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DGM – 4000

**The Last Story**

The last media-based story that I have had the chance to watch was episode 8 of The Rising of the Shield Hero – “Curse Shield”. It is part of an ongoing currently airing anime about a college level student who has been transported to another world similar to a video game type world. In short, the plot is that he and three others have been chosen as heroes to fight off an evil scourge that arrives periodically to lay waste to the land. However, our hero is commonly hated in this world and is soon treated very ill after a horrible rumor goes around about him.

For this episode we find the hero and gang sleeping on a roadside with their sales wagon when a sickly woman and child approach them. She explains that the closest town is under a plague. Upon arriving this is confirmed with the town doctor. After treating the sick the hero goes off to investigate the problem with the promise of money. After finding out that a dead dragon was causing the issue they slay the dragon. However, in the process, the lead female protagonist is cursed by the dead dragon.

Overall, I thought I should mention that I really like this show. Every episode has something new that hints at the bigger plot while revolving around a smaller subplot. As for the sake of this episode, this methodology is executed very well. Take the opening image for example. Our hero is greeted by a seemingly random passerby with a seemingly normal problem. Their village is under a plague. Choosing to investigate the hero decides that it would be worth showing up to see what is going on. Maybe he could do the regular routine of selling medicine to the sick. So, he goes to the village and does just that. However, after talking to the doctor he finds out that the problem arose after a dragon had been killed in the area. Knowing that it was from one of the other three and despising them he chooses to investigate the problem further.

Just looking at the opening image alone it screams great storytelling. Not only does it give reference to the greater plot it also follows the story structure very well. We see this further in the story when they arrive around the area the dragon died. One of the characters begins to eat big red fruit and this creates a comedic effect. This can be seen as the fun and games of the story. Then after this, they begin fighting the dead dragon zombie to relive the people of their stress. Hating dragons, the side character mentioned eating the red fruit gets eaten herself spattering red “Blood” everywhere. I see this as a false defeat. We find out later that it was simply the fruit that splattered and not blood. However, thinking it was blood the protagonist goes in a rage unearthing a strong power within his magical shield. In his rage, he hurts the female protagonist and is nearly defeated by the dragon. Although the still alive side character then burrows her way out of the belly of the beast and effectively kills the dragon once and for all.

What is beautiful about this is that the main character wasn’t facing a big dragon as his villain. He was facing himself. He was unable to see his compatriot die in the course of battle forcing him into a rage. I believe though that this even still wasn’t what his struggle was. I believe that he struggles with acceptance. One of the few people who has accepted him in this world has now gone away and he is not strong enough to deal with it emotionally. However, after seeing that he can cause a lot more harm to his compatriots from his anger he comes out of the fight a better person. Knowing this he begs the doctor in the village to use the large sum he earned in stopping the curse from spreading within the female protagonist. We are then given an outro with the shield hero vowing to protect his compatriots and a sneak peek at the next episode.

Overall, I thought this was a great story. It followed all of the storytelling points to the T. I believe that this is why the anime is so popular right now and why my friend recommended it. It really does follow a great story structure that has you wanting to watch every new episode for what the main characters will do. If you don’t know, stories like this have become quite popular in the anime-manga realm and have taken it by storm. What sets this one apart though is not the grandeur battles or the allure of life in another world. It is how the character finds a way to overcome a clear bias that has been placed on him from all angles after he arrived there. All on all I’d recommend it to everyone but stipulate that you have to be able to handle animation and subtitles.