With Veryard-dono as my advisor, the Four Nations Trade Federation began to grow steadily.

And now the time has come for us to face our worst enemies in business—the big merchants.

“Are you going to be in Ingracia Kingdom today, Gard-san?”

The one who asked was Bydd, who was in charge of the escort. We have gotten to know each other well and have allowed each other to call us by our names.

Forged in monster country, Bydd’s current strength has risen from a D+ rank to a B rank. Now that he’s renewed hiis armor, he’s become reasonably reliable and I always ask him to accompany me when I go out on excursions.

Of course, Gobemon-dono was there too.

This one is even more impressive and looks like a warrior of the past. His strength is now over Rank A and it seems he’s evolved into a Kijin (fair oni race) 2 .

I heard that they are of legendary status…but they’re common in the monster kingdom. I think I’ll only lose if I look into everything, so I’m just going to let it slide.

“That’s right. I have an important meeting today, and I’m afraid I’m going to have to go somewhere dangerous.”

“Huh? I guess it’s my turn, too.”

“What are you talking about, brother Gobemon! You don’t have a chance with me here!”

“Huh, I’m not so sure about that.”

Gobemon-dono is laughing at the confident Bydd.

Gobemon-dono became a Kijin, but his skin color remained the same. I guess that’s the difference between individuals.

He’s grown horns too, but they’re small so he hides them with a bandana or hat. He was wearing a hat that matched his suit and looked stylish.

He still seems like a hobgoblin at first glance, so it’s easy to catch any opponents off guard.

Bydd is stronger now, but he’s still unreliable. Gobemon-dono has always helped me as my bodyguard.

I’m leaving it up to them to protect me, but today I’m afraid it might not be enough. After all, the merchants who control the Western Nations are the ones we are meeting today.

But I needn’t worry about that.

After all, Rimuru-sama knows what we have planned for today. Whether the negotiations go well or not, my safety is assured.

So for now, I want to enjoy this comfortable tension.

In response to my call, the big names of the world have gathered in one place—this is a man’s romance.

To straighten up after a long absence, the three of us have decided to wear dark suits today.

“Now, are you ready?”

I asked, and Bydd and Gobemon-dono nodded emphatically.

I steeled myself and headed to the hotel where we were to meet.

The automatic door opened.

“Sir, may I ask your name?”

With a refined motion, the hotel clerk inquired.

“Myourmiles.”

“??! Oh, I’m so sorry. May I see your ID, just in case?

No one else is going to steal my name, but I have to cooperate. It means that we’re thorough with everyone else, so it’s rather safe.

“Is this okay?”

Bydd took a letter of introduction from his pocket and showed it to the hotel man. After looking at it, we were searched to make sure we weren’t carrying any weapons.

Meanwhile, my subordinates came running in.

“Myourmiles-sama, we’ve been expecting you!”

“Everything is set up right away. The venue is here.”

My men, who sent the hotelier away, lead me to the ballroom.

The venue this time is where the aristocrats hold balls and other events.

There were already many people milling about, and all eyes were on me as I entered.

“So that’s the representative of the Four Nations Trade Federation, the organizer of this event?”

“Hmm, he looks familiar. He was a very smart businessman, if I remember correctly.”

“That man, I hear that he has taken over Demon Lord Rimuru and taken his current position?”

“That’s right. But don’t underestimate him. I hear that the trade in monster country was arranged by that man. Rumor has it he gained some leverage over a beleaguered retail community.”

“Hmph, it’s a nouveau riche after all. The Rosso family’s influence is now a thing of the past, and although there seems to be a move to rewind in the Dolan General Kingdom, the other Five Great Elders show no signs of being replaced. It’s probably over.”

“Johann Duke of Rosteia was also arrested by an Ingracia Magical Inquisitor. He won’t be able to recover.”

“I have heard that the Border Count Sidel has been captured as well. He was charged with the defense of Ingracia, and now he’s abandoned it. I doubt he’ll ever see the light of day again.”

“In other words, whoever takes the lead at today’s meeting will be promised the power of the next generation,”

“Fufufu, I won’t let a newcomer like that take that place. I’m not calling for a bunch of rednecks like Four Nations Trade Federation!”

“But the monster kingdom is tricky.”

“Right. Their military might is not to be underestimated, and I hear that a woman named Testarossa or something like that has even taken control of the council.”

“Well, let’s see what he can do, shall we?”

“Master Left. If that man has no ability, it would be best for us to take his place.”

“And I’m sure Demon Lord Rimuru will also give preference to those who are more competent.”

And so on and so forth, the flowers of rumor are blooming madly.

Everyone seems to be curious about me. The conversation is so obvious that I can hear it.

Well, that’s understandable.

Today, not only the old Rosso faction, but also some of the biggest names in the world’s underworld are gathered here. These are men who control the wealth of the world and who usually don’t ever meet each other.

These are the tycoons of the old days, whom I would have once had difficulty meeting. One only has to look at the rumors of the Five Great Elders to see the breadth of their connections.

Those who live as if they were living horses. That desire is endless, and instead of being frightened by the fall of Rosso, they are enthusiastic about the opportunity.

I can’t let my guard down. I brace myself even more.

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Suddenly, someone calls out to me.

“Hey, Myourmiles. You’re getting pretty big, aren’t you? Why don’t you say hello to me?”

Well, that’s Don Gabbana’s bodyguard, Arlecio.

A big, muscular, middle-aged man. He wears full-body black leather armor, which is unbecoming, but no one blames him.

That’s just as well.

Aftere all, Arlecio is a retired former A-rank adventurer, and the incarnation of so much violence that there isn’t anyone in the underworld who hasn’t heard his name.

Of course, I knew him as well. Not that I wanted to see him though.

Arlecio is a ferocious beast of a man.

Always hungry, and always ready to hunt.

Ever since I met him as a young man, he’s always asked me for food and pocket money. I’d complain, but this man was the incarnation of violence.

And worst of all, Don Gabbana is standing behind him. He is a nobleman without a title but of such stature that even Ingracia’s royalty cannot resist. When Arlecio went too far and killed a thug, the gendarmerie settled it by suicide.

After that, no one dared to challenge Arlecio.

We are here to talk about the future of the business world, but this is not the time to quarrel with Arlecio. I, as a founder, will have to get through this, even if it means stepping out of line.

I smiled and turned to face Arlecio.

“Well, well, well, Arlecio-san. What a surprise to see you here.”

“Ahn? What’s with that tone? Hey, you look like you’re in some kind of shape while I’m watching you.”

Hey, this is scary…

Arlecio’s threats don’t involve shouting or anything like that, but it’s like a bite to the gut.

I’m going to chatter.

In Blumund, I was also called the king of the backstreets, but in front of such a “real” deal, I am reminded of how small I can feel…

“Well, Mr. Arlecio, it’s a happy occasion. I’ll tell you about it later.”

Bydd is also under pressure from Arlecio. He seems to know about Arlecio and is now afraid of him.

I can’t speak for other people either, and on the contrary, I’ve even reviewed Bydd.

In the past, I would never have tried to go against Arlecio.

But it leaves a bad taste.

“What do you want? You call my name so casually, but who gave you permission? Huh?”

Arlecio’s attention is shifting from me to Bydd.

Just as I suspected, this man doesn’t remember Bydd. I guess he didn’t think he was worth remembering, either.

It seems that Arlecio would not tolerate being accosted by such a small person without permission. He’s in a terrible mood.

In the old days I would have put my hands on some money to see him out.

But today, that’s not going to happen.

I am a representative of the Four Nations Trade Federation and I will not be taken for a fool by our enemies at this time.

The people around me are laughing at us now, instead of helping us. This may be a show and a diversion, but I’ll lose my position if we allow this to go on unchecked.

If I can’t handle this kind of trouble, I’ll only draw the ire of the guests.

“Arlecio, you misunderstand me. I’m a representative of the Four Nations Trade Federation. I’ll let you off one the basis of our old friendship, so leave quickly!”

I said to Arlecio, poised in a relaxed manner. I struggled to keep my voice from trembling, but I was relieved that I managed to do it.

“What?”

Is this what you call a killer intent?

The air around Arlecio changes, his eyes narrowing as he stares at me.

I’m scared shitless.

“Myo-Myourmiles-san…”

Bydd shuffled to his feet and called out to me in a tearful voice. But there was no time to answer and I couldn’t take my eyes off Arlecio.

“Hey, Myourmiles. Are you sure you didn’t misunderstand? Or maybe you did. Do you think I can’t get to you in this kind of a public place?”

“Uh…”

I do think so!

No one with a bit of wisdom would meddle with a man of high rank in a place like this. It wouldn’t be natural for a monster that follows their instincts, but someone with common sense would usually put up with it.

Moreover, Arlecio is Don Gabbana’s bodyguard. If you make trouble here, it would get your employer into trouble.

Just when I thought I was absolutely safe, I felt Arlecio’s left hand shaking.

In that moment, Bydd was pulled down and Gobemon-dono was in front of me.

It seems that in that instant, Arlecio tried to hit me. Gobemon-dono then covered me.

It was Gobemon-dono who pulled Bydd over, and if he’d just left him there, it could’ve been dangerous. As proof, Bydd’s ear is torn off by the pressure of Arlecio’s fist.

“Are you okay, Bydd?”

“Yes, yes. I’m sorry, I can’t help you…”

“It doesn’t bother me. Rimuru-sama will be very angry if you die here.”

“Oh, are you going to get angry for me?”

“Of course. I’ll be mad at you, too!”

I’m reaching out to Bydd and pulling him up. Meanwhile, sparks were flying between Gobemon-dono and Arlecio.

“Were you trying to kill me?”

“It was an accident, an accident. I was just trying to give you a quick pat on the back. I guess that’s why that punk over there fell over because you interfered.”

“Don’t be silly. I’m still a work in progress, but Bydd is like a little brother. I’ve been looking up and watching, but you, that’s too much.”

“Fuhaha, it’s bad because that guy is weak. You’re not allowed to bring weapons into this place, so you’re not going to die from a little poke.”

“…Oh yeah?”

Wow, the atmosphere in Gobemon-dono is changing.

I thought that this would no longer be a meeting, but then Don Gabbana arrived at that very moment.