

Dino stood up and tried to fulfill his assigned role.

He hated working, and he was reluctant, but he could not refuse the request from someone he had known for a long time.

Above all, he was driven by a compulsive notion that he had to do it.

However, his actions were unexpectedly interrupted.

“Huh? Dino-san, what are you doing…?”

Dino knew that his plan had failed the moment he heard Shinji’s voice.

He had planned to finish everything quickly so that no one would notice, but was interrupted by the timing of divine intervention.

No one should have been able to read Dino’s actions, but there was a blunder.

Beretta grabbed Ramiris’ hand just as he reached out to grab her.

It all happened instantaneously.

If Shinji had not spoken, Dino would not have been noticed.

“What do you think you’re doing, Dino-sama?”

“I’m honestly surprised. I didn’t expect to be interrupted. Good grief, I was so wary because of your presence, and was looking for an opportunity to relax.”

“…….”

“Give me a break, Shinji. You’ve got all the makings of a big shot.”

Dino complained, but he meant what he said. He knew that there were only a few people in this world who could have seen through what he was doing.

Dino had been so confident, but now it was all a waste of time.

Dino let out a long, depressed sigh, then gave Shinji a glare. Then, shaking his head, he turned his gaze back and looked at Beretta with narrowed eyes.

Shinji and the others finally understood that the situation had become more serious than usual. But that didn’t mean they could easily do anything about it.

Alpha and the others moved to surround Dino while picking up Ramiris from Beretta’s shoulder to protect her.

“…Eh? Eh—?!”

Ramiris, who had been unable to keep up with the sudden turn of events, seemed to be trying desperately to make sense of the situation as she looked alternately between Beretta and Dino.

Shinji distanced himself from Dino to take care of Vesta. However, Shinji’s companions, Mark, and the others, remained in place.

They seemed to have fallen asleep in spite of the situation. It was obvious to everyone that this was abnormal.

“Hey, Dino-san! You did something, didn’t you?!”

Shinji shouted, to which Dino replied lazily.

“Well, yeah. But really, if you’re resisting my power, then your skills must be pretty good too. I’m impressed, Shinji.”

“I’m not happy about the compliment.”

Shinji replied as such, even though he was actually a bit flattered.

Dino only shrugged his shoulders.

He had complimented Shinji, but did not look at him as if he did not care.

He only looked over Beretta’s shoulder to Ramiris and spoke.

“Ramiris, I’m sorry, but can you cooperate with us? I don’t want to get rough with you, and I promise to take good care of you if you cooperate. Look, we don’t want to shed wasteful blood on each other, right? So, why don’t you just come with me?”

Dino said this with a serious expression on his face.

Needless to say, Ramiris’s reaction to this was rejection.

“Huh? You’re the one who’s talking out of your mind. What the hell are you doing? If you keep talking like that, Rimuru will beat you to a pulp when he comes back.”

Ramiris was borrowing the authority of others as always, but she was not wrong in her words.

So Dino could only laugh bitterly.

“That’s right. I figured you would say that. But I can’t justify that as enough for now. After all, I am still the Watcher, even if I don’t want to be.”

“When you say “Watcher,” do you mean from the Seven Primordial Angels who were of Veldanava-sama’s inner circle?”

“Correct. Actually, I used to be one of the Primordial Angels. After Feldway and the others left for the other world, I was assigned to watch over the surface.”

“You’re got to be kidding?!”

“No, this couldn’t be more true.”

For Ramiris, this was a shocking fact that she had only just now learned.

She was always thinking that Dino was as much of a liability to the Demon Lords as herself, not realizing that he was actually an important figure. Ramiris could never have imagined that Veldanava, the creator god, had named him himself.

Incidentally, Ramiris had also been named by Veldanava, but she had forgotten all about it due to being reincarnated too many times. She would remember everything once she became whole, but she did not know when that would be.

“I thought that the Originals had all left.”

“No, that’s not the case. When the surface world became peaceful, Veldanava-sama began to seek the stability of the otherworld. I think you know that.”

“Huh? W-Well, yeah…”

Ramiris’ behavior became a little strange, but Dino just let it slide. It was too much of a hassle to get into it, and he didn’t want to explain it anymore.

So he took it as if Ramiris was in the know and continued the conversation.

“So, Feldway and three other Originals were assigned to that mission. There were three of us left, including myself, and we worked as Veldanava-sama’s hands and feet.”

“Even you?”

“It’s fair for you to be suspicious, but I was a serious man back then. But then a certain incident happened. That, coupled with various internal circumstances, corrupted me, and I went from a seraph to a Fallen Angel. My other colleagues are the same way, and now there’s not a single decent primordial angel left.”

“Wait, you left out the most important part of the story! The part that is the most important and the one that bothers me the most!”

Ramiris couldn’t hold back her retort, but Dino just sighed in annoyance.

“Shut up, it’s too hard to explain. It’s not important to me, so I’ll let your imagination fill in the blanks and we can start negotiating.”

‘It’s just too absurd to leave something like this to the imagination’—That was the impression of everyone who was listening on the spot. However, Dino was notorious for his lack of patience, so everyone gave up, thinking that it would be useless to ask for a further explanation. As it was, they chose to focus on what Dino had to say.

“So, what do you mean by negotiating?”

Ramiris asked on behalf of the group.

“It’s exactly as I said. If Ramiris is willing to cooperate, then I swear I won’t touch anyone in this labyrinth. But it you refuse, then there’s no other way. I’ll have no choice but to kidnap you, even if it means killing everyone who gets in my way.”

“There’s no way I’ll cooperate if you do that.”

“Well, I suppose you’re right, but that’s not really a problem. The best outcome is to have your compliance, but even in the worst-case scenario, as long as you can seal the labyrinth, it’s fine.”

“This is not what you want, is it? Who is commanding you to do this?”

“Well, I don’t know if I can tell you that…”

“I mean, I thought Guy was the only one who could give you orders.”

“Well, I guess it’s something like that…but that’s not quite right either. Guy and I are on equal footing, so why should I take orders from him?”

“Whatever, that doesn’t matter!”

“Uh no, it’s important…”

Ignoring Dino’s rant, Ramiris began to think.

“If it isn’t Guy, then…That’s right! It’s Feldway, the leader of the First Order! He must have come back from the other world and approached you while you were wandering around. You couldn’t resist him, could you?”

Detective Ramiris’ version of “mystery” guesswork was truly frightening.

She was always making all the wrong inferences in her reasoning, but somehow, she always ended up at the correct answer. And this time, she got it right once again.

“That’s amazing, it’s actually the right answer…”

The operation, which Feldway had put most of his resources into, was executed to perfection with two main objectives.

One was to assassinate Masayuki.

And the other was to destroy the labyrinth.

Destroying the labyrinth would have been a daunting task, and there was a risk that the plan could go completely awry. Feldway believed it to be important to secure Ramiris in order to prevent that from happening.

With the idea of eliminating all elements of uncertainty, Feldway formulated the battle plan, and Dino merely acted in line with that.

“Hmph…you parted ways with Feldway because you were a delinquent, right? That guy looks like a first-rate honor student, so you two don’t seem to fit together.”

“Hey, I’m not a delinquent! I just like being lazy a lot. Well, it is true that his orders were annoying, so I was glad that he was gone…”

Dino explained that even without any contact, their past relationship still remained.

“I see. Then that means the attackers are the Originals? That’s not good!! You should just ignore Feldway’s orders and come over to our side!!”

Dino smiled at Ramiris, who was saying the most outrageous things. But he still couldn’t nod his head in agreement.

“It’s unfortunate, but I also have my own situation.”

In fact, Dino himself found it incredibly strange that he could not disobey Feldway. But even so, Dino simply rejected Ramiris’ proposal.

“You…it seems that you’re serious. That’s quite a lot of nerve. I’ll deal with you myself. I’m a pillar of the Octagram too, and I’m determined to protect this place until Rimuru returns!”

Ramiris made her determination clear.

“So it seems. Honestly, I don’t really want to work. Being able to live in a world where I don’t have to do anything is truly ideal, but it can’t be helped. Unfortunately, I can’t be merciful. Don’t worry, I won’t take your life, so do your best to get rid of me.”

Dino returned to his usual easy-going and languid expression, and replied with a wave of his hand.

In this way, the negotiations were concluded.

The time for conversation was over, the battle had begun…

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Ramiris excitedly shouted, as if influenced by some energy.

Of course, Ramiris herself never fought.

That was as Dino had expected, so he decided not to make fun of it and confronted Beretta to see what he could do.

The “Control Room” turned into a battlefield.

It was a fairly large space, but there were many obstacles such as desks and chairs. It was not an environment suitable for fighting, and Ramiris wanted to relocate to a different environment.

However, this was unacceptable from Dino’s point of view. Because there was a high possibility that Ramiris could escape.

Therefore, Alpha and the others were busy retrieving the important equipment while the two were facing each other.

Without paying attention to their surroundings, Dino and Beretta began to fight.

Dino, out of nowhere, pulled out a huge sword that was as tall as he was.

This great sword was called the “Kuzurekiba3 (Crumbling Fang).” It was a single-bladed sword with a thick body and appeared to be so powerful that the weight alone might have been enough to break an opponent.



“What is the performance of that sword?”

“In terms of existence value…It’s a million.”

Alpha couldn’t hide her surprise at the report.

“What the hell, a mythical-grade?! Even if it’s Dino, that’s a foul play!”

Ramiris shouted an unintelligible complaint, but Dino just ignored her.

Dino re-positioned his Kuzurekiba above his head.

Beretta, on the other hand, was bare handed.

However, his body was made up of the magical steel doll that Rimuru had made. Now that it had become well acquainted with Beretta’s mana, it had been transformed into a living magic steel (adamantite).

Its shape was still the same as when Rimuru had made it, but its strength was incomparable. Moreover, since it was imbued with Beretta’s magical aura, ordinary weapons would be useless.

Beretta was full-body weapon of legendary-grade or higher, the hardest existence in the labyrinth.

Even so—

Dino casually swung down his large sword.

Beretta’s existence value was over 400,000, which was almost equal to Dino’s. However, unless Beretta was armed with mythical-grade weapons, he would not be able to compete properly.

Beretta, who was empty-handed, concentrated on evading Dino’s sword blows instead of taking them head-on. If Beretta was hit by the blade, he would have instantly been destroyed.

And even worse…

“Dino-sama’s existence value has increased from 400,000 to 2 million! The total is 3 million…how overwhelming…”

Alpha reported desperately.

However, Beretta remained unfazed.

Ramiris wasn’t surprised either, as if taking it for granted.

“I don’t know how you did it, but you fooled the existence value meter. I guess that means there’s still room for improvement. Also, Alpha, don’t refer to Dino so politely!”

“Hey, it’s fine. I’m still a demon lord too, right?”

“Shut up! Beretta-chan, you don’t have to be polite either, so hurry up and unleash your true power! Let that fool taste heaven’s judgment!”

“I don’t have that kind of power, but if it’s an order, then I shall do my best.”

Beretta was as hard-working as ever.

Even though the existence value was only a rough estimate, there was still a severe difference of over seven times. Despite feeling inwardly that Ramiris could really be unreasonable, Beretta responded to his master’s expectations by watching Dino closely.

“You’re not easy to deal with, either.”

“I don’t want to hear that from my enemy, but I will not deny it.”

Beretta responded while focusing on evasion, circling Dino. There was no need to be defensive as long as the attacks didn’t hit.

The key was to think differently.

Beretta’s whole body was a weapon. His bare hands were not at a disadvantage. On the contrary, they could be used as various means of attack. On the other hand, Dino was lightly armed and the only thing to watch out for was the big sword. The conditions were the same in that a hit would result in a heavy blow.

Because of this, he still had a chance to win. Beretta thought as much, and had been looking for opportunities.

As a “chaos doll,” Beretta was very good at changing attributes. Using his Unique Skill ‘Double-Crosser,’4 he could constantly switch attributes one after another and search for Dino’s weaknesses. He was facing Dino while calculating every move in order to make the situation work in his favor.

Dino, who was on the receiving end of the attack, was not happy.

“Geez, you’re a dependent of the Black line, aren’t you? I’ve heard that your kind are one of the best when it comes to dirty fighting tactics.”

“I am honored by your kind words.”

“Who’s complimenting you?!”

Even dialogue was used as a weapon as Beretta tried to overturn his disadvantage.

There was no room for error.

Thanks to the fact that Beretta was not impatient, he barely managed to maintain the status quo.

After correctly recognizing the current situation, he knew that he was not in an advantageous position.

The failed surprise attack was a huge mistake.

It had needlessly led to more battles, and the plan was thwarted into chaos.

Although the difference in ability between Beretta and Dino was enormous, there was not much of a gap between skill levels. However, it was clear that Beretta was nearing his limits.

But this was Ramiris’ labyrinth, and Beretta could be resurrected even if he died. He did not have to worry about depleting his remaining energy, nor would he be damaged by using excessive force. It was only because he could ignore all these restrictions that he was able to give his all to resist Dino.

They were protected by environmental effects, but even that had its limits. Beretta was not strong enough to overturn the decisive power difference.

But still, it’s quite remarkable. I didn’t think that a dependent of Black would be so difficult.

Dino had raised his evaluation of Beretta.

If it had been Charys or Treyni, the game would have ended more quickly.

Those two were by no means weak, but angels had an overwhelming advantage over the spirits.

Also, there was too much a difference in combat experience. But Beretta, as befitting a member of the Black line, had a level of skill that was comparable to that of Dino’s.

He was in a situation where even a single blow would kill him instantly, yet he had the courage to calmly assess Dino’s attack. Not only did he never give up on victory, but he even seemed to enjoy the situation.

Even when Dino intentionally showed an opening, Beretta did not take the bait. That alone was worthy of praise, but it was surprising to Dino that he was even wounded by the occasional counterattack.

The Fallen were not good at dealing with holy attributes, but it was not a decisive weakness. Nevertheless, Beretta’s attack was doing damage.

It was a blow that combined both holy and demonic attributes, and even Dino’s ‘Defense Barrier’ could not prevent it.

Dino judged that it was practically impossible to defend against this attack. As with the spirit attacks, unless he could overcome it with his willpower, he would surely be damaged.

To Dino, who was a former seraph and familiar with the laws of this world, it was astonishing that a mere unique level skill could damage him.

Beretta’s amazing combat acumen was deserving of praise.

However, Dino was also getting used to Beretta’s movements.

Dino knew that the more he swung his big sword, the bigger the gap would be. Beretta took advantage of his gap and attacked him, which was unexpected but within tolerance.

At first glance, Beretta seemed to be suppressing Dino, since Dino’s attacks didn’t even graze him. However, “Kuzurekiba” could easily slice through even an adamantite body.

There was no problem in Dino’s opinion because it would only take one blow to reverse the situation.

Beretta was also well aware of the current situation and was stalling for time. It seemed that Beretta had decided that Dino could not be defeated by accumulating attacks, so he was focusing more on defense.

Well, that’s the right answer, isn’t it? For Beretta, defending Ramiris is a victory.

Dino was not a fool either, seeing through Beretta’s inner thoughts.

As long as Ramiris was there, the people in the labyrinth would not die. Conversely, if Ramiris was killed, the labyrinth would end immediately. There was no guarantee that the labyrinth would be safe if she was kidnapped, so it was only natural for Beretta to prioritize buying time.

At this rate, Beretta would eventually get what he wanted.

However, things would not be that easy.

Unfortunately for Beretta, Dino still had a final hand.

The reason Dino was stalling Beretta was because he needed to neutralize Beretta here. It was very troublesome to fight against an opponent who would resurrects even if you killed him.

It would have been nice if he could just get to Ramiris before Beretta resurrected, but it was certain that the others would get in the way if that happened.

If he attacked with the intent to kill, then it might end up involving Ramiris as well.

Dino was sincere when he said that he had no intention to kill Ramiris, and that had become a shackle, binding him to the current situation and making things more difficult for him.

This is honestly so troublesome. I can’t believe how much work it’s taking just to neutralize Beretta. It would have been easier to just defeat him, but now that I’ve finished my preparations, I guess it doesn’t matter.

“Beretta, you’ve done well. Now ‘Slothful Sleep, Fallen Hypno!’”

Dino unleashed his power.

It was a non-lethal, wide range attack of the Unique Skill ‘Sloth.’

All life forms would be lulled into a deep sleep and would not be able to wake up until the caster released them. There was no point in resisting with will power. It was one of the most powerful abilities of the deadly sin series, but it took a long time to activate, just like the name “sloth” implied.

However, only those with Ultimate Skill would be able to resist it. At the unique skill level, it was a fearsome attack that could be said to be the strongest.

Dino wanted to neutralize Beretta and the others in the gentlest way possible.

He didn’t want to hurt Shinji and Alpha and the others, who were in the Control Room trying to protect Ramiris.

Vesta, who he had put to sleep first, was also a boss whom he truly respected. And Shinji and the others were his colleagues, with whom he felt a sense of camaraderie.

In truth, I really did not want to betray them.

However, Feldway’s orders were absolute, and he could not resist them.

“Really, I’m sorry. Don’t feel bad. I’ll ask Feldway to see if he can leave this place alone.”

Dino muttered to himself as Beretta collapsed. He glanced at the sleeping Ramiris, thinking that he’d finally done his job, and began extending his hand towards her…

“I won’t let you.”

A cold voice stopped him in his tracks.

“Seriously…?”

Dino turned to see a woman standing there.

The slender cilia of her body were shining in gold and silver.

The exoskeleton that protected the essential parts were a jet-black, glossy adamantite.

Two pairs of wings, shining blue like those of a morpho butterfly, were the same color as the compound eyes on her forehead, exuding a mysterious charm.

The true identity of the woman was Apito, who had awakened from her evolutionary slumber. The coloration of each part of her body had changed from before her evolution, but her shape remained almost the same as before.

However, Apito’s overall beauty had been enhanced. As the Insect Queen, she exuded an aura of majesty and was more queenly than ever before.

“—Apito…just in time. I want you to destroy my Holy Demon Core.”

Because demons did not need sleep, Beretta was barely able to resist the Fallen Hypno. Despite being reduced to a state of low activity (sleep mode), he did everything in his power to ask Apito for help.

“Beretta-sama—”

“You can’t move, but you’re still conscious?!”

Dino’s reaction was delayed for a moment due to his surprise. As a result, he was unable to stop Apito’s action.

Without asking why, Apito sent her poisonous needle to destroy Beretta’s Holy Demon Core.

Apito’s regenerative Osiris Rapier pierced the strong adamantite with ease. She was able to create as many Osiris Rapiers as she wanted within her own body.

Nevertheless, without evolution, Apito would not have been able to kill Beretta.

Beretta laughed.

“Heh heh heh, well done. With this, I will die and rise again unharmed. I shall leave things to you for a while, Apito.”

Beretta had retired as leader of the Dungeon’s Elite Ten, but he was still Ramiris’ second-in-command. He still has the authority to give orders to the Elite Ten.

“Understood. Unfortunately, I do not think I’ll be able to beat him, so I look forward to your early return.”

Contrary to her words, Apito’s voice sounded confident of her victory. Dino seemed to sense this as well, and muttered in an annoyed tone.

“You’ve got to be kidding me…such an accurate judgment…so there’s no way to take advantage of it.”

Dino was correct in his judgment.

Leaving the rest to Apito, Beretta disintegrated into a particle of light.

Immediately after that, Apito soared beyond the speed of sound.

The battle in the Control Room intensified even further.

That was Dino’s unvarnished opinion.

Apito was not Dino’s enemy, but she couldn’t be killed in the labyrinth either.

Even if he wanted to finish her off quickly and secure Ramiris, Apito would use her speed to get in the way. She wasn’t fighting Dino head on, but was thoroughly implementing more of a hit-and-run tactic, moving in an out flexibly.

The newly evolved Apito had a speed-focused fighting style. She was well aware of her own characteristics and made efficient use of them. Her existence value was around 700,000, but she was equal to Dino in terms of speed alone.

Besides, even if he took some effort to kill her, Beretta would have returned by then. It shouldn’t take more than a minute, but that couldn’t be helped because it was teleportation.

Even against Dino, who was far superior to Beretta, he wouldn’t need more than ten seconds, so Apito alone was able to buy time.

In this situation, there were few moves Dino could make.

The most reliable option was to put Beretta and Apito to sleep at the same time.

Dino calmed himself down and tried to activate the Unique Skill ‘Sloth’ once again.

Regardless of whether there are two opponents, it took time to activate the skill.

That’s why Dino decided to stop panicking and check the status of his companions with a calm mind, not unlike that of a combatant.

The first thing that caught his attention was the sight of Rimuru fighting Velgrynd, who had been victorious in the Battle of the Monsters.

How the hell did he get out of there?! I mean, he’s fighting on equal terms with Velgrynd!

To be honest, he was completely stunned.

According to Feldway, Demon Lord Rimuru and his commanding officers were sealed off in Velgrynd’s otherworldly realm.

Rimuru was able to figure out the coordinates of his location through the “Soul Corridors” between him and his companions and had escaped easily, but Dino, who didn’t know that, was puzzled. What was more surprising to him was Rimuru’s strength.

It looked as if he was pushing against the seemingly invincible Velgrynd.

Dino couldn’t help but feel anxious.

If we don’t move forward with the mission quickly, we might be in trouble.

With that in mind, Dino turned his attention to the others.

The main point of Feldway’s plan was to secure Ramiris. Dino had initially stayed in the labyrinth because Guy ordered him to be there, and it was nothing more than a coincidence, but it was unfortunate that it had caught Feldway’s attention.

Although Dino was reluctant to do so, he had to resign himself to the fact that he was the only one who could enter the Control Room, which was the most heavily guarded room.

As for how Feldway and the others were going to get in, a bold strategy had been devised.

He had incited Velgrynd to destroy the labyrinth in order to call out Veldora.

To Dino’s surprise, the plan succeeded without difficulty. Then, with Feldway himself leading the way, the invasion was carried out.

Accompanying Feldway were two of the “Three Phantom Commanders” and five generals brought by Zalario. There were eight of them in all.

Two of the top commanders had been recruited for this operation, which was a tremendous in itself.

Only Obera of the Three Phantom Commanders had been left to guard the Palace of Monsters in the depths of the Otherworld. When Dino heard of this plan, he could not hide his surprise at their drastic actions.

Dino was not the only one who was approached by the remaining colleagues of the “Originals” on the surface. The remaining two who had been living undercover in a human country were also called into the operation.

They were Dino’s subordinates, but Feldway had taken the liberty of using them without permission.

Their role was to keep the labyrinth in its state of destruction.

It was a precautionary measure in case Dino failed.

If Ramiris wanted to, her labyrinth could be turned into a prison. That would make it very difficult to escape from, so Feldway took steps to prevent that from happening in advance.

Dino cared the most about his two subordinates, so he first confirmed where they were on the monitor.

Hey hey, no way! Even with Pico and Gracia as opponents, they’re able to fight on equal footing…

Pico was the petite beautiful girl, and Gracia was the tall female warrior.

After Veldora was defeated by Velgrynd, the city, which had been isolated in the labyrinth, was brought back to the surface. At this point, Geld had come forward to defend the city, but Dino had no idea that he could rival Pico and Gracia.

Geld, the Barrier Lord, and Kumara, the Chimera Lord. By the way, Kumara had that group of beasts. Is she a cryptid? Could she be related to the World-destroying Dragon Ivarage—No, no no. No way…

Dino hastily quashed the unpleasant thoughts that had involuntary flashed through his mind.

Then, while thinking, ‘They really are the Twelve Guardian Lords,’ he shifted his gaze to the other battlefield.

The one fighting there was Zalario, of the Three Phantom Commanders.

Oh, that Zalario guy is as strong as ever. He doesn’t seem to be taking it seriously at all, and he’s showing a lot of confidence against Charys and Treyni.

His old colleague was still as strong as ever.

He had already felt at the time that Zalario was terrifyingly strong, and even after thousands of years he was still creepy to look at on the screen. He looked fine so Dino checked out the next monitor.

Cornu? From what I’ve heard, he was defeated in a major invasion a few decades ago. Is that why he seems so impatient?

As Dino had predicted, Cornu was in a hurry.

It was no wonder.

He had lost his entire army in the last defeat and had been injured so badly that it would take several decades to recover. If he failed this time, he would be purged by Feldway.

Moreover, Feldway was supposed to be hiding at Cornu’s side by now, so Dino thought that Cornu must be under a lot of pressure and was not able to perform as well as usual.

Unlucky guy. But then again, Masayuki is really weak, and the people standing in his way don’t seem like a big deal. I’m concerned about Venom being a dependent of Black, but he seems to be a newcomer compared to Beretta, so I guess it should be fine.

Dino wasn’t too worried about Cornu since they weren’t that close to begin with.

Even if Cornu failed, Feldway would take care of it. In other words, the operation seemed to be going well.

Perhaps it was because of this sense of security that Dino’s lazy mind got mixed up in the distractions.

Hmm, but it’s incredibly strange. Why do I have to worry about the success or failure of this mission? I don’t understand.

That was a very important point of suspicion.

For some reason, Dino could not shake his feeling of discomfort about this mission. He could not figure out why, and it left him feeling uncomfortable, as if the cause was on the tip of his tongue.

But alas—

“What are you playing at, Dino? I’m about to make my move, so you’d do your job quickly.”

The peaceful moment had come to an end.

Che, I really don’t want to work.

Dino had nothing against Beretta and Apito, in fact, he rather liked them very much.

That was why he was even more disgusted by this order.

But…orders could not be disobeyed.

Thinking that it couldn’t be helped, Dino decided to get serious.

Cornu was a reliable subordinate, despite his tendency to be overconfident. He was also a comrade who had received his name from Veldanava, and Feldway believed him to be very useful to him.

However, Cornu had made a terrible mistake in the last invasion, losing a third of his forces. This was in spite of their overwhelming superiority in terms of strength against one of the insignificant other worlds.

That was reason enough for Feldway to be disappointed.

Cornu was also well aware of this, and this time, instead of using his usual style of playing with the enemy, he was desperately trying to finish the job.

That was no fun for Feldway. The Three Phantom Commanders, who should be overwhelmingly strong, should not be at the mercy of the weak.

Even now, Cornu had missed an opponent he could have killed with a single blow.

He was unaware that Masayuki had been replaced by an impostor, and had fallen for the enemy’s schemes.

So furious that he was speechless, Feldway looked back and released a killing intent from his anger. He kept telling himself to calm down with his self-control until he barely managed to suppress his killing intent. Then, leaving Cornu alone, he moved to dispose of Masayuki.

On the other hand, Masayuki, who was on the run, felt very upset…

Every step felt heavy.

He could not accept that he was the only one to escape.

Of course, scary things were scary, but abandoning a friend was something even scarier. If anything happened to them, he would never be able to forgive himself for the rest of his life.

Masayuki stopped in his tracks and looked back.

He could see his companions fighting hard in the distance.

Minits blocked the enemy’s movements, the vampires used their immortality as bait, and Calgurio and Venom attacked whenever they saw an opening.

A special mention should be made of Jiwu’s maneuvering, as she was able to position herself well to block Cornu’s massive destructive attacks.

For a makeshift team, they really worked well together.

However, if any one of them went missing, this team would fall apart.

“Hey, Masayuki…”

“Bernie, I’m going back. I was always afraid to talk about my true feelings because I didn’t want my true identity to be exposed…but I really wanted to become better friends with everyone. I may be a coward, but I don’t want to be a scumbag, you know?”

Masayuki spoke his mind. At that moment, the “Voice of the World” sounded in his head.

He was worried that he’d done something wrong again, but was relieved to find out that wasn’t the case. He wasn’t interested in any hidden powers, but it was too late anyway, so he decided to approve it for now.

Immersed in that nostalgic feeling, Masayuki began to understand his own skill.

There was ‘Champion’s Aura’ to intimidate his opponents, ‘Champion Blessing’ to make him super lucky, ‘Champion’s Charisma to give courage to his comrades, and ‘Champion’s Action’ whose effects were unclear but had positive results, nonetheless. Those were Masayuki’s current powers.

The addition of ‘Champion’s Guide’ seemed to be a power that could make him a heroic banner.

Um, guiding the souls of the dead? I become a vessel? What the hell is that? If it’s premised on the death of a companion, then I don’t need this kind of skill…

‘Another useless skill,’ Masayuki thought to himself. He hadn’t expected much from it though, so he wasn’t too disappointed.

As long as things didn’t get worse, that was enough for him.

“Masayuki, you…”

“So, Bernie, let’s get back to the others.”

Masayuki went back to the main topic.

He was oblivious about his hidden powers.

“Okay. If you say that much, then I’ll just go along with what you want.”

Bernie scratched his head in resignation.

The two smiled at each other and turned to go back to the others—and that’s when things took a major turn.

He did not care about Bernie, but he knew he would get in the way if he wanted to take Masayuki.

Bernie had let his guard down and could be slaughtered with a single blow. No, it wouldn’t matter if Bernie was aware or not, because to Feldway, Bernie was nothing but a speck of dust.

Without disturbing the wind, or showing even a hint of his presence, Feldway drew his sword and was about to cut off Bernie’s head.

However, what sounded was a clear resonating tone.

It was the sound of a sword clashing with another.

“Who is in my way?! Who are you?”

His surprise was gone in an instant as Feldway asked who it was.

The answer was given by a young ‘masked’ girl.

“I am Chronoa. I’m a Hero.”



There was a moment of silence. Then, Feldway started laughing.

“I never thought I would meet a hero here. In that case, let me introduce myself. I am Feldway. Phantom King Feldway.”

Hearing his name, Chronoa remained unconcerned. She was in perfect sync with Chloe’s consciousness, and was now a cold-hearted fighting machine.

“Phantom King? Hmph, so you’re the master of the phantom tribe. I cannot overlook the evil you’ve done in front of me, so I’ve come out just in time to eradicate this threat to humanity.”

“Fufufu, you are a bold one. I’ll show you what it means to be self-aware, you fool.”

As soon as he finished speaking, Feldway, in his bright red uniform, moved, and Chronoa, in her white “Holy Spirit Armor,” disappeared in a flash.

The interplay of red and white lights glittered before Masayuki’s eyes, and the two disappeared from sight at the same time, leaving only the sound of sword blades clashing in succession.

Far from any shock waves, there was not even whisper of wind.

The battle was unfolding in an unimaginable realm.

The masked girl, who had saved Masayuki before, had now saved him again from a crisis. Although Masayuki understood that, he was not sure that he could even do anything help the girl who called herself Chronoa.

“Well, what should we do…”

“This isn’t something we can do anything about. We can’t afford to worry about it. We’re on our own doing what we can, so let’s go and help the others!”

Bernie sensed that it was him Feldway had targeted based on the sound of the sword strikes ringing in his ears. The fact that he had been completely unable react to them at all told him that this enemy was on a different level.

It was not because the current Bernie was weak, but because he and Feldway were so far apart in ability that they would not have even had a proper battle.

If that was the case, then there was no point in going back and forth. The right thing to do was to act simply and decisively—Bernie demonstrated this way of thinking that had been drilled into him as a soldier.

“Okay. I don’t know who this Chronoa person is, but I’ll leave it to her!”

Masayuki was no stranger to improvising in the face of unexpected situations.

That’s why he decided to obediently leave the scene.

And so, without regard to Masayuki and Bernie, Chronoa and Feldway crossed swords. However, that only lasted for a short time.

In just a few seconds, countless attacks and defenses had been played. It seemed as if the battle would go on forever, but then Feldway realized something.

“Hahahahahah!! Oh, so it was here the whole time? I knew it. Veldanava-sama was also hoping for my victory!”

“What, all of a sudden?”

“Huh, it’s none of your business. No, actually, since you and I will be companions from now on, I don’t mind telling you.”

“…?”

“Obey my command, Hope King (Sariel)!”

It was an absolute command.

The Angelic Ultimate Skill could not resist Michael’s “Ultimate Dominion.”

“What…What did you do—?”

“Oh? So there is still a residual sense of self? As expected Chronoa, who is famed as the most powerful Hero. However, resistance is futile. In a matter of hours, you will fall completely under my control.”

Feldway was delighted at his good fortune.

Throughout history, the famed Hero Chronoa had been known throughout the Empire for her valor. The fact that the Hope King Sariel had sprouted within her seemed to be a blessing from God.

Just as Feldway had hoped, Chronoa fell to her knees.

“I am Sariel. Give me your orders, Michael-sama…”

Chronoa’s mask came off, revealing her true face and beauty as those cold words escaped her pretty, cherry blossom-colored lips.

Feldway couldn’t help but feel sure of his victory. And he was.

Thus, Feldway made an extreme error in judgment at this point.

Between Cornu of the Three Phantom Commanders, one of his confidants, and the strongest Hero, even if she wasn’t the main body—with these two, it would be easy to accomplish his goal, he thought.

And so Feldway…

“Good. You will cooperate with Cornu and kill the boy. I have business on the surface, so I will leave the rest to you.”

…left the labyrinth after giving his command.

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Not that he had anything to complain about.

He had sensed a terrifying presence swelling in the direction Masayuki had fled, and was beginning to despair that he had failed in his mission.

“I’m so relieved that you’re okay!”

“Haha, it’s too early to say that since we still have enemies.”

“That’s right.”

Venom admitted as much.

Cornu is strong. Despite the clear advantage we have in the labyrinth, he is overwhelming, not to mention winning, and now I don’t even know if I can survive.

But even so, as soon as he saw Masayuki’s face, he felt relieved for some unknown reason.

An inexplicable surge of confidence welled up within him, making feel as if there was always a way.

Minits and Calgurio seemed to feel the same way, and their faces looked better than before.

“Kukuku, I know this is a bad time, but I’m having fun.”

“I agree with you. Truly, it’s as if I am sharing the battlefield with His Majesty.”

The Imperial soldiers laughed.

Even the vampires, who should have had nothing to do with it, seemed to be getting excited about the fight.

Meanwhile, Cornu was in a state of confusion.

Just as he was about to attack, another Masayuki had appeared.

Cornu wondered if he had failed to grasp his location, but upon a second glance, he found that there were indeed two Masayukis. That meant that one of them was an impostor. Needless to say, one of them was Jiwu in disguise, and the other one was the real Masayuki.

“How dare you underestimate me! You’re just a bunch of stubborn worms!!”

Even though he was furious, Cornu had no way to tell which one was the real one. His senses told him that they were equal in strength and that both were insignificant.

That was why it was even more troublesome. If Cornu got serious, both could be involved and get killed.

If that was the case, then there was no telling where they would escape to. Therefore, Cornu knew that he would have to tighten his nerves even more to avoid a wrong-handed kill.

And that’s when a helping hand appeared.

“Cornu-dono, is it? My name is Sariel. I come at the command of Michael-sama.”

An unfamiliar girl, who flew in at such a high speed that his eyes couldn’t keep up, offered to assist him herself.

Cornu did not doubt her words. The girl who called herself Sariel had a hint of Michael about her, just as she had said.

“That would help. You should aim for the Masayuki on the right. Do not kill him, just take him alive.”

Cornu had picked one at random, and fortunately or unfortunately, his choice was the real one.

“Understood.”

Sariel nodded and turned her gaze to Masayuki.

Masayuki sensed this and grew impatient…

Their eyes met.

Um, Sariel? That girl seemed to call herself Chronoa before, but I have no idea how she got turned to the enemy’s side in such a short time. I mean…

Masayuki was confused and desperate, but Chronoa’s beauty too stunning for him to feel any fear. Or rather, he had no time to feel it.

What’s going on?! This girl…is super cute!!!

Masayuki was so shocked that he forgot that he was in the middle of a battle.

If he had to describe her in one description—that’s it! Saying she was a transcendentally beautiful girl would be more appropriate.

Masayuki came to the same conclusion as a certain blond-haired demon lord.

‘Don’t wear a mask in the first place!’—Masayuki even started complaining about such pointless little things.

However!

There was hope lurking behind those trivial thoughts.

Sariel’s hand went to her sword, and Masayuki was prepared to die. Perhaps this was the reason that a thought came rising up within him like a magic lantern.

She’s really a beautiful girl, isn’t she? She’s the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen in my life…

As soon as that thought bubbled up, Masayuki felt a vicious chill for some reason.

His survival instincts were screaming at him, telling him that he shouldn’t think any further.

So he decided to trust those instincts.

…Or not—Second place. That’s right, the second most beautiful. After all, the most beautiful is still—

What came to his mind at the time was the blue-haired beauty he had last seen in his original world.

Yes yes, that’s her! The kind and gentle type, and so mature and sexy—A perfect score…

Even in the face of death, Masayuki’s fantasies were unstoppable.

However, that was the right decision.

Rather than calling it love, it was more of an annoyance. Why was it being glorified as love? However, he felt too embarrassed to complain about it.

But before that…

Why did I get an Ultimate Skill without even doing anything?!! I have to earn up to it!!

Masayuki shouted in his mind.

It was too much—Masayuki even wanted to question the Voice of the World.

However, even complaining about the results would not change anything. Moreover, even if he received an Ultimate Skill that he did not know how to use, it was still impossible to defeat Sariel in front of him.

It’s an amazing power, but it’s too late now. Well, I did my best, so I might as well go out in style.

Thinking this, Masayuki gave a refreshing smile.

The effect was tremendous.

“Protect His Majesty—!!”

The other soldiers who had previously been keeping at a distance because they were in the way, began to launch suicide attacks without any regard for their own lives.

This was the effect on those further away, so the change of those close by was even more dramatic.

“Power is welling up. I feel as if I can’t lose!”

Shouting loudly, Calgurio slashed at Cornu. Calgurio had been on the defensive up until now, but his sudden desperate attack scared Cornu, if only for a moment.

Minits was not to be outdone.

“Listen up, imperial soldiers! Let the His Majesty the Emperor give witness to our bravery!”

While shouting these words to inspire the soldiers, he himself did not take his eyes off of Sariel, constantly applying pressure with his ‘Oppressor.’ Normally, his Unique Skill would not work against an Ultimate Skill. However, this time, the attack succeeded in forcing Sariel to retreat, though only slightly.

The vampires were also very active.

“This is incredible! I’m feeling great right now, as if I can do anything!”

Someone was laughing while forcing an attack, even though the lower half of his body had been blown off by his recklessness.

“Take this!! Eat my energy cannon with all your strength!!”

People began repeatedly dying and resurrecting over and over again.

“Hyahahahahaha! This is so much fun!!”

Someone who specialized in regeneration began protecting solders from stray bullets without giving any thoughts about the consequences.

The crowd had become beyond fierce and were launching an even fiercer onslaught of attacks than before.

How were they able to do so?

It was, of course, all thanks to Masayuki’s skill.

A true balance breaker.

It was an uncanny power that could turn the tides of battle simply by having him on the battlefield.

If Masayuki had not seen Chloe Aubert’s true face, then he never would have awakened the ultimate skill. One only had to think about it that way to understand what a major faux pas Feldway had committed.

In any case, the battle fell into a temporary stalemate, barely maintaining its equilibrium for more than ten minutes.

Of course, it was impossible to defeat the duo of Cornu and Sariel.

However, the winner had already been decided.

The moment Masayuki had acquired the Ultimate Skill ‘King of Heroes,’ the path ahead was clear.

And now, thanks to the warriors who bought their time, the moment had come.

Velgrynd had vanished from this world.

At the same time, the gears of fate began to shift…

Just as Masayuki was becoming more confused, that person appeared.

At first, he thought it was just an enormous mass of energy.

But that wasn’t the case.

It was a humanoid figure.

The form of a very beautiful, nostalgic, woman.

With a crimson aura of supremacy that illuminated her distinctive brilliant blue hair, the ‘Scorch Dragon’ Velgrynd had now manifested.

Her eyes contained a domineering aura that could make all beings fall flat.

No one could even move, as if time itself had been frozen.

Cornu, too, was bewildered by the suddenness of the situation, and stared at Velgrynd.

The same was true for Sariel, who was waiting for Cornu’s instructions. That was the limit of a person with a newborn ego.

All of the Imperial soldiers present understood instantly.

The person before them was the most powerful being who had protected the Empire for so long.

It had been reported that she was currently engaged in battle with Veldora, but that did not seem to be the case.

Because Velgrynd was now hugging Masayuki in a deep embrace.

In anyone’s eyes, this was the way one acted when facing their beloved.

“I’ve been looking for you for a long time, Rudra. Always, always, always, longing to see you…”

After saying that, Velgrynd’s eyes welled with tears as she looked at Masayuki. Then, she gently put her hands on his cheeks, bringing him into a passionate kiss…



Masayuki was stunned.

Hey, so soft…No, it’s sweet? No, no wait…!

His head imploded and his cool judgment was lost in an instant.

This terrifyingly beautiful woman had hugged him, which was okay, but the problem was what followed afterward.

Fir—First kiss!!!

The casual coordination of her shirt and jeans was slightly more mature, and combined with Velgrynd’s beauty, exuded a cool aura.

It would be a lie to say that I’m not happy to be kissing such a beautiful woman.

However, there was a key point that should not be left out.

This beautiful woman had referred to Masayuki as Rudra.

Oh no, she must have the wrong person…

In this atmosphere, there was no way to tell her that she had gotten the wrong person.

That said, this beauty was still kissing him even now.

Masayuki felt like he was going to run out of breath soon.

Be cool, be calm, it’s times like these when one needs to keep their cool—Masayuki checked the situation once again.

His location was on the battlefield.

Right in front of the enemy.

Locked in a hot kiss with a beautiful woman.

Moreover, because he was in such close contact with this beautiful woman, he couldn’t help but be aware of the touch of her ample breasts.

It’s almost too comfortable as if I’m ascending to heaven…but I must not enjoy it now! What the hell am I doing?! I—

The more Masayuki thought about it, the more confused he got. The only thing he understood was that the moment he was exposed as the wrong person, his life would be over in an instant.

Now that he had done this in front of so many people, there was no excuse.

Even with Masayuki’s good fortune, this situation could not be expected to improve.

A situation where he was enjoying a heavenly good fortune, while waiting for the promise of misfortune that was waiting for him.

Masayuki stopped thinking.

Since he was about to die anyway, he might as well be grateful that he could experience kissing at the end. He came to that conclusion and resigned himself to it.

His consciousness was gradually getting hazy as Masayuki’s face grew dreamier.

Now that he had made up his mind, all he had left to do was enjoy the situation.

And that attitude only accelerated the misunderstanding of the onlookers.

“His Majesty is so skilled.”

“It might be a bit disrespectful, but I feel the same way. It is a privilege to witness the unwavering love of two adults who look at each other with such deep affection. I can sense the unshakable bond that leaves no room for anyone else.”

“Fufu, Velgrynd-sama is like a maiden in love…Fufufu, so the guardian dragon of the empire is in love with His Majesty.”

“Yes! Now the empire will be safe!”

In the first place, I’ve never even had a girlfriend, so don’t go talking about marriage!!

Masayuki lamented the absurdity of this world.

In the end, it was the enemy Cornu of all people, who rescued Masayuki from this situation.

“Don’t be ridiculous, Velgrynd! You’re supposed to be under Michael-sama’s control! So why are you getting in my way?”

From Cornu’s point of view, Velgrynd was just one of the pawns that had already been conquered. And now that she had shown up to get in his way, he erupted in discontent and anger.

“Hey, that’s just tactless. There’s a limit to how stupid you can be for interfering with us.”

Velgrynd, who had finally separated from Masayuki, glared sullenly at Cornu.

Though frightened by her gaze, Cornu could not stop himself.

“Shut up! Stop playing around and just cooperate. That that guy you’re holding, strangle him to death!!”

That was a forbidden sentence.

It had never occurred to Cornu that his words would touch Velgrynd’s reverse scale.

“Just now, did you just tell me to kill this man?”

The battlefield went silent.

Only Cornu failed to comprehend the situation, and shouted in his own anger.

“Don’t make me repeat myself, Velgrynd. You may be stronger than me, but I am the superior authority here. All you have to do is follow my orders!”

Until the very end, Cornu did not recognize the current situation.

He never got the time to realize that Velgrynd different than before.

“You’re going to die.”

It was a merciless blow.

The newly reborn Velgrynd was much stronger than before. With her sophisticated magic power manipulation, she burned Cornu cleanly to the ground.

Far from fighting back, Cornu disappeared from the world without leaving room for a single retort.

What was even more terrifying was that Velgrynd’s attack even spanned time and space. This was the true essence of the ‘Spacetime Continuous Attack’ that made full use of Velgrynd’s newly acquired ‘Dimension Leap’ ability. Cornu’s main body in the other world was instantly wiped out before even being allowed to feel the threat.

“I let you off the hook last time, but you really are stupid. I’d almost forgotten about my grudge against Feldway, but I guess I shouldn’t have let it go.”

Velgrynd spat out and then turned her attention to Sariel.

“Oh, this person is really Chronoa, someone who helped me…”

“Don’t worry, I won’t do anything, because there’s no need. Michael’s control of the Ultimate Skill ‘Hope King Sariel’ seems to have given it an identity, but that girl is resisting it on her own volition. The fact that she’s stopped moving is proof of that. If you’re still worried, just let Rimuru take a look later. I’m sure he’ll take appropriate measures. Although, I don’t think that will be necessary.”

Velgrynd finished speaking as she turned away from Sariel—Chronoa. After seeing Velgrynd’s completely unconcerned expression, Masayuki finally felt relieved.

While there were many people who were as relieved as Masayuki, there were also others who became nervous and started fidgeting from awkwardness.

It was those who knew Velgrynd’s identity who were disturbed.

Bernie, who was standing next to Masayuki, was the first who was determined to act.

Because he was standing closest to Velgrynd, he jumped forward and dropped to his knees. He then spoke with such momentum that he almost fell flat on his face in prostration.

“Lord Marshal, I am Bernie, 7th of the Single Digit hierarchy! May peace be with you, Lord Marshal.”

“No need to salute. So, what are you trying to say?”

“Yes! I disobeyed the Commander’s order and abandoned my mission to eliminate this boy Masayuki. I understand that my crime is worthy of death, but before I am punished, there is something I would beg of you, Lord Marshal.”

Again, the entire place fell silent.

The soldiers who had been listening to Bernie’s statement finally realized that Velgrynd was the Marshal, the supreme leader of the Imperial Guard.

Quite a few people were confused, but most of them were convinced.

As the understanding gradually deepened, reality finally dawned on them.

Those perceived as losers would be punished by Velgrynd.

It was useless to resist her.

In the face of an absolute Marshal who would destroy even this labyrinth, they had no choice but to wait for her judgment.

Naturally, they began to line up and wait for the judgment to come.

In this tense atmosphere, the conversation continued.

“What is it?”

“Our loyalty to the Empire is unchanging. Whatever His Majesty the Emperor wills, we know that we must obey his orders. Therefore, I would ask your permission for the soldiers to return home! The executives, including myself, have no complaints about taking responsibility of their punishment, but—”

“That’s enough.”

Bernie despaired when he was interrupted.

He felt like crying at his own helplessness, thinking that he could not reverse their fate after all.

But when Velgrynd saw Bernie, she chuckled.

“Oh, dear, did you misunderstand me? You’ve all done a great job for a bunch of fools, and I commend you for that. I thank you for protecting my beloved Rudra.”

All of the solders fell down to their knees and hung their heads in unison.

“So then…?”

“I had no intention of doing anything to you guys in the first place. All that matters to me is Rudra, and because Rudra cares about you guys, then I will protect you all as well. That is how it was before, how it is now, and how it always will be in the future.”

Velgrynd’s words were like gospel.

The soldiers erupted in cheers.

Some shed tears of joy.

Calgurio and Minits were no exception, deeply moved and convinced by Velgrynd’s words.

In the end, the crowd was endlessly chanting ‘Long live the Empire! Long live His Majesty!’ while Masayuki was standing there wondering what the hell they were even talking about.

If I’m hearing what they just said correctly, then they really have mistaken me with Emperor Rudra. I should have pointed it out already. Besides, Bonnie already knows the truth. If it’s exposed, I’ll be the one who gets in trouble. And the kiss…the kiss…I’ll definitely be killed…

Masayuki’s name was not Rudra, but for some reason, no one was asking ant questions. It made him feel like he was going crazy or something.

To be honest, Masayuki was overjoyed about the kiss. However, he sincerely felt that it was not his intention to get involved.

“You look upset, what’s wrong? If something is still bothering you, you can tell me.”

Much to his dismay, Velgrynd returned here attention back to Masayuki who had been left alone.

“Huh? No, no, it’s nothing. I don’t have anything on my mind…”

He replied a bit incoherently.

Seeing Masayuki’s unnatural attitude, Velgrynd’s expression became worried as she began asking warily.

“Perhaps you do not remember me?”

Masayuki felt like he was being tested for the correct answer.

The consequences of an incorrect answer were unimaginable.

Even though all he wanted to say was ‘Give me a break,’ Masayuki desperately tried his best to use his brain.

If one asked whether he remembered her or not, he did. That beautiful woman he had last seen in his original world was definitely her.

In that case, did he know her name?

That guy just now, called her Velgrynd, right? I think that Velgrynd was Veldora-san’s sister…and the rumors were that she was strong to the point of being outrageous. And she was said to be a guardian of the empire or something…

Masayuki’s desperate thinking was paying off, as he gradually recalled more and more information. Judging by the reaction of the Imperial soldiers, Masayuki decided that his guess was correct, and took a gamble.

“Velgrynd…san, wasn’t it?”

Velgrynd’s face broke out in happiness when she heard the answer.

“Yes, that’s right! You remembered me, Rudra!!”

Luck had yet to abandon Masayuki here either.

Just him saying her name made Velgrynd very happy.

And that wasn’t all.

“Oh, now I understand why you were looking so glum. I was so happy to see you that I forgot that your name is Masayuki now.”

“—!!”

The situation had improved all on its own, and even Masayuki’s concerns about his mistaken identity were resolved.

Eh, eh, eh, eh?! Does this person even know that I am Masayuki Honjou?

What an absolute relief.

It was the first time in his entire life that he had felt such a deep sense of relief.

He was so relieved that he almost peed himself, and then hurriedly pulled himself together.

“Yes, that’s right. Actually, my name is Masayuki, not Rudra. That’s why I’m a little confused.”

Masayuki grinned amiably, while also cautiously observing Velgrynd’s reaction.

Besides, it wasn’t just Velgrynd, but also the soldiers of the Empire who were a problem.

According to the conversation just now, they think that I’m Emperor Rudra, right? But if I tell them that I’m not the emperor at this point, they’ll all be confused. I would be charged for perjury by the emperor, and then I’d have to prove my innocence!

He didn’t know if there was such a charge or not, but he still wanted to make things clear.

So, Masayuki decided to convey his thoughts.

Velgrynd, however, did not care.

“There’s no problem at all. The value of the empire is nothing more than Rudra’s property. It was just Rudra’s hobby that led him to build it, and he kept it because it was necessary for his game with Guy. If you don’t want it anymore, why don’t we just scorch it clean?”

It was truly a statement of something transcendent like the divine.

The Imperial soldiers’ faces all paled.

All their eyes pierced into Masayuki.

St-Stop it! Don’t look at me like that!! Don’t blame me!!!

Masayuki opened his mouth while feeling the weight of an unnecessary responsibility.

“No, the empire is important! Rimuru-san also wanted to be friends with them in the future. When the war is over, let’s establish diplomatic relations—friendly relations.”

In short, Masayuki desperately insisted that the Empire must not be turned into a scorched earth.

All of the Imperial soldiers began looking at Masayuki with worshipful eyes, as if he were a god.

Velgrynd was a ‘just do it’ type of person, and it didn’t take much effort for her to do what she said.

If Masayuki hadn’t opposed it, the empire would have been destroyed. Everyone understood this, which was why their appreciation towards Masayuki was so great.

“Really? If you say so. Then I’ll just continue to cooperate as usual.”

With that, Velgrynd flashed a smile.

For their part, the Imperial soldiers breathed a sigh of relief.

In the midst of this, Calgurio spoke up on behalf of the group with a question.

“I am sorry to interrupt you just now even though things have been settled, but there is one thing I would like to confirm.”

His expression was grave, and it was clear that he was hesitant to say anything.

“What is it?” Velgrynd asked.

“Yes! It is about Rudra-sama, the current Emperor. What will happen next for His Majesty Rudra?”

Upon hearing this, Velgrynd also expressed her understanding.

“Oh, that’s right. After all, you guys can’t see the true nature of the soul, can you? The Rudra now is nothing more than an empty shell. But the real Rudra’s soul was gathered by my beloved Masayuki.”

“Huh? Me?”

“Yes. Even without your memories, there is no doubt that you are ‘Rudra,’ so I love you and will try to make you love me too.”

“Uhhh, yeah.”

Is there any man who wouldn’t get excited after being told that by a beautiful woman?

No, there isn’t!

Masayuki was no exception.

Although she was in love with him now, there was no guarantee that her love would last forever. So in order to hold onto his good fortune, he vowed work even harder.

What exactly he would do, however, was a matter left for the future.

Masayuki had made his decision, but there was still another problem.

“Then we must make Masayuki-sama the true Emperor!”

“Huh?”

“That’s right. But it might be difficult. In terms of bloodline, he’s of a completely different pedigree. It won’t even work if we say he is the emperor’s illegitimate son. There would be no way to cover it up.”

“Wait, what?”

“It doesn’t matter. The army will be suppressed by Calgurio-dono, and I will handle the nobility. It’s okay, they won’t be able to argue. If we fail, the empire will be destroyed anyway, so we can’t afford to take any chances.”

When Calgurio set the course, and Bernie raised the issue, it was Minits who offered the solution. The soldiers present were all willing to support the plan to the best of their ability.

And just like that, before Masayuki had a chance to interject, the plan moved forward step by step…

“Good luck with that, Masayuki.”

That…I don’t have the right to refuse?

Probably not, so Masayuki gave up.

His legendary life was only just beginning.