



戦司書 終章の獣

Tatakau Shisho to Shuushou no Kemono

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スーパーダッシュ

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Tatakau Shisho vol.8 - Fighting Librarians And The Beasts Of The Final Chapter

by *Yamagata Ishio*

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戦司書と 終章の獣

Tetsuharu Shosha to Shunsho no Kemono

characters

Yukizana
ユキゾナ

武装司書。次期館長代行。病弱だが戦闘能力はハミュッツに次ぐ。



Hamyutsu
ハミュッツ

パントーラ図書館館長代行。冷酷で極めて好戦的。投石器を操る。



Mattarasuto
マツアラスト

武装司書。ハミュッツの右腕。予知能力を使う実力者であり、天性の嘘つき。



Yukizona

An Armed Librarian and the next in line to become the Acting Director. He is sickly, but his fighting capabilities are second only to Hamyuts.

Hamyuts

Bantorra Library's Acting Director. Ruthless and extremely belligerent. Controls a sling.

Mattalast

An Armed Librarian and Hamyuts's right-hand man. A powerful man with a Prediction ability. His nature is that of a liar.



Enlike 艾恩立凱

操控雷電的戰士。打倒神溺教團後
行蹤成謎。

Lascal 拉斯哥爾

能延續人類故事的追憶
戰器、逝去石劍「夜」
的化身。



Olivia 奧莉薇亞

為了毀滅天國，反抗武裝
司書與哈繆絲的女人。



Kyase 凱薩莉羅

武裝司書。看似大而化
之，內心卻潛藏著膽小
的一面。



Lascall

The personification of the weapon that allows people's stories to continue – the Passed Stone Blade Yor.

Enlike

A warrior who controls lightning. He vanished after the Indulging God Cult had been overthrown.

Olivia

A woman who opposed the Armed Librarians and Hamyuts in order to destroy Heaven.

Kyasariro

An Armed Librarian. She seems carefree, but is actually a coward.

Prologue: Beginning of the Grand End

It was early dawn. There probably remained only about an hour until sunrise. The east horizon was red and stars have already disappeared from the sky.

The air was cold, but the sky was beautifully clear. It has been cold in recent days, but today was probably going to be the first warm day in a long while.

Here and there were lights shining in the streets. It was already long past the time for early risers to wake up. Smoke was rising from the chimney of a bakery. Today's first transport ship arrived at the harbor and the crew started unloading the cargo.

It was the usual morning scenery of the town in the Past God Island.

There was one ominous figure unsuitable for this peaceful town. It stood on the top of the beer hall that was closed for business, viewing the majestic Bantorra Library towering over the center of the island.

“Has this time come at last?”

The figure muttered. It was a woman clothed in black garments. She wore a long-sleeved dress, white gloves, and a black hat with a veil, so her skin wasn't visible at all. In her hand she held a strange dagger with a blade made of stone.

She was the Memorial Weapon who granted people's tale a continuation, the Passed Stone Blade Yor. Another one of her names was Lascall Othello.

"This is terribly abrupt, Ruruta Coozancoona-sama."

Lascall said. If someone could hear her from the side, they would probably be confused. After all, there was not a single change in the behavior of the people in either Bantorra Library or the town. The sounds of kitchen knives wielded by housewives and servants could be faintly heard, and the smell of freshly baked pastry was drifting from the bakeries.

Fresh vegetables and meat were being sent from the first ship arriving this morning to the markets. Boxes filled with Books were being carried to the Library by the early-rising normal librarians and trainees.

Lascall kept muttering to herself on the background of this peaceful sight.

"In any case, this is the biggest possible incident that can happen to this world. Is today of all days not far too ordinary for this time to come? As someone who overlooks tales, it feels somewhat improper."

There was a while of silence. Lascall then made a small, artificial smile.

"Oh no, this is such a small trifle, so there is no need to pay it any heed. This was merely my impression."

Who was Lascall talking to? There was no one around. Lascall's eyes were only directed at Bantorra Library.

“I am merely ascertaining it with my own eyes. If this be the end, I will do nothing but keep on looking.”

She said and smiled.

The date was January 12, 1927*. The exact time was 5:07 AM.

What was about to happen in the world at this very instant?

Only Lascall Othello knew the answer to this among all people on the surface.

All of the Armed Librarians and all of the Indulging God Cult had no idea what was happening and will not know what transpires from now on. Both Mattalast, who was protecting the secrets of Bantorra Library, as well as the Overseer of Paradise Minth, and even the Acting Director Hamyuts, were thinking of this as a completely ordinary day.

“Who said this before... I believe it was Mattalast-sama?”

Lascall said.

“There are three kinds of ‘everything is normal’: A situation where truly nothing had happened; a situation where an incident had been prevented in advance; and a situation where no one was yet to notice what happened; only these three kinds.

The normal Armed Librarians and people of the world would think it was the first.

Hamyuts-sama, Mattalast-sama, Yukizona-sama, Yuri-sama, Bonbo-sama, and the Overseer of Paradise Minth would think it was the second.

However, it is actually the third kind.”

Lascall kept her monologue.

“Why had no one noticed this grave situation? They haven’t even tried noticing it. Even I, watching over the tales of people for so long, cannot help but tilt my head in puzzlement.

It is probably because they have not been trying to notice. Their gazes have been stolen by lies and schemes, and so they have not noticed the truth.”

Lascall suddenly looked down at her feet. The Armed Librarians have celebrated the end of another year in this beer hall just two weeks ago. Olivia and Mattalast, Hamyuts and the Armed Librarians... The place for the feast of liars, where both the deceivers and the deceived mingled together.

“Thinking back, this banquet of liars... It was an event fitting for the conclusion of this story. How pleasant, and how truly trifling.”

Lascall’s facial expression was hidden by the thin veil and so couldn’t be seen, but at this moment she was unmistakably jeering. No, not only just now. For two thousand years, while switching from one body to another, Lascall had always been wearing an artificial smile. It might have been her sneer directed at all humans.

“Mattalast-sama, who was trying to accomplish something by deceiving people, and Olivia-sama, who had been trying to achieve victory by pretending to have been deceived. Both of them were terribly foolish.

No matter how much you deceive or conceal, the truth will always exist. And even the most clever of lies are powerless in front of that truth.”

Lascall, who had been talking to herself, noticed something. And then she spoke as if conversing with someone.

“Oh, have you finally noticed, Mattalast-sama?”

The one she spoke to wasn't around there. He couldn't hear her voice.

“Have you understood? Yes – a lie is powerless against the truth.”

Lascall sneered quietly yet deeply. And she then vanished as if melting on the roof.

Two hours passed since Lascall disappeared.

The emergency bells started ringing all over Past God Bantorra's Island. That sound announced a great danger to Bantorra Library.

The date was January 12, 1927, a completely normal winter day. The long story continued for a long time until this day came. The Armed Librarians have collected Books and protected them. The Indulging God Cult produced Books of happy people and offered them up to Heaven. At times fighting, at times cooperating, the two parties continually protected the secret.

Lascall could only nod at this imbalance. That morning was far too peaceful to serve as the conclusion of 2000 years.

January 12, 1927. On this day, the history of Bantorra Library was over.

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*The raw actually states the year 1929 throughout the entire prologue, but that seems to be a mistake as it doesn't fit in the timeline, so I fixed it for now.

Chapter 1: The Lone Struggle of the Defeated Remnants

Part 1

That morning he woke to the sound of bells ringing from afar. He knew that sound. He had heard it twice before.

The first time had been 1 year and 9 months ago, during the time of Mokkania's Rebellion. The second time had been a bit more than a year ago, during the time of the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion. For him, who had once fought alongside the Armed Librarians of Bantorra Library, it was a horrible sound.

Enlike Bishile threw his blanket off and got off the bed. He was inside the room of a hotel facing the main street of Bantorra Library's town.

"Did something happen?"

Enlike peeked out of the window. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to see Bantorra Library from there. He hurriedly put on a jacket, left and ran through the hotel's corridors. With his physical abilities it would have been easy for him to leap out of the window, but right now Enlike was concealing his own Magic ability. He couldn't use neither his power of lightning nor his superhuman movements.

He exited the hotel's main door and rushed into the road. Around him were other citizens who like Enlike seemed worried.

"Again?"

“Weren’t those terrorists gone already?”

People whispered to each other. It was natural they would be afraid. The memories of the Rebellion a year ago were still fresh in their minds. Everyone feared another battle that would end up involving them.

“...Do you have any idea what happened?”

A guest of the same hotel spoke to him.

“I don’t know.”

Enlike shook his head. He wasn’t lying or evading the question. While he understood the internal affairs of Bantorra Library better than the average citizen, he still had no idea what just happened there now.

At that moment, someone bumped at his back. Normally he wouldn’t even stumble, but Enlike fell cleanly. This was to conceal his own physical abilities.

“Sorry! Are you okay?”

The one to hit him from behind was a suit-wearing man. Judging from the impact to his back, it was a person who could use bodily reinforcement Magic.

“Are you fine?”

“Yeah.”

The suited man grabbed Enlike’s arm and helped him stand up.

“Forgive me, it’s only because this is an emergency.”

The man walked to Bantorra Library in a great hurry.

“Was that an Armed Librarian?”

The same hotel guest from before muttered.

“Probably.”

Enlike replied.

That man was familiar to him. He was an Armed Librarian with the name of Gamo. Mattalast had once introduced him to Enlike. But Gamo simply left after helping him stand.

Gamo hadn't noticed that the person he had bumped into was Enlike. This was because the current Enlike did not look like how Gamo knew him.

Enlike had once been eaten by the Book-Eater Zatoh. However, he reversed the situation and took control of Zatoh's own body. The Enlike that the Armed Librarians had known was actually Zatoh's form.

That Zatoh's form had now been changed. His almond eyes now became sanpaku eyes. His oval face had shrunk, and his nose became lower and bigger. Also, while he was once tall he was now at about an average height.

While a few vestiges of Zatoh have remained, this was the form of Enlike when he was alive.

He hadn't planned on changing it; It became so naturally during the past year. He didn't fully understand the reason for this, but his body was probably being adjusted to fit his soul.

Only the proof of his Book-Eating ability, his transparent hair had remained. With only that left, he dyed his white hair back to black.

“He didn’t seem to have noticed.”

Enlike muttered quietly while watching Gamo’s back.

None of the Armed Librarians knew Enlike’s former face – not even the late Noloty. As long as he wouldn’t use his power of lightning, none of them would be able to notice his true identity.

Enlike had been staying at Past God Bantorra’s Island for about 20 days now.

He knew that the Armed Librarians have been looking for him as the hero who overthrew the Indulging God Cult. The woman called Kyasariro had once invited him to their party. However, he had ignored all of it. He kept living while concealing his ability.

This was because Enlike was planning on fighting the Armed Librarians.

He was planning on destroying their biggest secret: Heaven.

“Hey, you. I don’t know what’s going on, but shouldn’t we return to the hotel?”

The man nearby spoke to him.

“That might be true... but I want to gauge the situation a little bit more.”

Enlike answered and stared at the direction of Bantorra Library. He could see people running on the roofs and rushing into the building. He could see an airplane that flew by taking a sharp turn and descending. The Armed Librarians were gathering.

But he couldn’t understand what was happening at all.

“I’ll peek there a little.”

Saying so, Enlike started walking. The kind man next to him tried to stop him, but he soon gave up.

This might be a good opportunity.

Enlike started thinking. If the Armed Librarians were in the midst of confusion it wouldn’t be so bad to take advantage of that. Anyway, his first priority was to ascertain the situation.

He walked toward the Library. All in preparation to fight against the Armed Librarians.

Yes, they had been Noloty’s precious comrades; Enlike also possessed personal grudges against them, and there were also those that he respected or felt friendly toward.

However, he had no choice but to fight against them. This was in order to destroy Heaven and put an end to Enlike’s fight.

He slowly walked toward Bantorra Library, where the bells were still ringing.

A year ago...

When the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion ended, Enlike was at the Ismo Republic where chaos still continued. Three days after the war had ended, Enlike sent Noloty’s Book and a letter noting the fact that he had killed Kachua to Bantorra Library.

With that he had fulfilled his obligation toward the Armed Librarians. He had nothing to do with him anymore.

After that, Enlike wandered aimlessly throughout the Ismo Republic. Who did he meet with and what did he do during that period? Enlike himself did not remember it well.

In exchange for victory, Enlike had lost everything. Or more precisely he lost what was everything to him; he lost Noloty Malche. He even lost his sole goal which was fighting against the Indulging God Cult.

He had no reason to return to a Bantorra Library that had no Noloty in it. He also had no interest in a peaceful life after having defeated the Indulging God Cult. He only wished for a life unrelated to battle in order to relieve Noloty.

What he thought about while wandering about was fighting. It was only thing Enlike was able to do. He knew nothing but fighting nor could do anything else. Only that was on his mind.

How stupid, he laughed at himself.

Noloty wished for him to have a peaceful life. He could understand it but couldn't accomplish it. It was because Noloty was no longer in this world. Even if he were able to achieve a peaceful life, Noloty would not be able to rejoice at that anymore.

He desperately searched for someone to fight. But there was no longer any opponent.

At that moment, a message came inside his mind. It was the Thought Sharing of one of the Armed Librarians, Mirepoc Finedell.

'Enlike-san... it has been a while. This is the lowly Armed Librarian Mirepoc Finedell. Where are you right now?'

Enlike couldn't respond. Even if he could, he didn't feel like answering her.

'We are looking for you, Enlike-san. We have prepared a treatment suitable to the amount of gratitude we possess toward you for saving the Armed Librarians and the world. You may not like it, but please make contact.

There is what happened to Noloty, but... we do sympathize with you. Please do not let yourself head into ruin. That would also be Noloty's wish.'

So stupid, spat out Enlike. *What do you even know?*

'That, and we came to understand Heaven the Indulging God Cult believes in. We have no definitive proof, but it seems like the legend created by people of the past was shaped into a delusion.

We are currently eliminating the remnants of the Indulging God Cult. Please do not worry about the revival of the Cult. Well then, please contact us.'

The Thought Sharing was severed. *What a crude ability*, thought Enlike. It allowed one to rudely approach a man who wanted to be left alone.

"I see. So the Indulging God Cult has been destroyed."

Enlike muttered. Then the battle has ended. The things Enlike had to do were also over.

This didn't make him happy. If the Indulging God Cult was gone he would no longer have anyone to fight.

At that time Enlike sat in a cheap bar at some dirty town. He was dressed like a vagrant. The customers and clerk directed hateful gazes at him. *These miserable circumstances are well-suited to me*, Enlike thought.

“Give me more liquor.”

Enlike said to the bar’s host. He pretended to not hear him. Enlike laughed at himself and drank the few remaining drops straight out of the bottle.

Decaying like this wasn’t bad at all. He had been dead for a long time in the first place. Thinking this, he threw the bottle at the floor.

Enlike laid his face on the counter and closed his eyes.

‘The Armed Librarians will be destroyed and the world will be reborn. There is no place for you in my desired new world.’

An unwanted face rose to his mind. It was the face of the one who used Enlike and killed Noloty – Kachua.

‘Let us take her Book along with yours to Heaven. You will probably have some place at some corner of that oh so vast and unfathomable Heaven.’

He also said such things. Though he didn’t want to listen to him.

Enlike then recalled Kachua’s just before he shot the great lightning that tore through the heavens. That expression of accepting his own death and still being convinced of victory.

“...No.”

Enlike muttered. Heaven was no delusion; no human would make such a face for a delusion. Kachua had been convinced. Heaven definitely existed somewhere.

“You’re wrong, Mirepoc.”

Enlike stood up. Finally finding an opponent, he smiled for the first time in a long while. However, that smile was on the border of sanity and madness.

“Heaven... does exist.”

The surrounding people shook their chairs to get away from him.

A year passed since then.

Walking through the roads of Past God Island Bantorra, Enlike was heading for the Library. A carefree voice suddenly called out to him.

“...Hey, do you have a moment? That bad-looking person over there.”

A woman wearing nightclothes in her sandals talked to him. *Quite the reunion*, thought Enlike as he looked at her. *It’s been a long time*, he almost said, but it stuck in his throat.

The one standing there was Olivia Littolet. She was the one who ran away from Hamyuts and fooled Mattalast – that Olivia Littolet.

“Did something happen? It’s terribly noisy, so is there some slasher on the loose or something?”

Olivia said in an easygoing tone. Having lost her memories, she was now no more than a normal citizen.

“Do you not know the sound of these bells, miss tailor?”

There were plenty of other people who jumped off at hearing the bells. They all looked at Olivia with strange eyes. She was the only one there to not understand the situation.

“Bells? Yeah, I’ve heard them before. What of them?”

“They’re Bantorra’s bells.”

“What about it? Uh, so cold...”

Olivia rubbed her pajama-clad arms while sneezing.



“You don’t know?”

“I only recently started living here so I dunno.”

The always-silent Enlike began explaining as Olivia started sniffing inelegantly.

“They’re the bells that signify an emergency of the highest degree. They’re summoning all of the Armed Librarians to gather with the highest priority.”

Olivia, sleepy thus far, widened her eyes for the first time.

“That’s not good. Did something happen?”

“I don’t know. I just saw the Armed Librarians running around.”

Olivia leaned her chin on her hand and thought for a while.

“Maybe it’s that...”

“What is it?”

Enlike asked back. People started flocking around Olivia. Everyone wanted some information, even mere rumors.

“A while ago I’ve talked with Hamyuts. She said that she has some enemy.”

“...What does that mean?”

Enlike inquired.

“It was about two weeks ago. She told me there was some unknown enemy after her, wondered who that was, said she didn’t know where they would come from, stuff like that. It might be them.”

The townspeople started clamoring. Enlike also started thinking. Who was the enemy Hamyuts said was targeting her?

“No, that’s probably not it.”

Enlike briefly denied it.

An unknown enemy targeting Hamyuts would probably be the person who’s inherited the Violet Wish. And that unknown factor was right there: it was Enlike.

Eight months ago he had succeeded the Violet Wish from Olivia. That’s why he was here right now, targeting the Armed Librarians.

“Why not? Or rather, who’re you?”

Olivia looked doubtful.

“It’s bothersome to explain. I’m going.”

Saying that, Enlike passed by Olivia.

“Miss tailor, what did you mean just now?”

“Are you acquainted with the Director?”

The people around started talking with Olivia one after another. She was being pressed for a response. Enlike left the area.

It happened nine months ago.

Enlike decided on fighting against Heaven, but his road was full of difficulties. After all, he had no way of knowing what exactly Heaven was, where it was located, and whether it actually existed.

He didn’t even know the location of his enemy; thus started Enlike’s desperate fight.

No, calling it a fight would be too comical. Enlike could only roam around searching for clues.

At that time, a change occurred at a certain town in the Ismo Republic. A man spoke to Enlike. This happened in some bar at the slums.

He was an ill-bred man. He was armed with a gun and a flashy knife, but he could see he was an amateur in fighting at a glance. The man curtly pulled out a photograph.

“Do you know this woman?”

Enlike widened his eyes. He remembered her clearly. She was the woman sheltered by the Armed Librarians, Renas Fleur.

He heard that she was taken by the man called Volken and died. However, Enlike met up with her before she was taken away. At the time she introduced herself as Olivia Littolet.

Why was he looking for that woman? Was she even alive? Who are those people looking for her?

He had trouble not letting his doubts and agitation show up on his face. Luckily the other man seemed thick-headed and so he probably didn't notice any of that.

“I'm not sure if I have or haven't seen her...”

Hearing Enlike's vague answer, the man clicked his tongue and put the photo away.

“Wait, why are you looking for that woman?”

Enlike persisted. He might be able to get some sort of clue out of that.

“It has nothing to do with you. She’s just some geezer’s lover who’s run away or something.”

He probably really didn’t know the reason. Although he was someone’s pawn, he was a mere underling.

“Will you let me help? I’m in a bit need of money.”

“Who cares. Go fish up the trash.”

“...Do you still not need me?”

Saying this, Enlike pinched the edge of the table and broke it. He then grasped the fragments, turning them to fine dust.

“Are you a Magic User?”

“I’m somewhat skilled. I don’t think you have anything to lose by letting me join.”

The man changed his behavior and drew closer to Enlike.

“Then you should’ve told me this earlier. We will welcome you.”

The man told him his affiliation. He made it very exaggerated, but it was a poor gang in this town. Enlike gave them a fake name and joined them.

At the time he didn’t think it would become much of a clue. But anything that related to the Indulging God Cult was fine. He only noticed that he stumbled upon something outrageous after having found Olivia.

A month later, the search for Olivia proceeded slowly. They already found out the city she inhabited. Next they just had to find her and report to their employer.

“Mister, has your face been changing lately?”

Asked the thug accompanying him as they walked around the town. Enlike’s face was continually changing at that time. There were signs of this change ever since the end of last year, but recently his face became completely different than Zatoh’s.

“Yeah, well, but don’t mind it. It isn’t a big deal.”

The thug shrugged, thinking it weird.

“I don’t really get people who use Magic.”

During that month Enlike was able to find who the employer of these thugs was. They were probably mercenaries paid by Mattalast. He once happened to hear about him hiring such people.

But why was Mattalast pursuing Olivia? Hamyuts was the one supposed to have announced her dead.

What was their reason for hiding her survival and pursuing her from the shadows? Enlike became interested.

Then, at a corner of that town... Enlike noticed a woman polishing shoes.

It was Olivia, or perhaps Renas. The thug alongside him hasn’t noticed her. Enlike softly stretched his fingers to his neck and released a small, small lightning.

“H-hey, what’s wrong?”

The thug collapsed. Enlike supported him while pretending to be flustered. Since he shot him with the minimal amount of power, there would probably be no wounds. Everyone would just think that he had suddenly fainted.

Enlike laid him on a bench and left the spot.

Feeling suspicious, Olivia stopped her shoe-polishing and ran away. Enlike chased after her and caught up to her in a back alley.

"It's been a while, are you Renas Fleur? Or are you Olivia Littolet?"

No matter who she was, she pulled a knife out of her pocket and threatened Enlike like an angered cat. *That means it's probably Olivia*, thought Enlike.

"...Wait, I'm not your enemy. Please listen to me, Olivia."

"Shut up. Are you with Hamyuts or from the Indulging God Cult?"

"Neither. Just calm down. Do you remember me? We met once when you were with Volken."

Saying so, Enlike produced a small bolt lightning in his hand. Olivia searched her memory for a while and then stared at him in shock.

"Are you Enlike Bishile? Your face is completely different..."

Olivia still not lowered her guard. She probably thought that he was working under Mattalast.

"Calm down. I didn't come here to capture you. I came to talk with you."

"...What?"

"Why are you pursued by Mattalast?"

Olivia and Enlike gazed at each other for a while. Finally she lowered her knife and sighed.

“In the meantime let’s eat something before talking. A lot happened so I’m tired.”

“...I see. Let’s go somewhere.”

At a cheap restaurant, Olivia finished a steak for two people. It seemed like she really was tired and hungry. Enlike was the one to pay; he had no shortage of cash at the moment.

During that time, Enlike went to wake up the collapsed thug and sent him back home. He obviously did not tell him about Olivia.

The pair spoke about their circumstances in the slums where Olivia was lodging in.

“...And that’s what happened with me.”

Enlike was the first to explain. He told her that despite having defeated the Indulging God Cult he was still looking for Heaven. Searching for clues, he joined in the hunt for Olivia.

“I will trust you for now.”

Olivia said. Enlike was somewhat relieved.

“Why do you so readily believe me?”

“Because you have no need to lie. If you were my enemy you would have killed me in a split second.”

Olivia smiled with a tired face. When he saw it, he was more interested in what happened to her. He could no longer see any trace of her brazen composure.

“On the contrary, I’m worried if *you* will believe me. Because it’s all too crazy. So much that even I can’t believe it.”

“Just talk for now.”

Olivia spoke for a long time. She first told him of how she had met Vend Ruga as a child. Next came the period she was on the Indulging God Cult’s ship. Finally she reached how she was robbed of her memories and how she changed to Renas Fleur.

“...This is quite the story even so far.”

Olivia said and smiled. Enlike himself had also led a fierce, outrageous life. He thought that Olivia’s life rivaled his.

“There’s still more. The true fun only begins now.”

Olivia’s battle still continued: the retrieval of her memories; her meeting with Volken; and then came the fight against Hamyuts, concluding in her survival.

And finally, her meeting with Lascall Othello, as well as him telling her about the Violet Wish.

“...Regarding the last thing Lascall said, even I’m not sure if it was just a delusion. Because all of that is completely crazy and ridiculous. Do you believe me, Enlike-kun?”

Enlike held his mouth and sank into silence for a while.

“What’s wrong, Enlike-kun?”

“I... believe. He introduced himself as Lascall Othello, right?”

“Yeah. I’m not really sure but he was a strange brat.”

“Then I believe you. If it’s really Lascall Othello.”

Enlike also had a deep connection to Lascall. Zatoh was given Enlike’s Book by him and he brought Enlike the Books of Qumola and

Noloty. He couldn't tell if he was an ally or an enemy to the Indulging God Cult, but there was no doubt he was an existence related to the very core of the secrets.

That Lascall had said clearly – Heaven existed. That truth appeared accompanied with the proof called Olivia.

Enlike couldn't really understand if he was feeling anger or joy. He simply got goosebumps and his fingers trembled. His battle finally started. Thinking of that made his skin shiver.

On top of that, he was able to gain yet another clue.

The sole method of destroying Heaven – the Violet Wish.

“Today's been quite the day...”

Enlike smiled. He found an enemy to fight and a way of fighting them both at the same time.

“That's a nice smile, Enlike-kun. I will entrust this fight to you.”

“Is there anyone but me?”

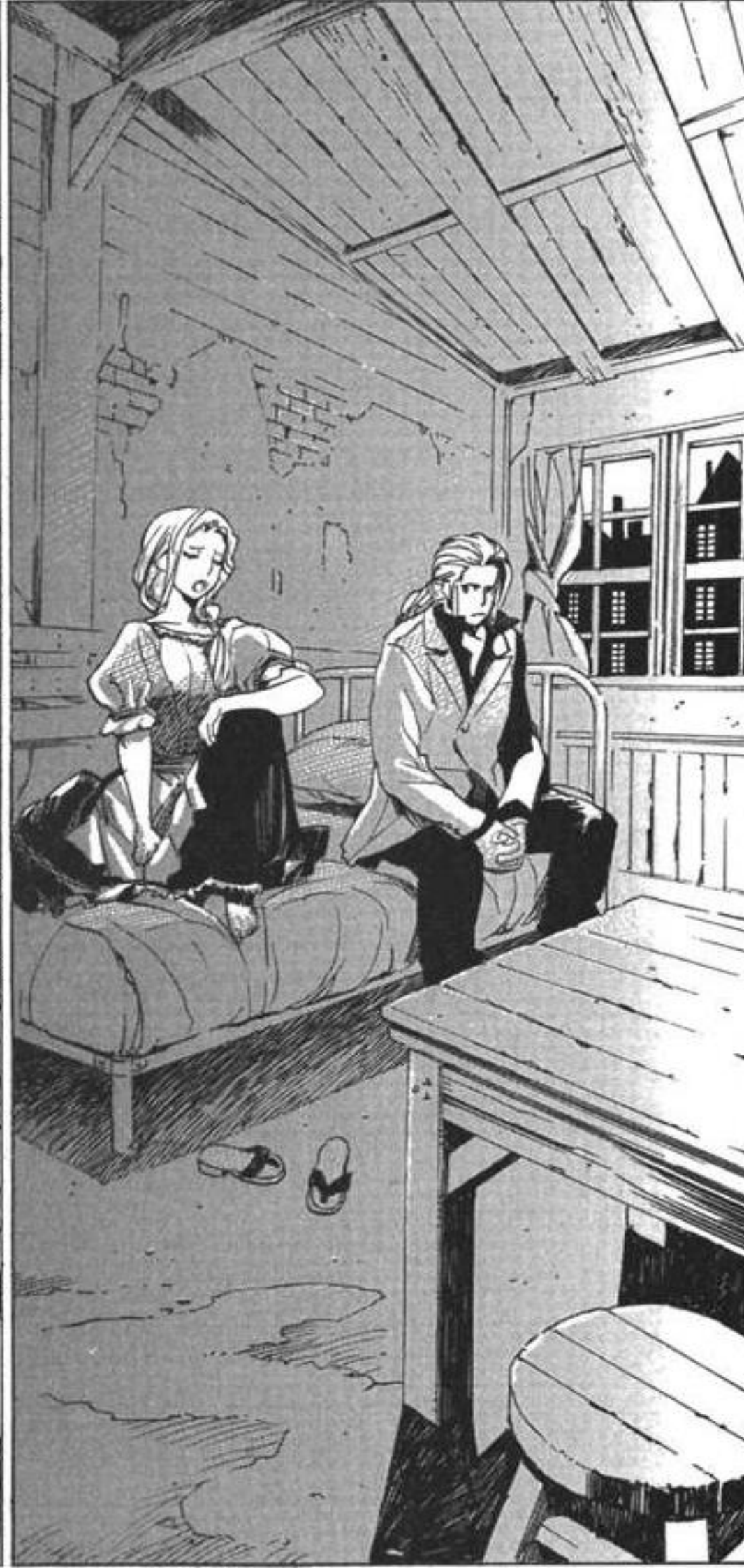
“True. There's no one else.”

Saying so, they both laughed.

That evening, Enlike lodged with Olivia. On paper he was supposed to have been pursuing her, so they couldn't loiter around together outside.

“Just what is Heaven?”

Enlike said. They both sat side by side on the one-person bed. Enlike was sitting near the pillow while Olivia sat cross-legs on the other side. Enlike started talking.



“The following is what I know right now. Heaven is a place that accumulates the Books of happy people. The Armed Librarians created the Indulging God Cult to produce those Books. They both cooperate to preserve the secret. But for what?”

“Who knows, I haven’t the slightest idea.”

Olivia shrugged.

“All I know is that the Armed Librarians and Indulging God Cult are birds of a feather. It means they’re the ones who’ve caught us and ruined our lives.”

“Why are they protecting the secret of Heaven? What does it exist for?”

Enlike kept thinking earnestly.

“That’s obvious. They’re the same as the Indulging God Cult. They want to go to Heaven after they die. That’s all.”

Olivia said.

“Is that so... I personally don’t think so.”

“Why?”

“While these guys are villains, some part of them is pure. They would stop at nothing to accomplish their goals, but they’re definitely not self-interested or desired. They only think of fulfilling their duty.

Hamuts Meseta is an exception, but she is also unselfish other than in battle.”

“Is that so?”

“I’ve been involved with the Armed Librarians for a while. So I know.

Their strength ultimately lies in their sense of duty and responsibility. This is the strength that the Indulging God Cult lacks and the Armed Librarians possess.

If their only goal was self-interest, the Armed Librarians would’ve been a much weaker organization.”

“...And what of it?”

“Protecting Heaven is not out of self-interest. Because it is their duty which must be fulfilled. I don’t know the circumstances that led to this, though.”

“Is that what you think? I have no idea.”

“Yeah.”

Enlike was also involved with the positive parts of the Armed Librarians, while Olivia only saw the negative parts. Since their viewpoints were different they would reach different conclusions. Right now they had no idea who was right.

“Anyway, about the identity of Heaven. If we don’t understand it we won’t be able to fight.”

Olivia shook her head to the side.

“Our survival comes first. We cannot fight if we don’t live.”

That’s true, Enlike reconsidered.

Part 2

From then on, the two started refining their plans.

“You have some connection to the Armed Librarians. Can you go back to Bantorra and find information?”

Enlike shook his head.

“I can’t. If you were caught or if they found your Book Hamyuts would target me.”

“...Do you think you can win even so?”

“Impossible. I can’t win from the front.”

This was Enlike’s rational conclusion.

He couldn’t possibly defeat Hamyuts. Even if he fought against Mattalast he would barely be able to reach a draw. There were still also Yukizona and Bonbo.

Even something like the lightning from the skies that he used to defeat Kachua wouldn’t work against that class of opponents. It took about thirty seconds to activate and couldn’t be used unless the sky had rain clouds.

“I might be able to bring down several people with me. But that’s meaningless... we have to be able to reach the secret after that.

Also, if they notice us it’s all over.”

“Meaning we need to conceal your very existence. Both the fact that you’ve met me and that you intend on fighting against Heaven.”

“Yes, but is it possible?”

“Let’s think of a way that makes it possible.”

The two conversed for several hours. Enlike was no good at deceit; most of the plan came from Olivia.

“So you’re going to deceive Mattalast and erase your memories to conceal me, huh.”

This strategy was like treading on thin ice. Even Olivia who proposed this had no confidence it will work. Yet she couldn’t think of anything else.

“Don’t be disappointed even if I lose.”

“Fine.”

Enlike nodded. Even if she loses, it will at least buy them some time. That would be good enough.

“I would only be able to buy you some time. Afterward I will leave everything to you. If you can’t do it as well, pass it along to someone else. The will and method to defeat Heaven... as long as they are not interrupted, we will win some day.”

“...Got it. And if I’m killed and you’re still alive, you pass it along to someone.”

“Seems like a fat chance, but I’ll try.”

Their conversation ended there. They had no other topics of discussion except fighting.

A long silence flowed between the two. There was probably something that a man and a woman could do while on a bed, but neither were in the mood for that.

Olivia suddenly opened her mouth.

“Umm, so that girl Noloty died, huh?”

“...Yeah.”

“It’s a pity. She was a good kid.”

“Yeah. Truly.”

That conversation did not continue. It was far too heavy for Enlike. Olivia also seemed to guess his mental state.

“Umm, the man called Volken also died, right.”

“Yeah. He was a good guy. A really good guy. Has it already been half a year since he died?”

Olivia said as if yearning for the old days.

“Many other Armed Librarians have also died. Even that Ireia.”

“And yet people like Hamyuts and Mattalast all survived. This world is crazy.”

“Indeed. I have no idea why, but I’m also alive.”

It was quite the hopeless conversation. They both didn’t like it and so stopped.

Olivia opened her mouth again several minutes later.

“Say, did you know that we’ve met as children?”

Enlike was somewhat surprised. His memories as a child have already returned, but he couldn't remember Olivia at all.

"You don't remember? You're a war orphan from the Kuler Region, right? I remembered you from those bad eyes of yours."

"I see, so you were there too."

Enlike searched his memory. Thinking of it, there was some girl who would indiscriminately attack anyone, child or otherwise, like a rabid dog. But he didn't know her name was Olivia.

"This is all much better compared to that time. At least I don't have to worry for my next meal."

"Who knows. I don't see a large difference."

The two smiled. Enlike suddenly tried mouthing a name that rose to his mind.

"Do you know of Colio Tonies?"

Olivia tilted her neck.

"You were a lone wolf, so I would understand if you didn't. He was part of my group. We lived together, helping each other."

Enlike recalled Colio when he was a child. He was terribly non-talkative and unreliable, a child that couldn't live by himself. He gave up on trying to imagine him grown up.

"So what happened to that Colio?"

"He defeated the one of the True Men, Cigal Crukessa."

Olivia widened her eyes in surprise.

“...No, wait. That shorty did?”

“Do you know him?”

“It wasn’t in Kuler, but I once met him on the ship. Is that for real? Did that brat really defeat Cigal?”

“It’s the unbelievable truth. Hamyuts had been interested in him for quite a while.”

Olivia’s face sparkled.

“That’s incredible. It’s a big deal... good job Colio. Where is he now?”

“Unfortunately it was a mutual kill. Still, I believe that was a fine death.”

Enlike shook his head. Olivia also hung her head. However, both of them haven’t felt bad at all.

“Do you know Kayas?”

This time Olivia brought it up. Enlike was surprised at this unexpected name. Kayas was one of his comrades that was eaten by Zatoh. He possessed the ability of super regeneration.

“Oh, I see. You remember him too?”

“I went fishing for food alongside him and we’ve trying killing each other countless of times. Eventually we would start fighting the minute our eyes met.”

Olivia spoke enjoyably.

“Quite the nice relationship you had there. Unfortunately, he also died.”

“I see... him as well.”

Olivia’s shoulders sagged.

“What about Malflare? He was also supposedly caught by the Indulging God Cult.”

Enlike said. He was another one of the war orphans that had lived with him. They were captured together but he never saw him.

“Malflare...”

After thinking for a while, Olivia recalled.

“I remember. He was on the ship. He fought together with me... but I don’t know what happened to him.”

“Your ship’s sank.”

“Yeah.”

He was probably not alive then. Enlike sighed.

“What about Kunali?”

Olivia asked. He was also one of the war orphans from Kuler. He was sort of a leader who brought the orphans together.

“He supposedly joined the Cult not as a Meat but as a False Man.”

“So that’s how it was, that bastard... I wonder if he died.”

Olivia frowned unpleasantly.

“Probably. The Armed Librarians killed all False Men. But I have no idea who killed him.”

“I should’ve killed him when we were children.”

“Yeah. But oh well. The Armed Librarians already killed all of them.”

Olivia once again recalled another name.

“Then what about Pasla?”

“Pasla? I don’t know that name.”

Enlike shook his head.

“I see... he was on the ship with me.”

This time Enlike was the one to ask.

“Then Olivia, do you know Sasari?”

“I knew him when he was a child, but not when he joined the Cult. Is he possibly alive?”

“No, he died too.”

They had fun raising memories for a while. They exchanged the names of children from the Kuler Region who fought desperately to stay alive. However, these nostalgic faces all became those of dead people.

Olivia suddenly spoke with a slightly gentle expression.

“Do you know Relia?”

That name was so nostalgic that he wanted to hug her and so sad that he wanted to cry. He was Enlike’s lifelong friend, the one who had shown him a smile for the first time. The man who accompanied Colio to Toatt Mining Town and died exploding.

“...Do you also know Relia?”

“A long time ago I got sick. When I thought I was going to die Relia nursed me. I thought about going with him, but we ended up fighting and separating. Even though he was a good guy.”

“...Yeah, he was. A really good guy.”

So she knew Relia as well. Thinking so, Enlike smiled faintly.

An hour or so passed. When the names in their memories ran out, Enlike spoke.

“Everyone died.”

“Yeah, they all died. I wonder why... they were all good guys.”

“Why have we survived, I wonder?”

“Don’t ask me. Even I have no idea.”

By some kind of twist of fate, the two remnants gathered there. There was a strange sense of solidarity between them.

“If it weren’t for Heaven, all of them would have been alive.”

“Yeah. They wouldn’t have died.”

Their friends from Kuler have been used by the Indulging God Cult and died.

For the sake of Heaven, both Armed Librarians and the Cult fought each other again and again and died.

Thinking back, this long, endless fight could be thought of as one big defeat. No one had won; everyone involved was killed by Heaven.

“Win, Enlike. For their sake.”

Olivia extended her hand.

“You too, Olivia.”

Enlike responded to it. The two tightly clasped their hands on top of the shabby bed.

Moving ahead, it was January 12.

Enlike passed next to Olivia and headed toward Bantorra Library. He could see the normal librarians on duty evacuating from the Library’s front gate. This meant the crisis was happening inside of the Library and not outside of it.

“Hey you, what’s going on inside?”

He spoke to one of the librarians.

“It is confidential. Please wait for the official announcement later. It is dangerous, so please wait at home.”

Enlike clicked his tongue and left the librarian. He won’t be able to gather any information by continuing to pretend to be a normal person, but it was still too early for him to reveal his identity. He loitered around the Library while pondering what to do.

Should I try entering inside? Just as he thought this, he could feel a presence from behind.

It was an unfamiliar person. However, he was familiar with their unique presence, as well as the stone dagger in their hands.

“Lascall Othello? What business do you have with me?”

I’ve been able to see quite a lot nostalgic people in so short a time, Enlike thought.

“It has been a long time. Where are you headed to?”

“To Bantorra Library, obviously.”

“Is that so?”

Lascall spoke coldly. Enlike didn't have any special business with this strange existence, but his feet stopped. There was something that he simply had to ask.

“What's your goal?”

“What do you mean by goal?”

“You were cooperating with the Armed Librarians as well as with the Indulging God Cult. And yet you conveyed Olivia the Violet Wish, taking rebellious actions against both sides. What is your goal?”

“I have said this countless of times, but my only goal is to bestow a continuation and watch the conclusion of a story. There is nothing but that.”

An incomprehensible person as always, thought Enlike.

“Does that mean you don't mind even if I'm going to destroy the Armed Librarians?”

“But of course. If that is your conclusion.”

“And you don't mind me losing either?”

“Indeed.”

Perhaps it was meaningless to think too deeply about this being, Enlike decided.

“Incidentally, Enlike-sama. About the Violet Wish you had inherited from Olivia-sama. How far have you developed it?”

“There’s only a short time until my victory.”

Enlike asserted.

“Oh, that is quite surprising to hear. How close are you to victory?”

“I’ve arrived at the identity of Heaven and the secrets of the Armed Librarians. All that remains is destroying Heaven.”

“...Ho.”

Lascall leaked a voice that seemed to be somewhat admiring and yet also somewhat condescending.

After parting with Olivia, Enlike disguised himself as a traveler. He infiltrated Past God Bantorra’s Island and surveyed Olivia’s surroundings. He didn’t know how exactly she got to that position, but he could see she was living in peace.

No Armed Librarian came in contact with Enlike while he lived on Bantorra. And even if he showed himself in front of Olivia, she wouldn’t know his appearance.

When he became convinced that Olivia’s plan had worked, Enlike left the Past God Island temporarily.

“Save the man known as Ruruta Coozancoona from despair”.

According to Olivia – and Lascall – this was the only way to destroy Heaven. However, Enlike had no idea who this Ruruta was. He was probably an important person related to Heaven, though.

What he had to do was discover the truth about Heaven and find the man called Ruruta. Both of them should be known by the Acting Directors throughout history.

There were three ways of doing so.

The first was to hear the information directly from those who knew it. Meaning either Hamyuts, Mattalast or Yukizona. Probably only the three of them knew the precise truth.

That would be quiet difficult, however. With Enlike's power it would be questionable if he could win against them even one against one. And even if he defeated them, he doubted they would leak the truth.

There was also the person known as the previous Acting Director, Photona Bardgamon. However, five years ago when he'd transferred his seat to Hamyuts he also retired at the same time and severed all contact with the Library. His current whereabouts were unknown.

It would be hard for Enlike to find him with his investigative capabilities. Or perhaps he wasn't actually alive. Either way, finding him was unrealistic.

He gave up on trying to hear it from those people still alive.

The second way was to kill a person who knew the truth and read it from their Books.

That would also be difficult. Even with pure fighting power the fact that he was inferior hadn't changed. Moreover it would be hard to obtain their Books after killing them anyway. The ones managing all Books were the Armed Librarians. Seeking cooperation from Lascall Othello would also be impossible.

The final way was the simplest one.

It was entering the Second Sealed Labyrinth and reading the Books of past Acting Directors. By going to the place where the secret was housed he could learn it. Such simplicity agreed with Enlike.

He took a bit of time to prepare for that.

It took him half a year.

December 28. On the day of the Armed Librarians' party, Enlike infiltrated Bantorra Library. It was the only day the Armed Librarians disappeared from the Labyrinth. He couldn't think of any other day in which to carry out his plan. He somehow made it in time for the only day it could work.

Slipping through the surveillance of the trainees, he stole the key and got into the Archive. Enlike stood at the entrance of the desolate Sealed Labyrinth.

"My bet starts from here on."

He muttered while gulping. Once he steps in he could no longer take it back. If his infiltration was discovered it would be the end of the line.

He could only do it now. Steeling his resolve, Enlike put his hand to the Sealed Labyrinth's door.

Obviously, the Sealed Labyrinth was locked during this day. Only official Armed Librarians had the authority to open the door. Enlike obviously did not have it.

Furthermore, the Library itself was heavily guarded by the trainees. Never mind entering the Labyrinth, even standing in front of the entrance was originally hard beyond measure.

But Enlike found a special loophole that allowed him to solve several obstacles at once. Those were the preparations he had been working on for the last half year.

Putting his hands to the door, Enlike spoke.

“I appeal for the Overseer of the Library using the authority of Luimon Mahaton. Please release the Labyrinth’s seal.”

He could hear a heavy metallic sound coming from inside the door. It opened gently as he pushed. He quickly went inside and locked the door behind him.

Luimon Mahaton – He was the young Armed Librarian who had lost his life during the Dragon Pneumonia Incident at Toatt Mining Town. Later, his Book was eaten by the Book-Eater monster Zatoh. Meaning, both his knowledge and his Magic Right were inside Enlike’s current body.

Enlike conducted the Magic Deliberation and made contact with Luimon’s soul. He got his authority to open the door as well as learned about the defense arrangements and the Labyrinth’s internal structure.

“So nothing’s changed. As I thought, you are weak against betrayal from the inside.”

Enlike faintly smiled and started running towards the Labyrinth’s deepest ends.

The Guardian Beasts weren’t much of an obstacle. With Enlike’s abilities he could break through the Second Sealed Archive by himself.

The problem was staying unnoticed by the Armed Librarians. Enlike proceeded cautiously as to not leave any traces.

Yet another problem was the existence of Hamyuts.

If Hamyuts were to capriciously extend her Sensory Threads to the Labyrinth, she would come to know of Enlike's presence. He wasn't able to think up of any countermeasures until the very end only against these Sensory Threads.

He had to leave that up to destiny. Fortunately, there was some friction between the Armed Librarians. Since Hamyuts was distracted by Yankuu and Olivia, she shouldn't be turning her attention all the way to the Labyrinth.

Enlike won that bet. Nothing came from behind him or in front of him, and he reached the Second Sealed Labyrinth within half a day.

"...I found it, Armed Librarians. The secret you have all been guarding."

Enlike muttered while putting his hand on the door.

The Armed Librarians were unworthy of fear. Victory was already within his grasp. He felt quite the hubris for his good performance. And he opened the door.

"...!"

His hubris disappeared much faster than melting snow. After opening the door, he peeked through the slight opening.

The moment he opened the door, Enlike leapt back ten meters. There was something inside. Was it Hamyuts, Mattalast, or some other unknown Armed Librarian?

It was an overwhelming pressure that he experienced for the first time in his life. He momentarily felt himself about to die.

“Who is it?”

Nothing came out of the half-open door. His premonition of death was gone, but the overwhelming pressure remained.

He couldn't move. His feet were paralyzed. Enlike, who was currently one of the top five strongest warriors in the world, was scared like a small animal. No human could exert this kind of pressure.

“...Are you... God?”

It was a bit late, but he now recalled that this was the residence of the Past Overseer Bantorra. Was Heaven Bantorra itself? If so, Enlike had no means to oppose him as a human being.

“...No, that's wrong.”

Lascall Othello had certainly said this – if he were to make the Violet Wish come true Heaven would be destroyed. If there was a way of destroying it, this meant it was no God.

Enlike stepped into the Second Sealed Labyrinth.

A single tree stood in the dark Archive. Enlike was able to understand this was Heaven without basing it on anything. He also realized this was the one to possess that pressure.

He didn't think of attacking it. He had an instinctive fear of it. He also operated under the rational judgment that attacking something without realizing what it was is a bad plan.

That choice was correct. The tree protected itself with a causality-erasing ability. The moment it was attacked it would crush its attacker's body automatically. This wasn't an imperfect ability such as that of the Ever-Laughing Magic Blade Shlamuffen. Even Enlike's super regeneration, Mattalast's predictive ability and Yukizona's Decay Wave would all be powerless against a perfect ability of this kind.

Enlike would be dead at the moment he attacks. Even though it was him, by ripping his brain and heart to pieces he would undoubtedly die.

"...I'll worry about this later."

Enlike ignored the large tree and turned his eyes toward the Books stored in his surroundings. The Books of Acting Directors were piled on top of plain, stone-made shelves.

What was stored here belonged to the representatives of the Past Overseer. They were supposed to be humans at the very top of the world. *It's quite the dreary sight here*, thought Enlike.

The biting cold was probably unavoidable, but the structure of the Archive was quite boorish, or rather rough. Not to mention the dark and heavy atmosphere. It seemed less like a cemetery meant to house the Books of great people and more like a prison confining criminals. Were they people who could not atone for their sins even after death? Enlike had this sort of impression.

It didn't matter which Book he read as long as it was that of an Acting Director. For now he picked up the newest Book. It seemed to be the Book of the Acting Director five generations ago. He wasn't able to find any Director after that.

“...!”

The moment he extended his fingers to the Book, Enlike reflexively turned around. He could feel some gaze coming from the large tree.

The tree was looking at him. He didn't know anything about it, but that tree was undoubtedly a being with its own will.

It was looking at Enlike. It possessed neither hostility nor good will; it was merely staring.

“...Don't be afraid!”

He encouraged himself and grabbed the Book with his bare hand. Enlike came to instantaneously know the life of the Acting Directors and everything about the secret they have been protecting.

He released the Book he had been holding. It made a small sound and fell to the floor.

“...!”

Fortunately it had not broken. With trembling hands, Enlike grabbed it again and returned it to the shelf.

“...This is... the truth...”

Enlike heard a voice from behind. His underclothes have frozen in the area of his back. Although it was a cold place and he had read the Book for merely an instant, Enlike emitted large amounts of cold sweat.

He realized Heaven's identity.

He also understood the duty of the Armed Librarians.

He found out who Ruruta was as well. Enlike thought that as long as he knew that, it would be easy to destroy Heaven. Yet he now realized it was an empty assumption.

“ ... ”

Step by step, Enlike slowly headed to the door. He felt as if a deadly attack would come flying at him from the tree behind, but it didn't feel alive at all.

He exited the Second Sealed Archive and entered the Labyrinth. The Second Sealed Labyrinth, full of the strongest Guardian Beasts, now felt like a safe haven to him.

Enlike put his back to the door and sank down on the floor.

“That is... Heaven, Ruruta Coozancoona...”

He recalled the words he heard from Olivia.

“Save Ruruta Coozancoona from the depths of despair. That will destroy Heaven.”

“How can I do such a thing? Just how?”

For a while Enlike merely mumbled to himself repeatedly. *Don't be afraid, throw away your doubts. Destroy Heaven even at the price of your life.* Even while he spoke this inside his mind, the repeated words never stopped.

“...How can I do it?”

When Enlike left the Archive and slipped through the Labyrinth, it was just in time to encounter the Armed Librarians at the end of the party. They didn't seem to notice Enlike's presence nor his infiltration to the Labyrinth. Olivia also seemed to be safe.

When he confirmed they were all peaceful, Enlike once again disappeared downtown.

Two weeks have passed since then.

He already threw away his fears from that day. No matter how strong Heaven was, did it matter? He was intending to sacrifice himself in the first place.

“Ho, a short time you say?”

Lascall Othello said. It was a rare, mocking tone.

“I already arrived at Heaven’s identity. All that’s left is granting the Violet Wish.”

Enlike said. But he was probably only acting tough. Just how difficult was fulfilling the Violet Wish? Now that he knew the truth he realized this.

“Fu, fufufufu.”

Lascall started laughing.

“Is that so? All that is left is to grant the Violet Wish. That is certainly quite close to victory.”

Don’t make it sound so bad, Enlike thought. Lascall was able to see through his bluff.

“Have you come to encourage me? Or just to ridicule me?”

“Of course, I am ridiculing you, Enlike-sama.”

Lascall said frankly. Enlike was surprised.

“Had Olivia-sama made a mistake in her choice? She was finally able to pass along the Violet Wish and a year has passed, but this is the current situation?”

These were wholly unexpected words. Enlike intended on approaching victory.

“No, there is no need for you to be bothered. It is too much for you anyway. Because destroying Heaven is impossible in the first place.”

“...It has only begun. The real deal starts now.”

Enlike said. This wasn’t a bluff. He will continue to fight as long as he was alive.

“No, that will not work, Enlike-sama.”

“What do you mean?”

“Unfortunately, you have not made it in time. Simply saying, it is past the deadline. Unfortunately, your battle will end today.”

He couldn’t understand her. Why has everything ended? Even if Hamyuts or Mattalast were to know of him, his battle wouldn’t be over yet.

Perhaps someone had destroyed Heaven before him? But he couldn’t feel any good news from Lascall’s tone of speech.

“...What are you saying?”

“I mean that quite literally. Olivia’s efforts, as well as your fight, were both useless hardships.”

“...Explain clearly. What do you mean?”

“Your long labor is over, good work.”

“Hey, explain!”

Ignoring Enlike, Lascall vanished.

He somehow felt that the situation had changed. It wasn't something like an attack on the Library or a rebellion as Enlike expected.

He had the feeling that something much more serious and unthinkable was happening.

He stopped hesitating. Enlike jumped over the fence and entered the premises of the Library.

“...Is no one here?”

The place he landed at was a corner of the park. There was no way it would be empty. The moment he thought so, he could see a figure coming from afar.

Was that a child or a petite woman? She was sitting alone. He approached her thinking that perhaps she was a customer who sprained her leg. When he saw her face, Enlike was surprised.

It was the Armed Librarian Kyasariro Totona. What was she doing at such a place during this emergency?

“Hey, what's wrong?!”

Her body jumped.

“W-who are you?”

He heard that she was quite powerful among the Armed Librarians. So what was with her behavior? She was surprised to the extent of jumping up in fear just at having Enlike speak to her.

“What are you doing here? More importantly, what’s going on inside?”

“...W-who are you?”

“That doesn’t matter. Anyway, what’s happening inside?”

While looking at Enlike, Kyasariro’s lips shivered.

“I... inside there...”

“What’s going on there?”

“Inside there...”

Kyasariro held her head. There was something inside the Library that made even a warrior of her caliber shake in fear. Enlike was convinced that whatever was going on inside the Library was something unimaginable.

Although she was now his enemy, she was an Armed Librarian he had fought along with. Enlike was worried about her.

“What is it, what happened?”

“No, nothing happened... it will all begin now...”

“What are you saying?”

Kyasariro kept trembling all over while holding her head. Her mental condition was abnormal.

“Calm down, what’s going on? What are the Armed Librarians doing?!”

“Shut up!”

She brushed Enlike’s hand aside when he tried helping her get up.



“I dunno, I dunno! Who’re you?! What’s going on?!”

“Calm down, Kyasariro!”

“Shut up, just shut up!”

Shouting at Enlike, Kyasariro started running away. He grabbed her arm and tried to get her to calm down.

“Let go, it’s all over, we’re finished!”

“So as I’m asking, just what...?!”

Kyasariro shook off Enlike’s hand and ran. It would be faster just entering the Library than chasing her. Enlike headed to the main building.

The last words left by Kyasariro echoed inside Enlike’s head.

‘We’re finished!’

“...It can’t be.”

He noticed himself sweating unconsciously.

The worst case scenario rose to his mind. It was the most frightening situation he dared not to think of. The Library ending. Enlike’s fight ending.

That meant that...

“...It can’t be... that Ruruta Coozancoona has...”

The rest was far too scary to even voice. He stuffed it into the back of his throat and back to his stomach.

From the faraway roof of the beer hall, Lascall replied.

“That is indeed the case, Enlike-sama.”

It was still early. The long, long day has only began.

Chapter 2: The Collapse of Various Kinds of Common Sense

Part 1

The one to first notice the abnormal situation was the Armed Librarian Mattalast Ballory.

He came to know of it at the deepest parts of Bantorra Library's underground, in the Second Sealed Labyrinth.

But let us put that aside for a while.

During the same time as Mattalast came to know of the abnormal situation something else happened in the Acting Director's Office at the top of Bantorra Library.

An iron blade suddenly appeared in the air. There was nothing to warn of it. It appeared as if some movie's special effect. The diamond-shaped blade was about three centimeters long. It had no handle or any decorations.

It moved as if sliding through the air and stabbed into Hamyuts's desk. Then, along with a grinding sound it started carving letters atop the oaken surface.

After engraving a short sentence of two lines, the diamond blade completely vanished without a trace.

During that time Hamyuts was asleep on the sofa in the break room next to the office.

During the same time...

In the faraway capital of the Ismo Republic, an event also happened in the headquarters of the New Indulging God Cult led by Minth Chezine. On the second floor of the small building, a diamond-shaped blade appeared above Minth's desk the same way.

It also carved letters and then disappeared.

There was no one in the headquarters during that time. Because of the time difference, it was midnight at Ismo. The False Men or other workers were not there, and Minth was resting in a room on the third floor.

Both Hamyuts and Minth kept sleeping without noticing anything.

After Mattalast, the next one to notice what happened were the new Armed Librarians Rizzly Kalon and Tena Tarno, as well as the veteran Luik Hartaine.

They were at the center of Bantorra Library – the back of the Sixth Sealed Archive, connected to the Sealed Labyrinth's entrance.

"Hmm. Am I the first person today?"

Cracking his neck, Luik came down to the Labyrinth's entrance. In one hand he carried the leftover applications for browsing Books. On his back was a huge spear made of steel that weighed over 100 kilograms.

"Well then, I wonder if today's gonna be tough."

Luik said and started some light flexing exercise in front of the door.

He was the biggest among the Armed Librarians. He weighed about as much as three average adult men and was tall enough to reach the ceiling of a normal house. Furthermore his body was covered by thick, black hair, so he seemed like a clothed beast carrying a spear. Just by slightly warming his body up, his fuzzy skin started raising some steam.

There was no excitement nor tension in his expression. Entering the Labyrinth was a mission that risked his life, but for him as a middle-class Armed Librarian, this was all in a day's work.

"Tena went inside before."

The new Armed Librarian Rizzly spoke to him from inside the telegraph room. He was a short boy who didn't even reach Luik's chest. With a slender body and a puppy-like face he didn't look like an Armed Librarian at all. Only the rapier and small gun hanging from his waist made him seem like a warrior at all.

He had been stationed in the telegraph room since yesterday. His current job was to monitor any changes within the Labyrinth.

"Ooh, she got up early. Getting up early is good."

"I hate it though... Ah, I'm so sleepy. When will Mirepoc-san come already..."

Rizzly said and yawned.

"Don't complain about staying awake for a day or two. How weak."

Saying so, Luik put a hand to the door.

"I'm fine being weak."

Well then, shall I play with the Guardian Beasts today as well?

Thinking this, Luik opened the door. At the other side was a wide staircase that went on for long, next leading to a space about as large as three tennis courts. From there were about twenty corridors all connected to the routes of the Fifth Labyrinth.

The moment he set foot inside, Luik was surprised.

“Oh, so sudden!”

Just before he had opened the door the Guardian Beast known as Cavalryman was already waiting for him. Even among the Guardian Beasts protecting the Fifth Layer, it was the weakest kind. It was still obviously a lot stronger than normal people, though.

“Are you fine?”

“Obviously.”

Luik stopped Cavalry’s spear with one hand and lifted him up. Just like that he threw him from the staircase into the hall. Cavalry, despite weighing over 500 pounds, started rolling down the staircase. Luik didn’t even need to use the large spear on his back.

“Recently the Guardian Beasts are also quite enthusiastic about their jobs. I want them to set an example to the Director.”

Saying so, Luik went to check whether he finished it off or not.

Guardian Beasts – the monsters protecting the Labyrinth Archive. Among those officially confirmed, they were the one and only kind of fantastic living creatures in the world. Fighting against them was the daily job of Armed Librarians.

But the Guardian Beasts were not the Armed Librarians' enemies. They only existed to protect the sealed Books from any and all intruders.

The Guardian Beasts were protecting Bantorra Library ever since it was created 2000 years ago. They wandered around the Sealed Labyrinth, indiscriminately attacking every intruder they could find.

Those who could not win against them were not entitled to touching Books. Only warriors who could break through the Guardian Beasts were allowed to handle them. Meaning, just the Armed Librarians.

The deeper one went into the Labyrinth, the more important the Books sealed inside were. Accordingly, the Guardian Beasts also grew stronger.

If talking about the Guardian Beasts protecting the Fifth Level, those around the level of Cavalryman, Rhino, or Needle Wolf, then about several dozens of heavily armed normal humans would be able to beat them. The Fourth Level's Elephant Soldier or Blade-Haired Lion could crush tanks and armored vehicles.

In the Third Level, even mid-class Armed Librarians would have to risk their lives. Trainees or intelligence agents had no chance of winning there. Reaching the Second Level, one would find Guardian Beasts equal in strength to Armed Librarians like Volken or Kyasariro.

It was probable that if all Guardian Beasts were to assemble they would be stronger than the entire Armed Librarian forces combined. They might even be able to rival all the armies of the world.

They were certainly strong enemies. However, recalling the fights they had against the Indulging God Cult, the Guardian Beasts almost

seemed cute. They never got out of the Labyrinth. Neither would one encounter them above their determined level.

For the Armed Librarians, the Guardian Beasts were strong enemies but also their comrades at the same time. They helped the protection of Bantorra Library after all.

“Mm?”

The collapsed Cavalryman tried standing up again. From its reaction Luik could see it lacked the power to fight, but it seemed oddly tenacious. He was puzzled.

“Hmm, have I grown lax over the holidays?”

“Haven’t you been drinking too much at New Year’s? You’ve stuffed your belly too full.”

Rizzly mocked him.

“No way. I have abs of steel.”

Luik beat his fist on his stomach that was as hard as cement.

“There, there, what’s wrong? Are you excited?”

Cavalryman charged again. Luik spoke in a tone as if lulling it to sleep, and lightly knocked it down.

At that moment, Rizzly noticed something strange.

“Luik-san, another one’s coming.”

He raised his head and looked at the hall ahead. Now it was the Guardian Beast known as Rhino. It rushed up the staircase of the entrance, its footsteps echoing around.

It was a rare situation. There were not many Guardian Beasts in the shallow parts of the Sealed Labyrinth. They would fight more than one at the same time only about once a day. Furthermore, Luik had no memory of encountering that in the very entrance.

But at the time he didn't think of this as abnormal. He simply considered it something unusual.

"I've been growing dull from sitting all day, lemme help you."

Saying this, Rizzly drew his rapier this time. Although he was a novice he still had considerable fighting strength. He also displayed a belligerent expression not fit for his face.

"I don't need ya."

"Don't be so reserved."

"Hey, these are my prey."

Luik voiced his dissatisfaction, but Rizzly prepared his rapier facing Rhino without listening to him. He looked like a man who would fight while dancing around magnificently, but it wasn't so.

He lunged directly at Rhino's charge. From the tip of his sword a shockwave far exceeding a tank shot in power was unleashed. A big hole the size of a fist opened up in Rhino's head, piercing all the way through his rear.

"Oops, I tried holding back."

The overenthusiastic shockwave stabbed into the floor of the Labyrinth, gouging a hole in it.

"Stop messing up the Labyrinth."

“Ahaha, I’ve been scolded.”

Rizzly lent no ears to the voice shouting at him. *He lacks education after all*, thought Luik, but at that moment...

They heard another voice. Another Guardian Beast has appeared.

This time they were two Beasts together – a Rhino and a Needle Wolf.

“...”

The reason both Luik’s and Rizzly’s faces changed color was not due to any sense of crisis. Even if ten Beasts appeared in front of them they would probably be able to handle them.

However, it was rather unusual that four of them would appear in so short of a time. Normally the Guardian Beasts would roam around the Labyrinth by themselves. They were never organized or attacked together with their comrades.

Four Beasts in about ten minutes. This was too much without a doubt.

Something was greatly amiss. These words clearly rose to the pair’s minds.

It was then that Hamyuts woke up in the break room.

Ever since the new year started there was several days where she was busy working for the first time in a long while. She was taking care of the procedures meant to pass her position as an Acting Director to Yukizona.

Recently there had been voices of dissatisfaction in various places about Hamyuts’s attitude towards her work. It wasn’t just the Armed

Librarians or the normal librarians; she received protests even from leaders around the world and the Present Management Agency as well.

That was only natural. Hamyuts barely did any Acting Director-like work recently. Yukizona was essentially already working as the Director.

Even her just sitting in her chair almost reached her limit. Hamyuts had no choice but to make a judgment call.

“Haa... even handing over my seat is nothing but trouble. And I can’t leave it to Matt.”

In addition to passing along her work there were other formalities like investiture and the inauguration ceremony, all sorts of formal work and complicated procedures.

I just need to have a bit more patience, thought Hamyuts while spending her days.

Even after passing the baton, Hamyuts planned on staying at Bantorra Library. Her reason was of course in order to fight.

Although Kachua had been defeated, perhaps some of the remnants were still hiding. She also had no idea how Olivia and her successor’s rebellion would develop from now on.

There were still the seeds of trouble planted in the Library. She couldn’t leave the best place like that.

“Mm... my shoulders are all stiff.”

Saying this, Hamyuts sluggishly entered her office. The moment she thought of getting some coffee, her eyes settled on the abnormal condition of her desk.

There were scratches she hadn't seen there before going to sleep.

At first she thought it was simply someone's prank and looked at it lightly.

"...!"

The next moment, she ran to the table as if to cling to it.

When she saw the written words her body trembled.

"Ruruta..."

Hamyuts muttered. She then unleashed Sensory Threads from her entire body. All of them were turned underground.

At first they came in contact with the normal librarians who finished their night shifts. Next, Luik and Rizzly in front of the Labyrinth. Then Tena and the Guardian Beasts inside.

Then Mattalast who was deeper inside the Labyrinth.

And...

"...A...ahahaha."

Hamyuts started laughing. She understood it all in a moment.

"Ahahahah, I see, I get it Ruruta. I've been surprised since you said it so suddenly. You should've told me it earlier, right, Ruruta? Do you hear me?"

Laughter. She shook while laughing.

Hamyuts Meseta was shivering with fear and shock.

Two Guardian Beasts were charging up the stairs. Luik spoke while attacking them.

“Is the Labyrinth today off limits?”

“Is that even a thing?”

“Who knows.”

Luik caught Rhino’s body and crushed it with both hands. Rizzly decapitated Needle Wolf using his rapier.

The two exchanged glances, then exited the Labyrinth. They left the door open so they could see the situation inside.

“What should we do? Should we report this to the Director or someone?”

Rizzly said. Luik hesitated; was this an incident or just a coincidence? If it was an incident, was it big enough to report? Thinking about the fact they simply battled four Guardian Beasts it wasn’t out of the ordinary.

Still, it would be better to report this for the time being. Luik then asked Rizzly.

“Is the Director coming today? She might be slacking off.”

“The Director’s still in the Library, probably. But she might have woken up and gone home on a whim.”

Saying so, they both sighed. Frankly speaking, they wondered just when Hamyuts would finally quit.

“What about Mattalast-san? I don’t expect to see him though.”

“Matt-san... I don’t know. When have you last seen him?”

“I think I saw him around the town three days ago. Only a glance though.”

“I haven’t met him ever since the new year. Hadn’t he gone somewhere after the party was over?”

They both thought about their two unreliable superiors.

“Then Yukizona. Should we wait until he comes to work?”

“Yeah.”

While they were talking of this and that, the body of the Cavalryman first beaten had been regenerated and it stood up. They haven’t noticed that. Cavalryman operated its twisted legs, readied its broken spear and started running. Finally, the pair turned their eyes to the Labyrinth’s entrance.

“...!”

Just before Cavalryman left the door Rizzly instantly tore it apart using the shockwave from his rapier.

The two gasped in silence. This wasn’t at the level of something unusual anymore. It was a completely abnormal event. The Guardian Beasts attacked all those invading the Labyrinth, yet the pair was outside the door to the Fifth Labyrinth.

“Right now... it tried to attack us despite us being outside.”

Rizzly told exactly what he saw. However, Luik had denied exactly what he saw.

“No way. Guardian Beasts attack only invaders inside the Labyrinth.”

That was his common sense as an Armed Librarian. His common sense and what he saw in front of his eyes clashed. People usually believed in their common sense during these times.

“But right now...!”

“Nah, that’s impossible.”

Even Luik couldn’t understand what was happening at all. Just as Rizzly had said, the Guardian Beasts came charging at them.

“Wait. I’ll go check the situation.”

Saying so, Luik entered the Labyrinth and went down the stairs. He approached the Cavalryman collapsed in the plaza. At that moment, a new Needle Wolf appeared from the road to his right.

It came for a surprise attack from Luik’s side. He prepared to meet its attack. However, the Needle Wolf acted outside of his expectations.

It turned in a right angle just before meeting Luik, running towards the stairs leading to the Sixth Archive and to the door beyond them.

Caught by surprise, Luik didn’t move. And Rizzly, who was outside the Labyrinth, couldn’t respond in time either.

It happened for only a split second. Just an instant before Needle Wolf was blown to smithereens by Rizzly’s shockwave.

A Guardian Beast exited the Labyrinth. For the first time recorded in the last 2000 years, a Guardian Beast got out.

“Rizzly! Sound the alarm!”

Luik regained his composure. However, Rizzly who was shaking in fear could not respond. After all it was something that seemed impossible, something that must never happen.

“Rizzly!”

Responding to Luik’s noise, Rizzly ran inside the telegraph room. Behind Luik, the Guardian Beasts he supposedly defeated rose up. Several other Guardian Beasts came towards the Labyrinth entrance.

In the telegraph room, Rizzly flipped the switch of the recently installed voice device. It could send his voice throughout the entirety of Bantorra Library.

“An emergency! An emergency! All Armed Librarians and trainees please gather in front of the Labyrinth!”

Rizzly’s voice echoed from behind. Luik stood in front of the door.

The Guardian Beasts protecting the Labyrinth and the Armed Librarians challenging it; that relationship, continuing without any change for 2000 years, was reversed at this time. It was the impossible situation of those Guardian Beasts coming to the Armed Librarians who protected the outside world.

Luik drew out the giant spear on his back for the first time that day. There were already more than ten Guardian Beasts at the plaza.

What was going on? And what should they do now? He swung his spear relentlessly while holding these questions.

“When will the reinforcements arrive?!”

Luik shouted, but Rizzly didn’t reply.

A while passed. No one had come to support them. No one responded to their shouts.

And at the next moment... Luik could see it. Tena came rushing from the other side of the Sealed Labyrinth. He saw one of her arms stained in blood and half of her face gouged out.

Tena, who despite being a novice could be said to be a perfectly good warrior, was fleeing in such an unsightly manner.

“...Tena.”

Luik muttered. He could hear heavy footsteps from behind her. There were no Guardian Beasts who could make such footsteps in the Fifth Labyrinth. It should be something around the level of Elephant Solider from the Fourth Level.

“Tena! What’s wrong?!”

“...El...Elephant Soldier, and Iron-Fang Mouse, are coming to the Fifth...”

Her ribs perhaps broken, she spoke while spurting out blood. He could see from behind her that a large amount of Guardian Beasts was breaking through.

Also, they were the stronger Guardian Beasts that protected the deeper areas.

“Tena! Run away to the Sixth Archive! The entrance is not safe!”

“Y-yes, I get it...”

Leaving the bloody Tena to her own, Luik took up position on the stairway connecting to the Sixth Archive. He readied his spear and stood in their way.

“...Until everyone comes...”

Luik muttered.

“...Will I be able to hold on?”

Half an hour passed.

Mirepoc arrived running to the Labyrinth. Some time passed since she heard Rizzly’s emergency call. It was quite shameful, but since it was her first battle in a long while, Mirepoc forgot where she had left her gun and sword.

Although Mirepoc rushed without a moment’s delay, she still arrived late. She hurriedly got into the Archive.

She found Tena being treated by the trainees in the entrance to the Sixth Archive.

“Tena! Who did this to you?!”

She exchanged her morning greeting with her just an hour ago. She heard that she was about to go shelving in the Fifth Archive. It wasn’t a job that would lead to those kind of injuries.

“...I-Iron-Fang Mouse and Elephant Solider, at the Fifth Labyrinth...”

Tena answered, gasping for breath. Iron-Fang Mouse was a Guardian Beast that appeared in the Third Labyrinth. It was an enemy only a central figure in the Armed Librarians could be a match for. Mirepoc had never seen it.

“Mirepoc! Quickly!”

An angry voice shouted at her from the Sixth Archive. She ran down there.

“...Shit, those Guardian Beasts...”

“Don’t lower your guard, they’re coming from below!”

The angry roars of Armed Librarians and trainees echoed through the wide Sixth Archive.

The Sixth Archive had a huge cylindrical center from which countless of small rooms extended. On the central isle was a long, spiral staircase and its middle was a wide atrium.

The lowest part in the middle of the floor was a staircase going down, leading to the telegraph rooms meant for Armed Librarians as well as to the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth.

“...What the...”

She heard what was happening from Rizzly’s emergency call. Still, she involuntarily gasped at seeing Guardian Beasts run around the Sixth Archive, where even normal librarians could work.

There were Armed Librarians wielding their swords and guns here and there on the floor and in the spiral staircase. The Guardian Beasts were destroying the atrium.

The existence of the Guardian Beasts inside the Labyrinth usually felt reassuring.

Still, seeing them run amok like this made her feel physical repulsiveness. Non-humans were endangering humans. She didn’t know such a scene could be so terrible.

“Kh!”

A Needle Wolf ran to the top where Mirepoc was. She kicked him with the soles of her boots and finished him off using her rapier. Then she grabbed its tail and threw it off to the atrium.

There were a lot of Armed Librarians and trainees on the spiral staircase. As to not get caught up in their fight, Mirepoc leapt to the center of the staircase. Then she rushed down the stairs connecting to the Sealed Labyrinth.

“...!”

The door connecting to the Labyrinth had already been destroyed. One of the double doors had been blown backward and the other was distorted. In front of the door two Armed Librarians were stopping the invasion of the Guardian Beasts from the bottom.

One was Luik. He used his own body, which was harder than steel, as a shield.

Behind him was Marfa, who was comparable in power to Kyasariro. He controlled a whip about 100 meters long covered in flames. The whip freely moved, avoided Luik’s body and assaulted the Guardian Beasts.

“What did you come here for, Mirepo?!”

Marfa shouted. This situation didn’t call for Mirepoc, someone who lacked fighting power. She would be in danger. However, she was aware of this and had something else to do.

“I’m here to close the Labyrinth’s barrier walls!”

Mirepoc advanced while bending her body. Marfa’s whip almost grazed her overhead.

Proceeding while desperately fending off the Guardian Beasts, she touched the door to the Sealed Labyrinth. In the Labyrinth were partition walls that could be closed down with the authority of an Armed Librarian. During Mokkania's Rebellion they had actually sealed it.

The several hundred walls to be created in the Labyrinth shouldn't be broken down easily even with the power of the Guardian Beasts. With this they should be able to seal their movements to a certain extent.

"Get down Mirepo!"

"You're in the way!"

Luik and Marfa shouted. Mirepoc shouted back without minding them.

"Armed Librarian Mirepoc! Despite my lack of authority I appeal to you, seal all partition walls!"

When operating the equipment in the Labyrinth, there should be a response of magical power. However, Mirepoc couldn't feel anything. She didn't feel anything happen.

"I'm saying you're in the way!"

Luik's spear cut down the enemy trying to attack Mirepoc. Thinking about it, it was obvious. There's no way Luik or Marfa wouldn't have tried something anyone could have thought about.

Mirepoc turned her back to them and ran away. Her job was not fighting there.

Coming back to the Sixth Archive, she heard the voices of her comrades.

“Mirepo! What’s the Director doing?!”

“What about Yukizona-san? Or Mattalast-san?”

Only now that she was told this she noticed. Neither the Director, Mattalast or Yukizona could be seen anywhere. Kyasariro wasn’t there either.

“I’ll contact them now!”

Mirepoc’s job was connecting the Armed Librarians. While running to a safe spot, she invoked her Thought Sharing to call the comrades she couldn’t see right now. First was Bonbo. He was currently monitoring the ceasefire in the vicinity of the Principality of Meliot.

‘Bonbo-san? Are we connected?’

‘I received contact from a trainee. I’m flying at my top speed and will reach you in about three hours.’

‘Roger, return as soon as possible.’

Contacting Bonbo had been nothing but a formality. In this situation he would probably not be very useful. If he were to activate his power – controlling whales – inside the Labyrinth, Bantorra Library would be destroyed.

The other three people were more important. Mirepoc ran up the stairs while connecting her thoughts.

‘Director!’

Her thoughts connected. However, while Hamyuts could receive it, she wasn't able to respond. It was completely unilateral from Mirepoc.

'This is an emergency, and not the time to think of it as troublesome or whatever, please come quickly!'

Her thoughts should have been connected. However, she couldn't tell where Hamyuts was and what was she doing. Next, she sent her thoughts to Yukizona.

'Yukizona-san!'

'I'm coming soon. Please wait for ten minutes.'

Mirepoc was surprised hearing this. She was late as well, but what did him being even more late mean?

'...Just how much time do you think passed ever since the emergency call?!'

'I have not been wasting my time.'

'What's going on?!'

'...I cannot tell you even if you ask.'

Mirepoc grinded her teeth. All four people who were said to be the strongest among the Armed Librarians weren't rushing at this situation. Leaving Bonbo aside, what were the three remaining people doing?

'Mattalast-san! Where are you right now? It's an emergency!'

She connected to Mattalast's thoughts. She hadn't seen him for a while. She wondered if he was lazing around in the town area. In the

worst case he might even be hanging out at the cinema capital of Fulbeck. If that was the case she thought of shouting at him.

However, Mattalast wasn't playing around.

'...,...'

She felt something that she had never felt before. It felt as if she was connected to something not human but to something like a rock. The inside of their mind was as vague as sand.

'...Mi...repo?'

After a while, Mattalast finally replied in his thoughts. Just what happened to him?

His thoughts were weak. It wasn't like he just woke up, and it was also different than being under the influence. Rather than his thinking abilities, it was more like his very soul was growing weaker. The thoughts of people about to die probably felt like this.

'...Mattalast-san? What's wrong!'

She held her head and stopped in place without noticing. The spear of a Cavalryman came to attack from behind her as she was careless.

"Watch out!"

Kalne thrust Mirepoc away. She rolled down the stairs and rose up while frowning.

'...Mirepo? What's going on? Is there... fighting on the surface?'

'What's going on?! Mattalast-san! Where are you now!'

'Mirepo... I'm sorry...'

His thoughts were severed. She didn't feel Mattalast dying. However, she only knew that he was in some serious situation.

Part 2

“Mirepo! How’s it going?!”

“The Director, what’s the Director doing?!”

Her comrades shouted.

“What does all this mean?!”

“Everyone, I received a message from Yukizona-san! He says that there is no need to worry so we only need to wait for a while. The Director and Mattalast-san will also come soon.

We have no time to pass information along! Anyway don’t worry!”

Relief spread among the Armed Librarians. They probably haven’t noticed she was lying. They didn’t have to leeway to see through Mirepoc’s poor lie.

At the next moment help arrived. It couldn’t quite be called a savior, but it still was someone reliable.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting!”

A person appeared, leaping to the highest part of the Sixth Labyrinth like a spinning ball.

It was the figure of a petite woman accompanied by twelve guns floating in the air. She was a powerful warrior Mirepoc had contacted just after trying the four strongest – Kyasariro Totona.

“You’re late!”

Mirepoc shouted while looking up.

“I needed some time to prepare for battle!”

Saying this, Kyasariro took her position in the topmost part of the Sixth Archive.

With her ability of precise and powerful telekinesis she could control twelve guns.

The twelve gun spread in the Labyrinth. They shot up the bodies of Guardian Beasts while flying around the atrium from one side. Her ability was extremely strong for a situation where both ally and foe were mixed together. The twelve gun were equal in strength to about twelve average – no, to twenty average Armed Librarians.

The Armed Librarians who were in a disadvantage suddenly became dominant, and the Guardian Beasts of the Sixth Archive were neutralized one after the other. The Armed Librarians finally got some leeway. Some of them ran away to support Luik and the rest. Others restrained the fallen Guardian Beasts so that they wouldn't be able to regenerate.

“Just what's happening, Kyasariro-san?”

Mirepoc spoke to Kyasariro who stood at the top of the spiral staircase.

“Shut up, you're disrupting my concentration. Also, I don't know as well.”

“But...”

Kyasariro was supposed to be closer to the nucleus than Mirepoc. Yet even she had no idea?

“Haven't you heard anything from Mattalast-san or the Director?”

“Nope. I’m not qualified as a First Grade Armed Librarian. They won’t tell me anything important. Don’t slack off, fight too!”

“Right!”

Mirepoc pulled out her gun for the first time in a while, and shot the Guardian Beasts below.

Ten minutes should have passed already, yet Yukizona did not come. She also had no idea where Mattalast and the Director were.

The battle raged on for a while. The Guardian Beasts were tenacious. Although the Armed Librarian were dominant, they couldn’t eliminate all the Guardian Beasts in the Sixth Labyrinth.

Mirepoc also quit her Thought Sharing and focused on fighting. Then, something weird was suddenly said to her.

“Mirepo, did you say something?!”

Kyasariro shouted. Mirepoc raised her head and answered.

“I didn’t say anything!”

Kyasariro looked confused and tilted her head.

“What’re you saying Mirepo!”

Now a voice came to her from the atrium; Tsamuro was shouting at Mirepoc.

“I’m not saying anything, what are you all talking about!”

“Then who’s the one talking?!”

“It’s not me!”

“Me neither!”

The Armed Librarians were arguing at Mirepoc's feet. It seemed they were hearing someone's voice. They mistook it for Mirepoc's Thought Sharing.

Mirepoc couldn't hear anything. It seemed that about a third of the Armed Librarians were hearing some voice.

"Shit, what is this?!"

Kyasariro shouted. Mirepoc felt the same.

She couldn't understand the situation at all. She had no idea why this fight was occurring. It was the same as the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion last year. No, at the time they understood that their enemies were the Indulging God Cult. This time they could understand even less.

All the Armed Librarians fought while suppressing their urge to scream.

Everyone thought the same.

What the hell was happening to Bantorra Library right now?

They had to fight before letting out these doubts of their mouths. During this, a sudden small voice suddenly rose up.

"...Ah."

It was Kyasariro. The twelve guns she was controlling stopped in place.

"What's wrong, Kyasariro-san?"

"I... know what this is."

During that time, Hamyuts was sitting all alone on her desk in the Acting Director's Office. In front of her eyes was the message engraved on it.

“...”

She interlocked her fingers and further laid her chin on them while pondering. She started thinking for a long time.

“There's no use thinking about this. It just had to turn out this way.”

Saying this, she leaned back on her chair.

“It was just a question of when. It just so happens that it happened today.”

She was watching the situation around Bantorra Library using her Sensory Threads. She could see both the fight at the Sixth Archive as well as the figures of Yukizona and the rest running around the Library. And yet there she was, without minding anything or taking any actions, she was just sitting.

“Everyone's working hard.”

She watched the battle unfold while saying this.

“Poor things. No matter how hard they try it's all useless.”

Hamyuts said, laughing from her throat.

“I should explain everything to them. About what's going on and what's about to happen.”

Saying this, Hamyuts took out a brand new machine from under her desk.

Kyasariro's twelve gun stopped in midair and fell. All the Armed Librarians seemed surprised of something.

"What's wrong, Kyasariro-san!"

Mirepoc shouted and ran to her. Kyasariro stopped while looking at empty air. Her mouth was half agape and she seemed to be stupefied.

"I know, this, I know this..."

"What do you know?!"

"...I know."

Kyasariro murmured, dumbfounded.

"Hey, don't lose yourself Kyasariro!"

"Mirepo! What's going on?!"

The angry voices of Armed Librarians rose from the bottom. Kyasariro was the center of the battle right now. If she became absentminded the Guardian Beasts might break through.

Mirepoc shook Kyasariro and waved her fingers in front of her eyes. She made no response. She then suddenly shouted with a shrill voice.

"Guys! Run away!"

All of the Armed Librarians stopped without thinking. Some of them were so stunned they weren't able to hear voices properly. They couldn't understand what she was saying.

"Don't be stupid, what can we do by running away?!"

“Run away, guys, quickly, run away!!!”

Kyasariro held her head and paled. They have never seen Kyasariro make such an expression. Normally she was cheerful and wildly eccentric, acting like a cool, brave warrior on the battlefield.

She wasn't supposed to look like a child afraid from a rabid dog.

“Run away, it's bad news, so all of you get away!”

“Please calm down!”

Mirepoc tried holding her but was thrust away. Kyasariro then turned her back and ran out of the Archive while screaming.

Mirepoc simply couldn't believe it... Kyasariro running away like that.

Mirepoc couldn't believe it. Kyasariro running away like that. No, would any proud Armed Librarian turn their backs to the enemy and flee?

“Kyasariro!”

The Armed Librarians raised upset cries. In this situation, if Kyasariro were to withdraw, the battle situation would be reversed at once.

Mirepoc tried to go after her. However, a voice at her back stopped her.

“Don't go, they're coming!”

The Sixth Archive was further assaulted by the Guardian Beasts. With Kyasariro gone, their counterattack crumbled and the Armed Librarians were once again at a disadvantage.

“Shit, I let one escape, Mirepo!”

A Blade-Haired Lion came to attack Mirepoc who was protecting the entrance. Now that Kyasariro had left, Mirepoc became the final barrier.

“Tch!”

She fought desperately with her handgun. However, with her fighting capabilities just stopping it in place took everything she had.

The defense of the Armed Librarians was broken. They would not be able to protect any further.

Is this it? The moment Mirepoc thought this...

A black figure and a white figure came through the door to the Sixth Archive. They kicked at the stairs and reached the floor in one fell swoop.

“Everyone evade!”

The black figure shouted. The Armed Librarians all simultaneously leapt away. If they were late then they’d be wrapped up as well – they could feel this sense of danger from the echoing voice.

The black figure released a dark wave as soon as it landed. All of the Armed Librarians knew its identity. Even those who have never seen it in action heard about its power.

It was the power of the next Acting Director Yukizona – the Decay Wave.

The Decay Wave slid on the floor and stairs, swallowing up the Guardian Beasts. It was the power to render any and all life in the world ineffective.

The Guardian Beasts were also obviously helpless. With one blow of the Decay Wave they all turned into a lump of a black, brittle ash-like material.

Yukizona started shouting from the bottom of the Sixth Archive. Everyone ceased their attacks and listened to his orders.

“Us Armed Librarians will now annihilate the remaining enemy forces. Mirepoc and Rizzly will confirm the situation of the wounded and our present fighting forces. The trainees will search out any noncombatants in the Library and evacuate them.

At once!”

“Roger!”

After becoming so disorderly, the Armed Librarians regained their leadership when Yukizona arrived. They started fighting more appropriately. The Guardian Beasts were neutralized within minutes.

What was he doing where until now? What was going on? These were natural questions, but no one voiced them. Yukizona’s cool-headed commands did not allow any useless questions.

“Luik, Marfa, retreat to the Sixth Archive!”

After confirming the annihilation of all Guardian Beasts in the Sixth Archive, Yukizona shouted this toward the entrance to the Sealed Labyrinth.

“If we retreat the Guardian Beasts will come out!”

“It does not matter, withdraw!”

Luik and Marfa abandoned protecting the door and rose to the Sixth Archive. The Guardian Beasts coming from behind were

dispersed by Yukizona's Decay Wave. Luik's body – the one to take the frontline – was miserably bloody. Mirepoc and Rizzly commenced with first aid immediately.

Yukizona confirmed that there were no Guardian Beasts coming. Then he spoke to his sister Yuri at his side.

“Activate the Barrier, Yuri.”

“Roger.”

Saying this, Yuri held up what she held in her hand.

“That's...”

Mirepoc raised her voice. It was one of the Memorial Weapons, the Spinning Doll Ückück.

Mirepoc knew that in Bantorra there were two Ückücks. Both of them were embedded with the power to protect Bantorra Library. The other one had been used by Mirepoc herself during the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion.

She did not receive permission to use the other one. She didn't even know what kind of power was within it.

“Spinning Doll Ückück, activate. Deploying the Gauze Barrier.”

The Doll began to dance. At the same time, a barrier made out of material that seemed like a cloth woven from hazy threads started enveloping the entrance to the Sixth Archive. The Guardian Beasts that tried leaving before the Barrier had been deployed were now obstructed by it.



Perhaps it was equal in power to the barrier that once protected Bantorra Library, or possible even above it.

“...Did you seal the entrance to the Sealed Labyrinth?”

Mirepoc inquired.

“The Barrier only stops Guardian Beasts. Humans can still enter. That is the kind of Barrier we spread here.”

The Guardian Beasts were staring at Yukizona from the other side. Fire-Eater Crow spat flames and Elephant Soldier rammed its large body against it, but the Barrier didn't budge.

“Do not worry. The Barrier will not break for a while.”

Yuri said gently to Mirepoc. She handed her the Spinning Doll that finished its role.

“Why did we have this Barrier...”

While staring at the Spinning Doll handed to her, Mirepoc muttered in a small voice.

This probably meant that they have prepared for this situation. The insertion Magic Right into the Spinning Doll was at the very least 1000 years ago. This meant they considered the possibility this would happen even 1000 years ago.

However, Mirepoc and the rest of the lower level Armed Librarians never heard nor thought about the possibility of the Guardian Beasts running loose. Even if it was a one-in-a-million chance, as long as the possibility existed why weren't they told of it?

“...I don't really get it, but it means we can relax?”

Luik asked. He was covered by disinfectant alcohol and hemostatic agent all over his body.

“Even this Barrier is not invincible. It will be broken eventually. We need to reorganize and attack the Guardian Beasts swarming inside the Barrier. Command will go to...”

Yukizona looked around the Archive, seeking a suitable person.

“Gamo, I’m leaving you in charge.”

Although being appointed, Gamo was upset. He was quite the veteran and had a high level of a discerning mind, but he wasn’t fit to receive command from Yukizona.

“Wait a minute. What are you going to do? Or more importantly, what about the Director?”

“Me and Yuri are going to break into the Labyrinth. If you have any questions contact me through Mirepoc.”

“Wait, but what about the Director? What’s Matt-san doing?”

Gamo persisted.

“...These are all my instructions. You don’t have to think about the rest.”

“No, that doesn’t explain anything about this situation! What are we supposed to do from now?!”

“Don’t ask needless questions.”

“They’re not needless at all!”

“ ... ”

Yukizona went silent in front of Gamo's angry voice. Mirepoc, Rizzly, Luik and the rest of the people inside the Sixth Archive all felt the same as him.

They were told to follow commands. However, Armed Librarians were not machines. What was going on? What were they supposed to be doing? Wanting to know all this was natural. And letting them know that was the duty of a commander.

"Let's go, Yuri."

"...Yes, Brother."

Yet Yukizona turned his back to the Armed Librarians. Was he ignoring the feelings of his comrades, or did he have no choice? They couldn't tell from his expression which one was right.

Yukizona sent his Decay Wave on the Guardian Beasts swarming near the Barrier. The pair of siblings slipped through the Barrier and broke into the Labyrinth.

"...What the hell are we supposed to do!"

Luik hit the floor with his fist.

"Where are the Director and Matt-san? It can't be that just like Kyasariro they..."

Rizzly said with an anxious expression.

"What's Kyasariro doing in the first place?"

Kalne spoke in anger. Here and there, the Armed Librarians and trainees raised voices of dissatisfaction.

Without Yukizona the Armed Librarians became disorderly again. Even Gamo, who was supposed to have assumed command, directed anger-filled eyes at Yukizona's back.

"We've dispersed..."

Mirepoc muttered. One year ago, all of them fought to the death in unison to protect Bantorra Library. Not even those who were afraid or doubtful have acted alone.

What happened now? The regular Armed Librarians became agitated, ready to flee at any moment, while those who were supposed to assume command did not fulfill their roles. There were even deserters.

The Armed Librarians were destroying Bantorra Library. It wasn't destruction from the outside. It was as if they caused their own downfall.

"...Impossible."

The end of Bantorra Library... It was impossible for the history of 2000 years to end in such an incomprehensible situation. The Armed Librarians were the strongest military organization, protecting both Books and peace.

By defeating these Guardian Beasts and putting everything under control, they should return to normal.

"Gamo-san, please take command."

Hearing Mirepoc's word, he regained his composure. He turned to her and asked for information.

"Rizzly, Mirepoc, what's the current situation of the injured?"

“There are no dead among the trainees or normal librarians. The only one incapable of fighting is Tena, almost half of our forces are lightly injured, but they should have no problem to fight.”

“Enough people to fight.”

Gamo and Mirepoc nodded at each other.

Yeah. This wasn't too much when compared to a year ago.

They can fight, and they can win. Thus Mirepoc believed.

Kyasariro's escape, Mattalast's condition, and more importantly, the impossible situation of the Guardian Beasts rampaging. Mirepoc suppressed her imminent anxiety and started moving again.

During that time, Kyasariro found herself at the park inside Bantorra Library. She somehow ended up there, absorbed in her escape.

There was no one around. The normal librarians ran outside the Library. All customers were also evacuated.

“W-what am I doing?”

She was panting heavily despite having run probably a kilometer at most. Kyasariro sank down on the lawn.

She even threw away all of her beloved guns. She was assaulted by a sudden anxiety and helplessness.

“...I-I have to go back.”

Kyasariro muttered. Yet her feet didn't move. It wasn't due to fatigue; a fear assaulting her mind paralyzed her feet.

“Why did I run away? I don't get it. What's going to happen?”

She tried organizing her thoughts. The Sixth Archive she fought in a short while ago... and the rampaging Guardian Beasts. The moment she thought of them, for some reason or another, memories started floating inside her mind.

Perhaps having some relevance to it, the face of her friend Olivia rose to her mind. Why did the face of her amiable friend cause her to feel guilt?

Next she thought of Mattalast. As well as something frightening coming out of his mouth. She had the feeling he had told her something, but she couldn't remember it.

That fear was connected to the Guardian Beasts inside her head.

She was supposed to know what this meant but couldn't remember. She didn't know it but remembered it.

"My memory's gone?"

Kyasariro muttered. Did someone use Argax on her? Or was she the one to make use of it?

"I remember..."

It happened just two weeks ago. Two days before the enjoyable party. She had been holding Argax.

She erased her own memories then. In order to escape from the terrible thing she had been told by Mattalast.

"Something... something is coming..."

Was that the rampage of the Guardian Beasts? No. It was something deeper. The true fear only began with them.

“It’s... starting now.”

Kyasariro vomited due to the welling fear inside of her. But even if she ejected everything in her stomach, the fear wouldn’t go away.

“It’s... starting now.”

Gamo distributed orders to his comrades.

“The Fifth Sealed Labyrinth is not wide enough for all of us to fight. We will split into three units, attack one after the other in alternation and repeat.

We will distribute our fighting forces evenly with the first unit gathered around Marfa, the second around Kalne, and the third around Luik. Me and Mirepoc will stay behind for support and command.”

“Roger!”

Everyone answered simultaneously. They pushed their unrest and anxiety deep within their hearts and only thought of fighting. They were the world’s strongest army. They couldn’t lose their concentration in a battle.

“Don’t think of anyone not here. Focus only on your own duties!”

“Yes sir!”

“Relax. We have Yukizona. The Director and Mattalast should also be working. Those people will definitely do something. I would also like an explanation, but there are probably some circumstances preventing them from discussing with us right now.

Believe in Yukizona and the Director. All right?”

The Armed Librarians all nodded. Although they were uneasy, their trust in those people had never been compromised.

“Let’s go...”

However, as soon as Gamo tried issuing the order for assault, he stopped his hand.

Both Gamo and the other Armed Librarians preparing for battle noticed something strange at their backs. They could clearly hear someone’s voice.

There were no traces of Yukizona behind them. There were only Guardian Beasts obstructed by the Barrier. The Guardian Beasts, who couldn’t even let a single bark out.

“Did the Guardian Beasts... speak?”

Mirepoc recalled – before Yukizona had come, several people heard some strange voices. Did they belong to the Guardian Beasts?

No, wait. Can they even speak? And even before that, did they have a will? Weren’t they simple machine-like Magic Beasts that had lacked any will and were only meant for fighting?

But they could definitely hear their voices. Everyone there could clearly hear them.

It both was and wasn’t a voice. It was and wasn’t a sound. It was also unlike either connecting to someone via Thought Sharing nor the recognition flowing inside one’s mind while reading a Book.

It was a transmission without any means. Understanding without any transmission. It was something incomparable and couldn’t be described in words. It was a voice surpassing human understanding.

‘Do not resist.’

‘Yield.’

‘Give up.’

The Guardian Beasts were talking.

‘Follow the destined outcome without any desires, wishes or requests.’

“Wh-what are they saying?”

Gamo held his head. Mirepoc also instinctively blocked her ears. Yet she could still hear their voices.

‘Absolve this Barrier. Release us from the Sealed Labyrinth!’

The voices of the Guardian Beasts echoed. Her head seemed like it would break. She was going mad.

The more they heard their voices the more they seemed to be convinced by them. They started wanting to stop fighting.

“...Fire!”

Gamo shouted. All the Armed Librarians that used guns fired at the Guardian Beasts. However, that didn’t kill even a hundredth of the enemies gushing out from the Labyrinth.

“Don’t listen to them, fight, just fight! Marfa Squad, attack!”

A squad of Armed Librarians commenced an attack against the Guardian Beasts. Scattered by this assault, they stopped talking.

“What was that?”

Mirepoc muttered without thinking.

“Who cares! Fight, fight!”

Gamo shouted.

The Guardian Beasts were monsters created by the Past Overseer Bantorra in order to protect Books. They were, along with the Armed Librarians, the protectors of the Library. Thus they were told.

However, Mirepoc was convinced – it was all wrong. It wasn’t something as simple as that.

These were neither the protectors of Books nor the allies of the Armed Librarians from the very beginning.

What are they? Just what is the thing we call Guardian Beasts?

During the same time, Hamyuts was still inside her office. She was fiddling with the machine on her desk.

“Aah. Aah aah.”

She made noises toward the machine.

“...It’s not getting through, I wonder if it’s broken.”

This was the same machine that Rizzly had used two hours ago to call all Armed Librarians. One of them was also installed in the Acting Director’s Office.

“Oh, do I have to connect this wire?”

Hamyuts finally realized it wasn’t broken. Since this was her first time she wasn’t used to it. She reconnected the loose wire and her voice was finally broadcast in the building.

“Hello everyone, do you hear me? I’m the Acting Director Hamyuts. Please cease all work and listen to meee. All those fighting in the Archive can also leave the Barrier.”

Hamyuts had already mostly grasped the situation in the building using her Sensory Threads. She could even see the expressions of those listening to her. She was even able to tell the Armed Librarians at the Sixth Archive widened their eyes.

“Well then, where should I start? This will be quite the complicated conversation. What should I start from?”

She could hear voices through the Sensory Threads.

“Director, are you fine?”

It was Luik. *How cute of him to worry about me in this sort of situation.*

“Luik-kun, I’m fine. I’m in my office. There’s no need to worry.”

The Armed Librarians inside the Archive started clamoring.

“For now I guess I’ll tell the situation to those in the Archive. Umm, the things you are fighting right now are the beings known as the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

Long, long ago, at the end of the Age of Paradise... they were weapons of annihilation created by the Future Overseer Orntorra.”

Orntorra? Weapons of annihilation? All sorts of voices came clamoring at her.

“We have always called them the Guardian Beasts. You were told that they were the protectors of the Labyrinth, created by Past Overseer Bantorra.

However, that was a lie. A complete and utter lie.”

What do you mean a lie? What’s the Director saying? She heard these voices.

“There are things that I must deeply apologize about to you all. Me and all the other Acting Directors of history have been lying to you.

We’ve told you many, many lies. About enough to say that everything you know is a lie.”

Soon the clamoring died, as if they did not want to miss even a single of Hamyuts’s words.

After waiting for all of them to be quiet, Hamyuts started talking. She spoke clearly as to not let a single thing unspoken.

“Well then, first I will make a serious announcement.

Starting today, Bantorra Library will close down. Including me, all Armed Librarians, trainees, students, normal librarians, and mine workers are all dismissed. All work related to the managing of Books will be stopped.”

Uh? An idiotic sound rose through her Sensory Threads.

“The one deciding this was not me. Since I’m only the *Acting* Director, I don’t have that authority.

The one to decide this can only be the chief executive of this Library, the actual Director.

Starting today, the Director of our Bantorra Library – Ruruta Coozancoona – has decided to close the Library.”

She could hear Gamo muttering.

“...Who’s that? Ruruta?”

“Ruruta Coozancoona. He was the second Director of this Library. He had kicked down the original founder – Past God Bantorra – and became the Director of Bantorra Library.”

“What are you even saying?”

Luik muttered.

Hamyuts stayed silent for a while at that point. It was to let all listeners grasp the situation.

“Umm, it seems like a lot of you can’t understand. Then let me say this again. Starting today Bantorra Library is closed. All of your work ends today.

Everyone, thank you for working hard for so long.”

She could see the mouths of Armed Librarians open in blank amazement. Since it was so funny, Hamyuts distanced her face away from the device and held her mouth.

“Just in case, I will say this again.

Bantorra Library and the Armed Librarians all end today.”

Chapter 3: The Duty of the Proud Slaves

Part 1

Hamyuts's words didn't reach Yukizona and Yuri who were running through the Fifth Labyrinth. Their bodies covered in wounds, the pair pushed through the Labyrinth's path.

Normally, the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth Level would be like a jogging course for them. The Guardian Beasts roaming there would be nothing against the Decay Wave.

However, this time it was different. The powerful Guardian Beasts from the Second or Third Level stood in the siblings' path.

"Don't falter, Yuri! Keep running!"

"Yes, brother!"

Obstructing them was a powerful Guardian Beast that protected the Second Level: the five-headed large snake known as the Jail King Snake. Yukizona intercepted its acidic breath using his Decay Wave. Yuri was protecting herself behind her brother using the power he had transferred to her.

Five heads were raised to attack from all sides simultaneously. Yukizona released his Wave in the shape of a belt to defend himself.

The opening came after he protected against the attack of the Jail King Snake. Yukizona shot his Decay Wave straight ahead.

"Break through! Don't lag behind!"

“Yes!”

He shouted to Yuri at his back and ran straight ahead. The Decay Wave caused a part of the twisting snake’s body to wither. It became a lump of soft ashes. Yukizona tackled that with all of his strength. Piercing through the lump of ashes, Yukizona and Yuri passed through the enemy’s body.

Going through their enemies’ bodies, creating a passage and passing ahead. Although they knew it was quite rash, the pair took this decisive action.

“Uu...!”

Jail King Snake spit acid at Yuri from behind. Yukizona turned around. Some of her defense didn’t make it in time.

“Don’t stop! Run!”

“Yes!”

They ran for their lives as Jail King Snake came from behind. There was no need to defeat it; If they defeated every one of the Beasts, they would only reach half the Labyrinth before exhausting themselves. Their goal right now was just to proceed. And to finally reach the bottommost level.

Next to block their way was the Guardian Beast from the Third Level, a Lancer. It was strong enough that even someone like Noloty or Minth wouldn’t be able to defeat it one on one.

Without using his Decay Wave, Yukizona dodged the spear’s attack with only his body. Yuri, who cut in from the side, kicked to send it flying.

Using the opening of its collapse, they ran ahead.

For several minutes after that, they had no contact with any enemy.

“Just as I thought.”

Yukizona said.

“Almost all Guardian Beasts... no, Beasts of the Final Chapter have gathered in the Fifth Level. Once we enter the Fourth we should have a smooth sailing.”

“Yes.”

“Hurry up. We must finish things no matter what happens.”

“...Yes.”

Yukizona ran ahead determinedly. Behind him Yuri was muttering softly.

Yuri was thinking about her comrades fighting in the entrance of the Labyrinth. They were probably fighting even now without grasping the situation nor knowing the reason for it all.

When Yukizona was asked for an explanation he said nothing. He told them only to follow his orders. This wasn't an appropriate attitude as a leader.

Yuri also knew the reason for this.

In order to explain the situation they would have to reveal secrets that have been concealed until now. Namely, the true history of Bantorra Library and the existence of Heaven slumbering in the Second Sealed Archive.

Concealing this was Yukizona and Yuri's mission.

However, did they really need to be fixated on that mission in this situation?

Was it not impossible hiding it any longer?

Did they have to continue concealing it despite the fact that in front of them was something much more horrible than letting the secrets leak?

"...Brother."

Yet Yuri wasn't able to voice these doubts. She also never thought of defying Yukizona.

"Brother."

"...What is it, Yuri?"

Yukizona stopped and turned around.

"No, it is nothing. Let us hurry."

Yuri kept running without stopping. Yukizona quickly overtook her.

How pitiful, she thought.

My brother still thinks of protecting the secrets and maintaining the order of the Library. He is trying to preserve the Library the same as it was yesterday.

It is impossible though... Even if we overcome this crisis, there is no way we would be able to conceal the secret from all of our comrades.

He is probably the only person to think the Library can keep going as it was. Without a shred of doubts, both Bantorra Library and the Armed Librarians are finished today.

Brother is the only one to not acknowledge this. Yuri watched her brother's back with sorrow.

Just as Yukizona had expected there were almost no Guardian Beasts in the Fourth Level. They realized a few were left by hearing their footsteps, yet they didn't meet them even once.

"Now it becomes easier."

He said to Yuri behind him.

"Yes, brother. More importantly, is your body fine?"

"No problem."

Having said that, it was true that he had exhausted his stamina. The cause was not the battles but rather the cold. Ever since he was born he was extremely weak against the cold. It was because of a heart disease.

Yukizona started slightly coughing as he ran. The cold air of the underground was like poison to his lungs. Because of this he had never participated in regular shelving. This was the first time he entered the Labyrinth ever since his promotion test to a First Grade Armed Librarian.

It was a normal situation this was when Yuri would have paled. Yukizona shot a glance behind him and signaled with his eyes that she didn't have to worry. This cough was not one that would lead to a fit making him unable to move.

“ ... ”

While running, Yukizona suddenly recalled an old memory.

It was the first memory left in his mind. It was from before Yuri, two years his junior, had been born.

His mother and the maid employed in their house clapped their hands and applauded him.

Yukizona, having gotten better at crawling, grabbed the edge of the table and rose up.

At that moment, the young boy caught a violent coughing fit and collapsed. His mother and the maid shrieked. Something black came out of his mouth and Yukizona, who couldn't understand anything, started crying.

That was his first memory.

Yukizona spent all of his life he could remember with the disease in his chest.

It was a rare, natural-born disease. It was neither hereditary nor contagious, but no way to treat it either by Magic or medicine existed. The doctors said that even for those with talent in Magic it would be extremely difficult to acquire one that could treat it.

There was nothing to be done but keeping his chest warm and letting him rest. Yukizona passed most of his boyhood on a bed. During the rest of the time he took walks in the garden on warm days or read books in the library.

His family was wealthy. His mother and father were gentle, and their house's servants all sympathized with him and liked him. He

had no inconveniences in life. There weren't many people who suffered from the same disease, but without any doubt Yukizona was the most privileged among them.

However – or to be more precise, because of it...

In accordance with his growth to adulthood, a dark rage started burning inside Yukizona's heart.

After reaching the age of ten, most youths began to question their own ways of life.

What if he, just like this, spends all his time comfortable and calm, waiting for death. If his life just end like that, then...

What have I been born for? If I was born only to wait for death, it was the same as not being born at all.

That was quite the first-world problem. However, because he was the one experiencing it first-hand he couldn't realize that.

Yet he couldn't vent out his worries. The people surrounding him were far too gentle, and his days were far too peaceful for that.

"What's the matter, brother?"

Yukizona, who grew from a sick boy to one of the strongest Armed Librarians, had been asked by Yuri.

"It's nothing."

Yukizona asked himself why he suddenly recalled the old days. According to what he's heard, people saw their lives flash before their eyes before dying.

Did that explain it?

There certainly was a dreadful crisis looming before him. The siblings were rushing towards their deaths.

“ ... ”

Another scene of the past floated to his mind.

It happened when he was a boy.

The one who disturbed Yukizona's heart the most was his little sister, Yuri. It's not that he hated her. He liked her. She was even his most beloved person. But that was why her existence was unpleasant to him. When she was a child she took away the job of nursing Yukizona from the servants. As she grew up Yuri got a knack for it, and when she passed 10 years old she already did most of the work.

This was an act of her dearly loving her brother, but probably not all there was to it. She also clearly took care of her brother for her amusement. Taking care of Yukizona was an extension of playing house as a kid.

‘Am I your toy?’

He once wanted to say this to Yuri while she put a pocket warmer on his chest.

What was so fun about this? You might be enjoying yourself, but I can't.

I see. So you can have fun. Have as much fun as you want until I die.

His emotions were a mix of envy of his healthy sister and a sense of helplessness.

He had never voiced it or even let it show on his face.

That was how Yukizona originally was.

Their relationship changed when Yuri became 12 and Yukizona 14. On that wintry day, no matter how many logs they burned in the fireplace, the outside cold still penetrated the walls.

Yukizona had a fit of his lung disease. It was the first time in a month. As always it was difficult for him to breathe and he continuously produced a bad-smelling phlegm.

He felt as if his lungs were clogged by coal. No matter how much he coughed, that coal would not come out.

“Young master!”

“Bring a doctor, quickly!”

The servants frantically rubbed Yukizona’s back. They replaced a towel wet with warm water every five minutes. It didn’t even relieve him temporarily.

The frequency of his fits has increased lately. They also became more severe as time went on.

Everything might be over today. If not today then at the next fit. Or perhaps the next one? There wasn’t much difference anyway.

Was the worsening of his condition due to his age? Or was it because Yukizona had given up? Even he couldn’t tell.

His vision darkened by the lack of oxygen. Even when the doctor finally came running there was nothing he could do.

Suddenly, Yuri thrust the doctor away. Then, she ripped the pocket warmer and warm towel away from him by force.

Is she trying to kill me? wondered Yukizona as his consciousness sank into darkness.

“What are you doing, Yuri!”

“Be quiet, mother!”

Yuri put her hand on Yukizona’s bare chest. Then, she closed her eyes and started exhaling deeply.

The next moment a change came to Yukizona’s chest. The coal clogging it up was burned and melted away. The doctor and his mother desperately tried to Yuri away. Yet she clung to her brother’s body and kept her hand on his chest.

A few seconds later, Yukizona opened his mouth.

“...What’re you doing, Yuri?”

Everyone was surprised. He had difficulties even breathing during a fit. Even after it settled down, he wasn’t able to speak for an entire day.

“Yukizona, you can talk?”

“Yeah, I can talk. I suddenly feel better.”

Of all the people in the room, only Yuri was not surprised. She was concentrated on closing her eyes and keeping her contact with him.

“Yuri, what are you doing?”

No reply. She seemed to not even hear anyone.

“...Mom, will you put out the lights?”

Yukizona said. She turned off the electricity. Yuri's palm was dimly shimmering in the darkness. What was that? Everyone except Yuri began staring at that orange light.

With her eyes still closed, Yuri spoke calmly.

"Mother, brother, I might be a genius."

"Is that Magic?"

Yukizona said as he looked at Yuri's hand. Yukizona had never seen any Magic in the fourteen years of his life.

"Yes, it is Magic."

"When did you go through that Magic Deliberation or whatever?"

Yuri shook her head.

"I did not. I just became able to do this before realizing it."

"Is that even possible?"

At the time Yukizona didn't know this, but it was an extremely rare occurrence. It was only made possible due to a sincere wish and a powerful will.

Yuri then spoke.

"At first I just thought I would like to do something like this. Next I thought that I might be able to do so. Just now I was sure I could do it. And then..."

"Yuri!"

While still in the process of healing, Yuri's mom hugged her.

“This is a miracle, aaah, I can’t believe it. The Present Overseer helped us, letting such a thing happen...”

The servants also shed tears as they talked to Yuri.

“Lady Yuri! I’m so happy, I really, really don’t know what to say...”

The doctor also shrugged while smiling.

“Dear me, just now I’ve felt the powerlessness of science. It simply can’t win against Magic or people’s feelings no matter how much it struggles.”

Yuri, her mother, the doctor and the servants. Yukizona looked at all of them happily praising Yuri with somewhat cold eyes.

That’s probably a Magic Right meant to help with my disease. It would probably not be able to treat any other illness. Perhaps it might not even work on another person with the same disease.

My sister is amazing. Despite it being improbable, and without learning anything about Magic, she was still able to save me.

But just what does that mean for me?

For some reason Yukizona felt a terrible loneliness. Even though all around him were only people who worried for him and loved him.

Yukizona raised his body.

“Umm, everyone. Since I’m already fine... could you all please get out?”

Yuri looked at Yukizona as if he had put a damper on her feelings. He muttered embarrassedly as if he disturbed them.

“What’s the matter, big brother?”

“It’s not that I’m angry. I’m just fine already is all.”

Nobody could understand what made him say such a thing. Even he himself couldn’t really understand it.

“...No, I don’t mean it in a bad way. I’m really fine.”

Yukizona raised a smile. With a worried expression, Yuri and the rest left the room.

No one could probably understand his feelings. Because that moment was very beautiful and moving.

The main character of that moving, miraculous scene was Yuri. Yukizona was just a side character. He was nothing more than a poor boy saved by a miracle.

He was pitiful. No one would be able to understand him, but they probably felt horrible pity.

Starting that day, Yukizona became somewhat taciturn.

Yukizona was in low spirits. His father showed some understanding seeing him like that.

“This happens to all boys your age.”

There’s no way it does, thought Yukizona. How many brothers in the entire world were saved by their younger sister’s miraculous powers?

Compared to Yuri’s brilliance Yukizona was nothing more than a shadow. He was only a side character in her brilliant story.

Yuri annoyed him. It didn't mean he didn't love her; the fact that she was the most important person to him hadn't changed. But that only further promoted his sense of inferiority.

And then...

A strange daily routine began for Yukizona. At night, when everyone slept and he was left alone, he began looking at the flowers in his room. It was the flower Yuri arranged after having finished his nursing for that day.

He didn't feel any admiration. Nor was he grateful to her.

Yukizona looked at the flowers with intent to kill buried in his eyes. He was simply venting his anger. He tried to absolve his unspent feelings for Yuri by staring at flowers. He never thought of finding any fault with her. Neither would he hit the vase or stomp on the flowers. He just thought that he would, at least, stare it to death.

These were trivial and miserable emotions. But that was how Yukizona originally was.

However, at the same time, this was the sprouting of his talent.

Geniuses sometimes had bizarre ways of thinking. Or perhaps a genius was born from a bizarre way of thinking. That's how it was.

Yukizona stared at the flowers. He did so with everything he had. That impossible behavior distorted the laws of the world.

One month later, Yuri was puzzled by the fact that the flowers were quick to wilt recently.

Three months later, there were strange germs in Yukizona's room, so the doctor came. At that time Yukizona first noticed what was blooming inside of him.

And half a year later... Yukizona became able to wither a flower just by touching it with his fingers.

A year passed. No it was no longer just flowers; he could also kill bugs and rodents. He called his own ability the Decay Wave. That very same ability brought him all the way to be one of the strongest later.

It was a strange story. The opportunity that gave birth to the strongest man was the jealousy for his excellent sister.

He never spoke of this to anyone. He was too ashamed of it.

He obviously also never told it to the originator, Yuri. However, he later wondered whether she actually had a vague idea about this.

Yukizona decided to pursue the path of an Armed Librarian. There was obviously opposition to this. His sister, his parents, his doctors, his servants and all of his friends opposed; meaning, everyone who knew him.

But Yukizona overcame that opposition.

His wish was, rather than simply live while waiting for death, to try and make his new power useful. He didn't mind shortening his life for that sake.

Yukizona was promoted from a student to a trainee in no time. When he was a student his Decay Wave was half perfected. All he needed to do was to acquire bodily reinforcement Magic as well as knowledge and experience.

Four years passed since his ability has awakened.

One day, Yukizona spoke with his friend Mokkania. They were at the cafeteria near the Library. Yuri was also at his side, but she barely opened her mouth except when Yukizona spoke to her.

“You’ve changed recently.”

They came from the same town and were of the same age. They both possessed a cruel and brutal ability. People around them spoke of them as rivals, but they didn’t have a bad relationship.

“Yeah.”

Yukizona noticed his own change. He was silent even originally, but it became even worse recently.

“You started having a dreadful look in your eyes. It’s hard to talk to you recently.”

“A dreadful look?”

“Yeah. The same kind that Photona-san, Mattalast-san and Ireia-san have.”

“What kind of look is that?”

“Eyes that are normally gentle, but can readily kill people.”

Yukizona thought for a while.

“I have no choice when it’s for my mission... Either hurting people or killing them.”

“Killing people is your mission?”

“I might kill people for the mission’s sake. It’s different from simple manslaughter.”

Mokkania seemed lonely as he shook his head.

“You’ve changed.”

“I haven’t changed. I grew up.”

Yukizona definitely has changed, though. From a gentle, sickly boy, he became a cool-headed warrior. It was such a sudden change that it surprised even himself. He thought that changing one’s environment truly caused changes in people.

“Why have you changed like that?”

Mokkania asked drearily. Despite his powerful ability, his naiveté never disappeared.

Yukizona thought of his life as an Armed Librarian for the sake of his still-naïve friend. For a while he organized the thoughts in his head and then spoke.

“I’ve been thinking about something lately. I believe that life is a duty.”

“Meaning?”

“I don’t know if one needs some sense of duty to live, or if it shapes life by itself, yet both of them are inseparable.”

“...”

“People all have their own duties. And it’s not something they’re born with; I believe that they find it, or perhaps are given it, during their lives.

In some cases they find it by themselves; perhaps their families brought it forth. Sometimes their countries give them their duty; they have to defeat their enemies. I believe that fate is also a kind of duty.

Duties brings hardships. However, at the same time they also bring happiness.

It is said that adjoining happiness and misfortune creates completeness. A duty lies within that.

In short, I believe that life is made up of one's given duty and their approach to it."

Yukizona glanced at Yuri who sat next to him.

In the past she had happily nursed him, meaning she found her duty in him.

"I believe that becoming an Armed Librarian is my duty. Not fulfilling it is the same as not living. By thinking like that, people will change."

Mokkania shook his head.

"This worldview is full of holes."

"I'm neither a philosopher nor a teacher. I don't know if this is correct. But that's how it is for me."

"I'm different. I won't become like you."

"No way. You will definitely change as well."

Mokkania shook his head again, a miserable expression on his face.

“In the past I had had no duty. I lived without being burdened with anything. However, I’m different now. I became an Armed Librarian and got myself a duty.”

“...A duty, huh...”

“I’m grateful for the Armed Librarians. Without them, I wouldn’t have become anything.”

“You’re grateful for your duty, and because of that you can fight. That gratitude makes you strong. How fortunate for you.”

“Yeah.”

“...But I’m different.”

In the end Yukizona’s words didn’t reach Mokkania’s heart. Later they ended up going on separate ways. Mokkania became a traitor and Yukizona became the successor to the Acting Director.

It’s not like he couldn’t understand Mokkania’s feeling. It’s just that Yukizona felt differently.

I will keep being grateful to everything that gave me a duty. To Yuri... to my family... to Bantorra Library and to my comrades. To the people of the world and their Books.

To everything that gave me a duty.

Yukizona had received innumerable favors to repay – thus he felt.

Part 2

After being promoted to an Armed Librarian, Yukizona worked brilliantly. Instead of him not going into the Labyrinth, he gained many achievements outside the Library.

He monitored the ceasefire in the Region of Kuler and assisted the maintenance of public order. He discovered a new mine and took command of its excavation. He established a system of international cooperation pertaining to Book-related crimes.

Yukizona became famous to the outside world. His friend Mokkania also did steady work. No matter which of the two, Yukizona or Mokkania, would become the next Acting Director, Bantorra Library would be peaceful – this was said in many places.

However, during that period Hamyuts and Mattalast were secretly worrying.

He only came to know of this later, but apparently they had held the following discussion.

“What should we do about the next Acting Director? For real.”

Hamyuts held her head while looking at both of their documents in the Acting Director’s Office.

“There’s definitely no suitable person.”

Mattalast also racked his brains. Public opinion was that Yukizona and Mokkania were perfect fits. However, they could not inherit the office.

“Both Yukizona and Mokkania are surprisingly good kids. What can we do? Why are such good kids Armed Librarians in the first place?”

Hamyuts said, seemingly completely lost.

The Acting Director could not be a good person; their job was to deceive the entire world and carry out evil, after all. Best were those who, like Photona and Mattalast, were villains in good people’s skin. The second best were people who were actual villains such as Hamyuts.

Actually good people like Yukizona and Mokkania were the worst for the job.

“Bonbo is quite a piece of shit, but... he can’t serve as the Acting Director.”

“Anyway, seems like we have no choice except Yukizona or Mokkania. Well, we just need to see how things are.”

Three years passed. Yukizona kept working as an Armed Librarian without any change. While he always appeared cold and heartless, his judgment would be usually correct. His reputation didn’t change at all.

The time came for Yukizona to be told of the truth. Yukizona and Yuri were brought along with Hamyuts down to the Second Sealed Labyrinth.

They were told it was something important. However, it seemed like Hamyuts was hesitating about something.

Without making any speculations, Yukizona and Yuri walked quietly.

“...I feel a bit bad telling you this.”

Hamyuts said.

“Why?”

“Because you actually believed it... You believed that the Armed Librarians are allies of justice.”

What a horrible thing to say, thought Yukizona.

Frankly speaking, Yukizona quite disliked Hamyuts. His reason was different from everyone else's, though. It was because he thought that she was impure as an Armed Librarian.

“If that's not true, then I have no reason to work as an Armed Librarian.”

Hamyuts sighed deeply while walking.

“Aah, maybe I really should stop. What can I do after being told that? How troublesome. Help me, Yuri.”

Yuri raised an eyebrow after being told this.

“Yukizona. Unfortunately, the Armed Librarians are not what you thought. They're neither allies of justice nor defenders of order.

I think you'll be quite shocked. But don't kill yourself or anything.”

And then Hamyuts started speaking. She told them of the true history of the Armed Librarians he offered his gratitude to.

Moving ahead in time, it was January 12, 1929.

Inside Bantorra Library, where chaos now ruled, Hamyuts spoke in front of the voice device.

“Well then, it is time for me to also tell you the truth. I will tell you the true history of this Bantorra Library.

If you don’t understand it you will also not understand the current situation. Please listen calmly, everyone.”

Hamyuts inserted a long silence so that everyone would firmly understand what she said so far.

Four years ago she had the same talk with Yukizona. She also paused like that back then. The story this time was directed at the entire Armed Librarians body.

“Well then... really now, where should I start?

I know, I’ll start with an allegory.”

By using her Sensory Threads, she checked the situation of the Armed Librarians in front of the Sixth Archive who were listening to her. The Library, that should have turned into a battlefield, was now completely silent.

“Have your parents read you fairy tales and such when you were children?

And in these stories were evil people who wanted to rule the world, right?

Like a demon lord, an evil king, something like that.

In these kinds of stories they would end up exterminated by the allies of justice. These heroes protected the peace of the world.

But haven’t you ever tried imagining another possibility? If the demon lord had taken over the world, what would have happened?”

There were probably only a few people who did so. More importantly, they didn't have the leisure to think of such a thing.

"The world we live right now is one controlled by one such evil sovereign.

In contrast to fiction, no allies of justice have appeared in reality.

The emperor made the whole world submit to him, and no one was able to oppose him any longer. People became the servants of that evil emperor and continued their lives.

The truth is that this is the kind of world we live in.

But there are also good things about this. Most of the people living in the world don't know they are being controlled by that evil emperor. They don't even know he exists. As long as they don't go against the evil emperor, they can live peacefully enough.

Thinking like this, it isn't so bad, right?"

Hamyuts was a bit dissatisfied because response had been too weak. *I think that was a great allegory thought...*

"Obviously, since the evil emperor is a bad guy, he uses underlings to control the populace. Those underlings, while possessing power and authority, do bad things all over the world.

They are us, the Armed Librarians."

She knew the Armed Librarians all raised their eyebrows. They couldn't understand the true meaning of her words.

"I know it's hard to believe, but this is the truth.

Shall we move to a more concrete topic? Let us move to the origin of this world and the Armed Librarians.”

Hamyuts’s story continued further. She repeated the same talk she had had with Yukizona in the past.

“The world 2000 years ago was called the Age of Paradise. You all know this, right.

We don’t know how long it lasted. It is said to have been for 10,000 years, and maybe even 100,000 years.

During that time, the world was governed by the three World Overseers.

Future Overseer Orntorra guided people, Present Overseer Toitorra ruled nature, and Past Overseer Bantorra recorded all events.

Their rule was perfect. It was very different from today’s Present Management Agency or any government.

The same way, people of the world were also different from now. Everyone in the world were nice, gentle people like Noloty. During that time, people lived in peace without any conflict or hatred.

People also had pleasant and wonderful comrades at their sides. Fairies that led people astray, respectful and awe-inducing dragons, as well as other monsters and fantastic creatures. However, they were never people’s enemies. They only existed to bring some color to the world.

It was a wonderful age. Everyone was like a child in a cradle.

However, we can't see how the Age of Paradise was with our own eyes. Because we can't read the Books of that time.

If any of us saw a Book from the Age of Paradise even once, we might become sick of living in this world."

The Armed Librarians were so silent that they would be able to hear a pin fall on the floor. They had to listen to her every word.

"Why had that Age of Paradise ended? That is a problem all historians in the world are working on, but we actually know the truth.

Simply put, the reason for its ending was the appearance of wicked people.

Those wicked people were those who possessed desire. Everyone has some desire, though. This means they had more desire than what the World Overseers had permitted.

The wicked people sought to win more than anyone, to own more than other people, to be more happy than other people, to be someone special, different than others.

The change came truly slowly. While there weren't any criminals or villains such as we have in our time now, the seeds of evil were sown and budded.

They increased slowly but surely.

Soon, people came to know of hating, of stealing, of ridicule, of control. The wicked people opposed the World Overseer and sought more prosperity. Then they exterminated the good people, controlled them and spread the seeds of unhappiness.

No good people of the Age of Paradise are now left in our world. All of us are the descendants of wicked people. An evil existence going against God; people who seek what cannot be obtained.”

All of the Armed Librarians were probably thinking: How was this story related to Bantorra Library? And how did it relate to the current situation?

“Ah, hold on for a bit longer and listen.

The world got stained in pain and sorrow by the hands of the wicked people. Crime was created and a policing force was born. Nations were born and began collecting taxes. Conflicts took place and trials were held.

Even so, we have no idea how better it was than our current world. At least people like me hadn’t existed then, as well as those like Kachua or Cigal.

But finally, a certain man was born. A man who openly waved the flag of revolution against the World Overseers and sought to destroy them.

His name was Ruruta Coozancoona. The wickedest person in the world. As well as the possessor of the greatest power in this world.”

Ruruta Coozancoona. She had also mentioned that name before: he was the true Director of Bantorra Library. And he was the one to sentence the Armed Librarians their end.

“He had fought the World Overseer and defeated them. So they disappeared from this world. Not only defeating the Gods, Ruruta Coozancoona also devoured their power and made it his own.

Future Overseer Orntorra had his power stolen by Ruruta and vanished from this world.

Present Overseer Toitorra became an existence that only maintains the laws of the world.

Past Overseer Bantorra lost his power to collect Books. The generated Books were abandoned by their Overseer and started being buried in the ground. This Library lost its master and became ruins.”

Impossible, all the Armed Librarians were probably thinking. *This Library was supposed to have been created by Bantorra and keep existing indefinitely...*

“After defeating the World Overseers, Ruruta Coozancona made this Library his own castle. He then unleashed the power he stole from the Gods – the “Beasts of the Final Chapter” in the Labyrinth and made them his guards.

We now call them “Guardian Beasts”. Their real job is not to protect Books; they prevent people from approaching Ruruta who sleeps in the depths of the Library.”

Several Armed Librarians turned around. The Guardian Beasts – no, the Beasts of the Final Chapter were swarming in the staircase leading to the Sealed Labyrinth.

“You all know how strong the Beasts of the Final Chapter are. Yet their power is nothing more than a fragment of Ruruta’s strength.

If Ruruta becomes serious for even a single moment, he would be able to kill each and every last person in the world. As he ruled Bantorra Library, he showed this power to the populace.

Thus no one was able to oppose him. Not only was he the world's strongest, he also took the power of the Gods.

Thus Ruruta became the ruler of the world. No, perhaps it would be better to say owner. He holds that much power, after all.

Well then, what did the person who owns the world do after this?

Becoming a king and governing the world would be foolish. The owner of the world wouldn't bother with something like that.

Collecting wealth would also be meaningless. Ruruta already owns everything in the world, after all. He overcame even death. He had nothing to do.

And the thing he wanted in the end...

Was to obtain happiness.

Ruruta told the following to the people of the world. Because everything in the world belonged to him, even the happiness they could feel was his.

He ordered all excavated Books to be brought to him.

He received the happiness embedded in Books as an offering.

The people who obeyed Ruruta worked to dig out the Books buried underground. They worked frantically. After all, if they displeased Ruruta they would have been killed on the spot.

Ruruta's servants used people to work in the mines. Those who weren't working were mercilessly whipped and those who opposed were slaughtered. They gathered people with power from the world in order to employ miners.

This was the beginning of the Armed Librarians.

Our true identity is Ruruta's slaves. The real duty of the Armed Librarians is to bring Books to Heaven.

Yes, we have been deceiving you. For a long, long time."

She could hear murmurs coming from the Sensory Threads. She couldn't tell who said it.

"...The Director's insane."

Hamyuts removed her face from the device and let a chuckle slip out. Why did everyone respond like that?

Four years ago Yukizona did the same. He listened to Hamyuts's story while descending the Labyrinth.

Yukizona was thinking: *The Director seems to have become crazy. We have to stop our descent and quickly bring her to a hospital.*

Someone like Ruruta couldn't possibly exist. The Armed Librarians couldn't possibly be slaves offering Books.

"It has to be a lie, right?"

He could hear Yuri's small mutter. He couldn't tell if Hamyuts wasn't able to hear her or else just ignored her.

The three people reached the Second Sealed Archive in the middle of their talk. Hamyuts put her hand to the door.

"You don't believe me, huh. I know how you feel."

She slowly pushed the door.

“But when you see it you’ll believe. Here lies the real Director of Bantorra Library, Ruruta.”

Yukizona saw what lay at the other side of the door.

It was a bizarre tree in the middle of the Archive. Yukizona shook from the overwhelming pressure felt from it. Yuri snuggled up to his shoulder.

“You don’t have to be so scared. As long as we don’t attack him Ruruta won’t do anything. For now, at least.”

Hamyuts entered the Second Archive. Yukizona also advanced while shielding Yuri.

He just couldn’t believe what she told him now. That terrible sense of intimidation... it wasn’t anything created by the Past Overseer Bantorra. There was no way he would have created such a wicked being.

“Do you now believe everything, I wonder?”

He couldn’t answer for a while. He exhaled his cold breath while gazing at the tree.

“This can’t be.”

Yukizona barely was able to speak. The tree starting swaying in front of him.

“Oh, don’t say anything rude. That tree is our boss after all.”

Hamyuts said and grinned.

“Now, shall we continue our talk?”

Hamyuts started talking again. It was the truth that further tormented Yukizona, who had believed in the justice of the Armed Librarians.

Hamyuts kept talking through the voice device to the Armed Librarians on the other side.

“Have you ever been told this by a teacher or your mom when you were little? When you lie once, you have to keep lying in order to make it consistent. And you end up needing to make many more lies. Before long you would become unable to make any moves and everything would end up exposed after all. That’s what I was taught.

You’ve listened to your mothers, right?

That’s just like the history of the Armed Librarians.”

Hamyuts’s smile was full of malice.

“Now, let us move to what happened about a hundred years after the Armed Librarians have been established.

There were only the Armed Librarians who kept squeezing out Books and the people of the world who were being killed. This period continued for about a century.

However, Ruruta gradually became less and less satisfied. There were only Books of those who rebelled against the Armed Librarians and those who were massacred by them. All of the Books produced during that time were boring.

The Armed Librarians were also gradually becoming exhausted. Day after day, they had to deal with rebellions and their suppression, decreasing their strength.

Here came the First Acting Director Masrai Cernel. He was a great person who could also be called Bantorra Library's second founder.

All of the Armed Librarians knew his name. No history book in existence didn't mention his name.

"Masrai realized there were limits of controlling people by power. Even if you hold down everything by force, that same force will come back at you. The rulers will eventually lose their power and the system will collapse.

But if the people of the world rebelled against Ruruta, any and all of them would be killed.

Masrai reformed the Armed Librarians.

What he did was to "embellish" them.

They needed a pretense to let people rule people. They needed authority. They needed prestige. Deluding the populace into thinking the influential people were great was the best method to rule them.

Masrai's goal was to make the evil organization of the Armed Librarians be reborn as allies of justice.

He began the reform. First he thoroughly purged all Armed Librarians working on evil. It was horrible. Even though they were conducting evil for Ruruta's sake, now they were being purged for his sake.

Next Masrai gave bread and circus to the populace. He assigned them fair taxes and work. He also created fun festivals and exhibitions. He had captured the hearts of the populace in no time.

And then he told the people:

The Armed Librarians are a group of people ordered by the Past God Bantorra, who had left this world, to oversee Books. Until now they were evil, unfairly taking Books away, but I, who received orders from Past God Bantorra, will manage every Book from now on.

Managing Books is in order to protect the world's peace and people's death. That is why the populace has the obligation to follow the Armed Librarians.

With these words, the rebellion was perfectly extinguished. The people of the world thought that if these were orders from the great Past Overseer then they had no choice.

What weird creatures humans are. Although nothing has changed with the fact that they were suppressed by force, just by insisting on legitimacy it made them shut up.

And thus the Armed Librarians were reborn from an organization that just collects Books to be allies of justice. It had to be done like that.

Masrai's reform was a success. Starting from that time the Armed Librarians increased the power of their organization and consequently the world became peaceful because of it.

However, the name of the Director Ruruta became a complete taboo. Since they decided that Past God Bantorra was to be the Director, the name of the real one couldn't come out.

And so Bantorra Library overcame its first crisis."

The hair-raising and cruel history lesson continued.

"Three or four hundred years passed since then. Well, a lot's happened. You can read about it in history textbooks.

Explaining only generally, the Armed Librarians were split into an organization managing Books and an organization that governed the populace. The latter was independent and became the Present Management Agency. Furthermore, from that uniform rule it began to shift into divided governments based on regions. The so-called states were born.”

She left out the history of the Present Agency and the change into countries. It was irrelevant.

“The Armed Librarians have also changed during this period.

They collected Books from the world’s mines, sorted out Books of happiness and offered them to Ruruta. Worthless Books were left in the Labyrinth for the time being so they could lend them to people who wanted to read them when the need arises. No one could pass through the Beasts of the Final Chapter wandering around the Labyrinth except Armed Librarians.

And thus the system was created.

Well, that means that at the time our current system was established.

Oh yeah. From that period the only ones to know of Ruruta’s existence were the Armed Librarian executives. There should be only few people who know the truth in order to protect the secret, after all.”

And with that the story came to its first stop for now. Hamyuts removed her mouth from the device and decided to take a breather.

When Yukizona had finished listening to her story he was also speechless. The history, his duty... everything was a lie. They were practically dancing in their palms until now.

Seeing the stunned Yukizona, Hamyuts sighed.

“Yukizona. I’ve argued with Matt whether to tell you or not. Can you withstand our reality? Mattalast said you’d be fine though.”

“...”

I can’t, he wanted to say. He wanted to immediately drink the water of Argax and forget all about it.

“There’s also old Ireia. We haven’t told her the truth. She is a proud person and somewhat inflexible. Everyone thought that she wouldn’t be able to bear working as a slave to Ruruta.”

Hamyuts said.

“There’s also the option to not accept. In that case we will erase your memories with the water of Argax. Naturally you will not be able to assume office as the Acting Director, though. But I don’t know how much better doing that will be.”

Yukizona said nothing.

“Brother...”

Yuri also said nothing besides her brother’s name.

Yukizona suddenly reached for a Book. It was an ancient one, close to being the oldest Book stored in the entire Library.

There was once a certain warrior. His name didn’t matter.

In the ancient society he lived in, people came to fight and pillage his village as a daily occurrence. He fought to protect his village ever since he was young. He became stronger by simply fighting again and again. Even the modern Armed Librarians were probably all a bunch of weaklings when compared to him.

He kept the village peaceful with his powers. In this dark world, only his village was surrounded by smiles.

However, that gave birth to misfortune. It happened one night. The warning bells were rung. The sounds of burning torches and a neighing horses came into the village.

He already knew of the presence of Book looters. As well as their repulsive name of “Armed Librarians”.

The several tens of Armed Librarians were trampling the village with the loud sounds of hooves.

“Books!”

“Give us your Books!”

The bandits wore inferior, dirty clothing. They had a cruel expression, intoxicated by slaughter. The warrior took out his sword and charged ahead to fight the wicked Armed Librarians.

“Everyone, get your weapons! Get the women and children away!”

While swinging his sword, he called out to the other villagers.

“As if we’d let you!”

One of the Armed Librarians cast Magic to put the villagers to sleep. The warrior barely held on with his mental strength, but

everyone else couldn't resist. The Armed Librarians started crushing the villagers that collapsed along the road.

"You bastards, you bastards!!!"

The warrior shouted as he knocked off the Armed Librarians all by himself. He shouted for the villagers to wake up, but they all passed away while sleeping peacefully.

"Surround him!"

"Shoot arrows from behind!"

He defeated seven, or even eight people all by himself, but he was still heavily outnumbered. He was surrounded, stabbed by spears from all direction and collapsed.

Unfortunately, since he was so robust he did not die immediately. Even as his blood flowed, he could barely open his eyes and hear things. He witnessed the slaughter of the villagers he was supposed to have protected.

Soon, there were no more any moving people around.

"Is it all over? My dear friends the Armed Librarians."

A single man appeared. This man, holding a stone dagger in hand, felt different from the others.

"It is over. We leave everything to you, Lascall Othello-dono."

The man stabbed his blade into the ground. A Book was suddenly created.

Reading it, all of the Armed Librarians starting laughing among themselves.

“What a happy village. They’ve never been hungry or sick.”

“Hahaha, a big catch. With just this Ruruta-sama will be satisfied for a whole year.”

The warrior thought it was devilish. Could humans really do such cruel things to each other? Compared to the Age of Paradise several centuries ago this was hell. It was better not being born into this world.

“I will kill... kill...”

The fallen warrior clenched the earth. Seeing that, a single Armed Librarian spoke.

“I wonder how’s that guy’s Book?”

Peeking into his face, another Armed Librarian spoke.

“No, he’s no good. He’s not happy, after all.”

At long last, after hearing these words, he died.

Part 3

Yukizona touched another Book. It was the same ancient world as in that man's Book. This time it was the Book of a woman.

She went on a journey to search for her lost husband. She missed him. She wanted to see him again even only once. She just wanted to see him; she kept journeying while thinking this.

Her journey didn't end even when she found out about her husband's death. Her wish was to be at his side. She wanted to live the rest of her life with his Book. Wishing just for this, she dove into the mines.

The mines were like living hell. The scary Armed Librarians mercilessly whipped and enslaved the miners. The corpses of those who became sick from harsh labor were piled next to the mine. The mountain of bodies grew larger by the day.

During all that, the woman merely kept working with her wish to meet her husband.

However...

"GIVE HIS BOOK BACK!"

She was finally able to excavate her husband. However, the Book was taken before she could even lay a single finger on it. She begged for them to let her have a glance, to let her read it even once, but they rejected it. She shouted, rampaged and was restrained.

"Shut up!"

An Armed Librarian whipped her hard. Since she was an ordinary person her body became covered in blood and pieces of her meat scattered.

“It’s my Book! That person’s Book! It’s mine!”

She yelled. The Armed Librarian swung his whip down with scorn.

“You idiot! As if there’s something like ‘your Book’ in this world!”

She was struck again and again and again. Poison entered her body from the wounds and she died with agony. She asked to read her husband’s Book until the very end.

Having finished reading the Book, Yukizona shook with anger. It wasn’t simply an inexcusable act of brutality; they also unashamedly called themselves Armed Librarians.

“Yukizona. These are the real Armed Librarians. Their way of doing things was different, but the things they were doing were the same.”

Hamyuts said.

“Unforgivable...”

Yukizona murmured while tightly grasping the bookshelf. Hamyuts sighed.

“If you won’t agree it’s quite troublesome. Since Mokkaia is like that, and Bonbo is useless, and Kyasariro or Marfa don’t have enough power...”

Hamyuts was already starting to think of her next plan.

Yukizona then touched another Book.

It was later than the previous two Books. It was from the period when the Armed Librarians had been reborn as protectors of peace. He felt no anger at this Book. They were fulfilling their duties as defenders of the populace.

It was the Book of an Armed Librarian – a person second in place to the Acting Director.

“Bantorra Library Director Ruruta-sama.”

He and the Acting Director of the time knelt in front of the tree. The Acting Director was next to the tree and the other man behind it.

“We present to you chosen Books from the world that you own. Please accept them.”

The Acting Director held several Books. He brought them closer to the tree in order. As they got close to it, the Books started breaking apart and disappeared.

He touched the final Book. Both the Acting Director and the man behind him tensed.

“This is the last Book.”

Saying so, the Acting Director brought the Book closer.

Now, the other man thought.

The next moment, the Book was turned into a short sword. It was only about as long as a middle finger and had the appearance of a caterpillar. It was one of the Memorial Weapons, the Ever-Crying Magic Blade Acharai. He had located it in order to destroy Heaven.

He made the Magic Blade appear to be a Book using his Magic.

The Acting Director thrust out the Ever-Crying Magic Blade. His speed was not inferior to Mattalast or Hamyuts. It was supposed to be the perfect formation to destroy Ruruta.

However, nothing happened. The Acting Director who held the short sword was stuck in place with it pointed ahead. He failed. The moment he was ready to die, he heard a voice inside his head.

‘Offer up the Acting Director’s Book.’

The one speaking was Ruruta.

‘That fool is now inside my dream. A dream where he destroyed me and became a hero. He is probably enveloped in happiness inside that dream right now.’

The Acting Director’s head fell down like a wilted camellia flower. The other man trembled while being showered in the Acting Director’s spurting blood.

His feet wouldn’t move.

‘Let us forgive your foolish act. But there will not be a next time.’

No sooner had he heard these words than he bowed down. He cried, wailed and apologized while wetting himself. He could do nothing else to escape his fear.

‘You’re telling me to forgive you, huh. You are a foolish human. I also have people who are useful and those who are useless. You have the duty to deliver his Book to me. Therefore I need you.’

Just as he was told, he offered up the Acting Director’s Book.

And even after this, he kept living as an Armed Librarian. And he said the following to the next Acting Director, repeating it again and again:

You must never go against Ruruta. No matter what happens, do not go against him.

If another rebel appears, kill them. If anyone seems like they would rebel kill them as well.

Yukizona read yet another Book.

It was a somewhat new Book. The Acting Director 500 years ago was a great Magic researcher as well as warrior.

He and his comrades used the Spinning Doll Ückück in an attempt to destroy Heaven. They gathered in one corner of the Sealed Labyrinth, sitting around it.

What they wanted was pure destructive power – pure power to surpass Ruruta. They believed that it wasn't impossible.

A pebble containing mineral matter was placed in front of the crouching Spinning Doll. The precious metal inside that pebble became the origin of their Magic.

The Acting Director recited the chant.

“A certain weight possesses the exponentiation of the speed of light, and will turn weight itself into power. Bend space, unfix time, basing yourself on the principle of relativity, grant power into our Spinning Doll.”

They were executing the biggest taboo in the history of Magic. Later, the people who feared this excessive force and killing power

made another Spinning Doll to activate a Magic that would impose that forbidden technique to never be used again.

This forbidden technique brought forth a pure, overwhelming destructive power. *Controlling it was impossible all along. Ruruta, us fools and the entirety of Bantorra Library will all be erased. But I don't mind that,* thought the Acting Director.

The era was just after the Ever-Laughing Witch Shiron had scattered the seeds of disaster. All around the world innocent people had lost their lives to Dragon Pneumonia.

The Acting Director was tortured by his feelings of self-reproach; the sin of his inability to stop Shiron and Wyzaf. He was probably trying to atone for it by at least taking Ruruta along with him.

“Spinning Doll, activate.”

In accordance to his voice the Spinning Doll began dancing. Immediately afterward, Ückück's head fell off.

And at the next moment they could all hear a voice coming from afar.

‘I have told you this again, and again and again.’

We weren't supposed to be noticed by Ruruta until after we had activated it... Ruruta used his own power to drown out the Spinning Doll's.

‘It is my intention for this world to exist. The world exists because I need it to.’

An arrow of light came flying from far away. One of the men sitting in the circle was pierced by it.

Penetrated by the light arrow, his body rapidly swelled and burst apart.

‘Perhaps you were all thinking that everything would be settled with your death. I must act in order to correct that misunderstanding.’

The could hear explosive sounds from the Library overhead. Even from this deep in the Labyrinth.

‘You might still not understand by me killing just several hundreds of people. So listen. How many sacrifices will be required until you do? Thousands? Tens of thousands? Or will you not understand until I kill seventy percent of the world?’

The Acting Director’s expression was already a step before complete insanity. He was unable to stop Shiron, could not defeat Ruruta, and caused many other innocent people to die.

‘Well then, can you understand?’

“...We... understand.”

‘What?’

“That no matter what we do it’s useless.”

‘Indeed. Bring me the Books of happy people. Attempting anything else would be meaningless.’

The Acting Director slowly brought his hands to his neck. He tightened his grip until he broke his neck with a snap.

Ruruta announced further.

‘If you understand I will pardon you. All so you can live in this world.’

Unable to look anymore, Yukizona released his fingers.

‘No matter what we do it’s useless’.

Yukizona felt as if he could hear these words beyond space and time.

It was not an illusion: Ruruta sought the understanding of all Acting Directors and all humans.

The world was his possession. He told them to understand that fact.

“Are you able to accept it?”

Hamyuts said with a tone without any expectations. Yuri averted her gaze from Yukizona. They were probably both thinking that he would refuse.

He certainly thought of doing so at first.

“Accepting it due to half-hearted feelings such as because there are no other alternatives won’t be good at all. If you’re going to accept it you have to accomplish your duty even in exchange for your life.”

Hamyuts said.

“Brother. There is no need to think about this. Let us refuse and leave Bantorra Library. We are being made fools of.”

Yuri said. Yukizona kept silently staring at the tree and thinking.

“I...”

How long was he hesitating? Yukizona spoke somewhat quietly yet with a firm will.

“I will accept it. I will serve Ruruta Coozancoona and bring him Books of happiness.”

The one to be surprised was not only Yuri. Hamyuts also seemed to give up on making him accept it.

“...Doesn't seem like it's on a whim.”

“Yes.”

“Do you understand? If you become the Acting Director, you will have to carry about evil deeds.”

“I realize that. Even so, I accept.”

“Brother, will you not reconsider?”

Yuri pulled on his sleeves in an attempt to stop him. However, Yukizona did not change his thinking.

“But why, brother?”

“Yuri. It's to protect the people of the world.”

“...”

Ignoring her confusion, Yukizona began to talk. He spoke towards the silent tree.

“Ruruta Coozancoona. Do not misunderstand.

I do understand that one cannot win against you and that we have no choice but bring Books to you. But I will not swear my loyalty to you.

My duty is to protect the people of the world. I will become the Acting Director to protect the people from you.

As long as I'm here, I won't let you kill anyone. Absolutely."

The tree's branches swayed.

"Ruruta Coozancoona. Don't think you can control even people's hearts."

Yukizona stared at the tree. It showed no other response other than swaying its branches. What was he thinking? Or was he not thinking at all? He couldn't tell.

Four years later, Yukizona ran ahead to fulfill his duty. He wanted to protect the people of the world against Ruruta who's started his move.

Yukizona passed through the Fourth Sealed Archive and entered the Third Sealed Labyrinth. Starting there the Labyrinth became complex; it would take about a third of the whole distance to pass through. Yukizona wondered if Ruruta was still inside the Second Sealed Archive. Or did he already move aiming for the surface?

"Seems like there aren't any Beasts of the Final Chapter here."

Yuri spoke at his back.

"Yeah."

"But why did Ruruta make his move?"

Yuri said. Yukizona wondered the same.

There was no way Ruruta couldn't tell how the Armed Librarians were currently organized. Inviting their collapse shouldn't be a good plan to him.

"...Can't be... is it because of Kachua?"

Had Ruruta chosen not the Armed Librarians but Kachua's Indulging God Cult? Perhaps they were able to bring him happiness more efficiently.

There certainly was the possibility of Ruruta thinking so. But in that case it wouldn't explain why it took him over a year since Kachua's death to act.

He was neutral, or perhaps indifferent in the fight between Kachua and the Armed Librarians. He had no reason to act now.

"Maybe this was something caused by Yankuu or Kyasariro?"

Yukizona spoke to Yuri behind him. They had already crushed the sprouts of rebellion just two weeks ago. Perhaps Ruruta was acting to eliminate all those rebels.

"That is not possible. For Ruruta to make such a move because of these children..."

Yuri denied. That rebellion was crushed long before it even reached Ruruta. It didn't inflict any damage to him.

"No, I don't know."

But Yukizona was still thinking. Weren't Yankuu and Kyasariro decoys? Wasn't the real enemy lurking in their shadows?

It was only a hunch, but it hit the mark. Behind Olivia there was also Enlike.

A rebel has appeared and in response to that Ruruta began his move. Yukizona became convinced of that. If so, what should he do? How could he quell Ruruta's anger and protect Bantorra Library?

"...Tch."

He clicked his tongue. The Armed Librarians were originally an organization that existed for Ruruta's sake. And now he had to protect it from Ruruta's hands...

That hated Ruruta. He simply kept exploiting them without producing anything. He left even the method of squeezing out what he wanted to the people under his control.

He was an unreasonable being that couldn't even be called a tyrant. Yukizona felt anger that such a being existed in this world.

"Brother, what are you going to do?"

"It depends on Ruruta. Try to think as well."

"Yes."

Yukizona couldn't think of any way to quell Yukizona's anger, but considered trying to offer up his life to calm him.

At that moment, Yukizona's feet stopped. Although nothing was there at the depth of the Labyrinth, he could feel a large being.

Yukizona turned on his heels.

"Let's go back to the Fourth Sealed Archive's entrance."

"What is the matter?"

"Ruruta's approaching."

Yuri also noticed some presence coming from the underground. She gulped tensely.

They both returned to the front of the Fourth Sealed Archive. No matter which path of the Labyrinth he chose, to come to the surface he would definitely have to pass through there. As long as they're here, they could avoid a stupid mistake such as missing each other on the way.

Yukizona released the maximal amount of Decay Wave he could muster and spread it around. It was an improvised barrier that would stop anything that tries to cross it.

He wasn't thinking of fighting Ruruta; he just wanted to talk. But even so, he wanted to create the bare minimum of defense.

The pair quietly awaited for Ruruta.

'Yukizona Hamlow, huh?'

After a while, a voice echoed inside his head. It was Thought Sharing. It didn't belong to Mirepoc. He already knew that even Ruruta Coozancoona could use that ability.

'Why did you come here?'

"I have something to ask of you, Ruruta Coozancoona."

Yukizona replied not in his thoughts, but using words. Ruruta had not only Thought Sharing but also super perceptive abilities. He should be able to hear him.

"Why have you caused the Beasts of the Final Chapter to move? The Armed Librarians will be destroyed if it keeps like that."

'Yes. I have no need for them anymore.'

A chill passed through Yukizona's back. But he couldn't be scared. No matter what happened he had to persuade Ruruta and protect the Armed Librarians.

"Is there anything to be dissatisfied about in our duty? We have managed the Books and sent all those containing happiness to you. Minth began working as the new Overseer of Paradise. We should be able to keep providing you with the Books of happy people.

You shouldn't have any problems with that."

'...Huhu.'

A faint laugh was transmitted through the Thought Sharing.

The sense of intimidation gradually increased. Ruruta was approaching. Yuri was shivering behind Yukizona.

It was simply frightening. A normal person who would stand in front of Ruruta would probably not feel so scared, but Yukizona was one of the world's strongest warriors. His fighting strength, the foundation for his confidence, lacked any meaning against a normal person. So he wouldn't feel any fear due to this.

'Yukizona. There is no need to be scared. Calm down.'

Ruruta sent a strangely gentle thought. Having endured his fear, Yukizona forgot the current situation and became relieved.

'You have all worked well. I have nothing to criticize about you two as well as Minth Chezine.'

"...! Then why?!"

Perhaps it would have been easier had he pointed out their errors. Making up for his blunders was fine.

Yet Ruruta was trying to destroy the Armed Librarian despite denying any dissatisfaction with their actions. Yukizona couldn't understand what this meant.

'Relax. Fighting is meaningless.'

Yukizona then shouted without thinking.

"Wait, Ruruta. Were there any other rebels?! Are you blaming us for not stopping another rebellion?"

'By a rebel, do you mean Enlike Bishile?'

So as he thought there was a mastermind behind Olivia. If it was Enlike Bishile, he could understand the rebellion he was planning.

"I'll go crush the rebel right away. Then you should have no problems, right?"

Yukizona said. However, he received a response beyond his expectations.

'Come to think of it there was him too, huh. It is a trifle though.'

He just couldn't understand. Then why was he trying to destroy the Armed Librarians?

At that moment he could hear a voice. It wasn't Thought Sharing; it came from a few dozen meters ahead of Yukizona.

"Let us stop, Yukizona."

It was a high, clear voice. It was neither feminine or masculine but an androgynous tone.

"Stop fighting or else die."

Yukizona shouted and released his Decay Wave. The stone making up the Labyrinth collapsed and became sand. He knew that his attack on Ruruta was going to be fatal, yet he still couldn't stop from attacking.

Dust began rising from the collapsed Labyrinth. Yukizona searched for Yuri's figure inside it. There was no time to confirm her safety when he had shot the first attack.

"Yuri!"

He could hear something collapsing inside the dust – the voice of a human collapsing. The only people there were Yukizona, Yuri and Ruruta.

And this meant...

"Yukizona. Do you still cling to power?"

The voice he could hear from upfront was Ruruta's. Meaning the one who collapsed just now...

"How sad. Fighting to protect and becoming stronger to fight... all that even though there is no need for power if you don't want to hurt your loved ones."

Ruruta's voice didn't reach Yukizona's ears. His eyes were directed at his back. At Yuri who was lying there collapsed.

"...Yuri."

She had no visible injuries. Yet she didn't respond even when he called to her.

He was supposed to be prepared for this time to come. At the time he took her here, or perhaps even when she became an Armed

Librarian. He was supposed to be prepared for the moment Yuri would die and leave him behind.

However, all of his resolve was powerless in front of reality.

“YUURIII!!!”

Yukizona shouted. He forgot even his duty as an Armed Librarian at that time.

He charged at Ruruta.

He wrapped both hands with his condensed Decay Wave. He unleashed it ahead at the vaguely visible figure on the other side of the dust. He managed to directly land a strike with the Decay Wave on his hands.

Yukizona’s hand touched something, but he couldn’t feel his Decay Wave destroying the enemy’s body. He could only feel the coldness of bare skin. His strongest attack was easily nullified and it ended with him just touching Ruruta.

In front of his eyes was the face of Ruruta Coozancoona. Yukizona saw his face for the first time. The next moment, a hand hit his forehead and his vision was blocked.

“...What are you... trying to do... Ruruta? What are you trying to accomplish by destroying the Armed Librarians?”

He asked facing his own death. Ruruta answered sadly.

“I will destroy the world.”

Yukizona’s vision instantly blacked-out.

Yukizona had naturally anticipated death, but he appeared to be wrong. He could feel peace and comfort as if he were asleep.

His vision was fading and his sensations were being deprived. And yet his head was clear.

He could feel a change taking place in his mind.

He lived for a long time with his duty as an Armed Librarian in his heart. Yet this sense of duty was disappearing. He started not caring about the Armed Librarians at all.

Ruruta said that he will destroy the world. He was supposed to have protected this world no matter what. Yet that feeling was also disappearing.

Even natural feelings like not wanting to die or wanting to continue living were gone.

Dying or living, fighting or protecting, all of that didn't matter. It was irrelevant. It had nothing to do with him.

He was slightly sad at his loss and his inability to fulfill his duty. But even that sadness was disappearing.

With all of his aspirations vanishing, Yukizona was becoming increasingly calm.

"I don't want to let you die in agony. This is my only gift for all of you who have worked for a long time."

He could Ruruta muttering above his head.

"The Power of the Tearless Ending. If I had to give it a name, I would go with that."

Why will you destroy the world? Yukizona could faintly feel this question rising. But it also ended up not mattering at all.

He closed his eyes.

His final consideration was of Yuri.

He wanted her to not die in agony but die peacefully just as he was about to do. Thinking only this at last, Yukizona's consciousness faded into the tranquil darkness.

The Labyrinth was still covered in dust. Ruruta was standing alone inside it. Yukizona's body was lying at his feet. He didn't die, but he also wasn't living. He fell into a peaceful ending.

Not far away was Yuri. She was also sleeping peacefully.

Ruruta murmured while overlooking both of them.

"How strange. I thought of the Armed Librarians as an incompetent organization for two thousand years.

But now that I decided on destroying them, I realized... they have done well. For me, as well as for the people of the world."

Ruruta looked upwards.

"Even this world, which I have thought of as nothing but trifling, I became to hold dear.

I now recall that I am also a human being."

Ruruta moved his finger. Yuri's body floated up in air and gently landed next to Yukizona. The pair of brother and sister were now sleeping snuggled up together.

"It's cold here. Please keep warm."

Saying so, he moved his thin fingers. The fuzz of a white bird suddenly appeared midair. The feathers started falling and enveloped Yukizona and Yuri.



“Relax even in the small while remaining until death...”

Saying so, Ruruta began walking again.

“Now then, let us destroy it... this foolish world.”

A notice from Ruruta was written atop the desks at Hamyuts’s Acting Director’s Office as well as Minth’s headquarters of the Indulging God Cult. It stated a brief reason for the destruction of the world.

“I grew tired of it all. Both of the long days of continuous waiting as well as of everyone who lives in the world”

Chapter 4: The End of the Liars

Part 1

Hamyuts felt Yukizona collapsing with her Sensory Threads. And yet she kept her composure inside her office without moving.

She could also perceive Ruruta slowly walking through the Labyrinth. There was still some time until he reaches the surface. It was enough time for her to pass the truth to all of the Armed Librarians.

Hamyuts started talking to the voice machine.

“Well then, after the system of the Armed Librarians had been set in place, the world became peaceful for a time. It would’ve been good if it kept that way, but the second disaster came.

Ruruta grew tired.”

All the Armed Librarians in the Sixth Labyrinth listened to Hamyuts’s story in astonishment. They didn’t even know anything about Yukizona’s defeat.

“500 years have passed since Ruruta became Bantorra Library’s Director. There wasn’t a great difference between people’s lives and happiness after all. Anyone would have gotten tired of being offered Books again and again and again.

However, Ruruta losing interest means the end of the world.

And so the Armed Librarians thought of a plan. They would pursue specific people and start working in order for them to attain happiness.

The Armed Librarians ceased being primitive hunters and became farmers. What they raised were not cattle but humans, and what they produced was not delicious meat but happiness.

At first they were openly declared as “Bantorra Library’s Chosen Ones”. But since gradually those who were not selected began feeling it was unfair, it started being done in secret.

Sounds like some people we know, right?”

Hamyuts laughed.

“It was quite hard.

Humans have unlimited desires after all. They want to eat delicious food, they want good women, they want to kill those who annoy them... but we’ve had no choice but to obey them. If they won’t produce any happiness they would be killed by Ruruta after all.

A strange story, huh? If it was like that then they should’ve simply served Ruruta directly. Well, who cares about that.”

Ruruta was probably also listening. Hamyuts wondered what he felt about this.

“The more this kept going the more outrageous people appeared.

Meat Grove Calius Barea. Naturally you all know this name.”

There was no way they wouldn’t. It was the first incident in which the name of the Indulging God Cult became known.

“He was an outrageous man. He personified extreme lust and desire for power. Talking about him makes me sick and gives me goosebumps. Even I’d have my mood ruined by speaking of what he’s done. Anyway, he used to gather up girls and boys in groups of eight, tie them up and then... aaah I can’t, I just can’t.

So that guy basically overdid it. Anyway it was impossible trying to think of keeping him alive. Even more than the Armed Librarians wanting to protect peace, it was impossible as a human being.

They had no choice but to kill him. And they also announced that he was a member of an evil organization, the Indulging God Cult.”

That was when the name first came out. All of the Armed Librarians grew tense.

“To be clear, the name of the Indulging God Cult was just random.

However, it was later noticed that their existence was actually quite convenient.

By organizing a true Indulging God Cult, offering up Books for Ruruta would become simple. It could be used as a group where every desire was permitted, searching for happiness with every possible means.

And if there’s any trouble, all of it would be blamed on the Indulging God Cult.

And so the Cult was created by the Armed Librarians. They created this false religion of permitting any desire. Ruruta was set up as a God, and being eaten by Ruruta became going to Heaven.

Also, people chosen from the smartest among the Armed Librarians were christened as the Overseers of Paradise.

Thus the Cult was born. Publically they... well, also from behind the scenes, they were heretics that permitted any desire. In truth they were farmers that produced the livestock whose Books would be offered up to Ruruta.

Obviously, this was a secret for both the general public as well as normal Armed Librarians. The Acting Directors of history did their best to conceal the secrets of both the Indulging God Cult as well as Ruruta.”

Hamyuts thought she should cut off the story there, but decided on going along for now.

“Do you need any further explanation? Thanks to the Indulging God Cult we didn’t have to worry about offering up Books for Ruruta. Protected by the Acting Director, the Indulging God Cult was producing the Books of happy people diligently.

However, from time to time there were True Men who went too far. There were also those who tried rebelling against the Armed Librarians in their pursuit of desires. They have all been purged by us.

The fact that the Armed Librarians created the Indulging God Cult has remained concealed.

You all know about this. In the one-year war with the Dark King Kavortfon, the Fighting Devil Hoholo and the Acting Director of the time have fought one-against-one; the rebellion of the kings who wanted to make Bantorra Library their own, named the Seven Kings Rebellion; the Ever-Laughing Witch Shiron and the Clown Magician Wyzaf.

They've all brought terrible amounts of sacrifices. Even so, we couldn't lose the Indulging God Cult. We had no other choice if we wanted to offer up Books to Ruruta, after all.

All of the rebellions of the Indulging God Cult were done by True Men who ran loose or other related people, but the sole exception had been Kachua Beeinhaus. He fought against the Armed Librarian despite being the Overseer of Paradise.

It seemed that man truly adored Ruruta from the bottom of his heart. His goal was to apparently make the entire world into followers of the Indulging God Cult. He thought that serving Ruruta and living for him would bring happiness.

What was he thinking about, I wonder? He was probably just an idiot, but oh well, who cares about him.

Obviously, even now the Indulging God Cult still lives on. We just pretended they were destroyed. We've worked hard to fool you. Mattalast worked without sleeping.

Even now, since Minth became the leader of the Indulging God Cult he keeps working hard.

Well then, history class is now over. Does everyone understand it?"

Hamyuts checked her audience using her Sensory Threads. All of them had an expression which seemed to indicate they couldn't understand anything.

All of you are bad students huh, laughed Hamyuts. But bad students are cute.

"Now, let's get to the main point. Meaning, what is about to happen."

At these words all of the Armed Librarians changed their expressions at once. A face of someone who was finally about to hear what he was waiting for.

“I’m not sure about the details either, though.

But it seems like Ruruta is fed up, both of the Books offered up to him by the Indulging God Cult and of everyone else. No matter what toy you’d give him, he’d grow tired of it in 2000 years, after all.

And so it seems that Ruruta has decided to destroy the world.”

The Armed Librarians’ response was weak. Speaking of destroying the world was probably too unrealistic for them to accept.

“This world was going to end when Ruruta got tired of it from the very beginning. Well, it took a long time.

And so, the Armed Librarians are finished. As well as this world.”

Hamyuts finally concluded.

“Everyone, you can do whatever you please. There’s no need to fight. It’s pointless after all.

Seems like there’s going to be a little remaining time, so try not to leave any regrets behind. You can eat delicious food or drink some alcohol. You can also meet your families or confess to your loved ones. You may also do as many bad things as you’d like.

Well then, goodbye. Thanks for your hard work this far.”

Hamyuts turned off the voice device.

A long silence followed. Several minutes have passed after they noticed that Hamyuts cut off the device.

“...What the?”

A voice came from somewhere. Who said this? It didn't matter. Everyone felt the same.

Mirepoc looked around her. None of them were able to keep their composure.

The attack of the Guardian Beasts was only the beginning. They couldn't understand even just that, but then came words they understood even less.

Today was the end of the Armed Librarians. Everyone was dismissed.

They only existed so they could offer up Books to the man called Ruruta. The Indulging God Cult was a branch organization of the Armed Librarians and Minth was the new Overseer of Paradise.

And the world was going to end today.

Hearing all of this, what should they do? Even if they were told to enjoy their remaining time, there was no way they could that.

“What all this means, Director?”

Mirepoc muttered. *Doesn't Hamyuts just enjoy watching us suffer?* She felt that her imagination was not so off.

But what frightened Mirepoc was that Hamyuts's explanation felt right on the mark. She had had the intuition that Bantorra Library was hiding some secrets for a long time. They were the truth about the Indulging God Cult that she couldn't comprehend, and the true identity of the Guardian Beasts attacking them.

She understood that Hamyuts was telling the truth. That's what frightened her so.

"What are we supposed to do?"

Mirepoc was thinking what to do as an Armed Librarian. But she was no longer one.

She tried sending her thoughts to Yukizona. However, she couldn't connect to him. He had probably already been defeated.

"Just what should we do?"

Mirepoc muttered and sent her thoughts, this time to the one she relied on more than anyone, to Mattalast.

She believed that if it was him, he would be able to tell her what to do.

Meanwhile, Mattalast Ballory ran through the Labyrinth. He was at the Third Sealed Labyrinth where there were no longer any signs of the Guardian Beasts.

"...Shit!"

Mattalast spat. His body wouldn't move the way he told it to. He ran so slowly it was unthinkable for someone like him who prided on his overwhelming physical prowess.

His thigh was dyed with copious blood. There were several holes like those of scorching in his pants. It was because Mattalast had shot his own thigh with his gun.

"...Uhh..."

He crouched, holding his eyes. This wasn't dizziness due to blood loss. It was the dregs of Ruruta's Power of the Tearless Ending that was cast on him. Mattalast had brushed it aside using brute force.

That morning Mattalast went down to the Second Sealed Archive with some Books. He was going to offer them up to Heaven. He had chosen some from the Books in the Sixth Archive.

There was still time until Minth's Indulging God Cult would start producing Books. It might take several years or even more than that. During that time, the incidents where Books have disappeared from Bantorra Library grew in their intensity.

"We must hurry up production. I have no idea how satisfied Ruruta would be with just one Book."

Saying this, Mattalast entered the Second Sealed Archive. At this point in time there was a sign of the abnormal situation. The last time he had offered up a Book was about six months ago. In the meantime, since the tree was supposed to have been left unattended, it should have swayed. However, its transparent branches remained quiet and it made nary a sound.

"Well, here is today's offering, or something."

Mattalast held no reverence towards Ruruta. It would be impossible for him to have and Ruruta didn't want something like that anyway. So he spoke in a jesting tone and put the Book near the tree.

"On today's menu is the lucky fellow who had made the great actress Catty Turner his wife. Quite an incredible first-rate product."

One year ago, during the fight with the Indulging God Cult, he had thought of trying to defeat it. But these feelings from the time were gone. Was it just a trick of the mind born from fatigue of battle?

As long as another fool like Kachua doesn't appear, as long as the Indulging God Cult keeps functioning properly, the tree was harmless. It would become docile when it was given Books once in a while. It was that sort of being.

“ ... ”

Mattalast was puzzled. The Book was supposed to have crumbled into fragments and absorbed into the tree. What did it mean that nothing has happened?

“Are you telling me to choose another, then?”

It was his first time to see something like that, but could that sort of thing happen as well? A book allowing one to see into the private life of the great actress Catty would make any cinema fan water at the mouth. Offering it up to Ruruta was quite a waste.

“So bothersome, really now, I'm sick of it.”

Mattalast tried turning around to leave the Archive.

‘You as well, Mattalast Ballory?’

Someone's voice replied.

At that moment, Mattalast foresaw the next two seconds. He tried turning around at once. However, his body wouldn't move as if he had become trapped inside a stone statue.

In order to avoid the predicted future, Mattalast took another action. Without turning around he made a giant leap to the right.

However, it still turned out just as predicted. It had nothing to do with turning around or going sideways.

‘I’m also sick of it.’

He heard a voice inside his head again. *Is this Ruruta’s voice?* Mattalast wondered.

He was restrained, unable to move even a finger. He couldn’t confirm what was happening behind him. However, his Predictive ability kept working. He could only understand that something was about to happen in two seconds.

The torture-like silence was broken abruptly.

A hand touched Mattalast’s head from behind. His hat had been taken, then a hand was placed on his head.

‘I give you the Power of Tearless Ending.’

A voice echoed inside his head, and thus Mattalast was deprived of a living heart. He stopped caring about both his surprise at Ruruta having woken up as well as the horrible events about to happen. If he was going to die he might as well die, and if the world was going to be destroyed it might as well be destroyed.

Thinking this, Mattalast collapsed.

Originally he would have stayed collapsed like that.

However, he regained his consciousness when Mirepoc had used her Thought Sharing on him. This happened when Beasts of the Final Chapter charged into the Sixth Labyrinth and the Armed Librarians were barely able to intercept them.

‘Mattalast-san! Where are you right now? It’s an emergency!’

These words echoed in his head. *Don't disturb me*, thought Mattalast. *I feel very calm right now.*

'...Mi...repo?'

He was able to respond only because of the word 'emergency'. His long-standing habits as an Armed Librarian slightly won against the Power of Tearless Ending.

However, he could only reply. He couldn't even open his eyes or fight.

'...Mattalast-san? What's wrong!'

'...Mirepo? What's going on? Is there... fighting on the surface?'

'The Guardian Beasts are on a rampage. They came out of the Labyrinth... Right now the Armed Librarians are blocking them together.'

Mattalast understood; Ruruta was trying to destroy the Armed Librarians. Or perhaps even the world.

But he didn't care. It was because of the power that made him not care, the Power of Tearless Ending.

'What's going on?! Mattalast-san! Where are you now!'

'Mirepo... I'm sorry...'

His consciousness was falling into darkness.

However, the next moment, Mattalast's hand moved and he pulled out his gun. He unconsciously pulled the trigger and shot his own leg. If he could not keep his consciousness, he knew he would never emerge from the darkness again.

He couldn't stay collapsed like that. He shot several bullets into his leg. He was able to regain his senses using that pain.

Mattalast then thought.

I can't be allowed to sleep. Or at the very least, I can't be allowed to die easily.

Don't die so easily, he told himself. He couldn't count the times he shot himself. Before long, Mattalast opened his eyes.

He looked around. That tree wasn't there; Ruruta began his move. He was probably heading to the surface.

"Above ground, huh. I must go."

Due to the Power of Tearless Ending, Mattalast couldn't think very well. His leg hurt and his body was heavy.

However, he started running.

Mattalast climbed the Labyrinth with his full power. If he were to be attacked by a Beast of the Final Chapter right now he would be helpless, but the Labyrinth had become vacant.

After he ran for a while, Mirepoc connected her Thought Sharing to him again.

'Mattalast-san, can you hear me?'

'...Mirepoc?'

Mattalast wanted to ask about what was happening outside. But before he did so, he received some sorrowful thoughts from Mirepoc.

'What should we do?'

‘...Explain the situation. What’s going on outside?’

‘The Guardian Beasts are trying to leave the Labyrinth. We barely blocked them by erecting a barrier, but we have no idea how long it’ll hold. Yukizona-san has moved to solve the situation, but there is no contact from him.’

‘Is that all?’

Mattalast wanted further explanations. Was Ruruta yet to reach the surface? And what about Hamyuts?

‘The Director has not joined the fight. Rather than that, she has told us that the Armed Librarians are already finished.’

“What?!”

Mattalast called without thinking.

‘The Director explained everything to us. She said there’s this man called Ruruta and that he’s the real Director of Bantorra Library. She said he wants to destroy the world.’

‘Did she really say that?’

‘Yes, she really did, Mattalast-san. Does this Ruruta exist? Were we being deceived this whole time?’

Mirepoc asked as if appealing to him. Implying that she wanted him to tell her is all a lie.

However, Mattalast knew the truth. And he knew that he could deceive her no longer.

‘...I see, so now you know. That bastard Hammy spilled the beans, huh.’

‘No!’

Her voice echoed in his head.

‘Then, then, is the world really going to be destroyed like the Director said?’

‘...’

Mattalast had no answer.

‘What are we supposed to do, please give me some orders, if you don’t say anything...’

Mattalast gritted his teeth at her painful plea. He had to think for everyone’s sake. Hamyuts abandoned the fight, Yukizona had been defeated, so there was no one but Mattalast.

However...

‘I don’t know. Even I have no idea what to...’

He couldn’t answer anything but that.

‘How horrible, Mattalast-san. You say that even though all of us are helpless...’

Mirepoc’s feelings were also transmitted to Mattalast.

This is the first time I came to realize how much she was relying on me. Mattalast is just a slacker, a womanizer, a good-for-nothing. Did Mirepoc really rely on someone like me?

However, he could think of nothing. Now that Ruruta took his move, there was not a single way to oppose him. He knew it so much it was painful.

'I'm sorry, Mirepoc... I'm sorry.'

'No...'

The Thought Sharing was severed.

"Shit! Think, Mattalast, what can we do!"

Mattalast's voice resounded in the silent Labyrinth. No voice answered him.

He kept running ahead at full speed. He found the figures of Yukizona and Yuri in front of the Fourth Archive. They were calmly collapsed in a bed of feathers.

"Yukizona, Yuri, move! Regain your consciousness!"

He shook them and slapped their cheeks. However, there was no response. Mattalast gave up and continued ahead.

"I have to do it. There's no one else left but me!"

He was painfully aware of the fact he was helpless. Even so he had to carry on.

Meanwhile, Mattalast's life until now flashed in his mind.

"Genius". Everyone who had reached the top class of the Armed Librarian without any exception was called that.

A genius was not a person who became strong with no efforts; those who have reached a domain no ordinary man could by making an effort and studying diligently were called geniuses. A genius was someone who made more effort than an average person. In order to make an extraordinary talent blossom, an extraordinary effort was needed.

However, there were exceptions even to these exceptions.

Like talent that required no polishing. A born talent that bloomed without doing anything.

Mattalast was one person like that.

He was born into a family with a long history of 800 years. They have produced Armed Librarians for generations and the one couldn't use one hand to count the amount of them that rose up to the rank of the Acting Director.

However, even the Ballory family had declined, and at last none of them became Armed Librarians. During that time, the child who was called their savior – Mattalast – had appeared.

His abilities already stood out even before he started the Magic Deliberation. He was second to none in his physical ability, marksmanship and swordsmanship, and even in his studies, once he read any textbook once he was able to grasp all of the important points.

Several months after having started his Magic Deliberation he had already mastered bodily reinforcement Magic. Half a year later he also completed his Predictive ability. It's not that he underwent a different curriculum from the rest; he simply was able to gain several times the results than anyone else by spending the same efforts.

He finished school in no time and became a trainee. He was promoted immediately afterwards. His promotion to an Armed Librarian at the age of 15 set a record as the youngest one ever.

However, Mattalast never felt happy at that talent.

He simply relaxed his behavior as if it was natural.

He became sixteen.

Mattalast came to a pub at the back of town. It was a boorish pub where you had to go up a graffiti-filled staircase and pass through a heavy door. It was also a place where one couldn't breathe due to the smoke of tobacco and couldn't talk due to the shouts and shrill laughter inside.

Mattalast sat on the dirty sofa inside. His upper body was naked. His long hair was tied and fell on his back, and he wore pants splattered with red and blue paint. Around him were delinquent students and prostitutes that proclaimed themselves artists. Also trainee has-beens and apprentices gathered around.

"C'mon Matt, let's go to my place."

A woman whose name Mattalast had already forgotten snuggled up to him. While wondering who she was, he spewed smoke from his cigarette.

"Oh, so were' going?"

Anyone would be fine, thought Mattalast. But the moment he tried to rise from his seat, he noticed what would happen in two seconds.

"No, we can't."

"Huh?"

The iron door was kicked off and rolled to the center of the pub. Simultaneously the movement around stopped all at once. Even the smoke politely ceased. Any Armed Librarian would know what this ability was.

"Welcome, old lady Ireia. What's your order?"

Mattalast said while laughing.

“For the time being, how about your nosebleed?”

Coming inside was the first-class Armed Librarian and educator Ireia Kitty. She approached him briskly. Mattalast’s lower body had been affixed by her ability. A splendid smack flew towards his nose, but he made no attempts to avoid it.

“Well then, what’s the matter, old lady?”

Mattalast was calm. He blew air from his nose, scattering blood around the area.

“How can you be so calm. I never thought you’d go so far as to skip Photona-san’s inauguration as the Acting Director.”

“I hate that guy.”

His cigarette was extinguished due to his nosebleed. He brought out a new one and lit it.

“That guy’s annoying. He’s got no talent so he’s all about work all the time.”

“As expected from our little mister genius.”

The next blow came from the side. Mattalast felt a sharp pain from inside his head.

“He’ll lose to you, Ireia-san. Even I wouldn’t be able to beat you when you were young.”

“What was that?”

Another blow came to his ear. He heard an unpleasant explosive sound inside. Mattalast spoke while scratching the bleeding hole of his ear.

“So, Ireia-san. Won’t you go back already? No matter how you look at it breaking my eardrum is enough.”

“I left one side. Otherwise we wouldn’t be able to have a conversation.”

It’ll take three days to heal, thought Mattalast as he wiped off the blood from his ear.

“Then destroy the other one and go home already. I have some plans for after this.”

Ireia ignored him and sat in front of him.

“Say, Mattalast. I will ask you frankly. Are you dissatisfied with something?”

“Nothing in particular.”

What a stupid conversation, he thought. *If I could simply confess my dissatisfaction and undergo a rehabilitation I wouldn’t do all this.*

“It’s just that everything’s boring.”

“Meaning everything but you?”

Ireia probably thought that he was looking down on people who had no talent. But it was wrong.

“No, including me, anyone and everyone.”

“ ... ”

Ireia frowned in discomfort. Since she was so proud it was probably hard for her to forgive insults towards the Armed Librarians.

“Armed Librarians are the protectors of all Books and of world peace. If that is boring to you, is there any other job which is not?”

“Mm, I can’t think of any.”

“...I do not want to say this, but you are an excellent person from birth. When will you stop having such pride?”

Pride, huh? I have no such thing.

“Am I really outstanding?”

Mattalast pushed his cigarette onto the ashtray.

“Everyone’s always speaking about talent this talent that.

“I don’t know who but, without me asking for it, someone pushed this thing called a talent on me. That’s all.

I just happened to have talent. I’m not special. The talent I’ve been given is special. Don’t you think so?”

“What stupid worries.”

Ireia laughed nasally. She was mocking him from the bottom of her heart.

“I’m serious though.”

“Oh, really? So what?”

They were certainly stupid worries, but for Mattalast they were serious. His life had been tipped over by the thing known as talent. He felt as if he would forever be an accessory to talent.

“And so you say the Armed Librarians are boring. I see.”

“Yeah. They are. Really.”

A boring man like him was born with the techniques of a killer. People have desperately trained aiming for something like that. The Armed Librarians bragged being God’s representatives by looking at it as a good thing.

He couldn’t help to think of them as boring.

“Well, it is just some children’s nonsense. I will forget it. When you become an adult it will be just part of your past you will be embarrassed to recall.”

“Probably. Just wait for three, four years.”

Just as Ireia had said, she broke his other eardrum and went away. For now, before going to any woman’s house, Mattalast would have to go to the hospital.

Mattalast’s misconduct continued for a while after that.

However, he more or less calmed down once he turned eighteen. The fact he was still acting like a delinquent didn’t change though.

That day he was in the training grounds behind Bantorra Library. With Vizac as their instructor, the trainees and young Armed Librarians were training.

When Mattalast showed up, Vizac made an unpleasant face. Just by having that slacker devil there the training became tenser.

Also, he brought a girl with him. She was a freckled, dull-looking girl. She only wore an old cotton shirt and a black skirt.

“Another girl again, Mattalast?”

Said the instructor, Armed Librarian Vizac. Bringing a girl along to combine business with pleasure wasn't unheard of.

“She doesn't really seem to be your type though.”

Vizac said.

He was supposed to prefer intelligent, older women. Wasn't the girl he brought along of the type he hated the most? Judging by both her rural clothes as well as the way she looked at all of them wonderingly, she didn't seem to be a clever person.

“Well, she does seem to be boring, but she's actually interesting.”

“Hmm, well it's not my business.”

Vizac said while feigning disinterest. Mattalast laughed in his heart. *Today's going to be fun.*

“Where's she from?”

“There's this tailor called Lander-san, she works as a seamstress there.”

He was a tailor from downtown who worked for the Armed Librarians. Mattalast frequented the place. Later Renas Fleur and Olivia Littolet would come to work at that place, but it had nothing to do with the present.

“Hmm, and what's your name?”

Vizac asked. The girl spoke from behind Mattalast.

“Hamyuts Meseta.”

While sighing, Vizac spoke to the girl.

“Hey, young lady. Don’t get caught up with this man. He’ll make you stupid.”

The girl called Hamyuts spoke, puzzled.

“Mm, I don’t really get it.”

“Hammy, try not to get in the way for now.”

Saying so, Mattalast trained seriously, which was rare.

While training, he glanced at Hamyuts and the other people. Hamyuts was watching them seemingly bored. The other trainees paid no attention to her.

Such thickheaded guys, thought Mattalast. Only Vizac-san noticed.

“Hey, Matt. Who’s that lady?”

Vizac stopped the training and whispered into Mattalast’s ears.

“I don’t know either. She’s just a seamstress.”

Vizac spoke with sharp eyes.

“Do seamstresses these days also fight?”

“Who knows, is that not so?”

Vizac glanced at Hamyuts. She still looked bored. Normally, anyone who saw the Armed Librarians’ superhuman movements would be surprised. Just her being stupid wouldn’t explain that.

“Say, Matt. Is everyone here?”

“Of course not. The strong ones are working someplace else.”

“That old man doesn’t work?”

Hamyuts pointed at Vizac.

“Stupid, he’s the instructor. Can’t you tell by looking?”

“Hmm... I don’t really get it.”

Hamyuts looked puzzled. Mattalast approached her.

“What do you think? Hammy, look at the people here.”

Hamyuts looked around at the training people and spoke.

“You’re the strongest one here, then that old man, and maybe me after that? There’s nothing impressive after that.”

The trainees’ movements stopped.

“No, in my opinion, you and Vizac-san are more or less equal.”

“You think so?”

Hamyuts tilted her head. It was then that the trainees finally noticed her strength.

“Hey lady, why don’t you try going against them?”

Vizac said as if provoking her. Hamyuts looked at Mattalast.

“I don’t mind, go ahead.”

Saying this, he pushed Hamyuts’s back.

Part 2

At first her opponent was a single trainee. He was a relatively old trainee who hasn't made much progress. He was probably thinking of showing his power there.

"Do you use any weapon?"

Mattalast said. Hamyuts replied.

"Hmm? I don't really care either way."

"Then go without. It'll be bad if you get hurt."

However, the trainee objected.

"Won't you use one? It'll make me angry if you later say I won only because you don't have a weapon."

"Well then."

Mattalast threw Hamyuts's luggage at her. She took out her weapon from it. She wrapped a bag full of stones around her waist and held a leather rope with her right hand. Everyone was surprised seeing this old-fashioned weapon that no one used nowadays.

The match lasted a second. The sling's first shot smashed the trainee's chin.

"What's with that sling?"

Even Vizac was surprised.

"Amazing, right? You'd be even more surprised seeing it from long range."

The second trainee was a gun user. Hamyuts bent back and dodged his fast shooting. Using some kind of muscle strength, by swinging her sling from an abnormal position, she pierced his abdomen before the second shot came.

“Why does the lass use that sort of weapon?”

“Who knows. Seems like it’s the only thing she has.”

“Even a bow and arrow would be more useful.”

Vizac said.

“I’ve told her the same. When I did, she asked me what a bow and arrow were.”

“...What the heck.”

“When I showed her what it was she was surprised at there being such a useful weapon in the world.”

“What about a gun?”

“She knows about guns. But it seems like they aren’t very useful to her.”

Vizac shrugged.

The third trainee challenged her in close combat. Different from the ones before him, he dodged the gravel bullets well. Hamyuts fought while retreating.

The moment he tried to return a decisive blow a string was wrapped around his wrist holding the gun. Hamyuts hurled the trainee’s body away, creating an unpleasant noise in the process.

“Matt, I think that person’s broken.”

The squirming man's comrades ran to the him. Seeing the condition of his broken wrist, it wouldn't be impossible to recover. However, fixing his broken heart was another matter entirely.

Vizac spoke to Hamyuts while grinning, yet the atmosphere wasn't calm at all.

"Say, young lady. You're quite something, huh. Won't you try becoming an Armed Librarian?"

"Matt's already asked me though. Being a seamstress it fine, but I wonder if becoming an Armed Librarian would be good as well."

"Is that so. I'm grateful. But young lady... If you become an Armed Librarian, you'd have to follow our discipline."

"What do you mean?"

"We need to punish the person who's broken three trainees. You've gone a bit too far, young lady."

Vizac readied his spear. He pointed its tip at Hamyuts.

"Say, Matt."

Hamyuts smiled for the first time that day.

"It's fun here. I'm glad I came."



Everyone then realized: It wasn't Mattalast who'd brought the girl here. She was the one who made him bring her here. A monster came to seek its playground.

"Yeah, it's getting fun, really fun."

Saying so, Mattalast cackled. For now, as long as she was here, things were about to get interesting.

Vizac and Hamyuts were equal at that time. However, it took her two weeks since starting her formal training to surpass him. And it took her less than a half year to catch up to Mattalast.

And so a few years passed.

Mattalast calmed down just as Ireia had said. After he became eighteen he stopped acting like an idiot. He had to think rationally when looking at the mirror. He was by no means stupid after all.

He cut his hair and started wearing a suit. His habit of slacking off remained, but he learned to be stricter with everything important.

The monster he had brought along, Hamyuts, was also not as much a problem child as expected. She lacked common sense, was belligerent and couldn't hold back, but even so, she wasn't stupid, and was surprisingly obedient to the organization.

"You have grown quite calm as I have said, right?"

Ireia teased.

"Yes. As expected one should listen to their elders."

"You have gotten popular lately. People say that you can inherit Photona-san."

“Ahaha, delinquents are seen favorably when they do good things once in a while.”

“Please do your best. You will have to take responsibility for the Armed Librarians even after I die.”

“...Well, I’m gonna work just for my salary.”

Ireia probably interpreted that as Mattalast’s joke. But this was his true opinion. Even now that he became decent, he had no pride in being an Armed Librarian. Since it seemed like being an Armed Librarian was the only thing he could do he thought of at least working seriously.

He simply gave in to reality. He didn’t become an adult but just grew up.

Inevitably Mattalast came to know of the secret. It happened three years after he had obtained the qualifications of a First Class Armed Librarian and eight years after he became an Armed Librarian, meaning when he turned 22.

When Mattalast was called by Photona he thought that the time for it finally came.

He vaguely realized that the Armed Librarians have some secret. Besides Mattalast, even the veterans such as Ireia and Vizac noticed the existence of a secret.

As well as the fact that only those who were to succeed the Acting Director would know of it.

Taken by Photona, Mattalast went down to the Second Sealed Archive.

“Mattalast. To tell you the truth, I had no intention of telling you about this. You probably know this, but neither do I like you nor do I trust you.”

His direct words weren't unpleasant. Even Mattalast knew they didn't get along.

“Yeah.”

“However, the fact remains that you're strong. I have to let you know.”

Mattalast decided to ask on something that piqued his interest.

“You've already told Hamyuts the Armed Librarians' secret, right?”

“How did you know?”

“Somehow or other. Well, does that mean she's better than me?”

“Yeah. I also can't trust that woman, but I've judged her to be better than you.”

They entered the Second Sealed Archive.

Mattalast was told everything in front of the tree. About Ruruta, about the true duty of the Armed Librarians and about the Indulging God Cult.

Normally anyone would shake in fear. There were some so shocked by hearing the truth about the Armed Librarians they believed in that they had an identity crisis.

However, Mattalast's impression was different.

“How stupid.”

He spoke in a low voice as to not let Photona hear him.

“I’ve been wondering lately if the Library’s any good at all.”

Until then, Mattalast had more or less respect for the Armed Librarians. But that day, it finally completely vanished.

Mattalast readily accepted the duty of offering up Books for Ruruta to the extent that it felt disappointing.

He started thinking while looking at the tree.

I’d better fight against this thing... this shittier than shit being. Mattalast was considering this from the bottom of his heart.

He had certainly once decided on fighting. However, he didn’t think of drawing his gun during that moment.

Because I’ll find a way to defeat it eventually. Thinking this, he submerged his fighting spirits deep inside his heart.

Exiting the Labyrinth, Photona told him that they would move to a different place. Mattalast thought it strange; if he wanted to keep a secret, it should be best speaking in front of Ruruta.

He told him they will talk while boarding an airplane. *No way, is he going to discuss a way to defeat Ruruta?* Mattalast thought. Something to not be heard by Ruruta... it was natural to think that.

However, what Photona told him was different.

“Three months ago, I and Hamyuts killed a certain girl and her comrades.”

“...Ho?”

“There is no need to speak of her real name. From henceforth she will be referred to only as the Violet Sinner. She was a great sinner who tried destroying Heaven. We have obliterated her Book and erased all records pertaining to her.

Anything about her is top-secret. Even the fact she had existed must not leak out to the public.”

“...Hmm.”

It seemed like the wind was blowing to another direction.

“Seems like she’s getting special treatment. There should be countless other people who’ve tried to destroy Heaven.”

Mattalast had viewed their Books in the Second Archive. Many Armed Librarians and rebels tried to challenge Heaven but were defeated.

“There were many other people other than the Violet Sinner who tried defeating Heaven. Their Books were left to teach the lesson that confronting Heaven is meaningless.”

“Hmm.”

“However, she was special. She arrived at the possibility to destroy Heaven. It was perhaps a one-in-a-billion chance, but she might have destroyed Heaven.”

“That’s quite a big deal. We really need to call the Armed Librarians on that.”

Photona ignored his joke. *As I thought I don’t like this person at all,* thought Mattalast.

“...If her existence becomes well known many fools would appear again to challenge Heaven. We have to stop that at all costs.

If Ruruta is provoked, the entire world might be destroyed.

“...Ha.”

Mattalast laughed nasally.

“So it’s forbidden to even hope or try to destroy Ruruta? But there’s no need to let such a piece of shit live.”

It was right to change places, thought Mattalast. He couldn’t talk like that in front of Ruruta.

“Don’t be stupid. If it fails, the world will be destroyed.”

“But wouldn’t Ruruta be the one in trouble if the world is destroyed?”

He could feel murderous intent rising from Photona’s body. Killing those who wanted to challenge Ruruta was also his job as the Acting Director.

“...Would you like to die here?”

“You go first.”

At that time Mattalast and Photona were about equal. They both calmly stared at each other inside the plane. Mattalast folded first.

“I get it. I realize how dangerous that is. I won’t think of fighting him.”

“Yeah. You’re a person who can calculate gains and losses. I trust that part of you.”

“Thank you very much.”

Photona glanced at the direction of Past God Bantorra’s Island. Its silhouette was growing far away.

“From here on, is something you don’t want Hamyuts to hear about.”

“Indeed.”

Photona said. Using her Sensory Threads, Hamyuts could eavesdrop from far away. There was no way to prevent it but moving outside her maximal range which was 50 kilometers.

“That woman’s nature is a complete unknown. Why does she seek combat to that extent?”

As if I know, thought Mattalast. Even he didn’t know the truth about her.

“I shouldn’t have told her about the existence of the Violet Sinner. Hamyuts might, someday, challenge Ruruta Coozancoona.

I’m telling you this so you would monitor her. Just in case she appears to be a threat.”

Photona was silent.

“Do you understand?”

“Are you asking this of *me*?”

He probably knew that Mattalast was Hamyuts’s lover.

“Since it’s you it’s a command. I leave everything about keeping the secret to you. Erase all those who approach Heaven, all those

who approach the Violet Sinner. Also keep the secret hidden so its very existence would not be known.”

“You’re quite the villain as well.”

“There’s no choice if I want to protect the world from Ruruta. Evildoing is also one of the duties of the Acting Director.”

Mattalast laughed.

“Duty, huh? Stop using that pretense. We’re two men alone. Will you not be frank with me?”

“...”

“Who’s protecting the world? You’re simply regretting your position. Everyone around the world admires you and calls you the God’s representative. Aren’t you happy?”

Photona didn’t reply.

“How stupid.”

Mattalast muttered so that he could hear him. He had never cursed his own strength so much like now. He was Armed Librarian that didn’t want to become one. Now he became the guardian of a stupid secret. *How far will my life go became of this talent?*

As I thought, I’d rather kill Ruruta. Those feelings strengthened.

He parted from Photona and got back home. As he opened the door, Hamyuts hugged him.

“Welcome back, Matt! Do you love me?”

“Of course.”

He held Hamyuts's body by the entrance. He kissed her thrice and got kissed by her five times.

"Dinner's ready, try guessing what I made."

"Hmm... a croquet?"

"Wrong."

"Steak?"

"Wrong. Geez, why don't you know? I hate you."

While having this stupid conversation, the couple hugged and separated again and again. Incidentally, dinner was a mutton stew made in the style of the southern frontier. *How could I even guess such a thing?* Thought Mattalast.

They kept their rambling while eating dinner. Then, Hamyuts spoke.

"You've heard about the secret from Photona, right?"

"Yeah. Even though I didn't want to."

"After that you've flown somewhere. Did you discuss whether to kill me, I wonder?"

Hamyuts said lightly.

"Correct answer!"

The two laughed loudly. Their aerial excursion was unnatural. It had to be a secret that they didn't want to let Hamyuts hear. There's no way that both of them didn't know at least that Photona regarded her as dangerous.

“Did Photona really think I wouldn’t find out?”

“I wonder.”

Laughing for a while, and after cracking jokes on Photona, Hamyuts’s face became serious.

“So, what’ll we do?”

“It’s not something for today or tomorrow. If I kill you Photona will be the one in trouble.”

“I see.”

This time it was Mattalast that turned serious.

“...Hamyuts. What are you going to do? Will you fight Ruruta?”

“Hmm, I’m not planning to. If I really run out of opponents to fight, maybe I’ll go get killed by him. But he’s not my type.”

“Why?”

“Didn’t I tell you? I like feeling murderous intent. I want someone to come at me with their mind and body intent on killing me. If I fight him I won’t have the leisure to enjoy it.”

“...I see.”

That was the part Hamyuts liked the best. Even at this time she already possessed a desire for defeat that would last several decades.

Her abnormality was also frightening. However, if she hadn’t had this strangeness, Mattalast wouldn’t have been drawn to her.

“So it’s fine.”

Mattalast said. This meant that the possibility of him killing Hamyuts was slim. However, Hamyuts interpreted it in another way.

“Yeah. If not Ruruta, then someone else will come to kill me someday.”

He deliberately didn’t correct her.

During that day in the middle of night, Mattalast opened his mouth again. Next to him, Hamyuts was on the subtle boundary between sleep and wakefulness.

“Say. Who was that Violet Sinner?”

Hamyuts replied with a sullen voice.

“You’re the worst, Matt. Talking about another woman in bed...”

“Don’t be strange. Even if it’s me, I wouldn’t cheat on you with a dead person.”

“I don’t get men after all.”

And that’s why women are troublesome, thought Mattalast.

“Did it seem like she could win against Ruruta?”

“I wonder. She’s never tried.”

Photona said that Hamyuts had read the Violet Sinner’s Book. He wasn’t told why only she had read it and why he or Kachua haven’t.

“It’s useless to think of it. The Violet Sinner’s dead after all.”

“Then, if I were to inherit the Violet Wish, would I be able to beat Ruruta?”

Hamyuts waved her hand.

“Impossible, definitely impossible.”

It made Mattalast a bit angry to have her assert this to that extent. He had somewhat of a confidence in his own strength.

“Even if we were to cooperate? If that happens we would be close to being the strongest combination in history.”

Hamyuts shook her head.

“That’s not the problem. It doesn’t matter how strong you are or if you have allies.”

“Then what is it?”

“Just like I said. Defeating Ruruta can’t be done with strength.”

If not by strength then how? Mattalast was puzzled.

“You have no idea right? So it’s impossible.”

“...Is it, really?”

“It is. She was the only person in the entire world who could do it. No one else can.”

At that moment Mattalast had a hunch. There was some connection between Hamyuts and the Violet Sinner. They had personal connection beyond an executor and a criminal.

He caught a glimpse of Hamyuts’s past for the first time. But it had no follow up.

“Then I’ll quit trying to defeat Ruruta. Don’t you go thinking about weird stuff as well.”

“I know that, Matt. I don’t want to be killed.”

She spoke differently than usual. She was supposed to always wish for someone to kill her.

“Hey, Matt. You know... you’re the only one I don’t want to be killed by.”

Saying this, Hamyuts smiled.

Did I fulfill my duty? Wondered Mattalast. He hugged Hamyuts’s bare shoulders. *But doesn’t that make it look like my job is sleeping with women?*

Mattalast later regretted the fact that he hadn’t asked about the Violet Wish that day. As well as the fact that he hadn’t asked about Hamyuts’s past.

“Definitely impossible”. Mattalast’s fighting spirits dampened by that one word. It’s not that he lost the will to fight, but he was a man who compromised with reality.

Mattalast’s job of protecting the secret of Heaven started. His first work was the incident where information about Lascall Othello leaked out. He secretly organized soldiers and sent them to investigate. It was a bothersome incident. The Armed Librarian called Haiza had already learned some information and started acting.

He reached the origin of the information a few steps before Haiza.

Mattalast summarized the investigation and reported it to Photona.

“So the source is Parney Parlmenta like we thought, huh. There’s no mistake about it.”

Mattalast nodded. He heard that she was one of the Indulging God Cult's True Men. Having information leak from there caused concerns about the structure of the Cult.

"Of course, Kachua noticed it as well, but seems to have left it alone. He seems to cherish his True Men."

"We have no choice... we have to act independently."

Hearing just that, he left the Director's office.

Well then, how shall silence up everything? Mattalast started racking his brains.

I'll try using the water of Argax on Parney. We have no choice but to leave Haiza alone. And there's also the question of how to compromise with the Indulging God Cult.

A few days passed. The conclusion arrived before Mattalast was able to finalize his plan.

"You've done it, Photona-san."

He was angry at him stepping over his job so rudely. Mattalast pounded the newspaper unto the table of the Acting Director's Office. The headline of an article was printed in huge letters. "Great Actress Parney Parlmanta Murdered". The entire paper was filled with articles pertaining to that.

He couldn't think of anyone who would've done it but the man in front of him.

"You probably didn't intend on killing her. That's naïve."

"Aren't you the naïve one here? Doing this will create more speculations and gossip. Their doubts will also grow."

“Crushing the foundation settles it all. Getting caught up on meaningless details will make you miss the full picture.”

“...Shit!”

Mattalast pounded the desk. He left the office in a quick pace.

“I’m disappointed in you. You won’t kill people to protect the secret. Did you think I’ll let it pass?”

Mattalast answered him as if spitting out.

“I just thought that I don’t need to kill. That it would only be the final measure. That I’d only kill those who want to rebel against Ruruta.”

Mattalast’s work was inexhaustible. The rumors of Lascall spread all over the place. He used his private soldiers to look closely whether there were any strange movements.

He also had to keep watch for archaeologists who were researching the Paradise Era as well as historians investigating the incidents caused by the Indulging God Cult in the past. He sent spies before they reached the core truth in order to lead them down a wrong direction.

Three years passed. Mattalast’s job of protecting the secrets continued. Then, on a certain day, he once again moved for a secret mission.

He waited in front of the Third Sealed Labyrinth for a rebel who had gotten close to Ruruta. Mattalast was thinking while blowing his pipe. *Who would’ve thought I would end up fighting him?*

“Mattalast? What are you doing here?”

The one to appear was Photona.

You're clearly shaken, thought Mattalast. He was just too bad at concealing things. Telling Hamyuts he was going to check Ruruta's condition, he went down the Labyrinth. Mattalast went ahead and waited for him here.

"I came to stop you."

"What're you talking about? If you don't have any business here then return to the surface."

Photona passed next to Mattalast.

"Not long ago Ireia and Kyasariro caught an amusing man. He became a trainee, but do you know him?"

"Yeah. He was a bandit from Ismo. Minth, was it?"

"His ability, Sacred Eyes, is the power to see humans' souls. And Minth said a strange thing... he asked whether a big battle was coming."

"What're you talking about?"

"I also asked him that. He then told me... Photona-san seems greatly resolved on doing something, he said."

"...That man can't be trusted. Let's fire him."

"No, I refuse. He's someone we can use, after all. I'm thinking of making him the next Overseer of Paradise."

Mattalast flicked the gun at his waist with a fingernail. Hearing that sound, Photona leapt aside. Pulling out his weapon, he readied it and directed it at Mattalast.

“What’s wrong? Did you think I was about to attack you?”

You came here to challenge Ruruta, but did you think I found that out and came to kill you?”

“ ... ”

Photona no longer tried to smooth out everything. He pointed his weapon of choice, a short stick, at Mattalast. With his ability, even with this simple stick he will be able to cut through anything and everything.

“You’ve never thought of challenging Heaven. If Minth wasn’t here it would’ve been dangerous. What happened to you?”

Photona did not reply.

“Is Volken the reason? Who would’ve thought some semblance of a human heart remained in you.”

“It’s fine for me to be the last person to commit evil.”

“I see. You don’t want Volken to do that. So you could call your parental affection.”

But it’s too late, he added in his heart.

“Didn’t you also possess the will to fight against Ruruta?”

“No, I’ve never thought of that for a single moment.”

“That’s why I left Hamyuts to monitor you.”

Mattalast didn’t know that. This would probably be the first and last time he would be outmaneuvered by Photona.

“Let me tell you as well. Perhaps one day you’ll think the same as me. The sole way of defeating Ruruta is...”

Before he said that, Mattalast drew his gun. He couldn’t listen to him.

“Even with the Violet Wish the odds are a billion to one. That’s what I heard.”

Photona was about to charge and slash. Even using his Predictive ability Mattalast would need to give everything he had to evade it. He retreated while keeping his opponent at bay with his gun.

Generally speaking Mattalast was probably stronger. However, their drive was completely different. It was a momentary clash, but Mattalast was clearly pushed back.

Photona emitted his vigor in silence. He sought an opening.

Mattalast opened his mouth to speak. He wasn’t being careless; he was calm.

“I won’t fight Ruruta. Actually, Photona-san, I’m a person with a personal rule to fight only when I’ve created a situation where I can win.”

A stone came flying from behind Photona. It was Hamyuts’s ricochet attack. It didn’t hit, but was enough to divert Photona’s attention. And it was enough of an opening to let Mattalast finish him.

His shot stabbed Photona’s neck. Missing his vital trachea, he shaved through the bones in his neck. He destroyed the nerves that connected his brain to the rest of his body. It would be a fatal wound for a normal person, but with Photona’s regenerative capabilities he

would probably be healed in several weeks. However, he couldn't move anymore.

"I won't kill you, Photona-san."

"..."

"Do you understand the reason? It's because Volken's here. If you were to die that boy would surely make a move. He's strong and has a good head on his shoulders. He's also popular on top of that, so it's troublesome."

Photona desperately tried to reach for the weapon that fell on the floor. Mattalast stepped on his hand and continued.

"Please be grateful to Volken. You're able to survive thanks to him. Now then, let me tell you something, Photona-san. I'll teach you how to create the thing known as a lie."

Mattalast held up Photona and started walking.

He already had a plan in mind. A way to deceive the Armed Librarians and hush up Photona.

Yet he then thought faintly.

Is that really fine? Didn't I also have the choice to battle alongside Photona? Defeating Ruruta... didn't I once want to do so?

"..."

He shook his head to shake off these feelings.

There was no need to push himself. Maintaining the status quo was good enough. And Ruruta wasn't an enemy they had to defeat as soon as possible.

Mattalast later came to regret this decision as well.

Part 3

Officially it was announced thusly: Photona Bardgamon abandoned his ways of fighting and desired to become an ordinary person. He himself drank the water of Argax, forgetting both that he was an Armed Librarian as well as a warrior.

He spent the rest of his life under Hamyuts's protection as an ordinary person that nobody knew. Respecting his will, it was henceforth forbidden for Armed Librarians to contact him.

At present, the man that used to be Photona moved back to his native country of Meliot and lived as a mail delivery man. He also got married and brought kids. Not knowing that he had enough money to buy a castle, he was racking his brains over his children's tuition.

Ever after this, Mattalast conducted his job perfectly.

The fight against the Indulging God Cult; Mirepoc's search for Lascall Othello; cleaning up after Kachua; and the capture of Olivia Littolet and erasing her memories. As to not let the truth leak to the Armed Librarians, as to not let the secret of Ruruta be revealed, he applied both extreme caution and wisdom.

Mattalast always acted capably. Despite knowing that his work was trifling, he did it with no ifs or buts.

All in order to conceal the truth about Ruruta and bring him Books of happiness.

And, on the final day of the Armed Librarians, Mattalast was running. Now in order to fight Ruruta.

Everything from his life until now was attacking him. He seemed about to be crushed by his intense regret and self-hatred.

‘You’re an idiot.’

A voice sounded in his mind. It was neither Mirepoc’s nor Ruruta’s Thought Sharing; it was Mattalast’s very own voice. The voice of him from when he once wanted to fight Ruruta.

‘What were those things that you had to do? Who was the opponent you had to fight against? You defeated Photona, deceived Mirepoc, let Volken die, tricked Olivia, and what did you gain in return?

You probably once thought of fighting Ruruta. Then why didn’t you do anything?’

The voice kept resounding inside his head.

‘You’ve fought against your allies and served your enemies. Is there any bigger idiot than you in the whole world?’

He had no answer for the voice inside his heart.

‘Just say how you truly feel. You were scared of fighting Ruruta. You were scared of losing. All because you’re in fact the biggest coward.’

“...”

‘You probably thought of yourself as a great warrior. You probably thought that you combined power and brains. It was all a lie. You have deceived not only others but also yourself, you good-for-nothing liar.’

“Yeah, I’m an idiot.”

Mattalast answered himself.

‘You understand, right? The world wouldn’t have been destroyed had you fought and won. You destroyed it. Because of you the world will be destroyed.’

No, it’s not my fault. He couldn’t put these words out of his mouth. It might not have been only Mattalast’s fault.

But after all it was his fault.

The regret that even death would not compensate for seemed about to rip Mattalast’s body to shreds. He was able to push aside the Power of Tearless Ending only due to that regret.

He thought while running. *Is there no way? Even the possibility of a billion to one was fine. Was there no way to stop Ruruta?*

He then thought of it.

‘Such a stupid man. Why would you cling to that so late in the game?’

He heard the voice in his mind.

“I have to ask Hamyuts. About the Violet Sinner and the Violet Wish...”

‘Just the worst... she is the Violet Sinner whom the Armed Librarians killed and you sealed. And yet this is the final straw you cling to?’

Mattalast was ridiculing himself inside his head. It was natural. Everyone couldn’t help but laugh at someone as bad as him.

Hamyuts was outside the Labyrinth. She should still be alive. If I hear the Violet Wish from her, perhaps there's a chance.

'It's useless. Since she's dead, defeating Ruruta is definitely impossible.'

He recalled Hamyuts's words. However, he had no choice but to cling to that impossibility.

As he approached the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth, Mattalast's feet stopped.

"...Dammit."

Mattalast spat out. He could feel a dreadful pressure coming from ahead. Ruruta had noticed his awakening. He stopped his feet heading for the surface and ambushed him.

'Mattalast. So you can still move?'

He heard a voice echo.

"Unfortunately, I can't afford to sleep."

'So you've resisted the Power of Tearless Ending. Seems like your despair is quite deep.'

Mattalast tried moving his hand to ready his guns. But once again it froze. It was a powerful restraining ability, different from Ireia's power to stop time.

He couldn't move even a finger. He was so pathetic he wanted to cry. How the hell was he a matchless genius? In front of the enemy he had to fight the most he couldn't fire even a single bullet.

"Kill me, Ruruta. What's your purpose?"

‘How sad. I want to release you from that despair.’

“What kind of pity you show me so late into the game!”

Ruruta then sent him his thoughts. They were mixed with sorrow.

‘Mattalast. I think of at least letting people of the world die in peace. That’s why I immediately used the Power of Tearless Ending without killing anyone.

That is my atonement.’

“If you want to atone, why are you even killing us!”

‘It’s been decided.’

“Don’t kill us! Please, I beg you!”

I’m just the worst, thought Mattalast. In the end I even tried crying and begging.

“No matter what you think, everyone’s living in this world! Everyone wants to live! Don’t kill us, please, for mercy’s sake, I beg you!”

Mattalast truly cried.

‘I realize that. Even I feel sorry. But I just have to atone.’

“Why?! What are you atoning for? No one told you to atone for anything!”

‘The sin I need to atone for is the birth of you people.’

“...But why?”

‘This world is hell. People cannot get what they want. Because they can’t they hate, rob, and hurt each other.

I have been watching this hell all along.'

"No, this world's no hell."

'Can you say that in front of Hyoue Janfus?'

Who's that? Thought Mattalast.

'You probably do not know him. It is the name of a boy who was caught by Kachua, made to be a human bomb, and perished pitifully. And it is not just him. There are plenty other people like him who have lived in hell. All of them fought, were hurt, and died.'

"...But this world also has happy people. We have offered you their Books."

'There's no need for that anymore.'

Ruruta pronounced ruthlessly.

'I have kept this hell going for my own purposes. I believed that even this hell might contain the perfect happiness and did not destroy the world.

I should have done that long ago, though. Because I did not, everyone hurt and suffered.'

"No!"

'I'm sorry. I have committed two sins. Letting you live, and killing you.'

That's no good, thought Mattalast. *That's not a human way of thinking.* He couldn't agree at all.

'So Mattalast, at least sleep in peace. Don't add the sin of me hurting you.'

“I refuse. I won’t die in peace or whatever.”

‘Then what do you desire?’

Mattalast shouted in despair.

“At least... at least, let me die while suffering! Please atone for my sins!”

‘...A human through and through.’

Ruruta sent his sad thoughts. Along with these words Mattalast’s body twisted. Starting from his spine and to his hipbones, even the tips of his toes were destroyed.

No scream resounded; his lungs were also destroyed in an instant. His fingers were severed. His inner organs withered one by one.

‘Humans are beyond help. As well as Mattalast Ballory.’

At the next moment, Mattalast’s body recovered. It was an ability far surpassing Enlike’s super regeneration. And he was able to use it on other people... was Ruruta’s power that strong?

‘Shall we continue?’

Along with Ruruta’s words Mattalast was again destroyed. His clothes were dyed entirely by blood, and pieces of entrails and feces were scattered around.

It wasn’t torture but a death penalty. This was repeated on Mattalast tens of times. He had already lost consciousness long ago. Ruruta absolved his restraints.

‘Can you still hear me, Mattalast? There is something I must tell you.’

He couldn't hear with his ears, but the thoughts barely reached him.

'I greatly appreciate your work.

If the truth became known to people of the world, it would have invited chaos. People would have challenged me in vain and their losses would have been piled. They would have despaired in front of the unbeatable enemy.

You have protected the world's people in your own way. You have concealed the truth of despair with a gentle lie.'

At some point, Ruruta was standing near the unconscious Mattalast.

"...Farewell, Mattalast, you kind-hearted villain."

Ruruta spoke with his own mouth. Then he placed his hand on Mattalast's head. He activated the Power of Tearless Ending once again. This time Mattalast's consciousness completely fell into darkness.

Ruruta raised his head and muttered.

"I have thought destroying the world would be simple, but unexpectedly there are plenty of other things to do. Even the Armed Librarians have not yet abandoned their will to live."

Then, he joined his two hands together. A small light was created between them.

In the Sixth Sealed Archive, Mirepoc was talking towards her comrades.

“...I can’t connect to either Yukizona-san or Mattalast-san. They are probably already...”

“...”

No reply came.

They lost Yukizona, Mattalast collapsed, and Hamyuts abandoned them. There was no longer anyone to lead the Armed Librarians gathered at the Sixth Sealed Archive.

They just stood still, having no idea what to do.

“...Will the world really be destroyed?”

Gamo mumbled. Neither Mirepoc or the other Armed Librarians could feel any of this was real. It felt as if they were just in some incomprehensible dream. It seemed that someone who possessed the power to destroy the world was coming from below. However, since they have never seen him, it couldn’t be helped that they didn’t feel the threat.

“What should we do?”

Mirepoc said, her face downcast.

“...Ahahahaha!”

A sudden laughter resounded. It came from Luik.

“It’s no use, thinking of difficult stuff makes me sleepy. It doesn’t fit my personality at all.”

Saying so and wielding his great spear, he walked towards the Sealed Labyrinth filled with Guardian Beasts.

“Where are you going?!”

“You can tell by looking.”

Luik turned around and said while laughing. While he seemed desperate he also seemed refreshed.

“I’m a piece of junk who can do nothing but fight. Whether the world is destroyed or I’m fired, it changes nothing.”

“...Luik-san.”

Unable to think of any words to stop him, Mirepoc took a step forward. It was then that Gamo spoke.

“Listen, everyone. You too, Luik. I’m the one Yukizona left in charge. I’m still your commander.”

Everyone looked at Gamo.

“The Director said that everything’s useless and we can do whatever we want to. So let’s do just that.

Those who want to go back or escape, get out of here at once.”

No one moved.

“Is there anyone who would like to kill if there’s no law? If so, do whatever you’d like without hesitating. The Director authorized it.”

“Yes!”

Rizzly raised his hand.

“I want to kill the Director though, so what should I do?”

Laughter and applause rose among the Armed Librarians.

“Now that’s a great idea!”

“Well said Rizzly!”

Mirepoc also laughed without thinking. It was perhaps the first time she had laughed so frankly. It was a laugh born at the worst possible situation.

“I’ve always wanted to kick her ass off once. This is a good chance.”

“I’ve done it. Obviously she turned the tables over me though!”

Everyone clapped their hands while roaring with laughter.

“What will you do Gamo? Do you really accept this?”

Marfa said to Gamo.

“I wonder.”

Gamo thought and raised his hand to another direction. This time it was Tena. She was seriously injured, but got back to the line of battle.

“Umm, there’s another person I’d like to kill.”

“...I see.”

The laughter stopped and everyone started thinking.

“Right, if that piece of shit Hamyuts returns alive it’s good enough!”

Gamo said.

“Obviously.”

Luik said.

Then, despite no one ordering them, all Armed Librarians formed a line. Those who excelled at Bodily Reinforcement turned to the front line and served as a wall. Those who had great destructive power came to the back. After them lined up those like Mirepoc who were support types.

“...Even if she tells us to do what we’d like, this is what we end doing.”

Gamo, who went to the same line as Mirepoc, muttered.

“Right, Mirepo. I don’t really get the truth about Bantorra Library, and I don’t care about Ruruta at all. In the end, all of us are idiots who can’t do anything but fight.”

Mirepoc then answered, sounding like she was weirdly having fun.

“Do you know how are these idiots who can’t do anything but fight called?”

“You don’t know them Mirepo? They’re called Armed Librarians.”

Luik raised a war cry. Rizzly shot a shockwave ahead. They started forcing the Beasts of the Final Chapter that remained behind the Barrier into the depths of the Labyrinth.

“Don’t stall!”

Gamo shouted.

“Who’s the hell stalling!”

The answer came from the front row.

Strangely at that time the Armed Librarians’ faces were bright. The organization they belonged to had already been destroyed. And of

course they had no chances of victory. So what was so enjoyable about it?

“Push them back! Until the hall of the Fifth Labyrinth!”

“Roger that!”

At that moment the Armed Librarians fought in order to fight. Both for their pride and for their lives as Armed Librarians.

Perhaps they were laughing because this was the first time they experienced such a thing since they were born. For the first time the Armed Librarians only fought for themselves.

Observing the situation with her Sensory Threads, Hamyuts then muttered.

“How unexpected.”

She said with a somewhat lonely voice. *Maybe I should go participate while we're at it*, she thought. She felt the same like someone locking himself inside his desolate room on the day of a festival.

She thought that if she informed them of the history of the Armed Librarians and the fact that the world was about to be destroyed they would lose their will to fight. That was her aim.

“You should’ve just given up... no matter what you’d do it’s useless, after all.”

She explored the Labyrinth with her Sensory Threads. The movements of Ruruta, who was at the Fifth Labyrinth, were transmitted to her.

“...Ruruta’s also quite insensitive. Since it seems like everyone’s having fun wouldn’t it be fine to let it keep going?”

Saying this, she gulped down her coffee.

Inside the Labyrinth, Ruruta created a ball of light inside his hands. A white shining thread was emitted from it. Releasing the ball of light from his hands, it slowly began rising upward.

“You were far stronger than I thought. O Armed Librarians. You were a good organization.”

The ball of light passed through the ceiling and headed to the Sixth Labyrinth.

“And so it is sad. You, who can rely on nothing but power...”

Ruruta began to walk again.

Amazingly the Armed Librarians managed to push the Beasts of the Final Chapter back. They retreated back to the entrance of the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth before the Barrier.

Even after a minute, they only charged ahead without thinking of anything. It was all so they could preserve their dominance. However, someone intervened in that moment. A ball of light suddenly appeared from somewhere.

“What?!”

The Armed Librarians raised a voice of astonishment. It didn’t seem to be the power of the Beasts of the Final Chapter. *It’s someone’s Magic*, thought Mirepoc.

But whose? It had to be Ruruta Coozancoona’s.

“Attack that ball!”

Mirepoc shouted. Slashing attacks and bullet all hit it at once. However, they all passed through as if it had no substance.

“What?!”

Shouted an Armed Librarian who struck with their sword. A thin thread was wrapped around his body.

The thread was viscous like rubber. It was softly flexible and didn't seem to possess any offensive abilities.

“I'll untangle this in no time...”

It wrapped itself around several Armed Librarians. It couldn't be shaken off or cut. It didn't become impossible to move, but their movements were restricted.

They didn't think this ability was a big deal, but at their current situation it was a decisive blow. At the last minute the Armed Librarians who were opposed by the Beasts of the Final Chapter were pushed back all at once.

Ruruta muttered.

“Don't kill them, Beasts.”

And he raised his fingers. He swung them around as if he was the conductor of an orchestra.

“...Sing.”

The Beasts of the Final Chapter didn't kill the Armed Librarians restrained by the thread. They bent over them and held them down.

“Cut the thread, someone!”

The frontline of Luik and the rest was broken through and the support unit at the rear has also collapsed.

Mirepoc exchanged desperate blows with a Blade-Haired Lion. However, the thread restraining her legs entangled her and she collapsed. She was held down from both shoulders and became unable to move.

Just as she thought she was going to be killed... she heard some voice.

Was that a song? Or just music? Perhaps it was just a mysterious wave different from these two.

Something beautiful passed in her ears, through her skin, and spread inside her whole body.

Her fear of dying as well as her anger at defeat began to disappear when she heard that sound. The violent emotions vanished from her heart and were changed to a sense of loneliness.

“...What, is this?”

Mirepoc muttered. She didn't know of how Yukizona, Yuri and Mattalast have collapsed. She also didn't know that this was the Power of Tearless Ending that had defeated them.

“Just what... is this?”

Many thoughts surfaced to Mirepoc's mind.

Her friends when she was a child; a person that she never once talked to, her first love; the days she had spent aiming to become a soldier; the memories of battle she spent as an Armed Librarian.

They should have all been important memories. However, they all started becoming boring, inconsequential memories.

Her mission as an Armed Librarians. The pride in her heart. All of it was disappearing.

And then she understood.

“Everything’s going to end already, huh.”

Her sadness lasted for a while. Before long, her expression softened like that of an acquitted prisoner. Mirepoc closed her eyes and let go of her will to live.

The Power of Tearless Ending. Originally it had to be activated just like this with the song made by the Beasts of the Final Chapter. Only its original user Ruruta could make use of it by placing his hand over the head of the target.

All of the other Armed Librarians lose their wills to live just like her.

And finally, the Beasts of the Final Chapters broke through the Barrier and charged outside.

Yukizona’s duty; Mattalast’s regrets; the Armed Librarians’ pride... Everything was crushed and the Beasts of the Final Chapter dashed towards the surface.

The Beasts were singing. Inside the Sixth Labyrinth, in the ground level of Bantorra Library, and over all the premises. The Beasts of the Final Chapter kept singing.

That song was carried by the winds and covered the Library.

“What’s that song?”

The normal librarians who still remained in the Library shouted.

“Is it someone’s ability?”

Everyone blocked their ears. However, the song spread into their bodies from their skin. Just like the Armed Librarians, the normal librarians lost their wills to live.

Kyasariro also heard this sound as she cowering in fear at some corner of the Library. And she raised her tear-stained face and smiled.

“Finally, it’s finally over.”

She didn’t have to be scared anymore. She didn’t have to be afraid anymore. She didn’t have to run away. Kyasariro gladly received the Power of Tearless Ending.

Her eyes slowly closed. And her body fell atop the lawn.

The Guardian Beasts swept over the Library’s premises. All of them raised their heads to the heavens and sang the song of the final chapter loudly in a chorus.

The people of the town looking worriedly at the Library were frightened.

“What is that?!”

“I can still hear it even if I block my ears!”

People tried at the very least to run to a safe place. However, they soon understood it was meaningless. People sat down here and there around the streets. They all had a uniformly calm face and they all collapsed.

Not minding the Armed Librarians at all, Olivia Littolet was working in her tailor shop. She was being taught skills of ironing and repairing by her tailoring master. Olivia was earnestly practicing so she could open a second shop.

She stopped her hands when she heard a voice coming from outside.

“...Is that someone’s voice? Is someone singing?”

Thinking that it didn’t have anything to do with her, Olivia kept ironing. However, for some reason her hands stopped and she sat down on her chair.

“...I quit.”

Olivia turned off the iron.

“What’s that song? Everything seems to become meaningless.”

She felt as if she had once known something important. She felt as if she had attempted to accomplish something incredulous. However, it didn’t matter at all anymore.

She probably did her best. But it didn’t matter at all.

Olivia closed her eyes.

The Guardian Beasts kept singing. The voice echoed away from Past God Bantorra Island and past the ocean.

Inside a residence in the Ismo Republic, the President and the cabinet ministers held a meeting through the night. The president appealed for their departure from cooperation with the Armed Librarians. The other ministers were opposed to it.

The president held a grudge against Luik for hitting him during the time of the Deep Blue Curse Rebellion. The ministers were confused at the President switching over to an anti-Armed Librarians stance.

“...No, it’s fine.”

In the middle of the speech, the President suddenly sat down his chair.

“Let’s leave it be. It’s meaningless anyway.”

There was no one to oppose the President suddenly saying this. All of them realized that everything was meaningless.

At Toatt Mining Town, a single woman was baking bread to sell it. She was called Ia Mira. She remained at the bakery left by her deceased lover and continued the same work.

Ia had a certain worry: recently a certain mining engineer started hitting on her. He told her that he wanted to leave town with her.

However, Ia had a daily routine of carrying flowers to the place where her lover and her friend who was a mysterious boy had died. She was attracted to the man, but didn’t want to interrupt this daily routine.

That worry suddenly disappeared.

“...Oh, right. It doesn’t matter at all.”

Ia turned off the oven, threw away the freshly baked bread and sat down.

Inside a certain farm at the Ismo Republic was the foundation of a large machine. The rocket of the second phase of the space program,

meant to fly from Ismo to Past God Bantorra's Island, was supposed to be completed.

A young man stood by the device. It was the young scholar who aimed for space, Kwane.

"Wanting to go to space... how stupid of me."

Kwane sat down, holding his knees.

"Say, Pina-san. You probably think so as well, right?"

Next to him was his friend and sympathizer, the farmer's daughter.

"Kwane, you're not stupid. If you are, then I am as well."

She sat down as well.

"Even though everything's useless anyway."

A man was riding a bicycle on the countryside of the Principality of Meliot. In his basket were bundles of letters and he slipped lightly through alleyways.

Five years ago, he had lost all of his memories and began living in that town. Since he had nothing to prove his identity with he was anxious. However, with the kind people of this town, as well as the cooperation of a certain woman, he was able to make his living there somehow.

Now he was married and his child was almost two years old.

"Keiz-san, this is from your son."

The addressee seemed to be absent. The man tucked the letter inside the door and returned to his bicycle.

It was strange, but he didn't feel as if he had to retrieve his memories. He had the feeling that his past was painful and hard.

He had been released. If so, this was where he belonged.

"...Hmm?"

He could hear something. And he recalled something. However, he couldn't understand it.

A few seconds later, the man stopped the bicycle and got down on the ground.

He was the former Acting Director. Now, the man who was once called Photona Bardgamon slowly lost his will to live.

A certain island in the southern frontier.

Yankuu was there after taking a vacation. Since they needed manpower for digging wells he was asked to return there as a favor.

With assistance from the Armed Librarians the migration to the island was somehow progressing. However, they still needed money to live. Until then he thought that he should continue to be a trainee.

"Say, big brother Yankuu."

"Yes, Mani?"

A voice came from above. Up there was his sister Mani. She was a True Man of the New Indulging God Cult.

"You should stop it already."

"Huh?"

He thought for a while of the meaning of those words. He couldn't understand why, but he was able to understand them.

"Yeah, let's stop."

He didn't have to aim for Mani's happiness anymore. He also didn't have to think of anyone's happiness. It felt the same as lowering a great burden he was carrying on his back. Yankuu sank down to the depths of the well.

The headquarters of the Indulging God Cult at Ismo.

The Overseer of Paradise Minth was scratching his head in front of his desk. In front of him were the mysterious words engraved on the desk. His subordinate Laty had no idea who did that nor their meaning.

"Was I at fault, was my way of thinking wrong?!"

Laty stared at him in shock.

"Please calm down, Overseer of Paradise. What happened?"

Minth shouted back at her.

"It's already over. I'm not the Overseer of Paradise anymore!"

"What do you..."

Minth then cried, wailed, and writhed. But before long, he calmed down and collapsed on the couch.

Thank god, he's finally calmed down, thought Laty. However, she soon stopped caring about that and collapsed to the couch the same way.

At that time... January 12, 1929, 11:19 in Past God Bantorra Island's time.

All stories that spread around the world have ended. Both comedies and tragedies, both the grand and the trivial.

All of the stories engraved by people reached their end at the same time.

Just like that, the world has ended.

Chapter 5: Despair Under the Sun

Part 1

Mattalast was collapsed at the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth. The Power of Tearless Ending made his mind sleep inside the darkness. However, some faint consciousness remained there.

Even now he still had a single hope left. Even if he had collapsed, there was still Hamyuts. Even if it was her, she couldn't fight Ruruta. However, she knew about the Violet Wish. She was the only person in the world to succeed it.

The only one to possess the possibility of defeating Ruruta and saving the world was Hamyuts.

Mattalast wished that the world would be saved by her.

But that hope will probably not be fulfilled. He knew that as well.

And yet he wished. *Please. Fight, Hamyuts.*

You're the only one that can protect the world after all.

The Beasts of the Final Chapter filled the vast premises of the Library. They raised their heads to the skies and sang in a chorus. Making his way through their gaps, Enlike Bishile came running.

"Shit, where are you, Hamyuts!"

Enlike shouted. Until a while ago he defeated the Beasts of the Final Chapter by his own hands, but he realized it was useless and

stopped. If he were to fight alone it would be endless. Since they were just singing, it seemed they were not going to harm Enlike.

“...!”

The inside of his head blacked out for a moment. He shook his head as if to chase out the song. Enlike was still enduring the Power of Tearless Ending.

However, he also knew that he didn’t have much time left. One hour would be impossible. He wasn’t even sure about half an hour. If he were to lose focus, his heart might get stolen by sweet resignation in the next instant.

“Don’t lose focus, hold your mind.”

Enlike told himself.

Right now, two things were supporting his heart.

First, the fact that the world would end if he were to collapse now – the sense of duty that only he alone could save the world. The second was the hope that he still had a way to fight.

The only road for victory entrusted to him by Olivia; the Violet Wish. The sole method to defeat Ruruta Coozancona was saving him from the depths of despair.

Because he knew this, Enlike was able to resist Ruruta’s Power of Tearless Ending and the song of the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

“Ruruta, what is the cause of your despair?”

Enlike knew everything that the Acting Directors of history knew. However, he couldn’t analyze Ruruta’s innermost depths. He also couldn’t tell what made him despair.

As long as he didn't know that, he didn't have any way to fight.

There was only one person who possibly knew of Ruruta's reason for despair. It was Hamyuts Meseta.

"Hamyuts! Hamyuts! Where are you?!"

He ran to the entrance to the Labyrinth and called inside it. Since Enlike had no information-gathering abilities, he could only find her by running around.

Ruruta Coozancoona was slowly walking through the Labyrinth. Among his multitudes of abilities there were powers of transportation. Using them he would be able to instantly reach the surface. However, Ruruta purposely elected to walk on his own two legs.

He had no reason why he must hurry. The Beasts of the Final Chapter played their song and the people of the world all lost their wills to live.

But there were probably still some people who resisted the Power of Tearless Ending in the vast world. Ruruta thought that he would wait until they accept the end.

Releasing the Beasts and killing all people only later would be fine.

"..."

But he also had some worries. It was about the current Acting Director, Hamyuts Meseta.

Although he had sensory organs that far surpassed ordinary human beings, Ruruta couldn't see through people's hearts. Even he couldn't tell what Hamyuts was thinking about.

The premises of Bantorra Library were filled by the Beasts of the Final Chapter. Hamyuts was looking down at the surface from the top floor of the Library, the Acting Director's Office.

"It's taking unexpectedly long. Who would've thought it would take more than half a day? Really, that Ruruta..."

She could probably not say that the Armed Librarians held out. Neither Mattalast nor Yukizona were able to even hold him off. The other ones were also defeated easily.

It was simply that Ruruta did not hurry. After having lived for 2000 years he could spare a few hours.

Thinking of this, Hamyuts drank her coffee all alone. Even if it was Ruruta he was naturally confused. She was drinking her coffee when faced with the destruction of the world.

"...Delicious."

It was the last coffee of her life, as well as of the world. *I'm glad I've made it well*, thought Hamyuts.

She confirmed with her Sensory Threads that Ruruta was walking through the Fifth Sealed Labyrinth. He didn't seem to be in a hurry. Apparently she had about two or three more hours.

"Thinking about it, Ruruta's never drank any coffee even though he's lived for 2000 years..."

People started drinking coffee around 200 years ago. Ruruta never left the Labyrinth for the last 2000 years.

He has received the Books of people who had drank coffee, so wasn't it the same as him drinking it? She was somewhat curious about that.

"I wonder if there's coffee in the 'new world'. If not, I think it's quite the big loss."

Hamyuts kept rambling to herself. She didn't think she'd have this sort of leisure before the end of the world.

She was not affected at all by the song of the singing Beasts of the Final Chapter. She didn't even try to withstand it, but simply kept calm.

This was because she had wished for death in the first place. She had neither the will to oppose Ruruta nor to preserve her life. The attachment to life couldn't been taken from those who desired death.

"I feel bad for Matt, but I really have no will to fight. Frankly speaking it's meaningless, so I don't feel like it."

Hamyuts, the only person to know the Violet Wish. Hamyuts, the only remaining possibility to save the world. Mattalast bet on that hope in the end. However, that last hope was useless in the first place.

She had already accepted her death.

Desiring her own death.

This wish had always been inside Hamyuts's heart. Both during the fight with the Indulging God Cult as well as during Olivia's rebellion afterward.

However, that did not mean that she has always acted accordingly. Rather, looking at her from outside, one would probably think that she was shirking away from death and it could look like nothing else.

If she only wished for death, it would all be over in an instant with poison.

If she wished to be killed in battle, she shouldn't have had subordinates. The world's strongest warriors were fighting in order to protect Hamyuts as a result.

Even more, if she wished for defeat, she should've been weaker. If she was about as strong as Mirepoc, Hamyuts's wish would have been probably granted without any issues.

She desired defeat yet was the strongest.

Hamyuts's life was full of inconsistencies. She herself understood this well.

"In the end I will be killed by Ruruta."

Hamyuts muttered.

If she was to be killed, it should have been a different opponent. There was the unforgettable Colio. There were those who had cornered Hamyuts like Cigal, Mokkaia or Kachua. There were also those who wrung out their courage to rebel against her like Volken and Olivia.

These beautiful, sparkling memories were revived. If she had been killed by them, just how happy would she have been? In exchange, now that she was going to be killed by Ruruta, it would be so dull.

She will simply be killed without a fight expending his desperate efforts, without any life-risking plan, without any sharpened murderous intent, but simply killed as if stepped on. How boring.

“Why could no one kill me, I wonder. Even though I always asked everyone to kill me and kill me...”

Was I doing this half-hearted? I should've been more evil. I should've thrown away my work as an Armed Librarian, throw away all comrades and subordinates, anyone and everyone, and just fight with everything I laid my eyes on.

I should've been a monster that does nothing but fight and become the enemy of the entire world.

However, she had chosen a different path. She lived as an Armed Librarian. Although she did evil, she also lived as a protector of the world.

Was that decision mistaken or not? Even Hamyuts couldn't tell.

“...No one could have killed me, huh.”

She complained in a lonely voice.

Oh well, she reconsidered.

Even if I start having regrets for being half-hearted now it wouldn't help. I will be killed just as I wished to. That's fine.

Hamyuts placed her half-empty cup on top of her desk and looked up at the ceiling. She then spoke as if talking to someone.

“...Right, Chacoly?”

The person she called was not there. Neither was she anywhere in the world. She, without even a Book left behind, lived only inside Hamyuts's memories.

"Your wish did not come true after all. Did you lose because of my victory? Or perhaps we've both lost?"

Although there shouldn't be any voice to answer her, Hamyuts kept asking.

"What is it, Chacoly Cocot? My lifetime friend.

If you were alive right now I wonder what would've become of you. I can't imagine you as thirty years old, but then again I also can't imagine myself as being thirty years old."

She closed her eyes while feeling nostalgic. Her memories from when she was a young girl were clear as if it were yesterday.

In the southern part of the Ismo Republic was a desert belt.

This was currently the only place in the world people didn't live in. Visiting it were only few researchers, criminals who have escaped after committing serious crimes, or perhaps recluses who have abandoned the world.

Which of them was he? Looking at a grave, the fourteen-years old Hamyuts thought so. Both his corpse and his Book were buried inside.

By his actions he would be a researcher. If he were found out, since he had committed questionable acts around the world, he would also be branded a criminal. His way of life was throwing away everything like a recluse.

No name had been engraved on the grave. They couldn't do that. In the unlikely event that someone visited it and read the name, it would become a serious affair.

The name of the deceased was Makia Dexiart. It was the name of the Acting Director three generations ago.

Three people were in front of the grave. Two of them were adolescent girls, and the final one was a bald, old man.

The old man then spoke.

"Let us say that Makia-sama's Book has been offered up to Heaven. After all, the current Director Photona is not a man good with bargaining or lies. He was probably deceived."

"Yeah. Whatever, Lascall."

Hamyuts said. If she was a normal person, she would've probably been sad. But she was Hamyuts Meseta. She did not harbor such feelings.

"Are you sad, Hammy?"

The girl standing behind her said.

"I'm not sad at all, Chacoly."

Hamyuts said, and the girl behind her, Chacoly, spoke.

"But daddy's died, Hammy."

"I know that. Hammy's not sad. It's because dad made me this way."

She kept speaking without turning around. Chacoly persisted.

“You’re lying, Hammy, you’re sad.”

“You’re the one lying, Chacoly. I’m not sad at all.”

Hamyuts said to her.

“No, Hammy’s lying. Chacoly can understand. Because that’s her ability.”

Saying so, Chacoly pointed at her own hair.

Looking at her face, one would think she was beautiful. Every time, no matter how many times one would look. The only ones whose faces Hamyuts saw every day were Chacoly and her father Makia. And yet, no matter how many times she saw it, she wouldn’t get tired of her face.

She was a small girl, two years her senior. She was small and had short legs, and on top of that her back was slightly hunched.

She couldn’t be called pretty even as a compliment. She had drooping eyes and a mouth that was too big. Her nose was large with round contours.

Her skin, exposed to the sandy wind and sun, was dull brown. Her face was full of freckles. The clothes she wore nowadays were so tattered that even vagrants didn’t wear them, and on top of that she wore a thick linen cloth on her shoulders.

So why was she still beautiful? The answer was simple.

It was due to the color of her hair that didn’t fade no matter how much the scorching sun shone on it or even if sand clung to it. It was the proof she was born with a Magic Right, a color different from ordinary people.

It was a bluish deep purple. Also, only her forelocks were as white as snow. That idiosyncratic hair was braided. Her yellow ribbon looked like a bee resting on a petal. Her father called it violet hair.

She never saw the flower called a violet, but using her hair as an example she thought that it was probably a beautiful flower.

“Have you forgotten Chacoly’s ability?”

Chacoly grinned, exposing her teeth. Recalling that hiding things from her was impossible, Hamyuts sighed.

“I’ve forgotten. I acknowledge it. I’m just a little bit sad.”

“Yeah.”

Chacoly’s smile soon vanished. The grief at her having lost her father spread on her face again.



Lascall spoke to both of them.

“Well then, I shall now leave you two. I pray that your future will come to an interesting conclusion.”

Lascall’s body sank inside the sand. Chacoly waved her hand to see him off. Hamyuts made no farewell greetings.

“We’re out of things to do. What shall we do from now on, Hammy?”

“Just like we were told. We’ll leave this place and go somewhere. To wherever we please.”

Hamyuts pointed at the camels tied near their house. All of their luggage had been loaded unto two camels. They were water and food to cross the desert as well as clothes and daily necessities for when they reach a town. On Hamyuts’s camel there were also the string of a sling and many stones.

“Where will we go?”

“For now, to town. There’s no other place to go to.”

“Yeah, Chacoly thinks the same.”

They got on the camels. Then, they slowly went through the desert.

The camels were walking in the desert. The pair barely spoke these last several days.

“Say, Hammy. Will you please always stay with Chacoly?”

Chacoly said.

“Don’t wanna.”

Hamyuts answered curtly. They sank into silence again. Chacoly tried speaking to her and Hamyuts rejected her. This was repeated.

After a long time again, Chacoly spoke again.

“Have you decided what to do afterwards, Hammy?”

“I have. I’ll get killed by someone somewhere.”

Chacoly made a sad face.

“It’ll be sad if you die, Hammy.”

“But there’s no choice. I was born like that.”

“I don’t want that to happen. Go with me.”

“Not a chance. No fight can happen near you. So I won’t be killed. Besides, when you’re there I become unlike myself.”

“Can’t be helped. It’s because Chacoly has this ability. But she wants to be with Hammy.”

“I’ll say this as many times as needed, but no.”

“...Really.”

Some anger seeped into Chacoly’s voice. Her violet hair swayed.

“...!”

Hamyuts grimaced. In an instant she pulled out a stone from her waist and flicked it with her thumb. The pebble grazed Chacoly’s face. Blood flowed from her cheek.

“Chacoly! You’ve promised not to use your ability on me!”

Unusually, Hamyuts shouted. Both now and later, it was rare for her to get angry and lose control.

“Sorry, it wasn’t on purpose. I activated it unconsciously.”

“...Don’t do that again.”

“It’s a promise.”

They went silent again.

Along the way there was only one time when Hamyuts spoke up to Chacoly.

“Chacoly. From now on, no matter who we meet, you can’t reveal my identity.”

“...I know that.”

“If I’m revealed, no matter by what means, I will kill you.”

“I know that.”

“If my identity were to be revealed, my wish will never be granted. They will confine me and I’ll spend the rest of my life in prison.

They’ll pour all of their energy so that neither the Armed Librarians nor the Indulging God Cult will kill me.”

Hamyuts got goosebumps while talking. Just imprisoning her won’t solve anything. They may take her memories away and make her live like a living corpse. She will spend the rest of her life tied to a bed.

“...I can’t let that happen. Chacoly will defeat Ruruta after all. If she does that, Hammy will be free. You’ll be allowed to live.”

Chacoly said, smiling.

“...It has nothing to do with Ruruta. Wanting to be killed is my own will.”

“You want to be killed no matter what?”

“Obviously. I was born like that.”

There always was some sorrow inherent to their conversations. While their relationship was the closest and they both shouldered the same fate, they were different like day and night.

Chacolý was born to be loved, and lived to be loved.

Hamyuts was born to be killed, and lived to be killed.

The roads they walked in were cruelly different.

Before long they approached town. The time for them to separate from this life also came close.

Hamyuts was thinking that from this point on she will never meet Chacolý again. She will later end up meeting her once more, but she had no way of knowing this at the time.

“Since it’s our last time, let Chacolý try to predict what happens to you Hammy from now on.”

“Do you have calico hair?”

“No, but Chacolý can even without any Predictive ability.”

“What’ll happen with me?”

“You will go to town, find a normal job, fall in love with a normal man, create a normal family, with kids as well, and then, either by some disease or your life span, you will have a normal death.”

“Impossible.”

Hamyuts shook her head.

“It is possible.

Hammy will not be killed by anyone. You will always, always, want someone to come and kill you, but no one will. That’s how things will be.”

“Because I’m strong?”

“You’re definitely the world’s strongest, Hammy. But that’s not all.”

After a short while of silence, Hamyuts replied.

“Not gonna happen. I will definitely be killed by someone. Even if no one kills me, there’s still Ruruta. If he makes a move, he will definitely come and kill me.”

“That won’t happen, either.”

“Why?”

“Because Chacoly’s here. Chacoly will win and save Hammy.”

“ ... ”

She didn’t tell her she can’t. Since it was Chacoly she might win against Ruruta. Hamyuts could understand that.

Before long they could see a town. Chacoly opened her own luggage on her camel. She brought something from inside of it.

“Hammy.”

Chacoly threw something. It was a stuffed doll. It was an animal Hamyuts had never seen before.

“What’s that?”

“A present. Take it. Daddy gave it to Chacoly, but you don’t have one right Hammy?”

Hamyuts stared closely at the doll. It was a strange animal with long ears. It didn’t look like anything that existed in this world.

“It’s called a rabbit. Daddy said it’s the cutest animal in the world.”

“What’s with the long ears, it’s disgusting.”

“Chacoly also thought so at first, but now Chacoly likes it. You’ll definitely come to like it as well, Hammy.”

“...Even if you ended up liking it, I hate it.”

Hamyuts thought about throwing it away. But it was fine doing so after separating from Chacoly. Thinking so, Hamyuts put it inside her bag. She couldn’t even imagine that she would end up keeping that doll even when she was thirty years old.

Neither the fact that just like Chacoly said she would end up loving rabbits.

Hamyuts put the doll inside her luggage. She then silently pulled the camel’s reins. It bent to the left. She bid farewell to Chacoly at her back. Without pursuing her, Chacoly kept advancing straight ahead.

“Hammy! Take care!”

“Don’t wanna!”

Hamyuts found out with her Sensory Threads that she was waving her hand. She advanced without looking back.

“I love you! Always!”

She didn't know how to reply. Should she reply 'me too'? Should she reply 'only you'? Since both were true and both were a lie Hamyuts hesitated.

So she answered the following.

“Only this once, you may read my mind!”

“Okay!”

Hamyuts felt the violet power extending into her mind. How did Chacoly read her current mind?

“Chacoly got it, Hammy! We'll always be friends!”

She laughed inside her mind. *So these were my feelings?* Hamyuts hung her head so that she wouldn't be seen smiling. The camel kept walking and before long she couldn't see Chacoly's figure even if she turned back.

Part 2

Their separation that day was burned into Hamyuts's mind. By closing her eyes she could see it as if it happened yesterday.

"In the end only one of your predictions came true."

Saying this, she caressed the embroidery at her chest.

Hamyuts suddenly thought.

Maybe if Chacoly had been alive and save Ruruta... then Hamyuts would probably have not been killed by anyone. Perhaps she would have quit being an Armed Librarian and had a normal death as a normal person. Or perhaps she would have lived as the Acting Director just like this?

Would she get married? If she did, then it would have to be with Mattalast, right? What about children? She couldn't imagine it.

"Well, there's not use imagining it anyway."

Chacoly died. She became the Violet Sinner, an existence that couldn't even be spoken of. The Violet Wish had been cut away and could no longer come true.

And the world was going to be destroyed.

Hamyuts looked down from her window. She didn't use her Sensory Threads; she didn't need to. All the people of the world have been defeated by Ruruta and none of them possessed the will to live.

"...Hmm?"

However, someone was moving. Hamyuts strained her eyes. She found someone unfamiliar.

Enlike was earnestly searching for Hamyuts. By now he should have searched most of the spacious premises. She was supposed to be somewhere in Bantorra Library.

“What’s that woman doing? Is she fighting somewhere?”

Hamyuts was probably fighting somewhere. No matter how abnormal of a mind she has, even Hamyuts would not face the end of the world without fighting. That was what Enlike thought.

And so he had a blind spot. He never thought she would be in that kind of place.

“Hey, who are you?”

He heard a voice from above. He looked up. Hamyuts’s face was poking from the window of the topmost floor. He could see it was the Acting Director’s Office.

“Can you still move, Hamyuts?”

Enlike called to her. Hamyuts answered while tilting her head.

“Referring to me with no honorific just like that? In the first place, who are you?”

Enlike jumped to the roof, kicked the walls and rushed into the office.

Jumping into the office, Enlike could see a cup of coffee resting on the table. It was still wet as if it had just been drank from.

He couldn't believe what he just saw. Faced with the destruction of the world this woman had elegantly drank her coffee. He even wondered if she might have lost her sanity due to fear.

"What are you doing in this situation? Do you even understand what's going on? The world's about to be destroyed!"

"I know that. More importantly, who're you?"

Instead of naming himself, Enlike shot a small lightning. Hamyuts widened her eyes in surprise.

"It's you, Enlike-kun? What's up with that face?"

"My face doesn't matter one bit."

He spoke as if trying to demand an explanation, but Hamyuts didn't mind it.

"You look totally different. I think you were way cooler before, though."

Why are you so calm? Enlike truly felt she had lost her mind.

"More importantly, Hamyuts. Tell me about the Violet Wish."

Hamyuts put her hand to her chin.

"If you know that... then you're the person Olivia had entrusted the Wish to.

Well, there was pretty much no one else. But what have you been doing this year? Olivia's plan nearly got exposed."

Right now that had no meaning. Enlike became angry.

"Cut the bullshit. Tell me about the Violet Wish!"

“Don’t you know about it?”

“It means to save Ruruta Coozancoona from despair. That’s the Violet Wish, right?”

“Hmm, so you do know that. Then you don’t know who Ruruta is? Fine. I’ll tell you.”

“No, I know that too. I know both about that man and the true history of the Armed Librarians.”

Hamyuts seemed confused.

“If you know that much, isn’t the rest simple? What are you asking me about?”

“I can’t do anything with only this. What makes Ruruta despair? How can I save him from that despair?”

Hamyuts widened her eyes in blank amazement. Enlike couldn’t understand why she was making that face.

“You came here to ask me that?”

“You’re the only one to have met the Violet Sinner. Now tell me. What’s the cause of Ruruta’s despair? I’ll crush everything that made him despair. That’s the only way to save the world.”

Hamyuts thought for a while.

“I see, so that’s what you’ve been thinking.”

She nodded in agreement and then made a large sigh.

“Yup, Olivia chose the wrong person. It’s impossible for you to fulfill the Violet Wish.”

Enlike was confused. Several hours ago Lascall had told him the same. What was he lacking? He had both the will and power to fight.

“Why did you decide so? I have to give it a try.”

“That’s true, but... as I thought it’s impossible for you. No way you can do it.”

Hamyuts said while pointing at Enlike’s chest.

“I’ll speak frankly. Right now you’re probably thinking of saving the world or defeating Ruruta. That’s no good.”

What are you saying? Is there any person who wouldn’t think of saving the world now?

“...I don’t understand.”

“I gave you so many hints and you still don’t get what you’re supposed to do?

If you think about it – no, even without thinking about it you should know.

If you are unable to realize such a simple thing, you are currently useless.”

Ruruta knew about Enlike. The Books of people who have met him were offered up to him. They were the Books of his creator Ganbanzel Grof and the Book of Kachua Beeinhaus. He also remembered that he had once gone down to the Second Sealed Labyrinth.

Killing him would be easy, but he wasn’t in the mood for that. He thought of leaving him be. He had no interest in him. He only thought that he should quickly accept the Power of Tearless Ending.

He probably understood this; he was alive only because of his enemy letting him to. It would be easy for Ruruta to defeat him. He let him live longer because he didn't care.

It was like that during the banquet of liars two weeks ago as well. Because Hamyuts went easy on her, Olivia survived and Enlike remained concealed.

It was a tragicomedy. Although Ruruta spared him, Enlike thought that he had outwitted him. Although he had no chance to win, he was still going to fight.

“How pitiful, Enlike Bishile.”

Ruruta muttered. He understood this as well – it was impossible for Enlike to save him.

Hamyuts waved her hands to drive off Enlike.

“And so, you're disqualified. Give up already. Listen to that song and calm down.”

The Beasts of the Final Chapter were singing in a chorus outside. If he were to entrust himself to that song he would definitely become calm.

However, Enlike stayed silent. Hamyuts's body moved. Immediately afterwards, a lightning strike burnt the office's desk to a crisp.

“What're you trying to do?”

He was surprised that even Hamyuts found it unexpected.

“...I'll kill you and read your Book. Then I'll learn about the Violet Sinner.”

She looked at Enlike with blank eyes.

“What’re you thinking about? I’m grateful for the proposal though. But it’s useless even if you do that.”

“Shut up!”

Hamyuts jumped aside again. A lightning strike pursued her. She loaded a piece of the desk onto her sling and threw it with one swing. Neither defending against or intercepting it, Enlike received the attack and shot further lightning strikes.

“You said you’ll read my Book, but Lascall won’t come anymore. Her role is already over.”

Hamyuts said from the room’s corner, entering a posture prepared for a counterattack.

“So what? I’ll just capture Lascall and make her create the Book.”

“No way you could do such thing.”

“...Still!”

The third lightning shot came. While Hamyuts’s legs were scorched, she somehow evaded.

She jumped out of the window and landed on the roof. She was able to read that a pursuing attack would come soon. Before Enlike jumped out she moved to a different location. While relocating she rotated her sling, and just like with Mattalast’s Predictive ability she shot through Enlike’s legs as he was landing.

Even Hamyuts could understand his heart. He despaired and could not let himself be defeated. If he collapses the world will end. Even

though he understands it's impossible, he isn't allowed to be defeated.

What a pitiful man. He worked, worked and worked for many days. Enlike couldn't give up even this late into the game.

"Even so, you can't give up, huh?"

Hamyuts laughed strangely.

"Fine. Then I'll respond to you. Fight to the best of your ability. While fighting, I'll tell you about the Violet Sinner."

A lightning strike came. Just before it did, Hamyuts threw the spire's bell using her sling. The lightning was blocked by the bell. Hamyuts retreated and escaped from Enlike's firing range.

"Now, come and fight, this is the final fight!"

Hamyuts ran around the roof of Bantorra Library and Enlike was pursuing her. She should have been far above him in speed. However, the fact that she wasn't able to shake him off was probably due to her going easy on him.

"Shit!"

Hesitation, confusion, as well as the despair approaching his legs all wore down Enlike's power. His movements were not well-defined just like when he had once fought against Kachua.

Hamyuts shouted while fighting. Her voice could be heard well and reached Enlike's ears clearly.

"Well then, shall I tell you about her now?"

The Violet Sinner was named Chacoly Cocot. She was raised to destroy Heaven by a certain person. She possessed that power since birth.

And we'll stop here! Keep going!"

"Shit!"

The Beasts of the Final Chapter didn't swarm only the ground; there were also plenty on the roof. There were some flying ones as well.

But they were indifferent. They didn't even look at Hamyuts and Enlike.

He kept pursuing Hamyuts while dodging her gravel bullets and attacking with lightning. She broke the roof and threw its debris.

He was being played with – even Enlike could realize that.

Hamyuts had no reason to fight him. She simply felt sorry for Enlike and went along it.

And even he had no reason to fight. It was already at the stage where even if he defeated Hamyuts nothing would come out of it.

It was a stupid fight. It was meaningless. They both realized that. And yet they kept fighting.

He couldn't capture the fleeing Hamyuts. She shouted from beyond his range.

"What's wrong? You're so disappointing! You should be at least three times stronger than that!"

Encouraged by his enemy, Enlike charged recklessly. He emitted lightning from his entire body while it was being destroyed by gravel bullets.

“Yeah, that’s good.

I’ll tell you. Chacoly’s ability was called Soul Sharing. It’s the superior version of Mirepoc’s Thought Sharing.

She was able to not only exchange what she was thinking about, but could also read the other party’s emotions and give them emotions. It was an outrageous power where misuse could let her control even the heart of a human.”

Thinking of what this meant, Enlike stopped his attack in an instant.

“We’re still in the middle, please fight!”

Hamyuts shot pebbles consecutively as if to scold him. Because he was thinking, Enlike was hit by all of them directly.

He thought while fighting. *It might actually be possible to oppose Ruruta with that power. Even a hundred of Hamyuts couldn’t injure him even once, but if ones could control his heart...*

Enlike kept fighting in order to hear the rest. Hamyuts kept avoiding his attacks while smiling.

Ruruta watched the final fight unfolding above ground.

He started thinking. *Hamyuts Meseta. Stop playing with Enlike. Do you intend for him to cling to a faint hope and continue this miserable fight?*

Let Enlike give up. Release him from his will to live, to fight, and let him be at ease.

Hamyuts admired Enlike's unyielding heart and was gladdened by it.

However, Ruruta could only feel sorrow seeing him.

He wanted everyone to give up, yet Enlike was the only one to not do so.

He made a single sigh.

They probably fought for several tens of minutes. While Enlike jumped through the sky, he was knocked down by a gravel bullet. Since he possessed a super-regenerative ability it wasn't a major wound to him. However, when he was knocked off to the ground it affected him somewhat.

Enlike stood up. Hamyuts stood on top of one of the spires.

She opened her mouth again.

"Chacoly read Ruruta's heart. She intended on controlling him at first, but that was a failure. He possessed resistance to any mind control made by Magic.

But when her heart became connected to Ruruta's, she knew – he was trapped in a deep despair.

She also knew that he collected the Books of happy people in order to escape that despair.

And Chacoly fell in love with Ruruta."

What Enlike wanted to know came after that. What did Ruruta despair of?

He tried to attack her further. At that time, Hamyuts stopped moving. Enlike also unconsciously let his hand rest.

“Say, Enlike-kun. Listening so far, do you still not get it? The reason for you definitely being unable to fulfill Chacoly’s should be clear.”

“...”

Enlike had nothing to reply.

“You’ve been listening since the start right? Chacoly fell in love with Ruruta. Making her love come true, making Ruruta become happy is the Violet Wish.”

“...I see.”

“In the first place can’t you understand it even without knowing about Chacoly? Defeating Ruruta with power is definitely impossible. If so, there’s only one thing to do.

Stop collecting happy Books. Change Ruruta’s heart. Is there anything else?”

“...”

“Do you still not get it? Try thinking about yourself.

You were once eaten by Zatoh and tried suicide. The one to change that was Noloty.

Now, what did she do to you?”

Noloty told him to stop trying to kill himself. Then she tagged along with him and did many stupid things. That changed Enlike’s heart.

“It’s the same. The thing needed to change people’s hearts. The thing one needs to do to smash despair.

There's only one. And it isn't simple.

You must simply sympathize. Without any self-interest, without any falsehood, sympathize with him from the bottom of your heart.

The thing needed to fulfill the Violet Wish is love for Ruruta."

Enlike couldn't move anymore. It was painfully obvious. He didn't notice that.

"You haven't thought of it, huh. You had nothing in your head but how to defeat Ruruta.

So it's impossible. You had to notice that by yourself. It can't have been taught to you by me. If you act on self-interest, you can't sympathize with Ruruta from the bottom of your heart."

"..."

His mind became blank. It was such a simple thing and such a difficult thing.

"Yeah, it's impossible. Ruruta is the demon lord who rules this world.

No one could truly sympathize and love him. In fact, no person had ever tried to do so except Chacoly."

Hamyuts looked down on Enlike. He was simply gazing up at her, stunned.

"Blaming you would be terrible. No one could have done it. So don't let it bother you."

"...What does Ruruta despair of?"

"You're still persisting? What'll you do with the answer?"

“I don’t know.”

“Oh well. If you want to ask me, please fight.”

The battle restarted.

Enlike wasn’t thinking of anything. He was overwhelmed to the extent he couldn’t think. The reality that the world was about to be destroyed; the fact that he wasn’t able to stop it; the fact that this long battle was nothing but futile effort.

He already didn’t think of either saving the world nor stopping Ruruta. He thought of nothing but listening to her story until the last.

Ruruta stopped his feet and looked overhead. He hadn’t laid a hand in the battle above ground. However, he couldn’t let it continue for poor Enlike’s sake.

I shall stop them. Ruruta clenched his fist and raised the index finger of his right hand.

Enlike was heading toward his opponent. *Maybe telling him any further about Chacoly was useless. But because I said I will tell him I have to do it.*

Hamyuts kicked at the roof and jumped to the next roof over.

“Then, let me tell you.

This is about a certain Book that Ruruta Coozancoona had eaten.”

At that moment, her words were cut off. She suddenly looked down. Something was strange at the center part of Bantorra Library. It happened just above the Sealed Labyrinth.

Ruruta Coozancoona raised his index finger overhead.

Oddly he was at the exact center of the Sealed Labyrinth.

It didn't cause any sound. It was an extremely sharp blow yet wasted no energy. This attack rushed through the ground to the sky in an instant.

Should it be called a needle? It was far too long for that, but its form *was* that of a needle.

It was about as thick as a person's thigh. As for its length, it came all the way from Bantorra Library's underground, piercing the ceiling of the level that was above ground and further reaching the sky. It was probably higher than any building above ground. This was the first time Enlike had witnessed Ruruta's power with his own eyes. He wasn't even able to follow how that needle burst through the ground.

"...Hamyuts."

Enlike muttered.

Hamyuts was located midway on the needle. It penetrated her from the back to the very center of her chest.

Blood started spilling from her. The blood trickled from her throat out of her mouth and all the way to her feet. Besides spitting out blood she didn't move an inch.

No matter how much one waited, she didn't stir.

"Hamyu..."

He couldn't voice the rest. Enlike's knees sank to the ground. His last hope, the information about Chacoly, was gone.

The needle stuck out from the right of Ruruta. He lowered his index finger and looked up.

“Hamyuts Meseta. It should be enough. Enlike gave up and your wish should also be fulfilled.”

When Ruruta gazed at it, the ceiling of the Labyrinth crumbled with a calm sound as if it was a building made of toy blocks collapsing. Sunlight flew in and at the same time Ruruta’s body rose to the air.

Ruruta flew, his arms slightly spread and his face turned toward the sky. He was as light as a swallow aiming for the sun. He passed through the ground, went over the Library and passed next to Hamyuts.

Ruruta appeared under the sun for the first time in 2000 years.

“How nostalgic this warm light is.”

The ascending Ruruta stopped. He landed with the toes of his bare feet atop the very tip of the long needle. His clothes and hair fluttered.



“Everything is nostalgic. Even when I’m supposed to know this world already through eating countless Books.”

His body was very young and small. The body of a boy who barely went through 15 years of life.

His bared upper body was thin, tender and captivating. He had tattoos resembling vines on the skin starting from the backs of both hands, up to the shoulders and then down to his chest.

His only garments were a cloth wrapped around his lower body. Even that creased skirt looked like a robe tied to his waist.

Everyone who’d ever seen him wondered if his face was even human. It appeared grieving, affectionate, and yet also machine-like. It wasn’t the face of someone living in this world; he wore a bizarre expression that looked as if it was created by a master artist pushing his imagination to the very limits.

“I thought I had grown tired of seeing this world, but seeing it again, it is beautiful.”

Ruruta’s hair hovered above with the wind. He brushed up the hair stuck to his shoulder.

His hair was transparent. This signified his possession of a Magic Right since birth. And, as Enlike knew, it signified he possessed *that* ability.

Ruruta Coozancoona. His ability was that of Book Eating.

He kept Eating for 2000 years.

He kept living for 2000 years with the Book of someone who could change his form to a tree.

The Book of someone who could protect himself with the erasure of cause and effect.

The Book of someone who could produce a large needle.

The Book of someone who could fly. The Book of someone with Thought Sharing. The Book of someone with supernatural senses. The Book with the ability of restraining. The Book that allowed him to control threads.

And, the Book able to destroy the world, the power of controlling the Beasts of the Final Chapter.

Ruruta ate varied and unbelievable amounts of Books.

He probably possessed no less than fifty Books of warrior that were around Hamyuts's level. And even warriors beyond her couldn't be counted on his fingers.

Ruruta was able to thoroughly use their abilities. When the user of same Book Eating ability – Zatoh – had eaten not even a thousandth of that amount, he reached his limits and went crazy.

Ruruta kept gathering Books for 2000 years. He stored the Books of the strong and of the happy in his Imaginary Entrails, making them his own.

“...Ah.”

Enlike could not move but only produce this voice. *At least fight until the end*, his heart said. However, the difference in their abilities overturned that command.

Ruruta overlooked the area for a long time. Enlike couldn't gauge his feelings; he was far too high for him to be able to see his

expression. Even if he could see it he probably wouldn't understand it.

Was he looking for something or was he feeling reluctance?

Suddenly, his vision focused on one point. Enlike also saw that.

Fifteen whales were flying through the skies. They were faster than airplanes. It was the whale user Bonbo. He finally came.

Bonbo stood on top of the last whale in line. When he saw Bantorra Library he lowered his altitude and raised his speed further. His target was visible.

Along with the whales' charge Enlike moved again.

The largest lightning strike Enlike was able to produce and the top-speed charge of all whales.

Ruruta's hands moved. From his right hand a thin line of light resembling a cotton thread extended. From his left hand a barely visible black fog was produced.

The line of light sliced up the fifteen whales. Along with their scream Bonbo began falling.

The black fog absorbed the lightning and returned it to Enlike as is. His body was burnt and he collapsed.

Confirming that this was the last act of opposition from humans, Ruruta made a lonely smile.

"Ruruta..."

Enlike said as if straining his lungs. It was a small voice, doubtful if he himself could hear it.

“What do you wish for...”

Ruruta looked down at Enlike on the ground.

“What do you need? You were able to gain all of happiness and consume it, so what else could you want...”

You have everything, so what could you despair from...”

Ruruta answered.

“From the fact that what I desire is nowhere in this world. The fact that the world exists. I despair that you exist and that I exist.”

At last he heard his words. Enlike’s eyes closed.

This was his last act. He finally gave up on all people living.

The time was 12:29. The sun rose all the way up to the zenith.

No one had noticed.

While pierced by the needle, Hamyuts’s corpse was smiling.

No one paid any attention to it.

In this world, she was the only one to fulfill her objective. Ever since Ruruta started his move, she was the only person to die. Everyone – including Ruruta – was defeated, and she alone was the victor.

A single droplet of blood dripped from Hamyuts’s body.

Fragment: Her Incomprehensible Desire

Mattalast was lying collapsed in the Labyrinth. While his eyes were not open, his mind was faintly moving. He was thinking of the past. He was thinking of the day when he turned eighteen, the turning point of his life.

That day he was drinking amid the hustle and bustle of the pub. Many women who he couldn't even remember were gathered around him. Men who took advantage of that and pretended to be his friends flocked around him.

Suddenly, just as Mattalast was getting bored, he took notice of one corner of the bar.

A lone girl was sitting there. She held a cup with both hands and licked the sweet alcohol as if she was a cat.

She was a bespectacled, dull-looking girl. She wore unfashionable clothes and her hair was gathered in tight braids. For some reason she held a bunny doll on her knees. She just sat there alone without speaking to anyone.

Mattalast hated country girls. He mostly ended up losing his head over them and then later it would become troublesome.

She's got big tits though. Thinking so, Mattalast rose up. It seemed like a joke, but that was the reason he spoke to Hamyuts Meseta for the first time.

"What's that?"

Mattalast sat down next to Hamyuts. He pointed towards the bunny.

“My friend.”

The girl answered unhesitatingly.

“...Huh.”

She seems quite amusing, thought Mattalast. In a bad way, of course.

“A friend?”

“A friend, and probably the savior of the world.”

“The savior of the world...”

Mattalast stopped himself. It was too early to laugh just yet. It could still become even more amusing.

“What other friends do you have?”

“She’s the only one. I actually hate her, but she’s my friend.”

So you came here alone, thought Mattalast. Thinking of it, some girl from here said something before. That they brought her here because she was strange, something like that.

And there were no other strange girls there but her.

“What about me? Am I your friend?”

Mattalast said and the girl made a puzzled expression.

“Who’re you?”

He was a bit surprised at her not knowing him.

“Mattalast Ballory. An Armed Librarian.”

“Hmm... I don’t really care.”

She somewhat hurt his pride. It was the first time in a long while he met someone who showed no interest in him as a person and not because of his flirting.

“And you are?”

“Hamyuts Meseta.”

“Hamyuts, huh. That’s a rare name. Meseta, meaning you come from Ismo?”

“Who knows, it’s a fake name.”

It was then that Mattalast began wondering if she wasn’t pulling his leg. Thinking so, he became a bit uncomfortable and started losing interest in the girl.

“Are you strong?”

What a stupid thing to ask, thought Mattalast.

“Yeah, naturally.”

“More than me?”

Does this girl not know the Armed Librarians? Even fooling around needs to be done properly. Mattalast answered naturally.

“Of course.”

At that time, he fortunately just so happened to activate his Predictive ability. If he hadn’t done so, Mattalast would have lost his eyesight.

He instantly put his palm in front of his face. An impact ran through his hand. Hamyuts's index and middle finger were stopped by Mattalast's palm. She was trying to hit his eyes with her fingers.

"It's true! As I thought Chacoly's a liar. There *are* people stronger than me."

Hamyuts smiled shamelessly. The people around them couldn't understand what happened. They probably haven't heard their conversation.

"You're interesting."

He realized cracks ran through the bones of his hand. But a smile rose to his face before he frowned with pain.

"Interesting? Me? How?"

Hamyuts tilted her head in puzzlement.

"...Ahahaha!"

Mattalast was unable to stop himself from bursting into laughter. He fell off the couch and only stood up after a short while.

"That's great. I finally found my destined person."

The friends and women around him started clamoring.

"Destined person? A friend?"

"Yeah. A friend."

While saying that, he hugged Hamyuts's shoulders.

"Stop that. The world will be destroyed."

"What?"

He couldn't understand what she was saying. But he didn't care.

"If I seriously end up falling for you, the world will be destroyed."

Hamyuts smiled.

"So let's not be friends. Because the world will be destroyed. We should just fight to the death instead."

She was smiling, but he knew she was serious. *Seems like I really ended up meeting someone outrageous.* So Mattalast thought.

They both stood up at the same time.

"If you kill me the world will be saved. So let's fight to the death."

The people around them laughed, thinking she told a joke. But Mattalast could understand – he wasn't sure if it was a joke, but he would end up fighting to the death with her the next instant.

"Save the world."

The moment she said this, they both shot their fists.

The first battle ended in Mattalast's victory. The bar's wall collapsed. It was a trace of where he hit Hamyuts.

"So, will you kill me?"

Hamyuts said, spitting blood from her mouth.

"If you kill me the world will be saved. If you become my friend the world will be destroyed."

Say, Mattalast right? Let's save the world."

Saying so, Hamyuts prepared for another attack. Mattalast smiled and unleashed another kick. Fun was mixed in with his fear, making it all the more enjoyable.

That day, Hamyuts and Mattalast became friends. And a little later, their relationship became more than that.

He might have been close to Hamyuts's identity on that day. Her real identity, what he didn't discuss with her about even once.

Mattalast thought while collapsed inside the Labyrinth.

In the end I wanted to know the truth.

Just who on earth are you?

Afterword

Hello, this is Yamagata Ishio. I present the eighth installment of the Tatakau Shisho series, “Tatakau Shisho to Shuushou no Kemono”. I hope you have enjoyed it.

Let’s start with some PR.

“Tatakau Shisho to Koisuru Bakudan” has turned into a manga.

The one in charge of drawing it is known as 篠原九-san. This is read “Shinohara Kokonotsu”-san; it’s not “kyuu” so pay heed*.

He is a person who draws amazingly gorgeous pictures. He allows me to enjoy the world of Tatakau Shisho as its creator in an altogether different way than with Maeshima Shigeki-san.

The manga is published in Shueisha’s web magazine “Ultra Jump Egg”.

You can find the link in the homepage of Ultra Jump or Dash Bunko’s site. Since it’s a web comic you can read it free of charge. Feel free to access it**.

Please do enjoy it.

The other day I went to eat hot pot and meet up with the aforementioned Shinohara Kokonotsu-san. My editor and the editor of Ultra Jump were also present. It was obviously paid for by the company.

Since I cannot eat good food unless being treated to it by other people, I don't usually eat a lot. However, some of my unpleasant habits made their appearance there.

When about three fourths of the hot pot were gone, my editor sitting on the other side spoke.

"Excuse me, but you've been eating all of the tofu and shiitake for a while now, Yamagata-san."

My first unpleasant habit:

Since I am needlessly timid, I have not brought my chopsticks to the meat. Furthermore I did it unconsciously. Both the editor and Shinohara-san have eaten so much meat that I couldn't help but admire their tolerance.

The second:

If I'm going to be timid I should have also held back in quantity. However, my gluttony for delicious food meant I couldn't stop my chopsticks. Just how stingy am I about tofu and shiitake?

The third:

Since I was given delicious food, I will frankly write about how tasty it was. I've already wasted one page of the three pages in this afterword on this silly rant. It's only a stream of sentences with neither the reader, the writer nor anyone else gaining anything out of it. A waste of ink and paper. And I'm a self-proclaimed novelist about to get paid for this to be published.

The fourth... Just how long can I keep on ranting? Five or six pages are probably too little.

Since it would be endless I shall stop here.

Shinohara-san and the editor from Ultra Jump, thank you very much.
I look forward to working with you from now on.

And finally some thanks.

I thank Maeshima Shigeki-san who took care of the illustrations this time as well. I am extremely grateful for your work even while you become increasingly busy.

My editor, people of the editorial department, designers, I thank you this time as well.

Even the “Tatakau Shisho” series nears its conclusion. Dear readers, let us meet again in my next work.

Yamagata Ishio

*The last kanji of the name would normally be read as “kyuu”.
“Kyu” and “kokonotsu” are different words for the number 9.

**Unfortunately as far as I see the manga is no longer available online.

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