basics of the basics to first examine the patient’s condition.”

With that in mind, Cliff began to examine all of them.

Still, those were the same things that the team of doctors were doing.

Looking over the patients with severe symptoms via the Demon Eye, questioning the patients with moderate symptoms, and comparing his theories with the patients’ charts.

That’s about it.

“To think we would talk to someone of the Milis church... *cough*, *cough*!”

The patients were startled by Cliff’s attire, and there were many among them who clearly showed him hostility as well.

Those who persecuted the Supard race the most violently were the Milis Religious Organization after all.

There were many here who held that memory.

“Answer truthfully, where did you first feel discomfort in your body?”

Not to mention, Cliff didn’t pay them any mind at all.

In a situation where those in need were not cooperating, if it were me, I’d have given up halfway.

As expected of Cliff.

“I see.”

After he had finished examining the patients, Cliff came to an understanding.

But, I had a hunch that perhaps he had still not understood anything.

I felt as if... even if Cliff may call himself a genius, there are things that can't be understood.

In the first place, Cliff may be a priest, he may be a healer, he may be a researcher, but he's not a doctor.

“Next, the attending physician's story.”

Cliff said that and proceeded to consult with the team of doctors.

How did they perform the examination, and what did they intend to do afterwards?

He asked the two Asuran doctors respectively.

“Basically, we intend to use both medicine and detoxification magic simultaneously and monitor for any changes.”

“I see, the doctors of the Asura Kingdom aren't that great, huh?”

One *hmp* from the nose.

The ones who were dumbfounded were both me and the doctors.

To think that Cliff would be so arrogant...

Looks like he was feeling uneasy about the Supard's behavior.

“If that could cure it, it would have already been cured by Rudeus or Orsted.”

“Then Cliff-dono, what would you do?”

“I'll be investigating that now.”

The faces of the doctors warped in anger.

Ah, human doctors, restrain yourselves.

If he fails, you can criticize him as much as you want.

For now, just for now, please restrain yourselves.

But I was a little anxious.

I thought of Cliff as reliable before, but will it be alright?

On the opposite end, Norn, who was nursing Ruijerd, was looking this way with a worried face as well.

“Alright, Rudeus, let’s move somewhere else.”

After parting from the doctors, we left the lecture hall.

2

After leaving the lecture hall, Cliff stopped and looked over his results.

“Now then, I have confirmed one thing. I’ve heard this from the elder, but it looks like there was never a time until now that the Supards were struck with this kind of disease.”

“Until now? How old was the elder again?”

“He’s well over 1000 years, or so I’ve heard.”

The Supard race sure do have a long life span...

“They were struck by this disease after they came to this land. Which means, the source of the disease can be tied with this land.”

“The possibility of Hitogami bringing in a poison?”

“It’s not that. The Demon Eye can detect that sort of thing.”

Cliff said that and started looking at the village’s surroundings.

First were the fields.

He removed his eye-patch and carefully observed the growing vegetables one-by-one. At times he cut one and observed the inside to double-check.

Even now, the juicy tomato was cut into two.

At any rate, if it became known that the Supards are just ordinary farmers, perhaps society will view them differently?

Humans are the kind of beings who feel closer to those who are similar to themselves.

“Next.”

Next we went to the animal slaughterhouse.

There were small traces of blood left, but all the meat was disposed of.

It looks like the villagers were in the middle of carving the animals when they collapsed, but it would have been unsanitary to leave the raw meat as it was. So on Sándor’s order, they were thrown out of the village.

Cliff was diligently examining the cutlery and chopping board with his Identification Eye.

“...I see. Rudeus, where is the meat stored that is processed here?”

“Let me see... this way.”

I don’t know what he ‘saw’, but I led him to the food storehouse.

A structure just below ground, there was dried and salted meat. In addition, large quantities of preserved vegetables were stored inside the building.

Cliff used his Identification Eye there as well and was examining each item one-by-one.

“Did you... find out something?”

“Don’t be impatient, let me examine everything first.”

After leaving the food storehouse, Cliff began looking around the village houses.

He entered the houses, kitchens, and bedrooms. On top of that, he looked through the wardrobes as well.

This is trespassing.

Cliff is brave.

Be that as it may, now that I look around the Supards’ houses, I can understand why Ruijerd’s house is plain.

The other houses were decorated with flowers and drawings... it suggested an energy

and livelihood.

This small house may have been used by the children.

Of course, if there were any residents with moderate symptoms still in the house, then we asked for their permission.

“Milis church...!”

“M-mother...”

“It’s alright. Please calm down. He’s safe.”

After seeing the priest Cliff, some raised their spears in intimidation, but that did not prevent us from gaining their permission.

“Lies! The Milis church, just by looking at us they... ah, aahh...”

“Mother? Mother!?”

Maybe she remembered something, because the mother started to tremble.

Watching her, the daughter hugged the mother who looked as if she was about to cry.

The Supard race and the Milis Religious Organization.

It feels like that there is still a gap that has yet to be bridged between them.

As far as I and Cliff are concerned, the persecutions of the Supards were a thing of the past.

But there are many victims who still remember that in this village.

“So, what kind of things do you eat? What is your cooking process?”

Cliff doesn’t read the mood.

As if he has no consideration for the frightened mother and the child trembling with anxiety, he continued his questioning.

“Answer quickly. We don’t have much time.”

Until they answered.

“Hmm.”

And thus, Cliff finished touring all the houses.

But I didn't think that anything in particular happened.

Just that, he only came into contact with Supard culture.

“Excuse me, Cliff-senpai.”

“Rudeus. There is no need to be anxious about it, they weren't frightened by me. It was just the clothes that I'm wearing that scared them. And if I cure the disease while wearing these clothes, that would change their way of thinking as well. Right?”

Would it be that simple?

Or so I think, I hope that it's possible for the daughter to reconsider that.

I hope it's that simple.

“Now then, on to the next one.”

While saying that, Cliff started looking around various areas of the village.

The fountain, the water well, the warehouse that lied in the center of the village. On top of that, he even looked around the garbage dump.

“...”

Cliff was carefully examining each of them.

His expression was serious.

Seriously rummaging through the contents of the dump while pushing through the rotten meat.

Just what was reflecting in that Identification Eyes of his?

The only thing I could do was to answer Cliff's questions.

And when he finished examining the entire village, it was completely dark.

We came back to the infirmary.

“Well then, Cliff-senpai, how about it?”

“I’ve determined a few things.”

“Ooh.”

“Lize, bring in my medicine box!”

When Cliff shouted inside the infirmary, Elinalize, who was nursing, quickly got up and began running.

She grabbed the large backpack which was at the corner of the infirmary, and came running this way.

“Here you go!”

“Thank you, Lize.”

Elinalize looks delighted.

Probably because she saw Cliff after a long time.

Did they entrust the kid to my house?

“Listen well, Rudeus. I know how the disease works.”

“Hoh.”

“Though I say that, I’m no doctor, so I wouldn’t be so sure...

For now, the fact that the Supards were struck by this disease after coming to this land is confirmed.

That’s why I tried looking at the vegetables grown in this land with the Identification Eye.”

“Ooh, and then!?”

“I didn’t see any abnormalities.”

Hahh...?

“It didn’t look like some kind of pathogen was lurking in the land or the water.”

“So that kind of thing can be found out with the Identification Eye?”

“Yeah, you can at least have confidence in the food.”

It's the Kishirika-approved demon eye, can it be trusted regarding food?

Could there be someone who got ill after eating?

“But, everything was indicating one thing, <A delicious tomato having a very high concentration of mana> ”

“It's not just the vegetables. The land, as well as the water, are holding a very high concentration of mana.”

“ ... ”

“There are cases even in Milis of food having high concentration of mana, but it's quite rare. Neither the land nor water have this much.”

Mana density, is it?

If I recall correctly, Aisha said it too.

That if we prepare the rice in the soil made by me, it will grow well.

That's probably because the soil had a high mana density.

“And?”

“Yeah. And I would like to know if farming was popular in the Demon Continent.”

“I am unaware of the Supard lifestyle in the Demon Continent, but there were almost no vegetables or anything like that there. The variety was also limited and the staple food there was just meat.”

“I see, as I thought.”

Cliff raised his finger with a flick and started speaking about his hypothesis.

“Possibly, growing crops in a soil with high mana density resulted in crops having high mana density.”

“Not to mention that there are a variety of soils. The soil in the Demon Continent is rich in mana, but due to the lack of fertility, only a few crops can be grown there.”

“The Great Forest as well, this kind of disease can't be found there, so that place is

probably special.

In this place, the soil and water is infused with too much mana.

On top of that, this soil is fertile and rich in nutrients.

As a result, crops grown here end up having a high concentration of mana.

Perhaps it is related to why there's only one kind of monster here, but let's leave that case for later."

"Although, by all rights, consuming mana-enriched crops isn't that big of a problem.

Since we keep on living without paying much attention to it.

If there was any correlation, it wouldn't be strange to see many similar cases before now.

What I'm trying to say is, in reality, we can eject any mana that we consume.

Even for the Supards, that fact should remain unchanged."

"But what happens if we keep on consuming mana?

Not for 10 years or 20 years.

I'm talking about what would happen if we keep on absorbing high density mana for 100-200 years..."

"Despite the plague, there are many adults who are infected, but many children who are unaffected."

Then, after explaining this much, Cliff turned to face me.

Certainly, there are a lot of children who are unaffected by the plague.

It's hard to figure out how many of the Supards are of old age, but it's not a problem regarding immunity, is that what he's saying?

"And thus, we should be familiar with it.

A case where the mana that was taken in couldn't be ejected from the body."

Couldn't be ejected...?

Ah, it's about Nanahoshi!

"Then, is it Drain syndrome?"

I was suddenly struck by something.

The initial symptoms were cold, and you fall at the same time you succumb to it.

But, if that was it then Orsted would've...

No, Drain syndrome is an old disease.

Perhaps Orsted didn't even know its name, much less a method to cure it.

Yeah.

If there wasn't anyone suffering from it in one of the loops, then even Orsted wouldn't know about it.

There's also the fact that it's difficult to ask Kishirika about it, just like how it was for me.

"But there are contradictions as well. It shouldn't have been that long since Ruijerd-san came to this village."

"Certainly... but he was possessed by the real Dark King Vita, right?"

Perhaps it's because of that.

Anyhow, it should be worth trying it out, right?"

Cliff said that and took out a box from the bag.

There were a variety of papers and materials tightly packed inside of it.

Cliff took something out.

It was dried up Sokasu grass.

"I thought that this would happen, so I borrowed a little."

His preparation is perfect.

"Let's use this as well."

Cliff took out a red fruit from the bottom of the bag.

"That is?"

"The thing that will become the source of poison. It will make the mana inside the

body malfunction.”

“Poison... is it?”

“Ah. Although it’s called a poison, it only works to the point of rendering a magician unable to use magic if drank.”

Would it be alright to drink that?

“According to the Identification Eye, this was taken along with the Sokasu tea since ancient times.

<It improves the effects of the Sokasu tea, and can be used as tea cakes, though it will also make you slightly drunk>, or so I’m reading.”

Which means it isn’t a poison, according to Kishirika’s judgement.

“The only problem is... if the Supards drink this right now, I don’t know what will happen.”

“...”

“In my opinion, this can cure it. But it may also have a reverse effect.”

It’s probably fine.

Or so he thinks, but it may aggravate the disease and result in death.

There is no guarantee.

“Well, it’s no use thinking. Let’s just try it.”

Cliff said that after a moment of hesitation.

And then, while making up his mind, he turned to the infirmary and shouted.

“I want to try a medicine in regards to your sickness!

Is there anyone who wants to drink it?”

“Ah, wai-, Cliff-senpai!”

After Cliff’s words, the inside of the infirmary became still as death.

Looking at Cliff, looking at Cliff's clothes, their face grew pale.

There were also those who simply looked away.

"Just one is fine! There's no guarantee that you'll be cured after drinking it!"

In order to see the effects, there is no need to make everyone drink it.

Just one is fine.

But there's no one who would answer.

"We can't trust the Millis church..."

Someone said.

When I looked, it was one of the males present during the meeting with the chieftains.

Looks like it'll be impossible with the leader.

But what to do now?

We can't forcefully make them drink it...

"I'll drink..."

There was one who was willing to try it.

He rose up unsteadily, and was looking at us with sharp eyes.

The one who was supporting his body was Norn.

"Ruijerd-san, so you woke up?"

"Ah, yes. Nii-san, he just woke up..."

The one who answered my question was Norn.

However, as if to drown out her voice, the surrounding voices raised in volume.

"Ruijerd, are you going to believe someone from the Milis church?"

"That's right! Who were the ones who prosecuted us the most after the war, you of all

people should know that as well!"

They were mainly remarks by the youngsters of the Supard race.

On top of that, as if being enticed by their remarks, the team of doctors interjected as well.

"I have never heard of someone who would make someone forcefully drink something without any reason!"

"Do you even know how to medically treat someone!?"

The anxiety of the doctors spread to the surroundings.

Even the Supards, who were silent up till now, started to object.

An incomprehensible medicine.

Which was brought by a person wearing the Milis Church's clothes, no less.

People who spoke of uneasiness, people who exposed their anger.

Mayhem spread in the infirmary.

"Do you want to be annihilated!?"

With Ruijerd's roar, silence was again brought about in the infirmary.

The complaining people went silent with blue faces.

Ruijerd who declared that, was coughing violently and was being caressed on his back by Norn.

"Rudeus brought this man along. I believe in Rudeus. If you have any complaints, say them after I die..."

No one would rebut those calm words.

It was a scene which showed just how influential the name Ruijerd Supardia is in this village.

"Alright then, Ruijerd-san. I'll have you drink the medicine. I'll say this in advance, but there is a possibility that it may worsen and you will die."

"Fine, I've lived long enough. Even if I die, I'll have no regrets."

No, but I'll feel regretful.

I'm doing all of this for the Supard race, or rather, for Ruijerd's sake.

Look, even Norn has that 'Huh?' face. We both have the same opinion.

"If Ruijerd is going to drink it, then I'll drink too."

One male raised his hand from the quietness.

A young man who has comparatively less severe symptoms.

To be honest, he may be an old man instead of a youngster.

"I was saved by Ruijerd in the Demon Continent. I would have no future if I had died back then, so there's nothing to be afraid of."

Reacting to those words, people started saying "Me too" and raised their hands as well. Many, many did.

"We can't trust in the Milis church. But Ruijerd is our hero. We'll abide by what this hero has decided."

Finally, the chieftain raised his hand as well.

And then he said with a calm tone.

"People of the Human race, I apologize about our attitude, about our words towards you. Please save this village."

"Yes, please leave it to us."

In response to those last words, Cliff strongly nodded.

4

After drinking the Sokasu tea with red fruit, Ruijerd and the rest fell asleep.

At the very least, their condition didn't suddenly worsen, and they didn't die immediately after drinking it.

The results will be clear tomorrow.

I don't think that everything would be settled with just the Sokasu tea.

But I hope for even a bit of improvement.

Despite thinking that, today was already over, so I decided to sleep.

I'll be staying at Ruijerd's house again.

For some reason, my feet naturally headed for that place.

We didn't get permission from Ruijerd, but we freeloaded anyway.

“...”

Norn wanted to stay beside Ruijerd, but there was nothing she could do since he was asleep, so she came with me to the house.

Currently, Norn and I are sitting beside the sunken fireplace.

The crackling sound of the burning firewood could be heard.

The boiling sound of the stew in the pot on top of the fireplace as well.

As for the total number of sounds, there were only two.

Within the pot, there were vegetables and meat brought in by the team of doctors.

Despite Cliff telling me that it's probably fine, I still can't eat the village's food without thinking that it might have been the cause of the plague.

“Nii-san, Ruijerd-san will get cured, right?”

Norn muttered.

She's anxious.

Even I am.

“Yeah, he'll get cured.”

“Really?”

“As far as I know, whenever Cliff declared that he would do something, he always accomplished it. That's why, tomorrow may be impossible, but someday he'll get cured.”

“Will Ruijerd-san even live until then...?”

“It’s alright. You might’ve heard about it, but Ruijerd was surrounded by over 1000 soldiers during Laplace’s military campaign and came back alive. He won’t be dying in a place like this.”

I have no choice but to say this now.

“I’m anxious...”

Norn said that and folded her legs to hide her face.

It’s a gloomy atmosphere.

There’s still some time left before the stew is cooked.

It’s not that I have to cheer her up, but there’s no meaning in feeling sad as well.

We’re going to just eat and then sleep for today.

I hope to at least make the food go down so that we could sleep soundly.

“Oh right, Norn, is school going well?”

Hearing that, Norn raised half her head.

“...I’ve already graduated from school.”

“That, how should I say this... well, sorry for not coming to see you.”

So she did graduate.

Why didn’t she tell anyone?

But, now that I think about it... I see, during the time of Sylphy’s delivery... so it was already time for graduation, huh?

Even though it would’ve been fine to tell Roxy and the others...

No, well, she would’ve only gotten embarrassed if she had said it that time.

“Not really, it’s fine that you didn’t come to see.”

No, but, it was Norn’s graduation...

To miss such an important event is...

I wonder what Paul in heaven would say...

“It’s not like I was the top student or anything...”

“But you were the student council president, you did give a speech or two, right?”

“Of course, we did a congratulatory speech. But I fumbled midway, and I almost fell down the stairs, it was terrible.”

I can picture it.

The figure of a person fumbling in the middle of a speech, losing her footing while descending the stairs but somehow not falling down.

I wish I could have seen it.

Norn has a somewhat ashamed face, but I would’ve taken a video and had it placed on my grave.

“Which reminds me, before graduation you were talking about doing some kind of event, right? What did you do at the end?”

“...Did you not duel with various people during Cliff-senpai’s graduation? We just imitated that and held a fighting arts tournament.”

“Fighting arts tournament! That sounds interesting. But wasn’t that dangerous?”

“The danger was suppressed as much as possible. The rules were to not kill anyone, the school lent out many Saint-class healing magic formations, healers were on standby as well, and the teachers prepared many healing scrolls too. On top of that, the participants were made to write an oath. That’s why there were some injuries, but 0 deaths.”

That’s amazing.

If it’s to the level of graduates from Magic University, then there should be many who can mutually kill each other with high powered magic.

Within such a tournament, there were 0 deaths.

It might be because of luck, but it’s mostly because of the well-prepared system.

“I wanted to see it too.”

“I think it would be like some kind of sport in your eyes.”

“But a tournament literally makes your heart pound.”

During my previous life as a shut-in, I participated in several online game tournaments.

Unfortunately, I didn't have any noteworthy accomplishments.

But just watching such a scene is enough.

“So did they prepare any kind of championship trophy?”

“...We did.”

She said that and pouted.

“Everyone in the student council contributed money. An honor certificate, flowers, and a magic staff were prepared.”

An honor certificate, flowers, and a magic staff.

Well, that's how it is.

I suppose they didn't have much of a budget, so it's possible it was a strenuous effort.

“And yet, the moment Rimy saw a large number of male participants, she proposed:
<The winner will get a hot kiss as a present from President Norn~> ”

“Eeh!”

“They got so excited, both the people participating and those who were not.”

What the hell? A tournament where you'll receive Norn's kiss?!

That's not good at all.

This is beyond evil, inexcusable!

If I had been there, I would've wrecked them while wearing a mask...

No, wrecking them would be unwise.

“Then... did you?”

“...On the cheek.”

On the cheek, is it?

I wonder if it's safe.

But Norn has buried her bright red face in her knees and is moaning with a 'Uuuu'.

Is it an out for Norn standards?

After a short while, she fell sideways like a book.

"The one who won said he will never forget it... but I already want to forget about him."

"I see, what's that guy called? If possible tell me about his address and phone number, and maybe some kind, mysterious masked magician will erase him and his memories from this world."

"Phone?"

"Nothing."

Norn raised her body and repositioned herself on the floor.

Not sitting while holding her knees, but sitting with her legs in a 'W' pose.^[30]

"Anyway, looks like the tournament was a huge success."

"I wonder. As for me, I was thinking whether I did a good job or not, but there were a lot of difficult things as well. I feel like I just kept reflecting."

"You call that a huge success. I'm glad."

"...Yes."

Norn blushed a little and then nodded.

She no longer has a gloomy face.

"Well then, the potatoes are almost cooked. Do you want to eat as well?"

"Rub a dub dub thanks for the grub."

I pour the potato stew and meat in a bowl and give it to Norn.

Norn was staring at the contents, but after a short while she muttered a few words.

“Nii-san.”

“Hmm?”

“Thank you very much.”

“Hm.”

I served myself as well.

I hadn't eaten anything the whole day,

I was hungry to the point of death.

“But this isn't delicious.”

Well sorry 'bout that.

5

The next day.

Along with Norn, I went out towards the infirmary as the sun rose.

“.....”

Ruijerd's well-being was the only thing on our mind.

For now, we were able to get a good night's sleep thanks to the unappetizing potato stew.

Even if it served no purpose, it should've guaranteed the stamina for nursing.

While resolving myself to some extent, I opened the door to the infirmary.

“!”

The scene that leaped at us was clattering.

The inside of the infirmary, which was like the wake until yesterday, was overflowing with liveliness.

No, liveliness would be a bit too much.

It doesn't have that much power.

But, at least everyone's faces look better in comparison to yesterday.

"Rudeus-dono!"

The doctors came running towards me after looking at my figure.

"Please take a look. The medicine prepared by Cliff-dono made everyone...!"

Did it work?

Did the Sokasu tea work?

"Last night, the ones who drank that medicinal water suddenly experienced bowel movements. When taken by the nurse to the toilet, everyone started discharging light-blue diarrhea. A short while after that, they all rapidly started to get healthier.

The ones who were seriously ill haven't recovered yet, but if given a bit longer, they will definitely recover!"

To think that I would hear such a fortunate thing so early in the morning...

But wait, excreted light-blue diarrhea?

"We're currently adjusting the medicinal water and giving it to everyone.

Well~, it was absurd of us to doubt him.

I can definitely say with confidence that Cliff Grimoire is the person who even smashed the curse!

Oops, we can't be going around doing this now.

We still have our duties to do, pardon us!"

The doctor said all that to us in one go and hurried back to the patients.

Light-blue diarrhea.

Something's bothering me.

What might it be? Light-blue, light-blue...

"Rudeus."

When I came to, a huge silhouette was in front of me.

A male with white clothes and black helmet.

“Ah, Orsted-sama.”

“Did you see the stool?”

“...No, not yet.”

While saying that Orsted leaned a little.

Close to my ears, he whispered.

“Those were the remaining fissions of Dark King Vita.”

Dark King Vita.

The moment I heard those words, my mind suddenly crossed some strange ideas.

Perhaps.

If only perhaps.

That the plague wasn't the Drain syndrome?

Dark King Vita.

That king who distributed his fissions within the village.

And was keeping the progression of the plague in check...

But, if only perhaps, what if that Vita had already cured the plague?

Just to threaten, by using his fissions, he was making the physical condition of the villagers worse, and after his death, while mustering his last power, he gave a job to his fissions...

And then, the fissions that were hidden somewhere in the intestines were disintegrated by the red fruit and Sokasu tea and were washed away...

Which means?

No, this is mere speculation.

“Just like you said, we struggled for a bit more.”

“...Right?”

Well, it's fine.

For now, we have crossed the difficult part.

We've completely defeated Dark King Vita.

Let's go with that thinking.

“Where is Cliff-senpai?”

“He was looking after the conditions of the patients, but fell asleep shortly after dawn. He's currently in a nearby vacant house with Elinalize Dragonroad.”

I see.

He worked hard.

Let him sleep.

Since he'll start preparation for a second child with Elinalize right away after he wakes up.

“Just now, Ruijerd Supardia woke up as well.”

“Is it true!?”

“Yeah, go and see him.”

“Pardon me!”

I bowed and headed inside the infirmary.

Directly towards the place where Ruijerd was sleeping last night.

Ruijerd was there.

Sitting up on the bed, with a good complexion, he was having a meal.

“Ruijerd-san!”

The moment we arrived at Ruijerd's place, Norn immediately ran to him and hugged

him by his belly.

"I'm glad... I'm so glad..."

Norn started crying.

It's the crybaby Norn.

With a worried face, Ruijerd wiped his mouth, set the bowl of food aside, and caressed Norn's head.

I didn't say anything for a while and watched the scene.

For some reason, I started to feel like crying as well.

"...Rudeus."

After a while, Ruijerd raised his face.

"Ruijerd-san... are you alright now?"

"Yeah, I can't wave my spear yet, but there's no problem."

I see.

I'm glad... I'm so glad...

I'm not mimicking Norn, it's the only feeling that's coming out of me.

"I've become indebted to you again."

"...Let's not say such things to each other. Not to mention, you haven't completely recovered yet. Please don't be negligent."

"Yeah."

As I started talking with Ruijerd, Norn moved out of the way while grumbling.

And started sobbing convulsively while hiding her face with her hands.

"However, let me say this first, Rudeus."

"What is it?"

Within that serious face, small amounts of uneasiness could be felt.

Is there still something left?

Will he tell me a shocking truth right now, with this timing?

As I thought that and put myself on guard, Ruijerd said this.

“After my complete recovery, I’ll become your strength.”

“.....”

I wonder what this feeling that is boiling up from my chest is.

Ruijerd became my comrade again.

Is it the sense of exaltation in regards to that truth?

I’m happy.

Just happy.

“Yes, I’ll be in your care.”

I swallow something that was welling from inside my throat,
while stopping the inner corner of my eye from getting hotter,
I lent a hand towards him.

“It is I who should say that, let’s get along well.”

Ruijerd’s hand was warm and strong.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 1

Q. Why did the doctor say 'smashed the curse'?

A. Maybe he noticed it by some chance. Like, he may have heard from someone about his origins from the Magic University in the Asura Kingdom.

Q. Who was Rimy again?

A. One of the pupils of the Magic University and a member of the student council. Of course, she hasn't even showed up yet.

Q. When Cliff said 'Just one is fine', what happened after that?

A. "I ain't drinking that!"

"Do you want to be annihilated! I'm going to drink it!"

"If Ruijerd is going to drink it then me too!"

"...Then, me too!"

"Please, by all means."

With such a course of events, they drank it.

Q. Cliff was able to check Elinalize's pregnancy with the Identification Eye but couldn't check for Vita's fissions that were inside the body?

A. Looks like he couldn't.

Q. In the end, it's still not clear what cured the disease.

A. Cliff's prescription cured the plague and exterminated Vita's fissions. Though the cause of it and how they completely recovered was not known, the Supard race got healthy! With this we can rest for now! We did it!

That's everything from Rudeus point of view. Perhaps someone would roughly explain it in the second half of this volume or perhaps they won't.

CHAPTER 8

THE CAPITAL

1

A silent house.

On the sunken hearth in the centre of the house, a pot was shaking.

Sitting in front of that was a man with green hair.

It was Ruijerd.

I was sitting across from him, with the hearth in front of me.

“...”

“.....”

There was no conversation.

Only silence remained between Ruijerd and I.

There was nothing to say.

No, it would be better to say that there wasn't any chance to speak.

All of my focus was directed entirely on what's in front of me right now.

Failure is not allowed.

My gaze pointed directly in front, I waited for the moment to come.

“!”

And so, that time came.

Carefully stretching out my hand... I put out the pot's fire.

But, it's not over yet.

I must not rush.

And like that, for almost 10 minutes, I stopped moving.

After 10 minutes had passed, I finally raised my voice.

“Ruijerd-san, are you ready?”

“Yes, I do not mind.”

As I received those words, I reached out to what was beside me.

It was completely white, with a gritty surface, and an appearance close to that of an egg.

Not like, it was a chicken egg.

“...”

Breaking the egg, and taking out a bowl, I scrambled the egg with chopsticks.

I was completing that series of events as if it was natural.

As if I had known it from the moment I was born.

The soul of a child of three is the same at a hundred.

Once you learn how to ride a bike, no matter how many years pass, you never forget.
It's the same as that.

No, I may not have even learned how to do this.

From the moment I was born, I may have had this information.

In other words, it was instinct.

The egg was now being beaten.

I repeated the action once more.

There were two eggs scrambled in the bowl.

I left that as it is and reached out towards the lid.

“...Alright.”

Taking off the lid and looking at the inside, I nodded.

The steaming white rice was making a simmering noise.

The uninterrupted steaminess of the cooked rice was spreading throughout the room.

The inside of my mouth began to water, and I unintentionally gulped.

I was overwhelmed by the urge to rake the rice into my mouth, but I endured it and stirred the rice mixture.

I took the bowls.

And dished out the freshly cooked rice.

A bowlful of it.

Not too much but not too little.

Therefore with the chopsticks, I opened a hole in the centre of the rice.

Into that hole, I poured in the eggs I had scrambled earlier.

And stained the white rice with a gleaming gold.

But that is not all.

From here on out.

This moment that I've been waiting for, from the instant I came to this world until now, has been my greatest wish.

I took the small bottle next to me.

While slowly squeezing itself out from that small spout, it poured onto the golden rice.

What came from that spout was a black liquid.

A pitch black liquid that looked like poison at first glance.

It was soy sauce.

I poured it only once.

Two was also fine, but for now, only once.

With just that, the top of the golden rice was now stained black.

Just like the tint of a pudding, it caused my stomach to growl.

Stay calm, I'll be able to eat it soon.

It was for this purpose that I went through 4 trials.

Also, from here on out, it will be possible to eat this whenever I want.

However, the first time is a very important moment that must be cherished.

“...Here you go.”

“Yes.”

I pass it to Ruijerd.

After taking the bowl, he waited for me.

I immediately repeated the process and made another.

“And so, thanks for the food, let’s eat.”

Hands together, we bowed.

Bowl to the left, chopsticks to the right.

I stretched my mouth wide for the first bite.

“—Mmm! —HmMmm!!”

This is it.

This taste.

It’s perfect.

It is not the best, but this is it.

This is the taste I have been searching for for so long.

“*bite*... *chew*..... *glomp*...!”

One bite, two bites, three bites.

Silently, eating, chewing and swallowing; occasionally coughing as I choked up on some rice.

I did nothing but continue to eat.

“...That was such a feast!”

Before I realized it, my bowl was empty.

My happiness time was over in an instant.

I was satisfied after eating, but I also felt as if something was missing.

But before I made seconds, I looked at the man in front of me.

Ruijerd was eating in silence.

He's not usually a man who speaks during meals, but today he seemed more quiet than usual.

No, today it is only Ruijerd and I.

Because I was not talking, there was no conversation.

Although his eating pace is not all that fast.

It looks like he still hadn't eaten even half of his portion.

No, I was simply too fast.

"Um, Nii-san."

"Waah!"

As I thought that, Norn was sitting right beside us before I realized it.

"Norn... When did you..."

"When? You ask... I just got here... I tried calling you once when you were eating."

So she arrived while I was eating.

"What are you eating?"

"Something good. Do you want some too?"

"...Then, I guess I will."

Norn nodded as she glanced at Ruijerd.

I immediately served rice in a bowl,

Beat the egg, scrambled it, and added soy sauce.

The entire process took 10 seconds, but the taste isn't the tiniest bit different.

It is the technique of a craftsman.

“Eat as much as you want.”

“What’s this...?”

“It’s my comfort food.”

“...Thanks for the food.”

Norn took the bowl I handed her and began eating slowly.

“...”

I waited.

I waited while they ate.

I sat and waited.

You’re still not done? Hurry up.

I want to hear your opinions. Although there’s no need to, but I still want to know.

“...”

And while my thoughts raced, Ruijerd had finished eating.

“So this is what you were talking about on the journey?”

“Yes. What do you think?”

“Delicious.”

His impression was a single word.

But I was satisfied.

My companion and I were finally able to eat what I had been searching for long ago on that nostalgic journey.

I was satisfied.

It’s only a pity that Eris wasn’t here.

“...Thank you for the meal.”

Thus Norn also finished eating.

And she had only just started, that was quite fast.

“What do you think Norn? This is what I was talking about at home.”

“...It was quite delicious. It doesn't taste like anything I've had before... is it because of this seasoning?”

“Yeah. It's soy sauce, a versatile seasoning. It's delicious with anything you put it on.”

“Hmmm...”

Norn seemed to be in great admiration.

I'll make it at home and let you eat it.

Today is an anniversary.

The anniversary of the first egg mix rice has been tasted in this world.

“It's just that eating a raw egg will upset your stomach, so you need to use detoxification magic.”

“If detoxification is needed, then don't make someone recovering from a disease eat it!”

I made her angry on the anniversary.

2

Two days later.

The Supard race was steadily making its way towards complete recovery.

Although there were some who were still bedridden, those with moderate symptoms were beginning to go back to their normal lives.

I also took it upon myself to build a darkroom to grow the Sokasu herb in the corner of the village.

We still don't know whether the cause of the plague was the high mana density soil or Dark King Vita.

But if we ever encounter the same symptoms, if we have this, then the result will differ greatly.

Although if the cause was Dark King Vita, then the same disease shouldn't appear again.

If it was the soil, then the Supard race would need to change their residence.

They would have to move somewhere less deep in the forest, or at the very least purchase vegetables from the neighboring village.

Either would work.

In any case, it was still necessary to have the country's approval.

I would like to have them move to the Asura Kingdom, but there was a lot of unease and opposition from the Supard race.

It seems they dislike leaving behind a place they have lived in for so long.

On top of that, the Milis Church's influence in the Asura Kingdom is quite large.

Cliff was rather relaxed when it came to the Supard race, but the Milis Church's deep rooted fear was most likely still commonplace.

And thus, to negotiate with the Biheiril Kingdom, I decided to head towards the capital.

There were two goals.

Have the Supard race accepted.

And on top of that, have the subjugation force disbanded.

The Supard race, overall, is quite frank, and due to their continued persecution, they are quite exclusive, but they are good people.

The Biheiril Kingdom might show disapproval at first, but there are plenty of ways to get them to change their mind.

The quickest of those is to get them to visit this village.

If they actually come and see the somewhat clumsy people and the smiling children, they will know that this is a safe place... Is what I would want them to think, but I wonder.

The Biheiril Kingdom might see the children and think, "There are even children being born here, hurry and dispose of them!"

Just like cockroaches.

But if that happens, I would recommend that the Supard race emigrate.

If they live in the Asura Kingdom, I'll owe Ariel another favor... but if it came to that, I'll just pay it with my body.

Although I think it will be fine.

The Supard children are somewhat cute to look at.

To see such children innocently playing with a leather ball, I would like to think that Biheiril Kingdom is filled with nothing but people that would smile at the sight.

"And so, I'll be heading for the capital."

"Yeah."

"Cliff will be seeing the disease's progress, and Elinalize will be accompanying him as well. Norn will continue to nurse Ruijerd. What about you, Orsted-sama?"

"I'll stay here. Cliff Grimoire is currently investigating the plague. We may be able to cure it next time."

As Orsted said that, he returned the ball that came flying at him with a *bong* sound.

It was in a flash. I couldn't even see the movement of his hand.

But the ball gently flew in an arch and landed right in the child's hand.

"With the negotiations, it will not be necessary for me to go."

"Of course. No matter how much the helmet seals your curse..."

With another *bong* the ball was hit back.

"It's not as if the curse has completely disappeared."

"Yeah."

The ball was returned again.

"But if it comes to it, I'll be relying on your appearance. Even with the curse, it's possible that if they see you, they will be in awe."

“That is fine.”

Another *bong*.

“Should I make them stop?”

No matter which direction he sent the ball flying, the Supard children continued to send the ball in Orsted’s direction.

The look in their eyes, rather than hostility, was curiosity.

‘Because there’s some weird guy here, let’s try throwing the ball at him’ kind of thing.

If it weren’t for the helmet, they might not be throwing the ball, but rocks.

But because the ball keeps landing comfortably in their hand, it’s somewhat fun.

“There is no problem. This level doesn’t even count as an attack.”

“Ah, is that so?”

I wonder if Orsted was having fun.

I couldn’t see his expression under the helmet, but he wasn’t in a bad mood.

“Is it fun?”

“...It isn’t bad.”

It’s fine if it’s not bad.

“Then I’ll be taking my leave.”

“Yeah.”

As Orsted said that, I left the area.

Sándor and Doga were waiting for me by the teleportation magic circle.

While I will go to the capital, Sándor will go to the second city to meet with the informant.

The destinations were different, but we decided that splitting up would be good for efficiency’s sake.

I was taking Doga as an escort.

I feel like he won't be of much help, but it's better than not having him.

"Whoops."

On the way I nearly ran into Ruijerd.

While leaning on Norn's shoulder, he was walking dizzily.

"Ruijerd-san, is it ok to walk?"

"Just a little."

Although Ruijerd said that, when I saw Norn's stern face, I knew that wasn't the case.

"I will be leaving for a bit to negotiate with the Biheiril Kingdom. I may bring along the country's soldiers with me, so if that happens, please try to welcome them to the best of your ability."

"I understand. I'll tell the Chieftain."

As Ruijerd said that, I saw Orsted.

Pressed against a wall, continuously having the ball thrown at him by the children.

It looked like bullying at first glance, but for some reason it was a pleasant sight.

Each time Orsted accurately returned the ball, the children laughed.

"He's different from how he looks, eh?"

"Right?"

While saying that with a grin, I left.

3

I headed to the Biheiril Kingdom via the magic formation.

Of course I checked the communication lithograph when I stopped at the office.

Zanoba's group had found no particular problem.

Aisha + Mercenaries also had no problem.

Sylphy's group still had not made contact. Considering the distance of the teleportation magic formation, it's quite far, so it can't be helped.

From Roxy's group, there was little movement.

It seems that when they looked into Ogre Island, the Ogre God had already left.

We do not know the location of the Ogre God.

But the people of Ogre Island were preparing for a battle, was the kind of information that seems to be flowing around.

Also, Eris was heading here.

She wanted to meet Ruijerd.

Even so. I wished she would hold on a little longer.

I also dispatched the information that the Supard race was recovering.

I felt like I've made a big racket about an incident that was resolved in just a few days, but I guess it can't be helped.

After finishing all that, I once again equipped the disguise ring and hopped into the teleportation magic circle that connected to Biheiril Kingdom's capital.

4

Zanoba had set up the teleportation circle in an abandoned village inside the forest about half a day away from the capital.

"Master, I have been waiting."

At the moment I arrived, Zanoba lowered his head.

Julie and Ginger were also with him.

"Were you waiting for me?"

"Yes. From the moment I heard you were coming."

What a loyal guy.

“But this works out great. Here, there are no eavesdroppers to worry about, and I can give my report.”

“I see. Then let’s hear it.”

“Although I say that, it’s nothing major.”

And with that preface, Zanoba told me of all his movements until now.

First, after finding an inn, he set up the teleportation magic circle in this forest.

After that was information collection in the capital.

It was then he came across the information that <The country is gathering a subjugation force>.

That was when he gave his first report on the communication lithograph. The part I read.

After that, he gained information that the North God would be participating in the subjugation force.

While still looking for information on Gisu, they were also looking for the North God.

That was the current state of situation.

“So basically, we don’t know anything yet?”

“I am very sorry. When I had heard that North God Kalman the Third stood out, I thought we could find him quickly, but it was considerably...”

“No, there is no need to apologize.”

We have only just entered the Biheiril Kingdom, so we haven’t been here for that long.

Enter the city, set up the magic circle, begin actions.

It was achieved in almost seven days.

To obtain these results, that’s rather fast.

“Let’s work hard from here on out.”

“Yes.”

The North God, huh?

If he really is participating in the subjugation force, I must convince them under any circumstances.

But not being able to find someone that stands out makes me think someone was moving in the shadows.

Maybe the North God has already become Gisu's companion.

Maybe Gisu, after hearing that Vita has been defeated and their plan had failed, saw how disadvantaged he was and decided to withdraw with the North God.

There was also the possibility that Vita was a diversion; he was defeated quite easily.

It's also possible that the information on Vita hadn't reached Gisu yet, but that might be a bit too optimistic.

If that's the case, I was at least able to make Ruijerd a comrade.

Just that makes this visit to the Biheiril Kingdom worth something.

"Then Master, shall we go? I will guide you to the capital."

"Yeah, please."

In any case, what I must do hasn't changed yet.

While thinking that, I headed to the Biheiril Capital.

5

The capital of the Biheiril Kingdom was somehow similar to Shirone Kingdom.

Being on the central continent, it had the atmosphere of a small to medium size state.

This country, rich in wood, mostly used timber for building materials.

There were also many trees in the city.

Maybe because of that, it exudes a unique atmosphere.

It may also be because I arrived at night.

In this country, when night comes, many bonfires are lit in the streets.

Horse drawn carriages were forbidden at night.

Other than that, nothing much was different.

Near the entrance were inns and pedlars.

As one went towards the town centre, the townspeople and the nobles houses became more extravagant, and at the centre of it was a castle.

The castle was built at the intersection of two rivers.

Just like the Sunomata Overnight Castle.^[31]

Its location was similar to that of Shirone's Fort Karon.

On top of that, behind the castle was a shanty town.

Even though I say shanty town, it's not like the people there look especially poor.

It's arranged like a town you can find anywhere.

"Well then, I have got to meet the king now."

"But, I wonder if we can get an audience, Queen Ariel's influence may not reach this far."

"Hmm."

In the room on the inn, I thought together with Zanoba.

The place Zanoba was staying in was not an inn for adventurers, but a luxury inn for the nobles of the city.

He was indeed a man of a different pay grade.

Or should I say, do the standing out with a bit of moderation.

Although he doesn't stand out as much as I say.

"How about I slip into the subjugation force? The king is likely to greet us when we set out. There, I can get close, even if forcefully, and then we can surely get an audience."

"That would be too slow. After the country has completed preparations, to the point of saying 'Start!', they might begin despite our protests."

There was an order to things.

Gather the people, the food, and then the weapons.

Once they have reached the stage of heading out, it's quite possible that the words "Please wait" won't stop them.

In these kind of events, the country has their honour to think about, so it would be hard for them to stop.

“It might be slower at this stage, but before they complete the preparations, we must explain that there is no need to attack the Supard race.”

We will teach them of the Supard Race’s existence during the preparation phase and have them confirm that it is safe, and the subjugation force can return to hunting invisible wolves.

It would be good to have a percentage of the cost.

Orsted should be able to provide it to some extent.

That’s why, before the subjugation force sets out, I want to meet the king as soon as possible.

With that in mind, we started thinking for a way.

“For now, let’s try approaching directly from the front. We might stand out, but if I introduce myself as the Dragon God’s subordinate under orders from the Asura Kingdom, and if it comes to it, throw Peruguis’s name out there, then... And if even that doesn’t work, we can try again and think of a different approach.”

And so, not coming up with anything better, we decided to seek an audience.

6

The next day.

After finishing breakfast, I decided to look around the castle.

So the castle was similar to Shirone’s after all.

In both size and atmosphere... but the large amount of wooden parts was different.

No, Zanoba said they would be the same in their weakness to fire.

“There is probably a toll gate.”

“I hope Queen Ariel’s name will be enough to grant us an audience.”

“Though this place doesn’t have any relations with the Asura Kingdom... so following the proper procedure will be difficult.”

“We’re following it?”

“We’re following it.”

Meeting with the king of a whole country is surprisingly difficult.

For all my audiences up until now, I have skipped the usual procedure.

Normally, I would use the country's nobility(Connections), to make an appointment.

Preparing clothes and a carriage, along with a certification of identity, and on top of that, introducing myself by a civil official of the castle.

After confirming that I was someone trustworthy, and adjusting my time according to the king's schedule, we would finally be granted an audience.

This would normally be the expected flow.

So it is difficult without connections after all.

However, despite setbacks, it is definitely not impossible.

Even if someone comes abruptly, if they're important, and they wish to meet the king, then an audience is possible.

Even so, if we stand out too much, our means of finding Gisu will become limited.

Although he might have found out about us long ago...

"So Zanoba, there are many rumours of us working together, so from here on out, it will be just me and Doga."

"Alright. I will pray for your good fortune."

I parted with Zanoba in a crowded place, and together with Doga, in front of the waterway, we headed towards somewhere abundant with royal guards.

It was still early in the morning, and the soldiers were moving around busily.

To suddenly come and ask for an audience, I would be taken as a suspicious person.

Although I made sure my appearance was like that of nobility...

But in a country with no embassy, I did not know what kind of dress was correct.

Hmm? Is this place not stuffed with soldiers?

There seems to be some kind of reception.

"Excuse me. Can you help me?"

"What do you want?"

The receptionist was a man with a respectable handlebar moustache.
His clothes looked somewhat civilian and he didn't look like a soldier.
I guess I should complement his clothes first.
No, I should talk business since that's the reason I came here.

"I would like to request an audience with the king."

"When?"

"Um? Ah, today, or as soon as you possibly can."

Although I said that, I don't think I look all that suspicious.

Well, I have nothing to lose.

If it's no good, then let's just properly go through the steps while acknowledging our conspicuousness.

"..."

The moustached man glanced at me and began turning through a stack of paper.

"That'll be one gold coin."

"Huh?"

"An audience will be one gold coin."

I wonder if he wants a tip.

"Here."

"This is definitely... Huh?"

The moustached man took the gold coin and began examining it.

And then bit it with *clink*.

It seems there's some problem.

Did I accidentally give him a fake gold coin...?

“This is an Asuran gold coin isn’t it?”

“Ah, Yes. That is where I hail from.”

While saying so, I showed him the insignia I got from Ariel.

“ ... ”

His reaction is bad.

The moustached man looked at me suspiciously.

As I thought, the influence of the Asura Kingdom doesn’t reach here.

I wonder if this is bad.

While I was thinking that, he had pocketed the coin.

He then wrote something on the paper stack and handed it to me.

“Write here your name and reason for your audience.”

“Ah, yes.”

“When the afternoon bell rings, come back here again.”

“Yes. Thank you very much.”

His reaction was bad, but my money was probably good.

It seems I’ll get an audience.

The power of money is great.

For now, I have gotten past the first barrier.

7

Noon.

I was in front of the waiting room for the audience.

“ ... ”

I was nervous.

The audience would not be today.

Is what I thought when I went to the palace, but the moustached receptionist had a different person lead me to the waiting room, and before I realized it, I was in this situation.

My turn was next; I would be called in for an audience shortly.

I thought that I had broken through the first gate, but what was waiting for me was the last boss.

It's happening too fast, my head was completely blank.

No, calm down.

I should first hear about the audience from someone coming out of the chamber.

The king of this country, in the two hours after noon, will hold an audience with anyone.

Of course, although I say anyone, there are conditions.

First, to hold an audience, you must pay 1 Biheiril gold coin.

And on top of that, each person is only allowed 15 minutes. There are only 8 people seen per day.

If you have the gold, anyone may see the King, to state opinions or questions and even ask for favours.

If you think there is a major problem, you may petition it; that seems to be the procedure of the country.

One gold coin is an amount that an entire village might barely be able to put together.

Listening to many unimportant stories, looking for a real problem.

The Biheiril Kingdom seems like a nice place.

Although being in real trouble and not being able to pay the one gold coin might also happen.

However, for a chance to directly petition the King, anybody would come running.

Especially greedy merchants and local rich people looking to secure their own useless interests.

In any case, when we arrived, it was a full house as expected.

But due to our good luck, there was a cancellation.

Really good luck.

It was probably the Asuran gold coin, worth ten times a single Biheiril gold coin, that raised my good luck.

That aside, for now, we are good.

A fifteen minute audience.

That's not much time.

It's not very calming.

I only have two things to take care of.

If I revealed who I was and talked cheerfully and clearly to someone, then the future will also be cheerful.

"Rudeus-dono, please proceed to the audience chamber."

While I was thinking that, I had been called.

"Well then, let's go."

"...Yup."

With Doga's response, I took a deep breath and stood up, and exited the waiting room.

Following the instructions of the servant, we walked through the hallway towards the audience chamber.

The audience chamber, well, it would be around a rank C.

It wasn't a terribly large room; there were no showy carpets and eight somewhat careless soldiers were standing guard.

There didn't seem to be any special decorations.

There wasn't any majesty to it.

Originally, this was a room where commoners entered. When you think of it that way, this much was just right.

Practically speaking, it's not odd. Three stars.

“Your Majesty, it is an honour to meet you.”

Continuing into the audience chamber, I knelt in a good place and bowed my head.
After a while, the King let out a voice.

“Courteous one. Face me and state your origin and business so that I may hear.”

As he said that, I raised my head.

The King was an old man.

He had a tiredness about him and it was unlikely that he had much time left.

He might possibly be suffering from a disease.

“My name is Rudeus Greyrat.

A subordinate of <Dragon God> Orsted-sama who ranks second among the Seven World Great Powers.”

“Ooh... Of the Dragon God...!”

The King did not try to hide his surprise.

It’s an uncommon, nice feeling.

It seems this King knows something about the Seven World Powers.

I wonder if it is because the Ogre’s live near.

“What does the one who associates himself with one of the Seven World Powers want with me... no, with this country?”

“Yes, I’ve heard about the subjugation of the demons being carried out in the Forest of No Return. I would like that to be cancelled.”

Whoops, I didn’t mean cancel.

My tongue slipped.

Well, well it’s alright, I can still be fixed.

“Cancel it?”

“Yes.”

“The reason?”

“What is living in the forest is not a demon.”

I then told him about the Supard race.

Since long ago, most likely before this country was established, the Supard race had been living in that forest.

How the Supard race are not the demonic race that the world makes them out to be.

And how at that time they made a promise with the village nearby, that they would hunt the invisible demons and make sure that they didn't escape the forest and damage the surroundings.

However, recently, the entire village was struck with a plague and the invisible demons were allowed to leave the forest.

And, how thanks to the efforts of Dragon God Orsted, the village has now recovered and is once again hunting the invisible demons.

So in that short time, all while trying to convey that the Supards were a good race, I gave my explanation.

“The evil race and the invisible demon... That is a rather unbelievable thing.”

“That is understandable, I had expected this response and have something prepared.

Once you see this, an explanation will not be needed.

Is there anybody here of this country that would like to confirm this for themselves?”

I will show them the current state of the Supard race.

Like the women cooking with pots, or the men making a living by hunting the invisible demons, or the Dragon God playing ball with the children.

“Alright...”

The King put his hand on his chin while thinking.

However I slowly shook my head.

“Assuming what you say is true, at this point I can no longer cancel it. Many men of

valour have already gathered in the country.”

“Then, it wouldn’t be a problem as long as you give the directive that the <People of the Forest> who live at the back of the Earth Dragon Valley are not demons, so do not attack them.

That it’s fine as long as they hunt the invisible demons which most definitely exist... Although if money is a problem, we would be willing to help out.”

“Well then...”

I took another breath.

“The Supard race, since ancient times, has lived in this country in secret. However, even now, they do not request preferential treatment. They only seek to live in the corner of this country, out of the way in the forest.

...If that is still not agreeable and His Majesty wants the Supard race out of his kingdom, I will arrange a destination of migration for them.”

“...You seem to hold the Supard race quite dear.”

“When I was young, my life was saved by one of them.”

As I said that, the King put his hand on his chin.

I glanced across and could see that the servant was worried about the time.

15 minutes had nearly passed.

“That is time. Please withdraw.”

“I humbly ask you to consider! They mean the country no harm!”

Taking one last breath, one step before leaving, I bowed my head.

“...Gullickson, Sandor!”^[32]

On the King’s command, two soldiers came forward.

One with a handlebar moustache and another with a thin long face.

This was the part where I’m picked and thrown out.

Although I thought the talk went well, it was still too abrupt...

This time it's a failure.

I'll try again la-

"On account of this person, go and confirm the truth!"

"Yes!"

At the King's cry, I was wide-eyed.

"Is that alright!?"

"These soldiers will be dispatched. And if it turns out that you are lying, as planned, the subjugation force will set out."

It's a little abrupt, but it seems the soldiers will be coming with me.

Do not deny it and confirm the truth with your own eyes.

He's a good King.

It must be because he listens to the problems of the people daily.

The Biheiril Kingdom's degree of trust from the Orsted Corporation has increased.

"I give you my heartfelt thanks!"

Finally, I bowed my head.

It somehow went very well.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 2

Q. I've become anxious now that Rudeus has said that everything is proceeding smoothly.

A. That's obvious, since he came here to search for Gisu but not even his name has turned up yet.

Q. It's found out that the cause of the plague was radiation or the like → The readers realized that it was especially close to 3/11 on that subject → The world takes it as satire and Magonote-san's social evaluation goes up in laughter, or so I thought would happen.(LOL)

A. If they did something like that, I'm afraid they won't just stop at teasing me but get angry at me while saying 'Imprudence!'.^[33]

Q. Does Zanoba's income comes from dolls and picture books?

A. That's how it is. He is in possession of a large-scale production factory and marketing store in the Capital of Asura Kingdom.

Q. I have great admiration for the poultries all over the world that provide cheap and safe eggs while carrying out thorough hygiene management and great effort.

A. The blessing of the Supermarket to provide fresh eggs constantly.

Q. Is Rudi in disguise the whole time he's in the Kingdom and the audience room?

A. Of course.

Q. Was TKG^[34] a joke reply!?

A. It wasn't. It was to give the reader an impression of a heartwarming portrayal of peace's arrival even if it was only for a moment.

Q. > if it came to that I'll just pay it with my body.

Um... (Meaningless)

A. Using Rudeus-san's body(Mana) for at least 1 month free of charge is rather very very meaningful.

Q. Make sure that you disinfect and properly wash the egg before serving yourself, LOL.

A. Of course, I do that.

Q. How do you read 鬼族 and 鬼神?

A. Oni zoku and Kishin(In japanese). ^[35]

CHAPTER 9

4 DAYS & 3 NIGHTS:

INSPECTION TOUR OF THE SUPARD RACE

1

Having the two soldiers from Biheiril join the party, we headed out towards the Supard village.

We moved in a carriage so that the Biheiril Kingdom won't discover the Teleportation Magic formation.

We moved to second city Irel within a span of a day.

While lodging there, I thought of collecting Sándor as well, but the progress report ended with the informant not getting a hold of anything.

Despite the disappointment of failing to discover Gisu's whereabouts, I hastened.

Furthermore, it took another day to get to the village of the Earth Dragon Valley.

The village was the same way I remembered it with many people, and granny was yelling energetically at the mercenaries as well.

It hasn't been even 10 days since then, so it's obviously obvious.

I would like to tell granny that "It's alright. The forest people are now safe", but it's still too early for that.

Even if the subjugation force is disbanded, it will take some time.

While thinking that, we stayed at the village for a night and then moved towards the forest at dawn.

"Almost there, we should arrive at the Supard village by dusk if we enter the forest at dawn, so please have a little bit more patience."

"Yeah. Let's make haste though."

“...My legs are starting to feel heavy.”

The two soldiers.

They had a lot of small complaints.

Gullickson.

He was growing a very elegant handlebar moustache and looked a lot like the receptionist soldier.

Perhaps they're brothers.

His voice and the manner of speech were the only things that set them apart.

Unlike the moustached soldier, Gullickson gave of an impression of a rude and a fairly blunt person.

He's also an impatient character that hates being kept waiting.

In the inn, as I was thinking about paying both mine and their shares, he paid my share as well before I could say anything, and one other time during our journey, the moment he realized that we were preparing to set up a campfire, he immediately started collecting firewood.

On top of that, when a monster attacked us, he took the initiative and went ahead to defeat it.

Of course, I took care of all the monsters. It'll be troublesome for me if they got hurt.

Sandor.

He's oval-faced. A long thin face can be said to vilify him.

He is calmer in comparison to Gullickson.

Always wearing a calm smile, he didn't bother to even unsheathe his sword when a monster attacked.

Having said that, he's not that much of a chatterbox.

He only says a few words when necessary. Otherwise, he stays shut like a shellfish.

He's a very curious character though. When I used chantless magic, he was surprised and started asking this and that.

He's wearing a soldier's uniform, but he might be a magician.

“...”

Sandor had sent me some suggestive gazes before.

The gazes were as if they were evaluating me.

I feel like I'm being monitored, but it can't be helped.

A male who suddenly appeared with the proposal of suspending the subjugation force.

They might have received orders to not let their guards down in case I tried to do something weird.

It's natural to be vigilant, and it's understandable that they're keeping an eye on me.

But there seems to be something more to it than that.

The duo gave off some really creepy vibes from time to time.

The strange thing is that Doga doesn't look like that much.

Doga seems naïve in regards to his appearance; I can't think of him having the wits to fool others.

So it might be that I am simply overthinking things too much after all

"The Supards are good-natured people. They are a bit blunt, but if you deal with them keeping that in mind, you can talk with them in good faith. Incidentally, they're kind towards kids as well."

I tried endeavoring a positive image campaign of Supard race towards my two companions from Biheiril kingdom.

"...We aren't children."

"Of course, I know that. But it's alright, they'll properly welcome you."

Still, it looks like they have some doubts regarding the Supard race after all.

At this rate, even if the Supards welcomed them warmly, they'll still be suspicious of the food handed to them or something.

Until recently, the village was being invaded by the plague. If that became known, then it's likely that they won't even move their hands to touch the food.

But fortunately, there's the food brought in by the doctors as well.

If it's the Asuran folks, then it may be possible for their palate.

At any rate, I intend to make them see the whole village and make them go back with a good feeling.

2

We arrived at the Earth Dragon Valley.

There were two bridges in front of us.

"Why are there two side-by-side bridges?"

The bridge that was there before and the bridge made by me.

"It would not be good if we were to fall down midway, so I created one with earth magic."

"Hmmm... so, which one should we cross?"

"This one."

When I pointed to the one I created, Gullickson jumped on it right away and started walking.

Without any handrails, despite the height, he rapidly walked without any hesitation.

Perhaps he's not afraid.

I guess.

I followed him. Behind me was Sandor, and Doga was at the end of the line.

"Please be careful so as not to fall."

If I had passed earlier, I would've been able to save them if someone were to fall, but Gullickson is really impatient.

Just like Eris.

Perhaps Gullickson is a Sword God Style user.

"Are there earth dragons below...?"

When I turned to look, Sandor gulped as he was trying to look below.

“Sandor-san, you’re a resident of this country and yet you don’t know?”

“I know of it, but this is the first time I’ve come here.”

That’s obvious.

There are probably not many who have seen every famous place of a country.

Since this wasn’t a tourist-attraction spot.

From the standpoint of a soldier, if one enters the forest after being specifically told not to, it would prove to be somehow problematic.

There are only a few who have climbed the Red Dragon Mountain Range in the east of Asura Kingdom, it’s the same as that.

“Rudeus-dono, I’ve heard that you’ve come to call yourself the subordinate of the Dragon God Orsted, but... have you ever fought an earth dragon?”

“I have not.”

“You’ve shown us splendid magic on our way here, but if it came to that, could you fight one?”

Sandor’s voice was trembling.

Perhaps he was afraid.

Afraid of an earth dragon suddenly climbing out of the valley and attacking us.

The bottom of the valley isn’t visible. What is lurking in it, what would pop out of it, those unpleasant thoughts are probably swelling inside his mind.

“Please be relieved.

I wouldn’t know what to do if I was thrown inside a flock, but if there were only one or two, I think I could deal with them.”

“Is that so...”

“Oi, hurry up already!”

During the time we conversed, Gullickson had already crossed over and was waiting.

We increased our pace to catch up with his impatience.

“After crossing the bridge, the Supard race’s village is only a little bit further.”

And from there starts the real thing.

3

Inspection tour of the Supard village

Guide : Rudeus Greyrat

Support : Doga

No. of participants : 2

“The Supard village only has one entrance.

The entrance is being guarded by two gatekeepers so as not to allow the invasion of monsters.

Thanks to their peculiar sensory organ, a trespasser can never be overlooked.

Of course, they have already sensed our arrival.

However there is no need for concern. Since they’re a very friendly species.”

“...Just what happened to you suddenly?”

“I’m giving an explanation.”

Gullickson was dubious, he won’t realize it by just looking.

That’s why there is a need for an explanation.

For that reason, a guide is necessary.

Hence a presentation.

“We can see the entrance.

Can you see it? Those people are the Supard race.

You realize why they’re facing this way even though they’re inside the forest, right?”

When I pointed towards the village, both their bodies stiffened.

It’s the real, genuine Supard race.

“...Looks like their hair really was green.”

“Indeed. However, there is no need for concern. Since you guys were able to get along well with the ogre tribe who has red skin and a horn growing, right?

The hair color is just slightly different. What’s inside of them is the same as everyone. Of course, there are some differences from person to person. If you talked with them nicely - they’ll be pleasant, if you talked with them rudely - they’ll be unpleasant.

It’s as simple as that. Please look.”

While saying that, I approached one of the gatekeepers.

First, I must make them realize that the Supard race is not a race of demons.

Greeting with a smile and getting a reply with a smile.

It’s the first step in human relations.

While extending my hand, I greeted the gatekeeper.

“JAMBO!”^[36]

“...?”

The gatekeeper shook hands, made a puzzled face, and looked at the other one.

Rude.

Looks like I got a little bit overexcited.

“Sorry. I’ve brought along the emissaries from the Biheiril Kingdom. I want to guide them around the village, so I’d be grateful if you let us through.”

“...I don’t mind. I’ve heard about this from Ruijerd.”

“Thank you very much. If possible, I also wanted to have a talk with the chieftains.”

“Got it, I’ll convey the matter.”

One of the youngsters started running towards the inside of the village.

“Now then, please follow me.”

After seeing him off, I entered the village.

Gullickson and Sandor slowly entered the village with stiffened faces.

So they were nervous after all.

I slowly began to walk towards the inside of the village so as to not make them worry.

“Just a few days ago, a plague was spreading here, but it is not something that infects humans.”

Honestly, we still don’t know whether or not it’s infectious to humans.

It’ll be cured if one drinks the Sokasu tea, but we still don’t know whether it was originally Vita or a disease that caused the plague.

It’s possible that I’ve already infected the Biheiril Kingdom and that the country will fall into a pandemic-like state within one month or so...

I’ll choose the Supards over humans I don’t know.

“Food is prepared there. They’ll be having the evening meal there at this time.

The fields are over there, slaughters of the animals are carried out on the opposite side.

You can see it right now, but that’s the corpse of the invisible monster.

We were not attacked on our way here, but a short while after its death, the invisible monster starts looking like that.

After all it is the invisible wolf. If not for the Supards, hunting with satisfaction wouldn’t have been possible.”

The chieftains probably have preparations to do, so I’m slowly walking them around the village while giving an explanation.

No Supard approaches us.

Of course, we don’t approach them either... but could that make the soldiers mental image worse if they looked from a distance?

No, wherever you move your eyes, the scenery of a calm forest can be seen.

It’s alright, no problem at all.

“...So there’s also someone from Milis religion.”

“And someone from the Long-eared race as well.”

When I casually looked over, Cliff was talking about something with Elinalize.

He was probably investigating the cause of the plague as he was walking around looking at places while pointing at a bundle of papers.

“Ah, he’s the genius man who saved the Supard race from the illness.”

“Does that mean that the Supard race has been approved by the Milis church?”

“It would be wrong to say that the majority of the Milis followers have, but one faction has approved of the demon race.

At the very least, Milis church will not be sending in any more troops to the Biheiril Kingdom to approach the Supards.”

“...”

“Won’t you introduce him to us?”

“Well, fine.”

As they greeted Cliff while extending their hands, Cliff shook their hands after making a sign of cross.

If he’s calmly spending time in this village, that means he might’ve made sure of Supard race’s safety.

“...”

Looking at Gullickson and Sandor, their faces were still grim.

Do they already want to go home...?

“...Ah, please look at this. The children of the Supard race are coming from over there.”

While holding the ball and giggling along the way, the children pass by us.

“Their tails are lovely, aren’t they?

Those tails are held by every Supard, and become their white spears later in life.

However, children look adorable in any world.

Don’t you think so?”

I tried saying that while chasing the children's figures with my eye, but the two soldiers didn't look at the children's backs.

Do they hate children?

No, that's wrong.

They were looking in the direction where the children were running to.

There stood a weird person wearing a white coat and a black helmet mounted on his head.

Within the settling sun, his figure which was standing still as a spirit looked as if he were a demon.

"...Ngh!"

As Gullickson gasped, he quickly moved his hand to the sword on his back. Looking at that, I hurriedly stood in front of him.

"Ahh well... he's not one of the Supards. Please don't mind him."

"...If he's not one of the Supards, then who is he?"

"He's my boss, Dragon God Orsted.

He certainly looks a little weird right now but it's alright, that person will leave this country after the end of this chain of events. He's harmless."

"...That so?"

Orsted looked at them for several seconds, but then turned his face away quickly.

At the same time, the soldiers' tension dissolved.

Looks like in this state of affairs, Orsted's curse was putting this in a difficult position after all.

No, it could be that by looking at Orsted, they had realized that Supards weren't just normal villagers.

"The Supard race has a lot of warriors, but as you can see, half of them are women or children who don't hold any power.

Please throw away that preconceived notion and look at it with your own eyes.

Do they look demons to you?"

I asked a question immediately after they looked away from Orsted.
It's almost as if I'm calling Orsted more demonic than the Supard race.
I'll apologize later.

".....No, they don't."

Sandor muttered a few words.

"Dragon God? Leaving him aside, the village itself looks ordinary, just like the other villages."

"That's right. It resembles my home town a bit."

Gullickson agreed on Sandor's words.

I don't know whether Orsted was effective, but they don't seem to hate it.
And when I casually looked over, the young gatekeeper who had gone before was approaching this way.

"The chieftains will now meet you."

"I understand. Well then, both of you, please come this way. I will now introduce you to the chieftains."

Looks like the preparations of the chieftains are over.

I led the two soldiers to the building where the chieftains were waiting while having a good feedback.

4

The chieftain was waiting for us in a somewhat big house.

This may be some kind of temporary measure, since the lecture hall was still being used as an infirmary.

There were three people waiting for us.

There were 2 from the previous meeting, and Ruijerd.

The remaining two are still under medical care.

Norn was beside Ruijerd and put out the tea ceremony that was prepared in advanced after we entered.

This little sister of mine is a very perceptive child.

Well, she couldn't do something like this before.

Is this the fruit of formal education?

"So, Rudeus-dono, what would you like to talk about?"

"Supard race's history up till now, their present condition, and their wish regarding the country."

"I understand."

The conversation advanced relatively calmly, probably because the welcome was modest.

The thing of the past and things of the present.

And thus, regarding the circumstances after this.

They don't want to hurt anyone and want to live in peace.

That modest wish of the Supard race was delivered from the Chieftain's own mouth to the soldiers.

Unaware of it, a calm atmosphere had already begun to flow between the soldiers.

The tranquility of the village, the chieftain's gentle demeanour.

Ruijerd too looked like he was diligently trying to unfasten his vigilance.

"I understand, we'll convey the truth to his majesty. Please be relieved, we don't hate you."

Sandor finally said that and the meeting was over.

It was decided that the soldiers would stay for tonight and leave tomorrow.

One night stay at the house which was loaned to Doga and Sándor.

For the time being, Doga and I also stayed in the same house.

By the way, Norn stayed at Ruijerd's house the whole time.

She has really become emotionally attached to him.

I wonder if she looks at him the same way she looked at Paul.

"What are your thoughts regarding the Supard race's village?"

Before I went to sleep, I tried asking them that.

"It was much better than we had thought."

"Indeed."

The two soldiers were nodding to each other with a delightful face.

"I've heard that the Supards are a demon race, but... it's different when you see it with your own eyes after all."

"It's an ordinary village. The food is good too."

"The invisible wolf? I still can't believe that there's an invisible monster though."

"But the inside of the forest was strangely quiet. It's quieter than the forest near the capital where regular hunting takes place."

"Then, I wonder if it's true that they hunt the invisible monster around here."

The two were praising the village while saying this and that before sleep.

Looks like the Inspection tour of the Supard race was a great success.

5

The next day, we talked about escorting the two soldiers to the capital city.

I explained that if they stayed for 2 or 3 days more - they'll be able to see the invisible monster for real, however...

"We must return back quickly and report to his majesty for disbanding the Subjugation force, so..."

Since that's how it was, it was decided to return as quickly as possible.

It's as if we had flip-flopped.

I wanted to use the teleportation magic formation by all means to save some time, but I must persevere for now.

There's this saying that haste makes waste.

Since a weak person can't do anything in a strange place.

While thinking that, I informed Ruijerd that "I'm going to escort them off." and left the village.

The Supard race will be OK with this for now.

After that, it's Gisu.

The North God's and Ogre God's whereabouts are also on my mind.

There's also the possibility that he has already left this country and is somewhere else, but...

If so, I'll be worried about Sylphy's situation.

There's also the possibility that this 'somewhere else' is where the Sword God is.

I wonder how Sylphy is doing.

It's fine if she safely came into contact with the Sword God though.

I wonder if Eris is fine.

It's fine as long as she doesn't create any problems.

I think it's fine since she's with Roxy, but I'm a bit worried because even she sometimes makes mistakes.

About Aisha and the rest... I feel they'll be just fine.

"...Is only one person coming with us?"

As I walked while thinking those things, Gullickson who was walking one step ahead of me turned back and asked.

"Huh?"

I tried surveying my surroundings.

Gullickson, Sandor, and me.

“If it’s that knight, he was sleeping without a nick in his snoring when we left.”

Upon Sandor’s words, I realized that Doga wasn’t here.

I didn’t realize that at all.

Well, in comparison to his frame, he doesn’t stand out much.

Wait, you overslept...

“We-well..... please be relieved. Even alone I should be able to escort you back properly.”

“...”

“...”

Listening to my words, both of them exchanged glances with each other.

Well, there shouldn’t be any problem.

Considering that Gisu doesn’t show up with the Ogre God on our way back... it should be fine as long as that doesn’t happen.

Not to mention, if that does happen, it wouldn’t be any different even if Doga was here or not.

Still, it would seem that I was advised not to be alone.

Should I make an Earth Fortress and wait until one of us went and brought back Doga?

We’re also about to meet up with Sándor along the way to second city Irel...

“Mngh.”

Before I realized, it was there in front of my eyes.

We’d already arrived at the Earth Dragon Valley.

There were two bridges in front of me.

This is perfect.

After we cross the bridge, there would be a lower number of invisible wolves; it’ll be

comparatively safer.

Let's move over there and wait.

"I'll be going first."

Gullickson started walking forwards as if it was natural, Sandor and I followed.

Perhaps it had been better if someone was behind so that the two of them would not fall.

While thinking that, I was cautiously walking and keeping an eye out for them.

"....."

Gullickson suddenly stopped midway.

"What's the matter?"

He turned around.

An expressionless face that doesn't match his fine moustache.

"Oi, will you do it?"

That inquiry was directed behind me, to Sandor.

When I turned around he shrugged.

"No, please go ahead and do it yourself."

What's going on?

What's this conversation?

"Umm, if you want to talk then would you do it after we cross the bridge?"

"Hm? Aah..."

While breathing out as if sighing, Gullickson moved his right hand to the wrist of his

left hand.

As I was wondering what he was doing, he put his fingers on top the glove.

And then, slowly started to remove that glove from his hands.

“Unexpectedly, it’s a thing that doesn’t let out any secrets.”

My heart started running fast.

The thing that was on Gullickson’s finger.

It was a ring that I knew of.

“My heart was pounding when Cliff Grimoire, who holds the Identification eye, saw me. If I hadn’t been wearing the glove, he might have seen through me.”

I turned around.

Sandor was also removing his glove.

He had a similar ring as well.

That ring.

I knew that ring.

It was the same ring that I was wearing.

Introduced by the Asura Kingdom, a ring that can change appearances, a magic tool.

“Haaaaa~... all that drama made my back hurt.”

Gullickson said that and removed his ring.

Right before me his face started to change.

His moustache disappeared, and transformed into the face of a middle-aged man of about 40 years.

A face, similar to a ferocious wolf, which matched his tone.

He changed into a completely different person.

“...A message from Gisu. <Magic tools ain’t limited to only one>.”

I turn around at that voice.
Sandor's face was changing as well.
It's not that long-thin face anymore.
A slightly young boy with black hair.
Having someone else's face.

"All things considered, it's a pity. And to think I expected so much from you who defeated Auber..."

Words didn't come out.
My throat had dried up.
Gullickson and Sandor, I could feel a tremendous amount of bloodthirst coming from both sides.

" <If it's a narrow foothold, then even Senpai won't be able to use his trump card> or so Gisu had said. Furthermore, to set foot in such a place willingly under the condition where both your front and back are---"

"Who are you... you two?"

Words as if scolding them came out.
I had a hunch that I knew.
I also felt like I didn't.

"I'm Gull Farion of the Sword God style."

"I'm North God Kalman the Third, Aleksander Ryback."

Both of them said in succession.

Sword God Gull Farion.
North God Kalman the third.
The two who said Gisu's name.

Enemy.

Both of them were enemies.

The moment I realized that, I immediately extended my hand towards my waist.

To push the button of the scroll for summoning the Magic Armor <Mk. I>

My hand didn't move.

Right in front of my eyes, my entire right arm fell down.

That right arm hit the bridge and was falling down the valley.

When I saw, Gullickso--Gull Farion had unsheathed his sword.

He cut it, but it was already too late to think that.

"AAHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Intense pain ran through me and I tried to stop the wound with my left hand.

Nay.

My left hand didn't move.

Wrong, it wasn't that my left hand didn't move.

It wasn't there.

In the corner of vision, my left hand could be seen falling down towards the valley.

"Oh, so that's your real face. You're quite handsome. Yup, it's better than the face before."

Due to the loss of my arms, the effects of the ring wore off.

Gull started laughing while looking at my face.

" <Since senpai uses magic from his hands, it's possible if you cut the hands from the base, he'll be unable to use it.> "

Sandor adds.

Blood was gushing out from both my hands.

It's certainly not coming out.

Magic was not coming out.

As if the circuits that fired magic were in the upper part of the arm, magic didn't come out.

"But wouldn't we have won even without knowing all of this?"

"Probably not, we don't know what would've happened if he directly opposed us. Even Gisu said to be careful around him."

"I don't think so, it would have been different if the North Emperor Doga had been here as a vanguard though, but I don't think that I would've lost."

It's wasn't coming out from the hands.

When I realized that, I immediately started channeling mana into the Magic Armor.

"Oh?"

While increasing the output in my leg, I turned back.

I charged in Sandor's direction.

I didn't intend to attack.

My aim was to slip past him and reach the Supard vill--

"----Hmngh."

My back felt a shock.

I was hit by a slashing attack.

A slashing attack capable of cutting up the Magic Armor <Mk. II> like butter, it was the Longsword of Light.

My body was cut right in half... or so I thought, but then the shock on my back would have been weird.

As I thought that, I was assailed with a floating sensation.

I was falling.

Within my spinning field of vision, Aleksander and Gull could be seen peeking below

from the top of the collapsing bridge.

Ah, is it because I tried to tread on the bridge with a fully powered Mk. II?

That thought crosses my mind.

I was falling.

After losing both my arms and not being able to do anything - I was falling.

My body had a feeling of powerlessness.

Fear was boiling up within me.

I'll die.

The moment that word echoed in my heart, my whole body felt a strong impact and I lost consciousness.

6

"Uh oh... he fell down."

While looking at Rudeus falling down into the valley, Gull Farion breathed out a sigh. Aleksander too was looking down at the valley while knitting his brows in disapproval.

"Gull-san, did you go easy on him at the end? It seemed to me that you didn't cut him properly."

"Don't be foolish... look at this."

The sword held by Gull was broken from its base.

It's understandable if someone were to look into it, those kind of swords were distributed among the soldiers of the Biheiril Kingdom; they were casting articles.

It's not that bad, but a person whose hobby was playing with swords would find it unappetizing.

"His armor was much harder than I thought it to be..."

Not to mention, Gull Farion was someone who held one of the strongest sword techniques.

A good artisan does not blame his tools. In accordance with those words, there was no need to use one of the famous swords to cut a flesh and blood human.

Even though he thought that it would be more than enough, Rudeus's armor was harder than expected.

The reason was that he had never once felt such a strong feedback, especially when considering that he slashed at his back.

"I should've brought my favorite sword."

As he said that, Gull threw that sword into the valley.

"I guess it can't be helped. If we had brought our favorite swords, our identities would have been exposed."

While looking down as well, Aleksander shrugged.

On his back was the sword of the regular army of Biheiril Kingdom.

Of course, it's not something a North God would carry.

"So, what to do? Should we go down and put an end to him?"

"...Hmm. If it wasn't for an act of not being able to use magic after losing both his hands, then I guess it should be fine to leave him."

"Well there are flocks of earth dragon as well."

"He said that he would be able to deal with one or two of them, but would be impossible against a flock, right?"

While thinking about the words Rudeus said, Aleksander came to that conclusion.

Of course, they also thought that specially going down to ascertain it was troublesome.

It was because their aim wasn't to defeat Rudeus.

"Well then, now that we were able to remove the first obstacle... should we turn back?"

"The fight with Orsted. I'm looking forward to it. Ah, you dealt with Rudeus, so please let me deal with Orsted, ok?"

The two of them crossed the collapsing bridge and returned back.

While chatting as if nothing had happened at all, they turned back on the road which led to the capital of Biheiril Kingdom.

“Haah? You just want to raise your rank among the world powers, it’s fine if I go first.”

“That’s wrong. I don’t want to raise my rank among the world powers, I want to become the hero. A hero who will surpass his father, North God Kalman who surpassed his father.”

“Haa.”

There was none who would run after their figures.

Even among the Supards who held the third eye, there was not a single one looking at this place.

After the turmoil of the disease, they had not gone far from the village for hunting.

Even if there were any for argument’s sake, the two of them wouldn’t have attacked him on the bridge.

“I’m not trying to get a head-start on you. Aren’t we supposed to do it exactly as planned? Because those were the conditions.”

“Tch... Irritating.”

While leaving those words behind, Gull Farion and Aleksander Ryback vanished into the forest.

Stillness fell upon the valley.

Only the collapsed bridge was left.

And then, only silence remained.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 3

Author : The opinions of Rudeus' becoming so careless was a lot so I rewrote a little. He'll now want to take Doga with him and turn back.

Depicting it is really hard, isn't it?

As an author I wanted you to recognize that the two soldiers 'became comrades' during that kind of flow and while saying those lines at that time, I wanted you to realize that it didn't matter much even if Doga was there or not.

I wonder whether the number of simple events weren't enough or the writing style was awkward... Looks like it doesn't always go as we want it to be.

Q. How should I say this... Why weren't there words like 'Rudi will die?!' or 'Is it going to end?!' in the Q&A section? LOL

A. Because simply falling down into the valley ain't going to stop it...

Q. Is Aleksander the uncle of the Death God? Is he an uncle with a young face?

A. It's possible they're half-siblings.

Q. Why did Gull-san cut Rudi's hands instead of his head during his first attack? Were they being cautious?

If the Sword God and North God wanted to fight Orsted so bad then why didn't they attack him the first time?

I mean, even though they think they couldn't win unless they surprise attacked Rudi, it's funny that both Gull and Alek intend to win against Orsted.

I mean, was there any reason for them to expose themselves and fluently talking before attacking Rudeus?

A. Just like how it's written; it's because those were the conditions, that's why.

As an author, I intended to write it in this form : They removed their rings and named themselves, they heard it fair and square from Gisu 'a method to defeat Rudeus without letting him use his power', they executed it and were successful.

No matter how much cautious you are, the thief will definitely get in, it's fine if it's similar to this, but I guess it's quite difficult.

Q. Were the 2 of them substitutes for the ones who were near the King?

A. That's right.

Q. I won't consult with the boss when I think that it's even slightly strange.

A. But that boss doesn't give out satisfactory instructions.

Q. The amount of spelling mistakes has steadily accumulated, but... Should I tell you about them after this volume has ended or immediately after you realize it?

A. While looking at the Q&A's and taking down memos, I'm rectifying them at my own pace. The first time I read it and find any I immediately rectify it. If after several days had passed and then there's still something left! then I'd be grateful if it's done after it's ended.

CHAPTER 10

DISAPPEARANCE

1

Magic City Sharia. ^[37]

There was a house located in its suburbs.

In that house, an elven girl was copying the contents of the mail that came through the communication lithograph.

Her name was Faria Steer.

She's often called 'Faria' or 'Tia' by her friends, but not a single person in the company staff has bothered to remember her name yet.

This girl, during the absence of both the president and chairman, became the supervisor of the office.

And although Rudeus has yet to know it, Faria Steer was indeed the true name of the "little elf-chan".

"Let's see, the mail from Sylphiette-san says... <The title of the Sword God has been taken over by someone else, the former Sword God's whereabouts are currently unknown. Nina-san is pregnant so she can't aid us. I'll be heading towards Biheiril Kingdom now.> ... Is this what I should re-direct?"

Her job was to transcribe the collected news that arrived from various places and then hand it over all at once when Orsted or Rudeus came back.

However, based on her own judgement, she was allowed to redirect any urgent news that came through.

Not to mention, the collected news had words such as 'God' or 'King', it was usually difficult for her, who was of lower middle class, to distinguish such importance.

"The Sword God has been substituted and the whereabouts of the former Sword God are unknown, this means that the possibility of him becoming an enemy is high, so

let's redirect this..."

Nevertheless, she was chosen by Aisha herself.

Aisha had carefully hand-picked her through a series of strict terms.

At first glance, Orsted's office work can be done by anyone, but there is tons of information that must be prevented from leaking. Thus, the post can only be taken by a reliable person.

Faria's birthplace was the capital of the Ranoa Kingdom.

Her father was a retired elf adventurer and her mother was the daughter of the town's human merchant.

She's the youngest of the three siblings.

Since she was a girl, she didn't receive any education as a merchant.

As a result, she never thought about becoming one. But she loitered around the firms since she was a child, and grew up observing sly old merchants.

Perhaps this laid out the foundation for her.

When she enrolled at the magic university, she was able to achieve good results thanks to all the times she had observed informants.

And thus, with Aisha's sharp sightedness she was able to zero in on her.

There were many others who were far better with information management than her, but she was chosen by Orsted himself.

According to Orsted's experience, it was highly unlikely that she would become an enemy.

"I should first send this to the Supard village, but who should I send it to next..."

Ah, probably Eris-san. Since she's a Sword King, she might be able to think of something if she knew."

While muttering those words, she faced the communication lithograph in the corner of the president's office.

With a magic crystal in one hand, she was scuffling with the communication lithograph.

Faria was trying to send a message to the Supard village and to Third City Heilelul.

Behind her back, a shadow suddenly appeared.

“Phew, with this... hm?”

Faria turned around.

A large build filled her vision.

“...Ah... um, excuse me, are you Orsted-sama’s... guest?”

A drum like body and log like arms.

A deep red skin color and a huge horn.

And a pot like lower jaw from which two long fangs were sprouting.

It was an Ogre.

“Are ya Orsted’s woman?”

“Huh?”

“...”

The moment Faria hesitated, the Ogre waved his hand with a *swoosh*.

The communication lithograph which just sent the message was blown off with a large noise.

Along with the office door.

“Ya what? Enemy? Ya fight?”

“Ah... Uu...”

The Ogre stuck his fist out in front of Faria.

Faria’s field of vision was completely filled with his fist.

A clenched fist twice as big as her face. There was coarse hair growing on his fingers and at the back of his hand, his knuckles looked violent.

And its influence was behind him.

It's easily understandable after looking at the demolished wall.

It's easily understandable what would happen if he hit you with his fist.

"N-n-n-n-no."

Faria sank down onto the floor and finally told him.

As if she was paralyzed from the waist below, she couldn't even run away.

The only thing left in her mind was the thought of not wanting to die.

"Then, get out. I... don't fight those... who don't wanna."

The Ogre smirkingly extended his hand towards Faria.

"Eeekk."

The now opened and extended hand made Faria curl her body up.

The thought of getting crushed by his hand was only for an instant as the Ogre gently lifted her up and threw her out of the hole he had created moments ago.

"Ahhhhhhh!?"

Faria was thrown out of the office, flew with high velocity, bounced twice, rolled about and came to a stop.

".....Ngh!"

Pain ran through her entire body.

Her mind was telling her 'Run, run, or he'll kill you.'

Her body was screaming at her 'I do not want to die, I do not want to die.'

Without saying any words, her throat only made the pathetic noise of crying.

Whether her legs restored after being thrown at the ground or not, she was standing up with her legs, although shaking like a newborn goat.

After running a few steps, she fell down.

After she repeated that almost three times, a thunderous roar echoed in the background.

She turned back.

“...Aah.”

The scene that entered Faria’s eyes was the destruction of the office.

The red ogre was going berserk, and while timber and building stones were being scattered about, the building was losing its structure.

Before long, Faria forgot about running away and looked at the destruction dumbfounded.

Dumbfounded, she just saw the destruction, wreckage, and the transformation.

She couldn’t do anything.

There wasn’t anything she could do.

While being harassed by a feeling of powerlessness, she just kept watching.

She wished that the red ogre wouldn’t come out of that wreckage.

She wished that he wouldn’t come this way.

She was wishing for the surroundings to go quiet, for the noises to vanish.

That someone would come to investigate after hearing that thunderous roar and protect her, she just kept wishing for that.

That day, all of the teleportation magic formations set up by Rudeus Greyrat lost their light.

2

At the same time, Roxy and Eris were in a forest.

The Third City Heilelul was a port city.

The oceans of this world are fundamentally filled with fishman race or sea fish race. Together, they’re called the beings of the sea race.

Except for a predetermined area of the ocean, the passage of land dwellers has been prohibited.

Fishing in one part of the neighboring port city was allowed, but if one left that area,

then the sea race would probably sink the ship immediately.

However, it's a little different in Heilelul.

The sea in between Ogre Island and Third City Heilelul are Biheiril Kingdom's territorial waters.

During the founding of Biheiril Kingdom, all of the sea race were purged from this area, thus giving Biheiril Kingdom complete access to the sea.

Since then, Third City Heilelul has become a popular fishing port, with types of seafood that can't be found anywhere else.

...Or so it was supposed to be.

"...I'm tired of just eating fish these days."

"Is that so? Is it not delicious?"

On the outskirts of the city, there was a forest surrounded by large walls.

Rather than prohibiting anyone from invading, it's more for defending against the monsters that occasionally came out of the forest.

The two of them were walking within this forest while eating dried fish.

"It's delicious but salty. Why would someone sprinkle salt like this?"

"It's probably for the sake of preservation."

"If it's for preservation, then why not just use ice magic like Rudeus?"

"Not everyone can use ice magic, you know."

A smile crept onto Roxy's face as she replied back to the complaining Eris.

Fundamentally, Eris wasn't the type to complain about food.

But it was certain that pickling salt was put on the fish a bit too much.

A town with an abundance of seafood, or so they say. But really, it's filled with nothing but preserved food.

However, the reason for that has already been found.

It takes a whole day by ship from the Third City Heilelul to reach there, Ogre Island.

Ogre Island has a fine set of fishermen at their disposal.

Legally, the ogre fishermen and the human fishermen cooperate and catch fish in the vicinity of Ogre Island.

However, the fishermen of the ogre race were not fishing now.

They just kept talking about how a war was coming in the near future and were preparing for the fight.

This resulted in a decrease in the quality of goods in the port city.

Why were the ogre race saying war was coming? Roxy and Eris made sure to get the information regarding that.

It was because they were participating in the subjugation force.

On orders of the Ogre God, the head of the ogre race.

And now, the head of the ogre race, Ogre God Malta, was in Second City Irel.

They were currently heading towards the teleportation magic formation that was set up in a cave to relay this information to Rudeus.

They were a little late in submitting the news, but the last time they saw the communication lithograph, it had good news saying that the Supard race was heading towards recovery and that the negotiations went well too.

It was doubtful whether the situation over there had suddenly taken a turn for the worse.

“The ogre race will protect the Biheiril Kingdom. They probably still uphold that oath even now. But isn’t it strange that he would go to neither the capital nor the Third City but to the second city?”

“Gisu is working with him anyway, right?”

“It’s still too early to decide that. Perhaps the Ogre God is just inspecting the local place by himself. There’s still the possibility of him becoming a comrade, so it’ll be problematic if we’re antagonistic.”

Despite saying that, Roxy felt a little uneasy.

This shouldn’t have happened if everything were normal.

Was this a scheme by the enemy?

Or have they simply not seen the state of affairs around them...

At the very least, everything was proceeding smoothly for now.

Rudeus had rescued the Supard race and made them comrades.

The information in regards to this place, they were unable to locate Gisu, but they were able to confirm the Ogre God's whereabouts.

Perhaps Zanoba might've obtained information regarding the North God in the capital. Thinking optimistically without any basis.

However, she had an unpleasant premonition which was unrelated to that.

This was also a baseless premonition.

When she thought about it, she felt that it was similar to when she was imprisoned in the teleport labyrinth.

Everything looked good, but it felt as if there was something important missing.

Rather, Roxy was aware that whenever things looked good, she was always able to create a mistake somehow.

"Listen, Roxy. After we report this info, shouldn't we meet up with Rudeus?"

"You just keep saying that, don't you?"

"But I just want to meet Ruijerd already. I'll introduce you as well!"

"No... once, I've met him once before, you know?"

Ah, looks like Roxy realized the origin of that unpleasant premonition as she gave a wry smile.

Both Rudeus and Eris held no fear towards the Supard race.

In her mind, she knew that the Supard race wasn't a race of demons.

But her body stiffened up anyways, no matter what.

Possibly because she heard about the folklore so many times as a child.

However, she must meet him.

Ruijerd was a benefactor of both Rudeus and Eris, a comrade.

A fellow who she must greet properly.

Still, she naturally felt reluctant to do so.

She might be able to change after meeting them, talking with them, and coming in contact with them, but...

If she couldn't... that's probably why she had that premonition.

"Hmm, let's see. Now that we've come this far, I guess it's fine if we move to the second city. That way, Ogre God Malta can't change his location and we'll be able to confirm our info as well. "

For now, they've obtained all the information that they could from the third city.

It should be fine to leave their position for a bit and go see the Supard village.

While thinking that, Roxy's feet came to a halt in front of the cave where the teleportation magic formation was set up.

It was a hole that was large enough for one person to pass through while crouching, camouflaged by branches.

Its previous owner, a bear, attacked them when they approached the cave, and as a result, it was killed by Eris and then eaten.

At that time, thinking that it was just right, they ended up recycling the cave.

Moving the branch of the tree which disguised the entrance, they entered the cave.

It was twenty metres deep and fairly wide. But it stank of animal.

And deep within the cave, a teleportation magic formation and communication lithograph were set up.

"...Oh?"

But there was something slightly odd about the teleportation formation.

The teleport magic formation was set up deep within the forest to make use of the high mana density, and it continuously gave out a blue, shining light after its activation.

But for some reason, that light had vanished.

"What's the meaning of this?"

"Please wait a moment."

Roxy carefully examined the magic formation.

Perhaps she made some kind of mistake which caused the circuitry to be inoperable...

While thinking that, she examined it, though there didn't seem to be any kind of bug.

To begin with, they just used it the other day and it worked fine.

There wasn't any evidence that someone entered the cave as well...

"Hey, this one isn't working as well."

On Eris's voice, Roxy raised her head.

Eris was squatting down in front of the communication lithograph that was set up in the corner of the room.

It had lost that light as well.

Roxy rushed over and tried sending in mana with random words, but there was no response.

"...Just what might this mean?"

Roxy stood shock-still, dumbfounded.

That was strange, leaving the teleport formation aside, the communication lithograph was made by Orsted himself.

She did help out in its production, but it certainly wasn't defective. It couldn't possibly stop working just like... that.

"It's obvious."

But Eris wasn't confused.

Did she know the cause of the malfunction?

Roxy looked at Eris with the intention of hearing her out.

Eris folded her arms, spread her legs apart, looked down on the communication lithograph, and spoke.

"Something happened!"

"That's... if something didn't happen, then this..."

As she was about to complete her sentence, Roxy realized.

Something happened.

Where?

Not here.

There was no indication that anyone came here. The entrance was properly concealed, there wasn't any indication that any human or monster had come here.

Then, somewhere but not here.

Teleportation magic formations and communication lithographs only work in pairs.

If one of the pair disappears then the other will automatically stop working.

There were no abnormalities in this one.

Then, the other one?

"Something happened at Magic City Sharia...?"

The first thing that came to Roxy's mind was Lara's face.

And then, one by one, the other children's faces.

Lucy, Arus, and Sieg.

And then the ones who were taking care of them, Lilia and Zenith.

If something strange happened in the city, then they...

".....Ngh!"

She stood up in a hurry and started running towards the entrance of the cave.

She thought that if the one here didn't work, then the other magic formation will...

But after several steps, her feet came to a halt.

What if she was on the enemy's side and attacked the office in Magic City Sharia?

What would happen to the other magic formations?

She would obviously not leave them alone.

She would destroy each and every one of them.

“What should I do... What should be done...”

Should she ask for someone’s help?

According to the last message, Orsted wasn’t in Sharia right now.

Was there someone to protect them from the attack that came...?

“Roxy!”

On Eris’s shout, Roxy suddenly turned herself.

“Please explain the situation!”

“...The teleportation magic formation and communication lithograph have been suspended.

The one over here doesn’t have any problems, it’s highly likely that Orsted’s office in Magic City Sharia has been attacked.

There’s also the possibility that our house came under the attack as well.

There’s no one at the house who...”

“I see.”

Listening halfway through it, Eris stood up.

“Does Rudeus know about this?”

“I wonder. He may know or may not know.”



And then Eris stopped moving momentarily.
Without changing her pose.
While pulling her chin up, she closed her lips to make a ‘^’.
But she suddenly opened her jaw.
As if she had found her answer.

“Leave the house to Sylphy, it’ll be alright!”
“Umm... but she’s at Sword God’s place...”
“Sylphy said that she would protect the house whenever Rudeus was away. That’s why, it’s alright!”
“...”

That’s absurd, no matter how you put it...
As she thought that, Roxy suddenly changed her mindset.
She didn’t know just when the teleport formation stopped working.
But Sylphy wasn’t using the teleport formation at the office.
She was moving using an old teleport method.
So even if she couldn’t come to Biheiril Kingdom, she would at least be able to go back to Sharia.
There was nothing she could do but rely on Sylphy.

“.....That’s true.”

And then, there’s Perugia as well.
Even though he’s harsh against Roxy who’s a demon, he’s still close with Rudeus and even named Sieg himself.
It’s not clear what he will do, but in the house is the flute to summon Perugia’s subordinates.
Lilia could use it if something were to happen.

It’s not just that.
Something like this might’ve happened; that’s why Rudeus summoned Leo.

If Leo wasn't able to do anything, then there would be no meaning in his summoning.
There's still a lot of relief materials.

There was also the mercenary group, the engineers from Zanoba's firm, and the teachers at the Magic University would also help if it came to that.

She reassured herself by thinking that.

There was no choice but to.

Since there's nothing that Eris and Roxy can do right now.

"Then, let's go!"

"That's right. Let's go."

They can't do anything while staying here.

There was no need for them to say what they had to do right now.

They just have to make sure to send the info which they held.

Of course, they were worried about the children in Magic City Sharia.

It's not just Roxy, even Eris had the impulse of running back to the house, and if she could...

Swallowing up that impulse, the two of them started to move.

Their destination was where Rudeus was.

It was the Supard village.

3

At the same time, on the other side.

Zanoba was getting impatient.

Rudeus was not coming back.

The subjugation force was steadily preparing themselves, their time of departure was drawing close.

Rudeus had triumphantly taken the two soldiers to the Supard village.

It was Master, so he would somehow be able to entice the two soldiers and negotiate peace, or so Zanoba was thinking.

Did the negotiations fall apart?

But the communication lithograph did say that <Persuasion was a success>.

It was signed by Orsted, so there's no room for doubt.

Then, why?

Perhaps, were they attacked by an assassin on the way?

At the very least, they might've gotten into trouble midway and were forced to stay there.

It can't be that they're sightseeing the Second City now that everything's safe... no it couldn't be.

But at this rate, the subjugation force will depart in around ten days.

Should he wait?

Should he move?

The perplexed Zanoba decided to move.

Using the teleport formation to move to Supard village and ascertain the situation.

After deciding that, Zanoba acted fast.

He left the inn, taking Julie and Ginger with him.

Taking the luggage, he hurried towards the hut where the teleport formation was set up.

"Ngh... this is..."

However, the teleport formation and communication lithograph had lost their light.

Zanoba immediately realized what had happened.

That some kind of accident happened at the office.

After thinking for several seconds, Zanoba came to a conclusion.

"Ginger!"

“Yes!”

“We’ll head towards the Supard village!”

“Roger!... and Second City Irel?”

“Not through there. If there’s an enemy, they’ll be waiting there.”

Zanoba got out.

And put his hand in his back pocket and took out something.

It was the flute.

A golden flute with a symbol of a dragon.

He blew the flute in no time.

The breath made *fuuuu* sound.

But nothing happened.

No one came.

“Kuh, looks like it’s still far. Ginger! Julie! Were there any Seven Great World Power stone monuments around here!?”

“I don’t remember one!”

“I haven’t seen one!”

People who could use the teleport formation aren’t limited to one.

He had thought of contacting Perugia and asking for his help, however...

“It can’t be helped! If you find one on the way, let me know! Let’s head towards the Supard village this instant!”

“Yes!”

The three of them started moving towards it.

Towards the Supard village.

traitorAIZEN: END of LN vol.24

AUTHOR'S Q&A 4

Author : Stop with the quarrelling. Everyone has a right to speak. It's fine if you leave your impressions regarding the volume but restrain your comments when you see other people's thoughts.

Also, while writing a critical impression, try to be indirect about it instead of offensive!

Q. Even though Rudeus and Co. have been overwhelmed and they've got themselves in a disadvantageous situation, yet what is this?

This earth-shattering sense of security.

Even though whenever things look good I feel nothing but uneasiness. LOL

A. You get anxious the first time you go up. That's a roller coaster.

Q. Did Hitogami send in North God and Sword God because he couldn't see the King's or Ruijerd's future, realizing that maybe Rudeus or the president had interfered?

A. This wasn't Hitogami's but Gisu's scheme.

Q. If you think about it, the president could've defeated Hitogami if he was a bit younger before even Rudeus came.

A. The president isn't young enough to form a team.

Q. So Zanoba had that gofer calling flute, eh? LOL

A. Come flying when I call for you! At the speed of light, that is!

Q. Though this is unrelated, 2714 pages of impression columns are crazy.

A. It's a well-appreciated story.

Q. Let's try to compare Gull-san and Alek with professional gamers.

"This game(Rudi) is really worth playing, ain't it? So that's how you captured that difficult place."

Were the pro Gull-san and Alek happy after being told about the capture method? On top of that, after they implemented it did they think "What is this? This was trivial."? Or so I've wanted to say that.

A. I wonder. I can't really say anything since I don't know much about pros, but if a gamer is told to "Do this action(measure) against this character(Rudi)!" then there would be many who would actually try to do it.

And then after victory, I don't think they'll think of it as 'Trivial' but rather 'Even without using this strategy I would've won.'

Q. I think there's a problem in patternizing.

I think there's no need for an event where everything goes without any hitch when you're crushing the plan of a cautious person.

For example, Rudi was cautious but as a result of being overcautious it backfired on him. Would that augmentation suffice for your depiction?

A. Let's see.

Even in the previous chapter I reconsidered doing this or that but for some reason I can't do it when writing.....

No matter what I do, I want to bring out the feeling that when a mistake happens-it happens, and when a success happens-it happens.

CHAPTER 11

BOTTOM OF THE EARTH DRAGON VALLEY

1

When I regained my consciousness, I found myself in the white dimension.
A feeling of powerlessness filled my body, as it transformed into its former vessel.
It was somehow nostalgic.
And then, a sense of defeat assailed me simultaneously.

I was defeated.
Lured in with Ruijerd as a bait.
My guard lowered with the defeat of Dark King Vita.
Growing overconfident after discovering Gisu's whereabouts and hunting him all over the Biheiril Kingdom.
And then inviting both North God and Sword God with open arms.
Finally, I acted alone and was caught in the consequences, and now I'm in such a sorry state.
A sigh came forth thinking about it all.

“.....”

Gisu planned it well.
I didn't know that if you cut the arms off from the base, one would be unable to use magic.
The choice of location was also clever.
I certainly couldn't summon the MK. I on top of the bridge.
He must have chosen that place before the battle started.
Roxy has been working on a system that would somehow work without expanding the magic circle, but Gisu doesn't know that...

I probably wouldn't have lost to those two if I had fought them with MK. II.

Not to mention, it looked like those two hadn't even thought that the bridge wouldn't be able to withstand MK. II's force.

But if you think about it like that, there was an escape route below it...

“.....”

In the end, just where was Gisu?

Was he there disguised as the King of the Biheiril Kingdom?

His voice was different though... well, if it's Gisu, he would have been able to deal with that somehow.

After all, with your support, wouldn't anything be possible?

Wait.

Speaking of suspicion, Sándor too was quite suspicious.

His face, voice, and physique didn't resemble Gisu's in the slightest, was it because of the magic tool?

It's highly likely since Magic tools exist.

He probably slipped into Asura Kingdom from the get go and restrained the Golden Knight leader.

He was awfully accustomed to intelligence gathering, so the probability is high.

“.....”

Not to mention, occurrences like this are repetitive these days.

Using dreams to attack the mind.

It was like that with Dark King Vita too.

Ah, perhaps you have a slime-like appearance as well?

That mosaic guise of yours isn't to hide your identity but it is how you originally look, or something?

“.....”

Hey--, Hey!

Say something already.

Wouldn't I look like a fool if I keep talking alone?

Now that I've been defeated, at least tell me all of your secrets as you laugh.

Isn't that how you do things?

Patting my shoulder and saying "I appreciate your efforts, you persevered but it's my win, a pity isn't it? De~yufufu" won't you do that?

Hey! come on!, I'll sock you hard in my final moments.

".....Just die."

As I said, I'm already dead.

I mean, what happened Hitogami-chan?

Somehow the quality of your mosaic looks bad today.

Are you feeling down?

"My future changes every time you move."

Obviously, that is the only reason I'm moving.

"I'm constantly observing my own future. I'm watching my far distant future."

Yeah, I know that.

Future sight, was it?

If I recall correctly, a maximum of 3 people.

Uhh? You can look at the futures of 3 people, was it?

"Three? I can look even more than that. But I'm unable to take my eyes off from my own future. That's why it's three."

...So most of your powers get consumed into watching your own future, eh?

“My future is pitch dark. It started to darken from that moment on.”

A very bleak future, huh?

“There was only Orsted at the beginning. But he was just a small fry. Not my enemy. I would absolutely not lose to that ridiculous simpleton.”

Simpleton, huh...

Well, even Orsted has made some minor faults here and there.

Just recently he was silent about the Supard race as well.

I'm not in any position to criticize him though.

“But from that moment on, it came to be that one man found himself next to Orsted. I don't know that man. A complete anomaly. He's probably not of this world. It only became a little darker at that time.”

Ah.

Perhaps he might be talking about Nanahoshi's boyfriend.

His name was... I forgot.

“But it immediately increased with one more. A woman. After that, my future became dark and fell silent.”

“As you kept moving, the number of comrades increased around Orsted.”

“And each time you moved, my future became darker.”

“It's already pitch black now.”

Then that means, whatever I did was not in vain?

“No, everything was in vain. I'll render it all futile.”

Oh, so edgy.

But if we assume that I'm already dead, then there's nothing much to do.

“If you die, I can still make it.
That future is based on one person, after all.
I can overturn it if I kill the person with strong fate.
That’s how I’ve been doing it until now.”

Would you prefer that I beg for my life...?
Should I say ‘Please at least spare my family somehow’ while prostrating myself?
I guess it would be impossible considering the circumstances though.

“Die.”

“Die. Die.”

Saying 'die, die' like that. Are you an elementary schooler or something?

“Just die, Rudeus.”

Listen to me.

2

I woke up.

The worst wake up ever.

If I'm told to die, die like that right in front of me, then I'll obviously be worried.

But well, even if he said 'to die' like that, he won't say 'I'll kill you', though. I can understand where Hitogami's reliance upon others comes from or rather, how should I put it?

He won't do his work by himself.

Just gives the instructions from above.

An unpleasant guy to deal with.

At any rate.

“I'm alive?”

I surely considered myself dead.

Magic Armor <MK. II> held a lot of power.

But I was just a lump of living flesh and blood; I fainted.

At that height no less.

I didn't think I would've been able to withstand the fall.

However, now that I've woken up like this, the question remains whether I did withstand it.

Maybe something cushioned my fall?

It didn't look like there were any trees...

In any case, you've given birth to a robust boy, O-Paul-san, O-Zenith-san, thank you very much.

“.....Ngh.”

I rose up.

The surroundings were gloomy. Was it a cave?

I suddenly felt something out of place.

What did I do just now to raise myself up?

Straining my abdominal muscles, pressing my elbow against.....

“Huh? My arms are here.”

Both my arms that should've been cut off by Sword God were sticking to me for some reason.

I don't remember myself having regeneration...

I stared at the arms while thinking that.

“Woah! What the hell...”

My hands were pitch black.

Similar to obsidian, jet black arms.

However, they freely moved around as my nerve impulses passed through them.

Raising my arm to look up to its shoulder part, the black arm had taken root at the side of the base of my shoulder, just like a plant.

It was a little gross.

Not to mention, it looked like I was somehow striped out of Magic Armor <MK. II> as well.

I didn't have the bottom parts either.

I'm only wearing a pair of underpants below.

Incidentally, bandages were wrapped throughout my body.

Blood was spread apart at my side.

Probably first-aid treatment.

So a person who can't use healing magic saved me, eh?

Which means, these arms were also because of that person?

“...Ah.”

When I looked around my surroundings, my clothes were all folded up.

Moreover... What the!... An arm rolled over on the side.

A freshly cut raw arm.

Ah, that arm's mine, isn't it?

The dragon bracelet was stuck on it.

“Ouch...”

When I tried to move in haste, pain ran through my entire body.

I immediately casted healing magic and cured the wound.

And then I removed the bracelet from the raw arm and put it on my black arm.

It's working... right?

“Where is this?”

I stood up as I expressed my curiosity.

While starting a fire in the palm of my hand, I illuminated the surroundings.

Its extent was 5 metres in all directions. The wall was made out of earth.

Looking at the ceiling, I found that it was definitely a cave.

I was laid to rest on top of the cloth or something that was spread out at the most inner part of the cave.

This cloth... was it a mantle?

“.....”

For now, let's go towards the cave's exit in order to ascertain the location.

The cave was curved, but I saw the light at once.

The exit was there.

However, someone was standing at the exit.

Having a large back.

And a huge armor that matched his physique.

He slowly turned around and raised his helmet's visor as I approached him.

A face that I recognized came into sight.

“Doga...”

“...Yup.”

“Did you save me?”

“I immediately leaped in... when I saw you... falling down the bridge. You... fainted. I carried you back, but... the armor was heavy so... I stripped you. I brought you here and... treated you.”

So he's the one who saved me.

Leaping inside the valley like that...

Uuu, sorry Doga.

Sorry for saying that you didn't stand out much and that it would've been fine without

you.

"I see, thank you, you're my lifesaver. Sorry, I acted alone. I let my guard down."

"...Yup. It was Sándor's... order, that's why."

Doga said that and let out a weak smile.

Even if it was an order, he still protected me the whole time when he was told to do so.

That's a good guy, isn't it?

Why did I even decide to guard those two? That was really absurd of me.

"Were these arms also yours?"

As I raised my black arms for him to look, he shook his head.

"When I found you... you were inside... some type of cocoon... when I opened it... the cocoon... became arms."

.....?

I was inside a cocoon and that cocoon became my arms?

Apart from the fact that the cocoon became my arms, then just what was the cocoon?

Did I carry something like these arms that are adhered to me like this?

As I pondered while looking at my arms, Doga said with an uneasy face.

"I found... one of your... former hands. I looked for... the second one but... couldn't find it. Probably got eaten. Sorry."

"Ah, not at all, it's fine."

Since I can grow them back anytime using healing magic.

.....If these black arms can be disconnected, that is.

"Where are we?"

"Bottom of the valley... the... deepest spot."

"I see... How much time has passed?"

"Don't know. Here... the sun rays... don't come. I think that... 2-3 days or more... may have passed."

Doga moved out of my way as he said that.

Thereupon, light leaped into my eyes.

A dim slightly blue light.

Besides the cave, there were many things like glittering moss and bright mushrooms growing in crowds.

Those were illuminating the surroundings.

However, that much wasn't enough to catch one's eye.

Outside the cave.

As if blocking the cave's entrance, there were three corpses.

Creatures possessing dinosaur like carapaces.

The earth dragons.

Also, why were there three corpses lying over next to each other?

"...Is this... your doing?"

"Yup. I... protected... Rudeus."

Now that I looked at it, Doga's axe was painted bright red with blood.

Earth dragon's blood, eh?

Nevertheless, to defeat them alone.

That's amazing.

I might've underestimated him a little bit.

If I recall, was it the North God or Sword God who said that?

"You're a North Emperor, right?"

"Yup. Master said that... I was still... inexperienced, but... monster hunting... is my

specialty.

Who was it? Who said Doga wasn't useful?

Didn't Ariel send a proper war potential who is really useful?

Sorry, it was me.

I seriously underestimated him!

"I see... that's amazing."

"Yup."

When I praised him, he smiled delightfully.

But if Doga was a North Emperor, that means...

"And Sándor?"

"...I... can't say."

"I see."

Well, I may have some idea.

When we return, I'll press him about it.

"Now, how do we get out from this place...?"

At any rate, returning back at once was the utmost priority.

Sword God with North God.

The enemy was powerful and in disguise.

Perhaps no one has even realized that I was defeated.

Thus, if they were the enemies, then the subjugation force was coming.

A force with the intention of destroying the Supard race will be coming.

The subjugation force may consist of 100-200 people that can be dealt with somehow, but it's a different story if North God and Sword God are mixed within them.

We must stop them.

“...For now, take me to the place where I fell. I want to recover the armor. Since there might be some useful scrolls that are still left there.”

“Yup.”

As Doga nodded, he walked forward.

While I followed his reliable back.

3

We arrived relatively quickly where the Magic Armor was.

Defeated two earth dragons on our way.

Both of them were defeated with just one blow from Doga.

It was just one blow.

The head of the earth dragon that was lying in wait for ambush was split open with just one swing from that huge axe.

Reliable indeed.

Recalling the fight with the invisible wolf, he looked weak in underhanded tricks, but I assessed that he wouldn't be defeated when it came to power confrontation.

Well, Doga's just fine though...

“Hmm...”

The Magic Armor had completely broken apart.

Especially the Scroll Vernier on the back was completely crushed.

All of the scroll bundles were cut right in half.

On top of that, it was a huge mess considering how my blood was splattered within the vernier. It's useless now.

Even though I received this from Roxy, who went through great pains to make it...

Looks like even the Magic Armor with its defensive armament wasn't of much use against a Sword God class.

But I guess that the sword was brittle.

The sword simply broke as it cut halfway into the armor

It was an ordinary sword by the looks of it.

Gull Farion had plenty of cursed swords, but for the sake of camouflage, he didn't bring one.

If he had brought his favorite sword along, the sword wouldn't have stopped at just the armor and would've cut me in two equal parts.

It's not a very appealing story.

But then again, would Orsted or Cliff have noticed if he brought those things along...?

"We can't use this anymore."

Looks like I have no choice but to throw away the Scroll Vernier that Roxy made for me.

Even though Roxy made this for me, and went through great pains to make it...

I'll at least come back later to recover it.

The main unit of the armor could still move.

One arm-part still remained in relation to the foot-parts which were unscathed.

It wasn't perfect, but...

Still, it's a pain that I can't make use of the summoning scrolls for the Magic Armor.

Even though I have to fight those two, I can't become their opponent without it.

I must fetch the reserves from the office as soon as I reach the Supard village.

It would be nice if I had the time for that.

".....Nh?"

While removing the Scroll Vernier from the armor, one of the scrolls along with the piece of sword that was sticking into it fell.

No, it wasn't a scroll.

It was a box.

It's the box that I put in the vernier since it had the perfect spot for it.

It's as big as a standard dictionary.

Engraved with ominous patterns of demons, a box that might curse anyone who opened it.

“The box I received from Atofe...”

The box I was told to open when I was in a pinch.

Looks like the sword had cut on its way and fractured it.

It had been cut halfway through.

“.....”

I timidly opened it and looked inside.

There was nothing inside.

It was empty.

No, there's something written on the bottom of it.

<This black lump of meat is a part of the Immortal Demon Lord Atofe's body. It will protect the owner when caught in a predicament. As if carefully treating the owner>

Black lump of meat...

I looked at my arms as I thought that.

...Don't tell me, these arms were that?

I didn't remember opening it but, if we think that Gull Farion's strike cracked the box, from there it sensed me being in danger, protected me from the fall, leeches onto my arms like a parasite, and stopped my bleeding, then.....

Is that what happened.....?

“Atofe-sama... Thank you very much!”

The person who would reply wasn't there.

But I expressed my gratitude to that violent demon lord from the bottom of my heart anyway.

Kowtowing in the east direction as my gratitude.^[38]

She might be on the move right now, but if I meet her, I'll treat her to some delicious alcohol.

“Alright, let's head back.”

The war was drawing close.

I must return quickly.

4

Although the situation was expected, we couldn't climb up the cliff.

When ascending to some extent with earth magic, the mushroom and moss area disappeared, making the surroundings pitch black.

Within that complete darkness, the ones who started attacking us were a flock of earth dragons.

The earth dragons kept coming in succession from left and right.

Before those overwhelming numbers, we were forced to retreat.

On top of the scaffold made using earth magic, no less than ten earth dragons swooped down upon us like lizards from within the darkness.

We were somehow able to deal with those, but the dragons kept coming using magic as a matter of course.

From above and below and even the walls, spears of earth came flying at us; we couldn't break through.

As one would expect of the thing called dragons.

“Fuuu...”

We tried to test one thing or another several times after that.

We tried shooting ourselves from a catapult and reaching the top in one go, while hiding our presence using earth magic and trying to rise up to the top.

But we were hindered by the earth dragons either way.

They were unexpectedly quick-witted and agile, persistent indeed.

The catapult shooting was intercepted midway and even if we hid our presence, we were attacked eventually.

Incidentally, once they had locked onto us, they followed us everywhere.

When we returned back to the place where mushrooms and moss were growing, most of them stopped their pursuit.

Looks like they hated this area for some reason.

Whether these mushrooms were not good or they didn't consider this area as their turf.

Nope, several still pursued us.

It's probably not absolutely impossible to come to this place.

"What to do now... I mean, like, Doga, you came down here pretty easily."

"...Yup. During descent, they... didn't attack... much."

"Is that so... well, it was like that."

The earth dragons were insensitive to the people coming from above and sensitive to people coming from below.

I knew that information.

But watching it happen right before my eyes was a first.

This was really over the line.

They had a will-power like that of a chicken.

Should I rather use a vast range of magic to blow them all off?

No, even if I did that, we'll just be buried under the rubble.

The valley was extensively deep.

The earth dragons could use earth magic at will.

There wouldn't be much significance to it even if we were to exterminate several tens of them.

I didn't want to waste large quantities of mana because I still had to fight the North God and Sword God.

As I'm sitting here confused, the North God's and Sword God's daggers may reach the Supard Village at any time.

It wouldn't be strange if they were headed to a different direction as well.

At the very least, Zanoba's location has probably been exposed already.

They might already have been done in.

I'm impatient.

Still, let's calm down, the situation won't change for better if I'm impatient.

But, the earth dragons above, that I looked at with my clairvoyance, were still vigilant of us who came down here.

“Is there some place where they are in a lesser quantity?”

“...Yup.”

We set out thusly.

It wasn't dark at our feet thanks to the mushrooms and moss.

There were not only the earth dragons that were attacking us, but also insects as big as humans, like a long-horned beetle and centipedes.

Looks like these dragons lived off by eating these insects.

I just saw a dragon holding an insect in its mouth and climbing to the top.

No sooner than that, I saw the satisfied dragon falling to its death and being surrounded by the insects.

All the fodder was below, something dropping from above rarely ever happened.

It's no wonder that the dragons were only vigilant of the things below.

Looks like there was a strange food chain in this place.

“ ... ”

However, I've been thinking as I was walking.

“It's easier to walk on this path.”

The path at the bottom of valley was flatter than expected.

There were places with huge mushrooms or fallings rocks and big stones that were blocking us.

But overall it was easier to walk because it was flat.

I was getting a nostalgic feeling with this easy walk.

“...Yup, it feels just like... the Red Dragon Jaw.”

“Ah!”

Those unpleasant heart-warming memories of Orsted still remained!

But it was certainly like that.

Red Dragon Upper Jaw, Lower Jaw, and Holy Sword Highway.

Mushrooms and moss were hard to find, but I felt like this when I walked around those areas.

“Then, does that mean someone built this...?”

But there weren't any monsters on those roads.

Which means, someone built it and called the earth dragons in here...

No, wait.

If I recall correctly, wasn't there a story in which it was stated that Laplace called the dragons in the Central Continent?

Which means, this road too was possibly made by Laplace.

For what purpose?

“.....”

Let's put that aside for now.

I should look for a place to climb up rather than that.

Topographically speaking, isn't there any place where the earth dragons don't make nests?

I had been looking up at the top using clairvoyance since some time ago, and I could see many holes in the cliff of the valley since it had good durability.

Just like a street of multistory buildings built without any gaps.

I wouldn't expect them to all be in one hole, but there should be at least a considerable amount of dragons there.

One thousand or two thousand.

Among them, the underlings in particular, would go down and look for food.

But I can't imagine that there would be enough food to support them all.

But in this world, a mismatch of the amount of food and magic beasts was a daily occurrence.

...I wonder if there's something they used to climb to the top?

No, what would they use?

If they fell, they wouldn't get up again.

The Earth Dragon Valley.

'Don't fall down there' or so they say, but I guess I underestimated a bit...

"Rudeus."

"Hmm, an enemy?"

I took a stance as if a new insect had came out, but Doga pointed his finger.

There was only a wall in that direction.

No, it was not.

It was hard to see because of the shadow of the mushrooms, but there was a hole.

The hole itself had frequent gaps at its base, but this hole was different from the others.

There were stairs.

Stairs had been attached.

Not going up, stairs leading downwards.

"..."

After all this, to go downwards...

Such a thought crossed my mind.

"Oh?"

But in the next instant, my hand moved by itself.
My right hand pointed right at the hole.
Almost as if it belonged there.

“Atofe-sama, is that the exit...?”

The part of Afote’s body didn’t answer.
But it was pointing.
As if it was addicted to being inside.

“Well then.”

Even if I kept walking, it didn’t seem like we would find anywhere to climb up...
It was not as if this valley continued forever.
If we kept going, we would probably just reach a dead end.
Turning back here and looking for the other side was time consuming as well.
Then, if you’re curious about something, why not examine everything about it?

“Let’s try going down.”

“Yup.”

Doga nodded without hesitation.
He also might have guessed something upon seeing this staircase.
And so, we began down the dark stairs.

5

Right at the bottom of the stairs, there was a huge altar.
A huge altar.
I wonder if there’s any other way to put it.
It was a huge cave covered with mushrooms and moss.

And as if to support it, there were two large sculpted pillars.

In between them, there was a rack which looked as if it was cut out from stone, and the interior of that rack looked like a mural which was decorated with meticulous engravings.

Were those dragons depicted in that mural?

There were lots of things drawn all over the place and it was hard to see in the dark.

But I felt like that I've seen this somewhere before.

Where was it?

"Are these the ruins of the Dragon Race?"

That was it.

The teleportation ruins.

It was a lot similar to that place.

These writings were also similar to those in the Sky Fortress.

If that's the case, I wonder if a teleportation magic formation is here.

But even if there was any, using it would only be a gamble.

Should I jump aboard that teleportation magic formation to get out of here not knowing where I'll end up?

Even though the place I wanted to go was right above me.

No, it's too early to decide that.

Looking around, there was no other room besides the one with this altar.

Besides, the Atofe-hand wasn't pointing towards this thing.

It was pointing towards the mural.

Towards the small stone shelf below the mural.

No, it only looked small because of how big the mural was; it wasn't actually all that small.

But Afote's hand was, without a doubt, pointing there.

" ... "

Suddenly, Afote's face floated into my mind.

I wonder if it's ok to follow that unintelligent Demon Lord's advice.

I felt that unease for a moment.

But my legs moved.

To where the Afote-hand was pointing, to stand in front of the shelf.

On it, several bottles were lined up.

Translucent opened bottles.

And in the centre, a translucent crystal-ball like thing was fixed.

"Don't tell me there's liquor inside."

While thinking that, I tried lifting one of the bottles.

There was a dragon pattern carved on it.

I was sure if I were to show it around Zanoba, he'd start talking about its value.

By the way, it was empty.

"...So what am I supposed to do with this?"

I ask the Afote-hand

No reply.

But, instead, the Afote-hand reached out.

Going past the bottle, for the translucent crystal.

The moment my hand touched the crystal, I regained control of it.

"..."

What was that?

Is it trying to tell me something?

The bottle, the crystal, and the altar.

It seemed some kind of RPG puzzle had started.

“Rudeus, there.”

Suddenly, Doga, who was behind me, pointed above my head.

When I looked, I saw that the tops of the giant pillars supporting the altar were glowing blue.

No, that wasn't it.

It was not that the pillars were glowing but some kind of blue thing that was oozing out of the top of the pillars was glowing.

And then it came down very fast and started accumulating in a saucer-like spot below the altar.

It seemed that this crystal ball——actually, this entire altar was a magic tool.

A magic tool that spouted blue liquid.

However, the light was mixing with the surrounding moss and mushrooms.

“So, I wonder what this liquid is.”

I wonder if I should drink it.

Although it's giving off a bad-looking colour...

No, the fact that it came together with a bottle means that it would have to be used somewhere.

You take the water in the bottle, you take it somewhere and pour it into some device, the device activates and opens the door for you to obtain the legendary sword or the like.

I don't need a sword.

“Isn't it this?”

Doga was pointing towards the mural.

There, a huge mural was drawn.

It depicted humans and earth dragons.

When the magic tool was activated, the structure that the blue liquid flowed into made a part of it shine exposing its whole aspect.

The mural seemed to indicate the flow of the blue liquid.

At the top was the altar, and below that, a person fetching the blue liquid with a bottle was drawn.

The person holding the bottle sprinkled it on the surrounding people.

Those that had been covered in the blue liquid took up swords and spears and hunted the earth dragons and other unknown creatures from behind.

Going off what I can see here, this liquid was made to hunt the earth dragons.

There also seemed to be something written next to the drawing, but I can't read it.

It seemed a little different from the writing of the Dragon race.

"Aah, but..."

But I suddenly thought of something.

The dragons don't come to this part of the valley.

Blue moss, blue mushrooms.

And blue liquid.

It was possible that humans once lived here.

And those humans used this blue liquid to drive the earth dragons away.

The earth dragons hate whatever is in this blue liquid.

And that component is also in the blue moss and mushrooms.

No, looking at the mural, the humans attacked the earth dragons from behind and from below.

From below those sensitive earth dragons...

...Maybe they can't see it.

The earth dragons can't see the things which emit this blue light.

Which is why they don't come here much.

So coating your entire body in it makes it so the earth dragons can't see you?

"...Should we give it a try?"

I turn back and ask Doga.
I did not give an explanation.

“Yup.”

But Doga nodded as if it were obvious.

6

After a while, we were at the top of the valley.

We escaped.

From the Valley of the Earth Dragons.

We came out of the cave with our bodies covered in the contents of the bottle.

After that, using earth magic, I slowly raised us up.

Thinking that we might be found if we went too fast, I went up slowly.

It was bingo.

The earth dragons, looking at us giving off blue light, gave no reaction.

Whether they couldn't see us, or didn't recognize us as food.

All we did was huddle together and stay still on the platform.

It was for about an hour.

As a result of our slow elevation, the night sky was visible.

Looks like it was currently night.

In front of the somehow impressive moon, we landed on the edge of the valley.

“We did it.”

“Yup!”

I slapped Doga on the back and he nodded happily.

It took a while, but the escape was a success.

We immediately headed for the Supard village to tell them about the Sword God and

North God.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 5

Q. I've been thinking this for a while now but aren't you misunderstanding the meaning of 'not a very appealing'?

A. It's not a misunderstanding but rather the phenomenon that I wanted to write 'horrifying' but for some reason ended up writing 'not a very appealing'.

Q. Now that he has the black arms there's no need for the prosthetic arms, right?

I don't think it's bad but, does that mean if he's locked in a King-class barrier now then he won't be able to escape?

A. As long as one prosthetic arm remains, it's possible.

Q. The current situation is that a part of Atofe is functioning like an arm but would he be able to use magic like usual?

A. He seemed to be using it.

Q. Why did the Atofe-hand know about the ruins?

A. Maybe the Atofe-hand simply pointed towards it instinctively or maybe it wanted to touch the equipment out of mere curiosity.

Q. A North Emperor who is weak in underhanded tricks. Would he be deemed as a heretic in the school?

A. It's not like that.

Since it's a school which has developed the best way to fight.

Ah, perhaps using an axe instead of a sword is heresy.

Q. Rudeus said that his hands looked like obsidian but how about their hardness? Are they as hard as stone? Or are they flesh and blood?

A. They are as hard as a stone but flexible and have warmth, so that he can stroke it whenever he wants(The rest is omitted.)

Q. Why are there so many North God Style followers as compared to Sword God style?

A. The top users of the North God style are mostly the immortal demon tribe, to begin with it's called the school which hates dying, so there's a lot.

Q. Who's the one at the 7th rank of the Seven Great World Powers? The 2nd Gen or the 3rd Gen?

A. The 3rd Gen.

Q. Was cutting both the arms Gisu's own idea? Or was it Hitogami's suggestion?

A. It was Gisu's idea.

Q. It was only O-Zenith-san who gave birth to such a robust body, O-Paul-san only inserted the seeds I guess...

A. Th-They raised a robust body!

Q. What if we put the Atofe-hand on head, would it become hair? If your head is in crisis then Atofe-hair is for you!

A. It'll probably take brain tissue as nourishment.

CHAPTER 12

LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO WIN

1

When I returned, the conference was reaching its climax.

“The enemy is at our doorstep, we must immediately start our preparations.”

“That’s why I’m saying we should search for Rudeus first!”

Raising her voice almost to the point of shouting was Eris, she was quarreling with Sándor.

Roxy was there as well.

“He has Doga with him. He’ll come back eventually. We should first organize our war potential or set up traps during that time...”

“That good-for-nothing is not useful at all!”

“Despite his appearance, he’s talented.”

“Even if he’s talented, why didn’t you go along with them in the first place!”

“Ugh... that’s...”

They were probably talking about what to do from now on.

Whether to go search for me, or wait for my arbitrary return and attack the enemy.

Far from that.

It looked like Eris was insisting on rescuing me.

I was grateful for that.

“Fine! I’ll just go down there by myself.”

Eris got impatient, stood up, and suddenly turned around.

Only to find me there.

“If you’re going to go down there, then descend the stairs that are in the shadow of mushrooms, go down into the altar, obtain the blue liquid, and then progress forward.”

“Rudeus!”

When I tried guiding her, Eris ran over and hugged me.

With force.

Force that could break my spine.

“I was worried!”

“Sorry.”

When I looked over, Roxy was hugging me as well and the others were sighing with relief.

This response by just looking at me being alive...

I was really grateful.

“...By the way, what’s with those arms of yours?”

“Ah, these are... no, I’ll explain from the beginning. But first...”

While saying that I surveyed my surroundings.

And brought my vision to a halt on a male sitting over there.

“Who are you?”

I spoke to Sándor as I looked at him.

2

North God Kalman the Second.

Alex Ryback.^[39]

The one who defeated the King of the Dragon King, defeated a huge behemoth,

formulated numerous military exploits in various places, and was able to become one of the Seven Great World Powers. The protagonist of that legendary story of the North God.

The one who was known as the world's strongest swordsman just some hundred years ago, and the most prominent person of the North God Style.

I was honestly not that surprised.

I did think about just why such a talented person was here.

But I consented for the most part.

The reason Orsted remained silent about him.

The reason Ariel sent him before Ghyslaine and Isolte.

The reason Doga was a North Emperor.

North God Kalman the Second.

I agreed to that fact.

"Why did you keep quiet?"

"In case of an unlikely event. If Hitogami can read people's minds, I can hide the fact that I'm a Kalman. It was easier to move around as well."

I see.

Hitogami may have extracted most of the information about us when I fell into the valley, but even we didn't know that Kalman is on our side.

.....

"...Really?"

"Nope, it is a little bit of that, but I thought it would be cool if I revealed myself in a time of crisis."

"Very well."

Making a mistake when trying to be cool.

That kind of thing happens a lot really.

"Since they already knew that Doga was a North Emperor, wouldn't it make it all the more futile?"

“Errr... I dare not say that many knew Doga as a North Emperor.”

But it left an adverse effect as a result of that.

If I had known that these two were this strong, I would’ve acted as if hiding from them. No, if it came to that then Sword God and North God would’ve taken a different approach.

“In any case, I’ll be relying on you from now on. Alex-san.”

“But of course. Ah, but, please do keep on calling me Sándor. I want our relationship to stay that way for now.”

After ascertaining Sándor’s identity, we started compiling our intelligence.

Firstly, I brought along Sword God and North God to this village some 10 days ago and was then dropped into the valley.

I didn’t realize it at the bottom of the valley because I fainted, but a lot of time had passed.

A day or two after that. The exact time was unknown, but the teleportation magic formations and communication lithographs all lost their lights.

Roxy and Eris, sensing that something was unusual, came to the Supard village in order to link up with me.

It was also confirmed that the magic formation in the village had lost its light.

Nevertheless, believing that I was still on the move, they decided to wait and see.

The one who confirmed that I was missing was Sándor, who came back before me.

“I kept waiting for Rudeus-dono to come to the Second City, but there was no sign of you returning. The other two soldiers who you took along didn’t return as well.

In spite of that, the rumor that the Supard race were the demons from the Forest of No Return started flowing within the city.

I thought of confirming the situation via the communication lithograph, but it was already too late as the teleport formation in the Second City was destroyed.

At that time, thinking that I was being targeted, I came back to this village while hiding myself.”

Sándor came to the conclusion that I was missing as he returned back to the village.

Was it the Second City? Or the Village of the Earth Dragon Valley?

Thinking that something might have happened around there, Ruijerd, who was still recovering, started his search as the leader.

On investigation, it was found that Doga's and my footprints lead to the side of the valley.

It was likely that we had fallen into the valley.

After realizing that, Ruijerd immediately decided to descend into the valley, but Sándor advised him not to.

There was no way to climb back up the valley once you fell down into it.

It was highly likely that they would be stranded the moment they went down into the valley.

Hence, it was concluded that they would wait until I climbed up by myself since it should be alright as long as Doga was with me.

Well, their judgement was probably right.

Trying to climb up with all those flocks of earth dragons was very difficult, but Doga was there, so he protected me.

"Which reminds me, did you meet up with the information broker?"

And then Sándor who returned to the village.

Information was brought by him.

It was regarding the destruction of the teleport formations.

"We were able to obtain information regarding Gisu from the information broker.

A monkey-faced person was seen heading towards the Capital City Biheiril from Second City Irel, or so I've been informed about his whereabouts."

"So we know nothing?"

"Yes. But just the other day, we were able to confirm that Ogre God Malta showed himself in Second City Irel.

If we're to think that he appeared the day after the teleport formations lost their light, then it's possible that he got into the teleport formation set up in the Second City to

reach Sharia, and from there he destroyed the office.”

“I see.”

There were Roxy and Eris to prove this information.

Both of them arrived just yesterday.

It took them at least 10 days for a journey which normally takes 4 days.

The cause of that was because when these two went through the Capital, a ceremony was being carried out.

That ceremony was the departure of the subjugation force.

The Capital was in revelry regarding the subjugation of the Supard race, and the departure ceremony of the subjugation force was being carried out within that revelry.

Although it was supposed to be carried out a little later.

It's possible that Gisu decided to hasten it after getting the report that I fell into the valley.

Without Orsted's bracelet, Hitogami now knew that I wasn't dead.

Therefore, they decided to attack Orsted as soon as possible before I came out of the valley.

Roxy and Eris did reconnaissance regarding the premature departure of the subjugation force.

Through their reconnaissance, they confirmed that North God and Sword God were participating in it.

However, they kept holding onto their doubt despite the reconnaissance.

Their doubt being: just why have things become like this even though Rudeus should've negotiated?

Why couldn't they see Rudeus?

While pondering about such thoughts, before anyone knew what was going on, the subjugation force left the Capital.

Anyhow, they chased the subjugation force while remaining vigilant.

They were aware of where the force was heading to, so they thought about collecting any kind of information if possible.

But Roxy said that if they kept on following them, after they entered the Second City, it would be dangerous.

So they took a big detour around the town. While passing through the forest, they arrived at the Supard village.

Afterwards, they idly spent a number of days with growing doubts, but they were able to arrive safely at the Supard village.

And that's how it was.

By the way, Eris and Ruijerd had a very deeply moving reunion.

The moment Eris saw Ruijerd, she wanted to jump at him really bad.

She wanted him to look at how strong she had become.

I think that kind of feeling was running throughout her body.

But she firmly kept her patience.

She was not a kid anymore.

She was Eris Greyrat, a warrior acknowledged by Ruijerd.

As a warrior, with Ruijerd as her Teacher, she mustn't take embarrassing actions.

Warning herself of that fact, with the same usual pose, she spoke.

"Long time no see, Ruijerd. You haven't changed much."

"Yeah, Eris. You've grown so much."

"That's obvious."

They exchanged only a few words.

But that alone made Eris feel nostalgic and proud.

Before, she could only look up to him. And now she had become the same height as him.

And thus she was going into battle with Ruijerd, shoulder-to-shoulder with him.

That's right, Eris was satisfied.

"We don't have much time left. The subjugation force are most likely heading towards our way right now. Soldiers of the ogre race appearing as reinforcements may not be too far in the future as well."

“I understand. Then, I’ll now report from my side.”

I started reporting my part of the story.

That the two soldiers were North God and Sword God.

That they were using the same ring as mine to disguise themselves.

And thus, that Gisu was probably using it as well so that he wouldn’t be found out.

That after falling into the valley, I was saved by a hair’s breadth thanks to Doga and Atofe-hand.

During that time, how I lost Orsted’s bracelet and Hitogami was able to look at me.

How I was finally able to get out of the valley and came back here.

“Rudeus.”

After I had spoken everything, Eris said with a low voice.

“I’ll deal with Gull Farion.”

Eris said as she looked at my arm’s base.

“...Well, let’s talk about it together bearing that in mind.

I’m happy that you want to fight him as an opponent, but don’t rush in alone. You don’t want to end up like me, right?”

Now then, let’s sort things out.

Firstly, it’s Gisu. There’s no doubt that he’s in a position to manipulate the subjugation force to some extent.

The most likely candidate would be the King, Gisu might be disguised as him.

I don’t know who the apostle was, but aside from Gisu, there were North God, Sword God, and Ogre God.

North God and Sword God were able to do some reconnaissance of the Supard village thanks to the disguise ring.

Ogre God attacked the office along with Gisu, and they were able to snatch away our

escape routes.

And thus, they were currently heading towards the Supard village with the subjugation force of approximately 100 people strong.

“.....”

Ogre God Malta.

Someone like him was sent into Sharia.

When I thought it over again, my heart was filled with despair.

“What happened to my house...?”

On my inquiry, Roxy casted her eyes down, Eris folded her arms, and Sándor started stroking his chin like he was bothered.

“We don’t know whether the Ogre God returned only after destroying the office, or if he attacked Sharia as well.”

I tried thinking.

If it were me, then what would I have done?

Sharia was completely empty.

Neither I nor Orsted were there.

There was no one who was capable of opposing the Ogre God.

Should we leave it alone?

There was no way we could.

Even in a condition where they had low war potential, they could still attack Sharia because they had nothing to lose.

“.....”

Silence dominated the place.

It felt as if even Orsted had an angry look on him.

I couldn't know for sure with his helmet on though.

"Uh-oh, seems like everyone's in a meeting."

Someone spoke up from near the entrance.

When I turned to look, there was this one guy.

"Zanoba!"

Come to think of it, he was here too.

No, it's not like I forgot!

Of course!

I was just a little bit worried about my house.

"Master, sorry for the delay. I've just arrived."

"No, it's alright. I've only just arrived as well."

Julie and Ginger were behind him.

Both of them were worn-out.

There were bruises all over them, and dark circles below their eyes due to fatigue.

It was the appearance of a person whose mana was on the verge of drying up.

"We had a hard time dealing with an invisible monster on our way. It would have been dangerous if the Supards hadn't come to rescue us."

"I see. Got it, let the two of them rest... No, it should be good to hear them out first. Please sit down at the corner and rest."

As I said that, Ginger and Julie silently entered the lecture hall on their unsteady feet, and sat down near the pillar.

Roxy quickly approached them and started using healing magic.

"Well then, Zanoba. How much information have you grasped on?"

"A rough idea of it. However, I would be grateful if you were to explain the situation

from the beginning.”

Hence, we started explaining from the beginning.

Explaining the same thing over and over again is a pain but it can't be helped.

Since sharing information is of utmost importance.

“And that's how it is, so we are worried about what happened to Sharia and about the subjugation force that's currently heading our way.”

“Hmph.”

Zanoba suddenly started laughing.

Was there something funny?

Don't tell me, he isn't going to say like “All of your family is already here so be relieved, hahaha” right?

“About that, before coming here, I was able to find a Seven Great World Powers stone monument, so I was able to confirm the situation by Arumanfi-dono, subordinate of Perugius-sama.”

“Oh!”

The one who stood up with a joyful look floating on his face wasn't me.

When bathed with the surrounding gazes, he quickly sat down.

It was Sándor.

“My apologies, and then?”

“He said that Master's family is safe.”

An atmosphere of relief flew through the surroundings.

I see, so they're safe.

I wonder if it was Leo's work.

Or were they protected by someone else?

Or did the enemy judge that it would be dangerous to invade Sharia, well-known for its Magic University?

“Nevertheless, if Perugius-dono is backing us, then we can reverse the situation in just one go.”

Sándor was getting slightly excited, surveying the surroundings.

But Zanoba was slightly gloomy.

“No, Perugius-sama is just going to observe this battle. We can’t expect his assistance.”

“Is that so! That gentleman is obstinate at a time like this!”

Sándor threw his head back with an attitude that could be said as exaggerating.

Did he really like Perugius that much?

Is he homo?

No, Sándor is North God the Second.

North God the First and Perugius both were one of the <Three Demon Slaying Heroes> and probably old friends.

Then, it’s possible that he’s an acquaintance of Perugius.

But Sándor was right.

The power of the 12 subordinates of Perugius was useful only at time like this.

Arumanfi of the Bright having the strongest reconnaissance ability and Clearnight of the Roaring Thunder.

By combining the two of them, an opponent’s information can be leaked to all the comrades in an instant.

Of course, it doesn’t stop at just that.

They can even focus on the finest of details of the other subordinates.

But now that he has said he wouldn’t support us, it couldn’t be helped.

Even Orsted’s policy was not to borrow Perugius’ power.

“Ogre God Malta was rough, but he’s a kind person. He won’t attack non-hostiles.”

Muttering those words was Orsted.

“If Sword God or North God had gone, then they probably would've attacked Sharia.”

Orsted's words were calm, but they resounded clearly.

I wonder if it was because of the helmet.

“But Gisu's a coward. By using North God and Sword God, he was able to confirm not only that I was here, but that the teleport formations were here too. So he didn't throw away the possibility that I could have returned back to the office.

Therefore, he used the Ogre God.

It would take some time to defeat the Ogre God even for me.

So it's possible Gisu planned to destroy the teleport formations in various places by himself or through someone else during that time.”

Those were Orsted's opinions.

I see.

Sending along the Ogre God was only a safety plan.

Due to that safety plan, my family was safe.

Rather than that, it looks like they never had any intention to attack Sharia.

I came first as a target, my family after.

Sándor interrupted with a question.

“Then why didn't the three of them go together?”

“That's probably because North God's and Sword God's target is different from Gisu's.”

The North God and Sword God's target.

With those words, the surrounding heads tilted in confusion.

The only head which didn't tilt was Eris's.

“...Gull Farion wants to fight you, right?”

“Aleksander Ryback as well.”

Orsted was in the Supard village.

The moment they found out, the two of them didn't go to Sharia but stayed here.

I could see Gisu starting to lose control of their reins.

If they could, they should've been able to kill me simply by coming down into the valley.

Since Doga was able to come down, it's obvious.

It should've been possible for Aleksander.

Thus, the two of them weren't acting according to Gisu and Hitogami's plan.

"At any rate, I'm glad that my family is all safe. Although I'm worried about the North God, Sword God and Ogre God coming here to attack."

Three God ranks.

Strengthened by a subjugation force 100 or more strong.

The war potential of the Supard race's side was 10 people or so who could still move.

And then, the people that were currently here.

Orsted, Zanoba, Ginger, Julie, Norn, Cliff, Elinalize.

Ruijerd, Roxy, Eris, Sándor, Doga.

There were women and children, and the team of doctors that were currently staying here.

The team of doctors aside, the subjugation force's main target was the Supard race.

If they were to invade, a massacre was likely to happen.

"....."

Ginger, Julie, Norn were out.

Cliff too... he isn't very useful in actual combat.

Even Orsted was out.

Orsted's mana recovery rate was almost next to none.

The more he used it, the more it decreased.

The only reason I was trying to collect subordinates for Orsted was to compensate for

that fact to begin with.

Just because there was a fight coming, I couldn't just go and ask him 'Teacher, please fight.'

If it did come to that, then there would be no choice for him but to go, although it would have been nice if it were only 1 or 2 God ranks. However, fighting 3 of them would definitely take a considerable amount of mana.

Then there's Gisu as well, whose whereabouts were still unknown.

Perhaps there were even more war potential left with him.

Besides, if I were Gisu, I wouldn't send in someone like Sword God, who could easily be defeated by us, to directly attack us.

He definitely has some kind of plan in action.

Orsted was the last resort.

Except when he's needed the most, it should be fine for Orsted to just guard the village.

Three God ranks.

When I factor in that we'll be fighting without Orsted, the fight won't be easy at all.

The fight won't be easy at all, but...

But it's not like we can't win either.

We have 3 powerful contenders like Sword King Eris, North God Sándor, and North Emperor Doga.

If they worked together as our support with me, Zanoba, and Ruijerd then...

The fight won't be easy at all, but... even if we had to run, even if we had to fight, I don't think that it would be absolutely impossible.

This all-out war... I thought it was a little bit one-sided considering it was Gisu.

The entirety of our war potential was concentrated in the Supard village.

It would've been good if they didn't know about me, but when I fell, Hitogami came to know all about my life and death.

There's Orsted here and me too.

In such state of affairs, would he challenge an all-out war...?

No, there was Dark King Vita as well.

Originally, Gisu used Vita and planned to turn Ruijerd and the rest against me.

If I think about it, he would've deceived me as I came to Biheiril Kingdom regarding this matter.

Arriving at the Supard village together with the disguised North God, Sword God, and Ogre God.

If you add Vita and Ruijerd to the 3 God ranks, the 5 of them could've easily killed us. That kind of flow was also possible.

Yeah.

It's possible to say that the reason the opponent was losing control of its pieces was because my time was spent well.

Perhaps even luck had some kind of effect.

I don't know just who or which one was an apostle, but from the information I received, I could feel that Gisu was starting to lose control of both North God and Sword God.

Just how did Gisu influence them in the first place?

Maybe Gisu presented some conditions and they consented to it, and it worked.

Maybe there were some kinds of promises to hold even if it's impossible.

And those terms had just came to light from our talk before.

Sword God's and North God's aim was to fight with Orsted.

They became fully motivated after watching Orsted's appearance.

Gisu had prepared for that reaction.

That's right.

Not to mention, I could see Gisu immediately starting to move after hearing that I fell into the valley.

According to the plans, he would accelerate the departure of the subjugation force to match up with the departure of the soldiers of the Ogre race.

It's conceivable that he would think to settle things up in my absence since it's very difficult to climb up from the valley.

Gisu knew that I wasn't dead.

He thought of mobilizing the subjugation force quickly and dealing a fatal blow to

Orsted.

Before I climbed out of the valley.

But I made it in time.

I was able to return before the battle, and the current situation had calmed down.

It was possible that they still didn't know about Sándor's true identity.

Incidentally, if we're to consider Hitogami's agitation, then...

"...This might be our chance to win."

When I muttered those words, a young man entered the room.

Holding a white spear, it was a Supard soldier.

"The subjugation force has arrived. They're about half a day's distance away."

So they've made it in time.

Though just barely.

3

Earth Dragon Valley.

This place, that was about to become a decisive battleground, was quite deep.

The average width of the valley was 400 metres.

It could exceed 500 metres at wider gaps, but was still 100~200 metres at shorter gaps.

The Supards built a bridge across the shortest gap, and came and went through the opposite side of the forest.

This bridge was smeared with mashed herbs that the invisible wolves disliked the most.

The number of enemies was a lot, but this was the only path.

It was different from a river, in that you can't just easily cross over. It was a place where you have to be careful of where you put your feet.

If we could drop the bridge, we could stall for time.

Moreover, clairvoyance could be used because there were no obstacles unlike in the

forest, and it was within my range.

“Let’s leave the bridge intact.”

Because of that proposal, the bridge was left alone.

If the enemy came crossing over, we could just drop it.

I had felt them firsthand, the difficulties of trying to climb up the valley after falling down into it.

We had the advantage in terms of position.

We didn’t have any time to set up traps, but...

We decided to wait for the enemy on this side.

There were 6 people present.

Me, Eris, Ruijerd, Zanoba, Sándor, and Doga.

The 6 of us were going to keep the 3 God ranks company.

It was decided that the Supards would take care of the subjugation force.

Since Roxy only had one thing to do, she was positioned in the back.

Elinalize and several people of the Supard race were guarding Roxy.

Cliff and the rest were guarding the village.

Well, technically, it was like the combatants were the vanguard and the magicians were deployed in the rear.

When push came to shove, we could carry the wounded to the village and bring them back to the front lines after healing them.

Speaking of healing.

I decided to leave the Atofe-hand as it is.

Time, and the number of scrolls that Roxy and Zanoba were holding was limited right now.

This arm was functioning better than my previous arm, so it’s better to leave it as it is for now. After the war is over, I’ll use a healing scroll to cure it.

Well, it is the Demon Lord-sama’s valuable gift.

I'll be making use of it to my heart's content.

4

After half a day, the subjugation force 100 strong were facing us.

On the opposite side, standing in front of the bridge were 3 vanguards.

Wearing a sword on his waist belt, a middle-aged man.

Sword God Gull Farion.

He had aged quite well, but his skill with the sword hadn't declined at all; that fact was proven to me through my own experience.

Carrying a long sword on his back, a young boy.

North God Kalman the Third.

Aleksander Ryback.

One of the Seven Great World Powers, the limits of his true strength were still obscure.

And with a height of almost 3 metres, having a build similar to a large tree, a globular bell-like choker on his neck, and wearing a tiger-striped rumen on his waist, the red ogre.

Ogre God Malta.

Orsted predicted the reason he didn't attack my family, but we didn't know his true motive.

Perhaps one expression of gratitude was in order for that matter.

But I didn't have any intention to thank him.

He did destroy the office.

Then it was hopeless for the elven receptionist who was in the office.

In the end, I could never remember her name. I'll take revenge for her at least.

"We can't see Gisu, huh?"

Unfortunately, we couldn't see that monkey-face near them.

Was he near but hiding himself?

Or was he waiting in Second City Irel?

At the very least, I couldn't see him with my clairvoyance.

If he did lose the reins, then it was possible that he had already fled, since it was Gisu.

The various soldiers of the subjugation force seemed afraid when looking at the Supards.

Green hair and chalk-like spears.

The very appearance of the demons that come up in fairy-tales were now in front of them.

If we win this war, then I'll give it my all to sell the Ruijerd book in the Biheiril Kingdom.

"There's no need to be afraid!"

The subjugation force were visibly afraid, looking at the Supards, but the 3 God classes were not like that.

"We have an overwhelming amount of personnel!"

North God Kalman the Third was especially full of vitality.

Raising his fist in the air, encouraging his surroundings and shouting with a voice that could be heard even from here, he was raising the morale of the troops.

He certainly looked like the figurehead of the subjugation force.

Since they were facing the Supard race within this forest.

It was actually better for them.

Everybody drew their swords and glared at us with clear hostility in their eyes.

Glaring at us, a group of just less than 20 people who were at the opposite side of the valley.

And then Aleksander unsheathed his sword from his back.

"I am North God Kalman the Third Aleksander Ryback! Follow me and you shall gain honor!"

".....!"

Thus, Aleksander started running on top of the bridge while shouting.
After seeing that, Sándor quickly cried out.

“Do it now!”

In the next moment, my hand moved.
I shot a stone cannon with both my hands.
It flew straight ahead and destroyed the bridge’s base.

Furthermore, Ruijerd moved too.

Near his side. The vine on which the bridge was hanging on was bisected with the chalk-like spear.

“AHHHHHhhhhh!?”

Everyone kept watching that dumbfounded.

The falling bridge.

And North God Kalman the Third who fell towards the very bottom along with it.
They could do nothing but watch dumbfounded.

The one who shouted, Sándor, was also looking in amazement.

It can’t be.

It can’t be, this is...

This is impossible...

Well.

It’s difficult to save someone who has fallen from this height.

No, it should be fine if it’s Aleksander.

...But, even if he survived, it would take some time to climb back up.

“...O-only one person of all people?”

There was no one who would cheer on those words.
There was no one who would even send criticizing looks.
The scene that happened just now was simply scorched into everyone's eyes.
...Now's the chance.

I loaded my arms with mana.
There weren't many in this place who could launch an attack.
So let's do it.
I raised my left hand towards the sky.
Lifting up enormous amounts of mana in my left hand, I made a thunder cloud.
Suppressing the raging mana within my left arm, I compressed it.
And then I let it fall.

<Lightning!> ”

Lighting fell down with a thunderous roar.
The surroundings were dyed in white, a raging roar echoed.
A cloud of dust fluttered about on the opposite side.
Many trees got engulfed in fire, and fell down one by one while making crackling noises.
I didn't know how much damage was dealt.
But there was feedback.
A feedback enough to make my hands shake.
The sensation of killing a person.

While gulping it down, I loaded my arms with mana once again.

“Once more...”

The moment I thought that.
Something jumped out from that cloud of dust.

A red mass.

It looked gentle and quiet when seen from a distance, a jump which could be seen as if it was flying.

But that speed and mass were overwhelming.

The red mass quickly closed in and then impacted.

A sound echoed as if a cannonball had fell and a cloud of dust fluttered about.

The red mass impacted on our right flank.

Two people showed up from that cloud of dust.

“...”

An ogre with a red body and a human in his forties.

Ogre God Malta and Sword God Gull Farion.

The two of them had jumped over the valley to come.

A 100-metre jump.

As expected of the Great powers.

“Now then... who’s going to be my opponent?”

A ferociously laughing wolf.

It was different from when I first confronted him.

Right now, he was standing there with a precise killing intent and holding an absolute resolution.

At his back, there was a scabbard holding one sword.

Probably a cursed sword.

It was different from the one which nailed my back armor.

Unknowingly, cold sweat started running through my back.

“It’s me.”

She naturally moved forward.

The Red Mad Dog.

Two swords hanging on her back.

While folding her arms, she stood in front of the Sword God with her majestic posture.

“I thought so. Anyone else?”

“It’s me.”

As I introduced himself, the Sword God laughed, taken aback.

“You really look full of spirit, eh?”

“Thanks to you, I’m in good health.”

“Tch, that’s why I said it would’ve been better if I had lopped his head off.”

Just who was he blaming?

It was probably Gisu.

Thus, together with me.

The person holding the chalk-like spear with green hair, a veteran hero was standing beside me.

It was the three of us again.

Eris, Ruijerd and me.

The three of us will fight together.

It was the second coming of <Dead End>

It was 3 vs. 1, but there were no complaints.

Me and Sándor originally planned to keep Aleksander company, but he was at fault for falling down the valley like an idiot.

“...”

Sándor, Zanoba, and Doga were facing the Ogre God.

Since I’ve heard that the Ogre God’s fighting style was hand-to-hand combat, Zanoba and Doga were the best pick, as mighty power types.

I’ve also heard that North God Kalman the Second was used to fighting a large amount

of enemies.

Their compatibility was perfect.

We can win.

Perhaps someone might be sacrificed.

Still, we can defeat these two.

“-----Hoough!”

That thought only remained for a moment.

A yell could be heard from behind us.

As we promptly turned around, something was flying up from the cliff.

It wasn't something.

It was the black-haired young boy that had fallen down just moments ago.

“Haa... Haa...”

While wiping his cold sweat, he held out his sword towards the sky.

And declared with a pompous tone.

“I'm North God Kalman the Third! The one who will defeat the cursed evil god Orsted and become a hero! The ones who are going to stand in my way, prepare yourselves!”

Don't tell me.

Don't tell me, did he run up to us?

From the bottom of the valley...?

No, it may be a cliff, but it's not completely vertical.

I could climb up the valley while using magic as well, but I would have had to stop midway many times.

He could have used that sword to break through the walls and hurriedly climb up from the bottom...

Should I say that this too is as expected from one of the World Powers?

“...I guess it can't be helped. Rudeus-dono, let's keep this fool company together.”

“Yes.”

I nodded to Sándor's words.

It was unfortunate that I couldn't fight together with Eris and Ruijerd, but it couldn't be helped. We'll just be going according to plan.

“Please be careful of that sword. That's the world's strongest sword.”

There was only one sword held by the North God.

It was manufactured when that King of the Dragon Kingdom was defeated, the legendary large sword. <Dragon King Sword> Kajakuto.

“.....Why?”

But the holder of that sword, while still holding up the sword, was looking our way with a flabbergasted face.

“Why are you here?”

North God Kalman the Third.

Aleksander Ryback looked at me with a shivering voice.

Fufu, was it really that strange that I was alive after falling down into the valley and even came back from there?

Gisu might've told you about my existence, but you may not have believed it.

But, falling down into the valley means a survival flag was...

Huh?

Was he really looking at me?

Aleksander's line of gaze was behind me.

It was Sándor.

Well, that was obvious, I guess.

“Father!”

Was that shout the signal for the start of the fight or was it just a matter of time?

“Uooooooooaaaaahhhh!!!”

In the next instant, Ogre God Malta yelled while raising his hands over his head and slapped the ground.

The ground rose, the cliff collapsed and the trees mowed down.

As if the peace was being washed away by that very shockwave, the fight began.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 6

Q. The Army corps and the Magicians using the special magic invocation law of Magician Frau who appeared during the subjugation of the Kingdom of the Dragon King. Does that even exist in the original story of the Mushoku world?

A. I don't think it does anymore.

Q. I think the enemy's reaction seeing Rudeus alive might have been a little too thin...

A. They already got the message through Hitogami.

Q. At first it was Sándor who was talking with Eris, but he was using such a polite tone that I mistook him for Roxy for a moment.

A. I'm really sorry. I'll try to make it so that it's more understandable.

Q. The red mass that came flying was the Ogre God, right?

I couldn't see the Sword God flying but could it be that he got on Ogre God's back?

A. That's right.

Q. After this war is over, let's play baseball with everyone. (Suggestion)

A. Strip rock-paper-scissors? (Disgusting)^[40]

Q. I have one doubt, why didn't the Sword God and North God go towards the Supard village to attack the President after defeating Rudi?

A. Because they didn't have any weapons.

Because they must report back the information.

Also, it was Gisu's request to keep up with Ogre God's pace.

Q. Why did the President say that it would take time for the Ogre God rather than the World Powers?

A. There's a variation between HP and defensive power.

Q. The Supard race's village was changed to Supard village on the way, but is it alright?

A. Well, it's fine either way. It's not like that village is a name itself.

Q. To think that Magonote-san's Q&A would progress faster than before... this was a first for me.

A. I had some things to do so.^[41]

Q. If he were to M with the Atofe-hand that means...!

A. It'll be crushed, he'll turn into Girleus!

Q. Were there names written on the stone monument of the Seven Great World Powers?

Or was it just the crests(family crests)?

A. It should be only the crests.

Q. Why doesn't the President fight, I wonder?

It's understandable that Rudeus is conserving his mana, but wouldn't it be fine just fighting without using any mana at all?

Since he's stronger than anyone even without using any magic, I think it's too good an opportunity to pass to let him play around with others to be frank.

Why not use the rook? I can't understand why the rook turned inside out as a dragon, the strongest piece(President) not being deployed this time?

A. As per the conditions, <President using his mana> will result in defeat.

They could ascertain the enemy's war potential but they still haven't seen Gisu and it's not like they have completely identified all of the apostles.

It's possible that there were reserve military force as well, and in the case if someone were to break through Rudeus and the rest then the president will become a necessity in order to protect the village.

It's certainly as you say that it'll be easy victory for the President if there's only 1 God rank, but mana compensation is not zero.

Not to mention, Gisu was the one who proposed to cut off Rudeus's arms at a narrow place, so it's possible that he might have thought of something to expend the President's mana supply as well.

That's why, preservation comes first.

The President isn't a rook or a bishop, he's the King.

Although Rudeus' overprotectiveness is certainly true.

Q. If they were at a distance of half-a-day then the enemy's hands would never reach them so I think that it would become an extremely easy to deal with extermination force with 0 danger if he used the clairvoyance.

A. Firstly, since it takes a whole day from the village to the forest therefore the troops had already entered the forest.

Clairvoyance can only work as long as there's no obstacles in one's straight line of

sight.

Since the forest is quite deep, it's possible that even if he climbed up to a high place to use clairvoyance, he still won't be able to see the enemy troops.

The best unobstructed view you can get from within the forest is near the valley.

The enemy troops came to a stop at the valley freeing their reins for the extermination.

If it wasn't half-a-day from the village but rather <1 day from the forest>, then they could have performed a long distance attack by setting up camp near the forest's entrance, then after that retreating till the valley. They could have gone with that kind of strategy.

The above 2 may lack in description a little bit.

I'll add some more.

CHAPTER 13

MAD SWORD KING VS FORMER SWORD GOD

1

Before they noticed, Eris's group had gotten far away from the valley.

The moment Ogre God moved, Gull Farion began to run away from the battlefield.

"This place should be good."

"..."

The place Gull stopped at was a clearing in the forest.

Only about a minute had passed.

But Gull moved fast, he had already covered quite a distance from the valley.

Eris felt a little anxious being separated from Rudeus,

But she immediately focused on the enemy in front of her.

"It's because the Ogre God doesn't discriminate while rampaging. I don't really want to be interrupted."

Gull said that and once again looked at Eris.

"..."

But he did not draw his sword.

As if he was saying - For you, bare hands would be enough.

To Eris, it looked like a stance full of openings.

Eris confronted Gull and held her beloved <Elegant Phoenix Dragon Sword> above her head.

But before her, even if formerly, was a Sword God.

Eris spent some time deciding whether or not she should take that opening.

“...You look lively.”

It was surprising.

Surprisingly, Gull let out a word.

No, Gull was also human. It shouldn't be surprising for him to say something.

But still, despite this sort of situation, for this man to start something not using swords but using words was not surprising to Eris.

“ ... ”

In response to Eris quizzically tilting her head, Gull laughed.

“Do you remember Jino? Jino Blitz.”

“...I remember. I didn't like him very much.”

At that answer, Gull gave a surprised laugh.

“Yeah. He was strong compared to his age, but he was a pretty boorish guy.”

Gull said that while looking at the sky.

The trees swayed as the wind blew and the sound of rustling leaves could be heard.

There wasn't any sign of birds or other small animals.

Only the distant sound of falling trees and explosions could be heard.

Most likely, the Ogre God or maybe the North God's fighting.

Gull's words flowed along those sounds.

“Right now he is the Sword God.”

“.....Huh?”

“The great I have given him the title of Sword God.”

Eris didn't understand the meaning of those words.

The Sword God Gull Farion was not a Sword God.

Even after it was said, Eris didn't understand.

"That bastard, what's with him? He suddenly said that he wanted to marry Nina! And then when I said he had to become stronger than the great me if he wanted to marry her... The bastard really did!"

Even though Gull said that with disdain, he actually seemed rather pleased.

Raising the corners of his mouth in a slight grin, he started remembering that time.

"It was in an instant! A sword that fast and heavy, even in my youth it would once or twice... No, he was probably better than me."

Gull seemed to have remembered something as he swung his hand through the air.

He swung his hand around like a sword, with a speed that could bring out a shockwave.

He suddenly brought a stop to his swinging hand.

"Why was it that the great I, for the second time couldn't swing my sword? I still don't get it."

And his arm returned to his side.

"It's difficult for the great me to understand, as I was the strongest from the moment I was born. But I guess ordinary people have their moments after all.

Moments when they can surpass talent through hard work..."

Gull said that while looking up at the sky once more.

He could be heard muttering - No, it seems I'm no longer the strongest. - under his breath.

"In any case, he already has everything he ever wanted in his hands. The woman of his dreams, the title of Sword God... in the Holy Land of the Sword, everyone has

recognized his strength. The era of the Sword God Jino isn't far off."

Gull looked at Eris

He finally looked directly at her.

"Compared to him, what have you accomplished?"

"...What?"

"After you finally got your man, you now wag your tail towards Orsted, who was supposed to be your enemy!"

Hah!

Gull Farion laughed, but there was no smile.

His eyes, radiating rage, glared at Eris.

"I had entrusted it to you. The dream of overthrowing Dragon God Orsted with absolute animosity."

"When I remember it now, it seems ridiculous. Why did I entrust that to someone like you?"

"You've completely lost your fangs. Hah, some Mad Sword King you are! What part of you is Mad? It's nice that you've got the man you wanted and all, but what are you, the third? Are you satisfied with that?"

Words were thrown out in rapid succession.

However, they didn't resonate in Eris's ears.

She could think of nothing but to not give a damn.

She wasn't concerned.

She didn't remember being entrusted with anything.

Therefore Eris answered like this.

"...You've become effeminate haven't you?"

Sword God's pupils contracted.

His condensed killing intent headed straight for his arm.

“You are excommunicated.”

“I don’t care.”

“You may no longer call yourself a Sword King.”

“Try it if you can.”

Eris was already prepared for war.

Rather, Eris wondered just why they had been playing with words until now.

“Do you think you can win?”

“Isn’t it obvious? I’ll send a weakling like you to the other world with a single blow.”

“Hah... That’s the second time in my life that the great I have been called a weakling.”

Thus, Gull Farion took his stance.

He spread his legs, lowered his waist, put his hand on the sword hilt, and took his stance as if to hide the sword.

The stance of Iaido.

Sword King Ghyslaine Dedorudia’s speciality, a killing technique.

“...”

Eris clenched her teeth upon seeing that.

The Sword God Style possessed the commonplace practice of thrusting the heaviest sword as fast as you can.

However, there were three stances.

One was the middle-step.

The basic form of Sword God Style, which is capable of dealing with any kind of combat flow.

Another was the upper-step.

An offensive stance which is fit for someone who can impede the opponent’s flow of combat before he/she gets to attack.

The last was Iaido.

A defensive stance which is fit for someone who can calculate the best timing of attack by sniffing out the opponent's flow of combat.

In short,

Iaido for someone who can read their opponent,

Upper-step for someone who can impede the opponent,

And those who specialise in neither take the middle-step.

Eris held a natural sense of rhythm and was someone who could assertively impede an opponent's flow of combat, so she specialized in upper-step.

As a Beast race possessing both extraordinary hearing and smell along with great intuition and hindsight, Ghyslaine specialized in Iaido.

“ ... ”

The stance Gull Farion took was Iaido.

This former Sword God could fight with any stance.

But in this situation, he chose Iaido.

And although she understood that, Eris was not afraid.

Silently letting out small breaths in between, they slowly closed their distance.

In that moment, Gull felt uncomfortable.

Eris was strangely quiet.

The Eris that in the Holy Land of the Sword was known as the <Mad Dog>, that would bare her fangs and simply attack right from the front, was not rushing to attack.

Something had changed.

It was her expression.

Eris had a smile.

Eris was grinning with an evil smile plastered over her face, but she stood there with a clear atmosphere like a monk in training.

If you had seen the expression, you would have understood that it was a trick.

Gull was not going to be deceived.

He only waited with his stance as if time had stopped, with the large tree to his back.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

It was a strange sight.

Especially to those that knew them, one could simply look and know something was off.

Both Eris's and Gull's school of swordsmanship specialized in attacking first.

Without doing so, there is no way to climb the ladder of the Sword God style.

But neither of them moved.

Only the leaves dancing in the wind like snow showed that the time was still moving.

Looking at this scene, you'd think it was the same as that time.

For example, the person they were talking about just moments ago, Jino Blitz.

He had seen it.

A battle of the Sword God style without movement.

That's right, a few years ago.

The day when Eris became a Sword King.

The fight of Eris Greyrat and Nina Farion.

They didn't move.

The two of them did not move.

Or maybe, for these two high level practitioners of the Sword God style, this stillness had become an eternity, and thus, they did not move.

Nay, they moved however.

Eris tensely closed the gap until only a finger of distance was left between the two.

At that last moment, only a short distance remained between their swords.

The gap in front of Eris.
But this distance was far.
It was too far for a finishing blow.
To land the greatest single strike, it was still too far.

“ ... ”

In the battle between Eris and Nina, whoever moved first would lose.
If Nina released a perfect <Longsword of Light>, Eris would be able to exceed that speed.
But it was Gull Farion.
Even if he was a former Sword God, he could easily exceed Eris in speed.
He could've easily stepped out of Eris's range and adjusted his sword so that it just barely struck her first.
But he didn't.
Gull Farion held his stance.
He neither closed the gap nor changed his angle.
He simply stood motionless, watching Eris's movements.
As if only Eris existed in this world, only her movements.

Eventually, Eris had entered the killing range.
She had confidence that her strongest slash would end it in an instant.

“ ... ”

A small doubt, a truly tiny worry, spawned within Eris.
Gull Farion had no openings.
Right now, she had the confidence that if she released a <Longsword of Light>, even if he was a former Sword God, she had the confidence to kill him.
But her opponent was Gull Farion.
She remembered that day in the Holy Land of the Sword, that moment of humiliation.
That moment when she couldn't see it at all and was completely blown away by Gull

Farion.

“...Ngh!”

The next instant, Gull Farion moved.

Dropping his waist only by a few millimetres, he gripped the handle and gathered his strength.

Eris moved as if she was tempted by it.

She ended up moving.

Towards the certain kill hit from her perfect stillness.

<Longsword of Light>

The world's strongest sword technique was fired.

But, at that moment, something caught Eris's eyes

She saw Gull Farion holding the sword's hilt with a backhanded grip.

It was not <Light Reversal>.

It was without a doubt, a <Longsword of Light>

A <Longsword of Light> unlike Eris had ever seen before.

“Water God Style Secret Technique, <Flow>.”

All that remained in Eris's hands was a tingling feeling.

The <Longsword of Light> that was fired by Eris collided with Gull's swift sword as if being counterattacked, distributing the impact.

The tree behind Gull was cut down diagonally.

As the swords were on the verge of colliding, Gull pressured a little bit, which made Eris's posture to slant ever so slightly.

As her posture shook, Eris was thrown off balance.

Just that was enough.

Gull's pupils reflected Eris's defenseless neck.

The retaliating sword took flight.

Was it the reparation for using the unfamiliar secret techniques from another school?
That the speed of the sword was in no way fast.

The speed of the sword did not reach that of the light's.

At best, it was the speed of sound.

<Longsword of absolute silence>

But at this distance, this separation.

To kill someone in one hit, the <Longsword of Light> was not necessary.

A simple attack to cut the head off was enough.

Like a guillotine, the sword fell.

A sharp sound rang out.

A kling and a klang could be heard together, the sound of metal colliding.

The sword had stopped. Biting into Eris's neck, it had stopped before reaching an artery.

Gull's eyes were spread wide open.

Unaware, there was a single man behind Eris.

A warrior possessing green hair, and a chalk-like spear.

The man who was standing behind Eris's back as if hiding himself, he had stopped Gull's sword like her guardian spirit.

If that technique had been a <Longsword of Light>.

The very instant after Gull had that thought.

"GAAAAaaaaaaaaa!"

While twisting her body, the sword which was drawn from Eris's right side of her waist, mowed down Gull Farion's torso.

“...Guh!”

In an instant, Gull Farion had jumped backwards.

He landed behind with a thump.

“ ...”

But while his feet landed, his upper body didn't go with him.

Gull Farion's upper body flew in mid-air.

It spun around three times and fell to the ground.

2

Gull Farion looked at his upper-half of the body slowly falling down.

And then admitted his defeat.

“Ah, damnit...”

While facing upwards, he muttered.

He hadn't seen.

He hadn't seen the Supard warrior standing behind Eris.

Nay, he did see.

He did see him, but it never entered his mind.

He thought that nothing would change even if an enemy of that level was here.

In reality, Ruijerd couldn't see the <Longsword of Light>.

Even if he was a veteran of the battlefield, he just couldn't perceive that excessively fast sword flash.

But Gull's second attack was different.

It wasn't the <Longsword of Light> or anything.

It was just a normal slash attack which was loaded with the minimum amount of power and speed necessary to cut a person's neck.

For an average soldier, Eris's neck would've been bisected before one even had the

time to think about stopping it.

But the one who restrained it was Ruijerd.

A veteran of the battlefield who had lived for hundreds of years.

He should be able to see it.

He should be able to stop it.

Gull had underestimated Ruijerd Supardia.

And Eris too, who had entrusted her back to Ruijerd, believing in him.

If Eris was to hesitate.

If he had thought of the possibility, even for an instant, that Ruijerd would stop his sword.

Then Gull's jump would have made it in time.

"Why didn't you use Sword God Style?"

Eris questioned the fallen Gull with blood dripping from her neck.

Despite that instant presentation of offense and defense, her forehead was drenched with sweat.

"I thought I would lose if I did."

From the perspective of a swordsman.

If Eris were to use the same move by holding the sword above her head, and firing the fastest <Longsword of Light>, then Gull would have had the advantage.

But he didn't do it.

He couldn't.

The memory of his fight with Jino Blitz floated in Gull's mind.

It was the memory of that fight.

The sword he believed in and never doubted.

The technique he believed in and never doubted.

Which were very easily destroyed and he was defeated, that memory.

His left hand with bone fractures, and his unsightly figure at the back of the dojo, that

moment.

The surrounding gazes.

Jino, who was looking down on him.

That weakened his resolve of using the <Longsword of Light> as the first strike.

Gull Farion is a prodigy of swords.

He had taken the name of Sword God, but if he were to fight in a Water God Style dojo, then he could only rise up to the Water Emperor rank.

Therefore, a technique from Water God Style was used.

He had absolute confidence that he would win. He was also deadly serious.

If he had taken the Sword God name, then he wouldn't have been able to use it.

He had to behave accordingly as a Sword God.

He had a strong sense of judgment that he must use one of the Sword God style techniques as the Sword God.

But this time was different.

There was nothing to stop him from using one of the Water God Style techniques to distribute the <Longsword of Light> in the most reliable way.

Therefore, he provoked Eris through words and took the initiative.

Something he would never do during his time as the Sword God.

Now that he recalled it, he would never have obeyed Gisu's order of cutting Rudeus's arms either.

His gears had probably been out of order from the beginning.

When he was defeated by Jino Blitz, they were thrown out of order.

Gull Farion didn't have as much self-confidence as before.

He didn't have as much strength as before.

The strongest swordsman had already ceased to exist.

"Just like you said, I had become an effeminate small fry."

Gull didn't give an excuse.

The person who believed in their technique won, and the one who didn't, lost.

That was just how it was.

And the words he said before the start of the battle were such effeminate words as well.

If he was vomiting out such words, then it should've been better to just stab him at once.

That was definitely small fry talk, and Eris might've looked at him as no more than a drunkard in a bar.

I must fight Orsted, I won't let it end at this rate, I want to be successful one last time – stimulated by those thoughts, he was tempted by Gisu's offer, and thought that he would be able to challenge Orsted.

Now that he thought that, he couldn't even laugh at himself in mockery.

“...I wonder what you're doing.”

While looking down on him, Eris understood.

That he was pitiable.

And then, an inexpressible sorrow welled up inside her.

That this was the end of the person who had once shaken her, who she had somewhat feared.

Therefore she asked.

“...Do you have any last words?”

Gull looked up to Eris with only his eyes.

A woman with red hair.

When he saw her for the first time, he thought that she had some talent.

He thought that she was unrefined, but she could become even stronger than Ghyslaine.

He never once thought that she would be the one to kill him.

He always thought that she would stay below him.

He thought that he could win anytime he fought her.

“The one who wields the sword only for oneself is pure, the pure sword would become sharper than anyone else’s.

People change. The sword wielded for the sake of others is strong, but it will be influenced by others.

Once you hesitate, that hesitation will haunt you thereafter. Your sword will become dull.

That is how I think so.

Marrying a woman, having a child. Raising disciples. What was it that I did as a Sword God?... as I kept thinking about such absurd things, I had gotten so dull.”

Within his fading consciousness, Gull could feel words leaking out from him.

It wasn’t that there was a need to convey it.

They weren’t his last words.

He had never thought about what he would say before he died.

He had never thought that he would die in such a place.

His thoughts simply leaked out from his lips.

“Eris.

You’re the best one after all.

You didn’t become weak.

You look like you’re being possessed by freedom. You continue to remain free.”

A clot of blood gushes forth from Gull’s mouth.

Without wiping off that blood, Gull presented the sword he was holding in his hands to Eris.

“...Take it.”

“I’ll be accepting this.”

An incoherent action.

But Eris quickly received it.

As expected for someone who was at death's door, Gull's hands were dreadfully cold.
But the hilt of the sword was hot.

"Haa..."

Looking at that, Gull breathed out.
His lungs no longer had the energy to even breath in.

"It's nice for a person who is free to be strong..."

His hand fell.
Sword God Gull Farion died.
Eris silently went down on her knees.
And extracted the sword's scabbard from Gull's back.
She then put the sword back into the scabbard, and placed it on her back.

"Phew-..."

While giving out a huge sigh, she brought out a scroll from her bosom.
An elementary healing magic scroll.
She was given one scroll to use in time of need, and so she held that one sheet.
While applying it to her neck, which was bleeding profusely, she sent mana into it.
The wound disappeared in an instant.

"...Eris."

"Let's go and support Rudeus."

"Yeah."

While saying only a few words, the two of them turned back...
After walking for several steps, Eris stopped.
She turned.
To remove the sight of Gull Farion's empty, pale corpse, Eris tightly grasped her fist.

She chanted a spell.

In order to remember only this one technique taught to her by Rudeus, she practiced this magic many times over with Ghyslaine.

“----- <Fire Ball> ”

The fireball fired by Eris's hand burned Gull Farion's body.

Eris didn't watch until the end of Gull Farion's corpse, now wrapped in flames.

She turned around and with a quick pace, left that place behind.

The surrounding trees were caught by the fire and smoke started coming out as if signaling something.

Not being hindered by anyone, until that fire was put out by Nature, it continued...

AUTHOR'S Q&A 7

Q. Come to think of it, what happened to the pamphlet that you applied for?

A. I wonder what happened...

I can only say to wait for it, there is no way for it but to become small as time passes.

Q. If Orsted's mana supply will recover after some 30 years, then shouldn't it be fine for him to join the fight? The Laplace is fight is going to be 80 years from now, right?

A. If the president's mana supply could recover in 30 years, then he would join the fight on his own accord.

Q. Just how much old is Sándor=Alex Ryback-san?

A. Maybe somewhere around 300 years old.

Q. Why does it look cool when Eris says it but when I say it, it looks as if I'm just ridiculing the memory...

A. It's probably because Eris doesn't have that much memory left.

Q. Are the members on the stone monuments added according to their standard equipment? Or are they judged by their plain strength? I would like to know that.

A. The members on the stone monument aren't very related to their strength.

Jino defeated Gull and was changed to Sword God, that's just how it is.

Q. There won't be any more changes in the rank of the World Powers during this fight, right?

A. No.

Q. Did she properly burn Gull's lower half of body?

A. The entire surroundings went up in flames, taking that with it.

Q. Gull Farion died too quickly, don't you think he became a little bit too weak?

A. Even during that fight, he would be stronger than Eris in a one-on-one situation.

Q. I was quite surprised that Jino became the Sword God!

A. He had more talent than anyone else, he kept training every day since a young age, and was able to lay his groundwork.

Q. Even though he was cut in two, Former Sword God-sama still had the time to talk, but if someone were to get cut in half in this world, then just how long would that

person live I wonder...

A. Depends on how he was cut!

Q. Eris used... magic...?... eh??

A. You get surprised each time she uses it.

Q. Eris and Ghyslaine. Couldn't they invoke a chantless healing magic by themselves with Rudeus's guidance?

A. They can't.

Q. According to power levels, Eris> Ruijerd right?

Regarding simple maggots.

A. Let's see.

If it became a fight like that, Eris would be stronger.

Q. Even though Gull fired a <Longsword of Light> it ended up being <Flow> of the Water God Style Secret Technique?

Did he combine them together?

A. Yes, he did combine them.

Q. Even though you should've written approximately the same number of characters, this story felt a bit less than usual.

A. It was around 7000 characters, so it was less than usual.

CHAPTER 14

THIRD GENERATION VS SECOND GENERATION + A

1

We were separated by quite a distance.

The rampage of Ogre God Malta.

A gigantic ogre who was going berserk like a storm, mowing down trees and digging up the earth.

As if being washed away by the aftermath, we were separated from the battlefield.

The ones who were facing him were Zanoba and Doga.

Since the Ogre God was a simple power type monster, their compatibility was perfect.

Since he's a Miko, there is no one who could win against Zanoba in physical power, and Doga is quite powerful against an approaching enemy.

But that much was obvious.

I didn't have the time to worry about the others.

The one who was standing before me was at the 7th rank of the Seven Great World Powers.

North God Kalman the Third.

Aleksander Ryback.

One of the two adversaries who pushed me down into the valley.

Not to mention, I didn't have the MK. I on me and MK. II was incomplete.

He wasn't an enemy I could go easy on or be careless around.

The early bird gets the worm.

So with quagmire, I———

“Wait!”

Or so I thought, but in the next instant North God Kalman III’s shout stalled me.

The opponent was a North God style user however.

It wouldn’t be strange if he ambushed us under the false pretence of asking to wait.

So I silently set up quagmire.

And fired stone cannons in quick succession.

“Let us talk a little bit before the battle!”

He easily repelled the stone cannons.

Or did they stray away from their path?

In any case, the stone cannons changed their trajectory mid-air and were repelled.

Even though the quagmire should have been set-up near his feet, he was not sinking.

Was this the power of a North God!?

No, that’s wrong.

I’ve definitely heard about the ability of that <Dragon King Sword>

“Your anger is reasonable.

After losing both of your arms and falling into the valley, you would surely want to fight as soon as possible.

But please wait for a moment.

After I’ve talked, I’ll keep you company at once.

A small fry like you can surely make time for the conversation between two strong people, right?”

A small fry... HAH!

You underestimatn’ me, I’ll make mincemeat out of ya!

But I couldn’t bring myself to get angry.

I certainly couldn’t deny the fact that I looked like a small fry in front of one of the

Seven Great World Powers.

On the contrary, it was refreshing since I'd been getting nothing but praise these days.

“.....”

As for me, I didn't want to wait.

It was possible that he was stalling for time, I wanted to win as soon as possible and then go around to back others up.

While thinking that, I took a step back and exchanged looks with Sándor.

He wasn't moving, just like Alek.

If he wasn't going to fight, I wouldn't be able to win alone.

“It can't be helped.”

While shrugging, Sándor moved forward.

“...So, what is it? Stranger.”

“Stranger? Me? The one who knows more about you than anyone else in this world?”

“I do think that this is our first meeting though?”

“The first time we met was when I came out of mother's belly. Father.”

I wonder why Sándor was playing dumb.

“Father. Please stop this.

I can tell even when you've put that clumsy helmet on...”

If Hitogami peeked into my mind, then even Alek should know that.

“You are North God Kalman the Second, Alex Ryback!”

“Alek-kun. You should've said that after I removed my helmet.”

While saying that, Sándor sighed and removed his helmet.

A black-haired middle-aged man.

Alek had black hair as well.

Now that I looked again, they both looked quite similar.

“After defeating me, you would say that I was a strong enemy, and to at least respect your victory, I would then remove my helmet. Only for you to see that I was your fath—
———”

“Enough of that! I thought you died a long time ago... what have you been doing until now!?”

“...I took on a disciple, and have been teaching martial arts. Recently, I caught the eye of Her Majesty Ariel and have now become a Knight.”

“Disciple? You, who had entrusted this sword to me and abandoned the North God style, have taken a disciple!?”

Anger floated onto Alek-kun’s face.

I don’t know what went on between them.

But it seemed Sándor’s words had sparked something inside him.

“Alek-kun, it’s not as if I abandoned the North God Style.”

“Lies, even now you do not hold a sword!”

“Hmm.”

Sándor lifted his rod to show it.

A rod made of metal

“You mean this? I think it has made me stronger.”

“! Are you making fun of me!? That piece of metal, stronger than this Dragon King Sword!?”

“That’s not true. Alek-kun, that sword is the strongest in the world. I, who have wielded it for 100 years, know that the best.”

“Then why?”

“It’s too strong. That sword.”

In response to Aleksander's question, Sándor answered.

As if it was reasonable.

As if it was obvious.

As if he were admonishing him.

"With that sword in hand, no matter how large the beast, no matter how agile the monster, no matter how strong the soldier, they were no match. I won countless battles and became a hero with that sword."

"But a thought suddenly came to my mind.

I became a hero. But, was there some kind of difference before and after I obtained this sword?

As a result, I began wondering whether North God Kalman II, Alex Ryback, was actually strong or not."

"Once those thoughts entered my head, I could no longer fight like before.

Of course, I didn't intend to deny my comrades and my fights till now, but...

I simply thought that my time as a hero was over.

That is why I entrusted you with the title of <North God the Hero>, and left to spread the <Teachings of North God Kalman I>."

Alek obviously felt left out.

I didn't really get it, but the old man Alex(Sándor) got tired of fighting, gave up his characteristic sword, and attempted to spread his teachings.

And his child who was against it was mad.

Well, it was not as if I didn't understand.

If you were suddenly entrusted with something that big of a responsibility and your father goes missing, of course you'd be angry.

"And the result was Auber, that wacky faction?"

"That was also one of the paths to demonstrate the teachings of North God Kalman I."

"I have not acknowledged that wacky faction. That is not the North God style."

Alexander shook his head without trying to hide his bad mood.

Auber huh...

He certainly wasn't a swordsman.

More like a ninja.

"Was it even swordsmanship?"

"North God Kalman the First used a sword, but there is no need to stick to the sword."

"Is that why you're using that piece of metal?"

"Yes, with this, I can feel myself getting stronger. And when you can feel your own growth, it is possible for humans to get even stronger."

"...I don't get it"

Alek-kun looked dissatisfied.

Perhaps he's still young.

He couldn't say no to the path he had chosen.

"Alek-kun. I'll be asking the same thing, why are you here?"

"I came here to defeat Orsted. After defeating the Dragon God, I will become the 2nd rank."

"Oh, you have so much motivation. As your father, I'm proud."

While smiling, Sándor praised Alek.

Sándor-san?

You're not wrong for being proud, but you are on our side, right?

You won't just say - Alright, I'll help you out - and then become our enemy, right?

"I've become your enemy this time around, but you have permission to totally defeat me and then go challenge Orsted."

"That's obvious. Even if you have become my enemy, as North God Kalman III, I will definitely show you that I can attain grand fame as well."

What's up with this grand fame?

Well, that's desirable, but worrying about your family's or your father's greatness is

also possible.

I can't support them from my position though.

"Not only just that. I'm going to annihilate the Supard race!"

"Hn? The Supard race are not demons, you know. You've seen that once yourself, haven't you?"

Alek did nothing but nod to Sándor's puzzlement.

"I don't care about something like that. The Supards are famous as demons. If I were to destroy them, then my name would be passed down as a hero for eternity."

"That isn't something a hero would do."

"Maybe. But I can't help but choose that path. If I don't, I can't surpass your exploits. I can't surpass North God Kalman II's name."

"If you surpass my name then you'll become a hero?"

"That's right!"

With his mouth partly agape, Sándor faced towards me.

And then bowed his head.

"Please forgive me, Rudeus-dono. I thought I could persuade him, but looks like this foolish son of mine is an even greater fool than I had expected."

"...It certainly seems that way."

It seemed Alek was being manipulated by the word called hero.

He didn't want to become a hero by doing heroic things, but was making a fuss about it to become famous.

It was a situation where anyone would want to say - that's not how it works.

I can't say it properly, but... that's not how it works.

"Let's stop him."

"Roger."

Sándor put his helmet on and prepared his rod.

I widened my arms as if to support him from behind.

Alek came at us while glaring with a sullen look.

Denying his way of doing things, being called a fool by a stunned expression, his swirling anger had no way to go down.

“.....Do you think you can defeat me, who possesses the Dragon King Sword, with that piece of metal and carrying that novice’s burden?”

“Yeah, of course. I intend to punish you thoroughly.”

Sándor declared full of confidence.

Hearing the word punishment, Alek’s cord of patience was finally cut.

“Don’t underestimate me!”

The fight between North God II and North God III began.

2

“TAAAAaaaaaaa!”

Alek took the initiative to shout first.

Easily wielding the large sword in his hands, he slashed at Sándor’s shoulder.

“OOOHHHH!”

Sándor warded off that overwhelming force with his rod.

Alek lost his posture, making him defenseless———NAY.

He faced his body forward with a fearsome sense of balance and struck Sándor once again.

Sándor moved as if he was anticipating for that.

While rotating himself, he parried Alek’s gale-like attack a second time.

And while parrying it, using the principle of leverage, he swept Alek's leg.

Alek's posture came crumbling down all a———NAY.

Alek's body floated as if leaping over Sándor, then came back down to the ground with a speed that was normally impossible.

Moving in a nonsensical way.

But I knew that.

This was the power of Kajakuto <The Cursed Dragon King Sword>

...Gravity manipulation.

"OORYAAAaaaaaaa!"

But Sándor was coping with it.

As he turned his back, the blows from the Dragon King sword were parried and parried and parried.

He gradually changed his direction, and before long he was facing Alek.

Alek's blows weren't something that could be parried just like that.

The ground was being gouged every time they clashed, the shockwave from the attacks were chopping up neighboring trees which fell down.

The vacuum waves that sprung forth cut my cheeks even though I was separated from them.

But those blows didn't reach Sándor.

Although he's retired, he is still a North God.

He kept parrying Alek's attacks perfectly.

Alek could move freely in all respects due to his gravity manipulating sword. He was acrobatic and it was difficult to predict his movements.

Furthermore, it wasn't like Sándor wasn't doing anything.

At first glance it looked like he wasn't moving, but he did move his body little by little so as to gain an advantageous position.

This was a fight between two fellow North God style users.

The speed wasn't that fast.

It was probably because of my training with Eris and Orsted that I was able to see their movements.

I could see them, but the sheer number of movements was too high; I couldn't predict them, thus making it difficult to back him up.

“WWWHHAaaaaaa!”

“TOOOOAAaaaaaa!”

Still, these guys were noisy.

Like I had the time to think about such thoughts!

I fixed my breathing and looked at them carefully.

If they were struggling for supremacy, then depending on my interruption, the progress of the battle could incline.

It was difficult to predict their movements even if I saw them with my foresight eye.

But, aside from Alek's, I could see Sándor's movements.

It was easier to predict him compared to Alek at least.

There was a pattern.

He went right and then left.

With this flow, if the opponent went right behind his back then...

“There!”

I fired a stone cannon.

The stone cannon made a high-pitched noise and flew straight, impacting on Alek.

No, neither did it went straight nor was it a direct hit.

It curved.

While chiseling through Alek's armor, it vanished into the forest.

But Alek's posture collapsed.

“Haaa!”

Without passing up that opportunity, Sándor struck Alek in his solar plexus.

“Ugh...!”

However, Alek leaped into the sky while groaning.

He came directly at me.

Fast!

“Don’t interrupt, small fry!”

< An axe kick. A killing attack from diagonally above. >

While watching it with my foresight eye, I tried warding it off with my remaining gauntlet.

“Ough...”

The moment I took the attack, my feet were caught by tremendous gravity.

The gauntlet broke and I fell down onto my knees.

My hand flew as it was cut...

Or so I thought, but the black arm made a heavy screeching noise while warding it off.

The Atofe-hand was strong.

“Those arms...! Are those grandmother’s!?”

<Electric>!

I fired electric from my other hand which had been stockpiling mana.

The purple lightning licked Alek’s body.

I continued and built up mana in my left hand to fire a stone cannon in his face at point-blank.

“TOORYAaaaaaaa!”

But Alek didn’t stop.

Evading my stone cannon by bending himself backwards, he attacked my feet by doing

a spin on one leg.

I jumped right away to avoid it.

But Alek had already reorganized his posture by that time.

A single blow to bisect my neck approached me.

“HAAaaaa!”

Just as it was about to, Sándor plunged his rod into Alek from his side.

While making a tailspin, Alek leaped with great strength towards my right... but he softly landed with a trajectory that defied gravity.

“...Phew.”

At first glance, no damage could be seen on him.

Looks like <Electric> didn't have much effect on him too.

Was it the power of the sword?

Or was it the performance of the armor?

Or was his endurance just for pretend?

Was it because of the difference in training? Or was it because of the difference in our body structure?

It wouldn't be strange if it were any of those.

“I've gone easy a little bit too much, I guess. Maybe I'll try becoming a bit more serious...”

Alek talked as if he was a losing player in a beat-em-up game, but the situation didn't look bad.

At this rate, we might win.

Sándor fights as the vanguard and I back him up.

If we kept hitting him one at a time, we'll definitely be able to bring him down.

North God Kalman III.

He's a formidable enemy, but Sándor is strong as well.

If there's a struggle for supremacy, then with my contribution we can win.

I'm not a burden!

"A little shoddy, huh?"

Or so I thought, but Sándor's words were unreliable.

No way!

Are we not superior?

Sándor had no damage.

My previous actions broke the Zariff prosthetic hand, but the Atofe-hand was equally or even more efficient.

We can still make it.

"He's preserving his strength right now so that he can fight Orsted-sama later. He's probably raising his power gradually."

Ah, damn.

So he was holding back.

It seems he's treating me as a small fry a bit too much.

"How much more time will Roxy-dono take?"

"I don't know."

She'll let us know when the preparations are ready. It's already been half-a-day, so I guess it'll be done sometime soon.

As long as Zanoba and Eris don't let the enemy through and reach Roxy and the others.

"It seems he has become quite strong since the time I knew him. I might've boasted a bit too much."

Sándor said with not much confidence.

I want you to try your best without saying such words.

Since I'll try my best to support you.

"Anyway, let's try to earn some time."

"Ro-roger."

After our short exchange of words, Sándor charged ahead.

Alek too ran forward in concord.

"UUOOO!"

"DORYAAA!"

And once again, the exchange of blows started.

But Sándor was right.

You couldn't see the change at a glance.

But Sándor's parries started decreasing.

Each time he received a hit, his posture broke down a bit.

Alek's level of attacking was getting crazy.

His appearance wasn't changing, but probably his weight.

If Sándor was in an disadvantageous position, then I couldn't get a direct hit from the stone cannon.

Would it be warded off or repelled or avoided?

He could do any one of them.

" ... "

I didn't fire stone cannon.

Instead I'll use magic to control the earth.

First, I'll bring a stop to his irregular aerial movement through which he's hopping around so much.

In that case, Sándor will have a little more comfort and the range of tactics he can use will increase as well.

As a result, my stone cannon should hit him as well.

For that reason.

<Earth Lancer>!”

I produced 4 earth pillars as if to surround the both of them.

And then to top it all off...

<Earth Web>!”

I made a web of earth above Sándor, some 50 centimeters above.

If the top is obstructed, then his irregular aerial movement will...

“Irritating!”

It was torn down in an instant.

So it was no good.

“What happened Father? This is the best you can do?”

Oh no.

Sándor was steadily being driven into a corner.

It was not a difference in technique. It was unmistakably the difference between their weapons.

The more it got hit by the Dragon King Sword, the more crooked Sándor’s rod became.

If I backed him using stone cannon in a panic, it will just bend away.

Furthermore, he might’ve been putting me off because he started ignoring the stone cannons.

Not good, at this rate we won’t even be able to stall for time.

The situation will become gradually worse and we’ll be defeated.

“GAAaaaaa!”

It was at that time.

Someone's figure plunged into Alek's flank like a comet.

That woman, having red hair and with the sword in her hands, struck Alek with all her might.

While receiving that blow and the one from Sándor as well, he was blown off backwards.

The red swordswoman gave pursuit.

After landing as if ignoring gravity, Alek swung his large sword on the spot.

The red swordswoman couldn't cope with that.

"HAH...!"

But behind her. A green-haired soldier following behind her back staved off that attack.

"GAAAaaaaa!"

The Mad Dog howled.

Brandishing the sword.

A blow was aimed at the nape of the neck, but its trajectory was once again changed by something invisible.

Though the sword was driven into the top of the shoulders, the sturdy armor was able to unexpectedly stop that attack with only but a scratch left.

The Mad Dog didn't chase him too far.

No sooner than she saw that the attack was a failure, she quickly leaped back.

Immediately following that, the large sword was brought down upon the place she moved out of, cutting a bunch of her hair.

She distanced herself from him.

The red-haired and green-haired, with their backs turned against me, stood there.

"Rudeus, I've kept you waiting!"

Eris said as she glanced over here.

Ruijerd didn't turn over, but he may have already confirmed my safety via his third

eye.

They had come over to save us.

If I were a girl, I would have immediately fallen in love with them.

Embrace me! Make a mess out of me!

“This can't be...”

When I became like a young girl, Alek had an astonished face.

Nay, it would be better to say that he had been shocked.

“Impossible, Gull Farion was defeated?”

So what happened? When he saw Ruijerd, he nodded.

Seriously?

Was Sword God defeated with the two of them working together?

“Though he resigned his seat as the Sword God, he couldn't have been defeated so easily... it seems I might have overestimated that person's circumstances.”

While proudly saying those words, Alek wore a sorrowful face.

If I recall when they pushed me off the bridge, he looked on good terms with Gull.

“It was only for a short time, but... he was a nice person nevertheless...”

Alek's presence changed.

It was different from before.

The feeling that he was going easy on us vanished.

“Even though I thought that I would quickly deal with the two of them and then proceed to fight Orsted...”

Alek prepared himself as he lowered his body.

Something was coming.

Sensing an overwhelming presence, Eris and Ruijerd lowered their bodies in vigilance.

But if he was going to go all-out now of all times, then it was already too late.

In addition to Sándor and me, there were Eris and Ruijerd.

It was 4 vs. 1.

Even if he's one of the World Powers holding the strongest sword...

"Right hand sword."

The sword in Alek's right hand raised, its tip facing the sky.

"Left hand sword."

Alek held the sword's handle with his left hand.

Using both hands.

The large sword that he had been swinging with one hand, he was now holding it with two.

I wonder if that was his real fighting style.

"Not good! Run!"

Sándor gave out a sharp shout and jumped on his right.

But it was too late.

"Brought about by both hands, a life is lost, leaving only death with but one intent."

Alek held the Dragon King Sword above his head.

"My name is Aleksander Ryback of the North God Style."

Then I realized my body was afloat.

It wasn't just me.

Eris, Ruijerd, and Sándor who jumped to the side as well.

Everyone's bodies were floating in air.

Of course, the falling leaves, the branches of the trees, everything was rising from the surface.

The Dragon King Sword's Gravity Manipulation.

Once you're up, forget about coming down. You can't even move properly.

Even if you kicked and struggled with your limbs, you couldn't move from the spot even a little bit.

A completely defenseless position.

Alek could be seen putting all of his power into it.

"Now is the time for me to avenge my sworn friend!"

Crap.

As I thought that my body moved on its own.

I loaded mana in both my hands and created a shockwave.

Eris, Ruijerd, and Sándor were blown far into the distance.

I immediately hauled in the remains of Zarif's prosthetic hand that were floating near me and pointed the Magic Absorbing Stone that was fixed at its tip towards Alek.

Something that was between me and the sword disappeared and I landed on the ground.

Throwing the Magic Absorbing Stone into the wind, I drove all of my mana into both my hands.

As I faced Alek, who was on the verge of swinging his large sword downwards———
—

<Secret Technique: Gravity Rupture>!

A flash and an explosion.

—————My consciousness paused.

3

When I woke up, I was on top of a tree.

I was blown off.

I realized that fact because my legs had bone fractures.

The leg parts were smashed to pieces, and my leg had twisted in a weird way.

It wasn't just the legs.

Most of my body-parts had broken, and I was being assailed with intermittent pain around my chest.

Probably a rib or two had broken.

“*cough* ... ghah, ghah.”

I was coughing violently and pain ran through my chest, but it wasn't severe enough to hinder my speech.

I chanted healing magic right away and cured my wounds.

“Just how far was I blown... uuuohh!?”

When I raised my body, the branch that was holding me broke.

While cracking the branches, I fell down from a fair distance.

But I had still not fallen to the ground.

It seems I was blown off to quite a high place.

As I was thinking that, I could see the ground.

There was a crater.

A crater with a diameter possibly even of 20 meters.

Something like that had appeared in front of the valley.

There wasn't anything like that before.

It was created just moments ago.

Possibly with the attack just now.

“Seriously?”

I suddenly turned my neck around.

I could see something glittering at the Supard village.

It was a light I recognized.

“That is... uuuoohhh!?”

The branch I was sitting on broke again.

This time I fell straight towards the ground while hitting many branches on the way.

“Owww...”

I had just used healing magic, but was injured once again.

I quickly chanted healing magic and cured my wounds once again.

At any rate, I must grasp the situation.

What happened to Eris, Ruijerd, and Sándor?

And Alek?

“!”

While thinking that, I stood up and could see a person right before me.

Getting startled, I quickly took a stance with my shaking body.

But the one before me wasn't an enemy.

“Sándor-san!”

“...Could you heal me as well?”

He was covered with injuries.

The armor was partially destroyed, the helmet was broken, and blood was coming out of his head.

His left hand was loosely hanging down.

“Yes, of course.”

I touched his body with my hands and healed his wounds with healing magic.

“Thank you.”

“Where are Eris and Ruijerd?”

I asked about those two immediately after I was thanked.

Even Sándor was wounded like this.

Then Eris and Ruijerd were in bad shape as well.

“They have minor injuries. It’s good that we were able to gain some distance thanks to you, Rudeus-dono. They might not even need healing magic. Although they’re still unconscious.”

I felt relieved by that report.

“And, where’s North God Kalman III?”

“It looks like he went ahead of us after seeing that we were defeated.”

“He didn’t deliver the final blow?”

“That technique just now was the strongest killing technique of the North God Style. He may have thought that there wouldn’t be any need.”

It was fine when I fell down the valley, but it looks like he really has a screw loose up there.

But we were saved thanks to that.

But we let him through.

We let him through to Orsted’s place.

Orsted will probably win.

Even he should’ve fought Aleksander with the Dragon King Sword in one of his loops.

He shouldn’t have fought him seriously if there was no need in the route, but I am sure he could defeat him just as easily as he defeated Water God Reida.

But that attack.

There were other people in the Supard village as well.

The Supards that just recovered from the plague, Julie, Norn...

If in order to protect them he took that sword technique upon himself to ward it off, then...

He would probably end up using a lot of mana.

A fight to protect is much harder than a fight to attack.

If Orsted couldn't protect everyone, then it would mean the death of all of them.

"Sándor-san, can you still fight?"

"Do you intend to go?"

"It's not over yet. I just saw a light coming out of the village. It's the summoning light. If Roxy's preparations are finished, then we're just getting started."

When I said that.

A green-haired male came running from within the forest.

Two of them. Both of them were Supard warriors.

It wasn't Ruijerd.

They quickly approached us after looking at our figures.

"A message from Roxy. The summoning was a success."

"Alright."

I nodded.

"Well then, I'll be going first, let me have the privilege of stalling him."

"Please be careful not to overexert yourself."

"I understand."

After a short exchange of words, Sándor began running.

“I’ll let you handle the nursing of Eris and Ruijerd. When they wake up, message them for support.”

“Alright!”

“Please guide me.”

“Yes!”

I entrusted Eris and Ruijerd to the nodding Supard warrior and took the other warrior with me and headed towards Roxy’s place.

Jumping over the roots of trees, crossing the thicket, I headed straight ahead.

I wasn’t that fast because of the broken Magic Armor.

I mean it had already lost all its function and was now heavy.

I stripped out of Magic Armor <MK. II> on the way.

And ran with my casual clothing.

North God Kalman III was stronger than we had expected.

But we must not pull back now.

This was a critical moment.

“Rudeus...!”

I reached my destination.

Roxy wasn’t there.

The ones who were left were only Elinalize and the remaining Supard warriors.

Then, it’s as planned.

“You look awful...”

Although I had cured myself with healing magic, looking at my tattered clothes and armor, Elinalize stared in amazement.

But she quickly stiffened her face.

“The preparations are complete.”

Behind her.

There was an impromptu magic formation written.

But it had already lost its light.

It was something that was identical to the drawing in the scroll that I had lost at the bottom of the valley.

The name of the manufacturer of that scroll was Roxy Greyrat.

That magic formation had already collapsed.

It collapsed due to the weight of the huge armor that stood on top of it.

For the worst case scenario, this was created as a duplicate if the Magic Armor was destroyed during the war.

Not having enough space in the armory of the office, this one machine was unwillingly put in the workshop.

The only trump card which escaped the destruction of the office.

“It’s the Magic Armor <MK. I > ”

Well then, it’s time for Round 2.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 8

Q. Teacher, are you a little bit in confusion?

A. It was a little misspelling this time or how should I say this.

I wrote <Second Generation> and <Third Generation> as the title for the fight between Alex and Aleksander but screwed up, then I fixed the title to <Alek> and <Earl> but then again screwed up, I fixed <Earl> to <Sándor> ...

Because of what I did it became awful.

I think it's quite hard to read now. I'm terribly sorry.

Q. What kind of appearance does the Magic Armor is the most similar to if compared to any mecha anime?

I imagine it as Koubu from Sakura Wars.

A. Let's see... it can be Koubu.

It can be Scopedog from VOTOMS.

It can be Destroid from Macross.

I imagine it as such from boorish series like that but it would be fine to imagine however you feel like it.

Q. So there were two pieces of Magic Armor MK. I, one of which was in the office and one machine at Zanoba's workshop? I do remember that there was a description of magic formation of the office set-up in the workshop. I wonder if the scrapped-up parts were used as the second installment of MK. I.

A. That's right.

Something like this might happen, so they created a second installment of MK. I.

Q. Was 2nd Gen's rank higher than Death God before he retired the Dragon King Sword?

A. No, it was the same as now.

The ranking has nothing to do with the power levels, which constantly changes.

Q. I wonder if the Magic Armor that was in the office was stolen.

A. It's heavy to begin with, and since no one can move it the probability is low.

Q. 2nd Gen or 3rd Gen, who is stronger?

A. At the very least, the 2nd seemed to be at the top during the time he handed over the Dragon King Sword.

And during those days, the child who was not swallowed up by that sword seemed strong.

Q. Sword God's battle was quite terrific but Jino is well...

Jino suddenly came into the spotlight without any development, when he fought a stronger opponent, he defeated a person far stronger than him. That kind of development didn't correspond well. That's the only complaint I have.

A. Perhaps Gull Farion too held a similar feeling.

Q. Atofe's parts compensated for the loss of hands but if it got attached with Former Sword God after he failed to cut the neck, would it become Atofe-body?

A. Well, if there was the box around there by chance at that time.

Q. Did Former Sword God's sword break? The armor had not aged but it was thanks to Atofe-hand, Atofe-hand is black and really hard.

A. When eating something soft the hard thing inside it can nick your teeth, sort of like that!

Q. Saying that there won't be anymore changes in the World rankings would be a spoiler so I wished that you hadn't said that.

A. Gull Farion's position was taken by Jino Blitz so Eris defeating Gull won't have any effect, right? Thus is my answer to your question.

It shouldn't be a spoiler.

Q. Alex → Alexander → Alexandor → Sandor → Sándor, so that's how it is!

A. Nope, Sándor is the hungarian name for Alexandros, that's all.^[42]

Q. Please tell me about the history of Rudeus's right and left hand.

A. Right Hand : Rudeus's right hand is born. It held talent when he was little, it grew as the most reliable hand of Rudeus.

Left Hand : Rudeus's left hand is born. It couldn't keep up with the right hand, but the right hand can't always show it's talent without it. It grew as an excellent support.

Q. Since Earl is the son of the immortal demon lord so he has regeneration, why would he need healing magic?

But it could also be that his regeneration couldn't keep up with his wounds.

A. There are times when Curaga is needed rather than Regen. ^[43]

Q. "Ah, this is father's nickname. Wow, it's been what, 100 years or so. I always wanted

to talk like this with you when I was a kid..."

For a kid who could've said something like this to be such a foolish kid...

A. This scene is probably far into the future.

Q. What are the subjugation group 100 strong doing right now?

A. After watching lighting falling down on them and the bridge falling down as well, they've lost all will to fight and have completely stopped moving.

Q. Wasn't the master of that wacky faction Aleksander?

In Ch 174, it's written that Wii Taa's master is North God Kalman III.

A. Wii Taa is Kalman III's disciple.

His growth was sluggish, but when he became independent he came to know about Auber's wacky faction, and then rose to North King.

Still, he wasn't Auber's disciple. There are many in the wacky faction who follow Alek's way of doing things.

CHAPTER 15

NORTH GOD THE THIRD VS DEAD END + A

1

After activating the MK. I, I set out after the North God.

Inside the forest, avoiding trees, I simply headed towards the North God.

While running, I estimated the amount of mana left in my body.

I consumed some fraction of it during my battle with the North God, but something of that level didn't even come close to 10% of it.

I still had a surplus of mana.

But a little while ago, while fighting the North God, the continuous rumbling in the background had stopped.

Zanoba and Doga.

No matter how good their compatibility was, it seems that a God class enemy was impossible.

I hope that they're alright.

Although, if we assume that those two got taken out, then...

The North God and the Ogre God.

I would have to fight those two.

I wonder if I have enough mana.

I can't run out halfway like I did in the battle with Orsted.

No, the current moment was critical.

Let's stop thinking about the past.

I have to address the things in front of me one at a time.

For now, the first goal.

North God Kalman the Third.

2

By the time I arrived at the scene, Sándor had already been defeated.

He was sitting at the base of a tree with his eyes downtrodden.

He didn't have a weapon on him.

His rod was lying broken near him.

The one who was looking down on him was Alek.

North God Kalman the Third had overpowered the previous generation.

"Father, how long are you going to continue this little game?

You must understand, right?

That you can't win against me if you don't have at least one of the Cursed Swords."

Sándor did not answer.

He may have already passed out.

I didn't want to imagine that he's dead.

"Or was this also part of your plan?

Playing dead. Such novelties are everyone's specialty in that wacky faction, aren't they?

No matter what happens, excel yourself and achieve the goal.

I also think that that approach is wonderful.

Although honestly, I think Auber's group was overdoing it, but...

Why did my father, who taught them, choose to deny me...?"

Sándor did not answer.

He just continued to remain in silence.

“Well then, it’s about time I get going.”

Alek said that and turned around.

To face me.

“...Huh?”

He looked like he had run into a bear.

An unexpected encounter.

He never thought that he would meet this person here.

That kind of face.

That Magic Armor should no longer be usable.

“My son. I’ll answer your question.”

And so for but a few seconds.

In the time Alek stood there shocked, Sándor stood up.

“Playtime is over.

As you said, without a Cursed Sword, I cannot win.

That’s why I borrowed one from Eris.

But that was just a last resort. With just a Cursed Sword, the chances of victory would still be slim.

So I waited. I persevered and persevered, played dead and waited.

For certain victory.”

As he said that, Sándor took out a single sword from his back.

That was the second sword owned by Eris.

The Cursed Sword <Prominence>.

“Why did I deny you?

That is because you, who aims to be a hero, are acting far from what a hero actually does.

A hero carries out his duties heroically, using whatever he can to grasp victory.

Not kicking around the weak to gain fame; challenging an enemy far stronger than oneself without any chance of victory, and then winning to seize the title of a hero.

Not like me, but in the same fashion as North God Kalman the First.”

Sándor unsheathed his sword with his aloof atmosphere and took his stance.

The Cursed Sword <Prominence> was a short sword.

But in Sándor’s hand, it seemed like a weapon fitting for a North God.

His beloved Alek glanced towards Sándor over his shoulder.

“...I get it.

Reinforcements...

Gisu did say to not let Rudeus get into the Magic Armor.

But that is simply fighting the enemy in their best form.

With just the two of you, do you think that you can win against me holding this Dragon King Sword?”

“Who said there are just two of us?”

Sándor’s words.

And as if in response to him, the bushes moved.

Two people came out from there.

A red haired woman and a man with green hair.

Eris and Ruijerd.

While I went to get the Magic Armor, they had woken up.

They both still had injuries, but the two of them were far tougher than me.

“ ...”

Eris took a glance at me.

That gaze held great meaning.

Those eyes said that she would entrust her back to me.

Ruijerd was also giving me a similar gaze.

Although it was his first time seeing the Magic Armor, through his third eye, he could see that it was me.

And thus, as if it was natural, he was coming towards me.

And so, I will be supporting these three.

As long as the Magic Armor <MK. I> holds out.

It may seem like a pathetic position.

But that's how it is.

We've been doing things like this since long ago.

Eris in the centre, Ruijerd in charge of control, and me as backup.

There wasn't any need for words.

There's an extra person mixed in, but this was the best formation.

"Now then, it's time for the second round."

On Sándor's command, the second round between North Gods began.

3

Coming right from the front was Eris.

She was, as usual, going for the fastest victory in the shortest distance. She was brandishing her drawn sword, and ran straight towards Alek.

Alek handled it well.

A slash too fast for my eyes to see.

It was handled safely and countered.

Eris's attack seemed to continue on without any break, but there was certainly a small pause that my eyes couldn't see.

But the counter was completely prevented.

It was Ruijerd.

Each time he swung his spear, Alek's counter failed.

Ruijerd was moving around in Eris's shadow.

No matter how many mistakes Eris made, as long as Ruijerd was there, those mistakes couldn't be taken advantage of.

But at times, Alek ignored gravity.

Just when you thought that his stance was broken, he would make some weird movement, and carry out continuous attacks or swap to defense.

From his big evasions, just when you thought that he was performing an acrobatic dodge, he would suddenly dive in for an attack.

Against those movements, not even Ruijerd could cope.

These movements, that Ruijerd couldn't deal with, were prevented by Sándor.

North God Kalman the Second, the man who knew more about manipulating gravity than anyone else, prevented them.

Aiming at where he was going to land or striking at him in the air.

Although Alek avoided direct hits, it wasn't going how he wanted it to.

It all ultimately resulted in his vain exhaustion of stamina and increase in injuries.

On the other hand, whenever he retreated back, he fell prey to my magic.

The stone cannons that even Orsted couldn't avoid were bent away by the Dragon King Sword.

But on the verge of hitting him, I activated the Magic Absorption Stone and a few shots managed to graze him.

It wasn't a direct hit, but the rain of bullets kept him from moving around and wouldn't allow him to gain distance from Eris.

Although the <Electric> that I shot with what I thought was the perfect timing was easily avoided, Alek wasn't getting any time to catch his breath.

And so, there was no room for him to use that <Killer Move> from before.

"Ghu...!"

Alek was both stronger and faster than anyone here.

But because he was rushing, because he was impatient, he was getting sloppy.

To the point that sloppiness itself was exuding from Alek's entire movement.

With absolute stability, it had become a battle with us having the advantage.

The damage given was also compounding.

There was no unnecessary movement.

It's not as if we're certain that we'll be able to defeat him.

But if this situation keep getting gradually worse like this, he will eventually be destroyed.

Stamina and magic.

If this keeps up for a bit longer, he's bound to run out.

Since this battle started, who has been expending themselves the most?

From the start of the fight, who has been the most wasteful?

That was someone who, right after the battle started, revealed their ultimate technique.

"...Tch!"

Eris's face got scratched.

Just a scratch.

But as time passed, more wounds added up.

There was one flaw.

Sándor.

North God Kalman the Second.

The man formerly known as one of the Seven Great World Powers, had a flaw.

But that couldn't be helped.

While fighting the Third, after taking his ultimate technique, he had been protecting Eris and Ruijerd.

And so, until we came, he continued to stall North God Kalman the Second until he had become worn-out.

Even an outsider could see that his movements were losing their brilliance.

But he was still moving.

He was handling his job.

Or it might be that he could somehow handle the job due to Alek's sloppiness.

But he was still human; he had his limits.

Of course, Eris too, and I, who was watching the opponent's movements with the foresight eye as well.

Even the veteran hero Ruijerd, was breathing slightly harder.

It was a tough battle.

Constantly maintaining a paper-thin line between offence and defense.

Sándor was probably about to hit his limit.

“ ... ”

But he still had some energy left.

Unlike before, I was wearing the Magic Armor <MK I>.

With its high line of sight, it was easy to oversee the battle.

The range of my support had increased.

Sándor was being overwhelmed.

Then, in order to support Sándor and those movements, it should be fine to change tactics for a bit.

The attack pattern will be Rock Spear from below and Vacuum Wave from above.

And then, increasing the usage frequency of the Magic Absorption Stone.

Alek ignoring gravity and freely moving in three dimensions was simply one of the Dragon King Sword's abilities after all.

And I've already confirmed the Magic Absorption Stone's effectiveness against the Dragon King Sword.

By increasing its usage frequency, the extent of my support will decrease, but Alek's movements will also be limited.

As a result, Sándor's burden would decrease by 30%.

But that would still only be 30%.

It wasn't enough for him to restore his stamina and continue the match.

We had the advantage.

But victory was far off.

It was something that we couldn't help but think about.

...Rather, could I keep the Magic Absorption Stone deployed forever?

While constantly deploying the Magic Absorption Stone, my long distance magic would be wasted, but if it was the ability of Magic Armor MK. I, then close-combat was possible.

If I seal those acrobatic movements, it will become a great advantageous situation... or would it?

No, it wouldn't.

Eris, Ruijerd, and Sándor.

Those three were standing at point blank range.

There was no room for the massive Magic Armor in there. No matter how much power and speed it has, without the technique to go with it, it will only hold them back.

But how about just stalling for time?

For Sándor to step back and recover his stamina.

Just a few minutes.

Wouldn't just that make a huge difference?

Wait... Alek is a North God.

Even without his gravity manipulation, he must have fighting techniques.

It's impossible that he doesn't have any.

Gravity manipulation was not his true power.

Even if that had been sealed and he had fallen a rank, my close combat abilities were 2 or 3 ranks below Sándor's.

Even with the foresight eye, I still couldn't read Alek's movements.

And because of that, I may put a huge burden on Eris and Ruijerd.

They were already getting scratches here and there.

With just another finger, or a hair's breadth of difference, an artery could be cut.

Eris was going all out.

Right from the very beginning, without wasting a breath, she rushed right in.

But she was already falling apart. It was because Alek was good.

She might still be exhausted from her fight with the Sword God, or maybe she's still injured from Alek's killer technique.

Even so, as far as I can tell, Eris was giving her best performance.

But I didn't know how long this was going to continue.

Ruijerd was still recovering from his illness.

He should still have been confined to his bed for another couple of days.

He might be moving around fine right now, but it was possible that he would suddenly fall to the ground with a thump.

What to do?

If it goes on as it is now, we won't lose, but we won't win.

My magic power was still fine, but Sándor will eventually hit his limit.

What to do?

What should I do?

Fully deploying the Magic Absorption Stone, preparing for the risk, and head for the front?

Or should I use some other kind of magic to break the deadlock?

Should we start afresh?

It's hard.

"Gah!"

As I was thinking that, Alek's aim changed from Eris to Sándor.

By decreasing his interaction with Eris, Alek's outer body began to be covered in wounds from slashing attacks.

But of course, we weren't able to hit him with a decisive blow.

I could see his aim.

Alek had also realized it.

That if Sándor was taken out, then the balance would break.

A chill ran down my spine.

Sándor's death.

Following that, Eris's death.

And then Ruijerd dies, making it one on one, and then I would be killed.

We'll lose.

(Is there no way to decide the battle quickly?)

Inside me, an unthinkable worry was born. Impatience was born.

My movements dulled, and the unease that I may have made the wrong decision emerged.

A small mistake emerged.

Even if I made a small mistake, Ruijerd would do something about it.

That said, it was most certainly a burden.

At this rate, it would be no good.

Something.

Something must happen.

Something decisive must happen.

As I thought that.

“...!”

A decisive moment came.

It appeared from deep within the forest.

The first thing to come flying was a cluster of dark grey steel.

It came flying out, rolling like a ball, hit a tree, and then stopped.

The lump of steel quickly got up.

But the helmet was missing, the massive armor was covered in dents, blood was flowing from his head, and his nose was bleeding profusely. He had a hazy expression.

Without letting go of his weapon, doing his best to hide his rustic expression, he glared at the opponent that sent him flying.

It was Doga.

The next one to come flying was a lanky person.

His armour was already gone and his top half was bare.

With his thin beat up body, he slammed into Doga who came flying moments ago.

It was Zanoba.

And then the decisive moment.

That was something with red skin and long fangs.

His stature easily crossed over 2 metres, he was covered with sinewy meat, and he fell down from above like a monkey.

There was no *THUNK* nor *TMP* nor *THOK*. With a very strange landing noise, he fell near us.

“...!”

Ogre God Malta.

The second he appeared, all movements stopped.

At the same time, my body began to tremble.

A bunch of crazy thoughts began floating inside my mind.

This battle.

Why did he come over here?

Could we win?

Would we lose?

Should we fall back for now?

Or should we attack?

“Ooh! Ogre God-dono!”

Looking happier than anybody else, Alek gave an honest smile.

As soon as he saw the Ogre God, a joyful smile crossed his face.

Seeing that smile, it was possible that even he was having a hard time before.

I see. It wasn't just us having a hard time.

The battle was also difficult for him.

I get it.

He wanted to go ahead, or so he thought, but was being stalled here.

We haven't lost yet, but we have yet to find a plan to break through.

He can no longer use that killer technique.

If this situation continued for a long time, he's bound to be mentally exhausted.

“You came at an excellent time!”

Contrary to Alek's smile, the Ogre God had a sullen face.

A sullen face wondering - Why the hell are you guys here?

The face that Alek had shown when he looked at me like he had met a bear. Right now, it could be said that the Ogre God had the face of a bear that ran into a person.

But this was bad.

This battle situation.

In a situation where we would most likely crumble within ten minutes, enemy reinforcement had arrived.

“Could you please give me a hand?”

The Ogre God nodded in agreement.

We completely lost our remaining strength.

I was already running all around the battlefield, and now I had to provide support for battles against two targets.

Seeing an opening, I managed to heal Zanoba's and Doga's wounds.

But they were inferior to the Ogre God.

Each time the Ogre God moved at a speed unbefitting of his massive size, Zanoba and Doga were blown away.

Even when Zanoba forcibly uprooted a tree to bash him, the Ogre God didn't suffer any damage and counterattacked by blowing Zanoba away.

Doga continued to swing his massive axe without giving him a single wound, but was swatted away like a mosquito and blown away.

Even though neither Zanoba nor Doga should lose in strength.

They were being blown away.

Overwhelming power.

Alek continued his unchanging attack.

Sándor was mustering up the last of his strength to move around. It's a mystery how he has been able to support the front line for this long.

No, it's not a mystery.

Sándor was fluctuating and Ruijerd was beginning to tire.

He's probably pushing himself.

This was bad.

This situation was bad.

It came to be a situation where we could no longer think of breaking through.

In just a few minutes, our front line will most certainly come crumbling down.

We must retreat.

But there was nothing behind us.

We would just arrive at where Orsted was.

Still, it's not as if Orsted would die.

But is that ok?

Would that still be ok?

It would be a loss, but would it really be ok?

Is there really no way to break through this deadlock?

We have to at least take down one of them.

Think.

There has to be something.

If I used all the cards in my hand to the fullest, there has to be something.

Most of the scrolls were lost but I somehow got the MK. I back.

The MK. I's gatling gun, size, speed, and power.

Is there really nothing that can be done?

Is there anything?

Something...!

"Gah..."

At last, Sándor fell to his knees.

And with despair, I looked at the Ogre God.

It was him.

If we didn't stop this rampaging machine, we couldn't win.

Another move.

Just one other move.

We've simply been forced from our advantageous position to a disadvantaged one.

We can still turn it around.

If we can do something about this Ogre God, Zanoba or Doga could switch places with Sándor so that he could retreat to the back and recover.

It's fine with just one move.

If it's only just one.

“AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA—!”

It happened then.

Laughter rang out among the surroundings.

And at the same time, the base of my arm felt hot.

The voice sounded familiar. Alek and Sándor suddenly raised their heads and looked around.

“It certainly has become something quite interesting!”

In the next instant, something black jumped out of the thicket.

Wearing black armor and tightly gripping a single sword, that person headed straight for the Ogre God.

“UGAAAAAAaaaaa!”

That person landed a single hit on the Ogre God.

A terrible *KLING* and *SCHLING* rang out simultaneously, and the sword broke.

The hand which the Ogre God had guarded with was now profusely pouring blood while he had taken several steps back.

“HAAAAAA!”

The black thing did not mind one bit that its sword had been broken.

Continuing to close in, a sharp fist headed towards the Ogre God’s solar plexus.

The Ogre God slouched forward for an instant, and was then hit with a left hook.

His head staggered for a second but he did not fall.

The Ogre God raised his uninjured hand above his head and hit the black thing.

The black thing flew back a few meters, spread its wings, and landed softly.

“AAHAHAHAHAHAHA! Good, good, this is a great feeling!”

The form like that of the devil.

I caught my breath.

“Atofe-sama...!”

Immortal Demon Lord Atoferatofe.

The person feared more than any other on the Demon Continent was here.

“Why...?”

She turned to look at me, her face twisted with ferocity, and laughed.

“Kukuku, I smelt from my fission that you were in trouble, and sensing that the final battle was near, I hurried here! I have no idea what’s going on but I’ve made it. The Ogre God and Alek... Kukuku, fufu... AHA, AHAHAHAHAHAHA!”

Atofe was laughing. Laughing so much that it made me wonder what was so funny.

With that ominous laugh echoing throughout the forest, Alek was standing there dumbfounded.

The fission...?

Right, these arms.

The situation hadn’t been completely conveyed, but she made it.

With Atofe here, our forces were more than enough.

This would work.

“TO ALL THOSE HERE! I, DEMON LORD ATOFERATOFE RYBACK WILL ERASE YOU ALL!”

Please, not everyone.

Dammit, was Moore not here?

The other Imperial Guards?

She has no reins!

By herself!

“Is what I would like to say, but...”

Atofe faced the Ogre God.

He was about twice her height.

Atofe was quite large for a woman. But still, the Ogre God was massive.

In height, width, and depth.

“Ogre God Malta!”

“Do you wish to fight me next?”

What came from the Ogre God’s mouth was fluent Demon God Language.

Contrary to his appearance, his speech was quite dignified.

I guess that should be expected of the God Class.

“Your island, The Ogre Island, has been invaded by my Imperial Guards! Leave here quietly! Fail to leave and they will all be slaughtered!”

“...!”

The Ogre God showed Atofe a surprised face.

He searched for the true meaning.

Whether her words were truth or lies.

But there was only one thing that could be said.

I cannot believe that Atofe would be capable of lies or bargaining.

“Of course, I do not mind even if they’re all slaughtered! In fact I would prefer it! Yes, I would prefer that! Alright, come at me!”

Atofe spread her hands wide.

That figure, those words.

It gave an incredible feel of authenticity.

The Ogre God's reaction was extreme.
In an instant, he curled up his body, and jumped like a monkey.
To the top of the tree.
And from there, he looked down at us.

“Wai...! Ogre God-san!?”

Alek was in a panic.
The Ogre God then saw Alek's situation for the first time.
With eyes that didn't care at all of the outcome.
And then he said:

“I return. Island in danger.”

What came from his mouth was the Human language.
The Human language with a country accent.
It seemed that, compared to the Human language, the Demon God language was his forte.
But he was still bilingual.
Even though Atofe cannot speak the Human language!

“Hah?”

The Ogre God jumped from that point and disappeared from the forest.
With Alek dumbfoundedly seeing him off.
Alek wasn't the only one dumbfounded.
Ruijerd, Sándor, and I all stared in amazement.
And so, one was left.
Alek was alone.
Surrounded by Eris, Ruijerd, Sándor, Zanoba, Doga, Atofe, and I.

Too disappointing.

Disappointingly, the Ogre God had left.

“Now then, the enemy is alone!”

“H-honored Grandmother...”

His father turned enemy.

A grandmother who doesn't listen to reason.

An irresistibly pitiable situation.

An atmosphere of being disappointed, dumbfounded, and not knowing what to do.

But there was one person here who couldn't read the mood.

“Gaaa!”

Eris took advantage of that opening and threw an attack at Alek with all her might.

“Ngh!”

Alek blocked.

A block.

He neither dodged nor parried, but blocked.

He blocked the ultimate technique of the Sword God style, the <Longsword of Light>.

He guarded against the unguardable ultimate technique.

When he realized, his left hand was flying through the air.

While spraying blood. Spinning around.

“Ah.”

The hand fell to the ground with a splat.

That was both the sign for resumption of the fight and the decisive moment.

The fight that had started, seemed to be missing something.

The North God Style should still have techniques after losing an arm. Even after losing both arms, Alek would probably still be able to do something.

But those possibilities had quickly been cut off.

Against such a high level of offense and defense, he could no longer fight without a left hand.

From then on, it was no longer a fight.

In just 5 minutes.

Just 5 minutes.

Alek, covered in wounds, awkwardly fled the scene.

5

“Haa... Haa...”

It wasn't an effective tactical retreat.

Out of breath, he was simply running away from something terrifying.

North God.

You wouldn't think that he was a member of the Seven Great World Powers.

Entering a good school, getting into a good university, and finding employment within a good company.

But then, for the first time in his life, he tasted failure like a new employee.

Driven by frustration, he fled the scene with an unsightly figure.

But it ended here.

There was nowhere to run.

Alek ran pathetically for about an hour and ended up back at the valley.

He was cornered.

The pursuit force was five people.

The second Alek ran, Zanoba fell down and Doga also sank to the ground right there.

But there were still five people.

Sándor and Atofe.

Eris and Ruijerd.

And me.

The valley was in front of us.

It wasn't a narrow place. There was a precipitous cliff exceeding 200 meters.

There was no place to run and our strength was sufficient.

"Dammit..."

Wasn't he cornered?

Or was he acting?

Alek was standing on the edge of the cliff out of breath.

It looked as if he was cornered.

But we mustn't get careless.

Although he may have lost a hand, he originally wielded the Dragon King Sword with ONLY one hand.

With the Dragon King Sword that can manipulate gravity, it doesn't matter that he's missing a hand.

There's no mistake since I'm speaking as a person whose arm was cut off.

While I thought that, fear began to cling to his face.

But he was the North God...

"Give it up already. You don't have any techniques to turn this situation around."

Sándor said that because... he meant that Alek no longer had any chance for a reversal?

"Yeah, just die quietly!"

"Mother, right now, I'm talking with Alek, so could you please be silent for a bit."

"Unh... Aahh..."

Atofe cut in but was shut down by Sándor.

That Atofe was obedient?

Witnessing that spectacle, I was once again reminded that they were indeed family.

Although they aren't similar at all.

"Ahem... The energy that you were saving in preparation for your fight with Orsted... the second that you had your hand cut off, it became your loss. Didn't I keep telling you when you were young? Don't look down on your opponents no matter what."

While holding back, he made a mistake that couldn't be undone and was defeated.

It happened a lot.

Especially while underestimating those under you.

"Throw away your sword and surrender. As your parent, I cannot hate you."

Kind words from Sándor.

<As your parent>

Over these last few years, those words had become quite a weakness for me.

Truth be told, I couldn't forgive him who tried to slaughter the Supard race.

But.

He was not directly Hitogami's apostle, but was Gisu's apostle attempt...

If Alek were to cry and apologize... Well, but, yeah...

He looked quite young.

About Paul's age I guess.

I didn't know his current age, but he should be about the age Paul was when he became my parent.

To call him childish wouldn't be wrong.

Then, if from here on out, he sincerely tries to begin anew...

When I thought that.

From such an immature child, in a very arrogant attitude, we heard his upfront answer.

“I don’t wanna!”

Of course.

“I wasn’t fighting at my full strength! The left hand was an accident. If the Ogre God didn’t run, this wouldn’t have happened!

“That is also the reason for your defeat.”

“Do you mean not to rely on allies!? Even though there were four of you fighting!?”

“A Hero does not have any allies. When it comes to it, he may receive help, but even if those allies disappear halfway through, he will still win.”

Sándor said that clearly.

As if to say that was the only correct answer.

Because of that, it was strangely convincing.

What kind of Heroic Legend did he wish to create? I don’t know the details of it, but... I guess that’s what’s to be expected from a retired Hero.

“But that wasn’t the cause of your defeat. It was your strategy. You should’ve hit us with all your power and then retreated once. After recovering, you should’ve challenged us again.”

“I won’t have another chance to fight Orsted, you know!”

“Who was it that said that?

“...!”

Looks like he hit the bull’s-eye.

It was Gisu.

Orsted was outside of Hitogami’s field of vision.

And so, Orsted has been missing for a long time.

You can meet him in Sharia - was only my common knowledge.

One couldn't meet him anywhere other than here. There will be no other chance to fight him besides now. You can't blame him for thinking that.

Especially since Alek was still young.

'I want to become a Hero', 'I want to surpass my father' – were words that came from being young.

There won't be a second time. I should take the chance in front of my eyes right now.

He couldn't help but think that.

Although he was a little forceful.

His attitude itself was something that could be cheered for.

"You should look for a friend or a rival who holds the same aim as you from your generation."

"QUIET!"

Sándor's sympathetic words caused Alek to shout out and grip his sword.

Eris and the others, as if signaled by that, also gripped theirs and stood prepared.

I also prepared.

5 vs 1.

Even though he shouldn't have a chance of winning.

"I haven't lost yet! A Hero would turn this situation around! I will defeat you all! I will eradicate the Supard Race too! And then Orsted! After killing the Dragon God, I'll be a Hero!"

The second I felt something gather around his sword, I raised my left hand.

" <Arm of mine, suck it all up> "

Gravity malfunctioned for an instant.

Just like when an elevator ascends, for just a second, my body floated, but quickly returned to the ground.

“URYAAAAaaaaa!”

The next instant, Alek’s sword began to shake.

The five people including me jumped backwards as if spreading out.

But Alek’s wasn’t aiming at anyone.

“Khu!”

It was the ground.

Alek slammed his large sword into the ground and destroyed it.

The next instant, earth and sand danced around, lowering the visibility.

So he was attacking through the smokescreen.

As I prepared for that thought, my clairvoyance saw something from the gap in the smokescreen.

I saw Alek falling backwards into the valley...

Was he killing himself?

Did he get blown off by his own slashing attack...?

No.

Alek’s face showed a smile.

A disgusting smile.

A triumphant smile.

No... that’s right.

After Alek fell from the bridge, he came back up.

The Dragon King Sword’s ability, gravity manipulation.

Even if he falls into the valley, he can easily get out.

“...!”

The next instant, I jumped.

I followed Alek into the valley.

CHAPTER 16

ALEKSANDER VS RUDEUS

1

As I was falling, I kept my eyes on Alek using Clairvoyance.

Alek too was keeping an eye on me the moment I fell.

While being startled.

As I fell down fast, the distance between us gradually became smaller.

It was because he was controlling his falling speed with his Dragon King Sword.

I extinguished that advantage first.

“ <Arm of mine, suck it all up!> ”

Alek's falling speed returned back to normal.

But the effect of inertia still remained. I couldn't stop my speed so abruptly.

I decreased my falling speed with Wind Magic.

No, gravity will become my weapon.

I, who couldn't use touki, will make the laws of physics my weapons.

Using the shockwave, I re-positioned myself in mid-air.

And directed my falling self straight above Alek.

“OOOOHHhhhhhh!”

With our constant relative velocity, I hit Alek.

Alek took it with his sword acting as a shield, and he was struck by the cliff, killing his momentum.

I kept using the Magic Absorbing Stone during that time.

Due to its recoil, I got closer to the cliff as well, but I re-organized my posture using a shockwave and kicked the cliff to accelerate myself.

I caught up with Alek once again.

“ORRAAaaa!”

I hit him!

I accelerated with a shockwave and hit him.

Using the relative velocity, I hit and hit him.

I hit him with the laws of physics.

“AAAAHHHHH!”

Alek shouted.

Was it incomprehensible for him that he was being hit in mid-air?

Even I didn't know.

I didn't know why I was doing this.

I simply thought that I couldn't pass this opportunity up.

I thought that if I left this kid who had a lack of morale, then someone would be put at a disadvantageous position.

And the one who would be left in a disadvantageous position would be me as an enemy.

My family, my friends, someone.

“AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!”

Without any reason I shouted as well.

It's not like I hadn't heard of Alek's and Sándor's story.

It's not like I hadn't thought of this guy contemplation while growing up.

It's not like I was comparing those two things.

But I hit him.

I accelerated and bashed him, accelerated and bashed him, accelerated and bashed him, and continued to bash him...

And then crash landed at the bottom of the valley at high speed.

Both me and Alek.

2

I raised my body from within the cloud of dust.

Due to the drop just now, some kind of blue spores were scattered around the surroundings.

Visibility was bad.

For now, my body was unscathed.

As expected of the Magic Armor < MK I.>, I'm grateful.

It had developed some cracks, but it still moved perfectly.

"Phew..."

And Alek was alright too.

But he wasn't completely unscathed.

His armor was broken and one of his legs was bent in a strange direction.

But that was it.

He may have defended himself with touki at the last second.

He stood on one leg and looked at me.

He's a monster for sure.

"...Did you chase me all by yourself?"

Alek looked at me and muttered a few words.

"Some nerve you have..."

I looked at the top.

I could see earth dragons moving within the complete darkness.

But no one was coming down here.

I thought that Atofe and the others would quickly come falling down...

While flying in the sky...

“My Honored Grandmother is quite old. When I fell, you gave chase. Then, no one else will chase after.”

“That’s absurd.”

“No matter how old that person gets, she always yearns for a one-on-one fight between a hero and a demon lord.”

I could understand that a little.

Atofe is violent but I can feel that she’s obsessed with something strange.

During my fight as well, none of the soldiers made a move.

“And that’s my good luck.”

“...What is?”

“This injury. If the ones who came down were Eris Greyrat and Ruijerd Supardia... or my Father or my Honored Grandmother, then it would have been the end for me.”

“You’re saying that it won’t be your end if I’m here?”

“I don’t intend to lose to someone like you.”

Brimming with self-confidence, eh?

Alek was heavily wounded.

He had lost one leg and one arm.

I was wearing the Magic Armor.

It took a lot of my mana as I had been wearing it for a long time, but I was able to give support and there weren’t any major injuries.

I was in perfect shape.

“Aren’t you underestimating me a bit too much?”

“It’s not like that. On top of your inability to wear touki, your reaction time is slow as well. You’re careless and full of openings.

You didn’t even realize that we drugged North Emperor Doga with sleeping pills, and as a result, you went out alone only to fall into the valley.

You don’t have enough resolve nor enough vigilance. You’re just an inexperienced blockhead.”

I didn’t even have anything to retaliate.

I certainly am like that.

Even though I have an overwhelming amount of mana, I’m just an incompetent person.

We would’ve been in trouble if Atofe hadn’t come this time.

“That’s why I’ll fight here and win, and then flee. If I flee from here, then victory shall be mine.”

“Even if I die, there’s still my comrades you know? The Ogre God ran away and the Sword God is dead... Even without me, you should have no chance of winning.”

I couldn’t confirm whether the Sword God was really dead or not, but...

Well, it’s fine right! It was Eris after all.

“No, a hero can win. That’s how my style is. Even just now, you couldn’t kill me during our fall. Since I was in a defenseless position, I had no choice but to continue to receive your attacks.”

An attitude as if to say - that is my answer.

Full of confidence.

But he was definitely standing on the ground with his own leg.

“I shall win.

Against you, against my Father, against my Honored Grandmother, and against Orsted.

I’ll defeat everyone and engrave my name as a World Power.

As the world’s strongest warrior.

I, Aleksander Ryback the Third, will be known as the world's strongest North God Kalman."

He had wounds all over his body, but he wasn't in a position where he was helplessly receiving attacks.

His chances of winning weren't nil right now.

It was a situation where he could look for a chance to win.

He didn't know what percent chance he had, but he thought that he had that chance.

He was thinking of defeating me in this crucial match.

Was it because he wanted to become a hero?

No, that was wrong.

It was because he had overcome so many difficulties on his own.

He knew that he was being cornered right now.

He was underestimating me a bit, but he wasn't going to fight shoddily like he had been doing until now.

He intended to crush me with all his might and then flee from this place.

My opponent was North God Kalman III.

The person who knew the world's highest class of swordplay, holding the highest class of demon swords, and one of the Seven Great World Powers.

He wasn't a cornered rat, but a wounded beast.

I, who was facing him, didn't really have much hope of winning this crucial match.

Whether my prior preparations overwhelmed him or I'd lose because of the difference in our strengths, there wasn't any other choice.

He had also sensed it.

He had realized that during times when you had to unexpectedly surpass difficulties, I was the type that wouldn't bring anything to the table.

Or it was possible that he heard that from Gisu or Hitogami...

"...Let me ask this one final question. Are you an apostle of Hitogami?"

“No. I and the Sword God received information only from Gisu. But I won’t deny the fact that I was aiding Hitogami.”

“I see.”

Then just who was the last apostle?

No, let’s put that thought aside for now.

I must defeat this guy first.

Ngh?

Wait, shouldn’t I just retreat if it was no good?

We had the war potential.

I didn’t need to try so hard here.

If there’s still one apostle left, then shouldn’t I fall back for now?

Sword God was defeated and we didn’t have any casualties on our sides.

Then, should I fall back now and make absolutely sure of our chances of winning?

“...No.”

Wrong.

That’s not it.

Orsted was behind me.

Not letting anyone through to him is the winning condition.

Even if one or two people were to pass through his nose, then it wouldn’t be that big of a problem.

The only thing that was important was not spending Orsted’s precious mana.

However, it will probably recover somewhat in the 80 years to come.

I was getting relaxed only because I was thinking that.

Before the start of our battle, I had gotten completely relaxed.

We defeated Sword God and Ogre God fled.

North God was in front of me with wounds all over his body and looked like he would

fall at any moment.

On top of that, even if I were to let him get away, my comrades were still in good health.

Even if he broke through my comrades, there was room left for Orsted.

If it was North God Kalman III, then Orsted was probably familiar with him. He could fight him while still being able to protect the Supard village.

I had gotten relaxed within those state of affairs.

I ended up thinking that there was still some room left even if I was defeated.

This was it.

This was the Winning Factor Alek was talking about.

And if I think back upon it, it always felt like this.

I could obtain a safety margin by stepping back for now, but then taking a step would become unattainable when it really counted.

Alek had sniffed that out.

Wave, force, luck, and flow. These things exist.

Many refuse to believe in such an abstract argument, but... there are times when these things exist.

If I fell back here or I were defeated, Alek would obtain something.

As a result, I would lose something in return.

That was something I couldn't explain, something that was beyond my expectations.

“.....”

That's why I couldn't lose.

Right now, I couldn't fall back nor could I lose.

A scene where I must take the risk and just go for it.

It was this.

This was the crossroad.

This was where I will muster all of my strength and make a serious effort.

“...I am Dragon God's subordinate, Rudeus Greyrat of the <Quagmire>.”

“! My name is Aleksander Kalman Ryback, the <North God>!”

I resolved myself.

“AAAAAAHHHHhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

I shouted.

I shouted from the bottom of my belly.

“OOOAAaaaaaaa!”

Alek too, shouted and prepared his sword.

His sword in his right hand.

He could only use that since he didn't have his left one.

His right foot was in front.

The broken left leg stepped firmly on the ground.

He ran towards me.

He didn't have any strategy.

I had the intuition that a long-ranged attack would be futile.

I ran towards Alek while keeping a low profile.

Just before we clashed.

Someone's figure floated in my mind.

It was Eris.

I quickly raised the gatling-gun on my right-arm and fired stone cannons with all my might.

“!”

But the stone cannons were annihilated.

Right before Alek's eyes, they turned to dust due to the power of the Magic Absorbing Stone.

Alek took one step forward as he saw me rushing at him.

As he saw the stone cannons pouring down on him like rain, he lowered his right foot in hesitation only for an instant.

But those stone cannons were getting annihilated one by one.

I quickly leaned towards the left side of my body.

I knew that I was within range of the sword prepared by Alek, but I still plunged in.

While plunging in, I fired from the hip with my right hand.

While bending forward as if rubbing my chest against the ground, I thrust my right foot into Alek's left side.

"RYA... AAAAaaaaaa!"

Alek's shoulder moved.

A silver flash took flight.

I took a hit on my right shoulder and a part of the Magic Armor went flying.

But my hand wasn't cut.

Without checking the extent of my wounds, I firmly stepped on the ground and with my right fist——

< Alek fills his legs with power >

He'll jump and then avoid it.

When I thought that, I loaded mana in my left hand.

I cut the mana supply to the Magic Absorbing Stone and then used a different magic, although I hadn't decided what magic to use.

I loaded my left hand with mana with the intention to not let him fly and then pointed it towards him when——

"Ngh!?"

Alek's foot floated for an instant.

"AAAHHHhhhhh!"

While shouting, I raised my right fist (gauntlet).

I ejected my fist with all my might which was attached with the gatling-gun.

BAM, the fist hit him.

It flung Alek to the wall.

"<Shoot out> Hng!"

I loaded the gatling with mana with all my power.

The stone cannons hammered the cliff, creating cracks.

But I didn't just stop at that. I loaded it with even more mana.

Stronger bullets! Faster firing rate!

The moment I thought that, my right-hand felt strange.

The gatling-gun cracked momentarily, then broke into little pieces.

"AAAAAAAAAHHHHhhhhhhh!!!"

Even so, I loaded my right-hand with more mana.

Producing a stone cannon.

The thing I've produced the most; the thing I was most accustomed to.

I fired it.

I fired and fired and fired.

"AAHH, aahh, hhaaa..."

I fired until my shout died out and was replaced by a sigh due to my heavy-breathing.

I kept shooting.

"Haa... Haa..."

And then I quit.

The right-hand of the Magic Armor that was completely buried inside the wall had completely broken apart from its base.

Its base... was it because it took that blow from Alek?

If it weren't for the Atofe-hand, then it was possible that my right arm would've been cut off.

“...”

I could see a human-body inside the wall.

Red-blood could be seen flowing out from the gap between the wall and the fist that was hammered into it.

It wasn't even twitching.

When I casually looked closer, the sword had fallen.

The sword held by Alek just a few moments ago.

<Dragon King Sword> Kajakuto.

I picked it up with my left hand.

A two meter longsword.

I took it and then looked at the wall a second time.

“.....”

Blood was flowing out.

Red blood was flowing from the gap between the wall and the fist that was hammered into it.

Nothing was moving.

Only blood was flowing silently.

It was understandable that the flocks of earth dragons were squirming around when I looked at the top, but only this region had a bizarrely quiet feeling.

Only my hand was left with feedback.

The feedback that I certainly killed a person.

“Hooray.”

Unaware, a word leaked out from my mouth.

How did I win?

I thought the victory was only paper-thin.

If I had been slower for even a moment or if Alek had not hesitated...

Alek's attack would've cut me just like the Magic Armor.

Moving like Eris played out well.

I attacked with the gun but in an irregular way, with a strange and out of sync timing.

Taking one or half a step more than usual and stepping strongly, I was able to successfully snatch away his chances.

This was Eris's offensive style.

Eris could fight in such a risky way without being conscious of it.

It was only because I was able to fight like Eris this time that I won.

I was the last man standing with blood dripping from my neck.

Although my movements couldn't be compared to Eris's.

The distinction of whether or not I could do it wasn't attached.

I shouldn't have been able to move within that area.

If it weren't for Alek's injured leg and arm or if he hadn't underestimated me, then I wouldn't have won.

And then, that thing I felt when his foot floated.

It felt as if it wasn't a type of magic that I had used until now.

Could it possibly be gravity manipulation magic...?

No, Alek was trying to do something with gravity manipulation using that Dragon King Sword and I may have interrupted him using the Magic Absorbing Stone by activating it unexpectedly.

The final factor may have been luck.

But I don't think that this victory was only based on luck.

"I won."

I suddenly made a fist and raised it upwards.

3

After I climbed out of the valley while I scattered the earth dragons with the MK. I, a lot of people were in front of my surroundings.

They were the soldiers of the subjugation force.

After losing the bridge and losing the three god ranks, they appeared to be standing there not knowing what to do.

They fled in every direction after seeing me.

They might've thought of me as some kind of demon or something.

For the time being, I caught the current commander—a knight of the Biheiril Kingdom that looked like he was in charge, and several other people, and conveyed to them that the North God and Sword God were dead.

I also conveyed that if they were still intending on subjugating the Supard race, then our side was willing to counterattack.

But at the same time, I also conveyed that there was still time left for peace talks.

The contents of the peace talks will remain the same as before.

I was angry that they attacked us, but if it was true that Gisu was the King, then that was Hitogami's doing.

I don't have any intentions of changing my tolerant attitude.

But just to make sure, we caught two people and made them prisoners of war.

It was possible that Gisu was disguised as the king. Then there wouldn't be much meaning to it.

But it could be that not every soldier was wrapped around Gisu's fingers, nor that the domestic authorities were under his palm.

After they hear about the current matters and if the soldiers were brought back safely,

then depending on public opinion, they should become our allies.

If it was still hopeless, then there would be no choice but migration... well, I guess I could still stall for time.

As I was on the way back while pondering, I suddenly came across the stone monument.

The stone monument of the Seven Great World Powers.

At the bottom of it.

The mark at the very bottom had changed into a very familiar mark.

“...”

A mark with the shape of three spears combined together.

The shape of the amulet of the Migurd race.

I may have become one of the Seven Great World Powers.

I was the one who dealt the finishing blow, but he did fight 4 people at the beginning... it just didn't feel right.

Maybe it wasn't for me... maybe it's the mark for Ruijerd and the rest?

Eris... not really, I guess.

“.....”

It honestly didn't feel that good.

But now that I've become one, it can't be helped.

I decided to return back to the place where Eris and the rest were.

4

After that, I crossed the valley and met up with Eris and the others.

“So, what happened?”

The one who came first was Sándor.

When I told him that I delivered the final blow to Alek at the bottom of valley, he made a sad face and wore a wry smile while saying - I see.

“You’re the hero. The despicable demon lord is defeated by the hero. That’s how it has been since the ancient times.”

Atofe’s expression didn’t really change that much.

But she’s probably a little sad at least. She did say sentimental words that weren’t like her.

“ ... ”

Alek was dead.

I think that he was still a child.

He had talent and only aimed to reach the top...

He had a future as well.

There were a lot of things between Sándor’s and Alek’s conversation.

I had hoped for Alek to have more time to think things through, disciplining him for the time being and having him reflect on his actions afterwards... those were some overly optimistic thoughts I guess.

There was no killing intent or hatred involved.

I only killed him because he was an enemy.

I thought that if I let him escape, I would come to regret it later. I had to do it then and there, so I killed him.

That was why I didn’t feel like apologizing.

It was just a flutter.

The other side was willing to kill me too.

That was all there was to it.

“You did it!”

On the contrary, Eris was wearing a delightful face.

When I told them that the mark on the monument had changed, she folded her arms, as the sides of her mouth raised to a complacent smile, her nasal breathing got rough. If I wasn't wearing the Magic Armor, I would've hugged her. Such a disappointment that I couldn't.

“.....”

Ruijerd didn't really say anything, but his face had become a deep blue. I had thought about that in the middle of the battle, but I guess he did reach his limit after all. Fighting with a recovering body would definitely be hard. But no one had severe injuries and we were able to gain victory with everyone in good health.

But what should be done now?

While thinking that, we headed towards the Supard village.

The place which had become burnt black in order to burn Sword God's corpse, the crater created by North God's attack, and then, the many trees that were mowed down during the battle with Ogre God, and animal trails.

As we gazed at those sights and walked further, we saw the collapsed Zanoba.

Doga was crouching down on his side with a completely exhausted face.

Zanoba seemed to be asleep.

With his face upwards with a deep blue color to it.

Like a corpse?

“...Zanoba. Wake up. It's over.”

I called out to him from above inside the Magic Armor.

But there was no response.

“Zanoba...?”

After several seconds, sounds from the forest vanished.

The wind stopped and the remaining sounds vanished as well.

“Huh? Zanoba? No way...?”

“...”

“Answer me...”

Zanoba didn't answer.

Only his face was facing towards the sky. He was silent like a corpse.

Just like a... corpse.

“...Hmph!”

Eris suddenly kicked Zanoba's head.

“Whaaaat the!?”

“We're going back! Wake up already!”

“.....? OH! I apologize! It seems I had fallen asleep before I realized it.”

Yeah right.

But it wouldn't have been strange if he had died.

Zanoba and Doga were in a disadvantageous position.

If we hadn't encountered each other by chance, then it wouldn't have been strange if he had become a wordless corpse.

While I pondered, I saw the blown up path that Zanoba and Doga came from.

Traces of a fight could be seen all over the path.

The uprooted trees, minced trees, and a small crater. The consequences of the attack.

It's good that they won.

No, they weren't superior to the Ogre God.

He just went back.

“Come to think of it, why were you here, Atofe-sama?”

“Nmh? Do you really want to know?”

“Please let me know.”

Atofe’s explanation was shoddy and incomprehensible.

There were a lot of sound effects and half of it completely went over my head.

“In short, you used the teleport formation left from the days of the past great war.”

“I found it and had it ready for when the time came!”

That’s bad.

If it was known that the infamous Atofe had used the teleport formation and was visiting several places using it, my reputation would probably go down the drain.

Well, maybe not. Not this late in the game.

All things considered, was this the... end?

It was certain that we obtained victory, but it ended in the blink of an eye.

It was unknown what happened to the Ogre God, but there were only a few enemies left.

“.....”

When I thought it was over, I was suddenly hit by a sweet fragrance wafting from Eris who was walking beside me.

Was it because of the difficult battle?

My survival instinct was stimulated, activating my reproduction instinct.

How about tonight?

Was it not time for the lifting of the ban on Rudeus?

“No! No!”

The abstinent Rudeus remains until the defeat of Gisu.

We hadn’t even confirmed Gisu’s appearance yet.

The Ogre God ran away. We don’t know what’ll become of that.

There was still one apostle left as well.

It's not over yet.

But Gisu had yet to make his appearance.

Our intelligence network was already in a mess. We couldn't even search for him.

We don't know if he ran away.

...Perhaps it was his main goal all along.

This was the decisive battle and we'll be settling things here. It could be that I was the only one who thought these things and Gisu intended to run instead.

Right now, he may be taking the last apostle with him and be about to reach the national border... or is he?

During this battle, the information that was scattered about various places ended up gathering in the Supard village.

We didn't have the teleport formation nor the communication lithograph.

Even if Gisu was spotted at the national border, we didn't have any means of catching up to him.

He'll probably run away.

With the Dark King defeated, North God and Sword God going out of his control, then...

Using 80% of his war potential as a diversion, only keeping the people that he can control with him, tricking us into following him, and then escaping during that time.

Abandoning this time, so some other time instead...

If I was him, I'd do this.

"Phew..."

But we couldn't lower our guard right now.

However, the fight here was over for now.

I was tired.

I couldn't fight anymore today.

Let's entrust the others with the consequences.

We weren't able to bring Gisu down, but the North God, Sword God, and the Dark King have fallen.

Ruijerd and the Supard village have become our allies.

We didn't know what Gisu did with the Biheiril Kingdom and Ogre God, but... maybe we'll be negotiating next.

The only real damage we took would be the destruction of the office...

Thanks to that, all the teleport formations were destroyed.

We couldn't move for the time being, but I clapped my hands.

It was not bad compared to the greater damage that I had predicted.

We could see the Supard village.

Maybe they sensed us coming, as the children of the Supard race were looking at us from within the fence.

And then, the warriors protecting the Supard village came out.

Furthermore, Elinalize, Cliff, Norn, Julie, and Ginger as well.

I stripped out of the Magic Armor.

My body had become light because I used up so much mana.

Julie and Ginger rushed up to Zanoba.

Norn went towards Ruijerd.

Cliff headed towards the completely exhausted Doga.

People who hugged each other, people who talked with relieved faces.

Looking at that, I was finally hit with an actual feeling.

“.....”

Orsted came out last.

Orsted started coming towards me.

“Did you win?”

“Yes.”

As a proof of victory, I handed him the large sword.

The large sword which could be said was the North God's symbol, <Dragon King Sword> Kajakuto.

"We won."

We had won.

A complete victory was still far-off, but we were able to overcome the difficulties.

We crushed the trap laid by Gisu and took the lead all at once.

There were a lot of things going on in my mind.

Things to reconsider were innumerable.

But a victory is a victory.

"Good work."

Receiving words of gratitude from Orsted who took the sword, I bowed.

I suddenly felt someone at my side.

It was Eris.

With her arms folded, she was looking at me.

She spread her arms.

"...!"

And jumped at me.

While enjoying the sensation of those breasts, I had the same thought again.

We were victorious.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 9

Q. Isn't the title of 253 fraud?

A. I guess so. I'll change it a bit.

Q. I do think he could've at least fight the Ogre God with the MK. I.

A. Of course he can!

But if he fought the Ogre God then he won't be able to support those who were fighting the third, making the front collapse!

Q. The Dragon King Sword, Kajakuto. Is it famous?

A. It's always discussed whether it's one of Yulian's Cursed swords but it's definitely famous as North God's favourite sword.

Q. Can Rudi win against a perfectly healthy North god III?

While defending against gravity manipulation and using Gatling with the remaining hand, would he lose?

A. Probably impossible.

While defending against gravity manipulation and gatling with the remaining hand, he couldn't use the Magic Absorbing stone on top of that.

Q. Rudi finally did it.

Mister, we've know Rudy since he was a little child.

That Rudi has become such a responsible adult now.

I am happy.

A. In truth, he was a lecherous child...

Q. If Rudi has now become one of the Seven Great World Powers then what would be his title like the Sword God and North God? Would it be Quagmire after all? Or a God would be forcefully added in front of the mud making him Mud God?

A. FYI, the mark on the monument resembles Roxy's pendant.

Q. The mark of the person who becomes one of the SGWP would become the mark which that person believes in?

A. It certainly seems like that.

Q. In the end, just what will he be known as a world power?

A. As the right hand of the Dragon God, it's likely he would be called Dragon King or Dragon Emperor. Even if he doesn't name himself, the public will acknowledge him so.

Q. In the end, was the right hand still attached or not?

A. Magic Armor's right hand was torn apart.

Q. The killing technique used by Alek where he stops his enemy's movements and hit them with the that one blow with all his might. That felt a lot like the earth-shattering Super Robot scene from the Showa era, would it be fine to imagine it as such?

A. Delta End!

Q. Atofe: "I got a shivering feeling from my fission, so I popped into the magic circle and poofed here, then with a fwoosh, I flapped my wings and flew towards the banging, and then I landed with a plop, and then jumped in here with a bang! You should be grateful!"

A. About that kind of feeling.

Q. The Magic Absorption Stone uses about the same amount of magic as the spell it extinguished right? And then the magic expended by the gatling gun wouldn't be anything small...

A.Yup, It's not small.

Q. Ehhh...!? The crest should be the object of worship...!

A Rudy lacking faith should not be allowed to lift the ban.

A. It's because it's the mark he got from Roxy... (*trembling voice*)

CHAPTER 17

OGRE GOD'S BARGAIN

1

3 days had passed after the battle.

The injured were cured and peace arrived at the Supard village.

During these 3 days, while being wary of yet more enemies, we relaxed.

It was not as if we didn't do anything, but it was just that nothing happened.

We were truly in peace as time passed idly.

Zanoba had grown considerably tired and passed most of the days sleeping.

We were worried that it might be a serious illness, but the doctor said that it was merely chronic fatigue caused by muscular pain.

It was the first time that he had muscular pain in his life so he said - My entire body feels like it'll come crumbling down... Julie, this body of mine is going to die soon, I have taught you everything there is to know. Even in my absence, be diligent - and then wrote his last will.

Julie cried again but nodded with such a determined look in her eyes it was amusing to watch.

On reflex, I rushed over to him and held his hands - We'll definitely see the automaton to its completion. I swear to my respectful God. Leave it to me. Let the power of God be converted into a bountiful crop, and be bestowed unto those who have lost the strength to stand once more, <HEALING> - while saying those things, I ended up healing him.

After that, Zanoba rose with an amazed face and started repairs on the MK. I.

Julie just kept looking blankly.

Atofe too, remained relatively docile within the village.

I noticed that she made the guys in the village build a throne with timber and was

teaching warriors the basics of battle, but it wasn't a serious matter yet.

Eris was participating at least.

Looking at that Atofe, Sándor became a little embarrassed, but at times a shadow was cast on his face.

He was thinking about Alek after all.

Even when I asked if he wanted the Dragon King Sword back, he said that those were spoils of war and wanted me to use it however I wanted.

After listening to such words, even I will lose the motivation to use it.

I have no right to say that since I rely on the Magic Armor, but if I use it too much, I'll become a no good person.

So I let Orsted keep that for now and I'll just use it when it really counts.

Ruijerd passed most of the time with Norn.

Although it felt more like Norn was following him around like a young bird.

Norn being taught all kinds of things by Ruijerd looked much like how Eris and I did before.

Norn was diligent as well.

...Being diligent is... fine, right?

Doga had gotten popular with the woman and children.

Although he was afraid when he first arrived at this village, he had devotedly helped out a lot during the plague, so it felt like he had crossed over a hurdle. They had accepted each other.

These days, he was carving wooden dolls with an honest face and was enjoying himself with the children.

The ball was lost because Orsted sent it flying somewhere, and so he was somewhat lonely.

The team of doctors had said that the health of the Supards was progressing favorably, and so they shifted to the researching the plague.

They were investigating the plague while examining the food of the village... or it would be better to say that they were collecting samples.

They were bringing it all back to the Asura Kingdom and recording notes in documents

for future use.

Cliff, Elinalize, and Ginger headed towards Second City Irel.

Once again, we sent a demand towards the Biheiril Kingdom with the prisoners at our disposal.

There was a need for a person who would receive the answer.

They took 2 Supard warriors with their shaved heads as escorts, but if Gisu's plan was still in action, there was also the danger of each of them getting crushed. I was worried.

This basically meant that I prepared a meeting to review the battle.

Even this time, there were a lot of things to reconsider.

Particularly, the part where I fell into the valley was dangerous.

Why was it that Gisu didn't approach us using the Magic Tool?

We must combine those parts with the next situation by boiling it down to its core.

The things that have been done can't be helped, but at the very least, we won't be biting our own tails.

Additionally, Atofe-hand was returned back to Atofe and my right-hand was restored using a healing magic scroll.

I reflexively started rubbing Eris's breast with that hand, which resulted in a one hit KO to my jaw, rendering me useless for half a day.

And then that magic.

The magic that I used during my confrontation with Alek.

I tried using that magic several times while taking that same feeling into account, but it never worked.

That was possibly gravity manipulation, but I needed some kind of impetus again.

I've already engraved the potential of using gravity manipulation.

We must also think about various things regarding the teleport formations.

If we were to set it up in various places like this time, then even the enemy could easily use them.

We must think about a counter-plan for that scenario as well.

Nevertheless, the teleport formations were still not fixed even after 3 days had passed. We summoned Arumanfi on the second day and inquired about our family, but... it was taking a lot longer than expected.

Maybe some kind of problem was taking place irrelevant to Hitogami.

I was worried.

Although there wasn't any meaning in worrying too much.

I must do what I can.

2

The fourth day.

The people who left for Second City Irel as messengers had come back.

They came as soon as possible after receiving a reply from Biheiril Kingdom.

A lot of things were written in one sheet of letter.

"The King of Biheiril wants to meet you. He says that if something is done regarding the war potential of Ogre Island, then he'll think about the circumstances of the Supard race."

Thus, that was the summary of the reply.

It looks like the continued existence of the Supard village will be allowed for now.

They came back rather quickly. The letter may have been drawn in a hurry because it had wrinkles in it, but the signature was the real deal.

The war potential of Ogre Island meant Moore and the others who were left there by Atofe.

On Atofe's orders, they took the people of Ogre Island as hostages and barricaded themselves in.

For now, it didn't look like the Ogre God was going to forcibly fight them...

Well, it just meant that we'll be talking about negotiations from here on out.

"...Alright."

With the exception of the Supard race's matter, there weren't any difficult requests. At the very least, they must hear about the matters regarding Gisu.

"If that's how it is, then let's go."

I'll take some people from the Supard race along.

Our primary aim will be the negotiations, but if the Supards were going to be living inside Biheiril Kingdom, then there was a need to show their faces for them to be accepted.

If they didn't, then there was the possibility that something like this would happen again.

But it's also possible that a resistance group may surface after seeing the Supards.

I guess there was a need to perform an act where the head of the Supard race and the Ogre race shake hands...

While pondering over such things, I selected my members.

Battle ready Eris, Sándor, Atofe, and Ruijerd.

Cliff of the Milis Church for the role of negotiations, and Cliff's attendant, Elinalize.

Along with 2 warriors from the Supard race, we decided to head towards the Capital.

The rest will be staying here to defend against any attack towards the Supard village.

I wasn't taking along only my members, but prisoners of war as well.

Sadly, there wasn't a request for the return of prisoners.

But we were sincere.

Be that as it may, the negotiations may break down, so one of them will be staying with us as a card.

While thinking that, I moved towards the hut where those prisoners were staying.

Inside the hut, the two of them were just sitting absentmindedly without any conversation.

When they saw me entering, they looked at me suspiciously.

"So how about it, this Supard village?"

“..”

“It’s quite a nice place, don’t you think? There are a lot of beauties and the children are energetic. The food is a little wild, but its taste shouldn’t be that bad.

The warriors over here are a little blunt, but you should know by now that they aren’t offensive towards the Human race.”

It had only been a few days for the prisoners, but they were living quite a free life.

Of course, we kept them under our watch, confiscated their weapons, and to make sure that they weren’t disguised, we stripped them naked as well, but we fully attended to their needs with a hospitable mind.

Many Supards made sure to welcome them as guests and they also were quite gentle towards the prisoners.

There wasn’t any need to restrain them.

They were free to roam around the village and they could also go outside of the village with one Supard escort after getting permission.

There was no concern of them fleeing.

This was because they themselves were afraid of the Invisible Wolf.

During the 2 days, when the Supards started hunting the wolves, they were able to confirm what kind of beast the Invisible Wolf was.

It is the kind of food that is eaten around this area.

They were still a little bit afraid of the plague, but there wasn’t anything else to eat, so it couldn’t be helped.

We did let them drink the Sokasu tea for the time being.

“...Well, we understand that the rumors were twisted a bit more than we thought.”

The soldiers were in despair when they were first brought in, but now they seemed lax.

I thought that they had yet to see the Supard race’s good characteristics.

But their overall impression had definitely gotten a little better.

The other one was already enjoying himself quite a bit.

However, I was afraid that the moment I got out of here, the other one would remove his mask and say –

Haha, I was actually a mole for Hitogami...!

Well, I selected them randomly and they also went through strict examination before entering the village.

Even Orsted and Cliff properly assessed them. Some were left behind as well... so it was probably alright.

“We’ll be going to the country for negotiations, so one of you will be coming with us. I would like to leave you with one of the high officials. Would that be alright?”

“I understand.”

One of the soldiers nodded and the other stood up.

He’s an honest person.

I would hate it if I was cutting down some kind of personal bond between these two...

Well, the country had finally accepted our conditions for once.

So it’ll just be a meeting where we talk things out.

While pondering over such things, we departed from the Supard village.

3

4 more days passed after that.

The negotiations with the King went smoothly.

The King of Biheiril was scared.

His attitude was King-like, but he did pay undue attention to my speech and conduct. He was also afraid of Eris, Ruijerd, and Atofe being there.

I was only threatened by Sword God and North God.

Saying such haughty words and in such a roundabout way too, but he did give us an explanation.

He admitted that a monkey-faced person was taking shelter inside the castle and that the only time he left the castle was when I visited.

Just in case, we asked them to remove all of their rings and I used the Magic Absorbing Stone as well, but it looked like Gisu wasn't changing places with anyone anytime soon.

However, I guess Gisu was the King that time after all.

He successfully deceived me.

A terrific acting ability as one would expect from him, though it was likely his vocal mimicry.

Anyway, we turned in the names of the prisoners while assuring negotiations. They said that if something was done quickly about the military forces of Ogre Island, then they were willing to acknowledge the Supard race.

They weren't forcing us to pay reparations, asking for territory, or difficult problems like that.

The people living in this country were simply acknowledging the people who saved this country.

On top of that, the one who proposed the early departure of the subjugation force was Gisu.

As a King, he couldn't help but sigh and get drunk.

If they were to refuse our demand here, they would be cutting their ties with the Ogre race as well.

It would become a scene where the Biheiril Kingdom forsook the prisoners of the Ogre race.

This country has strong ties with the Ogre race. If those ties were to be cut, it could effectively mean the end of this country.

4

That was how it went, so we were now heading towards Third City Heilelul.

A volcanic island could vaguely be seen in the far distance from the port city.

I would be standing-by here while Atofe and Sándor went to Ogre Island to negotiate with the Ogre God.

I asked Atofe and Sándor to proceed to Ogre Island as messengers.

I wanted to go to Ogre Island too, but the MK. I couldn't board a ship, making it a bottleneck for me.

There weren't any ships that could withstand MK. I's weight.

We didn't know what the Ogre God was up to, so it would be preferable if I wasn't separated from MK. I. That was the conclusion that we came to.

If negotiations with the Ogre God went down without a hitch, the prisoners of Ogre Island would be released, which would end that matter with the Biheiril Kingdom.

As a result, the Supard race will be able to live at the entrance of the forest and not near the valley.

We still couldn't be sure about what started the plague, but at least they will be away from whatever caused it.

It will take some time and labor for the migration, but my job was almost over.

The last thing we must take into consideration is the possibility of fighting the Ogre God...

Sword God and North God were no longer around.

So we should win.

Even if Gisu still had some war potential in reserve, if it became a little difficult, we would just have to retreat to the forest once and come back prepared.

“ ... ”

While pondering on such things, I climbed the lighthouse to see the ocean with Ruijerd and Eris as my guards.

It was nostalgic to see an ocean.

The ocean was big and spacious.

It was stretching out underneath a clear sky.

The island that could be seen beyond the horizon was Ogre Island.

I thought that the island itself would have a Ogre face like shape, but it was a normal island.

It was a volcanic island so-to-speak, and smoke was rising out of the mountain.

Now that I saw it, it had an atmosphere of magnificence or strangeness, but not of evil.

To say it clearly, it was simple.

Since the Ogres were living on it, it's called Ogre Island.

Of course, we didn't climb the lighthouse only to gaze at the sea.

The reason was to look at one point of the ocean.

There was a boat approaching Ogre Island.

The boat in which Sándor and Atofe had boarded.

While standing on top of this lighthouse, I was going to keep watch over their negotiations with the clairvoyance eye.

If the negotiations failed and the Ogre God went berserk, or if Gisu shows up unexpectedly, I was to contrive a large-scale attack from this spot.

It was a plan which would involve the innocent Ogres and send the negotiations with the Biheiril Kingdom down the drain.

But if Gisu really was there, then I would definitely fire.

"...Hey Rudeus, are you looking properly?"

"I'm looking. Need an explanation?"

"Don't need it."

With a wry smile on her face, Eris continued scouting.

I could only look at one part of the island with the clairvoyance eye.

That one spot was easy to see and I could see various people gathering over there.

It was the beach.

We had decided that that would be the place for negotiations.

An ogre with a remarkably huge body could be seen there. That was Ogre God Malta.

He was surrounded by ogres that were deemed to be soldiers.

It looks like they fought several times over as the soldiers were all covered up with bandages.

On the soldiers' opposite side, ominous soldiers wearing black armor faced them.

They were Atofe's Imperial Guards. Moore was also there.

They may be a little injured, but I couldn't see any damage on them.

So they were a lot stronger than the soldiers of the Ogre race after all.

Still, we wouldn't know what would happen if the Ogre God were to fight, but we've taken the entire village hostage.

He probably wouldn't fight.

Furthermore, I could see around 5 women and children of the Ogre race behind the Imperial Guards, most probably taken as hostages.

However, it was war, so there might be deaths as well.

This may be one of those disputes.

While thinking about that, my heart started pounding, but after Atofe's and Sándor's arrival, half of the hostages were easily released. Then, Sándor and the Ogre God talked about something, after which they disbanded.

It was unknown what they were talking about, but the Ogre God relaxed.

I was held back by the clairvoyance eye's inability to hear voices.

5

"Rudeus!"

The next day.

I, who was sleeping in an inn in Third City Heilelul, was woken up by Eris's shout.

"...What is it, honey? Let me sleep a bit more."

While thinking that, when I reached for her breasts, but my hand was brushed away.

That was hurtful to your man. It's violence.

But am I not allowed to?

Because I copped a feel despite my abstinence.

"He's here!"

"What?"

"That guy!"

After shouting, she ran out of the room.

I would like her to stop talking with feelings alone.

It's difficult for an intellectual person like me to understand such vague words.

"That guy...?"

While still trying to understand what just happened, I raised my body up.

After rubbing my sleepy eyes, I looked out of the window.

I saw a group of reddish-brown haired people standing in front of the inn.

"—THAT GUY!"

I quickly rushed out of the room and ran towards the first floor.

"....."

Ogre God was sitting cross-legged in front of the inn.

In his surroundings were youngsters of the Ogre race wearing pitiful faces.

As if to face Ruijerd and Eris, they were standing ready with weapons and arms.

When I stepped forward, the crowd of people opened up a path for me.

I stepped in front of the Ogre God.

And then Sándor whispered something into my ears.

"It seems Ogre God wants to strike a deal. I brought him along in order to lessen the likelihood of traps."

"...I understand."

If he didn't intend to fight anymore, then I wouldn't say no either.

I didn't know what Sándor was predicting, but it didn't seem like this was Gisu's strategy. Judging from appearances, Atofe, Eris, and Ruijerd didn't seem to be cautious.

These people had understood something, something which had relaxed them.

“.....”

When the Ogre God glared at me, he asked me as if searching for something.

“...Are ya leader?”

“Yes. Rudeus Greyrat. The person in charge.”

“I Malta.”

When I bowed, Malta bowed too even while sitting.

“Need ta talk.”

“...I wanted to talk with you regarding some things as well.”

I followed the Ogre God’s example and sat cross-legged on the floor.

The other side will be in the same posture, removing any discourteousness... or so I would like to think.

When I did, some of the surrounding youngsters stood by my side and served sake cups between me and the Ogre God.

It was sake cups.

Those cups were quickly filled up with drinks.

Common alcohol was served to me.

But it was soy sauce for the Ogre God.

Soy sauce and even miso, this area might be similar to Japanese culture.

“Drink.”

“Thank you for the drink.”

The Ogre God drank it in one go and so did I.

It would be bad if we got drunk, so it was only one shot.

Drinking might be part of courtesy...

But well, what should we talk about now?

First would be Gisu.

Or - are you an apostle?

Ogre God-dono's appearance didn't look too good.

I should convey it in a simple manner so that it's easy to understand such a complicated issue.

Gently, as if I was teaching Eris.

"I heard."

As I hesitated for a bit, Ogre God opened his mouth.

"Demon Lord attacked village. Stole food. Unforgivable. But people unable to fight, all lived."

Ogre God said that and looked at the surrounding ogres.

All lived...?

Even if it was a small battle, you would expect some deaths, but... no, he meant that <non-combatants> didn't die.

Looks like even Atofe knew that distinction.

Well, it was Moore's strategy though.

"Your house, destroyed it, your not fighters, let live. We same."

"..."

"Ogres protect country. Country surrendered to ya. I head of ogres. No reason in fight. Bargain."

He couldn't forgive Atofe who attacked the village.

But he destroyed my office as well.

But didn't attack the non-combatants.

That's why we're in the same boat.

The Ogre race has a duty to protect the Country, but that Country had already surrendered.

As the head of the ogres, he concluded that there was no reason to fight, thus the need for bargaining.

Something along those lines.

“What about Gisu?”

“Gisu said ya destroy Country. Thus I helped. But Gisu fled. Ya didn’t destroy Country. Anymore, Country and Ogre race perish.”

Gisu said that I would destroy Biheiril Kingdom.

But I didn’t.

On the contrary, Gisu fled.

If Ogre God acted any more than this, then both the Country and the Ogre Race would perish.

“Gisu lied. No longer trust him.”

But I won’t destroy the Country.

It was Gisu’s lie.

“I surrender. I die fine but please spare lives of my not fighters.”

While saying that, Ogre God brought his huge body down in front of me.

Close to prostrating himself.

The surrounding youngsters wore a sad expression.

They’re probably thinking that I’ll be killing the Ogre God here.

Killing your enemies is a matter of course.

And they were following that rule unwillingly.

Concluding that their head will die and they will live on.

Why was it so grim?

I had that question but I guess it was only right.

If the Country had surrendered, then it only meant that the ogres had lost their

support.

My side's war potential was superior and if I thought about doing it, then we could easily subjugate Ogre Island...

Of course, that was something pointless for me.

Now then.

Should I kill him or not?

Ogre God said that he no longer trusted Gisu.

He looked like a person who couldn't tell a lie. It was fine to believe him.

The Ogre God's speech was poor, but he was in no way an idiot.

According to my interpretation of him, he was the logical type.

His IQ might be higher than the Immortal Demon race.

Then, even unexpectedly, it was possible that he could lie.

After pondering for a little while, I asked just one last thing.

"Ogre God-dono, you're not an apostle of Hitogami are you?"

"Wrong. Gisu said Hitogami name, but I don't know that. Even I knew, Island important."

The Ogre God's eyes were strong, clear and honest.

If he was lying right now, then I felt that I could no longer believe in anything.

"I understand and accept your words."

When I said that, the surroundings were wrapped up in relief.

It's fine to let him live.

That way he'll become useful in the far future.

"However, Ogre God-sama. I will have you fight Gisu. If you betray us and run away, then we'll invade the island."

If we're to take into consideration destroying Gisu's traps, then this should be fine.

The relationship between the Ogre God and the Ogre race is deep.

Threatening someone isn't too good, and it would be problematic if betrayal takes place at the last moment.

"Rogar. I fight alone?"

"No, you'll be fighting with us."

"Then, what happen ta my not fighters when I die?"

"Regarding the remaining survivors of the Ogre race, one of us will... take responsibility and safeguard their safety."

"Hm. That not lie."

The Ogre God nodded.

And then the youngster from before poured soy sauce into the Ogre God's cup and alcohol in mine.

The Ogre God held it in his hand with dedication.

And I imitated him again.

"I swear me horn."

"...I swear by the Dragon God's name."

When I returned a suitable answer, the Ogre God nodded in solemn countenance

"Hm."

And then the cups were emptied.

Thus, the battle with the Ogre God concluded.

6

That night, a banquet was held at the beach near Heilelul.

The alcohol of the Ogre race was taken out from the warehouse and all of the ogres entertained themselves with us.

It seemed like the ogres had some kind of custom to exchange drinks when they had

reconciled after a battle.

Drinking alcohol to forgive and forget everything.

That seemed to be the Ogre race's style.

The Ogre God made me drink a lot and after I couldn't drink anymore, I let Atofe handle the rest. After that, a drinking competition started between Atofe and Ogre God during which I slipped out of there.

After sobering myself up with Detoxification Magic, I walked around the banquet for a little while, and when I realized that a certain someone wasn't there, I headed towards the beach.

Sándor was drinking there alone.

"Ah, hello."

"Can I sit beside you?"

"Go ahead."

I sat beside him and breathed out a sigh.

Just what was he thinking sitting in such a far away place?

That was something even the dull me could understand.

It was probably about Alek.

He was urging Alek to surrender till the very last moment.

Even if he's a North God, even if his son held hostility against him, he would definitely not want to kill his son.

Not to mention, I have no intention of apologizing.

If I had retreated there, if I had let Alek escape, then it was possible that this banquet wouldn't have existed.

The North God might've joined up with Gisu, linking up with Ogre God, and then they could've come out with even more aggression.

I actually thought that even Sándor thought that that judgement wasn't wrong.

Sándor didn't say anything.

He should've already realized it.

“What happened to Alek was regrettable.”

“Certainly.”

However, the fact that it wasn't wrong and staying silent about it were two different things.

“That child... had talent from when he was young.

When he picked up a sword, he could wield it better than anyone else. Whenever he fought beasts, he could see through their weakness in an instant.

There wasn't anyone in his generation who could defeat him.”

“...”

“That's why even I ended up having high expectations of him.

I granted him the Dragon King Sword and he succeeded the name of the North God.

But, I guess I shouldn't have done that.”

Alek was hung-up on becoming a hero.

“Something like North God is after all only just a name. But he had become obsessed over it.”

Sándor said that and took another swig.

It wasn't something I could say.

From here on out, if he gathered enough experience, maybe he would've found something which would have made him worthy of the North God title.

Or so I thought but I couldn't say it.

Since Alek was no longer here.

“Well, let bygones be bygones. I am a little worried right now, but you don't have to worry about that, Rudeus-dono. That's just how wars are.”

“...Is that so?”

“I've heard that you have many children. Then... An opportunity will come where you must think about it.”

The feeling of a parent who outlived his child.

That was still unknown to me.

And I didn't wish to know it in the future.

"Anyway, I pray for my son's happiness in the next world."

"Yes."

From there, our conversation paused.

The roar of the waves resounded from our front and the voices from the banquet from our behind.

When we discussed about the current battle with that kind of ambience, it felt like this battle was finally reaching its end.

Even though we still haven't even defeated Gisu, much less even seen him, it was coming to its end.

That was a tinge of anxiety that sprouted from the end of the battle.

As for the result, we were close to complete victory for this battle.

But there were times where we just barely made it through and where luck played a strong part.

What about the next move?

Would we be able to fight just like this time and attain victory?

It may be hard.

Gisu will probably make even more strategies after judging this battle.

"In the end, I wonder just who was Hitogami's last apostle."

Those were the words that came out.

It wasn't the Sword God.

It wasn't the North God.

It didn't even seem to be the Ogre God.

Gisu and Dark King Vita.

There was still one unknown apostle left.
According to the Ogre God, Gisu had fled.
Maybe he had taken that person who we haven't met yet with him as I had expected.

But, there was something.
I felt like I was forgetting about something.
A piece was missing.
One more person who should be more like an apostle hadn't come out yet.

"Let's see. Truth be told, even I can't imagine someone who would be one. Perhaps there might be a different apostle moving in a different place."

In a different place, a different apostle.
When I thought about that, the memory that came into my mind was my house.
The Ogre God hadn't attacked it.
But there was the possibility that someone else's hand was reaching out to it.
We still didn't have any means to return back.
We had struck a deal, but... it was still taking far longer than anticipated.
I wonder if Sharia was under attack right now.

"Phew..."

I couldn't help being worried.
I was anxious, but I could do nothing but let the people there deal with it.
I just didn't want to feel like a parent who had outlived his child.
I was fighting so that I didn't get to taste that feeling.

As if to wash away that feeling, I held the cup in front of my mouth and gulped it down in one go.
I just wanted to return quickly.

"Huh?"

Sándor suddenly raised his face.

He looked at the sea.

“Is there something shining?”

On those words, I looked towards the sea as well.

It was night-time right now.

The sea was completely dark, nothing could be seen.

Only the roar of the waves could be heard.

Even when using the clairvoyance, I could see nothing.

“Where is it coming from?”

“There, there, can’t you see? It’s approaching us.”

Same as before, nothing entered my eyes.

I strained my eyes for a bit but still couldn’t see anything.

I wonder if he had gotten drunk and was seeing illusions.

“Should I bring a lamp?”

“...Can you really not see it?”

“I can’t see it. Aren’t Sándor-san’s eyes a bit too powerful?”

Sándor knit his brows in confusion.

Surely it was possible that the holder of the clairvoyance was in fault.

Perhaps because I was drunk, I was looking in other direction.

Maybe a little bit upwards.

“...Don’t tell me! Rudeus-dono, close your demon eyes!”

“Huh? Ah, okay.”

I closed my eyes.

“NOT THAT, cut off your mana supply to your demon eyes!”

“.....”

As he ordered, I cut the mana supply to my demon eyes.

Both the foresight and clairvoyance eyes.

“...Huh.”

The moment I did, I could see it.

A being heading towards the sandy beach from the foreshore just now.

That guy was big. With a height of over 2 meters... his size was similar to the Ogre God.

That guy had wore a golden armor on his body.

That guy had 6 arms.

That guy, that guy was carrying a person on his shoulder.

The person who was on his shoulder wore a robe with odd patterns on it.

He removed the hood of his robe, and a nostalgic face leaped in my eyes.

“Ah, so we meet here, Senpai...”

The monkey-faced person.

It was Gisu.

“For god’s sake, just when I thought we’d land unnoticed, this happens. This ain’t good.”

“FUHAHAHA, You should better not think that everything will go according to plan, eh?”

“Ain’t that right.”

The one who answered Gisu was a male wearing a golden armor on his body.

It was a nostalgic voice.

I could never forget this way of laughter.

“Your Majesty Badi...”

Badigadi.

Why was he here? Why was he with something like that and why was he with Gisu?

Did the Ogre God betray us?

Or did Sándor call them here?

Don't tell me—no—but—this is—huh?

Various thoughts rushed through my mind, words didn't seem to come out.

My body started trembling without any cause.

That golden armor was bad.

I didn't know why it was bad, but I could feel the sinister premonition in that bad.

If I fought someone like him without any armor, then it would be instant death for me.

“It's been a long time, Rudeus and Alex too.”

Despite Sándor's state of complete dumbfoundedness, his forehead was completely wet with sweat.

Even though he should've attacked at once, he wasn't moving.

I felt that from Sándor in front of me.

“Great Uncle. Why were you here?”

“Isn't it obvious!? It is because the Great I am an apostle of Hitogami!”

Badigadi spoke.

He spoke imposingly without any hesitation.

That he was the last apostle.

“.....Ah.”

I see.

That's how it was.

I had forgotten.

Wasn't I told before as well?

Kishirika had said that the possibility of Badigadi being an apostle was high.

And he was also the one who brought Ruijerd along to the village, it was a matter of fact.

It was Badigadi.

Just why had I forgotten it?

The final piece that fell into the puzzle.

"On Hitogami's request, I escorted Ruijerd to the Supard village. In the middle of the battle, I was to get this armor that lay at the center of the ocean.

By joining the strengths of Dark King Vita, Sword God, North God, and Ogre God, the Great I was to defeat you people who had lost their escape routes and Dragon Orsted, therefore the Great I—"

"Boss, boss."

"What is it? Just when I was getting into the mood to talk with humans..."

"You're talking too much. There ain't any need to go that far."

"Hmph, such a dull person. Isn't our strategy already out in the open?"

While scratching his cheeks with his fingers, Gisu shrugged.

But with those words just now, I was able to connect the dots.

I was right.

Sword God, North God, and Ogre God.

They weren't Hitogami's apostles.

And if I had let North God III escape then the fight would've continued.

Without dissolving the subjugation force, they would've entered the forest for the final confrontation.

During that time, they would land at Ogre Island.

Defeating Atofe's Imperial Guards to get rid of Ogre God's fear.

With only North God and Ogre God, we had such a close fight.

And on top of that, if Badigadi were to come, we would have no chance of winning.

But if it is now.

Dark King was dead.

Sword God was dead.

North God was dead.

Ogre God had surrendered.

The opponents were only Gisu and Badigadi.

“No, I know that, Senpai. I’ve heard from Hitogami that you’ve won in the forest. You’re thinking that we won’t have any chance to win this late in the game, eh?”

Gisu was useless at fighting.

That’s why we could win...

Could we... win?

“But ya know, will it really go down like that? This gentleman over here is quite a legend, ya know?”

Being called a legend, Badi got arrogant.

“4200 years ago. The Great I had a tie with that Demon-Dragon King Laplace. I, the strongest Demon Lord...”

While gulping down his own spit.

The armor worn by Badi shined as if verifying his existence.

“...am named Fighting God Badigadi. I alone should be enough, right?”

So it was that after all.

So this was the Fighting God Armor after all.

A full-length armor giving out a bizarre presence.

I was getting chills similar to when I fought Orsted seriously for the first time.

I could instinctively tell that we couldn't win.

In the next moment, Badigadi spread his crossed arms.

"My name is Fighting God Badigadi! Dragon God's subordinate Rudeus of the <Quagm—"

"My name is Alex Kalman Ryback! I am North God Kalman the Second!

I challenge the Immortal Demon Lord Badigadi to a personal duel!

I swear by the honor of the Immortal Demon Clan, accept it!"

Badigadi stalled.

And then saw Gisu with a troubled face.

"Mmmh... the great I intended to duel with Rudeus though."

"It's fine if you refuse."

"Can't do that. It's been decided since the ancient times that a Demon Lord must always accept a challenge."

Gisu was stunned.

Rather than Hitogami, it seems Gisu's grip had already loosened on the reins.

Even I didn't have the spirit to control Badigadi or Atofe or anyone like that.

"Rudeus-dono."

During that time, Sándor whispered.

"I'll try to gain some time here. During that time retreat, assemble our forces, and then polish your counter-plan."

"And what about you, Sándor-san?"

"I might not make it back alive."

I had trouble breathing.

I couldn't answer immediately.

But I did quickly nod once.

I was right now flesh and blood.

Even if the MK. I was near me, right now I am flesh and blood.

It was not about the safety margin.

There wasn't any chance to win right now.

I would only become a hindrance if we both fought.

If I fought here right now, I would only become a demerit and nothing else.

"Please... do."

I said that and ran towards the village.

While hearing the intense clash of the weapons behind me.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 10

Q. It won't be fitting to call the child having a rhythmical sense of innate disposition. Even though he couldn't dance in his childhood?

A. Perhaps it might be better to say it was his uniqueness.

Q. The fact that Magonote-sensei knew about about Wing Man surprised me a little (lol).

Though it was the heat shock.

On the whole I think it seems a bit off. To raise your novel writing level, did you read a lot in the past?

A. It had nothing to do with studying, I just picked up whatever felt interesting. Whether it be book or game.

Although I have given up on old hard to get things, like things that can't be played on current OS.

But my memory is a little unreliable.

Q. "This crest is the Migurd race's!" the people who would recognize this crest won't simply charge at the Migurd village right?

A. Maybe they would.

Q. Kishirika has the superior Demon eye <Eye of a Thousand Miles> but if a Demon Eye is trained then could it not become a superior one?

Or is it some kind of event reward from Kirishika?

"Take this new Demon eye."

"Evolve your Demon Eye" ←

Like this the choices will come.

A. When Kishirika grows, while using a large amount of mana, it is possible to grant superior demon eyes.

Q. He wasn't under complete obedience of Hitogami, and on top of that, if His Majesty Badi was a friend of his then they should've been able to evade the duel with negotiations or at least delay it for a bit. He left all the decision-making to another person & escaped... only at the critical moment he ran away from the battlefield, his mind still hasn't grown at all.

A. At the critical moment “The enemy clearly declared that they were their enemy, if it’s this guy then he wouldn’t be under complete obedience of his boss, but if he’s a close friend of his then they can evade the battle by negotiations or at least delay it” such a naïve thought is... growth?

Q. “Hm. That not lie.” please teach me its meaning.

A. “Hmm. That doesn’t seem to be a lie.”

Or “Hmm, it isn’t a lie, right?”

Q. Why is it that when he uses the Foresight and Clairvoyance eye he can’t see His Majesty Badi?

A. Badigadi’s constitution is made up of something that is irrerecognizable to the Demon eye.

Q. It may be a question now but Alek’s gravity ignoring attacks or evasion that he used, would it be OK to imagine it like that air hand-to-hand fighting that uses wire action in Hong Kong action movies?

A. It’s more like a low jump similar to in Arcana Hearts.

While ignoring the inertia suddenly rising and diving, dashing in mid-air.

Q. Could Gisu breath underwater with those odd patterned clothes he was wearing? Was it a magic tool?

A. It’s a special cloth that can block the Demon eye.

He even has many others as well.

Badigadi walked from the sea but he didn’t drown.

Q. This is... if Sándor had the Dragon King Sword then he would've been able to stall for more time...

A. I don’t think he would take the Dragon King Sword ever again no matter how hard the battle.

Q. Paul’s dagger that was fit on the Magic Armor’s left arm, was it still on the MK. I?

A. Yes, it’s there.

CHAPTER 18

FIGHTING GOD'S MENACE

1

After hearing of the enemy ambush, the one that stood up with great joy was Atofe.

“Where is the enemy!?”

“At the beach. It’s Fighting God Badigadi! Sándor-san is holding him back for now, so we should fall back for now and gain some di—”

“AHAHAHAHAHAHA! So Badi has become an enemy! He will be a worthy opponent! Imperial Guards! Follow meeee!”

Without letting me finish what I had to say, Atofe took her Imperial Guards along and went towards the beach.

There was no time to stop her.

Of course, Ruijerd and Eris obediently followed me and Cliff quickly casted Detoxification on everyone.

After that, we assertively evacuated the Ogres.

“I fight too.”

But the Ogre God was different.

As if to keep his promise with us, he quickly followed Atofe.

Atofe and the Ogre God ended up going to the battlefield.

At that moment, my mind’s objective changed from retreating to fighting.

Sándor, Atofe, and Ogre God Malta.

If the three of them fought and then lost, we would lose a lot of our fighting force.

I concluded that even if it was disadvantageous to some extent, we should still fight head on and hold our ground here.

I'm not going to be at my wits' end.

With me, Eris, Ruijerd, the warriors of the Supard race, Cliff, Elinalize, and then Atofe, 10 Imperial guards, and the Ogre God.

We had more than enough strength.

Somewhere deep within my heart, I thought that we could win.

I ran towards the banquet hall and boarded the MK. I that was put there.

2

After giving out the instructions to evacuate, I boarded the MK. I.

Within that short amount of time, the battlefield had moved.

Not far off from Third City Heilelul, with his waist submerged in the sea, Badigadi and Atofe had started their fight.

Fighting up close were Atofe and Malta.

Badigadi was fighting both of them simultaneously while carrying Gisu on his shoulders.

The difference in their power was evident. Even while carrying Gisu on his shoulders, he was easily able to stand his ground against Atofe and Malta as if playing with children.

Overwhelming.

I couldn't see Sándor.

He couldn't be seen anywhere. Was he done in?

The Imperial Guards had surrounded Badigadi and were firing magic spells.

Ice arrows, fire arrows, and stone cannons were all pouring down on Badigadi like rain.

But they vanished just before hitting him.

The magic spells fired by the Imperial Guards weren't reaching Gisu.

Was that the power of the Fighting God Armor?

Or was Gisu using some kind of Magic Item?

If it's the latter, then I want to kill Gisu quickly.

I should've killed Gisu during the fight between Badi and Sándor.

No, Sándor should've fallen right after I separated from him.

Taking down Gisu would still have taken some time, then I wouldn't have been able to rush to the banquet hall and might have died.

Gisu should know quite a lot about me.

He had already taken steps to deal with me.

Even when I was in front of him, he had a lot of composure.

Then, it should be fine to think that hitting him with a stone cannon wouldn't have been an instant kill.

There was no reason not to.

There was also no time to think.

Atofe and Malta were both tough, but even from an outsider's point of view, Badigadi was superior in power.

It wouldn't be strange if the frontline were to fall at any moment.

"I'll go as well!"

"Stop!"

I commanded Eris who was about to rush in and loaded mana in both my arms.

Luckily, thanks to Atofe and Malta, there was quite some distance between us.

Atofe and the Ogre God.

I'll aim for the moment both of them are blown away.

"I'll be jumping in with magic first. Cliff-senpai! Please snipe and provide magic support!"

"Alright, leave it to me!"

I hesitated, thinking that Atofe and Malta would be wrapped in it as well.

But I could clearly see Gisu. I didn't know whether it would get through or not, but I could get a direct hit.

This was my chance. I didn't have time to think about my failures.

It was fine if it were just one hit.

The spell I'll use... will be stone cannon.

No, it should be lighting.

Since the stone cannons fired by the Imperial Guards were easily getting erased.

I do think my stone cannon would have some effect, but I'll still use a different magic.

Alright.

"Suu—"

While taking a deep breath, I raised my left hand up.

I sent the blood flow inside my body towards my left hand.

And then, with my left hand raised towards the sky, I not only used my mana, but a gust as well to make clouds.

While holding down my impatience, I took my time and made the cloud bigger.

The surroundings started to rain.

Thunder could be heard from a long distance.

The wind blew and the sea was getting violent.

Cumulonimbus

Originally, before the completion of this spell, it should be compressed and then it should be dropped.

But I expanded it.

Using both the updraft and tornado at the same time, a thunder cloud was quickly getting larger.

Rain started to fall heavily on the beach.

Not yet.

The waves grew higher, and sprayed the three fighters with water.

Just a little bit more.

The entire sky was filled with dark clouds.

The surroundings became dark and visibility was only up to 50m.

But I had the clairvoyance eye.

The clairvoyance eye continued to watch the three fighters without any change.

It watched Atofe and Malta.

My right hand.

I released the stockpiled mana from it.

The clouds shrank at once.

While suppressing the violent mana, I concentrated it at one point.

I timed it.

Atofe and Malta fought simultaneously and were blown away simultaneously.

At that moment.

I let it... fall.

<Lightning>

That wasn't a flash of lighting.

It was just a long cylindrical pillar of light.

The moment it arrived, a sound could be heard from the surroundings.

The rain paused for an instant, and the world was covered up by light and silence.

A huge column of water came out of the pillar of light.

A thunderous roar.

A sound similar to a lightning strike struck our eardrums.

“...hand... is... of earth...”

Within that thunderous roar, I could barely hear Cliff’s spell.

But I grasped what spell he was going to use and fell back to support him.

In our view, there was a mass of surging water.

That mass of water swept everything away and approached us.

It approached us very fast—

<Sandstorm>

The sand clashed with the mass, offsetting each other.

Due to Cliff’s and my magic, the mass of water became light-brown rain and polluted the beach and sea.

I cut my clairvoyance and looked for the golden armor while straining my eyes.

“.....”

I could see nothing.

My clairvoyance wasn’t activated, but...

When I looked around my surroundings, I could see the others similarly straining their eyes.

Regardless, we couldn’t see anything.

Nothing could be seen.

His appearance couldn’t be found.

“Did we do it?”

I reflexively muttered.

I ended up muttering.

There was nothing wrong with my murmur, but those words were ill-omened.

“!”

It was too late when I realized it.

Eris and Ruijerd.

With their sixth sense, everyone was watching above them.

In the next moment, a sand pillar was standing in front of me.

Something was falling down from the sky.

It was dancing in the sky. It was glittering and sparkling, even while being bathed in muddy rain.

With a golden color.

“Ough.”

A voice leaked out involuntarily.

That guy landed right in front of me.

The Golden Armor.

Was there really a face under that helmet that I would recognize?

“I thought I was done for.”

That voice came from the shoulder of the armor.

That guy had boarded it while covered with mud.

The monkey-faced person.

“My name is Fighting God Badigadi! The one who has taken the name of the Fighting God only as a sworn friend of Hitogami! I challenge Rudeus Greyrat to a personal duel!”

“I-I r-refuse.”

“FUAHAHAHAHAHA! NO USE IN ARGUING!”

I was hit by the golden armor.

One hit.

With just one hit, my armor was completely broken into pieces, and I took flight with my hazy consciousness.

My consciousness was receding.

As I was about to fall unconscious, I saw it.

Eris, Ruijerd, Atofe, and Malta.

Attacking the Fighting God all at once.

————That day, Third City Heilelul was annihilated.

3

When I came to, I could smell something nice.

I could smell a little bit of sweat too, but it was nice.

A nice smell that I was accustomed to.

I could see red hair swaying at the edge of my vision.

At the same time, I could feel warmth around my cheeks.

My cheeks were touching something.

“...Are you awake now?”

A voice came out from that something that was touching my cheeks.

It was Eris’s voice.

“!”

And then my consciousness quickly came back.

Eris was carrying me on her shoulders.

“...What’s going on?”

I quickly stood up and surveyed my surroundings.

Many people were walking around the surroundings like refugees.

Cliff, Elinalize, and Ruijerd.

“We lost.”

After that, Eris and the others challenged the Fighting God, and were completely defeated.

Eris fainted in just one hit, and Elinalize’s shield broke.

Malta and Atofe put up a good fight, but they were still sent flying every time.

Moore took over when I fainted and told everyone to retreat.

Ruijerd collected Eris and I. And then with Atofe, the Imperial Guards, Malta, and Sándor who regained consciousness as the rear guard, the retreat was successful.

“I see.”

It was a shock.

It was a shock that we were so easily defeated.

I never really thought of myself as the strongest.

Even when I fought for the first time with the MK. I, I lost to Orsted.

It wasn’t invincible.

But I was certainly getting victorious these days.

I defeated both Atofe and Alek.

Regarding Alek, it wasn’t a solo battle, but a victory was still a victory.

But I should’ve always taken the assumption that I would lose.

But one punch was a first for me

It was one hit.

With just one hit, my armor broke into pieces and I fell unconscious.

...I might’ve underestimated Badigadi.

Was it because I thought that even if he was the Fighting God, he would still cut corners being that Demon Lord-sama?

“What are we supposed to do next?”

On Eris’s inquiry, I pondered.

Next.

What should be done next?

We hadn’t run out of options.

But I wonder if we can win against that Fighting God with my impertinent plan.

We didn’t have Sándor nor Atofe, nor the Imperial Guards.

They might’ve died as well.

Our fighting force was uncertain.

There was Eris, Ruijerd, Cliff, Elinalize, and me... and then some warriors of the Supard race.

Even if I say that, I couldn’t be counted as a war potential. I, who had lost the MK. I, was only an insect now.

The best I could do right now was to make rivers, make mountains, and set fire to the mountains.

The Three Charms.^[44]

The Fighting God would just drink up the river, jump over the mountains, and extinguish the fire on the mountains with the water that he drank and then come after us.

We couldn’t win with our current potential.

“There’s no way but to run.”

“...Ruijerd-san.”

Ruijerd spoke while looking at me.

“That guy is one of the Seven Great World Powers, the real deal. He’s not someone who can be defeated even if we attacked him in a group.”

So we should run.

We should run until the Supard village...

And then... what?

If it were the Three Charms, then the priest-sama that took shelter in the temple used his wit to exterminate the mountain witch.

Orsted(The Priest) was there in the Supard village.

But... Fighting God Badigadi and Gisu.

Their aim was my life, and to exhaust Orsted's mana.

And if Orsted were to fight the Fighting God, his mana consumption would be nowhere near the level that it would have been if he had fought the Sword God or North God.

It was a substantial defeat.

To achieve their goals, they would go to the ends of the world.

No matter where we go, there won't be a place safe for us.

"...Even if we run, we can't win."

"Then there's no choice but to fight with the resolution of an honorable defeat."

A fight with a resolution of an honorable defeat would still be a defeat.

We couldn't win.

If we died, it would be over.

"...Rudeus, get a hold of yourself."

Eris suddenly held my hand.

It was a strong and warm hand.

It was a hand which had saved me many times.

It was the hand which had held my child.

"Ah."

I calmed down a bit.

Think.

Think about a way to win.

First, there's a need for information.

For example, the weakness of the Fighting God Armor.

But I heard that the Fighting God Armor was the best armor made by Laplace himself.

Even the person who built it himself was tied in his battle.

Would there even be a weakness?

But even if there wasn't any weakness, there might be some kind of capture method.

There was still a way to fight.

And from there, we could probably find some kind of hint.

Who is the one who knows that?

Atofe is... not here.

Orsted?

That's right, I must ask him.

And if we still couldn't get anything...

"..."

No.

Even if we couldn't get anything, he was an enemy that we must fight someday.

We will fight now.

Atofe, Malta, and Sándor weren't here.

But there should be a method to win.

But still, I want to keep the damage to a bare minimum.

I didn't want to involve the Supard village with the battle.

Since Norn was there as well.

There should be a chance.
Even if it was less than 1%.

That's right.

Now that I think about it, I still had one trump card left.
I originally planned to use that trump card much sooner.

"...We'll retreat until the village and hold out there."

I decided to wager on that.

"Got it."

Everybody nodded.

4

Then, we returned back to the Supard village.

My trump card was still being prepared.

I wonder just what was really going on.

Would it be fine to just wait?

While suppressing my wavering heart, I sat in front of Orsted in seiza and reported to him everything that had happened up until yesterday.

"That's all. We don't know what has become of Sándor, Atofe, and Malta."

"..."

Orsted wore a rigid expression.

"Fighting God Badigadi?"

"Do you know of any capture method?"

"...No. I know about the Fighting God Armor, but I've never once fought Badigadi

wearing the Fighting God Armor.”

“I see.”

I had expected this, but I still couldn’t hide my disappointment.

But there was no need to show it on the surface.

“Then, please tell me about the Fighting God Armor.”

“Fighting God Armor is the best armor made by Laplace himself.

It sank to the innermost part of the Magical Cavern, at the center of the Rings Sea.

Its surface gives out a golden spark when fired with mana, bestowing its user with the strongest power possible. But that much mana makes it sentient, and it hijacks the user’s mind.”

“But, it didn’t seem like Badigadi’s mind was hijacked?”

At the very least, I didn’t feel like Badigadi was being manipulated.

It was the same Badigadi as in my memories.

Although, it was possible that he was being manipulated, but it wasn't apparent.

After all, he didn’t bother arguing with Atofe and Sandor.

“...It will take some time before a complete hijack.

From the moment one puts it on, the Fighting God Armor will start dominating your mind, and you will gradually be unable to differentiate between good and evil, and will only wish to fight. Although, Badigadi’s body is made up of a special meat which can’t be perceived by the Demon Eye. It’s possible that the Fighting God Armor can’t completely take over him.”

So that meant Badigadi hadn’t worn it for that long.

Still, I’ve heard about this hijack thing somewhere before...

“The Fighting God Armor is similar to your Magic Armor. The only difference it has from yours, which moves with the wearer’s mana as fuel, is that it takes the wearer’s very life force as a fuel and you can’t take it off until it completely drains you of it.

If it has attached itself to Badigadi’s body, it can almost operate forever.

The moment that the armor is put on, it will adjust itself to the perfect shape for the wearer. In doing so, the optimal weapon is obtained.

Although the weapon range depends on the weapon itself, if Badigadi equips it, it probably won't be long distance.

The golden light radiating from the armor will render most magic ineffective... but there is a limit. Your full powered stone cannon may be able to get through."

He's very knowledgeable.

But I see, rather than a lightning strike, the stone cannon would have been more effective.

"Orsted-sama, when you fought the Fighting God, who was wearing the armor?"

"One of the Sea race. Although, his mana quickly ran out and he died."

"Any other cases?"

"I've put it on myself a few times, a human put it on once, and a Demon race once."

He experienced it himself before?

Well, I guess if he hadn't put it on himself a few times, he wouldn't have understood the details.

"So how exactly are we supposed to defeat it?"

"...I do not know."

"You don't know?"

"When wearing the Fighting God Armor, you feel neither pain nor fatigue. And on top of that, it is possible to fight constantly at full strength. But it is simply forcing you to move. It cannot heal injuries sustained while wearing it. Therefore, if you manage to land an attack, a battle of endurance will be in effect..."

But with Badigadi as the opponent, that becomes impossible.

The Fighting God Armor will continue to move until its wearer dies.

Badigadi is immortal.

In other words, perpetual motion.

“How did Laplace defeat it?”

“He overwhelmed the defensive limits of the Fighting God Armor by hitting it with a spell with a massive output, temporary annihilating the contents, and separating them. As a result, a large hole opened up in the continent and the Rings Sea was created.”

“...I see.”

Depending on the power of the attack, it was possible to deal damage.

It was just a matter of his recovery after that.

But if it was so, then this gives us one plan...

“But I heard the wearer from that time died. So it was Badigadi.”

“You didn't know?”

“Laplace, at that time, also didn't seem to know who was wearing it. After I heard about his death, I lost my remaining interest. Since I never would've thought that the Fighting God would appear before me like this.”

“Did you... hear it from Laplace himself in a previous loop?”

“That's right. I am the son of the First Generation Dragon God. First Generation Dragon God also instructed me on how to apply this curse.”

“...But you said that Laplace must be killed.”

“That's right. To reach the place where Hitogami is, the five Dragon Generals must be killed and the sacred treasures retrieved.”

“...”

I think this is the first time that I've heard him say clearly that they must be killed.

So it's like that after all.

Then I guess we really can't count on Perugia's support after all. I also wouldn't want to help someone who has the intention of betraying me later on.

But I guess there's no benefit in discussing that here.

“This is probably an unpleasant conversation for you.”

“...No.”

Right now, I have to think about what's in front of me.

That is, Badigadi.

If Hitogami was acting while seeing his own future, then he couldn't freely move such a chess piece like Badigadi, who acted selfishly.

Or this might even be the final trump card that Hitogami held.

When I saw him a few days ago, he seemed to be at his wits' end.

Fighting God Badigadi.

Badigadi was originally Hitogami's apostle.

It was unknown to me just why Hitogami didn't use Badi until this loop, but let's consider that he was suddenly dragged out this time.

Well, if he didn't come out in any of the previous loops, then I would have to be the cause.

"So what do you intend to do?"

"Fight. There is no escape."

"Alright. I'll come. I haven't done it before, but it shouldn't be something that we can't do."

As Orsted said that, he started getting up.

However, I interrupted him.

"No, please wait."

Orsted sat back down.

I couldn't see his face because of the mask, but I could understand that he probably had an astonished expression.

"If Orsted-sama were to exhaust his mana here, it would be a defeat overall. There wouldn't be any meaning."

"If you die here, it would also result in defeat. There wouldn't be any meaning."

"...Well, that's also true."

Should we take the chance now or take it later?

But I've tried my best until now.

I wanted to at least stick through until I think it was truly impossible.

“But even if Orsted-sama must fight, before then, it should still be possible to weaken the Fighting God.”

“...You'll die.”

“If that happens, then please take care of my remaining family members.”

I don't want to die. I want to return back alive.

But this was definitely a do or die situation.

The Fighting God was Hitogami and Gisu's final card.

There might still be another card, but in this situation, the Dark King, Sword God, North God, and Ogre God have all been defeated.

There's only one apostle left too.

All of his cards were in the open.

There were no more cards to pull out.

If we defeated the Fighting God here, the other side should suffer in turn.

We must persevere, fight and take the victory.

“I understand. But as soon as you realize that you can't win, retreat immediately. Understood?”

“Thank you very much.”

I bowed my head and stood up.

“So... Did Roxy contact you yet?”

“Not yet.”

“Is that so. When it happens, please let me know immediately.”

After I saw Orsted nod, I got out of the house.

The soldiers were waiting.

With a sharp glint in her eye, radiating bloodlust was Eris.

Standing with a clear bearing was Ruijerd.

The slightly nervous, scared, and excited Cliff.

With an expression that wanted to protect Cliff was Elinalise.

Sad after hearing of Sándor's defeat, the weeping Doga.

Having lost all his clothes during the previous battle, he was wearing the Supard's local dress, Zanoba.

And the Supard warriors aiming to protect the village.

This group.

Honestly, I'm uneasy.

The gap left by Sándor, Atofe, and Malta was huge.

But Zanoba and Doga were a good replacement for the Ogre God.

Badigadi was a close combat type. The compatibility wasn't bad.

They were inferior to the Ogre God. Even if their compatibility wasn't bad, it was unknown just how much meaning that held.

It was possible that this group would be able to stall for time for 2 days, or at least 1 day.

And within that 1 or 2 days, the possibility of my trump card arriving was low.

Then, there was no guarantee whether or not I would win even while using my trump card.

But it was possible that my comrades would just die in vain.

"Let's go."

However, I walked nonetheless.

I had a plan, but no chance of success.

I couldn't even guarantee whether my decision was right.

We might have some time to lay traps, but the enemy wasn't someone who would be

defeated from just that.

“ .. ”

Everyone, without expressing any opinions, simply followed behind me.

I will fight the Fighting God.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 11

Q. Was the reason that the Ogre God's speech was crude and that he didn't use Demon God Language while negotiating because there were people around him who didn't understand Demon God Language?

→ The Ogre God who was an Ogre who surrendered to Rudi who was a human. That's why he thought that talking in Human Language to respect the winner were obvious manners.

A. That's how it is!

Q. If the President was fighting the one who was wearing the armor, then his words that the Fighting God never once stood in his way as an enemy was a little strange.

A. This is a little difficult, but bear with me. In short, he meant that he hadn't fought anyone at the level of the 3rd World Power wearing the Fighting God armor.

Q. The President knows nearly everything, it's like he's Wikipedia-sensei or Google-sensei. And the lithograph looked like his Twitter.

A. You'll often get "This article does not exist".

Q. An inertia game is better than Arcana Heart, you know!

If it's a fighting game with fighting in the sky while ignoring inertia, then I guess a Touhou like game system is close to it.

A. They don't have floating steps in that image.

Q. The person who wears the Fighting God armor becomes the Fighting God? Or His Majesty Badi who wears the Fighting God armor is the Fighting God?

A. The latter.

Among the SGWP, it becomes a somewhat special type of pattern.

Q. If the conditions for the change in SGWP monument is losing consciousness or death, then when the abstinent Rudeus carelessly reached his hand out to Eris's mountain range and was knocked out with one punch, would it change then?

A. When they realized, the Seventh rank was changed to a Sword God Style mark!

Q. When the city was annihilated, I got the image that it disappeared without leaving any traces. Shouldn't it be collapsed or destroyed? Or was it literally annihilated?

Why, in a hand-to-hand battle, was the city was annihilated?

A. It's the result of normal hand-to-hand combat and the support that Moore and the rest provided using magic for a long period of time.

At the very least, it was possibly annihilated.

Q. When Orsted wore the Fighting God Armor, was he unable to take it off until he died?

A. Yes. He died right there and then looped.

Q. It feels like the President's mana capacity absolutely can't be charged by outside factors. Would there be no other choice in future other than normal self-recovery?

A. This... might be researched by someone in the future.

Q. A God Rank for a swordsman has made an appearance but a God Rank for a mage has yet to come out. And someone with a God Rank Magic who can cure the Magic Stone Disease hasn't come out yet either... this work is going to be over soon, but does that mean they will never appear?

A. Probably never.

Q. It has become such a desperate situation, but there's still not that much bloodshed yet.

How come there's no fight scene either!?

A. Let's see.

I did write that Rudeus fell unconscious. I should've depicted it with more depth I guess.

Q. After fighting the Fighting God, literally everyone's still alive (except those who are still missing). Does that mean that Badi is going easy on them?

A. Even without wearing armor, it may be that the rest of the guys are at a level where it would be hard to kill them instantly.

Q. But Orsted should've disposed of the Fighting God Armor.

A. When performing a speedrun in an RPG, the strongest most powerful weapon was in an extremely deep labyrinth. It's not required to defeat the Last Boss, and hence there was no need to get it... something like that.

There was a time when he tried it once for trial and error, but he thought that it was unreasonable and wasted a lot of mana (just hitting with the Godsword is fine), and so he didn't use it.

And for someone who doesn't want to be famous and stand out in the world for getting it, it's quite unreasonable.

CHAPTER 19

TRUMP CARD

1

The Fighting God appeared after two days.

It was thanks to Atofe and the others holding him back.

But they didn't return.

I didn't think that the Immortal Demon race would die that easily... but the Fighting God probably did enough damage so that they couldn't follow.

In any case, thanks to them, our preparations were complete.

The Fighting God came at us head on.

Without hiding or rushing.

Calmly, he made an appearance.

Gisu was sitting on his shoulder.

As if to say that no matter what we did, we couldn't stop him.

2

The battle began at the entrance of the forest.

I was standing at the top of a giant wall created at the entrance of the forest.

It was about 10 meters high and 2 meters wide.

From the top of this wall, which was made as if to protect the forest, I would be hurling magic. Stone cannons.

I would hurl quite a number of them so that I could at least knock down Gisu.

The clairvoyance eye didn't work against Badigadi.

It seemed that even Orsted didn't know the reason. Badigadi was probably just that kind of Miko, or as a result of something in the past, he obtained resistance to those Demon eyes.

The Gold gleamed in the far distance.

On top of that, ever since I was born into this world, stone cannon had been the spell I had used the most.

I aimed for a direct hit.

1 in every 10 shots made it hit.

But, even from this distance, I understood that it didn't do much damage.

A direct hit would open a hole in the Golden Armor, but it would quickly be filled again. It didn't penetrate.

Even stalling him was a failure, the Fighting God continued forward without even defending himself.

At this distance, there seemed to be a drop in power.

As I thought, it'd have to be at close range.

Incidentally, one also hit Gisu.

It was hard to see from this distance, but he fell off from the shoulder when it hit, so I'm pretty sure that it hit him.

But he got up as if nothing had happened, so it seemed he took almost no damage.

He may have simply gotten off Fighting God's shoulder as a measure of precaution and went around the back.

If he was a bit closer, Gisu might have taken enough damage to cause instant death.

But when you think about how he wasn't annihilated by the thunderfall, it looked like Gisu himself also had some kind of magic resistance.

In the end, we couldn't even halt his advance.

When the Fighting God got close enough, I casted fire magic towards the exteriors of wall and retreated into the forest.

I didn't have any intention to let him get any closer than necessary.

"So far it's within expectations."

Once I confirmed the destruction of the wall, a mutter leaked from my mouth.

Within expectations.

I knew that this would happen.

When the Fighting God entered the forest, the entire forest was covered in a wide and dense fog by me.

While activating a quagmire of the same size.

Reconnaissance and spreading confusion were entrusted to a force of Supard warriors led by Ruijerd.

Magic eyes didn't seem to be effective against him, but the Supards' third eye was; their senses could catch the Fighting God.

It was effective.

According to the report, as a result of the Supards' guerrilla warfare, the Fighting God had lost his way, and had been wandering aimlessly for a couple hours.

I hoped that he continued to wander around like this and end up at the exit to the forest.

While hoping that, I continued to extend the range of the fog and quagmire.

"The Fighting God has changed his direction."

And with that timing, Ruijerd appeared to report.

It seemed the Fighting God was now moving right towards the Earth Dragon Valley.

This was probably Gisu's contribution.

Rather than Badigadi alone, it seemed Gisu knew how to walk inside a forest with a fog this dense.

The question arises whether he could still walk even if he knew the way, but if one considers that he used some kind of Magic Tool or Magic Item, then it wouldn't be strange to think otherwise.

No, if he had a magic tool, then he wouldn't have wandered around for hours like that. Amongst the mud and the dense fog, he probably had to use some anachronistic way, taking his time and then deciding on one path.

The fog, quagmire, and the Supards' guerrilla warfare.
Even with all that, we were only able to stall him for three hours.
There were a total of three casualties.
Three Supard warriors who got too close, were done in by the Fighting God.
But their deaths were not in vain.

Thanks to them, the sun had gone down.
And at the same time, the Fighting God's movements had stopped.
Although it was probably not solar powered, it seemed he stopped moving during the night.

But I did not stop.
I didn't loosen the effect of the Fog or Quagmire, nor did the Supards stop their guerrilla warfare.
A long distance attack with exploding stone cannons was thrown at him.

I wasn't expecting much damage.
But I would simply not let them sleep, I would keep firing to not let them rest.
It may not have much effect on Badigadi, but to Gisu it had meaning.
With those thoughts, the first day ended.

3

On the second day, continuing what I was doing during the latter half of the first day, we tried with all our might to lure the Fighting God to the Earth Dragon Valley.

Dawn of the second day.
I crossed the valley.
From on top of the rampart, I glared down at the forest.
Standing next to me was Ruijerd looking out in the same way.

The topography of the Earth Dragon Valley was extremely well suited for defense.

It was a chasm more than 1km deep.

I didn't notice it when I first crossed it but the cliff on Supard's village side was slightly higher.

It doesn't have much to do with magic, but fundamentally, a higher position in battle is advantageous.

One could see better from an elevated position, and with gravity working against you, it would take more energy to go uphill than down.

With that mindset, I created a rampart with earth magic from the depths of the cliff at the side of the Supard's village.

It was a little less than 20 meters high, so it's not as wide as the one at the entrance to the forest, but this was the only place that the valley was quite narrow, so it's not a problem.

I had opened a hole in it where the bridge was connected as an entrance, but I closed it up after I dropped the bridge.

This way, he couldn't just jump across and suddenly start the battle like the Ogre God did... probably.

I never thought lightly of the Fighting God, but this was the strongest and highest wall I could prepare in such short time.

If he could jump over this, I'd have to give up on it.

Even if he didn't jump across, and simply arrived at the surface of the wall, it was possible to pelt him with the stone cannons from above.

He could render magic invalid, but he could not reverse terrain changes, I was now aware of that during the previous battle.

Again, because of the confirmation I got at the start of the battle, I realized that stone cannons were sufficiently effective.

If they were to cling to this wall and I hit Gisu with the stone cannon from the top of this wall, then Gisu, who didn't possess any power at all, will fall into the valley.

If not, then it should be possible to create a large quantity of water over the top of them, making them slip and fall into the valley.

Gisu may be a useful guy, but in a straight up fight, he's powerless.

Still, Badi was someone who was good at executing strategy and Gisu was someone

who was proficient at making strategies from his ingenuity.

They have the greatest compatibility.

There was also a risk in leading him to this narrow stretch of valley.

But it was better than him crossing the valley by himself in some place I don't know and attacking from that side.

At the top of the valley were Cliff, Ruijerd, the Supard warriors, and me.

The remaining Supard warriors were stationed somewhere off the wall for surveillance.

Worst case scenario, if he crossed the valley somewhere other than here, we would know immediately.

Right behind the rampart, Eris and the rest were on standby.

If they broke through here, it would be an all out war.

We managed to buy some time.

What would have been a one day trip in a straight line took three.

We earned two days.

There still hadn't been any contact from Roxy.

The time we bought might have been pointless, but I don't have any intention of changing our decision to buy time.

From the battle at the port city, we understood that we can't win in a straight up fight.

I have to bet on my trump card.

“ ... ”

Dawn arrived.

We did not know when he would arrive.

I was looking over the forest with the Supard warriors. According to their observations, the enemy camp was outside their range.

I wasn't sure of what to think.

“...They're here!”

As I was thinking that, Ruijerd called out.

Looking at the dim forest, I strained my eyes to the best of my ability.

I could see it.

It's only the size of a speck, but someone was standing in the forest.

But it's not gold.

It was someone in a white robe.

I recognized the feeling that robe gave off.

It was Gisu.

It was possible that it may be someone else, but it looked like Gisu.

"Who's that?"

"Gisu."

Ruijerd looked hard and confirmed it.

From here to there was within the range of the third eye.

Therefore, the probability of it being Gisu was high.

Not from the bare edge of the valley, but from deep into the forest, he was making his way to us through the thicket.

It was difficult to see since it was still dark, but it definitely looked like Gisu.

But the Golden color couldn't be seen near him.

Gisu was alone.

"Huh?"

Alone?

Was he scouting alone?

Gisu, who knew just what kind of magic I should be capable of casting, was alone?

Was he confident?

Or was Badigadi near him in standby?

No, he's about 100 meters from the valley; if Badigadi was close enough to provide backup, Ruijerd would have been able to see him.

At this distance, shouldn't my attack be able to kill him?

"!"

Thinking that, my heart began to beat faster.

The stone cannon will reach.

Gisu seems to be investigating over here, but I get the feeling he hasn't noticed me yet.

I can hit him.

100 meters.

Taking into account the elevation, it can't be more than 120m.

If aimed properly, I can definitely hit him at this distance.

"..."

Should I?

No, what would I do if it was someone else?

An adventurer wearing a white robe that just got lost in the forest.

...No.

No one should've been able to even move because of the fog and quagmire from yesterday.

Someone couldn't have come in this far.

If they were already this close to the valley before the battle started, then they would have already been picked up on the Supards' radar.

Right now, I can defeat Gisu.

What should I do?

It has to be a trap.

But what kind of trap?

Right now, I could attack. What kind of card does the other side have?

If I attack, will he gain some kind of advantage?

Could it be that the person over there was someone who looked like Gisu?

Was it possible that it's one of my allies or family?

No, it can't be.

Impossible.

Up until yesterday, it was just the two of them.

Someone couldn't just suddenly come along.

Isn't this my chance?

Up until now, I have been focused primarily on buying time, I haven't yet made an actual attack.

From the port until here, slowly advancing backwards.

On the journey with the carefree Badigadi, it's possible that he thinks this might be an easy victory.

Was it unlikely that they let their guard down and ended up showing their faces here?

The attack would be very brief and the risk would be little.

Was there any reason not to attack?

There was the possibility that they had put a guy over there by some means or something that I wouldn't want to kill.

But what was the meaning in doing something like that, strategically speaking?

What's the meaning that I do not attack from here?

...Confusion.

It feels like a trap, but I couldn't think of any demerits at the least if I attacked from here.

“ ... ”

Alright.

Let's shoot.

It may be a trap, but there's no demerit in just shooting him.

I'll just deal with it when the time comes.

“...I’ll be attacking.”

“Got it.”

I concentrated mana in my right hand.

I stressed accuracy rather than speed or power.

I couldn't see him through the clairvoyance as usual, but I was changing the scenery using clairvoyance while predicting the impact by on-offing mana to the foresight eye.

An exploding stone cannon was used if it missed the target.

I hesitated for a moment at the brink of shooting.

But immediately after my moment of hesitation, the stone cannon got released from my finger. With an almost straight trajectory, it was sucked into the opposite side of the valley.

There was no sound.

After it impacted on the person at the opposite side of the valley, that person fell down as if a doll’s string was cut.

After that, he didn’t move.

It hit.

There was a response.

“ ... ”

As if nothing had happened at all, time continued to flow as usual.

The fallen person wasn’t moving.

Within the morning glow, nothing could be heard other than the rustling noises of the forest.

10 minutes.

20 minutes.

No, the accurate passage of time was unknown, but time was simply moving nevertheless.

During that time, something sprouted within me.

(I want to confirm it)

I wanted to confirm just who was the person fallen there.

Was it Gisu or was it someone else?

Dead or not?

I'd quickly go there, confirm it, and then come back immediately.

Only that much is safe.

That thought born inside me.

But I sensed something at the same time.

This was the trap.

Attacking him wasn't the trap, but this feeling that was budding within me right now was Gisu's strategy.

If the person fallen over there was really Gisu at the verge of dying, and it came to that finishing him off were the circumstances.

If the person fallen over there was Sylphy who was caught unnoticed and somehow they were able to fool Ruijerd's eye, and we had to go there and save her immediately or else she would die.

When I go there, the Fighting God would appear and then I'll be killed.

I must not go there.

“...”

1 hour passed.

I was becoming nervous.

Did I do some kind of mistake that cannot be undone?

Should I not have fired after all?

Was their objective to make me shoot, and then stall me here?

Were they crossing the valley from some other place right now?

No, just in case, the warriors of the Supard race were keeping guard at various places of the valley.

I'll believe in them.

2 hours passed.

Should I go there and confirm it after all?

After confirming, would I not be able to predict Gisu's next move?

Could it be that I was running away from the act of confirming because of some kind of reasoning?

3 hours passed.

No movements whatsoever.

Various patterns came to mind.

I got tired of thinking so much already.

If making me tired in this way was Gisu's strategy, then it was working.

4 hours passed.

That was a corpse.

If it didn't move for 4 hours straight then I have no doubt that it was a corpse.

But I wonder just whose corpse it is.

Gisu was dead, but it was likely Badigadi wasn't moving.

If Roxy were here at a time like this, then I could've heard some kind of constructive opinion from her.

Cliff was just shaking his head with a sullen face.

6 hours passed.

After having a light lunch, we continued to gaze at the corpse.

It didn't move.

8 hours passed.

It was soon mid-afternoon.

The day was gradually passing.

As a result of bracing myself for so long, I was now starting to get tired.

If, if nothing happened after the day had been completely passed, I would be going out there to confirm it.

10 hours passed.

“Rudeus, he’s here.”

On Ruijerd’s words, I looked at the forest, taken aback.

From there, an armor glittering with golden color was coming out of the forest.

When the golden armor approached the corpse, he slowly stood up.

And then after they faced each other and talked about something, he faced this way.

When he shrugged his shoulders, I realized.

That gesture was, without a doubt, Gisu’s.

They quickly returned back deep into the forest.

And then silence arrived for a short while again.

“.....Phew.”

So it was a trap.

That was Gisu.

He made himself a decoy to lure me to him.

That was dangerous.

Still, after a little more and it will be night.

I’ll entrust the Supard warriors over here with the look out and then sleep myself a little bit.

I was too tired.

It wasn’t likely that they could come at night, but let’s make it a quick nap regardless.

“I’ll be sleeping for a short while.”

While thinking that, I wrapped myself up with a blanket.

The 3rd day was over.

4

The night of 3rd day.

It seemed the opposing side was in a bind after looking at the rampart.

They couldn't just try to leap over the rampart.

And if they couldn't leap over then there was no way to protect Gisu, that thought hit me.

I could understand that because a stone came flying from the other side.

It was a pretty big stone at first.

Even as that came at such an alarmingly fast rate that we got goosebumps, it impacted the wall and one part of it was destroyed.

After that, logs and stones came flying towards us at a terrific speed, which were all intercepted by me, who was startled by the banging roars, and we were able to avoid collateral on the rampart.

If they didn't do something about the wall, then they couldn't break through.

That was probably why they were acting like this.

Not to mention, looking at Badigadi's fighting style until now, he could've easily broken through here if he was alone, even if it was something impossible.

So it was Gisu after all.

If he left Gisu behind, then he could break through.

But it was possible that someone would pursue him from the back, taking Gisu's life.

Of course, there was nothing like reinforcements coming from outside the forest...

But it was possible that Atofe would revive and come chasing after them.

They were possibly afraid about this matter.

Even if that was not true, then just leaving one Supard warrior on the forest side would be sufficient for the job.

...But it could be possible that was exposed yesterday.

Even if there's a watchguard in my absence, it would be a quick story.

It wouldn't be surprising if Fighting God leaped over here alone any time now.
And then... no reinforcements came.

5

The fourth day.

The Fighting God arrived along with the sunrise.

Alone, as I had expected.

While running with long jumps similar to Malta.

And clung near the bottom of the walls.

As I had expected.

Yes, as I had expected.

Gisu wasn't riding on his back.

The moment I confirmed that, I faced towards the opposite side of the valley and fired magic.

A wide range <Flashover>.

The forest was engulfed in fire in an instant.

The effective range was unknown.

But there was no time to confirm it.

While dedicating a fraction of my vision towards the forest fire, I concentrated on the enemy in front of me.

The Fighting God made good use of his 6 arms to quickly climb up the wall like a spider. In order to knock him off, Cliff and I fired stone cannons and water balls in large amounts, but it was in vain.

The Fighting God ran up the surface of the wall with overwhelming speed.

"Cliff! It's useless, retreat! Ruijerd-san! I'll leave it up to you!"

"Got it!"

Ruijerd took the two of us and jumped down the rampart.

Of course, I didn't wait for Fighting God to pass over the rampart.
The moment we landed, I used magic and knocked down the rampart.
The huge rampart fell towards the valley.

It was futile.

The slowly falling rampart blew up like a dynamite being used.
The huge stones flew into the air.
A golden armor was flying within them.

The stones poured like rain.

While dealing with them with my magic, I didn't take my eyes off from the Fighting God.

The Fighting God landed nearby me, a spot 5 metres away from me.

"Hmm. Hmm."

And then he slowly turned towards us.

"Now then, once again."

With his upper arms folding themselves, the middle arm pointing towards me and the lower arms being put on his waist.

Badigadi saw me.

"My name is Fighting God Badigadi! The one who has taken the name of the Fighting God only as a sworn friend of Hitogami! I challenge you bastard to a personal duel!"

"I WANT TO ASK ABOUT ONE THING BEFORE THAT!"

I shouted at once.

While putting aside the thought that there would be no use in arguing, I still shouted.

"Your Majesty Badi, just why are you supporting Hitogami!? What does it mean to be a sworn friend!? Were you not deceived by Hitogami before!?"

“He certainly deceived me! I was deceived when in order to protect Kishirika, I tried to kill Laplace by wearing this armor, but I killed Laplace and ended up murdering Kishirika as well!”

“Then, just why!?”

“Hitogami apologized to me about that time by bowing to me! And on top of that, he requested me for my cooperation! Thus the Great I couldn’t say no to him!”

Hitogami apologized?

That’s a lie.

I couldn’t think of him apologizing of all things.

Even if he apologized, it would be like “Ahaha, that time was my bad, ‘kay “ while grinning.

“He’s deceiving you again!”

“Don’t care! Even if he deceives me, as long as he keeps apologizing, I’ll just keep forgiving him! The Great I, am immortal! Kishirika resurrected too! Even if he apologized now, there’s no longer any source of resent! He may wish for anything even more than this!”

He’s too lenient.

It felt like he was saying some very good things.

Even I might let it go if it was a trivial lie.

But I couldn’t convince myself that killing my family was something trivial.

I wasn’t one of the Immortal Demon Clan. My common sense was different.

“Would you not think about changing sides?”

“Futile! I was never on the Dragon God’s side to begin with! But, if you were to gain victory in this battle, I will think about it!”

Fight and then convey your desire.

This part of him resembled Atofe a lot.

If I recall, it was also a duel when I first met this Demon Lord.

Did I win that time or did I lose?

At the very least, it ended with Badigadi acknowledging my strength.

That's why, he might have gotten along well with me.

"...I understand. I will accept Your Majesty's challenge."

But the declaration this time.

Badigadi had forgotten a few words.

"We'll fight Your Majesty with everyone here."

Eris, Elinalize, Zanoba, and Doga showed up from the thicket behind me.

Furthermore, many warriors of the Supard race, who were standing guard near the valley, gathered one by one.

And thus, an all-out war began.

6

The vanguard tanks were Zanoba and Doga.

Eris and Ruijerd were the vanguard attackers.

Elinalize and Supard warriors were supporting in the middle.

In the rear, I was the attacker, and Cliff was the healer.

A standard battle formation.

With standard strategy.

Basically, Zanoba and Doga would take the frontal attacks, Eris and Ruijerd would be the main offense.

Elinalize and the Supard warriors, who were inferior in fighting strength, were to go around back at times and create small disturbances.

Instant kill from just one blow was likely possible except for Zanoba and Doga.

But, by combining our efforts and covering our weaknesses together, we could avoid a direct hit.

Even if a direct hit was avoided, bone fractures or other minor injuries would still be left, all of which would be healed by me and Cliff.

We only aimed to avoid instant deaths or loss of consciousness.

Cliff would devote himself to healing.

I would be healing from time to time while firing stone cannons here and there, giving damage to Fighting God and averting his attacks.

Badigadi couldn't be seen by the foresight eye.

Even so, I cut the mana supply to the clairvoyance, and by looking at my comrade's movements through the foresight eye, I could in turn predict his movements.

Doing something like this was a first for me.

I hadn't practiced using it nor was trained to use it.

But I was somehow able to do it.

I was able to understand my comrade's movements as well as the enemy's within this battle while closing one of my eyes.

In fact, it went smoother than when I usually went about doing such things.

I wonder if it was only because of the pivotal support of my allies.

Or is it because of Badigadi's frank movements?

At least, Badigadi didn't have Alek's level of skill.

Despite being surrounded by Eris, Ruijerd, and Sándor, Alek kept fighting with almost no injuries.

But Badigadi was different.

The number of people was different this time around, but his body was getting hit by almost all of our attacks.

Things were progressing well.

I could properly see the enemy's movements and could predict them as well.

Nevertheless, a winning vision doesn't come to mind.

Badigadi was receiving all of our attacks.

But that's just it.

Even if Eris cut him, even if Ruijerd pierced him, it quickly repaired itself.

The golden armor crawled like a living being and filled up the holes in an instant. Probably restoration was taking place even inside the armor.

At first it looked like we were giving him a lot of damage, but he wasn't getting any damage at all.

And he wasn't getting fatigued as well.

At first it looked like we would gain easy victory, but fatigue wasn't even getting accumulated like in Alek's case.

It felt like the fight would just keep on continuing forever, and our side was getting in an unfavourable position.

We had no chance of winning.

We were just holding out.

Until this battle formation reached its limits, until someone suddenly collapsed, we were simply holding out till then.

It had been a few hours since our clash, yet we held out.

We didn't know what would happen if we held out like this, but we simply held out.

But it seemed forced nonetheless.

As expected, the first to go down were the Supard warriors.

They were, by no means, weak.

But many were inferior compared to Ruijerd.

It was because these people simply hadn't fought enough real battles.

Or it was possible that these warriors were the ones who weren't born during the time of Laplace's military campaign.

These warriors who, since the time of their birth, only hunted the Invisible wolves and nothing else, couldn't keep up with the Fighting God's battle.

They fell one by one from the battlefield just like the falling dominoes.

There were those who clearly died instantly, those who were seriously injured but still fought, and those who remained indistinct.

In the end, a group of more than 10 warriors was reduced to only 3.

The one to go down next was Elinalize.

She was also, by no means at all, weak.

She was practically one of the top class among the adventurers.

She was on a level where she could become a vanguard during the capture of a S-class labyrinth.

But that was still among the adventurers.

Her specialty was her skillful use of a shield to ward off attacks, and from there with as little injuries as possible she was able to control the soldiers that would be prevalent.

But the shield that she was accustomed to wasn't with her.

Although she warded off most of Fighting God Badigadi's attacks with her skills by making use of the shield I made using Earth Magic, it was still easily penetrated.

Elinalize danced in mid-air and was slapped into a large tree, rendering her unconsciousness.

It started collapsing from that point onwards.

When Elinalize fainted, Cliff's mind was preoccupied by her.

During that little window, he was dragged up into the Fighting God's charge.

As if hit by a truck, Cliff was blown off into a thicket and vanished.

Was it instant death or a grave injury? There wasn't any distinction, but he wasn't returning.

After that, I had no doubt that he had lost consciousness.

When Cliff fainted, Zanoba and Doga who were receiving healing magic from him lost their support.

They who were struck by the attacks only a few times because of my stone cannons as support and with Elinalize's backing, were now getting struck by almost all of the attacks.

They were still able to hold out for some more because of my healing magic, but that was it.

Catching up with the two of them who were getting blown each time they were hit, and sending them out after casting healing magic was impossible for me.

If I had been wearing some equipment of Magic Armor <MK. II> then it might've been

possible.

We gradually lost our timing and the two of them were blown off simultaneously.

After that, he took aim at Eris, due to which Ruijerd covered up for her and became unfit to fight.

I hurriedly healed Doga and ran to Zanoba's side, but it was too late.

Our front had already started to crumble as quickly as Doga was blown away. And when I was healing Zanoba, what I saw at the corner of my eyes was Eris getting a direct hit by Fighting God's fist.

Eris fell while vomiting blood.

That was fatal. My brain shouted that if I didn't heal her immediately, it would be too late.

But I was too late.

Fighting God closed the distance between me and Zanoba.

"UUUUUUoooooooooooo!"

Zanoba howled.

He caught Fighting God's upper right fist and then upper left fist.

He was punched in the stomach with the lower right fist and his body bent in a 90°.

While being punched in the head by the middle right fist, he was blown away horizontally.

And then the Fighting God approached me.

When I thought it was dangerous, it was too late.

I fired a shockwave with my right hand and when I moved back because of the recoil, I was already being hit.

His middle right fist approached me.

I quickly thought of guarding myself with my arms, but it was futile.

I was hit by a shockwave that felt like it could tear off my upper body and was blown away.

Was it good luck that I didn't feel unconscious?

Or was it misfortune?

I could feel all of the bones from my shoulder to my ribs getting broken.

It was possible that even my spine broke since I could no longer feel my lower body.

I couldn't move.

The shockwave felt was so great that I couldn't even feel pain.

"...Haaugh... haa..."

I quickly casted healing magic and stood up.

A hell-like scene extended right before my eyes.

Not even a single person was getting up.

During the time when I was down, the Fighting God swept up the remaining Supard warriors.

They were annihilated.

I erred in my decision of when to retreat.

We couldn't even retreat anymore.

Now that I think about it, we should've retreated the moment Elinalize fell.

We should've retreated back to the Supard village judging that we could no longer hold out.

And then entrust the rest to Orsted.

It was too late for regrets now.

Fighting God was finally standing in front of me.

"...Do you have any last wishes?"

"Honestly, I want to plead for my life."

"I can listen to it but can't grant it. Since what Hitogami wants is your life."

I just want to at least heal Eris somehow.

It didn't seem like I had the free time to think about pleading my life with my wobbling head.

Something, isn't there something that can be done?

I just needed 5—no, only 3 minutes—to rush over to Eris while Badigadi was distracted.

It was fine even if Cliff came to and healed someone.

Somehow, someway, can't it be done?

"Then it's fine if you take my life. In exchange... would you be willing to protect my family?"

"Oh, family huh?"

"Your Majesty isn't aware of it but I already have 4 kids. And they are 4 very lively children."

"Children are something excellent. Even The Great I want to create some with Kishirika."

Badigadi nodded.

"Very well. However, even The Great I wouldn't pardon those who would defy me."

"That is, of course."

After my death, Hitogami would aim at my children.

But, Badigadi wouldn't support this.

Even just holding onto that promise, it would be acceptable for first.

But it was also possible that this held no meaning...

This was my final job.

"FUHAHAHAHA, HAAHAHAHAHAHAHAA!"

Badigadi laughed a lot and then raised his fist.

"Well then, farewell."

On those words, I faced both of my hands forwards.

I just wanted to at least fire stone cannons with all my might in my final mo—

“LAY DOWN!”

I quickly laid on my fours like a dog.

Something, which was even lower than my stance, passed by my side.

That something quickly passed through Fighting God’s thigh and stopped at the opposite side.

With dark skin, animal ears, having a cat-like tail, it was the black wolf.

Fighting God’s area around the knee was torn into pieces. He violently shook for an instant as he was thrown off balance, but it was only for an instant.

It was quickly restored by the armor, and as if nothing had happened, he swung his fist downwards.

And then a long skirt fluttered in the wind covering my vision.

“Uowhaa!”

I could no longer see the Fighting God who swung his fist downwards.

I felt something big getting blown away in mid-air slightly behind me.

After a delay, I could hear something falling with a *BU-BAM*.

Just what happened?

The only thing that I saw, which appeared out of nowhere in front of me, was the light blue-colored panties inside that long skirt.

And the wearer of those panties, I felt like I might’ve seen her several times or maybe not.

But I knew one other person.

I remembered.

Like hell I could forget.

Those movements, that sand-coloured hair, that dark reddish-brown body.

A swaying tail with animal ears.

“Ghyslaine!”

Then that means, that black-haired person was Isolte!

Water Emperor Isolte!

Ghyslaine and Isolte.

The one who was moving along with them was!

“Sylphy!”

Sylphy was quickly running along the battlefield like a rat.

She approached the fallen ones and only held out her hand.

With just that, the injuries of the fallen ones were getting healed instantly.

And thus, she healed Zanoba and Doga in a flash.

Chantless Healing Magic.

When I saw it, Eris and Ruijerd came out of the thicket and were coming back towards here.

Before I knew it, our battlefield was re-organized.

Isolte as the main shield, Doga and Zanoba as the sub-shields.

Eris, Ruijerd, and Ghyslaine as the attackers.

And Sylphy as a healer was added who could use Chantless Healing Magic.

Our battlefield was reorganized.

The hell was over.

“Rudi! We will hold him back here so go to the village! Roxy is waiting!”

“! Got it!”

I caught those words and quickly began running towards the Supard village.

I ran with all my might.

I ran, putting in all of my strength for the first time in my life.

Sylphy had arrived.

Even though the valley's bridge was dropped, she arrived.

Which meant that she came from the village's side.

Then that meant the bet that I had been waiting for had finally arrived.

While jumping over the roots of trees, going through the forest, I arrived at the Supard village.

The moment I saw that thing, I was delighted.

I saw it.

I could see it at the inner part the moment I jumped inside the village.

The teleport formation that was written in advance at the inner part of the village.

The long-awaited thing was around there.

I kept running.

I ran with all my might.

"Nii-san!"

"Grand Master!"

"Ah, Honored Onii-cha—"

I saw Aisha, Norn, and Julie on the way, but ignored them.

I was simply dead-set on running and arrived at that spot.

Near the destroyed teleport formation, one girl was sitting completely exhausted.

"Roxy!"

"...Ah, Rudi."

When I shouted, she raised her face.

There were dark circles below her eyes.

Was her mana exhausted, or did she do an all-nighter?

"I terribly apologize. I made a mistake in the procedure. I started the teleport

formation after digging it out and bringing it up. If I had drawn the teleport formation before and then asked you to dig it out then it wouldn't have taken so lo—”

“It’s alright! You’ve done more than enough! At least you made it in time!”

The thing behind her.

It was a giant armor.

Its height was 3 meters.

With a deep-blue coloring.

Gatling on the right hand and shotgun on the left.

Furthermore, mounted on the tip of its fist was the cursed sword which had the effect of ignoring defense.

Small but quite wide, an armor resembling a sumo wrestler was lying face-down.

Its appearance didn’t really differ from the MK. I.

But this wasn’t the MK. I.

I had prepared this in advance if something like this happened, the real trump card.

Its mana consumption was twice the normal one, capable of multiplying the mobility and defense many-fold, a short-term decisive battle weapon.

Due to its concept being the complete reverse of MK. III, the name it was given was—

“It’s the Magic Armor <MK. Zero>.”

The last resort.

My trump card.

If I didn’t win with this... no it’s not about whether I could win.

It was clear to me that our chances of winning were low.

“Roxy! I’ll be going then!”

“Rudi! Please be careful!”

I boarded the <MK. Zero>.

While getting dizzy as a huge amount of my mana was sucked up from me, I stood up.

And then, I saw Orsted at the center of the village.

He was holding a large sword in his hand.

“Rudeus! Take this!”

Orsted very easily threw that large sword towards me.

I immediately caught it.

A large sword which was a perfect size for the 3 meters tall armor.

The <Dragon King Sword> Kajakuto.

I, who was horrible in swordsmanship, could feel a tremendous amount of force simply by holding the cursed sword.

“Orsted-sama! I’m off!”

Orsted didn’t answer.

He simply nodded.

I moved the MK. Zero with all my might and headed towards the battlefield.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 12

Q. Since Badi couldn't take the armor off, he died once and then revived, and at that time he was able to take it off?

A. That's right. Well, if the wearer is hit by a very strong attack then the armor will be left but the insides will be dead, so it can be taken off.

It can also be taken off if the wearer is hit with an attack strong enough which the armor's restoration ability can't keep up, but well, thinking realistically, the insides are going to die first anyway.

Q. I've realized it these days but at times this <Girldesus> that comes out occasionally, is it Paro of Otomedius?

A. That's right.

Q. What Roxy said this time "and then asked you to dig it out then it wouldn't have taken so long..." wasn't above the teleport formation but rather teleporting below it, below the teleport formation of the Supard village. Simply put, teleporting it underground. Would it fine to interpret it as such?

A. Wrong!

When she realized that the MK. Zero was buried, she should've immediately connected with the Supard village via the teleport formation and asked Rudi to excavate it using Earth Magic. That's what it meant!

Q. Rudi should've volleyed shots at the fallen Gisu at once... would that unorthodox remark be no good?

A. That way of thinking isn't unorthodox or something like that but it was unknown whether attacking itself was a trap or not and yet simply thinking about pursuing him was enough.

Q. The Magic Armor MK. Zero can't perform super-advanced information analysis and situation predictions. Loaded with the "Zero System" which can calculate and predict infinite results and transmitting it directly to the wearer's mind.

A. It's all clear to me now. So that was the mind of universe huh!

Q. Where is Paul's cursed sword attached on the MK. Zero, left hand or right hand?

A. It's mounted with the gatling. So maybe right.

Q. If it's the usual route then it's possible but I don't know how it feels to attempt a

speedrun in a route that came out for the first time.

A. An example like speedrun was poor huh!

Q. I've been wondering this for a long time now but the protagonist is too worried by things like fight and strategy.

He certainly is far from becoming the strongest but he was still able to fight a formidable enemy and win(survive), that's why I think that it's better to grow his mental level even further.

A. Leaving the thought of tying his victory with his growth aside. If he didn't worry=he will grow mentally. I cannot consent to such a diagram. Rejected!

Q. If the President dies then would the current world keep on continuing? Or would it become like it never existed?

A. Until now, the outcome is that it never existed.

Q. → I might've not understood Badi's reasoning a little bit.

→ The one who tried to kill his beloved once, apologized. So for his benefit he tried to kill a friend? He thought that it was only a friend but it ended up being Rudeus.

A. The Human God and Dragon God have been at war since the ancient times.

Badigadi only maintained a lurking distance from both sides, but since the Human God apologized, so he swept the past under the carpet and joined Human God's faction.

Which meant that Dragon God's faction was the enemy.

Whether the enemy in front of him would be a friend or a blood relative, well those kind of thoughts might have risen up.

But if he was the boss of the enemy faction, and if he isn't killed then victory can't be achieved, so he would obviously kill him.

Q. Just how many more chapters will be in this volume and how many volumes would come out next?

A. This volume contains 21 chapters in all and Vol 24 will be the concluding volume.

I'm thinking about writing Vol 25 and thereafter which will contain the afterwards story or the the mundane episodes that I wasn't able to include in the real story named <Redundancy Chapter> with a sluggish pace.

CHAPTER 20

TURNING POINT 5

1

When I returned back, Eris and the rest had managed to hold on.

Without me and without the Supard warriors, it was like back when Cliff and Elinalize had dropped out.

Yet, the sense of stability was increasing.

Ghyslaine was basically running around the battlefield on all fours.

The range of the Fighting God's fist was high.

In order to escape that, she was running around with her body extremely close to the ground, and was supporting others by firing Sword Flash from the front, back, and sides.

Her offensive ability wasn't doing much damage, but the Fighting God was swinging his hands around as if he was being annoyed by it.

Also, Sylphy's existence played a crucial part.

Her chantless healing magic went quite well with this situation where the demand for faster healing was high.

Even when Zanoba or Doga were blown away by the Fighting God, she quickly ran towards them and healed them.

She's been away from active duty for quite a long time, she probably doesn't have much stamina.

Yet, as a healer, she was keeping up with Cliff and my portion.

And worthy of a special mention was Isolte's existence.

She, who stood as the extreme vanguard of this battle, was warding off all of the Fighting God's attacks and firing counters.

Her actions were fluent and accurate.

The Fighting God's attack, which was quite capable of dealing a one hit instant kill, looked like the tantrum of a child in front of that skill.

Of course, but of course, he wouldn't go down with just that.

No matter how many times and how strong the counter she fired towards the Fighting God, even when she cut his arms or legs, there was no damage.

If she were to fight him one-on-one, she may put up a good fight, but she still wouldn't be able to stand victorious at the very end.

She would eventually be fatigued, leading to her loss.

However, if we were to say that they were only stalling for time until my return, then her presence was overwhelmingly important.

"I've made you all wait!"

"Rudi...! Everyone retreat!"

On Sylphy's signal, everyone took their distance.

"Oh."

The Fighting God didn't give chase. There was no need to.

Without even glancing at the people retreating from him, he simply looked at me.

The difference in size wasn't that much.

The Fighting God Armor was 2.5 metres tall.

The Magic Armor was 3 metres tall.

The difference was only around 20~30 centimetres. Mine was slightly taller.

Since I had stopped some 10 metres away from him, he didn't have to look up to me.

"Is that the one? The power that was acknowledged by the Dragon God himself, and the one that took down my older sister. Is that the MAGIC ARMOR!?"

".....Did you not see the MK. I on the beach?"

"Hmm, was there something like that?"

"Well, you did break it into small pieces with just one hit."

Thinking back about that one hit...

I trusted its defense too much and ended up taking a direct hit. However, Eris and Ruijerd took similar hits and were still alive.

This might be the difference between normal defense and Touki's defense...

If that's the case, then I'm worried about Cliff.

Although he wasn't hit directly by a fist, he probably couldn't wear Touki.

"Then, if that was the <MK. I>, then THIS one is different?"

"About that, please look forward to it, so..."

While saying that, I looked around my surroundings.

They were looking at us from quite a distance.

They had taken quite a distance, but there still was the possibility of getting wrapped up.

Ah, Sylphy was rushing towards the injured ones as usual.

Then, I'll entrust Cliff to Sylphy.

"Well then, shall we begin?"

And thus the fight began.

2

The gong of the battle was rung by my stone cannon.

While moving back, I shot stone cannons, and Badigadi chased after me.

I was following the same pattern as when I fought with Orsted.

I fired stone cannons randomly while retreating.

Honestly, I thought that only doing this much would be hard, but when I loaded the Dragon King Sword with mana, the MK. Zero which was supposed to be slow was moving quite smoothly.

So this is what it meant to manipulate gravity.

I hadn't even practiced doing it to begin with. I wasn't going to make it any lighter than this.

"FUHAHAHAHAH! It's not even as effective as a mosquito bite!"

The Fighting God smashed many trees and made holes in the earth, all while drawing closer to me.

It was clear from watching that the effect was weak.

He neither dodged it nor repelled it.

Even in such short distance, his body just kept taking those hits as if absorbing them, and they were just falling in large drops from his back.

It was clear from watching that there was no damage.

It may have worked against Orsted, but it wasn't working here.

"Are you just going to keep running away!?"

Of course, I had no intention of doing that.

After I finally reached my targeted location, I gouged out the earth from Badigadi's feet.

As a large part of the ground was removed with the shotgun, the Fighting God's foothold was taken away from him.

His posture collapsed only for an instant.

I took that opportunity.

"WHooaa!?"

And purged him with the gatling.

I brandished the sword that was attached on my right hand.

The sword cut the armor like butter, and black skin was exposed on the inside.

<Shotgun Trigger!>

I drove the shotgun inside that.

One of Badigadi's arms was torn off and blown away.

"FUHAHAHAHA! Payback time!"

However, I was hit by four counters simultaneously.

The shockwave ran throughout the Magic Armor, and I was blown back a few metres.

But it's alright.

It was a direct hit, but I was somehow able to withstand it.

"Hmph!"

I moved my body back immediately and retrieved Badigadi's arm that was blown away.

The arm was pulsating timidly, wrapped up by the golden gauntlet.

I threw it strongly.

"Fuahahaha! Useless, useless!"

As Badigadi said that, his arm began to regrow.

It popped out like a certain person from Nōmek.

"Mngh."

But it's quite apparent that it wasn't useless.

The arm that grew back was bare.

The armor wasn't attached to it.

"Oh, so that's how it is... you've thought things through!"

Where I had thrown his arm just now...

I had prepared a certain magic circle over there.

Within it, Badigadi's arm and the Fighting God Armor couldn't regenerate.

It also seemed that Badigadi's size had decreased somewhat.

I hadn't actually thought about it.

But I got a hint.

Fighting God Badigadi.

Due to his armour, he possessed both high speed and power.

But his speed, compared to the sword masters I've faced before, was nothing special.

Orsted, and even Alek, were probably faster.

Although, obviously, he's faster than me, when wearing the Magic Armor, it was at a level that I could compete with.

It's thanks to the training that I've received from Eris and Orsted that I was still alive.

What's troublesome was his ridiculously high defense and durability.

The Fighting God Armor was hard.

It could be boasted that it was even harder than the Magic Armor.

At the very least, if Eris and the others were to hit it with all their might, it would leave a scratch, but the arm or head parts might not get separated.

The armor would instantly restore itself and would keep on fighting as if nothing had happened.

Normally, that would cause damage to accumulate on the inside...

But on the Immortal Demon Lord Badigadi, it does not.

Eris's slash or Ruijerd's thrust would normally cause damage on the inside of the armor.

But with Badigadi, it didn't cause that damage.

Whether it's a slash or a thrust or a strike, it's immediately healed.

Before long, the ones who were attacking would become tired, and they would inevitably succumb to the destructive power of those 6 arms.

Then, just how should he be brought down?

This hint laid with Atofe.

Immortal Demon Lord Atofe.

The symbol of fear itself for the various Demon Lords of the Demon Continent. The one who would keep getting up no matter how many times she was brought down and would keep charging towards the enemy.

There were two methods in order to bring her down.

The first was to disconnect the limbs and seal them so that they can't be restored.

This was the most standard way and Atofe was defeated 2 times using this method in the past.

A barrier which was fit to seal them for hundreds of years would be required, but for now, simply surrounding the parts in an advanced level magic barrier was enough to stop regeneration.

The other way was to make her admit defeat.

The Immortal Demon Lord Atofe, in accordance with her own rule, would fight many opponents.

And so, by that rule, when she realizes that she has lost, she will admit defeat.

Although I didn't think that it would be a simple matter to make the current Badigadi admit defeat.

So this time, I'd have to go with the former.

For this purpose, Cliff prepared various barrier magic circles throughout the forest.

They were set to activate when Badigadi's limbs were thrown into them.

I was previously unsure about their effectiveness against the Fighting God Armor, but they were working.

Use the defense-ignoring sword to cut through the armor, separate the arms, and seal them.

By doing this 6 times, I could make Badigadi admit defeat.

I'd like to seal his whole body, but... without Cliff here, I couldn't use the magic circle to seal his entire body.

"AAAAaaaaaa!"

I charged at him while yelling.

I no longer cared about damage.

Not even I knew just how long the MK. Zero could run at full power.

Thanks to the Dragon King Sword, the operation time may have been extended to some extent, but it wouldn't be strange if it stopped anytime soon.

There was no path besides a short and decisive battle.

"COME TO ME! HERO!"

The Fighting God spreads his arms wide to my challenge.

And at the same time, he swung his right hand.

In response to the Fighting God's flying fist, I brandished my sword and prepared for a counter.

The movement of those six arms exceeded my expectations.

But I had already gotten used to it during the fight.

I was at my best today.

I could evade it.

I cut into the lower left arm.

At the same time, I aimed the shotgun at the cut and fired, blowing it apart.

But there was an unavoidable opening in that moment.

In the moment that I blew his arm away, I was hit by a fist and sent flying backwards.

"...Ngh!"

The surface of the Magic Armor cracked.

As expected, it couldn't stand up to the Fighting God's fist. But the arms not wearing any armor could be ignored.

Four more left.

The Magic armor only had to last until I send them all flying.

"!"

I noticed something else.

(The barrier is...)

The magic circle drawn on the ground was scraped off during that exchange.

From the aftermath of the battle.

How did I not realize something so simple sooner?

Of course, there were still undamaged magic circles left, but I didn't know which ones were still okay.

"...Dammit!"

I immediately threw away the arm I had cut.

I threw it into the Earth Dragon Valley.

The more beat up Atofe became, the longer it took her to revive, and if her beat up parts were spread out, she wouldn't be able to revive immediately.

They could probably revive eventually, but it should have some meaning.

(...Hmm?)

For some reason, part of the armor wasn't getting restored.

Did dismembering the user cause a loss in efficiency?

The restoration seemed to be slowing. Have the many years of not being used caused a drop in performance even in the Fighting God Armor?

Or was it Badigadi's strategy?

No, don't worry about useless things right now.

I should take advantage of the fact that he's not restoring, and simply think of how to send all of his arms flying.

"Grrr..."

Badigadi continued to groan, but a new arm didn't come out.

And contrary to that, the arm that was restored before was now covered in some turtle like armor.

“!”

I wonder what it is.

In the next instant, from the remaining 4 arms, 2 vanished.

The arms and the gauntlets were sucked into the armor.

And the remaining two arms got thicker.

They got thicker with a gurgling sound.

The remaining two.

Now that they're thicker, can I cut them...?

No, I can. The harder the object, the better this sword cuts. There's no meaning in it even if he reinforced his arms and increased his defense.

After promptly deciding that, I kicked the ground and closed in on the Fighting God.

An alarm bell rang somewhere in my mind.

But no matter what the enemy was planning, I had already revealed my trump card.

With every passing moment, my mana was approaching zero.

If I didn't attack, I couldn't win.

“AAAAAAaaaaa!”

I could only shout.

In doing so, power came out.

Denying both fear and uncertainty, a small amount of courage showed its face.

This small amount of courage became profound.

Charging at him to obtain victory, just like Eris.

I rammed into the Fighting God.

He staggered, but took the blow.

I swung my right hand.
Biting into his left hand, I kept cutting.
I brought out my left hand,
And pushed the shotgun against where I cut,
And then shouted.
<SHOTGUN TRIGGER!>

Both Badigadi's arm and the Fighting God armor went flying.
But at the same time, I was also sent flying.
I was knocked back.

Badigadi's remaining arm.

I was hit by it.

The entire front of the Magic Armor was completely destroyed.

The shockwave traveled to the interior and my body was assaulted by a pressure that felt like it would crush me flat.

I fell on my back.

"Ghaough... ghaohu..."

I coughed up blood.

My heart screamed 'not yet!' in vain.

I had misread him.

The reason Badigadi reduced his arms to two was for a single devastating attack.

Let your opponent cut your flesh so that you can cut him to the bone, was it?

He drove his fist accurately into the crack, breaking the Magic Armor apart.

But not yet.

Not yet.

Just one more.

“!”

I can't move.

The movement of the Magic Armor is faltering.

The damage can't be fixed.

Right underneath the main body(me), is what could be called the core of the Magic Armor.

If that was broken, the Magic Armor will begin to fail.

I won't say that it couldn't move. It wasn't constructed that simply.

But it could only move.

In this battle, it's fatally slow.

I began transmitting mana in a hurry.

Right, I still have mana left.

It could still move.

My mana hadn't dried up yet.

I could still fight.

Then why couldn't I move?

“Good plan, good fighting spirit...”

Badigadi approached me as I couldn't move.

“And a good match. Farewell Rudeus. Not even Laplace thought this elaborately.”

Badigadi raised his fist above his head.

A fist like a cannon.

And it was thrown off—

“GAA!”

Something red flew in from under his arm and knocked the fist off course.

The arm was cut off at the base and flew in midair.

“Mngh!”

There were only a few things that had the color red in this forest.

It’s Eris.

Was she following us? Had she been right behind us?

I didn’t know.

There’s no other backup.

Only Eris jumped in.

But in the next instant, I realized something was out of place.

The sword.

Eris’s sword broke.

The famous <Elegant Phoenix Dragon Sword> broke at the base.

Of course, up until now, even when damage was taken on the surface, the base was never broken.

If it’s forcefully cut from the base, then it’ll obviously break.

“GAAAAAAaaaaa!”

But Eris did not cease.

As if she hadn’t realized that her sword broke, while crying out, she continued to face the Fighting God.

Looking again, it’s not just her.

Coming out of the forest one after the other as if chasing Eris were Sylphy, Ruijerd, Ghyslaine, and Isolte.

But it’s too late.

“It’s foolish to stand before me alone!”

Badigadi approached Eris.

There was nothing to protect her.

In that instant, I activated the escape function and slipped out of the Magic Armor.

And from the back of the Magic Armor, I took out the single sword that I had stored there.

The second I grabbed the handle, a tremendous feeling of omnipotence ran through my body.

An overwhelming amount of mana.

Upon which I poured in even more mana.

With the intention of filling the sword with all of my remaining mana.

I didn't think of using it myself.

But in front of me, there was a family member whose sword broke.

Who, in order to protect me, was brandishing a broken sword.

I threw the sword with her as the target.

"Eris!"

In a loose arc, the cursed sword flew.

Eris turned around and grabbed it.

Dragon King Sword Kajakuto.

The world's strongest and most famous cursed sword. The peak of the cursed swords forged by the blacksmith master Yulian.

Eris held it above her head.

"GAAAAAAHH!"

"GH, That's...!"

A downwards swing.

Right before impact, just for an instant, the Fighting God's body floated.

The sword bit right into the Fighting God's body.
And at the same time, a bright flash filled my vision.
The explosion numbed my eardrums.
Something overwhelming dominated the place.
Destruction unfolded before me.
But there was no blast.
Nor a shockwave.
Only silence came.
The destruction headed towards the interior.
The mana driven into the sword became a sphere and enveloped Badigadi.
It wasn't just Eris's power.
The mana I had loaded it with was being released by the cursed sword.

And inside the sphere of magic...
I saw it.
While slowly rising up to the surface, its interior contents were being destroyed.
The Fighting God Armor was cracking and breaking.
Badigadi, without a sound, was being compressed and disappearing.

I thought that Badigadi would struggle.
But he couldn't do anything.
The Fighting God Armor stopped functioning, and Badigadi was being destroyed as soon as he regenerated.

.....

The sphere disappeared.
The fragments of the armor left in mid-air fell towards the Earth Dragon Valley.
While making cling and clang noises, the fragments rolled down into the valley.
With the Dragon King sword stuck in it.
In just the armor.

Badigadi's black body had disappeared without a trace.

I gazed at it.

I gazed at it for a while.

Until the sound was lost in the valley and the armor disappeared.

Close by, Badigadi's arm still remained.

It wasn't moving.

It wasn't even twitching.

There was no sign of restoration.

Was he dead?

Did we win?

Is there still something else?

Is it soon?

Something's not going to rise up and appear with a FUHAHAHA is it?

With those feelings, I simply stared at the valley.

Nothing rose up.

There's no sign of anything rising up.

Only stillness was left in that place.

I heard someone falling from behind.

When I turned around, Eris was on her knees.

With a ghastly pale face.

"....."

I rushed over in a hurry.

An injury?

Was she countered?

I immediately stretched out my hand to cast healing magic, but I also fell to my knees.

“...aah.”

It's not an injury.

What I'm feeling, and the look on Eris's face, I recognized them.

Mana exhaustion.

The Dragon King Sword Kajakuto had sucked up all of my mana and exhausted Eris's as well.

This was probably the first time since childhood that Eris's magic had been this exhausted.

While blinking in surprise, she sat down.

“Eris.”

“Rudeus... your hair has gotten whiter again.”

She said so and touched my head.

I don't know about myself.

But some portion of Eris's hair had also become white.

Her hair now had white streaks.

“Yours is too.”

“Really... then we match.”

Eris said that and fell forward.

She didn't lose consciousness.

She had simply used up all of her power.

I wanted to fall down on top of her, but I held on.

“Rudy!”

Sylphy looked worried when she saw our faces.

Not just Sylphy.

Ruijerd, Ghislaine, and Isolte...

“Sylphy, where’s Cliff!?”

“Umm, after healing the wounds of others, he was carried by Zanoba and Doga to the village. We immediately chased after you, but thought that we'd be a bother, so we hesitated... but then Eris jumped in alone... huh?”

When Sylphy felt Eris’s head, she tilted her head in confusion.

She probably immediately used healing magic.

But Eris wasn’t injured.

She wasn’t going to get up anytime soon.

“It’s magic exhaustion. That sword sucks out all of the wielder’s mana.”

“...Ah, so that’s how it is.”

“For now, Sylphy, can you put the arm fallen over there in one of the undamaged magic circles? After that, I want you to take Eris, return to the village, and report to Orsted about the current details and bring Cliff back with you.”

I stood up.

The MK. Zero was destroyed.

I myself was basically entirely out of mana... but I could still move.

We don’t how much time lag there is before Badigadi revives.

At the very least, with that much compressed magic, it looked like he was obliterated.

There’s no sign that the arm will regenerate.

I’d like to think that we have a lot of time.

However, wishful thinking like that may be presumptuous.

But the MK. Zero was destroyed. The MK. I was no more. In addition to my almost exhausted mana, in this situation where the barrier magic couldn’t be activated without Cliff, we couldn’t have Badigadi reviving from the bottom of the valley.

If we descend to the bottom of the valley and he’s waiting for us, victory would be far off.

There’d be no option but for Orsted to take the front line.

I wanted him to not use magic until the very end, but we may not have a choice.

I lacked the ability.

But I'd like to wait until we're driven into an absolute corner.

I did all that I could.

It's unknown whether or not Badigadi was moving at the bottom of the valley, but we should have restrained him at the very least.

"Ruijerd, Ghyslaine, and Isolte too, please follow me."

"What will you do? Rudy."

I'd done all I could.

But there was still something that I must do.

With my almost exhausted mana, there was something that I must do.

"I'm going after Gisu!"

3

We immediately found Gisu.

Very easily and quickly.

I didn't even have to use my almost exhausted mana. We found him that easily.

The moment we crossed the valley and entered the burnt-black forest.

Within the shadow of a big burnt tree.

Gisu had fallen there.

He had large burns all over and he was lying there with his body completely black.

The <Flashover> I casted over the forest seemed to have burnt him as well.

He looked pretty dead to us when we first found him.

He didn't move a muscle and looked like a black stone.

But the one who found him was Ruijerd, using his third eye.

It wasn't a corpse.

"...Gisu."

"Yo, Senpai."

He hadn't become a corpse yet, but it was clear that he was at death's door.

I didn't feel like curing him either.

This was why I came here.

But I didn't feel like finishing him off right away either.

"Hehee, Water Magic, Earth Magic, Demon Eyes, and Magic Armor... I had countermeasures for each one of 'em and yet look at me now."

Gisu was wearing many things.

A blue vest, a light brown chest protector, and something like a chain-mail.

Each of them was burnt now, but they were probably countermeasures for each type of magic.

This meant that him being able to withstand the Thunderfall in the Third City was not because of the Fighting God Armor's power.

"Now that you've come here, this means... that even the final plan has ended in failure..."

Gisu was straining his now burnt cheeks.

The final plan.

Would it be okay to say that sending Badigadi out alone was a plan?

"Sword God, North God, Ogre God, Dark King... if any one of 'em were still left, it would've been different... if they had listened to me that is..."

"Well, they seemed like the type who wouldn't listen to others."

I responded to Gisu's delirious talk.

"Hah, you say that but... Eris, Atofe, and... is that Ghyslaine I see over there? You have nothin' but people who listen to you."

"That's... probably because my luck is good."

"Nope, that ain't right, Senpai. It's 'cause ya did it properly. Ya told 'em the whole story,

earnestly gained their trust, and in turn, they became your perfect allies. It's all 'cause of the effort that ya put in.

That's why, in the time of need, they listened to ya properly, and they accepted your instructions properly."

Certainly, that may be true.

Atofe and Malta.

It was necessary at that time so we took them in as allies, but they didn't listen to my instructions at all.

Sándor and Doga were exceptions, but Ariel would listen to me.

"In the end, preparin' with war as a motive, gatherin' up forces, cookin' up strategies, and stealthily movin' behind people's backs... by only doin' things like that... it was impossible after all..."

Neither the Sword God nor the North God listened to Gisu's instructions.

They simply prioritized their own motives.

As a result of that, I was alive.

"I knew that this was happenin', but didn't thought much about it.

I thought that I'd somehow be able to pull through.

Not to mention, the one who didn't understand it at all... ain't me."

Gisu laughed.

"It's Hitogami. He shouted 'til the very end.

He said - Why? Why? It's because of you. If only you acted more cleverly."

While laughing foolishly, a scoff-like smile floated on Gisu's face.

"Ain't that obvious, eh? Just who would work so hard for someone like YOU who deceives people... someone like YOU who keeps sneerin' at other people... just who will lend the likes of YOU a hand upfront?"

“Then... Gisu, does that mean that you were cutting corners as well?”

“Don’t know... you think so? Was it that easy? I intended to go all out for once, ya know?”

Gisu coughed violently.

Something black like soot passed through his lips.

“Well, me and Badigadi were the exceptions because we’re softhearted. This late in the game, a person who would lend a hand to someone who shouts and calls their own allies useless would be soft hearted.”

The black soot looked like Gisu’s soul itself.

It was clear that Gisu was losing strength.

“But you know, Senpai. I was still saved by that guy, Hitogami. There were some bad things, but lookin’ at the total sum of it, I was still saved.”

“...”

“You wouldn’t understand, Senpai. For someone like you who can do anythin’ and can walk the world alone. You wouldn’t understand the feelings of someone like me who can’t do anythin’ at all, you just can’t...”

I understand.

I feel like I understand.

About the ordinary things, the feelings of someone who couldn’t do things ordinarily... I could understand that.

Gisu was me. The me from before.

But a little different from me.

The me from before didn’t even try.

I just slammed the door and ran.

I only ran.

But Gisu was really not able to do it.

Within this world where beasts and violence dominated, the thing which can be said

to be the most important... <Fighting Power>, he couldn't attain that.
He was able to do anything besides that, but he couldn't keep on living.

"Wrong, Gisu. You're wrong..."

That's why I couldn't say anything but that he was wrong.

I couldn't say that I understood.

I don't even want to.

The only thing I could do was to deny him.

"Heh, Rudeus.

If you're goin' to deny me, then do it while puffin' up your chest.

Since you've won anyway.

You've defeated me.

In this world, the one who wins is right and the one who loses is wrong.

That's why, puff up your chest and say, "That ain't right, Gisu. That ain't how it works."

And then, well let's see, scold me or somethin' for my sake since I'm about to die.

You should've done this, leavin' Hitogami's side, you should've joined my side.
Somethin' like that."

Gisu said this and then breathed out with a puff.

And then spoke with a blank expression.

"Me, Badigadi, and the Dark King are no longer. There ain't anyone left who would personally and assertively help out Hitogami anymore."

"It's a loss. There ain't anyone left in this world who can deal with Rudeus Greyrat in some way or another."

"Actually, Hitogami said this as well. He said that if we lost here, then nothin' can be done about Rudeus."

"That's why, Hitogami will probably remain silent until your death. But he'll probably work in the shadows."

And then something came out of my mouth involuntarily.

“...That’s a lie, isn’t it?”

Gisu laughed.

“If you think that’s how it is, then why not?

Somethin’ like remainin’ silently is, well... that’s a bit too much even for my expectations after all.

You should just move with the flag of overthrowin’ Hitogami from now on.

That would be inconvenient for Hitogami, but it wouldn’t be an inconvenience for you, right?”

“Oi oi, that’s some gloomy face ya got there.

Aren’t ya Paul’s son?

If Paul was here, he would’ve laughed out loud, ya know?

Nah, even he wouldn’t laugh at the verge of my death.

Since I looked after him for a short while as well...

But, you know, you should be more proud.

It may be a short-lived elation, but you should still rejoice.”

“If you don’t, it wouldn’t look overwhelmin’.

I had finally won over the Sword God, North God, and Ogre God as companions by goin’ around the world.

So you should be enthusiastic about overthrowin’ them, and for me, since it didn’t go well, I look like an idiot.”

“That’s because I couldn’t control my allies properly.

I burdened Badi with the final risk, and sent him out... just look at me now.

But at least think of me as a strong enemy.

Just give me that recognition.”

Gisu had started crying at some point.

Tears trailed down his soot-stained face.

When I saw that, I understood that Gisu would never have cut corners.

"I get it. Gisu, you were strong.

It's true that I'm standing here like this.

But if even a single gear had fallen out of place, I'm sure that our positions would have been reversed.

This has been the single most painful and difficult fight of my life."

"Heh... hehe. Thanks, Rudeus."

He was without a doubt, strong.

It took me a year to beat him.

I fought for a year.

There's no way that he wasn't strong.

"Gisu."

Ghyslaine stepped forward thereupon.

She looked down at Gisu.

Her expression was behind her hair, so I couldn't see it.

"Yo, Ghyslaine, it's been a while."

"Yeah."

"I'll be headin' on first."

"Yeah, give my regards to Paul."

"Sure... maybe, when you come too, at that time, let's drink together. Paul gettin' drunk and shovin' his face in ya chest and Zenith gettin' all sullen... I'd like to see that again..."

"Zenith probably won't be there for a while. I'll probably come first."

"Heh, I get it... well, 'til we all meet again..."

Gisu stopped moving.

He fell to the side.

Suddenly, in the middle of his talk.

“ ... ”

Ghyslaine's ears twitched.

Her tail drooped.

“...He's dead.”

Gisu died.

4

Gisu was defeated.

That notion should be good enough, but my heart was still unclear.

I knew that I had gotten a shock.

Someone that you know dying in front of you like that is something incomprehensible.

He was an enemy. I was aware that he must be defeated.

But it's not like I hated Gisu from the bottom of my heart.

Although, if we had lost in this battle and Eris or someone close to me had died, then it was possible that I would harbor hate.

If things had turned out that way, would my heart feel refreshed then?

Thinking that I would have been paid back by defeating the one who I hated the most.

I don't know.

The only thing I could say was that the reason I was able to think like this while being exhausted was because I didn't lose any of my loved ones during this battle.

I met the conditions for victory.

While preserving Orsted's mana capacity, I was able to finish off every apostle.

We had hard battles and there were failures as well, but it was a complete victory, that was unusual for me.

It's possible that I've embarrassed myself by letting Gisu die like that.

Perhaps I could've brought Gisu to my side. I had taken that matter into consideration somewhere deep within my heart.

Even if I say this now, it's something that can't be helped.

Well, I'll make sure to at least carry his bones to the graveyard.

I guess it's fine if I put him next to Paul.

I thought about doing that as I burnt Gisu's body.

“ ... ”

Ghyslaine was staring at us cremating Gisu.

After it ended and we collected his bones, somehow, her ears and tail didn't seem energetic.

“Let's head back, shall we?”

“Yeah.”

We crossed the valley.

Anyway, now it's finally over.

I'm tired.

I only had a scarce amount of mana left.

My stamina was completely drained as well.

I'd lose consciousness the moment I hit the bed.

Though I couldn't just sleep before completely sealing Badigadi...

But I want to return back to Sharia as fast as possible.

I want to sleep tight on my bed.

When I wake up, I'll eat.

I'll eat rice.

Oh right, this country had soy sauce.

I can eat a perfect egg-rice mix.

I'll eat it when I get back.

I'll eat to my heart's content.

After that, it's sexy time.

The abstinent Rudeus had died along with Gisu.

Sylphy, Roxy, or Eris... who should I choose?

How about all three of them together?

Eris might dislike it, but, it should be fine to try it out just once, right?

It's my long-awaited moment.

Yep, long-awaited.

Let's postpone the review for this battle.

I'll try to forget what Gisu said this time.

Anyway, I'll take a day-off.

I'm tired.

"...Rudeus."

As I walked dragging along my now completely exhausted body, someone called out to me from behind.

It was Ruijerd.

The one who was walking at the very back, had turned around.

Behind him, towards the valley.

"What's the matter?"

"Enemy."

"Huh?"

A hand was rising from the edge of the valley.

Hand.

It's a hand.

Something was climbing out of the valley.

Something?

No, giving it a vague description like 'something' would be a grave mistake.

That hand.

The color of the hand was gold.

It was a golden gauntlet.

"Are you serious?"

Badigadi.

This is too fast.

But I see.

Come to think of it, after throwing a number of his arms down the valley, his body was dropped into the valley as well.

It looked like his body was completely annihilated, but big parts like his hands still remained.

So it's possible that the remaining parts gathered together and regenerated in a short amount of time.

"....."

The armor climbed up from the valley as our petrified bodies gave sidelong glances.

But its shape was different.

It had 2 arms, similar to when we brought it down, but its overall design had changed.

Its helmet was different and it wasn't that tall either.

It wasn't even 2 metres.

On top of that, it was holding a sword.

A large sword.

The world's strongest sword made by the King Dragon King himself.

Wrong.

This one was different.

This guy wasn't Badigadi.

"The hero will revive no matter how much he's cornered and then turn the situation around. I guess that's just how a hero's style should be."

That voice and the word hero.

I could never forget that.

"North God Kalman the Third Aleksander Ryback...!"

He was still alive?

Even though I thought that he had died.

Even though he didn't even twitch at that time.

He was still alive?

But I see.

Come to think of it, he's from the lineage of the Immortal Demon clan.

Which meant that given enough time, he would regenerate.

No, that's wrong.

It's that.

It's the <Final Plan> Gisu was talking about.

So this is it.

Did he intend to do this from the start?

Or did he change it mid-way?

I thought it was strange.

I thought that it was strange that the Fighting God Armor wasn't restoring itself.

It was intentionally not restoring itself.

And then, Alek wore the Fighting God Armor at the bottom of the valley and it was restored.

It was possible that they were making preliminary arrangements during the time Gisu

was playing dead.

Something like dropping a part of Badigadi and the Fighting God Armor down the valley, resurrecting Alek...

Damnit.

Must we do it again?

Must we fight again?

We're bored already.

Shouldn't it be fine to just end it at that?

Cut it out already! Why did someone who already died come out now of all times!?

No, it's my fault.

I didn't properly dispose of Alek's body.

I left it as is, thinking that I had defeated him, that I had won.

It might be different if I had burnt his body, but I left it as is.

But, just how was he still fine? Within those conditions. Beyond that state.

Well... it's fine.

The past is in the past.

What to do now?

I don't even have the MK. Zero now.

No allies.

Ghyslaine, Ruijerd, and Isolte.

And I, with almost completely exhausted mana.

With no weapons and no shield.

No method.

I don't think we can win.

What should be done?

What to do? Could we win against North God Kalman the Third wearing the Fighting God Armor?

Could we at least shave off some of his power?

“.....”

Alek looked at me as I gazed with my dumbfounded face.

As if to say that he had no questions as to why I was standing there.

As if to say that he had been looking forward to this as a matter of course.

“Rudeus Greyrat... I apologize that I called you a novice.

You’re a splendid warrior.

Unlike your looks, you’re an enemy worthy of me.

Thanks to you, I have once again levelled up and have become stronger. You have my gratitude.”

I turned my completely exhausted body towards the golden armor.

He’d just catch up to us if we ran away.

We didn’t have enough of a fighting force to even stall for time.

Then, I’ll struggle.

I’ll struggle while putting everything on the line.

While thinking that, I stepped forward—

“...Ah?”

When I realized, I had already fallen to the ground.

“Overwhelming. The current me can win against anyone.”

I realized that we were blown away by the Fighting God when I saw the three of them fall over.

Ruijerd, Ghyslaine, and Isolte too.

They were knocked down with just one hit.

“I give you my gratitude for making me even stronger, Rudeus. I’ll spare your life in return.”

Delayed pain ran through my body.

My leg was broken.

He’s too fast.

Although he wasn’t a match for the foresight eye, I still couldn’t react at all.

Except for me, the other three couldn’t even respond.

So that fact wouldn’t change even if he was a match for the foresight eye.

I wonder if this was the real power of the Fighting God Armor.

If the one inside was strong, then it would strengthen...

No, that’s wrong.

It’s not like Badigadi was weak.

Despite his appearance, he was strong.

The only difference was that if the user changed, then there would be a sudden change in performance.

Depending on who’s inside, it’ll change its shape...

“Well then, good-bye.”

Alek walked off.

There was no time to be surprised.

I immediately used Healing magic and healed the three in my surroundings.

The three had fainted.

They were at the verge of dying, but hadn’t died yet.

Was it Alek’s mercy? Damnit. Was he still underestimating us?

Well, fine.

After healing the three of them, I hid them in an Earth Fortress and then chased after Alek myself.

I just chased after him, with no idea what to do. I didn’t have any plan.

Did Sylphy already reach the village? What would Orsted do now?

I didn't know.

But that destination must be protected at all costs.

To protect Eris, Sylphy, and Norn.

And the same applies for every Supard.

We mustn't let him trample it all down.

There was no reason not to chase after him.

My legs weren't moving well.

I was getting feedback that something was coming loose.

But I still ran.

While chasing after the golden armor, I advanced forward.

5

The Supard village was far too quiet.

So much so that, when I arrived, I thought it was already over.

"...Why!? Why isn't anyone here!?"

Alek shouted out.

When he passed through the entrance, there was nobody there.

The Supard race wasn't here.

Neither was Julie or Norn.

Nor was the injured Cliff who should have been carried here.

Neither was Eris or Sylphy who should have delivered the message to Orsted.

There were no traces at all.

The people had disappeared like a magic act.

"What is the meaning of this!? Wasn't this the place that Rudeus was protecting!?"

Yes it was.

I was protecting this place.

It's odd. Until now, everyone was right here.

How much time... had passed?

It's about three hours from here to the valley.

Aboard the MK. Zero, it's faster, taking only one hour.

Fighting Badigadi, after that looking for Gisu and returning... so about 5-6 hours?

At that time, everyone was indeed here.

I was in a rush so I didn't get a good look at the surroundings, but everyone should have been there.

Huh?

No, wait. Wasn't that a bit too much?

There's someone who should be here, right?

"Dammit... Does this mean that I have been successfully deceived by you... Rudeus Grayrat!?"

Alek turned around.

While radiating an angry aura, he turned around.

It's a misunderstanding

Even I didn't know.

If Orsted wasn't here, then why did I follow such a dangerous guy here?

Wasn't that stupid?

I should have taken advantage of my luck and ran somewhere else in the forest.

"Orsted and the Supard race weren't here from the start. Is that how it is?"

"...No, the Supard race... and Ruijerd-san were here, right?"

While he was still giving off a feeling like he was about to attack at any moment, I took

a step back.

I couldn't tell what's what anymore.

Could this be a dream that I'm seeing?

Did the Dark King survive and was now showing me a dream after I had defeated Badigadi?

"I thought I'd let you live, but I'll take that back. If you choose to fight me until the end, I'll let you have your wish..."

Not good.

I didn't get the meaning.

I had to get away.

There's no reason to fight. I had to run.

When I thought that and turned around—

Suddenly, my back froze.

My legs stopped.

Did Alek do something?

No, that's wrong.

He's also frozen.

"Wha-what's this chill!?"

He let out a frightened voice and began looking around in a frenzy.

How could he still be this frightened after obtaining the Fighting God Armor?

Why?

It's because of the curse.

A curse that fills every human with fear.

Though I was immune to that curse.

But I understood that the person emanating that curse was radiating killing intent as well.

I possessed a great trauma in relation to this killing intent.

That was why it's frightening.

“...”

The origin of the bloodlust made his appearance.

From the depths of the Supard village.

It's not the black-helmeted figure I was familiar with.

Silver hair and cruel sanpaku eyes.^[45]

The man with a terrifying face, slowly headed this way.

“Rudeus.”

“Orsted-sama... why...”

Orsted.

He threw the helmet he had in his hand towards me.

I caught it in a hurry.

“When I heard the story from Sylphiette, Cliff Grimoire’s mana had already run out.

Therefore, I judged him inadequate to seal Badigadi the Fighting God and bowed my head to a certain man.

That’s why I was a little delayed. Forgive me.”

No, it’s not about that.

I didn’t want to hear why you're late.

I want to know the reason why nobody is...

“But I never thought that this would happen...”

Orsted said that and looked at Alek.

He looked at North God Kalman the Third wearing the Fighting God Armor.

“Leave the rest to me.”

Orsted took a single step forward as he said that.

Alek, looking frightened, took a step back.

I couldn't tell what was going on.

I only asked Orsted.

“But, Orsted-sama, your mana...”

“It's fine. You've done enough. I've resolved myself as well.”

Orsted shook his head.

“Resolved, about what...”

He saw me and smiled a little, but his face was also slightly stiff.

The man with the most frightening face in the world declared.

“I too, want to try fighting believing in my comrades for once.”

The exchange was short, so I couldn't understand.

But for some reason, it remained in my heart.

I understood that Orsted had decided on something with those words.

“...I understand. Then I'll leave the rest to you.”

I stepped back.

There was nothing else to say.

I had thought that I must absolutely not let Orsted fight, but when I saw that slight smile on his face, I understood.

I had been slightly mistaken.

It's not something that needed to be said, but Orsted cared for me far more than I had thought.

Not for his own self interest, but through his feelings, he thought of me as an ally.

And Orsted wanted to fight for that ally that he believed in.

From here on out, he's not alone, but with me.

Not using me to fight, but fighting alongside me.

That was something that I was happy about.

“Now then, <North God Kalman III> Aleksander Ryback.”

“Are you... the <Dragon God> Orsted...?”

Upon hearing his name called, Alek gripped his sword.

That was the Dragon King Sword, Kajakuto.

I see, so he was going to fight with that.

The Dragon King Sword and the Fighting God Armor.

The strongest despair-inducing equipment.

If we could at least prevent him from using one of them...

Was there anything I could do?

“This is perfect.”

Orsted spoke.

I was thinking that, but it seems that Orsted had something different in mind.

In response to Alek's raised sword, he showed a composed smile.

As if to freeze everything, a terrifying smile.

“Possessing the Fighting God Armor and the Dragon King Sword. I assume that you'll have no excuses when you lose with both?”

“Wha!?”

Alek's bloodlust swelled.

“Are you making fun of me!?”

“That’s not it.”

Orsted said that and pressed his hands in together.

And then separated them slowly.

He extracted something from his left hand.

A single katana.

The moment I saw that, I felt my legs shake.

I had only seen that katana once.

Orsted called that katana a single word, <Godsword>.

All I knew was that it used a great amount of magic power.

“The only thing I want to do is to thoroughly defeat you and completely break your spirit into pieces.”

Orsted held out the katana right in between his eyes.

Alek was openly outraged.

Releasing a prickling bloodlust, he held out the Dragon King Sword.

“Try me if you THINK YOU CAN!”

<Dragon God> Orsted and the <Fighting God Armor> clad <North God> Aleksander.

The be all, end all, final battle began.

6

10 minutes later.

A fourth of the forest of the valley was annihilated.

The wilderness had become a burnt area, with a heap of large broken trees scattered about.

A boy with both of his arms now gone was on his knees.

A sword was put against that boy’s neck.

The boy looked in amazement at the wielder of that sword.

The wielder of that sword was one man.

With silver hair and sanpaku eyes.

His entire body was completely unscathed.

He was standing spotless as if he hadn't even fought yet.

Only his clothes were a little bit torn.

"Will you die here or become my subordinate? Choose."

"....."

The Dragon God and the North God who wore the Fighting God Armor.

There may not be any objections to calling the matchup a legendary battle.

Perhaps they would form a companionship in their remaining lifetime.

But calling the actual battle a legendary fight would be too lame.

It was too one-sided and overwhelming.

Honestly, it's difficult even for me to explain the fight with my meagre mouth.

Indeed, I witnessed that fight.

While getting wrapped up in it and getting close to death, I witnessed it.

But it was too fast and I couldn't see most of it.

Even using the foresight eye, I didn't know what the two of them were doing.

The only thing clear to me was that Orsted constantly dominated the fight.

It was clear that even if Alek tried to reverse the situation, and each time that he did, he was thoroughly crushed.

There was a complete difference in power.

Even with the Fighting God Armor and Dragon King Sword, he couldn't even lay so much as a finger on him.

The Fighting God Armor had completely broken.

The armor itself started restoring, but it got separated from Alek's body.

The Dragon King Sword was lying with Alek's hand in his immediate vicinity.

Alek no longer had any fighting spirit left.

With the eyes of a loser, his mouth partly agape, fear clinging onto his face, he was looking at Orsted while shedding tears.

It was no longer the face of a boy who was enthused at the concept of becoming a hero. With his spirit thoroughly broken into pieces, he had become a dog with his tail in between his legs.

".....I'll become... your subordinate."

At the end of the long silence, Alek spoke at last.

Now, this time for sure, the final battle had finally come to a finish.

AUTHOR'S Q&A 13

Q. The number of comments has already passed 25,000, eh?

A. This, too, is all because of everyone's patronage.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Q. The President's <Godsword> was used a lot in this battle, but didn't it consume a lot of mana?

I think that instead of using a huge amount of mana, if the sword can obtain a terrifying sharpness, then Rudi should just use it... **A.** A lot of mana gets consumed just by summoning it and it also has a time restriction on it.

This is the truth about the Godsword!

Q. Was Cliff-Senpai living a stressful life in the Religious Organization where he had to remain vigilant everyday for poisons...?

I think that's how it is since he examined the food with the Identification Eyes many times...

A. Even if Cliff-senpai himself doesn't become the prey of poison, he still possesses the Identification Eye, so there are many times when he's chosen as a tester for poison during meal times, or something like that.

Q. The Fighting God Badigadi or Fighting God Alek, which one would be stronger?

Is it Fighting God Badigadi after all?

A. If the capture method is not known, then it would be Badi.

If it's known, then Alek.

However, if Alek has 50 years of fighting experience against Orsted from now on...

Q. Growing out of a one-man administration.

A. And Rudeus becoming a board member!

Q. What about the possibility that nobody knew that Rudeus-chan's vast mana would finally activate the Dragon King Sword's true power?

A. That possibility is high.

Q. Was clairvoyance ever needed?

A. In the future, if there are many occurrences of baths, then it will surely become

useful.

Q. I really wanted to see the grand monster play-off between the Fighting God vs. Magic Armor MK. Zero.

A. When the timer on the MK. Zero man's chest starts beeping after 3 minutes...!

Q. Gisu or Vita or His Majesty Badi was treated so badly by Hitogami but they still obeyed him because they had to repay a debt... was this Hitogami's curse that every living creature would like him that the President spoke of?

A. Normally, it's true that no one would want to work with such trash, but if you change the background and context, friendship may result.

Q. Perhaps Turning Point is ~

A. Turning Point basically happens the moment that the history of the fight between Orsted & Hitogami changes dramatically.

At the very least, it's not for knocking down the reader at the bottom of despair.

Q. I'm worried about Doga! I think that such a naïve young man might've been invited by Sándor to enroll in the Golden Knight Party, but I wonder if his innermost thoughts are that that this was not what he signed up for?

A. Doga-kun is honest and naïve so he won't raise those types of those questions.

Q. Was there some kind of grudge depicted towards the Dragon God?

A. The one who fought Fighting God Badi was the vanguard of the Dragon God's side, that is Laplace.

Q. Leaving Kajakuto as it is and then leaving to look for Gisu was unnatural.

A. It fell into the valley, so it can't be helped.

Q. Is the President's <Godsword> Laplace's work too?

A. No, it was the work of the founding Dragon God or the founding 5 Dragon Generals.

CHAPTER 21

END OF BATTLE

1

One month passed after that.

Right now, I was close to the exit to the forest of Earth Dragon Valley.

Wooden buildings that were built with a simplistic structure were standing in a row. In an open space cleared of trees, various men and women were restlessly walking around.

Woodcutters, laborers, and carpenters of the Human race that were employed by the Biheiril Kingdom and Supard Race... which came from the Rudo Mercenary Group.

“Onii-chan, would you please open up the east side of the forest a bit?”

There was Aisha as well.

She was giving instructions to each team as if she owned this village.

Rinia and Pursena were receiving her instructions and then commanding the group members to act on them.

This made it difficult to discern just who was the Captain.

“Yeah, got it.”

I was mixed up with them as well and was currently helping out in the reconstruction of the Supard village.

I opened up the forests with magic, made the foundations of houses with earth magic, and made a road up to the village of the Earth Dragon Valley.

There were a lot of things to do.

Now then.

Just why were Aisha and Rudo Mercenary Group here?

Just why was there no one except Orsted when Alek arrived at the village?

Explaining that is a must.

Although I said that an explanation was needed, I'll only finish it up with a few words.

It was Aisha's deed.

Saying it was her deed makes her look like she was guilty of a prank or something, so I should rephrase that to 'work'.

It was Aisha's work.

When the Teleport Formation and Communication Lithograph stopped working – Aisha and Rudo Mercenary Group too were in the polar regions of confusion.

In a faraway land with their means of contact and movement sealed, anxiety and impatience were born.

Within those circumstances, Aisha was calm.

She calmly took things into consideration and thought.

If the fight had already started at the actual spot, then for them who were near the national border, it would be too late once they actually reached their destination, and the things that could be done were few as well.

The conclusion Aisha had arrived at took into consideration the possibility of Gisu escaping while trying to restore the Teleport Formation.

That is to say, the restoration of infrastructure.

Although, in addition to the Teleport Formations, the reserved formation that Aisha had took with her which corresponded with the formation at the office were all already destroyed.

There was no way.

Or so I would think, and give up.

Because I already gave up.

However, Aisha was struck with an idea.

Her gifted brain recalled the secret arts of a certain person.

Those secret arts, which had a complete grasp of the damaged teleport formations of the other side and the formations that corresponded to those ones, were a technique capable of drawing such formations and able to teleport wherever desired.

Just who was that certain person?

That's right, it was <The Armored Dragon King> Perugia Dola.

She searched for a Stone Monument of the Seven Great World Powers near the national border in order to ask him for a favor.

Depending on whether she could find it, she would then travel to the Sky Fortress after using Perugia's flute.

Perugia, who knew that we were helping a Demon Race, was reluctant.

He declared "I'll only make one." towards Aisha's request, to which Aisha chose the option of creating a magic formation at the national border which connected to the Supard Village.

And that's how it was.

"You were able to persuade Perugia, eh?"

"He was quite reluctant, but when Orsted asked him for a favor, he quickly accepted."

After that, when I was in the middle of battle, everyone teleported from the Supard village.

They quickly made use of the teleport formation after hearing about the circumstances, and the inhabitants and the rest all took shelter at a city near the national border... or so how it went.

If we had prioritized on making a normal teleport formation rather than making one for Roxy's return to Sharia to summon the Magic Armor <MK. Zero>, it would have been almost in vain...

It was somehow clever that Roxy's mistake was followed up by Aisha.

Although it was inevitable that Roxy felt pretty guilty after that and curled herself up.

“Around here?”

“Yeah, clean it aaallll up. It should be fine to spread the area a little more, right?”

“I guess, got it.”

“When you’re done, call me again. I’ll make the Mercenary group carry the wood and all.”

“Roger.”

And so, it had been a month since the fight.

Although we were prepared while staying vigilant, there was no sign of any more battles.

It seemed that there would no longer be any battles.

Therefore, I asked Sylphy, Roxy, and Zanoba to return back to Sharia. I also asked Eris to return back under the pretext of making her their guard.

I asked of them this because the teleport formations used for the summoning of MK. Zero and the one used by refugees were destroyed during the battle of Orsted and Alek; it took the same pattern just like the time with Perugius.

I had asked them to rebuild the office, restore the teleport formations and communication lithographs, and such.

It seemed that nothing happened at Sharia.

The receptionist Little Elf-chan was fine too.

The only damage was that the weapons and armor, and the documents in which Orsted wrote every day were buried.

The refugees of the Supard race travelled from the national border to Second City Irel, and came back to the Supard village using the teleport formation which was reconnected.

Afterwards, they were officially welcomed by the Biheiril Kingdom.

It was affirmed that Biheiril Kingdom would be accepting the Supard Race as citizens.

They weren’t in any position to say no after losing both Ogre God and the third city.

They added a condition for accepting the Supards as official citizens, in that at least 3

people from the Supard Race should choose to do a profession for the sake of Country. It was the same as what happened with the Ogre Race.

For now, the selection of those three had finished, and we're currently starting reconstruction on the Supard village.

If the reconstruction continues without any incident, then the Supards would be able to live in the Biheiril Kingdom's urban area.

We had defeated all of the apostles, and had made the Biheiril Kingdom, Ogre Race, and Supard Race our allies.

We were victorious.

But, did we really gain complete victory?

"Rudeus-dono."

"Sándor-san."

While I pondered, the lumbering of woods continued. Unaware of my surroundings, Sándor was now standing behind me.

It wasn't just Sándor.

Ghyslaine, Isolte, and Doga were there too.

Sándor came back about 10 days later after the fight was over.

He was knocked off into the sea by the Fighting God and drifted ashore to Ogre Island, where he strained himself to recuperate.

Or should I say how admirable it was that he came back alive after fighting against the Fighting God?

"Thank you for your efforts. What happened?"

"Nothing really. Just, we were thinking that it was about time we returned back to Asura Kingdom. So we came to give our farewells."

".....Ah."

The work of Sándor and the rest was over.

They were at best Ariel's subordinates.

If there was no fight, then they could only return back.

“Sándor-san. Thank you very much. If it weren’t for you, then all of this wouldn’t have happened.”

“If it’s gratitude, then give it to Her Majesty Ariel.”

“Of course. Please convey to Her Majesty that if something happens from now on, then Her Majesty can inform me first. That I would be willing to cooperate.”

“I understand.”

Sándor, Doga, Ghyslaine, and Isolte.

Each one of them was as strong as King class or above.

I couldn’t thank her enough for lending me such strong people.

“Ghyslaine-san too, thank you very much.”

“No need for thanks... but, I’m thinking about visiting the grave next time.”

“I understand. I will be patiently awaiting.”

Ghyslaine only said a few words.

“Doga too, thank you. When I fell into the valley, if you weren’t there then I would’ve died.”

“Yup.”

“If you get into some kind of trouble, please do tell me. I too, want to repay my lifesaver.”

“Yup!”

Doga only said “Yup”, but he looked a little lonely.

“Isolte-san too, thank you very much. If you hadn’t come at that moment, I would’ve died.”

“No, I was able to learn various things as well. It is I who should say thank you very much.”

After giving an elegant bow, she smiled.

The same as before, a beautiful woman.

I wonder just what the heck the males of the Asura Kingdom were thinking if she's still unmarried.

"Please give my heartfelt thanks to the team of doctors as well."

"Yes, well then... we'll be taking our leave."

Sándor bowed once and turned on his heels.

But after seeing his back, I recalled something that I had completely forgotten and called out to him.

"Um... it was regretful what happened to Atofe-sama."

Sándor came back.

But it was only him who returned.

Atofe was still missing.

If she was washed away by the sea then she wouldn't be found for another several years.

It was the same with Moore too.

"...There's no need to worry about Mother. I think if you give her enough time, she would suddenly make her appearance some day. I think the most regretful thing that had happened was Ogre God's death."

"That's... right."

Ogre God's death was confirmed.

He put up a good fight against Fighting God.

But he wasn't one of the Immortal Demon Race. He used up all of his strength in the end and died.

Even though I had finally reconciled with him too...

"Although nothing can be gained by just mourning the dead."

“Indeed. We must look ahead of ourselves.”

I had promised Malta.

That if he were to die then I would be protecting the survivors of the Ogre Race.

Right now, there was no one who would be a threat to Ogre Race, but if something happened then I'd want to protect them even if there wasn't a promise.

“Well then, goodbye.”

“Yes. Many thanks for your hard work.”

“Ah, right... Please take care of Alek.”

“...Yes.”

Sándor said that and left.

And then Cliff could be seen coming my way as if replacing them.

Along with Elinalize.

“Rudeus.”

“Cliff-senpai.”

“Are they returning as well?”

“Yes, are you going too, Cliff-senpai?”

“Yeah. The relocation is over... in the end, I just couldn't find out the cause of Plague, but it's been almost a month now and the people living there have moved away... so I've decided to head back for now.”

I was indebted to Cliff as well.

If it weren't for him, the plague couldn't have been cured.

It's possible that the plague was the Dark King's doing.

“Cliff-senpai. Thank you very much. If you hadn't come, then just what would've happened...”

“Well, I do think that you would've been able to something, since it's you. If the plague relapses, contact me.”

“Yes... I’ve been getting nothing but favors from you; just how should I show my gratitude, I wonder?”

“The reason I’m able to work hard in Milis while leaving Lize and Clive is because your family is looking after mine. We are of equal status in that regard.”

I’m grateful if he says something like that.

“Well then, till next time. I’ll be meeting your family on my way back, so are there any messages?”

“Tell them I’ll be coming back soon.”

“Got it.”

Cliff said that and left.

In the end, Elinalize winked at me. I’ve troubled her a lot as well, but didn’t say anything to her... Well, I’d do that the next time we talk as neighbors.

But, I sure was saved by various people this time.

First was Cliff. If it weren’t for him, then the Supard race might have perished by the plague.

Then Sándor and Doga. If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t be standing here right now.

Atofe’s timing looked like God’s itself.

The Atofe-hand and the attack at Ogre Island at just the right time.

It could be said that this victory with almost no injuries was thanks to Atofe.

That Atofe was now missing, that is to say, I wanted to search for her in the sea once things had calmed down as a way of not showing too much ingratitude.

The battle was now over and everyone was returning.

A big event had ended, and it looked like we were breaking up as a result.

It was somehow lonely.

“Alright.”

As I pondered such things, the lumbering of the woods was finished.

In front of my eyes was a clean, stretched-out ground.

The trees that were pulled out from their roots were neatly lined up using Earth Magic.

I had done a nice job if I say so myself.

“Now then, Aisha is... hm.”

When I turned, I could see Ruijerd and Norn walking towards me, just at the right time.

“Ah, Nii-san.”

“Norn! You’ve come at just the right time. Won’t you tell Aisha that the lumbering has been finished?”

“Yes, I understand.”

Norn turned on her heels and quickly ran towards the village.

Ruijerd who was left behind was now walking up to me.

“Rudeus.”

“Ruijerd-san.”

“Sorry. I’ve burdened you with various things.”

“You’ve promised that you wouldn’t say that right? Dad.”

“I don’t remember making such a promise.”

“Right.”

Ruijerd was engaged in the reconstruction of the Supard village.

After that, he would probably come and go from our office, or be placed as the Biheiril Kingdom’s negotiator.

Norn was clinging to Ruijerd.

She too, until this village had finished rebuilding, intended to help Ruijerd.

“After the village’s completion, please do visit our house in Sharia.”

“Yeah, even I want to see your children.”

“They’re super cute.”

“Your kids are just like that.”

Ruijerd laughed and then eyed me.

His height hadn't changed very much.

“...You became really strong, didn't you? I never would have thought that you would become one of the Seven Great World Powers.”

“If it's the you right now then even you can become one, Ruijerd-san. If it's you, I would be done in by just one punch, in just one punch.”

“Don't joke around.”

“But I'm certain that I didn't become one only on my power alone.”

“That power might be yours as well.”

“I wonder.”

“.....”

Ruijerd looked at me a little, gave out a little laugh, removed the pendant hanging from his neck, and held it out towards me.

It was Roxy's pendant.

“I'll return this back to you now.”

“But, this is...”

“You should hold onto this after all.”

The pendant I gave to Ruijerd when we first parted.

Roxy's pendant.

Unaware, this pendant had become my mark.

The pendant which was my motive for setting out into the world.

“I understand.”

I accepted that pendant.

Before, when I handed him this pendant, it was over a trivial matter.

When we parted, I never intended for him to give it back to me. I hoped that he would hold onto it.

Or perhaps I wanted to have a link with him.

But he had returned it now.

Because we were already brethren.

Because we won't be parting for quite some time now.

"Ruijerd-san, Please take care of me from now on."

"Yeah. Though I might lack the ability."

"We'll just have to compensate for each other's mistakes."

"Pfft, that's right."

I laughed and Ruijerd too smiled.

2

Norn came back along with Mercenary Group and left with Ruijerd.

I left the place as well and started walking towards the Teleport Formation.

I thought of finally returning back to Sharia.

"!"

Then I realized that someone was approaching me from behind.

It was Orsted.

Just as always with the black helmet.

He wasn't alone.

Behind him was a black-haired boy who was following like a loyal retainer.

It was Aleksander Ryback.

"..."

From that day forward, he started following Orsted everywhere as his subordinate.

Like Moore, who followed Atofe.

Like Sylvaril, who followed Perugia.

As if to say that he had been in this position since hundreds of years ago.

I wanted to make him acknowledge me as his superior, but if we were to fight, I'd lose, so I kept quiet.

However, no matter how many times I see him, I end up getting cautious.

"Is there something wrong?"

".....Nothing."

"If there is something then please do say so. I'll quickly mend it."

Although contrary to my cautiousness, Alek was quite obedient from that day.

I thought that he would hold some kind of grudge against me, but he was honest.

He was completely obedient towards me and of course towards Orsted as well.

"I can understand why you would be cautious.

However, my position was clear to me after the battle the other day.

That, just how much inexperienced and stunted I was.

I will be devoting myself under Orsted-sama and Rudeus-sama's studies for a while, and during that time I intend to search for the meaning of what being a hero means, what being a North God means.

As a proof of that and as my punishment, my dominant arm has been sealed in this way."

While saying that, Alek raised his right arm to show it.

Everything down from his wrist was now gone, and a pattern was carved into the wrist's section.

It was sealing magic performed by Orsted.

The Immortal Demon Race's blood that flowed in Alek's veins could resurrect him even if he was scattered into pieces.

Although his speed wasn't as fast as Atofe's and Badigadi's, he could still completely regenerate even if it took some time.

That is why, his dominant arm was cut off and Orsted put a seal on it so that it didn't

regenerate.

It was his proof of loyalty.

Incidentally, the one who loaded the mana into the sealing magic formation was me.

“If it’s just my left hand then I wouldn’t be that much of a threat.”

“...No, if it’s you, you would be able to defeat me even without a single hand, I think. Like Headbutting or something.”

“You’re too humble... no, that modest nature of yours might be valuable. Please do guide and encourage me from now on.”

“Yeah...”

Orsted had faith in that Alek, so even if he served near him, he had no complaints.

But I felt like that he would someday stab me in the back.

Honestly, I’m scared.

“...Um, if you ever want your World Power position back, then tell me. I’ll immediately return it.”

“No, I’ve acknowledged that you yourself aren’t that immature, so once again, please do take care of me.”

“You will be diligent, right? You won’t just surprise backstab me someday, right?”

“Perhaps not you, Rudeus-dono. But I might challenge someone from the Sword Temple. Of course when it’ll come to that, I’ll fight you head on fair and square!”

“Let’s fight with the back of our swords, kay? Let’s not kill ourselves at that time, kay?”

“Yep!”

As of now, I had become the Seventh Rank of the Seven Great World Powers.

First Rank <Technique God> Laplace.

Second Rank <Dragon God> Orsted.

Third Rank <Fighting God> Badigadi.

Fourth Rank <Demon God> Laplace.

Fifth Rank <Death God> Randolph.

Sixth Rank <Sword God> Jino Britts.

Seventh Rank <Quagmire> Rudeus Greyrat.

And so it was.

Only my name was looking terribly out-of-place, and I was getting sick of it.

From this point onwards, I was sure guys hoping to snatch the World Power rank from me would come running.

I'm bummed out.

Although my mark was the Migurd Race's mark.

There were only a few times I had shown off that mark as mine. I received Roxy's pendant just now, but I didn't intend on showing it off, so no one would be able to tell just who the real World Power was.

My popularity shouldn't be that high, so challengers shouldn't come gathering up. Yep. Let's go with the belief that the Seventh Rank was <Unidentified> for now. Yep.

Incidentally, during that fight. Fighting God's rank didn't change.

According to Orsted, it seemed that unless the Fighting God Armor itself was completely destroyed, the ranking wouldn't change.

I looked away from Alek's face that was full of determination and looked at Orsted.

"Orsted-sama... how about that condition of yours?"

I faced toward Orsted, who was silent throughout the conversation.

"Not bad. It's not like it'll get worse if I use mana to some extent."

In the final battle, Orsted used his mana.

A lot of mana.

It could be said that he used half of the total amount.

It was an easy victory in front of my eyes. Actually, his HP remained at full and only his MP was spent to 50%, so it was certain that it was an easy victory.

However, the recovery of that MP was a different story altogether.

Orsted had ended up using his mana that he was saving for his fight against Laplace

and Hitogami.

We were victorious.

But Hitogami was able to meet his winning conditions as well.

Then, was it really our victory?

“Our allies have increased and our enemies decreased. The amount of times from now on that I will have to use my mana will be few, I guess.”

Although Orsted wasn't paying much attention to it.

He might've made up his mind about it.

“That would be nice.”

“Even if it's not, it's different this time around. As such, it's fine to take a different direction and then proceed accordingly. I've already resolved myself for that.”

Orsted had wagered it on me.

He was thinking that even if he used up the mana that was going to be used against Laplace and Hitogami, if he fought together with me then he could do it.

He was thinking that we had completely won this time.

If I think that he had won, then it should be a victory.

There were almost no casualties actually.

Ogre God, some people of the Supard Race, and some people of the Imperial Guards.

That's all the damage to this side.

There wasn't any losing factor.

“Ah, then, what would be your course of action now?”

“I'll be returning to Sharia soon.”

“I understand. I was also thinking of going back... ah, but I do think that the office has yet to start its reconstruction?”

“I don't mind. There should be at least a place to sleep.”

At the bare minimum, the teleport formation in the basement was dug out. Still, if repair works were going to continue, there would be a need for expansion work.

We must think about a countermeasure by taking into consideration how the Ogre God destroyed the office.

Although even now a good plan doesn't come to mind.

Perhaps it would be better to not place magic formations in countries other than the major ones.

Until now, I hadn't taken into consideration the possibility of an enemy using it to invade, and so I was quite surprised.

"Before that, I think we should go see that guy."

"..."

That guy, huh?

"Let me accompany you."

3

That evening, Orsted and I proceeded towards the Earth Dragon Valley.

Towards the bottom of the Earth Dragon Valley.

A leveled path where blue mushrooms and moss were growing in abundance.

There was a carefully hidden small hole on the wall.

The hole that was about 1 metre in diameter was in a slightly curved position. It looked like a dead end at a glance if seen from outside.

However, a huge room awaited if someone were to proceed some 10 metres inside it.

There, a large magic formation was shedding light with one sword as its core.

Though I say it's large, its radius was 5 metres at best.

One male was lying within that formation.

"Hmm, so you've come."

It was Demon Lord Badigadi.

His body had been separated into 5 pieces, and each of them were sealed in different places in the valley.

His main body was here.

This barrier would never get destroyed unless all of the remaining 4 seals were destroyed first.

And then, the barrier was operating using the mana of Badigadi's body, which was further amplified with the Dragon King Sword and Fighting God Armor as a catalyst.

It could keep operating almost forever.

The Barrier Magic Formation was reverently made by Perugia himself.

It was the God-Class barrier magic created in order to seal the Demon God.

If the sealing object that would become the medium and the magic item that would become the intermediary were strong enough, they could increase the barrier's strength.

In addition to the Fighting God Armor, even the Dragon King Sword was used by this seal as a catalyst. It was powerful enough that not even Orsted could break out of it.

It's possible that using two God-Class equipment as one part of the barrier was somewhat wasteful.

However, both of them would be terrifying weapons in the hands of the enemy.

Since the enemy proved this by using the teleport formations for their own gain, if these things were getting used up here then it's not such a bad thing.

As long as this seal existed, not only Badigadi, but the Fighting God Armor and the Dragon King Sword would be sealed here as well.

If this was destroyed then there would be no choice left but to give up.

That's the conclusion I'd come with.

Orsted had requested Perugia to set up this barrier.

He bowed his head and requested to borrow his strength.

And, Perugia acknowledged that.

He became Orsted's brethren, his ally.

But Perugia was someone that must be killed.

Which meant that Orsted had chosen the path of betrayal.

I owed both Orsted and Perugia a lot.

As an individual, it's a complex feeling.

But I could understand that Orsted had no choice left but to choose that path.

On top of that, if it's something that Orsted had decided on, then I was in no position to complain.

I did think that it would've been nice if we at least knew some way to reach Hitogami's place without using the five Dragon Race treasures, but it was clear that just a little bit of research wasn't going to be enough to find it.

Well, perhaps I didn't really need to think about that.

The enemy was in front of me right now.

"I must terribly apologize, Your Majesty. I had no choice but to do this if you were to become Hitogami's apostle again."

"It's quite uncomfortable. Can you let me move a little bit more?"

Badigadi said pompously while lying in a pose similar to the sleeping Buddha.

Even for my personal opinion regarding this jail, this was certainly an uncomfortable and narrow sealing barrier.

Still, I couldn't bring myself to kill him.

Please don't kill him - was Kishirika's earnest request to me.

"I'm terribly sorry, this is the best I can do right now."

"Hmm. Then it can't be helped."

Badigadi said and laughed with a FUAHAHA.

He had two arms and his body was comparatively smaller than before.

This was the result of the seal.

"So what's your business here? Don't tell me, did you come here to have a drinking bout with my charming figure?"

"Orsted-sama has something to talk with you."

I said that and handed over the scene to Orsted.

“Demon Lord Badigadi.”

“Good evening, Dragon God-dono. What would be your business today?”

“Abandon Hitogami and work under me.”

Badigadi looked blankly for a few seconds.

But quickly laughed out loud.

“FUHAHAHAHAHA!”

Badigadi’s laughter echoed within the cave.

“The despicable Dragon Race is asking ME, one of the Immortal Demon Race to join HIM!?”

“Although you became an enemy for a while, you bastard are still Rudeus’s friend. Alex, Aleksander, and Atofe have already turned to this side, so do you have any room for consideration?”

“NO!”

He declared plainly.

“But why? Respected Granduncle.”

Alek, who was standing near the entrance, came forward.

“You have already lost, you know? Then in accordance with the Immortal Demon Race’s law—”

“Do not misunderstand, Lil’ Alek. That is not the law of the Immortal Demon Race. That’s only Atofe’s own rule.”

“Then, Respected Granduncle. Have you pledged allegiance to Hitogami?”

“Wrong.”

Badigadi raised his body and shook his head.

And then, he folded his only two arms and sat crosslegged.

“I don’t like fighting anyone to begin with.

What I do like is going on journeys, laughing while drinking alcohol, making advances on casual women, sleep with them, getting shout at by my fiancée at times, drinking alcohol along with friends, laughing, singing, and looking at the sleeping but satisfied faces of tired people.

I went out of my way this time only because Hitogami requested me while bowing his head.

He wanted me to kill Rudeus Greyrat and Dragon God Orsted no matter what.

Do you know just thanks to whom both me and Kishirika were able to live up till this age?

I remembered the matter of 4200 years ago and simply wanted to repay back my debt. On those terms I accepted, but ‘only once’”

“.....”

“And now, that only once is over.

I won’t be becoming anyone’s ally from now on!

If given the choice of getting sealed here or fight, I’ll choose to get sealed.”

If that’s how it is, then I think that it would be fine to let him out.

Of course, on top of being Hitogami’s apostle and his nature of getting deceived so easily, I couldn’t just thoughtlessly leave him alone.

Yep...

“At any rate, when the fight between you and Hitogami is over, won’t you let me out then?”

Badigadi said to the perplexed me with a broad grin.

“...Yeah.”

I realized after seeing Orsted nod.

That's right.

It would be impossible within my lifetime, but if Orsted wins against Hitogami, then there would no longer be any meaning to jail him.

"After 100 years."

"That would arrive before long. Then I'll just obediently wait here."

Badigadi said that and lay down once again.

Orsted nodded and turned on his heels.

The talk was over with this.

That was quick.

"Your Majesty... it's probably not the right time to say this, but thank you very much for various things in the Magic University."

"Yeah. Rudeus, I don't know if this is the last time we'll ever meet, but I should say congratulations to you."

"Congratulations, is it?"

"I'm congratulating because you've won."

"I wonder if I've really won..."

That's what I'm worried about.

In the end, Orsted ended up using mana.

A mistake was made at the very last moment.

However, Badigadi wasn't alluding that one bit.

"Yeah. You've made Hitogami taste the sense of defeat."

"Sense of defeat, is it?"

"Yeah. You've made Hitogami realize that "No matter what I do, I can't kill this guy." Hitogami has completely lost all will to continue. Explaining how Hitogami looked the last time I saw him is difficult, but his figure certainly looked that of a loser. If it's so, then just what would you call it if not his enemy's victory?"

“...Is that true?”

“If you don’t believe it, then go ahead and remove that bracelet and see for yourself.”

When pointed at by him, I unconsciously hid my hand with the bracelet on.

“I’ll... pass on that.”

“I see, that’s fine either way.”

That trick won’t work on me.

I didn’t even want to meet Hitogami.

However.

Indeed, when I saw him at the valley’s bottom, he seemed to be at his wits’ ends.

If Hitogami realized a huge sense of defeat in this battle, then it might just be true.

But I wasn’t confident on the comment that he would lose all his motivation and not do anything.

“Is the talk over?”

“There's nothin’ more from me.”

“I see. Well then, be in good health.”

I turned around and followed Orsted.

At that time, Alek leaped in with an intolerable face.

“Respected Granduncle... I am——”

“Aleksander. If you want to become a hero, then find your true enemy. Your father could never find someone like that. When you defeat that, you will become a hero who will surpass his father.”

“...I understand.”

Alek turned around as well.

This might be my final farewell to Badigadi.

It would be nice if I showed myself once every few years, but it could be that through

some way or another, the seal comes undone.

Then it should be fine to not come.

There's no need to tell other people at the Magic University that Badigadi was sealed here.

The only ones who knew about this place were me, Orsted, Alek, Ruijerd, and Perugius. Only 5 people.

I'd made arrangements for Ruijerd to keep watch from the village's entrance so that no one would visit this valley.

On top of that, the amount of people who could descend and ascend the valley were few.

Even for 100 years, the seal may not break even by chance.

And, furthermore—

“Rudeus, the entrance.”

“Yes.”

I covered up the small hole.

So that no one would be able to dig it out or able to find it.

It was my farewell.

“Young Dragon God. I pray that someday your curse is lifted.”

In the end, Badigadi's faint voice could be heard from the cave.

4

The next day.

When the early morning was yet to arrive, before the sunrise, I returned back to Sharia.

My destination the office that was in the middle of construction.

The office which was now in front of the remaining debris.

Zanoba and the rest who were working on the reconstruction were sleeping in a huddle over there.

This time, I was indebted to Zanoba as well.

He was someone I would like to have a give-and-take relationship with from now on.

“Well then, Rudeus. I’ll be relying on you from now on as well.”

And along with Orsted as well.

“Yes.”

I separated from Orsted outside the town, and walked in the morning mist that had covered the town.

I had many souvenirs in my hands from the Biheiril Kingdom.

Especially, a great sum of soy sauce.

If I have this soy sauce, then from now on, I would be able to live my whole life.

The town of Sharia was the same as before.

The people here didn’t change as well.

People who were working in the fields, the adventurers who were training in the gardens of hotels.

The university teachers and men with robes could also be seen.

While passing by them, I walked my way back through the snow, via the open place in the central part and towards the residential district.

That scene was somehow nostalgic.

I had walked this path almost every day, but I wonder why, a feeling that I’ve finally returned was welling up from my chest.

From the street, I entered an alleyway.

It was a narrow path through which not even a carriage could pass.

I had become accustomed to this path, which was just a little shortcut.

After exiting the alleyway, I could see my house.

Beet, who had twined itself around the gatepost, upon seeing my arrival opened the gate.

The kitchen garden lacked a little bit of grooming.

When the armadillo Jirou saw me, he snuggled up to me.

When I crouched and started petting his head, he rolled and showed his belly. He's a cute pet.

At that time, the entrance to the house soundlessly opened.

The ones who came out were the Sacred Beast Leo and Eris.

"Ara, Rudeus. Welcome back."

"I'm back. Where's everyone?"

"They're safe."

"Not that, what are they doing?"

"...Lilia and Sylphy are preparing food. Roxy, the kids, and Mother-in-Law are still sleeping. I was just about to go running."

"I see."

I muttered and took Eris's hand.

And Eris grasped my hand tightly as if to answer to that.

I wonder if she had just done practice-swinging, because it felt warm.

When I saw her face, she looked a little red.

"Wh-what?"

"Eris. Let's take a day off today."

"I-I got it."

She said "I got it." as if to say she had already seen through what we were going to do.

Bang on the money.

"Leo, it's regrettable, but today's stroll is cancelled."

"...Woof."

Leo had a somewhat disappointed face, but he licked my other hand and then returned

inside the house.

While holding hands with Eris, I entered the house as well.

And then headed towards the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Lilia and Sylphy were lined up and making food.

“I’m back.”

“Ah, welcome back, Rudi.”

“Welcome back home, Master.”

The usual smiles showed by Sylphy and Lilia with relieved faces.

“Lilia-san, thank you very much for your effort in looking after the house.”

“Not at all. I’m really glad that you were safely able to return back, Master.”

“Norn and Aisha will be staying there for a little while longer.”

“I understand.”

After bowing to Lilia, I turn towards Sylphy.

“Sylphy, let’s take a day off today.”

“Eh? Alright, if it’s a day off...”

Tilting her head in confusion was Sylphy.

But it seemed the Lilia had quickly realized it.

“I understand. Madam, please let me handle the cooking.”

“Ah... I got it now.”

While shyly smiling, she clutched my arm opposite to Eris.

As a result of cooking and washing the plates, her hands were somewhat cold.

“Lilia-san. Let’s go out to eat at noon.”

“I understand.”

A smile that looked as if she had seen through everything.

It's a little embarrassing really.

But, it doesn't matter this late in the game.

While holding both Eris's and Sylphy's hands, I head towards the children's room.

When I slowly opened the door, 4 kids could be seen sleeping peacefully.

Lucy, Lara, Ars, Sieg.

And as if to protect them, Leo was curled up at the entrance of the room.

In the middle of the fight, I got worried about the house many times.

But contrary to my anxiousness, the children were in peace. Perhaps some kind of fight took place in my absence and Leo protected them all...

Anyhow, after confirming the health of the children, I slowly closed the door.

Continuing from there, I descended down the stairs and headed towards Roxy's room.

I knocked as part of my manners.

"...Coming."

After a few seconds, there was a reply.

When the door was opened, the half-asleep Roxy saw me.

She had bed hair and there were traces of drool below her lips.

"Ah... Rudi. Welcome back."

"I'm back, Roxy. I was thinking about taking a day off today, how about it?"

After looking blankly, she caught hold of the meaning of "day off".

While playing with her bangs of her bed hair with her finger, she blushed slightly.

"I won't mind, but..."

Among the two women on my left and right hand sides, she looked at one of them.

“Is Eris alright with it?”

I looked at Eris.

With a slightly puzzled look, her face was becoming reddish.

“I was going to ask her now.”

I faced Eris.

“Eris, I want to go to bed with all four of us like this, is that fine?”

When I asked, Eris seemed to have understood what I was trying to do.

Her face became even redder and she pouted.

If she wasn't holding me like this, she would've taken her usual pose.

“If Rudeus wants to no matter what, then...”

Sorry Eris.

I want to reward myself today a little.

I want to say goodbye to the abstinent Rudeus.

“Thank you.”

I thanked her.

I didn't say this to just Eris because she had given me permission.

I said this in regards to all the three that have supported me until now.

I thanked that no one went missing after the end of battle.

Gisu and Badigadi said that this was the end.

That Hitogami would no longer interfere with me.

Of course, I shouldn't believe those words.

As long as Hitogami lives, he would be considered my enemy.

But let's just take a day off for today.

So that I can work with more energy tomorrow, so that the day passes calmly.

So that I can still keep on laughing—

Just kidding.

I just want to have some sexy time.

Now then, from today onwards, the ban on Rudeus will be lifting up.

While thinking that, I headed towards the bedroom, three women in tow.

—○●○—

Volume 23 - Young Man Period - Decisive Battle Chapter — The End —

Next Volume - Conclusion Volume - Final Chapter

AUTHOR'S Q&A 14

Q. That was a good finale. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you very much as well.

Q. Why didn't Gisu assumed the possibility of fire magic at all? Did he thought that it would be strange which resulted weak defense only towards fire magic?

A. Rudeus mostly used water and earth magic when it was necessary so his defense against fire and wind magic was weak.

The question why he didn't completely defend himself against all types was because he simply couldn't carry that much weight.

Q. On Kishirika's request he wasn't killed so that means there's a way to kill him?

A. The immortal demon race are only humans who can't die, that's why if some way or another they die it wouldn't be strange.

Q. I've asked this before but you didn't answer so I'm asking this question again. I'm sorry if it's a question that's hard to answer but...

It's a question regarding mana.

If Our Great Highness President Orsted opened the Dragon Gate and Mr. Rudeus with his full mana tank stood in front of it and fired away magic at it ceaselessly which in turn would charge President's mana, would he not like to recover his mana that way?

A. I feel like I've answered this question before but it's not possible for me to answer twice.

The sucked up mana will only charge the gate in the end, in the midst of battle it could be useful to lower ma-na consumption but there aren't any other advantages.

Also, that technique has conditions like the enemy shouldn't be able to move or it should be used indoors or in a narrow path, if not the enemy can get out of it's effective range.

Q. As the story progresses, there's a saying that characters can easily move like they have a will of their own contrary to author's intention, did something like this happen in your experience, Magnote-sensei?

Something like even though you thought this way but Eris still jumped in to save Rudeus.

Or just when you made Rudeus alone he was rolled up by anxiousness and as a result became cautious.

A. Just when you thought that he was alone, he was rolled up by anxiousness, that thing happens a lot really. LOL

Q. Did Jino become a Sword God in other loops as well? Or was it just in this loop?

A. Probably just in this loop.

Q. A one punch weapon that makes you naked similar to Dragon King Sword, which one would be a more powerful weapon?

A. Obviously the Dragon king Sword.

However, that's one perfected weapon, depending on the situations or it's genericness and augmentability, and in the case it's declared a winner against the Magic Armor.

Q. Judging from President's words "I assume that you'll have no excuses when you lose with both?", does that mean he was able to come up with an excuse in an previous loop? LOL

A. Alek who held the Dragon King Sword was somehow or another powerful.

He's tenacious and doesn't hesitate.

That's why whenever he defeated Alek in his previous loops, he was prepared from the beginning to let go of the sword or do something else. So the President could win and Alek had an excuse.

Q. > > However, Badigadi wasn't alluding that one bit.

I feel like he quickly hinted something after that, was there a need for that previous statement like that I wonder.

A. I've written the part before that where it states that "ended up using Orsted's mana" They couldn't meet the winning conditions but wasn't it a victory?

Or so Rudeus thought but Badigadi wasn't hinting at the winning or losing conditions but he thought "No, I thought that Hitogami had lost so you guys should've won."

I'll go ahead and rewrite it a little.

Q. It would've been nice if the President could be supplied mana from Rudeus, just like in Highschool DxD.

A. Yeah, it would've been nice if it could.

Q. Rudi, who had huge mana reserves similar to Laplace, used all of it to the point of exhaustion. Although he wasn't even able to fight Orsted by doing that then I wonder just how Laplace was able to blow off half of the entire continent.

A. Laplace knew how to properly implement his magic, he had something like Final Secret arts of Magic. And so you can think like that.

Q. Even though Rudi's mana, which was similar in amount to Laplace's, was exhausted by wearing the Magic Armor and yet the Fighting God Armor worn by Badigadi which had anti-magic, restoration and other gim-micks like that was able to work for days at end, and yet the mana didn't run out I wonder why. I feel like it would be difficult to explain it with just the fuel consumption as the basis for both.

A. First of all the Magic Armor is a counterfeit of the Fighting God Armor.

The Fighting God Armor was the crystallization of Laplace's 10,000 years of research and study, it's not necessary that Hitogami or Orsted would know every principle behind it.

Q. Are there no problem for Alek to not be using the Kajakuto just like always? I also think that especially sealing his hands wasn't important.

A. Alek might think "It's no-good if I kept relying on this sword."

Q. As expected, the way of thinking of going to bed in a harem situation just like Rudeus is uncommon in that world.

A. Rather than the world, wouldn't it better to say the thinking of the common man or perhaps each country. At the very least, Sylphy doesn't think it's uncommon.

Q. I re-read from Tuning Point 2 but the President was hated by Ruijerd which made him feel considerably dejected, just how much were they getting along until this loop?

A. At the very least, even if there's the objective of defeating Laplace, to the point of loaning out his beloved daughter.

Q. The President's documents which were written in Dragon language were now buried under the rubble but I can't help but feel that there was naming list for the Magic Armor written inside it that was quickly rejected by Rudeus or a list of names for Rudi's children when the time comes for consulting those names.

A. The buried notes of the dark past!

Q. Would the new office be constructed somewhere else than the usual place?

A. Yes. The construction of the new office and removal of the debris of old office are progressing simultaneously.

Q. I always wondered just how Badigadi was able to play Gandhara, why he knew about such music in such a world. If someone is teleported in any time axis then could he be the reincarnation of Nanahoshi's boyfriend who were teleported off together, or was it someone important in the after story that would make his appearance. I know these are all wild ideas but still I wonder what it was.

A. It only sounded the same rhythm as that song.

He didn't know the song itself, and it seemed clumsy as well.

Q. It suddenly hit me, why wasn't the Dark King chased by the Death God?

Did the Dark King asked Hitogami to not tell about his whereabouts to Death God?

A. It's a somewhat soft topic.

Q. How much level has Perugius-sama attained in other places like healing or attack classes?

A. He's somewhat Saint Rank.

For Barriers and Summoning, he's God class.

Q. Isn't it unreasonable for the President to not fight?

A. At first Rudeus declared that "I won't let President fight this time! He shouldn't be allowed to fight!" but after looking at the situation deteriorate he thought "I guess I have no choice but to rely on President."

During Badigadi's fight there were only <The result turned out better than predicted.> & <Mistook when to retreat.> but he planned to entrust the rest to President if the MK. Zero hadn't arrived, or so it was.

Q. Even though Badigadi said that he'll think about becoming an ally but didn't?

"He didn't think that he would be a character like "When I said I'll think about it, I'll only think!"

A. No, Badigadi is that type of character.

The lying Badigadi.

The type of person who would say "FUAHAHAHA, that was a lie!"

Q. If he has used up 50% of MP overall this time, and add to that the previous times he used it, then there's only around 30% left is it?

Did he not splurge too much and had become like the 7th rank of the world powers?

Does that mean he will now rely on the fighting force's weight for the most part?

A. He will be relying most of the time on the weight of fighting force, yes.

Q. As one who has joined the Roxy religion, I would've liked it if I could get my hands on those 1/10 size figu-rines if they were selling, you know? LOL.

A. It looks like there was a person who was making it. I wonder what would have happened!

Q. I'm looking forward to the final chapter. If the book is translated then just how many

volumes would it take?

A. Won't it take 24 volumes?

Q. > Atofe's crew

As the Atofe Pirates it seems they would come back after conquering the Grand Line.
LOL

A. Come on board and bring along~~ ♪~♪

All your hopes and dreams.~ ♪~♪

Together we will find everything~ ♪~♪

That we're looking for(Atofe who has been swept away by the sea).~ ♪~♪^[46]

Q. Magonote-san, please write a postscript about the warriors that were KIA that fought for Atofe!

A. That so.

I'll append some.

Q. How did Atofe's father die? Or did he perish? I am curious about that part.

A. There's some kind of way to do that.

Q. Even though the Second Generation Dragon God Laplace was able to tear apart the Fighting God into two it was strange that the Dragon God was at the second place and the Fighting God at third. Were they able to get tied by a narrow margin?

A. In the first place, the rankings came into existence after the fight.

Q. So it was the Quagmire, I thought he would've become some other kind of God or an unusual God. Would you please explain how the monument carves the nicknames of the acknowledged people?

A. Only the marks are carved onto the monument.

The word <Quagmire> was only because Rudeus always called himself "I'm Rudeus of the Quagmire!".

Q. The setting that even after wearing the Fighting God armor only His Majesty Badi was able to rise until the 3rd rank is contradictory to the information that came from this work so far.

I'm glad about the contents, only this thing is regrettable.

A. Fighting God Armor has a will of its own.

Unlike humans, it doesn't have a head of its own, and even if it's more or less destroyed, that consciousness won't disappear.

That's why it shouldn't be contradictory.

Q. Ah right, is Mushoku Tensei as a series is a type of Prologue story or is it some kind of opening setting? Ah, but might the Second Human Demon War be the beginning?

A. All in all, it would probably be in the center of it all. It will become the start of the endgame at the very least. Maybe the fight between Hitogami and the founding Dragon God would be the prologue.

Q. Could it that you're a blue-haired loli girl with sleepy-like reproachful eyes, Magonote-san?

A. As a matter of fact, yes.

Once in a while the Magonote you see in events and such things like that is actually a familiar summoned by me.

Q. The hero named Golden Knight Aldebaran, according to one theory it's said that that human was the Hu-man God. → In the end just who is he?

A. It's still unknown just who is Aldebaran. However, he seems to have worn the Fighting God Armor.

Q. When the Conclusion Volume is over:

<Take a holiday for a while from writing activity or retire>

<Start an entirely different story>

<Start a story with a different MC in the Mushoku Tensei world>

<Nothing is decided yet>

<Secret>

Which one would it be?

A. While focusing on the published version, I'll sluggishly write out Redundancy Chapter.

After that, <Start an entirely different story> or <Start a story with a different MC in the Mushoku Tensei world>.

If I got tired when writing and lost all motivation then <Take a holiday for a while from writing activity or re-tire>.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Unsure of the second part 群雄割拠の時代が続いている。
2. Mystical demon/ogre island from Japanese folklore
3. I think this second part is supposed to be a sarcastic reference to the momotarou story
4. He says something along the lines of the method of propellant being steam, so I'm going to say steampunk sounds better. Japanese for anybody else that wants to try: 推進剤でもふかし
5. A different word for armour is used here.
6. Rudy, you're repeating yourself.
7. WWII Plane. Google image it.
8. Read as "Other Hand"
9. This doesn't make much sense in English, but it basically means helping the people who helped Ariel become queen i.e. Rudy
10. I am the hero the country deserves, but not the one it needs right now.
11. Can also mean demonic
12. He's assuming "philosophy" is some kind of demon
13. Same word used above
14. the katakana here says ブレ "bure" and the only translation I can think of this is blur, it seems to be used in Japanese photography. Japanese for anybody else that wants to try: それともブレの範疇なのか...。
15. This is actually what he says, I think it's supposed to mean he's some kind of "yes man"
16. These two sentences are practically identical in Japanese as well. The only difference is the kanji for a person in the first one is replaced by the one for an object in the second one.
17. the original says something along the lines of walking in a way that wouldn't cause suspicion but this flows better.
18. This made just as much sense to you as it does to me. Japanese: 果実を絞った

やつか、家畜の乳... なけりゃ水でいい

19. The next couple of lines are spoken in a jarringly different tone to normal, so that's how I'm going to translate it.
20. I may have taken a little bit of creative liberty here
21. Not Kidding here
22. This sentence means, he says looked "my person" right in the eye, implying him but is also left open
23. Supposed to be "second city of Bihaeril Kingdom, Irel"?
24. TLN: 4.5 Km/ 2.8 miles
25. TLN: A type of clothing. Poncho.
26. TL Note: 6.55 feet
27. TL Note : Keikakudoori
28. One doesn't has enough time to look back at other things in favour of an important thing. OR. In order to avoid a more pressing and larger wound, the sacrifice for a smaller wound is unavoidable.
29. TL Note: RPG = Role Playing Game
30. TL Note: W sitting.
31. TL Note: Sunomata Castle
32. Sandor!= Sándor. Sandor is pronounced with a 'Sa' voice and Sándor is pronounced with a 'Sha' voice.
33. TL Note: 3/11 Fukushima, Chapter was released on 3/8 really close to that date.
34. TL Note:TKG=Tamago kake gohan(Egg rice mix)
35. TL Note: Ogre God and Ogre race(In english) Since it's my translation, I would advise you to not worry about it too much.
36. TL Note: 'Hello' in Swahili.
37. TL Note: the entire chapter's narration was done in third person.
38. Kowtow : To kneel and touch the forehead to the ground in expression of deep respect, worship, or submission.
39. Well this is a bit confusing, but bear with me. Alex=Sándor=North God the Second. Aleksander=Sandor=North God the ThirdI choose Sándor over Shandor because Sándor is the hungarian name for Alex, which is a shorter

name for Alexander. Or you can just call him Goldy for ease of convenience since he's the Golden Knight leader. Now Sandor was simply Sandor in english so I left it as is. Aleksander is the polish alternative name for Alexander. And his nickname is Alek.

40. TL Note: Puns intensifies. The questioner says 'Yakyuu kai' which means 'a round of baseball game' and the author says 'yakyuukun' which basically means the 'strip rock-paper-scissors game' wherein the loser of each round removes an article of clothing.
41. TL Note: Magonote-san is the penname of the author or 'Rifujin na Magonote' if you haven't realized it yet.
42. TL Note: Well, the naming for Alex was correct then.
43. TL Note: Curaga (ケアルガ, Kearuga), also known as Cure3 and Cure 3, is a recurring spell from the Final Fantasy series. It is a more powerful form of Cure and Cura, which is used to restore a large amount of Hit points.
44. It's a Japanese fairy tale - The Three Charms. I recommend reading it if you want to know what Rudi is talking about.
45. Sanpaku Eyes - Refers to eyes in which the white space above or below the iris is visible.
46. TL Note: Ah, the good old days.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mgdyZQ_wzA



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