



Azumi Kei
あづみ圭

月が導く 異世界道中

Tsukiga Michibiku Isekai Dōchū

4

Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu

– Moon-led Journey Across Another World –

- Volume 4 -

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[Reigokai: Isekai Translations]



主な 登場人物

Shiki

元は「リッチ」と呼ばれる
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。
真に同行して学園都市
ロツガルドへ向かっている。



Tomoe

しん
元は「蜃」と呼ばれる竜。
真と契約したことによって
人の姿を得た。
愛用の武器は刀。



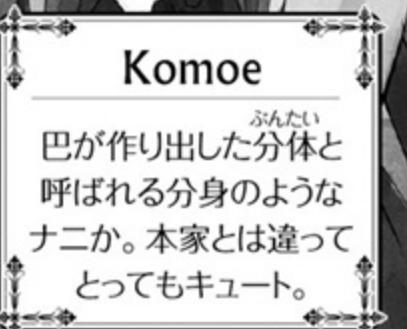
Mio

元は巨大な蜘蛛。
真と契約して、
人の姿を得た。
最近真と離れ気味で
寂しい思いをしている。



Komoe

ふんたい
巴が作り出した分体と
呼ばれる分身のような
ナニか。本家とは違って
とってもキュート。



Misumi Makoto

本作の主人公。親の都合で
異世界へ召喚されちゃった
悲運な高校生。3人の従者を
連れて順調に旅していたが……。



Sofia Bulga

巴と澪が現れるまで冒険者ギルド
ランク1位だった女剣士。
戦闘を楽しむというぶっ飛んだ
性格をしている。



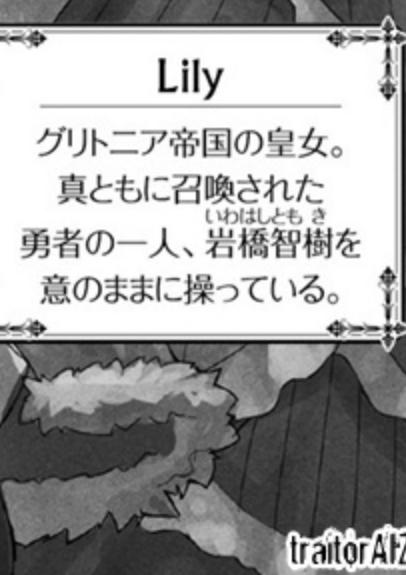
Mitsurugi

ソフィアと共に真の前に
現れた謎の少年。外見に
似合わず偉そうにしゃべる。



Lily

グリトニア帝国の皇女。
真とともに召喚された
いわばしともき
勇者の一人、岩橋智樹を
意のままに操っている。



Chapter 66

Looking at the departing back

“So it has been carried out. It’s been a while since we had such a busy day”

A man in the prime of his life has his hand on his prided beard and looking at a certain direction on top of a castle wall’s pathway.

This place is Tsige’s northeast department. In this land that is practically surrounded by high castle walls, only the northeast department is different.

From the northeast exit there is a wide beautifully paved path that extends forth.

The wall that protects the city is just as it is, it stretches out on both sides of these big path. That length goes on onto the horizon and one couldn’t see its end.

It is called the Golden Highway. It is the safest and highest priced path in this world. The width reaches 10 meters, but it is protected by a high wall. The highway goes from the southern tip to Tsige, from the northern extremity to the empire’s trading city, Robin City. Each nation maintains and improves it.

The lands that can use this highway to go in and out, without exception, are protected by a tall wall. There are even cities that were created in turn of this path and have evolved from it.

So that the merchants could transport large amounts of goods safely, so that important people can move safely from countries, for the sake of passing on important information that can’t be told through thought transmission as fast as possible; for various purposes, these highway is utilized.

Because the cost to use is pretty high, there are practically no pedestrians or adventurers in sight. Even if there are, it would be to protect people that are looking for even more safety than it is already provided.

Also, in various towns that work as relay points, magic formations are set, so it is made in the form that you are able to transfer one after the other in the different towns that

are connected to the highway.

Raidou, who has left Tsige today, didn't walk through the highway. He used the numerous magic formations to head to the far away Academy Town. But even from those relay points, the arrival to their destination will take long. In the direction that the prime man and the man who has his whole body clad in black look, there is no doubt that "he" is there.

"You are totally right. Even if they transit without resting, for them to reach Academy Town would take up to 3 days"

"Yeah. But wouldn't it have been fine to at least have Lisa and the girls see him off? Even if their hair is a bit short, I don't think Raidou-dono would mind"

"Women have their women way of thinking"

"Fumu, so it's such a thing. And so, Morris..."

The man tries to change the topic from the male butler. His eyes were not those of someone seeing off an acquaintance, nor the eyes of a father thinking about his family.

"What is it?" (Morris)

The man called Morris must have noticed, he responds to his master somewhat stiffly.

"Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono. From your eyes, how do they look like to you?"

"In terms of physical strength, no matter which one, I would have to raise my hands in defeat. In terms of doing trades, Mio-sama would be more comfortable, but in the end, she can't do anything that doesn't leave a bad after taste. I think that they are ladies that match their level"

"...So that's how it is huh. Well, the words "I know my own position as a person being lent a spot" that Tomoe said... I have no other choice but to believe in them. What about the people from Kuzunoha Company stationed at our store?"

"I have talked to them a number of times and from what I could get, the dwarfs are craftsmen. The other ones that I saw with Tomoe-sama once, from what I could see, they seemed hyuman but they had brown skin and red eyes so I think they are demi-humans. They have decorum, so it didn't look like people who would cause trouble"

(Morris)

“Does Raidou-dono not have intentions on employing hyumans?”

Rembrandt tilts his head. The followers that he has, Tomoe and Mio, are hyuman, but the other ones are all demi-humans. Taking into account their characteristics, most of them seemed to have appearances close to hyumans, but there is no hyuman employed.

“For now it seems to only be Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama. He knows various demi-human languages, so he may be taking into account the cost and ability as a priority when he is choosing. This is just an impression I got when I was talking to them but, I felt like they hated the so called discrimination” (Morris)

“Ability... and cost huh. This place is certainly dangerous, but Tsige has a principle of accepting people with ability after all. If we think like so, it is not that strange. If it were me, I wouldn’t care if they were demi-humans or whatever as long as they are proficient. Or at least that’s how I think now” (Rembrandt)

“...In time, an undesirable war might occur between the hyumans and the demi-humans but... a trend like that does exist” (Morris)

With a voice that one could feel slight grief from, Morris affirms his master’s words. If the demi-humans’ position goes up too much, it might create friction between the hyumans. He was worried about that.

“At least the Kuzunoha Company won’t become an explosive agent for now. They are still in a state where they don’t even have their own store. They won’t do anything rash. If it looks like a seed will appear, we just need to talk with Tomoe-dono and the others. It’s not like those girls won’t employ any hyumans at all” (Rembrandt)

“Yeah. Most of the adventurers will suppress their voices, so currently there shouldn’t be any problems” (Morris)

Rembrandt and Morris seemed to feel certain distress over the future of Kuzunoha Company.

“Now that I think about it, I wanted to meet the other follower that Raidou-dono said he would reunite with later. By the time he returns, I hope he brings him here” (Rembrandt)

“We tried to investigate on our side, but we couldn’t get who in the world he was. We can’t get any information of Raidou-sama either. It’s to the point that it makes me wonder if they are mushrooms that sprouted after rain” (Morris)

“...Mushrooms huh” (Rembrandt)

“Yes, with the sentiments of not knowing anything about them. Mushrooms” (Morris)

“...Well, it is a personage that would bring trouble if he tried after all. It’s not like I don’t understand how you feel. I don’t mind it if that is how the investigations turned out to be. I am having you guys do something that is hopeless after all. There was an inquiry from the castle about their registration in the guild and the level of those two...” (Rembrandt)

“!!”

The words “From the castle” that Morris’s master said, made him tense. Because if the Aion Kingdom’s attention is taken, Raidou’s movements will be limited a lot.

“No problem. Right now he is not properly moving as a merchant so, if I get anything, I will report it. Is what I told them and send them back” (Rembrandt)

“Rembrandt-sama...” (Morris)

“Don’t make that face Morris. Being in this kind of remote place makes one forget slightly that this place belongs to the country. It is not like they are doing anything to protect Tsige after all. It is obvious which side I will take between the useless bugs that only look for gold and the person that saved my family” (Rembrandt)

“...Certainly. The government officials that are brought here by the country, all of them think only about bribes. This is practically an autonomous place run by merchants. It’s just... this kind of topic is...” (Morris)

“I understand. This will stay between us. If someone got us from behind, it would be no laughing matter” (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt faces Morris and makes a childish face, like the one a kid would do when he does a prank. And Morris responds with an evil face as if punishing.

“If it comes to a point where Tomoe-sama takes my back, please leave me behind”

(Morris)

He may have remembered an error of some sort, Morris shows a face of discomfort.

In the past, Morris saw Tomoe in a bookstore in town and he tried to confirm her skills so he erased his presence and approached her.

The moment he stepped into the store and thought he was at her back, her figure was suddenly nowhere to be seen. It only ended up in him being hit on his left shoulder.

Morris embarrassedly reported that to Rembrandt and he bursted in laughter. Her threat was higher than Morris ever imagined, so this was advice of not making her their enemy.

Morris clearly understood the difference of strength between him and Tomoe. In the case she and Mio, who is even higher in level than her, get serious, Morris reported to Rembrandt that his last wall of defense, Morris himself, would not be able to protect him. He is an honest person.

"...When Raidou-dono returns, he will surely be stronger than before. Today when he came to ask me about the Academy, if he were to mention about the things I don't want to be publicized or about his followers, he could have controlled the conversation. In terms of his heart, I want him to stay as he has always been" (Rembrandt)

Learning various kinds of knowledge and studying, Raidou will surely increase his abilities as a merchant. His close aide Tomoe is also proficient. He predicts that his company may develop incredibly in the future.

Rembrandt felt grateful that he didn't have any intentions of joining Aion and making Tsige his headquarters. Because they could stay as good partners without minding about dividing the business area.

Also, Tomoe and Mio.

This was the first time Rembrandt had seen people of 4 digits. Those two would cause quite the pressure and mental strain just thinking about confronting them. Because they could easily blow away a town if they so wanted.

Instigating their imperial wrath would truly make that happen. In a sense, it's scarier than taunting a dragon.

Unless you have enough courage, trying to make business with those girls would end up in one being completely swallowed by their demands.

The requests regarding the wasteland are numerous but their completion rate is bad. That should be the case and yet, since the time Tomoe and Mio arrived, the request board in the Adventurer Guild that was always increasing only, now has a tendency to decrease.

Because of their arrival, the state of Tsige has begun to slowly change.

“Was it okay to talk about the heroes? There were contents that were supposed to be secret in what you disclosed” (Morris)

“I am incredibly grateful for my wife, my daughters and Raidou-dono. They told me they want me to do as much as I can so... I don’t mind this much” (Rembrandt)

“But to disclose such information so easily would make us look like we are cheap people. Please act with a bit more prudence” (Morris)

Morris warns his master on his rash act.

“It is fine. Honestly speaking, if I am able to gain their trust with something like this, I would consider it a huge profit. Raidou-dono is my benefactor and a business partner. Above all, he is a person I can’t see limits on” (Rembrandt)

“...I overstepped my line. And also, here is a follow-up report on the hero of Gritonia” (Morris)

“Hm, let’s hear it” (Rembrandt)

“Yes. He is favorably obtaining military gains for the empire. And it also seems that he is being used in “researches” by the second princess” (Morris)

In midst of the report, the word “researches” made Rembrandt’s body stiffen.

There were previous rumors that the empire did human body experiments. But after the descent of the hero they still continued, on the contrary, this is the first time he heard that even the hero himself was being included in it.

“Gritonia might be intending to use the hero as a weapon”

“That may be the case”

“...Is the hero such a submissive one? Well, an easy to drive hero is actually something the country would be grateful for”

Existences that possess strong power normally have intense ego. It makes it troublesome to control.

“I heard that he is still a boy. Limia and Gritonia are big. Satisfying the desires of a boy and girl should be easy for them” (Morris)

“How pitiful. So they are just going to be used in the war against the demon race huh” (Rembrandt)

If they are not aware of it themselves, that would be for the better. No matter what kind of title you possess, an idiot is still an idiot huh. Rembrandt grieved.

“...Also, there were no signs of any of the heroes approaching the Academy” (Morris)

“They are the trump cards in the front lines after all. I thought about it just in case, but it seems that the Academy will not be receiving the sparks” (Rembrandt)

“Yes, the ojo-samas’ preparations to return to school have already been made, so this was a matter of worry. But it appears that their heads are currently filled with the fight that is about to occur in Stella Fort” (Morris)

“Stella Fort huh. There are a number of anecdotes about that place, it seems to be a barrier that is protected by a demon general of four arms. From what I have heard, it seems that the hero of Limia will only participate by going around helping people in this capture mission. If I remember correctly... her name is Hibiki Otonashi” (Rembrandt)

Regarding Limia’s hero, she is a person that goes around the neighboring countries and solves the problems concerning the demon race. There are people that say she is the splitting image of what a hero in stories should be. When Rembrandt heard those kind of rumors in the information investigated, the time when he received the report, he heard them half in doubt and just ignored it. Because he thinks that there is no way such a holy person of virtue would exist.

For Rembrandt, the hero that is still in the empire, who is filled with greed and lust, is

an existence that is easier for him to comprehend.

"Yeah, it will be a joint front with both of the heroes. I will make moves so that we can obtain as much information as we can" (Morris)

"That would help a lot. No matter if the fight in Stella ends up in a victory or a defeat, it will decide the flow of things from now on. I want to know the conclusion as precisely as possible" (Rembrandt)

"Yes. I am looking forward to a few days from now. Who knows when the ojo-samas will get a complete recovery. We need to prepare for it" (Morris)

"By the way, what about the royal palace's report?" (Morris)

"...It's okay, just leave it alone. At any rate, the Stella Fort battle will utilize the consensus of all 4 major powers, so they must already know by now" (Rembrandt)

"Understood. Then I will do as you say. The preparations to return to school, to think such a day like this would come. Now that I think about it, to invite Raidou-sama to the Academy was also one of the wishes the ojo-samas did" (Morris)

"...Do you think that means they are in love with Raidou-dono?" (Rembrandt)

For a father, this made him have terrifying complex feelings. He is a benefactor, but seeing the two girls that have not been followed by any bad bugs to grow interest in a person of the opposite sex, there is no helping those feelings.

They must have remembered about him, the two, with synchronized voices, asked about his whereabouts and circumstances.

Rembrandt himself didn't possess that much information, and he had no intentions on retaining him pointlessly.

When he said that he doesn't know when he would leave the town because he is an adventurer, along with his wife the three of them said "Please stop him until we are able to thank him".

The deceiving would at one point lose its effect and when he was planning on telling him, they came and pleaded Rembrandt...

To have him go to the same Academy they are going to. He thought that they were quite into it, but this is something he felt even from before, 'isn't this a bit too much?'

But he was originally indulgent and, on top of it, a father that dotes his family. If it's his two daughters' request and his wife supports it, he didn't care about the morals and laws of this world.

He smiled and ended up consenting to it.

These were the details regarding the matriculation of Raidou into the Academy from Rembrandt's side. Even if Raidou didn't have any intentions of going to the Academy, he would have forced it somehow.

But for some reason, he himself came to say that he wanted to go to Academy Town. When he heard that he made a complete turn and said over and over again "There's no way there was a problem"

"I don't know myself. But it seems that the two of them have a no ordinary interest in him" (Morris)

"Interest huh. You are right. They didn't change their attitude even when he showed his face after all" (Rembrandt)

(The moment he took off his mask, it may be rude but... his outward appearance was ugly, no, poorly made? No, hmm... deplorable? No, that's not it. Ah that's right, it had such a strong sense of individuality that it made me lose my words) (Rembrandt)

It was on a degree that if he weren't a hyuman but a demi-human it would be in a level that wouldn't cause surprise, so Rembrandt was already used to it.

And if the words he said about having his mask off from now on are true, he will surely pass a lot of hardships. Rembrandt felt for him. The lie of him not being able to take off his mask because of a curse so that he didn't have to show his face was a bit undesirable for Raidou, but Rembrandt understood him.

Seeing their own appearance crumble because of the curse disease may have bended their own way of viewing the outward appearance. He remembered that his two daughters had a strong inclination to physical looks. He himself didn't change his love to them at all when he saw them in that ghost-like appearance, so he does understand that feelings and appearance are not directly related.

'Let's see how the situation unfolds', is what Rembrandt decided to go with.

(If he suddenly returns with my two daughters having a swelled stomach, I will throw the army at him. At least think of it as an opposition of sorts, Raidou-dono) (Rembrandt)

"Danna-sama, I share the same sentiments as you but I think that your thoughts are somewhat accelerated" (Morris)

Fumu, as expected of their many years of fellowship. Their thoughts get through easily. Rembrandt was wondered with Morris' words. It was still unknown if it was because it was being transmitted or because it could be seen at plain sight though.

"I am happy that you feel the same way" (Rembrandt)

There are practically no occasions where he has left something to him and he has failed. He is truly a reassuring butler.

That's right, there are practically no cases where he has left something to him and he has failed.

That's why he didn't confirm with him. He was negligent. It was a negligence that didn't normally happen on the merchant that even has influence in Tsige.

In another day...

An error was found in the documents submitted to Rotsgard Academy. Raidou, condolences.

Chapter 67

The two's journey begins in a downpour

The two of them noticed the abnormality.

That big abnormality which made someone feel a sense of loss suddenly appeared.

It's on the third day he departed to Academy Town.

Their connection with Makoto suddenly got broken.

But there were no changes in their bodies. The pact was still in effect. Even so, there is no doubt that this is an incredibly abnormal situation.

“What is going on-ja?!”

“Waka-sama!”

Tomoe and Mio look at each other and confirm if these sensation was shared by both of them. It seems that both of them are in the same state, is what they could tell.

In a relatively thin highway a few ways from Tsige. There was a group that was aiming straight in the sea's direction and casually travelling. They just departed so they were still not that far away from town.

At the same time that they measure the distance to the port city, they create as many mist relay points as possible. Walking along the paths, gathering information on the villages and the geographical information, they create an accurate map of the vicinity. They have an objective of sorts, but these two have a tendency to sightsee.

However, for the forest ogres, who were dispersed in various directions around the girls, this is a serious mission. They purposely walk in an area without a road and while concentrating in gathering all the information they can on the surroundings, they follow Tomoe and Mio from behind and head onto the place where they plan to lodge in.

“Mio, you also felt that?!” (Tomoe)

“Yeah, I can’t feel Waka-sama’s presence at all!” (Mio)

Makoto wasn’t explained this but the people that form a pact can actually tell their approximate location. For Tomoe and Mio, putting aside the times Makoto comes to Asora, they try their best not to bother him in his journey. They already knew their master’s approximate location.

They have also received a direct report today from Shiki that they would be arriving at a place that would move them to Academy Town. With those two points, the two of them, or more like Mio, could cope with the absence of Makoto.

(Tomoe-dono, Mio-dono, can you hear me?! Rai- no, Makoto-sama has disappeared!)

Right at that timing, they receive a thought transmission from the newbie follower that was accompanying Makoto, Shiki. The thought transmission of both Tomoe and Mio to Makoto didn’t show any response. They could tell that it couldn’t even reach him. Because of this fact, they were grateful at the report from Shiki.

(Disappeared? What do you mean by that-ja? Shiki, calm down. Talk in a clear way so we can understand) (Tomoe)

(Shiki, Shiki! What about Waka-sama?! Waka-sama!) (Mio)

(Ei Mio, shut up for a bit. I am asking that right now. You being noisy won’t take us anywhere!) (Tomoe)



Seeing a new source of information, Mio lunges in with the question she wanted to ask the most. But Tomoe who felt that the other side was also not in a calm state, held back her own emotions and rebukes Mio.

(Shiki, you said he disappeared right? First of all, where are you right now-ja?)
(Tomoe)

(I am in the second transfer point for Academy Town, a town called Felika. The moment I arrived here, Makoto-sama was gone. Even when I asked the guard that was in the transfer area, he told me that he didn't see him, and then, suddenly the presence of Makoto or more like, the connection between us was broken, and well...!) (Shiki)

It is unusual for Shiki to be in a state of panic. He was a researcher in the past and had a tendency to look at situations in a relatively calm manner. Even when he is like that, he still entered a state of panic when he saw that his master, who was supposed to be with him, disappear suddenly.

(You entered together with him at the previous transfer encampment right?) (Tomoe)

(Yes, without doubt) (Shiki)

(Un, I see. We have lost the connection we had with Waka as well, but we haven't returned to our previous forms. That means Waka is still alive. I may be asking the impossible, but even so, please calm down. For us this is literally out of nowhere. We don't know anything and can't think up any possibilities. We are counting on you)
(Tomoe)

Tomoe tries to slowly calm down Shiki first and ask for his explanation. To forcefully restrain an impatient heart and try to act normally is something hard to endure even for Tomoe.

(U-Understood) (Shiki)

(Okay? The disappearance may certainly be sudden. But even with that, there is still something that happened before it. First of all, is that official not lying?) (Tomoe)

(Definitely. I was in a panicked state so I casted a strong hypnotic spell on him. After-effects may appear on him, but I can say with certainty that the information obtained was no lie) (Shiki)

Shiki's words were few, but one could notice he was slightly calmer than before. One could tell he was quite desperate from the fact that he used a strong hypnotic spell on a hyuman without holding back.

(I see. Then, did something happen at the previous transfer encampment?) (Tomoe)

Tomoe didn't pry deeper at the mention of "after effects" from the hypnosis. If there were no points of doubt in the place they arrived to, the problem must have occurred before that.

(Previous. Even if you ask me about the previous one, there was nothing planted on the transfer formation. We entered just like always and were enveloped by light...) (Shiki)

(Shiki! Just go find Waka-sama! Right this instant! Isn't he anywhere in that village?!) (Mio)

Mio, who was somehow able to stay silent until now, couldn't endure it any longer and calls out. While Tomoe was talking with Shiki, Mio was tapping the ground impatiently and biting the nails on her right hand. It was clear to the eye that she was under heavy amounts of stress because she didn't know the whereabouts of Makoto.

(Mio! This will take just a bit longer so keep quiet! How is it-ja? Nothing coming to your mind?) (Tomoe)

(Light, we were enveloped by light and... Now that I think about it!!) (Shiki)

(Umu! What happened?) (Tomoe)

(It was slight, but I feel like the light changed into a golden color. Then after that, it was just for a bit, but I think I heard something like a noise. Waka-sama lifted his head, so I think he must have felt the same abnormality. And so, when I arrived at Felika, Makoto-sama was nowhere in sight. I was able to safely arrive so it isn't a transfer accident. After that, I shamefully forgot my self-control) (Shiki)

Golden.

The existences that possess this color, Tomoe only knows of two possibilities. One of them is a superior dragon just like her. And the other one... is the Goddess. Golden is a type of special magic. It is normally impossible for magic to possess this color.

(Hmph, golden huh. Did you feel a power when that color change happened?)
(Tomoki)

(No, not really. Also, it occurred in practically a second after all) (Shiki)

Even if the transfer formation was created by humans, it is still quite the product. Tomoe checked the transfer formation's pattern and construction before Makoto used it, so she could tell.

If we consider that "someone" cut into the activation in an instant and kidnapped one of the two persons that were being transported, that "someone" must possess quite the ability. Having a vast amount of magic power and must also possess a deep understanding in magic.

(Shiki, do you think you are able to go to that magic formation right now and check for the remnants of magic power?) (Tomoe)

(No, that will be hard. The reception preparations for the next transfer are already being done after all) (Shiki)

(I see. Then it will be difficult to pinpoint huh. Shiki, you head to the Academy as it is. You should be the one who has Waka's application documents right? Send those first. After that, if you are in the Academy, Waka should be able to fly there. It would breed suspicion if he transited again from Tsige) (Tomoe)

(Eh... But Tomoe-dono, to go ahead when we don't even know if Makoto-sama is safe...) (Shiki)

(That's right Tomoe-san! Shiki was the person closest to Waka-sama you know?! What are you thinking desu?!?) (Mio)

Mio's objection is understandable. She thought that Tomoe didn't understand the gravity of the situation from the instructions she gave.

(Mio, we should think that Waka-sama has been abducted-ja. The ones responsible can probably be reduced to two) (Tomoe)

(?! What?!?) (Shiki)

Shiki answers Tomoe's words with surprise.

(Of course, this is if we follow the logic that the golden light and that noise-like something is related to this situation-ja ga. We don't have any more material to create other deductions, and we can't just stand doing nothing) (Tomoe)

(That is obvious!) (Mio)

Mio approves of Tomoe's words with a strong tone. There is no way Mio would be able to stand and look when this is happening.

(Judging that our pact with Waka is still in effect, it is safe to think that the place where he has been taken, there is some sort obstruction that blocks the magic power from the outside-ja. From the color gold I can associate two. The first one is the superior dragon they call "Myriad Colors", Root. The other one is... the Goddess-ja) (Tomoe)

Tomoe would normally hypothesize numerous cases and after deliberate thought, she would filter the possibilities. That is how much her vision is being narrowed right now.

(A superior dragon and... God huh. Certainly, if we talk about golden magic power, I can only think about God. But I don't think the Goddess would go out of her way to do such a...) (Shiki)

Shiki's image of God was, at least, not one who would force such reckless actions. The change into golden was just an instant and he had no thoughts of doubting God.

(I will contact Root from my side. But if it really is the work of the Goddess, I am afraid to say that there isn't much we can do in our present state) (Tomoe)

Tomoe said these words with a mortifying face, as if wanting to grind her teeth.

(No way!) (Mio)

(That's why, Shiki, you go to the Academy. The only thing we can do is to prepare everything so that master can return as soon as possible to Asora. Even though it's irritating) (Tomoe)

(Gumuuu. But can't he search the vicinities?! It is still not certain that the Goddess is the one who did this!!) (Mio)

(That is... No, you are right-ja. It is no good to go along with just reason. Understood, search the vicinities of Felika. When finished, search the surroundings of the Academy

as well) (Tomoe)

(Understood!) (Shiki)

Seems like Shiki cut the thought transmission and began acting. Tomoe and Mio soon felt that the thought connection between them was cut.

“Mio, it is as you heard-ja. I will hurry to where Root is. That’s why I want you to be in Asora” (Tomoe)

“I will be going with Tomoe-san as well-desu wa! If this is the act of that dragon, I have to show him how foolish of a move he made with my own hands!” (Mio)

“You can’t-ja” (Tomoe)

“I don’t want to-desu! Why?!” (Mio)

“If... If this was done by the Goddess, it is mortifying but there is not much we can do. Being blocked and not knowing where he is, we are not even able to assist him. Honestly, in that case, the only thing we can do is pray for Waka to calls us on his own or to escape from that place by himself. We could have done something if matters were more apparent, but now that is has already occurred, there is nothing we can do” (Tomoe)

But well, the three followers understood that it is impossible for Makoto to call them by himself. Because he would have already done so if he were able to.

“To escape from God by himself?” (Mio)

Mio looks at Tomoe with a grim expression.

“If Waka is able to escape by himself, his first direction will be Asora. It may be necessary to nurse Waka if he is injured somewhere. If Shiki were here it would be best but, from what we heard, he is quite far away. You are better at healing than me, so please” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-san...” (Mio)

‘Please’, saying so, Tomoe grasped her hands so strongly that it caused pain. Mio was able to see that and called her name weakly. Tomoe is also Makoto’s follower, there is

no way her heart is calm in this situation.

"Honestly, a mysterious feeling is going rampant inside of me and it's making me want to shout. In truth, even if it takes three days, I want to call back Shiki and have him prepare in case there is a need to heal. But there is also a part of me that is hoping everything was wrong and he is somewhere around Felika's vicinity" (Tomoe)

"..."

"I am scared, like I have never been before. The fear of losing Makoto-sama. And if it is like this, there is no way I will be able to accept it. If Root is the true culprit of Makoto-sama's abduction, I will not ask for the reasons, turn it into a bloodbath and return with Waka. Like I care if he is one of the highest existences" (Tomoe)

Tomoe calls Makoto with -sama when she rarely does so.

"Understood. I will wait for Waka-sama at Asora. If he returns, at that time..." (Mio)

"Yeah, tell me as soon as that happens. I will return instantly. Fufu, to have Mio say something nice makes me happy but that would make Shiki's wait in vain" (Tomoe)

"Even though he is a newcomer he went and accompanied Waka-sama after all. I will have him wait-desu wa" (Mio)

It was a bit forced, but even so, both Tomoe and Mio laughed. To believe in your master and wait, that is an incredibly painful thing to do. To believe and wait sounds nice, but it means to wait for the situation to unfold without being able to do anything. That's why, in order to drown out their anxiety, they both showed a smile.

When Mio passed through the mist gate Tomoe created, the anguished face Mio made as if praying, eloquently told about the situation they were in.

"Waka, please be safe"

Tomoe, who was more worried about her master than facing a dragon in the top seats, blended into the mist and disappeared.

Chapter 68

Depressing Night

In the border of the world an otherworldler moved, but there were still no ripples occurring in sight.

At that time, Rembrandt, who is known in the world as the Merchant of Tsige, was tackling an opportunity.

The implementation of Stella Fort's capture plan by Limia and Gritonia.

In the battle that was spread out in two directions, the two heroes from both countries increased their morale. Moreover, because of the blessing of the goddess that had reappeared once more, the hyuman's position was gaining advantage.

The Goddess' blessing.

That is what could be called the basis of the big power the hyumans possess in this world.

Before the battle, they report to the Goddess about the beginning of it and the representatives of the troops do a speech. The Goddess confirms both powers and offers divine protection to the one she accepts the most, and the one she doesn't, receives a curse. More specifically speaking, the one that was approved of will have all of his forces doubled in strength and the one who isn't will have it halved.

In short, in the case the speech flows into a blessing situation, putting it in numbers, the distance in strength between the two powers will be of four times. If there is a big difference in military force it may be another story, but if it is normal, the difference is despairing.

That's why, in this world, the winner and loser of a battle between hyumans was normally decided in the speech step. Because the result was already clear, it was normal for the halved side to surrender. For the sake of being approved by the Goddess, the people pursued beauty and have also made clothes and pompous armor that ignored utility just for the speech with the Goddess. The one she approves is the

one that she finds the most beautiful. The royalty and nobles research the appearance of the people that have won in the speech, it couldn't be helped that there were some who went mad because of this. It was directly connected to the power of the country and the family after all.

But that is only the case of fights between hyumans.

In the case it is not between hyumans, the story changes completely. In the speech with the Goddess, she would provide the hyumans with divine protection no questions asked. Even if we count the times in the past where there was a fight the hyumans didn't receive blessings, there were no times where demi-humans obtained blessings. Not a single time. Against an opponent that was doubled in power with no questions asked, the demon race, originally known as demi-humans, were being overwhelmed because of their numerical inferiority. Being pressed by the necessity, the demon race began to assertively research strategy and tactics and obtained know-how numerous times higher than that of hyumans, yet it still continued with the hyumans having the advantage. Before the Goddess' disappearance, the demon race was having those kind of fights.

When the Goddess disappeared, obviously, the speeches became pointless. Even if they made the preparations and express their desire for a speech, they didn't obtain no blessings nor curses.

The 4-times blessing was now not showing effects no matter if the enemy was hyuman or demi-human. The demon race called a big amount of demonic beasts and demi-humans. Increasing their power to the very limit, they marched towards a war against the hyumans. They simply went straightforwardly from the front to crush them, pulverize them with power and numbers. The hyumans that were always been on the crushing side, were now being done in by the demon race. Victory, victory, victory, victory. The momentum didn't stop. They even destroyed one of the five major powers and the demon race was able to obtain large amounts of lands.

The Stella Fort is in the southern tip of that destroyed major power, Elision.

It's a solid fortress that has been attacked numerous times by Limia from the south and Gritonia from the east.

If they have the troops ignore this place and go north, in their march they will be obstructed by an inconvenient large river and swamp as well as a mountain range. It

is not impossible but there will be interferences by the demon race. In essence, for them to be able to attack the demon race's domain with a big army, they have to capture the Stella Fort or they won't be able to advance. That there is a courteous route leading directly to the fortress for both countries is one of the ingenuities of the demon race, and there were some intelligent hyumans in the group that had begun to notice this. Even so, with all the lives used for the battles in this fortress, it took away Limia and Gritonia's reasoning and recognition of this strategy.

The symbol of the hated demon race. A fortress that they have to capture no matter what. The Stella Fort is that kind of existence.

"The impregnable fortress. The devil's fortress that has killed uncountable hyumans huh. Well, it is no surprise you would want to capture it as soon as possible. The descent of the heroes and the revival of blessings, because of those, it is no wonder they are now planning another attack in the once hopeless battlefield"

With the evening passing, the curtains of darkness descend and the shadow of the fortress rises. Before the gate you could see the shadows of the vast amount of troops deployed that spread because of the burning bonfires. A number of shadows gather.

"Yeah. There are some scholars that say this is a trap of the demon race. But even so, this place has sipped too much blood. Limia and the empire can't back down anymore"

Another shadow stands along the shadow that said those words as if complying with it. Those words had a sense of surprise and in a part of it, self-derision as well. The voice that was slightly low came from a slim woman.

"I think that attacking from other places is also an option though. Well, I support this plan as well, there are numerous friends of mine "resting" in this place after all"

The shadow that is on standby a few ways in the back also opens his mouth. A man. He is in favor of bringing down this fortress, but he clearly states that this is an emotional decision of his.

"There are also an uncountable amount of knights that have fallen. This place is an unavoidable point we have to pass in our process to defeat the demon race"

Again, the two shadows, this time it is the shadow that is behind the girl who talked first. The owner of the voice is again a male. Because of the sound of rubbing metal, one could tell that the man is wearing armor.

“4-times blessing and the hero huh. I understand that we are in an advantageous position but... I just can't brush off this bad feeling”

“What a stupid thing to say. Soon there will a dinner assembly with the empire. Your bad feeling will come true”

From the lined up shadow, an incredulous voice is directed.

“Ahaha. I didn't feel this way with the spider so it may be needless anxiety. It could be because I just don't like the empire's hero called Tomoki”

“Who knows Hibiki, I saw him as a good young man though. He seemed like he was quite young but level-headed. An intrepid youth, is what I thought”

“Ah, I concur with Wudi. For me, he looked like a favorable person. He was a youth that has a strange attraction to him. Even though he looks like that, he can use a variety of magic tools and in the battlefield he can hunt tens to hundreds of demons. As a hero, he is incredible”

“We don't know Hibiki's taste after all. If I hadn't met with Hibiki first, I may have become that boy's sword. I felt the same majesty of a hero I felt from you”

“I... I am in the same mind as Hibiki. I didn't like something about him. I feel like that person is different from Onee-chan”

The girl called Hibiki, thinking that she would be disproved by everyone else, one voice of support called out. A shadow that is smaller than the other shadows. A voice that one could tell it is young.

“So the only ally I have is Chiya-chan huh~. There's no need to worry, I won't be putting my personal feelings in the battlefield. Then let's go for dinner and then sleep. We are going to attack at late night right?” (Hibiki)

Late at night, or more like, doing a dinner assembly just a few hours before? How relaxed, is what Hibiki thought. Is it because that is just how much they expect from her and the other hero? Or is it because they are confident in that so called 4-times blessing?

It is also for doing a last confirmation of the strategy, but under the pretext of a dinner. Feeling a bad presentiment combined with the hero of Limia who she still doesn't

know much about, Otonashi Hibiki looks once more at the bonfire.

(I will bring down that place. The demon general is a power type giant with 4 hands. We and the empire troops, no matter which group meets it, the heroes will reunite at where the demon general is and strike this huh. It is predicted that the military force of our combined troops is approximately five times that of the demon race side. Moreover, if we count the halving of their power, it is essentially 20 times? I don't understand the numbers in battle but 20 times is a number that brings peace of mind. But well~ the fortress's intensity is not halved, so it is not like we have an advantage in terrain. The 4-times is something that counts as a whole right? Our side is doubled and the other is halved. So then, if the demon race just negates that "halve", the advantage will only be of double) (Hibiki)

In terms of tactics, the demon race is better. She remembers those words from a meeting. There is no need to even do a final confirmation. Getting the blessing, attacking from two directions and if the top appears, use the heroes to defeat him. A simple thing. For some reason, because of the wishes of the empire, the attack was turned to a night assault.

The demon race knows the hyumans movements by a certain degree, is what Hibiki thinks. In that case, there should be some sort of action that differs from all the situations before, and yet, there is no reaction in sight. Ominous.

In this world there is magic. If so, even without having cannons in the fortress they should be able to suddenly rain attacks resembling those of cannons from their side. More like, I am overthinking things, is what she thought. Taking into account the applications, she can't even estimate what kind of magic they have.

That kind of uneasiness is probably what was making Hibiki have a bad presentiment.



"Welcome, Limia's hero-sama"

Approaching the pavilion, the pondering Hibiki was greeted by a cheerful voice.

"Ara, isn't this princess Lily? Thank you for going to the trouble of meeting me. I am honored to be invited in this occasion" (Hibiki)

The smiling Hibiki stops her thoughts and speaks out her previously arranged words by reflex. For the sake of not being discourteous, her companions and the nobles accompanying them were taught a few things. The girl kept in mind to use polite words.

The other party is the princess of Gritonia, a major power that possesses at least the same scale in influence as Limia Kingdom. No matter if she is a hero, as an individual, this person is not someone you can act impolitely. Hibiki felt nervous.

“I am of the same sentiment. Sorry for having called you out here. We have prepared a little service to you and the people that will be your comrade in arms. This night please recuperate your energies” (Lily)



While being perplexed by the rare event of having a royalty guide her, the hero of Limia follows the girl's steps.

In the round table that was prepared, there were already a number of people seated.

When they saw Hibiki's arrival, those people stopped their conversations, stood up and met the princess and the girl being guided by her.

"Hi! It is before the nap but, let's enjoy the meal without minding about ranks!"

"Now, Hibiki-sama, this way please"

Following the princess, Hibiki is assaulted by a melancholic feeling. It is because of the words that were directed at her. Just how light they were.

Furthermore, the empire is strangely not saying anything about what was said, making her feel sickened. That her own companions didn't show any sort of displeasure was also eerie.

As expected, Hibiki was guided to the vacant seat directly beside the seat of where the empire hero, Iwahashi Tomoki, is. There were no other places to sit beside this one. To refuse the seat that the princess has guided her to would be an act of impoliteness. Moreover, the ones who said there is no need to mind about ranks, are people that don't forgive impoliteness.

While sighing in her mind, Hibiki shows the princess a well-made fake smile. And faces Tomoki.

"Thanks for your consideration, Tomoki-kun. It will be a night warfare but, let's both do our best" (Hibiki)

Common words. Hibiki already knew Tomoki was younger than her even when it is the first time they have met, so she decided to call him with the suffix -kun.

"We are used to night battles so it is okay. We might even be able to cover Limia's side as well" (Tomoki)

"That is reassuring. We don't have that much experience in large scaled night battles so I am expecting much from your side" (Hibiki)

“Moreover, this is a mid-boss fight. Let’s end this in one sweep and have the Goddess praise us. Ah, I wonder if she will give us more powers” (Tomoki)

“Now that you mention it, the blessing speech is done by Tomoki-kun right? Will I be able to meet the Goddess again? I haven’t met her since the first time, and there are a lot of things I want to ask her” (Hibiki)

Hibiki felt like the situation she is experiencing is different from the situation the Goddess herself explained, so she wants to meet her again. Even though she has power and divine protection, the only time she has talked with her is in the very beginning.

She felt an uncomfortable feeling at Tomoki’s “mid-boss” words, so Hibiki changed her thoughts to the Goddess and maintains her smile.

“Ah, also, what level are you now Hibiki?” (Tomoki)

Tomoki suddenly asks Hibiki her level. The other members were being guided by the chamberlains, taking their seats and respectively chat and bring the food that is served into their mouths. Hibiki is also taking part in the meal but can’t properly taste the food. She wasn’t in the mood of enjoying the meal.

The only one that looked uncomfortable was Chiya who had the same opinion about having an unpleasant feeling of Tomoki. And a girl from the empire’s side that was about the same age as Chiya, began talking to her and bit by bit she indulges herself or so it seems.

“Me? I am 430 now” (Hibiki)

“I see. I have become 605 now” (Tomoki)

“Heh~ that’s impressive. And that’s how much you have participated in the battlefield” (Hibiki)

“Yeah. That’s why, Hibiki-san, you may be 3 years older than me but, could you please not call me with -kun? There is no need to go as far as calling me with -sama, -san is fine maybe, when talking to someone that is stronger” (Tomoki)

(Who’s the one that said there’s no need to mind about ranks?!)

Hibiki desperately tries to hold back the tsukkomi she wanted to do. The 100% fake

smile on her face was now showing signs of crumbling.

"I-I am sorry. I am still using the customs of the other side to talk. From now on I will be careful" (Hibiki)

"Nah, I don't mind it though. Also, I am sorry but, I don't like formal speech" (Tomoki)

(I am just adding –desu. There's no way I would expect formal speech from you who is saying "domo" and "ore"! And also, if you don't mind it, don't mention it! Isn't it fine to just let it go then?!) (Hibiki)

"I don't mind about formal speech anyways, so it's okay. It is fine to just talk the way you like" (Hibiki)

"Is that so? Iya, that's a big help. I was insecure of when I would mess up you see. We are going to do a swift attack on a demon general today, so I was thinking about having Hibiki-san and the others accompany us from the beginning, how about it?" (Tomoki)

In a sense, this is a conversation between the representatives of both countries. This is a link for diplomacy, is what Hibiki thinks. Even so, she felt like her head would split from anemia because of his words.

If this were the other side, the other world, such a kouhai taking that kind of attitude would get a proper sermon. Or could it be that the current middle school students are all like this? If that is the case, she is grateful to have been able to come to a different world. There is no better blessing than this.

"...It is a pleasant proposal, but we have to encourage the people of Limia and participate in battle. When the time comes, I will rush okay?" (Hibiki)

While feeling her own expression twitching, Hibiki was somehow able to pass the dinner assembly, also called as the patience test.

Just one person, Chiya, was preoccupied by Hibiki's state. When the dinner assembly ended and they left the pavilion, they returned to their own camps and the girl worriedly approached Hibiki.

"Hibiki onee-chan, are you okay? Should I serve you tea to calm down?" (Chiya)

"Chiya-chan, geez, just how much of a good girl are you! If that idiot were to have this

much courtesy, the story would have been a bit different!" (Hibiki)

The other members didn't understand why Hibiki was angry and could only tilt their heads.

"Hibiki, could it be that you don't like the food of the empire?"

"If that was the case, you should have told the other party or it will conversely turn as discourteous Hibiki-dono"

Hearing the words that were way off the mark, as expected, even she had to stop her steps.

"Eh?! Just how serious are you saying that?! How come the conversation didn't turn into how rude that Tomoki was to me, isn't that weird you guys?!" (Hibiki)

Chiya also agrees with Hibiki and nods several times.

"W-What is it you are so angry for? Tomoki-dono went through the trouble of holding a comfortable dinner assembly, said that he would provide us support in the fight, moreover, he casually pointed out to Hibiki about using -kun on a higher ranked person. And after that, wasn't his trustworthy proposition nice?"

Naval, the woman warrior that Hibiki considers as a companion the most in the battlefield, releases words as if counting a short story.

"What were you seeing on that full-throttle rude machine to reach such conclusions?!" (Hibiki)

Hibiki is astonished by her own companion's words. Even Bredda and Wudi, who normally warn Naval when she says too much, were agreeing with Naval's words.

(What is this? Are you telling me everyone turns weird when they meet him?) (Hibiki)

Even so, Chiya and I were alright. Just what in the world is going on? Hibiki didn't think she would have to ponder about how to talk with her companions in order for them to understand. She began thinking there was some sort of reason for it.

"Well, let's leave that aside for now. I got a bit out of control. Okay, let's sleep. The fight is close after all. Chiya-chan, let's sleep together" (Hibiki)

Pursuing this point at present will not get anywhere. When they sleep and wake up, the war will have begun already. She understands that she should not bring unneeded discord.

When Hibiki returns to her bedroom with Chiya, she was deeply moved by how easily she was able to fall asleep.

Chapter 69

Hibiki's Distress

The battle silently began.

Finishing the ceremonial-kind of speech with the Goddess without any problems, both the empire and kingdom troops were given the Goddess' blessing. At the same time, the demon race is supposed to have received the half curse.

Hibiki felt uneasy thinking that the Gritonia hero would do something stealthily, but it was practically him reading directly out of a paper and the speech ended without any suspense.

The kingdom's troops began their advance just as scheduled and made contact with the enemy. Hibiki and the others, who were quite a few ways behind the frontlines, felt the air of the battlefield with their skin.

But the situation was a bit different from expectations.

It is certain that the allies' strength increased quite a lot. Even Hibiki who was half in doubt could see in plain sight that the spell's power had literally doubled.

However, she didn't feel as if their enemies were halved. It is not like Hibiki herself entered the battlefield to confirm but, they didn't seem weakened to the point of being halved.

Even so, the progress of the battle was going favorably. The hyuman side had charged a number of times in the field and were scattering the demon race as if ripping scraps of paper. There was not even a single instance where their side was forced back.

It was a progress that would make one think the only thing left is the inside of the fortress. The kingdom and also the empire pushed their troops until the front of the fortress. The front part of the fortress that was widely open by the demons themselves. Consequently, there were quite the numbers that began flooding the fortress.

The morale was high. It was just a matter of time before they could assault the inside

of the fortress.

But all these chain of events in the battle were done without the assistance of Hibiki and the others, and the empire has not made any reports of the 4-armed general appearing. All these points made Hibiki have doubts. The alarms inside Hibiki's head were ringing at full force. They are trying to tell Hibiki something.

"Ne, Naval. This is kind of weird. No matter the circumstances, this is way too easy. This place is the impregnable fortress right?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah, there's no way this will end without us doing anything. Could it be that the empire's hero-sama is doing quite the participation?" (Naval)

Hibiki cleanly ignores the last part of her words and just puts the point of view of the fortress in her mind. Even the mercenary who has a lot of experience in the battlefield, Naval, felt this strangeness. It may mean something is really going to happen. Her instincts are trying to tell her something, but because of her own lack of experience, she is unable to think of anything. That is irritating.

"But! As long as we conquer the gate, the battle will be decided! Soon we will be able to drop the Stella Fort! Finally we will be able to do the first step to revive Elision!" (Bredda)

Bredda was in a completely excited state. He was in a state where there is no way he can think rationally. Even Wudi who was in line with Chiya had an unusual expression of excitement while looking at the battlefield.

Chiya was getting a bit used to the battlefield, but she still held fear of the air in it. It was like she was somehow able to stay firm by staying at everyone's side.

That's right, Bredda and Wudi's state told about the battlefield. Literally an assault right from the front. In the battlefield there was already no empire nor kingdom. They hold slightly different directions, but both troops collected in one at the fortress and were heading to the gate.

"I just can't brush off this bad feeling. Wudi, Chiya-chan. Just in case, prepare a suspended spell formation for defense barrier and high-speed movement" (Hibiki)

"But doing that for everyone is impossible. It would cost me an eye to even do our surroundings" (Chiya)

Chiya's fainthearted statement. The amount of magic power doesn't directly relate to the range a spell can reach. She was not good at expanding the area of her spells.

"If it's only the party, I can cast the high-speed movement. But all the unit is just impossible. I am not a spirit after all" (Wudi)

Wudi, on the other hand, didn't have as much magic power amount as Chiya. Even if he is able to control it, the useable magic power couldn't handle it.

"Then I don't mind if it's only us. We are doing nothing anyways, so please" (Hibiki)

While having puzzled feelings, the two of them accept the request of the hero. They form the spell and leave it in a standby state. They are still a hero party after all. This level of feat is possible for them.

(If it were me, what would I prepare? The thing I would do if the empire army and the kingdom army gathered in one place would be...) (Hibiki)

Hibiki ponders. The cliffs at both sides of Stela Fort. It was originally a fortress that worked as a bottleneck. Rather, she didn't understand why the demon race had the front part of the fortress, which was narrow to begin with, open before the battle, making it easier to assault. To have soldiers stationed on the cliffs and have them attack from above. But that is already something they have been doing. The army received attacks from the upper part of the fortress and the cliffs.

What she thought about next was the difference in height. The fortress is in a high position and the hyuman troops charged from the low part of the hill road. But it isn't a slope with that much of an inclination. From the present condition, it looks like one could use falling rocks on the front gate, but there is no plausible reason in having the enemy get so close to them just to do so.

They could also inundate the castle, but a lot of water is needed to do so. Just like the falling rocks, it feels like they are taking into account the season.

(Could it be... the one where walls on the left and right close in like in the movies of treasure hunters? That is exactly what one would use when the enemy is advancing in a narrow path. Just what in the world do they plan on doing? Well, if I can at least make it so we can return to the camp, we should be able to cope with most of anything that could come... probably) (Hibiki)

In the first place, the strategy this time had a lot of points Hibiki didn't understand. And it is not only related to the enemy army. It is also about the hero that in the moment her companions got involved with him, they began singing praises. She just couldn't understand. It is true that Hibiki didn't have that much experience in night warfare, but if they are going through the trouble of doing it, at least they should do it when the moon isn't out. And if possible in a cloudy weather with few stars, that way it would make the plan more solid, is what Hibiki thought. It seems that the Empire was pretty adamant with the day, but even after the plan started, Hibiki couldn't understand its true meaning.

While thinking that, she looks at her own army.

This is madness. This was truly a space where madness took control. Even though the longed for fortress is right in front of their eyes, the soldiers that are in the front line could only see the gate and the capitulation of it. Moreover, in the battlefield before the gate that should normally only have front line soldiers, there are units from the middle area and even spell casters that should be in the rear. Furthermore, the same was happening with the Empire's army.

In front of the demon race fortress that stole their friends and family. For Hibiki, this place hasn't stolen anyone from her but, she began to understand a bit the meaning of those words from the madness that they were releasing.

(This is... war huh. Even if I understand it, it is still hard to bear. To be received with praises and shouts of joy because of killing) (Hibiki)

Even the calm Naval showed a flame in her eyes that couldn't be hidden. The only ones feeling fear were probably Chiya and herself, is what Hibiki thought.

She saw the demon race as enemies, as existences that must be eradicated, is what she believed and thought she understood. But she didn't notice that from a whimsical thought, she was unconsciously counting the demon race's deaths as human deaths. These are remains of the way of thinking from her previous world. Speaking the truth, for Hibiki, the demon race's outward appearance were those of a human being.

(No, it may be the same with Tomoki. He is a person that was originally from Japan after all. That is only if his attitude before was just him *pretending to be tough*) (Hibiki)

On the boy that looked like he trusted too much on his level, Hibiki fixed a “probably” on him while thinking. Living in a world where you wouldn’t normally get to see the death of people up close, there is no way one can adapt in this battlefield so easily after all.

“Ah, the gate is...”

“Opening!”

Naval and Bredda’s words. Hibiki thought those were her own words, but she felt relief that it would end in just her pointless fears.

The welling up yells of the united hyuman troops resound in the battlefield like angry roars.

At that moment.

The pointless fears that Hibiki had thrown away, had suddenly become real.

The ground... collapsed.

In a fortress that is on the top of a gentle hill road, just before the gates the ground opened up. Everything of it.

As if taking the yells of the hyumans as a signal.

It collapsed in a breath. Saying it more precisely, it disappeared. Below it, darkness. Even when taking into account it was night, the scenery below still felt like a deep hades.

A silence of a few seconds. So that ground was already a product of magic huh. There weren’t even sounds coming from the ground that “collapsed”.

(The ground... dissapeared?!) (Hibiki)

Was it surprise or stupefaction? A strange space with the voice of no one spread in the battlefield.

Just how many managed to understand that the ground had disappeared just like the Limia hero?

“Wudi! Chiya-chan!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki had prepared just in case, so she was able to react faster than anyone else. It was a situation where the two spells prepared could serve. In a situation where one would normally ask for the high-speed movement support magic only, just in case, there was the suspended magic formation above prepared by Chiya. A fine play from Hibiki.

After another few seconds later, the spell activated and Hibiki’s party was able to avoid dropping. A faint light blue barrier is activated as well and a magic defense dome was created.

“Aaa... aaahh...”

The voices of the falling allies were heard by the party.

There is no way to know how far this hole continued on, but since they didn’t prepare any countermeasures for it, the result that was awaiting them could already be predicted.

Looking at it in an objective way, half of the soldiers that went mad and entered the frontlines had disappeared in a second.

At the reality that one could only think of as absurd, Hibiki couldn’t utter a word. The only ones remaining from the kingdom’s army were the spell casters at the rear guard, the bow unit and the knight units that were positioned with the nobles at the center.

Partial destruction... no, a bigger damage than that.

While constantly praying that the ones who fell were able to cope with it somehow on their own, Hibiki, without caring about the place, yelled out words to her party as if trying to suppress the scream that was trying to come out.

“Wudi, for now return up! Please try to move as much to the rear as possible. Naval and Bredda will come with me and find as many units remaining as possible, Chiya maintain the barrier okay?!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki looks up. It is something to be expected but... arrows and stones, as well as spells of many colors began to rain at them.

"...Naval, Bredda. Change of plans. Until we are able to return up, intercept! Come out as well Horn! We are going to survive!" (Hibiki)

While Hibiki calls from the silver belt the guardian wolf beast, Horn, her words were also to encourage herself.

Chapter 70

Heroes Reunite

While flying through the sky throwing shining lights out of his godly spear at the demon race and burning them off, the empire's hero, Iwahashi Tomoki, was in a state of confusion.

Literally the moment when the gate opened and were in the phase where they would assault the fortress and take the head of the general...

The people in the surroundings disappeared.

When looking below, there was a crazy big black hole. People, weapons, a part of the demons as well. Having a dispersed look as if seeing a CG, people were being sucked up by that hades.

The hostility that was being directed to him. From the opened gate, Tomoki noticed the magic shot and he used a destruction light from his godly spear to disperse them all. At the same time, he remembers something important.

About his comrades.

Ginebia, Mora, Yukinatsu.

The comrades that fought alongside him and protected him.

Tomoki activates a necklace-shaped sorcerer tool and searches the surroundings. He soon finds a reaction of the three.

Because of the silver boots the Goddess provided him he was able to float in the air without using magic power, so he was able to invalidate that crazy trap, but his comrades were standing in the ground normally.

Because of that he was the first target of the attacks, but with all the overwhelming equipment that was clad in his body, it was nothing.

“Did you fall you three?!” (Tomoki)

Saying that, Tomoki pursues the reaction. The reaction of the three was a bit below. Thankfully, it was practically on the same place they were.

When he reaches them, they were all gathered up in one place and floating. But that spell may have been incomplete, they seem to be slowly lowering.

“You are slow Tomoki! The replica of the silver boots is not complete so if there is something heavy we will fall!”

“Oi Yukinatsu, are you referring to me? I can’t just let that slip by”

Ginebia, who is wearing a plate mail and is clearly the heaviest of them all, lifts an eyebrow and reproaches her comrade’s words.

“Don’t fight. The two of you are heavier than me after all!”

““Of course we are!””

A third voice rings into the conversation that seemed like it would transform into a dispute and the two answer with the same words. Compared to the chibi girl Mora, the difference in height was clear.

Thanks to the creation of Yukinatsu, who came from an alchemist lineage, the three somehow were able to save themselves. Tomoki also strokes his chest in relief.

The exchange between the three also helped as an ingredient to calm down.

“I am glad that you guys are fine” (Tomoki)

“Tomoki... I am your shield. I won’t die without protecting you” (Ginebia)

“Don’t frankly make that kind of face, so embarrassing” (Yukinatsu)

“We are totally fine!” (Mora)

Because of the heartfelt words of worry from him, the three appeal their wellbeing with blushed faces.

“What a grand way they got us with, how cocky for a mid-boss. Mora, call Nagi please. For now we will retreat. Without confirming the situation we can’t decide to continue the battle” (Tomoki)

“...You are right. Just how many soldiers did we lose here?”

“What an absurd trap. The one who made it is crazy in the head”

“Understood, I will call Nagi” (Mora)

“Yeah, I am counting on you. There will probably be quite the amount of attacks coming from above anytime soon. Ginebia and I will block every single one of them, you can do it right?” (Tomoki)

“Of course. I won’t let you nor Nagi receive a single wound. Don’t underestimate a royal guard” (Ginebia)

“Thanks, Ginebia” (Tomoki)

Mora continues chanting an aria at her jewel, and while in the middle of giving his thanks to Ginebia, below the party that was slowly falling, a dragon was summoned. A type of flying dragon that possesses giant wings. It’s Nagi, who Mora controls.

Its emerald green scales are beautiful, a medium class dragon. It is also one of the individuals that are the closest to Mora.

“Nagi, go up! When we reach on top of the hole, we are going to retreat to the back. Please!” (Mora)

“GYAU” (Nagi :v)

On top of the dragon, while deflecting the attacks that rain, Tomoki reaches in front of the gate.

“What in the world, even the road at the back has become a hole. The rear guard is really the only part remaining” (Tomoki)

“Tomoki, let’s try to save as many people as possible by having them ride Nagi” (Ginebia)

Ginebia suggests. If they create a barrier around so the people don't get blown away, the space Nagi has to carry people is still quite enough. These were words that had taken into consideration this fact.

"Ginebia, that is no good. First we have to return as fast as possible and report this to Lily. That is the highest priority" (Tomoki)

Tomoki rejects Ginebia's suggestion. For him, it would just be unnecessary luggage and the mobility would decrease. A result he didn't desire.

"But!!" (Ginebia)

"For a while now I haven't been able to get in contact with Lily. Also, this is war. Because it is war, it is fine to just fight as much as the amount of people that died in order to repay them" (Tomoki)

"Tomoki... I am sorry. I became emotional" (Ginebia)

Just like how they have done until now, Tomoki's words enter Ginebia's heart and body as if permeating her. She was able to accept his words' logic quite naturally.

"Don't mind, it is fine if the usual Ginebia has returned. Now then, let's go back!" (Tomoki)

"Wait Tomoki"

"What is it Yukinatsu?" (Tomoki)

"Is it fine to not look for the hero of Limia and the others?" (Yukinatsu)

Even in a battlefield that has fallen into chaos, is it fine to not confirm the safety of one of the two figureheads? Is what Yukinatsu tries to ask.

Even if she is a hero, in a situation like this, it is not definite that she was able to deal with it calmly. No matter if retreating is the priority, it is not strange to ask about the Limia hero.

"Hibiki huh. She is also a hero. She must have managed something by herself. Me being worried about her may actually turn into being rude to her. It seems she is a "Senior Onee-san" after all" (Tomoki)

Just because the said person isn't there, Tomoki calls the other hero, who he was calling with -san a few moments back, without any suffix.

"I see. If Tomoki has something planned then it's fine. Let's go" (Yukinatsu)

"Yosh, Mora I'm counting on you" (Tomoki)

"Okay! Nagi, do it!" (Mora)

"Nice. But since we went through all the trouble of coming here..." (Tomoki)

Tomoki turns to the opposite direction of Nagi's orientation, in short, he faces the fortress. What he prepares is his favorite God Spear. The cone-shaped riding spear is enveloped by light and, in time, everything shines.

"This is payback!" (Tomoki)

Determining his aim, Tomoki releases the power of his spear at the gate that was trying to close. The light that straightforwardly travelled enters a gap in the closing gate... and created a thunderous roar.

"Quite the aim there"

"Oh... Sniper!"

"Onii-chan, nice~!"

To the ovations of the three, Tomoki makes a "this much is easy" face. Just in case, he uses the necklace to check the surroundings.

"Otto. It seems the Limia Hero and the others are alright. They are over there" (Tomoki)

"Oh. Heh~ you are right. Maybe I should make a replica of that necklace next. That is pretty convenient" (Yukinatsu)

Yukinatsu, a bit slower, uses something resembling a binocular to confirm Limia's party. Knowing that Tomoki used the sorcerer tool to search the area, Yukinatsu showed the greed of a researcher. Prove that she was now a bit more composed.

“At a later time okay?” (Tomoki)

Feeling a bit of discomfort in being a guinea pig of Yukinatsu, Tomoki responds in a vague way. To make a replica there is a need to have the sorcerer tool activated and observed for long periods of time. That time is quite a pain for him.

“You are still unable to contact Lily-sama?”

Ginebia asks. It is natural for her to be worried about the wellbeing of her other master.

“Yeah. I may be repeating myself but, does this world have the so called jamming?” (Tomoki)

The latter half Tomoki whispers it as if talking to himself. While they were flying, they catch up with Hibiki and the others. As expected of someone riding a dragon, even though Hibiki and the others were the first ones to escape, Tomoki’s side was faster.

“Great to see you are safe Hibiki-san. Your side’s movements are a bit dull, did something happen?” (Tomoki)

“...Is your detection ability low? It is the long awaited demon general” (Hibiki)

Thinking that Hibiki and the others just didn’t have enough strength to use the transmission, Tomoki points out their dull movements, but his face stiffens at her response.

Instead of the cold tone of voice of Hibiki, Tomoki shows shock at the words demon general.

“Demon general you say?! At our back?!” (Tomoki)

“That’s right. Moreover, he politely said he will wait for us to reform. Words you wouldn’t expect from someone who set such a trap. And so we are in the middle of having the rear guard fall back as fast as possible. Understood?” (Hibiki)

As fast as possible. Hibiki returns a begrudging tone at the insensible words of Tomoki.

“No way, just how...” (Tomoki)

"Who knows? They must have used a hand we don't know yet. By the way, more than the demon general, it is the fact that I can't get in contact with the troops that are supposed to be at the rear at all. Incredible huh, it seems the demon race is able to obstruct our transmissions. Meaning, there is a chance the demon race can intercept thought transmission. How unpleasant" (Hibiki)

"Jamming and... information leak. Isn't that fatal?" (Tomoki)

Tomoki seems to have understood the situation. He spews out gloomy words.

"And? What will you guys do?" (Hibiki)

"What, you say... about what?" (Tomoki)

"If we encounter the demon general it will be a joint front, or at least that's how it's supposed to go right?" (Hibiki)

Up to this day, this is a first. Or more like, this is the first time Hibiki has smiled at Tomoki from the bottom of her heart.

"The situation is different isn't it?! This should be the setting where we cut up the enemy encampment as fast as possible and escape right?! If we continue the battle like this, we will head straight to the bad end!" (Tomoki)

"Setting... setting huh. If that's the case, you guys escape. I will believe that the unit at the rear will do a pincer attack with us and defeat him. Well, if we were able to contact each other we would be able to cooperate in the escape though. In terms of strategy this is totally our loss. To be honest, I have taken an interest in that demon general" (Hibiki)

In these kind of scenario, Hibiki feels a conclusive gap in Tomoki who was talking as if he were in a dream or illusion. Hibiki feels a part of her is looking at him in a cold way.

And in a part she is happily talking as if having fun. Tomoki also shows puzzled eyes as if looking at such a living being for the first time.

"You... are you an idiot?" (Tomoki)

"No way. Also, I didn't ask you to cooperate right? In any case, you and I have bad compatibility. The selling point of you guys is the mid-range fire power. Most of my

party is close quarter. Your side shows best performance when fighting against big numbers, our side when we fight against fewer. Even if we fight the same opponent, I think our steps would be different" (Hibiki)

(Also, the attitude)

Hibiki secretly adds.

"In short, you are saying we can't form a joint front?" (Tomoki)

"I'm just saying there is no point in doing so in this case. I just don't see the merit of uniting. I don't like being shot by my allies" (Hibiki)

"...Then, it is fine right?" (Tomoki)

"Yeah. Just, lead the troops and use that fire power to clean up as many enemies over there. If you do that, it will make it possible for more surviving units to escape. We will take the opened path and attract the big-shot. Role division. Let's go with that in this case" (Hibiki)

"Understood. If you say that much, make sure to nail the demon general okay?" (Tomoki)

"Of course" (Hibiki)

The conversation with the two heroes finishes.

A slight meeting takes place in both parties.

Numerous times, voices of objections sound.

And those grew lower in time. Both sides show will and determination.

The time the two armies clash once more... is close.

Chapter 71

Ring

“Tomoki, Iwahashi Tomoki! Wait, weren’t you listening?!”

“I heard and understood everything! The moment where the enemy has his guard lowered the most is right now when our rear guard is sluggishly falling back! I will open you your path so shut up!” (Tomoki)

The dragon takes the lead and Hibiki’s group chases.

“The retreat has not finished yet and if we do something like begin the battle again it will only expand the damage of the units! The enemy has already been deployed and waiting, there is no way you can expect that much negligence from their side!” (Hibiki)

“If there is just a bit, that is enough! We are in the battlefield. Everyone is prepared to die! Hibiki-san, you are way too soft!” (Tomoki)

“Don’t mess around! What are you trying to achieve by deepening the chaos in your own team! We should find the escape routes that are possible and see how many units we can use...” (Hibiki)

“A geez! You are noisy! Don’t you understand?! A hero is a figurehead and that will serve as a salvation! This way more people will be saved! It is obvious which one is more beneficial! We are special! Chosen ones! If you say you want to die, do as you wish. I don’t care about that self-satisfaction. I will do your part as a hero in Limia as well so don’t worry!” (Tomoki)

Hibiki’s group is taking the road where the rear guard should retreat and Tomoki is riding a dragon to mobilize. Their natural speed is clear and the distance between them slowly widens.

Words already couldn’t reach. In the path they have taken there is only scorched ruins. Even if their speed can’t be compared to that of when they are fighting, the difference between a dragon and a person can’t be filled so easily.

"What a guy. Isn't encouraging the troops, standing in the battlefield as a standard-bearer, the way a hero should be? For him to try to save himself no matter what. I won't approve that" (Hibiki)

"But Tomoki-dono has a point as well. If we lose you, Hibiki, in this battle, the thousands of people you could have saved will no longer be saved. Your life is far more important than the hundreds of soldiers we are looking to save here" (Naval)

"Naval, shut up. I don't want to hear anymore. I won't ask. Because I still want to stay as your partner" (Hibiki)

"Hibiki-dono..." (Bredda)

Hibiki shakes her head horizontally at Bredda's words.

"This is one way as a hero. I understand that is what you want to say. That our job is to survive at any cost. But I don't like that. Also this can also be called a way of surviving in a fatal situation. In the middle of fighting the enemy general, if there is an opening somewhere, we will escape at once. That is what I am also thinking. I know this is optimistic thinking though" (Hibiki)

She knows this is quite the wishful way of thinking, even so, she doesn't want to say this is completely hopeless directly from her mouth. A decent reconnaissance has not been done. Then she at least wants to have this much hope. It is also the naivety of Hibiki who was raised in modern society.

"It doesn't change the fact that we got the short end of the straw, but someone has to do it. There is the chance the demon general will surround the remaining troops. If you tell me that is the responsibility of a hero, that is certainly true. Yareyare" (Wudi)

Wudi. He may have seen the hero way in Hibiki's actions, it seems he had resolved himself to what was to come.

"I will do my best. I won't fall down in the middle like last time!" (Chiya)

Chiya. Remembering the time with the black spider when she dropped out and left Hibiki all by herself, she brings out her fighting spirit.

"I am sorry, the hero I chose is Hibiki. I will accompany you till the end" (Naval)

"Me also, I won't be defeated so pathetically like last time. We are the five that pushed the calamity away. Something like a demon general, we will be able to deal with him somehow" (Bredda)

Naval and Bredda.

Tomoki, while burning the demon troops with overwhelming fire power, slows down his pace and Hibiki confirms his location.

Is he waiting for her, or is he just having difficulties. No matter which one it is, she won't accept the ways of that hero. That is what Hibiki decided.

Increasing her pace by one, the girl runs down the gentle slope and finds a messenger soldier. She makes her way to where he is.

"T-This is hero-sama! Just as instructed, we are having all troops retreat!"

Feeling deeply moved to have a heaven descended person, the hero, pat his shoulder, the young messenger soldier returns an upright and firm salutation.

"Thanks for your hard work. I am sorry for the continuous changes but, I want you to send a message to the generals of each unit. To stop the retreat and silently reorganize. Me and the Gritonia hero will open a path to escape so follow us" (Hibiki)

"That is..."

"I understand. They can't change their movements so constantly. But please. Also, tell the same thing to the Empire. In this kind of situation, there is no Empire nor Kingdom. We are definitely going to open our way" (Hibiki)

"...Yes, understood ma'am!"

He breathes deeply and slowly exhales it.

Seeing the running man that is hurrying to spread the message, Hibiki does one deep breath.

Silently closing her eyes, instead of resuming her breathing, she envisions the future. This is a habit she does whenever she is about to have a match with a strong opponent in kendo.

“Let’s go!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki’s party runs through the corpse-filled path that Tomoki has opened. It’s vexing, but this kind of destruction power deserves a special mention, is what the girl thinks. This is a feat Hibiki wouldn’t be able to accomplish. At least not in this short amount of time.

Taking into account the mobility of the dragon Mora called, coupled with the sturdy defense of Ginebia that is riding it, the high firepower of Tomoki who is using sacred treasures, and also the one providing support to Ginebia’s defense and Tomoki’s firepower, the one utilizing a replica storage and mass producing golems with alchemy, Yukinatsu.

Their figure when destroying the barriers the demons create with surplus and pushing on is fierce. As long as their barriers can’t resist, it would mean the only ones that could stop their advance is someone who has a good amount of power. In short, this means that they are able to shine indefinitely against these demon soldiers.

Just how many are feeling uncomfortable by the fact that this man is only opening this path just for obtaining his own safety. This is what Hibiki thought while looking at that far back.

“These are the last two!” (Tomoki)

Even the unit that was in front of the 4-armed general and wielded relatively high-class equipment were being burned down by the enhanced mowing light that was being shot from Tomoki’s spear. And the blaze that Nagi breathed out also minces the soldiers that try to approach. It seems it was spewing out an invisible wind blade.

The ones who thought about grabbing the flying dragon to obstruct its movements were scattered by the golems. People, beasts; the lifeless dolls that donned different forms didn’t permit the approach of anything.

“What an inelegant hero we have here. Looks like a kid raging at a party”

Releasing his crossed arms, the light purple skinned giant makes a fist. To be about three meters in height made him a small one in the Giants race, but the muscles that were packed in that body and the overpowering aura that spread out showed that he is a demon who is befitting of his title as a general.

The words that he directed to the hero also carried weight. It was calm yet heavy. And the presence of the 4 fists he made were also quite the thing.

“We don’t know about the inelegant part! Aren’t you the one with the broken head, going barehanded in combat?” (Tomoki)

Tomoki throws a light as a substitute of a greeting.

“Mun!!”

The demon general, with one hand, intercepts the dark cleaving light.

Meeting a collision, the light disappears. But the arm that was used to intercept this attack was burned black and had lost its base form.

“...As expected, one hit won’t be enough huh. Well, your opponent is another one. With this I am bidding sayonara. There’s no way I would lose if I fought, but I have to keep my promises you know!” (Tomoki)

The surplus-filled Tomoki and the others change direction, avoiding the front where the demon general is and beginning their attack on the troops at the left side.

“I won’t let you do that! Mu!”

The demon general tried to chase Tomoki, but feeling something, he looks at the path where Tomoki had appeared in.

A something clad in crimson light and crescent moon shape was approaching. As if running after Tomoki who is riding a dragon.

“Hoh~, this one looks like a warrior. Did you get a chance to learn speech?” (Four arms)

Whispering amused, the demon general scatters away the red attack with one hand. The figure of Hibiki wielding a sword clad in red is now in sight. In that clash of powers there wasn’t a single wound in his arm. This was prove of the difference in firepower between Tomoki and Hibiki.

“Did I make you wait? If the one that came here before me did something impolite I apologize but...” (Hibiki)

Maybe he was not taking into consideration the male hero from just a few moments ago anymore, with a ferocious smile in his face, the figure of him waiting for Hibiki's arrival was truly imposing.

"Nah, he was a really hyuman-like hero. Because even when words got through, it was impossible to establish a conversation" (Four arms)

Severe sarcasm.

"It annoys me that you think that is the obvious reaction a hyuman would have" (Hibiki)

"Then you prove it. However, it won't be with words, but with your skills" (Four arms)

Against the giant that puts his fists on the front, Hibiki looks at his face and prepares her bastard sword.

"Of course, I will do so. I am Limia Kingdom's hero, Otonashi Hibiki" (Hibiki)

"Well, well, how polite. I am the demon army's third group general, the demi-giant Io" (Io)

The demon general that had his eyes wide open for a second because of Hibiki's self-introduction, returns it with his own introduction.

"We may be outnumbered, but still, we will win. Even if we look like this, we were able to drive away the calamity after all" (Hibiki)

"The spider huh. I have heard the report. It seems you guys are quite capable. Also, outnumbered is a misunderstanding. I promise I will be the only one fighting the hero and her party" (Io)

"?!. Wait, he has one arm burned off and he still says that?" (Hibiki)

Looking at the charred arm that is probably unable to be used at all, the girl stops her movements from the surprise.

"N, ah, this isn't even worth calling handicap. Fuuhm" (Io)

Small cracks appear in the charred arm. With one swing of it, that charred skin was

brushed off and an arm appeared as if nothing had happened.

“...Is that the so called, high-speed regeneration?” (Hibiki)

“That’s right. Well, it is not in the absurd level of the black spider, so I might not match expectations though” (Io)

“You have made me remember an unwelcomed memory. Also, it seems you know quite a lot and set up such a trap!” (Hibiki)

“This time I had a lot of things pushed onto me so. I am not fighting just for myself here. That trap was the idea of the fox woman that calls herself tactician” (Io)

The scorn of Hibiki is answered by Io with apologetic words. The regeneration ability is not something he obtained to pester but something he was born with and the plan was planned by someone else.

He himself likes to fight fair and square by clashing their abilities. He is a warrior from the core after all.

“Are you telling me the one who holds the responsibility is someone else? Isn’t that dirty?” (Hibiki)

“Fufufu, are you provoking me? It’s not like I am trying to escape the responsibility. Also, I am planning on becoming a hero by defeating thousands of hyumans you know? There is no need for me to let achievements slip my hands. If I obtain subordinates by climbing in ranks, I end up unable to fight in the way I desire. That is the only thing I wanted to say” (Io)

Letting Hibiki’s words slip, Io shows the simple but good quality ring on his thick finger.

“What? An engagement ring?” (Hibiki)

“No no, what a funny joke. I am single. This is one of the things I said before, something that was pushed onto me. They told me to use it to snipe the hero. Right now the two of you should be in range, a nice time to use it. *Ghjkop \ kkjjgf*” (Io)

With the unknown words he used as a signal, the ring crumbles as if made of clay.

“...What?” (Hibiki)

The strength in her body feels like it is seeping away. The strengthening that she obtained with the blessing, she felt like it was coming out from her body. Not only that, the wolf that was by her side protecting her, became dim and disappeared.

“Hoh. It really showed effect. With this I can finally see our world coming to fruition” (Io)

The giant, seeing the wolf vanish, opened his eyes wide and makes a satisfied smile.

“What... did you do?” (Hibiki)

“I tried... erasing the blessing of you guys. It seems to only work for a limited time though. I was holding my breath, but it seems to have worked. What a splendid result” (Io)

“You blew away the God’s power with that one ring?!” (Hibiki)

“It has a crazy cost and it’s disposable. An incomplete product that is barely able to be of use in limited situations. Anyways, having something like a 4-times curse, do you really think we would just stay biting our fingers? First of all, did you think we were halved in this fight? I am sorry to say this but, we have already made countermeasures for your curse. To plan thinking you are fighting the same opponent as 10 years back, not even a fool would do that you know?” (Io)

“Uh” (Hibiki)

That’s true. If I were to be affected by a 4-times curse, I would try to do something about that first, is what Hibiki thought as well.

“Now, Hibiki and the others. Let’s begin. Please show me the power of a hero. Show me that it is a power that can reach the Demon Lord!” (Io)

A truly elated voice resounds in the battlefield.

Hibiki and Naval advance as an answer. In a distressing situation where one would normally retreat, the fight of the demon general and the hero began.



“Hibiki, what is that girl doing?!”

The impatient voice of Tomoki is heard from the top of the dragon flying in the battlefield.

His body had suddenly become heavy. It felt like his body had become even heavier than before, like a limiter had been put on himself. But what is important is not that. The problem is that the spear and boots as well as the armor were not showing any reaction.

The necklace that is being used as storage can be activated. But everything else showed practically no reaction. The armor that he could barely feel any weight from and had showed numerous defensive effects, had now become a mere heavy armor. When this happens, even the rubber suit that he had on as a foundation felt uncomfortable.

Practically every single weapon he called from his ring showed no reaction. The only thing that showed a response was a thin sword.

For him who is not suited at close quarter combat, this equipment was pointless. It wasn't a weapon one could use when in a mounting state anyways.

The one responsible for this irregularity is probably that demon general. In that case, it means this was caused by Hibiki's ineptitude.

(Is the power of the goddess sealed?! Is it okay for an opening boss to have this kind of power?! Or more like, if I can't use the power that the Goddess gave me, then isn't... the demon eyes in trouble as well?! I have to escape from this place as soon as possible!) (Tomoki)

But Tomoki who had thought until that point, notices an important reality. That if the Goddess' divine protection has been lost, the most important condition has been lost as well. Tomoki looks at the sky.

(Don't tell me, could it be, could it be, could it be! The immortal state is also canceled?!) (Tomoki)

Blood rushes to Tomoki's head.

This is no joke. If that is really the case, the point of choosing night would turn meaningless. It is because even if things turn to the worse, he still had this immortality to rely on. That's why he accepted to participate in this wide-scale operation.

He wasn't sure, but with reasoning was enough. The fact that he might die with just a stray bullet in his current state.

The fear of death begins to take control of him.

(No good, if I stay in this kind of place I will die! But if I were to get agitated and go back... At any rate, the affection points that I had painstakingly racked up, if I were to retreat now... Well, no matter. If I am released from this state, I will be able to get them back anytime. Even Nagi, if it were to die, I just have to capture a new one. I have to retreat even if by force!) (Tomoki)

Being unknown to death, he had obtained equipment of the highest class and had behaved strongly in the battlefield. Even if his level is high, he hadn't experienced the death and life situations that fit that experience. This kind of reaction was no surprise.

Up until now, when he thought there was a chance for him to get shot, he would only come out at night when the moon is out.

"Tomoki, what's wrong?" (Ginebia)

"Ginebia, the situation has changed! We are going to return as soon as we can to where Lily is!" (Tomoki)

Ginebia, who was concerned about Tomoki, was repaid with a yell.

"B-But what about Hibiki and the others? And everyone from the Empire? I think if it's just cover, we can still do so safely" (Yukinatsu)

"Shut up Yukinatsu! I am worried about Lily's safety, I have a bad feeling. Anyways, just hurry! Nagi, hurry up!" (Tomoki)

A lie. The thing about Lily and about having a bad feeling. Right now he was only praying for his own safety.

"Onii-chan?" (Mora)

Losing her words because of the sudden change, Mora simply mutters. This is the first time she has seen such a side of him.

Seeing Tomoki, who has begun talking about returning as if he had lost his mind, the three companions began having doubts. But those three had already accepted his order of retreating once, even if he has become impatient and forceful, there is no way they can decline at this point.

“Hurry! We are going to leave this place!” (Tomoki)

“U-Understood. Nagi, we are going all out! Do your best!” (Mora)

“No helping it. It doesn’t seem like we can fight until Tomoki calms down anyways. Ginebia, I am counting on you. Aaah geez! I will also prepare myself to go in the red by doing a giant release of golems and replicas!” (Yukinatsu)

“Roger!” (Ginebia)

The three, who were basked in the demon eyes close to the level of being prisoners, were now released from that curse temporarily but all of the effects piled up until now tied up their bodies. Just as how Tomoki planned, all of that piled up love is now binding them.

While Hibiki and Io’s fierce battle continues, Gritonia’s hero overtakes the enemy lines and heads to the Empire’s camp, to the tent where Princess Lily is waiting.

If they can at least pass the enemy lines, there won’t be other obstructions. It seems that even though the demon army was deployed at the rear of the united army, they haven’t reached the point of controlling it yet.

The time needed to reach the campground they sortied out from wasn’t that long.

“Tomoki-sama, so you were alright! Ah, what a relief!”

While being injured, Nagi was finally able to arrive at the destination and because of all the fatigue it didn’t even fold its wings and just fell to the ground. Seeing the hero that got down from it, Lily quickly ran to his side and while giving him a hug, she gave words of happiness at his return.

Tomoki, released from the grasps of death, loses his strength in relief. Sweat came out

all at once and his body couldn't stop trembling.

"Princess, to have let such an error occur, please forgive me!" (Ginebia)

Ginebia falls onto her knees and apologizes at the princess that continued her hug. Promising victory at their departure and then returning by themselves, just how unsightly this is.

"Ginebia, arrange the report of the situation. Come to my tent. Someone, come and take care of Mora's dragon. It is incredibly exhausted. Mora, thank you for saving everyone" (Lily)

"Tte, wait! Isn't there anything for me?!" (Yukinatsu)

Yukinatsu. Seeing the princess giving out prompt instructions but not being mentioned anywhere, Yukinatsu did a tsukkomi even when the other party is a princess. It was an act that proved their close relationship.

"Yukinatsu, looking at your state, it seems you have done quite the expense. But for you to choose your comrades over money makes me really happy. If you give me the full list of what you used, I will bear full responsibility of it so rest assured. Go and take a most deserving break" (Lily)

"Expenses in these dangerous situations don't matter. More importantly, in this situation what we need right now is someone that can see the whole battlefield and give clear instructions. Can you do it?" (Yukinatsu)

Yukinatsu looks serious and Ginebia lifts her head and agrees.

"I understand. That is why I came. In the end we ended up going back immediately though. Tomoki-sama let's return. Please tell me what happened as well" (Lily)

Lily glances at the battlefield. And soon turns her body and returns to the campground.

While hearing the report from Ginebia, Lily soothed Tomoki, cheered, comforted, healed. She also confirms the situation of the battle from his mouth.

(It completely became a losing fight huh. In that case, no matter what kind of damages the empire receives, what's important is to withdraw. Luckily the Kingdom's hero seems to still be fighting, so let's have the Kingdom's army work as our shield. The

Kingdom's strength will also be chipped, so two birds with one stone. Thinking about it, if the Limia hero dies here, the future would become much easier for me but... this would be too greedy. Our hero somehow managed to return without breaking and we have understood a bit of the demon race's moves and tactics. As a harvest, this is enough. It was originally fine if we didn't win anyways, so let's leave it at this. Also, the empire right now should be... Fufufufu) (Lily)

"Tomoki-sama, you have gone through a lot. Because of my own lack of ability in information gathering I have made you pass through such a harsh time. I am truly sorry!" (Lily)

"Lily. It's fine, even Limia didn't know anything. More importantly, should I have acted together with the Limia hero? With the two of us, the chances to win might have been higher" (Tomoki)

"No! The stupid one is that mockery of a hero, Hibiki. The existence called hero gives hope by living. To die for the sake of relieving her own satisfaction is just abandoning her duty. Tomoki-sama is a special one, if you were saved by the sacrifice of thousands of soldiers, it would still be cheap. It was the right decision. Please have more confidence in yourself" (Lily)

"...I see. You are right! If I die nothing will come out of it right?! Thanks Lily, I will have more confidence and I will become even stronger!" (Tomoki)

"Yeah, get as strong as you want. Lily will always be at your side Tomoki-sama" (Lily)

(If the Goddess' divine protection is suppressed, in the current state, there is almost no worth in using "this". Seeing the compatibility of sorcery tools he has, I think it is better to increase the amount of items that have as much use. Having weapons stacked inside the ring storage that he doesn't even use would just get in the way anyways. How troublesome. That pathetic sight he showed this time is out of the question. The clean up will be such a pain. Being blessed with such an environment and having that equipment as well as level, he still shamefully trembles. The hero the Goddess gave us is seriously thrash) (Lily)

She deeply embraces Tomoki once more. While having a slight cold shine reflected in her eyes that the other three companions don't have.

(The empire soldiers that personally saw our hero's pathetic figure are mostly dead

already. In the case they return, we make them experiment materials. Doing that, the result will be the same. We will obtain silence. The guns tend to explode a lot and to complete them we need a lot of people after all. No matter how many we have, it won't be a problem. For Stella, we will let it sleep for three months... No, around half a year. Even if this was part of their plan, it's still true that we were able to assault the outsides of the gate. If our side manages to talk smoothly, we should be able to buy that amount of time) (Lily)

Lily arranges her thoughts.

Stella Fort recovery plan failed. Using the Limia hero that decided herself to hold back the enemy, the Empire troops withdraw from the front. The Kingdom's army wait for their hero to escape and work as a rear guard while retreating. Barely escaping from the demon race's dirty trap, the Gritonia hero apologizes to the citizens and promises a comeback.

This being the result of the current strategy, the princess concludes and controls the truth of the information her own army should know. Getting in contact with the Kingdom's officers, they decide on the process of their retreat.

With the information in disarray and not being able to contact the front lines at all, the information of Gritonia hero being the only one who returned was used as a weapon by the princess and, manipulating in the shadows, the results came out instantaneously.

The actions of Hibiki backfired completely. The information that the hero directly brought out weren't lies, is what the Empire's princess made them think and the Limia officers that received this information, while crying and giving praises to Hibiki's decision, happily accepted the task of being the rear guard. Not only that, one unit of young people stood up and asked permission to rescue her which the superior officer gave his authorization. Princess Lily, maybe because she didn't consider this as anything that would bring trouble to her plans or because if she denies them she would bring doubts, only cried tears and gave praises at their bravery before departing.

Thus, by the time the sky was turning gray, the united army's retreat began.

Chapter 72

Furtherafter

“It’s morning huh. You guys really persisted” (Io)

“When cornered, anyone would show power surpassing their limits” (Hibiki)

The surplus-filled words of Io were answered by Hibiki with a reckless shout while dodging attacks.

“That is wrong. Being able to show power surpassing your limits only happens when you have properly grown and trained. You guys are truly skilled warriors. It seems I was misunderstanding the hero a great deal” (Io)

The compliments that came out indifferently from his mouth.

3 meters, from a normal person’s point of view this could be called quite the height. Using this body so agilely, he showed feats that would make first rate martial artists grieve.

“Power-type trunk” was quite the misconception. Hibiki felt hatred from the bottom of her heart at the idiot that made such an analysis. These were movements of someone that has polished his body.

A giant that one would normally think would use an axe or stick on his various arms and mindlessly swing them around. The real thing was completely different.

“The attacks don’t hit properly! This guy has a worst disposition than the spider!” (Naval)

Naval’s scream. This is true. The flashes that she has been releasing have not passed properly as attacks after all. Since the beginning, the attacks of her have gotten his arms from different angles a number of times, but not even his skin was scratched. Moreover, he won’t let attacks on the same spot reach. He deftly shifts and with some kind of method, he makes the edge slide off his hardened skin.

“Don’t self-depreciate yourself that way, white woman. Even though it is powerless, it is truly a splendid sword technique” (Io)

“Are you pretending to be a martial arts instructor?! Gu wu wu!!” (Bredda)

Bredda goes to where Naval is and jumps to divert the trajectory of one of his arms' attack.

“An instructor huh! That sounds nice. People like you that can take my attacks for so long are rare. How about it? Want to come to the demons side? Tto” (Io)

Io uses a step that makes it look like he shifted his body's direction in an instant to change his position. In the space he was previously in, a something made out of magic power passes by.

“Why are you able to dodge invisible wind?! Can you read the aria?!”

“That’s wrong, wind user. If one knows how much magic power is put in it, one is able to read most of the attacks that come. The place it is aimed at and the place it will activate, your eyes tell me that information” (Io)

This could be called an action brought by his enormous amount of experience. No matter if he says it, there wouldn’t be many who would be able to actually do it.

“I will have you let us move forward once and for all!” (Hibiki)

“!! Nicely done!” (Io)

Because of Hibiki’s sharp charge, Io is somewhat pushed back. But it wasn’t like Hibiki had reached the level of a demon general, it is just that his pre-established settings of her true abilities were beginning to be surpassed, that’s all.

To surpass the estimation of a general with vast amounts of experience is not something a normal person could do, but this was only a slight surprise for him.

A definite feedback is felt from Hibiki’s hands. The feeling of her sword reaching to her bones. Hibiki’s sword was able to slice one of Io’s hands till the middle.

“Oh, admirable. But how do you plan on surpassing the next barrier, hero?” (Io)

“...I can’t take it out?!” (Hibiki)

“If I tighten my muscles, you won’t be able to take out your sword. And so, your movements will stop as well!” (Io)

“!!”

Hibiki understood what would happen after this.

She instantly separates from her sword. This is an action stemming from Hibiki’s trust of her instincts.

A dull sound. This was the first attack she had received in this battle. Moreover, this is the first attack she received since she came to this world that didn’t have a single divine protection from the Goddess.

Hibiki flies like a pebble being kicked off. Chiya runs after her at once.

“Ga-ha!! U... go ho... wu...” (Hibiki)

(It hurts! It hurts! It hurts! It hurts!) (Hibiki)

Hibiki’s thoughts get dyed in one color. Is this the effect of losing the Goddess’ divine protection? For a moment, Hibiki thought this way.

(Hurts hurts hurts! But! Not having the Goddess’ divine protection doesn’t matter that much! Because I was able to move with not much change. The problem is him, Io. He is just way too strong!) (Hibiki)

Being almost controlled by the sense of pain, she tries to manage, even if for a bit, her reasoning. Think. For now just think. And so, Hibiki, for the sake of returning to her senses, continues to think while squirming.

(Even my bones are broken. What was punched was my stomach huh. To hit the stomach of a woman, how ungentlemanly. It seems there is a need to punish him. Ah, my mouth is filled with the taste of blood. It feels like it is coming from my throat. So lucky there is magic in this world. In normal circumstances I wouldn’t be able to eat food tonight, but with healing magic I can even go for meat. I am lucky) (Hibiki)

With her still disarranged thoughts, she tries to avert her attention from her wounds.

It seems that the self-recovery magic that was activated in the moment was steadily showing effects, her pain was slowly softening. Having Chiya's healing magic on top of it, both spells synergize and accelerate the healing speed.

While still being unsteady, Hibiki stands up after a short while.

"At that instant you let go of your sword and, even if imperfect, you were even able to put out a barrier huh. I shot that one with the expectations of making you mincemeat though. Truly well done. You have genius-level sense" (Io)

"How will you compensate if I end up unable to bear a child? And also, mincemeat you say, how gore. Don't joke around!" (Hibiki)

"What a lively girl. Have your sword back. It may be a pointless thing for you to do but, how about trying to look for a better sword?" (Io)

Hibiki receives the sword that was thrown out. Of course, the sword wound in his arm was nowhere to be found anymore.

"...When tomorrow comes, I will listen to your advice" (Hibiki)

As usual, the words that showed no sense of tension were somehow returned with impudent talk.

"If you guys live to see tomorrow, you will have a place to return. Those two premises are impossible" (Io)

"?!"

The demon general's nonchalant words. However, pointing out their place to return, Hibiki and the others uniformly open their eyes wide.

"Oh, so you get surprised as expected. Right now a detached force is advancing to Limia" (Io)

"Don't mess around! There is no way the capital will fall with a single unit!" (Bredda)

Bredda is the first one to object. For the demon race to defy with one unit, there is no way Limia Kingdom would fall so easily. Knowing that the fires of war were approaching his birth place, his appearance clearly changed.

"You are right. The scale is around two thousand. In normal circumstances, this is not a force that can be used to attack a major power's capital" (Io)

In Io's words one could feel pity. He sighs. While affirming Bredda's words, the latter half stirred up anxiety.

"What did you do?" (Wudi)

For Wudi, whose family is in the capital, these words felt like someone pouring cold water on him while sleeping. For him who wants his family as far as possible from this war, something that should not happen at any cost is about to happen.

"Magician huh. Well, it's just that I have reliable reinforcements that's all. A power that can even overwhelm me is accompanying me" (Io)

"Is the demon army a jack-in-the-box? If there are people like you crawling all around, the hyumans would have been annihilated a long time ago" (Hibiki)

Hibiki's sarcasm. But her words didn't show any composure.

"Hero. That's just how desperate we are. Now, let's close the curtains of this act. I will not forget you guys' bravery. Driving away the spider with only 5 and being hyumans to top. The fact that all of you came out alive tells that your strength is the real thing. There was a time when my best friend and I tried to make it retreat, but I ended up letting him die. A blunder of the young me, I truly regret it" (Io)

"?!"

He doesn't answer Hibiki's words, he just declares the finale of this fight. Also, the driving away of the calamity spider that worked as an emotional support for Hibiki and the others, Io points out that this wasn't an experience they alone had achieved.

It seems there was quite the effect. A clear unrest spreads in the hero's party. Words that hinted Limia's ambush and that he had repelled the spider. There is no way Limia's hero and her party would not get shaken from this.

(...I am thoroughly naïve. If I do an effort of 10, I will certainly get a 10. Thinking that, I came. I am putting my life on the line here. I should have tried my best by 100, 1,000, 10,000 times! I should have done that!) (Hibiki)

What can she do in this despairing situation?

Defeating Io and saving the capital. As expected, she could clearly declare this; that it is totally impossible.

Not enough. The power needed is absolutely not enough. For Hibiki, this was the frustration she was originally looking for. This was the step after desperate effort that Hibiki longed for. Therefore, obtaining this, her answer was obvious. No good.

Having sweat on her cheeks and hair over her face was simply irritating for her. The girl that tried her best and still lost. That was exactly the wish Hibiki had, but the girl began to understand what comes after in that path.

That's right. The reality of what will happen after a hero loses. The girl, Otonashi Hibiki, began to understand the reality of her existence being a center of hope. Her defeat is not limited to only herself anymore.

At times, there are fights in the battlefield that one simply cannot lose. Being raised in a peaceful land, Hibiki, who had thought this was just a fight in a different world, began to see the reality in it. That she couldn't continue thinking as she has until now.

A feeling of defeat that was not on the level of when she was defeated by the black spider was now enveloping Hibiki. For the time being, the whole party was still in a condition that can still fight. But the fact that they don't feel they can win, slowly breaks their heart.

“!!”

Far.

At a distant place.

In the direction where the Limia capital is in.

A golden light of giant magic power proportions splits apart the clouds and pierces the ground.

Of course, this was a happening that occurred in a faraway place. This was a phenomenon that one could see with their eyes, but to estimate the amount of magic power that light had was something Hibiki and the others couldn't do from their

location.

The only thing they could tell was that an intense pillar of light appeared, and it was golden in color.

But what happened? It was a situation that only rolled into the bad side. Hibiki tries to forcefully put her mind together.

“What is that?!” (Io)

It seems Io also didn’t expect this to happen. This made them feel a bit better and they could still hope for the better. The words of dismay that the demon general showed for the first time, sounded like music to Hibiki’s ears.

“That may be a plan to reverse things. Everyone! Just for a bit more, let’s struggle!” (Hibiki)

“I will accompany you!”

“Of course!”

“My magic power is not dried out yet anyways!”

“I’ll do my best!”

Of course, there is no way they have such a convenient reversal plan. Everyone understood this.

But even so, the companions that answered the encouragement won’t surrender till the bitter end. This is the strongest weapon that Limia’s hero and her companions possessed.

(Wudi-dono, I am sorry. Can you give me a bit of your time?)

(Naval-dono, what is up?) (Wudi)

Receiving a thought transmission from the girl that was standing with her blade beside Hibiki, Wudi responds without breaking his concentration. A contact from Naval, something that one could count in one’s hands, surprised Wudi.

(This situation... there might be a way to escape from it) (Naval)

(What?! So you need my cooperation for it right?) (Wudi)

(Yeah. I... can't ask this of Chiya) (Naval)

(...Let's hear it) (Wudi)

(I am a vanguard that against sturdy opponents can only do the job of getting its attention. I have low attack power. Even though I tried to look for a strong weapon, it is as you see) (Naval)

Naval continues her movements just like before, dodging Io's attacks while attacking. Seeing her attacking the parts where his defense looks weaker continuously, one couldn't feel the weakness of her words.

(I think putting a demon general as the basis is a bit of a rash self-evaluation though) (Wudi)

(No. I myself understand this. But for the weapon searching I have troubled myself so much with to be useful here) (Naval)

(What are you trying to say?) (Wudi)

A conversation held out while Wudi is providing support as well as attack magic. The two of them, without breaking their concentration in battle, were continuing their thought transmission. A show of how much ability they possess, proficient people.

(Yeah, I got my hands on a secret plan that will explosively increase one's strength. And a method to obtain immense attack power as well. It is sad that both of them can only be used once) (Naval)

(...Naval-dono that is...) (Wudi)

(A magician like Wudi-dono may already know of it. The fragment of a rose, Rose Sign, and a death god's note, *Deadly Word*; is what they are called. Quite the amount of magic power is needed to prepare its activation and it is something I can't use, but it is something you should be able to easily accomplish) (Naval)

(I refuse. Such a method, Hibiki-dono would not approve of it either) (Wudi)

(There is no need to tell me, I know Hibiki would be against the idea. But, you understand right? That the escape of the hero is something that has to happen. In a sense, the decision of Tomoki-dono is more adult than Hibiki's) (Naval)

(Guh! That is, certainly true...) (Wudi)

The hero, Otonashi Hibiki, is an existence that must not be lost. Even if one takes away the battle power as a hero, that charisma and way of thinking, and in times their casual words that one can obtain ideas from, all of those are things that the Kingdom needs.

(That's why, I ask of you. I want you to please let me save Hibiki. You also want to live and reunite with your family right?) (Naval)

(?! Those words... that is underhanded Naval-dono.... Which one are you planning on using?) (Wudi)

(Thanks! Since it is like this, I want to use both. Fighting with the Rose to the bare limit and then finish it with the Death God) (Naval)

(The... two. You have resolved yourself up to that point?... Okay, I will use my all to help you. When given the signal, I will take everyone immediately and show you how I shake off the soldiers at a speed so fast that won't even let them react to it) (Wudi)

(So you were already aware of my last request huh. I am grateful. Truly... grateful) (Naval)

Taking the chance when she avoids the giant's attack, Naval moves to the back of where Bredda is positioned in.

"Sorry, Hibiki, Bredda. I have thought of a trifling plan so, is it okay to leave it to me?" (Naval)

"Naval! If you are saying this and leaving us two to fight against this monster, it must mean you have quite the confidence right?!" (Hibiki)

"Merciless, this lady is merciless!" (Bredda)

Of course, the two of them spit out complaints one after the other. Their faces were filled with expectation, so they were not truly against the idea. Naval smiles at the behavior of both. For the girl that almost never smiles, this was an unusual happening.

“Just for a bit, I am counting on you guys!” (Naval)

Naval falls back to the rear where Wudi and Chiya are. Wudi had a strained and resolved expression. Chiya had a pure face filled with motivation. Naval, seeing both of their faces, smiled gently.

“Wudi-dono, please” (Naval)

She takes out an earth-colored object the size of a coin from the bag hanging at her waist. It was a form that seemed as if the so called “Rose of the Desert” had become smaller.

Next, a single note. It had thickness, and in the material that could make one think it is cloth, a pattern is engraved.

Seeing the two items taken out, Wudi lowered his brows and sighed deeply. Because the two items were the real deal.

“U-Uhm! What should I do?” (Chiya)

Chiya wasn’t able to understand the situation and asked the two people that had faces as if they knew everything.

Even though she is still young, she is still able to pay attention to the two comrades that have been left to deal with the giant while she talks. Chiya herself still didn’t know but, this is quite the growth.

Hibiki, knowing her hair was going to get in the way, cut it short. She learned about the sword from Naval and magic from Wudi. Seeing that sister-like existence, Chiya tried her best in her own way for the sake of walking beside that person forever. Continuously experiencing the battlefield, Chiya had grown well.

“Chiya... is okay. Just concentrate on those two” (Naval)

“No. Chiya, do your best in providing support to Naval-dono. Cast a strong spell that you won’t need to reapply for a long while” (Wudi)

“U-Understood!” (Chiya)

“...W-Wudi-dono” (Naval)

“Now then, next is the Rose Sign huh. How are you going to sneak the note on him?”
(Wudi)

“I will coil it around the handle” (Naval)

“Then let’s fix it as well. You remember the activation key right?” (Wudi)

“As expected, that would be no joke. There’s no problem” (Naval)

Maybe he was trying to soften the mood a bit, the party’s magician smiled and made a light question which was returned with a wry smile.

“...I wasn’t saying that with the intention of a joke though. If you are heading to a once in a lifetime stage, you must worry about those small things just in case” (Wudi)

Magic power flows from Wudi’s hand and the earth-colored item that was in Naval’s hand dissolved into a liquid state and gets absorbed inside of her.

The support magic that was filled with Chiya’s fighting spirit had also finished casting.

Naval, sensing power flooding her body, her shoulders tremble. In the beginning she thought it was because of the efficacy of Chiya’s support magic, but this power that knows no bounds, ignoring the comfortableness of the user, this violent-like power is not something that this small girl’s magic possesses.

“I have confirmed the activation. Start” (Wudi)

The business-like and firm voice of Wudi reaches the ears of Naval. There was no need to tell her, her eyes were already facing the battlefield, at Io.

Her white hair flows in the wind and the back of her neck is revealed. At both sides of her neck, something was there. The pattern of a crimson-colored rose.

“...Rose Sign. Something that I didn’t want to see on a friend if possible” (Wudi)

“...Wudi-dono, this is my wish. Don’t make such a face. Then... I’m going!” (Naval)

From the whole body of the running Naval, a dim radiance is being released. In that figure that would normally be seen as beautiful, Wudi looks at it in pain, as if wanting to cry.

“Uhm... What was the plan?” (Chiya)

“It’s something like the preparations for a sure-kill technique” (Wudi)

“Incredible! Naval-san could use such a technique?!” (Chiya)

Seeing the innocent happiness of Chiya, Wudi stops kneading his magic for a bit and looks at the sky.

“...Yeah. A one-time use” (Wudi)

He whispers.

That voice dissolving into the darkness.

Chapter 73

Decision in Stella

“W-What?!”

The swordswoman that had fallen back had now returned, her body clad in radiance.

The attack that Io used as a feint was evaded in a speed that was clearly at a completely different level from before and, just like that, her sword travels to his flank.

Tightening his abdominal muscles, the attack that was repelled until now had brilliantly cut the body of the giant and blood flowed.

“It can cut!”

“Naval, what kind of magic is that?! I will also go to the rear and have it casted on me as well!” (Hibiki)

“Hahaha, Hibiki that is impossible. This needs a special catalyst after all! Just obediently provide me support!” (Naval)

Naval stops Hibiki who was already trying to head to the rear.

“Wu wu, if you had such a trump card, you should have used it faster! You are sparkling and look beautiful too~” (Hibiki)

“We are pushing hard!”

The speed of Naval was originally higher than him. Even if Io's strategy is to freely move his sturdy body with fluent body techniques, against the hyuman whose height is different and excelled his speed, it was impossible to evade them completely. Now that her attacks were connecting properly to damage, the schema has made a complete reversal.

Keeping a distance not too far yet not too close, she coils about the demon general Io while one-sidedly cutting him.

There was no chance for Hibiki to intervene, Naval was dishing as much attacks as she wanted. With her speed, there was no chance to follow her and the wounds continued.

Compared to the regeneration, the speed in which he received wounds was faster. But at this rate, it will never reach a fatal wound. The wound she did at the beginning in his flank has already healed. If there is something she can aim for, it would be the weakening of his strength by lost of blood. As expected, things like neck, chest and stomach; he didn't permit her to aim at them.

Hibiki's two handed attacks leave shallow cuts. She is changing into a style where his muscles won't be able to catch her attacks. Putting slicing as her objective, she is moving in a way so the previous error doesn't occur again.

But in that turn of events there is one knight that had practically stopped parrying attacks or stopping them. He looked at the battle with a dazed expression.

“...That is... Rose Sign. Are you kidding me? Why does she have such a...” (Bredda)

It seems he had noticed something, he turned to the rear where Wudi is.

Wudi, who knew the position of prince that Bredda possessed, could only turn his eyes away.

No one in the party except Wudi knows, about Bredda holding the position of prince. Because of that, there were a lot of chances where he obtained information other people would be unable to touch. In that information, there was also the reason as to why Naval was able to change this situation into an advantageous one.

A fragment of a rose, Rose Sign.

Its size is on the level of a coin, but in reality it is one of the magic items that holds terrifying power.

It's a one-time use item and, when used, the pattern of a crimson rose will appear at the back of your neck. This is also one of the reasons for its name.

Its effect is simple. It uses life as food and forcefully brings out power. When it is born, it will slowly consume you until your death and will greedily devour that power you will never be able to recover. And so, it will provide the user with strength surpassing one's limits.

The effective time is until that person dies. It is by no means a long time. That is to say, in exchange for a power that the user will never be able to obtain in his entire life, your death is set in stone.

“Calling such a thing... a plan? Naval, you are...” (Bredda)

A pure swordswoman like her can't activate it. Bredda understands that. His thoughts reach at the conclusion that it must be Wudi or Chiya that cooperated with her.

(It is most likely Wudi. If it were Chiya, she wouldn't be cheering so merrily for her. Is she going to such lengths to protect Hibiki-dono and I?!?) (Bredda)

It is certainly not a situation where they could survive with the sacrifice of no one.

However, to take all the responsibility by herself and forcing her own death, it is something Bredda would never approve. The knight that faked his social position and joined the party, still didn't have the way of thinking a royalty should possess. Sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice someone. This reality is one that a politician can't avoid.

And actually, the effectiveness of Rose Sign is immense. Even in the present state, Io, who had been proving a difficult time for them, was now taking the defensive. He is someone that even with a handicap of 4-times blessing was still able to win.

“Ah, Naval! You must not, that attack is...!” (Hibiki)

There is no way to know if Hibiki's warning reached her. Naval, who had jump up to the air, swung her sword straight ahead and got the demon general's arm. And then, that sword continues unto its insides... and stops.

“I got you!” (Io)

Io wedged the sword and tightened his muscles. His opposite arm fires a powerful uppercut at Naval.

“Not yet!!” (Naval)

In midair, she puts her right hand on top of the left that is at the back of the sword's handle and places force as if pushing her whole body. Naval, kicking the body of Io, uses that momentum to push the sword that had stopped in the middle and slices the

bone and remaining meat.

The uppercut that was approaching her from below, Naval manages to put her feet on top of it and use that strength to propel her to the direction of the attack.

Io didn't let out a single scream from having his arm cut off and didn't stop his fist either. Nevertheless, one could clearly see that he was sweating and looking at his own arm that was now bleeding, he finally distorted his expression.

A blood spray that had never occurred was happening now.

"How scary, white woman. You said your name is Naval? Knowing an attack was coming and yet still greedily come to get my arm, moreover, kicking my fist and killing its power. Are you a monster of the sword?" (Io)

"For a demon general to call me a monster. It doesn't feel bad. I now grasped the way to cut off your arms. If the arms that protect you are gone, it will be easier to make your head fly" (Naval)

Laughing fearlessly, she brushes off the blood sticking onto her sword. Her sword was already clad in a faint radiance and the white aura that she was releasing from inside her was steadily getting stronger. The shining aura flows to all sides as if dancing and then disappears.

"So there's a hyuman magic I don't know right? Honestly, I am deeply surprised" (Io)

"Well, I am surprised as well. At your power that I can't overwhelm even when going to such lengths that is. As expected from a 4-armed giant race. You are one of those we call genius huh" (Naval)

"...I was originally a normal 2-armed giant you know? What you cut off is not one of my original arms" (Io)

Io responds to Naval's praise.

"At that time when we were attacked by the spider, I couldn't save my best friend. When I managed to repel it with my wound-filled body, I returned with his arms and transplanted it on me. It took a lot of time until I was able to move them properly though" (Io)

"Well, that was impolite of me then. I am sorry but I will have to finish this. There is also a fox woman right? From the 4 demon generals you are the weakest one. We can't take our time" (Naval)

The light that was coming from Naval's body surpassed its peak and was now weakening.

Maybe she is self-aware of this or maybe not, she once again begins her offensive.

"I am the weakest? Fumu, it seems you guys are doing a weird labeling there. Why would a weak general come to the frontlines? In terms of battle, I am the strongest one of the demon generals. There's no demon general that can beat me in a one-on-one" (Io)

Against Naval's fierce attack, Io limits himself to harden only the parts that he uses to guard and slowly manages to make them shallow. In these scene where blood is spraying here and there, Io seems to be calm, but in reality he is slightly reorganizing.

"That is good news then! If we manage to defeat you, we will be able to make a big step forward!" (Naval)

She didn't even flinch at the words "strongest". Naval goes full force at the demon general.

While handling the combo of fists, she puts force into the arm holding the sword and little by little, using full powered attacks, she maintains her distance while mobilizing.

In the middle of that, Naval does one step back and turns over her body. As if he had been waiting for this moment, she did just as Io planned.

(No good! Naval hasn't noticed?!) (Bredda)

Bredda, who has been watching that fight with complex emotions, holds fears about Naval not being able to evade the next attack that is coming from the demon general.

It may be because Bredda receives attacks a lot, he is skilled at reading his enemy's knacks.

This time, Io moved knowing that Naval would take her distance because she didn't like how the situation was flowing.

“...A kick?!”

That's right. Io hadn't used a kick at all until now.

The distance it has is wider compared to a fist. The place where Naval is, is not a safe range anymore. She is within his range sphere.

In the space between them that she thought was safe, a fast kick that doesn't fit the appearance of this giant was released. Avoiding it was impossible.

“You shouldn't be careless!” (Io)

“Seriously!” (Bredda)

From the side of the released kick, a shadow appears.

Bredda, who had noticed Io's prediction, moved to make a follow-up. From the front this attack is dangerous to defend, but attacking the leg from the side to shift its direction is something he can somehow manage. Bredda's decision was correct.

Getting his kick's direction shifted by an unexpected obstruction, of course, the balance of his body crumbles. Naval's eyes shine with the desire to attack.

“I did it!” (Bredda)

Replacing the kick of Io, comes Naval. Her movements while spreading light powder were beautiful like a dance.

Io, who had read the aim of the girl accurately, leaves the arm that is supporting his body and uses the two remaining arms to protect his neck.

“I won't get in the way! At this moment he isn't even able to counterattack right?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki forcefully cuts one of the arms of his and strikes his whole body. If it is at least cutting off one of the arms that are protecting his neck, it is possible.

“Hibiki, thank you!” (Naval)

Slipping through the arm that was left, Naval's sword reaches Io's neck.

“Nuu wu! Gu!!!”

She wasn't able to make it fly off. It took her all to slip through his arm and release a punch.

But the sword of her, certainly got through his neck. The white radiance that was covering the sword was now shining faintly and only protecting Naval's body.

The white swordswoman uses her remaining power to try and cut off his neck by placing force on the opposite side.

It doesn't budge.

The sword that had gone through his neck didn't move a centimeter.

“Praiseworthy. To think you would be able to do this much. I apologize for my impoliteness of thoroughly making light of you guys” (Io)

“...You bastard. That body is...” (Naval)

The purple skin of Io began to dye in pitch black.

“To think in this fight I would find an opponent I have to use my all” (Io)

The words of the black giant sent chills down Naval's spine. The sword that had clearly reached to his throat by pressing all of the strength of both of her arms, was brushed to the side. The sword... broke.

Without minding that, she exchanged looks with Hibiki and Bredda and took her distance from Io. He didn't give chase.

The giant, with the sword's edge still in his neck, stays standing.

“...This is a joke right? Are you telling me from now on its stage 2?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki's words are blurred. Until now it has been already been a plenty strong opponent that they could hardly match and yet, he becomes even stronger. There is no situation more despairing than this.

“No way. To not even use all of his strength when fighting Naval in that state” (Bredda)

Bredda's words were of mortification, a person that has been filled with despair.

"Sorry there" (Io)

Io silently prepares.

"Wudi!!!!" (Naval)

The words of Io were drowned by Naval's yell and resounds in the area.

Wudi, returning to his senses, quickly activates a spell he had prepared.

"Chiya, I will activate high-speed mobilization. Do a follow-up!" (Wudi)

"Y-Yes!" (Chiya)

The opened hands he placed to the front were retracted and tightly gripped at the same time. His eyes were firmly locked at Hibiki and Bredda. He didn't look at Naval.

"Eh"

"Uah"

Both Hibiki and Bredda felt like they were pulled by something and were brought to Wudi's side.

He closes his eyes. For the sake of reaffirming his determination.

An unexpected turn of events occurred, but he already accepted the predicted future he talked with her in the thought transmission.

The wide opened eyes of Wudi were only looking at the path the Gritonia hero took. There may be some soldiers blocking the way, but there is no doubt that is the place with less defenses.

He hoists his staff.

"Wai- Wudi?" (Hibiki)

He ignores Hibiki's words.

On the contrary, with the spell activated on top of Chiya's support, they retreat from the battlefield at a speed not seen before.

"Eh, Wudi-san! Naval-san is still!" (Hibiki)

"Chiya, you must not, at any cost, cut off the support" (Wudi)

"Wudi! What are you doing?!" (Hibiki)

"Bredda-sama. Please hold down hero-dono. I don't mind if it is only for a short while" (Wudi)

Without hearing the opinions of anyone...

Wudi fulfilled his promise with Naval and used his magic at max power to bring the party outside the boundaries of the battlefield. The demon soldiers that touched the gentle green area that surrounds the party were cut into pieces, and coupled with their screams, they went at full speed. Even when they arrived where the Kingdom's soldiers who were trying to save Hibiki were, they still didn't drop their speed.

The moment the spell lost its effect, he didn't speak a word and just fainted.

At the other side.

Io, who had understood the reason of Naval's shout, ordered the soldiers to pursuit them. However, the party passed through the battlefield at high speed and it was quite the difficult order to follow. The ones who followed this order faithfully were turned into minced meat, the arrows were broken and the spells were blocked and avoided.

"Wudi-dono, I am truly grateful" (Naval)

"This is your plan huh" (Io)

With a bitter-filled expression, Io asks the hyuman woman left.

"Yeah, that's right. My trump card is a bit dangerous you see" (Naval)

Saying that, Naval puts up her stance with her broken sword. The radiance that was rising from her body was already hollow, and what was left only dispersed.

"I can't see you able to fight anymore though. Even so, you will continue?" (Io)

The words of the giant were like a sigh that resounded in the place.

"Of course. I haven't used my everything yet after all!" (Naval)

The light in Naval's eyes were actually stronger even in this situation. Holding tightly her broken sword, she reduces her distance between Io.

"Are you wishing for an honorable death?!" (Io)

"My life would have mercilessly and worthlessly fallen in the battlefield anyways!! I am able to decide my death place, I got a reason to die, and moreover, I am able to remain in the memories of an irreplaceable friend! For the death of the sword monster, this is a stage that is too good!" (Naval)

"Wha-"(Io)

Io was thinking Naval would evade his fist and advance to pointblank range. Seeing his prediction turn out completely different, he unconsciously voices out his surprise.

The demon general's fist... pierced the girl. It's an attack that anyone would be able to tell it is a fatal wound. Naval, who had a fist growing out of her back, just what was she expecting to do now?

The girl who was vomiting blood, raised the corners of her mouth.

"Come to me, Death Messenger" (Naval)

"?!"

Just before death, the whisper of Naval didn't reach Io's ears.

In an instant, the blue fire that spread out in his surroundings covered all his field of vision. The fire steadily converged onto him and her as if trying to surround them, turning everything that touched it into dust.

It wasn't the vivid sky blue that refreshes one's eyes...

It's like the one you see after dusk, a dark and stagnant blue.

“This is... this is?!” (Io)

An ancestral magic that uses life as its price, is what Io concluded. Because she is a swordswoman, this possibility completely slipped from his mind. Now that the two who could use magic were gone, in a part of his mind he had set that there was no “magic” in her options.

Extremely high density blue flame balls were wrapping up Naval’s corpse and the black giant.

With an expression as if he would explode at any moment, he made himself smaller, and in the area, one could hear the shouts of Io. Maybe it took the increasing shouts of him as a signal, the blue flames showed a change.

In the moment they shone brightly, at the next instant, they created a large explosion.

The explosion was vast in range and the demons and hyumans aiming to retreat in the surroundings were caught in the blast.

A thunderous roar rules the entire area for a moment, a flame that burns the battlefield.

When the two of them vanished, a charred lump of something was left on the ground.

What was once Io.

With a form as if cowering, the charred body looked like a big rock.

Beside that rock, a blue skinned woman that appeared out of nowhere touched his hand.

She seemed like a demon, but in that face the horns that are their special trait are nowhere to be found. She had a slim figure and an extreme outfit that barely hid the most important parts.

She looked at the black lump with bored eyes.

“Io, wake up. You are not dead right?”

“.....”

"We still have the mending of the "Hades" so do it quickly. Even if we have concluded it beautifully, we still have to do the maintenance properly. Hey, wake up!"

The demon woman, who didn't hold a sliver of doubt about his survival, kicks the black rock. It seems she was in a bad mood.

The scene where he showed Hibiki his regenerated charred arm, was once again reproduced but with his whole body.

"She did a good one on me, that woman" (Io)

"...As expected, you were still alive huh. To kill you would take quite a lot. Let's return, we still have a lot to report after all"

"Yeah, go ahead first" (Io)

"Ah, is that so. Then return walking. To say such a cold thing even when I went out of my way to come and get you"

"...Naval huh. That name... I will remember it" (Io)

Io looks deeply emotive at the arm that was sliced by a single hyuman. The figure of the woman is nowhere to be found. Not only her body, even her sword and tools; everything turned to dust.

"Ah that's right. The blitz attack on Limia Kingdom failed"

"What?!" (Io)

Hearing the unexpected words, Io's voice gets rough. The actions of that woman called Naval were out of expectations, but the strategy as a whole should have been proceeding smoothly.

For the part he was the most confident to succeed to have failed, his reaction was natural.

"In the time you were turned into an ugly rock, a number of unexpected events occurred. And so, the other side failed. Later I will tell you the parts we could understand"

“That group of monsters... failed?” (Io)

“That’s right. Right now they are weak enough even we would be able to kill them. Just what in the world happened? If I were there accompanying them, I would have been able to see”

“I can’t believe it” (Io)

“Isn’t it just that in this world we don’t know what could happen? Even I, if these were how it ended, it wouldn’t be fun. If I knew this would happen, I would have killed the Gritonia Hero. The effect of the ring was instant on that side. He became a small fry in a breath”

The woman that was already flying in the sky, without hiding her bad mood, throws casually at Io words that could be taken as a monologue of her. Afterwards, he returned to Stella Fort alone.

Maybe he wasn’t perfect yet, he dragged his body while getting in contact with the soldiers and ordering them to clean up the remaining hyumans. And following the path the woman took, Io returned to the fortress.

Like this, the Stella Fort capture battle had ended.

Leaving a big wound on the hyumans...

And moving the world bit by bit.

Chapter 74

The suffering of the Golden one

Inside the dazzling light, I feel like I heard a voice I have heard before. The moment I tried to turn my attention to it, a soft sensation enveloped my body.

There is also a floating sensation I didn't feel in the transfer formations at the other towns. Before I could grow vigilant, a strong light as if exploding, dazed me and I reflexively closed my eyes.

I waited until the sudden strong light weakened before I open my eyes. I didn't want to receive that flash-like light. It seems I was somehow able to protect my eyes, but I didn't know what was going on.

This is... where? It is clearly not a place I have seen before.

Is it a stream? A river is flowing in front of me. It has a bit of width, but it's a shallow river which I can see its bottom. If I feel like it, even without looking for a bridge, I would be able to cross just like this.

This is so sudden that I don't know what to do.

I certainly got on the transfer magic formation. Then this should be the inside of the next relay town. Yeah, thinking things through is important. Uh?

That thing I see in front of me... a mamono? There are also demons there. They are heavily armored and walking in a really imposing manner. What, what in the world is...?

They are on the other side of the river. Since the river itself is pretty big, there is a relative amount of distance between us.

My breathing becomes shallower. I try to push aside this strange atmosphere for now. And then, I notice something.

I can feel presences at my back as well. I am scared, but if I don't see what it is, nothing

can be done. I felt uneasy about turning my sight away from that strange-looking group, but I push those feelings aside and turn to my back.

Behind me there is a forest. In the spaces of the many trees, I could see the shadows of people. That equipment... the army?!

The people that I could see were mostly facing the other side. It looks like they are retreating, but I can see a number of them looking at this side. Are they scouting?

I don't know from which country's army they are from, but looking at their uniform equipment, they remind me more of the army than soldiers. At my back, a hyuman army; at my front, a demon army. Then does that mean... this is, this is... a battlefield?!

I am right in the middle of both armies?! EH?! How?! Why?!

I don't understand, I don't understand at all! I was with Shiki... That's right, Shiki. My servant. Where is he?

Of course, just noticing that Shiki is not by my side makes me feel a sense of crisis. This is bad. I am quite unsettled.

(Shiki! Shiki! Can you hear me? If you can hear me, I want you to please explain me what is happening!)

There is no response. Or more like, I can't feel it reaching. Is it being obstructed? Then...

(Tomoe? Tomoe! Can you hear me?!)

(Mio, it is me. Makoto! Can't you hear me?!)

No good. It feels like the call isn't even connecting.

To think I can't even get in contact with my servants. This is the first time something like this has happened. What should I do? For some reason I am in a battlefield-looking place and it seems they are currently not fighting, but it doesn't mean this place is safe. No, it is better to think this place is dangerous.

If the hyumans are retreating, the demons are chasing them, or so I think. If that is so, then this kind of river won't even serve as an obstacle. I don't think they are an army

of *vampires* after all. What was it that stopped their advance? No, before that, why am I even here? From the Academy Town, there is quite the distance to the north before one reaches the war fronts. Are you telling me I have arrived to that north?
<Vampires are said to be unable to cross running waters>

What I can think of is, that voice I heard when I was inside that transfer light. That was... the voice of the worst existence that I met when I first came to this world.

Goddess.

There is no way I would mistake that voice. No doubt it's her.

If I remember correctly, that bug said..."I found you" or something like that. Are you telling me after all this time she now has some business with me and called me?

But what is that business? I wasn't told anything. Well, even if I hear it, I don't plan on doing it though. There is no way that after treating me so badly she would come and say "become a hero" anyways.

To throw me in this situation so suddenly without any information, just what is going on? I can't read the thought patterns of a God. Especially when it comes to that self-centered idiotic Goddess!

Damn it. There is only questions popping up inside me. What should I do? How should I move?

?!
Wa?!

A bad feeling instantly runs through my back.

This is... blood thirst! And it is pretty precise!!

It resembles the one my sensei poured on me when she told me I should get used to it. The strength of the presence also!

The person that can show such an impressive power is in no way decent! It is the type of presence I tried not get close to in my previous world.

From in front me. From the demons side, something is heading my way.

A human shaped one. Is it a demon? There is no doubt this one is strong. Or more like, scary.

Should I run to Asora? But I can't have that one enter as well. The time it takes for the gate to close after opening it, there is no assurance that one won't plunge into it at that time. Tomoe said something about enclosing an opponent in a small airspace and one-sidedly attack it, however, using that ability is still impossible for me.

There is no choice but to probe huh. Oioi, you are kidding me right? Isn't that, a kid?

When I look closely, I can see that he is floating, his legs are not moving. A boy(?) with orange hair is heading my way at a pretty fast speed. Certainly, I feel the blood thirst from that kid. But it is a kid you know? It doesn't look like he is equipped with any exaggerated equipment. Both of his hands are empty too. If he were a magician, a staff would fit but... I can't see a single difference with him and the children I see playing at town.

From the place that innocent looking child is, I can feel that strong blood thirst I previously felt. Also the part about him floating.

Feeling nervous at the scent of the battlefield I have never felt before, it choked me. While feeling my breathing grow increasingly shallow, I watch the kid's actions.

As if it were natural, he had already reached until the middle of the river and without dropping his speed, he advanced to my location. *So there's no problems in crossing the river huh*. Is it settled that he has business with me? <*he is referencing the vampire talk*>

That means, the reason the demon army stopped its advance, could it be...

...Me?!

“Disappointing”

From my left, a sudden voice! A woman?!

No way! There is no one—?!

Sensing something closing in to my face, I lower my head and instantly cover it with my left hand. Immediately following, a dull and powerful impact. Without being able to confirm its identity, I was thrown by that attack.

Gu... wu wu.

This might be the first time since I came to this world that I feel a strong and clear pain. An attack I didn't expect to come. In the blow that was firmly packed with blood thirst, my body was sent rolling on the ground and after I stopped, a cloud of dust was created.

It hurts. The throbbing pain is coming from my head. If I instantly lowered my posture and it hit my head, it means... its aim was my neck?! The insistent *zukin zukin* pain throbs in my confused head without holding back.

My hand is burning. It must be because I tried to cover against that attack with my left hand. This one is going *dokun dokun*. It hurts... what is going on?!

While collapsed face up, I bring my left hand in front of my face. I was astonished.

"My fingers... half of them are gone" (Makoto)

Even though it's my voice, it felt strangely distant. My middle and index finger are practically gone from the root and a half is missing from the ring finger. Even though it is an emergency, I can't seem to truly feel my current situation.

What... what is this?

Ah that's right, I gotta get up! If I stay down, I won't be able to do anything. I will be killed.

The bleeding also. Since I can't heal myself, if I am not careful, I might die from blood loss. The random tools I had were mostly in my bag that is presently gone. What I have is... the bow that I use for training. I can't be picky here. At any rate, I have to bandage myself first. The bow is not in a ready to use state anyways. There is no problems if they try to stop me.

Where should I begin tying from? For now let's just randomly bandage beginning from my elbow. I should have gone to a short course for first aid.

"Heh~ you are not dead. As expected from a person called by the Goddess. To not be cut by this sword, just what kind of defense you have? That face... could it be you are a hyuman synthetic beast, a chimera?"

The woman voice states her amazement at me. Even if you voice out your admiration at my survival, it doesn't make me happy. Also, I am not a mixed product! Don't go mixing me!

"Sofia, even though *I* went out of my way to turn his attention to me. For you to not be able to finish him, that's not like you" *<He uses Waga here, a really old way of talking>*

It's that kid. He is using *“Waga”. Damn it, a fantasy specialty. A character that one can't tell its age by its outward appearance huh.

"N? My attack connected perfectly. This sword isn't soft you know? This Mitsurugi"
(Sofia)

I am still dizzy. I look at the person that is probably the one who attacked me. There is distance so, since my vision is blurry, I haven't confirmed the person properly, but it seems she is forming a *combi* with that kid. *<Team of two>*

Her bang is covering her right side, so I can only see one of her eyes. She has blue hair like Tomoe. This is a natural thing in this world, but her figure is well-built. On her body she has shoulder plates and a breastplate, also, protection in key points like knees and elbows. The other inner parts were barely covered by lightweight equipment. Her bottom part looks like she is wearing denim short pants. If it weren't in this situation and we were just passing by each other, I would probably have turned around and admired those beautiful legs.



Also, that giant sword. It's slightly bigger than her. Even so, in terms of length it's shorter than a long sword. That thing has quite the width so it makes you feel it is bigger than it really is. With one glance I can tell that it is not an ordinary weapon, it has an emerald green almost-transparent blade. So I was mowed by that sword and sent flying huh. I thought it was a blunt weapon though... Normally one would have his head or neck cut clean. I am glad at my own defense power from the bottom of my heart. Thank you magic power, thank you eldwas.

The barrier is only deployed when I am aware a battle will occur. That I lost my rings is my complete blunder. How shameful.

However, to have such a big object at hand while approaching me and I didn't notice. No way.

Are you telling me there is that much difference in ability, in experience? That's no joke.

"That is a swing I provided practically all of my power. There is no way it was insufficient" (kid)

"But I felt like I was hitting a giant metal lump when I attacked him. No matter if he is a letdown. There is no doubt he is a troublesome opponent" (Sofia)

This is bad. Bad. It is obvious that they still intent to continue. I can't help feeling like the lifted corners of her mouth looked aggressive.

What should I do? I can't call for help. I don't know where I am. The hyuman army at my back is beginning their retreat for some reason. For a while now, the mamono army seemed like they were looking out for my actions or maybe the two over there, they didn't show signs of moving. At a glance, I feel like there isn't only a hundred or two hundred. A thousand, no, even more maybe.

But in my side... well, I have magic, so I will manage somehow. If I calm down I will be able to handle it. I should be able to do it.

Anyways, right now what I am clear about is that I can't take my eyes off those two. I have to make sure not to miss a single movement of them or I will definitely regret it. I don't have a mirror so I don't know the degree of my head's injury, but since there isn't that much blood flowing out, I won't mind it for now. And the bleeding of my hand has also calmed down a bit.

I am in the verge of falling into panic. First I should understand that point clearly and make sure not to really fall into panic, try to stop it.

I tell myself this.

There is only one way for me to return. Create a mist gate and escape. This is certain. I don't understand the current situation one bit after all. If possible, I don't want the Goddess to see me when I create the mist gate. In the worst case scenario I should do so without caring, but if possible I want to take as much distance from them first.

Even if my life is foremost, bringing these two to Asora is way too dangerous. Their strength is unknown, but it is certain that they are strong.

What is it you want to achieve you bug?! Are you telling me to get killed by these guys?!

Don't mess with me! Don't!

Even when I know I would definitely lose to the Goddess if I tried to fight her right now, my displeasure is overflowing. As expected, I am not confident I can win against a God in my current level.

Also, the fear I feel from these two. If someone told me they are the executioners send by the Goddess, I would believe it. Anyways, if earthlings are giving me a hard time, that means I am still not strong enough to fight against that bug huh.

Damn bug, I will definitely hit you!

Someday, definitely. Right now is the time to work for the sake of obtaining that someday.

The problem is that combi of young woman and kid. For now, the only ones that are clearly showing hostility are these two. The hyumans are escaping so it is fine not to pay them attention. I don't have the leeway to do so.

...

...

Right now, what I am aiming to do. Eliminate those two that are being an obstruction or pull away from them, open a mist gate and return to Asora.

Whether I can open the gate or not, I will confirm it after I have taken my distance first. A certain amount of time is needed to erase all the remains of a closed mist gate. Opening it takes 30 seconds and to close it takes about the same amount of time.

I should be an out of norm existence in this world. That 1 minute of freedom, let's create it.

Chapter 75

Their identities

"Ara, the color of the clothes changed. Could it be a countermeasure for us? Even though you should not be a new recruit that has smelled the scent of war for the first time. You are quite the carefree Goddess errand boy huh"

I ignore the woman named Sofia and prepare myself for battle. I have fought dragons, spiders and skeletons; in terms of fighting I am a bit used to them by now. But against a human being is, as expected, different.

I am fine when dealing with people like Lime Latte who just know how to make creepy smiles, but I didn't expect I would fight against people that can create blood thirst resembling that of my sensei. If I can stay in the mental state I was when I killed that idiotic woman, would I be able to create that kind of blood thirst?

Even if I think about this and that, if I can't do it, there is no point. There is no need to imagine it, I am already in front of the very people that can achieve it. My head is in a mess and I can't think properly.

I changed the color of my coat into red. Behind me there is a forest. It is in my field of vision, but there is quite the distance. If I use the speed attribute, I might be able to shake them off and enter the forest. If it goes well, I will be able to withdraw from here! The red color also increases my resistance against edged attacks, so it works as a countermeasure for that woman as well.

About the hyumans... in this occasion, I will ignore them. If casualties appear, go complain to your Goddess.

"It may be an act to make us lower our guard, don't lose your concentration. See, he is trying to do something. I feel a radical magic power convergence" (kid)

I click my tongue internally at the words of the kid. So he can sense magic activation huh. Then that means there may not be much merits in doing voiceless arias.

Even so, to not move immediately, are they leisure or maybe just negligent? I hope they

are just negligent.

I was a bit uneasy about using a one shot spell, so I did a chain activation on [Brid] balls and leave them at my sides, I create from 5 on 5.

I inserted keywords on the Brids to arrange a few things, but I am reaching my limit. I want to quickly go to Academy Town and learn new knowledge. Magic knowledge that can fill up the deep precipice of my understanding in magic in order to comprehend the book Shiki gave me.

“Take this!” (Makoto)

The moment I activated them, the balls are drawn to the limit until they become lines and are released on the woman and kid at high speed. At the same time, I turn around and run at full speed to the forest.

?!
A wall?!

In front of me there is a giant wall. A light of some sort is merging and working as a wall. Just a moment ago this wasn't there. But I can't just stay standing here. Luckily, the width is just a few meters. If I avoid it and advance, I can manage somehow.

I had stopped for a second, but soon I resume my running. I do a zigzag and try to evade it, that I am taking my time must be because of my own lack of ability. I want more instinct. Enough so that I can predict these walls that keep appearing one after the other.

Damn it, even though I have this speed, doing brakes all the time reduces the merit by half.

“Tch, how troublesome” (Makoto)

“Heh~ for an impromptu you were able to create this chain of high-power magic? I thought your fighting experience was the very essence of immaturity, but you are unexpectedly good. Mitsurugi, I am counting on your foothold and obstruction!” (Sofia)

This extremely strange spectacle of having a wall appear continuously. The forest that

should not be impossible to reach to, feels so far now! Moreover, from under my feet a shining thing is sticking out as well. This is... a sword?! No, just the edge?!

I can't understand anything!

I concentrate on making the barrier at my feet stronger and scatter the edges that are popping out while running.

Ah~, so difficult to run! At this rate...

I felt a bit anxious about the obstruction I placed, so I turned my head a bit in order to confirm the situation. At that place...

"Ahahahaha! This is incredible. Not only is it conceited, it also chases you!" (Sofia)

"Taking them head on would be a bit heavy huh. Well, there won't be problems if we divert it. More importantly, Sofia, if that is a secret card of the Goddess, there is something we should do right?"

"I know! But that will be when I do a formal greeting on him and he is still alive, okay?!" (Sofia)

...It's, not working as an obstruction. Just what the hell are these guys?

The rapid-fire Brids are definitely not low in firepower. I have these clothes and these rings so my magic power should be pretty strong. And yet, what is that?

The kid is probably using a magic barrier to divert the rapid-fire Brids to different locations. Of course, some of the blown off brids end up to where the demons and hyumans are, but it seems he is not doing any follow up for that. How heartless!

So it is possible to change the length and angle to divert magic huh. When I have time, this is a technique I want to learn. But I don't have the leisure to observe that kid carefully.

The woman's side is doing an unbelievable thing. She is using her sword to cut the rapid-fired brids, dashing like a keen beast to shake off those homing brids and evading left and right. Also, the numerous shining sword-looking things floating in mid-air, I don't know if those are made by the woman or by the kid, but she is using those swords as "footing" to perform acrobatic moves, reducing the distance between

her and me at a terrifying speed.

...You are kidding me right? She is cutting off the magic that is coming at high speed with a giant sword that requires both hands. What kind of monster is that?!

Moreover, she does that acrobatic-like mid-air sprint so easily!

Even though I am not the Goddess' hidden card or anything like that!

Ah, this wall. They are swords. A lot of swords are intersected to knit a wall. That girl, is she a special magic user or something? A sword magician maybe? The usability is questionable though. Well, I can't say anything in respect when I am currently surprised by it.

While I was trying to escape reality by thinking random stuff, she appeared right in front of me. A monster?!

Wasn't she behind me a few moments ago??!

There is such a bullshit hyuman in this world?! No, is she really a hyuman?

Her skin color and looks may be hyuman but, could it be she is actually a new creation from the demon race?!

The problem is not only that she caught up with me! She kicked the sword wall, raised her giant sword and dashed towards me!

“Cau~ght you!!” (Sofia)

Contrary to the light words she said, the figure of the girl wielding that giant sword grew blurry in an instant. The girl who was in mid-air didn't wait until landing, and just straightforwardly swung her sword at me! I expand a barrier at my front and enhance it with Sakai to confront her attack. It's not like I don't believe in the resistance of my armor, but I will do everything I can.

“?!”

An incredibly high-pitched sound reverberates and the sword of the girl was bounced upwards. I blocked it. But the barrier was also offset and destroyed! No way, that sword. Don't tell me that sword has a crazy property like “magic killer” or something

like that right?!

I wanted to try expanding a barrier again but I won't make it in time. Her chase and mowing is faster. To be able to do such a feat with an unstable stance, just what kind of body control is that?!

Just like how I was surprised she was able to destroy my barrier, she was also shocked that her sword was repelled. That means she was pretty sure that attack would decide everything but was stopped. To be able to think that way when doing it with such an outrageous posture.

This woman, won't she get astonished or waver? Or is it just that my decision-making is too slow? The ability to instantly decide on your next action at a fight of life and death, I haven't learnt that before and there is no way I will suddenly be able to do it in real combat.

What to do? What should I do?!

I place the [Sakai] to protect only my body, and cross my arms to defend against the attack coming from my left. This time I can only wager on the eldwas. To avoid the worst case scenario, I thought about springing my body back but my reflexes couldn't follow so I was unable to do it. Rather, to be able to raise my arms is enough to make me wanna praise myself.

I can't close my eyes. There is no assurance that she won't do a follow-up. I resolve myself and prepare for the swing.

There is no doubt this is an imperfect attack stemming from a crazy posture. Even so, I can't relax.

However, it seems I won the bet. It was a dull attack and there was no pain. The part that was hit only felt a bit numb. I wasn't even sent flying.

I knew this in an armor that the eldwas are proud of, but to actually block a sword with clothes feels strange.

This time she landed and looks at me with eyes wide open, taking her distance from me, arriving at a pretty distant place. To do so many movements in mid-air and still be able to land with her two feet. Truly awe inspiring.

At her side there is the kid. So they have destroyed all the batteries huh. Well, I did set them up thinking only about defense though. Seriously, what are these guys?

Don't tell me... heroes?!

No, that's not it. If that were the case, they wouldn't be with the demon army. What am I thinking?

If I remember correctly, this girl is called Sofia. The kid, I think the woman called him in the name of a famous sword. Mitsurugi. I feel like I have heard that name before...

"Wait~ that funny lump, what is it? He is way too amusing. He has ability and movements that aren't even worth mentioning, and yet, that hardness, reflex, magic power; his standards are on an abnormal level. A mismatched pervert" (Sofia)

"I also feel that way. Even though he is incredibly strong, he is way too crude. I don't understand at all" (Mitsurugi)

"Then provide me cover at least once" (Sofia)

"I was busy destroying the source of those attacks. Don't ask for the impossible" (Mitsurugi)

Are those commentaries about me? I am sorry for being amusing to the level of laughing and an incomprehensible existence. Also, I am glad to have left the batteries stationary there. I think I am the one that needs support the most though not you.

"Well, once we take control, the situation should change. Ghjkop \ kkjjgf" (Sofia)

"Oh, so we are using the ring on this single opponent? At least say when you are going to use it Sofia" (Mitsurugi)

"There's no other choice right? This kid seems to have received quite the blessings from the Goddess after all" (Sofia)

Hah? What kind of incantation is "Trample down on the God's prayer"?

The latter half of what Sofia said made no sense and left me questioning. Words I haven't heard before. Are those keywords to activate something? But if I remember correctly, the tools that are filled with magic are normally activated with common

language?

This language is a first for me.

As if responding her aria, the ring in Sofia's right hand crumbles. Not break, it was more like, crumbling to a state that would be impossible to restore.

Just like when I expand Sakai, a mysterious undulating sensation spreads out from the circumference of the crumbled ring.

With this... what does it change? It doesn't seem like the situation has changed at all though. My lifeline which is magic power can still be used without any problems. At the very least, the amount I still have inside me has no problems.

"Umu. It seems it is a success. With this the tests are done. However, this is interesting. To think that the day would come when we would be able to negate the interference of the Goddess. The worldwide influence she provides can now be changed at our whim" (Sofia)

Success. Then that means some sort of effect is in place. Damn it, I can't see what their hand is at all.

"From the beginning you and I were not blessed by it, so there is no demerit. Also, the demons and demon beasts as well. Basically, it is a tool that only has merits when used by someone that's not hyuman. Not only that, the effect of negating the Goddess blessing seems quite fast" (Sofia)

"But the one who created this was..." (Mitsurugi)

"Don't say it. There are still Goddess believers here after all" (Sofia)

Saying that, Sofia looks at me. Removing the interference of the Goddess? Doing something like that. Just what would that hyuman girl gain from it?

If she were a demon, it would be a topic that has high research value though.

They... don't take their eyes off me. I thought this was my chance to create a gate while they are talking, but if I concentrate and begin my aria, I feel like I will become chopping wood in an instant and that scares me.

Or more like, why am I on the side of the Goddess? I have gone through terrible things because of that bug you know?

Ugh, the sensation of my left hand is numbing. This is bad. Should I loosen the bandages? No, that's no good. I don't know how much blood I am allowed to bleed. I feel like it is a bad call to worsen the situation if I end up suffering blood loss.

This is the worst. Can healing magic cure an arm necrosis? Shiki, when I return I am really counting on you. I don't want to become a one-armed person at this age.

"I am not on the side of the Goddess" (Makoto)

Even though I know it won't get through them, I still say it.

"Hoh~, what does that mean?" (Mitsurugi)

"What, Mitsurugi. You understood those words? That was clearly not common language though" (Sofia)

Wa? Wait a moment, that girl. Don't tell me, she is a hyuman? This is bad, I did a blunder once again. Even though I knew my verbal expressions were fantasy-like, this "comprehension" that was given to me really doesn't distinct. As expected of a Goddess given ability.

"Red one, answer. What do you mean when you said you were not on the Goddess' side? You were without doubt brought to this battlefield by the Goddess. Aren't you like the two heroes that have been summoned from another world, someone that was brought here to protect Limia? That crazy power, I can only think it was given to you by the Goddess" (Mitsurugi)

"You, you are not a hyuman?" (Makoto)

While asking the kid if he was a hyuman, I pick up the word Limia.

Limia, if I remember correctly, it is a major power that is directly confronting the demon race. If they are calling me a protector, does it mean this is a key location for Limia?

"Well, for now yeah. Right now I have chosen to take the form of a hyuman that's all. You can talk if I am not hyuman? You get more and more mysterious. From your looks,

could you be the half of a hyuman and something else?" (Mitsurugi)

Pointing a finger at Sofia, the kid makes clear that he is a different living being that has taken the form of a hyuman. What do you mean by me being a half from my looks? Sofia also called me a synthetic beast. I can't accept that.

But this kind of situations where they tell me this things as if looking for a fight without any ill intentions, I already got used to it. It doesn't anger me that much.

"I have no reasons to fight in this battlefield and I have no intentions on joining hands with the Goddess. How about it? Will you guys please leave this as a misunderstanding and leave me be?" (Makoto)

"That is impossible. I will have you die here. You were summoned here by the Goddess. There is no misunderstanding anywhere" (Mitsurugi)

"I just have a sort of previous connection with the Goddess that's all. To kill me here, why is that? Because that hyuman woman called Sofia is allying with the demon race? I won't be telling anyone that information" (Makoto)

The kid that was indifferently complying with my words, suddenly becomes silent. He was looking at me with a dumbfounded expression. What is it?

I thought it was definitely because it would be bad for others to know she was cooperating with the demon race though?

"...Hyuman woman, you say? Kuku... Ahahahaha!" (Mitsurugi)

The kid suddenly raises his voice and laughs loudly. Did I say something bad?

"What? Why did you suddenly begin laughing?" (Sofia)

"Sofia, listen. This guy, it seems he doesn't know about you" (Mitsurugi)

I think this is obvious though. This is the first time I have met her after all. Moreover, she suddenly tried to cut me down.

"...Huhn~ Well, if he is the same as the heroes, that is a given right?" (Sofia)

"But he doesn't seem to be a hero. And he is pleading for his life. Saying to "please leave

me be"" (Mitsurugi)

What's so strange in that? Just, there is no doubt the situation is bad. Because the hostility has increased.

"The Goddess does incomprehensible things. To think she would throw such an unknowledgeable person to the battlefield. I don't think she just ran out of pawns though? You, being killed by people you don't know and people that don't even know your name. That is not something you would like right? I permit you to tell us your name" (Mitsurugi)

"I don't intent to be killed. However, in these times, isn't your side supposed to name themselves first?" (Makoto)

I try my best to play strong. Also, if possible, I want to avoid an encounter with this monster. I want information, seriously.

"Kuku, your tongue is first rate huh. Fumu, fine. Then we will start first. The one here who is swinging the number one sword in this world is Sofia Bruga. Her nickname is "Dragon Killer" and level 920, a famous woman. And I am Lancer. Well, Sofia calls me Mitsurugi most of the time though" (Mitsurugi)

...

.....Eh?

Sofia Bruga? Dragon Killer?

Isn't that the name of the previously strongest level in the guild? Moreover, Lancer, that name, if I remember correctly, is the name of the dragon that was killed by Sofia isn't it? That's right, if I remember correctly, his nickname was Mitsurugi.

Moshimoshi? Moshimoooo~shi!

There is absolutely no reason for such a big fish to aim at my neck!

"...I am Raidou. A merchant" (Makoto)

I barely manage to name myself. However, the waves in my heart are not showing any signs of calming down. To be attacked by the highest peak of hyumans and the

previous comrade of Tomoe. This situation is something I still can't put together in my mind.

"Raidou... huh. Saying you are a merchant, such an obvious lie-" (Mitsurugi)

"Hmph~, Raidou huh. You have finished introductions right? Once again, I am Sofia Bruga. Just as you see, I am an adventurer that is trying out being on the demon's side. And, the person that will be killing you" (Sofia)

Sofia interrupts the words of Lancer and announces her intent to kill me. This woman, just what is she thinking? If you are rising up against the Goddess, I feel like we could become friends, but why is it that it turned into killing me?

"Sofia, I was in the middle of talking. Then the so called Raidou, this is sayonara. You have seen something that shouldn't have been seen after all" (Mitsurugi)

You were the ones who told me.

Faster than his words were finished, in the surroundings of Lancer and in my own, as well as in the sky, swords created by him were beginning to appear.

It is a situation where it is not the appropriate time to talk.

This makes me laugh. It really makes me laugh.

This unreasonable checkmate, like hell I will let it! Not being able to depend on the companions that I finally obtained, and die without anyone knowing. Like I will let that happen.

I won't think about holding back anymore. Or more like, I have been surprised left and right and have had no chance to hold back or anything!

No matter what, I will create a chance and escape!

Blood has been coming out too much and it is worsening my state. Damn Goddess. Calling me at a crazy place. I have decided to learn a way to go against her summoning as my utmost priority. I wonder how far the Academy teaches in regards to summoning topics.

Even when doing all this, that bug didn't say anything to me. Is she really looking? Say

something at the very least!

"Then, I am coming. Your crazy defensive power should be gone now that the Goddess' interference has disappeared. It will become a simple massacre now" (Sofia)

Ah, so that's what she meant with "interference".

That means, she called me all the way here no questions asked and now she is unable to do anything? No, it is because she can't do anything that she called me here? Uh... which one is it?

No matter which one it is, how stupid of her. As expected of bug Goddess, she is an idiot. Instead of saying "I found you" say "I want you to do something". I would totally run the opposite direction of her words though.

"It seems the heroes are being cornered by the demon general. To remove the remains of the Goddess in here as well is not a bad idea"

It seems this world has an Anti-Goddess faction. It reliefs me quite a bit and at the same time I am amazed that there is an anti-force in the world she manages.

I am a bit interested in the heroes though. Tsukuyomi-sama told me to treat them well after all.

It's just, my life is foremost. I am sorry but, you heroes manage something by yourself.

Anyways, these idiots, they finally lowered their guard.

I feel their atmosphere has slightly slackened. They must have confidence in the effects of that ring.

They are free to believe I was being enhanced by the Goddess' interference. Even if I deny it, they wouldn't listen to my words anyways. They are confident they can defeat me now.

But well~ that won't be happening.

Unlike before, I am going to "strengthen" after all.

Being in a battle stance, while feeling anger, I take off the rings left in my left hand and

in my right hand. I take off all of my rings.

Chapter 76

Something not that far in the past to call it a recollection

“Oooori~aaaa!”

“Wa?!”

Without adjusting the magic power, I take out all that I could and with no aria I release it to the front.

The magic power amount that can't even be called magic, had turned into quite the shock wave, closing in onto them. Well, releasing it without thinking anything is its strongest point.

Seems it took them completely off guard, Sofia and Lancer get blown off vigorously. Hmph, me being weakened is something that you yourself thought I was. Life doesn't always go your way.

The wall and the glittering edges that Lancer created were also blown away splendidly. My circumference and front get shaved off by the raging shock wave and in an instant everything in my field of vision is gradually destroyed.

If I were fighting with a hyuman on the level of the people I have met, this would be the part where I escape, but these two, especially Sofia, are existences I don't understand. I want to clearly confirm that they are in a state they can't fight back and then open the gate.

Nevertheless...

Just like when one does a big stretch at the time one wakes up, just like after you do a careful stretch; the whole of my body is enveloped in that comfortable sensation. My mood is also being somewhat uplifted. Maybe it is because I have taken off all my rings and am now in a natural state. Even if my coat is still taking big part of my magic power, there is a big difference in the magic power I can release and knit. Well, if I think of my

maximum value, this amount is still low though.

I spread a strengthening and search [Sakai] at the same time. The strengthened searching ability lets me check the state of the two that have taken their distance from me once again.

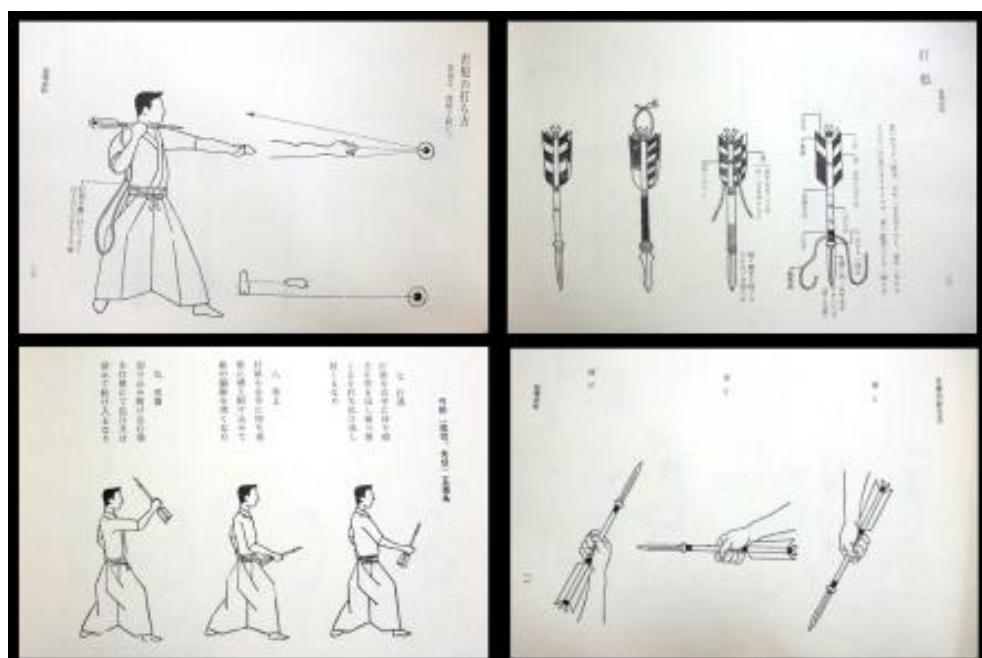
However, don't misunderstand. I don't have the ability to fight those two at close range. Even if I am being protected by an enhanced defense, there is no point if I don't escape. That is the combi of a dragon killer and a supreme dragon, there is no way I can let them inside Asora. I can't let my uplifted emotions take over my actions.

Conclusion.

I will have you guys receive my long distance bombarding! And so, after leaving you powerless, or in the worst case kill you, I will escape!

My left hand is like this, so I can't use it. The complexion is slowly getting worse. Shooting energy magic is the most it can manage right now. Pointing my hand helps a lot in the image. It is decided, my left hand will be used for spells. And so, in my right hand I now have an unshapely dagger that has a string coming out from its handle. That it is until now that I am able to use them, shows that it is not fit to be used in real combat yet. Anyways, this could be called the physical form of my negative thought patterns about running and protecting.

Uchine, is what this weapon is called. The way of using it was taught by my sensei, so at that time against Mio I was able to use a dagger properly.



At close range I use a dagger. Middle-range, a counterweighted sickle and chain and at long range, this is the weapon. It is a weapon that you throw at your opponent. Of course, it is a weapon that is filled with problems to use as my main weapon. For me as well, as a person that had learned the bow from sensei, this is also just something that she taught me to use as well. Before she taught me I didn't even know it existed. It can also be placed in a bow as an arrow and shot that way. However, I don't have a bow at hand so there is no point. Also, not only do I not have much experience in using it as a spear, I don't even have a passing grade on using it as a dagger or throwing tool. To swing it with the string is totally out of my field of expertise. Geez, it is obvious I will get wounded doing something like that.

That there is knife techniques mixed in the uchine's way of using is probably because of the own style of sensei. She seems to have been in the battlefield for a period of time after all. Luckily I wasn't brought overseas. She is a teacher I am proud of, but I would reject accompanying her to those places.

Even so, crossing swords against those two with these is definitely impossible. The armor of the Eldwas blocked that sword, I don't think the weapons they make lose in comparison, but the most important part who is me still doesn't have enough ability to wield it properly. Or more like, that Sofia girl is abnormal. To do a helm breaker in mid-air and then connect it with a mow down, even in acrobatic levels that is impossible. It makes me think that she is the one mixed with a cat or some sort of beast. Also, one that has quite the wild instincts.

That's why it is fine to use them only to block attacks when needed. It is better than stopping them with my arms after all. With the special handling of the uchine I might be able to make her recoil, or so I think.

Using that as my secret weapon...

I take my stance. Just like when I shoot with my bow. That I don't need to put away the uchine in my right hand in order to use spells is one of the good parts of magic.

This one will be different from the previous preemptive attack. I will have them taste a certain hit attack.

That's right. Compared to the brids I released a while ago, the power of this one is different.

Just try deviating this one if you can.

Show me that you can cut it down.

Don't think the speed and power are the same as before!

Even in this deteriorated field of vision, Sakai tells me the position of my enemies accurately. Yosh.

Like I will wait for you two to fix your stance. First one is Sofia! If possible, stay lying down just like that!

On the drawn to the limit brid, my image tells me of my certain hit. Fire!

The next one is created right after that and I turn it into an arrow. I pour my own magic power to it and just like how I shoot with a bow, I release it. This one is for Lancer.

The element is fire. It explodes in place so I can expect a certain amount of leeway in the hit area.

Even when the vision is taken away because of the cloud of sand my magic power wave created, she does a big step to the side as if she activated some sort of superhuman sixth sense. Because of my Sakai I was able to tell she was trying to avoid it. Lancer did that before too, could it be they don't even care about the army that is at their back?

...But, that is useless.

A brid that I have coupled with my certain hit image acts just like the arrows I shoot, they all hit their target. It may be defended though, but it will definitely get the enemy. That's right, even if something miraculous happens just the moment my image becomes reality, the level of accuracy in which it pursues its target is on a different degree. It hits Tomoe and Mio. There is no way it won't hit you!

And since it is different from a real bullet, its homing capability is incredibly high. Instead of decelerating when trying to head to the direction the girl took, the brid actually accelerated.

To increase its speed when changing directions, that is something I really can't understand.

Right now the certain hit is something I do with the same feeling as the bow, so hitting is still ambiguous. I don't have definite confidence in it. Magic is still a grey area for me.

Sofia uses her prided giant sword to cut off the brid that is flying at high speed. How scary. Even when releasing an arrow of that speed it doesn't surpass the reactions of hers? As expected, close range is not a good idea.

However, no matter if I already predicted this to some extent after watching that rapid-fire brid, it is still surprising how she tries to cut them off. Is she a genius?

Even so, the result this time is...

"Kyaaaa!!!"

She made a high-pitched scream and was blown away by the explosion. Yosh! I can do this!

"Sofia?! What is up with this power?! I can't deviate it!" (Lancer)

The defense barrier Lancer created was destroyed and his childish body was send flying by the blast. It seems this side has received damage as well. Let me tell you this, I won't be resting my hand! If the momentum is restored, I don't know what could occur!

"Wai-, Mitsurugi?! Didn't he get stronger?!" (Sofia)

"I think so too! This is what I think but, could it be... he was under a curse from the Goddess?! That shouldn't be possible, to go all the way to bring a person that is cursed by God?! There's no idiot who would summon someone like that!" (Lancer)

So it was the right choice to use fire for the blast huh. It looks like they are unable to move because of their confusion, but I don't need to confirm that anyways!

This time I will go with the element I am more compatible with, the water element which I can bring out even more power. If this manages to disable them, I will be able to open a mist gate!

"More is coming! He is able to do rapid-fires of magic with this much power?! What a cheat!" (Sofia)

She must have felt the convergence of magic power from me, Sofia lets out a voice filled with caution. The last part was a complain to me huh. If it's about complains, I have way more to say than you! I am being abused by the Goddess here!

"Sofia, return the sword's power to me! If it's a fire element magic, I will manage somehow! Take advantage of his opening when using magic and finish it in one go!" (Lancer)

Sofia assents to Lancer's words and moves to his side. Good, if the two are in the same place, aiming will be easier. It saves me trouble! If you are on the mindset of receiving my attack, then I will go with power as priority!

"Goooo!!" (Makoto)

Just like last time, I use the same sensation to shoot twice. It is clearly stronger and faster than when I used fire. I can't expect an explosion, but if it can at least freeze the area, it will make it even harder for them to move. When that happens, I will be in a bigger advantage.

"He changed to the opposite element?! Him alone?! Ei, just how out of the norms is this guy. But how stupid, if it is water it will make it easier for us!" (Sofia)

I can tell there is something flowing from the sword of Sofia into Lancer. That sword was something that was residing in a dragon? H-How dazzling...

How dare you try to cut someone with such a dangerous thing.

From Lancer's front, a blue shield that is stronger than the previous one is created. Could it be, water element? Is that guy the same as Tomoe, able to control multiple elements? Moreover, water?

The blue arrows and blue barrier clash. What happens when two of the same element clash? Don't tell me it will just one-sidedly disappear right?

"Wa?!"

A voice of surprise comes from me and Lancer.

The two blue arrows stopped the moment they clashed with the barrier of the same color, or so it seemed. However, in a second the arrows began to slowly slip through it.

The blue shield was being rippled with my arrows at its center. It was as if the shield was welcoming it.

If two of the same element meet, that is what happens?! But this is lucky for me. It looks like my attack will hit after all. It's the unexpected attack advantage, lucky!

"This is bad, really bad Sofia. Please finish this quickly! That guy, are you telling his aptitude in water element is higher than mine?! If it were "the invincible one" or "myriad colors" I could understand, but for a hyuman to surpass me is just...!" (Lancer)

"If you are frozen, I will be leaving you behind Mitsurugi" (Sofia)

"I will provide you a bit more service as a foothold, so when that happens please melt and save me" (Lancer)

Foothold? Oioi, there is also the aftermath of brid you know. I think kicking mid-air swords and rushing at me is a bit impossible.

The two of you can't move from your spot. Just obediently turn into ice. And then I will calmly return!

The arrow silently penetrates the shield.

"Yosh!" (Makoto)

"If it's the head maybe I can cut it off?" (Sofia)

Again.

Just above me, I heard a voice.

I won't even try and look. I reflexively jump back.

The sword slightly grazes the tip of my nose. My barrier didn't make it in time again! The hot sensation that is transmitted in me makes me knit my brows instinctively.

When I attack with all I have, I don't have the time to prepare a defensive barrier! Is this also a key point in practice?!

From the front of my vision, I see the figure of Sofia. Eh?! Weren't you over there?

Just what kind of trick did you use to suddenly change positions?! This is not my miss! I was clearly paying attention to her!

I shouldn't have shot with all I had and should have left a barrier on standby with me. But if I were to take my time doing that, the result would have been the same. Damn it.

The attention I had on Lancer's side, I forcefully take it out and concentrate my all in Sofia. When I look closely, Sofia has already accumulated something. It's coming coming coming!

"He reacted again! Really, what a funny specimen!" (Sofia)

What's with the "he reacted again". It's because you always talk out loud that I am able to evade them! Is she taking me lightly? I don't know if she is just an idiot that lets everything slip though. Maybe the price of having such a beast-like instinct is her brain and mouth. That must be it!

From her eyes I can see overflowing blood thirst and vigor. Without pausing her movements, she instantly entered pointblank range. This is bad!

In a second...

Sofia turns her back to me. Eh? Why at this time?

That back figure took me by surprise. I lost sight of her weapon. Hiding her weapon with her own body, she didn't chase me who was stepping back. That's right, that sword can still reach me from here. No, it is actually the perfect distance for her weapon!

Left. The direction she turned just a bit below. A reverse turn attack is swung. I can't evade it! So fast!

Counter, no, defense? But using magic with this mental strain? Impossible! I am going to be defeated?!

In the middle of my confusion, I unconsciously do a half-step to the front, grab the uchine with both hands and miraculously connects with her attack.

Why was I able to manage something like this?

The sound of metal rings for the first time between her and me. From both of my hands the intense shock and vibrations are transmitted. From my left hand that can barely grab it, the sensation is dull. It feels like I will soon be unable to use it.

“...You are kidding, right?” (Sofia)

This is not my voice.

...Uh, I'm alive?

I can only call this a miracle. The experience that sensei taught me so hard, might have moved my body here. I am sorry for complaining about this not being archery or anything close to that, sensei.

Hearing the words of Sofia, I close my eyes and let my vision recover. My face is facing down so luckily she didn't notice. Anyways, how pathetic. But I am alive! I was saved!

It might be too good to say it was unconsciously, but I can't rely on something like that, I need to learn how to create a barrier reflexively or I will die one of these days. If these person is the strongest in the world and the definite number one, it's one thing, but if there are numerous of those types at once I will certainly need it.

After this I want to learn to create multiple barriers and a defense magic that I can leave in place. Eh? Aren't I just thinking about defense?

I once again confirm the situation.

Oh~. What is this?

Sofia's sword, the sharp sword that had a wide width and one needed two hands to wield...

The emerald green and almost transparent sword blade that one could even feel beauty...

Broke. It wasn't a clean cut. Just what happened, I don't know the clear details, but it broke to the point that I can't count how many parts it turned into. Not even $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sword blade was left.

Eldwas, you guys are seriously incredible. What's up with this uchine. To think I would

see the day a dagger breaks a giant sword. Why did I close my eyes again? This is clearly a tool that has surpassed the area of self-protection. Incredible, this is really incredible.

“I-I am saved~” (Makoto)

I whisper dazed. There is one other thing I have understood. In the middle of fighting I seriously can't communicate with writing. There's no room for it, so it is obvious though. I just noticed it.

And so, I comprehended. That I was in the thought I had stopped just before I began panicking, but the truth is I was swallowed by it a long time ago.

Not reaching the conclusion I should have and not being able to do the things I could have done.

What a pathetic display.

Suddenly, the sensation of a hand is felt on my back.

DAMN-!!

“You, are thoroughly cheat” (Sofia)

All of a sudden, a soft sensation is pressed on my face. Eh?

Sofia was hugging me closely. What... is this? Breast?



Ah, I see. The brid a few moments ago destroyed her breastplate. Tte, eh?

I somehow turn my face up. At that place there is obviously the face of her. For some reason, a wide smile.

Her body had already lost most of her metal protection, so the sensation of her body was clearly transmitted to me. I thought she would have barbarian-like muscles, but that doesn't seem to be the case. She was more woman than I thought. Her sword gave a big impression after all.

The shirts and short pants must have a stronger effectiveness than her metal armor. Like the clothes I have.

That I am being embraced from the very front and my face is hitting her breast making me crazy must mean, Sofia is 180cm or more huh. If she wore heels, this scene would look like a kid and an adult.

!!

That's not it! First I should concentrate in the current situation! If worst comes to worst, I will use the uchine in my right hand on Sofia and...

"Uh!! Tto, what incredible superhuman strength. So to resume, a god body in an average mind huh. Ah, you were going 2v1 against us and were able to stay sane so, maybe your mind is also tough. Wouldn't you be able to face the roar of a dragon and its overpowering aura? But well, your skills are no good though" (Sofia)

Well, thank you. I don't have a hobby of fighting dragons so that information is pointless for me though.

She is embracing me with all and arms so I am unable to move as I want. However, it seems I will be able to somehow release myself from this restrain. Even though she swings that kind of sword, her physical strength isn't that much huh. How mysterious.

I am sorry but, I don't want to stay in this incomprehensible situation where I lose my initiative. I will have my escape.

"Struggling, is dangerous you know?" (Sofia)

Her face comes closer to mine. Sofia's voice is whispered in my ears.

“What?” (Makoto)

“Ah, you don’t understand what I am saying right. Well, I don’t intend to explain so this is convenient” (Sofia)

Wa?

For some reason I couldn’t hear the last words of Sofia. I feel like she said something really low though.

Just, it feels like the wind has suddenly become stronger. Wind magic, maybe? But to use an attack magic in this glued state, not even she would go unscathed. Also, I have already prepared Sakai and defense magic.

I confirm the situation of my surroundings. Before I noticed, the characteristic scent of the battlefield had become dim and disappeared. The clouds were looking strange. For a while now the wind has been strong.

Anyways, escaping is highest priority!

I accumulate my strength. Eh? I feel something in my feet as well...

“!! There’s no need to hurry so much, I will release you!” (Sofia)

With Sofia’s words, my field of vision widens in a breath. The sensation of her body also disappeared in an instant. To substitute it, a strong wind crashes against my whole body powerfully.

?!!!

Blue... the blue sky?!

Sky?!

I’m floating?! No, I’m falling!

“I am sorry but, I have sealed your wind abilities. If you fall at these height, even if it is you, you will die or receive a considerable damage. We will now leave it to nature and bid our sayonara here. Aaah, in the end I had to rely on his “foothold”. It will be troublesome to melt him huh” (Sofia)

Sofia's figure was at my vicinity. She must be using some kind of magic to float. She is not falling.

Or more like, foothold? Lady, are you telling me you can walk down from here? Nonono, this is pretty high up in the skies you know?

The figure of her is steadily growing smaller. But her figure suddenly disappears.

"Bye bye, Raidou" (Sofia)

I once again hear her voice in my ear.

It's Sofia. When I turn my face, she is certainly there. Don't tell me, she can do instant movement? Depending on the situation, isn't that even more cheat than me?!

Her figure disappears once again. With some sort of presentiment, I look below me. When I do so, I see a number of glowing things. That are the blades that Lancer creates, if I remember correctly. Now that I think about it, the ones floating in mid-air were not used to attack. Could it be, those were footholds? But how was Sofia able to...

I see the figure of her waving her hand. But it disappears again. What remains is one blade. Don't tell me...?!

Sofia is able to change places with a blade to mobilize?! Is that fair?!

But there is originally no meaning in having Lancer set a blade so high up in the sky. I can only think of it being for the sake of "exchanging".

Aaahh!!

More importantly, what should I do? This situation resembles that time with the damn bug so much.

At my dropping point there are glittering blades floating so it is even more brutal!

I am falling steadily. How long till I drop?! Is there some sort of custom in this world that says one has to throw a person from the sky when you can't handle it?!

N, anyways...

I see.

Maybe it is because this is my second time. There was a part of me that was strangely calm. The tension that was clinging onto me all this time disappears as if it was a lie.

The one minute, was created huh.

Even so, I haven't given my "thanks" to that Goddess bug. Tsukuyomi-sama, are you doing well?

I finish my aria. There is still time.

I spread out my Sakai and look below. Because of the clouds, I can't confirm it with my naked eyes. From below, the demon's march had restarted. It seems pretty far in the northeast, it looks like there is a war occurring.

The effect has been reduced to an ambiguous level where I only feel the presence, but I can slightly understand the situation. It seems they are trying to assault a fortress. It seems like there is no mistake, they are doing battle in a fortress-looking building. I can't tell who is the one winning though. They haven't attacked the fortress so the defending side is probably the one in the advantage. I was probably... right below here. At a place a bit disconnected from the battlefield.

That means, there were numerous battles taking place. Is it possible that there are multiple monsters that can surpass that Sofia roaming all over? I was a frog in the well huh. This has taught me the through importance of experience. Let's properly prepare counter-measures if there is a next time. If I can't use my magic power in real combat, then no matter how much magic power I have there is no point.

Even if I am able to think calmly in the situation, that was only because of my defense capabilities. If I can't analyze the situation as fast as possible and move according to it, I am no different from a plank.

I feel anxious about my counter-measure turning pointless by some other troublesome happening. But even so, I can only believe that I will be rewarded by it someday.

And so...

Sofia should be directly below right? The broken sword is there and Lancer is also

there after all.

Since I have the chance, let's send them a gift.

I face below and extend my left hand. With the fingers I have left and the dark red blood that has coagulated and turned hard. The whole arm has already turned purple and because of the blood obstruction, I can barely feel it anymore. It is quite the bad state. How dare you do such a thing.

My right hand goes into my pocket. Since I have the leeway, let's take off my clothes too. I wanted to throw them my magic at full-power, but if I do so I wouldn't be able to escape from this mid-air situation. The strong wind that is hitting my body makes even stabilizing my stance hard.

When I feel the rings with my right hand, the corner of my lips naturally lift. The tension was controlling me and I couldn't concentrate well, but it may be proof that I felt a gloom and ugly anger at this current situation. A clear anger that pushes me to yell and blow everything away.

I purposely pour magic power to the already saturated rings to an even farther step, to the point it was going to crack.

With Sakai I check all of Lancer's blades at the landing point. Putting all of them in my sight, I release a brid. The moment it was fired from my left hand, it turns into dozens of small balls that headed to Lancer's blades and probably what are Sofia's footholds.

This one is probably stronger than the brid that surprised the two of them. Here I was able to concentrate without anyone getting in my way after all. I am in the middle of dropping though.

With this they are probably unable to come to where I am. While at it, some of them may have hit them.

Next, I take out the rings that caused a disaster in Asora and concentrate a formed brid onto it, expanding it even more.

Putting this much into it, even if I throw from here, it should gouge the ground and blow up.

I could tell that inside the six rings there was a spherical brid that was unsteadily

swimming. Eat this, dragon killer and supreme dragon. This is my thanks for playing around with me however you wanted!

Those kind of things, you know, I am already filled with only the damn Goddess!

A dynamite ring brid that hasn't turned into an arrow is grasped in my hand.

"Fools! There was no need to seal my wind element! I can't even use it anyways~~!!"
(Makoto)

Thanks to my altitude lowering quite a bit already, the amount of information I could obtain from Sakai had improved and I was able to feel the presence of the two. Saying words of regards that no one heard, I fired the brid. And at the same time, I create a mist gate in the space I was dropping to.

I accomplish my return to Asora. The moment I opened it, I had already calculated the ending as well, so the gate should be terminated instantly. I am glad it all went well.

If the clouds didn't get in the way, I would have been able to see my ability in action. But if I were to activate it when I am below the clouds, there was the chance the brid ring that was in my hands would rampage. There is also the fear of someone seeing the mist gate. I had no choice.

Ah.

I suddenly feel the anemic sensation I frequently felt when I was a child. My vision was steadily blacking out and my field of vision was narrowing. What a bad sensation.

The moment I thought this wasn't good, it was too late.

I, who smelled the familiar scent of Asora, lost all of my tension at once and as my conscience went far away, I collapsed.

The dropping impact that I feared was not there, and taking its place was a warm sensation of something enveloping me.

Chapter 77

Lake of Stars

— In the time Makoto is sleeping —

An unfitting young kid was dragging one of his feet in the battlefield as he welcomes the companion that was returning from the sky.

“So is it over?” (Lancer)

“Probably. I went to the highest foothold you prepared after all. This was my first experience overlooking from the top of clouds. Don’t you know how to hold back?”
(Sofia)

The woman that landed didn’t mind about the scolding tone of the kid and just answers.

“To think my sword would break that way. It was as if I was in a nightmare. I admit I was a bit panicked” (Lancer)

“I was literally the one who experienced it, so I was even more startled. The weapon a pervert holds is also in the pervert level huh. It was an unshapely dagger I have never seen before though” (Sofia)

“I don’t remember seeing such a dagger either. If possible, I wanted to collect it and duplicate it in our base but...” (Lancer)

The kid-shaped supreme dragon looks at the sword that’s on his hands. Only a bit of the base is left from the blade.

“So you retrieved it. Thanks. I totally thought you were frozen in ice and died from the shock. It seems that wasn’t the case, nice going” (Sofia)

“It is a part of me, so it is obvious I would do so. However, the moment it was broken, I felt a pain as if my whole body was being torn apart. Even though I was inside an annoying case of ice, the pain resuscitated me and I felt like dying” (Lancer)

"Well, sorry to hear that. Now, let's give the advance signal to the demons and take it easy. As expected, I am unable to fight for some time" (Sofia)

"...Your sword was broken and your armor destroyed. You are even more tattered than when you fought against me. That your fighting spirit hasn't weakened is commendable, or more like shocking" (Lancer)

Lancer's words smelled like sarcasm. And at the same time, he was also praising the ability of his partner Sofia.

"In your case, you killed my companions, right? Well, they were reckless people that were gathered to kill a dragon anyways" (Sofia)

"Fumu, this time no one died huh" (Lancer)

"Yeah, almost all of my equipment is a goner and my body is all rattled. Even so this is probably better. We were able to take care of that pervert called Raidou or something like that. In a country without a hero, we will be able to provide enough damage to cease the functioning of Limia" (Sofia)

One could feel the amazement in Sofia's words. Even for the girl named the Dragon Killer that has passed numerous battles, the self-called merchant Raidou was an existence she couldn't comprehend.

An anti-magic sword that was filled with a supreme dragon's power against a barrier. In that attack that she gave her all, she was only able to offset the barrier. An incredibly strong barrier. And despite all that he took his time to reform his own barrier.

Using an amount of time that could be called way too long in a battlefield to confirm the situation, and on top of that, his indecisive part which only thought about escaping from the very beginning. After that, using a homing magic that Sofia hasn't seen before. Thinking about the cost and performance of homing functions, it is an inefficient act no one would perform.

His sword skills were like a newbie who was growing his pubes. For his skills with the dagger to be like that, it was awful. It was to the point one would think he was making fun of the battlefield. At least, that's how Sofia felt.

(But that last attack... For some reason, at that one time, Raidou stepped forward. Even though he was taken aback and was showing signs of retreating. Because of that, he

was able to properly clash swords with me, moreover, he broke my sword) (Sofia)

In those movements, she felt like it wasn't his own will but an instinctive action that kicked in. A movement that went against the predictions of the Dragon Killer.

The thoughts of stepping forward against an upcoming weapon is an action that is practically impossible for a magician. Even if he is a so called merchant. However, Raidou did it. It made Sofia wonder if Raidou actually has experience in swordsmanship.

(Are you telling me in that situation his body was able to remember those movements and connected his actions? He didn't give me the impression that he trained so much to be able to do something like that though. That means...) (Sofia)

"Oi, something is..." (Lancer)

Lancer's whisper-like words returned Sofia's consciousness to reality. She soon understood why he was looking at the sky with a distorted expression.

From the sky, several dozens of blue lines came raining down from the sky. Breaking through the clouds, they all came down without distinction.

Each one was thin and were piercing the ground like a buckshot. If the barrier of Lancer wasn't there, the bullets would have hit where the two of them were. The power of the bullets were on a level Lancer's defense was able to defend against, but it was an attack that didn't weaken. Thinking about the numbers, it was in a level that would rain for 10 minutes or so in the battlefield.

The demon army that had resumed their march, seeing the blue lights falling, one could tell that they were falling into chaos. Luckily, it didn't seem like there would be a second round falling, but it was a situation where they can't relax.

"?! This is!" (Sofia)

"Damn Raidou, is he telling us he will take us all along to his grave?!" (Lancer)

"I am going! I will go and obstruct him. If this continues, the army will be affected!" (Sofia)

"Sofia, you can't! With the attack just now, the blades working as foothold were all

destroyed. To think he would be able to destroy that amount of blades!" (Lancer)

"Then create more now. The next round might... wait" (Sofia)

The words of Sofia urging Lancer were stopped midway. Her eyes were looking at the sky again. Looking at the clouds that were blocking the view of the one man that should be there.

"...An attack to destroy the footholds for the sake of not pursuing him. That one just now was for that reason right, Raidou? You are telling us your real attack is coming now" (Sofia)

Lancer's expression was filled with bitterness. Sofia was staring up as well.

This attack just now was practically thrash for Makoto. Even with that, it was a magic with wide area of effect and with more than average power. And in truth, the demon army that received this attack had their formations disturbed.

Its element was water. Lancer looks at one of his legs. Unable to completely stop his attack, he received the magic and was now frostbitten. He wasn't sure if he will be able to use it anymore, but at least he was sure that this level of wound will not let him use his leg in this battlefield.

"Just how much will he make me laugh, that guy. This isn't an amount of magic power a single person should be able to create! And you are telling me he still has something up his sleeves?" (Sofia)

"Water element huh. One can tell he is quite confident in his ability with water" (Lancer)

(But what does this mean? A water spirit hasn't lend anyone its powers in this place. Not only that, the magic power in the area is practically unused. There is no way he was able to create these spells without utilizing the magic power in the area...) (Lancer)

The supreme dragon Lancer notices a strange point. A big amount of magic power is needed in order to do wide area attack magic. Of course, one would need the help of a spirit and also the magic power in the surroundings. Because it is impossible to do so with your own magic power.

"Water. In that case, with this..." (Sofia)

Hearing Lancer's whisper, Sofia was enlightened and she holds a necklace in her hands.

This is a product that lets one gain the assistance of a water spirit, and Lancer also knows of this property. However, the usage is only one time. In terms of water, one would probably obtain omnipotence over it. An incredibly high-grade tool. It's so valuable they didn't use it against the "arrow" of Raidou. Because Sofia and Lancer were confident they could manage without it. As a result, Lancer received an injury and when thinking about the current situation, it might have been the correct decision to save it.

(Certainly, with that we would be able to erase the influence of a water spirit from his spells. And normally it could even make him misfire. No matter what he tries to shoot, with the water spirit prohibiting his skills, the attacks he will be able to shoot are going to be limited. But... what's with this bad presentiment?) (Lancer)

"Lancer, I am counting on you for foothold. I will go where the effective range is and destroy his magic" (Sofia)

"...That is, you can't Sofia" (Lancer)

"Why?" (Sofia)

"Because it is not certain. We will use that, however, it will be for defense" (Lancer)

Believing in his instincts as a supreme dragon, he gives instructions to Sofia.

And then he contacts the commander of the demon army. The commander that was trying to calm down the disorder received a contact from the two who took the front and fought against that person who was summoned by that annoying light. He soon reacted to his message.

Even when seeing the golden light that is characteristic of the Goddess, the commander wasn't controlled by hatred and just concentrated on arranging for the new situation. Since the ones who headed to the light were Sofia and Lancer, controlling the army was easier. Anyways, he is a capable one.

'Prepare for an incoming attack in the surroundings and create a defense barrier as

quick as you can'

One could tell the demon army reacted to the orders promptly. As expected, they are really well trained, is what Lancer thought in admiration as he overlooked the situation. But there wasn't much time left. A straining magic power is beginning to converge. Like an idiot who only knows of one thing, he predicted that another of those "arrows" was coming.

"Defense, huh. Understood. Certainly, I have a bad feeling about this" (Sofia)

"That's how it is. You are able to go over there right?" (Lancer)

Lancer points at the demon army. He already deployed his glittering blades in the vicinity.

"Your preparations are fast. Then, I'll be going" (Sofia)

"I'm counting on you" (Lancer)

Sofia nods at Lancer's words. While cradling him on her arms, she exchanges positions with a blade.

A great noise pricks the ears of the two. They were in the middle of the troops so it is to be expected. The two of them hurry to the inside of the defense barrier.

"And? Should I use this now?" (Sofia)

Sofia holds the necklace and asks Lancer.

"Let's see. In this part should be fine. Sofia, use that only to envelop us. Just in case" (Lancer)

"?!"

"If it is placed on top of the barrier, my heart won't settle" (Lancer)

"...Even though we have shared a table with them for a few days. How cruel" (Sofia)

"It's not like we have become companions. You also, I don't feel guilt in you though?" (Lancer)

“We are in the battlefield after all. In terms of position, we are mercenaries. It is obvious to think about our lives as priority. I will follow the decision of my partner” (Sofia)

Sofia sends magic power to the indigo blue jewel necklace. The jewel glitters and crumbles, enveloping the two of them with the same blue glittering the jewel produced.

“It’s coming” (Lancer)

Lancer says.

“Really, we are like a bush snake” (Sofia)

Sofia’s words sound as if she was regretting something, but her expression showed an interest in what was about to occur.

“We got no choice. If we were to look at the situation just as it is, the demons would have all rushed to that golden light and we would be unable to resume their march. That color which represents the Goddess is a symbol of fear and hatred for the demon race. If the troops we finally managed to put in order cause an insurgence, we wouldn’t be able to achieve our objective” (Lancer)

“And then, this is the result. Wouldn’t it have been easier if we just let them rush to that Raidou guy and have him kill about half of them in order to tie them back in fear?” (Sofia)

“If it’s just about the result. Well, objectively speaking, we might have been able to negotiate with him” (Lancer)

“What do you mean?” (Sofia)

“That he might actually be willing to cooperate with our objectives, and for that sake Raidou would be tolerant. Is what I assumed” (Lancer)

“I see. An impossible alternative huh” (Sofia)

“You... you should have noticed that he at least has hostility towards the Goddess right? But its fine to see it as that being all it is” (Lancer)

"It did feel that way. If he is someone that doesn't care about the methods in order to achieve an objective, this attack would be the rising of the curtains. Ah, it's coming" (Sofia)

"Umu. You have perception on the level of a demon race. As expected of you. Right on the mark" (Lancer)

It seems normal demon soldiers were beginning to sense the incoming attack. Something similar to screams were heard from here and there.

(What scary magic power. If it comes down just like that, even the hyumans that scattered will be caught in it! Ah, I see. What's strange was the magic power. There's no doubt what is coming is that arrow magic. It's not a wide area magic. That means, he is not using the magic power dispersed in the world nor is he using the support of a spirit. He is using his own magic resource to create magic of this scale. Then don't tell me the amount of magic power he has in himself is already...?!) (Lancer)

His thoughts were cut off at that moment.

A blue light illuminating his body.



A blue distorted arrow opens a hole in the clouds.

The size isn't that big. To the point one can't comprehend how it bore such a big hole in the clouds.

In the beginning, seeing the difference between the size and the magic power they felt, they were as if all their tension was gone.

But the change took only an instant.

No one knows what happened inside the arrow, but a circle shaped ripple was born from inside it. It was as if an object had fallen into a water surface that ripple spread into the sky.

A few noticed the arrow swelled and accelerate.

Drawing a ripple in the sky once, the clear blue arrow repeats the same reaction.

3 times, 4 times. As the ripples increased in the sky, the arrow increased its size and speed.

It had already became a giant spear that released blue light. The spear pierced an area a bit away from the center of the demon army.

The army should have created a defense barrier in the vicinity. However, as if saying there was none, spears began piercing the crown of the troops' heads.

A final reaction occurs. But this time, it wasn't in the sky. It was because the spear was already in a state where it is pierced in the center of the army. It blows away the soldiers in its surroundings and when the distortion returns to its origin point, a freezing gale takes its place and rages. The devastating wind instantly converts the demons at a wide scope into frozen sculptures. The spear that had already created a disaster, in place of the ripples, it now accelerates and burrows completely into the ground.

A moment of silence.

From the feet of all the demons, no, in the whole ground itself a light is emitted. In the beginning it illuminated the whole battlefield and extended to the sky like a line, next, innumerable amount of lights of differing thickness followed. In a short amount of time, the landscape and sky were painted by the light.

A magnificent view. This was the only word that described this attack.

The spell caster, Mitsumi Makoto, probably wouldn't expect such a spectacle of this level would occur.

Makoto? He is most likely thinking this only amounted to pestering the battlefield.

He didn't notice...

That the brid he fired onto Sofia and Lancer was on a size totally different from when he shot it in the far off skies. A magic that he activated while experiencing the battlefield, moreover, in a state where his mind was totally filled with a danger to his life. A magic he slowly created while concentrating more than the normal. The difference in power is big. There's no doubt one of the reasons was because he was able to be in a normal state of mind in the far off sky, no, it was because this was the second time he was experiencing that misfortunate occurrence he was able to manage.

Moreover, he is using as a reference the power of the ring explosion that destroyed the clone body of Tomoe and the Arke that was barely saved. And it only caused the chain explosion of 4 rings. Mitsumi Makoto evaluates his own magic power way too low.

Whenever a ring was broken, the brid rapidly increased the range of its power by leaps and bounds. Makoto wouldn't even dream that it would create ripples in the sky and turn into a giant spear, piercing into the ground.

That everything he saw, the river, stream, forest, woods, the meadows where the demons were in and even the far off dried brown earth as well.

Everything was being enveloped in light. The hyuman army that was retreating was no exception. In the place they were was also in the diameter of the light that spear created.

Everything it touched was frozen and at the same time, being basked by that enormous energy, they break into dust. Turning into dust, they didn't even leave a shadow behind and just dye the place in blue color. The spear that fell down from the sky had already created a destruction dome in its hemisphere.

In an instant that felt like eternity, the light steadily disperses.

At the site one could see the devastation as if the place was grinded... or not.

A big accumulation of water that was slightly smaller than the dome, but bigger than a pond. A single "lake" was created.

Just how much power is it needed to achieve this? At least not in the scope that a single person would be able to possess. It was fitting to call it a tactical weapon.

In the place where a forest was there and a prairie as well, a single surface of water reflects the sky as if it was always there to begin with. Water flowed into the several rivers that were in the vicinity, and they flow downstream again. It was an attack that changed the map.

On its lake surface, it was sparse, but there was the shadow of something floating in the air.

It practically didn't move from its place. It wasn't a soldier that survived miraculously. Most of them had barely any part of their body left and the state of their corpses

varied. No, to be able to retain a part of your body in that destruction is enough to call it a miracle.

But that shadow was shaped as a person. Not only did it retain its whole body, while trembling, it put its right hand on its face and moves the wet hair that was blocking its eyes.

It was the Dragon Killer, Sofia Bull.

When looking carefully, close to her, one could also see a kid who lost one of his legs. Lancer.

“...Lancer, are you alive?” (Sofia)

“.....”

“Hey, that necklace. If used as defense, even if it is only one time, isn’t it supposed to protect the user completely from water element magic?” (Sofia)

“.....”

“My “substitute” was destroyed, my order-made armor was destroyed and practically everything related to defense was blown away though? Look at me, I am naked, NAKED” (Sofia)

Just as she said, right now she was practically naked. Her shirt was torn apart and only a miserable amount remained, but there is no way one could expect any effects aside from working as cloth.

“...I see. It took one of my legs” (Lancer)

The leg he was dragging was gone. He wasn’t left unscathed.

“Raidou, that bastard is dead right?” (Sofia)

“...Probably. He might be floating just like us though” (Lancer)

Without exchanging looks, the two of them look at the sky while talking. They aren’t even touching the topic about why they are floating. It must be because somewhere in their mind, they understood they miraculously survived. That is what their eyes told

as they look into the distant sky.

“...I think we should look for him and kill him before he grows up. If he learns competency and foundation, all hope will be lost” (Sofia)

“He is dead. He fell and died. For now just leave it at that. Anyways, even if we look for him now, there is no assurance that we can kill him. First we have to heal our wounds and prepare our equipment. I wouldn’t be able to handle having a mysterious body, who I don’t even know its origins, destroy our itinerary” (Lancer)

“Maybe he was not going all out?” (Sofia)

Sofia’s expression grew a bit fainthearted. She felt like Raidou was probably not being serious. Of course, he fought against the Dragon Killer. He was most likely serious, or so she wants to believe. It was a slight doubt she had in her heart.

“I don’t understand. I don’t understand anything at all. It’s as if we were blindfolded by the Goddess. I don’t know what happened and I can’t explain it at all. Being like this, I really want to press some questions to that Goddess. Maybe we should have shown him, that way we might have heard it someday. About who was the one that called him” (Lancer)

“Raidou huh. I thought about playing with the heroes for a while, but now I won’t be able to do that” (Sofia)

The same belligerent smile she showed to Raidou once again appeared in her lips. Even though it was a situation where they are practically unable to move, she was already thinking about fighting.

“Leave that for later. Finish my task first before going after Raidou. After putting in order your equipment and restored your strength, you can go have your rematch” (Lancer)

The grieving Lancer proposes a plan.

“...You are right. I understand Mitsurugi. My cards are not enough to hunt that yet” (Sofia)

“First of all, we have to regain our stamina and return to land” (Lancer)

“Yeah, we are splendidly unable to move” (Sofia)

The two laughed on the water surface.

At this day, from the 10 or so that miraculously survived this tragic event, a single rumor was born between the hyumans and demons.

About a person wearing red garments, the third envoy of the Goddess. It is said that he possesses a tall figure and peerless beauty and his age is that of a young one.

The small whispered rumors were proved true by that lake and word slowly spread into the world.

“The Devil”

That he is called like that, Mitsumi Makoto still doesn't know.

Chapter 78

The waking Makoto

I silently open my eyes and wake up. What was reflected in my eyes was a ceiling I was relatively familiar with.

This is... my room?

It's been a while since I have collapsed. That anemic-like feeling, I think I haven't felt it since I was a kid. I was really weak in the past after all.

My way of sleeping as if a pole was sleeping on the bed. How splendid of me. I won't hear opinions like "that is gross".

I grab my high-tech blanket that is refreshing at summer and warm at winter, and pull my body up. It is so pleasant, no one would believe this article is used by orcs that live in this barren lands.

It might be nice to use it as merchandise.

However... how sluggish. I can't seem to put strength in my body. Is this prove I have been sleeping for several days?

"N, fu~"

?

Eh, there is someone here?

I finally look in a direction other than up. I rub my fingers on my eyes, trying to recover from the somewhat blurred vision I had because I just woke up.

What in the world is this?

I am probably incredibly grateful that I am still half-asleep. Because without opening my mouth, I was able to analyze the situation as if placing a filter in my mind.

In my room, there were 3 people besides me.

First, Tomoe and Mio were sleeping at my left and right. Sleeping together? It doesn't seem like they are clinging to me. They are quite close though.

Tomoe is in yukata-like clothes. I don't know what she is punching, but at least she isn't directing it at me so it is fine. It's just, the yukata is incredibly disheveled. And also, I don't want to say too much about underwear but, why is it a *sarashi*?

Sarashi

It's not like I saw them, I was made to see it, is the excuse I made to no one in particular.

Mio is sleeping like a baby, rolling up her body. She is wearing an incredibly daring pajama that I question the reason she is wearing it. What an appearance, it is poison to the eyes. Well, she is properly wearing underwear so it is barely safe.

As someone who has a big and little sister, this isn't something I haven't experienced before. If you ask me if I don't mind it at all, I would answer that it is embarrassing though.

Fumu, for me to wake up when everyone is sleeping, I have quite the bad timing huh.

At the room's entrance, Tomoe's new clone was there. She is leaning on the door and doing a PE sit while sleeping. Is she intending to be a gatekeeper of sorts? One has to pull to open the door, so there is no point though.

She has an eldwa-style katana resting on the door just like the one Tomoe has. That is probably her weapon. Her looks are that of an elementary student, so anything she does would look charming.

She looks like a chibi Tomoe, so I gave her a random name like Komoe. As of now, I regret that decision a bit. Well, I think it sounds better than Tomoe-mini though.

When I look at the window, I see a thin light from between the curtains. It's probably early in the morning. Also, thinking about the time, I feel like it is a bit too cool. Damn Asora. Did you change seasons again?

However... seriously, how many days has it been since then? I think it is probably 1 or 2 days. I bled a bit, but it wasn't to the point I would die. Anyways, I was somehow able

to return to Asora on my own after all.

On my own huh.

Dragon killer Sofia. She was strong. How to say it, I felt like she had a human-like strength. In terms of strength and speed, I have met numerous people who were several times stronger, but it was more like the way she used that strength. In that situation it would be her equipment and magic maybe.

Things like being able to change her position with Lancer's blades, or just the ability to change her own position freely. Or maybe it was something that didn't take in mind anything, a teleportation-kind of skill. The thing is, she was able to act while ignoring the distance to a certain extent. For a person specialized in long-distance attacks like me, this is a topic that brings pain to my head.

It may be a bit rude to say this but, it was scarier than the time with Tomoe or Mio. If they told me she was over level 2,000, I would believe it. For that to be level 920, it would be dangerous to accept that number in face value. "Well that applies to you too", is what I feel someone would retort.

Attacks that take advantages of openings. I didn't think this style of fighting would create such a disadvantage for barrier magic. Maybe it is because the parts that you are not conscious about are easier to break through.

Or is it just because Sofia's weapon is abnormal? She is a person that has passed through a lot of experiences so it might be possible.

If I didn't have [Sakai], if my magic power was lower, if I didn't have the equipment of the eldwas; if only one of those were missing, in the worst case, I might have died.

Now that I think about it, the time I have learned magic is not even 1 year. I am an amateur among amateurs. If I compare my current self to the me that only had 1 year of experience in archery, I can clearly understand this. The time when I couldn't even hold a bow properly. It was in a stage where I couldn't mind about hitting the target.

Even if it was for the sake of hiding my magic power, I am truly glad I prioritized defense when I came to this world.

No matter if my magic power is as deep as the sea, there is no point if I only have a scoop and bucket to barely use some of it. Even if I still can't use the whole sea, I have

to learn how to use a part of it or it will just be a waste.

To have a limit in my crazy amount of power and only being able to use a minuscule part of it. I am not a maso, so I don't want to have close fights all the time.

As expected, heading to Academy Town was the right choice. It's just that this happened before I went there. If they say it's because of my bad luck, I would believe it.

Problem huh. This time it is troublesome that I don't even know where I was and how I fought. The reason I was thrown in that place, is probably because of that voice. What about "finding" you bastard Goddess. Because of her convenience, she threw me in the middle of a battle between hyumans and demons. After throwing me into a wasteland now you throw me into a battlefield. I will label you an evil God seriously.

Going through the trouble of doing that and not providing any instructions or support, she really likes to take me for a fool. If there is a next summon, I will definitely oppose it. Well even if I say so, I will leave most of it to my retainers. In terms of space movement, from Tomoe, Mio and Shiki; which one is more fit? It's probably Tomoe. But if it's about resisting magic, Mio is also a valid option.

Let's ask when they wake up. I have to make sure Tomoe and Mio don't look for retribution as well. No, it isn't because fighting is not good. I also have things to think about so I am just leaving the fun for later.

Ah right, Shiki. Where is Shiki? If I remember correctly, I was supposed to teleport to some town called Felika. Well, if he went to the Academy just like that, I will be able to arrive there too. Really, to be able to open mist gates in the locations of my retainers, it is quite convenient.

Before Felika... Uhm, the town I was before being forced to the battlefield, Ube-something. Instead of heading there and do the teleport again, it is more comfortable to just directly arrive to Academy Town.

Even when he looks like that, Shiki is actually the worrying type, so maybe he came back here. Let's try contacting him once and see.

(Shiki, good morning) (Makoto)

I am glad. It seems the link has been restored. I can clearly tell that we are connected.

Confirming that the thought transmission has connected, I try to call him out. Thought transmission is so user-friendly.

(Makoto-sama? Is it Makoto-sama?!?) (Shiki)

(Yeah, it is. I am sorry for suddenly disappearing) (Makoto)

From Shiki's point of view, he didn't know what happened to me at all so for now I just tell him I disappeared.

(No need to apologize! What about your body? Is there anything wrong with it?)
(Shiki)

(Yeah, just a bit sluggish. Just in case I will have you check later. Where are you right now?) (Makoto)

Eh? I feel like I am forgetting something.

(That's great, truly great. I was right beside you and was unable to do anything. If Makoto-sama didn't return after this, I would have-!) (Shiki)

(Shiki, I am asking you where you are right now though) (Makoto)

(Ah, I am really sorry! Right now I am in Academy Town, at the examination line. I thought it would be bad to take out the documents before knowing if Makoto-sama was okay, but after hearing that the day before yesterday you returned to Asora injured, I consulted with Tomoe and here I am) (Shiki)

Tomoe huh. Her decisions are like that of a father or more accurately saying, rational. She probably noticed that my injuries would heal properly alone and thought about when I needed to return, so she made Shiki stay there. A more thorough treatment can be done when I reunite with Shiki there.

I feel like Mio repeatedly told Shiki to come back and heal me, heal me right this instant no questions asked.

Fumu...

I returned the day before yesterday with injuries. Shiki told me. In that case, I have been sleeping for two days huh. Eh, I was in a pretty serious state?

Ah, injury!

Fingers!

Remembering my pretty severe injury, I take both of my hands out to confirm.

That purple thing which made one feel sick just looking at it, where is it now? Now there is only a healthy-looking left arm and hand.

My fingers are all there. They move normally. Actually, I have been using them naturally to move the blanket. Hah~, I may have just woken up, but I really am not in tune. I am airheaded right now.

But...

I-I am glad~~~!!!

And, Shiki said something about lining up? Examination line?

(Hey, Shiki. What is that examination line you are talking about?) (Makoto)

(Ah, to enter Rotsgard a test is necessary. It's the line you have to wait in order to take it. There should be other methods aside from this inefficient way though. At this rate, Makoto-sama's exam will probably take place in 6 days) (Shiki)

Certainly, if you have a turn ticket, there would be no need to line up. I feel like just by lining up, people steadily leave because they grow tired. I don't think that is their objective, right?

I see~. An exam huh. I thought that because of Rembrandt-san's recommendation, I would be able to enter easily just by doing an interview. Well, the self-proclaimed difficult test of merchants was just a duty education. I shouldn't worry too much. In the worst case, as long as I am able to obtain knowledge in that town, there isn't that much of a need for me to get involved with students. For the sake of Rembrandt-san, let's properly take that test.

6 days huh. I don't know how big this town is with my own eyes, but there seems to be enough time to check the place around.

(I see. Hey Shiki, you are really diligent you know) (Makoto)

(Wa?) (Shiki)

(Well, you said you use hypnosis and suggestion. So I was thinking, why are you diligently lining up?) (Makoto)

(?!!)

(I am sure it is just because you are trying to give a good impression for my sake though. You are pretty honest) (Makoto)

(.....)

(Now then, Shiki. I will be going there now so...) (Makoto)

(Y-Yes) (Shiki)

Shiki's behavior is a bit strange. Could it be he didn't get to sleep? It's this early in the morning and he was still able to answer this fast, so maybe he did an all-nighter. I am sorry for the trouble.

To be able to line up all night is truly incredible. Now that I mention it, in my previous world there were classmates that never missed a festival that was held in a certain place in Tokyo. Even though it was called the "haunt of wicked men" or "hell", they still talked about it with smiles for some reason.

Tto.

Let's quickly change clothes. I have made them worry after all. Shiki and everyone.

After changing, I will wake everyone up and tell them that I am alright. And then I will have Shiki do a thorough check and have a tour on Academy Town.

At night we will have a meeting in Asora for detailed reports. Let's make a mist gate in Academy Town where people can't see. It seems just by setting a gate once I am able to move from Asora to that place.

However, if it is totally closed it will vanish, so I have to leave remnants. Thinking about the possibility of infiltration, I have ordered Tomoe to completely close them. In places that work as relay points and in a base we will normally transit; in those cases we guard the exits with all we have. Mio is also able to open and close the mist gates that

are not completely closed. Shiki still isn't able to do it. It seems he is having a pretty hard time with it.

The former Lich that possesses a reasonable amount of knowledge and ability is like this. Well, I might just be worrying too much though. A genius level instinct type like Mio might appear and could end up able to pass through them, so in most of the cases I want them to be closed completely to have peace of mind.

Ah wait. In the Academy team it is only me and Shiki so there is probably no need to leave a gate in the meantime. I just need to open and close when necessary.

After arranging my thoughts... I feel gazes.

Moreover, from both sides.

“Waka!”

“Waka-sama!”

I was only able to catch those words. After that I wasn't able to understand anything else. The words of Mio that felt like they weren't even words and the words of Tomoe that were actually words but were so fast I couldn't understand. What is sure is that me changing clothes has become a pretty distant future now.

Being hugged by beauties from both sides should be a pretty rewarding situation and yet, the feelings of worrying them and wanting to say sorry were stronger. It's been a few months since I met them, but we have passed quite the thick times together.

(Shiki, I am sorry. I might take quite a bit of time going there) (Makoto)

(...Understood. Please don't push yourself) (Shiki)

I receive words of worry from Shiki.

“Tomoe, Mio. Good morning. It seems I have worried you both, I am sorry” (Makoto)

At this rate, the report meeting feels like it will be in a much later time. I decide to change the schedule a bit.

Chapter 79

Mio in the middle of a trip

“Mitsurugi you say? That brat, he wasn’t dead huh” (Tomoe)

One could tell Tomoe’s slight surprise from her words. I was somehow able to detach myself from them and tell them the situation, but, as expected, the two of them were quite angered.

“Probably. Also, he was with Dragon Killer that supposedly killed him” (Makoto)

First of all, I have to tell them everything. If I stop all the time to soothe them, I will never end.

“I still don’t know that part yet, I just know that the battlefield the Goddess kidnapped Waka to, is probably one of the battles in order to capture Stella Fortress. It seems it was an awful battle. I heard a big part of the hyumans died. But well, I see, Mitsurugi did that to Waka... Hoh~, fumu...” (Tomoe)

Ignoring Tomoe who is narrowing her eyes in a dangerous way...

I see, Stella Fort huh. It’s a name I haven’t heard before.

Certainly, it was the construction that had the most amount of people around. So that was the fortress huh. I took notice of it when I was high in the skies so it was on the moment I was about to return. In the end it became a losing fight for the hyumans huh.

If people like Sofia are in the demons side, I can understand. That was a scary living being. My last attack was probably only useful as pestering.

Experiencing a place where people kill people is a first in my life, now that I think about it. Not as a spectator but as a concerned party. It may be too late to say it now, but it was scary.

“I see. That Goddess threw me into an outrageous place. Moreover, the moment she found me, she didn’t even say anything! I seriously thought I would die!” (Makoto)

“Doing something like that to Waka-sama, how dare her... Goddess, unforgivable”
(Mio)

Mio is now in a state where conversation won't get through her. She is in a trip of her own. Her eyes have lost color and are completely still. It is a state where her ears are not working properly.

She won't suddenly go rampage, so there is no need to soothe her for now.

“However, to cause so much trouble for Waka, just how did they do it? With that equipment and magic power, it isn't something that one can defeat. But it is true that you were severely injured. Wumu” (Tomoe)

“It is because of my negligence and lack of knowledge. I think these were the reasons. Suddenly being thrown in the battlefield and suddenly encountering such a monster, I was in a total state of panic” (Makoto)

I was in a terrible state where not only did I not deploy numerous magic, I wasn't even able to properly put up a barrier.

“Fumu...” (Tomoe)

“It was a woman that swung around a sword bigger than her own body and was even able to slice twice in midair. On top of that, I don't know if it was instant movement ability, but she was able to ignore distance as much as she wanted. It made me think that I have to learn how to deploy a barrier as fast as possible and increase the amount of magic power I can use at once. In my current state, I am unable to use my advantages to their best” (Makoto)

“The amount of magic power you can use huh. Certainly. Setting aside the purity and density, Waka normally doesn't seem like you are using that much magic power. It's a changed magic with high effectiveness but in terms of aggregate amount, it certainly would be best to be able to form magic on the level of several rings. The time when you were against Mio, Waka had a different atmosphere there too” (Tomoe)

Yeah. Taking into account the amount of magic power I have, the amount I can use is way too low. Only having it is really a waste.

“I think that if I learn the basics in the magic academy, things will change a bit. I will try asking Shiki over there as well” (Makoto)

“...About that. I think that it would be better if we also accompany you there. We don’t know when the Goddess will interfere again. Her saying “found you” must mean that she has been looking for you over there and was able to find you” (Tomoe)

“...”

“Please reconsider” (Tomoe)

I understand the concerns of Tomoe. Even I, if an important friend or family suddenly disappears and returns injured, I would worry as well. I think it is best to strive in not making something like that happen again.

“Tomoe, I am definitely worried about the Goddess, but it is because of that that I don’t want you and Mio who she probably doesn’t know of yet, to hide their existence in Asora. She probably already knows about Shiki now, so instead of making him return, I think it is better to have him stay with me. Just like what I asked you, I want you to research for a way to oppose the summoning of the Goddess. It is also because I want to leave people I can count on in Tsige” (Makoto)

That’s right. I was kidnapped on the magic transfer formation, so Shiki’s existence might have been exposed. But if she discovers the existence of Tomoe and Mio as well, before learning a way to oppose her summon, I feel like she will kidnap me and dry me up.

In that case, I want to hide the two of them. I don’t know if good fortune will come out of this or a misfortune, but I don’t like having the Goddess know all my cards.

“Fuh~ a function to negate the interference of the Goddess and the creation of something so the thought transmission isn’t obstructed. If Waka is able to summon us immediately, the problems will be mostly resolved, so tackling both problems is more efficient. Yareyare, there are only difficult problems. However, I feel honored that Waka thinks of us as trump cards. For the sake of the day to come, we will remain in obscurity for now” (Tomoe)

“Sorry for the trouble. When I arrived at that battlefield, I was unable to feel the connections of anyone. Also the thought transmission was in a suspended state. I was really panicked. It is probably the Goddess’ fault, but the ring that Sofia used later also picked my interest” (Makoto)

“The first time was probably because of the Goddess’ barrier, but the reason why it

was restored for a second and then returned to the previous state might be because something obstructed the interference of the Goddess. The information we need to collect is way too much. I can't ask you to let me go there and investigate in more detail either" (Tomoe)

The words "restored for a second" of Tomoe interested me. I also want to know about what happened as a whole in that battlefield. Well, me going to the actual place to investigate right now feels like a poor move, so I refrain from that.

"Sorry for counting on you for everything. For the time being I will also do my best in regards to summoning everyone. I promise that if there is a time it is okay to rampage, I will definitely call you both" (Makoto)

Sorry for pushing all the troublesome things to you *dad* <*Referring to Tomoe as a parent figure*>. In terms of countermeasures against the Goddess, the only thing I can think of is pulling my bow as much as I want and obtain magic power surpassing hers. Right now my equipment is able to hide my magic power so maybe I should do it.

Ah~, I want to shoot.

"I am looking forward to that. Nevertheless, I don't want to feel that liver wrenching sensation again, so please prioritize a summon route. It is okay if it's just my needless anxiety but please, instead of using magic formations to mobilize, use Asora. We will manage the increase of gates on this side" (Tomoe)

"Ah, okay" (Makoto)

No good. I was showing withdrawal symptoms from my lack of archery. Even if I was unable to eat or sleep, I never missed a time with my bow after all. More like, it is a given. Now that it has come to this, I will not restrain myself.

"The battle between hyumans and demons is still far north. Fumu, in that case we need a detached force for the battlefield verification huh" (Tomoe)

"I will leave it to you. If it is Tomoe's personal selection, I can have peace of mind" (Makoto)

Let's flatter her a bit. I have been asking her a lot after all. Also, if it is Tomoe, there isn't that much worries about throwing the job to the wrong personnel and cause a big mess. I may be overestimating her though.

"Thank you for your graceful words. Also, can you have a word with Mio as well?"
(Tomoe)

With a quite troubled face, Tomoe points out Mio. Her face is telling me she doesn't want to deal with her.

"..."

Mio huh. Her miasma is unnaturally thick right now and I really don't want to get close. Maybe I should tell her to think countermeasures along with Tomoe in order for this to not repeat again?

Hmph.

Yeah!

But I refuse!

Ignore ignore!

"Go and wake her up Tomoe. Shiki is waiting for me so I will be going now. It is pitiful to make him line up alone right? Shiki doesn't know the situation at all too" (Makoto)

"...As you will. When you return, there will be a surprise so be careful. Also, lying is no good. The first one you made contact with was Shiki right?" (Tomoe)

"W-Well, I would be grateful if you don't think too much about the order. There was no deeper meaning in me contacting Shiki first after all" (Makoto)

Surprise she says. What a bad feeling those words give! At least say look forward to it. Moreover, for some reason she knows that I have done thought transmission with Shiki.

But I don't want to get close to the current Mio. Tomoe's surprise will probably be in a scope profitable for me, so for now I will endure. If things get busy at the Academy, I don't know when I will be able to return. Leaving aside the surprise, I am looking forward to the reports of what they did while I was in the academy.

But for now it would be better to be cautious about the Goddess in terms of communication. Mobilizing by mist, I can't really hold back from that one. They are

way too convenient. I can't use them as frequently now, but mobilizing with them is something I will probably be doing. It doesn't seem like the Goddess has noticed that I am using Asora as an intermediary to move. Probably the Goddess knows all the actions I did at that time, or maybe not. In that case, it is about that bug, she would probably come to me saying a word of complain or two. If she is not coming, it is probably safe to say she doesn't know yet.

Yareyare, I haven't entered Academy Town and it is already like this.

No matter which is the case, what I have to do is polish myself. Let's go strengthen myself for anti-Goddess measures. Before even learning about hyumans and magic, that Goddess might once again drag me into some trouble.

Geez.

In time, there will be no need for you to look for me, I will be the one going to you, so sit your ass and wait there. The things I want to do, want to aim for; if I am able to at least clear those, there is no need to stay hidden anymore.

No matter if I stand out or not, I will continue business and search for information about my parents.

"U-Uhm!"

When I was about to head to the Academy, a new voice calls me out. From PE sit to a firm and upright posture, a single girl holding her loved katana with both hands like embracing it, was there.

"Ah, Komoe-chan. Did I wake you up? Sorry" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, please don't push yourself and have a safe trip!" (Komoe)



You are a kid so it is okay to not force yourself to use polite language. Well, having a small girl doing her best talking is something that brings a smile to my face though.

“Okay, I will be going now. If Komoe-chan is being bullied by Tomoe, tell me okay?”
(Makoto)

Waving my hand at her, I pass through the mist gate.

“Komoe will do her best!” (Komoe)

Komoe is tightly holding a long sword bigger than her. I didn’t hold that many conversations with the first generation. Because I thought the consciousness of the clones were shared with the original body. But Komoe holds a separate consciousness from Tomoe. The first generation didn’t hold that many conversations with Tomoe either and seemed to be doing decisions, so I misunderstood. Or maybe Komoe is different. But I don’t intend to confirm this. I will treat her as a completely different person. That’s fine for me.

Taking that into account, I am probably treating her kindly. Even when I know this won’t atone for the death of the first generation.

Ah~ but...

If Tomoe were this polite with me it would be nice~.

I grasp the position of Shiki.

“...Waka, I like samurais but... I wish you to stop the pedophilia” (Tomoe)

“Like hell I am!!” (Makoto)

The words that Tomoe said with a slightly serious face, I thoroughly deny them.

The last words of her wore me out a bit, but I still continue to head out to Academy Town.

Chapter 80

Normal operations of Asora

“Now that Waka has gone. Mio, how long do you plan to stay like that?” (Tomoe)

The moment Makoto was enveloped in mist and disappeared, the voice of Tomoe reverberates in the room where Makoto isn’t anymore.

But the words that were directed at the black haired girl Mio were not answered and she just continued biting her thumb nail while mumbling words in a low voice. Tomoe seems to have given up on waiting for her answer and turns to her clone, Komoe, who is standing at the entrance.

“Komoe, you don’t have to guard the room’s door anymore. Go play with the forest ogres, I will be going there later” (Tomoe)

“Ah, yes! Understood, Tomoe-sama” (Komoe)

“You remember what I told you right?” (Tomoe)

“Of course! If I cut, heal it” (Komoe)

“Good. Then, I am counting on you... What is it?” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-sama, there is something I want to ask” (Komoe)

“Tell me” (Tomoe)

“What does “pedophilia” mean?” (Komoe)

“...In time I will tell you. Right now it’s too soon. Now, don’t let the forest ogres do nothing” (Tomoe)

“Y-Yes, understood! I will be going now!” (Komoe)

Komoe does a big nod and walks out. Tomoe watches her out. Seeing the opened door,

the dwarfs, orcs, lizards and Arkes must have noticed a change in the situation, they peeked inside the room. Tomoe smiles wryly at the residents that show worry at Makoto's well-being. That the forest ogres also came to check, surprised her a bit. Because she thought they would be firmly waiting at the training grounds. She thought she had cornered them to the very limit, but it seems they still have some leeway, so Tomoe decided to change their menu a bit.

"Uhm, how is Makoto-sama?"

One of the orcs says in a really reserved manner. It is the orc chief's daughter who does the administration and management in Asora, Ema. She is wise and it seems that her negotiation skills were originally high, she was able to act around the other races without feeling any sort of barrier between them. A capable woman. Moreover, her loyalty to Makoto is high. Tomoe and Mio respect Ema.

"Ah, Ema huh. If it's Waka, he woke up a few moments ago. He told me to tell everyone that he is alright" (Tomoe)

"But I don't see him around" (Ema)

"I had him go to the Academy where Shiki is. Because it is better if he checks him in detail. There is no one here that has experience in treating a human after all. Shiki who was a former hyuman, is the best one for the job right?" (Tomoe)

"...You are right. Understood. Will he be coming back at night?" (Ema)

"Let's see, I don't know about tonight, but let's have him come back soon in order to show everyone his well-being. Those dwarfs over there, I am a bit doubtful if they are worried about Waka's well-being or the equipments' well-being though" (Tomoe)

Tomoe sneaks a look at the dwarfs there and narrows her eyes.

"U-Unthinkable! We are also worried about Waka's well-being at foremost!"

"I see, I see, I understand that. Anyways, for now tell the other people at the village that Waka is alright. The lizards and Arkes as well, alright?" (Tomoe)

Everyone nods at Tomoe's words. And following her words, they began acting and leave from the door.

"Yareyare, what a troublesome bunch. However, understanding how much Waka is loved makes me a bit happy as well" (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama?! Waka-sama isn't here?!" (Mio)

"...Mio. You finally woke up huh" (Tomoe)

"Tomoe-san, where is Waka-sama?!" (Mio)

Seeing Mio who is instantly desperate, Tomoe makes a wry smile. After returning from her trip, she is like this. The pain of her master Makoto, even if only a part, Tomoe understood it.

"He went to Academy Town. While you were murmuring" (Tomoe)

"W-What did you say?!" (Mio)

Mio, who was sitting on the bed, stands up vigorously. But after that she may have felt anemia or something, she staggered and placed a hand on her head.

"H-Hot..." (Mio)

"Fool. After doing so much regeneration, your magic power and stamina will not return so fast. Just stay there and obediently recover" (Tomoe)

The voice of Tomoe that sounded amazed. However, taking a closer look, the color of her face wasn't that good either. And just as how Mio was, she also sat down at the bed.

"Uh, how pathetic. Even though I want to go and kill that so called Dragon Killer and Superior Dragon as soon as possible..." (Mio)

"We are not healing specialists. Doing something outside our expertise, it is obvious we would become like this" (Tomoe)

"That's why it would have been better to call Shiki here. That thing is useful if it's for healing after all" (Mio)

"Don't say that. Anyways, by the time I hurriedly came when I heard the report of Komoe, there was already one person unreasonably casting regeneration spells on

him" (Tomoe)

"T-That is..." (Mio)

"Even if I was able to remove the curse that was hindering his recovery in the middle to follow up on your spell and somehow were able to return him to his original state, who knows what kind of compensation you would have to take if you were to try and heal Waka alone" (Tomoe)

Tomoe sighs. By the time she ran there, Mio was clearly distressed. She even felt a madness in her bloodshot eyes, the eyes of someone that would pay any price in order to achieve their objective.

"...I don't care about the price I would have to take" (Mio)

Even though she was reflecting on her actions, she didn't regret them. That is what Mio's face said.

"What a troublesome one you are. And so you are telling me it would be fine to lose an arm?" (Tomoe)

In a joking tone Tomoe asks Mio, but Mio made a surprised face and looks back at her.

"Of course. If that would heal him" (Mio)

"..."

"Even if I were to become an empty-shell, I would be satisfied-desu. Because my everything belongs to Waka-sama" (Mio)

Mio calmly tells her that even if she lost all her limbs, it would still satisfy her. Tomoe makes a big sigh.

"...You are really an idiot-ja" (Tomoe)

"A-About what-desu?! Also, isn't Tomoe saying "idiot idiot" way too much?!" (Mio)

"To a point that it is still not enough. You may be satisfied by that, but if he were to see your deed and your appearance, Waka would cry" (Tomoe)

“Eh?” (Mio)

“Try to think about it. We are in a ruling relationship with Waka. In normal terms, we would have to absolutely follow his orders. Our movements and will would be as Waka wishes. Even so, he gave us this much freedom and lets us do as we want. It is a kind treatment that is no different from a covenant. He probably doesn’t think he is ruling us. He probably thinks of us as companions, family” (Tomoe)

“Companions, family...” (Mio)

“Right. That’s how much he treasures us. That’s why it is proper to be ready to throw away our everything for Waka, but we also have to stay healthy in order to serve Waka the best we can. As long as we stay with him, take care of your own body” (Tomoe)

“...”

“Oi, are you listening Mio? I am telling you something pretty important here you know?” (Tomoe)

“You... Saying all that even though you went and picked a fight on a high ranking dragon in who knows where.....” (Mio)

Mio, with her head hanging down, mumbles these words while looking at Tomoe.

“Uuugh?!” (Tomoe)

“You said something about Root right? And you went to pick a fight with him-desu. While pushing me the job of staying here. That isn’t something that would worry Waka? Is it okay for me to report this to Waka-sama?” (Mio)

“T-That is...” (Tomoe)

“Hmph, just because by chance the person in question wasn’t present and couldn’t meet him, doesn’t change the fact that you tried to do it. I will clearly report this” (Mio)

“W-Wait. I also said a bit too much. My feelings of worry about Waka made me a bit impertinent. Umu, it isn’t strange for me to become like this. That why, you see, don’t go betraying me like that okay?” (Tomoe)

“Who cares. I am stupid after all. Someone like Tomoe-san should have her period

dramas sealed for a while-desu wa" (Mio)

"Y-Yoooouuu~ what kind of scary things are you saying? Ah, I know-ja. Later, I will be going to the place where Waka battled. And so, when I get information about that Dragon Killer and Mitsurugi, the first one I will tell will be Mio. And after, we can secretly rampage a bit without telling Waka... or something like that" (Tomoe)

"...And?" (Mio)

"And?!" (Tomoe)

"..."

"Umu, I understand! Also I will cooperate in compiling the videos you were interested in. How about that?" (Tomoe)

"...Really?" (Mio)

"There is no turning back in a samurai's words" (Tomoe)

"Then, I will forgive you for calling me an idiot. Now go and investigate the place where Waka fought quickly please" (Mio)

"Y-Yes, understood" (Tomoe)

(Well, I was also thinking about giving that brat my thanks for what he did anyways. Accompanying Mio to rampage a bit might prove fun) (Tomoe)

The secret talk of Tomoe and Mio, surprisingly ended in Mio turning the tables. While doing what Makoto asked them to do, the two retainers decided on an ominous thing secretly.

By the time both of them were able to move their bodies, the sun was already high up in the sky. Asora was somehow able to operate normally.



PtFF by: traitorAtzen