

Well, I was in trouble too. That’s what I thought as I finished listening to the report from Ramiris and the others.

It was a bigger incident than I had expected.

“So, is Chloe going to be okay?”

“There are no problems. She reverted to her child form and is conscious. She’s just resting in the infirmary for now, just in case.”

I was relieved to hear that from Shuna.

I had been told from the start that there were no casualties, but even so, I couldn’t rest until I saw for myself. She was probably already asleep right now, so I would go visit her tomorrow.

That being said…

This time, the enemy was a real pain in the ass.

A strategy to use the intruder as a diversion and separate Ramiris from her guards.

Then use the opportunity for Dino to betray us.

Dino’s strength was far greater than Beretta’s. Even Beretta and Apito joining forces were unable stop Dino, and he had almost got his hands on Ramiris.

In the end, Ramiris was saved thanks to Zegion’s timely arrival, but if even one step had gone wrong, it would been a disaster.

I shuddered to think about what would have happened if Zegion had not woken up in time. I was really glad that he made it in time and couldn’t help grabbing my chest in relief.

Still, Velgrynd-san’s return had come as a bit of a surprise.

She was currently discussing her future plans with Masayuki and the Imperial commanders. We would have to meet and talk later, but I suppose they would all want to collect their thoughts.

That being said, if Velgrynd-san had protected those people, then it must have been because of Masayuki. I feel that many things have become clearer to me, but have also added more questions.

Then again, I’ll just think about those questions later.

I looked around at the people who had just given their report to me.

“Ramiris, I’m so glad you’re okay!”

“It was nothing. But then again, that Dino really didn’t seem to want to do anything to me, but it would have been awful if I had actually left the labyrinth. Why? If I really got serious, then I could have knocked him down with all forty-eight of my special moves!”

Ramiris was the same as always.

Although she was very angry, the moment she felt safe, she would put on a show of bravery. It was kind of cute.

She was still sleeping happily when I had returned, but was still talking in her sleep saying stuff like ‘Mmmmnn…Dino, I’ll show you all of my forty-eight special moves…’

Not only did she think she was strong in her dreams, but she also thought she was strong when not in front of me.

“Dino should be grateful that Ramiris-sama did not resort to her forty-eight special moves!!”

Treyni-san, who was taking care of Ramiris, was quick to flatter her.

“Well, of course!”

Ramiris nodded happily.

It because she’s always like this that Ramiris gets carried away.

‘Do it in moderation,’ I thought to myself.

“I am so sorry, Rimuru-sama. It was poor supervision on my part. I never thought that Dino-kun would betray us…”

It was a drooping Vesta who said so.

It seems that he wanted to come here to apologize to me as soon as possible. Vesta, who has a strong sense of responsibility, seemed to be quite depressed about this incident.

So I smiled at Vesta to put him at ease.

“No, no, don’t worry about it. Dino’s been weird from the very beginning, hasn’t he?”

When I said that, Ramiris, Treyni and even Beretta nodded.

“He’s a demon lord, after all. I was suspicious of him from the start.”

“I didn’t expect him to do something this bold, but I had been keeping a close eye on him to make sure I could deal with him in time when he caused any problems.”

“By and large, he also showed an unbelievably serious attitude with his work, which surprised me.”

It was a slew of pitiful comments that even made me think that we should have given him a little more credit.

But there was no way around it.

In the first place, Dino had come here because Guy told him to. Even Dino himself made no pretense of hiding the fact that he was a spy. We had every right to be wary.

But I think…

“Don’t be so depressed, Vesta-san. I don’t think that Dino really wanted to betray us from the bottom of his heart.”

That’s what I really thought.

While Dino’s betrayal was to be expected, there had been the presence of his own agenda that implied that he wanted to be watched from the start.

Perhaps Dino thought that this would happen someday. I couldn’t help but think so.

“He sure is clumsy, isn’t he? If that’s the case, he could’ve at least talked to someone about it…”

“Well, now that we became friends, I’d like to believe that. Besides, Dino might have had his own reasons.”

When I said that, Vesta seemed to agree.

“Indeed. I want to believe in him. I was once on the wrong track as well, but thanks to King Gazel and Rimuru-sama, I am back on the right path. It is encouraging to even know that someone is there for you.”

Vesta’s expression relaxed a little, as if his doubts had been cleared away.

‘That’s fine,’ I thought. I wanted to trust Dino too.

I couldn’t say it out loud until I was sure, but there was another thing that came to mind.

It was the possibility that Dino possessed an Angelic Ultimate Skill.

This coincidental convenience of having a Unique Skill evolve into an Ultimate Skill during combat doesn’t just randomly happen. If there was such a possibility, then that would mean he had the means to make it possible.

«Indeed. It is not common to evolve in the midst of battle.»

The one who agreed with me was Ciel.

My confidant and friend, and the one I relied on the most.

While in high spirits in the heat of battle with Velgrynd, I had named the Wisdom King Raphael-san.

As a result, the Manas (theosophy nucleus), an intelligent being called Ciel, was born.

It was not a mere thinking being. As was the case with Chronoa, it also acted as an algorithmic device separate from its master.

It could be thought of as another core that exists within my soul.

There was no doubt that it has an ego, and its reactions were more human-like than before.

«Is that so?»

As soon as Ciel said that, I suddenly felt my persuasive power drop.

Ciel had been doing a lot of things on their own, so what was it saying now?

Besides, even if Ciel had the time to say that now, wouldn’t we have been in trouble if it hadn’t evolved and remained as the Wisdom King Raphael?

Now that I think about it, from the moment I had confronted Rudra (or was it Michael?), I was in trouble. But that was probably because he was under the influence of the Ultimate Dominion.

«……»

You still have the habit of shutting up when it’s inconvenient.

In other words, if it hadn’t evolved into Ciel, then there’s a good chance I would have been defeated.

It was only now that I realized how close the line between victory and was, and I couldn’t help but be horrified.

«It’s a hypothetical situation, so it’s meaningless to wonder about what could have happened »

Hey, hey, you hate to lose even more than I do, don’t you?

I forcibly concluded, stopping my thoughts.

But well, I guess we’re definitely the exception.

Returning back to Dino, I think it was reasonable to assume that he was hiding some kind of power.

«Perhaps it was just intended to be a disguise. However, the unnaturalness of the manifestation can make us confident that he possesses other powers as well.»

Mm-hmm.

If Ciel says so, then it must be certain.

In other words, since Dino also possessed an Angelic Ultimate Skill, he was probably manipulated by Michael’s “Ultimate Dominion.”

Since Dino and I weren’t connected by a Soul Corridor, there was no way to disarm it immediately, but it was still possible if I ever confronted him.

Of course, there was still the possibility that Dino had betrayed us by his own will, so we could not be careless, but I had decided not to indiscriminately regard him as an enemy.

That should have been the end of it, but there was another person who was depressed.

“I am so sorry, Rimuru-sama. I put Ramiris-sama in danger…”

Beretta knelt down before me and hung his head in apology.

“Wait a minute, Beretta-chan! You’ve done a great job!”

I agreed with Ramiris.

Beretta did an excellent job against the far superior Dino. Rather than faulting him for negligence, I wanted to praise him for buying us all that time.

Given Beretta’s character, I was worried that he might feel responsible for his defeat, and it turned out to be true.

Like with Vesta, too much seriousness was not a good thing.

“No, you succeeded in buying time as you were trained to do, and that’s great work!”

“However, Ramiris-sama has entrusted me with the position of Dungeon Master, which is a key position in the defense. And Rimuru-sama has entrusted me to protect Ramiris-sama. And yet, here I am, in such a state of distress…”

Beretta was not convinced by my words, and continued to get more upset the more he spoke.

Perhaps he was very frustrated, but Beretta’s actions were all appropriate. With Dino as an opponent, Beretta did his part well with the correct understanding of whether or not he could win.

If he had misjudged the situation with a lapse in judgment and made a reckless assault, Ramiris would have been taken by now. I didn’t even want to imagine the damage that would have been done.

“So I tell you, Beretta, you should be more proud of yourself.”

Beretta finally calmed down when I praised him for his excellent work.

As it turned out, the enemy’s strategy had been thwarted.

In other words, Beretta and the others had achieved sufficient results.

“If that’s the case…”

He had calmed down, but he was still not all the way convinced.

“You’re still troubled? Then let’s talk to you about it later in my room.”

“Haha, thank you!”

Since Ramiris was safe, there was no problem. Beretta, on the other hand, was still too concerned.

All in all, Beretta and I decided to talk about it later, and that was the end of the matter.

“Geld, you did an excellent job protecting the town! Thank you.”

“I cannot say it in words, but I love this town. I will not let the fruits of our labor be so easily destroyed. My friends and I feel the same way. I will continue to work hard and try not to let Rimuru-sama down!”

“I’m counting on you, but don’t push yourself.”

Geld still seems to be working too hard.

If he worked any harder, it would look as if the rest of us were slacking off. Geld’s subordinates probably wouldn’t rest either, and a moderate amount of rest and relaxation from their superiors was also necessary.

I nudged Geld not to do anything too rash, and then received his report.

Apparently, the enemy seemed to be close to Dino.

They were two women, Pico and Gracia.

As for the identity of the enemy, Ramiris confirmed that they were subordinates of Veldanava known as the Seven Primordial Angels.

They were originally seraphim, the highest and most powerful of angels, who worked for the stability of this world.

Dino was apparently one of them, but the enemies that appeared on the fiftieth and seventieth floors were presumed to be other forces.

“These “Originals” were supposed to be in charge of controlling the otherworld by monitoring the powerful monsters that were sealed in the otherworld. However, from what Dino told me, three of them remained on earth.”

Those three people were probably Pico, Gracia, and Dino.

They transformed from seraph to ‘Fallen’ and lived on earth.

It seems that their purpose was surveillance, but it was not known whether they were ordered to do so by someone else or if it was by their own will. In any case, since all that was obtained were fragments of intelligence, one could only speculate on their intentions.

“The opponent’s strength was considerable. If I hadn’t evolved, it would have been impossible for me to resist them.”

That was what Geld said, so it must have been pretty bad.

I heard that Pico’s opponent was Kumara, and that it was also a heated battle. And yet, the fact that the opponent was still able to interfere with the labyrinth during the battle was enough to speculate that the opponent hadn’t made the full extent of their abilities.

“I see. That’s troubling.”

“Yes.”

I would have preferred not to be hostile to them, but it’s too late now.

I would bet on the possibility that Dino was being manipulated and think of a countermeasure.

Next, there were the other forces at work.

“And what of Zalario?”

Adalmann began to report.

“He was a formidable opponent. Charys-dono and Treyni-dono were fighting him before I got there, but they were no match for him.”

This one was worse.

I had checked the archives of the battles in the labyrinth, and it seems that the Fallen were a different race from the Phantoms.

He had called himself one of the “Three Phantom Commanders” and said he was a subordinate of the Phantom King.

In other words, that pompous Phantom King Feldway used to be the leader of the Seven Primordial Angels7.

The three Primordial Angels who went to the other world with him are now under Feldway’s command and call themselves the Three Phantom Commanders.

During their journey to the Otherworld, Veldanava disappeared, and they became unable to return. They must have transformed at some point and become ‘phantoms.’

I understood completely.

They were different from Dino, and it must be because of their past friendship that they had formed a mutually supportive relationship.

Those were just my subjective inferences combined with my wishful thinking.

«I agree with you.»

Oh, that’s reassuring.

With Ciel’s agreement, I was almost certain.

“In any case, the Phantom King and his gang are the enemies. From now on, everyone should be on the lookout for them!”

I gave everyone all the information I knew.

It was mainly about Michael and Phantom King Feldway. Especially important was Michael’s power, so I made sure not to hide that either.

“Th-Then—! Maybe Dino is being controlled?! That’s why Rimuru said he wanted to trust him, right?”

They noticed.

I wasn’t planning on pointing that out until I was sure.

“I hope I’m not just overthinking things, but it’s possible that he is being manipulated. So, Ramiris, if that’s the case, let’s forgive him.”

“Well, yeah. I hope so!”

Ramiris said so and laughed happily. She seemed to be feeling better than before, so I took that as a good sign.

All that remained was to hope that Dino was really being manipulated.

Rigurd wailed with joy for everyone’s safety. Rigur got the budget from Myourmiles and arranged for the party to be endlessly entertaining.

Myourmiles also joined the celebration and showed us his secret tricks.

The subordinates were very competent, and I was happy for them.

After the main debriefing, it was time to loosen up a bit and we were all having a great time.

“I don’t know who the Three Phantom Commanders are or whatever, but I’m going to kick their asses!”

As reliable as always, Benimaru.

Actually, he seemed to be very different from before he went into battle, so I wonder what happened?

“Gwahahaha! With me here, you will surely be victorious in the next battle!”

Gabil also boasted that he was well qualified to do so.

He seemed to have been very successful in the battle, and like Benimaru, his strength had somehow increased.

“Whaaa! Gabil-sama, how handsome!”

“That’s right.”

“You’re getting more and more manly. I will follow you for the rest of my life.”

Gabil’s men were also very excited.

“Brother, you must not get carried away. You almost died this time! It’s because you’re always being praised like that that you’ve become so obnoxious!”

Souka was angry, but let’s just forgive him for today. That being said, it was Gabil’s fault for worrying her, so I decided not to interfere.

This was definitely not an escape.

That must be made clear.

The more important issue was the old man standing next to me.

“Kuahahahaha! Charys, it seems you were beaten to a pulp. You need more training!”

“It’s quite a shame.”

“Kuahahaha! No excuses! Be a man and be brave enough to admit to your failures!”

He’s already admitted it.

I mean, didn’t Veldora lose to Velgrynd too?

You can’t exactly laugh at others either, can you?

“Didn’t you lose too?”

“Eh?! What are you talking about, Rimuru?! I didn’t lose. I was just in bad shape!”

He’s even making excuses!

You’ve been lecturing Charys this whole time, but you’re no good at all either.

“Master, there was nothing you could do because your opponent was too vile. And there was even interference from cowardly outsiders, right? That doesn’t count!”

“Yes, exactly! Very well said, Ramiris! That’s right, I did not lose!”

You haven’t forgotten that Velgrynd-san is still nearby, have you? It was such a poor excuse that I thought about pointing that out to him.

If Veldora hadn’t lost in the first place, I wouldn’t have had to worry so much, and yet this guy still…

“Charys-kun. Even if you get sick of Veldora, try not to give up on him.”

“Hahaha, please be at ease. My lord is now only Veldora-sama. I will do my best to be more respected in the future.”

Seriously.

He’s way too good to be Veldora’s subordinate. His seriousness reminded me of Geld.

It was great that Charys became Veldora’s servant—I couldn’t help but think that.

And with that, the banquet continued.

Sake was also being served.

I was the only one who thought that I was being too careful, but it seemed that it was nothing for the executives to neutralize the alcohol.

There would be no point to drinking in that case, but so be it.

I was able to enjoy the drunkenness, and the conversation was very animated.

I felt the same way about that, so didn’t want to bother with the details.

“Come now, Rimuru-sama, I’ll pour you a drink!”

“Wait, Diablo, it’s my turn this time!”

Behind me, Diablo and Shion seemed to be in the middle of a tumultuous argument, and it was completely incomprehensible whether the relationship between these two was good or bad.

Don’t compete with each other in such strange ways…

“Okay, don’t fight over such trivial things. You guys should drink too.”

“Kufufufu, then I shall make myself at home.”

“I won’t be fooled! If you drink, you’ll fall asleep, so I’ll take care of Rimuru-sama first today!”

So Diablo is a wine drinker?

I’m not quite sure about the taste differences of wine, but red wine does seem to suit Diablo.

And Shion…

This one’s drinking habit is pretty bad compared to just falling asleep.

When she drinks, she gets delirious and troubles other people, so Shuna keeps a very strict watch on her. The fact that she doesn’t remember after it all ends makes her drinking problem even worse.

That’s why I recommended grape juice to her, but if she was planning to control herself, I would keep quiet.

Upon closer inspection, I could see that these two have also gotten stronger.

Looking back on it, all the executives seem to have grown in some way. It’s not just that they’ve awakened, but there was something more than that…

«Please stop doubting me.»

Oh, I’m sorry.

Yes, you’re right.

Even for the mighty Ciel, it’s difficult to help someone else’s evolution, isn’t it?

«I only helped a little.»

So you still helped!

I needed to ask about this in detail, but we were in the middle of a celebration.

I could do it now, but I could also do it tomorrow, so let’s just enjoy this moment as much as possible.

That’s what I thought, so I threw all my problems to myself tomorrow, and enjoyed the celebration with my whole heart.

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Although, I still felt bad for Rigurd and some others who had to manage the affairs of the government. I had asked them to confirm the status of the city and explain the situation to the residents.

Even though the city had been brought back to the surface from the labyrinth, it was still necessary to make sure that there were no problems with the plumbing.

As soon as we confirmed the safety of the city, we would give the evacuees permission to go home. Because of the massive battle, I would have liked the administrative staff to take a rest, but the life of the masses was also important.

Thinking about it this way, I couldn’t help but think that politicians really were slaves of the people.

There are many problems even in normal times, and in the event of an emergency, you can’t even think about rest days or anything. Now that Testarossa and the others were helping me with the administration, it had become a little easier, but I still had to work hard to recruit more people.

And me?

I’m just an amateur, so my job was to read documents and give permission for things.

If I thought something is a bit unreasonable, then I’d reject it or send it back to the department for reconsideration.

Of course, this was only possible because Ciel gave me detailed explanations. If it had been just me, the whole process would have fallen apart long ago.

Anyway, even though it was only one day after the party, I still had to do my best to check the documents. With Rigurd and the others still busy running around, it was more of a relief than relaxation.

But before that.

Before I set off to work, I decided to go visit Chloe first.

As soon as I entered the infirmary, my eyes met with Chloe’s.

“Rimuru-sens—san!”

“Fufu, you don’t have to force yourself to act all grown up. From my point of view, Chloe is still Chloe.”

“Honestly! Despite my appearance, I am already an adult. In fact, I’m even older than Rimuru-san.”

Even if you say that…

Sure enough, appearances are still important.

It was just like with me. People who didn’t know me often only thought of me as some beautiful young girl when they met me, to the point that I had a complex about it.

In any case, it’s important to keep in mind that a careless remark can sometimes lead to stepping on a land mine.

To Chloe, whose cheeks were red, I said from the bottom of my heart that it was good that she was okay. As a result, she hid her face behind a pillow.

“Honestly! That’s just foul, Rimuru-san!”

Huh?

How should that sentence be interpreted…

«I don’t know. It is too difficult a question.»

Well, if even Ciel can’t understand it, then it can’t be helped.

So, for the time being, I just said ‘Okay’ and continued pacifying her.

After waiting for Chloe to calm down, I asked her about what happened.

What happened in the battle, and how it ended.

“I have no problems myself, but I’ve become unable to communicate with Chronoa anymore. It seems that the Ultimate Skill ‘Hope King Sariel’ is about to go out of control, so she trying to suppress it.”

As I thought, she was influenced by Michael’s domination.

After fighting with him, it now felt like he was messing with those I cared about. I had already identified him as an enemy, but it seemed I didn’t need to show any mercy.

“What exactly is the situation?”

“Hmm, I can’t really say. I am now completely unable to use the ‘Spacetime King Yog-Sothoth,’ and am unable to talk to Chronoa, so I really have no idea of what’s going on.”

Apparently, the situation was more serious than I thought.

Although I hadn’t planned on relying on Chloe’s strength from the very beginning, somewhere still, I had been naive enough to assume that she could just protect herself.

I was disgusted with my own perception, but now that it had come to this, Chloe’s safety took precedence over everything else.

«Now that I have the authority to interfere with the “information particle (intelligence hub),” I am able to influence Chronoa, who is the “Manas.” If I can break into Chloe’s spiritual world and perform a ‘Skill Alteration,’ we should be able to remove Michael’s influence.»

As it turns out, Ciel is able to interfere.

“Chloe, if I interfere with your Skills, I think I can improve the situation…”

“Rimuru-san, that won’t do. At that time, Chronoa said in the end, ‘If we continue to rely on that person anymore, we will never be able to stand on our own. We have to get out of this situation by our own strength, in order to walk alongside him.’ I agree with her, so I can’t accept Rimuru-sensei’s help.”

Chloe looked at me straight in the eyes when she told me this. Although her face was young and crisp, the expression on her face reminded me of her beauty when she was an adult. It was enough to make me nervous.

No, I am not a lolicon.

It’s just that Chloe’s transcendence—Oh, it’s useless.

It seems like the same idea as a certain blonde demon lord.

That was a losing battle, so I hastily switched my thoughts.

“Okay. But if you need anything, just let me know. I’m always here to help.”

With that said, I patted Chloe on the head.

Chloe smiled happily and nodded with a small “yeah.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule. I have just been contacted by King Gazel.”

“Oh!”

Pushing up his glasses, Vesta said.

“Yes. As you might expect, he wants you to explain.”

I knew it.

It had been such a big war, but I left the cleanup behind and had come back.

For that, indeed, I was going to be scolded.

It probably wouldn’t have been a problem if it was only within our territory, but after all, the Dwarven Kingdom had been involved…

“I see. Was he angry?”

“He seemed quite unhappy.”

Vesta was wiping the sweat off his face.

It was no wonder.

We had been drinking together just last night.

Thinking about it for a moment, you can say that Vesta is also to blame.

I guess he didn’t pay much attention to the situation, and it was honestly hard to blame him for that, but he seemed to be reflecting on himself for not advising me.

Still, it was me who did the most wrong.

“Please reply that I will explain it at a later date.”

“After all, you’ll have to think of an excuse.”

As expected of Vesta.

His quick wits made him very reliable.

In any case, we needed to sort out our situation before we could explain anything. The first thing I needed to do was to arrange a date for the briefing.

Therefore, I would leave it up to Vesta to deal with King Gazel. We decided to discuss the matter again after we had compiled our opinions.

Then, lunch break.

I threw all those hard questions out of my mind.

After enjoying today’s menu of my favorite fried chicken and yakisoba red bean noodles, I suddenly remembered.

Ciel seemed to have been doing something behind the scenes.

Last night, Ciel said that they had given the executives ‘a little help’ and I thought it was necessary to get a clear picture of what they had done, and how much they had helped.

After all, it was highly likely that what Ciel called ‘a little help’ was not little at all.

«Hmm, I am very surprised to be suspected like this…»

The next thing I know, Ciel begins to make a statement.

As I had suspected, it turned out to be a grand affair.

First of all, the biggest thing was the unauthorized modification of my Skills.

That modification led to the Ultimate Skill ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath.’

Yes, I did receive a report.

It was reported to me after the fact, but after Velgrynd’s ‘Skill Alteration’ was finished, I was told that the remnants of ‘Covenant King Uriel’ had been integrated into Velgrynd’s ‘Charity King Raguel,’ and that its essence was inherited by ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath.’

At that time, I was so focused on Velgrynd that I didn’t listen to the explanation.

Looking over the documents, I listened to the detailed explanation about the Ultimate Skill ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath.’

This power was like the crystallization of the bond between me and my subordinates.

—Skill Creation: to create new Skills from the information obtained through ‘Food Chain’ and ‘Analysis.’

—Skill Duplication: to create a copy of an acquired ability.

—Skill Gifting: the ability to duplicate a Skill and bestow it upon the right person. It is also possible to take it back.

—Skill Storage: acquired Skills are converted into information (data) and reproduced instantly.

Well, that’s how it was.

The capacity of a ‘soul’ was limited, so the number of Skills that one could learn was also limited. That was why there were some Skills that were attached to the body instead of the soul, even if those kinds of Skills seemed weaker in terms of willpower.

In my case, I had four Ultimate Skills, so my capacity must have been getting overwhelmed.

«No, it’s five, not four.»

Oh yeah, that’s right.

I had taken in Velgrynd and analyzed her the same way as Veldora. As a result, I had acquired a new power, the Ultimate Skill ‘Scorch King Velgrynd.’

When you think about it that way, it certainly wasn’t a matter of overcapacity. The reason why Ciel gave Velgrynd the ‘Covenant King Uriel’ was probably because I was reaching my limit.

«Exactly! I had no choice but to optimize the abilities!!»

Suspicious to the point of being shocking.

I think Ciel has even had this tendency of collecting skills since the days of the Unique Skill ‘Great Sage’—is it a hobby?

The capacity is full, but it’s too good to throw away, so that’s why evolution is being strongly promoted, right?

«…Anyway, I’ll continue with the explanation.»

That’s digressing!

Not only has Ciel become more human, but the number of instances where it feels useless has increased.

No, it’s okay, it’ll be fine…

I just prayed and decided to trust Ciel.

According to Ciel, it had dismantled the large number of Skills that had been unnecessarily eating up space, turned them into information, and then reorganized them neatly. The ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath’ was created to control that information.

With this power, it was possible to influence the monsters connected to me by the Soul Corridor, or more specifically, to grant them power.

It’s easily understandable just how much this ability can do.

Thus, Ciel used this ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath’ to help Benimaru and the others.

As for the degree of help received, it seemed that there were two kinds of situations where one either received slight assistance, or a lot of assistance.

There was a strong possibility that they would have been defeated had they been left alone, so it felt it wrong to complain.

Or rather…

“Thank you, I express my gratitude.”

«No, I was just doing what my master Rimuru-sama wanted me to do.»

I know I’ve said a lot, but Ciel has always been very helpful.

I thanked Ciel for its continued support.

With Michael and the Phantom King as our enemies, it was necessary to get stronger. However, that did not mean that we should grant the strongest power to just everyone.

Excessive power can lead to its own destruction.

I trusted Ciel on that point.

While it was still so fond of remodeling skills, I didn’t think it was going to do anything too unreasonable.

It didn’t think it would give Skills to those who wouldn’t be able to use them, but it seemed necessary to confirm it.

As I was thinking about this, Ciel asked me as if it suddenly remembered something.

«By the way, Master’s ‘Skill Alteration’ has been put on hold. Would you like to execute it?»

I’d forgotten all about it.

Ciel seemed to be getting restless.

It’s like it had been searching for something and had finally come up with an even more awesome modification.

As I recall, it had said that by merging the Ultimate Skill ‘Storm King Veldora’ and ‘Covenant King Uriel,’ it could create the Ultimate Skill ‘Stellar Wind King Hastur.’—or something like that.

But afterwards, I gave away ‘Covenant King Uriel’ to Velgrynd, so it should have been modified in a different way now.

Because it was Ciel, it was unlikely to be weaker than before.

In the first place, although I had not heard or received any report, it probably had already analyzed ‘Charity King Raguel,’ right?

«Of course.»

Just as I thought.

In that case, it was equivalent to having six Ultimate Skills.

In addition to this, I had also been offered power from the ‘Food Chain’ through the evolved executives, which meant that Ciel needed the ‘Harvest King Shub-Niggurath.’

A larger number of Skills does not mean that they can all be mastered, so it made sense to integrate them.

I was thinking that ‘Scorch King Velgrynd’ and ‘Gluttonous King Beelzebuth’ could be combined to create something.

I was also a little concerned about what had happened to the ‘Wisdom King Raphael’ after Ciel was born.

If Ciel wanted to optimize the pile of Skills saved up, then I had no reason to stop it.

We’re not in a battle right now, so I don’t see a problem.

Okay, in that case I’ll leave it to you then…Ah wai—!

«Got it! It will be implemented immediately!»

I was about to say ‘wait,’ but it was already too late.

In retrospect, I was a man who repeatedly made mistakes.

Always ignoring the consequences and regretting it…

Why was it so easy to give permission…?

I shouldn’t have left it to go without knowing what kind of terrifying modifications it would make.

However, Ciel, who was already well-prepared, initiated the ‘Skill Alteration’ as quickly as possible, probably anticipating that I would try to stop it.

The end result was Ciel humming and feigning deafness with the ‘«There’s no way to stop it already.» strategy.’

Having given permission without paying attention, and then giving panicked attempts to stop things afterwards—that was definitely all within the scope of what Ciel had envisioned.

It agreed at an alarming speed and immediately buried itself in the transformation.

In that frozen state, I just kept waiting, and with great momentum…

Ciel was so absorbed in its work that it didn’t even reply.

Ahhhh! I felt a sense of resignation, thinking that I would be surprised at the stuttering results once again.

In any case, without Ciel, I was unable to make any progress in organizing my paperwork.

I changed my mind and decided to work on something else.

After telling Shion and Diablo about it, they were kicked out of the room, so for the time being, it was just me in the room.

Shion also needed to confirm that her men were safe and left without complaining about anything.

Diablo was more trouble. He was very persistent, saying that I needed an escort, but in the end, I finally told him, ‘Depending on the results of these meetings, I’m considering removing you from your position as secretary. Testarossa is strong, beautiful, and suitable for the job, isn’t she? After all, I think one needs to be strong to be both a secretary and an escort!’ Such a half-hearted threat had him leaving in a panic.

Fufufu. Although I had no intention of doing so, he was such an easy man to deal with.

He was probably desperately trying to start a battle against the evolved Testarossa by now.

It is unlikely that Diablo would be defeated, but it would still be a good match. Losing is good medicine, so it’s good to feel threatened once in a while.

With that, I began using the time to start the interviews.

I called in Shuna and asked her to arrange the schedule.

From dusk onward, people who were available were called to my room one after another.

I had promised to talk to him earlier, so he was the first to be called.

For these kinds of interviews, the first and the last slots tended to be the most stressful, but in this country, being the first person seems to be considered to be the most honorable.

I wasn’t quite sure why, but it seemed to be the case as Beretta appeared to be very happy about it.

“Now, as for your troubles, you shouldn’t have to feel worried about your defeat this time. After all, you stopped the enemy’s objective, so rather than a defeat, it should be considered a victory.”

Without anyone having been killed, this could only be described as a big victory.

I said this with certainty, but Beretta still looked unhappy.

“I understand what you mean, but a loss is still a loss. For us dependents of Black, defeat is unbearable.”

That is to say, even if one agrees that it is a victory on their side, is it still considered a defeat for Beretta himself?

Charys, and Beretta too, are both too serious.

If it were me, I would be touting the results as a great victory.

Even if it’s a small thing, as long as I’m satisfied, even an indirect victory is welcome.

By the way, the ‘dependents of Black’ refer to a lineage of demons.

I only recently found out that Beretta was a Black dependent demon with Diablo, the Primordial Black (Noir), as the head.

Indeed, their weirdness was very similar in some ways.

The fact that they both hated to lose, for example, made sense to me.

So I could understand Beretta’s frustration…However, having said that, there was nothing I could do about it.

I had my subordinates awakened as a reward for winning the war, but that was only possible because they had the Demon Lord Seed and were connected to me through a Soul Corridor.

Did Beretta meet those requirements…?

«It’s fine.»

Well, wow, that scared me!

Ciel was absorbed in its own work, but it seemed to have been listening in on our conversation as well.

If that was the case, it could also help me with my paperwork—

«Just for this, there is enough souls to awaken one person. What do you want to do?»

…You’ve digressed from the story again, haven’t you?

Weren’t things a little better before evolving?

«Negative. No such fact has been confirmed.»

No, no, no—don’t just pretend to downgrade and cheat.

But, well, if that’s the case.

It seems that during the battle with the Imperial Army, more ‘souls’ were also acquired. If those were used, Beretta’s wishes could be fulfilled.

Beretta has clearly been working very hard, but I haven’t rewarded him. I was a little hesitant to reward Beretta because he is now a subordinate of Ramiris, but Beretta is also an important companion to me.

After all, there was also the important mission of protecting Ramiris. I would continue to rely on him, so as a token of my gratitude, I chose to relieve Beretta of his troubles.

Or course, there was a limit to what I could do, but from this point on, it would be up to him to make the effort.

“I understand why you lament your lack of ability. That’s why I will grant you more power!”

I got up from my chair, posed like a great demon lord, and held out my hand to Beretta.

