

Chapter 1

Walpurgis

The destination through Rain's “portal” was a silvery world of ice and snow.

Unlike last time, it seemed that the venue was to be Guy's palace.

Rain guided me as I stepped inside.

Shion and Diablo followed.

Although the outside was too frigid for any living thing survive, the temperature inside of the castle was comfortable. However, half of the castle had collapsed and it was obvious that something had happened.

“Hey, so you’re here. I'm sure Milim and Dagruel will be here soon, so make yourself comfortable and wait for them.”

Guy told me as he led me to the room.

There were several round tea tables in a large hall that looked as if it could be used for a ball. Chairs were also placed irregularly, so that we could sit freely.

Looking at the guests, I saw that Ruminas and Leon had already arrived.

Behind Ruminas was Pope Louis and the old butler Gunther.

Behind Leon were the two knights, Alrose and Claude, both fully armed.

I was a little relieved to see familiar faces. After a brief exchange of greetings, I took a seat. Shion and Diablo seemed to refrain from sitting down and waited behind me instead.

I wish they would sit down too, but I’ll let them do as they please.

And then, Ramiris made her loud appearance. 9

“Hey, what's the deal with you leaving me behind!?”

Ah!

I thought we had gone together, but it seems that Ramiris was left behind.

“Wha-what? Ramiris-sama, why weren't you with us?”

I wasn’t the only one who was caught off guard. Rain, who had been guiding us, was flustered as well. She seemed to have assumed that Ramiris was following her and was surprised to see her getting angry.

“Rain, it is unlike you to make a mistake. I received an urgent request from Ramiris-sama to pick her up.”

It was Mizari who said this.

Just like Rain, Mizari's face was battered and bruised, though her expression remained sharp.

I had initially thought that those two were similar, but…Perhaps it was because I didn't have the luxury of time until now, but the differences in their personalities stood out clearly.

“Rain-chan, you seem to be distracted because of your injury! I was just worrying about who I should take with me, you know! But even so!”

I noticed that Ramiris had two attendants with her.

Beretta and……—Hey.

“Veldora, what are you doing?”

Ruminas reacted to my words and turned to look behind Ramiris. She saw Veldora standing there and clicked her tongue, making a disgusted face.

“Tsk, that evil dragon.”

“Kuahahaha! I heard that there was some kind of important meeting going on, and I just couldn't miss it. I was actually planning to follow Rimuru, but was too late, so I quickly stopped Ramiris and offered to join her!”

Veldora did not read the atmosphere.

He didn’t care that Ruminas was in a bad mood and was confidently making his point.

Ramiris followed suit.

“That's how it is! If Master 10 is willing to join us, it’s like having the help of a hundred people, so I hope you'll thank me for bringing him here!”

Beretta was the only one shaking his head and lamenting, but there seemed to be no stopping the two of them.

“I am very sorry 11 . I was careless…”

“No, no, it's not Rain-san's fault. We came here in a hurry as well.”

Rain looked depressed, so I comforted her for the time being.



“Well, since I called you here, it was only natural to hurry. Rimuru, didn't I tell you before that you can just call Rain and the others by their names 12 ?”

Oh, I forgot.

“Guy-sama is right, Rimuru-sama. Please call us by our names.

“That's right. It makes me happy to feel more familiar.”

Mizari-san seems to understand me very well.

There are two ways in which I address others with honorific titles.

The first is when I want to keep an eye on someone, and the second is when I want to keep my distance from them.

When I'm not close to someone, or when I should be wary of them, I think it is rude to refer to them without their honorific titles. It’s also partly because I don't want to be disliked and partly a calculation so as not to antagonize them.

On the other hand, when I get close to someone, I naturally call them by his/her name.

There are a few people like Haruna-san or Treyni-san, who for some reason make me want to use the “-san” honorific, but those people are exceptions.

Putting those thoughts aside…

At this time, more voices from some unexpected people were heard.

[Ruminas’ voice] “Rimuru, you’ve been calling me by my name too, so it's probably a little late for that.

“That's right. You're so brazen, I don't think that you can fix it now.”

Ruminas and Leon.

I was convinced that they were right.

“All right, then. In that case, I’ll just call you all by name from now on 13 .”

I said so and accepted Guy’s and everyone’s offer.

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Mizari and Rain went out to meet Milim and Dagruel.

Everyone else relaxed and waited. There were snacks on the table, so we spent some time reaching for them.

After a while…

“What's going on, Guy? I've also got a lot on my plate. You can call for me, but you should at least contact us in advance! Frey says that's good manners.”

Milim arrived, looking full of energy.

She was still as noisy as ever, which was very typical of Milim.

“Is that so, Frey?”

“Well, yes. Guy-sama.

“Frey, as I was saying to Rimuru, no honorifics, please. The same with Karion and you guys there. Any of you in this room deserve it.”

Oh, Guy just said something I didn't expect…I am convinced too. Everyone in this room is strong.

If I had to choose, I'd say that Leon's followers were inferior in terms of magicule quantity, but their skills still seemed to be quite good.

On top of that, Frey-san had awakened into a “True Demon Lord” and had reached the Million-class. It was unknown how strong she had become, but she was not someone to be mocked as a mere subordinate.

As if she was aware of this, Frey-san nodded.

“Oh, thank you. I'll freely call you as such, then.”

Frey-san responded, looking around Guy's castle.

Karion followed suit, addressing Guy in a dignified manner.

“I've never been good with honorifics, so it's nice of you to say so. So, Guy, what kind of business did you call us in for today?”

Like Frey-san, Karion was also in the millions-class. He had always had the aura of a king from the start, so his irreverent attitude felt forgivable.

When our eyes met, he greeted me with one hand raised in the air.

Guy responded to Karion with a wry smile.

“Well, wait just a minute. Dagruel will be here soon, so we can talk then. But still, I’m surprised. Not only Karion, but Frey has awakened as well.”

Well, one would notice. I had heard it from the reports, but after seeing him in person, I can tell that he’s become far stronger than before.

“Thanks to you. Perhaps it’s exactly as Milim calculated, but this war has helped me overcome my limitations as a harpy.”

Frey-san smiled, and Guy nodded in satisfaction saying, “That's what it means to climb to the top.” 14

“Well, I guess I'm the same way. I was able to get rid of the shame of the beastmen, and I guess it's not all bad to play along with Milim's schemes.”

Karion laughed out loud.

“Whaaat!? I don't know what you're talking about!”

“Meh, don't try to hide it Milim. You must have thought that if we remained weak, we’d die in future battles, right? That's why you gave us the chance to fight the humans.”

“That's right. If this is the world Rimuru-dono wants, we wouldn’t have been able to get the souls needed to awaken. Perhaps this was your last chance?”

“That ain’t right. 15 Is that so?”

“Ah—Ahh! I don't know. Stop talking nonsense and just sit down!”

Milim's attitude as she shouted was, by all appearances, one of embarrassment.

‘So that's what she was trying to do,’ I thought to myself.

But that's beside the point.

“Um, Frey-san. You don't have to address me by '-dono' or any other honorific title.”

I was trying to make a point, but Frey-san snickered at me.

“Rejected. You are a friend of Milim-chan, our master, so you should be respected as well.”

No, no, but you call Milim so informally too.

I don't find that very convincing…

“If that’s the case—”

“Also, you’ve been referring to me with “-san” 16 as well. Can you stop that?”

I got caught in my own line of questioning.

Frey-san's request was a difficult hurdle for me.

Karion is one thing, but I don't feel comfortable calling out to Frey-san so casually.

How do I put it, is it the aura that I’m not good with?

Whenever I am in front of a beautiful woman, I feel debilitated 17 .

Milim is a child, and Ruminas is a beautiful young girl, so it's safe. If they had been more mature, I might have had a little trouble reacting.

If the person was as disappointing as Shion though, the hurdle would be instantly lowered and I would be fine.

“Ahahaha! Rimuru, so you're not good with adult beauties, huh?”

He saw through me!?

“That’s good. Whenever I need to ask you for something, I'll just take the form of a beautiful woman.”

“I don't need that kind of attention! If I know that it’s you, I won’t be happy about it!”

I was so annoyed that I lost all my tension.

That's why I completely ignored Guy's words and spilled out my true feelings.

“Fufu, of course! After all, Rimuru-sama has a beautiful secretary like me.”

Wait, you're going to say that about yourself?

“Kufufufu. Guy, you're being a bit presumptuous if you think that Rimuru-sama would be interested in you. In the first place, I can easily learn to transform myself into a woman, and if Rimuru-sama wants me to—”

“I don't want you to, so this conversation is over.”

Diablo was more dangerous than Shion.

He was about to say something crazy if left him alone, so I swiftly ended the conversation.

Seriously, my subordinates are so much trouble.

I regretted for a moment that I didn’t bring Benimaru with me instead.

Meanwhile, Dagruel had also arrived.

He didn't bring any companions, but even by himself he looked very intimidating.

“Oh, man, it's a hell of a mess. Could it be that this meeting is really serious?”

That was the first thing Dagruel said as he sat down on the large chair that Rain guided him to.

It was interesting because the chair looked distorted even though it was made of massive stone.

In any case, no one had mentioned it, but I still noticed it.

No, everyone had definitely noticed it.

There was also a big crack running through walls of this hall. Just by looking at it, it was obvious that something had happened.

Because I knew that it would be very troublesome, I had been diverting the topic to avoid facing the reality.

It was an escape to avoid getting involved in the situation, but now that everyone was here, there seemed to be no choice but to get down to business.

“Well, things have gotten a little complicated. For once, I seriously want to borrow everyone’s wisdom.”

“Hoh, that's a pretty big deal, coming from you.”

Guy nodded, and Dagruel turned serious.

He must have read the situation and decided that things seemed seriously troublesome.

It wasn’t just wisdom he wanted to borrow, I thought, with a faraway look in my eyes.

I wasn’t the only one, but Guy stood up and announced with a smile.

“Now then, let's change venues. Let us have an important discussion with our highly cooperative “Octagram,” first!”

Cooperative?

‘Don’t sleep-talk’ I almost muttered to myself.

That smile gave me a bad feeling, but…sadly, there seemed to be no way to refuse, so we all reluctantly followed Guy's lead.

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The venue was a hall with a round table that seemed to be isolated from the outside world.

The fact that drinks had already been prepared for us was quite impressive.

Guy sat at the top, and I sat opposite of him.

From my point of view, Milim was on Guy's right and Ramiris was on his left.

To my right was Leon. Between Milim and Leon was Ruminas, and on the other side was Dagruel.

Ramiris' chair was small, but the seat was higher than the top of the round table. And since Dagruel's chair was several times heavier than usual, the arrangement was well balanced.

As soon as I sat down, it was obvious that there was an empty seat between me and Dagruel.

“By the way, I don’t see Dino, do we have to wait for him?”

Dagruel asked the obvious question.

The other demon lords seemed to be curious as well, and their eyes focused on Guy.

“Ahh, that's right.”

Guy looked at me.

I immediately had the feeling that he was aiming towards me 18 .

“Rimuru-kun.”

Guy seemed to know about Dino's betrayal after all. I didn’t know what kind of an information network he had, but the fact that he was talking to me suggested that he had a grasp of the situation to some extent.

“Yes, yes. You want me to explain, right? Dino was a traitor. That is all!”

“Too brief! Be more polite and detailed.”

“Damn, it can’t be helped…”

It was useless to resist any further, so I gave up and decided to explain.

I told them that Dino, who was staying in our country, betrayed us and turned to the enemy’s side. However, I did not hide the fact that it was probably due to the influence of Michael's “Ultimate Dominion,” regardless of his intentions.

“Dino changed sides…”

Dagruel muttered to himself as he finished listening to my story. Dagruel, who was a good friend of his, must have had some thoughts on the matter.

“Even though he’s changed sides, it seems like he's still in control. I haven't confirmed his intentions, though.”

“Michael, was it? Are you trying to tell me that a mere Skill has a will of its own?”

Oh, so Guy didn't know why Dino betrayed him either.

“That's right. There’s no doubt about it. At this point, he's developed an ego, and has taken over Rudra's body, acting as Michael.”

Because I also have a partner, Ciel-san, we have the best evidence of that.

“Wait, Rimuru! Did you say that the Ultimate Dominion 19 affects the skills of the angelic system? Then the question is, how do you tell the difference between angelic and demonic when the concepts are so vague?”

Oh, Ruminas made a good point!

That's what I was wondering as well.

Just as I was thinking that, Guy stood up.

“I'll explain it to you.”

Then Guy started talking about Skills in surprising detail. It seemed like a huge secret, a secret about the way the world worked, but he was generous enough to share it with us.

According to him,

The laws of this world were established by Veldanava, but it seems that anyone with the right administrative power can influence those laws.

Even if you don't have that power, you can still rewrite the laws to some extent by intervening with your wish in magicules. In other words, this was the concept of magic, a kind of power.

A Skill is something that has been systematized to a certain extent so that it can influence these laws.

Skills that reside in the soul of the strong-willed and are activated by their pure energy—that is the Ultimate Skill of the angelic system created by Veldanava, and among them are the seven powers called the Virtues.

“When I fought Veldanava, he had many powers, but after the world was stabilized, he left only the strongest one, the ‘Justice King,’ and gave some of them away, releasing all that remained into the world. As a result, those powers were taken into the circle of reincarnation and appeared in the world in the form of qualified and strong souls. However, the Ultimate Skills were too strong, and were restricted to the unique level. They can be scattered among various Skills, or become a ‘Virtue’ type Unique Skill while retaining a certain amount of authority.”

I felt like the Virtue skill system was in contrast to the Deadly Sins skill system. In other words, there was the virtuous system and sinful system, or the angelic system and the demonic system.

But, well, from the way Guy was talking now, it seemed like there were not seven Ultimate Skills in the Virtue system.

The 'Wisdom King (Raphael)' I got was also an evolution from 'Great Sage', and it seemed to have nothing to do with 'Virtue'.

I'm a simple guy, so I was convinced by Guy's explanation, but Ruminas asked a question again, as if there was nothing to hide.

“Guy, if you know something, tell me. Are there seven angelic system skills in total? And what are their powers?”

Now that you mention it, I was curious about that too.

Of course, the other demon lords seem to be feeling the same way.

“Huh, you're all united like never before. All right then, I'll tell you. First, the seven virtues of the angelic system…”

Guy was very knowledgeable.

The seven virtuous powers that Veldanava was said to have possessed.

According to Guy's description—

Ultimate Skill 'Justice King (Michael)' — Its command is Mental Control itself, the strongest power specialized in the chain of command with a real 'Absolute Defense' like the 'Castle Guard.'

Ultimate Skill Knowledge 20 King (Raphael)' — The power to manage the laws of the world, specializing in support.

Ultimate Skill 'Covenant King (Uriel)' — A power that specializes in spatial management and is used for the management of all events.

Ultimate Skill 'Hope King (Sariel)' — The source of life, and the power to manage the circle of reincarnation.

Ultimate Skill 'Purity King (Metatron)' — The power to sort out all mixed laws, prevent interference, and select pure energy.

Ultimate Skill ' Charity King (Raguel)' — The power to provide support and amplification to others. It has been given to Velgrynd.

Ultimate Skill 'Patience King (Gabriel)' — The power to fix the status and respond to unforeseen circumstances. It has been given to Velzard.

—That’s how it was.

To tell you the truth, I was surprised to find out more than expected.

“That is the breakdown of the skills, but only three of them are known to exist at this time. Veldanava gave his 'Justice King (Michael)' to Rudra, so he got his 'Covenant King (Uriel)' back in return. That is the one that Rudra acquired and made ultimate. There probably would have been some changes in performance. Well, that's lost now, so we can't be sure.”

No one interrupted.

And so, Guy continued.

“I knew that 'Justice King' (Michael) who went to Rudra had the power to dominate others, but it was more powerful than I thought.”

It was there that Guy faltered.

While I waited for Guy to say something, our eyes met.

“You know Rimuru, don't you?”

Well, there was no reason to lie here.

If I could, I'd have liked to pretend that I didn’t know anything, but I can't do that. Because I didn't talk about the Ultimate Dominion properly in my explanation earlier, I’d give my take on it.

Now that the problem had grown so large, I thought that covering it up would only make things worse.

“Ah. I know him, or rather, I fought him just the other day. When Veldora was influenced by the enemy, I thought it was all over.”

Velgrynd had been influenced too.

“I see.”

“I had such a hard time because you pushed me into trouble! You didn't just get me into a fight with Rudra, you got me into a full-scale war!”

I'll argue the point that must be made.

But well, to Guy that was nothing.

“Ahahaha! It's fine because you won.”

“No, it's not! Ramiris’ labyrinth was destroyed by Velgrynd, and the area around our town was turned into a hellish scorched earth. Well, the restoration is going well, but I will never accept requests from you again!”

I got swept up in the momentum and yelled out.

With this, I hope he will not ask of me any unreasonable requests for the time being.

“Hmm, you've been doing that sort of thing with magic for a while now. Oh well. So, what's your conclusion?”

“I was slurring my words earlier when I said ‘'influenced,’ but I'll rephrase it correctly. Michael's “Ultimate Dominion” is a heinous power of absolute control over the holders of the Angelic Ultimate Skills.”

“That's ridiculous—”

“That’s hard to believe. A person who reaches the ultimate skill must have a strong mind. Human or demon, it's the same. To be completely dominated—”

“Accept it. The proof is that not only Veldora, but also Velgrynd were placed under Michael's control. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes.”

Or rather, I still didn’t want to believe it.

It was like a nightmare, something I never want to experience again.

“Rimuru’s story is true. As proof, Velgrynd has 'Charity King (Raguel)' and Velzard, as I said, has the Ultimate Skill 'Patience King (Gabriel)'.”

That’s how it is.

I suspected as much.

Judging from the collapse of this castle, there must have been a fight with a hell of an opponent.

I didn't want to admit it, but it seems that Velzard had been taken over by Michael.

My bad prediction had come true, and I felt depressed.

“Hey, Guy! In other words, are you saying that Velzard-dono has turned against us?”

“That's right, Dagruel.”

“No way! That’s a big deal!”

Guy's affirmation upset Dagruel. Since they've known each other for a long time, I guess he knows how dangerous Velzard is.

On the other hand, I don't know her that well…

I'm sure she's dangerous, but I'm not sure how dangerous she is. I couldn’t set a threat level because I couldn't really feel it.

“—Just asking, but could you possibly have defeated and locked her away somewhere…?”

“Rimuru, do you really think that such a convenient story exists?”

So there wasn’t.

I was annoyed that Guy was so appalled and that my wishful thinking was shut down.

“This sucks. 21 Michael's team now includes Velzard-san…”

I couldn't help but mutter to myself something that echoed the mood of everyone else.

“…Good grief.” 22

Leon seemed distressed as well.

“I suspected as much, but this is unfortunate.”

Ruminas also had a dark expression.

I think that was only natural. But I don't think he’ll be able to beat us because he had let Guy escape without a fight.

“Don't worry! There are still seven of the eight stars left here. Besides, the others are strong enough too! Let's go on a rampage and show them what we can do!”

Why does Milim look so happy?

As I thought, there was definitely something wrong with the True Dragon's blood.

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Well, everyone all knew that the situation was the worst, but there was still some more unpleasant information to add.

“Now, to continue answering your question as to whether there are a total of seven angelic skills, the answer is no.”

“Mmm…This is the worst.”

Ruminas looked displeased.

“Well, do you know how many of the Angelic Ultimate Skills there are?”

When Dagruel asked, Guy answered gravely.

“I don't know all of them either. When I fought Veldanava, I couldn't even see the bottom of it. He told me about the Seven Virtues. He also said he was going to give each of the Seven Primordial Angels a special power.”

Silence enveloped the room.

In addition to the seven virtues, one for each of the seven angels, that would make a total of fourteen…

“You make it sound like he didn't give one to all of them…”

“That's right, Dagruel. The angels back then had weak egos, and some of them couldn't handle an Ultimate Skill. That's why Veldanava gave Velzard and Velgrynd 'Patience King (Gabriel)' and 'Charity King (Raguel)'. It seems that he also granted skills to the eligible angels, but released the rest of the skills he didn't transfer.”

He left himself the 'Justice King (Michael)', which he traded for the 'Covenant King (Uriel)' that Rudra later acquired.

And then, when Veldanava died, the 'Covenant King (Uriel)' was also lost. It circled around and eventually became my power, and was now merged with Velgrynd's Divine Flame King (Cthugha).

This is not the time to be escaping from reality by mulling over the history. I feel that I have to keep it a secret for sure.

In any case, now I can see the whole picture to some extent.

“In other words, the angelic skills are pure skills created by Veldanava, and it is possible that there were at least 14 of them. And whoever manifests and acquires them will not be able to resist Michael's Ultimate Dominion, right?”

“That's right.”

I summed it up, and Guy nodded his head in agreement.

Which brought me to my next question.

“Wait, wait, wait. The angelic skills are okay, but what about the demonic skills?”

Oh, Ramiris asked exactly what I wanted to ask.

All eyes focused on Guy.

“That's a tough one to answer, but listen. I gained the Unique Skill 'Pride' when I was defeated by Veldanava. I had been observing him, trying to emulate his strength, and I think that's the secret.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Ramiris, your skills were born with you so you may not realize it, but acquiring Skill is influenced by one's wishes. It still depends on the individual, though.”

After answering that, Guy gave a brief explanation on Skills.

A Skill is normally found in the material body, the spiritual body, or the astral body. However, there are some special cases where the skill will reside in the soul itself.

Naturally, because the soul is so close to the essence of the person, the desire is greater, and it makes sense that the thing inhabiting the soul would become a powerful skill.

In addition to this, consider it in combination with Ciel-san's view.

It is true that there was something in a Unique Skill that resided in a material body.

The Unique Skill 'Berserker', for example, is easy to understand because it was inherited by Larzen 23 who took Shogo's body.

There are various examples like that, but I agree with the opinion that the power rooted in the soul is more powerful.

It's easy to hide, so it's hard to be stolen, and it can also be a trump card.

In that case, the Ultimate Skill is probably a soul-level power, and I think that's why the number of people who can handle one is limited.

But that's not all. There are two ways to take root in the soul, not just “dwelling” but also “being engraved.”

Ciel-san, for example, is completely assimilated to my soul. It is impossible to separate the two, so I don't have to worry about it being stolen. Still, I think it's safer to keep it a secret.

This is also the case with an Ultimate Skill.

If it is only dwelling in the soul, it might be stolen, but if it is engraved, there is no need to worry about it.

However, that would be impossible to detect…

While thinking like this, I listened to everyone's conversation.

“Which brings me to my earlier point—”

“You said that the power Veldanava unleashed was taken into the circle of reincarnation and came to reside in a strong soul.”

“Yeah, that's right, but in my case I didn't receive any of Veldanava's power. I wasn't given any special powers by Veldanava like Ramiris. It's a power I created myself. You get it? By imitating pure power, a Skill was born. And that is—”

‘The demonic system,’ he said.

“I see. So then my ‘Lustful King (Asmodeus)’ is just an imitation, a degraded version, isn't it?”

“No, that’s not the case. If a Skill is the result of your own will and desire, it has the same power as the original. I didn't want to tell you this, but my ‘Pride’ has evolved into the Ultimate Skill ‘Pride King (Lucifer)’. That power is comparable to the angelic system, and the strength of will is what decides victory or defeat.”

“Guy, it’s just like you to say that…Well, okay. Just to confirm, according to you, there are at least fourteen demonic system Ultimate Skills, right?”

“Probably. Just as demons were born from angels, demonic skills are born from angelic skills, at least that’s what I think.”

Hmm, I guess my prediction was right.

There are too many connections 24 in this world

If there is a cause-and-effect relationship between hero and demon lord, it’s not surprising that there would be the same kind of relationship between Skills.

“At the very least, Veldanava's seven virtues must have been paired with the deadly sins that evolved from the seven deadly sins.”

It seems that Guy's 'Pride King (Lucifer)' is paired with Rudra's 'Covenant King (Uriel)'.

From there, here is Guy's prediction.

Ultimate Skill 'Justice King (Michael)' is paired with 'Wrath King (Satanael)'

Ultimate Skill ‘Wisdom King (Raphael)' is paired with 'Gluttonous King (Beelzebuth)'

Ultimate Skill 'Hope King (Sariel)' is paired with 'Sloth King (Belphegor)'

Ultimate Skill ' Purity King (Metatron)' is paired with 'Lustful King (Asmodeus)'

Ultimate Skill 'Charity King (Raguel)' is paired with 'Greedy King (Mammon)'

Ultimate Skill 'Patience King (Gabriel)' is paired with 'Envy King (Leviathan)'

He said that each of them might correspond to the other.

As for me, I was at a loss for words because I had a Skill that had already been sacrificed.

I’d be in big trouble if I made this public, but even if I didn’t say anything, I'm afraid it’ll still be a problem.

At times like these, Ciel-san was conveniently silent 25 , so I decided to wait and see.

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After Guy's explanation on Skills, it was time to get back on track.

“To add on to Guy's explanation, it seems that angelic Skills have “control circuit” of absolute command built into them, and if you have one, you are unable resist Michael's orders. Dino was probably turned for that reason, so don't think of him as an ally if you meet him.”

“That's a pain. That bastard might not be the brightest, but he's stronger than you think.”

Dagruel growls at my words.

Ignoring him, Ruminas added in gloomily.

“What's more troubling is that Velzard-dono is on the side of the enemy. Velgrynd-dono too, perhaps?”

Dagruel also thought that this was a bigger problem.

I wanted to pretend that I didn’t know, but I’d have to inform them about Velgrynd. Ramiris already knew what was going on, so they’d find out anyway.

Just as I was about to open my mouth, Leon made a sharp point.

“Wait, I don't care about Velgrynd's story at this point. What we should be doing right now is checking whether or not anyone else has an Angelic Skill.”

That's right.

As expected of Leon, getting straight to the point.

The ex-Chosen Hero was overflowing with courage.

“Leon, I was hoping you'd bring that up!”

Guy looked pleased.

When I was thinking of the content of today's meeting, I knew that this would be the most important issue.

The only question was who was going to bring it up?

After all, doing so would mean doubting your friends.

The only way to prevent that would be to reveal your own hand.

That's why Guy and Ruminas had been revealing their powers earlier.

Those of us who were able to read the situation would have spoken up before being suspected.

Well, I guess I was a little late to the party…

“Wait a minute! You're not suspecting me, are you?”

“It’s fine. You've been excluded from the start.”

That's right.

Because Ciel-san had also assured me that Ramiris’ power was of a separate category.

Ciel-san said that her power was not given by Veldanava, but rather it was a part of her power that she lost when she was no longer a deity.

Having heard that, I did not doubt Ramiris either.

“Wahahaha! I'm different. I don’t really understand my power—”

“Don't worry about it, Milim. A power with that kind of ridiculous power would definitely be a Skill paired with the Ultimate Skill ‘Justice King (Michael).’”

In other words, the Ultimate Skill 'Wrath King (Satanael)'. I don't know what kind of power it is, but it doesn't seem to be completely under control.

“Then next is me. Actually, I don't have the same type of relation with my Skill as you all do. I'm more like Ramiris. I was born with this power too.”

We all fell silent at this statement, but I felt that he was not lying.

As evidence, Milim, who had a keen sense of intuition, remained silent.

“I believe you, Dagruel.”

“So do I! I do too!”

“Hmm, if Rimuru and Milim say so, then I'll believe it too.”

With this, the trust of 3 out of 7 people was obtained.

Including Dagruel, we had the majority, but there were still more supporters.

“Hmm, I will trust you too.”

“Hold on, I’ll believe in you too in that case!”

Leon casually dismissed his suspicions against Dagruel, and the opportunistic Ramiris expressed her desire not to be left behind.

With this, only Ruminas remained.

“Tsk, I'd love to take down Dagruel right now, but I guess I'll have to give up this time.”

“Gahahah! Ruminas, this is what is natural virtue 26 is called. Too bad!”

“So noisy! If you're actually being manipulated, I'll laugh at you for being so weak.”

Dagruel and Ruminas don't seem to be on the best of terms. And yet, there seems to be a strange amount of trust between them.

Well, maybe it's just my imagination.

Anyway, Dagruel is now cleared of suspicion.

Ruminas had declared herself to have the Lustful King (Asmodeus), and Guy had declared himself to have the Pride King (Lucifer).

That just left me and Leon.

Let’s take the initiative here.

“Ah, I'll keep quiet. I have a lot of skills, but I don't want to tell you!”

I announced this with a smile.

After all, my Skill is weird.

Ultimate Skill 'Void God (Azathoth)' and 'Fertility King (Shub-Niggurath)'—I don't thing such information should be made public. Even if I tried to describe them with a serious face, people would only think I was showing off 27 .

I was sure that no one would trust me, so I exercised my right to remain silent.

—is what I thought, but apparently that was not allowed.

“You can't pass with that reasoning!”

It was easily rejected by Guy.

Oh, so that was no good after all?

No, there was still a chance.

“Wahahaha! I believe in Rimuru, so it’s okay if you don't tell me! But only if you promise to give me some honey later!!”

Whether she’s dependable or calculative, either way, Milim was on my side.

“In that case, I’m okay with cake. Three days’ worth!”

Ramiris can also be bribed.

Three days’ worth will be a pain, but I’ll take it.

“Okay, I accept! I'll promise Milim three large jars of Apito honey and Ramiris three days’ worth of my dessert!”

I said so, and nodded my head.

“Just leave it to me! I’m declaring that Rimuru is okay!”

“Of course! Rimuru is the one who revealed the secret of the angelic system in the first place. I don't think there would be anything to be gained by revealing your hand, so you can't be under control!”

Oh, Ramiris made a good point!

She’s not usually like that, but sometimes she can be smart.

Perhaps it was just too sound of an argument, so the remaining demon lords began to look convinced.

“Hmm, I guess you're right. If the one who trusted me was betraying me, that means I would also be under suspicion. In that case, I should trust Rimuru!”

With a hearty laugh, Dagruel made his decision.

With this, we now have a majority of the votes. That was including myself, so it would be perfect if just one more person supported me.

With that in mind, I glanced at Ruminas.

“…What? There is no way that I could possibly be bribed—”

I won’t let her finish. I’ll end it here.

“Shuna has designed a new swimsuit.”

“—What?”

She took the bait!

Ufufufu. As I thought, it seems that Ruminas is more susceptible when you attack her from the inside.

“In cooperation with Ramiris, we’ve also created a seaside beach in the labyrinth.”

“It was done to perfection!”

“It's a paradise with a completely private area…”

“Rimuru, I think you and I are going to have to have a long talk.”

“The transparent seawater gently envelopes you when you swim. The sun shines brightly, but you won't get sunburned because it’s inside a labyrinth. Of course, you could tan your skin in any way you wish.”

“Wait, wait.”

“Beautiful women who expose everything in a sense of liberation, all in a place different from the rest of the world—”

“Okay. I have some requests and ideas, so I'll visit you after this meeting is over. Are you sure you can make the time?”

“Of course. In that case—”

“I understand. I have believed in Rimuru from the very beginning.”

Yes!

I unintentionally made a fist-pump, but now my victory is assured.

“…Hey, hey, are you for real? Is this how you want to play it, guys? I can't believe you Octagram are so easy to manipulate!”

Guy glared at me with resentment.

But that doesn't matter.

Victory is justice.

“Guy, you have no choice but to admit defeat. I’m not convinced either, but it's obvious that Rimuru is not being controlled.”

Leon's regretful voice was soothing the soul.

With this, I had succeeded dismissing my suspicions.

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Now Leon was the only one left.

“So, Leon. What about you?”

“My Skill is the Ultimate Skill ‘Purity King (Metatron).’”

“““…………”””

Leon answered Dagruel's question in a very simple……Huh?

What did he just say?

The Ultimate Skill ‘Purity King (Metatron)’ is an angelic skill, isn't it!?

I can't even begin to describe the feeling of helplessness that everyone exuded.

“Hey, hey, Leon. It's rare to see you make a joke. But still, this is a serious meeting. Calm down and give us an answer one more time.”

“Guy, I don't have time for this either. The 'Purity King (Metatron)' that we've been talking about is my Skill.”

I'm sure everyone was thinking that this was a big problem.

Just when I thought the meeting would be coming to a close, a huge problem arose.

“Well then, what should we do?—Hey, Rimuru-kun!”

“Don't dump this on me! You're so obvious that you don't even bother to hide the fact that you’re forcing me to do everything for you!”

“That’s you, you bastard! Quit complaining and just think of a solution!”

“Hey, don't start such an ugly argument with me!”

“Wahahaha! But you know, Ruminas…I understand how Guy feels. Rimuru can be very helpful in times like these!”

“That's right! Just leave this to Rimuru, and we’ll have a cup of tea or something!”

Selfish colleagues.

And Ramiris, you're especially terrible. I’ll be sure to remember this.

This is why demon lords are so scary. What kind of cooperation is this?

In the midst of all this, Dagruel spoke up in exasperation.

“Rimuru, you've had it pretty rough. I've felt closer to you ever since I heard that you were forced to take care of Dino, and I feel sorry for you this time too.”

He was such a good guy.

He’s a giant and a demon lord, but appearances can be deceiving.

“Dagruel-san, thank you!”

“The “-san” is unnecessary. I'm sure we’ve brought this up before.”

That's right.

I should be aware of the fact that I’m a demon lord by now.

I think being too humble can be harmful in certain situations.

“Then once again, thank you Dagruel!”

“Hm, don't worry about it. Anyway, is Leon alright?”

Dagruel nodded lightly, and the conversation returned to the topic at hand.

Ruminas also joined in, as if they were on the same page.

“That's right. He looks the same as usual, but it’s important to know whether or not Leon is under control, right?”

Everyone's eyes focused on me.

It's best to ask the person himself about such things, but he doesn't seem to be aware of it. If that's the case, I'll just have to guess, but before I do, there was something I wanted to confirm.

“As I said before, when Dino betrayed us, the labyrinth was destroyed and the enemy was able to invade. We believe that he came into contact with Phantom King Feldway.”

“Once they were inside the labyrinth, complete isolation from the outside was impossible. That's why, although they didn't seem to be able to talk directly, they might have been able to communicate through ‘telekinesis’ or something.”

Ramiris added to my explanation.

For the time being, it seems that she was willing to work.

While considering Ramiris’ nice assist, I asked Guy.

“So, I’d like to ask—what happened here? I know that Velzard-san became an enemy and went on a rampage, but I want to know how it happened.”

“So you know about it.”

“Yeah. I think anyone who saw this mess would recognize it.”

It was obvious to me that Guy and Velzard had fought. Otherwise, there wouldn't be such a mess.

What I'm curious about is how it happened, or rather, how Velzard fell into the hands of the enemy.

Is it possible to send a command to the “control circuit” from anywhere, or is it necessary to get closer to a certain extent?

Depending on the answer, the threat level will be different.

Also, Velzard and probably Dino were given their powers by Veldanava, while Leon acquired it on his own and brought it to the ultimate level. While his “control circuit” might not have disappeared, there is still the possibility that there is a glitch.

If so, that would explain why Leon's commands might not be going through. In any case, it's important to get accurate information first.

“You're right, that bastard Feldway broke through the Ice and Snow 'Barriers'. It was Mizari and Rain who greeted him, and I thought I'd go out and give him a thrashing. But then Velzard got in the way.”

Hmmm…

“In other words, he didn't make direct contact, but he came close. It’s the same conditions as Dino, but I'm not sure what to make of it.”

“So, you're saying they need to get within a certain distance to interfere with the control circuit? You don’t think that this might be a trick to make us think that, do you?”

“Something like that.”

“Leon, do you feel anything about yourself?”

“I don't feel anything. I'm just me, and I don't feel like I'm being controlled by anything.”

Leon replied confidently, but even Lieutenant Kondou and Velgrynd had not been aware that they were being controlled. It was impossible to trust that statement.

“In other words, your beloved is me—”

“Idiot, of course it's Chloe. I don’t even care about you. 28 ”

Oh, he’s fine.

This bluntness is undoubtedly Leon’s true personality 29 .

Also, it's not as if there's no evidence to support it.

«Feldway's words are recorded in the labyrinth.»

Yes, that's right.

When Feldway confronted Chloe, he said, ‘Hahaha Hahahaha!! Oh, so there it is. After all, even Veldanava-sama wishes for my victory!!’—That's what he said.

From what he said, we can infer that even Feldway and Michael do not know who possesses the Angelic Ultimate Skills.

There is no guarantee that this was not an act, but there is no point in doubting it. Because my intuition is telling me that it is safe, I should proceed towards believing in Leon.

«Using ‘Predation’ on Leon and destroying the “control circuit” itself is a sure way—»

Ciel-san interrupted me quite casually, but I refused to accept it.

I didn’t like the idea of predating Leon, physiologically speaking. Maybe that's why I wanted to believe in Leon even more than I did before.

“Okay, we're not going to come to any conclusions by talking about it here, and although I’m skeptical, I personally think it's fine. So, let's just judge Leon as “gray close to black” and see what happens!”

I declared as such.

“Is it okay, then?”

At Guy’s questions, I nod my head.

“I'm not completely sure yet, but I don't think the enemy has grasped the locations of the angelic skill users.”

“What is the basis for saying so?”

Dagruel asked curiously, so I presented my own thoughts.

“In Ramiris' labyrinth, there are records of the battles with Feldway and his men. From what they said, I'm guessing that the only Skills they know of are those that were given directly by Veldanava. If the Skill is self-acquired, they probably won't know about it unless they get close.”

“That's right! It's annoying that someone can so easily read information from my labyrinth, but it's being put to good use, so I’m not complaining!”

To put Ramiris in a good mood, I nodded and said, “You’ve been a great help 30 , seriously.” It was true that the labyrinth was superior in every way, so I thanked her without hesitation.

“Feel free to praise me more!”

And so, Ramiris was very pleased 31 .

I brushed off the comment and returned to the topic at hand.

“It's not like Leon's been spreading the word about his skill, so I think it will take a while for people to know about it.”

“It would be a foolish thing to do, to expose one's hand, except under such circumstances.”

Leon muttered to me in resignation.

“I see.”

And so, Guy seemed to be convinced.

“Certainly, Leon is right. Well, there is a good chance they'll see through us if they get too close, and I agree that we can't be absolutely sure, but it would be foolish to be overly cautious and split up.”

“Hmm, I have no objection to that either.”

Ruminas summed it up, and Dagruel agreed. The two of them seem to be on the same page, despite their differences.

It was interesting to see them scowling at each other in a not-so-amused manner, but they seemed to have no issues, since they hadn't lost their cool while fighting.

“I trust Rimuru's word, and Leon's word is not a lie!”

Milim gave her seal of approval, and just when I thought the matter was settled, Ramiris muttered something unnecessary.

“That's right. Leon-chan may need to be monitored, so the question is who will take care of that!”

If I say anything right now…

“Rimuru-kun.”

“Enough. I get it, so don't say anything else.”

As expected, I gave up and decided to take over the Leon surveillance mission.

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“Dino's departure couldn’t be helped, but I guess that means the seven of us here are now friends 32 . And I think everyone understands that we've got a nasty enemy on our hands.”

As for how we’ll keep an eye on Leon, we'll talk about that later.

“So, Guy, what are you going to do about Michael?”

I focus on Guy's remarks.

“Ah? I'm gonna destroy him, of course.”

“Hmm. So it's all-out war then.”

Ruminas muttered in contemplation, but it was also the consensus of everyone present.

“Wahahaha! I'm excited.”

“It's time to show them what I'm made of! Whether it's Feldway or Michael, I'll beat them with one punch!!”

“Hmm, Phantom King Feldway, huh? Now that he's back, it’s inevitable that we will have to fight for control of the earth.”

Milim's words aside, Ramiris was being too grandiose and unrealistic. But, well, even if one punch was impossible, the labyrinth is super important, so I stopped making fun of her.

“Do you know how powerful the enemy is?”

When Leon asked, Guy shook his head.

“We know that the Seven Primordial Angels, including Feldway and Dino, and Michael, who has replaced Rudra, are all generals.”

“Hmm, in addition to that, Velzard-dono is now an enemy as well. This “Tenma Great War 33 ” is going to be pretty tough.”

Hmm?

“Tenma Great War?”

“That's right. Isn't the war, which takes place every five hundred years or so, essentially Rudra's ability to summon angels?”

Dagruel's answer came as a surprise to everyone, including me.

“What!? Dagruel, don't talk nonsense!”

Ruminas snapped at him, but it was Guy who stopped it.

“Calm down Ruminas, Dagruel’s words are correct. Rudra has the Skill 'Army of Angels, Armageddon', which allows him to summon an army of angels and control them at will. Although, it seems that Rudra has difficulty controlling it and has only issued simple commands.”

Guy explained to everyone that its activation cycle was about every 500 years. However, because the summoned angel would have no body, it could only last a week at most before disappearing.

It’s a new thing to consider, but I wish he had told us this earlier.

“I have a question.”

“What is it?”

“Do angels, like demons, take root in the world when they incarnate?”

Oops, I didn't even have to ask.

Benimaru's wife Momiji's race, the tengu, was born from the incarnation of an angel into a wolf. It was not surprising that many such races were born during the war.

If that’s the case, then I just can't shake this bad feeling.

«It was the forbidden spell: ‘Demon Death Birthday’ 34 .»

You're amazing, Ciel-san.

You knew exactly what I was thinking.

“Looks like you've got something on your mind. Tell me, I'll listen.”

Guy asked me, so I answered without hiding it.

“You guys know Kazaream the Curse Lord, right? The truth is, Kazaream is being controlled by the enemy, and they're mass-producing undead elves……”

I ordered him to interfere with the ritual every chance he got, but I'm not sure how effective that was…

“’Demon Death Birthday.’ How many tens of thousands died?”

“Yuuki's Mixed Corps sacrificed about 60,000 people, so I'd say nearly ten have been born at most.”

“Hmm. So he prioritized the individual instead of the number. In that case, he's at least as powerful as Clayman. It’s a perfect medium for the Primordials to incarnate.”

Oh, Guy's got it wrong.

I have other concerns, so I'll correct him.

“No, not that. The Seven Primordial Angels already incarnated long ago. It seems Feldway and the others were incarnated in the other world. And Dino's colleagues—”

I think their names were—

“Pico and Gracia!”

Yeah, that's it!

Ramiris helped me out again, so I’m grateful.

“So then, what you're worried about is—”

“Yeah, I think the higher angels summoned by the 'Army of Angels, Armageddon' will be incarnated in the undead elves. Angels don't have much of an ego, right? So, if you use the soul of someone with a strong ego as the core, you could create a powerful new race that also incorporates the power of the angels.”

“““…………”””

Not only Guy, but all the other demon lords also fell silent.

After a few seconds, they looked at each other and said things like, “No, no, that's…” or “It's scary that you would come up with such an idea.”

I wasn’t saying this because I wanted to. It’s just that I had come up with the possibility.

“Rimuru-kun, do you think the probability of that happening is high?”

“That’s why, don’t talk to me like that as if to put the blame on me.”

“I get it. So, what do you think?”

“I'd try it if I was them. If you fail, the only thing being wasted would be some of your undead elves.”

“Well, I'd do that too. There's no point in having a bunch of weak minions.”

As Guy and I nodded at each other, the other demon lords looked at us as if they were in shock.

I don’t understand why.

I’m sure anyone would do that to increase their strength…

“Don't look at me like that! We don't actually know what's going on, but we should assume the worst, right?”

When I shouted this, opinions began to fly out, led by Ruminas.

“That is true, however…”

“You're still crazy 35 . What scares me is that you think you can handle it even if it happens.”

“That's right, Rimuru. The superior angels are the seraphim, but surely someone as powerful as Clayman could withstand their power. That would make them become as powerful as an awakened demon lord.”

“Hmm. If many beings like Dagruel are born, then we can't be too careful. At the very least, Louis and Gunther will have a tough time.”

It wasn’t so much a complaint about me as it was a complaint about the difficulty of dealing with them.

“Guy-san. Everyone seems to be unhappy. As the organizer, you should give them a good talking to.”

“Hey, I told you not to use “-san” in these situations, didn’t I? We're all on equal footing here, okay? It wouldn't hurt for you to deal with it!”

“Shut up!! You're the one who's putting the “-kun” on me. In the first place, why do I have to draw the short straw!?”

I shouted what I wanted to say without hesitation.

Now that I felt refreshed and calm, I was okay with Guy even though he scares me.

“It's not a problem. We'll just blow them all up!”

“That's right! We even have Master Veldora here, so I don't think we have to be so scared.”

For this meeting, Milim and Ramiris are always optimistic.

They look so happy, it really is enviable.

Incidentally, Veldora, the person Ramiris is relying on, is probably reading the scriptures (manga) in another room. Recently, he’s been reading a long historical work, saying that it might give him some great wisdom.

I'm sure he’ll come up with some kind of “trap of justice 36 ”, and it's going to be my job to figure it out, so I don't feel like getting my hopes up.

Anyway, I'll just consider it a blessing not to be disturbed.

“The situation is not that simple. In addition to Velzard-dono, isn’t Velgrynd-dono in the hands of the enemy, as well? Even if we have the Veldora, the enemy will still have the advantage! In the first place, I don't like relying on that useless dragon.”

That's right. Veldora doesn't seem to be very reliable.

He’s too timid in front of his sisters, and he was also recently captured by the enemy…

“Ah, Velgrynd-san is fine.”

I was letting my mind wander, so I answered absent-mindedly.

Needless to say, that was a mistake.

“How can you be so sure?”

By the time I realized it, it was too late.

I was planning to be more discrete with my information, but now that I'm here, I have no choice but to be honest.

“Due to various events in her fight against me, Velgrynd-san has broken free from the Ultimate Dominion. And now that she no longer has the Ultimate Skill 'Charity King (Raguel)', she doesn't have to worry about being controlled by Michael anymore.”

“““Haah!?”””

The only thing I can do now is play it cool.

“Well, it sure was difficult. I was so focused that as soon as I realized it, I found myself in a good position to win!”

The suspicious looks I was getting from the demon lords was painful.

However, if I lose here, then they'll probably make me confess everything.

“What the hell did you do?”

Surprisingly, even Guy is shocked.

“That's a trade secret…”

I must remain absolutely silent about my skill.

It’s hard to believe, so it would only arouse more suspicion.

What's more, if Leon was actually under control, my power would be exposed to the enemy.

I think I might be worrying too much, but this is the only decisive way to prevent that from happening.

“Tsk! As always, you’re full of baloney, stingy bastard…”

It's not a matter of being stingy.

It’s also a strategy.

“No, no, no, Dagruel aside, haven’t we all experienced the evolution of a Skill?”

“I’ve never experienced anything like that.”

Yup, of course.

Some troublesome points were made 37 , but I will continue the explanation without paying attention to them.

“Velgrynd-san was in a similar situation, and suddenly came to her senses during the fight against me. She said that 'Charity King (Raguel)' evolved at that time.”

I gave a little—rather, a largely embellished explanation, but it seems that everyone understood what I meant.

“Well…”

“I don't remember it either, but I think there was something like that.”

“Hmm…It's not unheard of for skills to evolve in the heat of battle. It's not normal, though.”

“That was the case with me. Between life and death, I bet everything I had on my potential. As a result, I received the 'Purity King (Metatron)', a decision I don't regret to this day.”

He seems to have been convinced in light of his own experience.

That's a relief.

If I pretend that I haven't heard about Velgrynd's current powers, I’ll be able to pretend that I don't know about the Ultimate Skill 'Divine Flame King (Cthugha)'.

As a matter of fact, Ciel-san did it, so it's not my fault either.

“—I thought the Ultimate Skill was the pinnacle, but I guess there is still further to evolve. Tsk, I still have a ways to go. I guess I was too proud to think that this was my limit.”

Guy muttered, and the topic came to a close.

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Although I felt that this discussion was not moving forward very well, I reviewed it again.

Identifying the enemy's forces is important, so we must not spare any effort.

“So, Velgrynd is really okay now?”

“Yeah. She’s protecting Chosen Hero Masayuki now. Masayuki and I have a friendship, so we'll help each other out if the other gets in trouble.”

“So then, they can be counted as an asset (war potential)?”

Hmm, I’m wondering if this is a selfish decision, but I'm sure they'll help us if we ask.

“Isn’t it better just to avoid being hostile? At the least, I don't want to fight them again.”

“You're right. It's not often that anyone can beat that thing, so you've done well. Now that Velzard has turned against us, we can't let Velgrynd turn against us too.”

Guy looks annoyed, but I'm sure he means it.

After all, half of the seven of us here are unlikely to be able to take on a True Dragon.

The only ones who can are me, Guy, and Milim.

Then next would be Dagruel after that?

Anyway, it’s good news if we can reduce the number of unnecessary enemies.

Oh yeah, then there’s one more thing.

“Since we're on the topic of Velgrynd, I'll mention it here. Of the Seven Primordial Angels, there are four that have crossed over to the other world, including Feldway, but three of them attacked Ramiris’ labyrinth.”

“That's right! Of course, I was able to drive them away with my own strength.”

Ramiris nodded her head, as if my comment had reminded her.

I quickly continued my explanation so as not to interrupt the conversation.

“Well, regardless of the truth of it. They called themselves Phantom King Feldway and his 'Three Phantom Commanders'.”

“Yeah. They've been trying to destroy the humans of our world for since ancient times. We call them demons 38 , but they're actually phantoms.”

“I thought that all enemies of mankind were called demons, but I guess that wasn’t the case. That said, one of the Three Phantom Commanders was destroyed by Velgrynd-san, so keep that in mind.”

I think it was Cornu, but it seems that he touched Velgrynd’s reverse scale when he taunted Masayuki. I sensed that Velgrynd had gotten stronger, but even I was surprised that she was able to strike a blow against someone as strong as the Three Phantom Commanders.

However, that Cornu seemed to be less dominant than Zalario, let alone Feldway. That was my impression from the way Cornu behaved in the video recording. At the least, as a result of analyzing the information left in the labyrinth, Ciel-san judged that Cornu was inferior to me in terms of strength, even though we were almost even in terms of existence value.

The rationale behind this is unknown, but I trust them.

Therefore, we should never underestimate our opponents, but there is no need to be wary of those who have perished. That's what I was reporting.

“Anyway, Cornu is probably dead. I've known him for a long time, but I don't feel anything for him.”

Guy laughed in an unconcerned tone.

It’s just nice to have fewer enemies.

It was very much like Guy, so I tried to move on to the next report without any particular surprises.

But then, Milim intervened.

“It’s just the right time, so I have something to report!”

That's what she said, so I decided to listen to Milim.

“Actually, Obera, of the Three Phantom Commanders, has offered to join me. The meeting was held in secret, so Feldway and the others should not have noticed!”

It’s not that I let my guard down, but I was unable to react to the report.

I was like, “Oh, I see.”

“As expected of you, Milim. How'd you get her to do that?”

“Yeah, let's hear it. Obera wasn't as narrow-minded as Cornu and she was a very serious woman. I don't think she had anything to do with the betrayal, so how did it come about?”

Guy and I asked Milim in perfect synchronicity.

Our eyes met, and that was enough for us to understand each other's thoughts.

In other words, we were worried that Milim was being deceived.

We nodded at each other.

“It's my natural charm. She came to me because she understood how great I was!”

‘It's hard being popular’—Milim laughed, but I didn’t take it for granted.

“Calm down. It could be the enemy's plan.”

Guy rebukes, but Milim doesn't listen.

“It's all right. Obera wasn't lying.”

“Well…But you know, Milim, there is a very simple strategy called “poison burial 39 ”, which is introduced in the scriptures (manga) of the Three Kingdoms, and sending spies to the enemy camp has been a common practice since ancient times. Contacting us at this time, when we are about to start a war, is like asking us to be suspicious, isn't it?”

Right now, Veldora is reading about this.

‘Now I'll be familiar with strategy,’—is what he said, but if it were that easy to train a military strategist, I wouldn't be having such a hard time.

In the first place, his worldview is too different, so I think he’s only useful as a reference.

Anyway, it was suspicious, so I tried to persuade Milim.

But Milim only smiled fearlessly.

“It's okay. I had my suspicions too, so I discussed it with Karion and Frey. And we all agreed that we should trust Obera.”

Hmm, well, Milim is not a fool, so she probably did what she had to do. If Karion and Frey-san share the same opinion, then maybe we should trust them.

“What kind of discussion did you have with Obera?”

—I asked for the time being.

“Well, that’s—”

After hearing Milim's story, we would make our own decision as well.

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“I see, so Obera is monitoring the movements of Ivarage, the World-destroying Dragon, in the Palace of Monsters. In that case, she can't afford to do anything either way.”

That was Guy's conclusion after hearing Milim's story.

Ivarage and the cryptid subordinates are a non-negotiable army of destruction. If Obera made a move, Ivarage might be resurrected, so they would normally be excluded from the invasion force.

However, there was something that bothered me.

“If Feldway is willing to let the world die as Obera says, wouldn't he be willing to unleash Ivarage on us?”

Feldway and Michael are hoping that Veldanava will be resurrected, but it will be terrible if that doesn't happen. Hope will be lost and a desire for destruction will arise.

There is nothing more frightening than a man who does not care about the future. 40

That's what I was thinking, but—

“That's the point, Rimuru. I can't believe that idea.”

I thought it was a perfectly legitimate opinion, but surprisingly, it was very unpopular. Starting with Ruminas' remarks, Dagruel also criticized me.

“That Feldway isn’t stupid enough to use a monster that's stronger and more uncontrollable than he is.”

Oho, so Ivarage is stronger?

“It was dreadful back then. Guy took care it, but I also helped to keep the planet from falling apart!”

“Gahaha! Ivarage's destructive power can shatter the stars if he's not careful. If we fight him carelessly, we'll be in big trouble.”

“If you can only destroy the enemy, then what would you to do after that? If this planet is destroyed, it will no longer be a matter of world domination.”

I see…I guess my assumption was too naive. From what I've heard about Ivarage, he seems to be a ridiculous monster.

“Wahahaha! There's no shortage of opponents. If he comes out, I'll take care of him this time!”

“Rejected.”

“It’s rejected.”

“It's a rejection.”

“Milim, I know you're strong, but you're not careful enough. I’m probably not the one who should be saying this, but you need to be more considerate of the damage you do to those around you.”

“Uhh, I've already learned how to do that. That's why Ivarage—but with a twist—”

“Yes, yes, I understand. Seriously though, if Ivarage does come back, I'll be the one to deal with him. I've been wanting to get rid of that bastard. Next time I get the chance, I'll definitely get rid of him.”

Guy proclaimed as such in a voice so cold it was frightening.

Naturally, no one could argue with that. Milim was not happy, but she agreed to let Guy deal with Ivarage.

Then, the conversation returned to Obera.

“Can't you ask her about the enemy's situation or something?” Dagruel asked Milim.

“I asked her, but she doesn't seem to know about the forces gained in our world. Feldway is suspicious, so she may have been wary of asking the wrong questions that might lead to false assumptions.”

“Well, Obera is right. Feldway is a sharp man, and he doesn't like his subordinates to think too much.”

“So, they’re just supposed to do what they’re told?”

I asked while thinking about my old troublesome boss.

Guy answers me as I think nostalgically about the old days.

“Not exactly. If you're doing your best on a given mission, you don't have time to worry about others. That's just the way he thinks, and that's why Obera's response is correct.”

If she was trying to fool us, it would have been better to use false information to gain trust. Instead, she said she didn't know, which seemed to increase Obera's credibility even more.

Even so, I don't think Feldway and I are going to get along.

“To be so self-righteous that he can't think of his subordinates as anything but pawns. He seems to believe that everything he does is right.”

And, I can’t help but spill my true intentions.

Guy, who heard this, smiled at me.

“Is that a sarcastic remark meant for me?”

“No, it’s not!”

Yikes, how dangerous. Right here is a guy who's beyond just being self-righteous, he's dictatorial. In Guy's case, he doesn't even seem to consider the demons under his command as pawns. A careless remark like mine could very well bring out his fangs 41 .

I'll just cover it up and continue.

“For the time being, I'm more inclined to trust her, so I guess we’ll wait and see.”

When I said that, everyone nodded.

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Now that the Obera matter was settled, I returned to the main topic.

There have been too many detours, how difficult.

“Ugh 42 , this meeting is not moving forward at all. No one's hiding any more secrets, are they?”

I couldn’t help but complain, at which point everyone all rushed in.

“““You have no right to say that!”””

That’s fair.

I'm the one who seems to have the most secrets, so that statement was a mistake.

While reflecting on that, I turned my attention to the meeting.

For now, Ruminas was in charge.

“Anyway. We don't know each other well, so we can't cooperate. So, I will summarize the situation.”

She begins by listing the enemy forces.

Leading the enemy forces, is Michael.

Under his control is the Frost Dragon, Velzard.

Then there’s Phantom King Feldway.

Under his command, is Zalario of the Three Phantom Commanders.

Then the insectar that Zalario was monitoring, and also their ruler, Insect Lord Zelanus.

Zelanus might have his own subordinates, but since Obera doesn't know much about them, it remains unclear. To be honest, this is the force that I was most worried about.

After all, all of the insectar majins I know are extremely powerful. Zegion and Apito aside, there was also Razul, the guardian god of the West, and Minaza, the sixth-ranked “Single Digit” that Shion had defeated. Zelanus himself seemed to be dangerous, but he also seemed to have strong subordinates, so we had to be careful.

Then there’s the Dino, Pico, and Gracia trio.

The fact that he (Dino) is an awakened demon lord is troubling enough, but we don't even know if he has an Ultimate Skill. It would not be surprising if he possessed one, so it would be better to estimate his strength on the assumption that he does.

And finally—

“An undead elf with an angel incarnating its body that could rival us. Hmm, that's tricky. I'd feel a little better if I at least knew how many of them there were.”

“That's extravagant. It's lucky that we've even found out this much. We should be thinking of countermeasures.”

Ruminas rebuked Dagruel for his complaint.

“Do we have an idea on who should deal with whom?”

It was Leon who said that.

It might be a waste of time to decide, but it is not meaningless.

“Well, at the very least, it would be best if Leon didn't have to deal with Michael.”

I agreed with Dagruel.

That should absolutely not happen, as it would only lead to manipulation. Rather, we should cooperate with each other as much as possible to prevent such a situation.

I was concerned about the possibility that not only Michael but also Feldway had the ability to control him, but after gathering various information, I found out how the skill worked to some extent.

“Listen, Michael's power is transferable, and it seems like he can give control to a certain level. That’s why I think we need to keep Leon away from Feldway as well as Michael.”

Just like with Lieutenant Kondou, Feldway should be considered to already have borrowed Michael's skill.

“It's annoying. If they take control of Leon as well, then the disparity between our forces will become even greater.”

While I listened to Ruminas muttering, I remembered something else that I had forgotten to mention.

“Oh yeah, Leon wasn't the only one in danger.”

“Mmm? What do you mean by that?”

“Well, as I said, Veldora fell under the enemy’s control during the battle the other day.”

“…I've been curious about that story. You should tell us more in detail.”

Ruminas listened back with a stunned look on her face.

That’s why I explained that Michael had the power of absolute control called the “Regalia Dominion.”

As for Chloe, she had already dealt with herself, so I'll put her on hold. If things got really bad, Ciel-san would have intervened forcibly, so I believe it's safe to leave her to her own devices.

Thus, I explained about Veldora's situation.

“““………”””

“Rimuru-kun. You were the one who asked if anyone had any more secrets, weren't you?”

Oh crap.

“No, did I say that?”

“You said it!”

“You did say it.”

“You did.”

“You definitely said it.”

There was no one on my side.

I desperately tried explaining that “it wasn't a secret or anything exaggerated, I just forgot to say it”—but no one was convinced.

‘You already knew, Ramiris’…I thought to myself, but pointing that out would not improve my situation. Knowing this, I gave up and said I was sorry.

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The other demon lords were getting irritated, so it was harder than I expected to deal with the situation.

Anyway, I was finally able to get back to the main topic, but the situation really was pretty bad when I thought about it.

If our strength was ever reduced, then the enemy's strength would also increase. It was like a shogi game where only one of the sides had the ability to reuse pieces, which was a condition that made it hard to imagine winning. It's my fault that I forgot to explain it, but I'm sure that it's not an easy story for people to hear.

“So, there is no one here who is being controlled by the ‘Regalia Dominion?’”

“It’s okay. The control of one with an angelic skill doesn't seem to have any subjective symptoms, but in the case of ‘Regalia Dominion,’ it is a forced dominion, so the ego disappears and the reaction is unnatural. In any case, since Veldora and I were connected by a soul corridor, he told me himself that he had been taken over.”

“I see. In that case, how did you free Veldora?”

“That's—”

This question again?

‘I ate him, and Ciel-san did a Skill Alteration.’—but I didn't want to be foolish and explain it that way.

They wouldn't believe me anyway, so I had no choice but to fake it.

“It's just like with Velgrynd-san. In the heat of battle, Veldora evolved his own powers. I guess it was the triumph of the trust between us. 43 ”

“““………”””

Their gazes were painful.

I'm aware that they're looking at me very suspiciously, but I have no choice but to push through with this explanation.

“Hey, I fought Velzard pretty seriously too, but she didn't show any signs of evolving her skills, you know?”

“Well, I suppose there will be individual differences.”

I’m saying this myself, but it's an impossible explanation to believe.

“Individual differences, huh?”

Is it no use?

They’re getting suspicious. What should I do?

Even if they wouldn’t believe me, I could just tell them the truth. But if I did that—

«In addition to forcing you to deal with all those who are under control, they will dig deeper into the Master's Skills.»

Just as I thought.

In the first place, it's impossible for me to explain how it works, because Ciel-san was the one who did it, not me.

I guess the right answer is to keep quiet after all.

“That’s enough. You don't seem to want to talk anyway, and you've probably done something out of the ordinary. If you can tell when someone is under control, then the Regalia Dominion is no more of a threat than the Ultimate Dominion. The question is, how do we deal with them?”

Ruminas decided that it was overall better that we were able to recognize the difference. She then said that we should discuss how to deal with Michael and the others.

I nodded my head in agreement.

“Rather than deciding on who should deal with whom, isn’t it better to decide on how to move when they attack?”

Guy nodded at my words.

“I agree. The enemy isn't stupid, so I don't think they'll try to spread out their forces.”

If the size of the enemy is too large, or if an opponent you’re not good with is attacking you, it is important to immediately call for help.

However, there was a problem with this.

“That's true, but we're pretty spread out, aren't we? Or should we all gather in one place, ready for the enemy to come at any moment?”

“Hmm, I don't think so.”

“Right?”

Guy seemed convinced by my explanation.

As for me, I'm going to defend my country. Leon and Ruminas, also Dagruel and Milim will not want to leave their countries either.

Milim's case is questionable, but there is no doubt about the others.

In that case, we should be ready to send reinforcements as soon as any part of the country is attacked.

“Yes, indeed. I have a duty to defend my country. In the worst case, we should consider abandoning our territory, but that should be a last resort.”

“Yes, I agree. And do not worry. If Ruminas gives up her territory, I will take it without reservation.”

“Don't be ridiculous! I'm not going to give it to you, so don't get greedy.”

There was Dagruel, who wanted to seize the territory whenever he could, and Ruminas, who wanted to prevent it.

That's why there were demon lords who could not leave their territories.

“What about Guy? Ramiris is in my country, so it doesn't matter, but you have no reason to defend this place, do you?”

“I don't. I'm worried about Leon, so I think I’ll go visit him there.”

Leon looked reluctant, but it was good.

Leon is the one I was worried about the most, and he also hadn’t been completely cleared of suspicion yet. That's why I was going to keep an eye on him, so Guy's decision was reasonable.

If that was the case, then I guess I didn’t need to monitor him anymore…

“Rimuru, you can afford it. Send some of your subordinates to Ruminas, Dagruel, Milim, and Leon.”

What?

Huh?

Guy's sudden request left me in a state of deep confusion.

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As it turned out, I couldn't refuse.

I resisted for a long time, but Guy refused to listen to me.

What’s more, he wanted me to set up a “magic transfer circle” so that he could go to and from each territory immediately.

It made me want to shout, “I'm not your subordinate!”

There was one reason why I didn't.

The long and the short of it was that I just gave in to Guy 44 .

Because Guy, with his serious atmosphere, was so intimidating that it was a kind of difficult to go against. I could probably do it if I pushed myself, but I would feel more comfortable by just giving in.

Unless it was absolutely necessary, it was an unavoidable measure to follow.

But then, who would be the right people to send, and to where?

Someone who was good at teleportation and 'Telepathy Net' from any location, was strong enough to endure on their own even if something happened, and was strong enough to resist domination. In that case, the three demon girls would be perfect for the job.

However, Testarossa has been entrusted with the task of coordinating the affairs around the empire, so I don't think I can appoint her this time. Carrera and Ultima would be the main candidates.

After that, there would be some of the executives.

“First, Geld for Milim. We need to get construction going again, and they know each other, so it will be accepted.”

“Hm! He is well-liked by everyone. Oh, by the way, Midley wanted to meet with Gabil as well. He said he'd like to train with him again.”

I see, that's a good idea.

I had left Gabil's training to Ultima, but it had only been a few days and he was already looking at me as if about to cry. I might be able to send him over for a break.

In that case, Ultima would be a part of the package, and since we're still in wartime, there was no need for the police 45 . I could call them back immediately if necessary, so I think it would be okay to make the decision.

“Okay. Then I'll send Geld, Gabil, and Ultima to Milim's territory.”

“Sure, I'm looking forward to it!”

With this, Milim's country was all set.

Next is Ruminas and the Holy Empire of Ruberios…

“For Ruminas…do you have any requests on who to send?”

I'm getting smarter. She would be furious if I said that I would send Veldora, so I figured I'd better ask her before I stepped on a landmine.

“Hmm, you’re right…”

Ruminas thought about it.

I was right to ask the question.

After a pause, Ruminas opened her mouth.

“I like Shion, who you brought with you today. She has visited my country before, so I know her well.”

Ruminas had been raving about Shion's violin. It was no surprise that she remembered.

“Then I'll send Shion. I'll also send Adalman and his retinue with you.”

Adalman was also acquainted with Ruminas.

There seemed to have been a falling out with the Seven Celestial Saints, but that was in the past now, so they should be fine.

“Hmm. Since he’s caused me so much trouble, it might be fun to give him some guidance myself. I'll accept, thank you.”

“Roger that!”

With this, Ruminas’ country was also all set.

“So, who will you send to my country? Well, I don't know anyone, so it can be anyone.”

Hmm, that’s right.

Well, if anyone is okay…

“I'll send Carrera.”

“Carrera?”

“Yeah. Speaking of the Yellow Primordial—”

“Nn? The Yellow Primordial!?”

Dagruel shouted with a very disgusted look on his face.

“No way, you, don’t tell me you’ve managed to tame that one!?”

“Not really taming, or rather, it just kind of happened…”

“Dagruel, just accept it. I understand where you're coming from, but this is not the time to talk about it.”

“By the way, Ultima is the Violet Primordial. I was also astounded, so I understand how you feel.”

I had heard that Ultima's territory overlapped with Ruminas' and Dagruel's, so they must have known about each other for a long time. Hearing Ruminas' comment, Dagruel was shocked and shouted in surprise.

“I'm stunned, too.”

“Besides, it's not just Yellow Primordial and Violet Primordial. You should know by now that it's a little too late to be discussing Rimuru's lack of common sense.”

They really just said whatever they wanted.

Milim is nodding her head in agreement, but the truth is that she’s probably on my side.

Well, whatever.

“So then, Carrera will go to Dagruel, okay?”

“Wait, hold on a minute!!”

Dagruel stood up from his seat, shouting loudly.

It looked like he was dancing with his arms outstretched, but perhaps this was his refusal stance?

“Objection! I think I also have the right to refuse!!”

The expression on his face was very desperate, showing his determination not to step back.

In contrast, Leon was smiling very calmly. It was as if he was saying, “I'm glad Carrera didn't go to me.”

“Listen, Rimuru. If you send that ruffian to me, my Damargania will be destroyed. I don't need much, but can you at least choose someone with a gentler personality?”

‘Character is more important than strength,’ Dagruel complained.

Even if you say that, so many of my subordinates are troublemakers…

I asked him about the situation in detail.

It seems that Dagruel's country is a decaying sanctuary called the “Holy Void” Damargania. It is a country with few resources, and many of its buildings have been swallowed by the sand and are in ruins.

And Dagruel's image of Carrera was the worst of all—a vandal who enjoys shooting out nuclear magic as a hobby.

Dagruel's perception of Carrera is that she is worse than Milim's second epithet, the Destroyer.

“She’s not that bad—”

“She is!”

“I agree with Dagruel’s words. I've been on the receiving end of her on a daily basis, so I can only imagine how you must feel.”

Dagruel asserted forcefully, even as I tried to deny it. In addition, even the taciturn Leon spoke eloquently of Carrera's many wrongdoings.

I have no choice but to believe what they say.

If so…

“In that case, I think Carrera should go to Leon.”

They seem to know each other, and Guy will also be at Leon's place.

I thought it was a good idea because Carrera would not be able to do anything too crazy.

But then…

“Stop messing around! Were you even listening to me!? I absolutely refuse! That demon is the only one I'll never let set foot in my country!”

Dagruel smiled, but Leon refused. The tone of his voice changed from “I” to “me 46 ” in a fit of rage, and he seemed to be completely out of control.

It was funny, so I was determined to send Carrera to him.

However, it was Guy who put a stop to that.

“Rimuru, you can't send Carrera.”

“Why not?”

“She tries to fight me all the time, and when she thinks she's going to lose, she just throws the match and runs away, you know? This battle is not a game. I don't want to waste my energy. You understand?”

It was a good point.

And Guy's eyes were serious, as evidenced by the unprecedented intensity in his voice.

“If Carrera is absolutely obedient to your orders and you’ll take responsibility for anything that happens, I'll consider it. But that’s impossible, right?”

Hmm, well, I'm not so sure about that. I’d be able to stop her if I was around, but I don't know what Carrera would do if I took my eyes off her.

“That's right. Carrera-chan is the one who's trying to make the game of “how many levels can you break through?” popular in my labyrinth. It's really annoying so I want you to stop it!”

Such violence…

As expected, it seems that some damage has been done without my knowledge.

“I'm going to ask Diablo for his oversight on this matter.”

And so, I’ll think about it while lightly trying to evade the responsibility.

“Wahahaha! I liked Carrera and the others. I'd like to see her, so she can come to my country as my guest.”

Oh, what a nice offer from Milim!

“Are you sure it’s okay, Milim?”

“Of course.”

Well then, problem solved.

I'll send Carrera to Milim's country, and Ultima to Dagruel's country.

Frey-san may be angry with Milim later, but that's none of my business. Let's just get this over with before Milim changes her mind.

“Well then, I'll send Ultima and Carrera from Milim's place to Dagruel's country in turns. It's a familiar homeland, so I'm sure Ultima won't have a problems with that.”

“I hate that—”

“—Okay then, it’s decided. Dagruel, since that's the case, make sure to get along with Ultima!”

Guy also gave the ‘OK.’

Dagruel was about to say something, but we agreed that it was just our imagination, and the matter was settled.

With that, it was decided who to send to Ruminas, Milim, and Dagruel. The only question left was who to send to El Dorado, Leon's golden territory…

“If Guy's going there, why should I send one of my men? Guy can keep an eye on Leon, and I don't see the need to reduce my country's strength.”

That was what I wanted to say.

Why should I reduce my country's strength when a war is about to start?

Well, the three demon girls can be teleported right back to me if something happens, or at the worst, I can summon them myself.

As for Geld, there was the reason why the construction could not be interrupted indefinitely, and Gabil was also Geld's bodyguard. In terms of simple combat ability, Geld is the stronger of the two. However, since Geld's main role is defense, it is advantageous to have an attacker.

In this respect, Gabil is excellent in both offense and defense, so I thought it would be interesting to pair him up with Geld.

As for Adalman and his followers, I wanted them to concentrate on defending the labyrinth.

However…

I was worried about sending Shion alone to Ruminas.

Her strength alone was fine, but her behavior was not.

Adalman knows all sorts of magic and can use teleportation as a matter of course. Adalman had met Ruminas and was expected to be polite to her, so I think this appointment was appropriate.

That’s what was confirmed so far.

There was no one left to send to Leon's country.

“Hey, hey, don't be shy. Your country is full of awakened beings.”

“There are. But I need them to protect my country.”

“You're worrying too much. You’ve got Veldora, so don't be stingy. Hey, how about that Benimaru guy? He's good, right?”

“Of course not! Benimaru's a newlywed. Moreover, he's got two wives! Both of them are pregnant, so he can't be expected to take an extended business trip during such a critical time!”

‘Benimaru is a monster, so it's okay—’ I couldn’t even laugh at that joke. Unless, of course, he wanted to go.

In the days when lifetime employment was the norm, people would go on long business trips at the worst possible times in order to measure their loyalty to the company.

For example, just after marriage or just after building a house.

Most of the orders I had heard about were practically harassment, unless they had a meaning. In this day and age, companies that did such stupid things would probably end up going out of business.

“Anyway, Benimaru is no good.”

“Tsk, that doesn't make any sense, but whatever. Then—”

“Oh, Diablo can go!”

I forgot about it since he’s always stuck so close to me, but since I’m sending Shion, I should also send Diablo.

If I sent away only one of them, they’d get in a fight.

My real secretary was Shuna, so I wouldn’t feel inconvenienced by their absence, so I think that’s the best choice.

“Diablo?”

“Yeah. He's strong, so just him is enough.”

“Hold on a minute, Rimuru-kun.”

Guy started speaking to me with a purr 47 , but I figured it was just a bunch of nonsense. That’s why, I ignored him and began wrapping up the conversation.

“We're in a tough spot right now, too. I don't have any extra resources to play with. Even so, I’m sending you our ace, so I hope that you’ll accept it in good faith.”

For someone like Guy, it's better to just tell him the decision rather than to negotiate with him. I did so, remembering my past experience as a general contractor.

Specifically, I referred to the case where the general manager had successfully refused to negotiate with a JV (a construction joint venture) that was insisting on being sent more staff. While appealing that he could not afford to do so, he refused to increase the number of employees because he had already selected excellent personnel.

From the other party’s point of view, there were many situations where they had wanted to say, ‘We need more staff because your staff is incompetent!’

It was a common understanding between everyone, including myself, that there was not a fragment of sincerity in that place.

Well, it really depended on your luck whether you were really good or not.

It would have been interesting if there had been a system of appointing employees from amongst the government or subcontractors (a reverse nomination system), so that they could be evaluated. Well, it's useless to think about it now, and the most important thing was to push Diablo to Guy.

“Bastard…”

“Something wrong?”

“……”

“……”

I waited for his reply with an air of dignity, but inwardly my heart was pounding.

“Che, you're getting thicker by the minute. Well, whatever. I'll just put up with Diablo this time.”

Phew—I won!

“I don't care who it is. Normally I would want to take Chloe, but that’s just the way things are. Oh yeah, if Rimuru wants, he can come to my country with Diablo. I promised to invite you before, but I haven't been able to do so yet.”

Before I could bask in the afterglow of my victory, Leon made a suggestion.

Even if taking Chloe is out of the question, I might consider paying a visit.

“Okay. I'll leave Chloe, but I'll visit you later if the schedule permits. I'll contact you through Diablo if that's the case, so thank you.”

To begin with, Chloe was absolute bed rest so I couldn’t move her. I didn’t know how Leon would react if I told him that, so I thought it best to keep quiet about it.

So, I decided to just accept the invitation.

It may not be the best time to do so considering the current situation, but it’s boring to just wait for Michael to make his move. As soon as I'm ready, I'll gradually return to my daily life.

“Very well. I'll look forward to hearing from you.”

“Yeah. Well, if Diablo gives you any trouble, just let me know. I'll be there to educate him without a thought.”

“Very well. I won’t hesitate to call, so make sure he's taken care of.”

Even though he hadn't done anything yet, I was reminded by Guy, and not Leon. I was curious about their relationship, but it seemed troublesome, so I decided it would be better not to know.

With that in mind, our future plans were decided.

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“Well, then I’m head over to Leon's place, so each of you just do what you have to do.”

Guy declared as such as he returned to the hall.

“Hey, hey, so no explanation for us, huh?”

“I received an explanation from Mizari, but I'd at least like to know what the plan is.”

Karion and Frey-san were the ones who spoke up to Guy.

I thought that was a fair point.

Guy is too hasty in his conclusions. He thinks he's the only one who needs to be convinced, so he leaves the others behind.

However, there was no way that Guy would explain the situation properly.

And not only Guy, but also the childish Milim and Ramiris, the sloppy Dagruel and Leon, and the uncaring Ruminas, were all similar and were unlikely to volunteer for such trouble.

I decided to be the adult and explain it to everyone.

“This is what we just discussed, but you were already briefed on the enemy, right?”

“Yeah, I heard that Velzard turned against us.”

“Apparently so. And the reason wasn't betrayal or anything like that…”

And so, this time I summarized the story and explained the situation.

Even so, it was a good thing that only the seven of us attended the meeting. If the subordinates had also joined in, it would have been much more difficult to move the discussion forward.

Guy's decision to anticipate this was correct, and I realized that it was his long years of experience that made a difference.

Thinking about it, it must have also been hard for Guy.

As one can see from the other demon lords, they each have their own peculiarities. It must have taken a lot of mental strength and difficulty to bring them together.

While re-evaluating Guy in this way, I finished my explanation.

“I knew it wasn't like you to flounder around like this, but it turned out to be more troublesome than I expected.”

Frey-san was dumbfounded.

It's not that she couldn’t handle it exactly, it's just that she didn't want to hear it.

“That's true. Now that I’ve got the power, I’d like to see how far I can go against a True Dragon, but I doubt I’d have a chance against Velzard-dono.”

Karion made a fearless remark, but his forehead was sweating profusely. He was probably trying to figure out what was going on and what he could even do to overcome it.

“Kuahahaha! You said it, Karion. Even I've never been able to defeat my sister. If you want to try, let me be your opponent first!”

“Master. I don't think this is the time. If you don't take things seriously, Rimuru will get angry at you.”

Well, I probably should have been angry, but on the contrary, now I felt saved by Veldora's light-hearted words. While we were talking so seriously, the situation had felt so bad that it made me depressed.

“I see. Then, in order to counter the domination, you're going to concentrate your forces as much as possible. So, this Regalia Dominion be resisted?”

“If your will is strong enough, it can be resisted. In Veldora's case, he was targeted when his resistance was weakened by a surprise attack.”

“Hmm. The original me would have been able to withstand it, but I was in the middle of a battle with my sister at the time. It was a little tough.”

It was tough—or rather, you were dominated.

It's useless to try and pretend that it didn't happen, so I wish you’d just admit it honestly.

While I was dumbfounded at Veldora, Dagruel spoke to me.

“Rimuru, why don't you send Veldora to me instead? I'm not a big fan of Vio—Ultima 48 , but Veldora is a familiar face, and I know him well.”

He was suggesting that we change the dispatched subordinates, but unfortunately the answer was still no.

“Sorry, I can't do that. Veldora's not my subordinate, he's my friend. I can't just decide for him.”

If he's okay with it, then it's none of my business. But in this situation, I can't just ignore Veldora's wishes and go ahead with the discussion.

That’s why I checked with him for the time being.

“Veldora, you were invited, so what will you do?”

Veldora laughed but refused.

“Kukuku. Dagruel, as much as I'd like to go and rescue you, I'm busy as well. I have a job to do, which is guarding the labyrinth of Ramiris!”

You just want to slack off…I knew it as soon as I saw Veldora declaring that he would act as usual.

“Master!!”

It was too bad for Ramiris, who was crying out with watery eyes, but I'm absolutely sure that Veldora was just trying to take it easy.

“I see, well, that's a shame. Even for me, there’d be a lot of trouble if I was attacked by Velzard. It would have been reassuring if you could have helped me.”

“Kuhaha, Kuahahaha, Kuaaaahahahah! Well, you know. A man as strong as me has nothing to fear from my sister. Too bad! It’s a shame indeed, Dagruel.”

He's so obviously vain, this one.

But well, Velzard seems to be really dangerous, and I'm glad Veldora said no.

I feel bad for Dagruel, but my priority is the security of my country.

“Dagruel is right. I've never fought Velzard, but my gut tells me she’s a dangerous opponent. If she comes here, I'll have to deal with her. You should be prepared to call for backup immediately, because you won't be able to do anything else.”

Milim, who had been listening to our conversation, made a very good point.

It was a realistic suggestion, unlike the normally overconfident Milim.

To put it another way, Velzard was trouble, and since it was unlikely that she would attack alone, we agreed that we should also avoid acting alone.

Frey-san and the others seemed to agree.

“I see. Well then, let's make sure that we don't act on our own either.”

“Yes, do that! Then Rimuru, I want you to bring Geld and the others to me as soon as possible. If you want, I can pick them up myself?”

“No, it’s fine. I'll explain the situation when I get back and have them ready for you right away.”

Geld can be reached by Teleport, so there was no need to rush. I was going to explain the situation to the executives first, and it shouldn't be too late to send them out after we had come to a common understanding.

“Then I’ll leave it to you, Rimuru.”

“Right. If the enemy attacks, I'll contact you immediately.”

That’s right.

I didn't explain that Carrera was being sent, but Frey-san doesn't seem to know what primordials were. I didn’t think there was any need to tell her, so I ended the conversation peacefully.

Besides, when it comes to stalling Velzard, there was no reason to complain about throwing in a Carrera.

“But what I am curious about is Michael and the others’ purpose. I don't think it's just to take over this world…”

It was Louis who asked that.

“Oh, that. It's the resurrection of Veldanava. Michael and Feldway are working for the Lord's resurrection.”

“““Haah!?”””

When I explained this, those who hadn't yet heard about it screamed in astonishment. The information was known to my companions, but it seemed that it was quite a shock to the others.

“Well, Rimuru is right. That's what Obera, my collaborator, told me!”

When Milim affirmed as such, Karion muttered in frustration.

“Seriously…I didn't just hear that.”

“Eh, didn't you know about it? I thought I already told you.”

“No, you didn't. Well, Midley's just as guilty as me on this one. You'll have to tell me more later.”

As soon as I was reconsidering Milim, this is what happens.

I heard that Milim and Midley had met with Obera, but it seems that their conversation was not well communicated. That's why we have to make it a habit to report, communicate and consult on a regular basis.

—Is what I thought. I'm not in a position to speak so highly when I had also forgot to tell them.

Louis spoke with a thoughtful expression while Milim and the others were talking.

“A True Dragon is immortal. There is no need to worry over it because he will eventually come back.”

“Well, yes. It's normal to think so, but Michael is an ego that arose from a Skill. Because he's an impossible existence, he must be thinking in ways that ordinary people can't comprehend.”

Ruminas shakes her head, as if she doesn’t understand.

Guy, however, seems to think a little differently.

“That said, it's true that Veldanava has shown no signs of resurrection. I can see why Feldway might think it's okay for the world to die.”

Guy boasted that he believed Veldanava to be immortal because he had fought him once before. On top of that, he said that he could understand why people adored Veldanava.

“But, you know, once you die, some of your memories and personality will be affected, right? That seems like a different person to me.”

“As for that, it’s a matter of personal feelings 49 . I feel like they are the same person. After all, they would possess the same soul.”

“Hmm, I don't know. Velgrynd-san also said ‘I don't care if Rudra is reincarnated as a bad guy or a good guy,’ but I thought that was something I should care about.”

“Ahahaha! You're still caught up in the stereotypes you had when you were a human. Well, you'll understand eventually.”

“It’s not like that…”

It doesn't make sense to me, but from the perspective of a long-lived species, the idea of right and wrong may be just a mood of the moment. If that's the case, I will keep my thoughts in mind and cherish them.

No, no, but then what would happen if I got involved in something evil? It would be exactly what the late Mariabell had feared.

In the first place, I am a selfish person.

That's why I have to make sure that I don't act on my own and bring chaos to the world.

I still like to do whatever I want, but I'm only working for a better world.

I swore to myself that I would never do anything to make others unhappy just for my own amusement.

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As I was asking myself if this was okay, Guy spoke to me as if he had just remembered something.

“By the way, Rimuru, I was just wondering…”

“Nn? I don't think I have anything else to hide anymore though?”

“No, I doubt that, but that's okay. I was just curious about Michael's thoughts. How is he going to bring Veldanava back?”

Guy pressed me to tell him what I knew.

‘How the hell should I know?’—is what I was about to say when I remembered something.

“Oh, now that I think about it, he was saying something about that.”

“Yeah. He mentioned it.”

I muttered, and Veldora, who was listening along, nodded.

Yes, I think—”

“Kufufufu. They seem to believe that if they take in the power of the three “True Dragons,” Veldanava-sama will be revived with all of the “Dragon Factors.” I think it is foolish, but can we be absolutely sure that it wouldn’t work?”

Diablo explained it before I could remember.

That’s right, I remembered it was something like that. I had forgotten about it because it didn't seem realistic at the time and I didn't think such a method would be successful.

In the first place, the “Dragon Factor” was the key.

«If it’s about “Dragon Factor,” Master has also acquired it»

Oh, I've become a “True Dragon” of sorts, haven't I? So then, it's not surprising that I have the “Dragon Factor.”

Be that as it may…

Velzard, Velgrynd, and Veldora. Even if you collect the “Dragon Factor” from all three True Dragons, it's meaningless if the most important factor, Veldanava's, is missing.

If the soul is different, then it's a different person.

According to Diablo, it's not impossible, though.

“Ah? It’s absurd, that theory. Even if you could recreate him, it would only be a pseudo-body, and while they might be able to imitate his skills, they wouldn't have anything to do with the soul which is the most essential part.”

Guy interjected, seemingly to be of the same opinion as I was.

“I don't know. It's just that we can't deny the possibility that the lost soul could come back if they have a perfected body.”

“Well, I guess. Veldanava is a complete spiritual life form, so I don't think his soul was scattered like Rudra's. You're right, it is possible.”

Hmm, that theory still doesn't make sense.

«There is no reason to come back. In the first place, Veldanava should be capable of regenerating his body himself if he intends to return»

That's right.

Since Ciel-san denied it, I was confidently skeptical of the enemy's plan.

Well, it'll probably fail anyway, so if we just ignore it—

“Hmm. Then the enemy's goal may be Veldora.”

Everyone in the room stopped moving.

“Fuah?”

Veldora's dumb mumbling echoed through the silent hall.

He seemed to have no idea what that meant but was leaving it to chance.

What’s more important now is what Ruminas had pointed out.

“Oops, that's a blind spot. Veldora was taken over once before, but they didn't take away the Dragon Factor at the time.”

I guess it's not the success rate that matters to Michael, only the possibility of it.

In that case, regardless of whether Veldanava would be resurrected or not, there was a good chance that Veldora's Dragon Factor would be targeted.

Not good, I hadn't thought of the situation where Velzard would be taken over, so I feel like I'm way behind the times.

“Hmm. Obera also said that Emperor Rudra—in other words Michael, had taken over Velgrynd's Dragon Factor. Now that Velzard is under control, all that remains is Veldora!”

“Whoa, whoa, hold on a second. What do you mean? Are you saying that Velzard will also lose her Dragon Factor!?”

Guy reacted to Milim's comment with a bit of panic.

So I just said what I thought.

“Isn’t that what makes sense?”

Then Guy showed an unusually agitated expression.

“In that case, Velzard won't be safe. She’s good enough to fight me on equal terms, but she might just disappear?”

“Hmm, I wonder about that. In Velgrynd's case, one of her 'Parallel Existences' was absorbed. I think the amount of magicules was probably less than 10%, but that alone was just enough for Michael.”

After hearing this explanation, Guy regained his composure.

“Hmm, I guess so. The power of a “True Dragon” is immense, so they can't be absorbed that easily.”

I nodded.

At the time, Velgrynd had suffered considerable damage from Carrera's “Judgment,” but she still had a considerable amount of power left.

In fact, Michael had taken in Velgrynd's power with Yuuki's skill ‘Still Life, 50 ’ but he could not absorb it completely.

In addition, I also had an idea of why Michael had banished Velgrynd from this world.

“Also, it's not just the strength and factors that are taken away, but also the skills. Doing so would remove the absolute control over the angelic skill system, so if he doesn’t act carefully, he'll get struck with a counterattack.”

That's why Michael would want to use Velzard to weaken her, and then take the factor away and banish her.

«I agree»

Well, sometimes I can be quite brilliant as well.

“But why would he need to take away their powers? If he has absolute control, wouldn't it be wiser to use them as a pawn rather than to use and banish them?”

Uh, that’s also true.

Michael's skill can be used over the skills of a user. I don't see any reason to take it away.

Ciel-san agreed with me, so I had thought my reasoning was perfect…

“Well then, do you think it’s necessary for Veldanava to revive by gathering all of the skills in Michael's hands?”

Dagruel spoke up, leaving me to mourn.

“So, you don't mind ignoring the demonic and other derived Skills?”

“That’s right. Maybe Veldanava thinks that the only pure Skills are the ones he used to possess.”

This time, it was Ruminas.

Just listening to our conversation, seemed to have led to a very profound conclusion.

“A perfect Veldanava—In other words, gathering pure skills in order to recreate the omnipotent being that created all skills? It sounds far-fetched, but if that's the case, I don't think that wish is going to come true. With Leon over here, it's impossible for them to gather all of the skills.”

Guy laughed invincibly, but I don't think it's that easy.

If that reasoning was correct, then we would have already defeated Michael's strategic goal at this point.

Because, you know?

I, or rather Ciel-san, had already consumed the 'Wisdom King (Raphael)', the 'Covenant King (Uriel)', and even the 'Charity King (Raguel)'.

Ciel-san spoke up to my worried self.

«Velgrynd, deprived of the Dragon Factor, could no longer maintain her existence and was certain to disappear even without “space-time transfer.” Before she disappeared, Master released the main body, so I assume that all of the energy was reintegrated»

Hmmmm…

In that case, why did he go to the trouble of banishing her?

«Perhaps he was afraid it would resurrect her. “Even if he took away the Dragon Factor, he couldn't destroy the soul or the core (heart). There, I believe he was trying to prevent the resurrected Velgrynd from taking revenge on him»

If you can’t come to a perfect conclusion, it means you can't be sure.

That's probably why Ciel-san has been avoiding this topic.

She’s still a perfectionist, but she’s been very helpful even as my advisor.

I wonder if Ciel-san is concerned about what would happen if Velgrynd was resurrected without losing her skills.

«That's right. The disappearance would be certain, but she would probably be released from control. If that happened—»

That could incur the wrath of Velgrynd, who would still have memories of the time when she was being controlled. If she discovered she was being dominated by the skill, she may leave the 'Charity King (Raguel)' who caused it, gain her freedom, and reappear before Michael.

So, banishment was the way to go then, was it?

Since there would be no one left to use it, it makes sense to keep the useful skills.

If that was the case, then the ‘theory of recapturing skills’ that is currently being discussed, is wrong.

«In the first place, I wonder if I can recreate a skill I’ve created before as many times as I want»

Yes, that's what I'm talking about!

That's what I wanted to say too.

I was relieved to see that Ciel-san's self-confidence was getting better than before.

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Now that I had collected my thoughts, I decided to join the discussion once again.

“I think it's beneficial to gather skills, but it has nothing to do with the revival of Veldanava, does it? I think what we should focus on is the Dragon Factor.”

“Are you trying to change the subject?”

Dagruel looks at me doubtfully.

He seemed to be fed up with inconclusive topics, and I understood that feeling well.

There was nothing more meaningless than a meeting with no conclusions.

That’s why I was going to make a quick conclusion right here.

“No, it's a matter of certainty. Michael didn't say anything about the skills, so I think that was an afterthought.”

“Hmm, you may continue.”

Well, not that I even needed permission from Ruminas.

I'm not sure why she was being so pompous, but I think it was better to end the discussion rather than to question it here.

This was not an escape. Absolutely not.

So I came to a conclusion.

“If the Skills really are important, then I know of someone besides Leon who has one. So I think we should ignore them and work to keep Veldora out of the hands of the enemy.”

“Hmm, you sound confident.”

“Well, yeah. I know I confused you a bit when I told you they took my skills, but please don't worry about that.”

When I said that, Guy stared at me thoughtfully.

“Hmph! It’s annoying that I still don't know why they took Velgrynd's skill. Fine then. I'll trust you.”

Guy was a lot more understanding than I thought.

For the time being, we've made our decision.

Some might say that we were only going back to the conclusion we had come to earlier, but we can't let that bother us.

“So then, yeah. I guess we should be wary of letting Velzard and Veldora meet. I’m counting on you, Rimuru.”

That’s what Guy said.

It may look like he's trying to push the responsibility on me, but it’ll take a long time to dig in, so I'll just nod.

As is often the case when one is fed up with discussions, I was in a mood to just let thing go.

So then—

“I knew it. I was in a very important position, wasn't I?”

I couldn't help but be annoyed at Veldora who said stupid things without even taking the discussion seriously.

Currently, we were behind.

We had to admit that, but we could make up for it.

Veldora had nothing to do with the Angelic system and had already escaped the control of the “Regalia Dominion.” The enemy was probably aware of this, so their next move would probably be a straightforward one.

If that happened, it would be an all-out war, so I think the first priority would be to bring the angelic owners together first.

If it were me, I would definitely act cautiously, but I didn't know which strategy Michael would mainly adopt.

But there was no rush.

There was no doubt that the enemy's main objective was Veldora, so we could take steps to prevent it.

In the worst case scenario, it might be a good idea to eliminate Leon's “control circuit,” though I didn't want to do it.

“Well, I wish you all the best. If anything happens, get in contact right away.”

With Guy's words as the final conclusion, the Walpurgis, which had been a dull affair with not the slightest sense of cooperation, finally came to an end.

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