

あづみ圭  
Azumi Kei

# 月が導く異世界道中

Tsukiga Michibiku Isekai Dōchū

12



# **Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu**

**– Moon-led Journey Across Another World –**

**- Volume 12 -**

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**[ Reigokai: Isekai Translations ]**



Sari

魔王の“子”的一人。  
幼いながらも大局を見通す  
判断力を持つ。

Lucia

権謀術数に長けた  
魔将の一人。  
魔族だが角がない。

Zef

魔族を束ねる王。  
冷酷なまでに  
実力主義を貫く。

Tomoe

しん  
元は「蜃」と呼ばれた竜。  
真と契約したことによって  
人の姿を得た。

Shiki

元は「リッチ」と呼ばれる  
骸骨型のアンデッドモンスター。  
真と契約したことで  
人の姿となった。  
真の頼れる相談役。

Mio

元は巨大な蜘蛛。  
真と契約して、人の姿を得た。  
天性の煽り上手。

Misumi Makoto

親の都合で異世界へ召喚  
されちゃった悲運な高校生。  
どこに行ってもトラブルに  
巻き込まれる。

# Chapter 185

## The Lapis Lazuli Volcano

“And so, it is now free time. We have easily received permission to go outside so, what should we do?” (Makoto)

Finishing the extremely tiring audience with the Demon Lord, we return to the room prepared for us and take a break.

I look at Mio and Shiki.

Well~ that was impressive.

It was truly the Demon Lord-sama.

The four children of his had a smiling atmosphere and were throwing me conversation topics, but I felt like they were looking at more than just my answers.

But it wasn't as if we were faced with a one-sided barrage of questions, they also readily answered our questions, so I managed to get the permission to walk outdoors without having any bodyguards or surveillance.

“For me, I was thinking about having a small talk with Rona.” (Shiki)

“With Rona? Ah, right. Rona is an old acquaintance of yours, right Shiki?” (Makoto)

“Yeah, but well, it is not like I am going to warm up my old friendship though. It seems like she is being overly cautious of us you see. There's still time for the banquet, so I will be going to solve that ‘misunderstanding’. She most likely already knows about the contents of our audience from the Demon Lord himself, but if that's the case, it is better to act fast.” (Shiki)

Misunderstanding?

Hm, did Rona do something to make him cautious?

I don't think she did anything special though.

Maybe it is just that she has the eyes of someone that might do something.

"...I see. Then you won't be leaving the city, right?" (Makoto)

"Yes. That, I will do later." (Shiki)

"And Mio?" (Makoto)

"I will immediately head to check the city. There were a number of places that looks interesting after all." (Mio)

The bouncy words of Mio.

I thought that she had an unconcerned expression at the parade, but she was casually checking the surroundings. That's impressive.

It makes me remember the words used to calm the nervousness of actors: 'Think of the audience as if they are potatoes', or something like that.

To Mio, the gazes and cheers of all those demons and demi-humans were akin to potatoes.

...No, potatoes are food, so maybe she considers them even lower than that?

No matter which, it is a bold spirit I would like to learn from.

At our visit to the Empire, Mio was looking after Asora in place of Tomoe, but this time, she was stubborn about going together with us.

'Tomoe went last time, so this time you are staying', is the logic she was using.

'Is she a child?', is what I thought.

Since returning from the Empire, Tomoe has been in a good mood, and without a single objection to Mio's words, she readily consented to house-sitting.

Well, she did say that she had something to do, so she probably didn't have any intentions of accompanying us anyways.

For me, Shiki is actually the one that pains me to have him accompany me two times in a row.

But he is the one that I can be the most at ease with when coming with me, so I unconsciously end up relying on him.

If I had only left Shiki behind, I think that it would have been possible to continue the classes in Rotsgard without having to cancel it.

I will have to reflect on this.

“An eating trip huh. At night we will be having a banquet, so try not eating too much, okay? Also, I didn’t hear anything about their side putting out bodyguards, but even if someone is following you, try to refrain from doing anything unreasonable.” (Makoto)

“Yes, I know. I will just give them a light tap, Waka-sama. But if you are worried, how about accompanying me?” (Mio)

“Me? I want to go, but since I have the chance, I will be finishing the errand of Root first.” (Makoto)

“Root’s... ah, the egg, was it?” (Mio)

Mio made a slight pondering gesture at the mention of Root, and it seems she remembered something, she clapped her hands together.

Yep, she is correct.

“Yeah, Crimson Red’s egg.” (Makoto)

“Right-desu wa. In that case, I will go together with you–” (Mio)

“Ah, can’t do. It seems like it is close to a place that your past self has done something a long time ago. It wouldn’t be good if anything were to happen.” (Makoto)

“My past self?” (Mio)

“Well, I will go quickly and finish. From what I heard in the audience, it is a place that only takes a few hours to reach.” (Makoto)

"Indeed. They did say that it's a few days to the north. Looking at it in the same way as the White Sand Sea, Waka-sama would be able to arrive in a few hours, and in the return, it would be enough to just use mist." (Shiki)

Shiki complements my words.

Maybe the demon side didn't expect me to make a question about that place, they made a surprised face at my question.

If I mention the name of a place in the demon race territory, it would definitely be strange.

Root's groundwork this time seems to be with the people that are directly related to the errand, and the demons weren't really in the know of this.

Different from last time, there's people who will take the guardian job, so as long as I arrive there, the mission will be completed.

"Then there's no helping it. It is regrettable, but I will be doing my best in obtaining new recipes-desu wa. Later, I will try searching for souvenirs to gift the residents of Asora." (Mio)

"That would be nice. Tell me about the nice stores later. About the things that might serve as souvenirs as well." (Makoto)

"Yes! I will do the eating tour." (Mio)

"Well then, I am going." (Makoto)

I open the window of the room and leave to the veranda.

The garden that can be seen below was emitting light making it look illusory, and it was really beautiful.

But I look moderately above.

At the pitch black sky.

"Have a safe trip. Come back soon." (Shiki)

“Don’t catch a cold, okay?” (Mio)

While receiving the words of the two with my back, I jump from the veranda that was as big as a balcony.

I harden magic power in mid-air and use it as footholds to jump again.

Just like that, I soar up into the sky.

I leave the barrier that envelops the capital, and arrive at the outskirts where wind and snow rule over. Confirming the direction of my objective, I set up a marker at the distance.

I can’t see it with my eyes, but I can feel it.

With this, I won’t lose my way even in this blizzard.

In the room there’s already a mist gate to use for the return.

I just have to dispose of it when I return.

Now then, my objective is the snow field volcano.

It is without doubt a secluded region.

“Lapiz Lazuli Volcano huh. Will it be blue just like its name suggests? It sounds like a beautiful place so it might be worth going to see.” (Makoto)

While holding slight expectations, I jumped into the blizzard.



If I didn’t have magic, I would have definitely gotten lost. I think this while I’m in this darkness filled snow storm.

The lights of the capital are already too far to be seen.

It must be as hellish of an environment as the White Desert.

There’s differences in hot and cold, and the hot one was filled with traps while this

one is more about the fury of nature though.

But Crimson Red is supposed to be the dragon that reigns over fire, and yet, why is it in such a cold place?

No well, it is a volcano, so maybe the place itself won't be cold though.

The outside is like this.

Thinking about Sofia's abilities, Crimson Red was probably a dragon that soared the sky and breathed out fire.

But the place I am in doesn't fit the image.

A dragon that shoots a heat ray like a laser. A dragon that could be considered the symbol of fantasy, moreover, a dragon that seemed to walk the path of the right.

Even if a laser is out of bounds, it is truly a Red Dragon.

I kinda want to see its figure when it was in all its splendor now.

I glance at the bag. Right now it is an egg.

Even if the growth of a dragon is quick, I will probably not be able to see it in the time I am alive.

That damn Sofia, she did something so wasteful.

"Oh, it is that huh. Going by the distance... it should be that, right? But it's bright red though?" (Makoto)

I thought I saw something dim pink at the distance.

After jumping a number of times more in the sky, I saw a bright red light that didn't fit this snow field.

It had the shape of a mountain, and when I got closer, I could see that it was shining like a ruby. A mountain remarkably high was there.

"With this, it feels more appropriate to call it Ruby Volcano though. Hmph?" (Makoto)

I don't think it is an unnamed place.

It stands out, and it gives out a feeling that's not normal.

For now, I will land.

The ground at my feet is glittery and red.

If this is ruby, it would be amazing.

The billionaire kind of amazing.

If it's colored glass... no, even that would be amazing.

Yeah, the Lapis Lazuli Volcano(probably), its worth in seeing is plenty.

I should do some harvesting later.

This might be how it feels to go to the south beaches and get an urge of collecting seashells.

I haven't experienced that though.

It is a thinking that is slightly stemming from greed.

"If this is the place, someone should be living here." (Makoto)

I change [Sakai] to search and spread it to the whole mountain.

I had to shrink the magic armor slightly, so it can't be helped that some of my magic power leaks out. Because I still cannot fix the consumption to a point that utilizes the magic power to a 100%.

If I was able to do it, it would be able to stay infinitely after all.

It might serve as a goal.

It works for offensive and defensive, so even if this power is exposed, the demerits are low. If I had to put out a problem, it would be that if I have it deployed in visible mode, the people will probably not get close to me.

If I walked with it visible, I don't know how many times I would be told every day: 'You are being haunted'.

Being visible is a pain. I definitely don't want that.

"There it is. There's a cave over there huh. I see." (Makoto)

Around halfway up the mountain, there's a cave that can be entered.

Inside it, there's the reaction of less than a hundred life signs.

They are demi-humans, or maybe mamonos.

Okay, let's go.

There doesn't seem to be any trap, and mamonos are not coming out.

Comparing this to what it has been until now, I would say this is actually on the safe side.

The only thing that happened was that I encountered a big Frost Dragon because of my carelessness, and I slapped it away. There wasn't anything that could be called a real fight, and I was able to arrive at the objective practically without obstructions.

But the encounter rate was actually relatively high.

If I dealt with all of them, the amount would be enough to serve as tracks to know exactly what route I took.

Even so, I felt like this place was safe.

The people living here are probably doing their regular patrols and securing safety.

"Oh, heh~" (Makoto)

I arrive at the cave.

Without much hesitation I enter, and the situation changed a bit.

I see.

My voice unconsciously leaked. I stop my feet and look at my surroundings.

“I see, Lapis Lazuli. For the inside to be deep blue...” (Makoto)

The outside is red, and inside is blue.

...Sadly, counting the environment, I wouldn't want to live in this place.

It may be beautiful, but I would limit it to touring.

“Ah, are they coming to receive me?” (Makoto)

After advancing for a while, I perceive a presence heading this way. I stop my feet.

It's one person.

It doesn't seem to be forming any magic, and doesn't seem to be taking any attack stance.

But it is really blue.

I remember hearing that blue light helps you get a quiet sleep, but with this, I might actually doubt its reliability.

It might have been nonsense.

I can't calm down.

“...Please tell me your name.”

The one that appeared looks at me and showed slight agitation.

But it spoke out and asked for a self-introduction.

Surprisingly, it was in common language.

“Name is Raidou. I accepted the request of Root, and have brought the egg of the superior dragon Crimson Red... -sama.” (Makoto)

That was close.

I almost forgot to say -sama.

Even though I had resolved myself to be more careful after the incident with Grount, the person that had come out was a bit mysterious and made me almost slip.

Slime?

Well, that half-solid body that seemed to be made up of a blue jell-like substance, has the shape of a hyuman. It seems that it does have a ruggedness resembling that of a face, but how to say it...

Ah, it is a woman.

There's a portion that seems to be her breast.

She is not wearing clothes, so I am speaking with a naked person.

And it seems like it is a woman.

To my regret, she is totally transparent and I don't feel any sexual attraction to her.

In an incredibly rude way, I can maintain a gentleman demeanor.

Being sexually attracted to this level of special would take a really special man too.

Even Tomoki might not... no, that guy might actually go for it without any discrimination.

No but...

Wait, what am I even thinking?

Anyways, I am sorry.

And while at it, if Root's information is correct, the past Mio seems to have cornered them to the brink of extinction; I am sorry for that as well.

I won't put it in words, but I will at least apologize.

"Is that Azuma-sama?"

Azuma?

I felt like my palpitation jumped up in an instant.

A really nostalgic name.

But for this slime-kin(temporary) to use that name, I don't think that she is using it while knowing the meaning for me.

I calm down my heart.

Ah, she is looking at the egg.

Could it be...

"...Excuse my rudeness but, is that Crimson Red-sama?"

As I thought, the name of the dragon.

So its name is Azuma.

It gives me a sense of familiarity.

Because it is the same name as a close friend of mine.

Not only is it not Japanese, reacting this much just because of the name is no good.

In the first place, even if the name is Azuma, I heard that the one in this world is male.

I see, so there's 4 superior dragons that are male, and 3 that are female huh.

...No wait, Root was originally a woman, so there are more female?

But right now he is male, right?

It might not be good for my mental health to think about this, but he spoke about having my child or whatever, so he should be able to turn into a woman as well. In that case...

Yeah, let's put a middle.

There's 3 male superior dragons, 3 female, and 1 other.

"Uhm, Raidou-sama?"

"Ah! Yes, this is Crimson Red-sama! Sorry, I was a bit spaced out." (Makoto)

"You must be tired. It can't be helped. The journey to this place is rigorous no matter the route taken after all. Later I will bring you to a place where you can rest your body, but first the egg... is that okay?"

I open the bag in a way that the woman can see, and take out the egg.

The moment she saw it, an emotion of awe was visible in the slime-kin.

She can tell even if it's an egg huh.

As expected of the guardian.

"I have certainly confirmed it. Please forgive me for holding suspicions. Go ahead, I will guide you to the dwelling of the Crimson Red-sama's guardians, Raidou-sama."

I'm glad.

It seems like this time will end without anything weird happening.

Ah, right.

This place that is red on the outside and blue on the inside; I will ask these people if I can take a bit of it.

Also, I should ask what Root has told them.

...I won't dance at the tune of that pervert's words after all.

I don't want to end in a pointless fight like the time with Grount.

At the end, Grount-san seemed to have grown timid after all...

Also... right. I have to make it back in time to the capital.

Being in this place feels like my sense of time will go weird.

It might be carefree of me, but I advance slowly.

Safely finishing the second egg's errand, I felt slight relief while enjoying the scenery of this secluded region.

# Chapter 186

## The Banquet's Night at the Dark Capital

I was almost brought into the feast of the Slime-kin and end up taking lodging.

It took more time than I thought.

A mysterious scenery also serves as a pitfall in this kind of sense.

A picturesque scenery should be enjoyed when one has the time.

I made it in time for the banquet, but I returned one hour later than planned.

"Then the egg of Crimson Red has been safely entrusted, right? Looks like it was a success."

"No. I refused their feast, so I probably dampened their mood a bit." (Makoto)

"If it's only that, I don't think they mind. In the first place, they wouldn't think bad of the person that brought the one they worship just because of something like that."

"...It would be good if that's the case. I don't think I will be associating with them deeply in the future, so there was a part of me that acted slightly halfheartedly thinking that it would most likely be the last time I see of them... you see." (Makoto)

"And in truth, having an individual settlement placed at these parts would be harsh even if we were to station the Forest Onis. It would be fine if we have teams formed, but if they are alone, it might be slightly dangerous. In that sense, our relationship with them will most likely not get any deeper."

"We are already lacking in people, so I don't plan on going so far. Even if I bring people to this capital... we would need Shiki or Tomoe to manage them every now and then, right? It would be bad to have the store on leave after all." (Makoto)

"But the other side... might request of it."

"At that time, I will politely refuse." (Makoto)

"That would be the best course. By the way, about the seating precedences of today..."

I return to the demon race capital and change to a dwarf-made ceremonial dress in our room.

At first, they proposed a room for each of us, but it would be a pain when returning to Asora, so we told them that one room would be fine.

Also, the number of places where I can't wear my jacket has increased, so I relied on the words of a dwarf that told me to leave it to him, and had him create a number of clothes that can be used for parties and for etiquette.

Now that I think of it, I wonder why I didn't ask the Orcs for that.

Even though I should have known that armor-like effects would be added to the clothes the moment I asked a dwarf to make it.

As a result, it took quite a lot of time before it was finished.

Right now they are at the drawers.

It is kind of a waste.

"Seating precedence? Ah, the seat numbers huh. Uhm..." (Makoto)

I have Shiki show us where we will be sitting.

"We would be here." (Shiki)

"Ah, hm? That's quite close to the Demon Lord. This could be taken as being welcomed, right?" (Makoto)

Are they appealing again?

I did tell them that I won't be favoring the demons though.

"The segmentation of the welcoming is quite something. Without a doubt, we are being treated as state guests." (Shiki)

"S-State guests... Mere merchants like us, are on the level of importance to that of a country?" (Makoto)

"As long as we don't delve into it, they will most likely not be saying it themselves, but it seems that way. As expected of the Demon Lord Zef. He must have felt something from Waka-sama." (Shiki)

"Is there going to be an incredible welcoming hell coming?" (Makoto)

My stomach is hurting already.

Even though the Rotsgard academy festival was already too much for me, and yet...

"Considering these seats, it might conversely be different. I think a chat with the Demon Lord will be the priority. Even if we enter, the Demon Generals should have taken their seats already." (Shiki)

...

I have a sense of discomfort from the words of Shiki.

Leaving aside the Demon Generals, we will be sharing table with the Demon Lord's children, right?

In that case, I feel like he should be saying more though.

"Shiki, the ones we will be sharing tables with will be the children of the Demon Lord, so they should be the prince-sama and princess-sama, right?" (Makoto)

...Even so, the Demon Generals and the royalty huh.

That will mentally fatigue me plenty.

Please learn that even if you have a refreshing smile, even if you smile gently, it will be pressuring depending on the person.

No, if they are doing it while knowing, I would just have to endure it though.

I can't just tell them to please stop smiling after all.

"Oya, ah right. Waka-sama didn't know, right." (Shiki)

"What?" (Makoto)

"The demon race chooses their next Lord by their power. At the election there might be slight political power involved, but in the end, you won't be able to become the Demon Lord unless you have the power to support it." (Shiki)

"I see." (Makoto)

"That next generation Demon Lord is called the child of the Demon Lord by the demon race." (Shiki)

"...Is that different from being a prince or princess?" (Makoto)

It would create factions between siblings, but I feel like I am only being told that they prioritize strength.

"Sorry, my words were insufficient. In other words, lineage doesn't matter within promising candidates, and after gathering around a hundred, they give them education to become Lords, and among them, the next Demon Lord will be elected. The kids that are gathered are all 'Children of the Demon Lord'." (Shiki)

...Eh?

In other words...

"The ones there weren't children that came directly from the Demon Lord?" (Makoto)

"Most likely. It was already reduced to 4, so the next one will probably decide the future Demon Lord. Of course, the ones that couldn't become Demon Lord will be given fitting posts and will take the role of leading the demon race together with the Demon Lord." (Shiki)

So the lineage doesn't matter huh.

That's impressive.

If you are promising, you will separate from your family in a young age and be treated as the child of the Demon Lord and be polished.

With that, promising talents would definitely be raised. They will be raised but... I also feel like questioning if it's really necessary to go that far.

As long as you have power, as long as you have talent; they disregard the person's circumstances, is what I felt in those words.

"The demon race really is completely into a power doctrine huh." (Makoto)

"Yeah, if they don't do that, they might not have been able to survive, but it is certainly extreme." (Shiki)

"Even if it does produce results... it is not a way of thinking that I would like to bring to Asora." (Makoto)

"Other places will be other places; Asora will be Asora, Waka-sama." (Shiki)

"Right." (Makoto)

I nod at the words of Shiki.

"Waka-sama! The guides have come-desu wa!" (Mio)

"Mio, welcome back. So the guides have come. You arrived barely in time. You took your time coming back." (Makoto)

"I came satisfied. It was all as planned-desu wa." (Mio)

"...Yes yes. Then, let's go." (Makoto)

I feel like she is the type of person that would say: 'There's still one minute left till closing time!'.

...I was also that type as well.

How nostalgic.

"Yes." (Mio)

Just like Mio -who was barely in time- said, the guides came soon after.

Mio is, without doubt, the person that is enjoying this trip the most.



I'm glad it is not a formal stand-up meal.

In terms of feeling, this is more like that of a wedding reception.

Of course, there's no bridegroom or bride though.

At times there would be performance dances, announced shows, and buffet cuisine of incredible size being distributed.

The atmosphere is lively and the food is good.

Mio and Shiki are having fun, and I am also enjoying it plenty myself.

I am grateful for the consideration of the demons for letting us act without the need of being too reserved.

Just that, the gaze of the Demon Lord and the children were frequently directed to our side.

It is obvious for the host to worry about the state of their guests, so while brushing it as something that can't be helped, I also felt slight nervousness because of it.

There were moments when the Demon Lord would bring conversations to me.

The other people that were probably nobles of the demon race or important people of the army; those people didn't throw any such conversation. There's quite the distance from them, but this point honestly makes me happy.

The guess of Shiki seems to have been spot on.

And also...

"It seems his memories are gone, but how to say it, it seems there's still the trauma clinging onto him." (Makoto)

"...Looks that way. I am slightly surprised." (Shiki)

"How rude-desu wa. To foam the moment he sees someone." (Mio)

"...That just means God-sama is not omnipotent huh, yeah." (Makoto)

It is something that happened when we arrived at the banquet.

At the table where the Demon Generals were gathered, one of them suddenly stood up. Well, his upper half was that of a hyuman, but its lower half was that of a snake, so I'm not sure if to call it stand up... wait, that's of no importance.

When I thought that he was staring at Mio while trembling fiercely, without saying anything, he began foaming and fell to his back.

The place turned silent for a moment.

We are the only ones who know the reason why.

He, the Demon General Reft, probably doesn't know the reason himself. The fear inside his heart must have remained.

I thought it was only a sense of inferiority level of trauma, but it was actually at the level of PTSD.

I thought less of it because there were no memories remaining, but it seems it was still resounding in Reft-san's heart.

And so, there's only 3 at the Demon General seats now.

The person that's wholeheartedly eating is someone I have not seen before, but it must be the last one of the Demon Generals.

The looks are like that of a hyuman.

Must be a demi-human, but the power itself doesn't seem to be that much.

Maybe that means there's more who are like Rona?

I don't want that.

"It's okay Mio-dono. Well prepared food is coming out in numbers, so we are being

welcomed." (Shiki)

"...I am happy about that, you know? But this and that are two different things, right? What part of me looks like a monster that makes people faint-desu ka?" (Mio)

It seems Mio is discontent about the reaction of Reft.

If someone just heard the conversation, Mio's anger would be reasonable, but when thinking about what Mio did before, I even feel like using a slipper to hit her head as a tsukkomi.

'In the first place, you are the one that brought him here, weren't you?', is the kind of tsukkomi that would come out.

And so, I have no comments.

"Raidou-dono, what do you think about tonight's banquet? From what this one sees, it seems you are enjoying yourself." (Zef)

"Yeah, thanks for the great seats. We are enjoying ourselves plenty." (Makoto)

"And your followers, it seems they have something to say though."

"Don't mind it. Its just that she didn't like how Reft-dono reacted, that's all. Uhm, can I ask how he is now?" (Makoto)

"Hm, the matter of Reft spoiled her mood huh. This one is truly sorry for that. It seems like right now he is seeing a nightmare of sorts. This one has received reports that he has been moaning in agony, but there's no danger to his life. It is not something to worry about." (Zef)

Ah, what should I do.

Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, I was thinking about telling them about Kaleneon while I am here, but there's the issue with Reft, so it was hard to say it.

Why did he have to be there and at that time in specific.

Because of today, it became even more difficult to say it.

“...”

Uh, the Demon Lord seems to be looking at me.

A gentle smile as if he wanted to become my comrade, no, like a smile of someone plotting something.

I want to think that this is unjustified suspicion, but from experience, I can tell that there's something behind that smile.

“A-Ahahaha. I am relieved that it was not anything serious. Yeah.” (Makoto)

“Right, Raidou-dono. After this, there's still a bit of time before the main dishes come out you see. If Raidou-dono is okay with it... can you accompany me for a bit?” (Zef)

“Accompany you to where?” (Makoto)

“Over there, at the balcony. This one has drunk at a slightly fast pace you see, so this one was thinking of breathing in a bit of night breeze.” (Zef)

Outside. The balcony huh.

Well, if it's only that.

I look at Shiki and he makes a small nod.

It seems it will be fine.

“Understood. I will gladly accompany you. My face is also a bit flushed after all.” (Makoto)

“Umu. The night view from the castle is beautiful you know. Well even if this one says so, it is practically night all the time in this capital though. Hahahaha!!” (Zef)

Being urged by the Demon Lord, I stand up from my seat.

Oh, I am slightly staggering.

The alcoholic drinks of the demon race are quite potent.

Sweet alcohol and bitter alcohol is normally on the high level.

If I get used to the alcohol in this place, I might not be able to drink the whiskey of Rotsgard as an alcoholic drink.

I might feel it tastes like juice.

If I detox myself with magic, this level of intoxication would be gone in an instant, but since I finally got drunk in good fun, that would be a waste.

I try walking a few steps and follow after the Demon Lord that didn't seem that drunk, and leave to the balcony.

There was no one, only the Demon Lord and I.

I could hear the door closing from my back, and the bustle of the banquet felt distant.

The wind that was neither strong nor weak was pleasant.

“How is the night view of the capital?” (Zef)

“Beautiful. It may be faint, but the lights of many colors somehow feel gentle.” (Makoto)

“Gentle huh. It is an impression that wouldn’t be given by a demon. How fresh.” (Zef)

The Demon Lord laughs amused.

From what I see, he doesn’t look that drunk.

It was a laugh that came after words that felt like they had many emotions placed within.

Sobering up might have been a pretext to bring me out.

“...This one would want you to... give me your opinion of the same night view, at the day of your departure.” (Zef)

“...Okay.” (Makoto)

"Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, Raidou-dono, this one wants you to look at the demon race and understand us. In the good and bad points." (Zef)

Does that mean he intends to show me the strong points as well as their weak points?

And at the end, tell him how I felt.

"I think it is splendid. I can feel the wisdom of the demons and their will to live." (Makoto)

"To tell you the truth, we weren't trying to deceive you, but this isn't a capital that functions as the metropolis." (Zef)

"Eh?" (Makoto)

"Accurately speaking, it has stopped being that way." (Zef)

"Because of the war?" (Makoto)

"That's right. Try thinking about it. The demon race has obtained vast territory, and yet, is there really a need to have a capital in a place as harsh as this one?" (Zef)

...

That's certainly true.

The current territory that the demon race possesses, the north of Elysion may be pretty vague, so the hyumans don't have a map of it, but at the very least, there's land that's better suited than this.

"Yes, that's true." (Makoto)

"Umu, in truth, right now we have been building up a city at the coastlands that will be functioning as the capital. We are making this the center of the country. This one is also normally there." (Zef)

Then why did you have us walk inside the blizzard for several days?

If you had a more comfortable place to be in, shouldn't that be better?

...Is it because it is crazy far?

“Then why did you call us here?”, is what you are thinking, right?” (Zef)

“Uh, yes. A bit.” (Makoto)

Did it show in my face?

I am trying my best to not show my thoughts in my face though.

“It is because Raidou-dono is not using the correct method to conceal difficult emotions. If you don’t want to be seen through, you shouldn’t try erasing your emotions, but hide them. If you force yourself to erase them, it will only make it more obvious.” (Zef)

“I-I see.” (Makoto)

“That time I asked you if you had fun as well. It would be okay to just leave a smile on your face. There’s no need to force yourself to stay expressionless. Most of all, you should learn how to smile with your eyes. With that, you will be able to hide most things, and even earn others.” (Zef)

“Thank you very much for the advise.” (Makoto)

Why am I suddenly being taught by the Demon Lord here?

But... to smile properly huh.

He says it as if it’s easy, but it is actually difficult.

If I was told to do it without caring of the situation, there are times when I just can’t.

I will have to be diligent.

“This is only the basics that can’t even be considered basics. There’s no need to think that you owe me anything. Ah, the talk was about the capital, right. This capital you see, is a place that has our history piled up. And for a long time, it has been the place that’s been the demon race’s everything. That’s why, this one thought that this is the place that this one wanted to show Raidou-dono no matter what. That’s the reason why this one had you walk such a harsh journey.” (Zef)

“History...” (Makoto)

“That’s right, history. The many customs that have been born from this place are living within ourselves.” (Zef)

“...Like for example, the matter with the children?” (Makoto)

I remember the words of Shiki and try asking.

Even if there’s no blood relation, that person will be treated as a Demon Lord candidate as long as that person is promising.

“...Who did you hear that from? That’s right. That method of choosing Lords was also born from this place, is what I have been told. It seems I have subordinates with loose lips. How troublesome.” (Zef)

“No, it was one of my followers that coincidentally knew of it.” (Makoto)

Even if there’s one, I have not heard of such thing from Shiki or Mio.

I should cover for the general subordinates of his.

“Hoh~ such extensive knowledge that person has. I see, a subordinate of yours that knows of the customs of the demon race. Well, that’s surprising.” (Zef)

He doesn’t look surprised at all.

Maybe he already knows about Shiki.

The time when he was a Lich known by the name Larva, he was acquainted with Rona in some way, so the chances of her reporting about it is high.

“It was by coincidence.” (Makoto)

“Even if so. The number of customs this one was planning on showing you tomorrow, you might know them already. The amount of demons that know the hyuman society are low. The majority that know of it are from the army. In that sense, you people who are a merchants, are deepening your knowledge. That’s something worthy of respect. You truly have good subordinates.” (Zef)

“I am honored.” (Makoto)

“...Within this everlasting darkness, the demon race has endured hardship. But that will continue forever with no end to it. At this rate, the demon race will perish. The moment we understood this, we gathered our strength and waited for the opportunity. And then, this one began war. As a Lord, this one doesn't regret it.” (Zef)

After a slight silence from my words of being honored, the Demon Lord that was looking at the distance, and without looking at me, he said words that were definitely directed at me.

That's how I felt.

“Even if it was the property of others, the demon race needed a rich land. If we didn't do that, we would have suffered in eternity, starve, and die. Raidou-dono, if you were to became the Lord of such a race, what would you have done? This may be hypothetical talk, but please let me hear it.” (Zef)



With a face that didn't show it was just mere hypothetical talk, the Demon Lord looks at me.

I think that this capital... really is a land that has big meaning to the demon race.

The Demon Lord probably recollected something and has asked me this.

Is it like the Kyoto and Tokyo for the Japanese?

The capital of history in essence.

No, it has only been a few years since the capital changed. It can't be compared to this.

It might look that way to me, but it is probably not that way.

"If it were me you say. If it were me, I would look for new frontiers before placing my hands on the belongings of someone else." (Makoto)

"Look for land that's not yet seen huh. Then, in the case that it shows despairing results?" (Zef)

Eh...

I went through the trouble of answering. Is it valid to return the question?

"Why would it be despairing?" (Makoto)

"Geographically speaking. There's only inferior places left. There's places that can't be overcome because of the lack of craft." (Zef)

"Then I will have us research in the crafts and advance it." (Makoto)

"I see. Raidou-dono is saying that war should be avoided huh." (Zef)

"War will definitely leave grudge. Thinking about the future, I don't think this will turn into a plus." (Makoto)

"That's of course true. But the demon race was way too cornered. The moment we judged that it was impossible to pioneer further north, we destroyed the demi-humans that were the previous residents of this place and obtained this land." (Zef)

...

The place that you decided to steal... was this?!

Just what kind of wretched place were the demons living in before?

The Goddess as well, she is as evil as always.

I really continue to think that I should give her a good punch at that face of hers.

“I-I see.” (Makoto)

“Ah, and not leaving any grudge behind.” (Zef)

“Eh, but...” (Makoto)

“Slaughtered them all. If we take care of everyone, there will be no grudges left. It may be an inane plan, but at that time, that’s how we saved our race.” (Zef)

That’s certainly true. If they don’t leave a single enemy behind, there won’t be grudges left.

They really are through.

“...”

“The answer may be different depending on the person, but the foundation of the demon race is without doubt ruled by the principle of strength. If this one has to say it without any ornate words, it would be: *survival of the fittest*. If possible, this one doesn’t want to show you that part of us, but if we are to continue our relationship, the sooner the better. That’s how this one thought. In the time you are here, you will witness the customs that are created by this principle, and its complications.” (Zef)

So he is telling me that they will face us seriously.

It is certainly true that showing one’s dirty side is hard to do.

...It is scary to do.

“But it was slightly unexpected. From what this one has felt, Raidou-dono is someone

that has quite the power. Hyumans are not a race that originally possess such high power. In other words, Raidou-dono has faced that much difficulties in life. And those kind of people, the people that have power will wish for more power and authority, that's how they end up thinking. Honestly speaking, this one didn't expect you to avoid war to that extent." (Zef)

"Thinking of avoiding war, is that so weird?" (Makoto)

"For you merchants, it is also a chance to support your Lords. Of course, it is also a chance to gain huge profits, you know?" (Zef)

"I... don't think of gaining huge profits from the war." (Makoto)

"...But when you were having a conversation with this one and the children, you said something that was akin to saying: 'I will be gaining profits from the war, but you can't complain about it', though?" (Zef)

I didn't say anything that meant that.

Where did he pick it up in that way?

Ah, that huh.

The talk that even if I oppose them, it will not be because I am trying to be their enemies but because of interest, or something like that?

But that was not intended in that way.

"No, that's a misunderstanding. I am not thinking of participating in the war itself after all." (Makoto)

"Rona was suffering a headache from that. Saying this is not what he said last time, that Raidou-dono might be intending to turn war into a business." (Zef)

"Like I am saying..." (Makoto)

"It's fine. It's enough to hear those words of yours. Just like what Raidou-dono says, that's Rona's misunderstanding.

"We still have the time to understand each other. This one thinks that it is fine to slowly

know of each other as we advance. Without hurrying." (Zef)

"Thank you very much" (Makoto)

Stopping my words with his hand, the Demon Lord understood what I tried to say.

I'm glad.

It is truly a misunderstanding after all.

I am glad it didn't end up in us being at cross purposes.

...

Right, if it's now...

There's no people around, only the Demon Lord and I.

On their side there's only the Demon Lord; in my side it would be best to have Shiki and Mio by my side, but thinking about it, the other party is a Lord-sama. In reality, a situation that fits such criteria would be hard.

He seems to be an understandable person, and from that conversation just now, it seems he has his own thoughts about the demon race stealing land.

(Shiki, do you have time?) (Makoto)

I call Shiki with thought transmission.

(Waka-sama? It looks like you are speaking with the Demon Lord but, is there some sort of problem?) (Shiki)

(No, its not that. You see, right now the atmosphere makes it possible to talk about Kaleneon. Is it okay to tell him?) (Makoto)

(...Right. The chances of us speaking with the Demon Lord will most likely not be that many in the future. If it's at this time, it would not turn in a debt. Just that, when you explain the situation, I think that it would be faster if you don't mention the Ansland sisters being the reason, or about Asora's matters.) (Shiki)

(But then the only reason left would be my parents. Wouldn't that be bad? Isn't it better to touch about the subject of Eva and Ruria's circumstances...) (Makoto)

(If you speak about that, it could be taken as siding with the hyumans and reclaiming Kaleneon. Taking the side of the hyumans also means opposing the demon race. In terms of result, that action helps the heroes in a sense, so it is better for 'us all' to not increase our image of being the ally of hyumans.) (Shiki)

(I-I see) (Makoto)

Now that I think about it, he does have a point.

It is only in terms of result, but our actions help the hyumans more than the demons.

I had no underlying intentions of doing that though.

Looking only at the results, if I tell them that I have reclaimed Kaleneon because hyumans asked me to... would be bad.

Yeah, it would be bad.

(In that case, it would be better to just tell them that it was the homeland of Waka-sama's parents, and that's why you took it back, which would let us earn more that way. For the demon race, it would be like giving them information that Waka-sama's parents were from Kaleneon. Who knows in what way they will take that information. For our side, it is not information that would trouble us.) (Shiki)

(Understood. Then I will be doing that.) (Makoto)

(Don't mind it. Also, the Demon Generals and the other people are beginning to worry about your situation there. When you see the chance, wrap things up and return. Ah right, I almost forgot. There's also the matter of Reft. At the very least, tell him that Waka-sama didn't participate in the attack. Right... tell him that Waka-sama's subordinates went on a rampage for your sake, or something like that please. Miodono and I will deal with it if anything happens later.) (Shiki)

(Thanks. Then after telling him this, I will be returning.) (Makoto)

I cut off the thought transmission.

The Demon Lord has not detected the thought transmission.

I have hidden it perfectly... I think.

The Demon Lord is looking at the night view with his hands on the railing.

“...Fuh~ No good. This one might have spoken a bit too much. Having our guest feeling the night breeze all this time, is something that should not be done. Should we go back, Raidou-dono? I thank you for accompanying me.” (Zef)

“Uhm, Demon Lord-sama. There’s something I have to tell you. Can I have a bit of your time?” (Makoto)

“This one invited you here. If there’s something Raidou-dono has to say, this one will definitely listen.” (Zef)

“The demon race lost a territory recently, right?” (Makoto)

“...! Yeah. Close to the meeting point with Raidou-dono and the others, there was a country named Kaleneon in the past. That one.” (Zef)

The expression of the Demon Lord showed the most surprise he has shown till now.

Okay, let's say it.

“That's something we did.” (Makoto)

“!!! Raidou-dono, do you understand what you are saying by that?” (Zef)

Narrowing his eyes, the Demon Lord takes off all that amiable atmosphere and asks for confirmation.

It is alright. Everything that has to be spoken has already been arranged in my head.

Don't be intimidated.

If it's about Kaleneon, I definitely hold responsibility for it.

I won't run away from it.

“Yes. Us -Kuzunoha Company- took Kaleneon from the hands of the demon race.”  
(Makoto)

“...Let’s hear the reason. There’s obviously one, right? This one hopes that you won’t say this was for the sake of hyumans.” (Zef)

“It was for my sake.” (Makoto)

“Raidou-dono’s sake?” (Zef)

“Yes. Kaleneon is... the homeland of my parents. In the past, my parents tied their bond there. For me, Kaleneon is like my second homeland.” (Makoto)

“..”

“Well even if I say that, I wasn’t thinking about recovering the land of Kaleneon which was already right in the middle of demon race territory. Just that...” (Makoto)

“Just that?” (Zef)

“My subordinates, thinking of me, took back the aforementioned land. The Kaleneon that they had given to me, I received it.” (Makoto)

“Is that something your two subordinates, Mio and Shiki, did? Or were there other factors involved?” (Zef)

Sharp eyes that tried to see through me.

There was no hostility.

But that was actually fearsome.

He is hiding his emotions just like he told me before.

With an emotionless face that reveals no emotion, he simply cross-examines me.

“I can’t say. No matter who was involved, the Kuzunoha Company moved, and I received the fruits of it. Since I received it, I hold the responsibility. I used power... to take away Kaleneon.” (Makoto)

“...Kukuku. By the principle of power huh. It is certainly true that it is the principle of the demon race but... seriously, it is not a subject that should be said in this place, without doubt. There was a Demon General at that place and it was in the territory of the demon race, right in the middle of it. No matter how much power that can't be overlooked you possess, is it something that can be recaptured by a company independently? Sorry but, this one is in chaos right now. But first, this one wants to ask you one thing. Why did you spare Reft?” (Zef)

“I later learned that that person was a Demon General. He was injured, so I had him treated and returned him to the demon race territory. I don't know the reason why his memories are a jumble though.” (Makoto)

“Because he is a Demon General huh. If this one had to choose between Kaleneon and Reft, this one would choose Reft. In that sense, should this one be grateful?” (Zef)

“No, that is...” (Makoto)

After leaking a chuckle, the Demon Lord makes a mysterious farsighted expression and a faint smile surfaced.

“But you got me. This one probably won't be able to sleep tonight. Even though this one had drunk quite a bit and was in a good mood.” (Zef)

“...”

“If the talk is over... this time for sure let's return, Raidou-dono.” (Zef)

“Demon Lord-sama, this talk...” (Makoto)

“If you are going to say: ‘Don't tell anyone’, that's an impossible deal. This one doesn't know if this one will be able to swallow all this. Also, this isn't a talk that an individual can keep to himself. Well in the first place, it is strange to refer a Lord as an ‘individual’ though.” (Zef)

He said it before me.

As I thought, it is impossible to ask him to keep it to himself huh.

But it would look bad to stay silent here so...

“No, this is something that I willingly spoke out because I understood the personality of Demon Lord-sama. That’s what I wanted to tell you.” (Makoto)

“This one will take your evaluation to heart. Now then, let’s go back.” (Zef)

“Thanks.” (Makoto)

The Demon Lord opens the door, and we return to the banquet.

A warm atmosphere envelops my body, and when I returned to my seat, I was welcomed by a huge amount of food.

Shiki who knew of the situation, had a face as if saying ‘good work’; Mio gave me her impressions of the food and gave me recommendations with a wide smile.

I-I was somehow able to say it.

Today there’s only eat and sleep left, so that’s a small blessing.

If tomorrow on is like this, my body might not be able to take it.



~Makoto’s Dream~

A dream.

I could tell from the atmosphere.

After being entertained by the banquet of the demon race, we returned to our room. Then, we locked the room and went to sleep in Asora.

Today I didn’t feel like doing anything more.

The moment I returned to my own room, I quickly went down.

Last time it was my old self that seemed to have created a desert. And before that one... it was a dream where I almost killed Hibiki.

Hm, this is bad.

It feels like things are getting messed up.

Dreams like a strange kingdom and desert.

I remember a bit about the people that appeared in it, but the other details are getting foggy.

Dreams are not something that can be easily remembered so it can't be helped, but these chain of events feel like they are trying to tell me something and it bothers me.

This is already the third time after all.

When I wake up, I will ask Tomoe to archive them.

Anyways... the mist is quite thick.

To the level that it looks like smoke.

Where am I... I mean, the me in this dream.

When I thought of this... I found him.

"..."

It isn't as old as last time.

Just that, it looks like I have an incredibly troubled expression.

I don't know if I have had these much emotion shown in my face before.

I was sitting at a bench.

Aside from that, I can't see anything else.

It's kinda ironic to say this in a dream but, this place doesn't feel real.

Also, it bothers me that there's no other person here aside from me.

"How long has it been since we have talked just the two of us, Waka."

“...Tomoe.” (Makothree)

Eh?

I was surprised by the voice.

Before I noticed, the shadow of a person appeared at the bench that I was sitting on.

Ah, so this strange place was prepared by Tomoe.

Or more like, there haven’t been any of my followers or the people of Asora in these dreams before.

“That kind of expression is... no, this isn’t something that I should be saying.” (Tomoe)

“You are the reason after all.” (Makothree)

“Yeah.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe, I...” (Makothree)

He is using ‘ore’.

If I remember correctly, there was one dream where I used ‘ore’ as well.

Yeah, even though it is me -no- maybe it’s because it is me huh.

The sense of disparity is incredible.

“Waka, please don’t say further.” (Tomoe)

“I haven’t said anything yet.” (Makothree)

“You were mostly going to apologize, right? It is unnecessary.” (Tomoe)

“...Even through the end, there’s no rivalling you huh.” (Makothree)

...

The end?

“It is something I wished for. At the very least, I have no regrets. Please.” (Tomoe)

“...”

“Being unable to reincarnate is something I was already prepared for when I made a pact with Waka. Also, there’s Mio at that side as well. She may not be as fun as being with Waka, but being together with her doesn’t bore me.” (Tomoe)

“If I had... If I had been stronger, do you think this wouldn’t have happened?” (Makothree)

“...No. Even if Waka had obtained the power to overwhelm that Goddess, there’s no knowing if the result would have changed. No one would know.” (Tomoe)

“But at the very least, I wouldn’t have done something as unsightly as exchanging the two heroes and Mio, right?” (Makothree)

What’s this?

Mio was here too.

And she is not here anymore. Is that what he is trying to say?

“But the Goddess might have come out faster. If that happened, not only Mio, Waka might have died at that moment as well.” (Tomoe)

“Even so!!” (Makothree)

“Everything has already happened. Waka, you have chosen your own path. We obeyed it. And so, we fought with a God and are now here. I said this before but, I... no, Mio as well, didn’t regret anything. Something like: ‘If we hadn’t met Waka’, has not crossed my mind one bit, you know.” (Tomoe)

“...”

“It was truly fun. A lot more fun than living eternally in a life without path. That’s why Waka should also look forward, and walk your own path. All your worries, I will be taking them here. When you cross the river of styx, I will return them to you.” (Tomoe)

“My path huh.” (Makothree)

"Yes. It is not like I can see through everything, so I don't have the right to say this all high-and-mighty though." (Tomoe)

"Even when you are speaking to me in this fashion?" (Makothree)

In this fashion...

What is it?

For some reason, a strange and bad feeling is clinging onto me.

"...Yeah. If you want to hear, I will tell you but... just promise me, \*you will not drag us along anymore\*." (Tomoe) <*She is telling him to stop burdening himself with their memories.*>

"You are so unfair, Tomoe. You who had no other worries aside from period dramas and Japanese customs, is having worries? Are you telling me this knowing that I want to hear it? Understood, I will walk forward. It is only a bit more after all. I will look at the other side when I finish climbing." (Makothree)

The mouth of the hung down head had a smile surface.

The corners of the mouth were upwards, but it looked like a made-up smile.

I could somehow tell that he wasn't truly smiling.

"Then... since the time Waka had decided on his path, I steadily began to think this way. That maybe... If maybe there was another person aside from me and Mio who supports Waka..." (Tomoe)

"Are you referring to a follower? But I don't have any other follower aside from you and Mio." (Makothree)

"Mio and I might have been a bit too possessive. We did receive equal affection, but we were negative about having a new follower." (Tomoe)

"...I can't imagine having a follower aside from you two. If I had to force myself to put out a candidate, maybe Zef. Another one could be Sand Wave? Root? Well, the candidates would be them." (Makothree)

"Zef huh. He might be a good one. Umu, if it were a man, we might not have minded much." (Tomoe)

"A third follower huh. That's quite the talk there." (Makothree)

No, and Shiki?

Shiki... is not here?

"I don't mind if it's 3 or 4, but well, I had such a weak-willed thinking." (Tomoe)

"Even you think about 'maybe's' huh. I am slightly relieved to hear that." (Makothree)

"Well then, it is already time to say goodbye. I made this kind of setup just in case, but I am glad that even someone like me was able to serve as a regret reliever." (Tomoe)

"Tomoe..." (Makothree)

Oh, oh...

Tomoe and I kissed.

And it doesn't feel like this is the first time.

We are used to it.

I can't believe it.

From all this, this is the most surprising.

With Tomoe huh.

I do think of her as someone dependable, but she is more of a brother, and I... don't see her as a woman.

No well, she is indeed a beautiful woman though.

"...Please forgive this blunder of mine. My body has been blown away without remains, so I unconsciously did something like this." (Tomoe)

Her body without remains...

As I thought, this Tomoe is...

There was the shock of that kiss, but I could tell that something even colder and heavier than that was being lodged in my stomach.

It hurts.

Tomoe was smiling all the time, and as if slipping into the thick mist, she dispersed like sand to the wind.

She disappeared.

Don't joke around.

Tomoe and Mio as well!

As if they would be killed by the Goddess!!

Hey, what in the hell did you do?!

Just what kind of stupid path did you take to lose them both?!

And Shiki?! What happened to Shiki?!

Damn it. I don't understand the situation, so the emotions that have nowhere to go create more and more questions.

The surroundings of the me who was alone now, showed an instant change.

The mist that had grown thin was whirling, and disappeared with me at the centre of it.

Eh, this place is...

"Head, I am entering."

A room I remember, and a familiar voice.

Without waiting for my reply, the owner of the voice enters the room.

As I thought.

When I saw his figure, I immediately thought this; Demon Lord Zef.

“Zef-san.” (Makothree)

“The matter of Tomoe-dono... is regrettable. But even so, I have come here to have a word with you.” (Zef)

“It is alright now. I had Tomoe sermon me just a moment ago.” (Makothree)

With a loose face, I smile at the Demon Lord.

It feels like I am quite close with Zef-san.

“...By Tomoe-dono?” (Zef)

“Yeah. Seriously, she is a worrywart. She comes to sermon me even after death.” (Makothree)

“...”

“And, how are the preparations?” (Makothree)

“Completely done. We are waiting for you, Head.” (Zef)

“I see. Zef-san might have forgiven me, but at this rate, I feel like Rona and Sari will get noisy.” (Makothree)

“With Head’s position, it can’t be helped. There’s no choice but to accept it.” (Zef)

I see.

The dream’s me has sided with the demon race.

So this is that kind of dream huh.

“Thinking of it like somebody else’s business.” (Makothree)

"It is in truth somebody else's business after all. You have finally taken off what was burdening you, so I will have you take a break." (Zef)

The Demon Lord looks a lot younger than what my impression of him was.

No, his outward appearance hasn't changed much, but his atmosphere is kinda different.

"Well, I understand how you feel, but taking a break will have to come after finishing one job more." (Makothree)

"Fuh, I am aware. Now then, when you leave the room, I will have you change gears, Head. First, we have to encourage the soldiers." (Zef)

The Demon Lord opens the door of the room and waits for me.

As if complying to his words, I walk there and leave to the corridor with the Demon Lord.

Looking at the ceiling, I take a deep breath and exhaled.

"Let's go, Zef. As a Demon General, I will have you work plenty." (Makothree)

"As you wish. As the new Demon Lord, I will serve you with this life of mine." (Zef)

"The enemy is the Goddess. Do you have the resolve?" (Makothree)

"For a long time. Since the moment I was born a demon." (Zef)

Demon Lord.

I climbed through the steps of the demon race and became a Demon Lord huh.

Not only that, it seems like it is before stepping against the Goddess.

This me is a lot further than me.

But... by sacrificing Tomoe and Mio.

I clench my teeth.

Looking at the figure and expression of the me who has walked further beyond, I could tell that I was feeling anger.

At that moment, the world creaks.

The scenery of the two walking the corridor had fine cracks appearing.

A displeasing sound as if glass was scraping each other resounded heavily.

I woke up from my dream.



It wasn't as if I woke up because I was having a nightmare, or because I was driven out of my dream.

I silently open my eyes.

As usual, it is late at night.

Like the saying goes, the time when plants also sleep.

Don't joke around.

That's not a precognitive dream.

Because they are walking a path that is clearly different from the real me.

But 'if I cooperate with the demon race, it will lead to that result'; there's the chance of something close to that happening.

I have been thinking that the dreams I have had were not just simple dreams.

Tomoe. I should ask Tomoe to record my dreams.

'The memories don't fade, the people just forget about it', is what she said.

In that case, I can reproduce everything including the previous dreams, and check them out.

...It really is no joke.

I don't want to become the Demon Lord, and I don't want to lose Tomoe and Mio.

In the first place, counting the two previous dreams that are starting to become foggy, there's too much bad aftertaste!

I send a thought transmission to Tomoe.

Even if she is sleeping, I intended to wake her up.

(Waka? Weren't you sleeping?) (Tomoe)

(You were awake huh. I have something I wanted to consult you about. Is it okay to do it right now?) (Makoto)

I thought that she was definitely sleeping.

What was she doing this late in the night?

(Understood. Then I will head to your room.) (Tomoe)

(No, I will go to you. Are you in your room?) (Makoto)

It is not like I am lonely, but for some reason, I wanted to see Tomoe.

(No, I'm outside. At the forest on the right of the mansion.) (Tomoe)

(Understood.) (Makoto)

Hearing the location of Tomoe, I head there.

The forest huh.

I also go there sometimes to shoot my bow, but I don't normally see Tomoe there.

There's not much distance, so I arrive soon.

"Tomoe, what are you doing?" (Makoto)

“Of course, training. Even if I say this, it is more like solving a puzzle.” (Tomoe)

“Solving a puzzle huh.” (Makoto)

Tomoe was at the front of one tree.

With her hands at the katana’s handle, she had her body slightly low.

I can tell that it is the stance to pull out the katana.

But the distance between her and the tree is too short.

The pommel is hitting the trunk.

With that, you wouldn’t be able to draw in the first place.

Is that a new type of meditation?

“Drawing from this stance seems to serve as training.” (Tomoe)

“Drawing you say. Isn’t that practically zero-distance? Even if you force draw it, won’t the handle just hit the tree?” (Makoto)

“Yes. Several trees have already fallen. That’s probably not the correct way.” (Tomoe)

Of course it is not.

A person wouldn’t normally drop a tree for trying to forcefully draw a sword.

Just what kind of handle is that.

“Who did you hear that from?” (Makoto)

“I was taught by Hibiki. It seems to be a foundation of the katana.” (Tomoe)

“Then won’t we get it after looking at her memories?” (Makoto)

“Waka, if I do that, I feel like it would go against the point of training.” (Tomoe)

“You are serious in the weirdest of places. I like that though.” (Makoto)

“Just training with the katana is fun, so it doesn’t faze me. Even if today is no good, even if tomorrow is no good, even if the day after tomorrow is no good; I will do my best every day. Well even if I say this, I intended to finish the training for today, but since I received a thought transmission from Waka, I continued for a bit more. And, what was the business you had?” (Tomoe)

Wiping her sweat, Tomoe laughs with a satisfied expression.

Uh, it reminds me of the smile of the dream Tomoe.

Stop it.

That was... a dream.

Not reality.

That’s right, I won’t let it become reality.

That’s why I came to meet Tomoe.

“I wanted to check a dream of mine for a bit you see. Dreams also enter in the category of memories right? Can you check them?” (Makoto)

“Of course. Is it recent?” (Tomoe)

“Yeah, around ten days ago. I think there’s a day when I was resting at Asora. I am counting on you for that.” (Makoto)

“Well then, excuse me while I give it a look.” (Tomoe)

“Don’t look at anything unnecessary, okay?” (Makoto)

“I know.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe’s hand touches my forehead.

Fuh~

Anyways, it might have been something important.

With this, I have one thing less to worry about.

Tomoe closes her eyes and searches my memories.

But to place the handle at the tree and draw huh.

Kuma-sensei who taught me the basics of Iai, no wait, I haven't been taught by sensei, not even once.

...Maybe I just didn't advance to that stage yet.

Is it because I wasn't following the lessons well?

Tomoe said she heard it from Hibiki-senpai, but now that I think about it, there's no training in kendo for drawing, right?

Was senpai learning swordsmanship as well?

In that case, she is more fearsome than I thought.

"...Waka." (Tomoe)

"Ah, did you finish?" (Makoto)

In the time that I was thinking, it seems she had finished.

Okay, this is no time to be sleeping, so I will look at them right now.

"For around 3 days, there were nights when you didn't have a dream but... there wasn't any specially strange dream." (Tomoe)

"Eh?" (Makoto)

"Maybe in those 3 days you had a such a deep sleep that you didn't have any dreams?" (Tomoe)

"No, there's no way. Ehm, at the day I met Hibiki-senpai... also, at the day when I went to the Empire. Also today, just a moment ago." (Makoto)

"I didn't find any. What kind of dreams?" (Tomoe)

"In one I was about to kill senpai, at another I made a desert, then I also became a Demon Lord... uhm, Tomoe and the others were dead." (Makoto)

"...It certainly does sound like a suggestive dream." (Tomoe)

"Are there really none? Memories of me seeing those dreams." (Makoto)

"Yes. Totally." (Tomoe)

No way.

I certainly did see it and I am able to tell its contents right now.

I saw them, and yet, a dream I didn't see? I feel more and more that those dreams are not mere dreams.

But Tomoe doesn't seem to be lying.

What's going on?

"...Understood. Sorry Tomoe. To ask you for something so late at night." (Makoto)

"No, don't worry about it. Waka, if it's okay with you, I can try searching as many times as you want." (Tomoe)

"No, it is not like pushing will do anything. I will return to my room and note down as much information I remember. I might ask of you again but, at that time, I am counting on you." (Makoto)

"I am sorry for not being of help. Just that, Waka..." (Tomoe)

"Hm?" (Makoto)

"We won't easily die. We are Waka's followers after all. I want you to believe in that." (Tomoe)

"...Yeah, thanks. Good night." (Makoto)

"Yeah, have a good sleep. I as well...!! If pushing doesn't work, maybe pulling..." (Tomoe)

“Hm, Tomoe?” (Makoto)

“M-Maybe!! It was that?! Umu, it might be!!” (Tomoe)

“...Tomoe? Hey~” (Makoto)

“Waka!!” (Tomoe)

“What? You won’t sleep?” (Makoto)

“I won’t! As expected, Waka is really different!! Umu, there’s worth in trying! Sorry Waka, I was thinking about going back with you, but I will be training for a bit more!!” (Tomoe)

“Ah... okay. Then, I will be going first.” (Makoto)

“Rest well!!” (Tomoe)

...

Well, it didn’t seem like a bad agitation so... let’s leave it.

I also have things to do here. Need to write down the contents of the dream.

The first two are kinda hard to say, but the one just now is still fine... I think.

Okay, let’s return to my room.

# Chapter 187

## Gossip – Mind's eye

At the time when Makoto had met with the two heroes and the Demon Lord, the Kuzunoha Company's Rotsgard store was really busy.

The reason is simple, there's not enough hands.

The person that's basically in charge, Shiki, was absent along with his master, and Lime Latte who handled the order taking and delivery, as well as being in the counter, was also absent because of Tomoe's order.

The store that has become wider has a reputation that increases and doesn't decrease.

The employees were unable to handle the customers that arrived.

Of course, there were preparations made beforehand for big transactions, but even so, it was on the borderline of not being able to handle it.

“S-Soon’s time to close. But I can’t take it any longer. I am leaving early...”

“Are you sleep talking, Eris? Actually, increase the amount of doubles. The customers are coming as if it’s the last spurt.”

“Hahaha, Akua, I am already a fallen rag. Even if you wring me out, nothing will drip. If I continue attending the customers in this state, even my cosmos will dry up.” (Eris)

“See, a regular of yours came. Smile smile.” (Akua)

“Hm, welcome~~!! Hah... it has already been deeply ingrained in me!!” (Eris)

One hour before sunset.

The Kuzunoha Company has received a big amount of customers today too, and the two girls with darkish skin were moving their feet as if there were several people existing, and were doing their best in attending their customers.

The tall height Akua and the short Eris.

Both of them were staggering already. There's Akua who was somehow enduring, and Eris who is despairing at the remaining time.

The sales limit that the shopkeeper Raidou placed was the saving grace of those girls.

Because there's that, they are able to see a goal.

If they were selling goods with no limit, if they were to sell goods until closing time, the two of them would have probably fallen already.

Raidou's sense for money as a merchant was dull, but this time, the sell limit he set up before going to the Demon Lord audience had coincidentally been a splendid choice.

It could also be said to be a point that made the employees wring out their stamina to the limit.

"It's less than one hour now. Fight on, Eris. Even if you are all dried up, wring yourself out as if you were to break. And then, drink. Drink with everyone." (Akua)

"If Lime were here... if at least Lime were here..." (Eris)

"Because of Tomoe-sama's orders, he is in Lorel at this moment. Don't ask for the impossible." (Akua)

"...I have decided. I will be drinking a lime flavored banana bliss today." (Eris)

"The cocktail that Lime suggested huh. Even if he looks that way, he is unexpectedly a reliable man after all. About that alcohol, Waka-sama gave it a name, so maybe there's already a precedent though." (Akua)

"...In a tankard." (Eris)

"...It won't liberate you, you know. But I will accompany in one drink. Then let's have a drinking party today at Asora. Yeah, let's do our best." (Akua)

"So number six was not enough. I have to wake up already. The ultimate cost." (Eris)

"That's why I'm telling you to stop sleep talking. Ah, welcome~! Today... yes, that's

right. I really did think that it was a bit fast for the season. Then, how about this one here?" (Akua)

"I am expecting the souvenir to be expensive... damn Lime!!!" (Eris)

The night was only beginning, but it was to the point that closing was in sight already.

The Kuzunoha Company was prosperous.



"Achoo!"

"Ara Lime, is that a cold?"

"No, someone must have been gossiping about me." (Lime)

"It would be good if that's the case though. You are vigorous at night after all. I hope you won't get stabbed in time."

"It is a different body from the one I use when acting separately from hero-dono's party. Don't worry." (Lime)

There's roof tiles and godowns, but in this strange scenery of a town that's slightly different from that of Japan, there's a male and female walking.

The man is Lime Latte, a member of Kuzunoha Company, and currently acting together with the hero.

The woman is Otonashi Hibiki.

Entitled as a hero by the Limia Kingdom, and also the existence that serves as the hope of humans in the war between humans and demons.

The shopkeeper of the Kuzunoha Company, Raidou -or Mizumi Makoto-, was in a relationship of senior and junior with her.

"It is not like I am telling you to stop indulging in women at night. I do think that if you are doing it fairly, I don't really mind." (Hibiki)

“Heh~, for a young woman, you are tolerant.” (Lime)

“Wudi has a wife and baby, and he is head-over-heels in love with her. Bredda doesn’t seem to have the spirit to buy prostitutes. Looking at him, I think he doesn’t have experience with women yet. I don’t intend to tell him to play around with women, but I don’t have much opinion of it either.” (Hibiki)

“...There’s still one more thing regarding Bredda, right?” (Lime)

“So you could tell huh. He seems to like me. I am happy to be liked but... I don’t intend to answer his feelings.” (Hibiki)

“How straight. Then I think telling him quickly would be kindness in itself.” (Lime)

“If he confesses to me, I will properly reject him. To reject him because I have noticed his feelings, don’t you think that would leave a bad aftertaste? He also has to properly resolve himself and say it. I think that putting an end to it in this way, will leave less regrets. Aren’t men like that?” (Hibiki)

“...I don’t know if to call you kind or strict. Well, it is not my business. I was the one who threw the conversation, but please do as you please.” (Lime)

Lime lifts his hands up and shrugs his shoulders.

“I will do that. Sorry for having you accompany me today.” (Hibiki)

“Don’t worry. The two are down with an endemic disease, so it can’t be helped.” (Lime)

“Wudi and Bredda are unlucky. Or maybe Lime is the lucky one.” (Hibiki)

“It is without doubt me being lucky. That’s why I am alive, and working at the Kuzunoha Company.” (Lime)

“Can I hear about that?” (Hibiki)

“I don’t mind. Well, there’s a lot I can’t answer though.” (Lime)

“...What’s that. In the first place, why are you in Lorel when you should be doing business at Rotsgard and Tsige?” (Hibiki)

At the location that Hibiki and Lime were walking to, there's a building bigger than others.

At the end of the long stairs, there's a temple.

Their steps told that this is their objective.

"Lorel's big shots are inviting my boss all the time. Telling him if he wants to put a store here. And so, I am doing a preliminary inspection. Being together with you guys was a coincidence, you know?" (Lime)

Lime's true objective is to investigate the movements of Hibiki and her party.

But in order to have them think otherwise, he gives out a reason that Tomoe properly laid out beforehand.

In that point, there were no holes.

"The big shots huh. The names?" (Hibiki)

"Hey hey, it feels like you are interrogating me. It is someone called Sairitz. You are free to confirm with the other party, but I ask you to keep it a secret that you heard this from me. If they learn that I am here to inspect, there will be a parade of thought transmissions and letters coming to Boss again. You are the senpai of Boss, right? Lending a bit of help to your kohai would be nice." (Lime)

"Sairitz... Hmph~, understood. I won't bring out your name." (Hibiki)

"Counting on that." (Lime)

"If you are talking about senpai and kohai, I would want some helping hand for the senpai as well." (Hibiki)

"You are the senpai, so I ask you to be a bit tolerant on that. Boss is filled to the brim busy, and is suffering." (Lime)

"...What a troublesome kohai." (Hibiki)

The two walk up the wide stone stairs.

At the center there's a handrail, and a lot of people are walking up.

It can be seen at one glance that there were a lot of people on their pilgrimage.

"Even so... Lorel is really enthusiastic about their Spirit religion. If I remember correctly, it is a Water Spirit. It is clearly receiving more believers than the Goddess." (Hibiki)

"For the commoners, they are the ones who have more appearance than the Goddess, and also, the High Spirits are a strong existence, so it is a religion that's plenty reasonable to direct their belief at. Also, even if I say it is a Spirit religion, Spirits are all serving the Goddess, it is in essence, a religion of the Goddess." (Lime)

"You seem to be... quite knowledgeable." (Hibiki)

"To the point that you have a different impression of me now? Then let me add one more thing while at it. In the past, at the time when the demon race made its great march, the Earth and Fire Spirit that lend their help to them were called low Spirits because of it. In truth, the medium Spirits that possess will of their own, there are some that are called High Spirits but... well, regarding these two, there aren't many hyumans or demons that continue their belief towards them though. Dwarfs are stubborn so they continue their faith towards the Earth Spirit, but because of their proficient arm in smithing, their eyes are not focused on it." (Lime)

"...Impressive. Are the employees of Kuzunoha Company required to have these amount of knowledge before being allowed to enter?" (Hibiki)

"I wonder. In our place, we have a tendency to excel at one trait, so there's no real need to know things, as long as you have a specialty, you can manage to enter, probably." (Lime)

"Then maybe I should enter as well. With the connection of Misumi Makoto." (Hibiki)

"A connection is not a talent. Is the job of a hero darker than it shows?" (Lime)

"Pitch black. The environment is also close to the worst. Well, what's more important is if it's worth doing huh. I can't stop after all. Can't I work in the side lines? Even if it's by connection, I am confident that I will be an employee that can bring you benefits though." (Hibiki)

"Our place doesn't accept being a side job. Too bad." (Lime)

"Ara. Fuh~ we have finally arrived. Seriously, what a long stair. Chiya-chan said she is almost done but, what do you think?" (Hibiki)

"If she can't handle this much, she would be lacking in training. Even if you ask me what I think, I can't say anything since I don't know what that Priestess is doing. I only tagged along with you here." (Lime)

"...You really don't know what Chiya-chan is doing?" (Hibiki)

"...Yeah, I don't." (Lime)

"Then, I will leave it at that." (Hibiki)

"I'm not being trusted." (Lime)

"Fufu." (Hibiki)

While doing small talk, Hibiki and Lime enter the temple.

After doing a simple check and confirming their identity, they were led into a room inside the temple.

The reason why they came -or more like Hibiki came- was because she was told that her party member, the Priestess Chiya's training would be finished by today.

Even if she is young, she is a dependable comrade, and Hibiki herself has come to meet her.

She wanted her party members Wudi and Bredda to come with her, but they are ill right now. That's why, for some reason, Hibiki came along with Lime, a Kuzunoha Company employee she met at Lorel.

Even Hibiki could only say that she instinctively invited him.

Because she felt that going alone would be dangerous.

Lime didn't get agitated at the sudden invitation of the hero. He carefreely accepted to go along with her to her destination.

There's no better distance to accomplish the order of Tomoe to investigate the hero's movement, so his actions could be said to be obvious.

"And? That Priestess-san, how does she get stronger?" (Lime)

"That's a secret." (Hibiki)

"If possible, I would be grateful if she were to grow able to defend herself." (Lime)

"Grateful? What do you mean by—!!" (Hibiki)

Hibiki's face showed agitation in one instant.

"So you noticed." (Lime)

"Something's strange." (Hibiki)

"Strange huh. Well, if you are saying this out of instinct, that's pretty impressive. That, draw it out." (Lime)

Lime places a hand to the katana at his waist, and looks at the sword at the back of Hibiki.

"An enemy? But Lorel has never received the invasion of the Demon race, not even once." (Hibiki)

"Who knows. I don't know about the demons, but for now, it is a matter of fact that they have secluded the space. The place we are in right now could be called a separate space." (Lime)

"Secluding space? Are you saying a barrier has been activated?" (Hibiki)

"That's how it is. But it is quite large-scale. I don't think this is a defensive mechanism of the temple. Someone must have set this up at the shadows of the temple, taking its time. That's how it feels." (Lime)

Lime calmly analyzes the situation.

As a spy of the Kuzunoha Company, he didn't show any signs of being agitated or bewildered.

He detected the abnormality faster than anyone, and had begun to think before anyone else.

“?!! Then, what about Chiya-chan?!” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, there’s a high probability that she is in danger. That’s why I tried asking how strong she has gotten.” (Lime)

“What kind of leisure is that! Lend me a hand. We will immediately go save her!” (Hibiki)

“...Okay, I will *lend* it. Don’t forget that word.” (Lime)

“Yeah, it is fine to think of it as a debt. I will return it in time.” (Hibiki)

“No no, there’s no need to think of it in such an exaggerated manner. It is fine to just tell me what that Priestess-san was planning on obtaining. I have a nature of wanting to know things that I want to know no matter what, you see.” (Lime)

“Then I will tell you while we move. You are a vanguard, right?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki asks after seeing the katana.

Lime nods.

“Yeah, even if it’s side by side, or back to back, I will do a decent job at it.” (Lime)

\*Don\*

Hibiki kicks open the wooden door.

The corridor showed a slight fluctuation as if warping, something it didn’t show in the past.

Different from a normal space, it was a scenery that was practically proving they were in an unstable place.

“Then follow me. I will have you do both side and back.” (Hibiki)

“Understood. First, right or left? Hero-dono knows the place where the Priestess-san

is, right?" (Lime)

"Right. Also, it is fine to call me Hibiki. Calling me Hero-dono is kind of itchy. For people that stand in the same battlefield, I actually don't want to be called in that way." (Hibiki)

"Hibiki huh. If you want me to call you that way, I don't really mind. Then, let's go." (Lime)

"Okay. Horn!" (Hibiki)

"Oh." (Lime)

Responding to the call of Hibiki, the silver belt that was wrapped around her waist summoned a type of wolf.

"Let's go to where Chiya-chan is. If you notice something, tell me." (Hibiki)

The wolf nods at the words of its master.

It seemed like it was able to understand the meaning.

"If you were going to summon, tell me so. I got surprised there." (Lime)

"Ara, I am sorry. I normally don't team up with temporary members, so I was indifferent about it." (Hibiki)

Two people and one animal run.

Just like what Lime said, the temple had become like a dungeon.

There were times when the corridor went a different course, and doors that had no locks couldn't be opened. Also, there were mamonos appearing in the temple; something that would never happen.

They were all hostile, and mercilessly attacked Hibiki's group who were trying to hurry.

"You are fighting with quite the leisure!! As I thought, you are not a simple employee!" (Hibiki)

"I just have enough ability to be sent to do a preliminary inspection in a foreign country. More importantly, counting that wolf-san over there, you possess power that doesn't shame the name of hero. I see you in a different light now!" (Lime)

But Hibiki's group didn't deal with them. They were all mostly defeated in one hit, and they were actually increasing their speed as time went.

Lime was observing Hibiki at times, nodding at times, and following her perfectly.

He followed Hibiki's speed without losing breath, moreover, looking at how he swung his sword as if reading her very breath, the phantom of her past companion surfaced in her mind, but she chased it away.

Hibiki told herself: 'Naval won't return'.

"Oh, looks like it is here?" (Lime)

"...Wah?" (Hibiki)

(This guy is incredible. His breathing is not affected at all. Moreover, he is acting in a way that doesn't get in my way. He is really like Naval. No, he is most likely a lot more skilled than her.) (Hibiki)

Even though Hibiki was the one running ahead, she was surprised that she was more tired than Lime who was following from behind, and was also surprised by his movements.

"Should we rest for a bit? It seems the Priestess-san is safe, you know?" (Lime)

"..."

While recovering her breath, Hibiki silently shakes her head.

(Also, it is the same with me. I felt like I was clearly stronger than normal. Is this person, Lime, the one that brought out that power from me? No way, there's no way that's the case but...) (Hibiki)

She does a big sigh.

And then, when Hibiki lifts her gaze, there's the back of Lime.

For some reason, that back of his looked quite big in Hibiki's eyes.

"But, the heart's eye? Or was it the mind's eye? I'm surprised she was able to endure with only that power. She didn't seem especially strong in fights after all, that Priestess-san." (Lime)

Lime makes a reference of the new power of the Priestess that he heard from Hibiki in the way. The name of the power that Hibiki told Lime was the mind's eye. The eye of the heart.

The power to see through the real appearance of the target without exceptions; a power that only the Priestess possesses. But Hibiki was hiding one thing from Lime.

That the mind's eye is a power akin to a side effect.

The objective of this time's ceremony was to enhance power in all aspects, and by doing that process, she also ends up obtaining the mind's eye.

Hibiki didn't tell Lime about the power enhancement.

"That's... , no, let's go!!" (Hibiki)

Hibiki almost told everything to Lime.

But just as she was about to, she stops.

It is certainly true that they cooperating now, but Lime Latte is a member of the Kuzunoha Company.

And in the eyes of Hibiki, the Kuzunoha Company is an incredibly dangerous existence.

She felt it was dangerous to reveal everything.

"Got it." (Lime)

"!!"

Lime complies, and then opens the big door.

At that place, there's the figure of Chiya on her knees, both hands put together, and her

eyes closed making a prayer.

Then, she saw the strong barrier that was protecting her.

"Demons huh. Why is it, I feel like this doesn't give off the smell of something planned. It is not good, and it is not like them either." (Lime)

Lime mutters.

In his eyes, there were reflected three demons surrounding the Priestess' barrier.

Lime could tell that she was breathing in and forming a spell.

At her surroundings, there's the corpses of the Priestess' bodyguards.

From the scenery that was reflected in his eyes, Lime felt some sort of occurrence involved in this ill-preparedness.

"Wait. Right, the mind's eye huh. Because of her acquiring that ability, she saw things that she didn't think would see, and that's why those three got agitated and did this huh. Then this state is also..." (Lime)

"You!!" (Hibiki)

"!!!"

Lime was analyzing the situation from the information.

But it seems he was the only one who was calm.

Lime who heard an angered voice from his right side, looks at the direction where Hibiki should be.

The silver belt suddenly shone and wraps her whole body.

At the same time, Lime felt a strange upsurge of power, and in the next moment, Hibiki's figure had disappeared.

That's right, even in the eyes of Lime that were trained by Tomoe, Hibiki looked like she had disappeared.

Lime unconsciously felt something cold at his back.

“Gyaaa!!”

“...Seriously?” (Lime)

Hearing the scream at the front, Lime learned of Hibiki’s whereabouts.

She was at the side of Chiya’s barrier.

And there were three corpses of demons as well.

It wasn’t as if they could react to it.

Luckily, only the third one was able to scream because he ‘hit’ the barrier by reflex. The other two weren’t even able to react at all, and were severed in one strike.

The one who was able to scream as well, it clearly showed that he received a fatal hit from one attack.

It didn’t turn into an instant death, that’s all.

In no time, the demon spat out a large amount of blood and died.

(Good grief. It is the proper practice to let one live and have it spill out the beans. For Hibiki, that Priestess might be a special existence. In that case, if there’s a need to restrain her, that Priestess might be useful. There’s no real need to take her hostage; just by mentioning it to her, her movements would dull. Even so... that was unbelievable speed. Like that, I wouldn’t be able to react. If dealt wrong, I would also be defeated in an instant. I am glad I got to see it... along with that incredible outfit. It is more eye candy than scary. Let’s admire it.) (Lime)

Lime places the entire movements of Hibiki in his head. Counting the Priestess’ existence, the strong barrier she created, and the super speed that might be Hibiki’s ace.

...And also the really high exposure rate outfit she uses when showing that speed.

“Are you okay, Chiya-chan?!” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki-oneechan! You came! You really came~!!” (Chiya)

The barrier crumbles, and Hibiki and Chiya hug each other.

“I’m glad! I’m truly glad I made it in time! It is alright now, I am here.” (Hibiki)

“It was scary, but I believed that you would definitely come rescue me! That’s why I had my barrier up all the time and doing my best!” (Chiya)

Chiya’s way of dealing with the situation was truly childish, and at the same time, it could be said to be truly composed and brave.

Instead of going to a poor offensive, the chances of a mistake are low, and it will assure that she will live longer.

The price is that she wouldn’t be able to eliminate the enemy, so her chances of survival hinged on how much you can rely on someone coming to help.

Chiya betted on the help, and she splendidly won the bet.

“I’m sorry for ruining your heartwarming reunion, but how about returning for now, you two? Watching a child and a young girl hugging each other at a blood filled altar, is a bit unsavory.” (Lime)

“Uh... you are right. Lime, you really helped me out in this occasion. Thanks.” (Hibiki)

“Not really. I did properly get the compensation, so minding it too much will only tire me, please stop it. If it’s not enough to show your gratefulness, invite me a dinner. I will be fine with that. Hm? What’s wrong, Priestess-san?” (Lime)

“...A large tree that raises up a forest. Also... a dragon and welcoming rain.” (Chiya)

Chiya suddenly mutters this with distant eyes as she looks at Lime.

“...Ah?” (Lime)

“Chiya-chan?” (Hibiki)

“A person that gives a lot of peace of mind...” (Chiya)

"Hibiki, it seems the Priestess is quite tired. Quickly finish reporting this and have her rest. No matter the circumstances, she is still a child after all." (Lime)

"Right, I will do that. Chiya-chan, can you stand?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah, I'm fine. Onee-chan is... Onee-chan. Amazing, nothing changed." (Chiya)

"...Really?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah!" (Chiya)

Hibiki and Lime look at each other.

Wondering about Chiya-chan who is for some reason laughing happily.

The three leave the abnormal space of the temple's altar, and head to the temple's waiting room.

Lime was making a thinking expression as he walked, and suddenly lifted his head.

"Oh right, it might be troublesome if they learn that I am here, so I will be leaving first. See ya, Hibiki, Priestess-san." (Lime)

"Wait a moment, you are an involved party as well!" (Hibiki)

"Lime-san!!" (Chiya)

"It is fine to just have it as if I wasn't there and take the credit. Hibiki, don't forget the dinner. I will be returning to the inn." (Lime)

Lime says this rapidly, and leaves the two at the waiting room.

"That Priestess-san, it seems the mind's eye sees something without regards to the other party's mind protection. I should report this as well. This is bad, it is almost time to submit the report to Sis! I have to go to a place without people and return quickly!!" (Lime)

At the Lorel Union, Lime was involved with Hibiki bit by bit.

He still didn't notice that this one incident would unexpectedly deepen his friendship

with those girls.

# Chapter 188

## Power is needed even in a temple visit?

“A friendly match, you say?”

“Umu.”

The next day after seeing an absurd dream like becoming the next Demon Lord, the Demon Lord Zef said one of the things I kinda expected.

Yesterday he was repeatedly saying ‘power’, after all.

“The type of battle that probes each other’s personality, right?” (Makoto)

Leaving aside the way of putting it, he is telling me to fight while being treated as a guest.

I ended up asking for a confirmation.

“Yeah. Don’t worry, a bit of spectators will gather, but it is fine for Raidou-dono’s group to fight as normal.” (Zef)

It is fine, he says.

I can kinda predict who my opponent will be.

We did say that as long as there’s merits for us, we wouldn’t mind accepting, but... what should I do?

Currently, it would only scare them, so I just have to properly hold back and act in a gentlemanly way. In that way, their impression of us would actually get better.

“By the way, who will be our opponent?” (Makoto)

“The opponent this one will be assigning will be a Demon General or someone who has an ability close to that. Even if this one says it is a friendly match, it is only that

this one needs some sort of proof of friendship with the Kuzunoha Company. In truth, it would be troublesome if you get too serious and it turns into hatred." (Zef)

"...A proof of friendship. Yesterday's banquet was plenty enough to tell us about your friendship though." (Makoto)

The Demon Lord and everyone else made a banquet, and there wasn't any people looking down on us.

Actually, it was so friendly to the level that I am scared of ulterior motives.

"That makes me happy. Well, today's plan is to guide you to the Spirit's temple; if there's extra time, look around the area of the castle, speak with the people of the castle, you can spend it however you wish. If your side accepts the match, this one would like to begin tomorrow." (Zef)

"Tomorrow. Understood. I will consult this with my followers and consider it positively." (Makoto)

"Please do so. This one won't be able to guide you, but this one will have my two daughters, Sari and Lucia, go with you. Send my greetings to the Spirits." (Zef)

Hah?

"...Eh? We will be meeting the spirits? I mean, we can meet them?" (Makoto)

"Of course. It seems like they took an interest in Raidou-dono. Fire and Earth High Spirits. They are not our allies only, but they are generous people that don't hesitate in assisting us. Maybe you will end up meshing well with them." (Zef)

Spirits... When it comes to High ones, I have not met any.

I had the impression that they were all from the side of the Goddess, so it was hard to get close to them. And most of all, I had no opportunity to.

Meeting one at the demon race territory for the first time, feels quite mysterious.

"I thought we were going there to pray or something. Learning that I will be meeting with a Spirit makes me nervous." (Makoto)

I thought it would be like going to a Shinto shrine.

Not only am I going to a place where they reside, but I am going to be meeting them in person. Moreover, with how things are going, it is as if meeting them is already a set deal.

How annoying.

“Your Majesty, it is almost time.”

“Waka-sama, the preparations are ready.”

Oh, the Demon Lord is busy every day, that's obvious.

Rona lowers her head and comes to get Zef-san.

Is she filling the job of secretary at the times she is in the castle?

“Good work, Rona. This one will be going soon. Raidou-dono, the guides this one told you a while ago are waiting at the main gate. This one hopes you will enjoy the demon race’s city today as well. Then, this one will be excusing himself.” (Zef)

“Thank you very much.” (Makoto)

I see off Zef-san who is leaving along with Rona.

“Shiki, is Mio already outside?” (Makoto)

I ask Shiki who came to call me, and ask him about Mio who I can’t see.

“Yes. Mio-dono is also enjoying the area around the castle. It is a section that she didn’t check yesterday, it seems.” (Shiki)

“I see. You probably heard already, but it seems like there’s guides at the main gates waiting, so let’s hurry. Sari-san and Lucia-san. If I remember correctly... two children of the Demon Lord.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, those two huh. Going through the trouble of choosing two women, I wonder if there’s some sort of reason behind it.” (Shiki)

“...I don’t think so. And what about you Shiki? It seems like you were together with Rona, could it be you two get along better now?” (Makoto)

I could tell Shiki was trying to tease me.

Lately, I have been able to not take things seriously and deal with them, so I think I am getting a bit used to it.

“It was a stupid confrontation between a fox and a racoon. No matter how friendly they get, they won’t be able to match. With Kuzunoha Company and Waka-sama’s matter, their amount of information is so low it couldn’t even be called a match though. Even if she looked like that, she was quite mortified.” (Shiki)

“Ahaha... I am kinda scared of the future. The grudge of a woman. Ah, by the way, Demon Lord-sama said that he wanted us to do a friendly match with them but, is it okay to accept?” (Makoto)

“...Yes. Please accept it. I have a slight idea of what they are trying to stick their nose into. If that’s the case, we will be able to obtain something that will not be a loss for us.” (Shiki)

“Is that information something you got from Rona?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. She probably purposely leaked out the information to have us accept the match. Their aim is not really disadvantageous for Waka-sama, so in this occasion, let’s receive everything they give us.” (Shiki)

“Understood. Then, we will have to tell Mio as well. I am counting on you for the follow-up so that Reft-san doesn’t end up against Mio.” (Makoto)

“As you wish.” (Shiki)

While walking together to the outside of the castle, I enjoyed a morning talk with the dependable Shiki.

It calms me.

Fuh~, no matter how frankly Zef-san smiles, just speaking with him makes me tired.



“Then, Raidou-dono is putting special effort in developing a medicine for the curse disease?”

“Yeah. That’s where we are putting most of our efforts in. If you need medicine, order it from us.” (Makoto)

“I am the person tasked to guide Raidou-dono today. Even if that weren’t the case, you are a guest invited by his Majesty, so there’s no need to speak formally. Please speak to me without worries like you do with your followers.”

...The youngest girl I know here is probably Rinon.

This girl called Sari is probably in the same age.

Her appearance is similar to that of Rinon, a primary schooler.

Lately, that girl has grown a bit bigger and her appearance has begun to look more curvy like that of a woman, so when thinking of that point, this girl Sari actually looks younger huh.

Her way of speaking is incredibly mature though.

Her maturity makes me think of a feudal lord that has been appointed at a young age.

The maturing speed in this world is honestly faster than that of Japan.

A bit of time has passed since I have gone to Tsige. When I went, I remember Rinon told me: ‘Rinon is already over 10 year old, so Rinon is not a kid anymore.’

I think that a 10 year old is still a kid, but in truth, Rinon is keeping tabs of her sister’s expenses, earning herself, and she is already skilled at housechores.

If she were in Japan, she would be an incredibly level-headed girl.

I don’t want to compare her to my 10 year old self, I would feel pathetic after all.

“Even if you say so, it doesn’t sit right to speak with the two Demon Lord candidates

in the same way as I speak with my followers." (Makoto)

"I didn't really tell you to speak with me casually though." (Lucia)

Lucia-san is hard to deal with in a different meaning.

This one responds with a smile when I speak to her, but that smile of hers feels completely business-like.

But aside from that, there's no other action.

When I glance at her expression for a bit, I could see that she also had a discouraged expression at times.

From the four successors, she is the one that looks like a military person the most, so maybe she is displeased in guiding a merchant.

"Sorr—" (Makoto)

"You are..." (Lucia)

Interrupting my apology, Lucia-san speaks to me for the first time without a smile.

"Y-Yes?" (Makoto)

"A person that has been recognized by my mentor Io, and also my father and Lord Zef who excels in magic and spear." (Lucia)

Hm?

So it is not like she is angry?

It feels like she is in ill humour, and yet, the contents of her words are just...

"It is vexing, but I still can't measure the limits of your power, or how much it is at all. But if you have that much power, don't you think you should learn to have more pride and attitude befitting that power?" (Lucia)

"Pride and attitude huh." (Makoto)

Is she telling me to appeal by saying things like: 'I am strong!'

"Most of the strong people have reached that strength by defeating many. Then isn't the duty of the strong to engrave their feelings and accumulated experience, and act confidently? But you are actually trying to hide that power. I can't comprehend that, and I can't consent to it." (Lucia)

"Lucia-anesama, that way of speaking is rude towards Raidou-dono." (Sari)

"Sari, you have a tolerant mind like Rona, so you can endure it, but for me, I can't bear the way Raidou-dono acts. I find it hard to believe that my mentor Io was defeated by someone like this. He most likely used an underhanded..." (Lucia)

Maybe she doesn't like me, because she is the disciple of Io.

I see.

It is certainly true that sending him flying with a Rocket Punch can be considered an underhanded method.

I did accept the friendly match, so as long as I properly proof my ability in the fight, I feel like I can clear the misunderstanding.

"The weak really do bark a lot."

...

"...What did you say just now, follower-dono?" (Lucia)

Mio?!!

Since when did you return from the food cart?!

Mio who had both hands filled with snacks, cuts into the words of Lucia-san...

"You are not even in a position to speak about this and that of Waka-sama, and don't even have the power, and yet, only your words are splendid huh. That's all I said-desu." (Mio)

Your words are harsh, Mio.

Lucia-san is trembling.

I don't even need to try reading her emotion, it is clearly anger.

Would it be bad if I don't stop it?

But I kinda feel it is unnatural.

Hm, in these moments, it is better to take a step back and increase my field of vision as much as possible.

I will take care of not acting by reflex.

...Ah, it is Sari.

She is way too silent.

It is strange that she only tried to control the situation by doing a light interruption.

Maybe it is all a play?

Or could it be that Lucia-san's speech and conduct are real, but Sari is plotting something?

From how the conversation went, it seems like Sari is similar to Rona, so it might be possible.

Then I should be careful that Mio doesn't go way too overboard...

"...I have done my best in training everyday under the tutelage of Io and Reft, two Demon Generals. Since the day I grasped a sword, there hasn't been a single day when I haven't trained. And Mio-dono is saying that I am weak? If you don't take back those words, I will take this as an insult." (Lucia)

She is seriously angry.

I think.

As I thought, maybe Sari is really the one utilizing this situation.

Don't hurry it. Calmly look over the transition of the situation.

"Reft... You are receiving instructions from a person of that level-desu ka? I am sorry for the rudeness. It seems like it wasn't even a point of being weak or strong, but simple wailing of a baby. I wasn't mature enough. I take back what I said-desu wa." (Mio)

"It is an insult huh." (Lucia)

"Ara? Didn't you hear me saying that I take it back? Do you have ears?" (Mio)

...Mio has gotten better at stirring things up.

Women are scary.

If I was told that using my bow was playing with a toy, I would most likely get angry by reflex.

"Get ready. There's no need to wait for the friendly match. I will confirm that strength of yours here." (Lucia)

"You will gaze upon your own figure that will not be able to recover anymore, and regret your rude remarks of Waka-sama." )

An atmosphere that things have gone to a critical point was enveloping the surroundings.

I even feel like sparks are flying.

Yeah, this is as far as it goes.

Let's stop it.

There's still something that is in my mind after all.

Sari seems to be seriously looking over the situation and has not noticed, and Shiki seems to have already made a slight investigation about it.

"Hold it." (Makoto)

“?!!”

“...Uh, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

I restrain both of their bodies by grabbing them with the magic armor that is currently invisible.

Mio can escape if she wanted to, but she understood what I was trying to do, so she didn't escape.

Lucia-san was... not only unable to escape, it also seems like she doesn't understand what is restraining her in the first place.

I grabbed her the moment before she drew her weapon, so physically speaking, she can't move at all.

“Lucia-san, Sari-san, my companion has been rude, I apologize in her stead. And Lucia-san, even without drawing your sword in the middle of the city, we intend to participate in the friendly match, so please wait until tomorrow. More importantly, I have something that has been slightly bothering me for a while now.” (Makoto)

“Raidou-dono, this restrain... is it your doing?” (Lucia)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

“...At what moment were you able to use such a spell?” (Lucia)

“I will release it soon. But first of all, there's something I want to ask the two of you. I believe that those two big temples that are lined up are the temples of the Spirits, but is that place always ‘like that’?” (Makoto)

“Eh?!!”

“What?!!!!”

Achaaa...

This atmosphere, it feels like some sort of incident is happening?

The two of them look at that ‘distortion’, and seem to be surprised.

At the place where I pointed my finger at, at the place where the two temples are lined up, the landscape at its surrounding seems to be distorted.

It was an unnatural feeling, like seeing something through the filter of a camera.

It looked like the place where the Spirits are supposed to be, so I thought it normally looked like this, but it seems that's not the case.

I release the hands that were grabbing Mio and Lucia-san.

"Shiki, did you find out anything?" (Makoto)

"I can feel thick Spirit power. The power of fire and earth. It is rising as if trying to compete with each other, meshing with the surroundings, and seems to be affecting it. I don't know the reason of it yet." (Shiki)

So the power of the Spirits is so thick that it is distorting the landscape huh.

It wouldn't surprise me much if this were a secluded region, but it is right in the middle of the city.

I feel like this is a serious matter.

"Just in case I will ask but, it is not always like this, right?" (Makoto)

"Of course. If it were always like that, it would be a struggle to even go there to pray." (Lucia)

"This is the first time I have seen it become like this." (Sari)

Good grief.

It would be better to return to the castle and report to Zef-san.

"Then we should go report to his Majesty. The faster the better." (Makoto)

"No, wait." (Lucia)

"Please wait." (Sari)

“?”

I think I did a reasonable opinion, and yet, the two of them stopped me.

Lucia and Sari look at each other and nod.

“Raidou-dono, by the name of the Demon Lord’s children, I assure your safety. I want to enter the temple like this to investigate. Can I ask for your cooperation?” (Sari)

“I concur with my sister’s words. As an apology for the rudeness just now, we will show you our strength, and we will also protect you.” (Lucia)

“No, if it is something important, I think that having his Majesty decide is more important.” (Makoto)

“...I don’t see people inside the distorted space. This is probably something planned. The Spirit temple is a popular place for us you see. In normal circumstances, it would be impossible that no one’s there at daytime. There’s only a restricted amount of people that know that we will be heading there today. In that case, this is...” (Sari)

“It might be the order of his Majesty telling us to deal with this situation. Raidou-dono, please.” (Lucia)

The younger sister complements the words of the elder one.

But if there’s some sort of coup d’etat going inside there, it would be no joke.

Even if he is the Demon Lord, would he really put the successors in a dangerous situation when there’s an army he can mobilize in this city?

Or maybe he is trying to make us do something as well?

If I comply here, I will be able to obtain a bit of good will from them, but it also feels like it will become messy.

“...Yeah.”

“Waka-sama, it may be presumptuous of me to say this, but in this abnormal situation, if there’s citizens dragged in it, it would be terrible. The residents that are supposed to be passing their lives out of harm’s way, it would be bad if by any chance, they were

to lose their life. Lucia-dono and Sari-dono must be saying all this because of a sense of responsibility as successors of the Demon Lord, so I think that it would be good to listen to their proposal." (Shiki)

Shiki...

This is not like Shiki. It is quite a humane speech.

Regarding the residents of the demon race, not only Mio, even Shiki most likely thinks of them as being worth as much as dirt.

At the very least, it felt that way in all the conversations we have had till now.

And yet, he suddenly says something that was as if stating lives are heavier than the world.

"Shiki, did you go crazy or something? For us, no matter how many people in this city die, it would be of no consequence. Only these two want to save them, and it is actually a bother to Waka-sama-desu. AL-SO! You must have heard the rude-beyond-belief words of this woman, didn't you? There's no need to accommodate to their circumstances." (Mio)

Mio has said too much.

Way too much.

"Mio-dono, it is true that those words of hers were rude. But, right now we should forget about such trifle, and secure the safety of the demon residents as fast as possible which would show Waka-sama's good will towards the demon race. Waka-sama is not a person that would think of people's lives as a bother." (Shiki)

...

Did he reach some sort of enlightenment?

But his expression and the light in his eyes are the same Shiki.

Hm... then, let's try betting on it.

To tell the truth, I did consider it slightly bothersome, so I wanted to ignore it. But

instead of concurring with Mio that has made an extreme statement, it would be better to concur with Shiki who has made a humane statement. In this occasion, it might become a plus.

"Mio, bear with it please. It is something that's happening in the middle of the city, so since Lucia-san and Sari-san feel like this is an emergency that demands this sort of action, we as the guests should not go against it. They did say that they will be protecting us, so let's continue on like this." (Makoto)

"...If Waka-sama says so, I don't mind. I will protect Waka-sama, so there won't be any danger anyways." (Mio)

"Great judgment, Waka-sama. I will also be protecting Waka-sama with all I have." (Shiki)

"Thanks, both of you. Lucia-san, Sari-san, just as scheduled, we will be counting on you to guide us to the temple." (Makoto)

"I am grateful, Raidou-dono. I apologize for my previous rudeness." (Lucia)

"Thanks, Raidou-dono. I promise you that I will have you return without any injuries, even if I have to risk my life." (Sari)

What exaggerated words.

It really doesn't feel like the words of a kid.

The gap with her appearance is incredibly.

I look at the temples that are within the swaying landscape.

I wonder how strong a High Spirit is.

In case it ends up in a fight, I should have my bow Azusa ready at any given time.

I was able to fight pretty well with Athena-sama, so I think I will be able to handle this.

There's no way they are stronger than Gods after all.

Well, it should be fine.

The chances are low, but it might be like a welcoming of the Spirits.

The Goddess is like that, so it wouldn't be strange if anything happened.

Let's hope it is some sort of surprise for welcoming us.

"Then, let's go."

"Now then, I will be opening a path to enter. Please wait for a bit." (Sari)

From here on it's the distorted space. When I suggested we enter, Sari answered me.

Mio was about to say something, but I stop her.

'Can't we just enter from here? It feels like we can though.', is probably what Mio was going to say as well, so I stopped her.

Sari faces the space and concentrates. She makes a long chant and is interfering with it.

"Sari-dono seems to be a proficient magician. Even though you are still young, you have amazing potential." (Shiki)

"Thanks, Shiki-dono. She may be my little sister, but she is a talented mage that even within the demon race, there's few who can teach her magic. She is not specialized in barriers, but she will definitely open a path." (Lucia)

Shiki and Lucia-san were speaking of that topic in a low voice.

Lucia-san is definitely a swordswoman, so one would be a swordswoman and the other a magician huh.

I don't know if they are related by blood, but those two would be able to team up as vanguard and rear.

"...Okay, open!" (Sari)

As if acting in concert to Sari's words, a part of the swaying space was cut open.

It is small, but we can somehow pass through.

At the other side, it isn't distorted and the same landscape is seen.

"Well done, Sari." (Lucia)

"This much is obvious." (Sari)

It is a pleasant conversation between sisters.

Then, let's quickly cross.

"It is a bit narrow. Let's widen it." (Shiki)

"Waka-sama, enter from here." (Mio)

I was thinking about continuing, but two voices reach my ears.

There was no need to say, it was Shiki and Mio.

Shiki instantly expands the opening that Sari-san had opened.

Mio's hand had shot darkness, eroding the distortion of space, and made an entrance that was a lot bigger than Shiki's.

"..."

"..."

Lucia-san and Sari were silent.

They were silent, but it was a silence that said a lot.

"Shiki, I have already created a path for Waka-sama to take, so you can use that one with the other girls." (Mio)

"Since they went through the trouble of opening it already, we should use... No, it doesn't seem like we will be appearing at a different location anyways, so there should be no problem in having two openings." (Shiki)

Shiki complies in an instant.

“Now now, the objective is to confirm the situation of the temple, so let's get along.”  
(Makoto)

My words felt somewhat futile.

...By the way, I entered from the opening that Mio made.

# Chapter 189

## Mad festival temple

“This is most likely a racket from the Spirits.”

“It feels like they are in a drunken state.”

“How annoying-desu.”

Those were our impressions.

After entering the distorted space, the inside didn’t seem to have any sort of mamono, or signs of demons trembling.

But in place of that, there’s Fire and Earth Spirits making a racket in madness.

It would be one thing if it were people with no power doing a racket, but when Spirits that are practically a mass of element, are doing this, it isn’t safe.

Stone, metal, and solid objects were dancing boisterously in the sky, and as if enveloping all of it, there’s a multicolored flame rampaging flashily as if creating a piece of art.

There were faint shapes of red and yellow lights shaped as hyumans; low Spirits that had no will appeared and disappeared.

There’s also a large sized lizard with fire clad on its body and moving rapidly.

A small one that looks like a kid, carrying a hammer in one hand and smashing it here and there.

I think those ones are Medium Spirits.

It seems they possess a will and sometimes they don’t.

...All the ones here don’t look sane, so it might be hard to classify them though.

“Why are you so carefree?!” (Lucia)

“There’s clearly an abnormality occurring in the temple. We have to hurry inside, to the grand altar.” (Sari)

Lucia-san and Sari were quite serious when dealing with the Spirits.

While wiping away the attacks that come from all directions, we proceed at walking speed.

We are following behind those girls and advancing along with them.

...Well, they did say they would protect us after all.

In truth, the attacks that come from the back and attacks that obstruct our advance were being rendered useless by Shiki and Mio, but even I can tell that it is not necessary to tell them this.

“Uhm, at this pace, not only are we not going to make it inside the temple, but I feel like we would end up passing the night at the stairs though.” (Makoto)

Just in case, I try asking about the current pace.

The closer we get, the movements of the Spirits grow more vigorous.

At the very least, this is what I can guess from what I have seen with [Sakai] and looking at how the situation has progressed.

Seems like Lucia-san doesn’t have the cheat-like regeneration of Io, and can’t ignore the damage.

Sari has magic that can adapt to the situation and her magic power is also abundant, but she has way too many counterattacks that she is losing the initiative.

I am beginning to think that it really would have been better to return once.

If they call the Demon Generals, or properly group up the army, they might be able to deal with this.

“With these nonstop attacks, it can’t be helped! I have a few plans in mind, wait for a

bit!" (Lucia)

Lucia-san doesn't have any breathing room.

I was shouted.

If I remember correctly, Reft was a master at counterattacking, wasn't he?

She succeeded the ability of Io to find out the weak points of its opponent, and she probably learned the techniques for what to do after finding them out from Reft.

I think it is a type with good balance.

If she were to succeed Io's fighting style at its whole, it would be necessary to have that defensive power and regeneration after all.

That's a cheat.

It cannot be completely copied, but it can be damped down. I should note down that there are those type of people as well.

"Ane-sama, this is difficult. I did try thinking of ways as well, but I ended up with the conclusion that retreating would be best." (Sari)

Sari is pretty composed.

Well, even when she used a big attack once, the wave would resume its movements, so not only is it exhausting, it is also disadvantageous.

If we don't increase our speed more than this, it will become gradually worse.

Even I can tell that.

"Then let's retreat. The situation is worse than expected. Now that we have things to report, don't you think you have accomplished your part plenty enough?"

"...Just that, there's no breathing room to create an exit for retreat." (Sari)

Arara, the opening that we used to enter has already closed, and if we return there, we would need Sari to concentrate again which would be pretty difficult.

"Can't be helped then. We will return to the entrance, and have one of my people open it again, so Lucia-san, Sari-san, don't push yourself." (Makoto)

"You are!! saying it!! as if it is easy!!" (Lucia)

It seems they still have stamina, but who knows how much Lucia-san's spirit will be able to last.

How to say it, she is level-headed, but as expected, she still has a 'childish' part. I am relieved.

"Don't compare us to you chicks. Something like this wouldn't even serve as warm-up. Stepping back or advancing wouldn't be of any difficulty." (Mio)

"...So you say. Then I would definitely want to gaze on that power of yours! But, it will be to advance!" (Lucia)

Advance, she says?

Does she have a strong sense of responsibility? Or is this also a scheme of the Demon Lord?

In the first place, I feel like he is also involved in this abnormal situation.

"Raidou-dono, if possible, I would want to witness that power as well. If you have power that won't make any difference in advance or retreat, I would like to learn from it." (Sari)

"Even if you say learn, it would go against what you two proposed, won't it? If you order us at your own convenience, it would only trouble Waka-sama and us." (Shiki)

"Shiki-dono, I admit that my foresight was naive. But in this kind of situation, I am even more preoccupied for the safety of the people inside the temple that serve the Spirits. Ane-sama and I want to confirm that they are still alive and protect them, please. Of course, we will be reporting this to his Majesty, and will definitely repay you for it." (Sari)

Wounded people huh.

Truth is, I have noticed life signs of what seem to be demons.

...And places where there *were* signs of life.

"Fumu, you who are one of the next era that will be shouldering the demon race, is going so far to depend on someone else?" (Shiki)

"..."

Sari went silent.

At this rate, there's most likely a more powerful Spirit rampaging inside the temples and it will turn into a bigger chaos, so it would be easier to just return once and have them deal with it.

Ah, no good, this is demon territory, so it would be bad to have them think we are doing whatever we want huh.

That Demon Lord-sama does seem like a person I can't drop my guard from after all.

"Waka-sama, I think that in this occasion, it would be good to have them owe us one." (Shiki)

"Isn't that fine?" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama is being too indulgent towards the demon's wishes. Shiki, you too-desu yo." (Mio)

"Don't say that Mio. You want to return by lunch, right?" (Makoto)

"That's... true, but..." (Mio)

"Then endure it for a bit. It seems like we will be able to learn the cause if we reach the grand altar of the temple after all." (Makoto)

"...Fuh~, you two there, step back. Shift-desu." (Mio)

Mio opens her folding fan and steps forward along with Shiki.

At the front there's Mio and Shiki; at the very middle there's me; at the rear there's Lucia-san and Sari.

...Eh?

I am at the position that's tasked to protect the demons?!

Oow.

"Let's see what you have, Raidou-dono. The power that father has recognized. I will be looking forward to seeing your followers' as well." (Lucia)

It seems like Lucia-san completely hates us now.

"I am sorry that this has happened after speaking all big. Raidou-dono, at the very least, we will protect you." (Sari)

"No, now that it has come to this, don't mind it. There's a number of people that are still fine, so it would be better to think about how you will protect them." (Makoto)

It is fine to just wrap them in the Magic Armor.

If they ask me about it, I will just answer that it is a barrier.

"?! You are able to tell the location of the people that are safe?!"

"Raidou-dono!"

"Before heading to the temple, let's go around those places first. There's 4 places. Mio, Shiki, you know the places, right?" (Makoto)

"Yes, we will be going in order-desu wa. But it is not something that requires Waka-sama to go as well." (Mio)

"Just like Mio says, please wait at the stairs over there. We will go gather them." (Shiki)

"I see. Then, I am counting on you. I will be waiting." (Makoto)

I look at the stairs that are several hundred meters long.

I could tell that Lucia-san and Sari who were behind me, were startled.

Instead of going one by one in order and end up having a few of them die, it would be

best to leave it to Mio and Shiki.

"Well then, I will be making this place a bit more silent-desu wa. Shiki, you do the rest."  
(Mio)

"Leave it to me." (Shiki)

Mio spreads out what looked like a spider's web in a wide range with her as the center.

She didn't say anything, she had her eyes closed in silence.

That's a Mio style aria.

She looks like she is not doing anything and then a big move suddenly comes flying.

Shiki looks at Mio's state, and seems to have begun doing an aria.

Orange lights that looked like grains of sand appeared at the surroundings, and began dispersing.

If you don't pay attention to it, you would lose sight of it; the domain of Shiki.

"Then, let's go. I will go at a light running pace, so please follow behind me." (Makoto)

"No wait, light running you say, Raidou-dono? Just how will you..." (Lucia)

"You will understand soon. Ah, see." (Makoto)

The still bewildered Lucia-san points at the Fire and Earth Spirits that are still running wildly.

I sensed the action of Mio's power and answer her.

\*Pachin\*

The special move of Mio made a nice sound at the end.

In a moment, a shaking that resembled that of an earthquake occurred over the whole place.

It only shook heavily once.

Then, it turned silent.

For us, it was only that.

Just that, for the Spirits, it was...

"There were some left huh. They are all weaklings, so they aren't that tasty, but to the rude ones that go mad in front of Waka-sama without knowing their place, this much is obvious-desu wa ne." (Mio)

\*botoboto\*

At the place that had turned silent, a sound like that resonates, and fire and mineral begin to fall to the ground one after the other.

Counting the lizard and the kid; they all had a big wound as if a mouth had crunched a piece of their body. They fell down and were continuously corroded by darkness until they disappeared.

There were some Spirits that were still moving on the ground, and some that still had the strength to fly into the sky but...

"Well then, I will take care of the remaining ones." (Shiki)

Shiki hits the ground with his black staff.

It is quite a standard action he does when activating a spell.

That kind of choice action actually increases the power of the spell, so it can't be underestimated. And in Shiki's case, that's exactly what it is.

By the way, the aria was: 'Turn earth into dust to the wind, turn fire into ash by water', so differing from Mio, Shiki must have formed a spell that deals with the Spirits depending on their element.

"Ah." (Sari)

Sari's words, no, her dumbfounded voice was like a signal. The remaining Spirits froze

and turned into dust, tore up and disappeared.

Nicely done.

“Well then, we will be back soon.”

Mio and Shiki bow once and head to opposing directions.

“Now then, that’s how it is, so let’s hurry as well. They were wiped out, but with how things are going, more are probably going to appear soon.” (Makoto)

“...”

“...”

Eh, the two of them look weird like the time when we were entering here.

I think a Demon General class would be able to do this much though.

Io would be able to enter the temple without caring about damage after all.



The inside of the temple had turned into a maze as if they were trying to harass us. Damn it.

I hate this kind of things.

And while at it, I honestly don’t like going to damp and humid caves.

My limit is limestone caves that have been made into sightseeing spots.

There’s this side of me that’s attracted to mysterious places, but when thinking about the level of humidity, temperature, water veins; I just don’t feel caves.

This world is orthodox, but it is good that I didn’t end up having to go underground.

In other words, right now it is pretty bitter.

“Can’t we just put a mark on it and go loose?” (Makoto)

“I think we are almost there, so please endure a bit more.” (Shiki)

There's two High Spirits. I can tell they are there.

I voiced out my desire to just blow everything up and make a straight line directly to them, but Shiki reacted to it.

...I can't huh.

“Waka-sama, it is okay if we just do it secretly-desu wa. Let's do it.” (Mio)

“You are totally letting the idea out. Shiki hears it as well. It is not a secret anymore.” (Makoto)

“Shiki is fine-desu. I will make it as if he didn't hear anything.” (Mio)

“Mio-dono, no matter the case, that's just way too excessive. Our objective is to investigate the abnormality of the Spirit temple, so please restrain from doing anything forceful.” (Shiki)



It seems like even Shiki has something to say about Mio's forcefulness this time around.

Hm?

(Ane-sama, this is real. The Kuzunoha Company has military power at the level of a large country, with only the three people here. Not only that, even when we are in a situation where we might end up in a problem with the High Spirits, they don't have any sense of danger.) (Sari)

(I understand. But Sari, we still don't know if Raidou himself is strong.) (Lucia)

(I don't think two people this strong would decide on a master because of blood or political power. Just like what father warned, Raidou is not an opponent we want facing us. I have reached that conclusion as well.) (Sari)

I thought they were silent, but it seems they were doing thought transmission huh.

I expanded [Sakai] to confirm the location of the High Spirits and coincidentally heard them.

We already finished analyzing the one Rona was using, so something like listening in is possible.

It is good that I have a habit of checking thought transmissions when I spread out [Sakai].

...No well, intercepting is bad huh.

But in the information war, the one who has been peeked is at fault.

Rona thinks that way as well, so that's why she made a secure thought transmission.

Yeah, let's leave aside my guilt.

(...In that case, even if this situation was created by an idiot that wants to oppose father, or if this was set up by father himself, or even if this was for a totally different reason; it was an incident that had worth for us huh.) (Lucia)

(I don't think this is something father set up though. Maybe to gauge the power of

Raidou, he went through the trouble of leaving it to us and didn't act himself.) (Sari)

(By using the High Spirits, and even putting our own lives in danger?) (Lucia)

(Leaving aside the Spirits, he most likely believed that Ane-sama and I would be able to gauge Raidou's power and tendency even if it's a bit.) (Sari)

(...Right, no matter what it is, the chances of us being chosen as Demon Lord is low. Even if we have the power, for women... there's other uses.) (Lucia)

(To support the demon race, we are destined to marry someone of influence or another demi-human to maintain political stability and to create good relationships.) (Sari)

(Yeah. It is not like we didn't have queens, but there weren't many. Ani<Brother> is especially good in politics so... Sari, you also think like that as well huh.) (Lucia)

It seems like they are doing quite a heavy thought transmission.

We were able to recover around 10 survivors, but there's no more survivors.

Everyone has a barrier placed on them and are now safe, and that must have lowered the guard of those two.

They probably think that there's no way there will be a fight against a High Spirit.

At the very least, these two girls don't have the power to fight against a Superior Dragon or a High Spirit after all.

(Raidou, if he has that much power, all his conduct up til now has been fake. It would be plausible to assume that he has carefully laid out a plan before making contact with us.) (Lucia)

Lucia-san is really cautious of me.

...It is true that I was faking, but it is probably a different fake from what Lucia-san is thinking about.

It is shameful though.

(Now then, I don't know about that, but we might need to prepare ourselves.) (Sari)

(The reason why we were tasked to be his guides today was most likely because of what Raidou answered to father's question of marriage, right Sari?) (Lucia)

Baha!!

M-Marriage?!

(I am still on hold, and Ane-sama has completely rejected it, right?) (Sari)

On hold...

On... Hold?

Means that she can't decide yet.

Not a rejection.

Not a rejection?!

Are you serious?

But as expected, it is impossible with a little girl.

Ethically impossible.

Even in 2d games, those were routes I normally avoided. *<He is talking about Eroges. No need to explain.>*

And in truth, even if I try to imagine it... yeah, it is impossible.

(If you don't have the intention of becoming a bride, then at least take the job of gathering information. If anything happens, become the shield of Raidou and die; better the impression he has of the demon race. Is what he is trying to tell us huh.) (Lucia)

(Or it might that he is telling us to witness his power and reconsider our decision.) (Sari)

(Fuh... true. Honestly speaking, he is outside the boundaries of common sense. I could tell that I wouldn't be able to win even if he is handstanding. No, I knew it already. Without even making a single stance, he disappeared without leaving a shadow behind. But his attitude of making light of his own power is just...) (Lucia)

(I feel like it is a bit different from making light of his own power. He felt like a normal person that has obtained a large power.) (Sari)

(In that case, he is even more dangerous. If a person exerts this much power with a notion as if it's his everyday life, it would be a disaster.) (Lucia)

(Yeah, that's why it is necessary; an existence that makes sure Raidou doesn't point that power at the demon race.) (Sari)

(...So you are saying that's you or me? But... thinking of age and looks, unless Raidou has quite a peculiar sexual preference, it would end up being me.) (Lucia)

I don't have such sexual preference!!

...Hm, eh, could this reaction be...

(Ane-sama, you are the person that will be shouldering the army's next era. If possible, helping me out would make things work better.) (Sari)

(Sari also has diplomacy and information administration for the future. You must shine bright at the side of Rona or it would be troubling. Compared to that, Io and Reft -my mentors- have no distress with their army. If I were to be used as a political tool with my title as princess for decoration, it wouldn't be so bad for that engagement to be with a person that has a power comparable to that of an Overlord.) (Lucia)

It's coming!

I turn my concentration to the response that was coming at high speed.

"Mio, Shiki! It seems they are the ones coming to receive us." (Makoto)

"Ara, it saved the trouble of having Shiki shut up." (Mio)

"Oh... but the grand altar should be a bigger place, so it would make things easier if it were there though." (Shiki)

I see.

In that case...

"Then, I know the way there, so let's push it back. I will do it." (Makoto)

I kind of know the path that it has taken.

This one is the temple of the Earth Spirit, so I think the one coming is the Earth High Spirit.

Well, it doesn't matter whoever it is.

"I can do that though." (Mio)

"It seems like it is quite big, so I leave Lucia-san and Sari-san in your care." (Makoto)

It is pretty big.

It might be twice as big as Mio in the time when she was a spider.

Like the size of one of the biggest trucks.

I haven't seen its appearance, but with this size, there should be no mistake.

"It will be breaking the wall around there. Wait, a cow?!" (Makoto)

Big!!

No, I was expecting it but, a cow?!

Confirming our figures, it began to kick its rear legs.

Even its movements are cow-like.

But... there's several places that differ.

The closest resemblance is that of a cow, but it has a mane, and instead of hooves, it has terrifying nails; it even has long fangs like those of a Saber Tiger.

Its whole skin is black, lustrous, and looks like it is hard; what looks like a cow is its thick and sharp horns.

Its eyes shine fiercely, and I can't feel like it is sane.

Even a High Spirit is in this state.

Every single one that has come out has been people I can't speak to!

...

Its eyes shone brighter.

Geh!

“Mio, erase it!” (Makoto)

“Yes!” (Mio)

I didn't need to confirm if she can do it or not.

Well, Shiki also moved in creating more layers of barriers.

I am happy to be blessed with reliable subordinates.

The floor and walls changed to black and sharp stalagmites grew out of it.

When Mio closed her folding fan and touched one of the many, everything scattered.

Barely made it in time!

As expected of Mio.

“Shiki, be the rearguard and protect those two. Mio, if it tries to do anything after, erase it before activation!” (Makoto)

“As you wish.” (Shiki)

“Please leave it to me, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

My orders narrowly make it in time.

The High Spirit lowered its head slightly like the gesture before a bullfight, its sharp horn undulated like a living being, and it stretches to my direction as it distorts.

Uoh, cool.

Is that a conversion spell? Wait, it is rushing!

But if it's a contest of strength, there's no problem.

Let's dosukoi our way to the grand altar then!

"Wa, do you intend to take on that?!" (Lucia)

"Reckless..." (Sari)

Ignoring the voice of the two girls, I answer the incoming cow(temporary) with my own rush.

I activate Magic Armor and stop a bit before crashing with that fellow.

And then, the tip of the sharp horns that were charging at me... I grab them with both of its arms!

The giant cow that had charged at me while accelerating, trembled at my front and stopped.

"No way, it is that big, you know? That's impossible." (Lucia)

"Without forming a single spell, he stopped its movements..." (Sari)

"Now then, High Spirit-dono, I will have you return to your room!" (Makoto)

I try advancing.

Tch, as expected of four feet.

It is giving a fight.

But this is the same as tug of war.

If the balance is broken, what comes next is to go all out.

"It stopped moving. No, it is bit by bit, but he is pushing it back." (Lucia)

"Ah, could it be the magic power materialization that Rona had reported about? A body made of solidified magic power. Even when it is in an invisible state, it still has that much power?" (Sari)

Maybe it doesn't like having its horns grabbed, the giant cow shakes its head in dislike.

But I won't let go.

I push without caring.

It is beginning to crumble.

In that case, what comes next is just to change gears.

I still have a lot of leeway left.

Okay!

"Mio, Shiki, Lucia-san, Sari-san; I will be pushing all in one go. Please follow me till the grand altar." (Makoto)

I gather strength in my legs.

No matter how much it tries to move its head, no matter how much it kicks the ground and puts momentum, it is already a corpse that is being steadily pushed back.

The moment that kind of agitation appeared in its eyes, I release the strength I gathered and push it back to where it came.

Slowly and steadily accelerating.

At the end, it was at a speed equal to that of its charge.

I have done a \*Yorikiri\* to the grand altar. <*A sumo technique of pushing the opponent*

*straight out of the ring.>*

A sense of accomplishment envelops my body.

“YORIKIRI! Just kidding. If Tomoe were here, she might have been delighted by it.”  
(Makoto)

“True. It was truly splendid.” (Shiki)

“Even if you say wide, it isn’t that wide-desu wa ne. It might be a bit small to end this.”  
(Mio)

In contrast to us who are celebrating, the two demons have reached zero in their word count.

They might be talking in thought transmission, but right now we are in the middle of a fight, so I won’t peek.

The giant cow gets up, and as usual, glares at me and tries to do something.

But Mio has been nullifying them, so nothing activates.

“Okay. Shiki, investigate. I will be protecting Lucia-san and the others, so Mio, go calm down that High Spirit for a bit. It seems to be riled up after all.” (Makoto)

“Understood.” (Shiki)

“Understood. But Waka-sama, it should be okay to kill it, right?” (Mio)

“No, definitely not. Leave it only to restraining.” (Makoto)

“...I wanted you to say: ‘I don’t mind’, at that part-desu.” (Mio)

Like hell I would say that!

It is a Spirit, you know?

It is a High Spirit, so it is probably incredible, you know?

I can tell that it would be bad to decide before properly hearing what it has to say.

It would be troublesome if it was ordered by the Goddess, after all.

Not that I think about it, she has been really quiet lately.

What kind of scolding and limitation did Susanoo-sama and his group give her?

...Just thinking about it scares me.

Even Athena-sama who looked like the weakest of the group, moved that gallantly and was so strong.

In the end, that lady battered me to the point of being unable to move; in a suit.

Gods are seriously scary.

Except the bug.

“Wa-Waka-sama!” (Shiki)

“Shiki, what’s up?” (Makoto)

“There’s also one coming from the side!” (Shiki)

Side?

“Even the Fire High Spirit?!” (Lucia)

Ah, Lucia-san spoke.

“Not only Behemoth, but even Phoenix... at this rate, the capital might turn into ashes. At the very least, I thought that the High Spirits had not gone mad and it was only a distortion, so I thought that we would be able to deal with it ourselves.” (Sari)

Sari also spoke.

Ah, this is Behemoth huh.

Calling you a giant cow; I am very sorry.

But I see, Phoenix huh.

Not having to do one other dungeon like this, is... lucky.

I only got an explanation that they were High Spirits but there were no details, so now that I know their names, I feel better.

“How lucky, right? Then, Shiki will take care of Phoenix—” (Makoto)

“Shiki, you take care of that cow. I will go for the bird.” (Mio)

“Mio.” (Makoto)

Mio’s sudden intervention.

What about dealing with the cow-I mean, Behemoth?

Ah, some sort of black web disappeared.

It only made it more angry.

It would only trouble Shiki to receive a baton pass at this moment.

“Ah, no. I actually think that it would be easier if Waka-sama and Mio-dono deal with it.” (Shiki)

Ah, now that I think about it, Shiki did say that it was quite hard to fight against Lancer.

I do want him investigate this event, so maybe I should just deal with both of them.

“I am more in the mood of bird than cow-desu. Okay, let’s change~” (Mio)

“It’s fine, Shiki. I will be dealing with bo-” (Makoto)

“Shiki, isn’t this a good chance to do our best? Or are you... trying to push all the trouble to Waka-sama? How about losing one layer of skin?” (Mio)

“?!!” (Shiki)

“No, I want Shiki to investigate the reason—” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama, can you please leave it to me? An Earth High Spirit; not a bad opponent

to have! Please let me!" (Shiki)

I can't speak till the end!

If you want to do it, well, I can leave it though.

I can just help out if anything happens anyways.

Well then, just as planned, I will be protecting Lucia-san and the others.

"That's how it should be-desu. Quickly get on our level. Well then Waka-sama, I will be eating the bird that is cooking itself-I mean, calm it down. Anyways, I will be back." (Mio)

...

I am uneasy.



Immediately after the fight began, I -Sari-, was simply looking at the way Raidou and Kuzunoha Company fought.

I soon discovered that things like Demon General, or father; those kind of measurements weren't enough to gauge these people.

In the first place, people that can take on the Fire and Earth High Spirits alone, is something that's already out of my comprehension.

Power that I can imagine in my mind, and power that I can tell in real life is simply different.

This is exactly what's happening.

A while back, we had an adventurer called Sofia that was together with the demon race.

She was also someone that was hard to grasp its power.

It seems she fought against Superior Dragons with few people and was able to win,

but in my eyes, she would be around the level of Io using his trump card.

I am mostly in the information department, but Lucia-anesama, is more experienced in seeing through the strength of other people, and even she doesn't know of Raidou's strength, so I thought that maybe he was dragged by his own strength.

"Hey hey, your movements are dull-desu yo, bird!" (Mio)

The black haired girl, Mio, moves around in mid-air as if sliding, and rampages in the sky with Phoenix as her opponent.

The other one, Shiki, was dealing with Behemoth on the ground as if it were easy.

Phoenix's alias is 'immortal'. Leaving aside if it's actually true or not, it seems it has regenerative ability that surpasses that of Demon General Io.

And in truth, it has received the full special move of Mio and has had its wings broken several times, and yet, it is instantly regenerating them. But observing the situation, it is just as Mio pointed out; its movements were growing dull.

If that means it is getting weaker, it would mean that Mio is overwhelming a High Spirit.

Phoenix who father told me has a peaceful attitude, is acting in a violent way that totally differs from what I have been told, but it is without doubt a High Spirit.

No matter what living being it is, it is not something an individual should be able to fight against.

"So this doesn't work either! To think that just by being earth element it makes this so much more difficult to deal with!" (Shiki)

Shiki's words were given out the moment his magic was dispersed at the vicinity of Behemoth.

In a sense, this side surprises me more than Mio.

Behemoth is an Earth High Spirit.

Just like Shiki says, it is the peak of all that's related to the Earth element.

From Rona's report, the origins of Shiki is that of the Lich, Larva, she knew of. A Lich is the highest point of an undead, but an undead is an Earth element existence. In other words, there's no undead that should be able to go against Behemoth.

Even if he were to make an army, it would all change into mud with a single roar, so even if it's a sword or magic, there's no way he would be able to harm its body.

And yet, even if its power is being mitigated by a lot, a few of the spells are reaching, and wounding it.

It can be said that this is a battle that completely overthrows my common sense.

As someone that studies magic, his fight is unbelievable.

"13th steps! From 1st to 4th steps, release. '*Wand*,'*Sword*,'*Cup*,'*Coin*'" (Shiki)

?

Shiki's power swelled up.

And it was as if his very existence had been strengthened, a really thick power activation.

There were four words.

In other words, he did four types of enhancements at once?

That kind of strong spell with such a short aria...

Not only Shiki; all three from the Kuzunoha Company have an abnormal speed in their aria.

Even if only a part of that technique is in the hands of the demon race, we would be able to widen and create more tactics in battle, I am sure of it.

They are doing all of this as if it were natural.

At some point in time, Shiki was now wearing four rings.

So that means, it must be the result of his spell.

"7th step, 'Hell', release, and activation! 'Mist Temple Nivlheim', devour that fellow entirely—?!!" (Shiki)

The moment a massive amount of power gathered to Shiki and was about to be released, Behemoth changed the form of its horns, and from 2 it was put together to make 1.

Its eyes shine.

The ring from Shiki's pinky finger produced light, but it broke as it shone and disappeared.

It was probably the spell failing.

Or maybe a misfire caused by intervention.

"Arara, looking at how it broke, you will not be able to use it for a while. Even though it is moving by instinct, that Spirit could tell that it was dangerous." (Raidou)

It's Raidou.

I see Shiki as quite dangerous, but as always, I can't sense any sort of danger from Raidou.

Since the moment we entered the maddened Spirit domain, the only moment he showed a displeased face was when he saw that the temple had turned into a maze.

"For a meat bullet, the things you do are unexpectedly complex! You are able to properly destroy spells in its entirety after all!!" (Shiki)

While saying this, Shiki lunges towards Behemoth.

Shiki who is clearly a magician, was going to enter a close combat battle. No matter how I see it, that's reckless.

Raidou's spell is a special case.

There should be no other magician in this world that can do something like him.

I can say for sure.

“Ascalon!” (Shiki)

The short aria of Shiki seems to have completed without being eliminated; the cane in his hands changed into a greatsword.

Holding the sword in an untrained fashion, he hits the horn of Behemoth.

The black sword makes a shrilling noise.

But Shiki was laughing.

“6th Step, ‘Fray’, release. ‘Sword Emperor Spirit Possession’” (Shiki)

Shiki’s moves changed in an instant.

It became the movements of a wild, violent, and instinctive natural-born fighter.

...This is crazy.

What was the first attack then?

But the Shiki from then on showed an overwhelming swordsmanship that made Lucia-anesama who was beside me lose all words.

With this switch, Shiki’s attacks were steadily wounding Behemoth.

Even so, it is not on the level of Phoenix, but it also has regenerative power.

The regeneration acts faster, and at this rate, Shiki will only be losing stamina.

...Shiki doesn’t seem to be the type that fights with instinct, so yhe probably has some plan in mind.

His fighting style comes from tactics.

It is in essence the same as me, so I can somewhat tell.

That sword technique is an instinctive style, so there’s the chance that Shiki has become desperate and has betted on his best style.

At times I can see calmness in those eyes, so I don't think he has become desperate though.

"I can't use rings with spell formations, but how about this!" (Shiki)

Legs, fangs, horn, and also around its body; all of them did attacks that would bring instant death.

And it did it practically aimless.

Shiki somehow evaded it and continued his attacks.

...

This is strange.

The number of rings Shiki has are different from the number he has announced.

Even though one should have been destroyed, the numbers are...

\*Kaki~~n\*

...

Shiki's black sword was inserted into the horn of Behemoth.

It was in a shape as if entangling it.

This is bad!

I look at Raidou.

He doesn't intend to move?!

The hard and sharp horn moves like a tentacle.

How troublesome!

Behemoth opens its mouth big, and fangs that didn't lose in sharpness devour Shiki.

“8th Step, [Ragnarok], release” (Shiki)

By the time Shiki muttered that, a part of his body had already been minced.

Uh.

Why... Why is Raidou so calm in front of the peril of his comrade!

From my judgment, you would never act this way towards people that you consider your relatives.

“It is over huh. But it was dangerous. If he hadn’t used [Gemini] first, there was the chance of a simultaneous defeat.” (Makoto)

Eh?

“First Chain, Raging.” (Shiki)

That voice was heard from the side of Behemoth.

“Well, it was groundwork for the limitation of the ring that desires the heart’s blood, so steady training is truly what saves you in your everyday life. Good work, Shiki.” (Makoto)

Ah, Shiki is there.

But, the one that was eaten just now...

When I return my gaze, there was a clay doll.

And Shiki who chanted First Chain, as if responding to those words, chains wrapped around the body of Behemoth.

A spell that seals movement?

Just how many prohibited, cursed, and powerful spells does Shiki know of?

From what I have heard of Rona, he is supposed to be Larva, but even from my eyes, I can feel that Shiki is several steps higher than Rona.

The Larva that Rona knows of is already in the past.

It might not serve of much reference.

“Shiki, you can’t slacken! You will be crushed!”

“Tch!! Second Chain, [Mud Sea]! Third Chain [Gleipnir]!” (Shiki)

Behemoth had chains wrapped on all its body.

Those chains were coming out from midair, and its end can’t be seen.

Not only physically, it seemed like it was using some sort of special power, as Behemoth didn’t rampage anymore.

“Hah... Hah...” (Shiki)

“Good work. To activate 9th Step [Gemini] and 8th Step at the same time, that’s impressive.” (Makoto)

“...No, it was a struggle. I was unable to use anything with spell formations even if it were the rings.” (Shiki)

“No, it was impressive. When the other opponent is superior in the same element as you, it becomes that much harder huh. I thought about lending a hand if it turned dangerous, but it is great that it ended without needing it.” (Makoto)

There were no signs of him trying to help.

Raidou knew that Shiki would be able to suppress Behemoth.

Also, after the battle, Raidou was somewhat different from how he has been until.

The sense of stability from being beside him.

Just like how Lucia-anesama says, could this be Raidou’s true self?

“The activation of ten onwards is still unstable, so I will be devoting myself with my all.” (Shiki)

"Right now you should rest. It seems Mio's side will be finishing soon, so when things get calm, I am counting on you for the investigation." (Makoto)

Mio.

Right. Because it was more silent there, I wasn't watching it much.

"As expected of Mio-dono." (Shiki)

"It will be decided with this. That Phoenix, I was watching, and it seems it can use attacks with its wings. It scatters by flapping its fire wings you see. And then, see, it rains down at one location in high speed. Mio has been guarding it all until now with her network barrier, but this time..." (Makoto)

Just as Raidou commented, the flapping of Phoenix dispersed several thousand feathers, and they stopped in midair and increased in brightness.

Is she... guarding this the whole time with her barrier?

I can surely tell that I would only be able to stop one of those by giving it my all.

And to escape unscathed after, I can't say for sure.

An intense light was emitted.

A terrifying amount of attacks rained down on Mio and us!!

"Slant them."

"All of them towards herself huh. I have a few bad memories from that."

Bad memories he says.

Just how miserable of a memory was that.

As Raidou and Shiki said, all the attacks that rained down changed directions and were headed to where Mio is, and then, all the thousand attacks hit Mio.

And yet, Mio's figure was maintained.

Even though it was an attack that should burn you and leave nothing behind.

"I will give it a taste and return it." (Mio)

Mio's words.

And then, Phoenix's cry.

Its wings, no, its whole body was being burned with a black fire.

...A type of counter-magic?

Demon General Reft also does something similar, but he wouldn't do something like having all attacks concentrated at him.

Mio returned from above ground as if sliding, and Phoenix followed right after by dropping while squirming. It was still wrapped in the black fire.

Glancing at Phoenix who had almost nothing remaining, Mio makes a bow to Raidou.

Mio was in front of us after returning.

I unconsciously gulped down.

There were remains of several attacks she had received.

As I thought, all the attacks had hit Mio.

Aside from those, there's also several other attacks.

The cloth clothing she has doesn't look that tough, but there are parts that are slightly loose, and yet, there's nothing ripped that stands out.

Maybe she has an overwhelming defensive power, or it might be she is combat oriented.

She is completely opposite of Reft who trained his counter because he knew of his self's low defensive power.

"Good work, Mio. Shiki also did his best so, about the investigation, can you help Shiki

out as his assistant?" (Makoto)

"If you go with me to eat bird later." (Mio)

"Yeah, that's fine. I am being showed around, so let's go together." (Makoto)

"I am looking forward to it-desu! Now then Shiki! Don't look from afar and let's finish this fast. We will be going to have a light meal with Waka-sama after all!" (Mio)

Ah.

This degree is maybe on an everyday standard for them.

That's why they are not flustered.

They don't even hold any sense of danger.

It is hard to believe, and I probably won't be able to believe it right now, but even if the demon race fights wholly against Raidou, he probably would make a slightly more troubled face than now as he does preparations.

And the demons are... the worst existence.

The Goddess and the powers that follow her are wandering all over the world.

It should be safe to assume this.

I feel like I have now understood a bit of why father is showing such hospitality to Raidou.

He wants to cooperate with him, obtain benefits.

It is simply a matter of steps.

The most important reason is that we don't want them turning hostile on us.

If we have him as an enemy, the demon race won't be able to make a single plan or strategy, and won't be able to deal with it.

Even if we have to kill our hatred and deepest wishes, we currently have to shake

hands with him no matter what.

I clearly understood this.

And also, the path that I should take.

Not that of being a Demon Lord or being a Queen; I now see a path that only I can choose.

There's no complains in this life of being treated as the child of the Demon Lord, and treated well by everyone.

My heart and body don't belong to me.

By the time the Spirit Temple returned to normal, I engrave the sight of the capital that I might not be able to see anymore as we go back.

# Chapter 190

## A generous(?) reward

“...This is the diagnosis of this time’s abnormality of the Spirit temple from the Kuzunoha Company. I who was in that place, think that it is safe to assume that there was no lie in their words.”

“Hm, a warped power that made even High Spirits intoxicated had occurred at the altar huh. This is clearly the act of someone.”

“Yes. As Shiki-dono said, it seems a catalyst that dissolves into the air was used, and it is some sort of strong ritual magic that lasts for several days. The crime was probably done... by someone from a power that’s hostile to his Majesty.”

“No doubt. In the first place, there’s no mobilization party from the hyuman side in this capital, and there were no unusual movements from the organizations and the temple of the Goddess. In that case, this one can only think that this was an inside job.”  
(Zef)

At that time when the night was soon and waiting for the banquet; the Demon Lord Zef, several civil officials, his close aides the Demon General Io and Rona were there as well and hearing the report.

The ones reporting were two of the Demon Lord’s children.

Lucia and Sari.

They were guiding the Kuzunoha Company party to the Spirit temple, and were involved in an incident. The two were witness of the whole incident and had returned to the castle.

They have just finished reporting the details of it.

Sari responded to all the questions Zef did without hesitation, and Zef affirmed the answers of Sari as if he already knew the one pulling the strings beforehand.

“But two High Spirits were unable to wound Raidou once huh. So being called Devil isn’t just for show or a bluff. From what this one has heard, one of his attacks killed around 4 digits of common soldiers. Seriously, this one wished that was only excessive rumors. But to look at it exaggeratedly and realize that it was even higher than that...” (Zef)

“...The power of those people rival that of a large country, no, if we are to take it more prudently, it would be safe to assume that they have enough to be a third power in this war. No matter how out of control they were, those three were able to cut through that garden of maddened Spirits with those refreshing faces, and suppressed Behemoth and Phoenix.” (Sari)

“If one follower of his is on the level of a High Spirit, we can’t deny their uncommon power. But Rona, from your report, that person called Shiki was only on the level of being a powerful Lich, though?” (Zef)

Zef’s words were directed towards Rona who was at the side.

“Yes, it is certainly true that Shiki person is supposed to be possessed by Larva. In these several years, he hasn’t made contact with us though. This is unbelievable. The Lich Larva should have already reached the limit of the power he could have. There’s no way he would be able to defeat an Earth High Spirit no matter how strong he got. To go against Behemoth with the power of an undead is just... it would be like trying to extinguish a fire mountain with a torch. Something stupid and unbelievable. I can only call it reckless.” (Rona)

“There might have been moments when he barely made it out alive, but in the middle of it, Shiki-dono showed splendid swordsmanship and used several prohibited curse magic at the same time, as he dealt with Behemoth. Whether it is his close combat ability, or his powerful magic... I can’t believe he is a Lich.” (Lucia)

Lucia who was silent until now, reacted to the words of confusion from Rona, and spoke of Shiki’s fighting style.

“Sword... It gets further and further away from the image of Larva. It seems that the situation I had grasped was probably not the truth. I will be investigating Shiki once again.” (Rona)

“Umu. But do it in a peaceful manner. This one prohibits violent methods.” (Zef)

"Understood." (Rona)

"And Sari, what did the Spirit-donos say? They returned to their senses, right?" (Zef)

"Yes. They said that they intended to test their abilities anyways, so it was convenient." (Sari)

"What..." (Io)

Io makes a short mutter of amazement.

"Mio-dono scolded them severely at times, but the conversation mostly proceeded in a calm manner." (Sari)

"Fumu. Well, they did seem to have an interest in them, so this one did think that there was a chance it would happen. And?" (Zef)

Without touching the topic of Mio, Zef urges her to continue.

"In the end, they made a promise of giving them a call when they were in trouble; Phoenix promised to Mio-dono, and Behemoth to Shiki-dono." (Sari)

"Kuku, is that so. Seriously, it is steadily getting out of hand, that company." (Zef)

"It seems they spoke about some other topics afterwards, but we were told to check on the state of the survivors, and had no choice but to leave the place. We don't know what conversation they had." (Sari)

"It's fine. Now then, it seems our plans here have stabilized more." (Zef)

Zef had an expression as if confirming his thoughts.

Looking at this, Sari opens her eyes wide and speaks.

"Excuse my rudeness, but did his Majesty already notice the abnormality in the temple beforehand?" (Sari)

"...Umu. No, it was only to the extent that this one had suspicions of it." (Zef)

"And the actions that Kuzunoha Company took as well?" (Sari)

"This one thought that you would be able to drag them along and have them interfere with it." (Zef)

"...And their power as well?" (Sari)

"About that point, this one was expecting you two to bring out as much as you could. If the abnormality was to the level that this one thought of, this one was sure your group would be able to come back without any problems." (Zef)

"Raidou-dono, that man, in a precarious situation where they were dealing with Behemoth, and Phoenix had intruded, he said it was 'lucky'. That it saved them the trouble of one more dungeon. Your Majesty! Did you feel that much power in Raidou-dono?!" (Sari)

"...Fuh, 'lucky' huh. What scary words he says. No, this one didn't think it would be to this extent. In the first place, this one didn't think that the two High Spirits had gone mad as well. If this one knew the situation was to such extent, this one would have taken the army and subjugated it myself. This one had prepared for it as well. Right? Io and Rona." (Zef)

Io and Rona assent at Zef's words.

Sari breathed out in relief.

"I see. We only considered them dangerous people, so I was bothered about how much your Majesty had understood of them. Please forgive my rudeness." (Sari)

"This one doesn't think of it as rude. Don't mind it. But the number one problem was as expected, the timing huh." (Zef)

"Timing?" (Sari)

"There's only a limited amount of people that know the date and time that Kuzunoha Company would be visiting the temples. In that case, it means that the people that have used that information to push a coup d'etat, are people that are close to this one. A Spirit rampage that even involved the High Spirits, from the details of it, it wasn't an incident caused impulsively. People that were able to pull it off as a plan, had grasped a relative amount of information, and were trying to involve the Kuzunoha Company; guests that this one had invited myself." (Zef)

“?!”

Tension ran through the place.

The words of the Demon Lord were said as if someone in that place ‘might’ be the one responsible.

“Good grief, this is a problem this one would like to resolve by spring. Even if it isn’t a situation on the level of Kuzunoha Company.” (Zef)

“Your Majesty, as we have made our guests work this much, we also have to show some form of decency.” (Io)

“This one knows, Io. Regarding that, Rona had already told Shiki to a certain level. Right, Rona?” (Zef)

“Yes, I certainly did tell him. But wasn’t that supposed to be the reward for the friendly match?” (Rona)

“We will put a bit more color to it, and give them something that’s one step higher. From what I have seen, Raidou was a person that feels debt towards this type of gestures. This one doesn’t know if Shiki will comply to it, but there’s no doubt that his words hold the most weight to Raidou. At least, if we were to convince him, there will be no problem.” (Zef)

“That’s true.” (Rona)

“Even so, don’t do anything reckless. Maybe we should make it as if the state of affairs is complicated and give it to them. Looking at the circumstances, they shouldn’t think that the demon race is wealthy after all.” (Zef)

Zef laughs.

This Lord is facing the Kuzunoha Company, and creating a method that fits their personalities.

“Then about the friendly match—” (Lucia)

“Wait.”

When Lucia was about to change the topic and was about to talk about the event that she herself would be involved in, the Demon Lord stops those words while maintaining his smile.

“Before that, there’s something this one wants to confirm with you two. Let’s hear your opinions now that you have accompanied them today. If this one were to tell you to marry Raidou, what would you do?” (Zef)

“No problem.” (Lucia)

Lucia was the first to make an instant reply.

“Instant reply huh. That was quite the quick change of heart.” (Zef)

“We can’t leave those people unchecked. Just like your Majesty has said, and just like what Sari has said as well; this is the truth. If someone like me will be of use, I will do my best to make sure that power doesn’t turn to the demon race.” (Lucia)

“Fumu. Sari, what about you?” (Zef)

“I... can’t marry Raidou-dono.” (Sari)

“Hoh~”

Zef looks at Sari with interest.

The people around were surprised by the rejection of Sari who was positive about the marriage.

“That proposal will most likely have a reverse effect on Raidou-dono.” (Sari)

“Why? No matter if it’s hyuman or demon, being given to marriage is a sign of a good relation. In times, it also serves to mediate the disputes of races, though?” (Zef)

“It’s because of Mio-dono. Compared to Shiki-dono, she is a person that moves honestly to her feelings. And she has feelings for Raidou-dono. That’s how I saw it. In that case, marriage wouldn’t be a nice topic for her. If Mio-dono alone were to think of interfering with the demon race in secret, it might create enormous damage.” (Sari)

“...Does she prioritize her emotions to that level? She is a close aide of Raidou, you

know?" (Zef)

"She does. Compared to the demon race, the Kuzunoha Company seemed to give quite a lot of freedom. I think that something would happen before things were settled." (Sari)

"Hm... that's a bit out of expectations. This one thought that everyone below Raidou had to follow his will definitely." (Zef)

"Also, Raidou is a lot more than what your Majesty thinks of." (Sari)

"A lot more what?" (Zef)

"Childish. I felt like he was a late blooming man. At the very least, that's the impression I have of him when it is peaceful." (Sari)

"Childish and late blooming huh." (Zef)

"Yes." (Sari)

"Then wouldn't marriage be an adequate plan? This one doesn't think a childish person would be able to easily have fights of life and death, but... thinking about the talk that night, you certainly do have a point." (Zef)

"But your Majesty, I have already planted a seed. Looking at him today, I think that there's something that can bind Raidou better than marriage. Can you please leave it to me?" (Sari)

"Sari!" (Lucia)

Lucia makes a rebuke.

Kuzunoha Company's Raidou.

This is not a matter that can be left to Lucia or Sari who are still in the middle of learning.

This is something that involves the whole future of the demon race, so the strict tone of Lucia is proper.

“...Do you have confidence in it?” (Zef)

“Yes.” (Sari)

“Tell me in detail.” (Zef)

“...I will give the details after the people have been cleared out.” (Sari)

“...Understood.” (Zef)

The gazes of Sari and Zef clash directly.

Both were serious, and created an atmosphere that cannot be interrupted.

After Zef took his eyes off first, Sari continued to look at him for a while and does a small nod. After that, there was silence where no words were spoken.

“Rona, this one told you this before, but there’s a traitor within the limited people around. Look for the traitor. Don’t let it affect tomorrow’s match.” (Zef)

“...Definitely.” (Rona)

“Umu. Io, this one will be doing a small modification to the friendly match. Keeping in mind the matter of the temples, this one wants to put more restrictions to the audience that will be spectating. Also, about the ones participating. Sari, you be on standby at this one’s room. Lucia, you can return, also, don’t come to tomorrow’s match. Looking at someone that has already given up wouldn’t serve as reference after all. This one will entrust you with the training of the units all day.” (Zef)

At Zef’s words, there were affirmative responses from each of them.

Lucia bit her lips, but didn’t object.

Because she has already seen the power of Raidou and Kuzunoha Company, it isn’t that necessary to look at the matches.

Leaving aside if such intentions of Zef had gone through, Lucia nodded and returned a response.

“After that’s finished, this one has to talk with Raidou-dono. Even though it was within

expectations, these guests really do make things busy." (Zef)



"It is great that you say this. Raidou-dono has practically saved this capital after all. You have accepted the friendly match and now this; no matter how many times this one lowers his head, it wouldn't be enough." (Zef)

"N-No no! There's no need for his Majesty to do that. I mostly had my followers do all the work. It is truly great that Lucia-san and Sari-san are not injured." (Makoto)

Yeah.

Zef is currently right beside me.

Close.

Right beside the Lord-sama.

The taste of the food is harder to feel than yesterday.

And while at it, I can't even feel my stomach filling up.

It is being directly distributed to me, and the scale is smaller than last night, and has more people participating.

It is a method that's not that pleasant for me.

"You even investigated the cause of it. It would be fine to be more prideful of it though. Hm, your cup was already empty. Sorry for not noticing." (Zef)

"I have already been given a lot, so uhm... I will take more. Please, your Majesty as well." (Makoto)

I look at the liquid that's already being poured and just give up.

In this kind of situations, it is a matter of how to refuse it.

I thought that if I stopped drinking, it would be over, but Zef pointed that it was empty and began pouring more.

I give up.

"Thanks. Well you see, there's few occasions where this one can drink with someone. It even makes me feel as if Raidou-dono is my very child." (Zef)

What is this person saying so casually.

He is definitely not drunk.

After hearing the thought transmission of those two these morning, these all sounds like nothing but pretense.

"Don't you already have two dependable sons? Ahaha." (Makoto)

"Roshe and Sem huh. It is true that they are working hard. But what great teaching produces is mostly prodigies. Those two as well. As expected, someone with peerless talent like Raidou-dono just... doesn't appear. Well Sari is still a bit young but how about it? If you want to have one of them, or even if you take both of them, it would make me have more peace of mind." (Zef)

...The topic doesn't change.

What's with this person.

"Please stop the jokes. I am a hyuman." (Makoto)

"If it's someone with power, race doesn't matter. I won't go as far as asking you for a grandchild, you know? Hm?" (Zef)

Don't 'hm' me.

I am not thinking about marriage in the first place.

"I really think that it is a good offer, but right now I am still unskilled as a merchant. So I will have to refuse." (Makoto)

"Is it no good?" (Zef)

"...Yes." (Makoto)

I was troubled in how to say it, but I decided to firmly refuse.

If I say it vaguely, he wouldn't step back after all.

"No matter what?" (Zef)

"No matter what." (Makoto)

"Hm..." (Zef)

Zef turns silent.

Maybe I soured his mood.

But this is too much.

I can't just marry like this.

"Then there's no helping it." (Zef)

"Eh?" (Makoto)

"It is regrettable, but it must be because my daughters couldn't catch the eye of Raidou-dono. In other words, they lacked charm. If their power wasn't enough, the result was obvious." (Zef)

"I-I see." (Makoto)

Talking about power here as well?!

That's impressive.

Or more like, he easily stepped back.

I am happy, but it also makes me feel a bit uneasy.

Is this a Demon Lord quality, no, Zef quality?

How scary.

"Even if Lucia looks that way, she has quite the well-developed body you know. When she doesn't wear that armor of hers, she does have a womanly body. It harmonizes well when she has a dress on but... since she is a soldier, it is certainly true that she is lacking in terms of womanliness. At this rate, I feel like nobody might want her and it makes this one uneasy. If she is not to Raidou-dono's taste, it can't be helped." (Zef)

With hyuman women receiving stronger blessings from the Goddess, it isn't strange to have women soldiers, no, it is actually on the higher side. But when it comes to demi-humans and demons, there are difference in rates.

That there's some is also related to the existence of magic, and a girl like Lucia-san who is at the top of the army is certainly something unusual.

I don't know if they are blood related, but she is his daughter, and yet, what a way to say it.

Even if you say that, there's no way I can nod to it!

Could it be he actually hasn't given up yet?!

His expression is the same gentle smile so I can't read him!

How unfair.

"This one does think there's fun in learning from square one, but Raidou-dono isn't at the age where you are able to enjoy that huh." (Zef)

"Eh, your Majesty, uhm, aren't you drinking a bit too much?" (Makoto)

He is definitely not drunk, and I can tell that the alcohol has nothing to do with it, but I blame it on the alcohol to make a follow-up.

"Then Sari must be no good either huh. She is truly at the stage where she will be turning into a woman. Even her body is immature. Is it that you don't want to taste the immortality that can be achieved only at this point in time?" (Zef)

He is not stopping.

He will most likely blame it on the alcohol later, and the two who are the topic of the conversation have stopped their hands and are trembling.

That's right, he is shouting with quite the loud voice.

Could it be that the Demon Lord actually likes to joke around?

I do know of Rembrandt-san who is a father with daughters, but he normally faces terrible consequences after he does things like this.

I will be running away but, you do have the resolve right?

I won't be stopping it even if you ask for help later, you know?

"Honestly speaking, even if you talk to me about marrying Sari, it just doesn't click. There wasn't any noble or royalty around me that has married at an early age, so..." (Makoto)

Let's go with the common sense.

I will at least try not to rub those girls in the wrong way.

"Then Raidou-dono, what kind of woman is your taste?" (Zef)

"My taste?! E-Ehm, a girl that is candid but has womanly gestures?" (Makoto)

"...Hoh~" (Zef)

"A girl that does her best in training?" (Makoto)

"..."

"No well, it is just a 'what if' though." (Makoto)

What am I even saying?

I have drunk too much.

It is true that it has been a repetition of drinking all and being poured more, so I have drunk quite a lot of strong alcohol.

"Fumu, does that mean Mio-dono is that type of girl?" (Zef)

Bufugh?!

I get surprised by the nonchalant utterance of Zef and look at Mio.

I don't know if she is listening to the conversation, but I feel like Mio's back is unnaturally straight.

Should I confirm with thought transmission... no, confirming something like that feels wrong.

"W-Why is Mio mentioned now?" (Makoto)

"No well, she is such a beautiful woman after all. It is obvious that you have put your hands on her already, so this one just thought that it might be the case." (Zef)

What's that about obviously putting my hands on her?

I definitely have not!

"She is... a subordinate. Also, how to say it, we have a relationship close to that of family, so I have ended up saying something that I normally wouldn't. I am sorry." (Makoto)

I apologize for the words that the alcohol has made me say.

I am beginning to feel like I can't lower my guard to any of Zef's words.

It is tiring.

Even if this is a banquet, even when this is a drinking party where we are the spotlight, it is incredibly tiring.

"Hahaha, it is this one who has to apologize for saying such unsavory things. This one also apologizes." (Zef)

So he is aware of it?

He is the worst, hey.

Saying that, Zef shifts his seat towards me, and closes himself to a point where his

body is in contact with mine.

And then, from his pocket, he takes out something cylindrical.

It is not big.

It is a long and thin cylinder.

Ah, it is like the cylinders used to put in honorable certificates.

Does that mean, it is a document?

After that, he takes out a board that is slightly thick and places it on the table.

I don't know the material of it, but there seems to be something carved on it.

It looks like paper money.

When I tried to confirm the details of what was engraved, Zef explained it to me.

"You see, this is a transit permit that allows you to free passage to all the towns and cities within the demon race territory. There's a number of types for it, but this has the same authority that a few in the upper stratum of the demon race army possess. Specifically speaking, you can make contact with the central part of the demon race." (Zef)

"I see." (Makoto)

A transit permit. The quite impressive type at that huh.

Are the demons properly doing things like mobilizing the residents and refugees?

"And, this one here is..." (Zef)

Nodding to my words of understanding, Zef takes out a paper from the cylinder.

It is a high grade-looking paper.

It seems like something is written on it.

From where I am, I can't read everything though.

"This is something that allows the Kuzunoha Company to do business tax-free in the demon race territory. This was issued formally, you know. It is well-known that this seal is something that only this one can mark, so problems and disputes will most likely not occur." (Zef)

"Hm, Kuzunoha Company's... Kuzunoha Company?!" (Makoto)

A permit to do business in the demon race territory?!

And no tax at that?!

"Umu. Of course, I will be giving you the transit permit as well." (Zef)

That impressive transit note as well?!

Eh, is this possibly what Shiki said about 'receiving something'?

Ah, no, is this because of the matter with the temple?

"..."

"Hm, this one thought that this one was showing a relative amount of good will though. Was it not enough?" (Zef)

"...I was surprised for receiving so much. It makes me wonder if I actually did something so impressive to receive all these things." (Makoto)

"Didn't you accept the friendly match? And not only did you resolve the situation at the temple, you also saved my two daughters. It is my gratitude for those." (Zef)

Even so, I think this is impressive.

"Later, this one will be putting it in order, but there's one more big thing." (Zef)

There's still more?!

Moreover, the normal procedure is to pass all the formalities before receiving the things. In other words, Zef has skipped all those procedures and has given me the

things first.

It makes me think that he is forcing himself.

From the cylinder, Zef takes out one more paper.

?!!

This is... you are kidding, right?

"This is a map of our country, excluding the unexplored regions to the north. The major towns, and the paths are also recorded. This one does want you to understand that there's classified information that's not recorded here." (Zef)

Just like Zef said, it is a map.

A map of the demon race territory that can be coupled with the hyuman map I have.

It is true that there are blank parts here and there, and even if he says there's major towns and paths, there were parts where the path just suddenly cuts off on the way.

But it is clearly information that could be considered classified.

It is without doubt information that no other hyuman aside from me knows of.

By the way, Kaleneon is here as well.

Zef spreads out the map that has Stella Fortress at the southern tip, and then once again wraps it up and puts it inside the cylinder along with the business permit.

"Now then, these are already yours, Raidou-dono. If possible, this one wants you to put them to practical use, and circulate your goods to the other demon and demi-human towns. Of course, this one is also looking forward to Raidou-dono's way of fighting tomorrow." (Zef)

"Uhm, I will do my best." (Makoto)

I have received incredible things after all.

No wonder Shiki told me to accept the match.

Even if we fight, our cards will not decrease that much, so this is clearly more profitable to receive.

“Please do so. Well then, from now on, let’s go without all the work and formality! Let’s begin from the talk about your taste in woman.” (Zef)

“Please spare me from that talk already!” (Makoto)

“Can’t do that. How can this one call himself a Demon Lord when this one can’t even reward properly the guest that has worked so hard at the temple?” (Zef)

“I have already received plenty!” (Makoto)

“No! At the very least, take one of my daughters.” (Zef)

We went back to square one?!

“Didn’t I refuse that already?! In the first place, that topic is mixed with work, you know!” (Makoto)

With the talking and alcohol, a night that felt like an infinite loop advanced on.

# Chapter 191

## The darkness of the demon race, and the shining one

Well, I did think it would turn out this way.

At the day when there's not much till we leave the demon race capital, I was walking infinitely inside the underground corridor of the castle, and was guided to a big hall.

It is truly wide.

There were seats at the outer circumference, so I can tell that that's the place where people will be spectating the battle from.

For a friendly match arena, it is truly splendid.

As expected, there's no way they would make us fight inside the pitch black blizzard outside, but I didn't expect that they would ready such a well-put stage.

When I look up, I can see a high-ceiling like that of a dome, and at the top there's a hole where the night sky can be seen.

And, what is happening currently is that... I am alone in this excessively spacious hall.

That's the situation.

There's no Mio and Shiki.

Those two that are able to suppress the High Spirits are already well-known.

'That's why, there's no problem if only Raidou-dono shows his strength', they said.

In summary, that's what happened, and now my two followers are at the spectator seats.

The things I received were impressive after all~.

I do feel that listening to a bit of their unreasonable requests is okay, and there's also the fact that using power on the level of a High Spirit would make the arena crumble.

Because you know, I have received a transit permit to pass freely through their whole nation, and I have also received something akin to the royal seal of the Demon Lord.

Even if I open stores in several towns, I won't have to pay taxes.

The demi-humans are many, and the good distribution is lacking.

Thinking about being tax free in such a place of unknown marketing possibilities...

As long as I don't fall in any unforeseen circumstances, it is manners to repay this, right?

This time it was unlucky, or more like, the natural price to pay.

That's what I think, so I am standing here.

"Now then, I wonder who will be my opponent." (Makoto)

The announcement that resounds through the hall signals the beginning of the friendly match.

There's not many spectators, and there isn't that wild enthusiasm like that of the Rotsgard fighting arena.

In exchange, there's serious gazes as if they were gulping their breaths, being poured at me.

It feels as if every move I make is being observed.

As a lecturer, I have felt this kind of gaze a few times, and in Japan when we had meetings for archery display.

"Geh, the worst possibility from what I have imagined. As I thought, my unluckiness is still going strong." (Makoto)

There's four shadows walking to meet me.

From my guess, I thought the ones coming out would be the Demon Generals or the Demon Lord, but I did think that maybe all the Demon Generals would be coming out.

With how things have been going, I even thought that Zef himself would be coming out, but as expected, having the Demon Lord be defeated in front of his subordinates is just bad.

I did feel that he wouldn't do any messing around in regards to being Lord, so at that point, I am not that surprised.

Even so, all the Demon Generals huh.

Leaving Io and Rona aside, I somewhat know what Reft can do; but the last one, I don't know much about that one.

Until today, I have not been able to properly speak to that person, and there haven't been many moments when I have seen that person say something.

It was an unkempt hair man wearing a white robe.

The type that would look good with tobacco.

I thought he was a demi-human, but maybe this person is a hyuman?

They stopped at a distance equal to that of when baseball players pay their respects.

"...Let me tell you this first, I am not a hyuman, Raidou-dono."

"Ah, sorry." (Makoto)

He noticed I was looking at him huh.

I thought I was being inconspicuous though.

"It seems like I have 1/16 of demi-human blood. I don't know the name of the race though."

"..."

No no no, isn't that practically like being a hyuman?

It is like saying your parents are quarters and your grandfather a half, right?

And if on top of all that, there was only one demi-human there... and since you already look hyuman, isn't hyuman fine?

"I see, you are just like I have heard. Blood, race, and outward appearance doesn't matter. How interesting. Just what kind of living did you have to grow in this way?"

"Every living being is equal. It seems you already know, but I am Raidou Misumi. Please be lenient with me today." (Makoto)

"Mokuren Kazusa. Even if this is a match, it is a serious battle. Something rude like pulling punches isn't what I will be doing. Even if I look like this, I live as part of one of the demon race after all. The power within this body of mine, I will let you witness a bit of it." (Kazusa)

"Hahaha..." (Makoto)

He isn't a warrior right?

He is a mage.

And he is not like Rona who holds two posts. He gives out the smell of a pure magician.

Also... he has an atmosphere similar to someone.

That feeling is... right, an alchemist.

I can feel the scent of a researcher from this person.

...How nostalgic. Was his name Hazaru? He is probably still at Toa-san's party doing more leveling and living thoughtlessly huh.

"I wish that Raidou-dono and I don't stand this way on the battlefield. But today, I will do my best." (Io)

With four arms and wearing gauntlets that one can tell are high grade at a glance, Io rises up and shows a competitive smile filled with motivation.

...The ceiling is open, so at worst, I can just throw him away with a rocket punch again.

“...”

Rona is completely silent.

She is not saying a single word.

Is what I thought, but it seems she has already formed several spells and concealing it.

It seems she is already at the brim by trying to control them, but she is playing it cool in her expression.

It feels like a lot of things will be flying at me right from the start.

“I am sorry for leaving early at the other day’s banquet. I am the Demon General, Reft. Someone like me has received the position of Demon General by the kindness of his Majesty. I am happy to have the chance of seeing your power that has been recognized by his Majesty.” (Reft)

“You are a hybrid dragon, right? I have heard that you possess a great power. I am looking forward to it.” (Makoto)

“?! So you know of hybrid dragons. It seems you are someone of extensive knowledge. Here as well, I am looking forward to it.” (Reft)

...

Tomoe said it as if it were common knowledge though.

So it was rare information?!

“Then, all that’s left is to wait for the signal to begin.” (Makoto)

“...”

For some reason, the Demon Generals make a strange expression.

We did introduce ourselves and the announcement has finished, so next would be the

signal of: 'FIGHT!', right?

"Eh? It seems like it isn't beginning." (Makoto)

"...Raidou-dono, today we will be fighting with you, but..." (Io)

Io speaks to me.

"Yes?" (Makoto)

"Did you not hear the details?" (Io)

"The only thing I was told by his Majesty was to lightly show my strength." (Makoto)

"Umu. In that case, regarding the fight..." (Io)

"Yes, it is fine to just fight with everyone, right?" (Makoto)

"..."

I-Is that not the case?

"Raidou-dono, could it be that you are intending to fight us all at once?" (Io)

"Eh? That's not how it was?" (Makoto)

Silence once again.

No well, you see, Io seems to be the strongest of the four Demon Generals, so going 1vs1 four times is just pointless, isn't it?

"Io, the permission has come from his Majesty. It seems it is fine that way." (Rona)

"But Rona, that's just..." (Io)

Hm?

"The person himself has the intention to do so, you know? Also, if it's just showing a light amount of power, that's fine, right? Hey, I don't want to speak too much, I am concentrating after all." (Rona)

“...Understood. Fine.” (Io)

The sigh of Io served as a signal. The Demon Generals began to move.

Io and Reft went forward, Rona at the middle, and Mokuren as the rear guard.

Io is slightly further ahead, but the formation is 2-1-1.

The announcement to commence comes out with fluster.

The words announcing the beginning of the battle between four Demon Generals and I resounds through the hall.

“Then, to begin things... [Brid]!” (Makoto)

Kicking the ground, I jump backwards while releasing fire Brids towards the four Demon Generals respectively.

They told me a while ago to not hold back, but I am not my same past self that would take those words seriously.

To restrain it, I reduced the power and speed.

“As expected, arialess as if it were natural! Mokuren, I am counting on you! Even if it’s arialess, think of Raidou’s spells as possessing their complete firepower!” (Rona)

“No problem. In terms of high speed spell deployment, I am also good at it.” (Mokuren)

As I thought, he is really a magician huh.

Mokuren treats his dagger as a staff and does an aria, and an aria that is done with the fingers... and it is arialess at the same time?!

Oh, there’s a prodigy here!

Mokuren does an aria for around 6 spells at the same time.

He creates a barrier that properly blocks all my Brids, moreover, it seems he has placed a number of support spells on his allies.

There's still magic power revolving around their surroundings, so they probably still have something set up.

A magician similar to Ema huh.

It's been awhile since I have seen someone like that.

Being able to do parallel arias is already impressive. The demon race is truly passionate.

"I will not leave you space to target Mokuren!" (Io)

Oh.

Io accelerates with a speed that doesn't fit his large build, and closes in with his fists ready.

It is not a timing where evasion will make it in time.

Obviously they will not tell me they are that fast huh.

I use the Magic Armor, which was forcefully named Materia Prima by a random pervert, and stop his attack.

While at it, I grab Io and restrain him. I point him towards the dark night and throw him.

Depending on the people watching, it might have looked like a master at Aikido had thrown a giant away.

...It was simple raw power though.

"GUOOOO!!"

"The next is... Reft-san, was it? It has been a while since I have seen a spear user." (Makoto)

This person seems to be a warrior type as well, so let's try punching him.

"Sorry but, I will have to resist!" (Reft)

Oh?

I can't grab him.

From the place I tried to grab, the arm was thrown aside.

I see. So this is the counter expert huh.

Reft uses splendid spearmanship to parry the Magic Armor that approaches.

Impressive.

It is understandable why Mio tried to learn this technique.

It is on the level of art.

How interesting.

"?!!"

I was unconsciously fascinated by the technique of Reft, and a shock comes from my back.

It is Rona.

Ah, it seems she set up a few spells.

The first shot didn't seem like it could do something to the Magic Armor, but the explosions continue.

As if swallowing up one spot, Rona releases a line up of her own high firepower spells one after the other.

Even so, at my very front there's Reft swinging his spear while including the spells in the attacks. His offensive didn't falter.

I am in a pincer situation.

Dealing with the two at the same time will be difficult.

Then I will begin with Reft.

If Rona finishes shooting her spells, she will step back after all.

“[Brid]!” (Makoto)

Arialess, around 5 Brids are shot from the body of the Magic Armor to Reft.

The spear that was swung around stopped, and the attacks from the front stop.

Well, it is a surprise attack, so he shouldn't be able to deal with it properly.

Then, next is Rona.

“I can't let you catch me!” (Rona)

“I was one step slower huh. Well done.” (Makoto)

Rona quickly takes her distance by kicking a part of the Magic Armor and returning to her previous spot.

She used me as a foothold! Is what I would have liked to try saying.

“Being engrossed in me is dangerous, you know?” (Rona)

“Eh? Uo?!” (Makoto)

A strong shock five times.

They were practically Shiki-class spells... wait, those were my Brids.

I see, so they were all reflected back huh.

Receiving my own spells feels fresh.

I wasn't the guinea pig of Mio's technique experiment after all.

“A scarily accurate attack. But on top of that...”

“No, more than that, how to say it...”

What incredible pressure!

Above?!

"Too slow!" (Io)

Io?!

"You returned?!" (Makoto)

"I won't let you treat me like an idiot twice!!" (Io)

Perfectly utilizing the falling momentum into his fist, he makes contact with the Magic Armor.

A ripple spreads through the whole Magic Armor, but Io's eyes didn't show any signs of this being the end.

Just like that, he uses another arm to do an attack, and at the end, he adds a kick just like Rona and creates distance from the Magic Armor.

The wind and shock wave it created travelled all the way to the spectator seats.

Even though they shouldn't be able to see it.

Are the two of them the type that can feel things instinctively?

Like this, it would be better to change it from concealment to enhancement?

"I thought that Io-dono's type wouldn't be able to easily fly through the sky though..." (Makoto)

"It wasn't easy! But I was defeated in such a pathetic way after all!" (Io)

He is using 'ore'.

He is already in total battle mode.

So you are the type of prodigy that can do anything when you try to.

"And, it is about time, right Rona?" (Io)

"Yeah, just in time. He is not that good at dealing with schemes after all, that Raidou 'rear guard.'" (Rona)

Rona points at her own waist and smiles at me.

Waist?

?!  
Something black is clinging onto the Magic Armor?!

That thing continues to expand, and as if announcing that it was time, its surface began to show dark red cracks.

It feels like a countdown.

Feeling the activation of a spell that I can't even feel the F of friendly, I reflexively change [Sakai] from concealment to enhancement.

A strong shock and the sound of an explosion. A black and red light envelop my field of vision.

Is it a time bomb spell?

What terrifying firepower.

Big part of the Magic Armor that was shifted to enhancement was blown away.

Is this possibly the trump card of Rona?

I did think at Limia that she had some sort of ace hidden.

It seemed like more than its firepower, its ability to scrape away on magic power is stronger.

I can only try and tell from her expression huh.

I am not good at that though.

I wait for the light and smoke to disperse.

But... that was a bad move.

I feel the activation of magic power from my feet.

!! Right, there's also the guy Mokuren.

When all four Demon Generals are together, they have a dangerous disposition.

Even though it should be an ironclad rule that the Four Heavenly Kings of the Demon Lord never get along!

“Taste a ritual spell. Second model, ‘Hail’ Revision.” (Mokuren)

I hear the voice of Mokuren.

The Magic Armor is scrapped off again by what looks like raging needles flying in the surroundings.

He said it is a ritual spell, right?

If I remember correctly, it is a spell that hides itself and is used in wide scale battles.

Not only is he able to do parallel arias, but he is also able to do something like that by himself.

Or more like, I am not a castle or an army you know!

I am an individual!

While I was complaining, the needles scrape off the Magic Armor, and they adhere to it and change into ice.

It can harden the movements huh.

It is harsher than the ice magic that Rona used when she was Karen.

I unconsciously remembered that.

"Now then everyone, get away. Fuh~." (Mokuren)

He still intends to do more?

"Third Model, 'Starfall Revision'" (Mokuren)

It is troublesome that my field of vision has still not gotten better.

Right now the Magic Armor is just partly frozen, but with enhancing [Sakai], unless something really big happens, it will be okay.

I want to see the spell, so maybe I should clear out the frozen parts of the Magic Armor and sweep the surroundings?

If that also clears away the ritual magic, it would be two birds with one stone.

I trace the places that are frozen in the Magic Armor, and add fire element to it.

An explosion that is probably on the same level as Rona's spell, is created with me at the center.

I quickly reform the Magic Armor and confirm the situation.

The Demon Generals have shifted to defense.

At most, the heat wave that headed to Reft is being returned to me.

Well, no problem.

And now, the ritual spell of just now...

I sound out my surroundings.

Above again huh.

It was Starfall, right?

I don't think something worst than Io will be falling down, but...

...Lava?

Muddled magma that has bright red stones sticking onto it is pouring down at me from the sky?!

As expected of ritual magic.

The scale is on another level.

"No matter the circumstances, to use something like these twice in a friendly match is questionable!!" (Makoto)

"Looking at you who's practically unhurt, I can only call it appropriate!" (Mokuren)

"For you to be unwounded even when I used that, just how tough are you? At least receive a slight scald for formality!" (Rona)

Don't say unreasonable things!

Damn it!!

"There's no way this will end with a simple scaaaald!!" (Makoto)

I use the two arms of the Magic Armor that are most likely visible to everyone now, and grab the lava into a ball.

"No way. Without mitigating it, using a barrier, or even avoiding it; he grabbed it? A big molten mass?" (Mokuren)

...Right.

It would be okay to just avoid it.

Hearing the dumbfounded mutter of Mokuren, I slightly regretted my decision.

"One, two... counter!!" (Makoto)

"That's not a counter!" (Reft)

The moment I throw the lava ball to the Demon Generals, Reft makes a rude shout.

I grabbed it before I received the attack and am now throwing it back, so it is a proper

counter... probably.

“Kuh... don’t let it work!” (Rona)

“Leave it to me!” (Io)

With those words just now, one of the four gauntlets shone brightly, and the body of Io turned bright red.

He is totally like a super robot.

Not only is he able to fly, he even has equipment that lets him do type changes huh.

Io who now looks like he is strong against fire, uses all his four arms to receive the ball of lava that has a size of around 5 meters.

Even if he has gauntlets, it is still like grabbing it with his bare hands.

It is the incarnation of a super robot.

I would like to have one of those...

No wait, the other two at the rear have already evacuated from the crashing point.

Mokuren and Rona; not only did they both step back, they also activated support magic and have buffed Io and Reft.

They are nimble.

Reft who is remaining, makes a terribly concentrated expression at the lava ball that Io actually stopped, and literally pierces it with the spear in his hand.

“Is this dodge ball?!” (Makoto)

Once again, the lava ball flies at me at high speed.

Hey hey, this won’t become endless, right?

Just like Mokuren said, avoiding it would be better.

"No no, you should fight it fair and square there, Raidou-dono."

"Mokuren?! Just when did you..." (Makoto)

"Magicians have methods of mobilizing called teleportation. Even if I am the weakest, I am still a Demon General you see. I do a lot of things on a level where Rona doesn't get angry at me." (Mokuren)

"And, what's that note that's in your hand?" (Makoto)

I look at the space where I was going to run to, and there, Mokuren was already there. I try asking about the note that I can tell is a spell that's about to be activated.

This is bad.

I have been confined.

"It is a spell that has its aria stored beforehand. I call it catalyst magic, but you can call it whatever you want. Now then, it is the development that we had anticipated. I will have you show us how you will be escaping from this one. 'Starfall' Revision, duplication." (Mokuren)

From Mokuren, another lava ball comes.

Another pincer attack.

You demons really like flanking huh!

Can't be helped. Let's receive them.

The second lava comes at me with a slight difference in time.

The first one; I repel it with a backhand to a direction where no Demon General is in.

It would be troublesome if they were to throw it back again after all.

The next one is... fast.

If possible, I wanted to repel it up, but I receive it with one hand.

In terms of intensity, the Materia Prima is higher, so I ward off the sensation of being pushed back, and later, I was able to stop it.

Okay, I probably can do it.

Just like that, I make one arm bigger, and cover the ball like a baseball glove.

I feel like if I carelessly crush it, it would make a big explosion, so I wrap it all and while controlling the power, I forcibly...

“Your Majesty!!”

Majesty?

Zef?

I was slightly surprised by the words of Io and look at the direction that the voice was directed at.

Ah, it is at the direction where I threw away one of the balls.

There, there was the shadow of one person.

It is certainly the Demon Lord.

Just where... ah, the guest seats huh.

If it crashes to the outer circumference just like that, it might create casualties in the spectators.

Now that I look carefully, he doesn't have his mantle on.

It looks like he is intending to face it.

It might be far, but I can see Zef's body build.

Incredible.

Even though he has a tough job like being a Lord, he has an abnormally toned body.

He did seem like he has been training, but his body is like that of someone whose main job is warrior.

The scary slim macho, Zef.

He draws out the sword at his waist.

I am also stopping a lava ball similar to the one that's heading to Zef, but I unconsciously forgot about it and was fascinated.

It was a beautiful movement.

Also, he is drawing his sword and doing an aria at the same time.

The aria is continuing even when he has already finished drawing his sword, but both actions were incredibly smooth.

Those are movements that show he is able to do it multiple times.

I who has been doing that all the time, am sure of it.

That's why I was able to nod at the confidence that Zef was showing.

Confidence that he is able to deal with it.

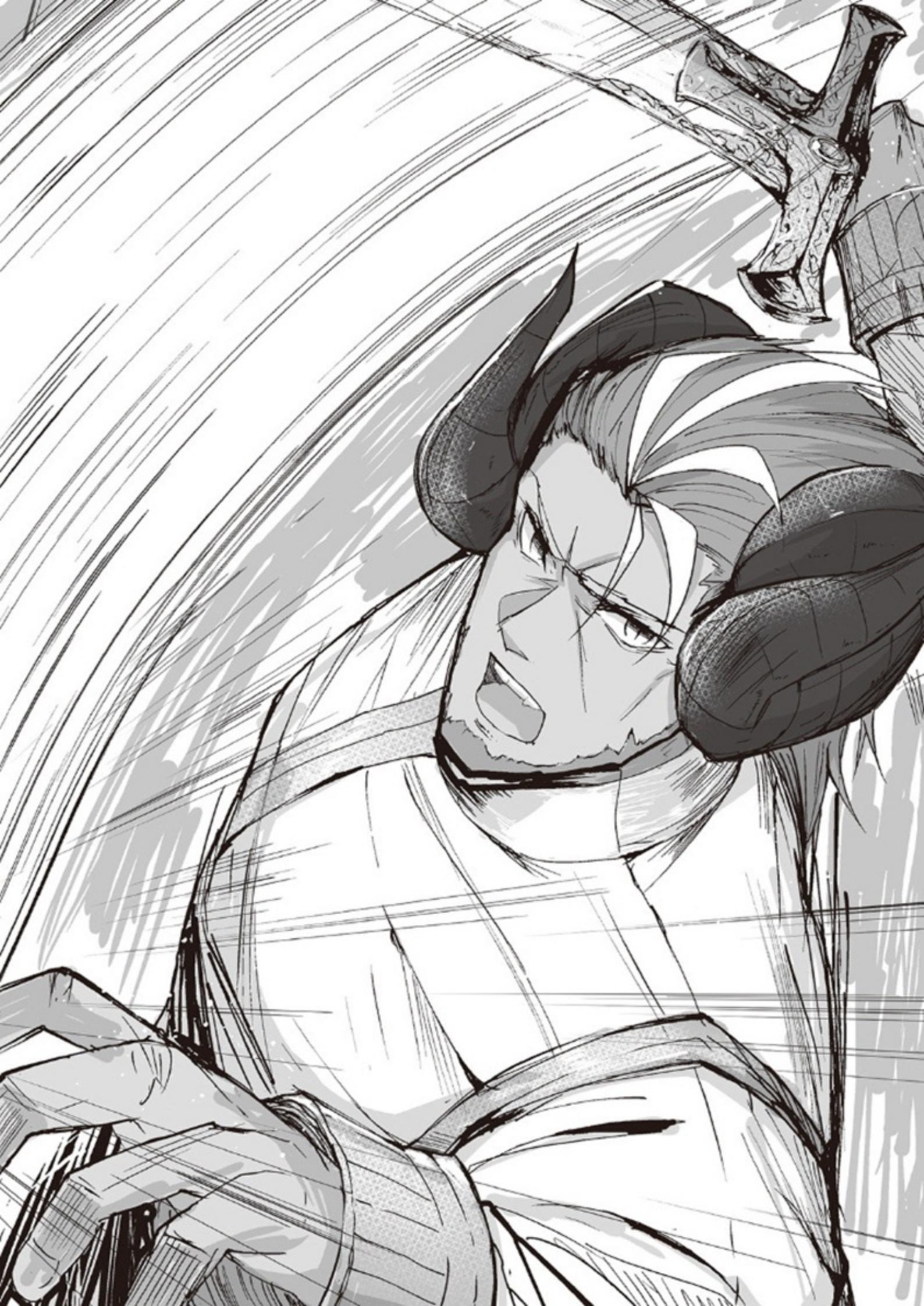
Since I have the chance, let's watch the technique of the Demon Lord.

Against the lava that was approaching, Zef brandishes his sword backwards.

The length of that long sword is not normal.

The sword Zef holds is also of a high quality that's able to handle his technique. And it also serves as a catalyst to safely activate his spell.

And then, the lava ball disappears from in front of him.



Within the things that I have seen in this world, it is the most perfected combination of magic and weapon.

What was used along with the sword was a barrier spell.

But it is a terrifying special type of barrier that vanishes anything that touches.

So the Demon Lord Zef is a swordsman that has mastered barriers or that type of spells huh.

By the time I noticed, I had already compressed the lava I was holding and had extinguished it.

It feels mysterious.

That sword might be the same as my bow.

A power that was born from breaking my heart.

A truly mysterious feeling of respect and empathy.

“That all! Raidou-dono, it was splendid. You were able to fight against all the Demon Generals and was able to fight them this well. This is certainly something that everyone here has witnessed. It was a splendid match. After this, I will present you a reward. Now then—” (Zef)

The words of Zef signal the end of the match.

But that didn't actually tie it to an end.

“Bring divine punishment to the slave of power!!”

The voice that was heard after, had erased the words of Zef.

At that moment, the presence of something raining down at high amounts was felt. A thunderous sound and the light of an explosion envelop the hall.

The Demon Generals had begun moving towards Zef, but I didn't understand what was happening and for now, just prioritize defense.

Soon after, I had felt the approach of Mio and Shiki.



"That's quite the flashy entrance."

In the arena that has completely turned into outskirts, I look around and mutter.

But I am impressed.

In an instant, the Demon Generals protected Zef and Zef had protected the spectator seats.

Of course, it wasn't as if he was able to protect everything. It was a destruction scale that would be natural to have several victims.

There's already no presence of spectators in the surroundings. When I confirm with [Sakai], I could tell that they have already arrived at the castle and have taken refuge.

How dependable.

In exchange, several tens of totally equipped people have appeared, and were looking at me.

It is the people that said: 'Divine retribution to the slave of power'.

So this destruction is also their doing huh.

It is dusty, the place is filled with rubble, and it was a splendid underground arena, and yet, there's no trace of it now.

Is this the darkness of the demon race?

The Spirit rampage was also something planned, so it may have been done by them as well.

"Waka-sama, you are okay." (Shiki)

"With the matter of the Spirits, and this as well; the security of the demon race is actually not that impressive huh. It lets me have more job to do-desu kedo." (Mio)

"Thanks, you two. It is certainly true that there's more accidents in the demon race capital than that of the Empire." (Makoto)

I thank Shiki and Mio who came for me, and I look at Zef.

Near him, there's several that have fallen victim and one of them is injured, but Zef is not treating her.

He is fighting against the terrorists and he is prioritizing that.

In compensation, there's Mokuren who has blood flowing from his side and carrying Rona who seems to be barely holding her consciousness.

So it was an attack that was enough to injure even the Demon Generals huh. Or maybe there was another attack afterwards against Zef and the others?

I haven't grasped that much of the situation.

"You guys really don't choose the place and time huh." (Zef)

"Zef, in order to finish your tyrannical rule, we don't intend to choose the methods."

The representative of the armed group is talking with Zef.

This can be considered a verbal clash.

There's not going to be a peaceful resolution now, so I think that in terms of power, Zef and the others have an overwhelming advantage.

It depends on how they will act and if they have something prepared though.

I do feel a strange flow of power after all.

I still don't know what it is.

"This one's tyrannical rule, huh. This one doesn't understand. In the first place, is there a tyranny bigger than that of the Goddess for us? This one is actually ruling for the advance of the demon race's survival and liberation though. Without any selfish motive." (Zef)

"Don't think that everything can be forgiven just because you do it without any selfish motive. Even though you bastard are not as tyrannical as the Goddess, the will of a God is not government. Putting it on the same level as the ruling of a person is just plain arrogance."

"Are you saying that killing this one and accepting the Goddess will help in the survival of the demon race?" (Zef)

"Of course."

"...What's your basis?" (Zef)

"We are a race that was created by the Goddess. As a proof of her affection, we have lived until this day. That's the best proof."

Incredible.

Even within the demons, there's people that even after being oppressed by the Goddess this much, forced to war, and even brought heroes to repel them; they still have faith in her.

The Earth and Fire Spirits that are more moderate, or more like the type that help out when needed, are more reasonable than these guys.

I can only call them fanatics. I can't understand them at all.

"It is certainly true. Maybe she will give a slight speck of pity towards us. As a result, a handful of demons will be able to survive by falling into slavery to hyumans. Compared to resisting and be exterminated, it is certainly true that this way we can achieve survival. But are you guys going to guide us to such a future? Have your children and grandchildren forgive the irrationality and favoritism of the Goddess? Is that what you will order them to do?" (Zef)

Zef's words were calm.

But anger can be felt.

I don't know if that Bug will forgive the demon race that has killed that many hyumans she loves.

She looks stupid, so maybe if they flatter her and throw their whole faith to her, it might lead to the situation Zef has stated though.

"You were the bastard that changed the impression of us demons as an existence that brings harm to this world! The world is below the grace of God. At the very least, if we didn't rebel, we could have had peace! You raided the hyumans, stole their land, and still continuing war! And even within the demons, you have given tacit consent to an ancient evil practice, and have crudely treated the life of many! That sin of yours has to be paid by you and your subordinates! That way, we demons will be able to apologize for our barbarity to the hyumans and demi-humans for the first time!"

"Can't even talk to you. The will of the demon race is together with me. As a result, the path of war has been chosen. That's all there is to it. In the first place, you say that before the war we were fine, and yet, you say we had evil practices. Aren't your words already contradictory?" (Zef)

"Then can you call it happiness to bind people by their aptitude and abilities, and not giving them freedom in choosing their jobs?! Is it happiness to thin out the children of a certain age in this harsh environment?! Is it happiness for the strong to not even be able to choose their own partner in marriage and have them be managed by the country?! Just because they have the talent, the children are unable to live with their parents for the short amount of time they are born into this world. Such a country, can it be called happiness?! This is something you have given consent to, Zef!! Answer!!"

...

The darkness of the demon race huh.

I see.

"It is not consent." (Zef)

"So you are going to deceive through words huh. As a Demon Lord!"

"You talk about consent, but from what this one knows, this is something that this one proposed and accepted." (Zef)

"Wh-at?"

...

“What’s wrong with putting the people in posts that are more fitting for them and be more useful for society? The children that can’t endure this environment will only reduce our food; if that means the working ones will end up starving as well, this one will take the responsibility and deal with them. This custom is not enforced in wealthy towns and the demi-humans, but the towns and villages that want to survive, this one won’t open its mouth against any. The strong leaving their strength to the next era is the obvious contribution they have to do for the country. The strong have to pay that price and carry the burden in order for the country to survive. And about the matter of children and parents, it is the nature of demons to appoint the most excelling person as the Lord that will guide the people. If you resent that, then don’t point that resentment towards this one or the demon race society; lament the misfortune that you have been born as a demon.” (Zef)

“...A peasant’s child has grown to be quite prideful huh.”

“It would have been possible for this one to continue as a peasant. You who are the child of a demon noble family and should have led us, not only have you crushed your own household, you even rebel to the country. You have really fallen low.” (Zef)

“...If at the very least, you were to hold doubts towards the evil customs, we could have taken hands together. But it is already impossible to join our wills huh.”

“Same thoughts. Being an omnipresent savior for the weak, is not this one’s ruling. It is evident that our cooperation would have ended as temporary.” (Zef)

“Just how long do you think that government of choosing the strong and leaving the weak will continue?”

“People that are intoxicated by kind words and comply to slavery, will never understand it. More importantly, you have done this much. You must be prepared for the consequences, right?” (Zef)

“Even though you knew the Spirit rampaging wasn’t our only plan... Was the source of your composure, that monster over there? But let me show you, a way of showing will that you bastards don’t know of.”

“If that’s how the Kuzunoha Company looked to you, this one apologizes. Even you guys wouldn’t want to do a foolish move that would end up destroying our whole country, right?” (Zef)

I have been called ‘monster’ a lot, so I don’t mind it that much.

Well, even if they invite me to tea, I would have definitely refused it though. You terrorists.

“That makes it even more convenient. This current demon race should be completely destroyed after all.”

“...Then that rudeness, this one will take your place and apologize. By lining up your idiotic heads, that is. Io, Reft.” (Zef)

Not only did Zef, Io, and Reft prepare their stances with those words, they suddenly charged.

They really send their heads flying, and it ended in less than ten seconds.

Io even did a stunt like using his hand as a sword.

He is truly a troublesome giant.

Skillful and diligent, moreover, has a natural constitution.

“If they can’t use what they set up, there’s no point, right your Majesty?”

“No, it seems like they were buying time with their lives on the line.” (Zef)

Yeah.

Something has activated.

The faint strange power that was drifting about, is now showing its contours clearly.

When I look for the location, it was hidden by the rubble, an ornamented staff that was stabbed on the ground.

It must be that.

“A staff? It seems like the activation has already begun though.” (Makoto)

“That is... the Governor Scepter? Could it be! Mio-dono, can you interrupt the

activation?!" (Shiki)

"Something like that is easy... Hm? It is awfully old and strong. This... I can't negate it?" (Mio)

"I... see. No, it can't be helped. If that's what I think it is, it might turn troublesome. Well, it is just a 'might', so I think it will be okay." (Shiki)

Shiki seems to know something.

"Shiki, what's that?" (Makoto)

"...It is probably a sacred treasure of Elysion. It should have been lost though. I think it is the scepter that led an army of dragons, the Governor Scepter" (Shiki)

"Dragon Governor Scepter?" (Makoto)

"A scepter that has been heridated by Kings of Elysion, a scepter that summons dragons. It is an article that has many stories of. It was unable to protect the related country from destruction, but it possesses enormous power." (Shiki)

Summon dragons huh.

Elysion, dragon.

Eh? Something bothers me.

"Even if powerful, the demon race was able to deal with it once and Elysion was destroyed, right? Shiki, is this really something to be agitated for?" (Makoto)

"...That sacred treasure uses immense amount of magic power or blood and lives that matches it to activate, but the result is random." (Shiki)

"...Random?" (Makoto)

The terrorists staked their lives on this last trump card which is a sacred treasure from another country, moreover, the activation result is random, you say.

It is like coming just to receive an honorable death.

What they said was also disgusting, but I really don't understand them.

"...You really know well. Shiki-dono really has extensive knowledge. That's certainly the trump card of the resistance and the sacred treasure of Elysion, the dragon army's Governor Scepter." (Zef)

"Your Majesty." (Makoto)

Zef talks to us as he approaches.

Io, Reft and Zef; all three of them held several heads in their hands.

"There's no way to apologize for involving you in our internal troubles." (Zef)

"No. More importantly, is it okay to not deal with that Governor Scepter?" (Makoto)

When I ask, Zef shakes his head to the sides.

It seems Zef knows of the dragon army's Governor Scepter.

Not its existence, but of its whereabouts.

"It is already up to fate to decide what will be summoned. There's no choice but to pray for the luck of the people here." (Zef)

"By the way, what's the worst case?" (Makoto)

It is my nature to worry about the misfortune when talking about luck.

"Excluding the Superior Dragons; it will summon a variety of dragons in this place, and in madness, they will rampage." (Zef)

That's a picture of hell.

No, it is better because there's no Superior Dragon huh.

"A variety huh." (Makoto)

"Umu. It seems like it will bring all the dragons in the world at once. Well, just like Shiki-dono says, it is a possibility only." (Zef)

“And that’s why it is dragon army.” (Makoto)

If the chance is of one in a hundred, then... a 0.01 chance?

Nai wa~

I wouldn’t be able to bet my life for it~.

Is it a bet they would be willing to take in order to take down what seems to be an imposing Zef?

“...From what this one knows, the dragon army is the best result. This one doesn’t know of any higher than that though. As a result of our investigation, even if there’s a chance, it would truly be lower than that of a one in a hundred. It is at a chance that is close to impossible.” (Zef)

It feels like a lot of zeros would line up.

Then it is in the safe zone huh.

I’m glad.

Then if we just knock down the dragon that comes out, it will be over huh.

“This is not good.” (Shiki)

“It smells-desu ne.” (Mio)

Shiki?

Mio?

“What is?” (Makoto)

“It is a possibility that Waka-sama might be able to draw.” (Shiki)

“Yeah. A being that a person would take his whole lifetime to search and never be able to meet, Waka-sama is the type of person that would be able to meet that being twice in a week.” (Mio)

You are part of those beings though.

...That's true. In less than a week I met Tomoe and Mio after all.

Those chances are quite low.

They are probably joking, but when they say those things at this moment with those straight faces, it kinda gets to me.

"You two, aren't you being a bit cruel there?" (Makoto)

"See." (Mio)

"Eh?"

At Mio's words, I look at the location that her hand was pointing at.

A golden light does a straight line unto the dark sky and it cuts through that darkness.

...Hah...

It is been awhile since I have been bask by a strong light like that of the morning.

I open my eyes that I closed for an instant, and look at Zef who was at my side... and for the first time, he showed serious agitation.

The area between his brows had thick creases, and he is looking at the light with a grim expression.

While cladding his body with a magic power stronger than that from before, Zef looked like he was thinking of a way to deal with the situation.

Or more like, this feeling, the presence I feel from the golden light... it is that person.

It has been connected.

Elysion, the Governor Scepter, dragons; there's no one but that person.

We hit the jackpot, no, we picked out a big miss huh.

"No way. It was a percentage that shouldn't be possible to achieve you know? In the first place, we just assumed that there was a step higher than that of an army of dragons just for the safety of the investigation." (Zef)

The words of Zef made my ears hurt.

From the center of the light, a shadow of a big dragon appears.

A western-style dragon.

Its body surpasses in size to that of Grount. And the wings made its body look even bigger.

Also, there's not only a pair of wings.

The trait of that dragon was that there were three pairs of wings with different sizes.

"...Root."

That damn pervert.

Just what is he thinking by turning hostile?

"Root, you say? It existed? The Harmony Dragon that owns all elements. The peak of the Superior Dragons that is also called the Ancient Dragon or the Heavenly Dragon. Why is an existence that is treated in equal footing to that Goddess accepting the summoning of something like a sacred treasure?" (Zef)

Zef mutters in pain.

It can't be helped.

I don't know how much of the situation he understands, but a Lord has to deal with things in a realistic manner.

And to create a countermeasure for something that his trusty subordinates said would be impossible to occur, is just not realistic.

...It would have been more understandable if he were to actually utilize it to do something.

Zef is that kind of Lord.

He advances through the things he chooses, and he understands the things he will lose and the risks that come with it.

I can't empathize with all his methods, but I can understand.

(...Ah, it has been a while, Makoto-kun. This situation, I would be grateful if you were to explain it to me.) (Root)

I can hear a spaced out voice.

It sounds as if he doesn't have any sort of tension.

It is thought transmission.

There's only one possible person.

(Root, did you want to fight me so much that you even came to the demon race territory?) (Makoto)

(Fight with Makoto-kun?! No no no... wait, don't tell me... the target of the Governor Scepter is...) (Root)

(Zef and everyone below. It seems like it also includes me though?) (Makoto)

(Achaa. I have been played. To think that the summoning I placed on the Governor Scepter as a joke would activate at this moment. Hey, did you possibly make a pact with an evil spirit of chances?) (Root)

(Like hell I would do a pact that will bring me misfortune. Since the time I came to this world, I have been on a high rave of unluckiness.) (Makoto)

(...Since it is already like this, I will endure the pain, so be gentle, okay?) (Root)

Contrary to his words, Root begins to create a fiendish rainbow colored ball.

The light ball that can be seen within his big open mouth has power gathering steadily.

You, if it was against your will, go back home!

(I won't hurt you, so go back home.) (Makoto)

(Ahaha, I can't. This summoning is absolute. It is forcing me to do an attack with no holds barred. I was caught in my own trap you see. Your specialty.) (Root)

(Stop the sarcasm. Then at least tell me what you will do. I will do what I can after.) (Makoto)

(Ah, I might fall all over again. How reliable! It is like a buckshot blaze with a mixture of six elements. It would easily destroy the castle and the land in the vicinity.) (Root)

I want to tell him not to nonchalantly say such atrocious things.

(...You, are you going leave after throwing that one attack?) (Makoto)

(Yes. Because you know, summoned beasts are that kind of way it seems. In the game that my husband played.) (Root) <*FINAL FANTASY!*>

(I now understand that I shouldn't underestimate the playful heart of a dragon.) (Makoto)

As if affirming the words of Root, the power shows abnormal rises as if there's no ceiling to stop.

At this rate, the topography will change.

I don't know if this situation was brought by my unluckiness, but I feel like it would be bad for the demon race capital to be destroyed by this.

Sorry, I am unlucky you see.

Is not something I can say.

I don't intend to cooperate in war, but they have treated me well.

Even if that treatment was brought by their evaluation of my power, the truth is the truth.

"To think that such a disgrace would occur..." (Zef)

While expanding a barrier, Zef laughs.

Too bad but, even he can't block everything.

Even if we just think of the after-effect, it would destroy at least half of the capital.

In terms of people, half might not be enough.

“...”

It is not on a level like the lava ball.

My Materia Prima can't do the same thing.

I can take it and can repel it, but it won't kill all the power, so it will definitely bring heavy damage to the surroundings.

Also, being a buckshot is problematic.

If I make the Magic Armor bigger, the density will decrease.

H-How troublesome.

If possible, I want to just use Azusa to pierce through that mouth of his.

If I do that, it would definitely create a giant crater with this place at the centre.

I can't do that.

I take my distance from the Demon Lord's group and begin consulting with the two.

“Mio, what do you think we should do?” (Makoto)

“Isn't it fine to just take refuge?” (Mio)

In Asora, is what her eyes are saying.

It is the best place for refuge.

It would end with us unscathed after all.

“...Shiki?” (Makoto)

“...Magic is also a product of someone’s image. Waka-sama’s Magic Armor is also the same. If we go by that logic, it is not like there’s no way like Waka-sama thinks. But I also recommend taking refuge. It may be unfortunate for the demon race, but it can also be called karma. It seems like they did understand that such a factor could happen, so being prepared for it can also be called the principle of the strong.” (Shiki)

So there’s a way huh.

Then, let’s try it.

I won’t be dying from that much anyways, so even if I fail, I won’t be losing anything.

“Shiki, explain in detail. Mio, you help as well, okay?” (Makoto)

“You will do it? Then, first I will be taking permission from his Majesty. Root-dono seems to be increasing the power more after all.” (Shiki)

“If Waka-sama decided to, I will happily help out-desu wa.” (Mio)

Shiki goes to where Zef is.

If I mess up, the ones who will be facing the worst will be the demon race after all.

It is necessary to confirm if it’s okay to do it.

If we are told to not do anything, then we can just take refuge in Asora anyways.

Rona is being treated as usual, and Mokuren is carrying her all this time.

But I won’t lend them Shiki.

I will have him cooperate with me from now on after all.

“A buckshot with a mixture of six elements huh. Well, we will just do Shiki’s plan with all we have.” (Makoto)

“It will be a collaboration work-desu wa ne, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

I look at the shining Root.

The good mood of Mio slightly calmed down my heart.

# Chapter 192

## A new step

(...In other words, what do you mean?)

This is the answer I gave to Shiki's careful explanation through thought transmission.

No well, I just didn't understand around 20% of it.

I did try my best in listening and understanding it.

The Demon Lord and the Demon Generals seem to be busy throwing out orders, so we don't have much spare time on our part.

That's why he easily accepted the proposal of Shiki.

They are moving in a way that decreases the casualties, and they have judged that there's no demerit in me acting.

And so, there's no problem in me acting.

Is what Shiki said.

(If I am to say only what we will be doing, it would be that instead of using spells, we will be sublimating magic power as material, in that way, we will be able to utilize Waka-sama's magic power amount better.) (Shiki)

(Are you telling me to change the Magic Armor's substance?) (Makoto)

Right now I am having it materialize as a spell to its limit, so completing it as a spell would be easy but... substance huh.

It sounds difficult.

(Yes. I will do the support for the fine details, so Waka-sama just has to strongly picture taking that attack of Root-dono without creating any after-wave and concentrate.)

(Shiki)

Without any after-wave huh.

In that case, it would be fine to just imagine something like a shield or a dome maybe?

In this moments, it is hard to instantly digest it even if he explains the theory behind it.

Honestly speaking, no matter what we are doing, it would help me a lot if they tell me in a simple way.

I have already shown my intend to follow Shiki's plan, so it is even more important.

Anyways, the countermeasure for the crazy blaze of Root has been decided.

What Mio will be doing has already been decided as well.

"Then, I will be try and do it. Even if it doesn't, there's meaning in trying. Mio, try to deflect it so the attack concentrates on me, okay?" (Makoto)

"Can I erase it if I can?" (Mio)

"Of course. Only if you can, and don't push yourself." (Makoto)

"Understood. I will do my best-desu wa." (Mio)

Mio doing a cute guts pose is something that I don't normally see from her, but it helped me release the tension in my body.

Truly dependable.

(I am sorry to interrupt you in the middle of your pleasant chat, but it is already reaching the limit of my charge. I will be shifting to the next phase. A bit more and I will shoot.) (Root)

A casual thought transmission came from the dragon, Root, that is within the sublime light.

(...Don't 'I will shoot' me! You pervert that can't read the mood. Just because you are

going to disappear anyways doesn't mean that you can just be so casual!) (Makoto)

(I do feel sorry, like seriously. At this rate, Crimson Red might die again, so this time I will owe you quite a debt for this. But it has an enforcing power that even I can't go against, so this blaze is one of my strongest area of effect attacks. I didn't think there would be a time when I would actually use it... and that makes me a bit excited you see.) (Root)

At the beginning he sounded apologetic, but at the latter part he turned defiant.

He is genuinely a loss cause.

Yeah, I have confirmed this truth once again.

Just how much distance do you think there is between here and the mountain I delivered the egg of Crimson Red?

This is already not at the level of a summoned beast. That's a totally different dimension of effective range.

(At least tell me the details!) (Makoto)

(I already told you that it is a buckshot of six elements.) (Root)

(Then why are you looking upwards?) (Makoto)

If it's a blaze, you would normally point this way and go \*dokaan\*, right?

And yet, Root is pointing his mouth upwards.

The light ball that was inside the opened mouth of his, is slowly ascending and growing.

It is quite unrestful.

(That's to increase the scope of it even more.) (Root)

(...Then why is there another power being created at your mouth?) (Makoto)

(That's to increase the firepower of the resulting attack. In a fight, we dragons like to

roar after all) (Root)

(...Is that the preparation for a roar?) (Makoto)

Now that he mentions it, the roars of a Superior Dragon... I feel like I have not received a proper one aside from Grount-san.

Jin and the others received a trauma from the roar of a low dragon, but I wonder what kind of power will the roar of Root possess?

(By the way, to increase the dramatic effect, I am doing an attack that takes time to do. I want it to be impressive you see. In other words, I was aiming for an attack that you will unconsciously look at it when shot!) (Root)

(I honestly want to punch your husband.) (Makoto)

Just how much game logic level of destruction was he planning on spreading?!

!!

Root's wings shone brighter within the light.

(...He was a nice guy that you would have liked. Don't say something so sad. Now then, it is the 'beginning' of the fireworks. Well, it is not a power that you guys can do something about, so just enjoy it.) (Root)

The moment when the rainbow colored ball continued to rise till disappearing within the clouds, the place began to oscillate.

A trembling that reverberates within the body, like the one of a really low bass.

At the same time, something incredibly unpleasant enveloped my whole body.

With a slightly late squall, the roar of a rampaging beast reaches my ears.

I am sure of it.

This is the roar of that guy!



(Mio, Shiki, are you okay?) (Makoto)

(Of course-desu) (Mio)

(...It is a bit harsh. It has terrifying pressure and it is a storm of abnormal status effects. With lower resistance, it feels like it will draw you closer to death.) (Shiki)

...

Maybe because I am not self-aware of it, I didn't think of this as such a danger.

Hearing this from Shiki, I feel uneasiness.

Depending on the effective range of it, the situation will become even worse.

This kind of sense that differs from an ordinary person can also be considered a weakness of mine.

(Root! What's the effective range of this roar?!?) (Makoto)

(...)

(Hey, are you ignoring me?!) (Makoto)

(...)

Tch!

Is he in a trance or something? Root is just looking at a point in the sky and continuing with his mouth opened.

There's no reaction or movement.

The last thing he said was fireworks. Just how far is he going to mess around!

When he said fireworks, was he referring to the last attack?

Hm.

Wait.

If that's the case, is that ball going to bloom in the sky?

...As a buckshot?!

How ill natured!!

(Mio, sorry but that blaze is probably going to fall in quite a wide range. It might be hard to deal with, but I am counting on you.) (Makoto)

(Yes, leave it to me.) (Mio)

Now then, soon I will have Shiki...

Eh? A thought transmission from Zef?

(Your Majesty, is something the matter?) (Makoto)

While being cautious of the next move of Root, I respond to Zef.

Zef should be busy with giving orders, so I wonder what business he has.

(Raidou-dono, are you able to deal with the Myriad Color Dragon's roar?) (Zef)

(No, we are cautious of its next move, so stopping the roar is...) (Makoto)

(...No, this one meant if you are able to resist it, but it seems it was unnecessary worry huh. This one doesn't know what you intend to do, but if you are able to show at least a bit of result, it would be an heroic action. No need to hesitate. This one wants you to do as you wish.) (Zef)

I have been given permission once again.

What a relief.

(I will do what I can. Well then.) (Makoto)

(Yeah, sorry for interrupting you in this busy time. Coercion, paralysis, petrification, panic, weakening lvl 5 curse disease, spiritual ailment lvl 6 curse disease, bodily function decrease, magic power effectiveness decay... there's still more, but the ones this one has been able to identify are already crazy. What an unbelievable roar. There's

already casualties. Please be careful. Raidou-dono's group, don't push yourselves. This one doesn't mind if you secure your own safety first. This one... wishes you good luck.) (Zef)

(...Yeah. Thanks for your care.) (Makoto)

...Root.

You really did quite the messed up attack.

To cast curse disease from a roar.

You probably don't know how much I hate curse diseases, but right now, I am thinking of definitely crushing your attack.

I have gotten quite a lot of resolve.

(Now then, Waka-sama. Please imagine stopping the attack that's gathering from Root and dispersing it, and send that image to your Magic Armor. As long as you strongly think of it, I will support you on the remaining.) (Shiki)

(Understood. Mio, prepare for the attack and grasp the surroundings, and tell Shiki and I that information through linking. Shiki, you will be doing the support and the analysis of Root's attack. I will be using [Sakai] and concentrate only in my spell.) (Makoto)

Seeing the two nodding, I was relieved and turn my attention to me and my Magic Armor.

I turn everything to within me.

It is my specialty.

Image.

An image of stopping the gathering attack.

"9th Step 'Gemini', release. 'Being that supplements and fulfills, Servant.'" (Shiki)

"Sky thread, fill. 'Black Sky Network.'" (Mio)

I feel the activation of power pretty close.

Shiki uses Gemini and turns into two.

Mio places a web in the sky.

When I look up, as far in the sky as I could see, I could tell that Mio's power had been activated.

I silently dive within myself.

I make my image stronger.

I alter the Magic Armor and reinvent it, its substance.

Shield... no.

Web... no.

Mirror... no.

None felt right.

I need a stronger embodiment of power.

Something big that can 'hold' and crush any attack.

Destroy the attack.

I think that's the most fitting image required right now.

Right.

I remember the figure of that four armed giant that can be called the symbol of power, I remember the gauntlets that he has equipped in those arms.

That's it.

Arm.

Strong, rustic, and in part, inorganic.

A fine arm like that of Io that instills trust.

An arm that would make one think is a human-shaped weapon; make that image bigger, and then stronger.

Something that would destroy anything that's caught between its palm... let's create such an arm.

I have decided.

Next, I enlarge the arm of the Magic Armor just like that, and then shape it.

After that, I just have go deeper, deeper.

I lead myself towards the state I have when immersing myself in a fight.

I feel the aria of Shiki from quite far back.

While I pave the beastly road that's in my heart, Shiki follows with his aria.

It is not only one.

Shiki is pacing with Gemini and was processing at triple the speed.

The figure of those two voicing out loud their aria was like that of a chorus.

Aside from using it as a scapegoat, he said that he is able to place an ability in Gemini before its activation. It seems like this time's type is the ability to process spells.

(Waka-sama, is it okay-desu ka?) (Mio)

Mio's thought transmission.

In the first place, because of Root's roar, it is a situation where we can't properly hear the voice of anyone, so using thought transmission is obvious.

Shiki's aria as well, I am just looking at the magic power flow and deciphering from it, so I am not actually listening to it.

(...What?) (Makoto)

(That pervert's roar-desu. It feels like it is not only going for the demon race city, but expanding even more. At this rate, the attack will also...) (Mio)

(Root brings trouble through and through huh. It feels like it brings instant death to normal people, and it looks like there's already casualties. Understood. I will see if I can do something about it.) (Makoto)

The people at the towns also follow the principle of power, so they probably won't complain even if they die, but even if the town is fine, for the people to be wiped out is not fun.

I don't know if I am able to erase the roar that's already in effect, but I do have the means, so I let's try it.

(No, it seems like the attack range will be increasing, so I don't know if I will be able to cover for it. And so, I was wondering if I can take a bit of power from Waka-sama.) (Mio)

As if saying the casualties in the towns are of no matter, Mio easily denies my words.

In exchange, what she said was that she wanted me to lend her power.

(Power, as in magic power?) (Makoto)

(Yes, if you do that, I will be able to bring out more power. Of course, it will burden Waka-sama, so it is only if I receive your permission though.) (Mio)

If it's magic power, I don't mind.

As long as I don't need to do much. It is something that's overflowing with no end in sight anyways.

If there's use to it, I don't mind at all.

(It is fine, use as much as you want.) (Makoto)

(Thank you very much!! Then, facing me... right, should I say it is like opening a valve? Ah, right! This link that Waka-sama and I -and the extra Shiki- are connected to,

imagine as if the one between us is thicker and release it, please!) (Mio)

(Understood.) (Makoto)

While holding doubts of Mio who is strangely exalted and happy, I decide to finish the request of Mio first, since I was feeling a strange pressure from the creation of the arm.

Just like Mio told me, I use the information link that she had connected to Shiki, her, and I; and concentrating in that line, I face Mio and release the magic power, or more like, I imagine pouring it onto her.

(Fuh~ufufufu! It is here, Waka-sama's magic power! This is the best-desu~It is delicious and feels good-desu~. With this, there's nothing I can't do!) (Mio)

...

Well, I won't delve deeper into it.

If she has gotten stronger, then there's no problem.

(...Sorry Waka-sama, can I ask you to do that to me as well?) (Shiki)

(Shiki too?) (Makoto)

(Resisting the roar of Root-dono is proving more difficult than I thought, and the support from the aria is running late. I want to prepare the best as possible.) (Shiki)

(Okay.) (Makoto)

I pour magic power to Shiki the same way as Mio.

It is like opening a cork, so it is close to sharing.

(This is... you have saved me, Waka-sama. With this, I will be able to support plenty enough!) (Shiki)

(Even so, it feels like there's some sort of obstruction in the creation of the arm, a strange sensation. Is this also because the support of Shiki is running late?) (Makoto)

The arm of the Magic Armor has already doubled in size.

Compared to the other parts, its density has increased, moreover, it has already begun taking the form of the image I have.

But when I try to make it more precise and imagine it as a substance, there's some sort of strange intermittent noise interrupting.

It disturbs my concentration and it doesn't proceed as I want.

I am leaving the aria crude and putting my concentration depth as priority, so maybe this is the recoil for leaving the fine details to Shiki?

(Noise... Yeah, that's probably the case. Waka-sama, once more. Please try to form that arm.) (Shiki)

(Understood. Just that, now I have something extra to do, so I will reduce the speed a bit. And Shiki, you also continue with the analysis of Root's attack, okay?) (Makoto)

(Understood.)

The aria support of Shiki has increased in speed instantly.

It is still slower than my concentration, but I will be going slower from now on, so Shiki might be faster after that.

I look at my surroundings.

The buildings at the surroundings have begun crumbling.

There's nothing above us, and we have properly secured our footing, but the people that are running must be having it rough.

Zef has gathered with the Demon Generals, and it seems they have already finished creating a barrier to protect themselves.

Rona seems to have suffered quite a deep wound. It doesn't look like she is participating in it and stays lying down.

The other three and the Demon Lord were deploying the spell.

Moreover, thought transmissions are flying around. Obviously, in this situation I am

not thinking of peeking, but I can easily tell that the situation is dire.

Okay, let's do it then.

I maintain my natural posture and lift my hand.

I open up my fist and call my weapon.

In time, a familiar sensation is finally felt in both of my hands.

The sensation of a bow.

I put the Uchine that appeared at my right hand to my waist, and hold only Azusa which is at my left hand.

I don't face it towards Root. I simply point it forward.

Even if Sensei has taught me, it is just a ceremonial gesture.

I have already forgotten the details of the etiquette after all.

I am actually putting magic power into it and expecting actual effects though.

While concentrating in having it reach as far as possible, I pull the bow without placing any arrow and the bowstring rings.

The bowstring trembles, and when it calmed down, I did it again.

I repeated this three times.

The bow ringing ceremony.

I wonder how much it will increase the effectiveness.

When I was thinking that, the support spell of Shiki increased in speed by a lot.

Honestly speaking, it was clearly faster than me.

Oh?

(Root-dono's roar is already showing no effects in my body! Is this what you were intending to do, Waka-sama?!) (Shiki)

For the time being, it seems like it was effective for Shiki who is close.

Right now I am concentrating [Sakai] completely into forming the arm, so I don't know much of the situation at town, but it is fine to just have it reach there.

Okay then, since Shiki has already caught up, I will not care about the noise and do it all in one go.

A bothersome thought transmission of Zef was send to me, but I am concentrating right now, so I ignore it and aim to finish forming the arm.

After stopping this, I will save the people that are being assailed by the curse disease, and then I will go to Rotsgard—

“?!!”

From Root's mouth, a laser-like blaze like that of Crimson Red was spit out.

It flashily tears through the sky and pierces through the rainbow colored ball that was slightly up.

It's been awhile since I have seen the blue sky.

And then, from the pierced ball, it really rained down like a firework. Buckshots, buckshots, buckshots everywhere...

This is... there's a lot more than I thought and the range is bigger as well!

The thick web was steadily being destroyed, and from the sky, a rainbow colored self-styled blaze was raining down to the earth.

Instead of calling it a blaze, this is more like a volcano eruption!!

“As expected, what you do is impressive-desu wa ne, pervert! Even so, learn that it is impossible to steal the march on me today!” (Mio)

Mio matches the scope of the raining buckshot and instantly expands the web that she

set up in the sky.

I can tell that my magic power is flowing to Mio.

The amount is not that much so I don't mind, but by using that, the black thread web expanded and received the buckshots.

The ones that fell in the spaces at the middle of the web were also stopped by a mysterious light pattern, and not a single one fell to the ground.

"Ah!!"

Eh.

In a moment, the voice of Mio resounded and had a spaced out expression.

I chase her gaze and look afar.

A single rainbow colored ball escaped from the web and fell at the horizon.

I haven't been there, so I don't know what's there though.

At the very least, it's not the mountain of Crimson Red nor is there a demon race town.

(Mio, you don't need to mind it. Right now concentrate in maintaining that web, and having the attack face towards me.) (Makoto)

(Yeah... I am very sorry.) (Mio)

The thickness of that pillar of light that was created could be clearly seen even from here.

The vibration and sound came with a time-lag.

One hit is like that?

If all the several hundreds that are at the sky fall at once, not only will the vegetation be wiped out, even the ground wouldn't remain.

I was honestly amazed by the crazy attack of Root who has already disappeared from

sight.

Oh well, Tomoe will probably be scolding him before us in Rotsgard.

We will leave the scolding of that guy for later.

More importantly, there's no spare time.

Moreover, the noise has been becoming steadily worse.

If this were a radio, it would be at a level where I would have long given up on listening to it. If it were a tv, it would be in the point where it is almost at the lost signal.

Is it some sort of barrier against anything regarding the formation of substance?

No matter the reason, I must do a strenuous effort in my concentration and strengthen my image.

Changing magic power into substance is quite harsh.

(Shiki, the noise is still terrible. I will try doing it in one go but, is it okay?) (Makoto)

(...Yes. Please continue as you wish.) (Shiki)

(Thanks) (Makoto)

I close my eyes and dive deeply inside myself.

I use one hand to cut off and shut all that noise that's interrupting incessantly.

With my remaining hand, I brush off the haziness from my image, and do my best to expose the full picture of it.

I concentrate only in that task.

When I shut up the noise and properly point my concentration, it was easy.

There was a haziness that was difficult to brush away, and there were so many vague shadows on it that it was incredibly hard to get a full picture of the arm.

Desperately, with the sensation of diving into the depths of water, I do my best to grasp that distant shadow.

I don't know how far Shiki is accompanying me, but that moment came.

It was a moment that I felt lasted very long.

I once again felt gratitude towards Mio who is holding back the attack properly.

I can do it.

A rough pair of arms that one can even feel wickedness from them.

Those were truly the arms of a robot.

The arms of a machine that has been excessively ornamented.

An organic sensation can't be felt.

Now then, let's touch it.

Let's create this.

I silently touch the arm that is shining silver.



This is it, is what I thought.

A while after Waka-sama had closed his eyes, the two arms of the Magic Armor detach, get huge, and complex features appear on it.

At the same time, an intense creak like that of a scream resounded in the place.

Different from the roar of Root-dono, it didn't have any sort of added effect, and it was purely a pain in the ears.

I know what this is.

Not much after, Waka-sama opened his eyes.

He tells me of his success with his eyes.

My mouth was busy with chanting the aria, so I respond with a nod, and put my strength to carry out the little support remaining.

With thought transmission I would have been able to respond with words, but right now I didn't even have the power to do something like that.

Waka-sama broke through the obstructive noise and grabbed the path to this spell, no, this deed.

I also have a guess on what that obstructive noise might be.

Splendid.

Later, as long as I finish the support in my aria, things will be wrapped up.

I who has created a double by using the power of the ring, have endowed it with the ability for spell support this time.

Doing the processing ability of more than two people at once, I provide a small assistance.

The more complicated the magic is, the more important the beginning is.

Waka-sama normally praises me as being amazing for accomplishing my tasks smoothly, but the one that's truly impressive is Waka-sama.

Within his pitch dark path, he gropes for new avenues, and creates a path in a pathless way.

And he advances through it without hesitating.

To smoothen things in a place where there's already a path created, may be necessary, but as long as there's technique, anyone would be able to do that.

When I am able to help Waka-sama, I always end up being consecutively surprised, and it is also an irreplaceable learning experience.

And, I finally finish all the support necessary.

The Demon Lord and Demon Generals that are able to be in this place are truly lucky.

Rona who is in this place but has no consciousness is quite the unlucky one.

Now, witness it.

Our master's new step.

From the fingers of the pair of arms that have detached of the Magic Armor, an alteration begins.

I can tell that excitement was running through my body.

There's already no need to call it with a deceiving word like alteration.

For the sake of not creating weight in Waka-sama, I changed the way of saying it, and had explained it in a more simple way, but...

"He was able to. In a body that's not of a God... Just how far can a human go?"

He is not even a Graunt.

As a hyuman, no matter how much assistance one receives, to be able to achieve this...

Just how much possibilities are lying in that body of his.

My interest doesn't run out.

This is why I can't stop serving Waka-sama.

"Right right. That is the vessel of creation; the ability to give concrete form from an image." (Shiki)

Looking at the arm that's shining silver, I felt tears welling up.

The ear piercing noise was the cry of the world.

The obstructing noise was probably the resistance of the world.

Without the qualifications and leaving it to raw magic power and spell technique, the

world must have rejected it.

But Waka-sama has crushed it.

He shut it up.

With only his own will and power.

I see. He is an abnormal one, so he will probably be able to go against the Goddess.

While being honored to be a follower of such a person, I look at Waka-sama who has done a great exploit.

“...Waka-sama?!”

“Waka-sama! What’s wrong?!”

Right at this moment, Waka-sama had bent his knees and was about to fall!

My voice and Mio-dono’s voice had overlapped.

(I am okay! I am just a bit tired. You two, please don’t lower your guards.) (Makoto)



A deathly pale face. Looking at his figure that is sweating profusely, I can't think of him as being okay at all.

But this person is not someone that would say this out loud.

When he is truly in pain, he will hide his true feelings; that's the kind of person he is.

That's why I need to do a complete follow-up later.

Right now, I have to concentrate in my master's great exploit, and the way he will utilize it.

There's still one job remaining that my master has left me.

(Mio, please have all of the attack face me and have it pass.) (Makoto)

(Is your body... no, I understand.) (Mio)

Because the thought transmission has been left open for all three of us, I am able to hear the words of Waka-sama as well.

It seems like he will finally use that arm.

(Shiki, hurry and analyse that attack. Well, it is in proximity, so I think that if it's Shiki, it will be fine though. Then, create a mix element that can go against it and extinguish it.) (Makoto)

A mix element that can go against Root-dono's blaze?!

Even if it is being blocked by Mio-dono in the sky, I will have to do that against something that has been perfected to a point of being art?!

It is impossible.

No matter what I do, I wouldn't be able to.

It isn't something that can be done with elements.

(Waka-sama, I am sorry, but that's impossible. I will hurry and analyse it, but even if I am able to do it well, it would just end up as a downgraded version.) (Shiki)

(Then it doesn't have to be an opposite, anything is fine. I don't care if it's just something that can extinguish that thing. Even if the power is not enough, I will take care of it. Shiki just has to take care of the balance in the elements. Find an adjustment that can turn that thing into zero.) (Makoto)

H-He is being unreasonable.

Even so... it is certainly true that it is not impossible to create an element balance that can erase a specific attack.

If it were a completely opposing element, there's the need to be on the level of art, but if it's just something that erases the other, then it should be fine.

In that case, if I at least have the information, I might be able to do something.

But what does he mean when he said that even if the power is not enough, he will take care of it?

(...I will try.) (Shiki)

No matter, I will just follow the idea of my master.

But I wonder how far I can go.

(If you want to, you can also do the same as Mio to power up Gemini.) (Makoto)

(To take more magic power from Waka-sama who is clearly tired already, is just...) (Shiki)

Knowing that it will burden him, makes it even harder to do.

(I am saying it is okay, so don't worry. I will also have this arm do its job, and I also have work to do.) (Makoto)

Work again.

Is he assuming that there's still more?

...

I see, the time-lag attack of Root-dono might be...

I did think that it was a roar followed by a blaze, but he didn't say that the time-lag would only be once.

(Waka-sama, I will be dropping them. While I was blocking them, I ate around ten of them- I mean, I erased them, but it will be difficult to do more than that. I have decided to depend on your words.) (Mio)

As expected of Mio-dono.

To customize the spell that was already activated and from that distance, and she was able to deal with the light balls.

The spells that Mio-dono uses are all originals, and most of them use arias that I practically don't understand their meaning.

At times, Waka-sama speaks with Mio-dono about arias, but for the unskilled me, it only sounded like a puzzling conversation.

It makes me envy well-rounded talent and power.

(It is fine to depend on me at times you know. I am always being spoiled by you guys after all. Do it.) (Makoto)

“Black Sky Network, distortion release.” (Mio)

With Mio's words, a part of the sky that was covered by a black web almost as if it was covering the whole sky, faded from the sky until the point it couldn't be seen anymore.

And the art-like mix element buckshot was heading towards us in its entirety, accurately speaking, towards Waka-sama, and it once again began to fall.

The rainbow colored buckshot rains down towards one point.

That sight was illusory, and I who was at the crashing point, had gulped my breath from the sheer beauty.

But sadly, it was different for the leading actor of this place.

Waka-sama's two arms that are floating in air a few meters ahead of him, they left a space in between the hands as if they were about to applaud.

Aiming at that space, the first shot of Root-dono's blaze came.

!!

Incredible.

There's nothing in the space of the two arms.

There's nothing, and yet, a little before reaching that area, it headed towards the space in between the hands as if being sucked in, and there, it was compressed to the size of a hyuman fist and stopped in place.

Second shot, third shot, fourth shot...

The shots that were coming one after the other have faced the same fate, and the buckshot that surpassed a hundred had turned into one. Even if it was steadily getting bigger, it was only as big as the head of a person.

My first guess was that he would imagine a giant shield or something resembling a mantle, but it was actually an arm that resembled a giant gauntlet.

And it was stopping the shots with an unbelievable method into one place, and shutting it out without creating any damage to the surroundings.

Ah, I see.

This resembles the time when he was fighting the Demon Generals and crushed the lava ball in the Magic Armor's hand.

That was with one hand, but Waka-sama has stored all the shots into that space, and maybe he intends to crush it with those two arms?

(Shiki, I can understand your happiness in seeing that it is working, but please don't watch in fascination and continue the analysis. Are you doing it?) (Makoto)

(O-On my way!) (Shiki)

(I am counting on you. When Shiki's analysis finishes, I will try extinguishing this. Being able to do this far can already be considered a success, and it is Root, so he will probably be doing a finishing blow.) (Makoto)

(I don't think Root-dono is such a persistent type though.) (Shiki)

(Instead of Root, I am more worried about the data he used as reference. He has a tendency to reproduce it to a level that is verbose.) (Makoto)

(Hah...) (Shiki)

I don't understand the foundation of Waka-sama, but I hurry my analysis.

It has natural features of fire and water, and it also has light and darkness.

Even though it has elements that repulse each other, it has an abnormal balance that makes them mutually increase their power and it is creating power enough to turn castles and towns into ashes.

If someone touches this, that person will truly disappear.

Root-dono also has an evil disposition.

No matter how many possibilities the Scepter had to go through in order to draw this one, in the end, it will end up killing the magician and everything else.

When thinking that this is a sacred treasure from Elysion which is the place that held its faith in the Goddess, I just don't understand the aim of it.

Even if Elysion relied on it, relied on the many dragons, and continued to utilize it; and at the end this were to activate...

There's the chance that Elysion wouldn't have fallen by the hands of the demon race, but by their very sacred treasure.

No, don't delve deep into it.

Leaving aside the future, the past has already been set.

I just have to search the element that will serve as the natural enemy of this thing.

“I have caught everything. Now I will...!” (Makoto)

Waka-sama was steadily squeezing the space in between the hands.

The merged buckshot of Root-dono seems to be showing resistance. It twitches and swells at times, but it is unable to escape from the domain that it is encased in.

“This is incredibly tiring... but!!” (Makoto)

I honestly don't know how much magic power the deed of Creation consumes.

Because even the Gods of a different world have recognized the magic power of Waka-sama, I thought that it would be impossible for it to not be enough, and that's why I decided that it was possible to utilize this moment for Waka-sama to do a step up.

Did I make some sort of miscalculation?

Or was the created thing bad?

...The magic power of Waka-sama, the thing that has no ceiling, has been whittled down till a point I can measure.

Even so, to our perspective, it is a domain that's still far into the skies for us.

But this is the first time that it has reached a point where even I can measure it.

Agitation is born within me.

It is telling me that this is no time to be easygoing.

I was unable to stop that agitation from reaching the point of disturbing my concentration.

(Shiki, calm down. It is okay. It is going well after all.) (Makoto)

Along with Waka-sama's words, a massive amount of magic power flows to my body.

A comfortable and peculiar sensation of great happiness envelops my body. I could tell that it was enough to erase my uneasiness.

(Waka-sama currently has a lot of magic power decreased. There's no need to do something like this!) (Shiki)

(It is certainly true that when I created that arm, around half of my magic power was taken away, and I think this is the first time in my life that I have lost this much magic power. I have heard this from the academy students, it seems like when magic power is about to dry up, one will experience deficiency in his physical condition as well. But it is not something that Shiki, the leading actor in this occasion, has to worry about. My job is already practically over after all.) (Makoto)

(A leading actor, that's just—!) (Shiki)

(I can tell that I can't use these arms for long. To use something in real combat when it hasn't been combat proven yet, I feel someone like Eris will be doing a tsukkomi about this later.) (Makoto)

Combat... No, leaving that aside, I have to hurry.

There's no helping it now that I have received it.

The magic power that is flowing from Waka-sama is not heading to the already deployed Gemini, but to me. Accurately speaking, to the thirteen steps rings.

This magic power that I am so familiar with because of the ruling pact, is being amplified by the rings and send to my body.

A sensation of almighty ness reverberates in my whole body, and the analysis of the element accelerated at once.

Light and darkness was paired up with a mysterious balance like that of yin yang to form the foundation, it mutually intersected with each other and synergised.

In these, four elements were added.

Water to wind, wind to fire, fire to earth, earth to water; all four assisted and enhanced each other. The strengthened elements assist even more, and were increasing the power of each other continuously like a spiral.

The more I see it, the more artistic it looked.

But if I just need to return it to nothingness...

I search for the two elements that are able to destroy the foundation of light and darkness.

And then, I search for the element that will destroy the first cardinal point, the water that the wind receives.

Hurry, hurry.

This is not impatience. I reasonably increase the processing speed, and continue searching for the elements that can destroy them.

Light and darkness, and then fire; the third element that is serving as a support.

I have found it.

With this ratio, I should be able to extinguish that blaze!

“Waka-sama, I did it!” (Shiki)

“With this! Disappear!!!” (Makoto)

He must have been waiting for my words.

The voice of Waka-sama soon resounded afterwards.

Within the clapping two silver arms, the rainbow light ball didn't explode anywhere and was simply extinguished.

With his breathing ragged, but without bending his knees again, Waka-sama proceeds to the next action.

I felt pity towards the tenacious opposition that has really done an attack against that defense.

Also, I am deeply grateful that I am the ally of this person.

(Mio, how is it?) (Makoto)

(The ascension has stopped. It is coming!) (Mio)

(As I thought!) (Makoto)

With the conversation of Waka-sama and Mio-dono, for the first time, I noticed what those two were conscious about.

I am also linked, so as long as I turned my awareness towards it, I would have noticed. What a blunder.

The laser-like attack that Root-dono shot to create this buckshot attack, it has reached towards starry sky, and had begun falling.

That also has a similar core to that of the buckshot.

And maybe that's what has made it change from ascension to descension?

But Waka-sama has his arms...

They have fallen.

The two silver arms don't show any signs of moving and have fallen to the ground.

I can't feel power from it at all.

I remember the words of Waka-sama: 'I can't use them for long'.

There's the chance that Waka-sama is exhausted to the point that there's a need to change the plan to my element analysis.

My responsibility is big.

But the balance of the element I will be creating can't stop the last attack of Root-dono.

There's the need of another card.

(Looking at the acceleration, it would take around three minutes to reach here.) (Shiki)

(Three minutes huh. Mio, sorry but can you please buy a bit more time. You don't have

to worry about my magic power.) (Makoto)

(...Understood. My web isn't suit against attacks with high penetration power, but I will try-desu wa.) (Mio)

(I am counting on you. Shiki, endow the element you created to my arrow.) (Makoto)

Waka-sama had taken a stance with Azusa.

At his right hand there's the dagger with a string attached that's called Uchine.

That right hand is facing Azusa, and when he places it on the bowstring, it stretches into a straight line, turning into a makeshift arrow.

Waka-sama who has already finished the process of pointing it high in the sky, slowly marks his aim as he pulls the bow.

So this is what he meant when he said he would be taking care of the power huh.

I see.

So in the last attack, instead of stopping it first, he intended to extinguish it right away huh.

His outlook in this extreme situation, if he were able to exhibit this ability in other fields aside from battle, I feel like he would be able to become anything he wants.

...Fuh~, because that's not the case, he is our master Makoto-sama huh.

Three minutes is short for me.

I use Gemini and begin forming an endowing spell as fast as possible but prioritizing that the element doesn't break.

Waka-sama told me to endow the spell, but since I will be endowing it to the arrow that Waka-sama is drawing, it is best to form the endowing spell instead of placing an endowing spell that increases its power.

If what I will be endowing already possesses an unparalleled strength, putting more power to it is unnecessary.

It is okay to just concentrate on accurately endowing the element.

Waka-sama's presence suddenly grows thin.

No matter how many times I see it, it is a sensation that's bad for my heart.

It is proof that the bow wielding Waka-sama has deepened his concentration.

"Just in time huh. Waka-sama said to wait for a bit more-desu yo!" (Mio)

Mio-dono reduces the scope of the black web she set in the sky and activates it.

There, a rainbow colored light streak pierces.

As expected, it seems that this attack is lower in power than that of the condensed attack of before.

Even so...

The power it has in a single point is strong to no compare.

"Kuh!!" (Mio)

The web that was able to take on all those attacks was being pushed back by the light streak and was losing its form.

Mio-dono was also showing a pained expression.

Is it possible that it will break through?

"Shiki, you were thinking about something rude, right?! I will punish you later! Something of this level... in this day where I have received the power of Waka-sama!! I will definitely not permit it, with my obstinacy as a woman at stake!!" (Mio)

...This is something I think every time, but I am confident in my poker face. And yet, why is it that Mio-dono and Tomoe-dono are always able to easily see through me?

If I am punished today or scolded, it is possible that I will really be visiting the otherside.

Also, no matter how I see it, she is being overmatched.

Mio-dono who is able to actually hold out temporarily, can already be considered a miracle. Being able to hold without it being broken is already good.

“Be obedient!!” (Mio)

The pushing back has... stopped.

Even though it is already abnormal to be able to activate such a spell from such a distance.

Not only Waka-sama, even the backs of the senpais I am supposed to be chasing are this far huh.

I look at Mio-dono with admiration and respect.

That figure of hers glaring at the sky was different from her usual self.

“Mio-dono, that hair...” (Shiki)

While in the middle of my aria, I unconsciously ask this.

Her hair has turned long and is now flowing till her waist.

Even though she was like always just a few moments ago.

“Ara, it has grown. Well, it is something trivial-desu wa. More importantly, Shiki, hurry up.” (Mio)

Is it trivial?

“Besides, your hair as well, has impertinently turned into a black color like mine and Waka-sama’s. Whatever it may be, it is okay to just mind it later. If by some chance, you are to mess up in the time I am holding here... you understand, right?” (Mio)

Hair?

Mine?

Black?

N-No, right now I should just hurry with the completion of the spell.

"Shiki, when you are finished with the spell, do it immediately, please. Mio, hold for a bit longer, okay?" (Makoto)

"U-Understood!" (Shiki)

"As long as you wish, just leave it to me." (Mio)

After those words of Mio-dono, her glare was telling me to finish as fast as possible.

I understand.

Waka-sama is maintaining his state with the bow while silently looking at the light streak.

He is probably ready already.

Soon after, I complete my spell, and endow it to Waka-sama's Uchine that has turned into an arrow.

"Then, Mio, release it." (Makoto)

"Yes!" (Mio)

"Fuh~"

While still silent, Waka-sama exhales and shoots the arrow.

It is rainbow colored just like the light streak and only a long straight line, but it pushed on towards the light streak of the same color and overlapped with each other.

I stopped my breathing and was over watching this, seeing the impudent light extinguish in an instant and only the flash of light in the sky remaining, I was deeply relieved.

That's great. It succeeded.

"As expected of Shiki. But the Uchine has been scattered away. I have to apologize to the Eldwas and have them make another one..." (Makoto)

"Yes, the arrow that I endowed and Waka-sama hit in the blank has no rival." (Shiki)

Since it was able to do this much, the Eldwas shouldn't complain about a weapon or two breaking.

They would actually welcome it with wide smiles.

"That was splendid. Even so, it would have been a bit more easy if we had the High Spirits help out. Seriously, they are all talk only." (Mio)

"Mio-dono, their own temples are in the city, so I think that it can't be helped that they would try to protect their surroundings as much as possible." (Shiki)

Phoenix and Behemoth rejected our request for cooperation.

Waka-sama didn't really seek it, but Mio-dono and I requested for their help.

But their answer was no.

The reason was because their own temple was within the range of attack.

It may be a limited scope, but they wanted to prioritize the protection of their area.

It's not like Mio-dono and I control them, so it is an incredibly reasonable answer to say that they have business to do, so it is impossible.

And when faced with an attack of this range and their temples are within it, more so.

And in truth, the people that ran to the temples when Root-dono's roar occurred, have somehow survived, so there's no doubt that it is working as a refuge location.

It is questionable how many shots that evacuation point would be able to take, but in terms of result, it was correct to not force them to come.

"Well, it isn't going to end in death anyways."

"And it isn't like death is gonna end us."

Is what they both said.

After all, there's the Phoenix that seems to revive, and the avatar of earth that controls undead as well; so those words can be said to be peculiar of them.

While having this feeling of exhaustion, I look at the Demon Lord.

They didn't say anything, they simply looked at the sky.

It can't be helped.

Because something that surpasses a war of mortals has occurred after all.

Waka-sama is quite tired.

Even if we have to postpone our departure day, we will have him rest for today, and maybe I should do the post-processing of the impending events.

Doing at least this much is no problem.

After that, we should retrieve these pair of arms and the artifact that is fallen in an unsightly manner.

It would be problematic to have it abused after all.

I transfer the silver pair of arms that will probably make the Eldwas happy, and the sacred treasure, the Governor Scepter, to Asora.

A strong wind brushes my cheeks.

My hair had clung onto the sweat of my face.

I was about to wipe it away because of the unpleasantness, and at that moment, I noticed the color of my hair.

It really is black.

Is it the side effect of receiving power from Waka-sama?

I have to investigate this as well... but first I have to deal with the Demon Lord that has

began acting.

Looking at the group that has Zef at the lead, I decided the current move to make.



“With this, Raidou has become the hero of us demon race.”

“He saved the country in its crisis, so it is obvious. Even if he acts as a merchant in the future, he will have no opposition.”

“I heard that Raidou was the one who erased that extraordinary roar in the middle of it.”

“With this, I have learned that tactics and schemes are of no use. And a frontal fight would be absurd. In other words, there’s no hands to play. I can only laugh at it.”

The Demon Lord and Demon Generals, as well as the guests, Raidou and his two followers, have returned to the city.

After that, Raidou toppled over in the middle of his conversation with Zef, but it was diagnosed that he fainted because of the decline in magic power.

Right now, Raidou is being carried by the Demon Lord Zef, and Zef was talking about the time when he will wake up, and the support in the future.

After a small silence, cheers of joy from the residents had welled up, and just like the roar of Root, it reverberated through the whole city.

The tossing hands of the citizens and that wild enthusiasm had spread through this historical city. And it was a mystery how this would contribute to Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company in the future.

This spectacle was watched by Sari and Lucia from a window of the castle, and even within the noisy interiors of it, they were speaking quietly.

“You two, his Majesty has returned. It will get busy, but anyways, we will be receiving them. Hurry.”

“Understood. Please head there first. We will head there soon.” (Lucia)

"I don't mind you coming later than us, but not making it in time by the time his Majesty and his guests arrive will not be forgiven."

"I understand, Ani-sama." (Sari)

The two return their responses to their brother, and then Sari and Lucia once again look at the Demon Lord group within the enthusiastic citizens, more accurately speaking, they were looking at Raidou who was being carried by the Demon Lord.

"Looking at that fight, and looking at the achievement this time; I have also completely comprehended it myself. We can't have him as an enemy. For that sake, I think it is fine to pay any sort of price." (Lucia)

"Yeah." (Sari)

"That's why, Sari, as I thought, it should be me -not you- who takes on that task. My current self thinks from the depths of my heart that it is fine to live for the sake of that man." (Lucia)

"Yeah, Lucia-anesama won't do. A person with looks like mine will not be rejected by them." (Sari)

"But..." (Lucia)

"Also... see." (Sari)

"!! I see. But if you are able to make contact with us, and there's the need of my help, don't hesitate to rely on me. Got it, Sari?" (Lucia)

"Thanks. When that time comes, I will not hesitate. I promise." (Sari)

"But you really act fast. Just when... that ritual supposedly needs a part of the target's body and yet..." (Lucia)

Lucia looks at the chest of Sari.

When Sari said 'see', she showed a 'bruise' that was on her chest.

Looking at it carefully, it had detailed characters inscribed and it formed a complicated pattern.

From afar, it looks like an ellipse, but it looked like a chain necklace with characters coiling around. It was something that couldn't be called good taste.

It is something that's engraved from the result of a special ritual, and Lucia knew of the meaning of it.

That's why she understood that it was *too late*, and didn't request Sari to substitute with her.

"Raidou is really thickheaded in that aspect. When we were returning from the temple, I told him that he had some graying hair, and let me take it off." (Sari)

"...When normal, he is really an easy person to deal with." (Lucia)

"Yeah, easy peasy. But equally scary. First we have to gain trust. Then, our first priority should be to set some demons within their group, even if only a little." (Sari)

"Umu. Well, the only thing I can do is to pray for your success though. Now then, it is time to receive them as well. If we are unable to receive the Demon Lord and the hero that saved us, it will invite antipathy from the populace." (Lucia)

Sari and Lucia hurry to join the reception.

"...My role is of utmost importance. I won't be able to return here. But... I am also slightly looking forward to it. What raised Raidou, and just what kind of thinking this person has. My interest doesn't end." (Sari)

The quiet monologue that Sari leaked out, disappeared inside of her.



"It seems Raidou-dono has woken up."

Rona who had returned from the guest room, sat down beside Zef and reported this to him.

"Half a day. Quite the fast recovery."

"If it is them, I can comprehend it though."

The two who responded immediately were Phoenix and Behemoth.

At that place there's Zef, Rona, and the High Spirits.

Io and Reft were controlling the chaos, so they weren't in that place.

Actually, Rona is also in that position as well, but she is present with Zef. In other words, instead of being strange that Io and Reft are not there, it could be said that Rona being there is strange.

By the way, aside from the completely necessary meetings, Mokuren rarely participates.

Research is his objective, and it is also the best way to contribute to his country.

"You two, what do you think of them?" (Zef)

"If you are thinking of taking them in, stop that thought. They are a sword without scabbard. And it is the type that can cut anything into two."

"Umu. No matter how big the power, if it's a power that will destroy a country with one mistake, it is not a power that one should possess. In the end, it will only be a danger. If this power is possessed by a mortal."

"In other words, don't touch him?" (Zef)

"That's how it would work. He is a boy that seems easy to guide his thoughts, so you guys are probably thinking about doing a lot of things, but it will be between obtaining everything or losing it all. A bet like that is not something that you should play with all the time. You guys are rebelling against the Goddess, and with that action alone, you have already put your whole race at stake after all."

"We are not only allies of the demon race. Our original role is to lend our strength to all the races in this land. As we are in that position, we are advising you this, don't use Raidou for war. Otherwise, we might have to silence you guys as well."

"...Earth and Fire Spirit-sama are beings that cooperate with us demon race even though you are being criticized by other Spirits. Regarding Raidou, we will mostly be doing that. We won't be making him participate in the war, and will not try to utilize him." (Zef)

Zef's words had created an atmosphere of relief from the High Spirits.

Rona was surprised by that.

High Spirits that are existences surpassing that of mortals, are alternating from joy and sorrow because of the acts of a hyuman.

She felt her uneasiness towards the existence called Raidou increase even more.

"Then that's fine. Not touching Raidou is the best course. We also want to tell the Goddess-sama how we feel, but I don't know if she will lend an ear..."

The big framed bodies of the High Spirits began to sway and then disappeared.

The talk between demi-humans and High Spirits has ended.

"Even the Spirits fear him, and an existence that makes them want to seek advice from the Goddess huh. This is already a situation that surpasses this one's understanding, but in that case, those arms that made such a Raidou exhausted to that point... As this one thought... it wasn't summoning but Creation?" (Zef)

"I heard that the magic power exhaustion was too much for it to be the summoning of a powerful magic tool. But Creation is a technique in the line of Gods. If Raidou was able to do that, that would mean he has begun surpassing the boundaries of a mortal. Isn't that overthinking it?" (Rona)

"Fuh... Normally, that would be the case. But with that incident of the dragon army's Governor Scepter, this one ends up pointing it towards that small possibility. It isn't a way of thinking that a Lord should have huh. Forgive this one." (Zef)

"To think that the Governor Scepter would call Root, it was also because of my deficiency in research. I thought that it was a fitting object for them to depend on, and I thought that it would be a good opportunity to clean them all out though." (Rona)

"That as well. Raidou called it Root in one glance. In other words, there's the chance that he has connections with the being that's considered the summit of dragons. Well, in the present time, there's no proof that it was Root though. This one doesn't think that there are any other dragons capable of replicating that level of attack though." (Zef)

"I have already begun the investigation of Root's outward appearance. Even if Raidou is acquainted with Root, his danger level is already at the peak. Right now we have no means to eliminate Raidou, so it wouldn't bring any change, and the only thing it would provide us is confirmation of whether it was actually Root or not." (Rona)

"Right. Seriously, my head hurts." (Zef)

"..."

The words of Zef pause, and Rona was silent.

It was an atmosphere saying that this talk of Raidou will not be changing for the better.

"By the way Rona, good work in this time's incident. That you received a grave injury at the end was this one's blunder. Sorry." (Zef)

"My whole existence is your Majesty's possession. Please don't mind it. Matters that your Majesty shouldn't dirty his hands in, I will take them all with my own hands. That dirt is my pride." (Rona)

"...That's not a reason to be spoiled by you. This one's lack of ability is wounding you. And who knows how much pain is that." (Zef)

"I want to see more of the country that your Majesty is creating. I want to do things that will bring you happiness. That's all there is to it. I... am not serving the demon race or the Demon Lord; I only serve Zef-sama. Spoiling your Majesty is more than I can wish for." (Rona)

Rona answers the words of Zef with a cheerful smile.

She, who is able to respond in a variety of situations with any kind of expression, was showing a heartfelt smile that she only shows to Zef.

Their relationship was too deep to be simply that of a Lord and subordinate.

It was an expression that would make people think that.

"...In that case, this one can only reward you by making even a bit of that country this one envisions into reality huh. This one has been blessed with a strict subordinate." (Zef)

“Utilize me as you see fit.” (Rona)

“Then Rona, what are the current numbers of the rebellion?” (Zef)

“With the other day’s attack to your Majesty, all the important people of the radical side have died. We were able to splendidly boil them all down.” (Rona)

“That man, if he were to become this one’s power, he would have become a reliable subordinate though.” (Zef)

“A conciliation was impossible. That man had a profound hatred towards your Majesty after all.” (Rona)

“Umu, and how much did your ‘current position as a member of the rebellion’ increase?” (Zef)

“The important members were eliminated, so I think that in terms of weight in decisions, I would be around number one or two. If you give me a few months more, I think I will be able to become the head. I did utilize my position as a Demon General to leak out information and they were able to almost reach the neck of your Majesty after all.” (Rona)

“If Raidou is the hero of the demon race, you would be the hero of the rebellion huh.” (Zef)

“It seems like it was good to show them how I covered one attack of your Majesty for one of their members. Even in the people that hold a different opinion, it looks like they have held an image of me protecting their comrades.” (Rona)

Rona reports with a smile appearing in her face.

The information leak that Zef spoke about before was Rona.

Moreover, it is something that the Lord knew of.

If the rebellion knew of this, just how much despair and how much hatred they would grow to have for Zef and Rona, just trying to imagine it is scary.

“Even if this one missed your vitals in an instant, that made my innards cold.” (Zef)

“Mokuren was in that place as well, so I was sure that I wouldn’t die at that moment.”  
(Rona)

“A Demon General that is my close aide is also their ace, so it was plenty enough of a chance to earn the head of the Demon Lord huh. For them, you must be quite the dependable existence.” (Zef)

“Is how they must think. In truth, I am controlling the pace of the rebellion, and will never let them get in the way of your Majesty though.” (Rona)

“Using a shield to protect one’s body has its limits. The best would be to have a shield and sword to play one’s part after all. It might be a dirty role, but Rona, this one’s counting on you.” (Zef)

“Yes. First, I will become the leader of the rebellion. I will lead everything to your Majesty’s will.” (Rona)

At the hall where there’s only the two of them, a conversation that could be considered highly classified has finished quietly.



Not only did he fall unconscious and the Demon Lord-sama gave him a princess carry, he also ended up sleeping for a whole one day and a half; I am that Raidou-desu.

I intended for it to be cool, and yet, I messed it up at the very end.

Tomoe was happily saying that I should return quick, when I opened my eyes there was Mio inside my bed, and Shiki seems to have been trying so hard that he had bags in his eyes!

What a fail.

Ah, the long-haired version of Mio had returned to normal by the time I woke up.

Shiki’s black hair returned to red as well.

It seems that change was temporary.

The demon race city was reasonably okay. The buildings and people had some

damage, but there was liveliness.

Zef properly explained our exploits to the citizens, is what I was told, and I thought: what the hell? But when I actually went out for a walk, I understood the meaning.

The food carts that I was jostled into, gave me all the food for free, and not only that, most of it was forcefully fed into my mouth.

It was an incredible torture, I mean, reception.

By the time I was aware, I already had presents and was in front of the castle gates.

That was amazing.

Moreover, because I was surrounded by so many people, I was unable to understand what was going on at all, and yet, my wallet was not pickpocketed.

Even though the demon race settlements don't have much security.

Anyways, it felt like they were saying: we are grateful, you bastard.

Well, I was able to properly block the blaze of Root, so I decided to agree with this amount of appreciation.

When I took a seat for the night banquet, it felt as if the city around the castle joined together to do a big festival, and the night was spent in a grand fashion.

Maybe because the people were told that I was in convalescence, there wasn't anyone who made contact with me aside from Zef and the Demon Generals, and it ended with only gathering attention from afar.

I did say it 'ended as', but personally, the gazes were painful.

In the next morning, Shiki showed me a mountain of letters that were substitutes for the greetings in the banquet.

Every one of them were letters from influential demons of the territory, and were saying things like: please do come have business in our land.

I think it would be good to have the Forest Onis, Gorgons, and Winged-kins join in

groups to check them out in order.

Of course, if we are to make a store in those places, I will have to show my face every now and then, so it is best to not decide quickly about actually putting more stores, and so, I place that thought in the deep recesses of my mind.

There should be no problems in doing peddling for a while.

And so, while it wasn't a proper ending, we safely approached the day we leave the demon city.

Ah, obviously, I told them that it was okay to not have guards in our return.

We are already late in our return, so if we were to take several days even in our return, it would have troublesome effects in my lectures and the Company.

We plan to immediately go to Asora as soon as we are lost into the blizzard.

"Well then your Majesty, it was a long stay, but with this, we will be excusing ourselves."  
(Makoto)

"What a regret. This one wanted Raidou-dono to look at the other towns as well though." (Zef)

Zef speaks as if he had lingering feelings, but since the incident of Root, he hasn't spoken about the topic of marriage, and most of the talk was done by Shiki, so for me, he became an incredibly easy person to talk with.

This is probably also a social skill.

"At the next chance, I would like to do that. I did receive passionate invitation letters, so when I arrange some tasks I have, I am thinking about going around the territory."  
(Makoto)

"That will make everyone happy. It will be troublesome, but please do so." (Zef)

"Yes. This generous reception, I, Misumi Raidou, will remember it. Now then, we will be going." (Makoto)

Okay, let's return home!

“Ah, please wait, Raidou-dono.” (Zef)

Zef calls me to a stop.

“Just one last thing. There’s a gift from the demon race.” (Zef)

...

It is already fine, isn’t it?

Hm... ah, one last thing at the end.

I have a bad feeling about this.

“What is it, your Majesty?” (Makoto)

“...Sari.” (Zef)

“Yes?” (Makoto)

Now that he mentions it, today I haven’t see her.

Sari comes out from within the tumult of people and shows herself.

“...Sari-dono?” (Makoto)

Her figure gave me a bad feeling and I unconsciously call her name.

How to say it... a maid outfit.



No, it is a maid outfit.

It is the clothes that maids from the demon race use. There isn't much decoration to it and it didn't have the frills I imagined those kind of clothes to have.

They were pretty plain clothes.

Right now, the clothes that have frills are the ones Akua and Eris combi wear at the fridays they call 'Maid Day' in the Company.

There are times when it changes to things like 'Pajama Day', so it seems to be pretty random.

Wait, that's of no importance right now.

The problem is why Sari is wearing those clothes.

"Raidou-dono, no, Goshujin-sama<master>. Just as promised, I will offer you this body of mine, and vow to serve as a chamberlain of yours for the rest of my life." (Sari)

...

What?

"...Waka-sama, what is the meaning of this?" (Mio)

Mio had a \*gogogo\* sfx coming out from her. <*An sfx denoting anger.*>

But I don't understand the situation at all!

"...Ehm, no, I don't know at all." (Makoto)

I barely manage to say this.

"Then it is just this girl being crazy-desu ne? I will take care of her quickly." (Mio)

"Please wait, Mio-sama. This 'promise' that I mentioned to Goshujin-sama, Mio-sama has also heard of it." (Sari)

"I don't have a single memory of it-desu wa ne. There's a limit to saying nonsense..."

(Mio)

Without any hesitation, Sari who had her knees and head down, had lifted her head and responded to Mio.

Ah, for a second, I forgot to stop her.

Even though Mio said something dangerous.

An important person of the demon race was about to be killed right in front of their faces by one of my followers.

I was completely frozen.

"At that time in the Spirit Temple rampage, I made an unreasonable request to Goshujin-sama without understanding my own power, moreover, I said: 'I will definitely return you unwounded. I promise this with my life', and yet, in the end, I was the one being protected. And so, with this life I betted with, from today on, I am Goshujin-sama's possession." (Sari)

"W-W-What?!"

She said this in one breath, and then, she suddenly opened her clothes and exposed her chest.

...No well, even if she does that, she has a chopping board body so...

I don't feel any lust for it though.

I was purely agitated.

"That is..." (Makoto)

I point at the ellipse-looking thing that's at Sari's chest.

Is that a tattoo?

"It is the proof that I have vowed this life of mine to Raidou-sama. What I did was a ritual that has been passed down in the demon race. It is already showing its effects. Even if I am able to leak information of the demon race to Goshujin-sama, I can't leak

information of Goshujin-sama to the demon race. You will be able to utilize me as a convenient pawn without worrying about betrayal." (Sari)

"Then just return to the demon race side and live your life as always—" (Makoto)

"That can't be done, Raidou-dono. That ritual can't be cancelled. It is an olden ritual that uses the root of life and has been continuously improved by the demon race; a prided ritual of the demons. It cannot be compared, but its fine details are way higher than the one Raidou-dono has of a ruling pact. The release of it will definitely vanish the soul of the target. It is a practice that one would hesitate to use even on the worst criminals." (Zef)

"No, even if it can't be cancelled, we can just leave it as if it is an order of mine." (Makoto)

"It is impossible to have a Demon Lord child that would definitely betray us with a single word of Raidou-dono. It is regretful, but this one wouldn't be able to leave her with any government related affairs." (Zef)

"Gugh..." (Makoto)

Even so, it is just unreasonable to take back a demon maid-san, right?

It might be okay at the bases of the borders, but it would be hard for Rotsgard and Tsige.

Tsige might be a choice, but even if Rembrandt-san himself says OK, the whole town won't be ok with it.

Even if I am given someone that I can't place in the Company, it is honestly only going to trouble me.

Even if you tell me that it is already settled...

"As I thought, let's have her die. That is the best choice for us, the demon race, and for herself-desu wa. She will be able to die with peace of mind if we just pray for her to not do such rash things in her next life, probably." (Mio)

"...Is that the wish of Goshujin-sama?" (Sari)

"Waka-sama, please tell her. That she is an hindrance." (Mio)

Sari received that proposal of Mio, and Mio throws it to me.

What a crazy thing she is making me do.

What should I do?

Should I aim for the cancellation of the ritual?

With that as a preamble, I can take her in temporarily...

"...Shiki, is it possible to cancel this ritual?" (Makoto)

"I don't know if that will be able to solve the problem though. But it should be possible to cancel it, if we just take the time to do it. Leaving aside the procedure and methods, it is a troublesome ritual. She probably won't die, but I think it will take around ten years to analyse it." (Shiki)

Long.

"As long as they don't know what we have been doing in that time, it is impossible to have Sari return to the demon race. At that time, if necessary, the Demon Lord would provide her shelter and a retired life though." (Shiki)

Don't continuously release an aura of understanding.

So at the end, Zef has left me this 'present' huh.

"If Goshujin-sama tells me to die, I will end it here." (Sari)

Ah, it is pissing me off.

All this talk has been about dying and dying.

They really say it so easily.

It is true that people do die easily, but to lightly throw away your life because of a promise feels wrong for me.

"Death is not a word that should be said so lightly, Sari-dono." (Makoto)

"But I am already the possession of Goshujin-sama. If I am told to suffer, I will suffer; if I am told to die, I will die. It is the fitting end for me who was unable to keep my promise." (Sari)

"Was your life light enough to be thrown away with a single promise?" (Makoto)

"For me, it wasn't a promise that could be taken lightly." (Sari)

"In that case, I don't need that kind of person. I want the people that live together with me to have a long life after all." (Makoto)

"...Understood." (Sari)

"?!"

Sari quickly took out a dagger and thrusted it to her own neck.

Hey!

I didn't tell her to die!

"Sari-dono?!" (Makoto)

There was no answer.

Well, that's obvious, but... more importantly, it is strange.

Zef, the Demon Generals; no one is moving.

"Shiki, can you save her?!" (Makoto)

"Are you going to save her? A person that you called unnecessary?" (Shiki)

"Hey now, I said I didn't need her, but I didn't tell her to die! In the first place, this girl is an important existence for the demon race—" (Makoto)

"If she is important, we don't need to move ourselves; they should be the ones acting. In other words, Sari-dono has already completely lost her position within the demon

race. If you don't intend to take her in, just like what Mio-dono said, it would be best to have her die. A harsh lifestyle would be waiting for her if she doesn't do so after all." (Shiki)

I look at Zef.

No, I glare at him.

She is a girl that has been raised as his own child you know?

Is he going to abandon her so easily?!

"Raidou-dono, this one understands what you are trying to say. But Sari was the one who took a hair of Raidou-dono and did the ritual without consulting with anyone. And for the demon race, this ritual is the worst stigma. We are unable to save Sari. In this occasion, this one's personal feelings are pointless in the face of the demon race's will." (Zef)

None of the demons move.

That's how much meaning this ritual holds for them.

Lucia was biting her lips, but she wasn't moving.

In exchange, she is glaring at me.

Damn it, you are in no position to be glaring at me, you know?

The one who did the ritual at her own convenience was Sari!

Mio and Shiki were also silently watching.

What should I do?

Should I let her die like this?

I am not that acquainted with Sari.

I do think that her childishness is lacking, but it is not like I want to teach her how to be childish.

The most I thought was that she is quite the mature demon.

In that case, if she will only be a pain, abandoning her...

"Raidou-dono, leaving aside that slave, there's something this one forgot to tell you. Is it okay?" (Zef)

Zef passes beside Sari and approaches me.

That amount of blood. It is almost to the point of no return.

What is Zef trying to do at this moment?

"But your Majesty, right now is a bit..." (Makoto)

"It is okay. It is only going to take a bit." (Zef)

Zef takes the indecisive me to a slightly separated location.

A place where we can see the crowd, Sari, Mio, and Shiki.

(To tell you the truth, Raidou-dono...) (Zef)

Taking distance like this, Zef used thought transmission to talk with me.

(Sari is the only one who has actual blood relation to me within the Demon Lord children.) (Zef)

And... now I know that they are blood related.

He was her blood father, and has been treated as a father all this time; and yet, Zef is taking that attitude towards Sari huh.

Is he intending to push through his position as a Lord?

(She is a child that was born from a temporary mistress, and it is something that the person herself doesn't know. It is publicly known that this one isn't married, and doesn't have his own child after all.) (Zef)

(Do you intend to let your own child die?) (Makoto)

(This one said this a while ago, but since she has branded herself with the worst slave stigma, there's no method to cover for her. Even if she were not my own child, as long as she is a Demon Lord child, this one would provide the best of protections. But this is a matter that surpasses this.) (Zef)

(Then what was the point of telling me that she is your own child?!) (Makoto)

(...This one wants you to take her in. This one won't ask you to marry her. She has that stigma after all. This one just wants you to have her serve at your side. This one doesn't mind how harsh of a job you give her. That's her wish after all. Just once, it may be way too late, but this one wants to grant her wish, as a father.) (Zef)

(Even if it is such a wish? Your Majesty, that's too sly! That's sly, isn't it?!!) (Makoto)

(Of course, this one is aware. This one is aware that no matter how much you scorn me, it can't be helped. This one can't stop being a Lord. That's why this one is asking you in such a makeshift manner. That's all this one had to say. Sorry for taking your time.) (Zef)

When he lets go of my body, Zef returned to his previous location.

He didn't even give a glance to where Sari was.

Damn it.

Damn it!!

I...

.....

“Sari, you will probably regret it. The fact that you rashly pushed that stigma.”

“No, I will never regret it in my whole life. As long as Goshujin-sama doesn't order it.”  
(Sari)

“...Please stop that way of talking. It is okay to speak in a way you are most comfortable with.” (Makoto)

“...Understood. I will do that, Goshujin-sama.” (Sari)

We have stopped within the blizzard.

The eyes of the demon race can't reach us already.

As long as she isn't dead, Shiki is able to interfere with magic, so it is a relief.

That's why we are stopping in such a place.

“Waka-sama is way too kind-desu wa. She is not a dog or a cat, so it will be troublesome to go around picking them up so nonchalantly. This kind of girl can't even serve as an object.” (Mio)

“I did have a suspicion that you would take her in, but what will you be doing? It will be hard to have a demon as a clerk after all.” (Shiki)

I did think.

I did think and think, and in the end, my decision at that moment was to save her.

There was plenty chance to abandon her.

In truth, I was terribly troubled.

I don't think this will be comfortable for Sari who has been doing her best as a demon race member till now.

That's why I think that she will be leading a harsh life from now on.

I will have her prepare herself for that.

She is actually able to choose death with my words, so I won't let her complain.

“If Rotsgard and Tsige are no good, then there's only one other place left.” (Makoto)

“Ah, Kaleneon huh. In that place, even if it's a demon... well, we will have her do her best as demon citizen number 1.” (Shiki)

Shiki thought it was Kaleneon and assents.

That wasn't it.

It is clear that Kaleneon would come to mind, and there was also Zef's conversation about having demons live there as well, but I was thinking of having a relative amount of demons live there at once, so having Sari as the number one citizen is no good.

For the sake of the future, I don't think that's possible.

"No, I will be bringing her to Asora." (Makoto)

"!"

"I have decided that." (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, even in that place, she will be all alone, you know? There's no other demon after all." (Mio)

"Moreover, it is a classified location of the Kuzunoha Company. Until we have investigated if there's any sort of modification done to the ritual, I think that it would be best to avoid that." (Shiki)

"It is fine. I won't be letting Sari out of there for the rest of her life. That's why, no matter what she does or what she learns, there will be no point. It will be like living her whole life working in a prison that she will not be able to escape." (Makoto)

"No matter where Goshujin-sama takes me, I will not object." (Sari)

"Yeah, I know. I will be taking you there now. To the eternal prison that will be your last destination." (Makoto)

If she can, at the very least, forget about her position in the demon race and find something else to strive for, my guilt should lessen a bit.

Unable to abandon her, and yet, can't take her directly.

I do think that it is a half-assed decision.

It is because of the ritual's reaction that I was able to decide this.

That's my only haven but... I am still naive huh.

Honestly, when I created the arms, I delved way too deep and felt strange. That's probably why I wanted to obey this feeling of pity towards Sari.

It's been awhile since I have returned to Asora, and with a new resident at that.

What a heavy feeling this is.

At this rate, I might need a change of mood.

My magic power hasn't completely recovered yet, so let's partake on relaxation for a while.



Ah, I have done it now.

This may be the worst.

I am looking at a dream.

It is *that* dream.

I was quite tired, so I should have rested at Rotsgard instead of Asora.

What a blunder.

In this pitch black space, I instinctively knew it was that strange dream. The dream that not even Tomoe is able to investigate. I have realized that I am looking at it.

I still don't see anything, but I think that there's a me that's not me again.

...Hah...

(Hate...)

Hm?

(I hate it. I hate everything. The Goddess, this shitty world, and the people that live in that place as well. That woman that acts as a good person and utilizes as much as she can utilize; that idiotic brat that is creating a harem and trying to put his hands on the

belongings of others. Everything makes me wanna puke!)

Again, what an extreme way of thinking we have here.

I can affirm the points of the world being cruel and about the Goddess, but the one playing as a saint... could it be Senpai?

The idiotic brat is definitely Tomoki.

Different from the patterns until now, my field of vision is totally zero, but I think this are my thoughts.

Did something happen for me to hate the two heroes this much?

The circumstances and the situation are in all honesty completely remote to me, so I can't even begin to imagine.

(...And yet...)

Eh?

Something is strange.

Or more like, something is welling up from within me.

This is a first.

(Why is it that no matter how much I kill, and kill, and kill, and kill, I don't feel anything? If I take revenge, if I have retaliated; there should be a sense of fulfillment. Why is it that no matter how many I kill, I don't feel any happiness?)

Uuuuh!!

Disgus... ting!

It feels as if someone has plunged its hand inside my stomach and stirring it up while being blindfolded, going round and round.

No good!

Still having this feeling to vomit, I open my mouth.

Nothing is coming out.

Well, this is a dream after all.

It might be because of that.

But my self that is in the bedroom must be... having the worst sensation.

I have declared my defeat and opened my mouth while having this nauseating feeling to vomit, and yet, it still wasn't letting me go.

It continues to provide me the same terrible sensation.

I can't take this.

This is truly hell.

Spare me please.

(Should I kill more? The Goddess and this world... and the trash that live in it. If I slaughter them all, will I be able to obtain slight happiness?)

Stop it.

Your voice is making me feel even worse.

I wanted to restrain that vomiting sensation as much as possible, and wish for the monologue I am hearing to stop.

(I can't return anymore. There's no allies anymore. Everyone is an enemy. In that case, I have to bring death to the hostility. That way, the dangers will reduce. I will slaughter everyone. Children will become adults, and women will give birth to children. Before I am killed, I will...)

Stoop it!!!

Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting  
Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting

Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting  
Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting!

Anyone is fine!

This nausea, this dream... erase it please!!

"Sorry, boy. It seems like my gift has done a bit of evil."

"Ah, eh?"

There's a being that has heard the screams of my heart.

"It's not that long to be saying it's been awhile huh. We have met again, boy. Do you remember me?"

"Ah... Daikokuten-sama?" (Makoto)

"Umu, I am happy that you remember me. You have been seeing weird dreams for a while now, right?" (Daikokuten)

"...Yes." (Makoto)

"About how much do you remember of its contents?" (Daikokuten)

"All of them were of a different me speaking with someone else." (Makoto)

"...Fumu." (Daikokuten)

"What are those? Are they my future? The kind that's telling me what's awaiting me ahead?" (Makoto)

"Fufu, boy, that's a sly way of asking. You have already guessed that that's not the case." (Daikokuten)

"That's..." (Makoto)

"It is fine. It is no mistake that it was my blunder after all. Just like what you think, this is a self of yours that has advanced a different path from you." (Daikokuten)

"In other words, this is a story of me in a world that's not my current one?" (Makoto)

"...It is and it is not. Well, even if I explain it to you in detail, you wouldn't be able to understand. Don't worry, having that much understanding is not something you have to mind. Boy, it is fine to just continue living as you have without minding it." (Daikokuten)

Saying that, Daikokuten-sama was standing right in front of me without changing his gentle expression.

That darkness, the nausea that I couldn't escape from, and the dull headache; all of it has disappeared.

Of course, that voice as well.

Even if I can't see the morning sun, a very dim light like that of the early morning was beginning to envelop the area.

That's why I can't see Daikokuten-sama's figure well.

I can only see his expression and a bit of his ornamental articles, and all else, I could only see them faintly.

My face must be a mess with tears and snot, so being brighter is actually a bit embarrassing.

My thoughts had recovered to the point that I was able to think that way.

"But what was that nausea just now?" (Makoto)

"This time it must have linked with an existence quite close to you, boy. That must be why you didn't 'see' but 'feel'. That person's feelings." (Daikokuten)

"Those were... feelings?" (Makoto)

It wasn't something as simple as that you know?!

"...People will gather a variety of experiences, and will live their life while carrying a variety of emotions. That person, at that scene, had his emotions at its peak while thinking that he doesn't feel anything. Confusion, despair, anger, sorrow; a lot of

emotions were settled and were whirling. If you boy who doesn't share any of the experiences he had, suddenly enters here and tastes them, there's no way you would be able to process them. That was the identity of your unpleasantness." (Daikokuten)

"Don't worry. The chance to fall in that kind of situation is quite low." (Daikokuten)

Daikokuten-sama showed me a relieving smile.

A confirmation from a God huh, I am grateful.

But...

"Thanks." (Makoto)

"Even if you say that, you are not convincing, boy. It isn't good to speak too much about other worlds, but as a form of apology, I will tell you a bit. Listen well, you are the only one, boy. The only Misumi Makoto that was able to accomplish Creation. In other words, at that moment, at the instant you created those arms, it is safe to say that you have begun walking a different path from all the Misumi Makotos. There's no problem in forgetting the dreams you have had until now. Actually, it is a waste to use them as reference and be dragged into them, you know?" (Daikokuten)

Creation?

Ah, those silver arms huh.

The ones that Shiki brought back to Asora.

It's been awhile since I have seen Tomoe that excited.

But I only gave substance to the magic power, and I feel like it is different from Creation.

"Creation? No, I think that wasn't Creation, but something more forceful though?" (Makoto)

"There's no forceful or flexible in Creation. Using magic power, you create something that doesn't exist from zero. That's, in other words, Creation. Boy, you may be thinking that Creation is an impressive thing like giving birth to a world, but 'increasing' the amount of rocks in this world is enough to be called Creation, you know?"

(Daikokuten)

I feel like that's pretty impressive.

Because even Tsukuyomi-sama said that the power of Creation is something special.

I thought that what I did was to change the substance of magic power though.

"Uhm, in that case, haven't I done something outrageous?" (Makoto)

"Yeah, you did. A power that a limited amount of Gods are able to use, you have accomplished it with the body of a mortal after all. If the Goddess and us didn't have collars restraining us, we would have already flown to your place in an instant and begun war" (Daikokuten)

Ah, can't laugh at that.

That was incredibly dangerous.

"That's because one of the reasons that brought this was our order of having you practice with your bow and increasing your magic power after all. To think that you would actually leave it to raw power... no well, I am truly impressed. It's been awhile since my blood has boiled." (Daikokuten)

...I think that having Daikokuten-sama's blood boil is dangerous.

Incredibly dangerous.

"Well, it is a good inclination. Makoto, hear me out. You can't let your principles grow and perform a royal road. You also can't let your emotions grow and advance a path of military rule. Slowly, it is fine to do it slowly, so think about the future, and decide in a way that you think is good. You probably have already noticed yourself, but you are carrying a troublesome thing that would normally make you unable to open your eyes anymore. Without being engulfed by it, slowly advance as a mortal, okay? Don't just run away from destruction. In that point, your decision regarding that demon girl was good. As a Lord, that decision would have been bad, but as a human being, it wasn't bad." (Daikokuten)

"...I will think properly before acting. Sorry." (Makoto)

"Oh, that wasn't a sermon, sorry. It is a problem that I fostered myself after all. A dragon, a spider, and a corpse huh. You have truly gotten yourself interesting servants, and the next one..." (Daikokuten)

"Next one?" (Makoto)

"Ah... Kuku, oops. No good. When I am talking to you boy, my mouth loosens up. Anyways, I will make it so you don't see those kind of dreams again. Wake up once, and wash your face before going to rest again. It will get busy in the morning." (Daikokuten)

"Morning?" (Makoto)

"Fuh, I will stop talking. Well then boy... in time, I would like you to use those silver arms to receive the attack of my \*Pinaka\*. I am looking forward to meeting you again in flesh." (Daikokuten) <*The bow of God Shiva.*>

Without leaving a trace, Daikokuten-sama's figure disappears.

And then, I lift up my upper half from the bed.

I didn't... vomit, great.

I blink a few times, and after that, I went to wash my face.

The time is still around 00:00 o'clock.

There were a lot of ominous things, but the one who stopped that nightmare was the same Daikokuten-sama.

I don't know what reason he had to come here.

Could it be... it was only for my sake?

No, I don't think a God would do that.

...In the first place, there's no way I can understand the true reasons of a God huh.

Let's go to sleep.

God did tell me to.

Yeah, let's sleep.



PtF by: traitorATZEN