

あづみ圭
Azumi Kei

月が導く異世界道中

Tsukiga Michibiku Isekai Dōchū

14



アルファポリス

Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu

– Moon-led Journey Across Another World –

- Volume 14 -

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[Reigokai: Isekai Translations]



主な 登場人物



Tomoe

元は「蜃」と呼ばれた竜。
真と契約したことによって
人の姿を得た。



Shiki

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



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。
最近各国重鎮との
面会に忙しい。



Lime Latte

巴の下で密偵として働く男。
何かと気苦労が多い。



Chiya

勇者響のパーティに
同行している
ローレルの巫女。
人の本質を見る
能力がある。



Mio

元は巨大な蜘蛛。
真と契約して、
人の姿を得た。
真を思うあまり
時に大胆な
行動を取る。



Otonashi Hibiki

リミア王国の勇者にして
真の母校の先輩である。
なんでもできる天才肌。

Chapter 203

The name Neptune is not just for show

Without anything special happening, the test for the sea migrants ended.

The departure day of Limia was stretched, and the day for the interview came first, which I consider lucky.

Their side must have their own circumstances, but since it also fits with my own circumstances, there's no need to get aggravated.

And so, in a variety of meanings, we arrived at the day where I will be doing the last interview with the patriarchs of the races that will be migrating to Asora.

Different from before, I wait for the other party with time to spare, knowing that it is my own arbitrary decision.

About the data of the test, I was given the documents beforehand, so I have already read them and am totally ready now.

“Now then, let’s begin.”

The one at my side is Ema again.

She is truly a big help.

And so, the interview with the sea races began.

The first to come were the Sahuagins.

They have the special trait of Kappas at their head, and are half-fish.

They are able to live in both land and water, but the main place they live in is the sea.

Their houses are there as well.

From what I saw in the documents, they were truly living peacefully at the sea of Asora.

They are good at hunting, gathering, and they are also trying to do something like animal husbandry in the sea, so my impression of them is that they are like Sea Highland Orcs.

They don't have friction with any race, and they are showing their will to migrate.

Moreover, they are cooperating with the harbour constructions, so they are exemplary people that I find no reason to refuse.

The interview with the Patriarch-san couple ended smoothly, and Ema was also smiling from beginning to end.

The interview ended in an incredibly peaceful manner.

By the way, the green scaled ones are male, and the brilliant red scaled ones are female.

The male are in charge of being warriors, and they are specialized in group fights. They said that in terms of magic related to water, it is their specialty.

In terms of fighting style, they gave me the impression of Mist Lizards.

Well, whatever the case, it is a good start.

“Next is...” (Makoto)

“The mermaids.” (Ema)

“...How are they going to come here?” (Makoto)

Their lower half is completely fish though.

We are doing the interview in land.

The races that can't come to land are interviewed later, and the meeting place is also at a different area.

"It seems like they are using a medicine that comes with a cost, and are able to temporarily turn hyuman shaped. That's why it seems like there's no need for our assistance this time." (Ema)

"What's with that sad story-like feeling?" (Makoto)

Will it take away their voice or turn their body into foam?

I can't laugh at that.

More like, I would prefer to go to the sea.

"Ehm, the price seems to be random, but it seems like it isn't that big of a deal, and the heaviest price is a slight fever" (Ema)

"...If I remember correctly, they didn't call it an elixir right? For some reason, I feel kind of betrayed though." (Makoto)

Even so, it is a medicine that's sold at the market? Is what I wanted to retort.

"Waka-sama, is it okay to call the next people?" (Ema)

"Ah, yeah. It is fine." (Makoto)

"Then, I will call them." (Ema)

Well, the mermaids didn't give a good first impression, but in terms of personality, they didn't have any problem at all.

Or more like, they hated combat so much that they accepted the invitation to Asora. That's how pacifist they were.

The fishing grounds of the hyumans has been increasing lately, and they didn't want any friction with the races, so they were thinking about a place to move it seems.

There's reports that they are exemplar magic users, and they mainly utilize healing, but it was a race that deserved a special mention.

Also, they like public entertainment and the people themselves like to sing.

Because of that, they get along well with the Sirens and Lorelei.

They can adapt to land without the need of using medicine, but their natural residence is in the sea.

The race has a village, and it seems like they want to extent the present condition. Of course, it was an okay.

They take the interaction with other races positively, and they have promised to cooperate with the harbour town.

Ema also spoke, and in the end, they nodded satisfied at my gaze of confirmation.

“To think that they will be inviting us to a singing show, how pleasant.” (Ema)

“Right. Since we have the chance, how about having a bi~g party at the seashore?” (Makoto)

“To celebrate the meeting of new comrades huh. I think that’s a great idea. I will plan it promptly, okay?” (Ema)

“I am counting on you.” (Makoto)

Oh, the one that made its appearance after my talk with Ema was... a mountain.

The knolls of Marine Blue.

This interview is done at the seashore.

It is a quite big building in the form of a gymnasium that I said will be used as a meeting place.

Just that, the entrance is gigantic.

The door opens responding to the size of the people that open it. It is a gimmick that the Eldwas are proud of.

When people of normal size like us open the door, it will act like a fake big door, but when a big living being pushes it, one will be able to tell it wasn’t actually a picture on the wall.

The light pushes in at once, and a shadow that obstructs it appears as well.

Receiving the light from the back, the identity of the mountain that shone like a blue gem was a shell.

This is my first time seeing it, but... it is big.

When I check on Ema, she was also looking at it dumbfounded.

I have only seen her sharp expressions lately, so this one is rare.

Blue Moon.

A giant turtle.

Or is it?

It is floating after all.

It is great that it won't be walking and creating steps that would resound and destroy the floor though.

Its gigantic figure contrasted with how it floated lightly.

Or more like, I am surprised it could enter.

I was now completely confident of the abnormal designing abilities of the Eldwas.

"Nice to meet you, King. I am the Blue Moon, Fua."

Common language!

For a mythical beast like this to be able to use common language is incredibly fresh.

Ema seems to have returned to herself when the Blue Moon called me King, she fixed her expression and faced him.

"Nice to meet you, Fua-san. My name is Misumi Makoto, over here is my subordinate, Ema." (Makoto)

"To think that the one who gave birth to this vast sea was a young and small hyuman, the world is truly big. And so, will I be able to stay in this plentiful sea?" (Fua)

"Of course. What we want to know here is your approximate residence, and confirm if you have the will to reside here. After that, we will only be telling you some rules." (Makoto)

"I am grateful. The Blue Moons have a relationship with the sea and we leave children. I for some reason didn't have a good compatibility with the sea of that Goddess' 'world', so I was troubled. I still don't know if I will be able to live well in this sea, but it is incredibly comfortable." (Fua)

It seems like the Blue Moon considers that this is not the world of the Goddess, but some other completely different place.

When he says they have a relationship with the sea, it was literally, as they don't need a companion to reproduce.

From his explanation, it feels like they really have a kid with the sea.

Even though he has the personality of a male, he doesn't feel anything out of place in the fact that he is giving birth to eggs himself. I thought that maybe the gender in their race is vague.

...I wonder why, different from the time with Root, I feel respect with him.

It must be that, it is because the person in question is not weird, probably.

And he is the only one wishing to migrate.

In this time's migration of Asora, there's only two races that are wishing to migrate alone, so this is one of them.

It seems like both of them don't have any problems with it, but I wonder if they won't get lonely.

For the Blue Moon, it seems like as long as there's the sea, he won't be feeling lonely at all.

Anyways, it is a composed race.

Obviously, there were no problems, so he is approved.

As he was leaving, he told me that he wanted me to watch when he gives birth, but... when I asked when was his breeding time, he said that it is once every 500 to 1,000 years.

...I don't think I will be able to witness it.

It is on the level that I would need incredible luck.

I answered that at that time, I would love to, but I think the chances of it will be low.

"He was truly a mountain." (Ema)

"Right." (Makoto)

"It seems like it was named Blue Moon because of the shell that shines lightly in the moonlight, but even when looking at him in daytime, it was beautiful." (Ema)

"Yeah. His address was uncertain, but he said that he would respond to the thought transmissions, so when there's any business, the races in the vicinity or I will be moving." (Makoto)

"I am thinking about asking him to report of any resources he finds." (Ema)

"Isn't that fine? Since he is wilfully swimming and floating around, he will probably be able to find unexpected things." (Makoto)

He was gigantic, but he had a truly carefree atmosphere.

It might also be because my image of a turtle is affecting my impression though.

I wasn't overwhelmed like Ema after all.

"The next one is also a candidate that wants to migrate alone." (Ema)

"Ah, her huh. If I remember correctly, she was a Scylla, right?" (Makoto)

"Yeah. She has a slight problem as well, so please confirm it in the interview that is to come." (Ema)

“Understood.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call her.” (Ema)

A while after the words of Ema...

A girl around the same age as me enters alone.

Scylla.

It seems like in the world of the Goddess, it is a race that doesn't have that many in numbers.

It is incredibly belligerent towards humans, and for that reason, they go out of their way to attack ships, and even though they are able to silently live at an island on the ocean, they end up living close to the human towns.

Even though their numbers are low, among the sailors, it is considered the strongest mamono within the sea.

In the first place, the races that come to this Asora are races that are low in numbers, but for some reason, a girl has come here alone.

“Nice to meet you, Asora’s King. I am the Scylla, Levi.” (Levi)

The Scylla gracefully bows.

So there's sailor uniforms in this world.

This is the first time I see a person wearing it.

It feels like I am looking at a high school girl.

“Nice to meet you, Levi-san. I am Misumi Makoto. Over here is Ema, my subordinate.” (Makoto)

Ema bows with a slightly stiff expression.

“Makoto-sama, I heard that this is the last interview. In other words, until today, I was at the passing level, right?” (Levi)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

“Thanks. Having so many worthy opponents was fun.” (Levi)

The report of the Scylla was filled with battle information.

It wasn’t between migration candidates.

It seems like she went and confronted the strong-looking animals that live in the sea by herself.

And at times, those targets could also be living beings from the land as well.

It is certain that she has quite the aggressive personality.

“There’s a few questions I would want to ask you myself. Is it okay, Levi-san?” (Ema)

“Of course, Ema-san. Ask me anything.” (Levi)

“You Scyllas attack hyumans because you want to, right? But in this place there’s no hyumans, and it can’t be said that Makoto-sama is one. In that case, what was your objective in migrating?” (Ema)

...What am I, Ema-san?

“Regarding the question about the race as a whole, the answer to your former question is yes. And regarding the latter, almost all the race has no answer for it. That’s why only I am here. I am an eccentric Scylla.” (Levi)

“...Let me be straight here. Do you hold any hostility towards Makoto-sama, or evil intent?” (Ema)

At the words of Levi-san that were as if dancing around the topic, Ema throws her a straightforward question.

That worrywart side of her makes her ladylike.

“None at all.” (Levi)

“Is that because you are an eccentric one?” (Ema)

Against the sarcastic-filled tone of Ema, Levi nods at it with a wide smile devoid of evil.

"That's right. I don't have fun at all against hyumans." (Levi)

"Not fun?" (Ema)

"That's right. The majority of them are weak, and yet, at my surroundings, there were people that were competing over who defeated the most hyumans. And they do it properly without being caught by the eyes of the Goddess, that's just low and boring." (Levi)

"..."

"...Even though we have been born with such a strong body, right?" (Levi)

The conversation of Levi-san and Ema continue.

"In other words, the reason why you wanted to come to Asora was because there were strong people there?" (Ema)

"Yes! This is a splendid place! There are people I have never seen before, and I also saw several strong Neptune Sea Lords, who I have always wanted to fight with one day. You Highland Orcs, the Mist Lizards, and those Arkes as well!" (Levi)

In an excited state, Levi-san speaks about the forces of Asora in her own vision.

How... impressive.

But hearing the words that show her way of thinking, I noticed something.

"Ah Levi-san, sorry for interrupting but, in that case, Levi-san... you have no hostility or evil intent at all, but you want to fight with me as well, is that what you are trying to say?" (Makoto)

"...Not yet. But in a future, I would want to have a match with you. First, I will be polishing my strength with the system called Asora Ranking." (Levi)

The Asora Ranking is the mock battle system that Tomoe began within Asora. Obviously, it is only composed of land races, and until now, there have not been other races mentioning even the name of it, but... Levi-san already knew of it, and moreover,

she wants to participate in it.

“Asora Ranking, is it? But that system has rules that don’t consider the sea races at all, so...” (Makoto)

“I don’t mind at all. I don’t have any intentions to seek for a change in the rules.” (Levi)

“Are you thinking about living in land?” (Makoto)

“Hm, that’s... there’s fights that can only be tasted in the sea, so I don’t want to choose between them.” (Levi)

The fighting standard came in.

This person, there’s probably a lot of people in Asora she could get along with.

A battle junkie that doesn’t hold any real discrimination huh.

...I can’t be sure of it though.

“Giant sharks, sea urchins, shelled animals, and eels; it seems like you have been fighting quite a lot, but why is it ‘not yet’ for me?” (Makoto)

To confirm about it, I once again interrupt and try asking.

About the record in the sea fights, there’s a lot of self-filing, but counting the wins and defeats, there’s quite the number.

It doesn’t seem like she is choosing her opponents.

Within those, there were also some where she barely escaped with her life.

And for some reason, after that, she has challenged them around three more times.

“...I just can’t imagine it at all, fighting Makoto-sama. Even so, I don’t feel like it will be boring. At those times, it is mostly because it is an opponent I am unable to do anything about. I am speaking from experience. And so, not yet. By the way, Tomoe-sama, Mio-sama, and Shiki-sama give the same feeling.” (Levi)

“I see. To live here, there are rules as well. It is fine to consider that you are accepting

those when you migrate, right?" (Makoto)

For now, it looks okay.

So I decided to enter the last confirmation.

"Yes. I will study about things I don't understand like currency, so at first, I might be a bother, but I would like you to please let me live here." (Levi)

Currency huh.

Tomoe has done something unreasonable about that after all.

Well, that's fine.

Levi-san is saying that she will be adapting, so...

"Well then Levi-san, I accept your migration. Looking forward to being with you." (Makoto)

"Thank you very much!" (Levi)

Levi-san lowers her head deeply, but she energetically lifted it up and made a turn.

She is leaving.

Could it be that in her case, since she has been with a race that says things like 'I have obtained x number of hyuman ears~', she is lenient?

If it's fine if there are strong opponents, then Asora might be a paradise for her.

"Ah."

While I was thinking that, Levi-san stopped.

Her gestures as well remind me of a high school girl.

No, she *looked* like one.

Until this happened.

"But if there's a war with some other place, definitely call me, please. Because at that place, there would be no problem no matter how many I kill after all~. Well then, I am excusing myself~." (Levi)

The expression of Levi-san who turned as she laughed, the gap between what she said and her tone made my back shiver.

The documents did say that the Scylla have a deep hatred towards hyumans, I don't know about the reason though.

Could it be that they are actually battle junkies that don't mind if they are hyuman or not as long as they kill something?

She is odd as I thought.

"She is only good at fighting, so in a sense, she is a safe girl, but... is it okay, Waka-sama?" (Ema)

"Even if she participates in the ranking, I don't think she has it yet to enter the core of it, so I think there won't be any problems." (Makoto)

"I think that those kind of girls will change for the worse when the environment is appropriate though... Should I call it strengthening, or wickedness, or maybe mentally abnormal?" (Ema) *<She is making a pun with 強化, 凶化, 狂化; all of them are pronounced as kyouka but have different meanings>*

For some reason, I feel like all of those fit her.

The Asora Ranking is properly made so that it doesn't turn into killing each other, so at that part, I don't have to worry.

If I have Shiki leave her without gas from time to time, it should be fine.

...I definitely don't want to fight against a high schooler with a transformed body that shouts spells as she attacks me.

"Ehm, about the next one..." (Ema)

The next ones were the Sirens.

Their upper half was that of a woman, and their lower half that of a bird.

I thought they would have wings on their backs, but the Sirens that were in front of me had wings instead of arms.

It is a race that has a stronger ratio of bird traits.

They live mainly at the seashore and at reefs, and in Asora, they said that they like islands that are slightly open into the sea and has cliffs rising perpendicularly.

There's no problem in having them live in one, so I gave them permission.

These girls are similar to the mermaids in the sense that they are pacifists, and like to sing.

It is a race that has only girls, and in that part, they are similar to Gorgons.

In the time of the exam, they discussed of these circumstances with the other races, and it seems like it didn't turn into any problem, so I decided not to get involved in it.

People like Lime should be relieved about that.

Even if he were attacked because of a misunderstanding, the experienced Lime will probably be totally in, yeah.

They told me that they were planning on having the Lorelei in charge of the musical instruments, and the Mermaids and Sirens for the singing, so in the flow, Ema spoke about the festival, and they flew around and were shouting in joy.

Looks like they are an energetic race.

When they told me the Neptunes will be the one doing the dancing, I was personally taken aback.

They asked me to please take care of the Loreleis that will be coming after, and after lowering their head, they left.

Getting along is something great.

“They were cheerful people.” (Ema)

“It is great that Ema doesn’t have to get angry.” (Makoto)

Remembering the disaster with the fairies, I tease her.

“That was because they were lacking way too much manners! And in reality, they are now able to act in a somewhat decent manner now, you know? In other words, they could do it, and yet, they didn’t. I was angry because of that!” (Ema)

...

I can’t say much about others, but I feel like this is similar to seeing circus lions jumping fire rings, and then expecting the wild lions to do that as well.

“Is there something wrong?” (Ema)

“No, nothing.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call the Loreleis next.” (Ema)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

Lorelei huh.

It is a type of demon race it seems.

Honestly speaking, there isn’t much I would question them about.

...Because you know, thanks to Sari doing her best and working a lot, almost all the questions I wanted answered are already written in the documents after all.

I even think that it would be fine if it just went: ‘How’s been lately?’, ‘Not bad’, ‘Then I am looking forward to being with you’, ‘Excuse us then’.

Different from Tomoe, Sari must be a girl that likes to gather all the information perfectly in the documents.

In other words, it can also be said that she is a girl that doesn’t set up things for me to experience for myself.

The interview with the Loreleis was truly just casual talk.

Confirming the content in the documents, and also speaking about Sari.

It seems like the Lorelei are truly being helped out by Sari. It seems like Sari is also feeling affection towards them as she interacts with them.

She has slept over at their village a few times already, so I can tell from that.

“Ah, now that I think about it, I heard that you guys are good at playing with instruments?” (Ema)

Ema must be thinking about touching the topic of the festival for last, she talks about one of their specialties.

“Yes. We make musical instruments, and we are also specialized in playing them. In Asora there are many materials we have yet to touch, so we are looking forward to it.”

“We are also looking forward to hearing your musical performance.” (Ema)

“With the cooperation of the other races, I think we will be able to do so in a near future. We are all doing our best in order to entertain you.”

I think that it is quite special to be able to play musical instruments, since I am no good at it.

In the case of the Lorelei, it seems like they are able to combine their magic with their melodies, so being diligent in their musical performance will also count in increasing their strength at battle.

Hm?

But if they are able to do musical performances, can't they dance as well to match it?

“Uhm, it is your specialty to do musical performances but, could it be that you are also good at dancing as well?” (Makoto)

I tried asking them.

“Yes. We are not that good at singing, but at the village, we would always pair musical performances with dancing.”

Oh~.

Then let's have them do that for the coming festival!

"In that case, I would like to see it at the time when you do your performance."
(Makoto)

"No well, the ones in charge of the dancing will be the Neptunes. There isn't that many chances to see their super high-class dancing, and it is incredibly rare to be able to do a musical performance when that happens. We are thinking of concentrating in our musical performance which is our main role."

...I am unable to evade the Tuna and Red King Crab dragon palace dance.

Is it okay to expect something when they say it is super high-class?

Inside me, the image of the Neptunes are already a profound mystery though.

Regarding the singing and music, they have already seized the dancing role.

"I see. Understood. I am looking forward to it." (Makoto)

"Yes. And so, will we be able to continue living in this land?"

"Yeah. I am thinking about having you guys be the leads of the harbor town." (Makoto)

"Thank you very much!"

They are more of a land race after all.

"From hereafter, I will be cooperating with Sari-dono and working hard as a part of everyone."

"I think that Sari will be involved with you in the future as well, but I am thinking about having her do the follow-up for the races that will be migrating. That's why she will not be able to make contact with you guys that often, please do understand." (Makoto)

"Is it a promotion? That's great."

"There's worth in doing it, is what the person herself said as well, and she is talented.

In the first place, if I were to leave Ema here with two settlements, she would collapse.”
(Makoto)

“Waka-sama!” (Ema)

“I want her to keep the strength to get angry at me like this. I am thinking about having Sari do her best. Everyone, please cooperate as well.” (Makoto)

It didn’t seem like Sari said ‘there’s worth in doing it’ to please me, so I decided to leave her in charge of the sea business.

Pushing it to Ema would be a bit too much after all.

In terms of trust and results, it is true that I would like to leave it to Ema, but thinking about how exhausting this work would be, I could tell that it would be hard.

She is telling me the things in a refreshing manner, but in reality, we are low in hands.

This is something that I understand even if not told, so I don’t touch that topic though.

“To think that us who are related to the demon race, can live in such an abundant land... Fuh... Live is truly unpredictable.”

“Right. The demon race has increased their territory and isn’t as bad as before, but that side is shouldering a war. You all will be making a town peacefully. It is truly unpredictable.” (Makoto)

“From now on, we are in your hands, Waka-sama.”

“I am looking forward to being with you.” (Makoto)

Maybe they are filled with emotion, the Lorelei had tears in their eyes as they left.

The Lorelei that abandoned living in that harsh land and searched for hope in the sea, it seems like they didn’t live an abundant life at all either.

Having piled up misfortune over misfortune, they probably see Asora as a paradise.

If this brings them happiness, it makes me happy as well.

“A type of demon, Lorelei huh.” (Makoto)

“As expected of people that have lived in a harsh environment, they are all people that have high endurance.” (Ema)

It seems like in this place, being a type of demon is viewed as a simple difference in the race.

In other words, it is like the difference of a white person and a black person.

Looking at it from a genetic point, they might have a bit more of a difference than that, but honestly, I wonder if they have that much difference to call them a type though.

“The demon race that’s challenging the hyumans and the Goddess together with the Demon Lord, and the Lorelei that came to Asora with the flow. I wonder which one is happier.” (Makoto)

“That question changes in answer depending on what they consider as happiness, you know?” (Ema)

“Ema, don’t you have a lingering discomfort between them and the demon race?” (Makoto)

Ema answered straightly, but I was a bit bothered.

There’s the event where the Highland Orcs were almost pushed into a dangerous state by the demon race.

It is not like everyone knows this, but she knows it.

“I don’t have anything to say about the Lorelei. About the demon race... I do have a bit, but even so, it is the truth that thanks to that, I was able to meet Waka-sama. I am not Waka-sama, but I am beginning to think that everything is okay as long as the result is good.” (Ema)

“I see.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call the next ones.” (Ema)

“Got it.” (Makoto)

The next ones... are here.

They are here.

Neptunes!

<TLN: This part has heavy Japanese puns about the past and with naming, so I am not sure if I have accurately translated them. If someone spots any mistakes, please point them out.>

Three of them.

A tuna and a thorny crab, probably the one they call a Red King Crab.

And the other one is... a whale.

It is a whale but... hey, it is small.

Is that the punchline?

For a whale to be around two meters is... obviously small.

“Nice to meet you, Neptunes. My name is Misumi Makoto. The one here is the Highland Orc, Ema, my subordinate.” (Makoto)

Until now, I have lost in presenting myself first, but they are different to the other races in a lot of meanings, so I hyped myself up and made the greetings.

When I did that, the tuna and the crab that were at the left and right lowered their knees.

It is a gesture that I feel would be done by knights.

And then, the mini-whale that was at the very center, made one step forward and does a refined bow.

Even though it is a whaleman that has hyuman limbs growing out of it, I felt elegance from it.

That's impressive.

“Nice to meet you, King of Asora, Makoto-sama.”

After saying that, the whale took a step back.

“I am in charge of the circulation of goods as a courier, the tuna race, name’s Tsuna. Nice to meet you, Makoto-sama.”

A tuna named Tsuna.

We are joking with the names already.

“As my strong point is strength, I am mainly in charge of public works, constructions, and physical jobs, Red King Crab race, name’s Hanasaki. Nice to meet you, Makoto-sama.”

Didn’t you say you were a Red King Crab?!

What’s this about a Hawaiian crab?! <*Hanasaki can mean ‘coming from Hawaii’*>

Just what are you?!

“And I am the head and a fireman, protecting the living of everyone, whale race, name’s Serwhale Gay. Being granted this audience today, I feel truly happy.”

...Gay.

Goddess... just what are you creating?

No, for that Goddess to create something like this, the molding is just way too terr-... way too unique.

They might be the antique races that originally lived here.

In that case, it would mean they have an amount of history comparable to the Superior Dragons.

Now that I think about it, there’s no Superior Dragon supervising the sea, right? Could it be that these guys are just like their name state, the protectors of the sea? That’s not it, right?

"A fireman, is it? Uhm, sorry for the rudeness, but from my knowledge, a fireman just doesn't give a good image though." (Makoto)

In the first place, it is weird for your job to be a fireman, right?

Aren't you in the sea?

There's no fires.

When talking about firemen, it is the ones from the Edo-period. *<the firemen they are referring to is written differently.>*

Or more like, it may not sound bad, but from what I know, the jobs of those firemens was to destroy the houses that were in fire.

Could it be that the Neptunes are lenient in their housing?

"You know well. It is certainly true that within our race the word fireman means the fireman that you refer to, and it normally doesn't have a good image. But I am surprised. It seems like you already knew beforehand about the courier and the strong*<both are works stemming from the Edo-period and written differently>*, and on top of that, you even knew about the firemen. You are knowledgeable like a scholar."

This self-proclaimed fireman is incredibly gentlemanly.

This person is totally talking in Kanjis*<japanese writing style>*, but I will probably lose if I am bothered by it.

Also, it would be troublesome to call him only as Gay, so I should also add the Ser as well.

Let's do that.

He said I was like a scholar, but things like couriers, strong, and firemen; as a Japanese, it is not that impressive of knowledge though. In terms of Edo times, 取る替えるべえとか, might be considered knowledgeable. *<No idea what that means, so in a sense, it is truly rare? :P>*

I am probably a bit more knowledgeable than the normal.

“Serwhale-sama knows the meaning of that name, and even with that, he is still calling himself a fireman.”

Tsuna does a follow-up.

“There’s no one as noble as Serwhale-sama.”

Hanasaki also speaks.

It is probably better to not worry about this guy’s identity.

Honestly, I don’t know anything aside from his name.

In terms of fleshiness, I have seen travelling programs where crabs had fleshy legs like that, but in terms of ecology and source, I completely don’t know what’s the difference he has with the Red King Crabs.

“Is there some sort of circumstance?” (Makoto)

Leaving aside their looks and composition, the Neptunes have a good reputation with all the races, and on top of that, they are incredibly cooperative with us.

Not only Sari, they also have a good evaluation from Tomoe, Mio and Shiki.

From the documents, there were no problems found, a race with moral rectitude.

If there’s some sort of circumstance from that race, I want to hear it here.

“We came here with the intention to tell Makoto-sama. It may become an embarrassment for us Neptunes, but will you please listen?”

“Of course. If you are going to be living in Asora, you are practically family. I think that we have to receive those circumstances as well.” (Makoto)

“The Neptunes are existences that can be called the protectors of the sea world. We have varied outward appearances, but all of us possess excelling abilities, and since time immemorial, we have been protecting the order of the sea.”

“The protectors of the sea...” (Makoto)

No way...

"Even if we are called the protectors of the sea, as long as we are a race, we will be targeted by friction and civil war, and there were times when we have divided our forces and done wars that drag other races into it. This is something that's not recorded in the hyuman history, but it is not like the sea has been living in constant peace like how the land sees of it."

"I see." (Makoto)

So the sea has also experienced a big war within the sea huh.

"Right now there's nothing like that and we are living peacefully, but a problem has occurred. I who am the son of the King, am actually a twin, so there's an exact older brother of mine."

"In that case, the one who will be inheriting the throne will be your older brother?" (Makoto)

"No, he has already inherited it. I don't have any intentions to fight over the throne, and intended to help brother, so my brother was able to smoothly inherit it without any obstruction."

Then there's no problem.

"It is stupid to divide the race and fight, and it would have been fine to just offer this body of mine to the Neptunes as a General of the army, but the fact that I thoughtlessly got stronger than my brother, had individual abilities surpassing him, and was the top of the army, must have been bad. Steadily, a bad atmosphere was beginning to born between my brother and me."

...It is beginning to turn muddy.

Even though they are like a gag, why does it turn into such a serious conversation, Neptunes?

"In other words, even though you have higher abilities to become the King, your brother became the King. People that didn't like this began appearing." (Makoto)

"In terms of disposition as a king, my brother and I have no difference. It is just that I

am higher in physical and magical capacity. But it is true that there were people resembling what you mentioned, Makoto-sama."

At this rate, he is probably also higher in knowledge and grades.

And maybe he was more popular too.

"My brother began thinking that it would be dangerous for me to do as I wish with the army, he fortified his faction, and tried to take in the army into the authority of the King. To avoid the concentration in authority, the Neptunes tried to decentralize the authority with a few methods. My normal brother would have been able to reach an understanding though."

"The Neptunes have quite the advanced government." (Makoto)

The words decentralization of authority, just when did I hear these words?

I have heard centralization a lot though.

It is incredible that they have a lot of different ways of thinking instead of just thinking about who's the better one.

Since coming to this world, I have finally begun to understand the words separation of powers, central and local authority; words that sound like some sort of chant.

Until then, it was more of memorization.

"Thank you very much. And then, after that, I obstructed the ones who seemed to have excessive centralization of power, and tried to work in mending my relationship with my brother, but in the end, it turned into a situation where it was impossible to avoid a civil war. I could only be embarrassed by my incompetence."

"A civil war." (Makoto)

"It was a situation where I was searching for a way to avoid it. But there was a light. It was for me to be exiled from the Neptunes. My brother probably said those words with the intention to declare a war, but for me, those were truly words of salvation. I accepted the exile, was called a firemen, and became a wanderer of the sea."

I don't know how many volumes are in the biography of Serwhale, but it seems like it

has ended.

"Ehm, then after that, you visited several places, and ended living with the Neptunes of other places?" (Makoto)

"No. After being exiled, warriors and populace from my country chased after me. But there were pursuers from my brother, and we were somehow able to cut through it with the minimal amount of fights, created a hidden village, and we were invited by Asora."

"That was impressive timing." (Makoto)

Seriously.

"We are truly grateful for this miracle. From now on, we will consider this sea as our homeland, hold hands with the people that are living there, and serve Makoto-sama. That's what we have decided."

The strength in his eyes is incredible.

As expected of someone that has been troubled by raging waves like the one I have heard just now.

Even someone as competent as him was unable to stop a political strife that has picked up in pace.

How scary.

"The Neptunes have a good reputation with the other races, so there's no problem. That's why I don't mind having you live here. I have already received the okay to our rules beforehand so, is there anything else you want to tell me?" (Makoto)

"Thank you very much. I think it is truly shameless for us to be saying it, but we have two wishes. The first is that we want to meet with the strong warriors of the Asora ranking, and we want to request for an accommodation<maybe a spar?>. The other one is something related to the conversation just now; if there's a possible problem regarding the Neptunes my brother commands, we can't participate. Those are the points."

So they can't participate.

A valid line.

I even think that it wouldn't be strange for him to tell us not to fight him.

"Then are you saying that if the Neptunes invade from outside, you won't be fighting?"
(Ema)

Ema refutes.

Even for a possibility, it is way too improbable.

"If something like that happens, we will commit suicide. I understand that it won't serve as atonement for anything, but even so, we are unable to fight, and it will trouble the other races. Choosing sides... would be unbearable. Just that, we are unable to bear it."

"You can't. Suicide is not permitted. Please think of another way aside from that."
(Makoto)

"But... Makoto-sama..."

"Sorry, I have made a strange supposition. I will leave this case as a homework of the Neptunes to Waka-sama." (Ema)

Ema cuts off the flow of the conversation.

Maybe because the answer differed a lot from what she expected.

"Ema-dono, this is something that we have discussed with everyone of us..."

"Serwhale-dono, please understand. It might be better to think of a way to turn that chance into zero. There are a number of people here that are able to make that possible." (Ema)

The eyes of Ema were serious.

By turning the chances to zero, does she mean...

"Zero?! Could it be..."

"I will leave it to your imagination. Suicide is not something that Waka-sama, me, and anyone wishes for. Please discuss it properly once more." (Ema)

"Understood. Well then, with this, we will be excusing ourselves. Waka-sama, Ema-dono, we are looking forward to being with you."

"Same here." (Makoto)

Zero huh.

Ah, I see.

If we slaughter all the Neptunes from his brother's side, that chance would disappear.

The chances of invading Asora are low to begin with, but if we were to make it zero, it is probably that.

Looking at the back of Serwhale-san, I remember something I had forgotten.

"Ah, right. Sergay-san!" (Makoto)

"What is it, Waka-sama?"

Sergay is already calling me Waka-sama.

"I can't find the relation between being exiled and turning into a fireman though. Because there shouldn't be any fire extinguishing in the sea." (Makoto)

"Ah, about that. Before being in the army, I was dealing with volcanos."

"Volcanos?" (Makoto)

In the sea?

"In the sea, there's things called submarine volcanos. They erupt just like the ones in land. The scale of the ones I did were small, but there was a time when I stopped one of those eruptions myself, and since then, I have been called the Number One Target, Serwhale."

"Submarine volcanos. Is that so. That's why it is called firemen. I understand now."

(Makoto)

“Well then.”

The three lower their heads deeply, and this time for sure, they leave.

Number one target and currently a firemen huh.

The submarine volcanoes are fires, I see.

“W-Waka-sama?” (Ema)

As I was nodding in understanding, Ema speaks to me with a trembling voice.

“What is it?” (Makoto)

“That person said he was able to stop the eruption of a mountain with that small body of his though?” (Ema)

“...Oh.” (Makoto)

Even if he says it was a small eruption, it is still quite the big deal.

I haven’t seen a submarine volcano, but it is probably quite the exploit.

“It seems like there’s powerful people in the sea as well. I have to tell everyone.” (Ema)

“Even if their names were gags as well, they were diligent people. Neptunes, how fearsome.” (Makoto)

And so, we did interviews with several other races, and in the end, there were races that could only be in the sea, so we went to meet them.

We were safely able to decide on the migration of all the races.

The population of Asora -well, I don’t know if it is okay to call it population- has surpassed two thousand now.

Hm.

So from two thousand and higher, I am being recognized as Waka-sama<young master> huh.

I am fine with being called Landlord-san which they sometimes call me with though.



Second floor of the Kuzunoha Company, at the reception room.

“Shiki-san, what was the reaction of Raidou-sensei?”

At the time when Makoto was doing an interview with the races of the sea, Shiki-san was meeting with four of his students: Jin, Amelia, Sif, and Yuno.

It is the students that currently wish to be employed in the Kuzunoha Company.

Jin who didn't have the surplus to even place the tea in his mouth, said this tense words to Shiki, and Shiki showed the usual gentle smile he shows to his students as he opens his mouth.

“About Jin, he said that he can't put out that much salary, but it seemed like... he was positive in it.” (Shiki)

“!! Is that true?!” (Jin)

“Yeah, just that, I think it is a job that won't bring much money despite its difficulty.” (Shiki)

“As long as I can eat and sleep, gold is only worth that much. In the Kuzunoha Company, they provide equipment when needed, right?” (Jin)

“When needed, and corresponding to the person's ability, you know?” (Shiki)

“Yes! Yosh, yosh!!” (Jin)

Jin was happier than ever at the words of Shiki.

It was a scene that one could tell he considers the Kuzunoha Company that appealing.

Also, he said that as long as he can eat, have somewhere to sleep, and be provided with

equipment, gold is of no importance. It was a scene where one could have a peek of that.

“Shiki-san, what about us?” (Sif)

Sif asks Shiki worried.

Even if they have a connection with her father, Yuno did something that displeased Raidou at the previous lecture(or at least that's what the sisters think).

They were thinking that they are in no way in the safe zone.

The expression of Yuno was also stiff.

“About Sif and Yuno...” (Shiki)

The silence of a few seconds felt as if a gulp could be heard.

“Your father has requested of it as well, and he has understood your passion with your decision of surely passing the guild exam. He will probably not have you work in dangerous places, but he says that he wouldn't mind having you work.” (Shiki)

“Aaah~, Yuno!” (Sif)

“Onee-chan!” (Yuno)

The Rembrandt sisters hug each other.

It was a happiness as if they had already passed the exam.

“Just that, he said that he won't be able to treat you specially in your salary. If you are unable to accept this...” (Shiki)

“Something like that, we haven't thought of it as a problem from the very beginning! Right now I want to test more of my own possibilities. For that sake, I am thinking that being by the side of Raidou-sensei and Shiki-san is best.” (Sif)

“Just as Onee-chan says! I also want to train myself more and more. I want to try going to the wasteland one day, and I think that I will be able to experience things I won't be able to experience anywhere else in Kuzunoha Company!” (Yuno)

With this, from the four, three now have expressions filled with happiness.

There's one left.

Only Amelia.

"Shiki-san, what did Sensei say about me?" (Amelia)

"Hm, right. Jin, Sif, Yuno, can you please leave for a bit?" (Shiki)

"!"

The three were able to tell the meaning of those words in an instant.

And Amelia herself as well.

She closed her eyes and hung her head slightly.

She exhaled deeply and lifted her head.

"Shiki-san, there's no need to do that. Please say it in front of everyone here." (Amelia)

"Is that okay?" (Shiki)

"Yes."

"..."

The three were silent.

Their faces were tense like the time before they heard the answer from Shiki.

It may be the business of someone else, but Amelia is a member of their party, and is a comrade of them in the truest meaning of the word.

"Amelia, from the perspective of Waka-sama, you have no specialized ability, and your personal ability is already reaching its limit. Looking at it only from the present state, you are excellent in synthesizing, but it is easy to see that you are the precocious type that other students can catch up to and surpass." (Shiki)

...

Hearing the harsh evaluation, Amelia's expression turns bitter.

"You are a talented person that by gathering experience you can have an active role in the future, but..." (Shiki)

"..."

"You are not necessary in Kuzunoha Company." (Shiki)

"!!"

"That's all." (Shiki)

Words like 'No way' and 'this must be a lie' were leaking from them.

And the person in question, Amelia, was clearly told that she was not necessary, and she is unable to hide her shock.

It may be faint, but in her wide opened eyes, there were tears coming out.

It was something rare for the firm Amelia.

It was truly something rare.

"..."

Shiki exchanged looks with Jin, and noticing the meaning of it, he took Sif and Yun, and they left the room.

Silently, the door closed.

"As I thought, Sensei noticed it huh. That I am not a big deal." (Amelia)

"..."

Maybe because she knew that they were alone now, Amelia opened her mouth.

About Amelia being precocious, the fact that there's the chance it will turn for the

worse in the future, being able to only gather low amounts of experience, isn't something Makoto discovered.

It was Shiki.

And it was him who gave her the harsh evaluation and the answer that she is not needed. Not Makoto.

Even so, Shiki told Amelia this as if they were the words of Makoto.

From the state of the four and Shiki, it was clear that they were asking for the opinion of Makoto regarding their employment in Kuzunoha Company.

But the reason why Shiki falsified the words of Makoto is unknown.

"I knew. Compared to the others, I don't have something that makes me stand out. Even so, I am not an all-purpose type either. That's why I tried polishing my leadership abilities, tried to be useful with my knowledge, and I also tried scheming..." (Amelia)

"Yeah, you did put your effort." (Shiki)

"Shiki-san, if I were to obtain the approval of the merchant guild, do I still have a chance? Is there anything, anything I can do to be accepted in Kuzunoha Company?!" (Amelia)

"...Sif and Yuno huh." (Shiki)

"Sif has the magic synthesis and incredible talent, Yuno is compatible with that suit, but if I just need to be as good as those two, then I can try even harder and..." (Amelia)

"You must know already, Amelia. Those two are the daughters of Rembrandt-shi. Even if those two had lower ability than you, he would have hired them." (Shiki)

"That's called having connections, right?" (Amelia)

"That's right." (Shiki)

"That's unfair." (Amelia)

"Right." (Shiki)

Amelia was pressing on as if she was holding in something, and Shiki was answering indifferently.

“...Why, why only me?” (Amelia)

“It is okay to cry. Amelia, you are trying too hard. It is good to work hard and look up, but there’s also things that can’t be gained with only that. Learn to cry and break. You have been trying too hard without knowing of that.” (Shiki)

The words of Shiki that were close to her feelings, finally made Amelia cry loudly.



Just like how Shiki told her to cry, she didn't stop, and he silently held Amelia.

Even though she called Raidou an idiot just as her feelings told her to, she didn't blame him, and even when she blamed herself, she wasn't angered.

The feelings Amelia was voicing out are coming from her true feelings, but she also understands that they weren't all of her feelings.

Even though she respects him, she also holds minus feelings towards him.

Just because she voiced out only the latter doesn't mean the feelings of respect disappear.

After Amelia cried, cried, and cried her eyes out, the force calmed down. By the time she had turned quiet and had entrusted her own weight to Shiki...

"Amelia, please listen." (Shiki)

"..."

There was no response.

But Shiki continued without minding.

"About Waka-sama's decision, honestly speaking, I also agree with it." (Shiki)

"..."

Makoto is simply not that interested in Amelia, and if she were to supplicate, he probably wouldn't mind hiring her.

He has that part of him.

That's why Shiki replaced his own words of Amelia and made them as if they were Makoto's.

"You are weak. The Kuzunoha Company has a lot of harsh works, and Jin and you will without doubt be thrown into it at a point in time." (Shiki)

"..."

“And you will die there. Without doubt.” (Shiki)

“!!”

“There’s low chances for you to make a drastic change now. If you continue as always, your chances of dying are certain and you will have no choice but to make a drastic change. Even so, if you wish for that, you will probably have to throw away the style you have had until now.” (Shiki)

“...I heard that the Kuzunoha Company has safe workplaces.” (Amelia)

“There are. Just that, in those places, there’s no Jin, Waka-sama, and... I am not there either.” (Shiki)

“!!”

“That’s why, Amelia, even if there’s dangerous work, you will most likely come to this side. And you will lose your life. That’s something clear to the eye. I also concurred with Waka-sama. Even if you don’t come to our place, there’s plenty other good jobs for you.” (Shiki)

“I don’t care about a workplace with good conditions. The only place I want to work in, is here after all.” (Amelia)

When she said only place, Amelia grabbed Shiki.

Shiki also understood what she meant.

And with this reply to the comment of a safe workplace, Amelia noticed her own feelings as well.

“Gritonia Empire has invited you, right? Isn’t it a desireable major power?” (Shiki)

“I hate cold places and the womanizer hero.” (Amelia)

“There will probably be someone from the Limia Kingdom coming to probe about this as well, you know?” (Shiki)

“Are you saying this seriously? I am the very person that killed a high noble of their place, you know? Misura, Izumo, and Daena too. I definitely won’t go to Limia

Kingdom. It would be a different story if the person is an incredible idiot or is able to interpret everything in a positive manner and has the heaven's luck though." (Amelia)

(Or if that person is able to unconsciously nullify all the obstructions. Just like Waka-sama.)

With the words 'incredible idiot', Shiki made a wry smile in a manner that couldn't be seen by Amelia.

Because his own master had surfaced in his mind.

"I can prepare a good intermediary for Lorel as well though?" (Shiki)

"Please give that to Izumo. That boy, he is shouldering it by himself, but he is quite troubled about his home." (Amelia)

"I will think about it." (Shiki)

"Shiki-san, I want to enter Kuzunoha Company. And it is probably for a bad reason compared to the other three." (Amelia)

"..."

"But I am serious. I will do anything. Anything... so..." (Amelia)

Shiki had replaced his own words as Makoto's.

It is an action he normally would never do.

Because it is an action that if not handled properly, would make Amelia hold animosity towards Makoto.

Leaving aside if the person holding the animosity can cause harm to Makoto, it isn't something that a person serving him should do.

The reason was because Shiki himself was unable to hate her.

This student that loved him.

To the point that he wanted to pull her aside in order for her to not die.

Maybe because his undead side complicated things, he still hasn't thought of protecting her himself, but compared to the many girls that are simple students or came to confess her feelings to him, his awareness of her is definitely different.

"Anything, you say?" (Shiki)

"Yes." (Amelia)

"Even if it is... to abandon your hyumanity?" (Shiki)

"Eh?" (Amelia)

Amelia lifted her face and looks at the expression of Shiki.

He does look sad, but he is asking her resolve, an expression that's definitely not that of someone joking.

"...Trying hard and continuing to try hard, and after experiencing something harsher than ever before, and even with that, if there's a time when you are unable to match the task, will you be able to compensate by abandoning your hyumanity?" (Shiki)

Once again.

With the same face, Shiki says this.

Looking at the eyes of Shiki, Amelia was able to tell... this is the last chance.

In the first place, she felt that if she is not in the Kuzunoha Company, she would forget about Shiki in time.

Trying to escape from that rabble, she asked for employment in Kuzunoha Company.

Even though she said words akin to a confession, there was no answer.

Even so, Amelia felt like this was the last chance to connect her feelings.

"If with that... I am able to stay by your side, I won't regret it." (Amelia)

"..."

“I...” (Amelia)

“If I remember correctly, Lime said he wanted a subordinate. I was troubled because there’s the need for intelligence gathering abilities, magic, and high fighting power.” (Shiki)

“I will do it!!” (Amelia)

“The time I have until introducing him would be, let’s see... probably by the time you graduate. Let me tell you this, it will as if the party fights until now were just playing around, you know? You will be resting at the Academy, and learn after school. You will probably be living a life like that.” (Shiki)

“I don’t mind!!” (Amelia)

“Without lowering your grades, and continuing your part-time job, I will have you go through the training of an official employee.” (Shiki)

“Of course!!” (Amelia)

“Understood. I will arrange the necessary. Make a desperate effort to have Waka-sama recognize you, Amelia.” (Shiki)

At the end, he gently said Amelia’s name and made a smile as if he had been beaten by the persistence of his opponent.

(In the first place, he wasn’t against hiring Amelia. Even though I said all this, there’s actually not much problem in hiring her with how she is currently. What do I want with Amelia? At worst, if I were to do a breech of morals, just how much should I show and just how much should I involve myself? This is bad. Even though I am aware that I am cruel, maybe because I was originally a hyuman, there are times when I can’t be like Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono. Amelia is simply a stray cat that I coincidentally found. It is an existence that even when stirred by others at times, it is not someone that can bring harm. And yet, am I feeling reluctant to relinquish it? It is someone that I haven’t shown my real self, you know? I...) (Shiki)

While holding questions within himself, Shiki felt that a part of him wished for this development, and was bewildered.



“Ara, Tomoe-san. What’s wrong? It is rare for you to come to the kitchen.”

“Don’t ‘what’s wrong?’ me. You are plotting something, right?” (Tomoe)

In the kitchen where Mio was endeavouring herself in, Tomoe appeared.

Right now she was in the middle of preparing dinner.

“Plotting, you say. What are you talking about?” (Mio)

“Clearing out the people, I have come to ask you in this way. Don’t play dumb.” (Tomoe)

Just like what Tomoe said, the preparation work that normally has a lot more people working in, only has Mio today.

There were actually people, but Tomoe slowly gave them work and had them leave. Right now, there’s only Mio remaining.

“Even if you say that, I just can’t understand what you mean.” (Mio)

“About accompanying Waka-ja yo.” (Tomoe)

The kitchen knife that moved nimbly, stopped.

Until now, Mio had been speaking with Tomoe without looking at her and only directing it to her presence, but she slowly turned around.

“About going together with Waka-sama to Limia Kingdom without letting Tomoe-san or Shiki, is it that-desu ka?” (Mio)

“That’s right-ja. About you going, well, it is not like it is necessarily a no, but there’s one troublesome hero at Limia. I don’t know what you are thinking, but I will be going as well.” (Tomoe)

“I refuse-desu wa.” (Mio)

“What authority do you have in saying that? I want you to tell me along with your scheme-ja no.” (Tomoe)

“Hibiki isn’t even to fear. Isn’t Tomoe-san just being overcautious?” (Mio)

“If we are just looking at the fighting power of her, it would be as you say. But the troublesome part of Hibiki is not that. That intuition and way of conduct, if we were to let her involve herself with Waka without proper supervision... I just can’t overlook it.” (Tomoe)

“I don’t understand that intuition you are talking about. No matter what Hibiki learns of, just what would she able to do about it-desu? In the first place, if she were truly sharp, I wouldn’t even need to move out.” (Mio)

At the latter part, Mio mutters it incredibly low as if talking to herself.

It seems like Tomoe was unable to hear that part.

“It is not about what she learns. What’s troublesome is the chance of her teaching Waka something she has thought of. Looking at the chances, I can’t say it is zero.” (Tomoe)

“Even though Tomoe-san always goes without interfering, the moment Waka-sama is about to learn something that inconveniences you, you turn defensive-desu wa ne.” (Mio)

“You, are you looking at me in that way?!” (Tomoe)

“Because, isn’t that the truth? You have a lot of things you don’t tell Waka-sama, right? You have also silenced me from telling him about me killing the individual that revived.” (Mio)

“...There are a lot of things in this world that are premature to know, and things that are better not known.” (Tomoe)

“This is something I learned recently but, it is about that merchant Rembrandt that Waka-sama likes. Wasn’t he quite the merchant-sama in his younger times? Even though it is something that you should know because of your mind reading abilities, you didn’t tell Waka-sama.” (Mio)

“W-What good would come... from telling him? Wouldn’t it only make Waka suffer? That’s why I will tell him when he has grown enough to be able to take it. Don’t you think it is okay to do that?” (Tomoe)

“I just can’t agree with that ‘watching over is best’ thinking of Tomoe-san.” (Mio)

“Then what are you telling me to do-ja?” (Tomoe)

“That... I will be showing it in Limia. But it would be troublesome if you were there. Please rest for a bit. There’s a lot of other work to do after all.” (Mio)

“Is it okay to think that it has something to do with you giving a similar equipment of Waka to that Rembrandt daughter? That troubled Waka a lot, you know?” (Tomoe)

“That’s right. I have already received my scolding, and I have already received his forgiveness. Until now... I have not said anything about most of what Tomoe-san has done. Is Tomoe-san going to interpose in what I will do? Are you thinking that I will harm Waka-sama?” (Mio)

The eyes of Mio shoot a dangerous light.

“That’s not it. I know of your deep affection and loyalty to Waka. You don’t even have a shred of a thought about harming him. What I am anxious about, is you going out of control-ja. Because of your deep affection to Waka, you view other people aside from Waka way too lightly. As long as Waka cares for the general trend of others, we should also accommodate to that as well. You should also be able to understand that too, right?” (Tomoe)

While thinking that the words of Mio hit in a part that hurt, Tomoe responds.

“Yeah.” (Mio)

“That’s why I am saying that I will accompany you and do a follow-up.” (Tomoe)

“That’s why I am doing it-desu.” (Mio)

Their words weren’t in sync.

“What?” (Tomoe)

“The one that’s caring is Waka-sama. And yet, there are idiots that just don’t know that the match is already over. Why is it that there are people troubling Waka-sama’s heart one after the other?” (Mio)

“ ”

“That’s why I just want them to understand just what kind of person Waka-sama is, to those idiots and Hibiki as well. It is just that-desu.” (Mio)

From the words of Mio, Tomoe understood that it was impossible to convince her and gave up.

She has known that Mio and Shiki have been mostly complying with what she said.

“...This is something you are doing when already knowing about the power of the priestess, right?” (Tomoe)

With a power different from magic, the priestess Chiya is able to see through something within the person. Tomoe was confirming this of Mio.

With the report of Lime, this has become evident. Shiki and Tomoe are currently thinking about a countermeasure to it.

“Of course, I know of it-desu wa.” (Mio)

“Knowing that, you want to accompany him alone, that’s what you are saying, right?” (Tomoe)

“This time I won’t yield.” (Mio)

Saying that, she points her kitchen knife at Tomoe.

Without a single sign of joking.

“...Understood.” (Tomoe)

Without placing a hand on her katana, Tomoe lifted both of her hands and showed her intend to give up.



“You are unexpectedly obedient-desu wa ne. Even though I thought you would be a bit more persistent.” (Mio)

“The reason that the preparations for the meal were a bit earlier than normal was because you were expecting something like this to ‘happen’, huh.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. I don’t want to delay the meal of Waka-sama, so I made sure that even with one match, it won’t happen.” (Mio)

Once again, the sound of the kitchen knife hitting the chopping board was heard.

Of course, it is because Mio returned to her preparations.

“I understand that you don’t want to hurt Waka or make him suffer, but you know, that’s something I don’t want, and probably Shiki neither. No one is thinking about wanting to see him break or crumble.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. I wouldn’t forgive someone like that after all.” (Mio)

“You said you won’t be yielding this time, but I will be using that, Mio.” (Tomoe)

“...Eh?” (Mio)

“At least bring Lime with you. Even if he is like that, he is useful. He won’t be able to get in your way, and it is also useful as a pawn to use in that side, right?” (Tomoe)

“But...” (Mio)

“I won’t be yielding-ja, Mio. Waka will also be able to comfortably travel having one man alongside. Just as you wish, Shiki and I won’t be going.” (Tomoe)

“Waka-sama will...” (Mio)

“Please.” (Tomoe)

“Fuh~, understood. I will accept Lime coming along. But it is also prohibited for Tomoe-san and Shiki to stealthily follow from behind, okay?” (Mio)

“I wouldn’t do something like that. Also, I don’t know what the other side will do in the time you guys are in Limia, and I have asked Waka to avoid coming and going to

Asora as much as he can. You will be able to do as you wish." (Tomoe)

"I trust in you-desu wa." (Mio)

"..."

"There's no need for Waka-sama to care about the world to the point of collapsing. There's also no need to protect the town just because there have been complains of here and there. Every single one of them, there's a limit to being dense." (Mio)

"...Don't overdo it, Mio." (Tomoe)

Makoto didn't know that Tomoe and Mio had this kind of conversation before heading to Limia.

Tomoe feared the irregular possibilities that might be born from the long time that Hibiki and Makoto have lived together.

Mio was angered by the world that surrounds Makoto.

And Shiki is more into his students than Makoto thinks of.

Without noticing the thoughts of his followers, Makoto, Mio, and Lime head to Limia Kingdom today.

Chapter 204

Unannounced Storm

The Kuzunoha Company's representative is going to come to Limia Kingdom.

This is small news.

For a company that has its headquarters at a foreign country to go through the trouble of going to Limia to say its greetings is relatively rare, and for the many knights and nobles, it is a happening that isn't given much attention, or at least that's how it is supposed to be.

They took it as a simple merchant trying to get on their good sides, and the representative of the company in question was half with that intention.

The merchants that have stores in Limia have already asked for information about the Kuzunoha Company from the Rotsgard Merchant Guild, and there were many nobles that were indifferent to it.

The Kuzunoha Company currently doesn't have the intention of establishing in Limia, and in this time, they were simply going because the Limia royal family had wished for it. They heard that the Kuzunoha Company doesn't have any big business plan prepared.

At most, in terms of movement, a part of the people that are interested in information are thinking about creating a connection with the Kuzunoha Company in the time of their stay.

However, for a limited few, this matter held a big meaning.

From the Limia side, it is Prince Joshua and hero Hibiki. And there's also the Hopelace household.

The Limia King also has a relative interest in the Kuzunoha Company and the representative Raidou.

In the side of Kuzunoha Company, there's Raidou's follower, Mio who has something hidden within her.

For them, it was already clear that they will be meeting with an ulterior motive of their own.

And then they arrived at the appointed day.

Raidou, Mio, and Lime; those three headed to Limia in a morning with good weather.

At the teleport formation managed by the Academy, Raidou's group was being seen off by the Kuzunoha Company members.

The teleportation to Limia's state border was prepared, and from there, a carriage travel was waiting for them.

"Waka, please be careful."

"Yeah, I will do my best, Tomoe. I won't be showing my face in Asora, so I will be leaving that part to you." (Makoto)

"Yes." (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama, I will be taking care of the Academy matters, so I am counting on you for the selection. I will make sure to always be ready to receive your thought transmission, so if there's anything that you need to consult about, don't hesitate to." (Shiki)

"I will probably rely on you a number of times. Thanks, Shiki." (Makoto)

While nodding, there was a slight hesitation in the state of Shiki.

He looked like he wanted to say something more, but in the end, he didn't say it.

"Please leave the store to us."

"I have perfectly gotten used to dealing with customers. I have obtained the skill [Devilish Clerk], so go ahead with the mood of being on board of a boat."

"Akua and Eris, I am counting on you." (Makoto)

"But well, if the souvenirs are going to be bananas, make sure the boat is big." (Eris)

"Well then, I will be going." (Makoto)

Ignoring the utterance of Eris, or more like, without paying attention to her words, Raidou followed Mio, and Lime and entered the building with the teleport formation.

"To think that he would use [Ignore] on me... What a high-class skill. I didn't know Waka had learned such a skill." (Eris)

"There's no bananas in Limia, Eris." (Aqua)

"...And compared to that, what an obvious retort. The level of Akua is low. It seems like there's the need to go back to the basics with 'what's up with that?'" (Eris)

The two Forest Onis that have gone to see them off had begun a friendly quarrel.

There were none who tried to stop it.

"Shiki, it seems like there's something in your mind." (Tomoe)

"...No." (Shiki)

"Waka and Mio are not here, and I have something I want you to hear. Lend me your time." (Tomoe)

Telling Akua and Eris to make it in time to open the store, Tomoe took Shiki and changed locations.

To an empty location in the Academy that is silent and is not being used.

"This place is fine. For these past few days you haven't been acting like yourself. Shiki, at the time of the farewell as well, you looked like you had something in your mind, you know?" (Tomoe)

"...Is that so. It is true that I am busy, but I think I am as always though." (Shiki)

"I feel like you are self-aware of it though. Also, the matter about Waka going with Mio to Limia, you accepted it way too easily." (Tomoe)

"That was... uhm... Mio-dono persuaded me in a variety of ways and..." (Shiki)

"Physically?" (Tomoe)

"...No. Ah, I-I will leave it to your imagination." (Shiki)

"In my side, I had a slight dispute with Mio, and I was a bit interested in your thoughts." (Tomoe)

"My thoughts?" (Shiki)

Shiki returns the words of Tomoe as a question.

In the first place, Tomoe and Mio having friction was news to him.

"About how you think of Waka -no, that's not it. What do you want Waka to become-ja?" (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama?" (Shiki)

"The reason of you acting weird might actually be because of that. It seemed like you are getting way too involved with the Rotsgard students after all." (Tomoe)

"!! Something like that is... not true." (Shiki)

Shiki was clearly shaken, and it was practically like saying 'that's true'.

"Especially what you did to that girl called Amelia. Depending on the reason, it is something that can be taken as a joke, you know?" (Tomoe)

"Why do you—?!" (Shiki)

"I coincidentally saw that girl, and within her head, it was completely filled in pink. She was truly happy, but the details were something that I can't ignore. I didn't expect you to be related to it." (Tomoe)

"..."

"Now that I think about it, there's practically no commonness in what we wish for Waka. It is certain that there's no 'I want to cooperate with the Goddess and make this

world a paradise to hyumans', though. Even if there's no antagonistic feelings towards Waka, within our group, there are times when we oppose each other, and I am beginning to think that it is a matter of course." (Tomoe)

"That's impossible. We have originated from the control pact, we are Waka-sama's followers. There's no way we would be able to do acts that would go against our master." (Shiki)

"You telling those things to that girl as if they were the words of Waka, depending on the way it is taken, that can be considered a betrayal to Waka. There's no absolutes. Even if we don't go against Waka, there's plenty possibility that we oppose each other, right?" (Tomoe)

"!! I wouldn't do something like betraying Waka-sama! That was something I did while thinking of the good of that girl and Waka-sama and..." (Shiki)

"But that manner of speech, didn't Amelia certainly get a bad impression of Waka?" (Tomoe)

It is certainly true that Shiki had done a severe criticism to Amelia as words of Raidou.

At that time, he took the position of soothing Amelia.

That could be taken as an act of betrayal to Raidou.

"Tomoe-dono, that's not it. Until then, I had already given plenty enough praise to her. In a sense, my role is to give self-confidence. That's why, to play the bad guy in only that moment would go against the class policy that Waka-sama had set before." (Shiki)

"But in the first place, those were not the words of Waka, right? It is true that you have lied-ja. That fact doesn't change, you know?" (Tomoe)

"The evaluation that Waka-sama gave to Amelia was way too harsh for Amelia at that moment. It is true that I falsified it, but for the one receiving the lessons, there's something harsher than a severe criticism. And so, I decided to tell her the conclusion of my own analysis of her faults as if they were Waka-sama's words." (Shiki)

"...How did Waka evaluate her?" (Tomoe)

"Normal, it seems. Things like she asks a lot, a mobile professor, she talks a lot.

Anyways, it seems like he didn't have much interest in her and there wasn't much impression of her." (Shiki)

"..."

"Waka-sama has placed notations on the students depending on their special traits and has an understanding on them, but in principle, he sees the students as people to instruct techniques, and doesn't hold further interest or emotions than that. Waka-sama and them are close in age, and it is certainly true that at first, he said that he would draw a line, but... I thought that in time it would grow vague. However, that didn't happen at all." (Shiki)

Shiki opened up.

He spoke of the emotions that took shape at that time he was talking to Makoto about the students' evaluation and their employment.

"Even so, it didn't turn into something like a master-disciple relationship, and he has been acting as a simple teacher doing his job. I thought that even if Waka-sama doesn't go too far with Jin, Amelia, and the others, they would be able to reach a relationship of teacher and student close to that of friendship... no, I began to wish for that to happen." (Shiki)

"Teacher and student huh." (Tomoe)

"Do you understand, Tomoe-dono? The most painful thing for the people that earnestly want to learn from their respected teacher. It is... not criticism; it is unconcern. Not being interested in them, and being dealt with in the same way as the others. That's how it is. Or at least, that's how I think it is." (Shiki)

"Is this something that you can tell because you were a hyuman before being a Lich and had been in the path of research? I feel like you are reading into it a bit too much though." (Tomoe)

"I don't know. But after obtaining the body of a hyuman again and being in a learning environment once more, it is the truth that I... have grown attached to my students." (Shiki)

"Good grief, that was a miscalculation. Isn't that the total opposite then?" (Tomoe)

“...Tomoe-dono?” (Shiki)

“And so, you showed a severe criticism that would be ‘similar’ to that of Waka that has been playing the bad guy, have Amelia think that Waka has interest in her, and that he has been properly analysing her ability. You are saying that you wanted that girl to think in that way?” (Tomoe)

“...Yes.” (Shiki)

Shiki nods at the words of Tomoe.

Shiki was bothered by what Tomoe said of ‘opposite’, but he decided to first affirm her words.

“And so, you planted at the bottom of her heart that in her current state she would die if she were to enter our place, and you showed her your feelings of wanting to avoid that.” (Tomoe)

“No, that’s not it.” (Shiki)

“It is. What a troublesome man-ja na, to think that you haven’t noticed it.” (Tomoe)

“...”

“In the first place, Waka has no interest in Amelia, so if that woman wants to work, it would be okay to just have her stay somewhere close to you and the problem would be solved.” (Tomoe)

“But then it would end up as Amelia dying a pointless death... Waka-sama will probably... not give her a special treatment.” (Shiki)

“True. But what’s wrong about dying pointlessly? Isn’t it just one woman, who doesn’t know her place, dying?” (Tomoe)

“Wha...” (Shiki)

“This is something that you would have said before heading to Rotsgard. That was my miscalculation. Seriously... the reason why you showed antipathy towards my words just now was because you are holding the lives of all your students dearly, or maybe just that one girl-ja ro ga.” (Tomoe)

"?!! I feel that much towards those kids?" (Shiki)

With a face as if receiving a shock, Shiki mutters as if groaning.

In a pretty weak voice.

"Good grief, the men at our place are all blockheads in the important parts. It makes me think that the consistent denseness of Waka is better." (Tomoe)

Tomoe mutters in a truly amazed manner.

"I am amazed that everything was right on the mark. In that case, your attitude towards Waka just now was mostly you wanting to say a complain because he so easily threw all the matters of the students to you?" (Tomoe)

"To make a complain to Waka-sama, there's no way!! But, it is certainly true. I did think about why he didn't say a single thing about Jin and the others. Those kids straightforwardly follow mine and Waka-sama's lecture. In that case, we should also show our sincerity—" (Shiki)

The words of Shiki were stopped by Tomoe who had gotten closer.

"Shiki." (Tomoe)

"...What is it?" (Shiki)

"Do you remember me saying 'opposite'?" (Tomoe)

"Y-Yes." (Shiki)

"You see, I thought that when Waka becomes like you, I wanted you to do a follow-up so that Waka doesn't go too far. That's why I agreed in you accompanying him to Rotsgard." (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama... becoming like me?" (Shiki)

"That's right-ja. If it is you, I thought that it wouldn't become that way-ja. But it seems I have splendidly missed." (Tomoe)

In a distance where their faces were practically touching, Tomoe spoke to Shiki with

an extremely low voice.

It was a low volume, but it was a voice that had a silent pressure.

“That’s why it is the ‘opposite’ huh. I got into it, and Waka-sama remained unchanged.”
(Shiki)

“That’s right-ja.” (Tomoe)

“But why was it me?” (Shiki)

“...You are being way too stupid-ja na, Shiki. You are not telling me that you don’t remember what you did before becoming Waka’s follower, right? Even if you obtain the body of a hyuman, your past doesn’t disappear, you know? Can’t you remember? What you did as a Lich to the people in the whole world.” (Tomoe)

“!!”

“Hyumans, demi-humans, beasts; just how many lives did you steal for the sake of your researches? Just how many were sacrificed for experiments that in the end didn’t show the results you wanted?” (Tomoe)

It was just as Tomoe said.

And the knowledge of those times were related to the last resort Shiki had with Amelia.

There’s not enough data, is what Shiki said, but in truth, Shiki has experience in tampering hyumans. If Amelia really doesn’t have enough power and can’t reach the objective, Shiki intended to just strengthen her safely to that line with the knowledge he had.

To forget the roots of that knowledge is truly something strange.

“Uh...” (Shiki)

“If you were in a learning environment in the past and Rotsgard had a similar atmosphere, and there are talented students who are diligently learning, something of your long past might have resurfaced. But it is impossible to forget what happened in between-ja yo.” (Tomoe)

"That's... I haven't forgotten about it though." (Shiki)

"Then you should understand why I gave you that role even without me saying everything, right? What color are those hands of yours? Are those the hands of someone that can pat the head of his students?" (Tomoe)

"..."

Being told that, Shiki lowers his gaze and looks at both of his hands.

He understood plenty what Tomoe was trying to tell him.

"...Fuuh. Well, if I was talking with Mio, she would innocently say: 'They are beautiful though, is there a problem?', but it is different with you." (Tomoe)

"True... it is true that I was way too festive. It seems like I have felt something no less than attachment towards the students." (Shiki)

Tomoe takes distance, and the condemning atmosphere disappeared.

Placing Mio as an example, she melted the tension of Shiki.

"I was able to read an approximate of what you wish from Waka. You want to cancel the 'hyuman discrimination' that Waka has, right?" (Tomoe)

"...Yes. So Tomoe-dono also noticed it huh." (Shiki)

Shiki affirms the words of Tomoe.

Discrimination.

It is a word that doesn't fit Makoto that much.

"Well, yeah. Waka has declared that he won't discriminate demi-humans and he is putting it in practice, but he is discriminating practically all the hyumans. The direct reason might be because of the idiots that went crazy in Asora though. But he has Rembrandt who he has been socializing with before that." (Tomoe)

"Yes, he has already closed his heart and creating a clear line, and on top of that, it seems like he is keeping his speech and conduct in check. There have been several

times when he has remained as a spectator in Rotsgard 'because they are hyumans'. That part has become a plus appraisal for Rona." (Shiki)

"It is troublesome because he is doing it unconsciously-ja na. It is certainly true that I want to reduce that part of his as well-ja." (Tomoe)

"As I thought, it is really unconsciously. Waka-sama is normally against the very word of discrimination after all." (Shiki)

"That's the kind of education he was given. That it is bad to change the way of seeing someone because of the color of their body, their different traits, or traits that they are missing." (Tomoe)

"What a kind teaching." (Shiki)

"Yeah. But the matter with Waka and the hyumans is complicated. There's the matter with the Goddess as well, and in the first place, the hyumans in this world are blessed with position and power. There's no few amount of people that would think it is fine for hyumans to face some pain after being in the position of other demi-humans. Even if we explain it normally to Waka, it will probably serve only to scratch the surface." (Tomoe)

"It is certainly true that in this world, hyuman discrimination is not a word I have heard." (Shiki)

"In that point, I am not sure about it, but I am slightly expecting something from Hibiki. They are both Japanese, and if it is that girl, there's the chance that she will be able to change the will of Waka properly. Well, she will definitely do something unnecessary, so I will have Mio -no, Lime work as a suspension though." (Tomoe)

"In my perspective, that girl is like strong medicine that's close to being a gamble." (Shiki)

"I already know that it is a gamble. But I... am honestly unsure if what I have done for Waka until now has been good or bad." (Tomoe)

"...Different from me, Tomoe-dono has been acting for the sake of Waka-sama. From what I have seen, you are protecting that person as if you were connected by blood." (Shiki)

Shiki speaks out his true feelings.

Tomoe was directing a different emotion from that of serving the man she loves, towards Makoto. Shiki thought that way.

It was a deep affection, like that of a brother and sister with a big difference in age.

What was troubling Tomoe, surprised Shiki.

"But since the time Waka came to this world, he has certainly been walking a path different from those other kids that were living peacefully as well. If we just say that it is because of how they were raised, the talk would be over, but I have been wondering if there was a better method, that maybe I have only been covering the eyes of Waka. The insecurity is killing me." (Tomoe)

"This is not a world where we can live by not killing anyone, not hurting, or causing any problems. Waka-sama touching common sense and changing in some way in this new world is something that's unavoidable. Of course, I don't think it is the fault of anyone." (Shiki)

"Waka is... doing his best. Even though he was a person that thought of only looking at the big world, he has been forcefully pushed to the stage, and he is now looking for peace in that space. Even though he was originally not a person who had the strength to swim in that ocean-like world." (Tomoe)

"..."

"Shiki, I want Waka to have peace in his heart, and as long as his life lasts, I want to keep this connection without throwing it away. Even when that time comes, I don't want to be abandoned." (Tomoe)

"That time?" (Shiki)

"But Mio is different. That girl, if it's the decision of Waka, she can accept anything. Only that girl has a principle that's completely different from us both. As followers of Waka, we are all in the same position, and in terms of our wishes, we all have different positions." (Tomoe)

"Tomoe-dono..." (Shiki)

“In the demon race country, Waka achieved Creation. Waka has definitely done a step towards his confrontation with the Goddess, and he is approaching the time when he has to decide on what will happen after.” (Tomoe)

“At that time, it might be the time to do our farewells?” (Shiki)

“Compared to the heroes, Waka clearly has more attachment to his world. There’s the chance-ja. Even in Asora, Waka is not trying to hold much state power as a ruler. In other words, I began to think that maybe he has no attachment to it, and it just doesn’t end. Japan or us, which one is more important to Waka—” (Tomoe)

“Then let’s search for it.” (Shiki)

Tomoe’s words were cut by Shiki this time.

“Search? Not ask?” (Tomoe)

“That’s right. There’s no need to ask for Waka-sama’s wish, you can easily tell what it is after all.” (Shiki)

“What?” (Tomoe)

“You are thinking about it way too deeply, Tomoe-dono. If it’s Waka-sama, he will definitely keep in touch with Asora, and on top of that, he would say that he wants to return to his world while maintaining how things are.” (Shiki)

“...Are you an idiot? It is because I haven’t found that method that I am being anxious about the final choice.” (Tomoe)

“Put more power into it. People like Root-dono, the living beings that were originally in Asora, and there’s also the Gods from another world that have brought their blessings. Since it is for this, isn’t it fine to just throw away your shame and reputation to gather information from the many powers out there?” (Shiki)

“Without caring about one’s appearance huh.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. Luckily, Kuzunoha Company has a lot of sells in medicine, there’s also the Rembrandt company that can obtain highly fresh information, and we can also expect something from the knowledge of the demon race. I think it is too fast to give up.” (Shiki)

“...Fumu. Now that I think about it, moving from worlds might be a bigger obstacle than the Goddess. It is easy to tell the wish of Waka huh. It is just as you say, Shiki.” (Tomoe)

“Also, if the information of the Goddess side is slightly old, we can get our hands on it.” (Shiki)

“Hoh~.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe shows interest at the words of Shiki who has an evil smile on his face.

“A while ago, I got acquainted with a cow and a bird that are connected to that side you see. Also, I know clearly of the whereabouts of another one in Lorel, kukuku.” (Shiki)

“...I see. There’s a mountain of things to do in the time that Waka’s not here huh. Fufufu.” (Tomoe)

The sinister design that was being exchanged in this ruins.

It has been a while since Tomoe has laughed so brightly.

“By the way, I wonder what Mio-dono is thinking regarding the countermeasures for that priestess. Even though we are unable to find a conclusive method here.” (Shiki)

“Who knows. We are talking about her, so she probably has some odd plan-ja. It seemed like she was using the head that she rarely uses after all.” (Tomoe)



Lime Latte was holding his head.

It wasn’t because of how uncomfortable it was when they were lodged in the Hopelace territory yesterday.

And it wasn’t because of the high-class assassins that crept into our place that night either.

It is certainly true that in terms of distance, the Hopelace territory is a weird place to be staying in, and they said that the feudal lord was at the capital and was unable to

greet the Kuzunoha Company. Those were conditions that made one question what was the reason for lodging there.

The residents there were mainly unable to hide their emotions in their gaze, a lot of the children were facing their way as if cursing them to death, and the adults had cold eyes as they laughed.

It definitely wasn't a place to rest well.

Makoto said that 'they are probably still suffering since something like that happened in the Academy to the second son of the feudal lord', but he didn't think that they were holding a grudge even now and didn't care about it.

If speaking of Mio, she slaughtered all the assassins and for some reason is now all smiles.

With a normal spirit, you would normally collapse in this situation, but Lime is also a member of the Kuzunoha Company. He had already expected this, and it is something that can be easily washed away with a bottle of sake.

Then why is he holding his head?

The reason is simple.

Because of a scream and the light sound of something falling.

In the carriage that's still on its way to the capital, they had passed through the gate just like that and were advancing through the streets of the capital.

The gazes of the residents were divided between those with interest and those that didn't, the former gazes were somewhat good willed.

Until this point, it was good.

The problem is after the carriage stopped at a place close to the castle, Lime had confirmed several times beforehand something with Mio.

He asked 'are your countermeasures to the priestess okay?', and he also asked if those countermeasures were also applied to Boss.

She nodded with complete confidence.

Not only that, she said 'I have made perfect countermeasures, so it is okay for Wakasama to just maintain his Magic Armor in concealment as always-desu wa'.

For some reason, a bit of uneasiness was left, but even so, it is something that was said by the person that stands side by side with Tomoe as matchless people of the Kuzunoha Company.

Lime swallowed his own uneasiness.

And then...

Right after Lime got off first and confirmed the lineup of the people and their numbers... Mio had gotten off the carriage gracefully.

That kimono girl that had makeup applied, attracted the gazes of many, and even when she is similar to Hibiki, she was a different type of beauty that created gasps.

Leaving aside one person.

Priestess Chiya.

Only she was not fascinated by Mio or happy about her reunion, she placed her hands on her mouth and made a scream, and with eyes that couldn't be opened any wider, she was trembling heavily.



And that's when a thought surfaced in Lime's mind: 'this is bad'.

When he looks at Mio worried about the countermeasures not working, Mio was happily looking at the state of Chiya.

"This is bad, Tomoe-neesan", that's what Lime thought from the bottom of his heart.

For a second, he thought about stopping Raidou who was going to come next, but it didn't go well.

In the end, Raidou got off last.

He was the only one that looked nervous from the people that were in the group.

From the three, the one that was the most nervous was Raidou, is what Lime was sure of.

Chiya who was looking at the unenergetic man, made a dubious expression for several seconds.

After that, she made an incredibly high-pitched scream, lost her balance, and then fainted.

Raidou was taken aback by the state of Chiya and was agitated by it.

And within the confused surroundings, Lime was holding his head.

Looking at the red lips of Mio that were bend upwards, he felt an additional wringing sensation from his stomach.

(What kind of punishment is this? Is it because of the matter in Lorel? That's too much, Anee-san~.) (Lime)

The harsh days in Limia have been made certain.

Lime was looking at the sky, placing his right hand at his forehead.

The Kuzunoha Company's party has arrived at the Limia capital.

Chapter 205

At the side of the sleeping priestess

“...Right. I didn’t meet the Emperor in Gritonia, but I have already met the King of Limia... so I should have known.”

After returning to the guest room that was given to us, a sigh and a reflection leaked out.

My head was heavy as if something was weighing down on it.

It was a sensation as if I had been studying for a long period of time, and I stopped my concentration for a bit.

We did an audience with the Limia king, and had a talk with nobles(that were probably influential).

The moment we came to this country, I was already prepared to have talks with nobles, but in Gritonia, the only ones I met were the princess and the hero, so at a corner of my mind, I thought that maybe I won’t be meeting the king.

It seems like with the excuse of having saved them at Rotsgard, they began an audience as their thanks.

Personally, I wanted to go visit the priestess-san that had suddenly collapsed, but in that part, they politely refused.

I was bothered by it, but I had no choice but to ask Mio and Lime grasp her state.

Thanks to my experience in the audience with the Demon Lord, I was somehow able to overcome it, but the number of nobles that came to talk later were more than I expected, and it made me abnormally tired.

I spoke a bit with prince Joshua, and after that, I thought that Hibiki-senpai had various things to talk about as well, but to my surprise, she didn’t show up.

And there's also the Hopelace household.

The feudal lord said that he would be waiting for me in the capital, but I had a bad feeling about actually meeting him.

He was calm and told me about the opinions of other nobles, so in the surface, he had a cooperative atmosphere, but...

At times, he directed unpleasant eyes at me.

That's what I felt.

I don't think it was my imagination, and I felt like the nobles that were close to him also directed a good amount of those gazes.

There were several times when I felt like they were keeping each other in check, and it might be just as the rumors say that the Limia nobles are ridden in political strifes.

For now, in the talks of today, there was not a single topic about having the Kuzunoha Company placing a store.

There's plenty possibility that in the Merchant Guild of this country and the nobles there has already been some sort of talk between them. This is the guess of Lime, but I think that's correct.

"Good work, Waka-sama." (Mio)

"Good work, Boss." (Lime)

Mio and Lime; the two of them were in the room and welcomed me.

"I am back~. Senpai was not there, but the talk with the king and the nobles was incredibly tiring." (Makoto)

"About the priestess that Waka-sama was worried about, it seems like she saw an hallucination because of overwork." (Mio)

"Yeah, right now there's nothing wrong and is calmly sleeping." (Lime)

"So she was tired to the point of seeing hallucinations... a girl as small as that... Senpai

must be worried as well." (Makoto)

I feel like being in the hero party of the Limia Kingdom is a very successful career, but is it an exhausting job?

It seems like Senpai is standing at the frontlines in the war with the demon race, so maybe it is a given.

In this world, kids are working as if it was natural after all.

"Also, a messenger came and said that prince Joshua is waiting for you. It is not urgent, so after you have made your arrangements, he wanted you to tell the people that are at the corridor" (Lime)

"...Hey Mio." (Makoto)

"What is it-desu ka?" (Mio)

"About the priestess-san, I feel like she collapsed when she saw you and I thought. You didn't do anything, right?" (Makoto)

"I haven't done *anything*-desu wa. In the first place, from all those people, she was the only one that ended up like that, you know? Even if it is me, I wouldn't go out of my way to target my spell at a small girl." (Mio)

"...Right, sorry." (Makoto)

"It is not something to apologize for. In the first place..." (Mio)

"Hm?" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, Lime, and I haven't done anything, so the reason should be on the other side. If that girl was trying to do something to us and ended up in that way, even if she is a girl, it just means she got her just desserts. Whatever the case, it is not something that merits Waka-sama to be troubled over." (Mio)

Mio was laughing gently.

When she is with Tomoe and I, she normally acts emotionally, so this is unusual.

She seems to have a lot of composure, and how to say it, she looks calm.

I felt that in this journey I would be depending on Lime, but Mio's beginning to look like a dependable person.

The Arkes show remarkable growth, but maybe Mio is like that as well.

I don't think there will be that many complicated talks and decisions in Limia, but if that time comes, I am happy that there are two people I can rely on.

"That girl might have done something, huh. She is a priestess-san, so does she have a special sense or something, Lime?" (Makoto)

"Somewhat... Uhm... I think she is proficient at seeing the essence of someone when she sees them." (Lime)

"Essence... more mysterious sounding stuff. From what I saw in her gaze, she didn't look like she saw my Magic Armor, so is it the type that sees things that other people don't?" (Makoto)

"...Yeh." (Lime)

"Maybe I should try asking her when I visit her. It would be bad to make the Prince-sama wait, so I will be leaving soon. Ah, there's no need to stay house-sitting. It is fine if you just return by evening." (Makoto)

"If that's the case, Waka-sama, I will go meet Hibiki-desu wa. I will be asking about the visit to the priestess in detail." (Mio)

"Mio alone?" (Makoto)

Senpai and Mio.

Even if we are inside the castle, it makes me slightly uneasy.

"Then I will be taking Lime with me. It seems like there was a period of time when he was with Hibiki's group in Lorel after all. Is it okay? We haven't confirmed if it's okay to go outside, so if possible, it would be better to receive permission for it first, and it would be better to take care of the business that can be done within the castle." (Mio)

“...Yeah, I am counting on you.” (Makoto)

What with this? She is really reliable.

Did Mio evolve?

There was no notice of it.

It is true that we haven’t confirmed if it’s okay to leave outside.

This is bad.

I was thinking that it would be okay since those two can easily go outside without being discovered by the people of the castle.

It should be better to receive permission for going outside in terms of order huh.

I let it slip by.

“Go do it.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, I will.” (Mio)

I still had a sliver of uneasiness in my head, but I leave the room to head to where prince Joshua is, and tell the guards that were standing there about my intentions.



“Well then, let’s go meet Hibiki, Lime.” (Mio)

“Nee-san.” (Lime)

“...What is it?” (Mio)

“What did you do to Chiya? What did you show her?” (Lime)

Lime made up his mind and asked, and Mio who had a gentle smile, narrowed her eyes slightly.

“I didn’t do anything. Nothing at all.” (Mio)

"I reported Tomoe-neesan about the priestess' eyes. Boss didn't seem like he knew, but Nee-san should have known, right?" (Lime)

"Yeah." (Mio)

"Yeah', you say?! Don't tell me, you intentionally..." (Lime)

"Waka-sama isn't that good at expressing himself without words after all. Also... even if they learn of my identity, it will only deepen their understanding of Waka-sama. There's no problem at all-desu yo." (Mio)

"I-Identity... is it? Don't tell me you are like Tomoe-neesan, a Superior Dragon?" (Lime)

Cold sweat ran down the face of Lime.

It wasn't pleasant sweat.

When he was involved with Root and learned of his direct superior Tomoe's identity, he was proud that he didn't lose consciousness at that moment.

It was a situation that wouldn't be strange if he did after all.

"Fufufu, that's not it, but it is something similar-desu wa. Also, it is fine to just ask Hibiki about what that girl saw. I don't know what she saw either after all." (Mio)

"Just what's Boss, seriously." (Lime)

Lime began to get interested in what Chiya saw in Raidou and Mio.

Just how will she express what she saw with those abstract words of hers.

"Waka-sama is a gentleman that's like a cat basking on the sun. With no evil and hostility. That's only if he is not touched or woken up because of their own convenience, though." (Mio)

"The reaction of Chiya didn't seem like she saw a cute cat though. Definitely." (Lime)

"Then she must have had a stupid expectation. Ah~, I don't know what power it is, but it would be convenient if all the hyumans had that kind of power." (Mio)

The gentleness disappeared, and Mio was now showing a smile that made one feel dreadfulness.

“W-Well then, I will contact Hibiki.” (Lime)

“No need. You know where she is, right?” (Mio)

“Eh... yes. I have the information of Hibiki in this, so I can tell.” (Lime)

Saying this, Lime points at the katana at his waist.

Lime had received a katana exclusive for him from Makoto via Tomoe, that has been customized with a variety of abilities.

That's one of the reasons why he is able to tell the location of Hibiki without the need of investigating.

Lime explains the location of Hibiki to Mio.

It seems like Hibiki is currently in the middle of nursing Chiya.

“This is convenient. Well then, we are going. Let's go.” (Mio)

“So suddenly?! We should at least send a thought transmission to—” (Lime)

“Ara. For a person that we have trained, given a weapon, repaired it, and even gave her the credit of several achievements, there's no need to be reserved-desu wa.” (Mio)

“...That's... it might be true but...” (Lime)

What Mio had listed was all true.

When lining it up again, Lime felt that they have done quite a lot for her.

“I will have Hibiki learn of Waka-sama in the time of our stay. By force, that is.” (Mio)

“Learn of... Boss.” (Lime)

Lime felt something ominous from those words.

His instincts were telling him that it was dangerous.

"Right, first of all, maybe I should have her accompany him when delivering that." (Mio)

Mio glances at the bag that is lying down at a corner of the room.

"...I have not heard of the details, but if I remember correctly, it is the egg of a dragon, right?" (Lime)

"Yeah, it seems like it is the Waterfall dragon-desu" (Mio)

"I see, the Waterfall dragon, is it." (Lime)

Lime definitely didn't understand the meaning of it.

"It is a peace-fool dragon that was defeated by a mere dragon killer, but I will have it be useful." (Mio)

"...Water fall, Waterfall... dragon... Dragon killer? Hah? Haaah?!" (Lime)

"Hmph~, so it is here. The room where the priestess is sleeping." (Mio)

Lime was finally able to digest the words of Mio, but he was in the middle of showing several emotions by voicing them out.

Mio had nonchalantly teleported.

It is not the medical room.

It's the private rooms.

The cleaning was well done, but it was a room that didn't seem to be used that often.

At a part of that place, there was some sort of religious tool, and one could guess that it is the room of a priest.

"Who's there?!"

"Hibiki, it is me. It seems like you weren't present at the time of the audience. Waka-

sama was worried, for a variety of reasons." (Mio)

"Mio... -san. And Lime too. I didn't invite you, and you didn't knock either but, what's going on?" (Hibiki)

"It hasn't been long enough to say 'it's been a long while', but well, I am glad to see that you are somewhat well, Hibiki. Sorry for coming so suddenly." (Lime)

"Sorry, you say. Lime, you..." (Hibiki)

"Just how much do you think you owe us, lady? Wash away something as trivial as this without blaming." (Mio)

"Fuh~. When you bring that, I can't say anything." (Hibiki)

In the room of the priestess, the hero Hibiki was there.

The priestess Chiya was lying on the luxurious bed that has a pavilion.

In that big bed, there was only one small bulge.

"It seems like the priestess still hasn't woken up. Waka-sama was worried about her as well. He said that he wanted to visit her later, so can you please make the time?" (Mio)

"Misumi-kun? But that's..." (Hibiki)

"He seemed to be worried that maybe he did something to her. Even though your side was the one that did something though." (Mio)

"...I see. So you heard it from Lime." (Hibiki)

Lime takes the gaze of Hibiki directly.

He hasn't promised to not say it or to keep it a secret, so there's no room to blame him, and when thinking about their relationship, he is someone that she owes a lot to.

When there's nothing to be ashamed for, it is natural to show a confident attitude.

"It is my job after all." (Lime)

“Right. I won’t blame you for that.” (Hibiki)

“Also, didn’t you think that we would be coming with a countermeasure for that?”
(Lime)

“...Yes. You know of the eyes of Chiya, so I wasn’t expecting much.” (Hibiki)

Slight regret was shown in the eyes of Hibiki.

“Now then, I wonder what this girl saw~. I am looking forward to hearing it.” (Mio)

“You didn’t make a countermeasure?” (Hibiki)

“There was nothing you can see that could trouble us after all. I only thought of it as getting my fortune told for free-desu wa.” (Mio)

Mio says this nonchalantly.

“How sturdy spirited, as always. It is true that I thought you would act more cautiously.” (Hibiki)

“Fufufufu, Hibiki says quite the amusing things-desu wa ne. Ara...” (Mio)

Seeing the expression of Hibiki clouding slightly, Mio shows a wondering expression.

“You wanted to know about Waka-sama and us, right? Then be happier. Thanks to the priestess, you have obtained valuable information, didn’t you?” (Mio)

“Until now, Chiya-chan has seen a variety of people, but she didn’t lose herself as much as now. It might be valuable information, but because my forecast was naive, I have made her experience something painful. I can’t be happy.” (Hibiki)

“I thought that you had become quite skilled at conducting yourself, but it seems like you are soft-hearted when it comes to your comrades, as always. How lukewarm.”
(Mio)

“Just this one part, I feel like it is something that I can’t throw away until the last moment. But Mio-san, you call it lukewarm, but it looked like Misumi-kun was also quite soft-hearted towards Mio-san and the others though?” (Hibiki)

She didn't say that she won't be able to throw it away, but she objected to Mio's words, and brings out the subject of Makoto.

It is true that Makoto treats her as an equal, or more like, family.

Hibiki who thinks that if they are talking about soft-hearted, he is one too.

"The standpoint is different. When it is an action befitting of one's stature, it can't be called soft-hearted. For Waka-sama, it is a conduct that he has surplus to do, but for you, you are just pointlessly tiptoeing." (Mio)

"You are going so far as saying that. Can I hear your basis?" (Hibiki)

"That's something you yourself should learn." (Mio)

"...Eh?" (Hibiki)

"Lime and I won't get in the way. Waka-sama wants to go to some lake in Limia because of a job he has been asked to do. Since you have the chance, how about you go guide him? Right, Waka-sama and you are 'fellow countrymen', so go together alone." (Mio)

"?!!" (Hibiki)

"Nee-san..." (Lime)

"Lime, you keep your mouth shut. How about it, Hibiki? If you say you are going to guide Waka-sama by yourself, I think it will be fine to clear all the debts until now." (Mio)

"...It will depend on the place that he wants to go, but in my side, I can make the time. In the first place, I was thinking about having a long talk with Misumi-kun." (Hibiki)

The affirming words of Hibiki made the brows of Lime crease.

(And yet, the reason why they didn't establish a place to talk immediately... was because they placed the talk with the nobles first, to gather information and manipulate the impressions huh. The chances that a number of the nobles asked something of Hibiki are high, and if Hibiki meets with Boss after he has gone through uncomfortable talks, with the positions of Boss and Hibiki... The nursing might have been by chance, but it turned into a good excuse for us. Mio-neesan, Hibiki is not

lukewarm. Something that can't be thrown away until the last moment, is something that can be considered will be thrown away when that moment comes, after all. If you are going to leave Boss and Hibiki alone... I should at least make it possible to grasp the situation. Tomoe-neesan was also bothered by it after all.) (Lime)

"I have set up the table this much, so Hibiki should do something to make sure Waka-sama is able to go to the place he wants to go. No matter where Waka-sama wants to go, you who are a hero, is accompanying him, so it should be easy to convince the people around, right?" (Mio)

"He is a guest that was invited by the Limia Kingdom, but he is only one merchant. There's places that can't be entered so..." (Hibiki)

"...Hibiki, Waka-sama was called here to express their gratitude for saving your king and prince, you know? Something like public stance, I actually don't care about those. If you are going to bring out conditions after I have prepared this much—" (Mio)

"Hibiki, those are not bad conditions, right? Boss is not someone that would cause troubles, and since you are an acquaintance of his, you should know, right?" (Lime)

Lime cuts in.

Because he could somewhat guess what Mio was about to say after that.

Those words would have been way too careless and should not be said. While feeling slightly agitated, he composedly coped with it.

"...Understood. Today would be impossible, so it will be for tomorrow or the day after. I will match the necessity of Misumi-kun, and guide him. It will be *only* me and Misumi-kun, okay?" (Hibiki)

She confirms with Mio, or more like, she was pushing her desire.

From Hibiki's impression, Mio hates when other girls approach Makoto.

Even so, Mio was currently proposing them to be in a situation where they are alone.

It would be strange not to suspect anything behind that.

"Of course-desu wa. Waka-sama has been tired lately, so please have him relax. I am

leaving it to you, Hibiki." (Mio)

"Understood. I will do what I can. The girl here is still resting so..." (Hibiki)

"Of course, we have finished our business. Let's return, Lime. Ah, Hibiki, this is a request with no debt involved. What the priestess saw, please do tell me as well. I am really interested in it after all." (Mio)

"Got it, Nee-san." (Lime)

"I have heard it, but I can't promise anything." (Hibiki)

Hibiki looks at the place where those two blended and disappeared in the darkness, with a serious expression.

She is scheming something.

She was able to tell at least this much.

She hasn't told anyone about Makoto who is calling himself Raidou, but she has gotten one lead, and it is true that Hibiki wants information of them to the point of desperation.

But the table has been prepared way too much.

Also, the reaction of Chiya was irregular.

"...Just what in the world did Chiya see? It bothers me as well. If possible, I want to hear about it before guiding Misumi-kun, but... they did tell me that it is best to wait for her to wake up naturally after all..." (Hibiki)

Looking at Chiya sleeping, Hibiki makes a small sigh.

The bad feeling doesn't disappear.

The chill that has been wrapping around her neck since the moment Chiya collapsed, worried Hibiki.

Lime who had returned to their guest room, made a tired expression in front of Mio.

His appearance of bending his back was pitiful.

"Please spare me, Nee-san. At that rate, Nee-san, you would have said that you would be turning the capital into ashes to none other than Hibiki, right?" (Lime)

"I was slightly... peeved. It would have been fine to just obediently accept the preparations, but she had to go and try to be all sly. As expected, it would have been bad to say that I would be erasing the capital. You have saved me, Lime. I was about to trouble Waka-sama." (Mio)

"Also, isn't it bad to leave Hibiki and Boss alone? I have been asked by Tomoe-neesan to—" (Lime)

"Lime." (Mio)

"Yes, what is it?" (Lime)

"There's no problem." (Mio)

An assertion.

"...There's none?" (Lime)

"Yeah, none at all." (Mio)

"Under... stood." (Lime)

(No... choice. I will have to do it stealthily.) (Lime)

Left with no other choice, Lime began to think of a way to check on the state of those two from the shadows.

But...

"If you do something like keep those two in check... I will do something interesting, Lime. Something incredibly interesting." (Mio)

"..."

Lime lost his words.

From the first day in their stay in Limia Kingdom, he already felt dark clouds enveloping him.

Chapter 206

A transient peace

"To think that Raidou-dono was someone that had come from another world, I wouldn't have expected it. A hero would be one thing, but for a merchant to be summoned is something I wouldn't have been able to imagine."

A talk with prince Joshua.

In this place where no other noble is present, I was here alone with her.

What was reflected in my eyes when I was given permission to enter the room, was the figure of prince Joshua in a simple dress.

After finishing our remembrance talk about Rotsgard, prince Joshua suddenly brought out such a conversation.

"?!"

"I heard it from Hibiki. You are a resident from the same world of Hibiki, and also an acquaintance of hers. Of course, this is only known by me and his Majesty. We haven't even told the Hopelace household that was together with us in Rotsgard." (Joshua)

Information from Hibiki-senpai huh.

Then it wouldn't be strange for Joshua to know.

But for her to talk about such information as well, it seems like there's proper trust between her and the Limia royal family.

Because the nobles go to the frontlines frequently, and there's also the background that the power of the nobles is strong, I had some strange thoughts of it, but it seems like it ended with just being thoughts.

It was the type that would be better if it ended in needless anxiety, so I am relieved.

"From Senpai, I see. Ah it is certainly true that Senpai and I were from the same world. I don't know how to explain it, so it is a personal history that I haven't spoke of much though." (Makoto)

"...Must be. Special cases like Hibiki and the personage in the Empire have their background assured by our God, but Raidou-dono was a sudden happening huh. When I heard the story from Hibiki, I was surprised, and at the same time, I felt respect towards you who became a merchant even after that." (Joshua)

"It is not as much as you say." (Makoto)

It was just that my misfortune turned into fortune.

The truth is that there's not much I have achieved myself.

After saying a relative amount of details that Senpai told her of me, I could tell that prince Joshua doesn't know much.

If I were to speak with Hibiki in detail, it would be necessary to explain that the root reason of coming here was because of me and the Misumi household.

Be it Senpai or Tomoki, they originally shouldn't have had a trigger to be related to this world.

And yet, because of me, they were forcefully selected by the Goddess.

Even if it's the result from a selection, those two are totally victims.

In the first place, a decision like abandoning your world isn't something that can be decided in a short amount of time.

I decided to do so because of my own circumstances, and yet, I am regretting it even now.

That's why it is not a certainty if those two would have changed their answers now.

I do think that one day I have to properly apologize to Senpai and Tomoki, but how am I going to break it? The time where I am just brooding over it continues.

Because of the matter of Tomoe, it is even harder to talk with Tomoki about it after all.

It is still easier to tell Senpai, but... hah...

There's that matter and I know it is difficult, but if possible, I don't want to oppose them.

It is something that Tsukuyomi-sama asked of me, even if it was only moderately.

How vexing.

"At the same time, it allowed me to comprehend that power of yours. When Hibiki came to this world, she had the ability to fight with the leader of the knight division. She said she studied in Nakatsuhara and had learned about a variety of subjects; her knowledge and wisdom was quite the thing as well. In that case, you who have studied in the same place as her, beginning a business when coming to this world isn't such a strange thing." (Joshua)

I feel like she is having an incredible misunderstanding.

It is beginning to sound as if high school is an incredible place.

Also, it would be very troublesome to talk with Senpai as the standard.

I am one year younger than her, and if asked if I can become like Senpai, I would have to say I can't.

Even if I were to try for my whole life, I think it would be impossible.

In the first place, for a high schooler to begin a business is something obvious? Just what's Senpai?

"Hibiki-senpai was a special and exemplary person even within the people in our world. I am way inferior compared to her. And when talking about the business, it would be one thing to finish the test of the guild, but in practice, I am being hindered by my own inexperience, and there are a lot of things that don't go well for me, that's why, I don't have the ability that Joshua-sama thinks I have." (Makoto)

"Hibiki evaluated you pretty high, you know? She even said that there's no one as reliable to have at one's side than you, and that surprised his Majesty. I have heard that there's the need to study a long time before being able to do the Merchant Guild test. And yet, you were able to call the test 'one thing', that must mean that even if

Raidou-dono himself doesn't notice, you are an exemplary person." (Joshua)

...I think that the gaze of Hibiki was directed at Mio and Beren when she said that.

I don't think she has noticed that it was us in Limia, and she doesn't know that I was the one who defeated the purple cloud either, so I can't think of a reason as to why she would evaluate me so highly.

Even if it's Senpai, she shouldn't have the foundations to evaluate me that high.

I am aware that I am incredibly blessed in talented people after all.

"Ahaha, when you say it like that it scares me. Right, speaking of surprise, your Joshua-sama's attire has surprised me. As expected, when you are indoors, you dress normally huh." (Makoto)

"...No, even when I am indoors, I normally don't dress this way. It's been awhile since I have released myself from crossdressing." (Joshua)

"Ah, is that so." (Makoto)

"Right now this room is being paid attention to in a lot of ways, so there's the point that there's no worries of the inside being peeked, and the guest that I was receiving is you, which serves as a big reason." (Joshua)

"Is it because I already know of the circumstances?" (Makoto)

"Yeah. It would have been fine if that was only a hobby of mine, but..." (Joshua)

"As I thought, that's not the case." (Makoto)

"Me crossdressing is not something that I do because I like to. For me, it is nothing but a mean. It is something that if necessary, I won't hesitate in doing, but if there's no need to, I would prefer not doing it." (Joshua)

"A mean... It sounds complicated." (Makoto)

Even so, I don't want to stick my nose in that, so I decided to just leave a vague response.

Whether the crossdressing is a hobby or a mean, I don't have much interest in it.

If this will only steer unnecessary trouble, I would prefer to change the topic.

Well, I was trying to avert from the topic of Japan, and in the end, I ended up in a conversation that doesn't have a good air, so my thinking was the shallow one.

Let's be careful... at least.

"In terms of feeling at home, this way feels more comfortable. And that's why a part of me has used you in order to be dressed in this way. Please forgive me." (Joshua)

"No no, if it is only for this much, you can freely use me. Ehm, the normal gallant prince Joshua is lovely, but I think that the relaxed Joshua-sama is also beautiful." (Makoto)

I go for a compliment.

In Limia, there's a lot of moments when compliments are necessary, so I have been taught a few of what they said I should remember, and I have now used some.

In the talk with the nobles, it was a barrage of questions, so I didn't have much chances to use it.

Prince Joshua in his female appearance won't be that noisy about it, so it is the perfect person to use them.

"Use those kind of compliments when you are at parties, or nobles that boast their wife. It is necessary for you to first learn how to say it in a more natural manner though. Ehm, in other words, it is out of the question." (Joshua)

So she has said 'ehm' huh.

That's bad.

"Ah, sorry. I am just not used to say that. Because you are an acquaintance, I ended up trying it." (Makoto)

"...I am still this country's prince, you know?" (Joshua)

A slight silence is created with prince Joshua making a complicated expression.

“You are in that appearance, so I thought that maybe it is fine to not mind about social status at this moment.” (Makoto)

Since she is not meeting me as a prince, that means this matter is not about the country after all.

“It doesn’t seem to be enough, but you do have a relative amount of ability to make plans, so what’s needed is to pay attention to the other party’s feelings as well.” (Joshua)

“Ugh, that’s a harsh evaluation.” (Makoto)

It was kinda soft, but I feel like she was basically telling me I was showing my uselessness.

“And it seems like Raidou-dono doesn’t understand completely the reason why I am dressed this way. Hibiki is good at reading this kind of things, so I was unconsciously expecting that of you.” (Joshua)

The reason she is dressed this way?

The security of this room is reliable, and since I already know her circumstances, I thought she just wanted to relax.

Prince Joshua herself said so.

Prince Joshua waited for my words for a while, and after letting out a short troubled sigh, she looked at my eyes.

“Raidou-dono, you have learned of my secret.” (Joshua)

“Y-Yes.” (Makoto)

“And then, I asked you to keep it a secret and returned to my country.” (Joshua)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

“...”

“...”

What's happening?

Confirming the obvious, we once again fell into silence.

It is certainly true that I learned of prince Joshua being a woman, and after being asked to keep it a secret, we have met again like this in Limia, but...

What about it?

“...Hibiki told me that Raidou-dono is not someone that would plan a conspiracy, but I see, she referred to this huh. I now understand why when she was talking about Kuzunoha Company, she corrected herself and spoke of Raidou-dono himself.” (Joshua)

“E-Ehm...” (Makoto)

“At that time, I was unable to give any clear collateral to Raidou-dono, and didn’t even give anything like a deposit; the only thing I did was say some vague things. Then, how do you think I thought of Raidou-dono?” (Joshua)

“That you wanted to quickly present a collateral and be done with it, maybe?” (Makoto)

“No.” (Joshua)

“The capital was made a mess and it was no time for this, maybe?” (Makoto)

“No. That’s something that deviates from the preamble of ‘what I thought of Raidou-dono.’” (Joshua)

That’s true.

But, something that prince Joshua thought of me.

It isn’t a collateral.

Even so, there hasn’t been so many thought transmissions lately.

I thought that maybe it was because the reconstruction was hard work.

When I met with Hibiki-senpai before, she didn't say anything about it though.

Hm... then what would she think?

If it were me, regarding a faraway person that has learned of something that's bad to be known and have only done some simple secret keeping...

...I would definitely be uneasy.

Depending on the situation, I probably would want to eliminate that person as fast as possible.

But there wasn't a single assassin from Limia.

Then, investigate?

To learn if that person has told anyone else about it.

There weren't reports of that either though.

If it's not this, I am out of ideas.

"Then, you were uneasy, so you wanted to know of the person's movements?"
(Makoto)

"That's right. And from what I could tell, you haven't disclosed my secret. You haven't used it as a figurative talk either." (Joshua)

So she was really checking us huh.

What method did she use?

I didn't hear anything from my guys though.

"Yeah, and in truth, I haven't told anyone." (Makoto)

She did tell me not to tell anyone, and something like the secret of the second prince of Limia has no way of use for me.

"That's why I will trust you from now on. With that meaning in mind, I showed myself

in this appearance." (Joshua)

"Could it be, I was being suspected quite a lot?" (Makoto)

That's kind of... shocking.

The royal family that has been living a sheltered life even within the hyumans, that's something...

In the case of this person, it feels like it would be possible, but even so.

"Let me ask you back, why would I be able to trust you? A merchant that I suddenly met in Rotsgard and know nothing of his personal history." (Joshua)

"..."

That's certainly suspicious.

Even if I don't have the intentions to, it is natural from the viewpoint of the other party.

"At that time, I even estimated that my ruin would be coming. To the point that I even thought about how to dispose of my body so that it won't cause problems for his Majesty. But you didn't seem to have disclosed it, and there were no actions towards me with the knowledge you had." (Joshua)

Disposing of her body, she means suicide?

That's scary.

"Like I said, I haven't told anyone." (Makoto)

Saying it in a slightly hard manner, I return the same response.

I didn't even tell the people of Asora, or more like, I forgot about it.

"It is the secret of a second prince. Depending on how it is used, it is a suitable ingredient to increase your position as a merchant to one or two steps higher. To utilize it in some way is natural and logical for a merchant." (Joshua)

"..."

Ah, so that's why.

They did ask me things like: 'Do you have any plans in having a business in Limia?' or 'Don't you have anything you wish as an accommodation for what happened before?'.

I remember those thought transmissions I got before coming here.

'I currently don't have any plans of opening a store in Limia, so please don't mind it and concentrate in the reconstruction', is what I always answered every time it happened.

"Not only did you not utilize this secret, you didn't even speak to the nobles, and you don't have plans on opening a store in Limia; this, I have confirmed. Honestly, it is a hard to believe answer." (Joshua)

"It is also because of the lack of personnel, but there's a lot of circumstances going on in Kuzunoha Company, so we can't increase the amount of stores that readily." (Makoto)

To tell the truth, I have a few of my people doing peddling in Limia, but it is not to the point of making a store.

I was thinking about telling them this in our stay in Limia, but in terms of a store... Ah, right.

In that case, there's the method of revealing it to prince Joshua and have her convince the nobles so they don't go clamouring.

"I went further into thinking that you were different from a merchant, for example; a military personnel or a person that has ties with a noble, and that increased my caution even more. But after hearing Hibiki's story and your own talk, it seems like everything was just my own imagination going wild." (Joshua)

"About that, there's something that I was planning on saying in time, so I was thinking about telling Joshua-sama first." (Makoto)

"...It feels like you just thought of it though, but well, tell me." (Joshua)

This is something that I have been thinking on who I should tell in the time I am in Limia.

It is just that I didn't think I would be telling this to prince Joshua at this moment.

The topic itself is not something that I thought of just now.

"In the Kuzunoha Company, there's something like an out-of-store sales, or more like a peddling unit. There's the fact that the unit has been doing business in a small part of the settlements in Limia, and in a small scale." (Makoto)

"Hm... I didn't get reports of it, but I see." (Joshua)

"It is probably not in the direct jurisdiction of the royal family, but I have received reports that we have done several transactions specially close to the borders in the territory of nobles." (Makoto)

"And?" (Joshua)

"I was thinking about obtaining the consent of the royal family and the nobles." (Makoto)

"Are you asking me to help you convince them?" (Joshua)

"If needed, I will also give you the reports of the sales and pay for the taxes as well, so please." (Makoto)

The transactions don't deal with big amounts of gold, so even if we talk about taxes, it shouldn't be that big of a deal. Probably.

If necessary, I should investigate about the tax of Limia.

Prince Joshua makes a thinking expression for a while.

The time she was thinking was a lot shorter than the times she showed me a complex expression, and then, she returned her gaze to me.

"...If it's that much, there's no problem. It also depends on the amount of money, but I will manage the part of the tax. I promise." (Joshua)

"That will help a lot." (Makoto)

"At the reception, no, in the conversations a few moments ago, there were a lot of

people wishing for Kuzunoha Company to open a store, right? There were people that didn't say anything, but there were few who were opposed." (Joshua)

"Ah, now that you mention it, yeah." (Makoto)

"Even if there are people that wish for you to increase the scope of your business, there's most likely none who would actively ostracizes you. Just in case, can you tell me the settlements that you know of have been in those business of yours?" (Joshua)

Saying that, prince Joshua stands up from his seat and takes out a map of Limia kingdom from the shelf.

Just that it was quite a rough map.

I can tell the territories, but I can't tell the insides that well. It was close to being a blank map.

Only a few major points were drawn, and the paths were sparse.

Are the normal maps like this?

It is quite different from the one we normally use.

For now I just say ok, and point out the position of the settlements I have received reports of.

There's around 20 places.

If we include the villages they have gone to only once or have only seen, the numbers would increase by a lot, so I have only mentioned the villages that we have done trades with and the name of Kuzunoha Company has resonated.

Depending on the medicine selling of the Kuzunoha Company, I mean, the peddling, some people have begun calling the Forest Onis with a sad nickname like 'Kuzu-san'.
<Kuzu means trash>

They are probably being called 'Kuzu-san' by the innocent kids and the elders that are enjoying their retired life. Honestly, that's quite the psychological attack.

And in truth, when they learned of it, they were quite down.

I have heard a few times that the village heads wants to meet me, but I didn't want to be called the boss of Kuzu-san, or the representative of Kuzu, so I haven't gone to any of those places.

"That's quite the number. But it looks like the number is higher in the west side."
(Joshua)

Prince Joshua writes down the places that I point out.

As a result, from the west side of Limia's national border to the south of it had been marked here and there.

"It seems like at the west side there's a lot of poor villages, so our people bring them goods often." (Makoto)

"...Why? In poor villages, they won't be able to provide you the money, right?" (Joshua)

Prince Joshua tilts her head.

Did I say something strange?

It is not like our place is selling high-class items though.

"But in poor villages, the people will need goods, right?" (Makoto)

We are only selling everyday goods and household medicine in places that are in need of those.

I don't think that's strange.

"Ehm..."

"What is it?" (Makoto)

It seems like prince Joshua frequently shows this kind of expression and stiffens up in silence.

It feels like she is bewildered because of meeting a mysterious being, or like she is surprised by it.

As I am not a rare animal, I am a bit sad about it.

“...No, it is true that if you are going through this kind of villages as your focus, it is understandable that the reports of the feudal lords are coming late. This is still something that hasn’t been confirmed, but I will think of a method so that Kuzunoha Company can move more freely in the Limia territory. It is something that can be done since it is only on the scale of peddling after all.” (Joshua)

“Easier to move... Like giving us a transition pass, or something like that?” (Makoto)

Like the time in the demon race territory.

“A transition pass huh. A passage permission for the highway, permission for peddling inside the country; I still don’t know what kind of form it will take. Just that, I will lend you my strength as thanks for protecting my secret.” (Joshua)

“Thanks.” (Makoto)

“By the way, what other plans do you have here, Raidou-dono?” (Joshua)

“Ah, an acquaintance of mine requested me of something, so I was thinking about going out for around half a day.” (Makoto)

Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow there’s a lot of blank time.

To the point that if I were to move the plans of tomorrow to the day after, I would have one whole free day.

“To where?” (Joshua)

“The lake.” (Makoto)

“Ah, Seiko? At that place there’s a lot of people going for sightseeing, and it is close to the capital.” (Joshua)

Yeah, I did hear about that.

A big lake at the vicinities of Limia that was created by the Devil, or so to say, me.

It is receiving a relatively good amount of sightseers, and in terms of practical use,

they have been receiving resources from the lake or something like that.

If I were asked if I wanted to go there, as expected, I would have to shake my head sideways.

No way I would want to go there.

"No, it is the Meiris lake. I heard that it is a famous place in the Limia kingdom." (Makoto)

The place that Root told me is that.

I am grateful that it isn't that far away.

Moreover, it seems like it isn't as heavily managed like the desert of Gritonia.

"Meiris... It is certainly true that it is famous, but didn't your acquaintance make a mistake in the place or something?" (Joshua)

"No, I am sure that person said Meiris. He said that the entrance isn't prohibited though. Is that not the case?" (Makoto)

"That's true. This lake is famous, and as long as we confirm the need to enter, there's no prohibition in entering." (Joshua)

"That's great." (Makoto)

A part of me was internally nervous that maybe Root was trying to create more trouble again.

I remember the face of that guy that said: 'My joints still hurt', as he gave me the egg.

It was an aloof smile that as always, I couldn't tell what he was thinking.

"Just that it is dangerous. It is a lake where a superior dragon and the kingdom had an agreement. It would be one thing if it's people that are going there to test their strength or take the trials, but Raidou-dono is someone that our country has invited, and our side would prefer if you didn't go to such a dangerous place." (Joshua)

"...I see." (Makoto)

Now that I think about it, the Gritonia desert was supposed to be a dangerous place as well.

It was a beautiful place, and since I was easily able to pass, I forgot about it.

Is this place also considered relatively dangerous as well?

'It is opened to the public and there's a beautiful lake shore, so go and have a walk around the lake when you return', is what Root told me though.

In that case, I will have to think of a way to stealthily leave this place again huh.

"I will tell his Majesty, but please don't expect much. If it can't be granted, I still have a few places I want to guide you to." (Joshua)

"I am counting on you." (Makoto)

It is an answer that feels like it won't work.

If I say I will be bringing Mio, will it work?

It is fine if it is Lime.

Senpai knows of his skills, so maybe I can have her give her word as well.

After that, we did casual talk and talked about the state of the business, and with nothing special happening, the talk ended.

I could tell her about the Forest Onis selling medicine, and have heard a positive answer for this.

For me, it was a beneficial meeting.



Joshua thought that he was a troublesome person.

It was a truly frank evaluation.

This was practically the first time Joshua had talked with Raidou properly, but she felt

like he was completely different from what she imagined him to be.

(Even though it was a verbal promise, he acted as if he had formed some sort of contract. That's something for me to be happy about, but turning it around, it would also mean that for him, verbal promises are as strong as official contracts.) (Joshua)

A deceptive promise might become an unexpected restrain.

For Raidou, there's the need of a different standard in negotiations. Thinking this, a sigh unconsciously came out from Joshua.

(Also, his way of thinking when doing business. Even when compared to Hibiki, he is way too incomprehensible. His speech, tone, and expressions, it made me feel as if he was doing charity work or something. I do think that there's something wrong in me for thinking that way, but it throws me off.) (Joshua)

Raidou didn't use her secret to threaten her.

He didn't ask for advantages in his business either.

The only thing he asked for was to give consent for the small scale peddling he did.

Even that, Joshua was doubting if he actually thought of it in advance before asking her.

(...No good. The information is way too limited, it would be better to just leave it like that. He is from the same world as Hibiki, moreover, someone that was studying at the same learning facility. I don't think he is just an ordinary person. It is also a mystery as to why he wants to go to Meiris instead of Seiko. If possible, I would want to observe him with a subordinate of my own, but I wonder...) (Joshua)

He is not someone that can be left alone.

At that point, Hibiki, the Limia king, and prince Joshua are of the same opinion.

There was confusion after actually meeting him and talking with him, but Joshua's root way of thinking had not changed.

The highly efficient personnel of Raidou, and the rare ability of his Company.

And also the ability of the students he taught that can overturn common sense.

All of those points are things that they are unwilling to 'give to other countries'.

Especially Gritonia, if it were to go there, the balance in countries would crumble.

That's why, for Joshua, no matter where she looked, Raidou was...

"What a troublesome person Raidou-dono is." (Joshua)

Being in the middle of its reconstruction and still calling him in a hurry, does mean that Limia has ulterior motives.

From the royal family, Joshua and the King.

The hero Hibiki.

A number of quick witted nobles.

Right now they are still being docile, but Joshua expects that the merchants will be moving as well.

Tomorrow she will be dealing with those people, and moreover, she is thinking about showing him the current capital.

She filled her free time with things that had somewhat of an objective.

But if Raidou has a different request from that, even if the chances are low, she has no choice but to take it into consideration.

That request of his was also something that troubled her, and made her want to groan.



At the welcoming banquet, I was made to drink quite a lot, but my waking was pretty pleasant.

I conversed a bit with Senpai and her group, and the nobles asked me to try doing business in their areas no matter the scale.

His Majesty told me that he was anxious about the reconstruction of the city.

Once the support unit that went to Rotsgard returns, the reconstruction speed should increase, and there's good materials as well, but as expected, since it is winter, there's probably going to be more damage coming which made his Majesty feel depressed.

It won't be like Asora that has summer tomorrow.

In this one point, the demon race got them good huh.

And in truth, if you just do one step to the big street, you can see that the situation is like that of ruins, and at the outside of the reconstructed outer walls, there's still a lot of camps.

For me, it looked like the reconstruction of the capital was only beginning.

I am not unsensitive enough to say something like that to the people that are happy that it has advanced quite a lot, so I zipped my mouth though.

"Then I will guide Raidou-dono. Even if it costs me my life, I will assure you a safe journey. Please don't worry."

The journey to Meiris that I requested of prince Joshua yesterday has been granted in a strange form.

With the minimum amount of luggage, I was carrying the bag with the dragon egg, and in my front, there's Senpai who is completely armed.

Those words just now were something that she directed to the Limia people, Mio, and Lime.

It seems like my going to the Meiris Lake has been approved, if I have the hero Hibiki go with me.

The talk was made confidentially within a limited few and approved, so there are people that have puzzled faces seeing us two going to the lake.

Or more like, I am also bewildered.

Not even in Japan I had a chance to be alone with Senpai, but this is the second time

already, counting the time when we were at the room of the company.

I was incredibly bothered by Mio, but she had shockingly accepted it and stepped back easily.

She is definitely plotting something.

She even made a Root-like laugh.

Root laugh.

Actually, the one protesting was someone from the hero's party.

It is a warrior-looking person.

If I remember correctly, it is Prince-sama.

If I am going to be resented(well, I can just separate from them in the middle), I don't have any problems in having him accompany us though. But in the end, because of the shout of the King-sama, he gave up.

Even so, the priestess is not here.

She hasn't opened her eyes yet?

Or could it be that she is feeling unwell and can't come?

It is worrying since Mio is going to be staying.

When I return, I will ask about her state again.

Mio is persistent in saying that she didn't do anything, and it didn't feel like she was lying.

But if Mio really didn't do anything, I don't think the priestess would turn that way after looking at her and I.

It is true that I am ugly by this world's standards, but even the first villager that I met in the wasteland only screamed and did a rocket dash.

...Only, huh.

No, let's not think about that.

That's why, even if the concealment of Sakai didn't work and she was able to see the Magic Armor, I don't think the priestess of the hero party that has experienced many things would faint because of it.

Just remembering it hurts.

At first, the Priestess-san looked dumbfounded, with an expression different from all the other expressions that were shown towards me.

When I looked back at her thinking it was a unique reaction, after a bit, she looked as if she had noticed something and opened her eyes really wide, her whole body trembling, and then, she went 'kyaaa' and falls.

Ah, it was shocking.

Even if it's as Mio says and the Priestess-san actually did something, I want to know the circumstances.

"Have a safe trip, Waka-sama. If the Hero-sama is with you, I don't have anything to worry about-desu wa." (Mio)

"Be careful. Uhm, please leave the matters here to us." (Lime)

Lime seems like he wants to say something.

Even if he says to leave the matters to them, I know that it will be hard for him to hold back Mio.

Well, they will be guided by Joshua-sama and a number of retainers to the areas close to the castle.

If they just take care in that aspect, it will probably be okay.

"I will be going. Make sure not to trouble Joshua-sama and the people of Limia, okay? If anything happens, I will leave the decision to you two, just that, try not to obstruct the reconstruction work." (Makoto)

“Understood.” (Mio)

“Even if it costs me my life.” (Lime)

Hahaha.

Lime is imitating Hibiki-senpai. Even if you do that now, it isn’t funny.

He even has a strangely serious expression too.

When I finish today’s delivery, even if I pass the time being washed around by the other party, there won’t be any problems in Limia.

I was unexpectedly able to speak with Senpai today so, how to say it, Limia is working well.

It feels like it will be more comfortable than the other tours in the foreign countries.

On our journey and at our arrival, there still hasn’t been any unreasonable happening since coming here.

Gritonia is a major power as well, and since I had a preconceived notion that the nobles were oppressive, I probably misunderstood Limia.

“Well then, let’s go Raidou-dono.” (Hibiki)

“I am counting on you today, Hibiki-sama.” (Makoto)

I thought that it would be bad to call Hibiki with -senpai, so I tried using -sama instead.

Senpai didn’t seem to mind me changing my way of addressing her, she just nodded lightly and rode her horse first and began moving towards the Meiris Lake.

I turn around once to Mio who was waving at me, and then, I quickly follow after Senpai.

If it’s Senpai, she will probably let me go alone if I just tell her the circumstances.

Now that I think about it, things like: ‘Give me that person’ and ‘Show me your power’, happened at Gritonia, and reminds me that I had gone to a problematic country.

It is one of the few tasks I have to do in Limia, so let's quickly deliver this egg.

Chapter 207

A long long day in Limia (top)

The Meiris Lake and the surrounding land is a special area that is managed by the Limia Kingdom.

In the public, there's a number of fronts, but in essence, it is the same as Gritonia Empire; a place that they have formed a contract with a dragon and the royal family is protecting.

Different from the Empire, the contract is something of the long past and has already begun fading from the memories of many people in Limia, and now only the royal family and nobles with authority know of the details.

Currently, the common knowledge of the Meiris Lake is not that it is the territory of a Superior Dragon, but that it is the training place of Limia with the highest danger level.

Misumi Makoto and Otonashi Hibiki were riding their horses and entered through the closest eastern gate, and they walk through the surface of earth that was made from the steps of others.

By the way, the guards of the eastern gate were suddenly notified that the hero would be going and were at their peak in nervousness. After desperately doing the explanation of Meiris Lake and safely finishing their introductions, they kneeled down.

“In Japan, horse riding is considered a special skill, but here, you just naturally learn it.” (Hibiki)

“Right, I was like that as well.” (Makoto)

“How many times did you experience having your horse run at full speed?” (Hibiki)

“Hm, it was a short distance, but around three times. Senpai seems to be quite used to riding. Do you ride them normally? Or did you have experience when you were in Japan?” (Makoto)

"Yeah, I had normal experience in Japan. But because I only knew the basics, it actually made it harder since I had to get used to riding on the horse and to the change of viewpoints. Even when it is the same form, the techniques required were different." (Hibiki)

At the Meiris Lake, there's a forest, a prairie, and a number of hills; and all of those together, make it as if it is one big national park.

Defeating mamonos or ending up as their meal are all your own responsibility.

The two were in a forest not far away from the capital that's thick enough to be called a sea of trees. They were doing a conversation that didn't fit the place as they walk through it.

They encountered mamonos a few times, but Hibiki cut them with the end of her sword.

Makoto was only following her from behind.

"By the way, Makoto-kun, this is the first time I have heard of people living in this place. What is it you are delivering?" (Hibiki)

"Sorry, it is supposed to be a secret, so I can't answer. If the other party doesn't mind it, I will show you at that time." (Makoto)

"Too bad. The reason was plain curiosity, but I might as well try asking the other party." (Hibiki)

Hibiki was really interested in the object that Makoto was delivering, but she easily drew back.

If she were to forcefully try to take a look at it or learn of it, it would be obvious that it would make the atmosphere heavy, and there was no benefit in that.

"Even so... Senpai has gotten strong. It seems like there's no need for me to do anything. If I remember correctly, when you were in Japan, you were a national level swordswoman." (Makoto)

Makoto remembers that Hibiki was an exemplar kendo user and nods.

There was one time when Makoto had seen a match of hers since the archery club match was over and it was close.

At that time, the eyes of Makoto saw in the sword of Hibiki, not only kendo, but also an old sword style mixed in it as well. He didn't touch on that point though.

"My role is to protect you after all. If I weren't able to protect you on my own, I would have called my companions as well. It is a place where I am plenty enough, that's why it is only the two of us, that's all there's to it. I don't know if you actually need a bodyguard since you are able to make people like Tomoe-san and Mio-san obey you though." (Hibiki)

And in truth, Hibiki was not actually acting as a bodyguard.

Hibiki's objective was to have a connection with Makoto, and keeping him in check.

"No, it was a great help that Senpai was in Limia. Because with just Mio and Lime, I don't think the people of the country would be able to trust us. Even if we have power... it doesn't mean they will trust us." (Makoto)

Makoto honestly answers.

If only power was necessary, Makoto would be more trusted by others.

And in truth, Makoto -the Kuzunoha Company's Raidou- is being seen as a shady existence mostly because of his way of acting, but in a sense, Makoto felt the 'limit of only having power'.

To reach that conclusion you need to be quite the special case, and even if he feels it, the experience he should be gaining is a different problem.

At the very least, the current Makoto still doesn't have a clear grasp of the worth of his power.

"...Power is... the basis of everything. When you have enough of it, trust will take form in some way and follow you." (Hibiki)

"Is that how it works?" (Makoto)

Hibiki has been compensating for her weakness of long ranged attacks with magic and

sword technique.

The fire spear that was released from her had pierced through the beast that came lunging at us, and was now carbonized.

The first sign of the attack was when the branches shook from the jump.

With a short aria, she was able to form a relatively powerful magic. This point made me feel the power of a hero.

If the people in Rotsgard Academy were able to do this, they would be able to gain a pretty big advantage.

It is not anything unique, but her foundation has been carefully polished by talent and hard work.

Her ability to defeat the enemy without them being able to do anything was something that made the people looking understand how incredible it was.

Hibiki opened a bit of time and gave an opinion to Makoto's words, and glances at him.

The fire spear that was shot in front of Makoto's eyes, the sword technique of Hibiki; Makoto gave words of admiration instead of surprise to all of those as he followed her.

"As an individual, an organization, or in an even bigger society; in the end, people are practically doing a competition in how much of that 'power' they can obtain. It's as if they are placing that basis as their everything." (Hibiki)

(So my power is within his predicted level huh. I have shown my serious side to Lime, so this probably can't be helped.) (Hibiki)

"Even in physical strength and fighting power? It is certainly true that in this world, the power of an individual can overwhelm an army though." (Makoto)

'That's something that only applies to this parallel world, and in Japan that doesn't work like that, right?', is what the eyes of Makoto were saying.

That look of his made a number of conjectures Hibiki had of Makoto disappear, and at the same time, it reinforced some conjectures she had as well.

Without showing it in her expression, she continued speaking.

“Even here is the same as Japan, you know? Even if we call it power, this ‘power’ counts physical strength and wisdom. The integration of what you have obtained yourself, and what you have gathered; this will determine the size of your influence in society.”
(Hibiki)

“...”

“Mankind are animals that show their best performance when they flock together. For example: friends, companions, and commanders; if those kind of people increase in numbers, they will be able to add their power to others. Even if it’s you alone or a group of people, power is power.” (Hibiki)

“...I feel like... what Senpai is saying and what I am saying are not coinciding at all.”
(Makoto)

“No, it is exactly the same. Just that our allies are different. I think that no matter what power it is, it can be turned into a numerical value. You don’t think that way. I think that’s all there’s to it.” (Hibiki)

“Numerical value huh. It is certainly true that I haven’t thought much in that way. In the first place, I feel like it would be pointless to turn physical strength and wisdom into numbers.” (Makoto)

A judgemental opinion was given by Makoto.

But his expression didn’t show antagonism, it seemed as if he had a lot of questions popping in his head, Hibiki was able to notice it and nods.

Hibiki was having Makoto hear a deep opinion of hers with an intention in mind.

‘Even if you have power, you can’t obtain trust’, using those words of Makoto, she began this argument.

Well, the person himself doesn’t seem to have noticed it much, but even so, Hibiki didn’t mind and continued the conversation.

For the sake of doing what she wants to do with Makoto in this time they are alone.

"Depending on the situation, it will double or be halved, but there's plenty enough meaning in it. For example, Tomoki-kun and I are normally being compared, but between us heroes, there's already differences. Strong points and weak points can't be helped. That's why, gathering people with aggregate amounts is important, but gathering people with different types of abilities is equally important." (Hibiki)

"Senpai and Tomoki huh." (Makoto)

"That's right. In your analysis, Makoto-kun... hmpf, just what do you think?" (Hibiki)

In the middle of her words, she brushed away something resembling a dart, and just like that, she shortened the distance and cut several mamonos with her blade.

When she returned, she continued her question.

He could tell that Hibiki didn't feel any pressure after entering the east gate that has the highest danger level.

"Tomoki is the offensive type. He is strengthened with his equipment, and by using powerful bursting abilities, he is able to defeat his enemies without them being able to do anything. His number one specialty is probably that. He also has his Charm, but it doesn't have much point against people that are not affected by it anyways." (Makoto)

"But in a sense, that Charm of his is the strongest weapon. Thanks to that, his actions within the Empire have gone practically unobstructed. It may be simple but his strategy is to trample down his opponents with high firepower, and with his Charm, he is able to easily turn opposing parties into supporters. Having these two, he is most likely able to do a lot." (Hibiki)

"Ah, in other words, those points should be added as Tomoki's power? It is a convenient power that can crush opposition before it occurs after all." (Makoto)

"Yeah, I do want to hear more about him, but right now, I am more interested in what Makoto-kun sees in me. Can I hear about me?" (Hibiki)

"Senpai is... Ah, I see. So that's why I thought like that. As expected, how impressive..." (Makoto)

"Makoto-kun?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought that she would be hearing an evaluation of herself, but seeing Makoto beginning to understand something by himself, she makes a puzzled expression.

"Ah, sorry. Hibiki-senpai is able to do both physical and magical fights without any problems, and even if your magic is a slight weak point of yours, it is the all-purpose type. If there's a hole in your formation, you can fill for the long ranged attack and lack of firepower, and with that reaction speed, I think there's practically no problem in that." (Makoto)

"..."

"Compared to Tomoki, your firepower is lower, but I think you win in all other aspects. Also, I feel like Senpai's specialty is not battling." (Makoto)

"Heh~." (Hibiki)

"This is something I thought when I was in Japan too, but Senpai actively looks to obtain connections with people that can do what you can't. I think that's incredible. Even though there should be opposition and a lot of other things that make it hard for both parties to connect, you are good at getting along with them, like doing discussions that I wouldn't be able to imagine we are the same age, and it felt like you were used to speeches." (Makoto)

"It is not like I can do anything by myself after all. I have other people help me in the things I lack of, isn't that kind of thinking natural?" (Hibiki)

"Even though you are a person that can do a lot by yourself, you are still able to think in that way. That's not something natural. And I thought this after hearing what Senpai said just now, that maybe Senpai's number one power is that." (Makoto)

"I feel like you are praising me, and at the same time, I feel like you aren't. Those are vague words." (Hibiki)

"I am praising you. That no matter what area that person excels in, Senpai is able to look at them without clouded eyes, and see that person's power. And especially those normal persons that don't have a big talent or power, you understand that they are able to do something big as long as they gather and help each other. That point of view, or more like, that way of thinking is what I think is Senpai's number one power" (Makoto)

Each person has their own plan.

Even so, people gather around the surroundings of Hibiki, cooperate with her, and on top of that, they live for their own objective.

In the eyes of Makoto that is looking at this from far away, that's how he saw Hibiki and her surroundings.

She is able to accomplish anything, and she is kind to people too.

That's why Makoto evaluated Hibiki as a perfect superhuman, a genius.

Hearing Hibiki's way of thinking, his thoughts changed a bit, but the impression of Makoto towards Hibiki didn't turn bad.

If he were at Hibiki's side, he would probably be able to find ugly selfish parts of hers, but Makoto and Hibiki didn't have that much interaction to reach that point.

Making the best out of people.

That's exactly the talent of Hibiki, is what Makoto thought as he felt true admiration.

"Thanks, I am happy." (Hibiki)

(...As I thought, he is not an idiot. Even though it is limited, he is able to evaluate people, and he is probably the type that keeps some inside of himself. I have heard about a few poor conducts of him, but... could it be... he still hasn't learned of a way of acting that fits the stage he is standing in? Kuzunoha Company is a company that has suddenly gathered attention and is growing, it is a possible case. That he is having a radical increase in attention and is growing continuously means that the person himself has high potential, but if his ability and the ability of his company are not proportional... In the time he was at Japan, from what I remember, he was the type that specialized in one talent. He had average grades and physical ability, only in his club did he show extraordinary abilities, is what I think. It is a faint memory that I was somehow able to remember though.) (Hibiki)

"Ahaha, well, I heard from Lime that you had a slightly hard fight at Lorel, but that was probably because there weren't the necessary people gathered around Senpai at that moment. If it's Senpai, you probably already have countermeasures for that." (Makoto)

Being given a honest thanks, Makoto gets embarrassed.

If it were in Japan, this is a situation that would never occur.

"A perfected long ranged firepower huh. It is sad to say, but that countermeasure is still lacking. The reconstruction of the capital is a pressing matter after all. We have been trying a few things with my comrades, but I think that it still isn't at the passing mark." (Hibiki)

(But it is clear that he has touched several fields when he arrived at this world. His company's business conditions and his classification was an anything-goes store. Medicine that doesn't let anyone follow in effectivity and cost performance. Even though it should be difficult to transport goods in the wasteland, they have a stable supply of ingredients and goods. With their abnormal speed in circulation of goods, I can only think that they have surpassed the modern day Japan. They have a stable management of dwarf equipment that hyumans have a hard time to get their hands on. Tomoe-san, Mio-san, and Lime are employees that have overwhelming power enough to make mercenaries run away. None of those are things that can be obtained by being specialized in archery. In the first place, his actions up until now have been that of a rising merchant, which makes it even harder to believe... In that case...) (Hibiki)

"When talking about long ranged attacks, in this world, as expected, magic is the one that shines. If it's only a single attack, ritual magic is best, but the preparation is troublesome, and it is easy to make countermeasures for it." (Makoto)

"Also, it should be a slightly adaptable power. With the firepower of ritual magic, it would be passable, but in adaptability, it is weak. Effectivity, range, accuracy. The reconstruction makes me feel bitter, but my own incompetence too. Even though Rotsgard that was destroyed at the same time has advanced that fast in it, I am here, and that makes me feel that maybe I could have done more." (Hibiki)

(And most of all, his thick Japanese smell is bothering me. It is already been two years since coming to this world. Even Tomoki who has created a harem, has changed quite a lot compared to his time in Japan, and even I am remembering my past and trying to bring out that old self. And yet, his natural state smells like that of a Japanese, at least on the outside. What's going on? He is way too involved in this world to be evading reality. Just what kind of lifestyle did he live in order to turn out like this?) (Hibiki)

"In the Kuzunoha Company there are a number of people specialized in long ranged attacks, but as expected, I just can't lend you my important employees all the time. Sorry." (Makoto)

"...Is the person that shot that incredible attack in Lorel... one of them as well? That attack was shot from a crazy distance, and had destructive power on the level of a bomb. It was like a cutting-edge weapon in terms of accuracy." (Hibiki)

(This is something that I have thought after arranging the information I have of me and Tomoki, and checking the common points of us heroes. Could it be that part of those things also apply on him as well? The outward appearance is probably not a requirement when being summoned. It is most likely necessary to have an above-average talent and a special trait, but then, this boy has a number of common points with me? No. The common points of Makoto-kun, Tomoki, and me huh. Maybe I should verify the points that are not the general type from the common points Tomoki and I share. The number one would be his attachment to his original world but... I feel like he is different in that aspect from us.) (Hibiki)

"Ah, that huh. Was it that weird?" (Makoto)

"It wasn't strange. It was incredible. If someone were to get into a fight with the Kuzunoha Company, it might not be at the level of a capital, but it would be able to wipe out most towns in one attack. Just thinking that, my back shivers." (Hibiki)

(The Goddess said we can't return anymore. Tomoki and I accepted this and wished for it, so our attachment isn't that big. Well, it is true that I sometimes miss the food of Japan and the peaceful life which I feel a different sense of value in. But that's all there is. The things this world has given me are bigger. It should be the same for Tomoki. Actually, that guy has made a harem that he can do anything with, and even with that, if there's a time when he says he wants to return to Japan, I feel like as a woman, I would have to eliminate him first before the Demon Lord. There's also unconfirmed information that some Empire noble has given birth to the child of Tomoki. And in truth, there's a number of girls that are currently pregnant.) (Hibiki)

"Ahahaha..." (Makoto)

"The person that did that was someone I know? Tomoe-san, or maybe Mio-san?" (Hibiki)

(Well, leaving that aside, the next thing that bothers me is this. Thinking about the natural traits of a hero, I would be able to understand, but I am slightly wondering if those two ‘are the same’ as well.) (Hibiki) *<She is most likely referring to an ability like Charm and Charisma. She thinks those two probably have been ‘charmed’ by Makoto.>*

“Actually, the elder dwarfs made an incredible weapon, and with that weapon, I uhm... I did it. Uhm, I wouldn’t pointlessly destroy a town, so I hope you understand we wouldn’t use it to make negotiations in Kuzunoha Company.” (Makoto)

After emphasizing that it was a dwarf weapon, Makoto confessed.

“?!!”

(Wait, WHAT DID HE SAY?!?) (Hibiki)

“I didn’t expect for it to be so powerful~, ahahaha.” (Makoto)

In Makoto’s case, he thought an attack of that level wasn’t something surprising, but he took the words of Hibiki as how the general populace would interpret it.

“Makoto-kun... shot an attack of that level?!” (Hibiki)

“Well, yeah.” (Makoto)

“...You did it alone, right?” (Hibiki)

“...Yes.” (Makoto)

Hibiki was confirming and Makoto nods.

“...”

“Senpai?” (Makoto)

“I see, so Makoto-kun is a long-range attack expert huh. I was surprised.” (Hibiki)

(My plans on how to deal with him... more than half of them have been trashed. This is bad. In that case, the more I need to ask him *that* before it becomes unpredictable.) (Hibiki)

"In the first place, my specialty was the bow. Even in this world, I am relying on it."
(Makoto)

"By the way, Makoto-kun, I don't think it is possible to obtain power of that level by ordinary means but, can I ask you something?" (Hibiki)

It is not like Makoto has faced hardships in his training since coming to this world.

Actually, the time he faced hardships was in his childhood when his body still didn't have the physical strength of a normal person, and that's a story of when he was in Japan.

"If it's something I can answer." (Makoto)

Makoto answers the question of Hibiki with the convenient phrase he has settled of in saying since becoming a merchant.

"Makoto-kun, have you killed hyumans, demi-humans, or demons?" (Hibiki)

"I don't know why you mentioned demi-humans and demons separately but, I have. It may be a bit, but I have also experienced the battlefield." (Makoto)

Makoto easily affirms this.

"So Makoto-kun thinks of the demons as demi-humans. But I see, you have." (Hibiki)

"Receiving a terrible treatment, being directed murdering intent, being attacked; this world is seriously dangerous for one's life." (Makoto)

(Demons and demi-humans are only one race huh. In the hyuman force, it is something that's rarely heard. Even I unconsciously thought that the demons and the demi-humans were separate races until recently. In that case, in his eyes, he might be seeing the current war with the demons as a revolution from the oppressed class. That's troublesome. Also, he easily admitted murder. If he learned of morals in Japan, no, if it's a person that has learned in an advanced country, they should have strong opposition in taking the lives of others. That's not something you do half-heartedly. There's a large number of soldiers that choose to forsake their own lives because they are unable to kill others in the battlefield; this is something I read in the documents once. Being able to kill others, in a sense, being able to cross that line can be considered a special trait in itself. When I investigated, I learned that in the past the

army had done trainings to numb that avoidance of them. And yet, me, Tomoki and him; all three of us were able to conquer that and have survived until now. Was it a coincidence?) (Hibiki)

"That's true. I have killed a lot of demons in the battlefield, demi-humans that have pointed their blades at me, and... have killed a number of humans as well." (Hibiki)

"In my case, acquaintances of mine were killed by humans and that turned into my motive." (Makoto)

(A while after losing Naval, I was truly cornered mentally. Even if the other party is an enemy, the action of taking a life is definitely stressful. Especially when your heart is weakened. Right now I am already used to it, but how does Makoto-kun feel about it? From how Tomoki said it, I could feel that Tomoki was just acting tough. But at that rate, I think he has already turned deviant again. It seems like he obtained that power in the weird space before me after all.) (Hibiki)

"...No, at first I thought that this made me a murderer, and I was indeed troubled by it. It is certainly true that I took away the lives of many after that as well, but it was in a place where the other party was prepared for that to happen. And the other is in places like the wasteland where the survival of the fittest prospers." (Makoto)

Thinking about the savanna-like wasteland, Makoto makes a bitter smile.

But Hibiki opened her eyes wide at the words he said before that.

"What's that about being prepared?" (Hibiki)

Her expression had returned to normal, but her voice was slightly shaky.

(What's this...? There's an incredible chill running through my back...) (Hibiki)

"If you are armed and fighting in the battlefield, that means they are prepared to take lives away and prepared for their lives to be taken, right? Moreover, even if it isn't a battlefield, if they have experience in killing someone, they shouldn't complain about being killed themselves. That's the same for me and Senpai, and there's no way in telling where hatred will be born. I know that my brain wouldn't be able to estimate it anyways, so I have given up on that." (Makoto)

"...T-Then, the people that have resolved themselves to fight and have ended up killing

someone, is Makoto-kun saying that you... wouldn't hesitate in killing someone like that?" (Hibiki)

"That's only if it's necessary. People don't kill just because they want to, you know?" (Makoto)

"...If that were the case, that person would end up as a simple murderer that repeatedly kills just for pleasure after all." (Hibiki)

(Makoto-kun... he is really answering indifferently as if it's nothing. It is a calm attitude that's unthinkable for it to be acting. This is bad... bad, bad, bad! He is within the people I think is dangerous, no, an existence even more dangerous than that. I don't know why, but he still maintains his Japanese feel subconsciously, so there's probably still room to deal with him. For this boy... just how light does he view a life?) (Hibiki)

"Something like a serial killer, that's no joke." (Makoto)

"Lives are important, right? Because it is something that people only have once, it is an important and irreplaceable thing." (Hibiki)

"Yeah, everyone has only one in their possession. They only have one, and yet, why are there people that take it away or utilize it to fatten themselves? The people that become soldiers probably do it for things like protecting the things that are important for them, but even so, they live every single moment of their lives in full." (Makoto)

The sight of a serene and beautiful lake steadily began showing its appearance from within the gaps of the trees, and it would not be wrong to call it a picturesque scenery.

But within the head of Hibiki, she didn't have any surplus to enjoy that.

Inside, she was wondering what she should do with Makoto, and wondering if he is a good person to talk about the topic she had planned.

Those were the things that were spiralling in her head.

Makoto noticed that the lake was beginning to show itself, and pointed at it as he tells Hibiki. Her response showed no spirit compared to the ones until now.

(Something that everyone naturally has, using it to fatten themselves? It is as if he is saying 'you have only one, so you have to use it with care', but it feels like he weighs it

as much as a casino coin. How light. He views lives way too lightly. Even if Makoto-kun were to take away the lives of thousands or millions, if that's a battlefield, he would think that the other party has given consent for their death. No, not only that. If my worst guess is right, this boy that's talking to me right now has already committed mass murder. There's the possibility that he has said this with this kind of mindset.

I don't know why there's so much difference in battle power between him and me, but right now, what's more important is to place some sort of brake in him or it will be way too dangerous. What to do... What should I do? As I thought, the schedule of us coming here was way too soon. If I had heard what Chiya-chan saw of him, I might have been able to prepare a more detailed counter-plan. But in that case, Mio-san and Lime would move in the shadows, and he would have been able to come here alone. There's a high chance that this opportunity of being alone with him would have been gone completely.

!!

Right, the reason why Mio-san was strangely cooperative was because... she wanted me to notice his power and how dangerous he is. And to make me understand what would happen if we were to get in the way of Makoto-kun and Kuzunoha Company, no matter if it's a major power.

In basis, they would be able to utilize that long ranged attack to destroy towns one after the other, and supported with that supply line, they would crush the army with the monsters that are a match of thousands. With only the war potential that I have a grasp on, they are probably able to bring down even Limia. What an ambush I got...) (Hibiki)

"Looking at it, I can expect much of Meiris Lake. When the errand is over, can I get some time even if it's only for a bit? I want to take my time checking it out." (Makoto)

"...Yeah." (Hibiki)

"Now that I think about it, that Lorel priestess, Chiya-san, was it? That girl, is she alright? I heard that she is down from a shock, and I have been bothered by it." (Makoto)

"...Is that... because she looked at you and fell?" (Hibiki)

"Uh, as I thought, it was really because of that? What was the reason for it? Honestly, I

couldn't tell why." (Makoto)

"That was... my doing. Didn't you get a report from Lime about the power of the priestess? You seemed to know about the matter with the purple cloud after all." (Hibiki)

"The power of the priestess?" (Makoto)

Makoto tilts his head at the words of Hibiki.

About the eyes of the priestess, Lime had reported it to Tomoe, and Tomoe thought of several countermeasures with Shiki and Mio.

Just that it didn't take actual shape, and in the end, Mio didn't use any countermeasure at all when she faced the priestess.

Makoto doesn't know anything about that.

Makoto did tell his followers to only report him things that are necessary, but they didn't tell him all the information.

Because even if he were to be told that, he wouldn't be able to process everything.

Just by listening and reading the reports, the day already passes.

Regarding the priestess' eyes, they planned on telling him before going to Limia, but in the end, it slipped by.

They concluded that they would be leaving it to the countermeasure of the super confident Mio.

"Chiya-chan is able to look at that person's essence, or more like, real nature. In other words, she obtained a demonic eye that can see through the self that the person himself doesn't notice." (Hibiki)

"Is it like the mind's eye?" (Makoto)

"Probably. And in truth, only she can use it, and she has finally grown capable of utilizing it on her own will, that's why we returned to Limia. The other day, I told her to look at Mio and Makoto-kun with that eye of hers." (Hibiki)

“...That means, she saw something in Mio and got a shock, and when she saw something in me, she collapsed?” (Makoto)

“That would be the case. I still don’t know what she saw. I have done something bad to Chiya.” (Hibiki)

(Even the chills and bad feeling I am getting are intense, so the thing that Chiya-chan saw might have been outrageous. But when she saw me, it seems like she saw my self shining. This ominousness I am feeling from Makoto-kun, just how was it reflected to Chiya-chan? That girl has amassed a good amount of experience, and she wouldn’t fall unconscious for most of anything.) (Hibiki)

“That’s information that makes me pretty depressed.” (Makoto)

(Mind’s eye huh. I can’t say that it would bring real harm to me, so maybe that’s why Tomoe and the others didn’t notify me of it? And in truth, it was the other side that collapsed anyways.) (Makoto)

Without being agitated that much about not being told of the priestess’ eyes, Makoto just accepts it.

‘Things like true character and essence, wouldn’t getting those checked actually be something to be grateful about?’ is what he was thinking at most.

“When she wakes up, I will ask her about the image she saw of you, so if you want to know, I will tell you. You can probably learn something of yourself that you didn’t know of, you know?” (Hibiki)

“Is it okay to hear it? I actually have interest in it.” (Makoto)

“It will depend on Chiya to see if you will be allowed to be present at that moment though. It would be troublesome if she were to collapse again after all.” (Hibiki)

(Hiding or deceiving would be a bad move. It is not completely impossible, but he is not someone that I can have as my enemy. Even so, I can’t help being scared of having the current Makoto-kun as an ally. The best plan would be isolation. To create an environment that no one would be able to use him...) (Hibiki)

“...She went ‘kyaaa’ after all.” (Makoto)

"In my eyes, you look like a normal young man though. Well, I do sympathize since that appearance is probably giving you a hard time in this world." (Hibiki)

(First, the most indispensable thing is to have him at arm's reach, in a distance that the eye can catch. And then, I have to learn of what he treasures, what he wants to protect; I have to grasp that inclination of his. The war with the demon race is still in progress, and even if it reaches the point of post-war period, it is easy to see that the Empire's Tomoki is going to go wild. Right now we have our hands full with the reconstruction of Limia's capital, and cleaning the festers created, and yet, an unbelievable thing has come in front of me. He is practically a world destroying bomb like the ones that appear in low-budget SF movies. To overcome all this, I have to move now. Seriously, this world is really worth being in. Could it be, that Goddess is the God of trials or something?) (Hibiki)

"Hard time... I really did have a lot of those." (Makoto)

"About that, I would like to take some time and listen to it after we finish your errand here." (Hibiki)

At the field of vision that was cleared in a moment, the big lake that was visible reflected the sunlight, and it was simply beautiful.

In the path that Hibiki and Makoto passed through, there were a lot of corpses, but a spectacle that seemed like it was washing away that brutal reality was spread before their vision.

As Hibiki spoke with Makoto, her impression and evaluation of him had changed drastically.

When she arrived at the lake, what she was thinking was about the time when priestess Chiya would be waking up, a thinking that was really set foot into reality.



On the other hand, at that time, the priestess had woken up.

Still in her lying position, she only had her eyes opened without saying anything.

She was silently breathing.

(Mio-san is the spider. The Black Calamity Spider. I can't believe it, but it is the truth. That person looked like the same giant black spider of that time. No, it wasn't the same. There were two things that were different. The first thing were those eyes, in the past I could only see fiery instinct burning from those eyes, and yet, now they were incredibly calm and quiet. The other one was... a choker.) (Chiya)

Chiya was thinking.

About what she saw from the Kuzunoha Company when they arrived at Limia.

Lime who had come out first, was the same as before.

In a spectacle that looked like a diorama, there's a large tree.

Looking at it calms her. In the images Chiya has seen, it is still top class.

The next one that appeared was the black haired woman, Mio. The moment Chiyo saw her, she almost unintentionally screamed.

A giant black spider appearing from the carriage.

It didn't rampage in any way, and was simply smiling at Chiya who was looking at her.

Chiya placed a hand on her mouth, and was somehow able to hold down her voice, trying her best to be as calm as possible.

And then, she noticed.

Those eyes that were different from before, eyes that one could feel intelligence in, and that choker.

That choker had a chain attached to it.

At times, the spider showed loving gestures as she touched the choker and chain.

It didn't seem to hate it.

And that chain stretched towards the inside of the carriage.

Kuzunoha Company's representative, Raidou.

Finally, the concerned party had come out from the carriage.

At first, Chiya was looking at Raidou's figure without using the mind's eye.

As a hyuman, it was an ugly appearance that's normally not seen, but that's all there was to it.

She was unable to perceive his magic power, so compared to Lime and Mio, one could tell at a glance that he was weaker.

It is said that he is a merchant, and it doesn't seem like a specially strange person, is how Chiya felt.

And then, she looked at Raidou with her mind's eye.

(He had a chain in hand. The chain that extended from the spider.) (Chiya)

He had a hyuman shape in complete smooth white like that of an egg.

It had a short build, and it looked like the silhouette of Raidou himself.

Until now, Chiya has seen a number of people looking like this.

There have been people that looked like they were made out of mud, and there were also people with a metallic tinge as well.

It is not a common case, so Chiya guessed that maybe it is an image that people, who are bound by something, share.

And the only thing they have in common is that they are hyuman shaped and traitless.

There were some who had long limbs, but that depended on the person, and Chiya herself still doesn't understand what it means.

This is something that's brought by her lack of experience, and it can't be helped.

In the image of Raidou, there was a big and incredibly beautiful bow in his left hand.

And in his right hand, there were three chains.

One of the chains extended towards the spider, and the remaining two stretched towards the distance.

(The meaning of those chains is probably that of control, or servitude. The bow is the weapon he uses. Just that, it was incredibly beautiful and it looked like he was holding it preciously, so it probably doesn't amount to only that.) (Chiya)

At first, Chiya was able to observe the image of Raidou with composure.

Things like the chains, the bow, and that white; she was able to think of their meaning.

Until she noticed something, that is.

She remembers that it was somewhere around his neck.

Just trying to search for that memory was making her whole body shiver.

But Chiya closed her eyes once, and opened them as if she had prepared herself. The trembling in her body stopped, and she faced that memory.

She didn't want to repeat her failure.

(Right, if I remember correctly, it was at his neck. At only that one part, the smooth surface was cracked, and the very center of it was dark. I thought it was a small stain, but it wasn't. It was hollow.) (Chiya)

At that time, Chiya strained her eyes and tried to look inside that darkness.

And then, she saw it. *<Staring back at her.>*

(Something was there. Was there? Is there? I don't know. But those eyes, they were only looking at me, and yet, my head was inundated by several images of death. It was as if I was being killed over and over. This is only my hunch but, I think that's not a living thing. It is something that shouldn't have eyes to begin with. And that something is looking at the outside from within him. With great interest, it looks around restlessly.) (Chiya)

Chiya who was facing the eyes that were peeking from the crack of the image, had fear grabbing a tight hold of her body, and just as her emotions told, she screamed.

Even if she screams, he won't disappear, and it won't solve anything.

She knew that, but even so, Chiya had no other choice but to scream.

When confusion and fear fill up one's head, they turn that way, is what Chiya thought as she looks back at her disgraceful behavior.

In all of her life until now, she hasn't experienced something like this.

Chiya didn't have the confidence to stay calm if she were to meet Raidou and Mio again.

(A person that has something like that within himself, is able to control that black spider. Sairitz said that he is the same Wise like Onee-chan, so she wanted him to visit Lorel, but that's not good, that person is a no. I don't know what those other chains are connected to either.) (Chiya)

The demon race and the Demon Lord are enemies that Chiya can still understand.

The fight against the demi-humans and mamonos that oppose hyumans as well.

Currently, Chiya, for the first time in her life, couldn't understand the foundation of something, and was being enveloped by a giant uneasiness she doesn't know what to do about.

The reason was obviously Raidou.

(What is the Kuzunoha Company? It is definitely not a simple store...) (Chiya)

While knowing that she definitely had to report about what she saw, Chiya was still unable to leave her bed.

Just that, her impression of Raidou who she hasn't exchanged a single word yet, was now the worst.



“Hm... Senpai, over here.” (Makoto)

“Makoto-kun, this is your first time coming here, right?” (Hibiki)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

“Why can you tell it is there? You don’t have a map, right?” (Hibiki)

“That’s because I was told the location of the person that will be guiding us in this lake.” (Makoto)

“Hmph~, I see.” (Hibiki)

Makoto and Hibiki walk through the lake shore.

Makoto was walking without any hesitation and Hibiki asked for the reason of it.

Half of Makoto’s answer was a lie.

It is true that he heard a guide would be waiting around the lake, but Makoto was actually using [Sakai] to pinpoint that person’s location.

Right now he is not using his Magic Armor, and was only using [Sakai] to investigate the surroundings.

(Thinking about the place we will be going now, I think it would be better not to use Materia Prima. But when you abbreviate Materia Prima it turns out as MP, that literally translates to magic points. And it can also be reversed to turn in PM. Maybe Root doesn’t have naming sense. Well, it is not something I can say though.) (Makoto)

Makoto was completely in sightseeing mode.

On the other hand, Hibiki was in quite a tense state.

There’s the fact that she is thinking of a countermeasure for Makoto, but if it were only that, it would still be within her permissible range.

That she is currently losing that surplus she normally leaves was because she was cautious of the encounter between a certain existence in the Meiris Lake with Makoto.

Hibiki has been notified that this place is the territory of the Superior Dragon with the alias ‘Waterfall’.

Hibiki who had previous experience in encountering Lancer, had more knowledge of

a Superior Dragon than normal people.

She hasn't met one directly, but it is a dragon that even has a regional religion.

She understood that it isn't an existence that can be carelessly touched.

(I have never met the Waterfall dragon, but there's no doubt that it is that dragon that is maintaining the control of Meiris Lake and its surroundings. The reason that faith is directed at it is more because of the gratitude for the blessings it has given than its power. The mamonos don't come out from the forest around the lake and they don't try to increase their turf. It's no mistake that this unnatural situation is related to the dragon. And in truth, the water that this lake has, has benefited in the expansion of the greenery. Hunters have been coming and going to the outer circumference of this forest, and in the several rivers that this lake has created, towns have prospered. In other words, the Waterfall dragon is a dragon that can coexist with humans. In that case, it is better to avoid unnecessary dispute. I can't have it die by the hands of Makoto-kun.) (Hibiki)

For Hibiki, Makoto had already become an existence that can defeat Superior Dragons.

No, he had already become an existence that surpasses the Waterfall dragon.

This is one of the many possibilities that Hibiki has created in order to grasp the background of Makoto.

Right now, Hibiki saw Makoto as a dangerous being that has a 'Don't touch, dangerous' sign with skulls all over the place.

"Ah, there it is." (Makoto)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

Being told that, Hibiki looks at the place that Makoto pointed.

At the faraway waterside, there's certainly something visible.

"It is that person, the guide. Just in case, I will ask if it's okay for Senpai to accompany me further." (Makoto)

"Hey, Makoto-kun. I am sorry for saying something that's probably obvious but, there's

someone here in this lake that's like a chief, and it is like a water god of sorts." (Hibiki)

"A water god huh. Nice way of putting it. It is true that it might fit Orient dragons." (Makoto)

"...You know that something is in Meiris Lake, right?" (Hibiki)

"That there's something, you say... Well, yeah. I do know the basic knowledge of the place I am going. This place is the territory of the Waterfall Superior Dragon, right?" (Makoto)

"...That's something that's not made public though. It is only being passed as a legend in the villages close to here and the towns that are at the river basins." (Hibiki)

Hibiki herself had heard this directly from the royal family, so learning that it was being passed down as a legend was something that happened after.

Just that, the way Makoto spoke so confidently that there's a Superior Dragon called Waterfall in this Meiris Lake was bothering her.

"I heard that from the person that requested this delivery." (Makoto)

"By the way, can you tell me of that requester? I am a Japanese person and a hero, but it is also true that I am associated with Limia Kingdom. I can't have you making problems with a Superior Dragon." (Hibiki)

"...About the requester, please let me ask the person himself in another day. It is a job, so I think it is best to not say anything I don't know if it's okay to say. But it isn't a business that will cause any problems with the Waterfall dragon, so it is safe." (Makoto)

"Understood. I will trust Makoto-kun." (Hibiki)

(It seems like he at least has a sense of responsibility in the job he has accepted. Just that, uhm, the one that Makoto-kun pointed out as someone... isn't it a mamono? In that case, it should be appropriate to think that it is not a request from the Adventurer Guild. Just what is he giving to who?) (Hibiki)

As she guessed, in the place that the two have arrived at, there wasn't a hyuman, but a mamono.

Hibiki could feel that it was a mamono that was within the strong kinds, and that mamono was approaching them without showing any kind of hostility as it made contact with them.

For a hero that has only been fighting the mamonos, this was a bothering reaction.

“Greetings. You have received word of me, right? I am the one that came with the delivery, name’s Raidou.” (Makoto)

The mamono nods.

(Words are working? Is that an ability of Makoto-kun?) (Hibiki)

In Hibiki’s ears, Makoto’s words were heard as japanese.

But those are not words that work on mamonos.

And yet, it seemed like Makoto’s words got through the mamono, and Hibiki guessed that maybe Makoto used some sort of ability.

“Yes, that’s right. I have it here. Also, if it’s okay, the Limia Kingdom’s hero Hibiki-san seems to want to go as well. Is that okay?” (Makoto)

“...”

(He is having a conversation, right? In my eyes, it only looks like a lump of gel, the size of a hyuman, trembling. Thought transmission? But Makoto-kun is speaking normally.) (Hibiki)

“Thank you very much. Eh, here and now? Understood.” (Makoto)

In the time that Hibiki was thinking about a lot of things, the conversation seemed to have reached a conclusion. Makoto gave his thanks and then, it seems like it requested something, he took the bag at his shoulder and opened it.

What appeared was a big egg.

Hibiki thought it was a spherical object, but it was something that surpassed Hibiki’s expectations.

“...Makoto-kun, what’s that? I can tell it is an egg by looking at it though.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki felt that if she asked just like that, she would only get a response that it is an egg, so by taking into account the response he might give, she asks for a deeper explanation.

It was a pretty big egg.

At the very least, it is an egg Hibiki has never seen before.

“It is rare to see one of this, right? It is a dragon egg.” (Makoto)

“DRAGON?!” (Hibiki)

Her words unintentionally came out strong.

The Meiris Lake is the territory of a Superior Dragon.

And at a place like that, they are having a conversation about a dragon egg.

It could become a delicate problem in an instant if not handled properly. Hibiki got agitated.

“Yes, it is the egg of the Waterfall dragon. I am kind of helping it return home.” (Makoto)

“Water-fall?!” (Hibiki)

“Senpai? As expected, you got surprised?” (Makoto)

Hibiki lets out incomprehensible words without caring about the eyes of others, something unusual from her.

Makoto talks with fun as if he had heard a joke.

For Hibiki, it was not the time to be surprised.

If Hibiki was really trying to let loose or make a joke to entertain, she probably would be showing more composure than this.

“Why do you have something like that when you were supposed to be in Rotsgard?”
(Hibiki)

Controlling her breathing that was about to turn disordered, Hibiki was somehow able to continue her words.

“That was uhm, there were a lot of things going on.” (Makoto)

“...You said that this is the egg of Waterfall. In that case, it will become the child of Waterfall, right? Could it be, there was an idiot who would steal the egg of a Superior Dragon?!” (Hibiki)

“Eh, ah. When I said it was the egg of Waterfall, I didn’t mean it in that way. This is Waterfall itself. A lot happened a time ago you see.” (Makoto)

“Waterfall itself?! Hey now, Makoto-kun, this isn’t a matter that can be wrapped up by just saying ‘a lot happened’, you know? Waterfall is the dragon that lives in the territory of Limia. I am not totally unrelated to this.” (Hibiki)

“Well, that is... if I don’t ask the people here, I can’t say much either. Eh? Wait?”
(Makoto)

Hibiki seeks an explanation.

Makoto was wondering how he would tell her, and looked at the direction of the gel.

In that place, there was the appearance of the gel that had changed a part of itself into a hammer.

It seems to be an action that it was doing after telling Makoto, but it seems like Makoto himself couldn’t understand what it was doing.

And then, the gel swung down that hammer.

The hammer arm of the gel hits the egg as if it was natural.

And obviously, a big crack appeared on the egg.

Actually, it should be surprising that it wasn’t smashed completely.

“Safe. Or more like, it is unexpectedly tough.”

“Wait—”

Makoto and Hibiki were looking at it dumbfounded.

The gel didn't do more than that, and was standing before the egg.

A silence ruled the space, and within that silence, the sound of something hitting could be heard.

Hibiki noticed that the sound came from inside the egg.

“This is a joke, right? Are you telling me that it will be born here and now?” (Hibiki)

“Ah, so that just now was to assist on the hatching huh.” (Makoto)

Because of the situation, the composure of Makoto and Hibiki did a complete reversal.

They watched attentively just like that.



Finally, with the crack as the center, the thick shell was lifted up.

As it was lifted up, the head peeks out like a chick.

The head of the dragon comes out from the egg.

(Just what in the world happened for a Superior Dragon to suddenly hatch. Makoto-kun doesn't seem to be that agitated. Are you telling me that this unprecedented event is a normal occurrence in his everyday life?) (Hibiki)

(...It is a western style one huh. It is a dragon that has taken a lake as its territory, and is specialized in the water element that is the best at healing, so I was expecting a snake-shaped one though. Is Tomoe the only one that was a snake-shaped dragon? Uwa, even though it hatched just now, the way it is breaking the shell is not cute at all.) (Makoto)

Makoto who was expecting a snake-shaped dragon, saw the head and claws of the dragon, and sees that its silhouette was similar to how the western dragons are depicted, and made a tensionless impression.

The gestures of shaking its head and body to shake the shell off was something that he was expecting, but even though Waterfall was the size of an arm, it was using its claws to break the shell in an incredibly composed manner and coming out from it.

The light in its eyes was not that of innocence or purity, but the eyes that would make one thing are those of an adult.

After Waterfall calmly left from its shell, it begins drawing something in the air with its small legs. In just a few moments after hatching, it was able to exercise magic.

The surrounding egg shells quickly froze, turned into dust, and disappeared.

(So it even does the cleaning itself.) (Makoto)

Makoto was thinking that this dragon kid was seriously not cute.

Waterfall was moving its head to the sides several times as if confirming its state, and it first looks at the mamono.

"You have protected this place well in my absence. It seems like I will have to increase

the number of you guys in the future."

From the mouth of the dragon, fluent common language came out.

(It is even able to talk as soon as it was born. Couldn't it have just come back here on its own? I didn't hear anything about them being like this the very moment they are born. That damn Root... Gel-san is happy here, so well, that's fine.) (Makoto)

Leaving aside the discontent of Makoto, the Gel was trembling more than any moment before, and inside the transparent body of it that doesn't have that much temperature, a number of bubbles were appearing.

And then, Waterfall faces Makoto and Hibiki.

Makoto who has a good amount of Superior Dragon acquaintances like Root and Tomoe, was the same as always; on the other hand, Hibiki's body was stiff.

For Hibiki, this is the first time that she has properly met with a Superior Dragon.

At that time with Lancer, it was a fight, and the one who did most of the fighting was actually Shiki.

It could be said that this is the first time that Hibiki can talk to a Superior Dragon.

"...Raidou, I am impressed that you accepted the request of that free-spirited and troublesome person. I give you my gratitude for returning me to Meiris Lake." (Waterfall)

"No problem." (Makoto)

"I want to have a good talk with you later so, can I have your accompany for a little bit longer?" (Waterfall)

"As long as I am able to return by today, there's no problem. Right, Senpai?" (Makoto)

"Ah, yeah, it is okay, Waterfall... -sama." (Hibiki)

"Fufufu, I don't mind you not using -sama, you know? Limia's hero, Hibiki. Leaving aside if it was actually necessary, I give you my gratitude for guarding Raidou all the way here. I also give my gratitude to the Limia royalty that has been abiding to the

contract until now. As a show of my gratitude, I will invite you to my dwelling along with Raidou. It's been awhile since I have invited people though." (Waterfall)

"Thank you very much." (Hibiki)

(What a wise dragon it is. It seems like there's complicated circumstances, but I have nothing to lose in being able to hear the conversation if only for a bit. Also... it seems like Waterfall thinks something of Makoto-kun too. I stuttered though.) (Hibiki)

"Well then, I am counting on you. Raidou, Hibiki, please just keep a tranquil heart as you are." (Waterfall)

Waterfall sends a gaze to the Gel.

As if answering that gaze, the Gel inflates its body largely, and expands itself.

Its body opens up as if it were opening its mouth, and after wrapping up Waterfall, Makoto and Hibiki, it dives into the lake just like that.

"In the space between the lake and land, there's an area where I live in. We will be arriving soon, so please enjoy the scenery underwater as we wait." (Waterfall)

The body of the Gel was muddy, but it turned transparent and was made possible to look outside.

A 360° scenery that felt like one of those aquariums, had spread in their view.

(Not the space between the land and sea, but the space between land and lake, huh. Aah, it is great that I had my Magic Armor off. I would have troubled Gel-san when it was wrapping us after all.) (Makoto)

(Calmly, and maintaining one's spirit constantly cold, you look at the situation. No matter how harsh it is, if you don't have this margin in mind as you act, you won't be able to reach the best result. Having a margin is not leeway, but an insurance line. Don't get impatient. Even if this can affect the current war and what happens after. Even if I am unable to obtain the best result, I won't give up on obtaining the better result. That's my current duty.) (Hibiki)

The day in Meiris Lake continues.



The capital Asuta.

Its reconstruction was not looking good.

The royal family's riches, the noble's riches, the hard work of the knights and the residents.

Even when they are using their investments in an adequate manner, they are being hindered by the season, and it wasn't proceeding as they thought.

If the capital had been destroyed to the point of becoming an empty lot, it would have probably made the reconstruction faster.

However, there's a great number of rubble and gouged paths, and to begin the actual reconstruction, they have to deal with that first.

Moreover, in this world, there's the existence of mamonos and it is war time as well, so they had to work in the outer walls first.

Compared to normal towns, it is a pretty fast pace, but in this case with the capital, there was a town that was doing a miracle-like reconstruction at that same period.

Academy Town, Rotsgard.

The scale of Rotsgard Academy and the capital are around the same.

The two were similar in the part that they possessed satellite towns.

But the reconstruction speed of Rotsgard after being destroyed was absurd.

Even though the disaster occurred at the same time, the information of Rotsgard had reached the ears of Asuta as well, and because of their absurd speed in it, the residents and nobles that live in the capital were suspecting that maybe there's some sort of problem in the reconstruction at the capital's side.

In the end, the Limia royal family requested a reconstruction cooperation of Rotsgard.

It is well known that the reconstruction of Rotsgard has a high number of students

and magicians working in it, and Hibiki who considered that they should take the same method, stood as a messenger and requested for help.

After less than a few months, the plans will probably differ, but the many students and magicians will probably participate in the reconstruction of the capital.

The fact that they have requested for cooperation was at the same time proof that Rotsgard didn't need that many magicians anymore, and was also showing that it is already returning to its former shape.

In just a few months, a prominent town had climbed up from a disaster, and recovering.

There's no doubt that the revival of Rotsgard will be spoken of for a long time to come.

"They are taking their sweet time here."

"Rotsgard is just way too fast. It is also because our place is helping out, but that place is a treasure trove of magicians. I think it was a miracle result that was brought out by the good combination of people commanding and people executing."

"Also, they have the chance to remake it, so they should have made the outer walls at a more distant location, and increase the scale of the inside. Are there no people here that can use their head?"

"...Nee-san, an outer wall is the lifeline of a town. Just rebuilding it is already a high priority task. It seems like this time the foundation was fortunately okay, so it was judged that it would be plenty enough to rebuild as it is." (Lime)

"...Ah, so that's why they didn't move it one inch huh. Even though they should know that they are in a location where they will constantly face the meddling of demons." (Mio)

"It seems like Hibiki and a number of nobles were contemplating on moving it, but in this situation, it is impossible. If they were to force it, by the time they finish the new capital, who knows how many of the inhabitants would be left." (Lime)

Being guided through Asuta and seeing the slow reconstruction state, Mio gave an honest advice.

Lime gave a follow-up by saying that in a realistic point of view, Asuta is actually doing a good job, but Mio's expression didn't seem to show a single shred of consenting to that.

He was also being careful about the second prince who is silently guiding them to the next location.

Because the words of Mio were definitely heard by him.

No matter if they were told there's no need to worry about formalities, Lime is not the type who would take those words for granted.

While feeling chills that maybe Mio was trying to buy a fight with Joshua, Lime was moving about in confusion between those two.

"Mio-dono and Lime-dono seem to have seen the miracle town Rotsgard, so I think it is a plausible opinion. The current situation of the capital is a problem that is hurting our heads, and it is the truth that we are hurrying because of our feelings that we should finish it as fast as possible. The proposal of Hibiki about moving the capital was something that has to be considered, but in the current state, regaining the functions of the capital and the towns, as well as the livelihood of the people was of higher priority, so at this time, we couldn't do it." (Joshua)

"How leisure. I wonder if you will be able to finish while it is still winter." (Mio)

Normally, a city wouldn't be able to recover so fast.

It is something that has to be planned for at least a few years.

"We have to at least arrange the looks, no matter what. Ah, you two, it is here. From here, we can climb up on top of the outer walls. I think you will be able to see a different form of the capital from here compared to the castle." (Joshua)

Just as Joshua said, a part of the outer walls had something similar to a cabin constructed, and from there, a long flight of stairs stretched up.

The three went to the top of the outer wall, and have an unobstructed view of the capital's interior and outside.

"This is... The talk was that people will be coming from Rotsgard, but even so, looking

like this, I think it will be taking around half a year before it takes proper form." (Lime)

"As expected of Lime-dono, a splendid diagnosis. The result of our discussion about the assistance of Rotsgard, was that it would take around that time. Hibiki said that there's still room to make it faster though." (Joshua)

"By that time, the demon race will be attacking already-desu wa. The logic that the enemy won't attack because you are in the middle of recovering is not possible." (Mio)

(Mio-neesan. We should stop this topic soon. This is a problem of Limia, and help from Rotsgard will be coming. Even if we stick our head into this matter, well, I don't think it will show a good result. Boss didn't tell us anything either so...) (Lime)

(...Lime, are you looking to be peeled too?) (Mio)

(Peeling?!) (Lime)

(In the first place, just how much do you think Waka-sama has helped in that Rotsgard reconstruction? And in truth, what's most important is to have them understand that very point. Be silent.) (Mio)

(No well, uhm...) (Lime)

(Be silent, okay? I will properly talk to Waka-sama later. It's okay to just match what I say.) (Mio)

(...Understood-ssu.) (Lime)

Unable to stay silent, Lime send a thought transmission to Mio.

But he ended up being shut out himself and curling his tail.

In the first place, the standing and power of Lime and Mio are way too different.

Travelling together with Mio was impossible for Lime.

It could be said that the most he could do was change the direction slightly.

"Well then, does the Kuzunoha Company have a good idea?" (Joshua)

Joshua asks for a suggestion from Mio.

Those words were a given.

“Of course. If you want to, I can show you a bit of it right now.” (Mio)

With a smile, she answers prince Joshua as if nothing.

Seeing this, Lime had his usual expression, but internally, he was rolling around in suffering.

(Uaaah! It is happening again! It is that same smile! Boss, please return quick! This is impossible, with only me, this is definitely impossible-ssu!!) (Lime)

Lime didn't know what she intended to do.

Just that... he was sure that she was *going* to do something.

It hurt.

Lime's stomach was hurting.

“Go ahead please.” (Joshua)

With slightly sharp eyes, Joshua said these short words.

“Okay. Ah right, prince Joshua, that section there has a lot of rubble, right? It looks like you haven't worked on that part yet.” (Mio)

“We haven't been able to work on that section yet. The part that can be seen at the other side as well, and the part at the left side too. We haven't been able to clear away the rubble yet.” (Joshua)

“Are there people there?” (Mio)

“The entrance is currently prohibited.” (Joshua)

“Then, is it okay to use magic?” (Mio)

“...Go ahead.” (Joshua)

“Fufufu~.” (Mio)

Mio didn't say anything.

She took out her folding fan from her bosom, and pointed it towards the place that is still filled in rubble.

Prince Joshua looked carefully at Mio's appearance and the rubble alternately.

Lime was already looking at some place faraway from the rubble and letting out a dry laugh.

“I will be doing it-desu wa.” (Mio)

“?!!”

The short words of Mio.

At the place where the folding fan was pointing, in an instant, a dark swirl appeared at the ground and everything was gone.

Being swallowed by the dark swirl, the earth and sand, along with the rubble, had disappeared completely.

Prince Joshua places his right hand at his mouth.

One could easily tell that he was showing surprise.

(She did it. She ended up doing it, Boss... Now, they probably know that the Rotsgard reconstruction speed had something to do with us as well. It is true that it is the place that Boss is living in, and we haven't done much in keeping it a secret, but... I thought that it would have been better to keep it hidden-ssu. Mio-neesan is planning to destroy it, a lot of things.) (Lime)

Lime felt that something else was coming out aside from his long sigh, and the cries of his heart resounded pitifully.

“Also, you said that side over there and the left side was the same, right? Then...” (Mio)

Mio continued onto the other two parts, and erases the rubble.

Even though there were priorities to take care of first, the terrible spectacle that had been left like that for several months, had disappeared in an instant.

"Just what kind of magic can do something like this? Was there a spell like that in the dark element? Also, what's swallowed there... where does it go?" (Joshua)

While looking at the place that had become a completely empty plot of land, Joshua mutters to no one in particular.

"I will be taking it out after this-desu wa. It is okay to let it out anywhere outside the outer walls, right?" (Mio)

Mio answers the mutters of Joshua that were not directed at anyone.

"Ah, yeah... I want you to avoid doing that where the camps are though." (Joshua)

Joshua who had lost his courteous way of speaking towards the Kuzunoha Company, had answered Mio as if she were the supervisor of a construction work.

Just that, from the relationship between Joshua and Mio, this way of speaking is no problem at all.

Actually, it could be said that until now, he had been way too courteous.

"So you don't mind. Then, at that part-desu wa ne." (Mio)

Mio didn't show much interest in the change of the prince, and continued speaking.

There's also the point that she didn't care about the attitude of the prince as she acted though.

Pointing the folding fan to the outsides of the capital, a dark swirl was created.

In a distant place, rubble, earth, and sand came out one after the other from the dark swirl and as it fell, it made the ground tremble and did a dull sound. It even reached the ears of the three who were at the outer walls.

"What a powerful magic." (Joshua)

"Powerful? Something of this level, I can do it hundreds of times-desu wa. The rubble

and scraps of wood in this place, I would be able to throw it outside in one day if I wanted to. Lime, with this, how much did it shorten the reconstruction time?" (Mio)

"...Right, let's see-ssu. It probably reduced 2 months of work-ssu." (Lime)

"Ara ara, how simple." (Mio)

"Mio-dono, then can you please lend us that power of yours? What you are trying to say is that you will be helping us in the reconstruction of this capital?" (Joshua)

"I will confirm with Waka-sama once he returns, but if it's just for one day, there's no problem-desu wa. Waka-sama is not here and I don't have anything to do anyways." (Mio)

"Just for this one day', what great words! Of course, I will be giving a proper compensation. I will bring the one in charge right this instant, so please, do lend us your strength!" (Joshua)

"I don't care about the one in charge, but prince, the condition is that *you* will be there as well. You will be witnessing what the Kuzunoha Company's Mio will be doing." (Mio)

"If my presence is enough, I will engrave it in my eyes." (Joshua)

The sun was still high up.

It seems like the day of Mio and Lime who were suddenly assisting in the reconstruction work, was still long to be over.

Chapter 208

A long long day in Limia (bottom)

"I was expecting a cave-looking place, but it seems it was completely different."

"Right. But since it is a water dragon, this might be more fitting actually. It is incredibly interesting."

Makoto and Hibiki were at the island that is floating at the center of Meiris Lake, in that place, there's a giant temple.

It looked like an ancient greece temple, with stone tiles and stairs, and the material quality of every article that made this place was high.

It made the two feel that this is not a place where people live.

(...The damage is terrible. It would be another case if it were ruins, but this is a dwelling. There's a lot of recent damage made by magic and swords. It seems like the 'a lot of things happening', are pretty violent stuff.) (Hibiki)

The outward appearance and its interior was terribly damage to be called a dwelling.

Just as Hibiki noticed, there was quite a lot of recent damage.

She was certain that there had been a large scale battle in this place.

"Water has been used as a mirror since time immemorial. The special traits of water are a lot more varied than hyumans can think of." (Waterfall)

Waterfall stepped forward first.

She was sitting on top of the Gel type mamono, and turned her head to answer the guests that she had invited.

The Superior Dragon Waterfall's dwelling is at an island at the center of Meiris Lake.

But in the Meiris Lake that Makoto and Hibiki were just a few moments ago didn't have an island at its center.

Right now, they are at a space of Meiris Lake that Waterfall had created.

Its utilization is quite different from Tomoe's, but Waterfall was a dragon that possessed a space as well.

(Mirror huh. Is it like the world at the other side of the mirror? The scene at the water's surface can be broken by the waves and gives an unstable image, but even though this is small for a space, it feels like it is stable. It resembles Tomoe's Asora, but... could it be that water is the closest to the element of space creation?) (Makoto)

Makoto was comparing the inherent ability of Tomoe -Asora- with the current space that was probably created by Waterfall.

"Waterfall, let me go right to the point. If I were to put it the water element to practical use, can I compose a separate space even if temporary, and retain it?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki was thinking if she could put the water element into practical use to create a separate space she can use as a storage.

If they can make use of it, it would be extremely useful in armies.

They have to rival the demon race in techniques and strategy as much as possible, or the hyumans will continue suffering hard fights.

It is because she understands this that she made this question.

"Well, I wouldn't say there's no chance, but this temple holds the special characteristic of my water, and it was combined with the power of the Meiris Lake; a result born by chance. It is also the one of the reasons why I live here. In magic, water is indeed one of the elements closest to creating a space, but in terms of the utilization you are thinking of, the one with the highest chance of knowing would be a certain someone that specializes in illusions." (Waterfall)

"Someone that specializes in illusions... It is true that something of this level can't be done easily." (Hibiki)

"..."

(I feel like she is talking directly about Tomoe. Just how do the memories of Superior Dragons work? She is talking of Tomoe as if she knew of her. Anyways, this place is really different to Asora. Her space is only as big as a lake after all. Also, there's a problem in it.) (Makoto)

Makoto didn't react to the words of Waterfall and was thinking.

He was using Sakai and trying to understand this space.

From the information that was gathered, he learned that this place is simply connected to the real Meiris Lake, and it was different from Asora which can be used for complete isolation if they wanted to.

"Now then, please come in. Fortunately, I am currently in this size. We will be able to talk comfortably here." (Waterfall)

Following the invitation of Waterfall, the place that we arrived at was a courtyard.

A soft bright light was shining, and there's a lake at one's field of vision.

A table and sits were prepared, and there were even cups and a pot.

Makoto and Hibiki took their seats, and Waterfall takes a seat that was raised for herself.

The Gel skillfully grabs the pot and serves what seems to be tea to Makoto and Hibiki. It turns to Waterfall and trembles once before trailing its way out of the courtyard.

"That guy is quite handy." (Makoto)

"He is the one that takes care of my everyday necessities. Because of that incident, they have decreased a lot in numbers though." (Waterfall)

"Is it your familiar? Or maybe a devotee?" (Makoto)

"It is the same relationship as that of 'her' and the Mist Lizards, Raidou." (Waterfall)

"Ah, I see." (Makoto)

Makoto was impressed by the dedication of the Gel.

With an answer that only Makoto would understand, she expressed the relationship between both.

“...Waterfall, is it really okay for me to be here as well?” (Hibiki)

Making a conversation that she didn’t understand as soon as it begins, Hibiki asked in consideration.

She was already given the permission to be there, but it was to confirm just in case.

“Of course. I hold a personal interest in you. Please accompany us here. My conversation with Raidou won’t be long, and after, there’s also something I want to talk with you about.” (Waterfall)

“...Understood.” (Hibiki)

“Now then, Raidou. It seems ‘that person’ has caused you a lot of trouble huh. Even though the problem has been resolved, it is easy to imagine that the situation would have gotten even worse without your help. With that in consideration as well, I give you my gratitude.” (Waterfall)

“It is not something you have to turn so courteous when saying. Also, the one that was troubled the most was probably Grount-san. I think that it would be better to thank that person instead of me.” (Makoto)

“Grount huh. You went through the White Desert by feet, right? It is certainly true that since I am in this kind of state, I most likely caused a lot of burden to her.” (Waterfall)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

“Anyways, I think that, as a Superior Dragon, I have to reward you. You probably won’t be happy about money and goods, so I have prepared a magic book for you.” (Waterfall)

(A magic book. At times, I feel strong magic power from Makoto-kun, and at times I don’t feel anything at all, which I don’t understand well. With that attack that dispersed the purple cloud, I should think that he possesses a giant amount of magic power. In that case, a magic book from a dragon could increase his power even more. But I currently have no way of stopping it. How vexing.) (Hibiki)

Hearing the word magic book, Hibiki instantly strengthens her caution.

A strong magician will be obtaining strong spells.

Hibiki understands just how much of a danger that is.

“A magic book. Thank you very much.” (Makoto)

“I think you will be needing it. Please use it for the sake of leading the world to a good path. Of course, I don’t mind if you take a number of them. I will guide you there, so how about checking them out?” (Waterfall)

“Is that okay?” (Makoto)

Makoto made a honest reaction to the words ‘he is going to need it’.

Waterfall who seemed to understand the situation, told Makoto that she had prepared magic books that he would need.

Obviously he would have an interest.

“Of course. You have accepted my gratitude, and if you will be taking the recompense for it as well, it would only make me happy. At the other side of the courtyard, I have a guide waiting at the pathway along the lake. With this, let’s put a finish to the stiff talk, and I will be speaking with Hibiki for a while.” (Waterfall)

“Sorry for the trouble, and thanks.” (Makoto)

(She feels the most sober out of all the Superior Dragons I have met. Honestly, it derails my pace.) (Makoto)

Makoto stands up from his seat, and advances through the corridor that Waterfall had pointed, and disappeared from the field of vision of Waterfall and Hibiki who were left.

“...”

“...”

Seeing the back of Makoto going away, a silent time between Waterfall and Hibiki

began.

“...I understand that you had Makoto-kun leave and wanted to speak with me about something. Just that, I think that your position is higher than mine and Makoto-kun. Can I ask your reason for this?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki who has been silent until now, looks straight at Waterfall and speaks.

“You are sharp. I am relieved that you are just as I expected you to be, Hibiki. The reason why I wanted to be alone with you, is because I have something to request of you.” (Waterfall)

“A request? A Superior Dragon like you... to me?” (Hibiki)

“It isn’t something strange. Even a Goddess is requesting of a hero after all.” (Waterfall)

“...”

“Just as you can see, I am currently not in a body that can exert much power. In truth, I would have preferred to make contact with you before I turned this way, but an unexpected situation occurred and it couldn’t be fulfilled.” (Waterfall)

“A lot happened?” (Hibiki)

“Of course, I will be requesting of you, so I will be telling you later. Hibiki.” (Waterfall)

“What is it?” (Hibiki)

“Please seal Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“!!”

Hearing the unexpected words of Waterfall, Hibiki’s breath stops.

Leaving her surprised eyes, she simply waited for the words of Waterfall that should have a continuation.

“Even if I am saying seal, I am not telling you to do anything dangerous. Accurately speaking, I want you to prevent him from growing more than he is now. I want you to be the overseer of this.” (Waterfall)

“What do you mean by that?” (Hibiki)

“I think you have already noticed, but that person is incredibly dangerous. It could be said that he is already a danger to all the existences that live in this world.” (Waterfall)

“...That much?” (Hibiki)

“We –Superior Dragons– normally don’t intervene in the dispute between hyumans and demi-humans, and we don’t have an interest in it either. Frankly speaking, we don’t care who they glorify in this world. That’s why, leaving aside the Spirits, the Superior Dragons don’t actively take part in the war between hyumans and demons.” (Waterfall)

“...”

While being well-known as an existence of high power, the Superior Dragons practically didn’t intervene in the war that’s currently happening.

Grount who is giving divine protection to one of the knights of the Empire, is a dragon that provides power to the people no matter if there’s a war or not.

The exception was Lancer, but it is not like he was cooperating with the hyumans or cooperating with the demons.

Because of the contract with Sofia, both were merely moving for their own objectives.

“But thinking about the hyumans, demi-humans, and the many races out there in this world, there’s one hyuman that becomes an unprecedented threat to them. That’s Raidou. Misumi Makoto. Depending on his actions, I might have to move myself.” (Waterfall)

“...An unprecedented threat.” (Hibiki)

Waterfall had a thinking that was incredibly close to what Hibiki thought.

That this dragon is perceiving Makoto with the same level of threat she does.

“People change as easy as water, they possess a flexible vessel, and are living beings that can show change in trickery. Normally, I would oversee all this, and even if there were a revolutionist appearing, it would only be considered as the natural flow. But

Raidou is not even that. He will simply destroy. Nothing will be born from him. In the past, present, and future, he will simply destroy. He is the kind of existence that has a strong possibility to do this." (Waterfall)

(It is practically the same thinking. Makoto-kun won't hesitate in fighting against existences that he has deemed as enemies. And he thinks of life –and most likely his own as well– in an incredibly dry manner. For the sake of resolving the problem, he wouldn't care about eliminating the obstacle. He is a boy that would naturally accept this flow of events. And without thinking back on it, he steps forward.) (Hibiki)

Waterfall had been defeated by Sofia, and was absorbed temporarily into herself.

For Waterfall who has been thinking about making contact with Hibiki, this was a big blunder.

But thanks to that, Waterfall was able to witness the two battles of Raidou against Sofia, and within the egg, she was able to learn a lot through Root's analysis.

On top of that, what Waterfall thought first was to jeer at certain existences that were right beside that person.

'Just how far are you going to go in order to fulfill your own enjoyment?! Just what do you think of the world, you idiotic bunch?!"

80% was directed at Root, and 20% was directed at Tomoe.

Afterwards, she let out her anger that couldn't turn into words, and was throwing jeers that she had no choice but to not say.

It's been a long time since Waterfall had fallen into a complete state of rage.

That's why Waterfall was grateful for the unexpected chance that Hibiki came to Meiris Lake as well.

And so, she decided to throw away her restraints.

"His past self wasn't like that, he was a normal young man. He probably didn't have that abnormal nature there's no way of hiding." (Hibiki)

"The possible reason is this world. Being separated from his family and the world that

was filled with peaceful common sense, he has slowly shedded off the way of thinking of ‘that other world’. Even so, right now it is only on the level of shedding off the thin skin of the egg. His morals and ethics are still alive, so that’s probably the remains of the Raidou that Hibiki previously knew of.” (Waterfall)

“An abnormal nature that would have been buried if he hadn’t come to this world... In other words, he is a person that would have been better if he hadn’t come?” (Hibiki)

“Exactly. Thinking about the fact that he should have originally been summoned alone into this world, it could be considered that this situation is a miracle in itself.” (Waterfall)

“...What do you mean by that?” (Hibiki)

“The head of the Superior Dragons has a connection with the Goddess. Since it is the information of that person, it should be credible, but originally, the only one that had a connection to this world, was Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“In other words, the irregulars are not Makoto-kun, but us who were called here as heroes?” (Hibiki)

“Yes, and from what I guess, that’s has probably become some sort of debt inside of Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“Debt? Why?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki asks for the basis of that guess.

Hibiki and Tomoki had consented to coming to this world after hearing the situation from the Goddess.

It is certainly true that if given more time, the answer might have changed, but it was a decision they made themselves.

That’s why, even if they are irregulars, the fact that they have become heroes isn’t something that Makoto should feel indebted for.

“This is only a guess. Finding a suitable time, please confirm it with your own ears. And if it’s actually true...” (Waterfall)

“...You are telling to keep silent about my feelings that: 'I don't think anything about it, and that's just misplaced debt'?” (Hibiki)

“...It is great that you are quick on the uptake.” (Waterfall)

If the person feels debt by himself, it shouldn't be corrected and utilized instead.

In that sense, the two of them were in sync.

“Honestly, Makoto-kun's threat level is something that I felt as well. Today it turned into certainty though. I don't know if I will be able to answer your expectations, but I do think that I must associate with him in a prudent manner.” (Hibiki)

“That's fine. Don't let him get used to the battlefield, and make him be as far as possible from the war. If the person himself is satisfied with being a merchant, please help him do it. In present, that's the best direction.” (Waterfall)

“You don't have a plan that can solve the root problem?” (Hibiki)

“I have one, but leaving aside him, the people around him most likely won't consent to it. If possible, that would be the best solution, and it is also what he has gone to check at this moment.” (Waterfall)

“...And that is?” (Hibiki)

“It is simple. The technique for a recalling ritual. For me, that would be the best solution, but... thinking about the current situation, it would be impossible to realize.” (Waterfall)

“*Summon? No, a recall?!* In other words, a method to return to Japan!! In that case!!” (Hibiki)

Hearing the solution of Waterfall, Hibiki's eyes glittered in an instant.

Certainly, if it's that method, Raidou who is not that attached to this world, would not only give his consent, but that way, it will also work as the perfect isolation.

She thought that it was the best method where no one would be unhappy.

But at the same time, it bothered her that Waterfall said it was impossible in a

regrettable manner.

“...To accomplish the ritual there’s the need for around a thousand lives, and on top of that, it can only recall. Moreover, it is not a forced one, but a ritual where the person has to consent to in order to actually work.” (Waterfall)

“A thousand...” (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought that it was a small amount of sacrifices compared to the danger he might cause in the future.

“Raidou has a special companion relationship between many, and the people that have a strong connection with him in this world are not few. It is not a realistic solution.” (Waterfall)

“Are you referring to Tomoe-san and Mio-san?” (Hibiki)

“...Yeah. It is troublesome. About Mio, your companion Chiya probably knows of it already. When you return, you can hear it from her. What I can say for sure is that, whether it is Tomoe or Mio, it will be impossible to obtain consent for the recall. Because even if the residents of this world consent to the recalling ritual, they won’t be able to go to the same world as Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“...”

“Hibiki, listen well. Change him not with battle, but with a different method, and find some way to seal him within peace. Raidou’s vessel for power itself is completely different from you and the Empire’s hero. It can take form suddenly, and trying to oppose it would be a foolish. No matter how big of a vessel humans possess, they won’t be able to take in the whole sea. It goes beyond comparison.” (Waterfall)

“Vessel of power...” (Hibiki)

“Even if we were to put all the power in this world into one, I don’t think we would be able to realize a battle.” (Waterfall)

“Then, don’t tell me that even the Goddess...” (Hibiki)

“...If it turns into a situation where the Goddess herself comes down to this world and fights...” (Waterfall)

“...”

“This world will most likely be destroyed by its root.” (Waterfall)

“No way.” (Hibiki)

“I am sure of this.” (Waterfall)

“...”

Waterfall is saying this.

That Makoto already has the power to outdo the Goddess.

As expected, Hibiki was unable to easily accept this level of opinion.

She decided to just listen to it as one opinion Waterfall has of Raidou.

“You have learned of both sides of the Goddess’ world, and even with that, you were still able to think about changing it from the inside. That approach of yours struck my heart. Because of my powerless body, I am unable to provide you divine protection or form a pact with you, but I –the Superior Dragon Waterfall– promise to cooperate with hero Hibiki. I will leave this world in Hibiki’s hands.” (Waterfall)

“...I said it before but, why did Waterfall end up in that body?” (Hibiki)

“Ah, I still haven’t explained it, right. Actually, I was killed by the Dragon Slayer Sofia not that long ago.” (Waterfall)

“...Eh?” (Hibiki)

“And then, aside from me, there was also Crimson Red and Darkness Clad. Sofia who had killed us and obtained our power, was half killed by Raidou who didn’t suffer a single injury.” (Waterfall)

“...Eh?!” (Hibiki)

“And then, Sofia was finished by our Head. Being released, we were looked after by the Superior Dragon’s Head, and Raidou is currently delivering them to the several locations.” (Waterfall)

“...”

“He has connections with the demon race as well, so I think Hibiki will definitely have it hard. If you were a man, your hair would definitely fall mercilessly. But I believe that if it’s you, you will be able to gather all the circumstances, and lead it to the best result.” (Waterfall)

“Wa, wait!!” (Hibiki)

Being told truths she didn’t know of one after the other, Hibiki had turned into a reaction doll.

With its round eyes, Waterfall was looking straight at Hibiki with a pressure that didn’t suit her small body as she cornered her more and more.

“Fuh~, after saying it out, I now feel a bit lighter. It’s like something has come off from my shoulder.” (Waterfall)

“D-Don’t just put it down!! What was that about the demon race?! No matter what I do, we would end up confronting anyways then!!” (Hibiki)

“...Please do your best, Hibiki.” (Waterfall)

“You are supposed to be cooperating with me, right? Didn’t you say that just now? Isn’t all of this something that shouldn’t be said now, but at a more earlier stage?!!” (Hibiki)

“Sorry. I was dead all this time, and today I was recently born. Even if I could observe, I wasn’t in a state where I could tell you.” (Waterfall)

“What’s with that...? What’s that about being dead, seriously...” (Hibiki)

Hibiki who had stood up from her seat, once again took her seat as if the strength in her legs had given out.

“Even so, Hibiki, you won’t break. Your nature is that of a challenger. And you are a genius. Wring out the power of the people to protect this world and the Goddess as well.” (Waterfall)

“I wonder why... I feel incredibly tired.” (Hibiki)

"When you return, listen to what the priestess has to say. And then, if possible, try having a bout with Raidou. By doing that, you will definitely understand; what I saw and feared." (Waterfall)

Hibiki didn't answer Waterfall's words.

She had her head hung down and her eyes closed. Maybe she was trying to understand this situation, or it might be that she is simply exhausted.

She continued staying silent.

"...For now, I will try with the talk about the recall and the convincing. And after that, I will try having a bout. If I have no choice but to do it, I understand I will have to carry this burden as I move forward." (Hibiki)

(*The one to remove the traveller's clothes wasn't the wind, but the sun; the one who defeated Watounai wasn't a tiger but an old lady, was it*. To think that I would have to do something like this when we are still in war... I feel like I am doing war with both the Kuzunoha Company and the demon race at the same time.) (Hibiki)

"I am counting on you. Ah, try to act as you always do with Raidou." (Waterfall)

"Because I was the one you told the situation to, you believe that I am able to do it, right? I have somewhat understood your personality." (Hibiki)

"How reliable." (Waterfall)

Hibiki stands up and heads towards the library that Makoto went to.

Waterfall got on Hibiki's shoulder and showed her will to accompany her.

"Right, Hibiki. If it's for a short time, I can make myself bigger, so at the time of your return, I will be taking you outside. It will also provide a plus to your name." (Waterfall)

"Since the circumstances are like this, I will accept anything that can serve as a plus." (Hibiki)

Thinking about the meaning of returning by riding a dragon, Hibiki accepts the proposal immediately.

Hearing a vast amount of information, she felt that she wouldn't be able to sleep for several days, and a small sigh leaked out.



Riding a giant dragon, Hibiki and Makoto return to the capital.

The big frame of Waterfall that came flying in the sunset sky had surprised the people of the capital, but after learning that Hibiki was riding at its back, they were welcomed with big ovations.

(Eh? There's a lot of rubble outside. The help of Rotsgard shouldn't have come yet, so... Was Mio the one who did it?) (Makoto)

After finishing the delivery of the egg as per usual, Makoto obtained several useful magic books from Waterfall and was in a good mood.

Teleporting from world to world.

Learning of the existence of magic books that have magic formations that could be used for this purpose, Makoto was dazed.

By the time Hibiki and Waterfall had finished their talk and had come to look for him, Makoto was seriously reading through the magic books.

Coming down from Waterfall who had landed close to the outer walls, she said her thanks to Makoto and Hibiki, and just like that, they parted ways and returned to the castle.

It was close to dinner.

Makoto did a meeting with Mio and Lime; Hibiki did an emergency meeting with the Limia king, prince Joshua, and the close aides of the king.

Within the tense atmosphere, Hibiki explains about Waterfall.

Of course, the talk of Waterfall wasn't something that could be readily said, and was unable to explain the dangerous sensation she felt at that moment.

Moreover, Joshua spoke about the assistance in the reconstruction from the Kuzunoha

Company, and that made her sigh several times.

On the other hand, Makoto praised Mio for helping out in the reconstruction, and thanked Lime.

He spoke about how he already finished delivering the egg and showed Mio the magic books that Waterfall had given him.

In contrast to Limia's side, this side's conversation advanced in a cheerful manner.

And then...

"Mio-san is the black spider, Onee-chan." (Chiya)

"...Please give me a break..." (Hibiki)

"It is the truth. Also, that person Raidou, uhm, he is in control of that black spider, or keeping her." (Chiya)

"...Hah..." (Hibiki)

"Onee-chan." (Chiya)

"What is it, Chiya-chan?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki went to see Chiya who had woken up.

At today's dinner, it will be Kuzunoha Company, the royal family, and the hero party, who will be participating.

Since they didn't know if Chiya would be able to attend it, it was also a visit to see if she had the will to do it.

She apologized first for having her use the Mind's Eye, but Chiya got angry saying that it wasn't necessary to apologize.

Hibiki didn't want to forcefully ask her about the image she got, but the priestess herself opened the conversation, and Hibiki felt a profound gratitude towards that action, but the contents of it made her face stiffen.

"That Raidou person is definitely a no. Fighting him or even getting along with him is a no. I don't think he as good of a person as he makes it out to be. If possible, don't get involved with the Kuzunoha Company either." (Chiya)

"How did that person look to you, Chiya-chan?" (Hibiki)

"...It was a smooth white hyuman shaped image, but inside of him, there was an incredibly disagreeing 'something'." (Chiya)

"I have heard about hyuman shaped ones a number of times already, but having something is new." (Hibiki)

"The white part was slightly cracked. From there, I could see it slightly." (Chiya)

"Cracked... In other words, the white hyuman shape is the figure he thinks he is... and that has begun to fall apart? But white. Until now, there hasn't been an image with that color, right?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah, but it was a pure white." (Chiya)

"Whichever it is, I have understood plenty enough that it is a dangerous image. And that we shouldn't settle an interpretation of it too soon as well. Thanks, Chiya-chan. You don't have to look at them with your Mind's Eye anymore." (Hibiki)

"...Yeah. But if needed, I will do it again, okay?" (Chiya)

"Even so, Mio is the black spider huh. I did think it was strange that there were no reports of it appearing again after we only encountered it once but... to think that she was an employee in a company, there's a limit to unexpected. In other words, the opponent that played around with us until the verge of death and left on a whim, saved us in our training and gave us equipment huh. What are we doing, seriously." (Hibiki)

The self-deprecating mutters of Hibiki at the end had leaked.

Her words had an unusual bitterness in it.

"The person called Raidou is probably stronger than her. And Mio-san didn't seem to dislike being controlled. Also..." (Chiya)

"Yeah, continue." (Hibiki)

"That person's image... had three chains of control. In other words, he has two other people that are similar to Mio-san." (Chiya)

"Two huh. Okay. I have a slight idea of who." (Hibiki)

"I see. As expected of Onee-chan." (Chiya)

"...Hey, Chiya-chan. Today's dinner will be with the people of Kuzunoha Company. Will you be able to come? If it is too hard for you, you can eat in your room, you know?" (Hibiki)

"I will go. I have done something rude to them after all. I have to apologize." (Chiya)

"You aren't scared?" (Hibiki)

"Souring their mood and having them cause trouble to Limia Kingdom and Lorel Union is something I want even less, so I'm fine." (Chiya)

The priestess that had an expression that didn't suit her age, said this firmly.

For a second, Hibiki was in mute amazement, but she soon showed a smile that came from deep inside and nodded.

"Also... after finishing the meal, as a sideshow, I was thinking about... fighting him once..." (Hibiki)

"You can't!!" (Chiya)

She cut off Hibiki's words.

"...It is only a bout, you know? We won't be fighting to death. This is just my guess but, if he is like that, it is safe. Also, even if it turns dangerous... he is someone that we have to probe no matter what. It is also because someone asked me to, but I think it is necessary too." (Hibiki)

"That person is far more dangerous than Tomoki-san, you know? This is only a possibility, but maybe even more than the Demon Lord." (Chiya)

"Yeah, I know. I also share the same opinion, Chiya-chan. I think there's other methods we can use, but to tell you the truth, I wanted to test a bit." (Hibiki)

“That person? No, Onee-chan herself?” (Chiya)

“Yeah. ‘I won’t move on self-interest anymore’, that’s what I thought of doing, but I still can’t do it. Throwing my all, I want to learn more about him, about myself.” (Hibiki)

“...Then I will also watch. When you get hurt, I will heal you immediately.” (Chiya)

“Please. I am sorry for being an useless hero.” (Hibiki)

“For me, Hibiki Onee-chan is the best hero-sama, so you are not useless!” (Chiya)

“...I see.” (Hibiki)



“I didn’t think you would be accepting this kind of request. Thank you, Raidou-dono.”

“Don’t mind it. It is something that I have been thinking of as well. To be able to have a bout with hero-sama, it is something I can boast about.” (Makoto)

Two hours after finishing dinner without any incidents.

“The less spectators the better, but making it less than this was impossible.” (Hibiki)

Makoto and Hibiki were about to confront at the place where the knights train, located at the back of the castle.

Just like Hibiki said, there’s few spectators since it is a faraway place.

The hero party, Limia King, prince Joshua, and a number of nobles.

And then, the Kuzunoha Company’s Mio and Lime.

“I don’t mind.” (Makoto)

(After I finish what I want to try, I can just go ahead and lose after all.) (Makoto)

“We will both go seriously and with our all, okay? And when we are finished, let’s have a drink together. You can hold your alcohol, right? It would be a waste not to enjoy this good night, so I will entertain you.” (Hibiki)

"I can hold it a bit. I will happily accompany you." (Makoto)

(Senpai looks like she can hold her alcohol really well. I don't think she will force me to drink, so I will just order some tea before anything happens.) (Makoto)

Whether she knows how Makoto feels or not, Hibiki pushes the word that this is a serious match.

On the other hand, Makoto was already worried about the events *after* the match.

Distance was taken between the two.

Maybe because they took in consideration that Makoto's weapon is a bow, the two of them had taken quite a lot of distance compared to a fight with swords.

"Then... let's begin." (Hibiki)

"Yes." (Makoto)

A short exchange.

But the tension in the place increased in an instant.

Hibiki summons Horn from her silver belt, and immediately activates her serious equipment.

Horn and the silver belt that were shining strongly, hid in a small area of Hibiki's body and protected it.

The invisible defensive field that was created by the sacred treasure provided high endurance to Hibiki.

At the same time, her speed is buffed, and the bastard sword she unsheathed stacks even more speed into that equation.



(At any rate, she is a specialist in speed and power huh. Just as I saw in Meiris Lake. The type that if you can't catch her, you can't do anything about. Her defensive power is decent, and that exposure rate is for speed sake. How through, or more like, on top of that, she is using body strengthening as well. So a full boosted Senpai will be going with her all from the start huh.) (Makoto)

Makoto took his bow into his hands, activated his Magic Armor, and was checking the movements of Hibiki.

And then, he was sure she was a suitable opponent.

After he achieved Creation at the demon race territory, Makoto slightly noticed something regarding his own image.

To test it, there just... wasn't a suitable opponent for it.

Makoto was going to try and test it with Hibiki.

He doesn't intend to take her life.

He doesn't intend to leave her deeply injured either.

Thinking that, Makoto was able to accept the 'serious match' of Hibiki.

(Bows will shoot the arrow straight; leaving aside magic arrows that are created from Brid, if it's a physical arrow, I had a preconceived notion that it worked this way. I think that maybe in this world, I will be able to do even more incredible things.) (Makoto)

"...Fuh!!"

Holding the bastard sword in one hand like that of a japanese katana, Hibiki swung her sword at Makoto.

(...An Iai?! No, a sword wave.) (Makoto)

The sword wave changed colors faintly and launched towards Makoto.

Of course, that was blocked by Makoto's Magic Armor and disappeared.

However, because of the impact and the dust, Makoto's field of vision was blocked.

“...”

(It was like an Iai. To shoot a sword wave, that's incredibly hero-like.) (Makoto)

Without getting agitated, Makoto lifted his bow and takes an arrow with his right hand.

With no stance and simply in a standby posture, he waits for the next move of Hibiki.

Attacks struck the Magic Armor of Makoto from the back, left, right, and right again.

(She was able to shorten the distance this much already. She is probably faster than the wolves in Asora.) (Makoto)

He was in a state where his field of vision had not recovered yet, and was exposed to the continuous attacks of Hibiki.

But they were all stopped by the Magic Armor and couldn't reach Makoto.

There was no agitation felt in the sword of Hibiki, the space between the attacks steadily opened, and it felt as if she was analyzing it.

“Ah, there she is.” (Makoto)

“What an incredible defense!” (Hibiki)

Right in front of Makoto was Hibiki.

With her body slightly bend down, she slashes at Makoto without hesitating.

That attack cuts the invisible Magic Armor.

Being endowed with magic power and counting its speed, it was an attack that Makoto couldn't follow with his eyes.

“Even though you have no scabbard, how can you do an Iai?” (Makoto)

“I just use the wind as my scabbard. I feel like I can finally do a proper attack—?!!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki's next attack was crushed before it was activated.

Makoto reformed the arm of the Magic Armor and leaving it to raw power, he struck her to the ground.

Being held down just like that, Hibiki's movements stop.

Even so, she hasn't released her sword.

"Wind as a scabbard? What kind of idea is that?!" (Makoto)

"Guh!! Even though I certainly did feel like it worked, and yet, damn it!!" (Hibiki)

The Magic Armor of Makoto broke again.

The arm of the Magic Armor that Makoto can see –the arm that was holding down Hibiki– was pierced by something, and from there, the composition of the arm was destroyed.

(Was it shot down? No, Senpai is not using something like that. She did something with her sword. But she is using her whole body and moving well! Restraining her will be hard.) (Makoto)

While being surprised by the unknown powerful attack Hibiki released, Makoto was finally able to grasp the figure of Hibiki in his eyes.

Placing an arrow, Makoto concentrates on Hibiki who's there.

(I was somehow able to disperse that restrain by perforating it. Also, what held me down was probably the defense of Makoto-kun. In other words, if I use a stronger piercing attack, there's the chance that it can reach Makoto-kun. But, is it only at this level?) (Hibiki)

"..."

Makoto adjusted his aim at Hibiki.

At that moment, Hibiki noticed.

(I thought I would be able to evade his arrows, but if I remember correctly, he boasted

an abnormal accuracy. And if it's like my Iai that utilizes wind and his ability has been enhanced in this world... it is fine, even if it hits me, I will just have to strike it down the instant it touches my body.) (Hibiki)

“...”

“...”

(I will brush away the arrow and cut down his defense with my Iai. Without putting any fronts, I will use my all to pierce it. But he is not moving. If he is not going to make any moves... I will just have to bait him to!) (Hibiki)

Hibiki's figure disappears.

Without caring about the presence of the dust, he doesn't try to follow her trace at all.

The speed of Sofia and the speed of Hibiki are completely different.

Hibiki mixes real moves and feints, and utilizes the eyes of the people and their senses to make the other party perceive it in a faster speed than normal.

Just like how Lime saw it for the first time and lifted his hands in surrender, it could be said that it is an incredibly vicious technique.

Different from the time when he was barely able to follow the moves of Sofia, in this case, Makoto had completely lifted his hands in surrender at the speed of Hibiki too.

(As I thought, I can't see her at all. Nice. This is fine. It has to be this way.) (Makoto)

Makoto closed his eyes, and the figure of Hibiki before she disappeared, appeared in his head.

And then, he released his arrow at that image of hers.

Makoto who opened his eyes, felt that his Magic Armor had been destroyed.

The attack of Hibiki had increased in sharpness, and Makoto felt like the power was increasing more and more.

It might be some sort of ability, but for the current him, that was a point that was of

no importance.

Without his Magic Armor, Makoto used Sakai without any expectations, and tried to grasp the location of Hibiki.

At that place, there's Hibiki who has an arrow pierced at her right shoulder.

Maybe because she had stopped her movements due of the pain, Makoto was able to grasp her location.

That's how fast Hibiki was.

And then, she took a surprising action.

"Her left hand?!" (Makoto)

Taking her sword again with her left hand, she forcefully released her trump card sword wave.

The wave of attacks spiralled and advanced in a shape to pierce at Makoto.

Makoto forgot to activate his Magic Armor for a second, and was entranced by it.

(...Doing an Iai with no scabbard, and be able to release a sword wave with that much power... Even though she is already outrageous by being able to do this much against an opponent that she can't attack properly, she is even able to use her sword waves as bullets... Just what's going through that head of hers? Oh right, first of all...) (Makoto)

The piercing attack of Hibiki that had already approached to his very eyes, the Magic Armor can't be completely activated in time.

Only cladding the Armor at his right hand that was free, Makoto decided to take the piercing attack.

Even though it is in an incomplete state, it was an attack of Hibiki that had reached Makoto for the first time.

The right hand that was placed at his front made contact with the sword wave that's clad in Hibiki's magic power.

“...This is... strong!!” (Makoto)

At first, Makoto was thinking about crushing it in his hands, but understanding that it would be hard to do, he tried to shift its trajectory forcefully with his hand.

“!! He stopped the wave with his hand?!” (Hibiki)

“Shiaaa!” (Makoto)

The right hand of Makoto deviated the attack, piercing the ground and making a thunderous sound.

“...”

“Ouch ouch... Sorry but I don’t think that I can fight anymore. I give up.” (Makoto)

Makoto waves his hand as if in pain.

From that hand, red blood was flowing.

Mio who saw the injury of Makoto, had her brows twitch up, but that’s all she did and didn’t make any move.

“...I also can’t continue it seems. It is a draw huh, Raidou-dono.” (Hibiki)

(I couldn’t tell when it pierced me at all. If it had been in my head, I would have died without knowing what happened. The vessel of power is different huh. For Makoto-kun, I’m not even an opponent that’s worthy of fighting. Being this overwhelming, it even makes my will to compete wane.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki takes out the arrow that was pierced in her shoulder, and a healing light came from the red stain.

Without being able to understand what Makoto did at all.

Makoto practically didn’t move his bow at all and didn’t even turn around, and yet, it ended this way.

The only proper moving he did was when he prepared his arrow, and when he grabbed the sword wave of hers.

Hibiki understood that it was her defeat.

And on top of that, while being irritated by Makoto who looked like he was planning on losing from the very beginning, she declared a draw.

Announcing his defeat after doing something like that and not doing a follow-up attack, even Hibiki didn't find it pleasant.

While holding bitter feelings inside herself, Hibiki ended the match with Makoto.

(To think that it would even replicate the place it had pierced in the image... I see. The reason why I needed more time in order to increase my concentration was maybe because the difficulty of it was high? Even so, at that time, I was directing it towards the image of Senpai that was at that place, and yet, it hit Senpai who was leaping around the area, just as I pictured. I have finally reached a point that's not archery, but something really sketchy. I don't think this will be enough against the Goddess, but I have gotten a bit of confidence.) (Makoto)

"Hm, this is good." (Makoto)

Makoto mutters lowly.

He was satisfied that what he wanted to do had been realized.

He didn't really mind that the lost he intended to have had become a draw.

Mio was smiling in a satisfied manner while looking not at Makoto, but Hibiki's state. It was hidden by her folding fan, so the only one who noticed that smile was Lime.

And to make it as if he didn't see it, it ended with no one knowing.

And like this, the long day in Limia kingdom has finished.

Chapter 209

The two in the next morning

“You are already fine right, Hibiki?”

“Yeah. I only had an arrow pierced in my shoulder, so it wasn’t that big of a deal. Thanks for visiting me.” (Hibiki)

“Visiting?”

Mio’s words were paused there, and a silence appeared between Hibiki and Mio who were alone in the room.

“Yeah... Was his wound okay?” (Hibiki)

“Something like that, it can be healed at the instant-desu wa. More importantly, Hibiki, it seems like you are doing a lot of moving in the shadows, but after actually acting together with Waka-sama and even having a bout with him last night, you finally understood, right?” (Mio)

“I am not really moving around in the shadows you know, Mio-san. But it is true that I have understood his strength, and that he has strength that even you would follow.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki says these words as if biting them.

Last night, Hibiki had a bout with Makoto.

Of course, it was only a bout for Hibiki, and it was clear that Makoto didn’t have the intention at all.

In the end, it finished with Hibiki being unable to pass a single proper attack and was only able to cause a wound on the level of a scrape, and Makoto hit her in the shoulder with an arrow.

Makoto’s surrender was made a draw by Hibiki, but for Hibiki, it wasn’t a draw nor a

win, it was a losing fight.

"That's no good, Hibiki. Leaving aside the fact that you have understood the power of Waka-sama, you are trying to hide things from me? Even though you were the one that had us stay at the Hopelace territory when we were on our way to the capital." (Mio)

"No way. A part of the nobles made a strong interference in the invitation we did to your Kuzunoha Company, and the visit to the Hopelace territory is a result of that. In the point that I was unable to stop it, I do hold a part of the responsibility." (Hibiki)

"...Then, are you saying you don't know anything about what happened there? That's what you are trying to say, right?" (Mio)

"...Yes. At least me and the royal family don't. Did something happen?" (Hibiki)

"Hibiki." (Mio)

"What is it, Mio-san?" (Hibiki)

"In our eyes, you, the royal family, the local nobles; all of them are the same Limia Kingdom. That's not going to work as an escape route." (Mio)

"..."

Hibiki's throat moved delicately.

It was a small movement of gulping.

"Investigate it. Something of that level is of no problem, but this will be a new debt for you." (Mio)

"...Understood." (Hibiki)

"And? From what I heard of Waka-sama, you are intelligent, right? I heard you are a genius that can do anything." (Mio)

"Wait, what is Makoto-kun putting in Mio-san's head?" (Hibiki)

Hearing the words of Mio, Hibiki was taken by surprise for a second, and the tension fell from her face. At the same time, she muttered a complaint to Makoto.

“Haven’t you understood Waka-sama and the Kuzunoha Company already? Let me hear your point of view.” (Mio)

“...”

“Go on. Lately, I have been scattering a lot of hints, you know? If you don’t understand after all this, I can make it even *easier* to understand. Maybe there’s the need to do something that no matter how much you want to turn away from it, it will be engraved in those eyes of yours.” (Mio)

“!!”

“Hibiki... What is Waka-sama? With the information you have gotten, what was the answer you arrived at with that nice head of yours. Tell me.” (Mio)

Mio’s words reverberated coldly in the room as if signaling a last warning.

Hibiki was hesitating about something, but as if resigning, she looked straight at Mio.

“Raidou –Misumi Makoto-kun– is...” (Hibiki)

“...”

“The Devil. He is the Devil himself. And also the white guy that saved me in Limia.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki’s low but confident words made Mio break a smile.

In her mouth and eyes.

Mio was laughing satisfied.

“Nicely done. That’s right, Waka-sama is the existence called Devil by you guys. And the master of the Kuzunoha Company.” (Mio)

“I had an idea since before. In the time at Meiris Lake it became even deeper, and at the mock battle, I was confident of it.” (Hibiki)

“It was worth having you accompany Waka-sama. And it was also worth giving that suit to the Rembrandt girl.” (Mio)

“The new equipment that the Kuzunoha Company created, right? The SFX hero suit that the girl called Yuno Rembrandt was using. As I thought, it was a deliberate leak of information huh.” (Hibiki)

“Of course. I wanted you to arrive at the thought that Waka-sama is the Devil, and also the person that had saved you after all.” (Mio)

“I was saved by him twice, huh.” (Hibiki)

“That’s right. The first time, he even received grave injuries in his sacred body; the second time was a deal with the Goddess though. But as a result, in both of them, Waka-sama saved you.” (Mio)

“Yeah, that’s true.” (Hibiki)

“Then show an attitude appropriate of your benefactor. Looking at Waka-sama, you should have understood well, right? He doesn’t wish for war. The reason he saved you two was only because you are people from the same world.” (Mio)

“...”

“Listen well, I won’t tell you to cooperate. I am only telling you to stop any sort of action that interferes with the Kuzunoha Company. Also, if something happens within the range you can detect, stop it. Waka-sama is simply trying to bring good to the people after all.” (Mio)

What Mio said at the end made Hibiki’s brows narrow.

“I wonder about that.” (Hibiki)

“What did you say?” (Mio)

“As a company, he is really providing good things at a cheap price. But is that all he is trying to achieve in his actions?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki objected.

That’s also something she thought about after seeing a part of Makoto, and if the Kuzunoha Company really only has those intentions, then there’s parts that contradict this from the way the company acts, that’s how she felt.

"If it's as Mio-san says, why does he increase his fighting power to that degree? If he wants to go on as a simple merchant, isn't it plenty enough with just Tomoe-san and Mio-san? I don't think he was so strong from the very beginning. The Empire hero and I were reasonably strong, but thinking about his ability when he was in the previous world, he should have been about the same as us or less. And yet, he clearly has obtained an abnormal power different from ours." (Hibiki)

"Waka-sama was thrown into the border of the world. It was a result brought by necessity." (Mio)

"Are you saying that that necessity won't lead to war?! It is certainly true that I didn't feel ambition from him, but he does bring doubts that maybe he has some sort of scheme." (Hibiki)

"You, even when you have spoken with Waka-sama, you are still thinking such stupid things?" (Mio)

"...I did talk with him. However, my anxiety towards him won't disappear. That strength and way of thinking is just way too different from that of a person that was supposed to have been raised in modern Japan, in a normal family. I want to ask you this Mio-san, is it really okay for Makoto-kun to change like that?" (Hibiki)

"There's no need for you to mind about something like that. Waka-sama can change as he sees fit, and if he wants to change, he can just do so. I will simply follow him. If I am asked, my answer will obviously be 'everything is okay'." (Mio)

"...I still can't answer you about how I will interact with the Kuzunoha Company and him." (Hibiki)

"...Hibiki." (Mio)

"There's! There's still time. There's also still time to learn more of him." (Hibiki)

"...I see. Right. I will wait for a bit more. If you want to speak with Waka-sama for a bit more, I will accept it. But it will *only* be talking." (Mio)

"I understand." (Hibiki)

"Fuh~. What a pain. By the way, Hibiki, you already know that I am a spider, right? That priestess has woken up, right?" (Mio)

“That’s—!! Yes, I know. I heard that you are the Black Calamity Spider. So it was true.”
(Hibiki)

Mio suddenly reveals her identity to Hibiki.

Hibiki who didn’t expect her to announce it in this timing, was slightly agitated, but she admitted it.

“Fufufu, I am interested in what that priestess saw in Waka-sama, but I will leave that enjoyment for later. Well then, taking that premise into consideration, I will give you one piece of info.” (Mio)

“Info?” (Hibiki)

“You said the power of Waka-sama was abnormal, but that personage had encountered me as a spider when he was merely two weeks into this world.” (Mio)

“?!”

“There will be gaps in power appearing between you and the Empire’s hero. Those gaps may be 10 days worth or maybe one month, but from what I know, Waka-sama came later than you two.” (Mio)

“Then, you are telling me that, with practically no experience, he fought with Mio-san, no, with the Black Calamity Spider?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought it was impossible.

After coming to this world, she got used to battle and obtained trusty companions, but even if she fought with the spider that had been in so many battles, the result would be obvious.

“Yeah.” (Mio)

“Ah... I see. Tomoe-san was also there, right?” (Hibiki)

Within the agitation, Hibiki remembers the order in which Makoto met his followers.

In the past, Mio had told Hibiki that she met Makoto after Tomoe.

“Waka-sama fought alone against me.” (Mio)

“No way.” (Hibiki)

“He did receive some injuries, but he defeated me. At that time, the Black Calamity Spider ceased to exist in this world.” (Mio)

“Then, he had that crazy power since the beginning? Without any relation to the Goddess?” (Hibiki)

“Who knows. Just that, Hibiki, I have practically no memories of when I was a spider, but when I investigated a bit to see...” (Mio)

“...”

It seems like my encounter with Waka-sama happened a few days after fighting you guys. Since that time on, the gap between Waka-sama and you has simply increased more and more. Think very *very* thoroughly about this truth.” (Mio)

“...”

Hibiki was shamed by the difference in power between her past self and Makoto.

“Of course, by the time we are in this country, that is.” (Mio)

Just like how she came in, Mio melts into the darkness and disappears.

Hibiki who was left there, still didn't move.

‘The gap continued increasing’, those words of Mio were echoing in her head.



“Hm?”

“...Is something the matter, Boss?” (Lime)

“You know, Lime.” (Makoto)

“Yes?” (Lime)

"Can you attack me for a bit? It is fine to not hold back." (Makoto)

"...Yes?" (Lime)

Opening and closing the hand that Mio healed, I was pondering something.

Since Lime had returned to the room just at the right time, I asked him to do something, but well, he did a predictable reaction.

"No you see, last night I did a friendly match with Hibiki-senpai, or more like, a bout or well... anyways, we did that, right?" (Makoto)

"Yeah..." (Lime)

"Honestly, I had already seen what Senpai could do at Meiris Lake, and it was mostly what I had expected, but..." (Makoto)

"But, what?" (Lime)

"How to say it, from time to time, she was unexpectedly strong. In terms of defense, I didn't do much, so I think Senpai was the one who was probably doing something. Just that, in truth, I don't have an accurate idea of the current state of my defense." (Makoto)

"A-Are you saying that you didn't put much into that defense?" (Lime)

"And well, returning to what I said in the beginning, I was wondering what would happen if it was an attack of Lime. Please, give it one attack." (Makoto)

"W-We are doing it here?!" (Lime)

"Yeah." (Makoto)

Even if we get slightly injured, we can just wait for Mio to come.

If it's a light wound, I can just have Lime heal it.

There's no need to go through the trouble of going outside and gathering attention.

Maybe Lime saw my behaviour and noticed that my will won't be changing, he was

worried for a bit, and then took his katana in hand.

“...I really am going to do it without holding back, okay? Even so, I don’t think it will reach the level of Hibiki though.” (Lime)

“You don’t have to mind that. Also, the weapon you have in hand is better, right? Even if something happens, I will have Mio do something about it, so just concentrate in giving your best attack.” (Makoto)

“You will do a follow-up for Mio-neesan, right?” (Lime)

“Of course. After asking you to do it, I won’t go asking her to save me.” (Makoto)

“Then, excuse me.” (Lime)

Lime unsheathes his katana.

Bending his legs, he lowers his posture, and grasps the katana in his right hand, with the blade facing up.

It is the stance for a thrust.

I was the one who asked for it, but I am grateful for Lime who is listening to it and doing it with his all.

It is because, in my memory, his preparation motions are the same as the stance of the attack with the highest power he has.

Just like that time with Senpai, I activate the Magic Armor.

Lime who didn’t move from his place, was accumulating power steadily.

As a charging technique, the longer it accumulates, the stronger it gets, since he doesn’t have to worry about the charging, it is the best kind of attack.

“Whenever you want.” (Makoto)

Lime didn’t answer.

Instead, magic power leaked from his body, and it looked like it shone lightly.

And then, Lime silently kicked the ground and pushes the power from his legs, waist, and shoulders, into his katana.

The amplified power converged into the katana and tried to pierce through the Magic Armor.

But...

“!!!”

Without any high pitched sound of contact, the katana of Lime stopped at a space slightly apart from me.

As I thought, even Lime's full power was unable to cut through it.

Is what I was thinking, but at that moment, Lime made an action further than that.

He released his right hand from the handle in an instant, and this time, he uses his left hand's palm to push the end of the handle.

From his left hand, a massive amount of magic power flowed, and at the same time, it was pushing through.

A second stance to a charging attack!

That's probably incredibly cool.

But the Magic Armor didn't break.

“Ah.”

“Geh.”

Mine and Lime's voice came out at almost the same time.

The reason is probably the same.

The katana of Lime trembled slightly, and... the blade broke into pieces.

Acha...

So it was unable to withstand being in between the attack power of Lime and my Magic Armor huh.

“S-Sorry, Lime.” (Makoto)

“...Don’t mind it. Well, fortunately, I don’t think there will be any event where I will have to use this in our time in Limia, so don’t let it bother you.” (Lime)

“In how much time does it restore?” (Makoto)

“If it goes well, around half a day. This time there’s no need to hurry, so I think about a day. If there’s something necessary today, I will just use a spare sword-ssu.” (Lime)

Saying that, Lime shows one of the rings that he is wearing in his hand.

Ah, if I remember correctly, he did say that he has a lot of preparations done.

That ring can turn into a sword, right.

There’s a reason why Lime and I are not in such a grim mood.

As long as the handle remains, the regeneration ability is pretty fast.

It seems like even if it’s done slowly, it can take one day to return to normal.

I didn’t know about how much time exactly, but it is pretty fast.

“More importantly, Senpai was able go through my defense pretty easily with a weaker sword. Lime, do you have an idea why?” (Makoto)

“I don’t. The current training Hibiki has is with the sword waves she utilizes for long-ranged attack, but... when it comes to its power, I can only think of it as being common. Compared to when I was accompanying her, she didn’t seem to be doing anything different either.” (Lime)

“I see... In that case, maybe it is the divine protection she received from the Goddess.” (Makoto)

“It seems like that decorative belt was something that was given by the Goddess-ssu. She said the method of utilization is an original of hers though.” (Lime)

“Utilization? Are you talking about that radical exposure method?” (Makoto)

I have gotten slightly used to it, but... that's... incredible.

Senpai is incredible for being able to utilize it because her battle power increases, and it is also incredible that it is an ability that actually increases her power.

But as expected, the most incredible part is the looks.

Yeah.

“Against that increased speed, I honestly feel it is hard to find a way to deal with it-ssu. ‘If she doesn’t take a single attack, there’s no need for armor’, is what a part of the adventurers discuss stupidly regarding it, but if they are at that level, they can spew all they want but they wouldn’t be able to actually make it true.” (Lime)

“Hm? In that case, the exposed mode Senpai doesn’t have much defensive power?” (Makoto)

“No. Even when Hibiki has obtained that much speed, she hasn’t forgotten the importance of defense. In that appearance, she has more defense than normal, but it seems like its defense loses against the people that are specialized in attack power, so she currently condenses the defensive field that envelops her whole body and enhances it.” (Lime)

“So instead of receiving the strong attacks, she stops them in a specific point huh. It is totally opposite of me who has abandoned stopping it and has chosen to receive them directly.” (Makoto)

I feel like as a skill, the one of Senpai has a higher difficulty.

She increases the defensive power of one point, but it will be a manual defense.

In other points, her defensive ability is on a godlike level though.

...How picky.

“What are you... doing... Lime?” (Mio)

“Hiiih!!” (Lime)

"Ah, Mio. Welcome back." (Makoto)

"I am sorry for not being by your side because of some business. And Lime, what were you doing?" (Mio)

"This is..." (Lime)

"I don't mind if you give me an explanation later. I will be calming down first so... come." (Mio)

"Y-You are going to calm down, right? In that case, I don't think I am needed." (Lime)

"What are you saying? In order to calm down, your presence is necessary or I won't be able to, right?" (Mio)

You are the one that's saying weird stuff, Mio.

Lime is giving out an aura of defeat and is in a state of horror.

Can't be helped.

"Boss!" (Lime)

"It is okay, Lime. I will properly heal you back to normal." (Mio)

"Heal?!" (Lime)



Mio who had gotten close to Lime, grabs him with her slender hand.

It looks as if he would be able to break free from it, but in truth, it has quite the strength behind it.

No wait.

I did say I would do a proper follow-up, so I have to keep my promise.

Also, I would prefer if Mio were to attack me with those current rampant feelings of hers.

“Mio, stop. Lime listened to a request of mine, so we were just doing a little testing here. That’s why, it is fine.” (Makoto)

“...A test?” (Mio)

Mio stops moving.

But her hand was still grabbing Lime.

Of course, the face of Lime didn’t show any sign that he felt he had escaped from danger.

Actually, he has a face that says he is in incredible danger.

“Yeah. Mio, help out as well. Just for a bit, I would like you to... right, can you attack me with your prided slicing fan?” (Makoto)

With that folding fan, she shoots an attack.

She really came out with another absurd thing, so I retorted by calling it slicing fan, and it seems she liked it, she decided to call that technique of hers in that way.

“Use Slicing Fan on Waka-sama?” (Mio)

“Something bothered me about the fight with Hibiki-senpai you see. Please.” (Makoto)

“With Hibiki... I understand. If it’s that, I will accept-desu wa.” (Mio)

Lime was finally released.

I thought I would need more convincing, but lately, when Hibiki-senpai's name comes out, she becomes pretty obedient.

"Well then, here I go." (Mio)

Just like Lime, without caring that we are indoors, Mio points the closed folding fan at me and swings it.

"Thanks Mio." (Makoto)

I receive the wave of attacks from Mio that had different degrees of power with my Magic Armor, and after continuing until it was broken, I give my thanks to Mio and finish the test.

"Is it okay already?" (Mio)

"Yeah. I have understood that the sword of Hibiki-senpai is around this level of power after all." (Makoto)

"...Are you referring to the attack that injured Waka-sama's hand that time?" (Mio)

"It also has to do with that attack, but in general, Senpai's attack were strangely strong. And in truth, the last attack Mio did was a pretty serious one, right?" (Makoto)

I ask Mio who I thought did an attack with about the same power.

"I didn't even use 80%-desu wa. I wasn't serious at all!" (Mio)

An over 70% of Mio is plenty strong, most likely.

Even if I think that way, I won't say it though.

Because it seems like Mio is also bothered by it.

My Magic Armor was cleanly chopped off, and I ended the test.

Since it would turn out the same as the mock battle, I considered it was plenty enough for the test.

"As I thought, the speed was obviously good, but... there's something behind the strength of those attacks. I feel like I will have to go a bit stronger when doing a bout with Senpai or I will end up wounded." (Makoto)

"...When Hibiki was struggling in the wasteland, she didn't have a unique attack power like that. She was a girl with good instincts and a wide field of vision though. If I remember correctly, Shiki said that in the time that he was with Waka-sama in Limia, she was suddenly able to release a strong attack. How about confirming with Shiki when we return?" (Mio)

"Ah... maybe he is talking about the time when his the barrier he was keeping them in was destroyed? I see..." (Makoto)

Could it be that a new power she received from the Goddess awakened?

That really sounds like a hero-like development.

It didn't seem like she was using any special spell to buff herself, and there's also the chance she activated a stealth type skill like my Sakai.

In that case, I can't underestimate her too much.

"But that girl, did she really obtain that much attack power? Even with that, she asked for a new weapon..." (Mio)

"Mio? What's wrong?" (Makoto)

"N-No, nothing! It is nothing-desu wa!!" (Mio)

"Now that I think about it, that business you were talking about... if I remember correctly, the only plans we had were to meet with a number of nobles and merchants and that was all, right? Could it be, you were meeting with Senpai?" (Makoto)

Mio with Hibiki-senpai...

Well, thinking about what happened in Rotsgard, I am indeed uneasy, but in Tsige, they were in a master-disciple relationship temporarily, so I shouldn't worry about it too much.

"I was only doing some small talk about the time when they were in Tsige. Ah right!

Hibiki said that soon we will be able to speak with the priestess." (Mio)

"With the priestess-san. That's... great. I did think about paying her a visit at least once before leaving." (Makoto)

"Yeah, I think it will be possible." (Mio)

Also, that priestess-san saw something in Mio and I.

It would be a lie to say I am not interested in it.

Leaving aside if she will actually tell us, I want to at least try asking.

Well, she is a girl that's not so far apart in age from Rinon, so I obviously don't intend to force her.

Now then, it is almost time for an official to come.

It will be the time when I say that I want to leave with the company for now and give a reply at a later date.

I will not be giving a different answer anyways, so it would be good if they just take the hint and give up though.

Hah... I haven't even checked the town around the castle properly.

Chapter 210

The counter-plan goes astray

“Kuzunoha company’s peddling permission?”

“Yeah, he has saved my and his Majesty’s life in Rotsgard. We called him here to give our gratitude, so doing nothing won’t do. Raidou made a petition himself, and it isn’t a subject that needs any heavy regulation, so I have given him a response geared towards accepting.” (Joshua)

“I see.”

“Is there some sort of problem? A number of nobles that want him to make a store will probably be unsatisfied with this decision, but it shouldn’t be disadvantageous for us.” (Joshua)

“Yes, I think Joshua-sama’s thinking is correct. If he wished for it, it should be appropriate as an expression of gratitude.”

“It makes me happy that Hibiki says so as well. But well, the fact that this is currently the only request of Raidou makes me feel troubled though. It would actually make me feel more at ease if he were to ask for land or a peerage.” (Joshua)

A conversation with Joshua and Hibiki.

The conversation was about the Kuzunoha Company.

The promise that Joshua made to Raidou about the permission for the peddling the Kuzunoha Company did on the territory.

The two were talking about that matter.

Bredda was also there, but as of now, he hasn’t joined the conversation.

“He probably thinks he has obtained plenty enough compensation.” (Hibiki)

"No way. To say it is plenty enough when he saved the king and prince of a major power, there shouldn't be a person who thinks in that way." (Joshua)

"...If it's him, it is possible. He is that kind of person." (Hibiki)

"It is certainly true that Raidou has an uhm... a kind way of thinking, that doesn't fit a merchant. But even he should have some sort of avarice. I would also like to recompense him a bit more. It wouldn't be good to leave strange lingering discomfort after all." (Joshua)

"You wanted to say he has a naive way of thinking, right Joshua-sama? That's actually right, you know." (Hibiki)

"Even so, that's not a word that should be directed towards someone that has saved my life, Hibiki." (Joshua)

Hibiki restates the words of Joshua who chose his words.

Joshua rebukes her, but there was no stormy atmosphere between the two.

Bredda was silently drinking tea.

It was easy to see that this is an usual occurrence.

"What are Joshua-sama's thoughts about how we should associate with them from now on?" (Hibiki)

The true meaning of Hibiki's question was not to ask the opinion of Joshua's personal opinion only, but to include the king's stance, and the will of the nobles.

Joshua is the advisor of the king, and the number of people that think his opinion is the opinion of the king are not few.

"He himself is someone that doesn't hold evil intentions. The strength they have as a company and the ability of its employees can become a threat depending on the sides it takes, but in basis, I think I want to build a favorable relationship. It is clear that it is not simple peddling, and in reality, the contribution Mio-dono achieved outside her schedule in the reconstruction was splendid. It seems like they have cooperated with the reconstruction of Rotsgard as well, but from what I see, they probably have done more of their part in the work than a simple cooperator. I was about to overlook that

part in the report that I had gotten.” (Joshua)

“Rotsgard has already regained its former form and is advancing to a step further than that. It is saddening, but the speed to stand back up was clearly different from the capital. There’s no doubt the Kuzunoha Company played a big part in it. Just looking at their achievements, it is truly an appealing existence, but...” (Hibiki)

Anguish shows in Hibiki’s face.

“As I thought, there’s problems too huh. In my eyes, they look like partners that can become extremely beneficial though... Then, from Hibiki’s viewpoint, how does he look to you?” (Joshua)

“Right now it is hard to put it in clear words but... there’s a few points.” (Hibiki)

“I don’t mind. Let’s hear it.” (Joshua)

“First of all, he doesn’t have an interest in the war that’s currently occurring in the world. On top of that, even though he is the Head of a power that can be considered a nation, he doesn’t have any intentions to gain more than what he personally views. It is incredibly unstable, and engaging them carelessly is way too dangerous.” (Hibiki)

“Assuming that there are a number of other people that have the same power as Miodono in the Kuzunoha Company, and taking Raiou-dono’s power into consideration as well, then not only a mercenary group, they would possess a military force akin to a nation. I consider it is proper to think of them to be in a nation level. But what’s that about not being interested in the war? I don’t understand the part about being unstable either.” (Joshua)

“It means exactly as I have said. He has the notable characteristic that no matter how much the hyumans, demi-humans, and demons do war with each other, he won’t care. Also, he has no discrimination towards the demi-humans, and it is possible that if asked to provide accommodations because of troubles... they would most likely sell goods even to the demon race.” (Hibiki)

“No way! That’s an act of betrayal towards hyumans!”

Bredda speaks out for the first time.

While they are doing business in the hyuman country, they sell goods to the demon

race.

Thinking about it from the common sense of Bredda -no, from the common sense of a hyuman, it is an inconceivable act.

“...Even to the demon race? He didn’t look like he had such a lack of integrity though.” (Joshua)

Joshua narrows his brows at the opinion of Hibiki.

Because in Joshua’s eyes, Raidou didn’t look like a person that would sell goods to the demon race for profit.

“...It is not that there’s no integrity in profit. In that sense, I actually think he is loose. The point of beingr troubled is what plays a big part.” (Hibiki)

“For example, no matter the cause, if there’s a demon race village that was unable to secure food supply in winter and there’s a request for help, they would help them out even if it is a situation where even payment is doubtful?” (Joshua)

“Yeah. Of course, even if there’s a request for help similar to that from hyumans or demi-humans, they would most likely reach the same decision. He is... kind, after all.” (Hibiki)

“As a result, the war would grow longer... and a great number of lives would be lost, bringing ruin to the world as a whole, and yet, he would still do it?” (Joshua)

“He is kind after all. If there’s someone in trouble, no matter if hyuman or demon, he would most likely save them. Demi-humans wounded by hyumans, hyumans that were wounded by demi-humans... without discrimination.” (Hibiki)

“...I see. It is certainly true that Raidou-dono gave that kind of feeling. The part that he would choose help over profit. If in his mind, hyumans and demons are equally worthy of saving, they will become an incredibly troublesome existence.” (Joshua)

“Yes. For hyumans and demons alike, they will become an exceedingly dangerous existence.” (Hibiki)

“It is so sudden it is hard to believe, but since it is something Hibiki says, it is worth considering. If they are contributing to the demon race in the same manner as with us,

it would not be good. But... even if that's truly the case, we still have no choice but to continue with our current way of interacting. I see, so this is what's troubling you, Hibiki." (Joshua)

Joshua continued his words as he thought about the methods that can be taken with the Kuzunoha Company, and then, he noticed the reason for Hibiki's heavy expression.

"...Yes. We have no choice but to have a favorable relationship with them. If they are an existence that brings benefits to both sides, we have to get involved with them as well." (Hibiki)

The expression of Hibiki was still bitter, and it was comprehensible.

If it's an existence that they can expect benefits in being involved with, even if they bring benefits to the enemy as well, they have no choice but to be involved with them as well.

Even if they are dangerous, as long as they don't have a clear countermeasure for them, they won't be able to break the deadlock, so they have to continue with how their relationship currently is.

"Fufufu, right. There's no reason for us to throw away that benefit ourselves. And in truth, in this time's visit, we have utilized them plenty after all. And yet, they are being taken as a threat. It is truly a misfortune." (Joshua)

Joshua laughs in a self-deprecating manner.

The visit of the Kuzunoha Company has several objectives they have not been told about.

Thinking about that, a smile unconsciously came out.

"I will try to convince him at least. If... he were to side with us, it would solve most of the problems without doubt after all." (Hibiki)

"It is written all over your face that you don't think it will go well." (Joshua)

"Honestly speaking, I don't have the confidence. His sense of worth is already a lot more different than mine. I don't know if we will be able to reach an understanding." (Hibiki)

“I pray for your success. I want to continue having a good relationship with him after all.” (Joshua)

“Regarding that, I heartedly agree as well. It is someone I definitely wouldn’t want to be in trouble with after all.” (Hibiki)

“Someone you definitely don’t want to be in trouble with huh. Well, fine then. Regarding Raidou, I will leave the decision making to you. Well then Hibiki, you won’t mind if I advance things just as we have discussed, right?” (Joshua)

“Yes. I was meddled a bit by Mio-san, but there won’t be any problems. Let’s continue with it in one go.” (Hibiki)

“Understood.” (Joshua)

The talk finished, and Hibiki stands from her seat.

Joshua also stood up a second later, and sees her off.

Bredda was about to leave the room following Hibiki as if natural, but at that moment, he was called from behind.

“Bredda, there’s something I have to talk with you about.”

“Hah?” (Bredda)

Being in a different pattern from normal, Bredda let out a dumbfounded voice.

There have been times when Bredda has been in presence of the conversation between Hibiki and Joshua, but there’s never been something after that.

He was with the thoughts of only accompanying Hibiki, so it is an expected reaction.

“Ara, then I will be going ahead.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki didn’t show any special surprise and leaves promptly.

“Wai–, Hibiki?!” (Bredda)

The door was ruthlessly closed.

“...Seriously, what do you want, Joshua?” (Bredda)

Because Hibiki was now gone, Bredda returns to his sibling way of speaking and takes seat in a slightly violent manner.

He asks for Joshua’s business.

“Brother, I have established several occasions for this kind of meetings, but you haven’t participated in any of them properly, right?” (Joshua)

“I am present only as a knight and a bodyguard of Hibiki. In the first place, I am not in a position to say my opinion.” (Bredda)

“Because there was the will of the king as well, I have given tacit consent to brother’s attitude until now, but with the capital in this state, I can’t just leave it as always.” (Joshua)

“...Listen here Joshua...” (Bredda)

“Isn’t it time to be thinking about the ruling of the country? Not as a knight, nor a party member of Hibiki’s, but as the successor of father.” (Joshua)

“...You are talking about that? I have decided to be the shield of Hibiki as a knight. If it’s about the throne, you succeed it. If it’s Joshua, there’s no one who would be against it.” (Bredda)

“I don’t have the gift to be a ruler. In this time of war, the role of the king is to encourage the whole country, and the one who is the most fit for that role of being the king of Limia is you, brother. In the first place, I have already abandoned the succession of the throne.” (Joshua)

“It is just fine to say you want it back. In the first place, me being the decoration and you being the counsellor is not that different from you being the one directly doing things. I refuse being a simple decoration hanging.” (Bredda)

“Abandoning the succession of the throne is not something as simple as that you know. Also, if you are able to fulfill the role of a decoration, then in a sense, it can be considered a talent for being king.” (Joshua)

“But I have been telling you haven’t I? I want to be of use to Hibiki—” (Bredda)

“If you think that way, why can’t you understand that being the next king is the best move?!” (Joshua)

Bredda tried to finish the conversation in the same note, but today was different in all senses.

Interrupting his words, Joshua shouted.

At the same time, Joshua hits the table and a loud sound reverberated in the place.

“...What did you say?” (Bredda)

“Looking at the current Hibiki, you should be able to tell. She is already in a territory that a normal person can’t catch up to. That’s right... there’s already no way for brother to become the shield of Hibiki! When in the party, the most you can do is guard the priestess and Wudi, right?!” (Joshua)

Watching the mock battle of Raidou, Joshua was able to understand plenty enough that Hibiki’s strength had already surpassed the line of normal.

She clearly had a strength that went a different path from that of a strong adventurer.

The same could be said for Raidou, but it was evident that it was a different dimension from the trained strength of Bredda.

“Joshua, you... what are you trying to...” (Bredda)

“Brother will definitely become shackles for Hibiki in time, that’s what I am trying to say. Before turning into that, I am advising you to help her out in politics! Let me tell you this, you are only a prodigy by birth. Because of the king’s lineage.” (Joshua)

“Shut up!!” (Bredda)

“For example, the three of Kuzunoha Company, no matter which one of those three brother fights, you wouldn’t be able to defeat any. But if you move as the king of Limia, brother will have plenty enough power to become the strength of Hibiki.” (Joshua)

“I’m telling you to shut up!!” (Bredda)

“This is father’s will!” (Joshua)

"?!"

"...It's not that I think this way. If the capital gets attacked again, is there an assurance that the king will be safe? If he were to fall in this state where we still haven't announced the next successor... We can't have the current Limia fight over who will be the next successor. Something like that, even brother understands, right? Father is thinking about announcing brother as the next successor. Things like reading the heart of your own father, you should at least be able to do that without having me telling you, brother!" (Joshua)

"I can still do it. I will become stronger and support Hibiki." (Bredda)

"I know that brother is someone that doesn't slack in his efforts, but not only Hibiki; the priestess, Wudi, and also Naval; everyone possesses outstanding talent. It isn't something that one can keep up with just hard work. Fortunately, brother's defensive sword style can become a help in moments of need. Please take heed of my words." (Joshua)

"Then what will they do about my substitute?! Yeah, it is certainly true that my strength is lacking, but is there any other person that's able to support the current Hibiki at her side? Before talking about being me being the king, shouldn't you first find that person?" (Bredda)

"...There is." (Joshua)

"What?" (Bredda)

"I said there is one. We will be meeting that person after the Kuzunoha Company leaves though." (Joshua)

Heartless words came from Joshua.

Bredda was at a loss for words, and was dumbfounded by the unyielding attitude of his little brother he had never seen before.



Night

Finishing my plans of the day, I had returned to my room and was passing a leisure time with Lime.

He was doing maintenance to his katana that had finished recovering, in a good mood while talking about the state of the land near the castle.

“As expected, they are still far from being finished in the reconstruction.” (Makoto)

“Right. There’s also the point that Rotsgard is just way too fast though. Mio-neesan showed several things, so there’s probably going to be a request for help from the prince or maybe someone else.” (Lime)

“If it’s about helping with the reconstruction, I don’t mind helping in a permissible level though. It would definitely be a lot easier for the people that come from Rotsgard if the groundwork has been done after all.” (Makoto)

“It would be great if that much is enough though.” (Lime)

“That’s the most we can do. No matter the case, if the war intensifies once more...” (Makoto)

“The demon race huh. I don’t think they will match the conveniency of hyumans and not attack in winter, but... I wonder what they are planning. If it were me, I would immediately come to crush the weakened Limia though.” (Lime)

For the demon race, winter is a season that’s easy for them to defend in.

For hyumans, it is hard to attack.

But just as Lime says, it doesn’t mean the demons will have a hard time attacking too.

This is something that I can say with confidence after meeting them; the Demon Lord is not the type that would loosen in the offensive.

He is a person that would attack with no hesitation.

In other words, there's a reason why he is not going for the attack.

In that case, this time where they are waiting for spring and the time they are doing their best in the reconstruction is actually a vital time for the hyumans.

Because it means that the demons are preparing a hand that is bigger than attacking the current Limia after all.

"Right. Well, when the time comes, I will move as well, so it won't turn into the worst scenario." (Makoto)

"Boss will move? You didn't seem to have much interest in the war though." (Lime)

"Hm? I don't have any interest in the war, I also have no intentions in participating. Just that, I don't think the demon race has much intentions of meddling with merchants and adventurers that much, so no matter what happens with the hegemony of society, I don't think much would change in our everyday life." (Makoto)

"...Getting along with the demon race is kind of a... complicated feeling. Then what do you mean by moving?" (Lime)

"Meaning that I will try to save Senpai at least. I don't know about this country though." (Makoto)

"...That's just like Boss-ssu. Hm? Someone's coming. This is... Hibiki-ssu ne. This late in the night, that's rare. (Lime)

"Senpai? If she has any business, it would be with me huh." (Makoto)

"Most likely. Well, even if Boss and Hibiki pass a night together, nothing will be happening, so it is most likely not going to end in seduction." (Lime)

"Oh, sharp words there. Leaving aside me, from what I know, Senpai is quite popular you know?" (Makoto)

"...Well, she pretends as if she knows how to deal with men. She is the same as Boss, so she won't be able to do those kind of things." (Lime)

"The same as me?" (Makoto)

"Hehe, just ignore this delirious talk of a man that has travelled along with her." (Lime)

What is he talking about?

The points that Senpai and I have in common are pretty few, you know.

After a bit, knocking comes from the door.

"Yes?"

"It is Hibiki. Do you have a bit of time?" (Hibiki)

"Come in." (Makoto)

Just like what Lime said, it was Senpai.

"...So Lime was here too. Can you please... no, Raidou-dono, can you accompany me for a bit? It might take a while though." (Hibiki)

Is it something that she doesn't want to talk about in this room?

At the very least, it doesn't seem to be something related to the priestess-san.

I don't think we will be visiting her at this late of an hour after all.

"It is okay. Then Lime, I will be leaving for a bit. It is okay to go rest before me." (Makoto)

"Okay. I will do that." (Lime)

Lime lowers his head.

His mouth was smiling, but his eyes weren't smiling much.

Maybe because Tomoe or someone of that line has asked him to be cautious of her?

But even if he is going to eavesdrop, there's nothing that would trouble me if he heard, so I will just let him do whatever he wants.

"Then, let's go."

"Yes."

Senpai is trying to feign it as always, but I could tell from her body that she was tense.

Just like when we talked about the priestess, I don't think this will be a comfortable talk.

Because of the recall ritual, it has become a pretty good development for me in Limia though.

Waterfall seemed to be the sober type of dragon, but she opened the library and brought us back, so she is quite the open-hearted fellow.

I have also received the peddling permission for the Forest Oni's unit, and as long as we are able to return without anything happening, it would be great.

But it won't go so smoothly huh.

Ah, right.

It depends on the talk with Senpai, but maybe I should try talking with her about the recall ritual.

I think that information about returning home is important.

Yeah, that's not bad.

The back of Senpai made a silence flow through us, and that provided me time to arrange my thoughts.

In time, Senpai's legs stop and turns towards me.

Senpai and I were in a part of the castle, at a corridor where we could easily see all the land around the castle.

Chapter 211

Invitation and Response

“How’s Limia?”

“It is a big country. Isn’t it a major power that is fighting over the first and second place?” (Makoto)

A vague question from Senpai.

Leaving aside that I might have answered differently If she had made a more concrete question, I gave my impressions of Limia.

I have a few bad impressions of the rampant nobles, but... if I had to give a good part of it, it would be that, honestly, I don’t have much of an impression.

“Fufufu, a major power huh. That’s true. But you see, in truth, the major power that you and I imagine are quite different. It is also a half-hearted country.” (Hibiki)

“Half-hearted?” (Makoto)

I don’t think a major power can be half-hearted.

It is a major power because many people live there, right?

In that case, it wouldn’t be able to function as a country without a superior system supporting it.

“For example, the population, Makoto-kun, how much do you think is the population of Limia?” (Hibiki)

P-Population?

This is a topic I have not cared at all for since coming to this world.

“...The territory of Limia is wide, so maybe around the ten millions or hundred

millions?" (Makoto)

Looking at its territory only, I don't think it would be strange for them to have at least this much.

"The correct answer is: I don't know." (Hibiki)

"Hah?"

What's with that?

Isn't that cheating?

"In this world, there's practically no country –including Limia– that has a clear grasp of their population. From what I know, the only one that has a grasp on it is Tsige. Moreover, the ones in possession of the information were not government officials of the country, but a single company." (Hibiki)

Seriously?

One company?

...I feel like there's only one who fits the bill.

I wonder if he has a grasp on the population even in the current sudden increases it is having, Rembrandt-san.

"It is most likely difficult... probably." (Makoto)

A grasp on the number of people... inhabitant's ballot, no, a census huh.

Wait, it should have existed in Japan since quite a long time ago though...

In other words, it shouldn't be difficult?

Unless it is quite the chaotic era.

This world is currently in war, but thinking about the time in which it began in my previous world, it wouldn't be strange for them to be able to do it.

If we are talking about a chaos that made the document burn in fire and had the minds of people agitated to the point of being unable to keep things like that in mind, it would be... the revolution at the Ounin era, maybe?

In the past, even when I investigated in my free time about that era, I couldn't understand it well.

The enemies became allies, and even when the Heads of both powers were affiliated to the same camp, the battle continued, and by the time I noticed, it was already the Sengoku period.

I don't think this world is in the same state.

"They don't have the will to do so, they don't find any reason to do it; it is just because of that. They just report about an approximate of the harvest, and from that report, they decide the tax. With a system like that, there's little point in keeping the population number in check." (Hibiki)

"I-I see." (Makoto)

They decide the tax by the land huh.

It is certainly true that by doing that, they are able to leave the rest to the nobles.

I feel like they are just pushing all the responsibility away though, but if the income is properly coming in, it doesn't seem to be a problem.

"But if a country is thinking about obtaining power, it is a topic that can't be ignored. And in truth, I would say that Limia's population is around 50 million to 70 million, but the tax yields are only around half of that number. So it is like they can avoid tax as much as they want." (Hibiki)

"Half... The remaining would be embezzlement huh." (Makoto)

Limia is practically a despotism of nobles after all.

"Yeah. I am sorry about asking for a consent after the fact, but we are currently utilizing your help in order to improve this part." (Hibiki)

"Me?" (Makoto)

Did I do something?

"It was a real help. Thanks." (Hibiki)

"No well, I don't have much awareness of this, but if I was of help... that's great. Or more like, Senpai, you are even doing things like improvements?" (Makoto)

I feel like this has to do with the very foundations of the country.

"Improvement is a special skill from Japan after all. There's no way I wouldn't use it just because I am in a parallel world, right? I brought out the topic of population as an example, but there's a lot of things that can be changed in this world for the better." (Hibiki)

Isn't that saying too much?

Improvement isn't something only Japan does, it is done in the whole planet Earth.

"Well it is not like it shouldn't be used but... it seems like you are putting a lot of zeal into this country." (Makoto)

"...This is the country I have been summoned in." (Hibiki)

"I know that." (Makoto)

"It is the country where I know the most people, and the country where the most people know of me. It is the country that has placed their expectations on me. Isn't it a matter of course that I think deeply of it?" (Hibiki)

"Sorry." (Makoto)

I felt like I was being criticized, so I ended up apologizing.

Well, I also think deeply of Asora, so it should be about the same.

If it's that, I feel like I can understand.

Different from Asora, Limia is connected by land with other countries and if there's enemies, they can get attacked though.

“...I want you to like this country as well. Is it... difficult to desire that?” (Hibiki)

...

The eyes of Senpai were dyed in seriousness.

“Makoto-kun, this world and the Goddess, it is certainly true that it is very different from the common sense of our original world. There’s definitely things that you can’t just accept and things that are unreasonable.” (Hibiki)

“...”

“I know that you don’t hold positive feelings towards the Goddess. At this occasion, I won’t tell you to throw those away. Just that, for the sake of finishing this long war... can’t you please lend us your strength? Of course, I won’t be telling you to learn of war either. It is fine to supply us with goods at a suitable price.” (Hibiki)

“...”

So she is telling me to supply the goods of Limia huh.

If it’s to lend strength to Senpai only, it would be a different case, but if I were to cooperate in supplying the goods in order to finish the war, it would mean that I have taken the side of hyumans.

Meaning that, even if it’s indirectly, I am participating in the war.

Yeah, can’t do.

There’s no choice but to refuse.

“...How about it?” (Hibiki)

“Sorry, I can’t. If it’s just selling things to Senpai personally, I wouldn’t mind though.” (Makoto)

“I see. So you won’t be cooperating *‘for the sake of putting an end to the war’* huh.” (Hibiki)

...Ah.

Even I could tell that Senpai emphasized the words at the latter half.

So they are already suspecting that I have a connection with the demon race huh.

They don't have any positive proof of it, so they can't ask about this crime though.

"I'm thinking on opening the doors of Kuzunoha Company to all that need it. Please let me cooperate in the sense of neutrality." (Makoto)

"You see, Makoto-kun... I don't think that all the actions of the Goddess are correct." (Hibiki)

"?!"

Senpai?!

No wait, isn't that something a hero shouldn't say?!

"She is not the 'God' that we think of. She has a personality, and individuality. I have not heard of the existence of other Gods in this world aside from her, so it shouldn't be wrong to say that she is the only God though." (Hibiki)

"..."

That's right. There's no way I would accept something like that as a God.

The God that Senpai is talking about is probably the almighty one.

That kind of God, I have not met one either.

But... I do think that there's no way it is okay to leave that Goddess do as she pleases.

"The existence that manages and watches over this world. The Gods that exist are probably people that do these kind of jobs. Honestly, even now, I still think that she is a woman with problems in her personality." (Hibiki)

"Senpai..." (Makoto)

"But Makoto-kun, no matter the existence she is, she lives in a different place from us, in other words, an existence that has nothing to do with us, you know? Even for us, the

day we met that night was the last. Until then, I didn't believe in the existence of God. In other words, isn't she only an existence that we met in a mere instant of our short lives?" (Hibiki)

"..."

"What will you do by maintaining that feeling of defeat inside of you? It is like having complains about the laws and phenomenons that naturally exist in the world. Isn't it pointless?" (Hibiki)

"Why did Senpai...?" (Makoto)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

"Why did Senpai come to this world? Even though you had a life of success secured over there." (Makoto)

I don't understand at all.

"You want to know the reason why I came to this world?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah." (Makoto)

"You are interested in the reason of why someone like me, who shouldn't have any relation to this world to begin with, would come to this world?" (Hibiki)

"!"

Does Senpai know?

The fact that the two being summoned was the fault of me and my parents.

"...Because I thought it was interesting." (Hibiki)

"That's the main reason?" (Makoto)

"Well, it is not like I don't hold any feelings of wanting to return to my life in Japan. However, at that time, at that instant, I certainly did feel that being in a parallel world was appealing. That's why I am here. In the end, the whole reason I am here is because of the feelings of that instant. From then, I created connections in this world more and

more, and I can no longer separate from it so easily." (Hibiki)

"Feelings of that instant." (Makoto)

So Senpai currently doesn't have intentions of going back then.

I can sense that from her.

Even though she said she wanted to return a bit, I couldn't feel a single trace of homesickness from Senpai's words.

"The Empire's Tomoki must be the same. Well, if the Goddess had asked him the previous day or the day after, his answer might have differed. There's plenty possibility that different heroes would be summoned, and he and I would currently be living a peaceful life in Japan." (Hibiki)

"..."

Right.

At that day, in just that instant, the two decided to become heroes.

A decision is a decision.

But if we were to call it a thoroughly thought decision, as expected, that wouldn't be the case.

"It is not like I am blaming Makoto-kun. Don't make that face. Let me advance the topic. In this world, the interference of God is not something definite or anything like that. This world will most likely change more and more. If we can finish the war soon and calm down the quarrel between hyumans and demons, we would be able to use that much time in changing the world." (Hibiki)

"Change... the world?" (Makoto)

"That's right. It can't be done easily, but I think it is possible to create a society where hyumans and demi-humans don't discriminate each other." (Hibiki)

Reforming the very thinking of hyumans then?

But as long as the foundation of that thinking lies in the teachings of the goddess, I think it is impossible.

Even in the teachings of the Spirits, they are told that demi-humans are existences below hyumans, you know?

"Even if you are a hero, isn't that way too idealistic? This is a world where a big number of hyumans follow a religion that goes against that very ideal of yours." (Makoto)

"Isn't Makoto-kun showing that possibility yourself? In Rotsgard and Tsige. It is possible to wake up the hyuman society as a whole with those actions, right? I don't think the Goddess would be able to forcefully amend the people that want to change themselves. I have investigated decades of activities from her, but she herself is docile and simply has a deep affection for beautiful hyumans, and she doesn't punish hyumans that hold a different way of thinking from what she wills. At least in public it is known in that way." (Hibiki)

So Senpai is trying to change the Goddess' world from the inside?

But if that's the case, her thinking should be close to mine, and yet, why is it that I feel like Senpai is so far away?

"In that case, Senpai, even if the Goddess doesn't exist anymore in this world, for example; even if a different God were to take her place, you wouldn't mind, right?" (Makoto)

Well, even if I say a different God, I don't have a specific God in mind though.

I am just saying and see how she reacts.

But if Senpai does think that way, I thought that maybe it would be possible to form a cooperative relationship with her.

If she thinks that a society where demi-humans don't face discrimination is better, it would be possible to speak with the demons as well.

"...Even if the Goddess is gone?" (Hibiki)

"F-Figuratively speaking." (Makoto)

In the case that I actually fight her, win, and punish her, I don't know if the Goddess will continue managing this world as always.

In that case, I thought that since a God is gone, there would be a different God coming to fill her place.

"If it doesn't have any effect on the world at all, I wouldn't mind. Just that..." (Hibiki)

"Just that...?" (Makoto)

"If the Goddess is gone, the Spirits that work as her servants will be gone, and then she -the manager of this world- would be gone. Who knows what kind of effect would bring to the magic power that serves as the nucleus of this world. On top of that, the blessings and divine protection will disappear and the status of the Church will fall. There's also the fear that the very teachings of the Goddess will be thrown away as well." (Hibiki)

"..."

I didn't think that far ahead.

Because I didn't care at all about what would happen to this world after the Goddess lost her power or at worst, died.

It is fine to just bring the people that want refuge into Asora first, and in the first place, it is a world that existed even when the Goddess wasn't there.

It seems like people like Root were there at that time, so I think that it won't go to the point of being impossible to live in.

That's why I didn't think further than that.

But it seems like Senpai had thought about the things that would happen if the Goddess were to fall.

"Even if, for argument's sake, it turns peaceful at that time, the world will instantly fall into great chaos, and there's an incredibly high chance that hell will break loose. Especially the humans that had received the affection of the Goddess, there's the chance that the other races will view them as enemies." (Hibiki)

“It is certainly true that there’s the chance.” (Makoto)

Or more like, it will definitely turn out that way.

The blessing will be gone, so leaving aside the people that have true strength, most of the hyumans will be facing a hard time.

Also, if the common language disappears, it might turn into a mess, like the Tower of Babel.

They wouldn’t be able to create a big country like now, so the hegemony of the world will probably be changed to another race.

“If you are saying you have a method that will not show a single effect like that to the world, I don’t mind.” (Hibiki)

“Then if there’s an effect like what Senpai has stated?” (Makoto)

“Even if it costs me my life, I will go against it.” (Hibiki)

“...Even if it costs you your life?” (Makoto)

“If there’s someone planning something like that, it would be the same as the demon race; a world-class terrorist. Ruthlessly cornering the people that are living in peace and taking away their lives. It is enough to call it pure evil. The ones facing the most damage would be the hyumans, but the demi-humans will also be involved with no exception.” (Hibiki)

“Terrorist. The demons are a different race, they possess a country, and are opponents that you are fighting in war. Even though you are doing war with them, you call them in that way. Aren’t you a bit too prejudiced?” (Makoto)

Terrorist is a word I didn’t expect.

To call the war with the demons terrorism...

“Yeah. It is like a war brought by the minority that knew that no matter what they tried, they wouldn’t be able to reign supreme against the majority. That’s probably why the Goddess got impatient and called the heroes.” (Hibiki)

“The demon race is the minority?” (Makoto)

I imagine the conflicts and invasions of places like Russia and China.

I remember the words of Zef.

If I remember correctly, he said that the demon race population is at most 1 million or 1.5 million.

If Limia has several millions just like Senpai said, the hyuman population is most likely more than 4 times that.

They are called the four major powers, so I was expecting that though.

So if it's 50 million, then 200 million?

Two hundred million against a few millions.

If the other demi-humans are added to the equation, would it turn into the ten millions?

The demon race units are originally composed by mixed races.

No, even with that, it would still be an incredibly low number compared to hyumans.

Whichever the case, this is not on the level of war.

Just like Senpai said, this is on the level of a small insurrection.

Even if we take into account that this world counts more the quality than the quantity, it is honestly incredible that the demon race is putting up a good fight.

“If the demon race request of it, it would bring the denial of the Goddess and her retribution... Well, it wouldn’t go so far, but they should at least be able to seek a better treatment. What they are doing is denying the very social system of this world they have been living in.” (Hibiki)

“They could have gone into extinction if they hadn’t done that.” (Makoto)

“You really take the side of demons here.” (Hibiki)

"I have seen something that made me realize just how severe the Goddess' discrimination was, after all. Then, the actions of the demon race were brought by the need of surviving." (Makoto)

"Yeah, their raising of an army in this occasion was probably something unavoidable." (Hibiki)

"Then—!" (Makoto)

"That means it is already too late. They had to do something before it turned out that way. To better that scorned environment they had even if for a bit, they should have tried to make the hyumans accept them. With a method aside from taking arms, that is." (Hibiki)

No way, that's asking for too much.

Regarding the demon race, it was practically as if the Goddess made the first move telling them to go away and cornered them.

"Isn't that just asking for too much?" (Makoto)

"I have taken a look at the history of demons and hyumans. Of course, this was from the historical records of hyumans, so there's most likely bias there though. Just that, there haven't been much events where the demons have acted in a positive way towards hyumans. And within those small number of people, there's not a single one that has continued for long." (Hibiki)

"History. The history between hyumans and demons." (Makoto)

I only know rough details of it.

"For the demons, hyumans are an overwhelming majority, moreover, it is collected in a single religion, it is also an opponent that has better individual battle power, you know? From the beginning, the choice of fighting was not something sane." (Hibiki)

"...Right." (Makoto)

Because of the blessing of the Goddess, the demon race was also being overpowered by hyumans in the magic power side as well, so there was no good part in it.

The more I think about it, the more impressed I am by the demons being able to put up a good fight against the hyumans.

Well, it is not like they have been doing war forever. They were mostly enduring the discrimination and oppression.

“But the demons fought with the hyumans several times, lost, and still, they haven’t changed their way of dealing with things.” (Hibiki)

“...”

“They should have had several opportunities to. The chance to enter within hyumans just like the demi-humans.” (Hibiki)

“Eh?” (Makoto)

“If it were me, that’s what I would do. If it’s a big opponent and I am unable to do anything about it with our power, I would join them and change them from the inside. I would create an opportunity to enter, and then, manage something from there. Isn’t that one of the few choices that the minority has in order to survive?” (Hibiki)

“Are you saying that they should live amidst hyumans as slaves?” (Makoto)

“...Even if it’s a starting line from a slave position, it is possible to crawl their way up. But they took arms to the very end. I don’t have the intention of wiping them all out, but if we don’t corner them to that very limit to show an example, no one would be able to accept it. At the very least, we would have to eliminate the people that are managing their country, their army, and the ones cooperating with them; every one of them.” (Hibiki)

“Accept it, you say. Isn’t that also because of the warped teachings of the Goddess?” (Makoto)

If only she hadn’t tainted this world with her stupid teachings, this wouldn’t have turned out this way.

The existence of that Goddess is the main reason for this problem, so they probably have to confront her at some point in time.

In that case, even if it will somewhat trouble the people that are currently living, isn’t

it a lot better to just eliminate that Goddess that has spread this strange way of thinking?

"The warped teachings of the Goddess huh. But that is the religion that all the world follows, you know. Isn't that the same as having an overwhelming minority taking arms?" (Hibiki)

"Then you are saying that they should resign to their fate? That the teachings of the Goddess can't be helped, and it also can't be helped that the demon race is rendered impossible to stand back up? That because they didn't conform with those conditions quickly and become slaves for the sake of surviving, it can't be helped that they are receiving a worse treatment than that? Is that what you think, Senpai?" (Makoto)

I am kind of pissed here.

No matter who, if they are being oppressed, they would want to make a complain or two.

To expect those kind of people to calmly look at the situation, think of the future, and find a good way for the race to survive, something like that... who would be able to blame them for being unable to do that?

To be able to act composedly no matter when, that's not something that anyone could do.

Thinking that way, I unconsciously spoke to Senpai in a harsh tone.

"That's right." (Hibiki)

"!!"

It is not like I thought Senpai would make a troubled expression... but I thought she would at least show hesitation.

The instant answer of Senpai blocked my words.

"I said this just a few moments ago but, the demon race and the hyumans are already in a situation where it is already too late. Without a closure for this war, neither of the races will be able to advance. That's how much hatred is gathered between both sides. Of course, I who has been fighting alongside Limia, am no exception. The Goddess'

teachings, their dependence to her, the discrimination towards demi-humans; all these problems are problems that can only be dealt with after this war is over. This one point is impossible to move or change anymore. No one is able to." (Hibiki)

"No one..." (Makoto)

Is that true?

If it is the Kuzunoha Company that has a connection with both, wouldn't it be able to work out somehow?

...No.

Before that, wouldn't things change a lot if I just had that Bug reflect?

"No one. Even for Makoto, that's impossible. The hyumans that had their family taken away by demons had their hatred grow inside of themselves, and that hatred becomes the fangs that point towards them. It is the same for the demons that had their family taken away by hyumans. This chain of losses... can't be erased." (Hibiki)

Senpai made a pained expression for an instant.

The current Senpai is as cold as ice, and she is speaking with an indifferent expression, so that one instant remained in my mind.

Memories can't be erased huh.

Rotsgard has become a lot easier to live in, but it is certainly true that it would be hard to erase that memory.

The more there are, the higher the amount of deaths there will be after all.

"Hatred and sadness. It is not something that easily disappears. I... can understand that." (Makoto)

As I thought, I should do something quick about that Goddess.

Senpai seems to be worried about the later, but in the end, if the Goddess remains, the current state of things won't change.

I will have to revise my attitude towards Bug.

"The demons who are the minority, are going against the overwhelming majority which are the hyumans, and the Goddess. This revolution that terrorists have raised which the majority of the people in this world didn't wish for, this madness of a war, I will end it as soon as possible. Makoto-kun, I will say it again. Lend us your power, please." (Hibiki)

Senpai lowers her head deeply.

But my thoughts won't change.

Actually, I think that Senpai is over-thinking this in a way too realistic of a manner.

In this world that the Goddess does whatever she wants, I don't feel like they would be able to change their sense of worth even if they took their time trying.

"...Senpai, I will say it again as well. I refuse." (Makoto)

"Let me say this frankly, the stance that you Kuzunoha Company are taking can bring advantage to the demon race. The act of providing goods to both sides in a war, is an act of a merchant asking for a death sentence, you know? Is the Kuzunoha Company wishing for war and looking to gain profit from it?" (Hibiki)

"No. I also think that it would be better if the war didn't exist. Just that, I think that the whole reason for this is that Goddess, and if only we could make her change her way of thinking, there would be as many methods born from it." (Makoto)

"What do you mean? Even if the Goddess is the cause, what does Makoto-kun plan on doing?" (Hibiki)

"It is not wrong that the policy of the Kuzunoha Company is to welcome anyone that needs it, but... I personally think it would be better to drag down that Goddess once." (Makoto)

"Drag down the Goddess..." (Hibiki)

Senpai makes a short mutter and turned speechless.

"It is certainly true that the world will fall into a temporal chaos, and it might put a

limit to the magic that magicians can use. It might turn into an End of the Century situation between hyumans and demi-humans, but even with that, I think that the best plan is to kick that woman out from the God position she has been lying on." (Makoto)

"...How?" (Hibiki)

"Well, by force." (Makoto)

"By force, you say. The opponent is a God you know? Even if, for argument's sake, you were to overpower her, would you be able to substitute for her?!" (Hibiki)

"Overpower? I don't know about that, but I don't intend to become the replacement of her." (Makoto)

"Then you will simply eliminate a God?" (Hibiki)

Senpai held her head and shook it aimlessly.

No no no, I don't plan on eliminating her.

I was thinking that it would be fine to just leave her a bit further from half-dead.

I am still alive after all, and the reason why I met with Tomoe and the others was in part because of that Bug.

"No well, she is not the only God out there, so as we do our stuff, a substitute will come, probably." (Makoto)

"...You speak as if you have met other Gods. Well, I have been brought to a strange place with a shady individual though." (Hibiki)

"How to say it, I have met with a God-sama that seems to be an acquaintance of that Goddess." (Makoto)

"...That's why you are saying that you will be changing that Goddess' way of thinking by force? Without thinking at all about the repercussions that it can cause." (Hibiki)

"If something happens, we can just take refuge until things settle down." (Makoto)

"You are really indifferent at the crisis of hyumans. You don't discriminate demi-

humans, but you discriminate hyumans huh." (Hibiki)

?!!

No no!

I am not discriminating hyumans.

"I am not discriminating demi-humans or hyumans." (Makoto)

"...You are seriously saying that. Then this is serious." (Hibiki)

"What do you mean?" (Makoto)

"From Makoto-kun's speech and conduct, you are flickering your thoughts that it can't be helped since the hyumans have done whatever they wanted along with the Goddess." (Hibiki)

"Well, it is true that the hyumans have done whatever they wanted for so long, right?" (Makoto)

That's not discrimination, it is the truth.

"Yeah, but to give a cold reception because of that, isn't that considered discrimination?" (Hibiki)

"Hyumans are the strong ones that overwhelm this world with their numbers. Why would the word discrimination apply for them?" (Makoto)

Isn't discrimination something done by society's strong ones over the weak ones?

"And so what?" (Hibiki)

"Eh?"

"Are you saying that even if someone were to discriminate rulers, it wouldn't be considered discrimination? The gazes that the hyumans direct towards demi-humans is peculiar, but have you noticed? Makoto-kun, at times, you have directed those kind of gazes towards hyumans. Even here, and at Rotsgard as well." (Hibiki)

"Ugh..." (Makoto)

If she brings out gazes, I can't say I am conscious of it.

But if I am asked if it is okay to show discriminating actions towards the strong, I would say it is not.

"Hey Makoto-kun, in the structure of this world, you and I are considered outsiders, right? In that case, not taking into account the past history and coming in contact with the hyumans and demi-humans in equal grounds, isn't that how a person that doesn't discriminate would act? If there's a person that's troubled in front of you, shouldn't you be stretching out your hand no matter the way that person has been living until now and their social standing? For hyumans, they have done whatever they have wanted, so they should suck it up; for demi-humans, they are pitiful, so help them. Isn't that what you would call discrimination towards hyumans?" (Hibiki)

"But the hyumans have been utilizing the demi-humans as their servants, and they have been living shouldering this. In the first place, there's no way I would be able to look at them with eyes like those of a Saint." (Makoto)

"That's why. You end up thinking that way because you are thinking with our common sense. This is *not* Japan, this is a parallel world. In the common sense of this world, hyumans and demi-humans are this way. In the first place, the demon race has picked a fight against that common sense and have brought about a war, you know?" (Hibiki)

"...That's a mistaken common sense." (Makoto)

"As a Japanese, that is. Your basis for your cold reception towards hyumans is something that's natural common sense, and most people would not understand being criticized for it. Even in hyumans, when in situations between other hyumans, where you take out the attitude towards demi-humans and their attachment to beauty, they are people that properly hate discrimination." (Hibiki)

"Even if you take out things that shouldn't be taken out, it won't make me accept it." (Makoto)

"To change their root cognition, there's the need for time, which would have to be after the war is over. But if there's Makoto-kun who wants to do that by force against the Goddess, it would all end up crumbling." (Hibiki)

"Not really. I might lose, and it is okay for Senpai to just continue doing war. I will be moving with my own thoughts. Even if it's Senpai, I won't be affirming everything you say and obeying it." (Makoto)

"If you were to lose, that would be..." (Hibiki)

Senpai places both arms on the handrail and bends her body.

"...There's plenty chance for it to happen. Even if she is like that, she is still a God after all." (Makoto)

Words leaked out from Senpai who had her face hidden, a mutter of expectation for me to lose.

From the conversation until now, I could tell that it would be a pleasant development for her.

I am slightly shocked, but it can't be helped.

Senpai seems to be entirely against the idea of me fighting the Goddess after all.

Even so, I am practically not thinking about the effects that will bring forth to the world like Senpai said.

I refuse managing a world like this, and I don't want to become a God either.

Instead of arranging such pointless things, it is much more important to find a method to return to my original world with Tomoe and the others while being able to go back and forth to Asora.

"I can't imagine you losing." (Hibiki)

As if resenting me, Senpai turned a sulking face towards me.

"W-Well, thanks." (Makoto)

"Things like being too far away, the scale being too much, or the numbers being way too many; I know that I can't do anything about those, but this is the first time I have felt that no matter what I do, I won't be able to surpass an individual. Even if I went at full power in my current self." (Hibiki)

The full power of the current Senpai huh.

As I thought, maybe she has obtained some power like that of Sakai.

Even if that's not the case, there's definitely something.

"No well, Senpai was also strong, you know. It was like 'as expected of a hero'."
(Makoto)

"Even though you were not serious at all. Heh~, then, between me and the Demon Lord, who is stronger?" (Hibiki)

"...If I were to fight the Demon Lord, I would be able to answer you." (Makoto)

"Then, what about Io, White One?" (Hibiki)

"...With that strong attack power, maybe you can win against Io?" (Makoto)

To fight with that person, it would depend on how well you can surpass that regeneration power of his after all.

But if you were to try and go until he is unable to regenerate, it would turn into an incredible endurance battle.

I think there would be the need to finish the fight in one go.

Senpai has faced painful experiences with him, right?

If I remember correctly, she has close to a terrible affinity against him.

But if it's the current Senpai, she might be able to defeat him.

Thinking about it that way, she is a dangerous one.

Because that means she is stronger than that scary-looking giant.

"Receiving the input of the White One, I feel my confidence strengthening. That guy... is someone I have to win against no matter what, after all." (Hibiki)

"I see." (Makoto)

After meeting several times in the battlefield, something like destiny is born, maybe.

I don't have much of those.

Aside from that Goddess.

"Hm."

Senpai releases the handrail, and stretches her body upright.

Maybe because of her experience in kendo, Senpai's posture is good.

"So that means Kuzunoha Company and Raidou are the allies of everyone in trouble, right? Okay, I got it." (Hibiki)

"Hah?" (Makoto)

I-Is that okay?

That helps me out though.

No matter how much she asks me to cooperate with Limia, I won't be nodding after all.

"On top of that, I have learned that you are a troublesome person that is fully antagonistic towards the Goddess. Well, about that, I will keep it a secret for you though." (Hibiki)

"...Thanks." (Makoto)

"The Goddess probably hasn't heard of it either after all. With the capital having been raided, leaving aside the blessing and divine protection, there has been practically no reaction from her. What she is thinking is a mystery." (Hibiki)

No reaction?

In other words, she hasn't answered the calls of the Church or the heroes?

The attack to the capital... I see, it is around the time when that Goddess met with those Gods.

Did they make some sort of agreement that's making her unable to move?

I have not been told the details of it, so...

"We have done a strange talk as well, but yeah. Tentatively speaking, I would like to eliminate the influence and distortion of the Goddess, and having you know that is plenty enough for today." (Hibiki)

"It sounds like you feel it will be in a pretty far future though." (Makoto)

A long time after we die, that is.

Maybe that's why I felt Senpai so distant.

The objectives that Senpai shoulders are not things that she always tries to resolve herself.

She resolves them bit by bit, and if it isn't possible with her, she places that job to the future generation.

"We are a race that can transfer their feelings, you know. By doing that, we are able to turn time into our allies as well. Trying to do everything by yourself in your own era can bring about pointless pain and can distort your objective." (Hibiki)

"What you have decided to do yourself should be accomplished by oneself. I think that's something splendid. Time can fade memories, and there's no assurance that the next generation will hold the same feelings as you after all." (Makoto)

"So you won't think about moving as a whole... you won't believe in this world's society as you act huh." (Hibiki)

"Just like how Senpai taught me, in my foundation, there's most likely some discriminating feelings towards humans. I think that's what it means to understand the words, but being unable to accept it. Even if Senpai tells me to believe in their change, I just can't. Sorry." (Makoto)

"...It isn't something that can be immediately eliminated right after understanding it. It isn't something you need to apologize for either. From now on, I will be counting on you as a customer of yours, Makoto-kun." (Hibiki)

"Yes... here as well." (Makoto)

We look close, but Senpai and I are distant.

I didn't want to know of it, but I ended up knowing it.

This is different from the disgust I felt towards Tomoki, like a disparity of not wanting something like this to happen.

Senpai accepts the current world of that Goddess.

On top of that, she is trying to tell the world about this sense of discomfort and trying to change it slowly.

She is aware that it will take an enormous amount of time.

Without caring about those kind of things, I am thinking that it is natural for me to want to have the Goddess reflect as soon as possible and have the hyumans and demi-humans enter an equal relationship.

Without caring about how much or how many consequences it might bring.

From this world and this Goddess' perspective... I probably do look like a fiendish terrorist...

Even so, if I can simply find a method to return to my world in a desirable way, I think I would act.

For the sake of fighting once with the Goddess.

I wonder, if that time comes, will I end up fighting Senpai?

I don't think a fight against that person and me will come to a conclusion, but if possible, I would want to avoid having Senpai point a sword at me.

Chapter 212

Drowsiness of the Victor

“I understand... Makoto-kun pushed away my serious emotions of the several millions of lives that I have been entrusted with. From what I was shown, I felt like he was a lot more scary than that Goddess.” (Hibiki)

After Makoto left from the passage, Hibiki was left alone.

A self-deprecating mutter came from her mouth.

“I am seriously the type that stumbles when it counts the most.” (Hibiki)

The fight with Io.

Remembering the invitations she did to Mio and Lime, Hibiki makes a wry smile.

She felt as if the important things were slipping from her hands, an irritating feeling.

The wind passes in between the fingers of her opened hand.

She felt as if it was a feeling similar to this.

Her self-depreciation continued.

“If we lose to the demon race, that’s the end; if we lose in the war against Tomoki, it will be the end as well; and if Makoto-kun goes haywire, it will be the end too huh. What an incredible situation. The last one has a narrow chance of hope though. A world without the Goddess huh... Thinking about the current state, it will most definitely become a warring era with the flood of the small countries, so it wouldn’t change the fact that it will be despairing.” (Hibiki)

A disastrous image appears in the mind of Hibiki, and disappears.

Winning against the demon race, shutting the Empire, and on top of that, restrain Makoto with something aside from power.

After doing all that would Hibiki finally be able to begin with her objective.

Just like what she said about it being an incredible situation, it is practically close to impossible.

Even so, Hibiki can't just withdraw.

"Even so, I have to do my best till the end. Believing in me, many have died. For the sake of my objective, I have killed many. There's also people like Naval that have sacrificed themselves. I can't give up. I have to struggle." (Hibiki)

As an awakened one from the world transfers, she has obtained the ability to change the conception of others into power.

Because of that point as well, she is aware of the innumerable cord-like feelings that have been placed on her.

The lives that have been entrusted to her, and the lives she has taken away; while having those in mind, Hibiki fights.

Hibiki felt that she has the obligation to do her best until the last moment of her life.

That's why she can't just push them aside.

Even if the other party is someone with power that can easily cut apart those feelings.

"Seriously... being a hero is quite the worthwhile position." (Hibiki)

For Hibiki, the Goddess is the person that has provided her with this environment.

That's why Hibiki feels a set amount of gratitude towards her.

But that's all there's to it.

Hibiki's impression of her was like that of the first person that had found her.

Sadly to say, she is a type that is hard to respect as a superior, and there's several problems with her as well.

But as a numerical value, she provides benefits, so it is someone that can't be cut off

and there's no choice but to just accept it.

It is something like that.

Thinking until there, Hibiki sighs.

"Hah... If I could change the religion I am shouldering, I think it would be easier to have Makoto-kun instead of the Goddess. Even if he were to be treated as a God, by using the front of worshipping, it can be hidden in many ways. But even when he said such outrageous things, the only strong reactions I got from him were with the Goddess, and... his discrimination towards humans. He doesn't have a purpose. That boy doesn't even have the intention of founding a nation. If he at least had something like that..." (Hibiki)

Hibiki could tell that the options for the future would increase a lot.

If Makoto were to become a king, if he were to announce that he would be founding a nation, the humans and demons wouldn't be able to ignore it.

Because it would be a big problem that would force them to even stagnate this hatred-filled war in order to deal with it.

Anyone that has seen his power would be able to tell.

Because it would mean that a country that surpasses all the currently existing countries in military power will be born all of a sudden.

At the very least, in the time that Makoto and his close aides are alive, they wouldn't be able to enter a full-out war without that country, is what Hibiki thought.

"He doesn't have the intentions to become a king or a God either. Because of that, his inability for authority is unconsciously showing, and thinks that the Goddess is an enemy of equal ground. I seriously don't understand him..." (Hibiki)

Hibiki's waist falls to the ground.

Hibiki sits in the cold corridor.

"My legs gave out... but that's a given, right? If I made a mistake, I might have ended up dead cold right now at this place. Not only my spirit, even my body was enduring

the fear huh." (Hibiki)

An absolute strength.

Currently for Hibiki, that's exactly what Misumi Makoto is.

The moment those straining feelings loosened, Hibiki's body reminded her that.

What she wanted to ask, her invitation, and also, the confrontation she feared.

For Hibiki, the conversation just now was something she challenged with the feelings of standing on thin ice.

(He is already not in a dimension where I can think of him in human standards. Earthquake, tsunami, eruption, tornado... he is close to those. Fighting against him is not that realistic, but... as long as it is someone that moves with a will, I can't ignore it. Seriously, he has become quite the monster.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki then notices.

That within herself, two things began to bother her.

The first one is something that she had already expected.

They were her own emotions after all.

(Then why I don't obey him? If it's just in military power, he surpasses that of a country; a monster in the skin of a human. No matter what Limia tries to do, they probably wouldn't be able to beat him. Then there should be no other choice but to curry his favor, and yet...) (Hibiki)

The lights of the land near the castle she was looking at were few, and as she saw them grow sparse, Hibiki sunk into silence.

(...I see. It is hatred. I can't forgive the demon race. They have burned many villages, killed many hyumans, and also my comrade... Naval as well. Ah, maybe that's why.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki nodded a few times.

Facing your own emotions and controlling them.

It is something important, but difficult to do.

When those emotions turn so natural that they seemer deep into yourself, it becomes even harder to do.

Overcoming the death of a comrade is also a different matter.

Hibiki finally understood why she didn't choose to completely curry favor on Makoto.

(Of course, I have killed many of them as well. Within them, there should have been people with comrades, family, and lovers. Even so, I hate the demon race. I see... so this is how it feels to be a concerned party. Is the hatred of war something so troublesome?) (Hibiki)

Hibiki was surprised that within her deepest self, hatred towards the demon race had piled up.

It is true that the demon race is the enemy, and there's no doubt that they are a hateful enemy, but she didn't know that it was binding her this much.

Since she thought she had it somewhat under control, this was shocking.

(To curry the favor of Makoto-kun, I would have to affirm his ideals even if it is only on the outside. In other words, it would become hard to continue the war. That's why I...) (Hibiki)

In other words, she wished for the continuation of the war.

With her hand covering her mouth, Hibiki's pair of eyes opened wide.

(That's why I can't. I want to bring down my enemy. That's right. Until I kill Io, I...) (Hibiki)

Thinking about the reason why she wanted the war to continue, she reached an answer.

In the end, it was an incredibly personal reason, and Hibiki was amazed of herself.

Even though it was not funny at all, she felt a laugh coming out from within her throat.

After a while, the laughing stopped, but Hibiki didn't stand up and was sitting just like that.

She was thinking about the other thing that was bothering her.

(I... what did I feel a sense of discomfort in? The moment I thought of Makoto-kun as a monster, I certainly felt it... Right, 'refuge'! He said that when the world goes into chaos and turns into an End of the Century era, they could just go take refuge for a while. Why is there a need to take refuge? There's no doubt that the world will fall into great chaos if the Goddess is defeated. But it is not a situation where individuals with power or organizations would take refuge. If it's the Kuzunoha Company, it is realistically possible to even be able to become the number one company. But he said that he would be taking refuge.) (Hibiki)

That word coming from someone strong made Hibiki feel a sense of discomfort.

(Just that, when it comes from the mouth of Makoto, it doesn't feel that strange. Refuge huh. A safe place. In other words, he has a place where no matter if the world has fallen into chaos, he is able to secure safety. That wouldn't be his store. In the variant incident at Rotsgard, the Kuzunoha Company's store was destroyed. Also, Rotsgard and Tsige won't be spared from the chaos.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki lists out the places where Makoto has connections with.

Because she wanted to grasp even if a little bit more information of Makoto and his tendencies.

(! There is. The place that he arrived in when he came to this world. The border of the world. If he has a base in the deepest parts of that wasteland, it would signify that it is safe. They would be able to cut themselves away and live peacefully for years. For him who doesn't think about calming the chaos himself, it is plenty possible.) (Hibiki)

She digs out the memory she had of Tsige where she went to train temporarily in.

She tries to remember as many stories of bases in the wasteland as possible.

And then, she arrives at one answer.

In the first place, those kind of talks are rare, and by elimination process, it was plenty possible to arrive at 'that' place.

"...The Mirage Town. I don't want to think it is possible, but could it be, that's the base of Makoto-kun -of the Kuzunoha Company?" (Hibiki)

A Mirage Town that a few number in Tsige have heard of.

In the end, Hibiki returned to Limia without going to that town.

But the more she thought about it, the closer she felt the relation between Kuzunoha Company and that Mirage Town.

"A mirage town located somewhere in the wasteland. If that's his base, his first store being in Tsige begins to look like a splendid decoy. The wasteland is his base and has set up a store at Tsige. That's right, if he already had a base by the time he left the wasteland and entered Tsige..." (Hibiki)

Hibiki noticed one other scary thing.

Her words stop unconsciously.

(For a base, the wasteland is just far. WAY too far! A base needs to be in a place where one can return in a short amount of time. His Majesty and prince Joshua said this when they returned from Rotsgard, that they have broken the long distance teleportation that the Kuzunoha Company was relying on... That's a lie. It hasn't been broken. They don't use the merchant transportation method to 'return', they have in their hands a stable long-distance teleportation. Because they are able to take refuge after all.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki doesn't know of Asora.

She does know that there's a mirage town somewhere in the vast border of the world.

It would be impossible for her to be able to predict a parallel space, so even if it's not a perfect correct answer, it was a guess that was close to what Makoto's base is.

(If he is able to do business in this world while ignoring distance completely, it would be logical how he is able to have a store and has allowance to do peddling around the whole world. Yeah. Kuzunoha Company is like the Goddess, if I were to consider them

an existence living on a different plane altogether... They declared that they didn't have interest in the war, so there's many ways to deal with this.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki thinks about how she will be interacting with the Kuzunoha Company.

At the same time, she was estimating the way to progress in the war with the demon race.

(It is slightly different from the request of Waterfall, but if I have Makoto-kun compromise that he won't be destroying the world, it is still salvageable. If we are able to bring the advantages of Kuzunoha Company and him to the humans... next, as long as the demon race does a big move in the time that the Goddess is still okay, there's the chance that it will turn advantageous for us. But well, the demon race is also hostile to the Goddess, so there's not much for me to worry about in this part huh.)

Hibiki stands up.

She walks towards the opposite direction of the passage that Makoto walked away in.

Even when she knew Kuzunoha Company's power to a certain degree, her eyes didn't show the light of giving up, it reflected strength.

Makoto and Hibiki's conversation, and Hibiki's monologue. That one act had ended.

At one of the castle's spires pretty far away from the passage, one shadow was sitting there.

It is the roof portion of the spire that shouldn't have people to begin with.

The girl that was eavesdropping at the whole conversation of Makoto and Hibiki, first smiled with her mouth, and it spread all the way to her eyes.

"Ufufufu, a breakdown. That's a given-desu. Waka-sama and Hibiki's way of thinking about the current state was simply coincidentally similar after all. It has gone well."

Makoto's follower, Mio.

Mio had created a flow where it would lead to Makoto and Hibiki's conversation, and induced it.

But she didn't manipulate the result, and didn't interfere in it either.

Mio was able to read to a certain degree what was going to happen if they were to clash their opinions.

"When I heard Tomoe-san's assessment of Hibiki, it came to me. That it would be fine; that Waka-sama and her are not compatible. It is Hibiki who doesn't know of what's beneath, and Waka-sama who, in a sense, only looks from beneath. It was an obvious result-desu." (Mio)

The assessment Mio heard from Tomoe.

It is something that even now Hibiki isn't aware of, a subconscious part.

From what Tomoe said: Hibiki doesn't know of the standing of the weak.

What Tomoe said of Hibiki was that: 'She doesn't understand the standing of the absolute weak. Because that girl believes that if they do their best, they will be able to bring about results-ja. No matter how they struggle it will be for naught, she doesn't know that there are people that can only be weak. Well, she herself can do anything she tries to do, so since she is young, thinking that way can't be helped~'.

And in truth, that's what Hibiki thinks.

If you try till death, people will be able to bring about some results.

Of course, there's many people in reality that can bring about 'some' results, but in society, there's also a part that can't do anything no matter what they try.

Not only the environment and the talent, there's also cases where there's external pressure they can't go against.

But Hibiki, who clearly has not been a concerned party of these cases and even in Earth was born in a blessed household in Japan and with high talent, speaking about how much she understands of the current state, just like how Tomoe said, it is a part that can't be helped.

On the other hand, Makoto doesn't hold the point of view of a strong one.

Even in the parts of position and responsibility, he doesn't understand in what stage

he should be standing in.

Without any jokes and exaggeration, a responsibility that fits the strength of Makoto would be to act while thinking about the whole world in itself.

"It is because the more she learns, the more she doesn't understand. That's why, Hibiki is cautious towards Waka-sama. And so, because she is unable to bring him in, what they are trying to do is to exclude Waka-sama as much as possible from the war. But Waka-sama won't consent." (Mio)

Mio was laughing in a truly gleeful manner.

The figure of Mio laughing simple-mindedly below the moonlight felt like it had madness drifting about, and a dangerous beauty.

"That's because Waka-sama doesn't care if it's hyuman or demi-human after all. He would help out the demi-humans that are troubled, but that's all. What's important for that personage is his own circle. And from the hyumans that I have seen, there was an abundance of idiots, so his preference turned into demi-humans, that's all. It is so simple, and yet... everyone can't understand it. That's just strange-desu wa." (Mio)

Mio looks at the true character of Makoto in that way.

That's correct.

That's why Makoto is still involving himself with hyumans, and at the same time, he has turned into a point where he can't hold a wider field of vision no matter how much time passes.

"It is impossible to not get involved in the war. If there's people troubled coming from it, Waka-sama will act. There's no way he would think about what would happen in the future or the troublesome things that might come. There's no need to match the pace of Hibiki who only thinks about big things like the future, the world. In the first place, that's all empty dreams. Waka-sama most likely noticed it with this. To begin with, future things should be thought by the people of the future-desu wa. No matter what Waka-sama who lives in the present does, no matter what happens to the world because of it, it is simply an unavoidable destiny for the people that will be born later." (Mio)

She once again voices out an unreasonable logic.

But Mio originally doesn't care for anyone other than Makoto.

That's why, for her. what makes Makoto happy is the correct thing to do.

If the noise is getting unbearable and her master is troubled, she wants to remove the seed of that distress.

The actions of Mio this time, were simply because of that.

Just that, Makoto takes in mind his surroundings way too much, to the point of overdoing it.

That's why Mio moved slightly indirectly.

"The hyumans, the demons, and that one above, are really annoying. Waka-sama is saying that he doesn't have any interest, so you should just go kill among yourselves as much as you want in a place that Waka-sama's eyes don't reach-desu. Seriously." (Mio)

Mio disappearing from the spire, and those words, were done at almost the same time.



"Eh? Isn't that Priestess-san -ah no, Priestess-sama?"

"..."

Before arriving at my room, I encountered an unexpected person.

One member of Senpai's party, the priestess of Lorel. If I remember correctly... her name was Chiya.

She looks like she is the same age as Rinon, so she is probably 12-13.

Even though it is already pretty late in the night, she was standing there as if lying in wait for me.

Her attire is also probably not the one she uses when going to sleep.

"Ehm... do you have business with me?" (Makoto)

She maintained her silence, but I ask her who has been staring at me all this time.

"I am the priestess of Lorel, my name is Chiya. First of all, I want to apologize for my impoliteness. I am very sorry." (Chiya)

She lowers her head deeply.

The 90° type, the one that bends the body a lot.

"You suddenly collapsed, so please don't mind it too much. I have heard a bit of the circumstances after all. Uhm, I would be happy if you were to tell me what you can about what you saw though." (Makoto)

"It is not only for the matter of me collapsing. In the time of the dinner, I was unable to take part in it, not even once." (Chiya)

"Your physical condition was not good, so it didn't affect my mood. It is something that can't be helped." (Makoto)

It is true that in the dinners, I was together with Senpai and prince Joshua a lot, but I haven't been together with the priestess once.

In one instance, there was clearly a seat prepared for her and even the meal was prepared, and yet, she didn't come.

At that time, it was probably a 'maybe' case, but if her condition is not good, there should be no responsibility taken in not being able to attend to a dinner. Even when she is this young, she is quite the level-headed girl.

"Thank you very much. My impoliteness can be taken as the impoliteness of Lorel, so it is great that you say that." (Chiya)

But she is so stiff.

It is not an atmosphere fitting her age.

This is not something that requires an apology, but it is certainly true that what she saw interests me.

About what she saw that could make a girl like this lose herself and faint.

“...”

That's why I stay silent and wait for her next words.

“I rudely tried to peek into the true nature of you and your Kuzunoha Company's entourage. Even if it's my power as a priestess, it is an action that wouldn't be helped if you were to scorn me. If you so wish to, it might be my duty to give you the answer of that result.” (Chiya)

“No well, I don't really scorn you or anything...” (Makoto)

In the first place, it is something that Senpai made you do.

Also, if a girl of her age were to get the power to see inside others, I don't think it would be strange to want to use it.

Well, the Priestess-san doesn't fit that much into the kids of her age though.

“What I saw in Lime was a gentle large tree. Lush leaves wet in rain were glittering, and... maybe it was making it its dwelling? The young figure of a dragon was visible. I don't know if it's a hint to something, but I felt like he was a likeable person. That's how I viewed it.” (Chiya)

A gentle large tree.

And a young dragon huh.

I see.

So it is true that she can see things only she can.

But it comprises many truths. There's a high chance that it truly touches their essence.

“Mio-san was... a big black spider. The Calamity Spider. Around its neck there was a big choker, and that spider looked like it was lovingly caring for that choker that had a chain attached to it.” (Chiya)

So it saw through Mio's true identity perfectly huh.

But a choker...

That's probably hinting at the pact.

In that case... this girl saw that chain connected to me?

"Yeah. There's a lot regarding Mio. As you can see, she is no longer the rampaging monster with no sense of sanity. In most cases, she is safer than in the past so..."
(Makoto)

"...No matter if I make a racket about it, I have already reached the conclusion that the situation won't change for the better anyways. Please don't mind it." (Chiya)

"I see... that's great." (Makoto)

"And, you were... a pure white hyuman-shaped form with no features." (Chiya)

Something like a white doll?

No, I don't think that's all there's to it.

It is not something to collapse for.

"A white hyuman shape with no facial features huh. Once again, I don't know what it means." (Makoto)

"Sorry. I have awakened this power just recently, so I still can't accurately grasp the meaning of the things that I see." (Chiya)

"No, I wasn't blaming you." (Makoto)

"Just that, that white hyuman shape had a crack. A small crack." (Chiya)

"A crack?" (Makoto)

"At that part..... Sorry. At that part, in my eyes, it looked like... there was something incredibly repulsive dwelling there." (Chiya)

Repulsive is quite the word.

Leaving aside my outward appearance, is this the route where it is telling me that even my true nature is ugly?

Something like this really depresses me.

“Was it something so repulsive that it made you collapse?” (Makoto)

“I don’t know. I didn’t look straight at it for long after all.” (Chiya)

“I see...” (Makoto)

“...”

“...”

“Please! There’s probably nothing I can do, but...! Please... don’t bring that ‘*thing*’ outside! If you call yourself a merchant, please!!” (Chiya)

“Uo, ehm, please calm down a bit.” (Makoto)

When I thought there was a short silence, the Priestess-san draws closer as if she had lost it.

Moreover, what she asked me to do is something I have no way of doing anything about.

In the first place, what is ‘*that*’?

Something that not even I know myself, there’s no way I would be able to control if it comes out or not, you know?

While trying to somehow calm the Priestess-san, I was troubled by the request that I was unable to nod at.

The Priestess-san that had returned to herself, was heaving with her shoulders going up and down while having a tension-filled face. Because of the same reason, her whole body was still stiff.

“I-I am very sorry.” (Chiya)

“Uhm, I don’t understand it well, but I will do my best, so it would be better if you didn’t pay much mind to it. You might have seen something dangerous, but it seems like it isn’t showing you the future or anything like that.” (Makoto)

"I heard this from Onee— I mean, Hibiki-sama, but she said that you don't hold a religious belief towards the Goddess? Ah, it is not like I am condemning you. For the sake of future reference, can I hear about what you rely on, whether it be in the Spirit-samas or in the studies, and the teachings and thoughts you hold?" (Chiya)

"Hah? The teachings and thoughts?" (Makoto)

"Yes. The teachings of the Goddess, the teachings of the four elemental Spirits that are born from those, and the truth that a number of scholars have arrived at in their studies. Those kind of things." (Chiya)

"...I don't have those. I don't have much interest in religion, even so, if told that science is everything, I also think that's not the case. What I rely on huh. Hmm..." (Makoto)

"..."

The Priestess-san looks at me and was dumbfounded.

Maybe she thought she would get some sort of thoughts of mine immediately.

That's just unreasonable.

"Well, I do have experience in an art called archery that has created some rules inside myself. Are you fine with that?" (Makoto)

"Please let me hear them." (Chiya)

"It is not something complicated or anything like that. It is to do what you have decided to do with your own power. It is something that you have decided to do, so don't rely on someone else, and adhere to it with your own discipline. It is quite vague in many points, but it is something like that. But in truth, there's only one thing that I have decided myself to do though." (Makoto)

"What would that be?" (Chiya)

Maybe she is used to listening to the talk of others, it feels like this Priestess-san is easy to speak with.

...One of the reasons might be because she is a kid though.

"To continue with the bow. In the future, no matter what path I take, no matter what employment I have, no matter what place I end up living in, I have decided to continue with the bow for the rest of my life. That's all there is." (Makoto)

"...I see. To continue doing something, no matter what it is, it will require strong will. It may be difficult, but I think it is a splendid thought." (Chiya)

"Thanks. I feel like I am being comforted though." (Makoto)

"When you decide you will do it, you will definitely do it..." (Chiya)

"Priestess-sama? By the way, how are you feeling? If you are still not feeling well, I can provide you with medicine just in case." (Makoto)

"Wah? ah... I-It's okay." (Chiya)

"I see. In that case, it is already late, so how about returning to your room? If you need to, I can accompany you partway." (Makoto)

"I will return by myself. I am grateful for your consideration. Sorry for intruding so late in the night. Have a good night." (Chiya)

"Good night." (Makoto)

How old was the girl I was talking to?

That's the kind of impression I had remaining even now.

"Ah, Boss. Welcome back. The priestess was here a while ago, you know. Didn't you meet her on the way?" (Lime)

"Yeah, I did. That girl, she came alone to this room huh." (Makoto)

"Yeh, she said she wanted to apologize to Boss. I told her that you are not someone who would mind that, and that I would tell you when you come back, so she should return and sleep, but she didn't listen." (Lime)

"I see. Well, the talk felt similar to that, Gentle Large Tree-san." (Makoto)

"Hah?" (Lime)

“The white featureless one will go to sleep now. Good night.” (Makoto)

“Okay... Good night, Boss.” (Lime)

The day of leaving Limia is close.

The home of Hibiki-senpai, the Limia Kingdom.

I did think that it was somewhat comfortable, but... it became a lot more tiresome visit than I expected.

I don't have the power to think about the future of the country and the world in whole like Senpai does.

I can't even understand individuals well, so there's no way I would be able to understand hundreds of wills, and the country that is like the crystallization of the race's will.

The Demon Lord, Senpai, and the Kings of each nation probably understand those things though.

But I who can't even grasp the circumstances and tendencies of my company employees, this is just a heavy talk.

I can't do it, but I should at least make an effort huh.

I should try to pursue what I can do.

When I return to Asora, I should try speaking with Tomoe and Shiki about it. Ah, when I return, I should show myself in Kaleneon.

...After that, a small talk with Zef...

Because I was doing some thinking, or more like, a lot happened and it is already this late of an hour, my thoughts were cut off in the middle.

Drowsiness is the best.



PtF by: traitorATZEN