AFTERWORD

Long time no see. Here we are at Volume 9. The deadline for this one came early for me, so it’s a relief that I got it submitted in time.

Volume 9 counts as the continuation of the “Demon City Opens” arc from the web novels, and really, now that I’m done writing it, it was absolutely crazy that I thought to cram the contents of Volumes 8 and 9 into a single book. The last volume had returned back to normal with fewer pages, but this one has, well, yo-yoed back up. Yes, yo-yoed. My diet was successful, I let my guard down, and boom, I’m right back where I came from. My own weight’s the same way, actually; I yo-yoed back up around fifteen pounds because I don’t have the free time for exercise when writing. Next time, I’ll try to spread things out some more so it doesn’t turn out like this.

Really, the first thing here needs to be the plot. Of course, the term plot is a little nebulous, so let’s use some more concrete terms.

First, write out the characters and events that’re appearing!

You gotta do that, at least. It’s very important, as I learned the hard way; time lines and relationship charts play second fiddle.

Why am I saying this? Because toward the end of writing, I kept on making serious errors along the lines of “Ah, I forgot to put this event in!” or “Ah, I haven’t inserted this character yet…”

Honestly, there are too many characters in this volume. I regret that a little, but I’m just going to say it. I couldn’t help it. This volume depicts a big festival, and it was hard to cut anyone out.

This makes me recall a conversation I had with my editor, Mr. I, early on in this series—while I was writing Volume 2, maybe.

“I like how you aren’t introducing too many characters for the first time in this volume.”

“Oh, you think so?”

“Yeah. If readers don’t remember characters, they’ll start to have trouble figuring out who’s who. Then they won’t be able to focus on the story.”

“I see…”

“That, and designing visuals for them all can be difficult, among other reasons.”

“Should I maybe remove some? People like Kurobe don’t appear much. Maybe I could combine Hakuro with the blacksmith character?”

“Nah, you’re doing fine now. Slime has a lot of unique characters, so I think it’d be more of a problem if you cut them in weird ways!”

…That sort of thing. I’m not as confident with my memory skills as I used to be, so I think I’m filling in some of the hazier points, but that was the gist of the conversation.

At the time, I just thought, Ah, neat, so I don’t have to cut anyone. Kurobe exists as he is today thanks to Mr. I. So, with this get-out-of-jail-free card, I no longer restrained myself from introducing new characters.

Then, while writing Volume 7, I contacted him one day…

“Ummm, if we could talk…”

“Sure, what is it?”

“I’m going to have some more people serving Hinata, but is that okay?”

“…How many are we talking?”

“You see, I’m planning for six captains, plus around three other people.”

“That sounds like a lot to me—”

“Well, wait a minute. You know Hinata is responsible for two different groups, right? Don’t you think we’re gonna need to name a fair amount of people under her?”

“If you put it that way…”

“Also, I want to beef up the Luminus side, so I’d like to add some other main characters to it!”

“I see! All right. In that case, let’s go with it!”

Thus, although he realized I was favoring my beloved Luminus, Mr. I was convinced to let me add Arnaud and the other paladins, as well as the Three Battlesages.

Now, going from Volume 8 to Volume 9, all these characters are getting woven in with new ones, and it’s turning into a huge crowd. The thought was, Oh man, it’s gonna be chaos. If I had given names for everyone first thing, I could’ve avoided these kinds of mistakes. I learn something new every day, I suppose, and I’ll be using that knowledge going forward.

So I remembered all of this as I completed my final check, and then I realized:

Wait, the Three Battlesages don’t appear at all, do they?

Come to think of it, Glenda double-crossed Luminus and shacked up with the Rozzos, but what have Saare and Grigori been up to in the meantime? As all of you saw in Volume 9— Oh wait, you didn’t, because they never showed.

Ah well. These things happen. Characters who even the author almost forgot about who didn’t appear this time are bound to come back in the future, so keep an eye out for their exploits!

Moving on, I need to give everyone a notice about a mistake I made.

In the Japanese edition, Emperor Luminus refers to herself in the first person as warawa, which (in my mind) reflects a very prim, fussy noblewoman. However, it turns out that warawa in the Japanese language is actually a self-deprecating, humble personal pronoun. I had the completely wrong impression.

I actually knew this by the time Luminus appears in the print novel version, but I thought changing things at this point would be too strange, so I’m still going with warawa.

There was a time in the web novel version when I used the Japanese term yakubusoku to mean “not up to a task” when it actually means “overqualified for a task,” which a lot of people pointed out was wrong. Honestly, I wish I could’ve kept that in the print version. I hoped that readers would understand what I meant even though I misused the term. However, deliberately misusing vocabulary in a printed piece of literature might prevent people from learning the correct meaning of words later on. I think a writer should be allowed freedom of expression, but yes, it’s important to use vocab correctly, or at least discourage incorrect usage.

As for Luminus, nothing’s been altered for her, so I just want to make it clear here:

Luminus has no intention of acting humble or deferential toward anyone!!

Just think of her as arrogantly calling herself warawa, as befits her atmosphere. Thanks.

Now I’m almost out of afterword pages. Once again, Mr. I just called me up and said, “Hey, six afterword pages please, okay?” Hoo boy. My first draft already had a ton of text, and as we revised it, I expanded my depictions of some characters—and now this afterword. It looks like Mr. I has once again lost any resistance to these volumes getting thicker and thicker.

I can’t complain, since it beats being asked to pare it down. Okay, that’s not entirely true. But I’m a little concerned about how the next volume will turn out. The plot’s really going to start moving, I think, so…

With all the events in store, I’m excited to see how I’m going to piece the story together. I’m hoping to really focus on the plot this time, starting with a scene in the labyrinth I couldn’t quite flesh out in this volume.

See you in the next volume!