

Chapter 2

A Short-lived Everyday Life

Five months have passed since Walpurgis.

During this time, many things have happened, but it has been very peaceful overall.

There have been no signs of Michael making his move.

I was worried that we hadn’t been able to keep track of what Feldway and the others were up to, but I was trying to think positively that we’ve at least had the time to strengthen our defenses.

Or rather, there was a reason to be taking it easy.

Actually, I had been trying to get in touch with Dino since back then.

The method of contacting him was, quite simply, the curse that Zegion had carved into Dino.

Zegion and Dino were connected through the curse spell. When Ciel-san told me this, I had asked if we could communicate through it.

«It's easy»

I couldn’t help the blank look on my face when I was told that so simply, but I suppose I should have welcomed it if I could.

I immediately contacted Dino and stuck it right to him 59 .

Well, as far as Dino was concerned, I’d rather have him near the enemy. Even though he had been doing some chores for Ramiris, I couldn't shake the thought that he would just be a waste of money even if he was on our side. It would be more helpful if he could give us information while in the enemy camp.

As I have said before, ‘what one should really fear is not a competent enemy, but an incompetent ally.’ This is exactly the case with Dino, who has contributed to us simply by being on the enemy side.

So, the contents of the conversation we had at that time—

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‘‘Hey! Dino-kun, how are you?’’

When I spoke to him, Dino seemed to panic.

That's right.

It was natural for him to be so surprised because I had suddenly spoken into his mind.

‘‘Rimuru-san?’’

‘‘Oh, so you do know. Me, it's me.’’

This was not just a scam.

To make him understand that I was in the superior position, I’d have to be high-handed here.

‘‘…What is this for? I am very busy—’’

He reacted quite uncomfortably, and I smirked.

You won’t be getting away, Dino-kun.

With that in mind, I send out a ‘thought.’

‘‘No, it's quite a simple story. Dino-kun, I heard you picked a fight with me, right?’’

‘‘N-No, I mean, I did pick a fight, but it wasn’t as dramatic as it sounds…’’

‘‘I don't want to hear any excuses. I think what's most important is sincerity 60 .’’

‘‘Sincerity, you say…’’

‘‘I heard that you led intruders into Ramiris' labyrinth and went on a rampage. Moreover, you even plotted to kidnap Ramiris, didn't you?’’

I smirked and cornered Dino.

‘‘Well, you see, I had to do it because I was ordered—’’

‘‘Didn’t I just tell you that I don't want to hear any excuses?’’

‘‘Yes, I'm sorry…’’

It was hard to tell which of us was the villain here, but I'm a demon lord, so it’s fine.

Incidentally, Dino was also a demon lord, so my conscience remained conveniently unharmed.

Dino's reaction was sluggish, as if realizing that he was in the wrong.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, I began to negotiate.

‘‘Normally, this would have been an unforgivable act, but I am willing to ignore it just this once. That is, if Dino-kun is sorry 61 though.’’

‘‘Seriously!? Of course, I’m sorry. It's just that I have my own problems, and this is what happened. You understand that, don't you?’’

‘‘Mm-hmm, I do. It's just that Dino-kun was under Michael's control.’’

‘‘—Eh?’’

As I thought, he wasn’t aware of it.

However, Dino's inherently lazy personality probably helped him this time, as he didn’t seem to have much loyalty to Michael, the ruler.

‘‘Wai—hold on! Seriously!? I’m being controlled?’’

‘‘Yup, you are. I didn’t think it was your decision to do that, either.’’

After saying that, I told him about Michael's ability.

‘‘So that’s how it is. I'm assuming that you have an angelic skill too, am I wrong?’’

‘‘No way…It’s true that I do have the Ultimate Skill “Heavenly King Astarte…”’’

Dino's skill is ‘Heavenly King Astarte.’ I’m not sure what it does, but it seems that it is an angelic skill.

‘‘That's it, then. That's why you're being manipulated by Michael without even realizing it.’’

Based on Dino's reaction, letting him know that he was under control could be a good thing or a bad thing. He did not seem to be completely under control to the point of swearing allegiance, so it might be easier for the domination to fall apart.

Dino's character might also be a factor, but I had a feeling that he would be able to break through this well.

‘‘What should I do? Listening to you, I don't feel angry at Michael. I don't feel like betraying him, and I don't feel like joining you guys. I didn't realize it until now, but it's definitely a weird feeling.’’

With this, I was able to find out Dino's skills and also make him aware of everything. This contact seems to have been a great success.

But anyway, I’ll take my chances.

‘‘Well, I have a hypothesis. If you have a demonic skill that opposes an angelic skill, you might be able to offset them and escape from their control. There are other ways to do this, but I don't recommend them because they depend on luck.’’

As for the offset theory, Chloe is an example.

Because she had the Manas named Chronoa, Chloe herself was not controlled. I heard that she had lost contact with Chronoa now, but from what I saw, she had fought and struggled to remove the “control circuit” from ‘Hope King (Sariel).’

I wanted to help, but I trust them and will let them do what they want.

So, it’s just a matter of luck.

That’s a lie.

It's not that I don't trust Dino, but he is still under control. I'm not stupid enough to reveal all of my tricks.

Actually, with Leon, I had a feeling that Ciel-san would take care of things if used 'Predation' on him. But just the thought of that was unpleasant, so I was saving it as a last resort.

That's why I told Dino that there was only a possibility that I could do something.

‘‘…I see. It doesn't feel good being controlled, so I'll see if I can't do something about it.’’

‘‘Hey, hey, don’t overdo it. Michael and us demon lords are going to have an all-out war, so I want you to do nothing and stay out of suspicion.’’

Even if I could get information from Dino such as by asking him to spy, I wouldn’t fully believe him.

The effect of Zegion's curse was not enough to prevent him from telling lies, and even if he could, it would be useless if he told Michael about what was reported to us.

Since I was not sure which effect was greater, Zegion's coercion or Michael's control, I thought it was dangerous to rely on uncertain information.

But even so!

It would be a waste to let Dino fool around here!

Rather, it is unacceptable that we’d be the only ones who were struggling.

‘‘Is that all right?’’

Dino looks happy to be told not to do anything.

He's such a sweet guy.

There’s no reason for me to be kind.

‘‘I also thought it would be hard for you to betray Michael.’’

I replied in a gentle tone as if I cared about Dino, but I was secretly ready to make him work.

‘‘No, I don't want to betray him, but I don’t care at all about leaking information!’’

Hey, is this really okay?

I don't think I can trust this guy on a fundamental level…

No, this is fine.

It's best to have him act in our favor to the extent that he doesn't even feel like he's betraying us.

‘‘No, it's okay. You don't have to do anything.’’

‘‘Seriously? Then, what about that sincerity thing you were talking about earlier?’’

I’ve been doing a good job of leading the conversation.

It seems I was right to use Dino's innocent nature to get him to act voluntarily.

‘‘Even if you don't join the battle, that’s almost like having Michael's strength reduced.’’

‘‘I see, that is true!’’

It's a little annoying that he was convinced by that, but because it’s Dino, I feel like it's forgivable.

‘‘I see, if you say so. Then I'll let you know if there's anything you need hear about.’’

‘‘That would help.’’

All right, now he’ll be able to be a spy without being aware of it.

‘‘Okay, I'll keep an eye on things, so let me know if you need anything. Is that okay?’’

‘‘Yeah, that's fine. By the way, what's Michael doing now? Do you have any idea of when he might be ready to move?’’

Having succeeded in getting Dino to talk, I asked him what I wanted to know.

I could tell when he was lying, so as long as Dino didn't tell on me, the information would be reliable.

‘‘Yeah, I think he's asleep now. You see, he got Velgrynd's power and also took Velzard's power. I guess the strain of that took its toll and he went dormant.’’

Whoa, that's some great information right there.

I had thought he would weaken Velzard before making his move, that impatient bastard.

Oh, I heard she fought Guy, so she might have been a little weakened. But it seemed that neither of them had fought seriously, so it must have been too much for Michael to handle.

And so, the Dragon Factor was taken from her.

If that's the case, it's possible that Michael has changed in some way, so we should be on our guard.

What I am wondering about is—

‘‘What happened to Velzard?’’

‘‘Velzard is recovering, too. She will probably be back to normal in a few days.’’

I see…

I guess the possibility of being attacked out of nowhere has disappeared, but a True Dragon's resilience is unbelievable.

However, I'd like to think that there won't be a full-scale invasion until Michael, the commander, is back to normal.

‘‘Okay, thanks.’’

‘‘For this, it's a small price to pay.’’

There were many more questions I wanted to ask, such as the number of enemies, but I decided not to go any further.

It would be better to be satisfied with Dino's willingness to speak up, because he would be a long-lasting source of information.

‘‘Okay then, I'll be in touch.’’

‘‘Oh…I just remembered. It would be helpful if you could tell Ramiris that I'm sorry.’’

Just as I was about to end the conversation, Dino asked me for a favor.

So, I briskly declined.

‘‘Ah? You can apologize yourself later. She was pretty angry and said that she was going to use all forty-eight of her special moves on you.’’

‘‘Forty-eight my ass! All she can do is dropkicks!’’

‘‘I don't know. That's just what she said. Didn't I tell you?’’

When I said that, it seemed like Dino was laughing.

‘‘Fufu. I understand. See you later.’’

‘‘Yeah, see ya.’’

With Dino's approval, I broke the connection this time.

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And that was about it for the exchange.

It went well, I'd say.

I had already shared this story with the demon lords, with the caveat that Dino was an informant. That's why we did not have to feel tense.

Of course, I couldn’t deny the possibility that the whole thing was a trap, but if I did that, I’d be just like Ciel-san. It was no fun being overly cautious and losing your nerve, plus that would be like falling into the enemy's trap, so I came to the conclusion that the best thing to do was to be natural.

Well, that was still the same decision I made when I heard that the angels were coming to attack.

I had always been the type of person who did what I could do tomorrow.

For example, whenever I had summer vacation homework, I would do my best in the beginning and finish the rest on the last day.

And if I didn’t get it done in time?

At that time, I would go straight to school without hesitation and announce ‘I forgot,’ at which point they would get mad at me.

If I was told to bring it in tomorrow, then I would finish what I could, and if I couldn't, next I would say ‘I lost it.’

Well, I had done my best because I had wanted to finish it as much as possible, but I think it is important to accept that which is impossible.

Eh, do my best on a regular basis?

No way, it’s about focusing the mind.

So then, as long as you are prepared to get someone angry, the rest is manageable.

In other words, you have to take responsibility for your own actions.

But I’ve digressed from the topic at hand.

I asked Dino to call me every morning to see if Michael had woken up or not.

Michael shouldn’t be able to see everything. He seems to be able to manipulate the skills of his subjects, but I don't think he can read their thoughts. If that were possible, he would have to process a huge amount of information, and that would make it more difficult to extract only the necessary information.

I do not believe that a person who cannot even tell a lie to himself would go that far.

The rationale behind that thought was Ciel-san.

Even Ciel-san asserted that although it was possible to speak with someone connected by the ‘Soul Corridor,’ it was impossible to read their every thought. While one might sometimes be able to sense their surface psychology, it is impossible to interfere with what someone is thinking deep inside.

However, I have heard that you can see the answer to a question if you ask it directly, but I have some idea about that. I always tried to be cautious, because I felt that my thoughts were often seen through.

For that reason, I placed a certain level of trust in Dino's information.

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And so, during the last five months when Michael had not moved, we had been preparing for the final battle.

We had established a system of mutual cooperation amongst us demon lords, and were holding detailed discussions with each of our territories so that we’d be able to deal with any problems as soon as they arose.

And by us, I meant me. 62

The agreement to go and help the others if possible was meaningful to me, but it had been very difficult to coordinate.

Just by looking at that exhausting banquet 63 , one would understand how difficult it was to meet with demon lords who were so selfish.

First, as promised, I was constructing a “magic transfer circle” in each demon lord's territory.

After Walpurgis, I had asked Mizari to take me to each of the demon lords' countries. I recorded those locations so that I could teleport to them immediately.

Of course, the demon lords had all agreed to this.

I already knew Guy's castle, the ‘Frost Palace,’ since it had been the meeting place at the time.

I had also already been to Ruminas’ Holy Empire of Ruberios, and its capital, the Sacred City of ‘Runes.’

I had visited the still-unnamed country of Milim many times, so I really only had to visit two places, El Dorado (the Golden Land) and Damargania (the Holy Void).

Dagruel’s territory was like a decaying sanctuary. If I had more time, I would have liked to take a leisurely tour, but work took priority at the time. I left immediately and made arrangements to dispatch Ultima and the others.

Incidentally, I found out from the conversation that Milim and Dagruel could not teleport.

Needless to say, neither could Ramiris.

“No, I'm not good at that kind of thing.”

“Me too! It's faster to just fly than to do those troublesome coordinate calculations!”

That's what they both said.

It is true that transportation type magic can only transfer you to a location that has been recorded. In the case of the skill ‘Spatial Transportation,’ it is more flexible, but the coordinates of your current location and your destination—an accurate depiction (image)—are required or else the skill won’t be activated. It is necessary to understand the correlation between the positional information and to calculate the angle and distance to jump.

It may look like an easy transition, but there is a time lag, and it is a surprisingly complicated skill.

Milim acts by instinct and natural intuition, and is not good at intentional calculation. Her computational ability is very high, but it seems that she is not good at it because she finds it troublesome.

Dagruel is the physical type as one can see…

And Ramiris, well, you know.

The construction of the “magic transfer circles” had been a request from Guy, but they might also come in handy in the future. Leon and Ruminas could do whatever they wanted with their magic and skills, but the fact that they didn't oppose the installation suggests that they must have seen the usefulness of this device.

After all, it could be used by anyone.

In fact, even people with very little magic power could use it.

Using the magicules collected from the atmosphere, it was possible to transfer nearly fifty people at once. This would make it easier to travel to and from countries where magic circles have been set up.

In the future, we could prepare a larger scale system, but there was still a problem in terms of efficiency.

As you know, a large number of magicules are required to transfer organisms.

If we waited for the magicules to be replenished naturally, then it would take a week to use it once. It was easy to replenish the amount of magicules if the person had as many as we did, but it would be a lot of work for humans to do so with their magic power.

If it was used to transport goods, then that could start a distribution revolution. If that happened, the “magic train” we were working so hard to develop would become obsolete, and there’d be a lot of problems to solve.

The word “compartmentalization” came to mind, and so I decided to leave the effective utilization of this device as a future task.

—For that reason, I was installing “magic transfer circles,” though as a matter of fact, I had already completed them in demon lord territories.

Let's look back on the situation at that time—

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The first one I installed was, of course, in my country of Tempest.

Just in case, I had it installed in the Isolation Room of the labyrinth. That way, it would be safe even if it was used by the enemy.

The next one I installed was in the “Holy Void,” Damargania.

I went with Ultima and completed it myself with little choice in the matter.

Normally, I would have just left the work to others, but this time things were different. In addition to the fact that I could not afford to take my time, Damargania was a unique location.

A long time ago, the city had been reduced to ruins by the decisive battle between Guy and Milim. However, the tragedy of that battle still affected the city to this day.

A barren land, a deadly desert. There were several reasons why it was called that.

The raging sandstorm corroded everything it touched. This sandstorm isolated Damargania from the outside world.

«At the time when the forces between Guy and Milim clashed, a catastrophic destruction occurred, and the energy was forcibly expelled to another dimension to minimize the damage. However, that power has not disappeared, but continues to leak from the dimensional rupture. That is the cause of this tragedy»

That was Ciel-san's explanation.

It was such a long time ago, I was surprised that it was still having an effect.

Anyway, such a dangerous place was the territory of Dagruel.

In Damargania, there was a huge tower—the “Heavenward Pavilion 64 ”—that pierced the sky. Only the area surrounding it was a barely functional safe zone called the “Holy Void.”

Outside of the ‘Barrier,’ which had existed since ancient times, there were threats that even rivaled the permafrost.

Weak monsters would be sliced to death by sand blades, and even strong monsters would be at risk of death over long periods of time. Dagruel and the other giants were of no exception to this rule.

For the weak, women, and children, even if they were high ranking warriors, there were many dangers outside the safety of the Holy Void.

If even the Giant race could be reduced to such a state, then for humans, this was truly a deadly place. That's why I did the work myself this time rather than sending for Vesta and the others.

That said, all I really had to do was set up the ‘magic circle.’

The giant disk made of pure magisteel, engraved with magic formulas constructed by Ciel-san, was one meter high and seven meters in diameter, and was installed in the location specified by Dagruel. The rest of the work went to the demons who had come with Ultima.

“This is an order from Rimuru-sama! Do not embarrass me, and make sure you complete it!”

And so, the demons were given a threatening pep talk from Ultima.

It was mostly just threatening, but the demons were good at magic, so they could handle it. With that in mind, I left them in charge and retreated.

“Rimuru, are you sure it’s alright…?”

Dagruel asked me anxiously…

“Yeah, it's fine. There’s Veyron as well as Ultima, and we can also call Zonda back if needed. The test was successful, so don't worry about leaving the rest of the adjustments to them.”

Yes, there was nothing to worry about.

Because Ultima and the others were big time demons despite their appearances.

They probably had accumulated more wisdom than I could even imagine, so I finished the work without any worries.

“Rather than that, I was just wondering whether they would go berserk—”

“Well then, I'm off! You take care of the rest!”

Dagruel was about to say something, but I chose to ignore him.

It would only be a hassle to change personnel here, so I left the place as if to escape.

After Damargania was Ruberios.

I set up a ‘magic circle’ at the location Ruminas had specified.

After that, it was worktime for Gobkyu and the Surmounters who had come with him.

If I just left things to Gobkyu, he would construct a magnificent building as a transfer facility. And with the help of the Surmounters, they could handle the fine-tuning of the relocation information.

“I think this will work. I will keep in touch with Tempest and Damargania, and we will get it working up to a practical level!”

Now that they were taking care of it, my work here was done.

Now, as for the other matter.

Shion, her subordinates, Adalman, and his followers were scheduled to arrive in Ruminas' country.

I had brought them all together this time, but the problem was finding an inn.

“Rest assured. There is an empty room in my temple, so you can sleep there.”

“That would be a great help. Shion, Adalman, that's how it is, so don't cause any trouble.”

“Leave it to me, Rimuru-sama! As Rimuru-sama's secretary, I shall see to it that your duties are carried out in an unashamed manner!”

I'm worried.

I'd rather you not do anything and just send me a message when the enemy attacked.

“However, it’s such a pity that I can't cook. They say that even one day without cooking can dull one’s skills…”

Isn't that for more delicate skills, like the piano?

Come to think of it, Shion is also good at the violin, so doesn't she need to practice that too?

“Don't you need to practice your instrument? You’re so enthusiastic about combat training, but I never really see you playing the violin.”

“Fufufu, don’t worry. As long as you practice daily, playing an instrument is a piece of cake. It's more about the ability to make subtle changes of seasoning 65 —”

That's crazy.

This person’s way of thinking is wrong.

I hid my disgusted expression, wondering if I should apologize to all the musicians in the country.

Shion says it's all in the seasonings, but no matter how much you get it wrong, the taste will be guaranteed. However, too much salt is too salty, and too much sugar is just bad for your health. The correct answer is that the right amount is important.

Anyway, it’s clear that her concerns are misdirected.

As I was thinking this, Ruminas interjected from the side.

“Shion, wasn't it? If it's combat training you’re looking for, I'm sure Hinata has some time. If you’d like, I can do it too, so don't worry. Oh, and as for the cooking, I will give you an unused kitchen and arrange for the ingredients, so you can do as you please.”

I was made speechless by her words. The offer was so fearless that I was trembling.

I was so startled that I was too late to stop her.

“Ru-Ruminas, letting Shion cook for you is—”

“No, I don't mind. In this day and age, hobbies should be cherished. I also had a passion for cooking at one time. Fufufu, it would be fun to try it with you.”

“Well! That's a wonderful idea. I won’t lose, Ruminas-sama!”

“Fufu, Hinata is also very good at cooking. Let’s invite her.”

You’ve gotta be kidding.

There’s a lot to talk about here.

I could no longer handle this, let alone having Hinata join in.

I didn't know what to do, so I left my luck to chance.

“A-Adalman. I leave the rest to you!”

“Eh!?

He must have had some terrible premonition. Even Adalman, a man of great faith, could not nod his head in agreement with my words.

However, the die had been cast.

“Well then, let me know if anything happens!”

I left it at that and escaped on the spot.

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The third destination was Milim’s country.

The ruins of Yuurazania, which I knew quite well.

What rose from there was not a sacred mountain, but a huge structure still under construction.

I teleported to the site of the old city and waited for the pick-up.

Geld had been sent ahead of me, so I was accompanied by Gabil's group, and Carrera and Esprit.

Gabil’s cheerleaders 66 , Kakushin, Sukerou, and Yashichi, and Gazat-kun, the captain of the ‘Hiryuu,’ were also there.

I don't know who Gabil's second-in-command is, but I am sure that these four stand out.

Even though the “Hiryuu” and others were preparing to face a decisive battle with a dangerous opponent, they all looked very happy.

The reason seemed to be because Ultima’s special training had been put on hold for the time being.

It was so harsh that they all died many times. They had all lamented over being unable to stop even after death, because they were still in the labyrinth.

If you think about it, that labyrinth is a foul.

Rather than training to the point of death, you can assess your limits on the assumption that you will die.

Well, thanks to that, they seem to be improving rapidly.

Simply evolving and increasing your magicule quantity does not mean that you will become truly strong. It is only when one has mastered their power that they can be called a first-class warrior.

That said, you should not overdo it.

I wouldn’t want to train like that either, so I decided I would tell Ultima to keep it in moderation.

And so, there were a little over a hundred people in total. We had been waiting here for about ten minutes now.

I told Milim that I would be here today through the 'Telepathy Net', but maybe she forgot?

“Aren’t they late?”

“There, there, Carrera-dono. We’ve only just arrived, haven't we? Let’s wait for the pick-up with the feeling of sightseeing!”

“Gabil-dono is kind, isn't he?”

“I think Carrera-sama is just too quick-tempered.”

“What did you say, Esprit?”

“No, nothing.”

It's barely enough. But still enough.

I can help but understand Carrera’s frustration. But that's because I still have the senses of a modern Japanese who used to live by the minute, and in this world, I'm one of the impatient ones.

We have a concept of time, and we have clocks, but they are not as elaborate as the wristwatches worn in my previous life. It is common knowledge in this world that only aristocrats or big merchants have pocket watches which are a little bulky.

Therefore, if the time of an appointment is vague, such as in the afternoon, the general practice is to have a messenger on standby as early as possible.

In this case, it was Milim's fault for failing to do so, but it would not be mature to get angry because there was always the chance of a misunderstanding such as with the meeting time or date.

It was no use asking Carrera for help, so I decided to take the lead here.

“Don't panic. I'll just check with Milim.”

After saying that, I tried 'telepathy net' on Milim.

‘‘Hey, Milim? I'm already here, but is there no one at the meeting place?’’

‘‘Mmm!? R-Rimuru? I'm busy with my homework, but I told Midley properly! Perhaps he misunderstood the time. I'll give him a strong reminder, so please don't be angry with him!’’

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You get the idea.

I guess she was so busy with the homework Frey-san gave her that she forgot to give him my message.

‘‘I understand, no need to panic.’’

‘‘Mm, mm! I'll see you later!’’

These things happen.

With that in mind, I diligently waited for the pick-up while calming down Carrera.

However, something unexpected happened next.

One of the people who rushed over made an outrageous remark.

“Oh, you must be the Demon Lord Rimuru-sama! You are even more dignified than I had heard, and with such an impressive presence. I, Jagi, am truly impressed!”

The speaker, Jagi, bowed reverently towards Gabil.

Apparently, Jagi's race is like a dragonewt. Unlike Gabil, Jagi has a human form, with horns growing out of the side of his head.

He is small in stature but has a sturdy physique and sharp movements.

The five majins with him did not seem to have any noteworthy characteristics other than being diverse in race.

For some reason, Jagi had scars all over his body that appeared to be freshly made. That worried me a little, but he looked fine and healthy, so I guess it wasn't a problem. What was more troubling was Jagi's comment itself.

I was stunned, but I think Gabil was the one who reacted with the most surprise.

“No, no, no, I'm not Rim—”

“Oh, my goodness! You don't need to greet a low-ranking captain like me! There is not a single person under Demon Lord Milim-sama's command who does not know your name!”

He hurriedly tried to deny it but was interrupted by that misunderstanding bastard's outburst.

Even if you know my name, what's the point if you don't know my face?

There were many majins who knew my face, but it seems that this low-ranking captain was not one of them.

As for the reason why Jagi mistook Gabil for me, I think it was the haki.

I had completely suppressed my youki and outwardly appeared as a normal human being.

The same was true of Carrera and Esprit, who didn’t look like demons or even majins.

Well, because there were many human guests in Tempest, we had a habit of keeping our youki at bay.

However, things can’t go on like this.

It’s been a long time since I’ve been treated like this, and I was enjoying it, but Carrera and Esprit have very little patience.

“Hey, that person is Gabi—”

“What's with you people? Aren’t you guys supposed to be maidservants? You may be wearing a military uniform, but if you're interrupting an adult conversation, you're not getting the education you need.”

And now again, he interrupted Esprit.

To be honest, I thought he was the one who lacked education.

“Wahaha, he's a pretty funny guy, isn't he?”

Carrera was laughing.

Despite her words, I could see the veins bulging on her temples 67 .

She seemed to be trying her best to hold back.

It looks like she's three seconds away from exploding, so now is not the time to be laughing.

Just as I was thinking that, Esprit moved before me.

“Hey, can you please just listen to me?”

She said so firmly and put her hands on Jagi.

It was not so much of a punch as it was a strong action. A weaker majin would have been unable to react and probably would have been knocked unconscious by the blow to the cheek.

Normally, I should be angry with Esprit, but this time it was Jagi's fault. He mistook Gabil for me and did not listen to us.

Although it was not good to resort to violence, Carrera had been about to lash out. Esprit's action was based on her understanding of the situation, so I decided to ignore it.

I thought that if Jagi would calm down and listen to us, it would end the conversation there.

However, something unexpected happened next.

Jagi reacted to Esprit.

“—Eh?”

“Hyah!”

The attack was instantaneous.

Jagi grabbed Esprit's left back fist with his right hand and twisted it lightly. As if to catch Esprit off guard, he used his right foot to sweep her off her feet while she was off balance.

Esprit leaped as if to avoid the low-kick-like sweep, or perhaps it was because she had read the attack. Then, twisting her body in midair, she threw a kick with her right foot towards Jagi's head.

Jagi dodged the kick by bending his upper body, but that was not the end of Esprit's attack.

Using her grabbed fist as an axis, Esprit kicked with her left leg, returning the kicked right leg like a pendulum.

In this way, she aimed at Jagi's neck so that her right and left legs intersected. It was an acrobatic technique, like something you might have seen in a comic book, but it would be difficult to deal with at first glance..

And yet, Jagi evaded the barrage by releasing Esprit's fist and doing a backflip.

And so, the two sides went back at it once more, but at this rate, both sides were going to end up getting serious.

“Well, you seem to be quite the pleasant young lady. The fact that you're taking it easy on me, it's no wonder you're wearing a military uniform.”

Jagi snapped his neck as he began speaking.

“You're good too, old man. I think I'm going to enjoy this a little bit, so let's show them how serious we are, shall we?”

In response, Esprit began smiling very nicely as she cracked her knuckles.

Carrera was unperturbed.

It was obvious from her happy smile that she had no intention of stopping them as Esprit’s boss.

Gabil was very unreliable at times like these. Because of Ultima, he seemed to have been traumatized by the three demon girls. This time it was Esprit, but he didn’t seem sure if he should talk to me or not.

Gabil glanced at me.

Aw geez, it seems that I’m the only one here with any common sense.

I had no choice but to intervene.

First, I decided to call out the person in charge.

“Yes, yes, that's enough. Jagi-san, right? You won’t talk to me, so go get your boss.”

I stepped forward and called out to him in a grandiose manner. I think I was pretty cool, but I'd give myself an eighty.

I waited for Jagi's reply, feeling proud of myself.

And then…

“Hah? Don't interfere in a man's fight!”

Something like that!

I was instantly offended.

But at the next moment…

“You, you're being disrespectful to Rimuru-sama!”

Carrera kicked him with lightning speed.

“Even I have reached my end of my patience!”

Gabil's spear struck down the Jagi who had been blown away.

“Oh, I was late.”

There was no turn left for Esprit, who had been facing him.

And as for me…

“Ah, you guys. Nothing happened here. Okay?”

I lightly intimidating the majins that Jagi had brought with him in an attempt to destroy the evidence.

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As it turned out, there was no need to threaten Jagi.

The fault turned out to be on Milim's side.

“Wahahahaha! Now you realize that it's not my fault, don't you?”

“Yeah. I had thought you forgot to tell them, but I didn't realize that you were having fun playing a winner-takes-all game to see who would pick us up…”

The winner was Jagi, but the war criminal was Midley.

“How can that be? I don't understand…”

“No, no, no, my guys are bloodthirsty, but Midley's guys are no slouches either.”

Frey-san was holding her head in her hands in disgust, and Karion was laughing with his stomach.

“So, was this Jagi guy any good?”

“Well, he was strong. I'd say he was about 50/50 with Phobio-san.”

I replied to Karion, who suddenly asked me with a serious face, with my honest impression.

In fact, he was slightly inferior when comparing on the amount of magicules, but his skill (level) against Esprit was quite good. He might also have shape-shifting ability like Gabil, in which case my evaluation would be even higher.

However, Phobio can also transform himself into a beast, so the gap between the two would never narrow, and I'm sure Phobio would win in a real fight.

Nevertheless, Jagi is quite skilled.

Like Midley, the priests of the Worshipers of Dragons are really strong. Because they do not rely on power alone, they are versatile and are able to use that to their advantage.

Even so, they are muscle heads.

It's quite an unfortunate reality.

“I'm apologize for the state of affairs. I have failed in my supervision.”

With that said, Midley bowed his head.

Well, I can imagine that Jagi was also inspired by this man, so I couldn’t deny that Midley was largely responsible.

“So, you're Carrera-dono, right? Gabil-dono and I would appreciate your cooperation with our country for the time being.”

In times like these, it was up to Frey-san.

Karion was a great king, but he also loved to fight. He was more like Midley and had not yet abandoned his innate values that the weak were bad.

This time—or rather, we are saved in many respects because we were the strong ones. If we had been weaker, we would not have been able to negotiate as well as we did.

In that respect, I was pretty lucky.

“Well then, Carrera-san. Why don't you have a little test of strength with me?”

You see, Karion's got something to say.

“Hoh, that’s quite the spirit you’ve got there! Just tell me how much you want me to go easy on you.”

Don't just join in so easily, Carrera!

“Whoa, hey now!”

“It’s fine, milord. I hear Karion-dono has evolved. So then, it's only natural that he’d want to know how much stronger he’s become.”

“Well, that may be true, but this isn't the labyrinth, you know? If you overdo it, you could die, so you guys have to refrain from such dangerous behavior.”

Gabil and Frey-san were the only ones who nodded at my words.

However, the others looked dissatisfied.

Especially Milim.

“Ehh, that’s boring!”

Frey-san got angry at her. ‘Don't say that!’ she said.

But well, for practicality’s sake, I couldn’t allow it.

They couldn’t do it near the construction site, and would have to go to a place far enough away that wouldn’t be affected by the battle. To do so right here would be like asking the enemy to aim right at us.

Even so, Karion was surprisingly insistent.

“Sure, I know it's dangerous. But I meant what I said when I said that. I want to know how strong I've become before the showdown.”

Karion even asked Frey-san to agree with him.

Well…

Come to think of it, I had Ciel-san.

At the time, it had just been 'Wisdom King (Raphael)', but it still answered all my questions, so I hadn’t needed to test my strength to learn what I could do.

In the case of Karion and the others, the only way to find out was to test their strength by themselves. It made sense that the quickest way to find out was to fight the strongest person.

“I won't deny that. But isn't that a problem you've always had and will always have to deal with on your own?”

“That's true. But the enemy won't wait for us, you know? We have to get stronger quickly and protect the people who believe in us. To do that, we have to be willing to take some risks, don't you think?”

“That's…”

Frey-san lost the battle.

She seemed unable to say anything back once the duties of a king were brought up.

If he had only wanted to brag about his power, I would have dismissed it, but because he had a reason, it was a question I should consider.

“Rimuru, I agree with Karion's opinion. I’m training him now, but I think there are limits to what I can do.”

“Milim is right. It's a shame, but now that I’ve awakened, I understand. I thought I had been getting stronger, but Milim still seemed so far away. And Rimuru, the difference between you and me is the same. There is a gap between you and me that cannot be bridged no matter how hard I try. On that note—”

“Fufu, do you think I can reach you? I've been beaten, but I think you're right that it's better than dealing with Milim-sama.”

I see…

I don't think there's much of a difference between me and Carrera in my current state…But if Karion feels that way, then it proves that his eyes are able to see the essence of things.

Guy also thought highly of Karion, and if he could use the power he had awakened, he would be a great asset in the future war.

It was also a request from Milim.

In that case, the right thing to do would be to cooperate.

“All right. Then I'll return with Karion and Frey-san, and Carrera will stay here and defend as planned.”

“Eh? I’m the other one who—”

“There are suitable people in the labyrinth!”

“I understand. As you wish, milord.”

I feel bad for being so gloomy, but I mustn't show my naivete here.

Carrera was overkill. Ramiris' complaints were giving me a headache, and it was wiser to have a more sensible partner if I wanted to leave Karion and the others in charge.

Karion could have Benimaru. Or Zegion.

For Frey-san, Kumara would be a good choice.

I’d work out the details after I got back. If something happened, I could be contacted, and would immediately send them back via teleport.

“I'm sorry, I've been a bit selfish.”

“That's okay. I'm only cooperating with Karion because I think he's right. Is that okay with you, Frey-san?”

“Yes, of course. It's very kind of you to offer, so I see no reason to refuse.”

And so that’s how it went.

Gabil and Carrera were left under Milim's command, and Karion and the others were brought back with me.

Incidentally, Karion's subordinates were left to their own discretion.

As long as they had not awakened, the environmental destruction wouldn’t be so bad…I think. I had sent them a large supply of recovery medicine, so they should be able to handle the rest on their own.

Benimaru and the others had gotten stronger that way, so they weren’t worried about that.

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After returning from Milim's country, Karion and the others were left in Benimaru's care and thrown into the labyrinth.

Finally, it was time to go to Leon's country.

I had sent Diablo ahead of me, but I put off my visit until the end, so he was probably waiting for my arrival by now. With this in mind, I prepared for my departure.

Leon’s country—I knew where El Dorado was because Mizari had guided me there before.

Therefore, we would be there in a moment with Teleport.

“I will be your escort.”

I felt safe with Souei.

“Don't forget about me, my lord!”

Ranga poked his head out from behind me, appealing to me.

Oh good, good!

I nodded while enjoying the fluff.

He was always with me anyway, but he was cute like this.

And now…

I was somewhat reluctant to go, but I had already informed the other party. It was always better to just get the unpleasant things done quickly, so I stood up.

“Well then, let's go.”

Muttering to myself, I activated the teleport as Shuna and Rigurd saw us off.

Leon's territory was on a small continent.

Even if it was small, a continent was still a continent. It was a little bigger than Australia. There was an astonishingly vast amount of flat land with well-organized streets and cityscape.

Before Leon and the others had settled here, there had been a natural landscape of forests, plains, lakes, rivers, and mountains. It was said that the current state is the result of forcing that landscape into shape with great magic and optimizing it.

An artificial city created with the harmony of nature in mind—that was El Dorado, the city where Demon Lord Leon Cromwell resided.

“Wow, this is amazing…”

In response to my muttering, Silver Knight Alrose, who had met me at the designated spot, replied happily.

“Haha, I am honored. I am sure Leon-sama will be pleased to hear that.”

When I met him before, he had been wearing a helmet that completely hid his face, but now his face was bare.

He was not as beautiful as Leon, but he looked like a beautiful woman.

His beautiful silver hair flowed down his back, but judging by the thickness of his neck and his Adam’s apple, he was definitely a man.

Incidentally, it seemed that Alrose was also the leader of Leon's subordinates, the Magic Knights.

Another person I had met, Black Knight Claude-san, was said to be the strongest, but this Alrose was also quite good. He was able to use magic without chanting and was able to invoke transference spells quite naturally. We finally arrived outside of the city—that is, outside of the city's defenses, but from there we arrived in front of the Great Gate 68 in an instant.

The race didn't seem to be human, but they looked human. When I thought as much, I was told that they were demonoids.

They were a long-lived and magically gifted race, but it seems that they used to be human. They were born by a mutation called majinization, so their population was quite small.

Perhaps, Myuran or Larzen—

«Yes, by definition, they are the same»

I knew I was right.

Well, the term “majin” was so diverse that it was troublesome to define them in detail. If a former human was transformed into a majin, there seemed to be no problem to call them a demonoid.

Anyway, I turned my attention to the city beyond the Great Gate.

It was even greater than I expected.

The beautiful golden buildings all lined up in a row were truly magnificent.

The arrangement of the buildings had been well calculated.

In a nutshell, the shape of the buildings could be described as a six-pointed star, or a hexagonal ridge. This alone created a two-dimensional magical effect, but the amazing part began from here.

The cityscape was spiraling, gradually increasing in height from the entrance. It lead to a chalk-white castle that stood majestically in the center.

A spiraling royal castle rising up as if piercing the heavens.

The size of the castle itself was not that large, but the three-dimensional structure of the entire city made it look quite enormous.

If you glanced at it from above, you would see that the city itself formed a powerful stacked magic circle. Conversely, those who did not have a bird's-eye view from above would not be able to notice the magic circle drawn by the city.

And even if you had a bird's eye view, you would not notice it unless you were conscious of it. It was such a clever and exquisite arrangement.

I, too, had dreamed up many romantic ideas for the construction of cities, but I had never thought of incorporating magic circles. It had been a long time since I’d had a great idea, and it made me feel a bit frustrated.

This well-calculated city structure stimulated my pride as a former construction worker.

Our country was undoubtedly wonderful, but we could not afford to plan our cities with such a high priority on functionality. We had Ramiris’ Labyrinth to protect us, but that was really just a result of luck.

I had wanted to devise a system to maintain it with the magical power of the city's inhabitants, and achieved it in that way.

“This city itself has the effect of a powerful magic circle. I can only say it's amazing.”

I felt a little defeated, so I praised it honestly.

“Oh, you can tell?”

Alrose smiled happily.

“Its effects are ‘Search Enemy’ and ‘Countermagic,’ right? It's too different in scale from normal magic to have the usual effect.”

Just to give two effects to a single magic circle, you'd have to go to a lot of trouble to come up with the right arrangement. This was made possible by the scale of a city.

While drawing a magic circle with only the arrangement of the buildings, he was able to deploy tactical grade magic at all times, so the magnitude of his feat was immeasurable.

If someone entered the city without permission, they would be detected immediately. In addition, any magic attack from outside the city would be repelled.

With a magic circle of this scale, even legion magic, which specialized in attacking cities, would be easily repelled.

“Haha, you're good. You can understand that much just from a glance? There's no point in hiding it, so I'll tell you, you're right. This city has been given an Absolute Defense by magic.”

Alrose replied proudly.

At that time, he smoothly explained to me that “this ward protects us from evil demons that shoot nuclear magic,” but I didn't listen to him, because it seemed inconvenient for me if I pursued it too deeply.

I had a glimpse of a blonde schoolgirl-like demon flash through my mind, but I think it must have been my imagination.

I decided to arm myself with the theory by assuming as such, and praised Alrose so that it would not be pursued further.

“It would have taken an enormous amount of money and years just to achieve just one effect, wouldn't it? But two of them, while accounting for the expansion of the city's functions as they develop, were achieved so perfectly.”

“That's right. It was a tremendously difficult journey, but we believed in Leon-sama and we did it.”

“No, it's seriously amazing. You took something that would have been profitable if it had worked, and you succeeded.”

“Hahaha, thank you. I didn't expect all of this praise. Leon-sama is the one who invented this city, so I'm sure he’ll be very pleased.”

No way, Leon designed this city!?

I didn't know he was a real genius…

I thought he was just a “Chloe-loving, sulky demon lord”, but I guess I needed to change my perception.

This cityscape was definitely beautiful.

Because it was a reality that I had no choice but to admit, my excitement outweighed my frustration.

Souei was also observing the city with admiration, but magic wasn’t his specialty. Even so, he seemed to be listening greedily to see if there was anything to be gained.

“Is it difficult to invade from the sky? In that case, we’d have to go underground…”

Wrong.

He was just thinking of a way to attack.

No, but that’s important too, isn’t it?

We may have a cooperative relationship right now, but we also might end up working against one another.

In any case, the combination of the city and the magic circle was wonderful.

I wanted to introduce this feature to our country, but it’s not something that can be easily imitated. At least, the capital city Rimuru was complete in another sense, so it was impossible to introduce it right now.

This was a future project.

If there was ever a chance to add another city, I would try to realize my idea then.

Now I had something to look forward to when I got home.

It may be a waste of time, but I decided that I'd try designing my own magical city.

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I walked through the entrance of the Great Gate and followed the glass spiral corridor.

The interior of the city was also beautiful.

In the distance, waterfalls were flowing down with great force from the man-made cliffs. The water flowed through the city's canals, creating beautiful patterns.

We walked for about ten minutes, enjoying the city in this way. Finally, we arrived at an area guarded by the knights from the general public.

“In the back of this area, there is a magic circle that leads to the front of the royal palace.”

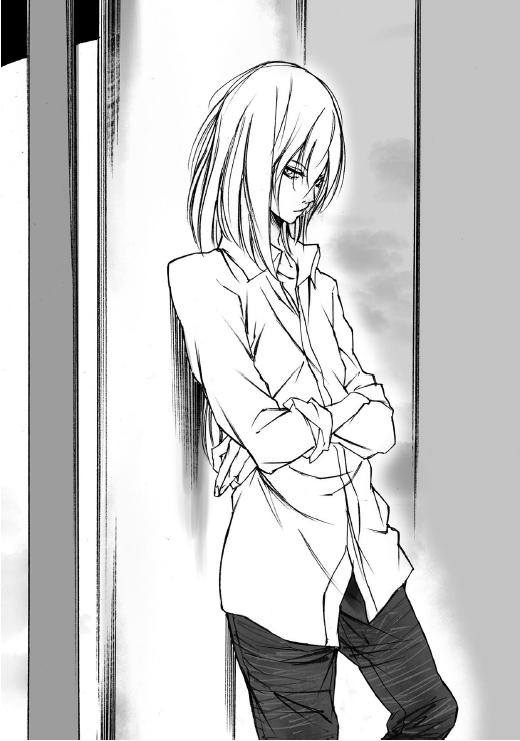
Alrose said as such while guiding us.

To our surprise, the person who greeted us at the magic circle was the lord of this land himself, Demon Lord Leon Cromwell.

I was surprised to see that he was dressed in a white shirt and jeans, which was rougher than I expected, but it looked very good on him.

A lady killer looks good no matter what he wears, I guess.

Leaning against a pillar with his arms crossed, he looked as if he were a painting.



And yet, as soon as I opened my mouth, I felt a sense of disappointment.

“Damn it, I knew Chloe wasn't here.”

I was a little annoyed that he only had Chloe in his head.

As expected, he was definitely a “Chloe-loving, sulky demon lord,” but that was enough to convince me that he was the real Leon, so I wouldn’t complain.

Besides, Leon's appearance was a little strange.

I thought Alrose was also good-looking, but he paled in comparison to Leon. He was still sarcastic and handsome, but he seemed to be lacking in aura.

“Of course not. More importantly, you’re looking little haggard, aren’t you?”

“…You're annoying. You're the one who sent us the culprit.”

Ah!

That's all I needed to know.

He's probably causing trouble, I guess.

“Could it be, that Diablo is…?”

“…Well…”

For a moment, a silent stare-down ensued.

Leon looked like he had something to say, but he swallowed his words and just nodded once.

Heavy.

The air was incredibly heavy.

I was led through the castle in silence.

Finally we arrived at a gorgeous and luxurious room.

The room was decorated with gold, silver and jewels, but the furnishings were elegant and not obnoxious. The wallpaper was unified in a pure white, and the jewels reflected the glow of the chandeliers.

Like Clayman's castle, it was not in bad taste.

Rather, it was a shining example of good taste.

I guess you could say that it was luxurious enough not to be suffocating. Just as the exterior of the castle was chalk-white but not gaudy, the interior was beautiful, elegant and calm.

Even a commoner like me could relax in this place without feeling nervous. The atmosphere was heavy, but the furnishings were very comforting to me.

—Or so I thought, but then the hallway became noisy.

Even though I didn't feel nervous, I had a feeling that I’d be getting a headache.

Naturally, I was exactly right.

“Oh, Rimuru-sama! I've been expecting you.”

It was Diablo.

After bowing to me reverently, he led me to the reception room quite naturally.

This is Leon's country, you know.

I was tempted to ask him why he looked like he owned the place.

Guy came in after Diablo.

“You've kept me waiting long enough, Rimuru. Why did you make this place the last one?”

While saying that, he sat down on the chair facing me.

“Of course, that’s because Guy-san was here. It's such a relief to have someone strong around, so I wonder if I even had to come here!”

I joked lightly, trying to convey my true feelings.

Guy's temples twitched.

That was dangerous.

I'm a man who can read the atmosphere, so I decided to change the subject before Guy exploded.

“Relax. The fact is, with you and Diablo here, you could have dealt with the enemy if they had attacked, right? I was a little worried about Ruminas, and as for Dagruel, I don't even know how strong he is. It's only natural that I should prioritize.”

“Milim is just as strong as me—”

Yes, Milim is also strong. I knew exactly what Guy meant, but there was a good reason for this.

“Milim's territory is undertaking construction work. For me, who’s creed is credit first, I had no choice but to give them priority.”

With that, I put on a smug face.

Milim is, after all, a very important friend of mine, and she's helped me a lot. It was only natural that I should repay her, and there was no need to even ask who was more important between her and Guy.

She might’ve gotten into some trouble, but it was mutual.

“Tsk, well whatever. So, how are the other demon lords doing?”

The good thing about Guy is that he can quickly switch gears.

I was relieved to see that even though he was annoyed about being put off, he still kept a clear head and a sound judgement.

“For the time being, I've installed “magic transfer circles” in each country. The fine adjustments are still being worked out, but there should be no problem activating them in case of an emergency.”

While saying this, I opened the 'Stomach' a little to reveal a magisteel disk. It was so big that it was a pain to take out.

“I'll install it if you specify the location.”

“Hmm, I'll show you that later.”

Leon interjected.

No wait, Leon is the master of this castle, so that was a good thing. Guy's attitude was so pompous that I almost misunderstood him.

“Hmm, I'm glad that you've prepared for emergencies in time. So now we just have to wait for the enemy to attack?”

“Well, yeah. As for me, I'll be cleaning up after the war with the Empire and strengthening ties with the Western Nations.”

“You can't expect humans to be a force to be reckoned with, can you?”

“Yeah. So, they’ll be doing evacuation drills. They’re going to do their best not to get caught up in our own war and destroy civilization.”

The people living in the capital Rimuru would be safe, but it was hard to predict how much damage would be done to the rest of the world. That's why we were trying to get the Three Drunk Sages (Riega 69 ) to set up some kind of shelter.

Myourmiles-kun has been working very hard.

I was planning to give him a consolation prize once things settled down, as I feel he's been doing too much work.

Incidentally, the imperial subjects may be essential to Michael's skill, but it was safer to assume that they were not absolute.

Since I had suggested killing all of the imperial subjects, I think Michael was taking measures against them. It could be said that he had arranged for this to happen, but there was no way to confirm this until we fought.

“Hmmm, you’ve had it tough, too.”

Guy was surprised, but that’s just who I am.

Having gone through so much trouble to successfully establish diplomatic relations with human society, it is my country's supreme mission to maintain them.

I couldn’t stand the thought of Michael and the others destroying it, as if to trample on all the hard work we had done.

Even Leon spoke to me in exasperation.

“You're even more of a softy than I thought, looking out not only for your own country but also for others. Do you think your hands are limitless?”

Well, he has a point.

I don't think I can do everything, either.

But even so, I've had enough of losing without doing anything. 70

“I just don't want to regret anything. I'll do everything I can. If that doesn't work, I can just give up.”

No, if it didn’t work, I wouldn’t be able to give up and I’d probably regret it.

However, I was working to prevent that from happening, and until an unhappy future was confirmed, I would live in pride with myself.

It is impossible to deceive yourself.

That is why I have no choice but to live a life I am satisfied with.

“Huh, I have had nothing but regrets. Maybe that's why she chose you instead of me.”

Was he talking about Chloe?

There was a weight to Leon’s words that I could not ignore.

There is no doubt that Leon had done a lot of reckless things. Maybe he's warning me that if I'm not careful, I might end up like him.

With that in mind, I decided to laugh off Leon's worries.

“Unlike you, I'm not a loli-siscon—I'm a sensible person who's considerate of the people around me, so your worries are unfounded.”

“Fuck off, I'll kill you.” 71

Curiously enough, we got into a tense situation, and our argument continued until Guy intervened.

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“Really, I was hoping things would get better when you came, but it looks like I was mistaken.”

For some reason, Guy complained to me, looking very tired.

I wasn‘t sure what he was expecting from me, but I didn’t understand.

“Kufufufu. Why don't we just settle things here? Fortunately, Mizari and the others are getting used to setting up ‘damage reduction barriers.’”

So you want me and Leon to fight and settle this?

“Hey you, a demon lord shouldn’t be doing something so unreasonable.”

“Please do not worry. There is no need to bother Rimuru-sama, I will take care of this.”

Diablo's eyes narrowed as he looked at Leon. He looked at him as if he were a Predator stalking its prey. This guy might really be serious.

I couldn’t tell who would win, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't care. But even so, it would be out of line in many ways to allow it to happen.

“I'm telling you that the damage would be enormous! I thought I told you that your mission was to protect Leon—and now you’re going to try and fight him? That's more than a little out of line!”

As I lectured Diablo, he pouted in disappointment.

He didn’t seem to be very sorry, but he had grown up a bit, so I let him off the hook.

“Tell him more, Rimuru. He's a real bastard, you know! Even yesterday, he came at me and destroyed the training grounds even though I took it easy on him.”

No, I’m not so sure about that.

Without knowing what caused the fight, I can't say for sure who's at fault.

Or rather—

“Eh? You and Diablo fought?”

“Yeah. I've been bored lately, so I've been doing some light exercising.”

I don't understand.

So Diablo and Guy had fought, but it was incredibly hard to put into words. It seemed to have happened yesterday, so I was just glad it wasn't today.

When I looked over at Leon, he was sighing very unhappily.

“It all started when that maid picked a fight with Diablo. She was beaten to a pulp and fled, cursing her defeat…”

Leon's gaze caught Rain's as if to say, “That's the maid.”

“No way, you’ve got to be kidding me. I am not a sore loser, and I didn’t lose in the first place!”

But you don't deny that you had a fight…

“Your subjective opinions are not worth listening to.”

Leon cuts off Rain's words.

It was Diablo who picked up from there.

“Kufufufu. As for me, I dislike bullying the weak. I let her off the hook.”

“Ah? Didn't I tell you I’d get serious next time? Did you misunderstand me because I took it easy on you?”

“Did you forget that you brought Mizari to challenge me in a two-on-one match? Next time, I'll have to discipline you harder.”

While Diablo remained calm, Rain taunted her opponent as if to encourage the other. I was worried that they were going to use force, but strangely enough, they didn't.

“What a pain in the ass these two are…they came to an agreement before we knew it.”

Guy said so incredulously.

It seems that the quarreling was a regular occurrence, and was quite cute.

“They’ve been fighting every day for the last two weeks. Before we knew it, they were on the same page.”

Leon's affirmation lent credence to Guy's story.

And if that was true, then it could be understood that the imbalance of forces had become quite troublesome.

“No way. What proof do you have for that kind of crap?”

“Did you really think we wouldn't find out? In yesterday's fight, you were shouting out stuff like, ‘Fuck you!’ and ‘Show some more fighting spirit, Diablo!!’”

Rain tilted her head and asked curiously, but Leon replied without changing his expression.

Then Guy's voice overlapped, sounding disgusted.

“Rain, you're revealing your true colors. I mean, you were rooting for Diablo instead of me…”

“No way. I would never use such vulgar language, and I am Guy-sama's loyal follower. Leon-sama must be mistaken.”

She said that without hesitation, this person.

I hadn’t noticed it while she was looking serious, but she must be the youngest, right?

She's the type who doesn't think twice about what she says or does and believes she can do whatever she wants. People who were loved by their older brothers and sisters tended to be like this.

However, it was obvious which side was right after listening to all this.

“Diablo, how did you guys get like that?”

Diablo would never lie to me, so I put the question to him directly.

Diablo smiled and answered.

“It is all thanks to the majesty of Rimuru-sama. I told Rain the story of Rimuru-sama, and she was also converted because of it!”

Scary!!

‘Brainwashing’—is what I was about to say, but I swallowed my words.

“I-is that so?”

“Actually, I'm a fan of Rimuru-sama. In exchange for a few stories from Diablo, I've decided to help you out a bit.”

Rain said with a curtsy.

Perhaps this person is really self-centered 72 ?

Diablo is the same way, so it makes sense that they would get along.

“O-oh…”

What else can I say?

I looked at Guy in a bit of distress, but he was shaking his head as if to say it was too late.

“Sorry about my idiots.”

“No, no, Diablo's is also annoying, so we’re in the same boat.”

I felt that Guy was also having a hard time, and the familiarity I had felt before grew stronger.

Incidentally, Mizari, who had always kept her face expressionless, reacted unusually to Guy's words.

“…Eh? Isn't it possible that I've always been treated like an idiot because of Rain…?”

Well, it looks like you’ve realized the truth.

I didn’t want to say it out loud, but I think that was the correct answer.

But since it was not good to interfere with other people's affairs, I pretended not to have heard her murmurings.

After chatting for a while, I was led to a hidden room behind the audience chamber where the throne was located, where I set up a “magic transfer circle.” It weighed several tens of tons, so it would be troublesome to move it once it was installed.

Then, having finished my business, I quickly took my leave.

Leon seemed to have wanted me to take Diablo and Rain, but that would interfere with the mission. Even if it didn't, I had no intention of taking them with me, so I decided just have Leon put up with it.

And then we began our farewells.

“Take care of Chloe.”

Leon reminded me.

I didn't need to be told, so I nodded and said, “I'll take care of her.”

Leon seemed to be convinced and gave up surprisingly well. It's a secret that I was a little surprised, because I had thought he would be more persistent in getting involved.

He was a pretty cool guy when he was behaving normally.

Not only that, but a surprising truth came to light.

In fact, Leon and I had the same taste.

I don't mean that we're lolicons, okay?

Rather, Leon's dream was to be an architect.

No wonder he has a great aesthetic sense.

I heard this during our chat while complimenting the city and the castle. I was convinced, because I had already admitted that Leon's sense of style was one of the best in the world.

He's rude, but is actually a good guy. That was my new opinion of Demon Lord Leon.

With that feeling in mind, my relationship with Leon was improved, and my visit to El Dorado ended successfully.

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After returning from Leon's country, I continued to vigorously travel around the world.

The purpose of this was to strengthen the cooperation with other countries, as we did not know when the enemy would attack.

Because I had prepared an emergency means of transportation between demon lords, it was only natural that I should set up such means in other friendly countries as well.

The first place I went to was the Dwarven Kingdom.

Currently, Agera was dispatched to Gazel.

I had received a report that she was training with Gazel, so I thought I would check the results of her training.

I teleported to the main gate of Dwargon.

As always, there was a long line of merchants and adventurers. I walked past them to the nobleman's passage and called out to the gatekeeper.

Then, I was ushered into the royal castle without any waiting.

I am still a small-time citizen, so I feel superior in such a situation. I was aware of my small stature, so I was careful not to make a big show of it.

I was greeted by Gazel.

“I've been waiting for you, Rimuru.”

Of course, Agera was with him.

“My lord, I am glad to see you are well.”

He kneels down grandly and says a few words of greeting to me.

It was like something out of a period drama, but very well done.

And this Agera, surprisingly, is the reincarnated form of Hakurou's grandfather. I was surprised when Carrera told me about it, but as I observed him more carefully, I found that his mannerisms were very similar to mine.

I remembered that I had wanted to have an interview with him, but had not had a chance to do so. It would be a good idea to talk to him after this.

With that in mind, I returned the greeting.

“Long time no see, King Gazel. It's good to see you. And Agera, too.”

“Hahaha! You’re still so formal. As I always say, feel free to call me Gazel.”

“Well, I'm trying to, but I get so nervous when I see you in these situations. It reminds me of the trial, and I'm still a small-time citizen after all.”

I can't get rid of my small-town feeling, but I think I'm cute like that.

After all, it would be strange not to get nervous in front of such a big person.

Pann-san and Dorf-san were watching our conversation with a warm feeling.

So did Souei.

Agera interjected.

“From my point of view, I should do as my lord wills, but Carrera-sama would scold me if I said that. In the first place, as the ally of the Alliance, you are on equal footing. You should not be shy about being in front of King Gazel, and I hope you will respond with dignity.”

“Well, I guess I know what I'm doing.”

Needless to say, I understood, but I had been an office worker up until a few years ago. Unless I was angry, or focused, or caught up in some big event that I couldn’t afford to be in, I would  revert to my normal self.

“Good, I can understand Rimuru's feelings. Even I get nervous when I'm in front of the Celestial Emperor Elmesia.”

“Oh, so King Gazel had such a person—”

“However! You are able to talk to the Emperor with ease, even though I am not very good at it! That's what I can’t figure it out!!”

That’s right.

It was so right that I couldn’t argue about it.

So Gazel told me to be less formal with him, and I said I would do my best.

But, well, I respect him because he's someone I can rely on somehow. It's difficult to fix this behavior.

“But in some cases, you give right response at the right time, so it's not that much of a problem, right?”

“You idiot. It is in such situations that one’s usual habits come out. To avoid failing on the big stage, one should always reexamine their own behavior.”

I was taught another lesson.

Because I was often lectured like this, I tended to revert to my old behavior.

El-tan 73 also gives me a lecture sometimes, but she’s always on and off.

In that sense, she might just be trying to make it easier for me and Myourmiles-kun to get along with her—though I could also me overthinking it.

In any case, I kept Gazel's suggestion in mind for future reference.

We moved to the parlor.

With drinks in hand, we reported on our recent activities.

The most important purpose of the meeting was to exchange information.

“So how do we avoid the war—?”

“Unfortunately, I don't think it can be avoided. I’ve just set up ‘magic transfer circles’ between the demon lords to allow for emergency travel.”

“Hmm…One problem goes, and another one follows. To be honest, I thought it was over when Velgrynd-sama became an enemy. Now that she’s on our side… Michael, was  it? I don't think he's the one we should be worried about now.”

Well, I wasn’t looking to praise myself, but our forces surpass those of the Empire in its prime. In addition to that, we have demon lords, Velgrynd, and even Veldora, so Gazel seems to think that we have no reason to lose.

However, that is a naive perception.

“No, they are strong opponents. Even judging by power alone, its scale is incomparable to the Empire.”

“I understand. I'm not underestimating them, quite the opposite actually.”

“The opposite?”

“I don’t think I’ll be able to help you no matter how hard I try, so I've come to the point of resignation.”

“Ah, that's…”

Well, yeah, that's true.

No matter how powerful Dwargon was, victory would be impossible if Velzard targeted them.

I can understand why he might want to give up because the individual enemy is too strong.

“However, I won't let them destroy us easily. Worst case scenario, we'll be ready to take our chances.”

Gazel barked out, full of spirit.

His resolve was unquestionably genuine.

The fact that he did not run away from Velgrynd made it clear that he was someone who would take on a battle he knew he would lose.

While thinking of Gazel in a reassuring way, I continued my story.

“If you can't win, you should think of a way to win, right?”

Quality was more dangerous than quantity. What's worse was the fact that Velzard was hostile.

This made Veldora useless.

The only people who can take on Velzard properly are Guy and Velgrynd.

Me?

I'd rather not, so I'm determined to escape at all costs.

“A war between true dragons is like a battle of the gods.”

“True. That's what it feels like. But I can't just run away.”

“Do you really think you can win?”

“No! But I'm willing to work hard to improve my odds.”

“Fufufu, you little bastard.”

Gazel nodded at me with a wry smile.

The truth is that I really didn’t know what I was going to until I tried, but I’ll just make sure I can escape if I don't think I can win.

I've tried to make myself look good, but there is no point in arguing about whether we can win or not before we have even analyzed the enemy's strength. The point is that I'm just trying to be prepared for what to do if we're about to lose.

“So, I need your help.”

“Very well. I'll lend you my cooperation, and you can do whatever you want.”

Gazel readily agreed to my request for help.

I immediately requested the installation of a ‘magic transfer circle.’

Unlike the previous installations for personal use, the location of this one was also important.

“I'm amazed that you were able to create such a high purity magisteel.”

“I'm cheating on that by using my Skill. Normally, I'd wait for the crafters to mature, but the enemy won't wait for me.”

“—Well, I guess. You can leave the adjustments to me.”

I thanked Gazel and set up the magic circle for the transfer at the place he had instructed.

Having successfully accomplished my goal, I moved on to chatting.

“So, how are the results of your training?”

“Hmm. You are the grandfather of Master Hakurou and the founder of Oboro-Ryu, Agera-dono. You've made me realize that I still have a long ways to go!”

“Don't be modest, King Gazel. You have already mastered the secret art of the ‘Five Flower Strikes (Gokatotsu)’ 74 and are aiming for even greater heights.”

In the Oboro-Ryu, it is said that the Five Flowers Strikes (Gokatotsu) and above are considered secret techniques.

Zakuro (Pomegranate) – or the ‘Rokkazan’ is a high-speed slashing blow intended to be non-lethal.

Yanagi (Willow) – or the ‘Nana Nagi’ is a sword technique that softly parries the enemy's attack.

The number of moves increases with slashes and stabs.

And then finally, the highest technique is said to be attained, the Yaezakura (Cherry Blossom 75 ) – or the ‘Hakkasen.’

It is said that this is a sword art that should be kept secret from the public, but Agera intended to pass it on to Gazel without reserve.

“I heard from Hakurou that his grandfather showed him the ‘Hakkasen?’”

“Yes. It was before I was reincarnated, so I'm not sure my memory is correct, but I seem to remember showing it to him once or twice. If he was able to reproduce it, then he is undoubtedly a genius. I am ashamed to say that I am boasting about my grandson, but I am not Byakuya Araki, his grandfather. I would like to honestly praise the predecessors of the monster country.”

Agera said so, shyly and proudly.

“No, Hakurou is my master as well. I don't feel bad about the praise, I feel happy about it.”

“That’s right. The teachings of Agera-dono have been passed on to Hakurou-dono. When you think about it, fate really is a mysterious thing.”

Gazel agrees with my words and smiles happily.

Agera watched us and nodded, deeply moved.

“So, Rimuru. If you don’t mind, I'd like to hear your thoughts. Is that okay?”

“If I’m able to understand.”

“Well, I've mentioned this before, but I'd like to ask you about the Ultimate Skill. If I continue to hone my sword skills, do you think I can defeat an Ultimate Awakened?”

Oh, that's quite the direct question.

Depending on the situation, it wouldn’t be impossible to win. It would be a very tough fight, but not impossible.

“The lesson I have learned is that Ultimate Skills can only be countered by Ultimate Skills. It's better to think that you can't compete at the unique skill level.

“So, is there…”

“However, if certain conditions are met, I think it should be possible.”

“Well, what are those conditions?”

“For example, Yuuki Kagurazaka's ‘Anti-Skill’ was a nasty super-specializing ability that blocked my powers. Also, Diablo overwhelmed and ultimate gift owner with his magic alone.”

“Hmm—”

“It’s only a possibility, but I think that the key is willpower. If a mental life form exists only by will power, it seems to be able to resist the ultimate power even without an Ultimate Skill. I think this guess is correct with a high degree of certainty.”

I didn't want to be definitive, but I thought it was almost certain because it actually was in agreement with Ciel-san's view.

So, the key is—

“So it’s a matter of whether I can increase my willpower to the point where it rivals that of a spiritual life form? Then, after the way of the sword—”

“There may be a quicker way.”

“What!?”

“It seems that if you are recognized by mythical-grade armor, you can become the equivalent of a spiritual life form.”

This was the answer.

Well, there was also the foul technique of granting power, but as they, ‘too much power can destroy you.’

Or was it “greed” instead of “power”?

It may have been changed from the original parable, but I think it still conveys my point.

You can't master the power if you don’t have the strength to handle it.

That's why I don't grant skills to all of my subordinates. Also, there was no way that I was going to do that to Gazel. He’d have to do his best on his own.

In the first place, I can't grant skills unto to someone who is not connected to my soul. I awakened Rain and Mizari, but that's not the same thing as this.

So this time, I think getting mythical-grade is probably the best solution.

That said, mythical-grade equipment is not so easy to obtain.

I have also been trying to analyze Hinata's “holy spirit armament” and mass produce it, but no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to get it to reach t he legendary-grade. If I put it on, I might be able to reach the power of Saint, but I don't think it's enough to compete with an Ultimate Skill.

“—Mythical-grade, huh?”

Gazel muttered and looked at his own sword.

The well-used sword was probably of Legendary-grade. It also seemed to be a fairly high-ranking sword. However, there were countless scars on the blade.

“This was the result of clashing with Kondou's sword. It was fortuitous that it didn't break, but this sword's life is over.”

Indeed.

It must have been a national treasure passed down from generation to generation. And yet, now that it was like this, it could only be kept on display.

No, but perhaps…

“Shall I ask Kurobee? Maybe he can bring the sword back to life.”

“What? Is that true!?”

“I can't promise anything, but Kurobee has a proven track record of renewing Gabil's spear.”

Kurobee had repaired Gabil's Vortex Spear using the hihiirokane I provided, and it was reborn at a stage just short of mythical-grade.

With continued use, it would eventually evolve into a mythical-grade model.

I still have a surplus of hihiirokane left over…

“The sword doesn't seem to be dead, so maybe—”

“Please. I don't care if you fail, just ask Kurobee-dono!!”

It's a great service, but I'll spare no expense for my senior apprentice. He's always been such a great help to me, and this is the time I should return the favor.

With that in mind, I accepted the sword from Gazel.

“Aside from the sword though, is there any other way to get mythical-grade equipment?”

“Do you think there is? Since you don't seem to know anything about common sense, let me tell you that even something legendary-grade is a national treasure. And it's from a major country. You wouldn't find them in an empire, let alone the middle of nowhere.”

Please don't be so shocked.

I thought that would be the case.

“The result of my research is the same. I had us search all over the Western Nations' back routes, but I’ve only managed to find a few Legendary-grade items.”

Now that Souei had confirmed Gazel's words, the remaining hope was left to Kurobee.

Incidentally, Souei's twin swords were also renewed by Kurobee's hand. Unfortunately, it did not reach the mythical-grade, but with Souei's ability, that was not a big problem. On the contrary, he thinks positively that there is room for growth.

“There's no point in asking for what you don't have. More importantly, do you think you can compete with an Ultimate Skill if you become a spiritual life form?”

“That's not an absolute either. It's natural that there are differences between individuals depending on the number of years they've lived, but a newborn archdemon still seems to be useless. If one has a strong will and the mental strength (energy) to support it, then they can resist the ultimate power.”

“Meh, your explanation is too vague to understand…”

No, I don't think that’s the case.

But if you're going to go that far, I’ll make it simple.

“In short, it's about spirit!”

I didn't want to say this because it was more of a gut feeling.

It would be a mistake to think that you can cover up anything with fighting spirit, but when it comes to an Ultimate Skill, other explanations were more difficult to explain than this.

For the most part, since we live in a world where a flash of a sword can split the atmosphere in a flash of light, there may not be much difference between swordplay and magic.

If you train your will power, you can distort even the laws of the world.

—It is easier to understand and everything will be all right if we assume that it is.

After listening to my explanation, Gazel became serious and fell silent.

I glanced at Agera, who was also looking thoughtful.

Then, Souei opened his mouth.

“It is exactly as Rimuru-sama says. As a recipient of an Ultimate Gift myself, I cannot speak too much, but I do feel that if I put my spirit on my sword, I can kill any opponent.”

Agera nodded his head in agreement.

“That is true. In my case, it was as if I sublimated all my will into a blade. With the will to kill the enemy itself, my own body becomes the blade, and I believe that nothing cannot be killed by my sword. Therefore, it can kill even formless things.”

That's right, Agera's skill was 'Blade Transformation'.

If we were to simply compare the existential value, Agera's transformed sword would not be better than the mythical-grade. However, Agera was superior in its sharpness. It is said that mythical-grade has a will, but it is still not as strong as human’s will.

Ranga popped his head out of my shadow and joined the conversation.



“My case was a little different. I was asleep in my lord's shadow when I suddenly felt as if I had heard a strange voice, and then it hit me: ‘Stellar Wind King (Hastur).’ But I think it was because I kept wishing to be of service to my Lord that it took shape in this way!”

‘Hahahah,’ Ranga said happily.

Maybe he's gotten smarter lately, but his lower body was still in my shadow. So, I couldn't see it, but I guessed that his tail was wagging as hard as it could.

It's really cute.

I used to be a cat person, but recently I've come to think that dogs are nice too. I think that Ranga was a significant contribution to this change of mind.

Anyway, I hope the stories from Souei, Agera, and Ranga will be helpful.

“Spirit, huh?”

“Well, there's no need to be hasty. If the enemy attacks while I'm here, then I'll help you. Please don't hesitate to ask me.”

That would be certain.

Between Gazel's power and Agera's swordsmanship, I think they would be a good match even if the opponent was Kondou. At the very least, it would buy some time.

However—

“If your opponent is Velzard-san, you'd better run away without hesitation. She’s probably not the kind of opponent you can fight.”

“Is that it?”

“Yeah. I can't say for sure because I haven't seen her in action, but she felt creepier than Velgrynd-san.”

“Mmm…I hate to admit it, but you're probably right. As for me, after seeing Velgrynd, I understand how reckless it is to challenge a True Dragon. But as a king, I can't abandon my people.”

“Then we can only pray that Velzard does not attack. If she does, let me know.”

I said so and indicated to my mobile phone.

“Hm, you have it!!”

“As I’ve said before, it's a magical device that allows you to talk directly to someone. There aren't many of them made yet, so take good care of it.”

That said, I only gave him my personal number and the direct line to the Control Room. I didn't give him El-tan's or Myourmiles-kun's numbers.

I think it is bad etiquette to not of ask such things directly from the people themselves. I remember being annoyed when my cell phone number was given to my business partners without my permission before I died.

“I see, so if you type in the number you have on file, you'll be connected to the other party.”

“That's right. Not many people have this, but if they do, ask them for the number.”

“Mm. If you need help with something, you can ask me.”

“Well, that's the way it's supposed to work. Call me if you need anything, and I'll see what I can do.”

“All right, I'm counting on you. Of course, if there's anything I can do, don't hesitate to ask me. Personally, I'll do everything I can to help.”

Gazel and I laugh at each other.

I don't think it's likely that Dwargon will be targeted, but I’m relieved. And thus ended the discussion on emergency response.

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After staying in the Dwarven Kingdom for a few days, the next stop was the Farmenas Kingdom.

This is where Gadra is staying.

Gadra, who had become Diablo's disciple, was also helping Testarossa. It seems that Gadra was forced to give up all of the information on the empire in order to secure Masayuki's accession to the throne.

He seemed to have been busy going back and forth between the two countries, but now he was settled in the Kingdom of Farmenas.

I thought I'd take this opportunity to ask him some questions.

The capital of the Farmenas Kingdom was livelier than I had imagined.

The city had been under construction when I came here before, and it was the same now. The difference between now and then was that more areas had been cleaned up.

In the outskirts of the capital, a large station had been completed. In the vicinity of the station, there were warehouses.

Because it was a relay point between Blumund and Dwargon, it was necessary to have a place to store various goods. The station building was constructed adjacent to the capital since it was not possible to secure a place in the capital

The reason why the construction of Royal Capital was postponed was that the priority was placed on economic activities for the future.

Another reason may be that the current Farmenas family had no money.

To put it simply, I was lending them all the money for the construction.

The contract for laying the rails for the magic train was managed by our country. At first glance, this may seem like a generous thing, but that is a shallow view. The fee for the use of the railroad would become our country’s income, and we had placed the unbeatable condition that the expenses for the use of the land would be free forever.

Once the construction was finished, all we’d have to do was sit and wait for the money to be collected. Even after deducting the labor cost, the maintenance cost of the train, the maintenance cost of the rails, etc., the annual profit was estimated to be quite large.

That's why I was responsible for the “magic train” project, but Farmenas was responsible for the urban development of the surrounding area.

Myuran was mainly in charge of planning the development of the city, but she was forced to take a leave of absence due to childbirth. It was Youm, who became the king, who rose to the occasion.

He had said that he was uneducated, but he still had a good head on his shoulders. He took the initiative to study hard in order to replace Myuran, who had become immobile. As a result, even now that Myuran has recovered from childbirth, she is struggling to lead the nobles and officials.

To support Youm, I gave him a low-interest, unsecured loan.

Why not interest-free, you say?

If the loan was interest-free, the borrower would inevitably feel indebted to the lender and become reserved. In addition, the lender might feel superior to the borrower, and the relationship may become one that cannot be called equal.

Lending and borrowing money between friends can be the biggest cause of losing friendship. That's why we made the contract between the two countries and concluded it in a firm form so that both parties would be satisfied and both parties would benefit from it.

For this reason, the construction work was done in such a way as to prioritize economic activities, and the development o the  city  began  to follow suit.

While we finished the reception at the gate and looked at the lively city, a horse-drawn carriage was expressly prepared for us.

Normally, we should have been accompanied by our own officials, like a procession of feudal lords. However, this was an emergency, and there was no time for an elegant trip by train, so I used Teleport to get here along with Souei and Ranga as my companions.

The reason why I contacted Gadra and asked him to prepare a carriage was to keep a low profile in the Farmenas Kingdom.

I was relieved to know that he had sent a carriage to pick us up.

Unlike Milim's country, this one was very thorough.

“Thank you for your patience. King Youm is waiting for you. I will take you to the castle.”

Or rather, it was Gadra who got out of the carriage.

That wasn’t a bad idea.

“Whoa, that surprised me. You didn't have to come all the way to the gate.”

“That's not possible. Such a prestigious role would not have been possible without such an opportunity. But more than that, if I did not greet Rimuru-sama, Diablo-sama would surely have me executed.”

Gadra laughed, but it did not sound like a joke.

“If he's bullying you, why don't you tell me? For the time being, you’re be under my direct control.”

It was a little disconcerting calling an old man like Gadra “you, 76 ” but I'm afraid I was getting used to it.

I would like to advise Gadra, thinking about it.

Diablo may be quiet in front of me, but he tends to be reckless when I'm not looking. If he does so in Leon's country, that’s a laughing matter, but it becomes a big problem if he does so within Tempest's group.

Gadra is apparently Diablo's disciple, or rather, his faction, so he can't complain openly. That's why I, as his boss, should follow him from behind the scenes.

But Gadra laughed and said it was no problem.

Apparently, no hardship is too great to gain knowledge.

It's difficult to understand people with unique idiosyncrasies.

It was best not to interfere in such cases, and I vowed again to let Gadra do as he pleased.

I boarded the carriage and received a report from Gadra about Masayuki’s coronation.

The carriage moves slowly through the city, so I make the most of the time.

“So, Masayuki's coronation went well, huh?”

“Yes, sir. It went very well. With Testarossa-sama and Velgrynd-sama working together to encourage him, it would have been impossible for him to fail.”

“Well, that would definitely be the case if those two are on our side.”

If they weren't, that would be a problem, but I only got the impression that it would be.

To begin with, Masayuki was a lucky man. On top of that, with such brilliant figures one his side like Testarossa and Velgrynd, the incarnation of power, I truly believed that no one would be able to oppose him.

“The people, who had seen Velgrynd-sama's majesty, seemed to welcome the crowning of the new Emperor Masayuki-sama. I mean, who could resist the sight of that?”

Gadra assures us.

Well, it’s only natural that no one can complain when they are shown the overly grandiose match-pump that erupted a volcano to prevent its threat.

It seems to me that Velgrynd knows no bounds when it comes to treating volcanoes as matches.

“Some people are still dissatisfied, but I'm sure Testarossa-sama will take care of them.”

“Is it going to work?”

“No problem. Calgurio-dono and others were worried that Testarossa-sama would kill all of the dissenters, but their fears were unfounded. It seems that the information I provided was put to good use, and I was impressed by Moss-sama's skill. I'm sure he will be able to take advantage of the enemy's weakness and settle this matter in a perfect manner.”

Well, that's true.

I wouldn’t want to make enemies with those two, either.

“If there's anyone brave enough to oppose us, we can recruit them in our country.”

“You're right!”

“I can only say Yes 77 .”

“You're absolutely right. I'd feel the same way if I saw that scene.”

Gadra and I laugh at each other.

As I thought, Gadra is a delightful old man.

It seemed that our hearts were connected because of our shared impression.

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Inside the castle, we were greeted by the king and queen, Youm and Myuran, as well as all of their ministers.

Edmalis, the former King of Farmus, was also there, but he had lost weight and shaved his beard, so he looked different from when I met him. The light in his eyes was not cloudy, which made me think so even more.

It would be awkward for both of us to talk to him, so I let him pass.

Although this visit was unofficial, I informed them that the purpose of my visit was about the upcoming disaster.

It would be great if we could avoid war, but everyone understood that it was too optimistic.

The Kingdom of Farmenas is a newborn nation and has no financial resources to spare. It relies on loans from our country, as I mentioned earlier.

Moreover, their military power had not recovered.

Training knights is not something that can be done overnight, not to mention that they have no money to hire mercenaries. I was not going to take the blame for that, even though I had something to do with it.

Because if you care about everything, you can’t have justice.

I don't believe that everything I do is right, but from an official standpoint, I will shout for justice. If I don't, the victims won't be happy.

That’s why even though I feel liable, I do not speak of it.

However, as an ally, I will provide as much assistance as possible.

Sending Gadra is part of that, and Youm and the others understand as such. In other words, this country's vassals are facing the reality that they can't afford to get into a quarrel with me.

“Boss 78 , has the situation improved?”

Youm asked on behalf of everyone.

“The demon lords and I have made a lot of arrangements, but to be honest, it's a bit of a crapshoot. I'm not sure if that's enough, which is why I’ve been traveling around.”

The situation had been explained via Gadra, so there was no major confusion. He also showed me where to install the ‘magic transfer circle’ without me having to say a word.

“You can ask Gadra here about the fine-tuning and how to use it.”

“Leave it to me.”

“So this is your escape plan in case of emergency. But, you know, it's really a question of where you choose.

“Well, yeah. The place where you escape might not always be safe, and it may only be a temporary relief.”

“Well, it doesn't matter where I run to if the boss’ country falls. In that case, I'll just resign myself to the fact that it was meant to be.”

Youm said so cheerfully, and his vassals nodded in agreement.

It seems that people in this country are more afraid of me than I thought. At the same time, there seemed to be a strange belief prevailing in the country that there was no point in doing anything if I could not win.

“Hey, hey, don't be so irresponsible, just keep struggling until the end, okay?”

“Of course. My daughter was just born, so I'm not going to end my life! But still, “Papa”—Why hasn’t she called me that yet!?”

Youm had become a great parental fool.

He was poking at Meme, the baby in Myuran's arms, and grumbling like that.

“No, I don't know about that, but…Too much attention will wake her up.”

Myuran, who was taking care of Meme, would have been furious if that happened, so I casually warned him. This kind of casual consideration is the sign of a capable man. Maybe.

“Please tell him more. He seems to lose his calm judgment when it comes to this child.”

Myuran said in a disgusted tone.

I can imagine that’s how he usually behaves.

“It’s because there's a shitty wolf who claims my daughter is his daughter, so I can't be too careful!”

That's what Youm says, but I don't understand.

“What nonsense! I'm the guy who's going to take your place and marry Myuran in the future. Then of course, Myuran's daughter will be my daughter!”

“Grucius, you bastard, give it a rest! How many times do I have to tell you that your assumptions are wrong!?”

Hm, that's right.

Youm is crazy, but that shitty wolf—Grucius is crazy too.

I know Meme is cute, but I don't know what kind of thinking he must have to claim her as his own daughter.

“Well, I can understand Youm's feelings…”

“Right? Look, Grucius! I knew the boss would understand!”

No matter how busy he is, he worries that if he doesn't take care of Meme in his spare time, he won't be remembered as a father.

He said that he is making a tearful effort not to let Grucius beat him to it.

Well, in this day and age, it's not good idea to obsess over things. Even if it's a stupid story, if it makes you feel better, it's welcome.

However—

“Don't say stupid things and get yourself flagged for death, okay?”

I said so and gave Youm and the others a list of death flags.

We held the meeting in the Farmus Kingdom's capitol building.

Since I had a general idea of the flow of the meeting, the explanation went smoothly.

The only thing I expected Youm and the others to do was to guide the people of Farmenas to evacuate, not to fight. Since the ‘magic transfer circle’ I  installed cannot evacuate a large number of people, we needed to decide who would use it beforehand. I asked them to coordinate it well so that there wouldn’t be any conflicts.

However, the destination was not necessarily safe, so the purpose of the transfer was different. Rather than the evacuation of important people, we were more concerned with the dispatch of troops.

If the Farmenas Kingdom became a battlefield, the newly established Knights would respond to the situation. It seems that Grucius has been training the knights from the new recruits, including the old Farmus knights, but they are not enough to fight.

Therefore, arrangements were made to send reinforcements from other countries.

It would have been easy if we had placed them from the beginning, but since we did not know where the enemy would aim, we needed to be able to move them in any way.

After considering the importance, it was decided that the Farmenas Kingdom would be postponed.

Even if this kingdom is lost, it can be rebuilt. As long as the human casualties were kept to a minimum, there was no need to force the war.

It was difficult for me to tell Youm and the others this, but I explained it to them and they agreed. Naturally, I promised to support them as much as possible by carrying out reconstruction projects in the worst case.

This kind of ‘laying the groundwork’ was important in order to make effective use of our limited forces.

“I know. It's not like boss has abandoned us.”

“That said, there are only about fifty people who can go at a time with the ‘magic transfer circle.’ It's not a reassuring number at all.”

“Still…Normally, we're supposed to protect our country on our own. And since you've been so considerate, I don't want anything more!”

His words weren't directed at me, but at the ministers who seemed to want to complain.

I can understand the unvoiced arguments of the ministers, that they wanted us to help, that they didn’t want to sacrifice their people, and that they wanted us to send more forces, but unfortunately we can't afford it either.

Well, I guess they understood that, and that's why they grudgingly agreed with us.

Anyway, the business with the Farmenas Kingdom was completed successfully.

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After that, I went around to various places with Youm's guidance.

The main attraction was the construction site where important facilities were being built.

The Farmenas Kingdom was the original royal capital of Farmus, so the central part of the city, within the city walls, was a noble town. As you moved closer to the outer perimeter of the city, the population becomes poorer, and the free people were forced out of the city walls.

Land readjustment was being carried out to make major renovations, but in the process, the streets running through the center of the city were dug up and underground passages were built.

The plan was to have the subway run from the station building adjacent to the royal capital.

“That's a bold move.”

“Myuran is amazing. She used her magic to investigate the strength of the ground and came up with a plan.”

Really, magic is such a cheat.

Geological surveillance is very complicated, but it's so easy for a skilled wizard to find out.

You can easily find out the location of underground water veins, the existence of cavities, the brittleness of the ground, and the quality of the ground.

Moreover, if you are good enough, you can even modify the soil. Soil-based magic can change the properties of soil, sand, soft rock, and hard rock.

Long live magic.

No wonder science and technology have not developed.

On the contrary, the empires that focus on technology and the vampires who are treated as freaks are the ones that are unusual in this world. However, I think we should not make fun of them because they are the ones who make useful discoveries.

“That's an idea I never had. I thought shield engineering was useless in this world, but I guess magic can help.”

“Well, I don't know what the shield thing is, but you’re not losing, are you?”

“It's a technique for reinforcing an underground excavation so that the surface doesn't collapse. It takes a lot of machinery, but a good mage can do it, or maybe even beat it.”

I remembered mentioning once that it would be nice if we could run trains underground. I can only admire the fact that Myuran, who remembered it, has made it happen.

I heard that Larzen also cooperated, and it can be said that a construction method unique to another world has been completed.

In terms of cost, this method is definitely much more advantageous.

Well, this is not a matter of winning or losing. I felt that we could bring about a revolution by introducing the idea of technology into magic.

“Well, now I'm trying to suspend the construction and use the underpass as an evacuation site. We've reinforced the ceiling with magic, so it can withstand a big magic explosion in the city.”

“It depends on the scale of destruction, but I think it's a good bomb shelter. If you stock up on water and food, you can stay in there for quite a while.”

“It seems that water can be managed by magic. That's why I'm having them only carry food. I've also dug a bunch of side holes for places to sleep and a big hole under the room with the door. You can use it as an outhouse.”

The room we were led to was indeed a toilet. The room was divided into many private rooms and could be used by about a hundred people at the same time. The shape of the toilet was Western style, and it was dropped down like a Botton 79 toilet.

“But won't the smell be bad in the underground space?”

“Do you think so? But underneath this toilet, there are pieces of wood and other materials that help eliminate the smell.”

Oh, maybe it's like a bio-toilet?

I don't know much about them, but the activated microorganisms break down the solids into water and carbon dioxide, and the water evaporates, right?

«That's pretty much correct. I've confirmed that the mechanism is working correctly, so there should be no problem with foul odor»

Oh, great.

I heard that there are about five toilets.

It seemed that they could manage even if the siege lasted long.

Since there is a place to escape, we could send people who specialize in setting up 'defensive barriers.’ That way, they could prepare for a long war.

I  had heard that there was an underground passage that led to this one from the basement of the royal castle, so they were well prepared. I was relieved and excited by the technology of this world.

“We've got city defense barriers in place, and we've got evacuation drills going on. As soon as we spot an enemy, we can escape immediately.”

“That's why the ministers didn't make any unreasonable demands.”

“Yeah, that's why. Besides, I won't tolerate anyone who says anything stupid. I told them to quit their jobs and get out of the castle if they just want to whine.”

Anyone can complain. What's important is a positive opinion.

Youm laughed when I said that.

Looking back on the time when we first met, he has grown tremendously.

I was secretly reminded of the fact that we all grow up when the need arises.

After going back to the surface from the basement, I next headed for the training grounds.

I was also allowed to see the strength of the new Farmenas Kingdom Knights trained by Grucius.

There were 500 knights of B rank and above, and 3,000 knights of C rank and below.

If they gathered all of the knights from all over Farmenas, there would be more than 40,000 knights. However, there was no point in gathering such a large number at this time, so they were giving priority to maintaining security.

“Well. If a huge army of angels attacked, there would be nothing we could do on the ground.”

“Yeah. I heard there was anti-aircraft magic, but there aren't many magicians. Rommel concluded that it would be better to focus on defending the city with legion magic.”

“Larzen-san agreed, so we're training according to that policy. In other words, the Knight Order's mission is to free the people from those who come down to the earth.”

Youm and Grucius explained to me.

I was relieved to see that they weren't too eager to take on the enemy.

“I was a little worried that you might be thinking about doing something reckless.”

“Hahaha, I'm more timid than Phobio-sama. I know what I'm capable of, so I won't be reckless. Well, since Larzen-san trained me, I think I'm stronger than before. And just recently, my strength has suddenly increased. I'm going to be a shield for everyone, to the extent that I won't be ashamed to be a leader.”

Grucius replied.

It's not that he's a coward, but that he possesses a quality that is essential for a commander—calm judgment. Grucius had a calculating side, so he didn't seem likely to misjudge the difference in strength between him and the enemy.

There was also a curious comment about his “sudden increase in strength.”

Indeed, the amount of magicule in Grucius now seems to be comparable to that of the previous Beastketeers, so it seems to be equivalent to Special A rank. If his skill (level) was added on top of this, he must have grown to be a very strong asset.

The reason for this is, without a doubt, the effect of Karion's awakening.

Even though he became like a brother to Youm, he did not forget his respect for Karion. This was also a sign that Karion felt a strong bond with Grucius, his subordinate.

“That's because Karion has awakened and evolved. It must have affected you, too.”

“Karion-sama did!?”

“Yeah. So don't ever waste that power.”

“Of course, I understand!”

“This feels like a lecture. It’s not my place to tell you that.”

“Hahaha, not at all. I'm glad to know why, and since His Majesty Rimuru 80 is someone Karion-sama approves of, I'm grateful.”

I'm glad he doesn’t think I'm meddling in his affairs.

“I hope so. By the way, so Grucius is also being trained by Larzen?”

Larzen is the one who trained Grucius. I seemed to have remember him being the one who made ramen noodles, but I guess he must have been a wizard.

How can Larzen be a match for Grucius?

“Oh, Larzen-san is a jack-of-all-trades. His knowledge of magic rivals Myuran's—”

“Hey, don't address my wife that way 81 !”

“Shut up, she’s eventually gonna be my—”

“Don’t fuck with me, you bastard!”

“Yes, yes, that's enough fighting. So?”

I was tired of seeing them bicker on a comical level, so I asked them to move on.

To summarize Grucius' story, when Larzen took the body of the “otherworlder” (Shogo), he took his power as well. Of course, he did not take away the skill level of the otherworlder, but Larzen, who had gone through a certain amount of training, was a first-rate fencer as well as a wizard.

As such, he was good at striking and kicking, which he passed on to Grucius.

“I didn't understand what he meant at first when he told me not to only fight with my natural physical abilities.”

Grucius laughed.

“Yeah, well. Sare has more strength than Larzen, but he loses in arm wrestling. He's no match for him in a real fight, and I've been impressed with him since he made his name in the Western Nations as the majin Larzen.”

“It's no wonder the Beastketeers were so cautious. But—”

That's when Grucius stopped talking and looked at me.

Then he shook his head.

“I understand, Grucius.”

With that, Youm patted Grucius on the shoulder and looked at me.

While I was wondering what the hell was going on, they both looked at each other and sighed deeply.

“I’m just saying that there’s always someone better, boss.”

“Oh, yeah. That Larzen-san was being played like a baby in front of Gadra-dono. I was stunned when I saw that.”

Oh, so that's the story…

Well, Diablo had also said that Larzen was “a small thing that doesn't matter,” and we had a lot of people like that.

Gadra is certainly strong.

There is no doubt about it, but I feel that he’s still a mid-tier level in our country.

He seems to have evolved in a strange way after becoming a member of Diablo's faction, so his current rank may have changed, but he still doesn't seem to be within the top ranks.

Talking about this, I wondered what Gadra was doing now.

“So, I don't see Larzen or Gadra around, are they doing something somewhere?”

Youm replies with a wry smile.

“Training, they’re training. They participated in the meeting to pick up the boss and to discuss future developments, but other than that, they've been fighting all this time.”

“Seriously?”

“For real!”

Grucius nodded, so he must be telling the truth.

I thought Gadra was the intellectual type, but I didn't know he liked to fight so much.

Did Diablo have a bad influence on him?

Such fears began flashing through my mind, but I quickly dismissed them.

“If you're curious, I'll show you around.”

I took Youm at his word and decided to visit Gadra and the others.

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The destination was a plain about an hour's ride away by carriage.

There was a simple hut, similar to a guest house, that stood there. There was nothing else, just wasteland as far as the eye could see.

According to Youm, there were only four people living there.

Needless to say, the four were Larzen, the best of the Farmenas Kingdom, Sare and Grigori, formerly of the Three Martial Sages, and Gadra.

It was a very interesting combination, but when we arrived, they had all lined up to greet us.

It was strange to see Gadra leading the way, acting like a representative.

“We are very pleased that you have come to such a place!”

At Gadra's signal, the three remaining members of the group bowed their heads.

Not to Youm, but to me.

“Hey, hey, I'm here, too, aren't I?”

“Your Majesty, Sare and Grigori are guests of Farmenas, but it is not you they are loyal to. Therefore, they are paying their respects to His Majesty Rimuru, the Lord of Gadra-sama, by their own will.”

“I get it. You don't even have to say anything, you're always lecturing me.”

Larzen rebuked Youm's complaining, but their relationship was more familiar than I had expected.

Larzen's true intentions are unknown, but his position is that of a loyal vassal of Farmenas. I had thought that he held no loyalty to Youm, but judging from his attitude, it seemed that he cared for him in his own way.

However, aside from Gadra and Larzen, I don't remember being respected by Sare and Grigori…

“Anyway, if they’re doing this of their own will, why me?”

I was curious, so I asked.

Youm seemed to be curious, as if he had never heard of it.

If they wanted to move to my country, I could consider accepting them. Hinata didn’t seem to have any intention of seeking out Sare and the others as traitors and executing them.

“There’s a clear reason. Master Larzen taught us about our inexperience, and Guru Gadra 82 taught us about the greatness of His Majesty Rimuru. We were so impressed that we wished to be included at the bottom of your ranks!”

Guru!?

“That's right. Well, Gadra-sama's strength was unimaginable, but from what I heard he’s not even close to His Majesty Rimuru. No! Even before that! I've heard that His Majesty Rimuru has a lot of powerful people under his command that even Gadra-sama cannot match, and we want to test our strength—”

Ranga jumped out from behind me while Grigori was making his speech.

“Well said! You are Grigori, I knew you'd be a sight to behold! If it's all right with you, then I'll give you a test of strength!!”

“–Ge, Gyaaah!! That dog guy from back then!?”

“Huh?”

“Ah, no…Ranga-dono, wasn't it?”

Grigori is shaking and sweating profusely. He had been badly beaten by Ranga before—had he been traumatized since then?

No, it can’t be.

“If that's the case, why don't you let Ranga deal with him?”

“Eh!?”

“My lord, it would be my pleasure!”

“No, I…”

“Come, Grigori. Let us get out of the way so that my lords are not disturbed.”

“Ah, hold on!?”

Ranga grabbed Grigori's head in his mouth and ran happily away. I couldn't see Grigori's face, but I'm sure he was happy that his wish came true.

I saw him and Ranga off with warm eyes.

It wasn't just me, but all the people present as well.

“Oh, I'd like to test my skills too, but I'm still inexperienced, so I'd like to start from the bottom…”

Sare said awkwardly.

“That's true. Ranga is my bodyguard, so he’s one of the best. I thought Grigori-san was a challenger.”

“Of course! He's got a phobia of dogs since he lost to Ranga-dono. I think he wanted to overcome it.”

Hearing Sare's comment, Larzen was holding his head in disgust. Youm and Gadra were chatting amicably beside him.

“Even I am not a match for Ranga-dono…What a fool he is.”

“I see, that sure is some rough treatment. That’s amazing, I don’t think I’d ever be able to do that.”

“Don't do it. Your Majesty is a king. You don't need to be strong.”

“I've always wanted to be strong, but I know my own strength. Once you get to know Boss Rimuru, it's obvious that a little strength is useless.”

“It's not useless. Even in the worst case, if we stay alive, we might be able to help in time.”

“Right. Well, I'll do what I can to protect the ones I love.”

“I think that's a good idea.”

Youm seems to be becoming more aware of his role as king.

I can't lose, either.

I don't intend to be as crazy as Grigori, but I am determined to do what I can, step by step.

Larzen also seems to approve of Youm now.

“As long as Your Majesty Youm serves this country, I will do my best to help you. Well, Her Royal Highness Princess Meme is the one I am going to make my apprentice, as I promised Queen Myuran, so I'll protect her before anyone else.”

What a thing to say.

However, Youm should be relieved to know that he has someone who has supported the Farmus Kingdom for hundreds of years.

As for me, I was thinking of something else. I was puzzled by the fact that Larzen spoke in an old man's manner despite his youthful appearance.

In the meantime, Ranga returned with a limp Grigori in his mouth.

“My lord, after a little play time, this person has stopped working!”

Too much!

“You're not Shion, so can't you take it easy on him?”

I scolded him severely.

And when I diagnosed Grigori, it turned out that he had just fainted.

“He's that guy, isn't he? Why did suddenly nominate Ranga?”

Well, I understand the desire for revenge, but I also think one should know where they stand…

“No, Boss, I don't think that was it.”

“Eh?”

“Rather, he said he never wanted to fight, never wanted to see him again…”

“Seriously?”

Youm and Sare pointed this out, but perhaps I was the one misunderstanding? Sare said something different what what he said before.

So maybe he wasn’t happy to see Ranga again and just wanted to escape.

“—No, I don't think that’s the case. He was brave. He was unyielding, even against a man he'd already been defeated by. I was, you know, impressed with him. That's why I allowed him to fight Ranga. Right, Ranga?”

Admitting a mistake is a liability.

Fortunately, Grigori was safe, so I decided to play it cool.

And on top of that, Ranga played nicely into it.

“You're right! I was so overwhelmed by this man's spirit that I overdid it!”

No, he's really good.

He’s brilliantly correcting his mistakes.

I don't know who he's taken after, but I think Ranga has become cunning.

But it seems that our teamwork has convinced Youm and the others.

“It’s exactly as Rimuru-sama says. Isn't that right, you guys?”

“Oh, yes. If that's what the Boss says, then I guess that's what it is.”

“I’m particularly dissatisfied. Sare, wasn’t it your misunderstanding?”

“That’s right! Well, Grigori sure has become a gutsy man…”

Yes, yes.

There is no problem.

“You’re right. Now that I have a little respect for you, I'll call you Grigori ‘-san’ from now on!”

So that's what happened…When Grigori himself woke up, he politely declined my offer.

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Thus, all my business in the Farmenas Kingdom was finished.

Youm and I discussed the matter and agreed that Sare and Grigori would be accepted and trained in our country.

I was concerned that their forces would be reduced, but they should be able to handle it since Gadra was still there. They also have Larzen, and unless there is a major invasion by the enemy, they should be able to buy some time.

However, if such a situation had occurred, even with Sare and Grigori, it would have been a drop in the bucket. That's why I chose to develop my skills in preparation for an emergency, rather than worrying about such an eventuality.

Incidentally, the power ratio of Larzen and the others was very interesting.

If we simply compare the approximate amount of magicules, the order is Sare, Larzen, Grigori, and Grucius (from highest to lowest).

Youm, I'm sorry to say, is out of the question. With Hakurou's hellish training and the performance of his equipment, he is barely in the A rank. We couldn't hope to increase his strength in the short term.

Grucius was an elite of the Beast King's Warriors. Thanks to the gift from Karion’s awakening, he has grown to the level of Grigori, one of the former ‘Three Martial Sages.’

However, it was a problem for the Knight Commander to leave his home country, and he did not want to, so I did not bring him back. He said he would come to visit us after all the problems were settled.

The first person who came to our country, was Grigori.

He is a strong man with the special ability of 'immobility.’ He prefers to use a battle axe spear (halberd), but he is also good at hand-to-hand combat.

Although he was defeated by Ranga, he was a “Sage Class” comparable to a Demon Lord Seed and had an existence value of about 400,000.

He was much stronger than I expected, so there is a possibility that he might turn into one.

The second person who came to our country, was Sare.

He used to be the first knight of the Imperial Guards, but he was defeated by Hinata and gave up his position. Then he challenged Diablo as one of the “Three Martial Sages” and has been here ever since.

Well, it was simply the wrong opponent.

It seems that like Grigori, Sare was a man without luck.

However, his ability is real.

The value of Sare's existence that had led to Saint had surprisingly reached a million. It would certainly be interesting to have him challenge the labyrinth in the form of a real battle.

By the way, Larzen only had a few more magicules than Grigori, but his ability was greater than Sare’s.

When he took Shogo Taguchi's body, he gained the Unique Skills 'Berserker' and 'Survivor'.

According to Ciel-san, there are cases where Unique Skill is rooted in the mind, cases where it is engraved in the soul, and cases where it resides in the astral body, spiritual body, or material body.

There is also the power to steal Skill from enemies, but it seems that this is only possible if it is in the body. As an exception, it seems that there are Skills that reside in the soul, and in such cases, they can be taken away.

In other words, is it harder to take something that's engraved in your soul?

«It is not absolute. But if it is rooted in the heart, it is impossible»

She explained confidently.

However, it seems that it can still be copied without being taken, so it is possible to commit foul acts like with Michael…

I digress, but that’s why Larzen, who had acquired two Unique Skills, was said to be more proficient in using them than Shogo.

And so, he overwhelmed Sare, who had about twice his magicule count.

However, it seems that this was only the beginning.

Sare had a unique skill called 'The All-Knowing One', which allowed him to recognize and master his opponent's Art just by seeing it once. When Larzen learned of this, he taught Sare all of the skills and magic he knew.

Magic is both an art and a skill that comes from knowledge. It was not easy to learn, but Sare did not complain and asked Larzen to teach him.

That is the reason why Sare called Larzen his master.

That is why Sare is now stronger than Larzen in both name and reality.

Even so, Gadra seems to have beaten him to the punch.

The comparison of existence values is—

«Disclosing information about Gadra's»

Name: Gadra [EP: 1,126,666]

Race: greater chaos spirit — metal demon

Blessing: Black Primordial (Noir)

Title: Servant #2 “Pochi 83 ”

Magic: ?dark magic??elemental magic?

Skill: Ultimate Gift ' Grimoire '

Resistance: Physical Attack Nullification , Abnormal Condition Nullification , Mental Attack Nullification , Natural Effects Nullification , Holy-Demonic Attack Resistance

I've found a lot of things to complain about, but I'm too tired to talk about them, so I'll leave it at that. For now, I'll discuss the comparison with Sare, but it looks  like Gadra outperforms him by EP alone.

To be honest, I didn't expect him to be this strong.

Gadra wasn't that strong before he was reborn.

His knowledge of magic was outstanding, and his skill (level) was remarkable, but he was not a threat if we judged him only in terms of combat.

He was cunning and troublesome. If he was going to be an adversary, he should be the first to go for. That was my true evaluation.

With that in mind, Gadra did the right thing.

He's still alive, and he's in my direct line of command. And he's even surpassed Saint Sare in direct combat ability.

Sare's ‘Omnipotent One’ is also troublesome, but it's surprisingly easy to deal with. All you have to do is to challenge it in a straightforward manner.

You can overwhelm it with physics, without the use of art or magic. Even if you do use them, you should do so in a timely manner to avoid being imitated.

It is said that Sare was defeated by Hinata, but I can guess the reason.

Hinata would never be careless, so she must have fought without exposing her cards to Sare. In that case, he would have lost the advantage of the Unique Skill, because he had nothing to learn.

And this time…

The decisive difference in Gadra's case must have been the presence or absence of the Ultimate Gift.

Gadra was cunning, so he might not have shown Sare his hidden tricks. But even if he had, Sare would not have been able to imitate it.

Because the unique level cannot compete with the ultimate level.

With that in mind, I realized once again that being able to give an Ultimate Gift to a subordinate like me must be a quite the foul move.

Incidentally, the power of the Ultimate Gift ‘Grimoire’ was very similar to that of Adalman's ‘Necronomicon.’ This included ‘Thought Acceleration,’ ‘Universal Perception,’ ‘Demon Lord Haki,’ ‘Chant Cancellation,’ ‘Analyze and Assess,’ ‘All of Creation,’ ‘Mental Crush,’ ‘Knowledge Browsing,’ and ‘Concept Sharing.’ ‘Knowledge Browsing’ seems to be an ability to learn from Ciel-san. And 'Concept Sharing' seems to be the right to share with Adalman.

Well, like Ciel-san, it seemed to be a  skill that embodied Gadra's desires.

Anyway, I understand why Gadra is stronger than Sare.

I also now have a rough idea of how powerful Sare is.

As I recall, the Holy Knight Order had been working hard to conquer the labyrinth, but was their current ranking at Apito's level?

That was before Adalman's evolution, so it's not very useful…

I heard that they came to visit us recently, and that he had collected some data. Arno and Reynald were extremely strong, with existence values of nearly 500,000. The remaining captains were also around 300,000 each and seemed to have grown significantly compared to their initial levels.

Since they were in the same level range as Grigori, it would be interesting to have them form a party.

Sare, on the other hand, had the advantage of learning the Arts easily, so it might be better to leave it to Hakurou.

He could be a good training partner for the children, and I thought he could also learn a lot in our country.

Of course, that should be kept confidential.

And so, the training plan for Sare and Grigori was decided.

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For the time being, I decided to let Sare and Grigori familiarize themselves with the labyrinth.

Benimaru had been informed of the training plan and would be sent to his own place when the time was right.

“Will I be taking care of them again?”

“I'm counting on you. It’s sudden with Hakurou, so there might be some confusion, right?”

“Well, that’s true. But we’re all in the same situation, and I think you're being too overprotective.”

Benimaru chuckled.

You may have a point, but they are our guests.

If they had immigrated to our country, I would not have allowed them to be too unreasonable.

More importantly, speaking of training.

“So, what's the status of Karion and the others?”

“Huh, things are getting interesting over there.”

As soon as Benimaru said that, Ciel-san disclosed the information.

Name: Karion [EP: 2,773,537]

Race: Beast God (Ju-Xin). Greater chaos spirit — “Light spirit beast.”

Name: Frey [EP: 1,948,734]

Race: Bird god (Choujin). Greater chaos spirit — “Sky spirit bird.”

The Labyrinth, it’s dangerous. All of the existence values and personal information is completely visible.

Karion and Frey-san have evolved and took on a divine nature. Frey-san's existence value is less than 2 million, but she seems to have met the requirements for divinity. I guess it is within the margin of error.

Their skills and resistances are unknown, but there is no way to know that unless they tell me.

Even so, both of these people have awakened to become True Demon Lords, and are undisputedly strong.

In my case, the amount of magicules had increased tenfold, but Karion and Frey-san didn’t seem to have increased by that much.

Or rather, there seem to be individual differences.

My impression is that Karion's pre-evolutionary value was around 700,000, and Frey-san's was less than 400,000.

Assuming that I'm right, Karion's strength has increased fourfold and Frey-san's strength has increased fivefold.

Well, in my case, it's because the original values were low, wasn’t it?

If you think about it, it’s natural.

We should consider not how many times the original value has increased, but rather how much it has increased.

It was not wrong to say that the greater the existence value, the greater the power when awakened.

Now, let's analyze their strength based on this information.

Karion's physical abilities nearly tripled when he transformed, but I don't think they doubled if we converted them into existence values.

I was thinking that it was probably just an ability boost for a certain amount of time. That's why I believed that shapeshifting was not completely foolproof.

Because if you transformed, you would become weaker after the time limit.

This is true not only for Karion, but also for Gabil and the others. Otherwise, the best idea would be to maintain the transformed state at all times.

However, there were still many advantages to transforming, such as the healing of all wounds and the full recovery of physical strength. These are characteristics unique to beastmen, so I don't mean to make fun of them. In short, it depends on how you use it.

So, in the case of the evolved Karion, how well is he able to use his power?

“What's he like now?”

“Yes. First up was Karion-dono, who I took on first for revenge.”

“What?”

“You know, I led a team to Yuurazania once. I was no match for him then. That's why I wanted to see how strong I had become now, and to test myself against Karion-dono, who had awakened.”

Um, I think you've got it backwards.

I was planning to have Karion and the others test their strength to the fullest../.

I wondered why Benimaru was testing his own strength, but after thinking about it, I didn’t see the problem.

Benimaru got serious, and Karion gave it his all. In the environment of the labyrinth, where no one dies, this seemed to be a very interesting combination.

I'm sure Ramiris and the others were recording it, so I'll watch it later. With that, I decided to ask about the result first.

“Who won?”

“By a narrow margin, me.”

“Oh, that's good!”

While I admired him, I was actually slightly troubled by the reaction.

For some reason, I realized that I hadn't doubted Benimaru's victory, and I was upset when I heard that it was a close call.

“But it was a close call. How did that happen?”

At any rate, I asked him.

Before Benimaru could reply, an image appeared in my mind.

«It seems that Karion made the first move»

As expected of Ciel-san.

It looks like she got the information right away.

And as Ciel-san explained, it was Karion who moved first in the video.

At the moment he raised his weapon and sank in a flowing manner, Karion's entire body turned into light.

It was not a metaphor, but a real particle that attacked Benimaru.

«Karion named it Burst Roar. It is an illusionary diffusion-focused particle cannon that can transform his own body into willful particles that pierces the enemy»

So, it has a will then.

It means that Karion had also awakened and acquired the characteristics of a spiritual life form. It was also understandable that the light that had followed Benimaru swallowed him up.

“The moment the game started, I got chills, or rather, I sensed that it was going to be dangerous. So, I decided that this was not the time to wait and see, and activated my ‘Heat Haze 84 …”

Benimaru's ‘Heat Haze’ is a power that can be called the ultimate secret of 'Formhide.’ It prevents any attack from catching you, so it will only work if you have the Ultimate Skill on top of it.

However, if that had not been activated, Benimaru would have lost in the first move.

After all, Karion embodied a speed several hundred times faster than the speed of sound, comparable to that of Velgrynd's super speed attack.

Benimaru's evasion of the attack was amazing, but there was nothing he could do if he had been tracked from there. It was because of his Ultimate Skill ‘Heat King (Amaterasu)’ that he was able to withstand this.

“Your intuition and your Ultimate Skill were the difference between victory and defeat.”

“Yes, it was a close call. I was so proud of myself that I thought I could win more easily, so it was a good reminder for me.”

“That's right. I didn't doubt you'd win, so I had mixed feelings about it. After all, carelessness and pride can lead to defeat. It's hard to be aware of, so I'm grateful you realized this before the showdown.”

“Yes. Even if I’m aware of it, I can be unconsciously proud of it. That's why it's called carelessness, but it can be scary.”

“Exactly.”

We were grateful to Karion for reminding us of our lack of awareness.

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After reflecting with Benimaru, I relaxed with a café au lait brewed by Shuna and listened to the rest.

“Did you fight with Frey-san?”

“No, I think Frey-dono saw us fighting and decided she couldn't win. She seems like the type who hates wasting time.”

“I see, so that's how it is.”

I nodded my head, agreeing with Benimaru’s conclusion. Frey-san is not particularly belligerent, so I can understand her reaction.

Besides, I had heard Milim complaining about Frey-san's meticulous nature. I've heard that she’s been having a lot of trouble with it, but it's none of my business, so I’ll just ignore it.

“After that, it was a matter of trying to conquer the labyrinth to see how far they could go.”

“If you want to test your strength, that’s probably the quickest way.”

“Yes. Each one started at the fifty-first level, individually.”

As Benimaru explained, images began flooding my mind.

Ciel-san is a being of many talents.

First, Karion.

The power that affected Benimaru was serious, and he continued to make good progress.

The 60th level was cleared easily due to Gadra's absence. Though at this rate, even if he had stayed, he would have been defeated. That's how unstoppable Karion's momentum was.

He also fought Adalman and the others, who happened to be back to adjust the magic transfer circle, as a test of his skill.

As a result, he easily defeated them even though it was three against one.

That wasn’t surprising. He was using Burst Roar generously, so Adalman and the others had no time to take countermeasures.

Wenti acted as the shield, Albert as  the ranger, and Adalman as the attacker. That combination fell apart when Wenti was first defeated.

Karion then went after the troublesome Adalman, leaving Albert behind. The way he fought was reminiscent of a lion on the hunt.

«It is the female lion that does most of the hunting…»

I know that!!

Ciel-san's explanation is very useful, but sometimes it makes me feel like a fool.

It's always been that way, even since the days of the ‘Great Sage,’ right?

«I'll be careful»

‘Really, please do,’ I nodded, greatly offended.

So, back to the topic at hand.

Karion's Burst Roar was incredibly powerful.

Adalman had a light attribute, but Karion was also a light attribute. There was no difference between them, so it was just a matter of simple strength.

The interesting to notice here was that Adalman has an Ultimate Gift.

Karion does not seem to have an Ultimate Skill, nor does he have mythical-grade equipment.

So, how was he able to beat Adalman?

I seem to remember Ciel-san saying that the ultimate level can only be beaten by another ultimate power.

«I don't remember»

Oh, is that so?

I feel like I've been deceived, but I'm not so sure either…

«Karion also possesses the characteristics of a spiritual life form, so his strength of will must have been able to rival the ultimate power»

I see, that makes sense.

In other words, Karion has more offensive power than the ‘Multilayer Barrier’ reinforced by Adalman's ‘Necronomicon.’

“The next opponent to face Karion-dono was Kumara. Kumara wanted to fight first, so I gave her permission.”

“Well, Zegion is stronger than Kumara, so maybe we should rethink the labyrinth floor guardian placements.”

“Right. And as it turns out, it was a pretty good match.”

Again, a video was shown.

Kumara hadn't shown her tailed beasts and was going all out from the start.

She had heard the news of Adalman and the others' defeat, but seemed to be going into battle without listening to the details.

There is a big difference between knowing what the enemy is up to and not knowing. And yet, she dared to challenge the enemy on equal terms.

Karion was superior in existence value. However, Kumara had the Ultimate Gift ‘Beast King Bahamut.’

Again, Karion made his first move with a Burst Roar. This time, it became several flashes of light, aiming at Kumara from all directions.

Kumara, on the other hand, flew to the sky and invoked ‘Gravity Domination.’ This caused the light to bend due to the super gravity, and Karion's attack only pierced Kumara's leg.

This was not Kumara's intended evasion, but was just her luck. That's why she did not counterattack, but instead prioritized her own recovery.

Or is it possible to substitute with the legs of a tailed beast instead? The tailed beasts can be resurrected by Kumara's magicules, so it would be difficult to disable Kumara with an opponent of the same level.

And Karion, who failed in his first attack, had materialized. The particle state, which seemed to be invincible, still had a time limit.

And it looks like it cannot be fired repeatedly.

Karion did not chase Kumara, but instead kept his distance and set up a ‘White Tiger-Blue Dragon Strike. 85 ’

Kumara looked down at Karion from above.

Karion stared at her and considered his next move.



Their gazes crossed, and in the next moment, a tremor ran through the air.

Kumara swooped down to attack Karion and unleashed a ‘Nine-Tailed Piercing Strike 86 .’  Karion responded by concentrating his magic power on the ‘White Tiger-Blue Dragon Strike and unleashed a Beast Roar.

It was Kumara who won the clash.

The particle cannon fizzled out, and Karion's ‘White Tiger-Blue Dragon Strike’ shattered.

“I will win!”

Kumara was proud of her victory and tried to finish Karion off.

But that was not to be.

“How naive.”

Karion's muttered words came late, after Kumara's heart had been destroyed.

Karion's weapon was shattered, but not broken. The shards were controlled by Karion's will and had become particles that pierced Kumara from behind.

The game was won.

Karion was not so naive as to let his guard down here. He mercilessly ended the game with a Beast Roar against Kumara, who had stopped moving.

“And so Karion-dono won—”

“Looks like it. I mean, Kumara has gotten so strong that it's hard to believe she lost so easily.”

“Well, that's how it goes in a fight. Fortunately, this wasn't the real thing.”

“That's true. Really, I think it was a good experience for Kumara.”

Such a display of Karion's prowess made us all feel very remorseful about ourselves.

We've been too prideful.

“The idea of taking care of Karion-dono was very presumptuous. There were many things to teach, and I learned a lot from him.”

“Well, yes. Some people say that teaching others is like being given an opportunity to realize what you lack.”

I think he meant that if someone asks you something you don't know, you should look it up immediately and use it to your advantage.

In this case, I felt that he learned how to fight more carefully by training with Karion in actual combat.

Karion seemed to be getting more and more sophisticated in his fighting style.

If Kumara had taken him on before Adalman, the odds would have been more likely to be reversed. That was how well Karion had developed.

“Well, I guess Zegion was in danger, too.”

I couldn’t imagine Zegion being defeated, but at this rate—

“Oh, that was out of the question.”

“Eh?”

“Facing off, Karion-dono was the first to set up—”

The imaged played out.

The battle was instantaneous.

Before Karion could turn into a particles—No, that’s wrong. Immediately after Zegion smiled at him as if he were an illusion, Karion's entire body was cut into pieces.

“—Instant kill, what is Zegion really?”

“To be honest, it's almost a miracle that I was able to beat him. If I tried now, I don't think I could win.”

Benimaru chuckled.

He may have been being modest, but if Benimaru, who hated to lose, was saying as much, then Zegion truly was exceptional.

If Zegion had been defeated here, it would have required a fundamental review of our defense system.

“Zegion doesn't seem to be very prideful. We've reaffirmed our own lack of awareness, but that seems unnecessary for Zegion.”

“Agreed. He's extremely stoic. It was the most complete victory he's ever had, but he didn't seem satisfied at all, saying ‘This isn't even close to Rimuru-sama.’”

I wondered if Zegion was aiming for an imaginary me—I felt very far away.

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Karion's challenge was over.

So then, what about Frey-san?

“Frey-dono also defeated Adalman and the others. Quite handily, at that.”

“Seriously!?”

Too unexpected.

I was expecting Adalman and his team to win this game.

I had thought Frey-San would win in a one-on-one match, but that Adalman and the others would have the advantage in a three-on-one match…

After watching the video, I understood why Frey-san won.

“Ah, they were too incompatible!”

“Yeah, that’s right. Frey-dono's ‘Magic Interference’ blocked Adalman's magic. The reason for the defeat was that this disrupted his offensive pattern and allowed Frey-dono to control the pace.”

Benimaru's explanation was correct.

A circle of fifty meters in radius around Frey-san had become an anti-magic area, blocking the movement of magicules. Because the interference wave was more powerful than that of the Charybdis, it had also blocked Adalman's 'Necronomicon'.

By the way, Frey-san also had divinity.

Since divinity seems to be a trait that can only be acquired by a spiritual lifeform whose life span has expired, it was no surprise that Frey-san was able to compete with the Ultimate Gift.

On the contrary, there was a possibility that Frey-san might have acquired an Ultimate Skill.

At this point, Adalman switched to Holy Magic: Holy Cannon as his main tool, but it was not a decisive move. The trouble was that Frey-san could fly, so she was able to evade it with a flick of her wrist.

She then closed in on Wenti, who was acting as a shield, and grabbed her with her claws.

“The trouble is Frey-dono's claws. They disrupt the body’s magicules, so they are a monster's natural enemy. Once they grabs you, it’s like having all of your skills and magic blocked.”

Frey-san's claws were definitely a mythical-grade level of danger.

“Wow, if I didn't know better, I’d say I might have been in danger too.”

“Hahaha, you're okay, right? In the case of Rimuru-sama, you can escape with ‘Clone.’ However, Karion-dono also said it was impossible to escape from, so I’d be in trouble too. I’d just beat her before she caught me, though.”

In Benimaru's case, that was probably true.

But for Adalman and the others, it was impossible.

Wenti was destroyed from the inside and left the battlefield. After that, Frey-san changed her strategy to a long-distance battle.

Since Adalman and his team's flight was blocked, they could only be attacked one-sidedly from above. Albert, impatient with this, leapt and aimed at Frey-san, but that was exactly what Frey-san wanted.

The title of “Sky Queen” was not lost upon Albert, and he too was scattered in the sky.

Thus, Adalman was the only one left, but he had no chance to win. Sadly, he was forced to defeat before Frey-san.

“Frey-dono also moved on to the next opponent, which was a battle against Kumara.”

“What was the result?”

They were almost evenly matched in strength, but Kumara is not divine.”

Besides, judging from the way she just fought, Frey-san had quite a bit of combat experience. She had said herself that she was the weakest of the ten demon lords, but it seemed that she was being modest.

The cunning Frey-san and the inexperienced Kumara.

I thought it would be a good match, and I guess I was right.

“It was a great match. They fought for three whole days, and both of them gave it their all. I'd call it a draw, but the winner was Frey-dono.”

“Ah, that was a great battle. I'll study the footage later.”

“Yes, I learned a lot. The indomitable spirit to never give up on victory is important, but in the end, it's the intelligence that counts. When you have a strong opponent, it is important to mislead your opponent about your strength. The reason for Kumara's defeat was that she misjudged her opponent's remaining strength.”

I see, I'm looking forward to seeing the video.

It was three days' worth of information, so I’d watch it at several times the speed using Thought Acceleration.

“So, did Frey-san challenge Zegion?”

If she was on par with Kumara, she was bound to lose.

It seemed to me that Frey-san, who had avoided a fight with Benimaru, would not participate in a fight with an obvious outcome.

“She was fighting Apito, not Zegion.”

“Eh, is that so?”

“Yes. After all, she must have had her pride as someone of flight.”

“Oh, that’s…”

She seemed reasonable, but she was surprisingly competitive.

“It was a good match, but Frey-dono won by a landslide.”

That’s about right.

If it was a good match, I should have congratulated Apito on her good performance.

Anyway, now I knew what Frey-san was capable of, and I could see what my friends had to work on.

It must have been a shock for Adalman and his group, who had to suffer a series of defeats as soon as they came back to our country in the middle of their work, but I hope they would be grateful that this was not the real battle and use this experience in the future.

Also, I might have sold my debt to Karion and Frey-san. This was also thanks to Ramiris, so I’d tell them to thank her later.

I also thanked Ramiris once again.

Now, onto the real issue at hand.

“Then, I’ll leave you in charge of Sare and the others.”

“Yes, sir. Well, let's see if they can get past Adalman and the others, shall we?”

“I agree with you. Maybe, Albert can handle it on his own. Just don't keep Adalman and the others around forever!”

Having just vowed to not let my guard down, I wouldn't be surprised if this prediction was wrong. But Sare was no match for even Master Gadra.

It would be difficult for him to get past Adalman and the others, I thought.

And then later.

That prediction proved to be correct. Sare and his team decided to train with Apito instead of Adalman and his team who returned to their work.

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After leaving Sare and the others with Benimaru, I headed for the Blumund Kingdom, where Myourmiles was waiting for us.

The plan was to meet them there and have them accompany us to the Ingracia Kingdom.

I had been to Blumund Kingdom many times before, so I  was familiar with it. Since we were not going into the city, there was no need to go through the ‘Barrier.’ We went to the outskirts of the capital as if we were sightseeing.

It was also the center of a big project.

The “World Station” was currently under construction, and workers from neighboring countries had been gathering there. Not far from there, in a prime location, the headquarters of the Four Nations Trade Federation was being built.

Well, I'm pretty happy.

It was a ten-story skyscraper over 30 meters high, which was rare in this world.

While it was not as high as Milim’s new castle, it was still one of the tallest buildings in this world.

I had tried to elaborate on the design and used precious glass extravagantly. Of course, it was a tempered glass made of “maka, 87 ” which was resistant to typhoons, earthquakes, and magical attacks.

I had many other hobbies and interests, so I was very attached to this building.

This was where we were meeting today, or rather, where we were planning to have a party to celebrate the new building. I was actually the owner of the building, but was treated as an invited guest.

And now, I had finally arrived in front of the building.

I would have liked to come and see the building when it was completed, but I had been so busy lately that I haven't had time. So, I left all the arrangements for the building's staff to Myourmiles.

It was hard work for me, but it must have been hard work for Myourmiles too. Without Myourmiles, I wouldn't be able to see this day.

I knew that he was capable, but he also seemed to have a talent for charity.

The representative of the ‘Four Nations Trade Federation’ is Myourmiles, but the head of this building was someone else. To my surprise, Veryard, who had recently been promoted to the rank of Viscount, was now Myourmiles' subordinate. I was informed that he had been appointed as the general manager.

I am honestly happy and relieved that Veryard has become my ally. I haven’t forgotten the skill with which he deceived me, and I hope to see more of him in the future.

I have heard that he has recruited several other talented people.

He said he would introduce them to me at the party today, and I was looking forward to it.

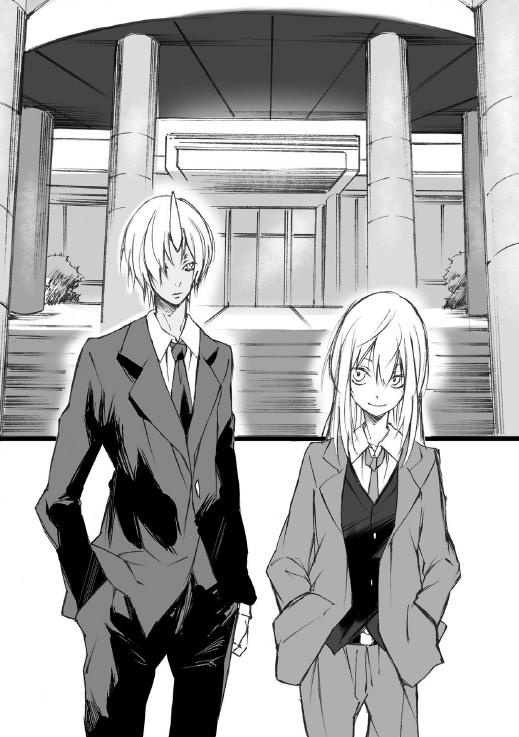
As usual, Souei and I stand side by side, with Ranga in the shadows.

We were dressed in formal suits today.

I was wearing a three-piece suit and Souei was wearing a two-piece suit.

The color of the suit was gray for me and black for Souei. It was one that Shuna had tailored for us, using the now-branded Hellmoth thread.

Since it was custom-made and not sold in the market, anyone who saw it would have noticed the difference in quality.



The party wouldn’t start until evening, so there were not many people.

In spite of this, it was my charisma that attracted the attention of passers-by.

“Look at that guy, he's so handsome!”

“Is that his brother? He's like a big brother protecting his little brother.”

“The little brother is cute too, I can't wait to see what he becomes in the future!”

“He's cool. There have been a lot of foreigners visiting these days, but it's still rare to see someone so cool.”

…Hmm?

That's not the reaction I was expecting.

I guess she was just interested in Souei, not my charisma.

I realized that I was being too self-conscious and felt a little embarrassed.

“Well, why don't we just go in and say hello first?”

I said so, trying to cover up my embarrassment.

So, I went through the door to the reception desk. The first floor was a large floor like a hotel lobby, divided into a waiting area and a long room.

Since I already knew the inside of the building, I proceeded without hesitation.

“Is Myourmiles-kun here~?”

As I called out to the beautiful receptionist, a pompous man dressed in a fashionable suit with a cigar in his mouth came out of the back room and stared at me suspiciously.

“And just who are you?”

“Ah, I’m Rimuru. Can you tell Myourmiles-kun that I'm here?”

I said so with a smile, though I thought he was arrogant despite his gentlemanly appearance.

The receptionist, hearing my name, quickly changed her complexion and reached for the crystal ball. It was also a magic tool that allowed you to communicate with another crystal ball. The disadvantage was that it could only be used at a short distance, but it was the best item for inside the building.

That response was just as I'd trained it to be, so I was content to watch…Suddenly, an important man stopped the receptionist.

“Um, Gabbana-sama, this person is—”

“It’s fine. I'll take care of this.”

“No, I mean—”

“I am here. There are people who tell lies in order to meet Myourmiles-sama. There are also a lot of fools who try to attend parties they weren't invited to, and well, it's not easy being famous. He doesn't understand much about that, so he needs good subordinates like me. You were unlucky, too. If I hadn't been here, perhaps you would have succeeded.”

“Haa, I see…”

What else am I supposed to say here?

The receptionist seemed to know my name, but this gentleman—Gabbana, didn't seem to know anything about me.

No, maybe he did know me, but the face and the name didn't match.

Judging from the situation, he didn’t seem to be in charge of the reception.

I wondered if maybe he was just a dirty old man who wanted to look good in front of this beautiful receptionist.

“Rimuru-sama. I will educate this man myself.”

Souei, who had been quietly losing his temper, glared at Gabbana with steely eyes.

“Wait, wait, wait! Myourmiles-kun is training him, so let's not let a few misunderstandings get in the way!”

Let's just be kind here, okay?

In fact, Myourmiles had probably refrained from picking us up because he was busy, but it turned out to be a bad idea.

Gabbana's pompous attitude may be questionable, but with so many unannounced visitors, this kind of reaction might be inevitable.

As I was calming down the angry Souei, the receptionist shouted out.

“Gabbana-sama! This person is the real deal!! She looks exactly like the portrait on display in Myourmiles-sama's room, there's no doubt about it!!”

Eh, he has a portrait?

I had noticed that he had one when I visited his house, but I didn't know he still had it. Myourmiles surer was a strange man to display it so proudly.

Well, the original Shizu-san was a beautiful woman.

I can understand why one might be attracted to her, but my figure is that of an elementary school student—well, now that I think about it, I've grown up.

I was just under 160 centimeters, which is about the average height of a high school girl.

I don’t have much of a chest, but I might be beautiful in a portrait.

However, I couldn't sit still, so I would have to ask Ciel-san to take over the inside.

—I have no intention of becoming a model for a painting, though.

As I was trapped in such an advanced level of thought, I heard Gabbana's astonished voice.

“Wh-What? You mean to tell me that this brat—I mean, this young master, is His Majesty Rimuru himself?”

“Yes, I'm sure.”

“No, no, isn’t that crazy!? Isn’t he a demon lord? A king who controls such a vast territory is walking around with only one bodyguard—just by using common sense there is no way, so how—!?”

Hmm, that’s also true.

As Shuna said when we were on our way to Dwargon, we needed to behave in a way that was appropriate for our rank.

I skipped it because we didn’t have much time at the time, but Shuna seemed to be unhappy about it. After all, I should probably be more careful in the future to avoid this kind of thing.

“I know that, but it's true!”

“But I mean, would a demon lord just drop by the reception desk and casually ask, ‘Is Myourmiles-kun here~?’—You wouldn't, would you? Right?”

Gabbana makes his case with tears in his eyes.

If he admits this reality, he will be left with nothing but the fact that he tried to turn a demon lord away. In Gabbana's position, he would desperately want to deny it.

The gentleman's mask is off and he's showing his true colors…I'm starting to feel sorry for him.

“I'm sorry, okay? It's not like I'm gonna call my subordinates over now—”

“At your request, I can call in the stealth force?”

“No, I don't want that! So, I’ll just say that Gabbana-san was not at fault this time, and I’ll drop the matter. Can you get Myourmiles-kun on it?”

When I suggested this, Gabbana's face lit up.

“I-Is that okay?”

“Wouldn't that make both of us happier?”

As soon as I said that, tears welled up in Gabbana's eyes.

I don't know how he misunderstood, but he looked at me with sparkling eyes and said, “Thank you very much! I will never forget this favor.”

As for me, I felt a little uncomfortable, because I just wanted to cover up my mistakes as well.

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While Gabbana was thanking me more than necessary, the receptionist called for Myourmiles.

With Gabbana and the receptionist bowing us off, we made our way to Myourmiles' office.

It was a spacious room on the top floor, with plenty of sunlight and a great view.

We sat down on the best sofas and enjoyed the view, while quenching our thirst with the juice that had been prepared for us.

“Rimuru-sama, did something happen?”

“No, nothing at all.”

“Well, that's good, but perhaps Gabbana has done something rude—”

“No, no, it's okay!”

I calmed down the worried Myourmiles and casually changed the subject.

“More importantly, Myourmiles-kun. I heard that you have a portrait of me in your room. What does that mean?”

I asked, keeping my gaze fixed on a point on the wall and maintaining my composure.

“Gweh!? W-Well, that's…”

“The painting seems to have been acquired on the black market. However, not only is the source unknown, but so is the identity of the artist.”

“Eh?”

“There was one with the appearance of a slime, so it must be the work of someone who knows Rimuru-sama, but even our intelligence network can't figure it out, so I guess they’re pretty good.”

Eh, wait a minute?

I mean, isn’t this pretty bad?

“So, you're saying Souei couldn't track him down even if he investigated?”

“I'm afraid so, yes.”

“No way…”

“Since it was during the war, we judged this case to be of low importance. That's why we couldn't arrange a large number of personnel.”

I see, that was one of the reasons.

But still, it's weird to be used as a model for a painting by someone I don't know.

“No, no, the reporters of other countries have seen Rimuru-sama. I'm sure some of them have a keen interest keeping the paintings, so isn’t that strange?”

“Is that so…?”

It does bother me that even Souei and the others aren't sure who it is.

Well, there’s no use thinking about it.

“Then, we’ll confiscate the painting.”

“Yes—E-Eh!?”

I tried to persuade Myourmiles, who was surprised and displeased.

Or rather, it was already decided.

“Why should I let you display my portrait? Absolutely not!”

“No-No way! That's high-handed. I don't even think any tyrant, ancient or modern, would do such a thing!!”

“You're overreacting! I mean, why are you resisting so much? I'll pay you for the painting, so this is confiscated.”

I said as such and collected the painting from the wall.

After all, the painting had been so beautified that I felt it was no longer me.

To put it simply, there was nothing but the image of Shizu-san.

Beauty and fragility were beautifully expressed.

“I was so excited about hanging Rimuru-sama's picture here…”

Souei patted the lamenting Myourmiles on the shoulder.

“Huh, it can't be helped. Then I'll give this to Myourmiles-dono as well.”

“Eh?”

“W-Well, that's…”

Myourmiles was surprised.

The moment we saw the picture, Myourmiles and I had delicate expressions on our faces.

It was a picture of a slime.

“Hmm…”

“Hey, good for you, Myourmiles-kun. Take a look at that and give it a try.”

“No, no, no, no, that's not right, what can I say…”

Well, it is different.

I don't think seeing me in slime form will get you fired up even one millimeter.

“That said, why does Souei have something like that?”

“Yes. I confiscated it during our investigation. There were a few other items leaked as well, so we recovered them all.”

“Just the slime portraits?”

“……Yes.”

What's with the pause?

“No…Actually, Diablo took one from me…”

What the hell, that bastard!

“I desperately resisted, but I was unable to do anything. I apologize.”

“I see, I understand. I'll make sure to take it back from Diablo and tell him not to bother you.”

Diablo is a problem.

That bastard thinks too highly of me.

The problem is that I can't completely deny my appearance, because it comes from Shizu-san. That is why I can't allow him to keep in his possession a picture that I don't even know whose work it is.

Souei smiled, as if he was relieved by my promise.

Myourmiles muttered, “No, but…Then Souei-dono will still keep the painting?” But that was probably an unnecessary worry.

“Souei is very popular, so you can rest assured, right?”

When I said that, Myourmiles nodded with a delicate expression.

We ended the conversation by agreeing to investigate the source of the paintings thoroughly.

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With only a few hours left until nightfall, we got down to business.

“I'm glad to hear that your plans are going well, but what are your plans for the future?”

“That's the thing. I've been meaning to ask you about the current situation.”

“Well, then shall I tell you?”

“No, I've been getting flooded with inquiries about that. I've invited you to the party today and we'll have a meeting tomorrow.”

“Oh! Impressive, Myourmiles-kun. You've got it all planned out.”

“Wahaha! Of course!”

We had been talking about the same thing over and over again and I was getting bored. Thanks to Myourmiles, we’d be able to do it all at once.

In that case, I’ll just get a report from Myourmiles.

The plan was going well.

It seems that there was almost no one left to oppose the ‘Three Drunk Sages (Riega)’ as they took over underground organizations one by one.

They had also gained the trust of the public, and now there was no end to the number of noblemen from various countries who wanted to join.

“That's wonderful. You're doing so well it's almost scary.”

“Indeed, it is. In fact, Veryard-dono's skill is so great that he's been expanding his influence in ways I never thought possible. Frankly, he's better than I am.”

“Don't worry. I remember when Veryard-san took one over me. No wonder Myourmiles-kun thinks he's lost.”

“I hate to admit it, but he's a monster. I felt like he was reading my thoughts and leading me to wherever Veryard-dono wanted me to go. Perhaps he’d be a better representative than me, right?”

I don't know about that.

I'm sure he's an excellent man, but whether or not he should be at the top of the organization is a different story.

“I don't think so.”

“…?”

“No, I'm not saying that because I'm good friends with Myourmiles-kun, but because it's actually the boss's job to appreciate the hard work of his subordinates. When you're too good, it's hard to properly appreciate the achievements of others.”

“Hmm, I think I understand what Rimuru-sama is trying to say, but…”

Myourmiles was still unconvinced.

In that case, I’d repeat it here. I could have laughed it off, but I thought it would be better to allay these fears in the early stages.

“People have individual differences, and naturally, their abilities vary, don't they? That's why bosses are expected to assign tasks to their subordinates according to their abilities. On the other hand, people who can work on their own tend to finish everything on their own without relying on others.”

“Huh…”

“So, when a person like that reaches the top, there's a pretty good chance he'll think he's the best and the right one.”

It’s what they call a one-man boss.

They are certainly excellent, but some of them take the extreme view that their subordinates should be able to do their jobs and that they are incompetent if they fail.

Even if the failure is caused by the boss who imposed an unreasonable workload on the subordinate, the boss who thinks he is right may blame the subordinate for the failure. It’s even worse if it’s the president.

There may be no one to point out the problem for fear of being fired, or even if there is, they may not listen to you.

In this respect, I believed that Myourmiles would be fine.

Myourmiles may be a bit of a ‘one-man,’ but he is also humane and has the capacity to accept the failures of his subordinates as his own.

And in the case of Veryard, he is the type of person who discards incompetence.

No, I was exaggerating.

I don't mean that he is cold-blooded or anything like that, but he is the type of person who only looks at the numbers and does not give preferential treatment to people who are unnecessary to the organization.

Such a top executive may contribute to the development of the organization, but that is not the kind of organization I am aiming for. I want the people who belong to the organization to experience the joy of being useful to others.

With the ‘Four Nations Trade Federation’ being set up so far, there is no need to rush to expand the organization. Even if it’s slow, I want this to become a trustworthy organization where one’s fellow members can rely on one another.

Rapid growth tends to create dropouts. That's probably what would happen if Veryard took the top position.

I told Myourmiles, politely.

“…I see, so that was Rimuru-sama's idea.”

“My fears may be unfounded. I don't mean to say that Veryard-san is a bad person, but I think he tends to put efficiency first because he is capable.”

“Well, I can't deny that. So, my role is to make it easier for the people under Veryard-dono to work, right?”

“You're quick to guess. The top position can be a decoration. But it shouldn't be empty. If you can be a portable shrine that everyone feels good about carrying, most things will work out!”

This is not absolutely correct, because it is a case-by-case basis. But in this case, I was convinced that Myourmiles was the right choice.

In the first place, Myourmiles was also the minister of finance in our country, so he should not work too hard as the representative of the “Four Nations Trade Federation.”

He should just reign at the top and assign tasks to his capable subordinates. And it seemed to me that Veryard was better suited to work for someone else than to be at the top himself.

Therefore, I gave my seal of approval to Myourmiles as a suitable representative, but upon hearing that, Myourmiles started laughing.

“Wahaha! As expected of Rimuru-sama, so very humble!”

“…?”

“—!!”

“You idiot! I'm not talking about me, I'm talking about you!!”

Even though I shouted, Myourmiles kept laughing for a while.

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After listening to Myourmiles’ report, it was time for the party to start.

“We have invited noblemen from all over the world today, so Rimuru-sama will be the center of attention. There will be so many guests that you won't have time to take a break, what do you think?”

Hmm, that’s right…

“It's not good for me to be intimidating.”

Needless to say, it was a bad idea, and I also didn’t want to be bothered.

If that was the case, I shouldn't have joined the party in the first place, but today's party would include Gazel, Youm, and King Drum of the Blumund Kingdom.

If the representatives of the four countries is Myourmiles, then they are the ones who are the big supporters. We can't afford not to show our faces.

“Shall I get rid of them myself?”

Souei said so, but with a straight face.

My instincts told me it would be a bloody scourge if I left it to him.

“N-no, it’s okay. With my brilliant interpersonal skills, I'll be able to handle it just fine.”

“I see…I understand. Then, I'll be escorting Rimuru-sama from a short distance away.”

“Yeah, do that.”

Okay, that's a relief.

This time, violence was strictly forbidden since the group was full of high-ranking people.

It doesn't have to be the bigwigs, but if it became an international issue, it wouldn’t be just about us.

“My lord, I am here too, so do not worry!”

Ranga emerged from the shadows, asserting himself.

“Yeah, I'm counting on you!”

Love that guy.

Ranga's gesture soothed me, and my tension was eased.

Riding on that momentum, I went to the venue.

The ninth floor, one floor below, has a large floor plan.

It is designed to be used for various purposes, such as holding meetings with a large number of people, gathering the staff for events, and so on.

And now, the space has been decorated and turned into a party venue with standing tables.

By the way, the eighth floor is a cafeteria for the staff, where one can enjoy a meal while looking at the scenery. Coffee and tea are also available outside of mealtimes, so that business meetings and discussions can be held there.

The food served at the party was, of course, prepared by our chefs.

Assorted pickles, various soups, prosciutto, high-grade steaks, meatballs and roast beef, various pastas, takoyaki, yakisoba, okonomiyaki, curry and rice, hamburgers…huh?

There was no ramen, of course, but there was a lot of stuff on the menu that wouldn't normally be appropriate for a party.

“M-Myourmiles-kun?”

“What is it?”

“Isn't this a weird choice of food?”

“Is that so? This is the most popular menu from the Monster Kingdom's cafeteria.”

“Uh, well yeah, it is, but…huh?”

No, calm down.

Perhaps we should've made the menu more aristocratic, but there is no need to be bound by convention, right?

As long as we have the spirit to bring about a new wind, these menus may be the right choice.

“In the first place, we offered unusual cuisine at the Founding Festival. Rather, some people seemed to be expecting this.”

“I see, no problem then.”

“Well, I won't complain even if there is a problem!”

Hmm! I like your roughness, Myourmiles-kun. I regretted that I was overthinking things and looked around again to see if there were any other problems.

Then my eyes met with the man who was in charge of setting up the venue.

It was Veryard.

“Well, well, Your Majesty Rimuru! Oh, yes, in my current position, would it be acceptable if I called you Rimuru-sama?”

He greeted me with a smiling face, and I nodded my head.

There was nothing wrong with it, but I had bitter memories of Veryard's smile, so I couldn't help but be overly cautious.

This is really no laughing matter for Myourmiles.

However, I think the Blumund Kingdom was more unusual in that it flexibly changed the national system itself.

It would normally be unthinkable in the real-life world, and even if it were an absolute monarchy, it would be a dream to achieve it without bloodshed. The fact that King Drum accomplished it showed me that he was no ordinary person.

He was a genuine gambler, using his own country as a chip.

To be honest, I don't have such courage, so I can only respect him.

As King Drum’s sword, Veryard was not to be underestimated.

“Today's arrangements seem to be very careful and thorough, and I feel comfortable entrusting them to Veryard-dono. Please continue to support Myourmiles.”

“Of course. Also, please just call me Veryard. My father is the patriarch of my family, which used to be the marquis family, but I plan to throw it away without inheriting it.”

“Eh—is that so!?”

No, the status of the nobility will be shaken in the future, but that's only for the lower nobility. The Count status is doubtful, but I think the higher nobility of the Marquis family and above will be safe no matter what the situation is.

“Well, it is certain that we will change our name from aristocrats to noblemen 88 and eventually lose power. After all, I'm the one who proposed this to the Drum King.”

So it’s you!

I should be commended for swallowing those words.

“Hahaha, what, it's just the way of the times. Right now, the aristocracy is running the government, but if the people get wise, they will be dissatisfied with the current situation. We need to gradually transfer the authority to them so that when that happens, they won't be hostile.”

“That's true, but if you've never been in politics before, you can't run a country all of a sudden.”

I replied, and Veryard smirked.

“That's why I'm going to become a commoner now and accept the authority that will be transferred to me.”

Oh, you mean…

It's not cheating, it's a race.

But I understand it's very logical.

That strategy would certainly minimize complaints from the aristocracy.

But really, just how far ahead is this guy moving?

As far as I can tell, he's as smart as anyone else. So much so that I'm afraid to call him out.

Myourmiles was also shaking his head, as if stunned.

‘I told you so, didn't I?’—His eyes seemed to tell me, and I nodded my head in agreement.

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The party started in an orderly fashion.

First, Myourmiles, the representative of the party, greeted the guests, and then King Drum made a toast.

Then the lectures began.

The important thing here is realizing that it is no good to be rude.

I don't need to explain. There are royalty here, so of course it's wrong.

Nevertheless, there are always people who can’t read the atmosphere, and as soon as we started chatting, a crowd formed around me.

Even my brilliant interpersonal skills had their limits!

It’s one thing being surrounded by one or two people, but it’s troublesome if I'm surrounded by more than ten people.

“Your Majesty Rimuru! Please listen to what I have to say!”

“We, too, would like to send a diplomat to your country!”

“We want to trade with you! Regarding the completion of the roads—”

“Hey, you little country, stay out of this!! As for us, my country is close to yours—”

“Oh great, a guy who can’t wait his turn in order. You’re not qualified to be a diplomat!”

“I am the crown prince. If you're talking about order, then rank should come first.”

“Don't bring your own authority to another country!”

“Do you intend to start a war with my country?”

Well, it’s all quite noisy.

There were so many comments that I wanted to respond with an, “I don't know,” and there was even an atmosphere that made one feel like starting a fight. It was all giving me a headache. I can't ignore them, but they are really troublesome to deal with.

This was beyond my imagination.

I guess that just shows how important my position has become, but it's also probably because I was careless.

Because Gazel isn’t being crowded like this.

Even Youm is proudly—Wait no. Is that Myuran guarding you with a smiling face?

I'm jealous.

Well, in Youm's case, he was a sharp-eyed warrior, so I suppose that's why a refined aristocrat wouldn't want to get close to him.

Oh, I wonder if El-tan rarely showed herself because she didn’t want to get involved in such a commotion.

She had said that she has them wait for a turn to see her after going through the formalities, so that she won’t see them without an appointment. I decided I'd do the same from now on.

Nevertheless, my first priority now was to deal with this situation.

As I was pondering what to do, an unexpected person came to my rescue.

“Why don't you all calm down a bit?”

It was Gabbana, who had interfered with me the first time we met.

“His Majesty Rimuru is the demon lord of the great Jura-Tempest Federation, and our greatest supporter. I understand your desperation, but I ask that you refrain yourselves today!”

Gabbana glared at them with a silent pressure, saying “Today is a celebration of new beginnings, so we can discuss business at another time.”

The man who had cried in front of me earlier was now very reliable.

And then there was the reaction of the guests.

“W-Well, well, Gabbana-dono! I've heard that you've become a member of the ‘federation,’ and I'm glad to see you're doing well…”

“Tha-That’s right, I was a bit impatient. It wasn’t for nothing if I was able to greet you today, so if you’ll excuse me—”

“I'm sorry too. I hope we can meet again at a later date through the formal procedure.”

Those who say this and walk away are still better, but most of them run away as quickly as possible. It wasn’t a complimentary attitude, but I didn't want to make a scene.

In the first place, my availability is limited, so Rigurd is the one in charge. Since I only meet with carefully selected people here and there, I’m always sifting through a lot of people.

In the future, I plan to follow El-tan's example and be more strict so that I can try to avoid meeting with troublesome people as much as possible.

So, it’s possible that I may never see these people again. With that in mind, I didn't mind a little rudeness.

Still, I was impressed with Gabbana.

Gabbana was keeping a close eye on me at a distance. Thanks to him, I was able to enjoy the party calmly.

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Now that I was free to move around, I looked around at the other guests.

I had already made arrangements with Gazel and Youm in advance, so there was no need to go out of my way to greet them. They would be present at the meeting tomorrow, so if they had anything important to say, they could say it there.

Today, I just have to broaden my knowledge.

That's why I'm going to make small talk with people I'm interested in.

I looked around for someone, and there she was!

She's so beautiful that everyone was turning to look at her.

Who is it?

Yes, it's Hinata!!

Hinata was wearing a dress with the back wide open.

It was jet-black like a dark night, and studded with jewels like stars.

However, it is not the dress that was noteworthy, but Hinata's own sexiness.

Hinata's hair is short, so the bare skin from the nape of her neck to her waist is fully visible. A ribbon was tied around her neck, but even that accentuated Hinata's sex appeal.



Her pure white skin was dazzling against the black dress.

No, it was too bright!!

It seems to be called a backless dress. I don't know who thought of it, but it's a wonderful design.

I'm saving it in my brain.

No, I'd rather have Ciel-san record this video—

«There is no such function»

No, no, there is, right?

You showed me the information inside the labyrinth with vivid images.

«This is not inside the labyrinth, so the recorded images are inaccessible»

You're joking, right!?

You can definitely do it!

You were even saving the battle records of the labyrinth monsters for us to review later. It's the same thing, just a little more—”

«Negative. Need not recognized»

Why are you responding so mechanically?

Damn it! You're such an unreliable partner at these critical moments, seriously.

It couldn’t be helped, so I asked my slime cells to do their best, and spoke to Hinata with a smile.

“Hello, Hinata-san. You look beautiful again today. That dress looks really good on you!”

Hinata was sipping her wine, put it on the table and turned to me. Then she opened her mouth, her gaze sharp and suspicious.

“Huh? You're a flatterer now, aren't you?”

“No, I'm not! I'm serious. It’s not flattery!”

I'm not very good at complimenting people on things I don't mean, so I'm being half truthful.

And yet, Hinata snickered and didn't take it seriously.

I couldn't let the conversation end there.

Thinking that way, I desperately tried to repeat myself.

“Anyway, you really are bold. I don't mean to be rude, but I didn't think Hinata would wear a dress that aggressive.”

She glared at me.

I gulped and swallowed the rest of my words.

Uh-oh. I feel like I'm becoming less and less likable.

“If you think it's rude, then maybe you shouldn't say it.”

“I'm sorry, you're right!”

I shouldn't have crossed her. An apology was the only option.

Hinata's eyes glazed over.

I'm getting impatient.

That's when I sensed the aroma of wine.

Hinata's sigh was endlessly sexy.

The back view was also sexy, but the front view was already nosebleed-inducing.

The dress was neck-length, but sleeveless, so there was nothing to hide her white shoulders. And most importantly, from side to side—

“What are you looking at? I’m gonna kill you.”

“I'm sorry.”

Failure, a failure.

I forgot I was in human form and stared at her.

In that case, they’d know by looking at me.

I’m just grateful my body can’t have nosebleeds.

“Ruminas insisted I wear this,” Hinata said.

Nice work, Ruminas!

I'd like to give you a big thumbs up.

I can picture Ruminas with a smug look on her face, and I respect her for it.

While inwardly leaping to praise Ruminas, I kept a cool expression on my face.

“Hmm, you're right. Ruminas is right. Because you really look beautiful today.”

I say so with a crisp expression.

I am not afraid of Hinata's stare because I really mean it.

—No, that’s a lie. The truth is, I was really scared.

“Not that again—”

Covering Hinata's dumbfounded words with my lips—it would have been perfect if I could have imitated something like that, but one wrong move and it wouldn't have been sexual harassment. I'd be a sexual predator, and I'm a chicken-hearted person, so I didn't have the courage to go that far.

That’s why I told her in sincere words, “It's true!”

Then I saw Hinata's cheeks turn red.

I got this!

I'm the best today.

«It’s only because she’s drunk»

—Hm?

I turned my attention to the wine that Hinata was drinking.

“What? Isn't this a bit high in alcohol?”

“Is that so? It's really good.”

Does Hinata have a surprisingly low tolerance for alcohol?

She doesn't look like it, but that's what Ciel-san says…

I've always been interested in her sex appeal, so I wanted to know how she was doing in that area.

I held up three fingers and asked Hinata.

“How many fingers am I holding up?”

“Do you think I'm stupid?”

“No, no, no, I’d never do that—”

As I hurriedly denied it, Hinata let out a big sigh.

“You know, I'm still a Saint, right? I've traveled with Chloe, and Ruminas has taught me a lot since I came back to life, so I can detoxify alcohol if I want to!”

Can it be that you tricked me, Ciel-san!?

If that's the case, you're right.

Let's just say that after that, it was very difficult to calm down the angry Hinata.

So, time went by without me having time to ask why Hinata's cheeks were so red.

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It was the day after the party.

After the lunch break, the meeting began.

The participants—

The first five were the rulers of the countries supporting the Four Nations—myself, Gazel, Youm, Myuran, and King Drum.

All of us had already reached a consensus regarding this topic, so this time, we’d only be participating for approval.

Next was Myourmiles, who was nominated as a representative by the four of us excluding Myuran, and Hinata who was representing the Western Saints Church.

From the Western States Council, there was the chairman himself. I think his name was Lester. As always, he had a bushy white beard.

The rest were carefully selected members from various countries, about thirty total, all gathered in the conference room.

Veryard also participated as a secretary.

Cien stepped forward as the moderator.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us here today. Well then, let us begin at once. Allow me to start by explaining the crisis that will occur in the near future.”

And with that, Cien began his explanation.

The purpose of today's meeting is exactly what Myourmiles wanted to hear yesterday.

The existence of a definite enemy and their goals.

The anticipated effects of the war and how we should deal with them.

The participants were carefully selected in order to avoid fear due to panicking.

No amount of crying or screaming would change the reality, so we needed to take optimal action as much as possible. In order to do this, the leader must never be flustered, but that was easier said than done.

So first, let’s move on to the explanation

I have given the same explanation many times, so I was grateful to Myourmiles for arranging this occasion.

Cien's explanation ended.

“…And so, Demon Lord Rimuru-sama has won the war against the Empire, but a new enemy, Michael, has emerged.”

Chancellor Lester muttered, followed by the senators from the various countries.

“And this Michael is leading the angels?”

“It's the Tenma Great War. I didn't think the 500-year cycle of disasters would happen in during lifetime…”

Hearing that, I decided to add something to the conversation to avoid any misunderstanding.

I raised my hand to speak.

“Well, as I’ve just explained, the enemy's goal is to revive Veldanava. We can only speculate on the method, not prove it. And most importantly, we don't know exactly when. We think it will be soon, but Michael is a long-lived species. It could be tomorrow, it could be in a few years, and it could even be in a few decades.”

That was the most troubling part.

We didn’t know when it would happen.

For the time being, if there was any movement, we would know it from Dino's daily report. The accuracy of that information would be shared with Obera via Milim for confirmation.

So far, Michael had not moved.

It was eerie, but there was nothing we could do about it, so we left it alone.

In that case, it was important to keep vigilance against the enemy who may attack at any moment, but we would still have to continue our daily activities…

It had been the same in Japan. The rate of occurrence of a major subduction zone earthquake within 10 years was 60 percent, and within 30 years it was as high as 99 percent, but that was just how we lived our daily lives.

In order not to be troubled when something happens, we should prepare in advance. Then, we should cherish our daily lives, I guess.

In fact, I was more afraid of volcanoes than earthquakes, but that's because they were natural disasters that were impossible to deal with.

It was said that if a huge caldera eruption occurred on Mount Aso, it would have caused catastrophic damage. It was also called a catastrophic eruption, and there would have been no escape from it in Japan.

Some parts of Hokkaido might have been safe, but there was no doubt that Japan would be destroyed.

That was a hypothetical story—

Even if it was predicted, and the government had said that it would happen within a year, it would still be doubtful…

It would be doubtful that it would actually happen, and there would be no escape plan even if one wanted to believe it.

There was no country that would accept all of Japan’s citizens, and it was also doubtful that people could escape to other countries one by one.

Of course, if the prediction were 100% certain, the government would do everything they can, but if the political system was different, it was unlikely to be accepted, and in the end, only those who can rely on their own contacts would be able to escape.

I also think that somewhere in the back of my mind, there was the thought that ‘if something happens, then we'll talk about it when it happens.’ It was better to live happily every day rather than to worry too much and live in fear every day.

It doesn't mean that the place you escape to would be absolutely safe, but I guess you could think of it as a natural disaster because there's no point in thinking of it otherwise.

There is a saying, “Do your best and wait for your destiny,” meaning that it is better to do the best you can in the moment to live like a human being.

“Therefore, I want people to cherish their daily lives while preparing for Michael's attack at any time. That is why I only want the leadership to know about this fact. I hope you will cooperate with us with that in mind.”

I concluded my remarks.

Everyone was silent as I spoke.

Some of them groaned loudly.

After tens of seconds had passed without anyone speaking, Hinata broke the silence.

“The  Western Saints Church pledges its full support.”

Hinata's statement was followed by Chancellor Lester.

“Well, that makes sense. The development plans being hurriedly carried out by the Western nations were preparations for that, weren't they?”

Cien nodded in agreement.

“That is correct. Everything is as Rimuru-sama wills it.”

In addition to laying the rails for the ‘magic train,’ the construction of the e station building was also underway. The station was then expanded to provide an evacuation site for the residents of the surrounding area.

During normal times, the building could be used as a gymnasium, an auditorium, or for various other purposes.

I was going use this occasion to ask them to hold evacuations drill for the local residents. But before I could say anything else, Chairman Lester spoke up.

“The important thing is to prepare in advance, which makes sense. I understand. I personally do not have the authority to interfere in the policies of other countries, but I can suggest evacuation drills as a possible solution. I'd be happy to help.”

“Indeed. I am only a member of the council, but back home I am a marquis. I will advise the king and have my people trained.”

“That's very good. I will cooperate!”

The councilors also agreed.

It was much quicker than I expected.

It was probably because they had been carefully selected and there were no fools who would argue here.

Or rather, Myourmiles said that the meeting would be held in a small group so that this would happen. The reason is that a large group of people would not be able to reach a consensus on such an important decision. The idea was to persuade a small group of powerful people first, and then let the remaining members persuade the others individually.

It can be said that his plan was successful.

Still, it was unclear how the council would vote on this, but about that—

“Hohoho. Your Majesty Rimuru seems to be worried about the council's decision, but you can rest assured, because there is no one who can stand against Testarossa-dono.”

Huh?

“Hahaha, that is true. Your life is more important than your own interests. Whether it's a matter of life and death for your country, or if it's a matter of whether or not to train your people to evacuate, you should obey the voice of Testarossa-dono.”

“Correct. This is not a matter I want to fight to get my opinion across.”

“Yes. Since this is beneficial to us as well, I think it will pass unanimously.”

The reaction of the senators was not what Myourmiles and I had expected.

It almost felt like there was no need to be cautious explain in advance.

“Well, I guess I was wrong about that, too. I've never met her, but Testarossa seems to be quite the remarkable person.

Veryard was impressed.

The eyes of the senators looking at Veryard were warm.

I don’t know if they were being kind, or envious…

“Huh, aren't you all a little too careless? I am Testarossa-sama's loyal servant, despite my appearance. I am obligated to report on this meeting, so please do not forget that.”

Cien was the one who interrupted, but when the senators heard him, they fell into a panic.

“It's a misunderstanding! Please believe me!!”

“I didn't mean any disrespect, I was just praising her leadership—”

“I'm telling the truth—Oh! Ahh! Glory to Testarossa-sama!!”

I don't know what to say about the last guy, but his emotions and desperation were palpable. I hadn't expected Testarossa to be feared so much, so I was surprised.

“Cien, stop bullying everyone.”

I said, rebuking the laughing Cien.

And it seems that Veryard had also realized Testarossa's menace with just this exchange.

“Hmm, I thought we should meet once, but Testarossa-dono seems to be busy, so let's not. So, are we done with the meeting for today?”

And just like that, he moved aside without stepping into the minefield.

His ability to foresee danger was something to learn from, and I acknowledged Veryard's excellence once again.

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The meeting was over, but I remembered that I had one more thing to tell everyone.

“Oh, yes. I heard from Testarossa that Masayuki, who became the Emperor of the East, wants to establish a cooperative relationship with the West. He wants to join the Western States Council, so what do you say?”

This was reported on the 'Telepathy Net' just before I came here.

I told them in a light-hearted way, but most of them stopped moving as if in shock.

“““—Wha?”””

They all turned to look at me, their eyes wide open.

The only ones who weren’t surprised were Gazel, Youm, Myourmiles, and Cien, whom I had explained to beforehand.

I hadn't even told King Drum yet, and he was just as shocked as Veryard. It’s a secret, but I was a little satisfied to see his surprised face, which was so rarely seen.

But it seems that what I said was a bigger bomb than I had thought it would be.

“I didn't hear about that!”

“I just told you.”

“Did you know, King Gazel?”

“Hm, I was consulted, but I haven’t heard any details. I didn't even know they were that far along.”

Oh, so Gazel knew?

«No, we have discussed the hopes for that to happen, but haven’t talked about any specifics, including dates and times»

That may have been the case.

There was a bit of a timing lapse, but since I have a cell phone, I probably should have told him.

I was going to meet him today anyway, so I had thought I'd explain it there. But it wasn’t convenient, so I just decided to announce it here and now.

“So, Youm didn't know about it either, right?”

“Yeah, I didn’t hear about it.”

“Then why aren't you surprised?”

“Oh. If I became surprised every time the Boss did something like this, I wouldn’t be able to survive.”

I feel like I was just dissed in a grand way.

Myuran, who was listening beside him, put her hand on his head, but she didn't say anything, so I guess she must have agreed with him.

In that case, the stares coming everyone are a little painful.

“I’m appalled. Why do you always have to talk about important things as if they're nothing?”

Hinata's stare was painful.

“We-Well, even if you say that…”

I couldn't help but use honorifics 89 . Could it be that this was my fault?

I had been so preoccupied with the battle against Michael that I thought it was only natural for the Empire to take a cooperative stance.

We had been supporting them so that they’d be in line with us. I didn't expect everyone to be this surprised, because it was only natural for this to happen.

“You don't seem to be remorseful.”

Guah!?

“Wait a minute, Hinata-san! You knew that our country and the Empire were at war, right? We won, so we exercised our rights as the victorious nation and decided to cooperate from now on. That would inevitably lead cooperation with the West!”

I blurted out my excuses in a spirited manner.

However, Hinata's eyes did not stop staring.

Well, you know.

I'm not wrong, but I might have made a mistake in not telling them.

It's not like I didn't have any means of communication, and saying “I was busy” was no excuse.

In that case, I was at fault, too.

I was about to give an apology—but suddenly, Veryard nodded deeply and offered me a helping hand.

“You are quite right. This is not His Majesty Rimuru’s fault, but rather ours for not asking for the details.”

You understand, you do understand, Veryard-kun!

As expected of the smartest man I know, I couldn't ask for a better ally.

Hinata and Veryard glare at each other.

Hinata is the one who breaks.

“Well, yes. It only took a little thought to realize that Rimuru would do what was best for us. It's just—”

“Just?”

“It's just that, given the common sense of those of us who live in the western economic sphere, it's hard to believe that an empire that’s been our enemy since ancient times would behave in such a way. It's just that our preconceptions were too big to consider this possibility…”

Hinata looked frustrated.

It wasn’t hard to understand.

It's like a superpower that had been hostile for such a long time was suddenly offering to reconcile.

I suppose one should first be skeptical, but the fact that it came from me, the victor, was significant.

There was little risk in simply building a cooperative relationship, and at a time when the Great War was about to begin, it would be foolish for humans to go to war with each other.

“Your Majesty Rimuru, I would like to ask you—”

“What is it?”

I encourage the questioner, Chancellor Lester, to speak.

“The discussion with the Empire, where will it take place? And one more thing, when you referred to the Imperial Emperor as ‘Masayuki,’ are you referring to ‘Masayuki-dono the ‘Shining?’”

Chancellor Lester was excited.

The second question caused a louder buzz than the first. I realized that I hadn't explained myself well enough, as the others were getting excited too.

“Well, the meeting is in the Ingracia Kingdom. He said he would like to attend the next council meeting if possible, as soon as possible. And to answer your second question, Lester, you are correct. My friend, Chosen Hero Masayuki, was recently crowned as Emperor.”

As soon as I said that, the conference room erupted in applause.

“That's great! As expected of Masayuki-sama!”

“Yes, how wonderful! Now we can avoid war.”

“I don't know how this is possible, but I guess anything is possible with Masayuki-sama!”

“You're right! Even the Evil Empire was not an enemy of Masayuki-sama!!”

And all hell broke loose.

“I had heard of the coronation of the new Emperor, but I had no idea it was Masayuki-dono…”

Even Chancellor Lester was in tears, but this reaction was unexpected.

Somehow, I think I've done Masayuki a disservice…

There’s no such thing as a space opera story where a Chosen Hero overthrows the Empire!

Of course, if you think about it normally, it's impossible for an individual to overthrow a country. The fact that they can believe that such a thing has taken place shows that they have a ridiculous amount of faith in Masayuki.

But now that it's happened, there's nothing I can do.

“Well, that's the way it is. I don't know the details, so you'll have to ask him yourself.”

With that said, I threw all the trouble onto Masayuki, who knew nothing about the situation.

In this way, the plan to implement the evacuation drills was shared, and it was decided that the new Emperor of the Eastern Empire would be present at the next council meeting.

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—So that’s how I’ve spent the last five months.

There have been a few small mistakes, but the preparations have proceeded steadily.

The next council meeting is scheduled for two weeks from now in Ingracia, and the consensus between Masayuki and the council leaders is sound. In effect, the Empire's accession is expected to be approved.

It was safe to say that Testarossa would take care of that.

On the surface, the unification of humanity has been achieved.

The demon lord's forces are well prepared.

Now, we just have to hope that the enemy's strength is not greater than expected…

As I was thinking this, I suddenly received a call from Dino.

‘‘Ah, it’s Dino, can you hear me?’’

‘‘Of course I can. So, has there been any movement?’’

It wasn’t in the morning, so I'm pretty sure something had happened.

‘‘Hmm, I'd say there was, so I'll keep in touch for the time being. But there are so many things to say, and it's difficult to decide where to start…’’

Huh?

He was talking in an incomprehensible manner, but I was sure that something had happened.

The peaceful daily life came to an end as soon as I heard the news.

Notes:

[59]

In Japanese, it says that he “Immediately contacted him and nailed him to the wall.” But I changed it to make more sense in english.

[60]

Other translations are honesty,  trustworthiness, candor, etc.

[61]

Is “remorseful” or “regretful” are other translations.

[62]

MTL had it as “Mainly, me.”

[63]

He probably means the Walpurgis.

[64]

This translation was a bit tricky for me. I think that 天通閣 (romanized as ‘tentongkaku’ in the MTLs which made no sense) is similar to the “Tsūtenkaku (通天閣)” which is a real tower in Osaka, Japan. Based on the Chinese characters, other translations can be “Tower Reaching Heaven” or “Sky Reaching Pavilion.” For me, the “Heavenward Pavilion” sounded the best, and is what I’ll be using until actual translators decide otherwise.

[65]

All of the MTLs were confusing. “Sajikagen (匙加減)” is a Japanese idiom for making adjustments based on skill/feel. However, it is also the noun for “manners of seasoning.” In the next few paragraphs, they start talking about music as if it’s like cooking/seasoning, so it was hard for me to tell which translation to use.

[66]

The word used for these three was “Taikomochi (太鼓持).” Taikomochi are also known as male geisha’s, but in this context, they are referred to by the less formal form meaning “jester/drummer/drumbeater” or “someone who flatters.”

[67]

In Japanese, it says “his temples were streaked in blue” which I’m assuming are the veins.

[68]

“大門” or “Daimon” = Big/Great Gate.

[69]

I brought up in V17, but here is a reminder. This is a Japanese acronym, but it doesn’t correlate in English. The ‘Three Drunk Sages’ are called the ‘Sankensui’ or the ‘Riega’ (no kanji) in Japanese, so the ‘Ri’ from Rimuru, the ‘E’ from Elmesia, and the ‘Ga’ from Gard (Myourmiles) combine to create the ‘Riega’.

[70]

Another translation might be, “there are so many things to lose if I don’t do anything.”

[71]

“Fuzakeru na” can also mean “don’t mess around/don’t be silly,” but it also means “fuck off” of “stop fucking around” if used in an aggressive manner like Leon is using with Rimuru.

[72]

“A “Maip?se (Mai ペース)” or a “My pace” type of person, is someone who goes at their own pace, doing their own thing, at their own time/schedule. Basically, they do whatever they want and the world revolves around what they think—'my pace’. It’s a Japanese term not really found in English.

[73]

Just as Elmesia uses the -cchi at the end of Rimuru’s nickname to give it a cutesy feel, Rimuru does the same thing with her. He calls her El-tan. The “-tan” part gives off the childlike/cutesy feeling like with -cchi.

[74]

Not 100% sure, but I think that “Gokatotsu (五華突)” roughly translates to something like the “Five Flower Slash/Strikes.”

[75]

Specifically, the Yaezakura is a cherry blossome with more than 5 petals)

[76]

He uses informal honorifics (‘omae’) when speaking with Gadra. It is common in Asian culture to refer to the elderly with a formal tone.

[77]

 Rimuru actually says “Yes” in English for this sentence.  “I~esu”

[78]

Youm refers to Rimuru as ‘Danna.’ It can also mean ‘Sir’ or ‘Master’ in this situation.

[79]

A botton toilet is an old style of Japanese toilet. Example: https://3dmdb.com/en/3d-model/Japanese-Old-Toilet-Botton-Type-C/4563565/

[80]

“Rimuru-heika” = His Majesty Rimuru

[81]

Grucius calls Myuran with no honorifics which is something that people only do when they are very close.

[82]

“Sonshi (尊師)” can refer to a ‘guru’ or a ‘holy master’ who is like a religious/spiritual leader.

[83]

Pochi is a generic Japanese name for a dog (kind of like Fido). His title is basically calling him a little errand dog.

[84]

Kagerō (陽炎) = Heat Haze. They also called it ‘Yōen.’ So feel free to refer to this as ‘Kagerō,’ or ‘Yōen, as well. I’m here getting One Piece vibes…

[85]

‘Byakko Seiryugeki.’

[86]

‘Kyuubi Senkougeki (九尾穿孔撃)’

[87]

Maka (マカ) or 魔化 could mean a variety of things that I’m not 100% sure of. ‘Ma’ can either mean devil/demon or magic depending on how you look at it. And the ‘Ka’ can mean ‘-ification’ or ‘reinforced’ or ‘made of,’ or a bunch of other things. Perhaps it’s a way of saying ‘Magic Made’ glass or something. Or it’s just a pun because Maka sounds like Micah.

[88]

From ‘Kizoku’ to ‘Kazoku.’ I think this is implying that the nobility is going to change from pure blood nobility, to inherited nobility. But there’s no good way to translate this in English.

[89]

Rimuru started speaking more formally.