

“Don’t forget, I can only help you. Everything is up to you from here one out.”

With that, I used the 100,000 souls on Beretta and performed the evolutionary ritual.

Since I was the one who “named” Beretta, his path to self-evolution was closed. This ritual may have been a way to take responsibility for that.

“N-No way!!”

“Beretta, you will evolve in this way, too. Please continue to protect Ramiris!”

Beretta was surprised, but his evolution was completed without any problems.

Very much keeping his part as a member of Diablo’s family, Beretta did not fall into an evolutionary slumber.

Incidentally, the status of his evolution was…

Beretta’s body had been transformed into the ultimate metal (Hihiirokane). This was equivalent to Mythical-grade level, so it made sense that Beretta’s existence value was greatly increased.

By the way, ‘EP’ was the existence value.

It stood for ‘Existence Point,’ not energy point. It was in English, but that was not worth worrying about.

This was the result of the original material, adamantite, absorbing the huge amount of magicules leaked from Beretta.

As for the most important Skill, it seems that he sacrificed the Unique Skill ‘Double-Crosser’ and gained the Ultimate Skill ‘Divine Machine King (Deus Ex Machina).’ This included ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Universal Perception’ ‘Demon Lord Haki,’ ‘Mineral Domination,’ ‘Geological Manipulation,’ ‘Inverted Fusion,’ ‘Spatial Manipulation,’ and ‘Multilayer Barrier.’

«I worked hard!»

Oh, thank you for your hard work.

Or rather, you’re always attentive to things that interest you, aren’t you?

My skills are important, but I guess you won’t forget your own interests.

It looks like you’ve messed with his Skills as well…

So true to Ciel’s style, I couldn’t help but think so.

Ah, never mind that for a moment…Rather, Beretta is really amazing.

By combining his new powers of ‘mineral domination’ and ‘earth attribute manipulation,’ he can now create and manipulate minerals at will. He would need materials, but there is a vault of magical steel in the labyrinth. Since the labyrinth is in contact with the earth, it is also possible to procure a certain amount of minerals.

He seems to have acquired this power by evolving his own body into hihiirokane.

The ability to manipulate the elements, perhaps?

Any shape of metal could be freely deformed. He could do whatever he wanted without regard to hardness, so any armor that was not reinforced by magic or aura would be nothing in front of Beretta.

What was even scarier than that was the fact that Beretta’s own body could be freely transformed at will.

It goes without saying that that most weapons would not work on Beretta, and he could even turn into something like those stubborn fluid metal guys you see in the movies.

Approaching quietly like a Slime, entangling his opponent, and suffocating them…it was terrifying just thinking about it.

Normally, Beretta looked like a top-quality humanoid doll with spherical joints, but his essence is not the same as his appearance, so one must be careful.

Thus, Beretta evolved into what could be called a subspecies of spiritual lifeforms—a fearsome metallic lifeform.

Although I had built the doll on a whim, it’s really something that it has evolved to this point. While making observations and wallowing in such sentiments, Beretta knelt down before me.

“I will never forget what Rimuru-sama has done for me. Even if it costs me my life, I will keep your order and see them through!!”

He swore to do so.

Although I wanted to tell him not to push himself too hard, that could not be the case if Ramiris was ever in danger. I am sure that Beretta would live up to my expectations, even if there were to be tougher battles ahead.

I was also relieved to have Beretta guarding Ramiris.

“I’m counting on you.”

I said this to Beretta with a nod.

Beretta’s troubles were thus resolved. A job well done.

I told Beretta to get some rest and let him go back to his post.

Based on the information I had gained from the recent evolution festival and the battles with the powerful people of the Empire, a question had arisen in my mind.

Skill s are based on the roots of the laws of this world, the power rooted in the ‘soul.’

It could be granted by the ‘Voice of the World’ after repeated practice or great achievements.

It was a strange phenomenon that I hadn’t really thought about much until now.

That’s how I had always went about it…but in the course of events that had taken place, it had become a question that I could not ignore.

In other words…

What is the essence of a Skill?

That was the question.

When I came first came to this world, I possessed Unique Skill.

Or rather, I had been hearing “Voice of the World” while I was dying in the other world.

From that fact, it can be inferred that a Skill is not unique to this world alone.

If that was the case, then that would make the question even more difficult to answer, and to be honest, I couldn’t help but wonder if there were people who could use Skills in my original world.

Originally, a Unique Skill was thought to be something only heroes could acquire.

As the word “unique” implied, the performance of these skills varied from one person to another, and they were very powerful. It gave form to one’s desires, and gave them the power to do what they wished for.

In my case, I had acquired ‘Predator’ and ‘Great Sage,’ but I didn’t wish for ‘Great Sage,’ which was a funny story.

«Impolite. I am here because I was wanted by Rimuru-sama!»

Yes…?

Just because I’m a virgin—No, I’ll stop thinking about it.

If that’s what Ciel said, then it must be that such a desire existed deep in my psyche. That was somewhat of a dangerous topic to dig deeper into, so let’s just leave it at that.

Okay, back to the topic at hand.

This means that although Skills are rooted in the soul, there are cases where they are not.

Skills acquired at the limit of physical training may be engraved on the body, not the soul. This is especially true for Skills acquired from monsters, often acquired simply by eating them.

Such Skills are called Race Intrinsic Skills. Each race of the same kind had its own Intrinsic Skill, which could be passed on to future generations.

Skills acquired through training often only reached the level of extra skills. After that, it was still relatively useful to weave original techniques by increasing proficiency or fusing with sword skills.

Actually, magic was also a kind of Skill.

This is proven by the fact that I was able to learn it by eating.

As you can see, there are many kinds of Skills, but the most important are the Unique Skills.

A Unique Skill is a unique ability created by the individual.

Naturally, each of them has different performance.

Although there will be similarities on the larger classifications, Unique Skills that are identical will not normally exist. In some cases, they are reproduced over time, but that is a special exception.

That is the case with the unique skill ‘Starved’ of an orc lord. It is an Intrinsic Skill that is inherited by the awakened race, and it is inherited only by blood relatives.

Since this ‘Starved’ Skill is engraved in the body, it seems to be a Skill that could not originally be handled by people of other races.

In my case, I immediately merged it with ‘Predator,’ so I just never paid attention to it until now.

I think that Shizu-san’s ‘Deviant’ was derived from her soul.

Then it was entrusted to me.

That is why even I can use it now, and if it wasn’t for that, I wouldn’t have been able to acquire it.

Somehow, I think that the Skills engraved in the soul are more powerful.

Incidentally, the Ultimate Enchantment ‘Alternative’ skills given by Rudra were, of course, engraved in the body. If one is not a ‘Saint,’ then they will not have enough energy to use it, presumably because they did not receive the power themselves, and therefore would not use it efficiently.

That’s why it was so powerful, but could be combated against even at the unique level.

Diablo had defeated Jiwu and Bernie, the ultimate skill holders, but originally, this should have been impossible.

Unique Skills cannot be used against Ultimate Skills. Only Ultimate Skills can be used against Ultimate Skills.

There were exceptions like Chloe’s ‘Infinite Prison’ and ‘Absolute Severance,’ and Masayuki’s ‘Chosen One,’ but it was impossible to defeat an ultimate skill holder at the unique skill level.

Even with Unique Skills, there was a big difference in strength, but when it came to Ultimate Skills, the difference was as great as heaven and earth.

Those who acquired an Ultimate Skill understood the reasoning of the world. Therefore, one could become a higher being through magic, which was derived from the laws of the world.

Only ultimate spells, such as ‘Disintegration’ or primordial spells, the most powerful spells in the sacred system, could resist this.

So, it is also possible that Diablo defeated them with ultimate magic, but it didn’t seem that way.

In his case, he might be able to anything just by forcing it. That’s a situation that shows there are no such thing as absolutes in this world.

Anyway, depending on the situation, even if one doesn’t have an Ultimate Skill, it is possible to outperform an Ultimate Skill holder.

However, there is no doubt that the best way to fight against an Ultimate Skill is to acquire one yourself.

To sum up, here are my thoughts.

—Skills can be engraved in the ‘soul’ as well as in the flesh (body).

Based on my experience so far, it seems that Unique Skills can be obtained by a strong desire or craving. It’s not so much of a talent as it is an aptitude. No matter how much you wish for it, you cannot obtain it unless your existence value is high enough. It is not something that can be obtained just by wishing for it, but can only be obtained by clearing various trials and conditions. The power one acquires is stronger than the power given to you by others. Furthermore, it seems that the powers that come from the soul are more powerful than ones that come from the body.

—Next, there are no identical Skills.

Even if a Skill has the same name, its performance and laws are probably different. It is a desire translated into form, so there will be many differences depending on the owner’s state of mind.

—Next, the difference between Unique Skills and Ultimate Skills are not absolute.

The strength of an acquired Skill is easily affected by the owner’s ego. A strong will is needed to make it more effective. A Skill is the power to influence the laws of the world simply by wishing for it. In order to exercise such a fundamental power, it is impossible to do so with a half-hearted willpower.

When you look at it in this way, it’s clear that the most important thing is willpower.

This is followed by a thorough understanding of the nature of the Skill and exploring how to use it properly.

I originally had Wisdom King Raphael-san telling me how to use them correctly, but that was not usually the case. Even if it was a Skill created by your own desire, there may be cases where one would be unable to utilize it due to a mistake in usage.

«Fufufu, in a recent example, Dino made an interesting mistake.»

Huh?

I couldn’t help but ask out like that, so Ciel felt amused and began to talk about it.

Dino’s Skills, as stated before, evolved during the battle. ‘Sloth,’ the most power of the deadly sin Unique Skills, became the Ultimate Skill ‘Sloth King Belphegor.’

It was originally said to be a skill that could exert terrifying power. And yet, it had been completely defeated by Zegion.

Of course, one of the reasons was that Zegion was overwhelmingly strong, but the more fundamental problem was that Dino had not been able to fully utilize ‘Sloth King Belphegor.’

He probably didn’t understand it properly because he was using this skill as a disguise…

The Ultimate Skill ‘Sloth King Belphegor,’ which was created by Dino’s lazy nature, had the characteristic that the more he moved, the weaker he became. Therefore, the original use of this skill was to “support subordinates and companions.”

The ability to lend the power that Dino had accumulated to his friends. If he had used it in that way, then only then would the ‘Sloth King Belphegor’ have shown its true value.

Although it had happened while we were away, the battle records (archives) of the labyrinth were full of images. It was Ciel’s hobby to analyze them, so it told me about them in this way.

Guy would not have made such a mistake.

He would understand the nature of the Skill and use it correctly. However, a lazy person like Dino seemed to have been misled by the surface of the Skill and never realized its essence.

Or rather, it was the enemy’s mistake to make Dino work in the first place.

If Dino had slacked off as usual and let his friends Pico and Gracia do the work, Geld and Kumara might have been in trouble.

In that light, I felt that we were lucky.

It was only because I assigned work to Dino and awakened him to the joy of work that we got this lucky.

The evaluation that the more you work, the more you fail is the worst, so if I could make up with Dino, I would teach him a good lesson if that time ever came.

Anyway, as you can see, it is not easy to correctly understand one’s Skills.

In some cases, such as Masayuki’s, the Skill is triggered by itself, even if you don’t want it to.

Such Skills are difficult to control, and even more difficult to use thoroughly.

Knowing the nature of a Skill and using it fully is the same as knowing your own mind. It is very difficult to understand, and I think it may be necessary to spend a lifetime dealing with it.

In other words, if one mistakenly believes that Skills are just a useful weapon of convenience, they will never be able to bring out its true potential.

«That’s right. Please take better care of me, and face me properly.»

Hmmm…

Somehow, I felt misinterpreted, but I stopped thinking about it.

It was Benimaru who came in, escorted by Shuna.

“You wanted to see me? I heard this was a private meeting. What did you want to ask me?”

As soon as he sat down on the sofa facing me, Benimaru asked me. He seemed to think that this an important private meeting, but unfortunately, it wasn’t.

“I’m sorry, this was just on a whim.”

“On a whim?”

“Yeah. This war has greatly increased everyone’s strengths, hasn’t it? We can also measure their presences in the labyrinth, so I thought I should get a good idea of everyone’s strength.”

“I see, that’s really important!”

Benimaru’s expression brightened as he heard my explanation.

Apparently, he had been preparing himself to be questioned about his newlywed life.

“Well, I am curious about that, but wouldn’t it be power harassment and sexual harassment to ask about it?”

“Is that so? That guy Souei actually said, ‘Hmph, if you were able to evolve smoothly, then you only did what you had to do. You’re so late in life that I thought I would have to help you…’”

Just as Benimaru said that…

“Brother?”

Shuna, who was bringing in cake, interrupted him with a smile.

The crushing force was so intense it sent chills down the spine.

“What are you talking so rudely about in front of Rimuru-sama?”

“S-Sorry… I’m sorry…”

Even the hard-core Benimaru was no match for Shuna.

“Rimuru-sama as well. You should have scolded him instead of just going along with my brother’s foolish talk.”

“Yes, that’s right. I’ll be careful.”

This is the kind of thing that one can’t go against.

I understood that deeply, and waited for Shuna to get in a good mood.

I was so nervous that I could not taste the cake.

The moment Shuna left the room to take away the tray, Benimaru and I let out a big sigh.

“Phew, that was a failure, wasn’t it?”

“Yeah. Next time you talk like that, you should think about the time and place.”

“Understood. I originally wanted to say that I didn’t want to talk about it, so I don’t know how it turned out this way…”

Well, that’s right.

I’m sure it happens, but to me, it just sounds like you’re showing off.

Well, let’s talk about that later.

For now, I decided to check Benimaru’s status as planned.

I mean—that’s so strong!

After sacrificing the Unique Skill ‘Generalissimo,’ he acquired the Ultimate Skill ‘Heat King Amaterasu.’ Its powers included ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Universal Perception,’ ‘Demon Lord Haki,’ ‘Will Control,’ ‘Light and Heat Domination,’ ‘Spatial Domination,’ ‘Multilayer Barrier’ and so on.

According to Ciel’s statement, his skills even reflected a portion of Velgrynd’s powers. However, Benimaru had practically obtained the Ultimate Skill by his own power alone.

Ciel told me that it had only helped him a little.

But still…

Benimaru’s own Existence Value is over 4 million, and it increases by over 1 million when he possesses Red Lotus—Isn’t that more than Luminas?

By the way, there is no way to cheat the existence value—probably.

To be more precise, the existence value of a person in the labyrinth can be measured with a great deal of accuracy.

If one wanted to cheat, they would have to have a mythical-grade weapon hidden, or a ‘Split Body’ in another place like Velgrynd. For example, at the level of ‘Clone,’ the value of the ‘Split Body’ would be so small that it could easily be detected as an impostor.

Outside the labyrinth, one could cheat all they wanted, but entering the labyrinth was like soaking one’s head in a full hot spring. They could not escape Ramiris’s ‘appraisal.’

Ramiris is very talented in this aspect, but she also has her regrettable aspects.

In short, she does not understand what she can or cannot do.

The reason why I am able to make measurements like this is because someone once said, ‘It would be nice if we could make accurate measurements’ in a chat.

I think it was Shinji wo said it, but Ramiris’ reply was ‘It’s possible!’

At that time, I heard that there was a delicate atmosphere in the room.

Everyone must have been thinking, ‘I wish she had told us earlier.’

If that was the case, then we could have measured the existence values of not only Luminas, but also Guy and Velzard-san…

Also, if we had measured Dino’s presence, then we would have realized that he was much stronger than his appearance suggested.

…Well, even if I had noticed, it wouldn’t have mattered if I wasn’t sure that he would betray us. We could have been more vigilant, but in this case, there was nothing we could do.

Anyway, although it was a reference value, the existence value was useful as an indicator of strength.

With that, I was convinced that Benimaru would be able to keep up with the “Three Phantom Commanders” and Dino.

Even amongst Million-class, he belonged in the upper-ranks and could be counted on as my right-hand man.

There was just one thing I couldn’t stop thinking about.

“I thought that monsters were supposed to get weaker after having children?”

“That’s true. Generally speaking, they lose a large amount of magicules.”

“Then how did you get so strong?”

“Ahahaha, that’s a mystery!”

Ah, what a refreshing smile.

But trying to fake a smile isn’t going to cut it.

“What the hell is going on here?”

“I don’t know either! Souei was also pestering me about it, asking how I did it.”

Oh, so I wasn’t the only one who was curious.

Well, it would be good news for the monsters if this question is answered.

Many of the hobgoblins are married, but I haven’t heard of any problems about them suffering from weakening…But the higher up in the hierarchy the monsters affected were, the greater the impact would be, so this was something that I hoped would be resolved someday.

“Let me know if you find out anything.”

“Got it. Then, I’ll switch with Souei now.”

Leaving that one question unanswered, the interview with Benimaru ended.

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As soon as we sat down facing one another, I complained to Souei.

“You shouldn’t make too much fun of Benimaru, you know.”

“Heh, that guy’s always been a late bloomer in strange places. I just thought that if I didn’t give him a good talking-to, he’d probably stay in the dark forever.”

Woah, that’s a good point.

After all, Benimaru had said that there was no way to evolve without a successor, and it was understandable that Souei would be worried.

“Well, let’s leave it at that. Now, about your evolutionary status…”

Souei was influenced by Benimaru’s evolution.

And his resistances are amazing.

In order to defeat Souei, you can only use the Holy-Demon Attribute, Holy Sword Techniques, or some kind of Ultimate type of attack.

As for Souei’s Skill, it is the Ultimate Gift ‘Moon King Tsukuyomi’ given by Ciel. Its powers are diverse, and include ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Universal Perception,’ ‘Eye of the Moon,’ ‘Insta-kill,’ ‘Ultraspeed,’ ‘Mental Manipulation,’ ‘Parallel Existence,’ ‘Spatial Manipulation,’ and ‘Multilayer Barrier.’

“Hold on! You can even use ‘Parallel Existence’ now?”

I was so surprised that I couldn’t help but ask, to which Souei replied flatly.

“Yes. It’s not possible to use more than one at the same time, like Velgrynd-sama, but I am proud to say that just one is useful enough.”

That, indeed, is something to be proud of.

One alone is enough.

With this, even Souei is infinitely close to being indestructible… However, perhaps the most noteworthy is the ‘Eye of the Moon.’

It was an ability that allowed one to manipulate shadows at will, so they could do various things without your opponent even knowing you’re there. It was characterized by its wide range, to the point that a whole town could be put under its influence. In addition to being specialized in gathering information, this ability could also be used for assassination.

I had thought it was a lot of stuff, but I guess that was the reason why.

«The great thing about ‘Eye of the Moon’ is that it can also be used by a ‘Clone.’ If Souei dispatches ‘Clones’ to various places and uses ‘Eye of the Moon’ to share information, information from all over the world can be available through ‘Telepathy Net!’»

I can see why you are very proud of your work.

The more I heard about it, the more I realized how powerful it was.

In other words, this was like a superior version of my surveillance spell ‘Argos.’ He could now monitor situations around the world and visualize them with sound. He had become a versatile and dependable man.

In the future, I would continue to entrust Souei with all of our country’s intelligence activities.

“All right. I’m giving you the new title of ‘Darkness,’ so please continue to lead the Dark Shadows in the service of our nation.”

“Haha! All actions are for the sake of Rimuru-sama!”

Not for me, but for our country—forget it.

“Well then, I’m counting on you.”

I said so, and then thanked Souei.

After that, I spoke with Souei for about an hour, asking him if he had any complaints, or about how Souka and the others were doing.

He told me that the existence value of the five members had grown to nearly 200,000 while Souka herself had an existence value of 261,898, which was quite high. She was at the level of a former demon lord’s lieutenant and could even fight with the upper ranks.

This battle seemed to have greatly enhanced her abilities.

Combat was the best training, as I had heard Souei say.

However, one thing to be aware of was that just because you can do it does not mean that others can do it as well.

Everyone has their own personality, and their own unique strengths and weaknesses.

Souei was indeed very capable, but I hoped that he would not force the same number of expectations on his subordinates. Doing that could cause even the best of people to lose their motivation.

“Isn’t it only natural to do everything in our power for Rimuru-sama?”

Well, that’s not natural.

“Don’t you see? If you only think like that, then no one will be able to follow you. It is your role as a supervisor to take better care of your subordinates so that they can effectively enjoy their work for a long time, right?”

After all, people will only follow you if you give them something worth doing.

Of course, it’s still work, so just being fun isn’t enough.

Even so, I still think that a sense of accomplishment is important.

If the workload is always unreasonable, then you won’t be able to feel the joy of a sense of accomplishment. In addition, if you are given a large amount of work right after pushing yourself to complete your last load…

If it were me, I’m pretty sure I would be upset.

You might say something like, “you do it,” but in Souei’s case, he was always able to get it done. If that happened, one would have no choice but to blame themselves, and as a result, they might become mentally or even physically ill.

That’s what I was worried about.

“I see. So you’re saying that I must use my tools with more care, right?”

“Stop calling your companions as tools. It’s truly important to keep glory in one’s work, but it should not be forced on you. If you, as a superior, can show recognition in your subordinates’ work, then they will feel very happy.”

“…I see. Indeed, I myself regard Rimuru-sama’s praise as the greatest joy.”

Umm, should I say that he’s too serious or too heavy?

“Anyway, why don’t you also take this opportunity to have a gathering with your subordinates?”

“I understand. It is my responsibility as their superior to understand their feelings, so I will make sure to take care of them more thoroughly in the future.”

“Remember to do things in moderation.”

Anyway, for the time being, I told him what I was thinking.

After that…

I received a letter of thanks from Souka and the others.

The letter was stained with tears of joy, and I felt satisfied that I had done a good thing.

“Gwahahahaha! Because of Lord Rimuru’s summons, I, Gabil, have come to visit!”

Today—or rather tonight, Gabil was still full of energy.

I told him to be quiet because it was nighttime, and offered him a seat.

I asked Shuna to serve tea and then we got down to business.

“You did a great job this time. Because of your efforts, everyone was able to make it back alive. You did well to endure to the end and I’d like to thank you personally.”

I was grateful to Gabil, not from the standpoint of a nation, but as a personal expression. If Gabil had been unable to hold out, there would have been many casualties.

“R-Rimuru-sama! I am overwhelmed by your words!!”

Gabil burst into tears.

I was so impressed. I didn’t want to disturb his emotional state, so I waited for Gabil to calm down.

“It is all thanks to Rimuru-sama that I was able to win and even survive. That voice—I was convinced after hearing Gadra-dono’s whisper—that was Rimuru-sama’s voice, wasn’t it?”

Oh, so he heard Ciel’s voice.

“I knew it! I understand that it would have been an unwinnable battle if I hadn’t gained that power. I have always been warned not to get carried away, so I will not claim credit to myself.”

Gabil replied, but there was a calmness in his expression that made me realize that he meant it.

“You’ve grown up.”

“Haha! Just to hear you say that, I am very grateful…”

In the same way as before, Gabil started crying once again.

A handkerchief was not enough anymore, so I handed him a towel.

Gabil’s condition was just as bad, but his growth had been amazing.

Gabil’s Ultimate Gift, ‘Psychology King Mood Maker,’ was also masterpiece of Ciel.

It was not self-acquired, but that did not mean it should be disparaged. It was precisely because Gabil had the aptitude that he was able to acquire this power.

The five main abilities were ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Change Destiny,’ ‘Unexpected Effects,’ ‘Spatial Manipulation,’ and ‘Multilayer Barrier,’ but if he could fully control his overflowing power, he would also be able to learn ‘Demon Lord Haki.’

The most dangerous power was ‘Change Destiny,’ which was limited to once a day, but had the potential to turn the tide of battle against an opponent who was stronger than himself.

This…what would have happened if someone other than Gabil had learned it?

If someone like Diablo had acquired ‘Change Destiny,’ they would have become the strongest without question.

When I thought about it this way, I felt that Gabil was a pretty great guy.

What particularly surprised me was the way he fought.

After wiping away his tears, Gabil told me about the part of the battle he was proud of…

“Well, the enemy’s spear was coming at me, so I laughed and hit it with my spear!”

Th-This is…

Gabil’s weapon was the Vortex Spear, a unique-grade magical weapon. It was said to be the secret treasure of lizardmen, but it was still only unique grade.

Nonetheless, I thought it was some kind of a joke when I heard that the Vortex Spear had defeated the mythical-grade Seiryu (Blue Dragon) Spear.

“Looks like the difference in performance does not determine the winner. Gwahahahaha!”

Gabil was laughing, but I thought it was obvious.

If the opposing weapon was a Legendary-grade, then I could have forced myself to accept it, but that was no longer possible if it was a Mythical-grade.

The only possibility was…

«Gabil unknowingly used his Skill and added it to his Vortex Spear. Presumably, the spear only survived without being shattered because it was protected by the ultimate level of power.»

Well, that seems to be the case.

Gabil was pretty awesome in that regard as well.

He’s actually a hard worker, though he doesn’t stand out because of his usual behavior.

He was a jack-of-all-trades, who could do research, fight, and everything in between.

We could expect a lot from him in the future.

“Regarding that Vortex Spear, could you leave it with me for a while? I’d like to ask Kurobee to revive it.”

“What?!”

“That is, we’ll let the weapon’s experience be inherited and create a new one. I will provide hihiirokane for the material, so it might even be possible for it to evolve into a mythical-grade.”

Hihiirokane was still scarce, but it would not be a waste on Gabil.

As a reward for this battle, I really wanted to strengthen Gabil’s weapon so that he would be able to survive any tough battles ahead.

If Gabil did not want to give up his ancestral weapon, then I would think of a different way to do it.

“By all means, please do it!!”

Gabil left the spear with me, once again in tears.

Now that he could have a superior weapon, Gabil would become even stronger.

If he was recognized as a mythical-grade master, his existence value would also increase. Since Gabil himself could become a semi-spiritual life form, his resistances would also increase.

Gabil’s subordinates, the Tenshoshu (Heavenly Flying Crowd), now had an average existence value of over 200,000. I hoped that they would continue to support Gabil in the future.

Gabil had cried from beginning to end, but the interview still ended successfully.

In a private room of a special, members-only restaurant.

Refusing the presence of the beautiful elf ladies, I faced Geld.

“How are you doing?”

“I’m in good shape. I have grown accustomed to this power, so I won’t be breaking any more cups.”

Geld laughed and drank his wine with dexterity.

When held in his large hands, a normal-sized glass looked like a sake cup.

“Well, the reason I called you here today wasn’t for anything other than you. I thought we’d drink to your comfort.”

“I’m grateful. I feel unparalleled happiness just to hear Rimuru-sama say such things.”

Geld was normally a calm guy, but from the look in his eyes and the excitement in his voice, I could tell he meant it.

I nodded back, and clinked our glasses in a toast.

Then, after listening to Geld’s complaints for a while, I got down to another subject.

“Actually, I’m going to say something that might be rude to you, if you don’t mind.”

“Of course. Whatever it is, I won’t think Rimuru-sama is being rude to me.”

No, no, I can also be insensitive, so if it bothers you, please point it out. I sometimes say things in a joking way without thinking badly about it, so I want you to tell me out loud.

I was a good talker, even in elementary school when I was talking to girls—No let’s stop there. There is no black history, and I’ve grown up since then.

Even now, I was aware of my lack of delicacy, but I still made an effort every day to refrain from saying things that people might not like.

Whether my efforts had been successful or not, I didn’t know.

Now that I had Geld’s permission, I decided to go ahead and say it.

“Then I’ll tell you, but you can say no if you don’t want to, okay?”

After saying that, I made a suggestion to Geld.

The suggestion was, of course, whether or not to accept Ciel’s ‘Skill Alteration.’

Since Ciel’s existence had to be kept a secret, I asked him, ‘Can I mess with your skills?’

Then Geld answered ‘yes’ without hesitation.

“I think it is because I am this way that I made Rimuru-sama worry. If you can make me stronger, I would be happy. Thank you.”

With that, Geld drained with glass of wine in one gulp.

It wasn’t a mood of compulsion, but a determined declaration from Geld because it was natural for him to accept the offer.

I nodded to Geld as I poured him another drink.

Geld received the Ultimate Gift ‘Gourmet King Beelzebub,’ which included ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Magic Perception,’ ‘Demon Lord Haki,’ ‘Ultraspeed Regeneration,’ ‘Predation,’ ‘Stomach,’ ‘Isolation,’ ‘Demand,’ ‘Supply,’ ‘Corrosion,’ ‘Iron Wall,’ ‘Grant Protection,’ ‘Substitute,’ ‘Spatial Manipulation,’ ‘Multilayer Barrier,’ ‘Keen Smell,’ and ‘Full Body Armor.’ The skill was like a slightly degraded version of my ‘Gluttonous King Beelzebuth,’ with a lot of things incorporated into it.

By empowering his subordinates with ‘Grant Protection,’ an entire defensive force could be formed.

Geld himself was also able to use ‘Iron Wall’ and ‘Substitute’ to take the damage of his comrades.

‘Corrosion’ was both an offensive and defensive skill that did not focus only on guarding, but was also useful for attack. It was great for Geld, who specialized in defense, to make the most of this ability.

It was also worth noting that it was not just the skill that deserved to be praised. Rather, Geld himself was also outstanding.

Geld’s armor had become mythical-grade, and was as good as Geld’s own flesh and blood. It was similar to the garments of demons, and could be manifested at will by Geld.

The same was true of his meat crusher weapon, as even if it were destroyed, a new one would be created immediately. After being repaired by Kurobee, the weapon was said to have a memory of remaining in that state.

To be honest, I thought it seemed like a cheat.

In any case, Geld’s existence value had been increased by taking in the armor, and his foundation was quite sufficient. In addition to this, the acquisition of ‘Gourmet King Beelzebub’ made Geld’s power overwhelm even Souei’s and Gabil’s.

The current Geld should be able to stall for time even against the Three Phantom Commanders. It would be difficult to defeat the defensive Geld without an extremely powerful blow.

“You’re becoming more and more reliable.”

“I am glad to hear that. I swear that I will continue to work with all my might to protect everyone!”

I smiled at Geld and said that I would continue to rely on him.

I was thinking about tomorrow’s meetings.

The meeting had only started today from dusk, so there were only five people to meet.

Because everyone was busy as well, I couldn’t just spend days on this.

In addition to the remaining nine of the Twelve Guardian Lords, there were also a few others I needed to meet with.

At least with Apito, there was a need to be interviewed at the request of Ciel.

It seemed to want to mess with her Skills.

That seemed a little too faithful to its own desires, but I couldn’t deny that doing so would serve everyone well. I had no reason to stop it, so I intended to keep doing my best tomorrow.

I asked Shuna to make a schedule with that intent. I also told her that Diablo and Shion would be postponed until later, so we should be able to finish everything quickly tomorrow.

I was worried about Masayuki and his group, but I heard that they were also having a long meeting.

I had received a brief report, but I wasn’t not sure whether I should get involved or not. So, until Masayuki and the others from the Empire finished their discussion, I was going to stay out of it.

Well, Velgrynd’s presence had also become a reason for my restlessness. The current 70th floor levels had become an atmosphere that no one could approach.

Veldora, for example, had long since panicked and rushed off to his room, and I was feeling slightly uneasy.

It hasn’t been that long since I last separated from Velgrynd, but I was wondering what kind of experiences she had accumulated…

All in all, I would just have to wait and see what she did.

In the meantime, I would do what I have to do.

As I was pondering like this, I suddenly noticed a presence.

Ranga was staring at me from my shadow, his head and the tip of his nose poking out.

“Whoa, what a surprise! It’s Ranga, you woke up safely!”

I was so happy that I took human form and rubbed Ranga’s head and ears.

The next moment, Ranga looked both happy and sad at the same time, and his ears flopped down.

“What’s the matter? Are you feeling sick?”

I was worried about whether he had failed to evolve, or if he was in some kind of trouble, but apparently that was not the case.

“Master, I missed the Great War because I overslept…”

He was so depressed and out of sorts.

“What? That’s it?!”

“I do not know how to apologize, but I heard that Gobta and the others lost their chance to play an active role because of me!”

That’s true, but it couldn’t be helped.

Compared to that, it was better if Ranga evolved safely and played a bigger role in the future.

“Even Gobta and the others were so active in their chores and secret stunts at the banquet, and no one complained about you Ranga, so don’t worry about it.”

“Master, I am thrilled to hear you say that.”

Ranga ‘cooed’ and climbed up to the floor, rubbing against me sweetly.

So I cuddled his fur, enjoying his fluffiness for the first time in a long time.

