Kondo Tatsuya said, drawing his military knife.

Seeing the way Gazel's sword was raised, he couldn't help but sigh.

"Tease, that's beautiful. The Sword Sage doesn't look like he's a fool.”

It was by no means a polite remark, a genuine compliment, but Gazel snorted in response.

"Don't be ridiculous. It's just sarcasm to hear you say that.”

This is also true.

The reason why is because Kondo's frame is also so beautiful that even Gazel can't find a break at all.

The current Kondo was holding the Saber in both hands.

Unlike the fight with Footman, there was no slack in the stance.

And even more surprising.

The two were exactly the same as if they had made a date.

After several rounds of silent sparring, the two have largely grasped each other's strength, so it is no coincidence that they are already convinced of the same frame.

Gazel’s sword skills were learned from Hakurou, and there were also some unique sword skills woven into them, but the basic stance was still faithful to Hakurou's teaching.

Hakurou's "Mizuru" Sword Art was inherited from his grandfather, Araki Byakuya.

No one other than Hakurou passed on the genre.

Even Gazel, who was a direct disciple, did not have a full grasp of the Mizuru, and he knew very well that there were mysteries that he had never seen.

However…

In the Land of Monsters, Hakurou was responsible for training soldiers as an "instructor", and of course he would teach them the basics of swordsmanship, but it was hard to imagine that swordsmanship would spread from there to the Empire.

After all, sword skills were not something that could be mastered overnight.

So, Gazel asked for the exit.

Coincidentally, Kondo asked the same question.

"That style, why do you know Mizuru?”

"I always thought it was possible that His Majesty's sword skills were similar to my Mizushin Lifestream. Who did you learn this from?”"

“……”

 “……”

The duo stared at each other.

The first to speak was Gazel.

"The Mizushin Lifestream…are you saying that it's different from the Mizushin?"

Kondo faced expressionlessly as he listened to the question and pondered it in his mind.

 In the Dwarven Kingdom, the combination of a one-handed sword and a shield is the mainstream orthodox swordplay, so it seems that the existence of a certain magical creature with great swordplay skills is linked to this information.

There was little intelligence, but Kondo was basically close to the right answer.

Faced with such a Kondo, Gazel asked as if anxious.

"Aren't you going to answer my question?”

"Don't worry about it yet. Mizuru is probably the same genre as the one I studied, so I'm asking, ‘Is it possible that the same genre can be derived by chance in this world?’"

"Hmm, too…”

Muttering, Gazel recalled.

While cultivating, he had heard about Old Grandfather Byakuya.

"My master, His Excellency Hakurou, has heard that his grandfather taught him the Mizuru. It's said that his grandfather was a "visitor" from the other world, so that explains it.”

Unbeknownst to both Gazel and Kondo, Araki Byakuya had a younger brother, who had become the originator of the Kaikyo sect in place of his older brother, and who taught the Mizushin Lifestream in the world where Kondo was born.

Fighting monsters and spirits as a sword to exorcise them.

Kondo was also one of those who fought against the monsters and learned the "Mizushin Lifestream"

in a position close to the source stream.

"Kukuku, it's funny to be in the same family.”

Kondo smiled cheerfully, a rare occurrence.

He never shows any emotion in his life, but this smile highlights his coldness.

"I have a proposal, Your Majesty, Gazel.”

“What?"

"Fellowship. With His Majesty Gazel's strength, he is strong enough to join the Empire. If you can swear to disarm and serve our emperor, I promise you I will stop all aggression against your country.”

 "Do you think I will accept your proposal?”

"Yes, I will. It's the best way to reduce casualties.”

Kondo was right, thought Gazel.

This was a desperately needed proposal, and it was only right to accept it if the people of the Dwarven Kingdom were to be protected.

As monarchs, one should not be bitter, one should accept.

Now that the threat of Velgrynd was known, there was no way to win. This battle, originally, had no clearly defined conditions for absolute victory.

Before inflicting heavy casualties, Rimuru and the others would go head-to-head with Rudra—and that optimistic speculation is all there is to it.

 If it's for the people's sake…

Thinking about it, Gazel smiled as if he had thrown away his confusion.

"Ridiculous! You think you've already won. It seems you don't know that you've lost Kondo! See how I correct you for your arrogant thoughts!”

Shouting, Gazel focused his thoughts on the enemy in front of him.

The sage's dominance has been fully liberated by the unity of mind, body and spirit with the sword.

What unfolded there was a heroic pose that was close to reaching the Awakening Demon Lord.

Nevertheless…

Kondo remained calm at the sight of such a Gazel.

"It's a pity that the so called Sage King is just a name. Then there's no other way. I'll take care of you before your reputation goes down the drain.”

These words are the signal for war between the “saints."

A few minutes passed.

Kondo is starting to get the upper hand.

The ''Heroic Hegemony'' released by Gazel was easily counteracted by Kondo, and by winding the Hegemony, all the effects were nullified.

Even if you look at pure swordplay, Kondo is able to use his dexterous body movement to counterattack with a blinding wind and thunder, and then he can use his fastest assault technique, the purple electric surge, while Gazel is able to use a running water chopper to break up his attack.

The same-kind know each other too well.

Slowly, Gazel's counterpart gradually became slower, acquiring more sword skills or Kondo.

 "Indeed, there is a sword skill that is not passed down from the Mizushin Lifestream, but even I, who is close to my bloodline, can't grasp the full picture. I'm still wondering how far the Monster has come to understand the essence of the sword.”

That was Kondo's honest opinion.

But this was in no way a despise for Hakurou.

The sword path is profound and unending.

Kondo says this because he is proud of his genre.

But this angered Gazel.

"Is this an insult to my master?”

Gazel glared at Kondo even more imposingly.

And then, there was one more.

"I say, Lord Gazel, it's easy to lose your mind on the battlefield, it's not enough to cultivate. I'll take your place for a while, and you stay here and calm down.”

Hakurou, who led the follow-on troops as Gobya's counselor, arrived belatedly.

\*\*\*