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OVERLORD

In 2138, a Dive Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game, YGGDRASIL, was about to be closed out even though it became the predominant once before. One of the players, Momonga, who enjoyed his prosperity with his guild members, was waiting for the last moment. However, he didn't log off even though the scheduled ending time passed, and all of a sudden, NPCs started to act on their own. Out of the guild, Momonga found a totally different world he'd never seen before. In the real world, he was a guy just lonely and uncool, but now becomes one great wizard with a skeleton look. Here comes the ruler of death dominating the world!!

Overlord

- Blu-ray 4 Special - Overlord Prologue (1st Half)

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PART 1

The massive door seemed to shriek as it slowly opened. The ear-piercing sound never went away, no matter how many times he oiled it.

The reason was clear — because the door's metal parts were warped beyond repair.

Replacing those parts meant the door would no longer make that sound, but he — Suzuki Satoru — did not feel it was necessary.

Spending money on this door, which he only used when he went to and came back from work, was too much of a waste.

In addition, he had come to think of this creepy noise as a welcome, so he was somewhat attached to it.

The most important thing was that this noise could serve as a burglar alarm of sorts — provided any burglars actually came to this broken-down apartment.

Nobody would think there was anything valuable hidden behind a door that made this kind of noise.

After all, if anyone was going to the effort of robbing a house, they would probably rob another, more promising home instead.

The white lights in the ceiling came on, triggered by motion sensors, and the ancient air purifier rumbled to life.

The hollow, cold and dark sensation still remained, despite the lights turning on. The scene beyond this door was the very picture of lonely, gloomy abandonment. However, this was an everyday sight for him.

He closed the door and engaged the three locks, but even so, any thief could probably still break in.

“An electronic lock... huh?”

Perhaps he should use something better here.

However, Suzuki Satoru's high-speed mental calculations concluded that he should not waste his limited capital on theft prevention. The possibility of someone robbing him was very low, and at the moment he felt that his effort would be wasted, so he discarded the idea of spending money on it.

Truthfully speaking, he was not that poor. His salary was meager, but he still lived above the poverty line. He had an ample balance in his bank accounts, but he had no idea how to spend that money.

He forced himself to be thrifty because he felt that he should not waste money. He felt that some day, he would have the chance to use that money to enjoy himself.

He tossed his beat-up shoes aside, and suddenly his steps through the entrance hall felt very light, as though the heaviness of his previous movements were all because of his shoes.

The kitchen was near the hallway, and it was practically empty. To begin with, there were no cooking utensils at all. Suzuki Satoru washed his hands in the kitchen, then took out a towel, which he wetted. After that, he opened the small, old fridge — for some reason, he felt bad that it was still there — and took out his dinner.

Eating was important. Hunger would reduce his ability to think, and it would inconvenience his comrades. He passed three doors along the way — the toilet, the bathroom, and the bedroom, before finally opening the innermost door, to be greeted by a somewhat small room.

A black frame about 100 centimeters wide rested upon a stand of some sort. In front of that was a comfortable-looking, high-class chair, complete with a footrest. On the side was a remote control and power cables, resting on a wheeled, two-layered table. These were the only things in the room, apart from a calendar on the wall.

The furniture was clustered in the center of the room. The lack of anything else might make people think that the owner of this room was an empty shell of a human being who had no interest in anything. Upon the table was the sole bastion that attested to his humanity; a photo of a happy family cradling a baby.

Suzuki Satoru came to the chair and laid his dinner on the table. Then, he undid his necktie and dumped it on the ground. After that, he pulled off his air filtering mask and his goggles in a single motion.

His coats were next. He peeled them off, one after the other, and the sense of liberation he felt blooming from within was evident on his face.

Then, he shed his pants. In his unsightly attire of shirt and boxers, he wiped himself down with the damp towel. Although he planned to take a steam bath afterwards, he could not stand the discomfort of a sticky body.

As he wiped himself, he hooked his clothes on the tip of his toe and kicked them into a small pile in the corner of the room. Although they were contaminated by the outside air, they were still his property, which he had paid for, so he would need to wash them to get the dirt off. However, he would do that later — it was too troublesome right now.

He focused on wiping his face and hands, the parts of him which had been exposed to the outside air, and then laid the blackened cloth on the desk. After that, he practically threw himself onto the chair. It was brand name stuff, made by one of the Big Eight corporations in the world. It might well have been the most expensive thing in the entire apartment. Despite how delicate it looked, it did not even creak under the weight of a grown man, in stark contrast with the main door.

The man sighed deeply, and looked at the ceiling with dull, expressionless eyes. Then, he turned a keen gaze on the calendar.

“Ah, it’s still a long way off...”

It was still the middle of the week. His next rest day seemed unbearably distant.

“Ah—. Ah—. Ah—. Ah—.”

As Suzuki Satoru mused on the number of days remaining, he ended up making a bunch of strangely modulated, and ultimately unintelligible noises with his mouth. After that — as though his batteries had run out — the noises stopped.

Then, a smile dawned on his face.

“Ah well, forget it.”

Indeed. As long as he thought of what would soon come, even pain like that could be forgotten.

Suzuki Satoru picked up his dinner, which he had just laid on the table.

He inserted the straw into the steak-flavored liquid food, and sucked it up.

It was little more than a sticky, meat-flavored gel. The truth was that it was awful, but he strongly felt that the pursuit of perfection in food was pointless. After all, it all became shit in the end, so investing money in it was pointless. The important thing was filling one's stomach, and if it was not nutritious enough, there were always pills for that.

After that, Suzuki Satoru gulped down several multivitamin and supplement pills with a mouthful of health drink.

That was the end of his 220 yen dinner. He usually ate lunch outside, which was more expensive than the most economical meal he could get, so he had to save money on his breakfast and dinner.

After replenishing his nutrients, Suzuki Satoru finally began acting like a human being.

Unlike the clumsy fumbling when he first came home, his eyes were bright and his movements were nimble.

He picked up a black power cable, which was connected to a wall outlet.

Suzuki Satoru removed the protective plastic covering on one end of the plug, revealing a plug that was roughly three centimeters across. A silver gleam blended with the liquid glittering of the slippery protective fluid.

He held the cable in one hand and lifted up the hair on the back of his neck with the other. The subdued glint there came from the man-made object embedded in the nape of his neck.

With practiced ease, he opened the roughly-three-centimeter cover on the back of his neck. The sliding motion exposed the socket hidden beneath it.

He pressed the plug home, without any hesitation.

“Ohh...”

In time with his quiet sigh, he could feel light moving through his body, as though his blood vessels were filled with radiance.

The room had not changed, but his field of vision was different now.

Several windows popped up within his line of sight, showing him the information flowing into the processor within his brain.

He began operating the CPU.

Someone from an earlier age might look askance at the strange gestures he was performing in empty space. However, his cranial CPU read the weak electrical impulses of his synapses — in other words, it was thought-controlled — and converted it into data.

His thoughts reached his supercomputer through the medium of the cable, and turned on the television. The power came on, and a screen appeared in the black frame.

Within it, a primly-dressed Japanese female began reading the news.

“—The conflict that started last year between the 2nd European Arcology and the 3rd European Arcology—”

He manipulated an invisible console and changed the channel.

“—Regarding the three mega corporations in the capital, Neo Kyoto—”

He changed the channel again.

“—Arrested for the sale of illegal cyberware in Neo Kyoto Hachijo—”

The screen flickered rapidly between several channels, but the news he was hoping to see did not appear. Suzuki Satoru moved his hand, and turned off the TV.

“Then — let’s begin.”

He picked up the helmet that almost covered his entire head as mandated by the computer laws, connected another wire to his neck and linked it to the helmet, then put it over his head.

Although it was supposed to be a full-face helmet, the camera mounted on the outside would transmit its video signal directly to the brain, so his field of vision was still clear.

This helmet included a system that would automatically record everything which went on in the virtual world. As an aside, it would retain footage for a month, automatically deleting it after that.

A lot of people wanted to avoid wearing this helmet. It was only natural, since putting it on was something like giving up one's privacy.

Yet, almost everyone wore these helmets.

It was not just because of the law.

It was because it protected people.

The neural nano-interface was a human brain augmentation which allowed it to function as a supercomputer — a super high-performance personal computer. It was essential for daily life, but sometimes they were used in crimes as well.

In particular, hackers would use the brains of others as a springboard to commit crimes.

Because of that, helmets like these could prove one's innocence, even if the wearer was implicated in a crime. One could say this was the safety net of the computing world. In contrast, not having one of these greatly increased the chances that one might be charged when involved in a crime, so only a handful of people chose not to wear them.

He noted the words that said recording had begun, and then he operated the console window floating near his hand. He opened several new windows nearby, then brought one of them near his hand and touched it.

The window he touched had the word Yggdrasil on it.

Soon, Suzuki Satoru's real life would begin. However—

Suddenly, an alert rang in his ear. Only he could hear it.

A frustrated expression came over his face.

The newly-appeared window said, "Intracranial nanomachine depletion over 85%. Please replenish nanomachines."

"Haa..."

Suzuki Satoru sighed with exaggerated loudness, in response to the damper on his enjoyment. Nobody was here, of course, but he could not help wanting to express his feelings.

"Fine, fine, I got it, I got it..."

Suzuki Satoru minimized the window, which was making annoying alert noises.

"I know. I don't want to be booted out halfway during the game because of an error, so sit there and wait..."

He grabbed the painless syringe as he mumbled to himself.

The injector looked like a seal stamp as he brought it to his arm, and then he pressed it. Much like how he felt when he inserted the plug into his head, he felt a radiance moving through his body.

It started from his arms, and then spread through his body like wildfire.

He calmly placed the empty syringe on the table. He could cheaply exchange it for a new one at a clinic, but if he broke it, the replacement would be very expensive. Therefore, he treated it carefully, in order not to waste money needlessly.

A message told him that a quantity of cerebral nanomachines had been infused into his body, and then it automatically vanished.

And now, the preparations were complete.

That should be everything. There should be nothing else to get in his way.

Nobody would call him, so there was no need to switch off the integrated mobile phone network.

His eyes gleaming like a teenager at a theme park, Suzuki Satoru clicked the window named Yggdrasil.

—The world changed.

His cerebral nanomachines began their computations, disrupting his field of vision and taking control of his voluntary nervous system, and everything changed.

An empty void extended in all directions — no, there were things sparkling in the darkness like stars — like space. Among them floated a gigantic tree that seemed to encompass everything.

Part of his visual field flickered, and if he tilted his head to the side, he could see something.

It was a monster.

Red-black flames burned in the eyes of the skeletal monster.

He was not at all confused or afraid by the inhuman being that had appeared out of nothingness. Naturally, it was because that creature was his other self, with which he was intimately familiar.

He reached out a hand — and in the moment that he touched the skeleton, his point of view changed once more.

Countless lines of algorithms swept across his vision, and they vanished in an instant. They seemed to have some significance, but since he knew nothing about them, they were meaningless to him. Besides, not knowing them would not inconvenience him in the slightest.

However, there was one line that he recognized.

It was on the bar at the top of his view. If the number on the right did not reach 100%, the adventure would not begin.

With nothing to do, he looked at his hands. They were now bereft of flesh, with only skeletal, inhuman hands in its place.

He clenched his fists and opened them again. While the sensations were dull, it was close to reality now.

The number on the top row became the 100% he was hoping for, and several icons appeared. The one he selected was composed of a triangle joined to a rectangle.

In other words, the HOME button.

If he clicked it, it would in turn change shape into a bar that represented a waiting area.

The 18/30 on it represented that out of the maximum of 30 people, there were 18 already there. He hid his growing excitement under his unmoving, skeletal face, and then touched it with a bony hand. After that, he selected YES when he was asked “Are you sure?”

—Beginning entry.

—Please stand by.

The female voice coming from beside his ear had a musical quality about it, and sounded like a human speaking. Of course, it was electronically generated.

Even people with good senses could not tell the difference. He knew that only someone like his friend, with excellent hearing — which his friend called “useless pitch” — would know about it. That piece of information came from that friend’s elder sister, who told him about it in great detail.

While it was good that she told him that, she had no intention of hiding her hatred of the people who stole her job, so he looked back on that thirty-minute lecture — more of a protest, actually — with a small amount of dread.

Even if people with experience in the field knew it was pointless, he still believed in that rumor of the online world — that telling the voice to hurry up would let you into the game more quickly. Therefore, he said to the voice: “Let me in faster.”

PART 2

The world of darkness filled with light.

It was a strange feeling — though he closed his eyes, it felt like they were still open — but after it passed, he found himself standing in a room within a building. The brief disorientation he felt as his mind switched over to a fictional world quickly faded away.

He carefully looked around his surroundings.

The room was made of some kind of gray inorganic material, which looked like concrete, and it had a high ceiling. Though there were no obvious light sources, a side of the ceiling glowed with white light.

“Yo~ Momonga-san. Thanks for coming.”

Someone called out to him.

Suzuki Satoru — Momonga — had logged into Yggdrasil countless times before, but nobody had ever spoken to him in this room, so he was confused for a moment. However, because it was a familiar voice — or perhaps it was the voice of one of the people in this clan that he was closest to — his mood immediately changed, and he answered:

“Ah — Peroroncino-san, good evening. Glad you came.”

The voice addressing him came from a man with the head of a ferocious beast, with wings on his back. He wore a suit of shiny golden armor.

“Ya~ it scared me. Momonga-san is the first person I’ve ever encountered here.”

“Same here! It seems we logged in at almost the same time.”

“Well, this sort of thing happens. The real surprise is why it didn’t happen before now. After all, there should be a lot of people who get off work and log in right away, around the same time.”

His friend — Peroroncino — walked toward him.

With every step Peroroncino took, golden motes scattered from his armor and vanished in mid-air. Bathed in the afterglow, he cut an imposing figure.

“I’ve never seen that effect before. What’s up with that? Could it be that it’s from a data crystal dropped by monsters in the newly discovered area?”

“Nope~”

Peroroncino’s face did not change. A regrettable deficiency was that one’s avatar could not change expressions to match one’s voice. Still, his voice was perfectly clear, and so was the happiness in his words.

“It’s a character effect, from a cash shop item.”

Momonga felt like the ground had just opened up under him. He should have displayed an emoticon, but he was not in the mood for that. Instead, he stalked up toward Peroroncino.

“No way! Why? Peroroncino-san, how could you betray me like this? How could you betray our fiery friendship! Didn’t we both promise to play without using cash items?”

Indeed. Though they knew that one could pay to win with cash items, they had formed a No Cash Item Alliance, their souls blazing with the idea that they could compensate for weakness with skill. More to the point, Peroroncino and Ulbert had been the ones who came up with that idea first. Being the first to betray it as well was absolutely unforgivable.

“Momonga-san, I’m sorry!”

Peroroncino put his palms together in apology, but his words were unremorseful.

“You wanted to stuff all those effects in no matter what, but look now. Hasn’t your armor gotten weaker?”

In Yggdrasil, players could design their equipment as they liked. This included their powers as well. However, abilities could not be stacked willy-nilly; the capacity of an item for data was determined by the item’s construction and the material.

In contrast, special effects took up a smaller amount of data capacity, so it was not uncommon for them to be imbued in an item to use up the leftover capacity.

However, Peroroncino was a power gamer, and people of that sort sought power at any cost. They were the type who obsessed over skills and character builds. Thus, devoting even a little bit of data capacity to special effects was a waste.

“Well, I know that...”

Momonga nodded, having changed his tone a little. He had not been serious about his accusations anyway.

“Peroroncino-san, you’ve always been about perfect builds.”

“Indeed. I wouldn’t load useless data into my outfit.”

Peroroncino was trying to build the item combo “Sunfall”, which needed a stringent selection of many data crystals, as well as armor and weapons to install them in. Still, there was some payoff to his hard work; he had managed to recreate the look of the item.

“That’s why I had no choice but to install the effect into my avatar with a cash shop item! You should know, right? I don’t like using cash items either. If I could stick it in my armor, I wouldn’t need to do all that. It can’t be helped. Man, I’m so envious of Touch-san’s explosion effect and his landing effect. I wish I had those too.”

“Ah. Those. Yeah, those are pretty flashy.”

The person in question was the leader of their clan, as well as the person Momonga was indebted to. He was in love with transforming heroes, and if the topic came up, he would be more than happy to begin discussing masked heroes who had debuted on wireless radio wave broadcast more than 150 years ago.

Thus, one could say that it was his style. One of his special effects was programmed to automatically trigger a meaningless explosion behind him when he struck a certain pose. The other one—

“Still, the explosion is one thing, but those words... The first time I saw them, I honestly had no idea what kind of face to make. I mean, they’re...”

“Really? I kind of like it.”

—Justice Has Arrived. The words would appear behind him, when he took the appropriate pose.

“Eh? Seriously? Peroroncino-san, you’re amazing. You’re really amazing.”

“Amazing?”

“Well, I think among us, only you like that sort of thing.”

“Ah, it’s true, my big sis said she wasn’t into it... Wait, does that mean I’m the one with weird taste?”

“...If I agree with you, it’ll reflect on Touch-san’s tastes too, so I’ll reserve comment.”

“...Isn’t that the same as just agreeing with me?”

Although their expressions had not changed, the mood in the air had become very solemn. Well, it was not really that gloomy. Or rather, it felt more like they were playing around.

Momonga laughed.

For some reason, talking about these unimportant things made him very happy.

He felt like he could keep chatting like this forever, but that would only impose on his friend Peroroncino, and he wanted to see his other friends too.

Momonga pointed to the tunnel.

“We shouldn’t talk here. Let’s go to the meeting point.”

“Yes, yes, I got it.”

The two of them walked forward, with matching strides.

The tunnel was made of the same inorganic material as before, which could be easily mistaken for a prison, and it extended straight ahead. Although there were doors on both sides, the two of them ignored them and kept moving forward. One could say

that the doors beside their destination were little more than decorations, and they could not open them even if they really wanted to.

“Speaking of which, what’re we going to do today?”

“It wasn’t written on the mail, but we’re probably going to take people to level up. I mean, the new people are all somewhat low-levelled. Still, they can still fight if they want to, even with a difference of two or three levels.”

“Well, it’d be good if we could enrich ourselves along the way.”

In Yggdrasil, defeated monsters tended to drop money easily. This was because there were many crafting classes in the game. Most of them made scrolls or wands and staves, which were frequently used by magic casters, and which they could use as well.

If less money dropped, magic item production would become very difficult, and magic-using classes would have to think twice about going on adventures with intense combat. This went against the design philosophy of having players explore the world. Therefore, the game was much more generous than its contemporaries with dropped money.

“What do you mean? Data crystals? Or money?”

“Money, of course. Though there’s some data crystals I want too...”

The two of them walked side by side.

The two of them were in their full gear and were walking shoulder to shoulder, so they needed a lot of space. However, the dimensions of this tunnel were designated as variable, so the path would automatically change to match their body sizes. This was why they could walk this way.

“The data crystals you want are for your dream build’s weapon, right?”

A dream build.

Creating a second character was forbidden in the DMMORPG Yggdrasil. As a result, in order to make the most of their one avatar, the average player would develop their characters through trial and error. The aim of most players was power, or to fully

develop the abilities of a non-combat profession such as cooking or alchemy or the like.

But among them were people who proceeded in a way, towards their dream builds.

This was the title given to those people who proudly declared their romantic streak, who eschewed the pursuit of power and sought to role-play.

For example, in order to make a barbarian who sang in battle, they would not gain levels in the vanguard classes which suited barbarians, but instead levelled up in classes like Dragon Priest or Bard, which was considered a waste.

By the way, most people disdained dream builders.

In Yggdrasil, the maximum size of a raid was five parties of six people each, or 30 people in total. Apart from exceptional cases like guild battles or fighting a World-Class enemy, people who were over the limit would be subjected to friendly fire. In other words, they had to take on bosses with just these 30 people. If there were joke characters among them, it would reduce the amount of fighting power they could bring to bear.

Because of that, it was popular for most dream builders to form guilds with others who felt the same way as them.

Then, what about Momonga?

The clan he was in was not filled with dream builders, but at the same time, they were big-hearted enough to accommodate those people.

“Yeah. That’s why it’s hard to bring it up. I don’t know if that dungeon drops any data crystals that other people want... well, from a different point of view, you could always say that nobody’ll fight with me for the drops.”

“Where did you find that out?”

“I went to Nyaru-chan.”

After hearing the name of that famous intelligence website from Momonga, though his face did not move, Peroroncino displayed an emoticon of uneasiness.

“From Nyaru, huh. Those free sites tend to have a lot of fake news. They’re probably in cahoots with paid sites, so the best way to get useful info is to go to those paid sites. There’ve been cases where they spread false info on purpose, in order to draw people away from places that drop rare data crystals, you know.”

There were many websites with false information on Yggdrasil, especially the ones where contributors could freely edit in their information.

All this was because knowledge was power in Yggdrasil. As a result, most players would not disclose what they had learned to the masses, whom they did not know or trust. Therefore, if one saw a piece of valuable, highly sought-after information, one could be sure that there was some kind of scheme behind it.

“Ah, I know that too. But this information looks reliable. You know how there’s a top-tier guild called Seraphim, the one which only allows angel-types to join? They say the info came from them.”

“Ah. Well, if that’s the case, it may indeed be credible, after all—”

At this point, the two of them had finally reached the double doors at the end of the tunnel.

Momonga opened the doors, and let Peroroncino go first. Naturally, this was the courtesy one would expect of a salaryman. Incidentally, if a situation like this happened again, according to etiquette, it would be Peroroncino’s turn to open the doors.

“Thank you very much.”

After Peroroncino stepped through the door with those words, Momonga followed after him.

The room on the other side of the doors was built of concrete. If this were a guild homebase, perhaps it would not have been so plainly made, but given that this place had been rented with in-game currency, they did not have the luxury to spend data on useless things. Still, there were advantages to such a bland room. Since the amount of data used was exceedingly small, the room could be made very large.

There were several sofas and chairs scattered throughout the room, with quite a number of heteromorphic characters — there should have been 18 in total — seated

at their favorite places in their favorite poses. A wave of welcomes and smiling emoticons appeared as the two of them came in.

Momonga popped several smileys of his own in response.

“Where should we go?”

“How about there?”

Momonga and Peroroncino sat themselves down on a couple of chairs, which they moved to face each other.

“Ah, now where were we?”

Momonga thought about their prior conversation in response to Peroroncino’s question.

“Ah, I think we were talking about reliable information.”

“Yes, that’s it! That’s it! Like I was saying, you have to determine whether or not information can be trusted with your own eyes. Tell you what, if there’s no clan activities today, I’ll go there with you.”

“Eh?! Is it really all right, Peroroncino-san?”

“Of course, Momonga-san! My sis says she’s coming too — well, she might not be here yet, but we can bring her along too. Besides, a party needs a tank.”

“Thank you very much, Peroroncino-san.”

“It’s nothing, it’s nothing. It’s okay as long as it’s Momonga-san. Although next time, you’ll have to go hunting with me.”

“Gladly!”

“Well, if that’s the case, we’ll have an Attacker, a Tank, and a Wildcard. For a perfect party, we’ll need three more people — a Healer, a Seeker, and another Attacker.”

“Oh, and where do the two of you plan to go hunting?”

They looked to the sound of the third voice, and what they saw was the organizer of this clan.

“Ohh, it’s Touch-san. Good evening~”

“Good evening.”

“Ah, good evening.”

There stood a warrior in silver. Below his appearance of a Paladin was an insectile body.

He wore a red cape that looked like a scarf.

Although there was no wind, it still swayed like there was one. However, Momonga-san had long since ceased to be curious about that. It must be some sort of cash item. All he felt now was admiration — the desire to have a fluttering red cape like that if he ever wore a suit of armor.

The man called Touch Me sat beside Momonga with a grunt of “yoi~sho~”, like he was an old man. Under his command, the cape settled down. Perhaps he felt that it got in the way,

“Clan leader, are we supposed to go anywhere today?”

While the leader of a guild would be called the Guildmaster, this was not a guild. Rather, it was a step below a guild, or a clan. Therefore as the leader of this clan, Touch Me was called the clan leader.

“No, actually. There’s no plans yet. Although, I think we have to carry out the usual meeting.”

Momonga’s clan held regular meetings on a weekly basis. Although there were quite a few people who did not — or could not — take part, those members were also asked to look at the clan’s message board.

“Oh, in other words, you were planning to go, then?”

Meetings were a chance for most of the members to meet, and thus chances were high that they could conduct large-scale activities like hunting. If there was really nothing

planned later on, it would be the best place to recruit members for a party, so they planned to chat up some people and suggest that they go along.

In response to Peroroncino's questions, Touch Me simply went "Hmm—" and looked at the ceiling.

"...Well, not exactly, there's some things, this or that, which I want to change, that..."

Momonga and Peroroncino looked at each other as Touch Me drifted off into mumbling.

This was completely unlike Touch Me. He was a very straightforward person, the kind who was very direct in his words and deeds.

Just as Momonga was about to ask him about it, he saw the door open from the corner of his eye and Bukubukuchagama entered the room.

Being Peroroncino's elder sister, she looked like a pink slime. Although she called herself guro-kawaii, nobody agreed with her. Everyone was certain that she had said so to trap them.

Momonga, Peroroncino, and then Touch Me greeted her, which she returned in kind.

Several other people had arrived in the room after Momonga and Peroroncino. Momonga had done his best to pop smileys at them as they came, but when he was absorbed in conversation, he sometimes forgot to do so. However, he would definitely notice if she arrived. After all, pink slimes were especially outstanding even among this clan of heteromorphic beings.

Bukubukuchagama's body wobbled as she flowed toward Momonga and the others. She might be a slime, but she could move fairly quickly.

According to Bukubukuchagama, she said it was like walking on her own two feet, albeit with the hassle of wearing a long skirt.

She reached Momonga and the others and immediately sat down. Although the body of a slime did not possess feminine curves, one could still approximate a place which should have been her waist from the way her body was bent.

"Yo. You seem to be talking about something serious. What's up?"

“It’s nothing much. Just discussing what we’re going to do today.”

“Haha, well, it’s just like what my brother said. Touch-san, what will we do after today’s meeting?”

“Come to think of it, it’s about time. Everyone... oh, that’s pretty good. Everyone’s here.”

Struck by Touch Me’s words, Momonga looked around. He saw 27 other heteromorphic beings of all kinds — it would seem the entire clan was here. This was quite rare, even for a regular meeting.

This clan was a rarity in that it contained no students, only working adults. As a result, their free time hardly overlapped, and it could hardly be considered a good guild. Having all the members together was not a common thing.

“Hey, Yama-chan, good evening~”

Bukubukuchagama waved a slimy hand, and an ugly giant waved its gigantic hand back at her.

“Ah, good evening, Bukubukuchagama-san.”

It was a gentle woman’s voice.

This was Yamaiko, the nephilim. Unlike giants, who were demihumans of a sort, nephilim could not hide their ugliness no matter how they tried to disguise themselves. It was hard to imagine that within that body was the only other female member of the group, besides Bukubukuchagama.

She had said in the past that she might change her character race, but given that she still had not done so, she must have found it oddly satisfying.

The gracefully seated Yamaiko slowly stood up, and lumbered over to them with heavy, plodding footsteps.

“Yama-chan~ call me -chan too~ Ne, how about it~”

“Ehh?”

Yamaiko displayed an “Oh dear” emoticon as she descended into thought. Then, she replied:

“...Buku-chan?”

Bukubukuchagama froze. Yamaiko realized that she did not like that name, and tried something else.

“Then, Bukubuku-chan?”

Bukubukuchagama collapsed into a pile after suffering another direct hit, and in a dull, demoralized voice, she said:

“...Sorry. Please don’t say Buku-chan.”

Because of her job, she could deliver on a truly evocative performance when she put herself into it. This was a voice of a defeated soul in anguish.

“Ah... sorry about that, Chagama-chan.”

“It’s not bad, but, hm... it doesn’t sound cute enough.”

Her little brother was saying something along the lines of “Look at your appearance”, but Momonga and Touch Me remained silent.

They knew that saying nothing was the wise choice.

“Okay! Next, call me Kazecchi.”

“Kazecchi? I thought you wanted -chan?”

“I do~ Yama-chan~”

A revitalized Bukubukuchagama swiftly oozed up next to Yamaiko’s side.

Like Yamaiko, Momonga and Touch Me had no idea why they had to call her Kazecchi. They looked to the only person who might be able to shed some light on this.

“Ah, big sis... she had a less mainstream stage name, Kazeumi Kumi. Her old fans used to call her Kaze-chin. She changed it several times, but she liked it the best.”

“I see...”

At a glance, the pink slime seemed to be spinning round and round the nephilim. Although it might be a kind of dance, this bizarre, unbelievable sight reminded onlookers of some wicked ceremony. Of course, it was an everyday scene in a clan of heteromorphs.

“Then, my apologies for interrupting you ladies’ fun, but since everyone is here, we should be able to begin. Or rather, the faster we start, the faster we finish. Oi, guys, the meeting’s about to start.”

After Touch Me raised his voice and stood up, so did everyone else. Everyone shuffled to the round table, one by one, finding a place they liked and sitting down.

“Then, we shall begin the meeting. I have some things I want to discuss with you later, so I hope everyone can give me some time. Next, has anybody discovered anything this week? Does anyone have anything to share?”

One could say that these meetings were conferences for communication. It was a weekly organized sharing of information and requests for help. That said, new information did not come easily.

According to the developers’ website, Yggdrasil was a game of exploration, and so many things were mysteries. It was a game where all you were told was the controls before being thrown into the deep end. While a lot of information had already been collected, most of it pertained to dungeons or other locations, and it was estimated that only 30% of the nine worlds had been mapped so far.

For instance, there were the World-Class Items, also known as the “crapped out”. There were supposed to be 200 of them in total, but according to the developers, only 50 had been found so far. Many players had tried hard to look for them, but this was all they could come up with.

As working adults, the members of the clan played during their free time and did not have time for in-depth investigations. Therefore, they usually did not have any information worth mentioning.

However, today was different.

“Yes.”

A hand went up in response to Touch Me's question to the clan.

Described in a word, the speaker was a ninja. He wore the stereotypical ninja outfit and a weird mask, with two swords at his waist. Saying he was anything other than a ninja would be a lie.

He was one of Momonga's earliest comrades — Nishiki Enrai.

"Nishiki-san. Did something happen?"

"Indeed, Touch-san. This is a truly incredible discovery."

As he said that, everyone else went "ohhhh" in curiosity and excitement.

"—I've discovered an unexplored dungeon."

Joy and curiosity were masked by surprise, and many of the clan members made even greater sounds of awe.

Everyone asked Nishiki Enrai questions. Momonga, Peroroncino and Touch Me were no different. The only one who didn't seem excited were the girls, Yamaiko and Bukubukuchagama.

The game Yggdrasil was composed of nine separate worlds. Each of them was ridiculously huge, and there were many places within them which were difficult to explore. For instance, there were gigantic swamps, verdant expanses of rainforest, scorching deserts, and the like. One needed special equipment to delve into the dungeons there, as well as a proper strategy and the determination to throw one's life away for the trip. Even so, there were many people who wasted their time on a trip.

This was because these hard-to-find dungeons contained monsters which dropped valuable data crystals. Anyone would be excited to find a hitherto unexplored dungeon. One could say it was a gold mine.

In addition, discovering a dungeon could affect the world ranking of a guild. So there were no downsides to it.

"Where exactly did you find it?"

The one who asked on behalf of the incredulous clan members was not the clan leader Touch Me, but the man who had taken a goat-headed demon as his avatar, Ulbert Alain Odle.

He was a member of a class that was called World Disaster. In Yggdrasil, there were a limited number of people who could join it — because the requirement for taking levels in this class was killing its previous holder. It was a class which specialized in destructive magic, and he was the man with the highest firepower in the clan.

Before opening his mouth, Nishiki Enrai — who was as blank-faced as the rest of the clan — snuck a peek at Touch Me.

“...Are you aware of the huge poison swamp in the marshes of Helheim?”

“Do you mean the gigantic camp of the poison-resistant Tuvegs? That poison swamp?”

“That’s the one. I found it in the swamps there.”

“Amazing. But how did you do it? A lot of people did aerial reconnaissance, but none of them reported finding a dungeon. I’ve seen their recordings, and they weren’t lying.”

The quiet speaker was part of the clan’s intellectual elite, Tabula Smaragdina.

His fearsome heteromorphic avatar, wearing gear which made onlookers think of torture tools, was the fruit of his hard work.

“We’re not doubting you~”

The man who continued was also part of the clan’s intellectuals, the man who went by the alias of Zhuge Kongming, Punitto Moe.

He was composed entirely of the plant known as Death Vines.

“When Tuvegs spot intruders, they cry out and alert their entire tribe. Thus, they’ll be troublesome opponents, because it can’t be easy to remain undetected until we reach the dungeon.”

“Ah, it’s quite deep into the swamps. I found it while searching for something else, so I can’t tell you how far away it is in a straight line.”

“Did anyone here travel with Nishiki-san?”

Everyone shook their heads when they heard Punitto Moe’s question.

“Then, did you lead a huge band of NPC mercenaries there? No, if you brought them along, you would be discovered and overwhelmed by sheer numbers. It’s far too difficult, which is why people have only ever reconnoitered the area from the air. Well, if everyone here went there it wouldn’t be a problem, but I guess that’s not the case. Then, how did you find it out, Nishiki-san?”

Punitto Moe tapped his temple with a vine that looked like a finger. There might have been some reason behind it, but sadly, Momonga did not know why. However, his questioning style of speech was not like his usual self.

Even so, Punitto Moe’s dramatics were quite effective in disseminating the information to the other members of the clan.

“Policeman-san, you’ve made a fatal mistake,” the masked ninja declared with a laugh. “All you need to do is silently approach a Tuveg and relieve him of his head in one strike. That way you won’t alert his friends as well.”

Punitto Moe had nothing to say.

This was the end of the guessing game.

“Yaa, you see, it’s child’s play for me to take someone out from behind in one blow. That was how I delved into the depths of the swamp. While there were some worm-like monsters which used vibrations to navigate, I’m pretty sure I can sneak myself past their detection ability.”

“...Nishiki-san, something’s been bothering me. Doing that much, even for a ninja... how did you build your character to do all this weird stuff?”

Punitto Moe delivered those lines in a daze, and Nishiki Enrai responded with a laugh.

“Ah, don’t you know? It’s just a simple sneak attack. There’s a damage multiplier for backstabbing people. My defense is rubbish and I’ll die if I get found... but I love that thrill. I’ve always liked the glass cannon, high speed sort of character. You could say that it’s my dream build. Speaking of which, Punitto Moe-san, you also play Aberage, right? What machine was it? It’s just like what I was talking about.”

The game they were talking about was one which Momonga did not play. It involved building power suits, and then using them to fight each other.

“Ah, I play a balanced type with average armor. The aim is to take on anyone.”

“That sounds like what you would build. Like I said, mine has paper armor, high speed and high firepower. I even dumped my radar, relying on my eyes alone, to move faster.”

“...That is pretty weird.”

“Still, Punitto-san. My machine’s among the upper ranks, with the title of Violet.”

Beast King Mekongawa, seated beside Nishiki Enrai, suddenly exclaimed, “Ehh?! What did you say? Doesn’t that mean you’re a super top-class player? ...I’m just a Green. Maybe I should quit Aberage...”

“No, no, please don’t say that. Group up with me next time.”

It was kind of lonely to see one’s clan members get excited over things that one knew nothing about. Just as Momonga was feeling hurt, the sound of several claps rang out.

“All right, all right, we’ve gone off-topic. Nishiki-san, tell us about that dungeon.”

“Ahhh, yes, Touch-san, my apologies. Then, there’s an island in the deepest reaches of the poison swamp — or rather, there’s a base there, and in the middle is the entrance to the dungeon.”

Nishiki Enrai said it was called the Tomb of Nazarick.

“Why didn’t anyone find it by aerial recon before?”

In response to that question, Punitto Moe replied:

“I think it’s a dungeon that can only be discovered under special circumstances.”

Some dungeons could only be found under certain conditions. For instance, the entrance to a dungeon amidst a field of flowers in the depths of a forest could only be seen under the light of the full moon. A notable example of this was the Frozen City in Niflheim, which could only be entered during a blizzard.

Although this was only a hypothesis, Tabula Smaragdina continued:

“Perhaps the Great Tomb of Nazarick only appears to people who’ve traversed the poison swamp on foot? Or perhaps it’s only visible under a certain altitude.”

After the replies of “I see” and “That might be so” passed, Nishiki Enrai continued speaking.

“Then — I have a suggestion. Why don’t we go there after this is over?”

The response was more subdued than when the news that “there’s an unexplored dungeon” was announced.

Being unexplored, there was no way to tell what dangers awaited you. It might be a very difficult dungeon, which would lead to a total party kill. Yggdrasil dungeons were not the sort that told you what levels were suitable for them.

What changed everyone’s mind was the woman who was said to have muscles for brains.

“It’s interesting, don’t you think? This is an unexplored dungeon, right? We should just attempt it regardless of the difficulty level.”

“I agree as well. Being that the dungeon is dangerous, it will also offer a great reward when we complete it. I want to take advantage of our early discovery and attempt it by trial and error so we can gain the reward for clearing it. Unknown dungeons are troublesome. We should go gather information on how to beat it before other people find out about it.”

There were many points in Yamaiko and Ulbert Alain Odle’s words which people could agree with.

Momonga supported the idea as well.

The first time one ran a dungeon, there would be a bonus, or about 10% more treasure chests. Also, the first time a dungeon was cleared, the big treasure chest would offer equipment with item levels up to 10-20% higher than usual.

It would be a regrettable thing if they could not find these treasures and let other people claim them. How could they allow the goldmine before their eyes to be plundered by others?

“It would seem a majority of people approve of this. Then, we shall head to that dungeon after the meeting. After all, it’s quite rare that everyone’s gathered in one place.” Cheers of approval rang out in response to Touch Me. Although there were a scant few who opposed this, they were moved by the passion of the other excited people.

Excitement boiled off the clan members gathered around the table.

“Then, is there anything else that anyone wants to share?”

There was no response to Touch Me’s question.

“Good. Then, although this isn’t the end yet, I would like to say something.”

Touch Me looked around, and then dropped a bombshell.

“Firstly, I want to dissolve this clan.”

For a moment, everyone was struck silent.

Then, the room was swallowed by confusion and panic. Momonga’s cry came from the bottom of his heart. While it was true that this clan had very few people in it, and it had been founded by Touch Me, the clan had gotten to where it was today through the efforts of everyone here. It was very frustrating if one person was allowed to decide this sort of thing by themselves.

Touch Me raised his hand, apparently to say something else, but then a voice cut through the chaos.

“He left because you’re so damn selfish.”

The air froze.

The one who had spoken was Ulbert. His prior politeness was nowhere to be found; no, it would be more accurate to say that his hidden feelings had finally risen to the surface. His words were earnest, given that the person he was closest to left the game.

Characters in Yggdrasil could not show facial expressions, but Ulbert's face seemed to have a shadow over it, as though twisted by hatred.

"You son of a bitch."

"Ulbert-san, you've said too much."

Momonga could not help but say those words. Ulbert turned to face Momonga, but there was no enmity in his eyes. His shoulders rose and fell, as though they were breathing. Then, after quelling the flames of his anger, he spoke again in a calm voice that sought approval.

"Momonga-san... You're right. I went too far. Still, don't you think he's being selfish? First he chased that person away, and now this. If this is the case, shouldn't he have disbanded us earlier?"

The fact was that Momonga partially agreed with what Ulbert said.

When the clan was founded, there was a great disagreement that led to one person leaving the game. The matter had left a great scar on Momonga's heart. It felt like a stain on the glorious memories of a closely-knit guild and his cherished friends.

Even so, Momonga still had to rebuke Ulbert for this.

The feud between those two people could have been solved if either of them could have spoken calmly to each other. If he left Ulbert to his own devices, it might happen all over again.

"I fully understand how Ulbert-san feels, and I was shocked when that person left the game. ...This might not sound too good, but I knew that person longer than Ulbert did. However, I think it would be better if we heard out Touch-san first. How about it, Touch-san? Could we hear everything you have to say?"

"Thank you, Momonga-san. Ah... I'm sorry for alarming everyone because I chose my words poorly. I've been thinking for a while that since our numbers have increased, our clan name no longer suits us. Therefore, I planned to dissolve the clan and re-found us as an official guild."

Exclamations of "Oh" and the like were heard throughout the room.

Unlike a clan, there were many advantages to being a guild. Therefore, a lot of things had to be decided while founding a guild. This was because there were many things which could not be taken back if a mistake was made.

In particular, there were two things which deserved particular attention:

The name of the guild and the guildmaster.

The clan had not been upgraded to a guild because of these two reasons.

The room had settled down, and Ulbert could be heard to say, “Then, he should have just said so”. Touch Me saw that this was the time and raised his voice.

“...Are there any objections to disbanding this clan and re-founding us as a guild?”

There were none. That was only to be expected — after all, everybody was looking forward to becoming a guild. However, Momonga felt a little lonely.

This was because the reason he had been so absorbed in this game — the reason why he had worked so hard and made so many precious memories — the clan name, was going to vanish. On the other hand, he had never thought that the name would no longer fit the present circumstances. He had not even thought that people might not be happy with it.

The clan’s name was Nine’s Own Goal.

It had been founded when hunting heteromorphic beings was all the rage. It was because there were some strong job classes which needed players to PK a certain number of heteromorphic beings for entry. Therefore, players of heteromorphic characters hid out in the three worlds which were advantageous to them — Niflheim, Helheim and Muspelheim — and refused to go to other worlds. After all, a world was big enough to play in even if they did not leave it.

However, Touch Me and the founding members — including Momonga — were different. They were unwilling to restrict their ambitions, and bravely adventured to other worlds. How many people had managed to get into a strong class because of PKing Momonga and the others? That was their self-deprecating name for a group of suicidal fools who only served to make their enemies stronger.

Now their numbers had grown, and there were more members than could be counted on both hands. Also, one of the founding members was no longer around. He left the clan and the game.

That being the case, it might only be natural to change the name.

Although Momonga came to that conclusion himself, his heart ached as he thought of his absent friend, the one who had played with him from the beginning, who was no longer with him.

As Momonga sank into rumination, the conversation continued around him. After that, Touch Me opened his words with a “Finally”.

“This time round, I’ll beg off on the position of clan — no, guildmaster. I feel bad about saying this sort of thing even before being picked, but I hope everyone will take that into consideration.”

The clan members looked at each other in silence. Was he serious? What did he mean by that? And who would be Touch Me’s successor? Their eyes conveyed the questions in their hearts.

“Then, who will be the next leader — the next guildmaster? Does anybody want the role, or does anybody want to recommend someone for that role?”

Momonga kind of agreed with whoever had asked that question. Nobody could replace such an outstanding man. He felt sorry for whoever the next man was.

Touch Me looked around at everyone, and what he said next blew Momonga away.

“Personally, I would like to recommend Momonga-san.”

“Guehhh!”

Momonga could not help but make a strange noise.

He could not understand why his name was being brought up at this time.

Looking around for someone to help him, he instead found a chorus of voices saying things like “Not bad” and “We can leave it to Momonga-san.”

Though it should have been impossible, he did not hear a single voice of dissent. It made him wonder if there was a conspiracy going on.

“Are you guys serious?! Do you really think I can do it?!”

In response to Momonga’s exclamation, Touch Me performed a magnificent feint, one worthy of the strongest warrior.

“Well, I sprung this on you so suddenly and I didn’t get Momonga-san’s approval, so is there anyone else you want to recommend? Does anyone want to volunteer?”

Nobody answered Touch Me’s questions.

No good.

Although his body could not sweat, he could feel that sweat on his back all the same. This was a common situation in company meetings. If he did nothing, he would be chosen.

As he looked at Touch Me — the strongest warrior who had used a feint to throw him off his balance and deal him a fatal blow — Momonga decided to solidify his defense.

“Oi, oi, oi, oi, oi, come on, give me a break. Really, give me a break, Touch-san. This is all too sudden; won’t everyone be put off by it? You can’t decide these things so quickly. Give me a little more time.”

The person who answered Momonga’s protest was not Touch Me, but Ulbert.

“I don’t think so. Personally, I feel Momonga-san is an excellent candidate. He logs in regularly, is meticulous, and he doesn’t have any strange habits. Also, he’s a neutral party who isn’t biased towards anyone.”

Et tu Brute—!

Honestly speaking, it was not a betrayal. It was just that the recommendation of a fellow member of the No Cash Item Alliance drew noises of approval from all around him, so it felt like he was being betrayed. Although he was faintly proud that nobody opposed him, this was not the time for that sort of thing.

“No, wait, wait a minute! Ulbert-san! I, I’m not confident that I can lead everyone as outstandingly as Touch-san. Wouldn’t someone else be better for this?”

“Everyone here supports you in that respect. There’s nobody in this clan who won’t help you out, Momonga-san.”

Touch Me kept repeating, “It’s okay, it’s fine.”

Momonga looked around, and everyone he saw was nodding.

This was a level of anxiety Momonga had never felt before in his life.

How could he possibly be a Guildmaster? There were many reasons why not. Besides, how could someone like him substitute for a man like Touch Me?

As Momonga thought about how to refuse this nomination, a new window appeared in the corner of his eye. He had received emails from three people. All communications which did not go through in-game magic were the province of cash items, so it would seem these emails were very important.

His hands moved below the table, and he opened the emails.

Momonga was very surprised to see that there were three different senders, but if he thought calmly about it, it would seem that all three emails had been sent at nearly the same time.

The three senders were Punitto Moe, Tabula Smaragdina and Bellriver.

He quickly scanned through them while the others were excitedly discussing the new Guildmaster. Although they were written in different ways, they all said the same thing.

If someone other than Momonga became the Guildmaster, the guild — in other words, this clan — would surely tear itself apart. Therefore, they wanted to join a different guild with Momonga.

This was the reason why Momonga had to be the Guildmaster.

It was clear that the three of them were certain the guild would break up, but at the same time they had differing opinions. The main difference was in which side they were leaning towards.

If they played the game for pleasure and entertainment, it would only be natural for a guild to break up because they wanted different things. Since it was hard to gather all these diverse members, keeping everyone together so they could all have fun was the right thing to do.

Personally speaking, Momonga wanted the latter outcome.

Since the three people who had sent him the emails were either smart or learned, there was most likely some sort of ulterior motive behind them. However, they had nothing to do with Momonga.

In the end, the choice was up to him.

Momonga searched his soul.

The conclusion was very simple.

This was a game. One of his friends had already left, and the day might come when everyone else would follow suit as well, because the real world was more important than a game. But it would not be this day. Besides, Momonga wanted to keep playing with these people.

Thus, there could only be one answer.

Of course, Momonga was worried, and he wondered, “Is it really okay if it’s me?” He was uneasy about whether he might bring everyone trouble, and afraid that he could not handle the many things which would happen in the future.

Even so — though he was still somewhat hesitant, he had already made his decision.

“I understand. If there is nobody else, then I will take the role.”

Everyone turned their eyes to him. Well, some people did not have faces, so it was more of turning in his direction. Still, Momonga could feel the weight of their gazes on him, and he was suddenly very aware of the saying that there was power in stares.

Crushed by the sudden pressure, Momonga thought of backing out, but the words that came out of his mouth were completely different from those in his brain.

“Of, of course, that is only if everyone is willing to help me.”

Without a single word, the members of the clan had already made up their minds to aid Momonga.

If that was the case — Momonga screwed up his determination and rose from his seat.

“Then... although I’m not too reliable and I might cause trouble for you, I will take the position of Guildmaster. Let’s work together in the future.”

Momonga bowed to thunderous applause.

“Then, as the future Guildmaster, I will get down to business. What about our guild name? Should I come up with one?”

A hubbub filled the air after that last suggestion by Momonga. Was this a sign of their discomfort?

Yggdrasil characters had no facial expressions, but he felt that there were black lines all over everyone’s faces. It weighed heavier on him than their gazes.

“No, there’s no need, don’t worry about that, I think—”

Bukubukuchagama spoke, and her words scoured away the toxic clouds hanging in the air.

It was followed by several voices of approval. Although they tried to cover it up, they all sounded quite panicked.

Momonga could not imagine why they would feel that way, and just at that moment he noticed his friend nervously raising his hand.

“Go ahead, Peroroncino-san.”

“...I’d like to know, just to test the waters, as a hypothesis, for comparison... but what kind of name would Momonga pick for the guild?”

Momonga racked his brains as he heard the question.

“Right now, I don’t have anything in mind.”

“Well, any name will do.”

Why were they so adamant about this? As those thoughts ran through his mind, Momonga started trying to think of a good name.

“How about Heteromorphic Zoo?”

That seemed like a decent name. Someone must have muttered it from somewhere.

“Heteromorphic Zoo, huh? It’s surprisingly good, and it does fit our image. Just that... well, it makes us sound like small fries.”

“It sounds a bit exotic, but it’s not bad... Although it does sound like a cameo organization you find in mangas. You know, in tournaments.”

“It feels like the sort of team that shows up on the fight list, but ends up losing before getting a chance to show up. That’s what I would do, to make the readers think they were strong, but then they’d lose in the next panel.”

“I kind of like it, though, it has a nice villainous feel to it.”

“I personally think it makes us sound like trash mobs, so I don’t like it. Ah, sorry, Momonga-san.”

Yamaiko was muttering to herself among the people discussing nearby.

“Still, I feel that it’s a waste to completely abandon our current clan name. It would be nice if we could pick a new name that had some relation to the old one.”

Silence suddenly fell across the room, followed by voices agreeing with Yamaiko.

Momonga could accept that suggestion — although she probably had not meant to make one. Closing his eyes brought to mind the enjoyable times spent with these clan members. He considered that these unforgettable memories would vanish with that name, and he hated it.

“Nine’s Own Goal. Nine suicidal people? Is there something related to—?”

“If that’s the case, how about the Knights Templar? After all, Touch-san is kind of like Hugues de Payens. Well... though we are missing one person.”

Although he had no idea what Tabula Smaragdina was talking about, Momonga felt it must be related to some occult knowledge. After all, he was quite versed in occult lore. There were far too many things that Momonga did not know anything about.

“Knights Templar doesn’t even have a word in common with Nine’s Own Goal.”

“Tabula Smaragdina-san is always talking about things we can’t understand.”

“Ah, yes, sorry about that.”

“How about baseball? A baseball team needs nine people.”

“Even football is on its way out. Besides, you should remember that the reason we’re discussing this is because we aren’t nine people any more. You should think about something that doesn’t have anything to do with the number nine.”

The nephilim Warrior Takemikazuchi did not take part in the dialogue. Instead, he sank into thought, scribbled some things onto his PDA, and then he spoke.

“If we want to use the *ん* sound... how about Ains? Nine’s starts with the letter N, and in Hiragana, n is *ん*. That way, if we take the first character N and substitute it with an A, we get Ains.”

“Not bad. So it represents the end of the current clan, and a new beginning in the form of Ains?”

“It feels a bit forced, but it’s definitely the best suggestion so far. ...Ains... it comes out as Ains, right? Or how about Ainz?”

“Both are fine, right? It’s not a big problem. Rather than think about that, we should try and find a way to use Own and Goal.”

“If we go with that,” Punitto Moe began. “How about Ooal Gown? Have Own Goal become Ooal Gown.”

“Ohh! It’s perfect... hm? There’s an extra O, where did it come from? Without it, it becomes Gwn? Ainz Ooal Gwn? Hm...”

“Well, it’s not often that you get the chance to play with anagrams.”

“Before that, Ooal is pronounced oo-ul, right?”

“Just like that. After all ooze is for slimes.”

That great insistence came from Herohero, the slime.

“N, W and G are all used. North, West... gone.”

Though the topic had completely shifted to making anagrams of the name, the voices slowly grew softer, like they were tired.

Amidst this heated debate, Momonga felt that there would probably not be any better ideas. He carefully considered the suggestions and after making sure that there were no others, he looked to all the members and made his decision clear.

“Then, we will combine the suggestions from Takemikazuchi-san and Punitto Moe-san to make the new guild name. Does anyone disagree?”

“Nope~”

Everyone seconded Bukubukuchagama’s statement.

If that was the case—

“Then, our guild’s new name is Heteromorphic Zoo!”

In that instant, the sounds of laughter and teasing reached Momonga. He showed both his palms to indicate that he got it, and then he coughed.

“Well, that was a silly joke. So — we’re decided on Ainz Ooal Gown then?”

The clan members agreed in one voice.

“Then, who will take the quest for setting up the guild? Is anyone willing to help? If you’re busy, I’ll progress it slowly in my free time..”

One needed to carry out a mission when it came to registering a guild. There were eight types of missions to choose from, but only one needed to be perfectly completed. Momonga wondered which of these would be the simplest.

And then, there was no need for that.

“It’s fine, Momonga-san. The fact is, I already completed the mission and brought the mission item back, so we can use that .”

It was Touch Me who said that.

“Can we?”

“Of course. I gave up halfway — this is the least I can do.”

Momonga took a scroll from Touch Me.

When he unfurled it, a new window opened in his line of sight.

It was a guild setup request form.

If he followed its instructions and entered the relevant information, he could found a guild.

“Then, I’ll disband the clan.”

Somber, mournful music came from Touch Me’s position.

After about a minute of music, the clan disbandment message that appeared informed everyone that Touch Me’s request had been completed. Momonga entered his acceptance of the disbandment with the keyboard floating over his console, and then hit Enter.

In that moment, a brief burst of fanfare rang out.

“Everyone! I made the guild. Next, I’ll send out the invites. Look out for them.”

After making enough invitation scrolls to Ainz Ooal Gown for everyone, he sent them out. This was shortly followed by messages appearing in front of everybody.

Momonga thought it was quite amusing how everyone opened the scrolls and entered characters in the same way.

A bell rang continuously as the number of guild members kept increasing. In the end, all the members of Nine's Own Goal were now in Ainz Ooal Gown.

Thus, the clan of the past vanished, and a brand new guild was born.

His status window indicated that the territory belonging to the clan called Nine's Own Goal had been transferred over to the guild called Ainz Ooal Gown.

It was nothing much in the big scheme of things.

New guilds popped up in Yggdrasil at about the same rate as old ones vanishing. However, there was a strange feeling in Momonga's heart.

This was because he had been saved from PKing by Touch Me when he first started playing. He had been invited into Nine's Own Goal and learned how fun the game could be. Then when its members had increased, he had enjoyed playing the game with his new friends.

And now, the clan which was the source of so much of his joy was now gone.

However, the loneliness he felt passed in an instant.

This was because the newly-founded guild would carry on everything.

Indeed, this was not an end, but a beginning. However, it was not just happiness that he felt.

A mighty burden weighed down on his back.

Until now, he had been happy enough playing with and helping his fellow clan members. But now, as a Guildmaster, he had to help everyone enjoy themselves.

As Momonga watched everyone talking about what they would do next, Momonga felt the crushing stress his sense of duty gave him. He took a breath, and then stood up.

Judging by the movements of the new Guildmaster, he probably had something to say, so they immediately shut up.

Amidst this silence, Momonga explained what he was thinking about.

“Then, for our first guild activity as Ainz Ooal Gown, I plan to conquer the dungeon in the swamp which Nishiki-san just found.”

Replies of “sounds good” came from all around him. Amidst this atmosphere of excitement, Momonga gulped, and struggled with the buzzing tension inside him.

He might be branded as a failure of a Guildmaster because of what he would say next.

But before Momonga could speak, someone asked:

“Guildmaster, I have a question. Since it’s an unknown dungeon, we should only be making a reconnaissance first. When will we seriously try to clear the dungeon? Our gear and preparations may need to be changed depending on that.”

It was a heaven-sent question.

This was the last decision point. If he wanted to stop, he would have to do it now. However, Momonga committed himself to his decision.

“No. Actually, I have an idea.” Momonga coughed, and raised his voice. “Everyone, listen to me.”

Tension hung heavy in the air, given that Momonga had raised his voice.

Suppressing the crushing pressure to run away that made him want to vomit, Momonga stated his piece.

“Please listen to me. I was hoping to clear the unexplored swamp dungeon in one go.”

An uproar.

There was an uproar. It was only to be expected.

Momonga knew full well how foolhardy his words had been.

Unexplored dungeons had unknown monsters waiting in them , and there was no indication as to what traps were present.

Therefore, they had to mount multiple attacks on a dungeon. In this way they could identify effective ways to bring down the monsters and the shortest way to the heart of the dungeon, as well as some way to beat the dungeon boss. No, usually a dungeon could not be cleared without using these methods.

“Still, that should be impossible. We don’t know the ideal level to clear that dungeon, and trying to clear a dungeon blind will be difficult, even if it’s a very low-levelled dungeon.”

The person who put that forward was Bellriver, a heteromorphic magic knight who looked like a lump of meat covered in mouths.

Several others also began voicing their opposition, in support of Bellriver’s sensible conclusion.

Naturally, Momonga understood how they felt.

However, he wanted to go forward with it.

It was natural to frown on using this dungeon run to celebrate the founding of Ainz Ooal Gown. A simpler activity would have been a wiser choice, in order to leave good memories and strengthen their bonds.

If they failed here, it would be an inauspicious start for them.

However, great difficulties could also leave behind strong memories. Momonga’s thinking was that the struggle would unite the guild, much like how enemies might become allies in desperate circumstances.

Momonga had a premonition that if he did not unite them now, the guild would fall apart on its own sooner or later. The possibility for that was very high, just like he had seen in the letters which the three wise men of the guild had sent him. The only reason why it had not happened so far was because of Touch Me, as well as their sense of camaraderie for Nine’s Own Goal, which they had fought for until now.

Right now, the bonds between them were weakening. Therefore, Momonga had to glue them together again, even if it meant using his position as Guildmaster to force them to do so.

As expected, there were those who strongly opposed Momonga's unusually eager proposition. A silent count revealed that about a third of them opposed this.

He could fully understand their opposition.

They felt that the benefits were far too small in comparison to the penalties of a total party kill.

Dying incurred two kinds of losses.

The first was the loss of XP and a consequent loss of levels, though that depended on the way in which they were resurrected.

This was not a big drawback in Yggdrasil, because XP could be regained easily, unlike in other games. Even if one's levels went down for a while, the loss could be quickly recovered.

What everyone hated was the second kind of loss, which was the random dropping of an equipped item.

Weapons and armor in Yggdrasil were made by inserting a data crystal into an item skin. Very few people could remain unmoved after losing a personalized piece of equipment.

One could lose one or more pieces of equipment if a dungeon expedition was very difficult. Because of that, people sometimes geared themselves up with second-rate items, the kind they would not mind losing. However, players could not clear the dungeon in one go with second-rate stuff, so they had to use their best equipment. In addition, the developers designed the game so that the most valuable gear would be dropped first, which meant that the chances of an item which was key to the player's strategy being dropped was greatly increased.

That was why they felt uneasy about this.

Just as the uneasiness was about to leap to the other two-thirds of the guild—

"Let's do it. Don't you think it'll be fun?" Warrior Takemikazuchi said.

"Well, I'm not going to say Touch-san is wrong or that he's cowardly, but dungeon delves that he plans aren't really exciting. I still want to take part in this foolish

expedition and flail around like an idiot. Momonga-san, you're the best. I knew picking you as Guildmaster was the right choice."

"If we all get taken out, then we'll really be fools."

Punitto Moe had not voiced any opposition until now. As soon as he finished speaking, Warrior Takemikazuchi chuckled.

"This is a game. A game. A total party kill is just part of the fun. After all, Nine's Own Goal was a clan founded by fools. Why do you think the clan was named that way? Didn't we all do foolish things in the past? Humanoids mocked us for fools, while our fellow heteromorphic players hated us for doing unnecessary things. We only became more respectable after our numbers increased. Actually, no, do you remember how the first World-Class Item we found got snatched away? And I'll say again, Touch Me did nothing wrong. But... but I still want to mess around like a fool again."

In the silence, a comrade who had been with them ever since Nine's Own Goal was founded — Ancient One — spoke up.

"...I agree with Take-san's sentiments. Don't you think it's great? We'll start off our guild with a bang. After all, wasn't it those very same fools who obtained that World-Class Item in the first place? Or why don't you look at it from the basics. This game was meant for players to thrust themselves into danger. With that in mind, isn't clearing an unknown dungeon a good thing? Let's become a guild that does this sort of thing."

"What about our dropped gear? I don't want to rely on cash items..."

"Ah, that's true. Bellriver's worries are well-founded. After all, item loss is a nightmare to we who have been the prey of PKs. There's people here who are trying to suppress their anger at that unfairness too."

Warrior Takemikazuchi looked earnestly at the katana he was holding.

"Well, I'd be upset if I lost this chap. However, all I need to do is make an even stronger blade, right? Since I don't know everything about this game, I can't say that the gear I possess is the strongest. The more I learn, the better a weapon I can make. The same goes for my Mk Six. I levelled it up all the way from its Mk One state. Mm. If I made the strongest katana, I'd call it Zero or Ultimate or Void or something like that."

Warrior Takemikazuchi scratched his head. He was not tired, just confused by what he had just said.

“Ah — what was I saying? Equipment is nothing more than equipment. Don’t you think it would be too sad if we denied ourselves the world — our enjoyment of the game — because we were too afraid to lose it?”

“I think everyone enjoys the game in their own way, and forcing one’s point of view on others is wrong.”

“Uwah, I didn’t think Momonga-san would say that. I’ve been shot in the back by a comrade.”

After apologizing to Warrior Takemikazuchi, Momonga looked at the guild members and said:

“Frankly speaking, the idea of clearing an unknown dungeon in one go is my own wilful idea. And you’re right to wonder, ‘Is this challenge worth the risk of losing the gear we spent our time and effort creating?’ Bellriver is right. I am the one who is wrong. However, I still think we should go for it. I feel that the members of our guild are people who’ll make an idiot their leader, and when that idiot asks them to do something foolish, they’ll laugh and take care of it right away. Can you help me with the foolish thing I said? Please.”

Momonga lowered his head slightly.

Several seconds later, the first reply came.

“Well, since this is a request from my comrade Momonga, I’m happy to help.”

It was Ulbert’s voice.

“As a guild leader, I would put safety first... but as a player I want to have a good time.”

After him was Touch Me.

“I was planning to do this from the beginning. I just kept quiet because Takemikazuchi said it first.”

“As a guild member, I’ve got to back the new Guildmaster up, you know.”

The siblings Peroroncino and Bukubukuchagama made their opinions known. Now, it was Bellriver's turn.

"I'm not too keen on this, but since Momonga said that, I'll take part. Although I'd like it to be noted that I opposed it."

Although his words sounded like those of an unhappy child, Bellriver's approval seemed to have started a fire, and the ones who opposed the idea at first came around one by one.

"Thank you," Momonga lowered his head, "Then, our next objective is to defeat the boss in the depths of this unknown dungeon!"

"Oh!" the gathered members answered with hearty shouts.



There were 27 people gathered here.

In Yggdrasil, parties were made of six people, and a raid could have a maximum of 5 parties.

Judging by the current member count, there were three vacancies.

Since three missing people was a huge gap in a party's capabilities, the intention was to fill those places with NPC mercenary characters.

One good thing about NPC mercenaries was that they could allow a solo player to form a group, but their AI was not very good, and their combat ability was lower than even a poorly put-together character of the same level. Because of that, when grouped with NPCs, people who were not good enough were hindered when running difficult dungeons.

Momonga thought about who was the right person to lead the NPCs.

It was a choice between the fighting power of Touch Me or the cunning Punitto Moe. As he thought about it, he realised that he had made a fundamental error.

Rather than leaving the entire mission to one party, he should split it up between two parties.

“Ah, my apologies. Punitto-san, Touch-san, I have something to ask of you.”

The two of them were the most reliable powerhouses among everyone present.

Touch Me had fighting power while Punitto Moe had command ability. The two of them could probably make good use of the NPC mercenaries.

“Ahh, Momonga-san. I have a suggestion to make. Could you come here for a bit?”

Momonga had no reason to refuse Punitto Moe’s request.

The two of them went to the corner of the room.

“My suggestion is that you place sentries at the entrance of the dungeon.”

The sentries was a party which would be used to stand guard at the dungeon entrance, keep an eye out for anyone approaching, and depending on the circumstances, they would eliminate any interlopers.

Momonga sighed and rejected it. This was a group activity, and everyone would be clearing the dungeon together. He did not want to leave any of his companions at the door.

“No, I won’t compromise on this. I don’t want to be squashed.”

“Squashing” was Punitto Moe’s name for a PK method that involved attacking a player group that had just began delving into a dungeon from behind. Once their opponents were forced deeper into the dungeon, they would have to deal with the dungeons’ monsters as well as the PKs attacking them from behind. This was a kind of pincer movement.

Although it was a PK tactic he had used to great success, on the other hand, he was probably making that suggestion because he knew how potent it could be.

However—

“—Don’t you think you’re being a bit too paranoid? Nobody else knows about this dungeon, right?”

Punitto Moe defeated Momonga’s reply with a “Naive”.

“We won’t know about the situation until we’re there. For all we know, it might be a trap or some sort of hunting ground.”

“Well, that said... can’t we use the icon that shows up when we’re near it to tell if the dungeon has been explored before? There’s no way to disguise that, so it should be okay, right?”

“That’s naive too, Momonga-san. Unexplored and undiscovered are similar, but different. If it was me, I’d stay about one step before the dungeon is flagged as discovered, so any other people who discovered it — this is just a hypothesis, of course — jump in with their guards lowered.”

“...Punitto-san, you’re a very scary person. You’re the number one scariest person in this clan, no, in this guild. But you’re right, it’s good to be cautious about this.”

“Number one scariest, huh. Then, I’m not so much cautious as cowardly.”

“But I don’t think you’re cowardly. After all, that time—”

“Oh! Momonga-san, please don’t mention that. Well, let’s leave that aside for now. I’m fully aware of the dangers of splitting up our fighting power, but this is our guild’s first group activity, after all. We wouldn’t want to fail because of a silly little mistake, no?”

“Well, that’s true...”

“During this enterprise, the worst case scenario is that we get PKed. Momonga, I understand how you want everyone to delve into the dungeon together. However, leaving someone at the entrance is an important part in our plan. After all, you don’t want to be wiped out, but you want to completely clear the dungeon, right?”

“Of course.”

“Then you should understand.” Momonga had nothing to say in the face of Punitto Moe’s words.

Though he was still trying to accept this proposal, on an intellectual level, he had already concluded that it was the right answer.

He would burden the group if he allowed himself to be ruled by his emotions. The comrade before him knew that the Guildmaster should have reined himself in, yet

chose to help and contribute his wisdom to this endeavour. Momonga deeply regretted how he had troubled everyone with the difficult task of clearing an unknown dungeon.

A Guildmaster should act rationally. He had no idea what he had been doing in the throes of his excitement.

He recalled the loneliness he felt when one of his comrades left, and then he nodded to Punitto Moe.

“I understand. I’ll bring it up with everyone afterwards.”

“I’m counting on you.”

Momonga already had several candidates in mind for the rear guard. As expected, this sort of thing was best left to members of building classes.

“Ah, please say that I suggested it.”

He had no idea what that was about, but he agreed anyway.

“Eh? Ah, alright. I understand. However, this is just like Punitto Moe-san. I didn’t think of PKs or whatnot.”

“Well, PKing is pretty popular in this game. Most games wouldn’t let PKing get this far, or promote PKing at all.”

“Is that so? I’ve never played other games, so I’m not sure about that.”

“Ah, then why don’t we try a different game together? There’s one that I’d really like to try.”

“Mm, while that’s not a bad idea, shouldn’t we master Yggdrasil first?”

“Can you really master this game? No, you might be able to do it, after several years.”

One thing that the developers of Yggdrasil forgot was to make the game user-friendly. The very fact that the joke existed highlighted how little information there was in the game. In addition, there was a mountain of things which could not be verified about

the game despite the players' best efforts. Even after several years, it was not strange that there were still a lot of unknown things about the game.

What kind of lunatic would master this game, Punitto Moe laughed.

"Then, I'll need to impart the PK tactics I came up with to you, Momonga-san. I'm also thinking of writing a book called 'PKing For Dummies' as well."

"On the outside?"

The outside — in other words, the real world.

"No, no, how could I? I meant inside, in this world."

In Yggdrasil, one could store a manuscript in book form and read it like a book in the real world.

There were people in the game who put works whose copyright had expired into books, and sold them cheaply.

"I see. Then, can you let me see that manual of yours when you're done? Lessons on how to attack are useful for defense as well."

"Naturally. When the time comes, please, by all means."

"I'm looking forward to it! Fufufu. I'll make sure I copy it and pass it down."

"Momonga-san, what are you saying?!"

After his embarrassed outburst, Punitto Moe sank into deep thought, and spoke quietly to Momonga.

"...Is that really alright? If a lot of people know about it, then you'll lose your advantage, Momonga-san. There's no need to share knowledge with everyone. Only a select few need to know. Knowledge is valuable because it's rare. When you spread it, it becomes useless."

"Come to think of it, that's true."

“That’s right! Momonga-san is my friend, as well as my Guildmaster. That’s why I’m teaching you.”

“Apart from that, is hiding your dark history because it is too embarrassing the other reason?”

“I think it’s usually that way. It’s like how you get into a song and record it for an album or something, and then when you listen to it several years later you want to kill yourself.”

That was a cry of despair. However, Punitto Moe’s face remained unchanged.

This was an inconvenience of Yggdrasil.

It would be more interesting if his expression could change with his words.

As he thought about that, he also realised that it was impossible.

It would not be that difficult for humanoid players, but writing macros to move the faces of demihumans and heteromorphic beings was extremely difficult. In addition, there was Ainz’s bony face to consider. The creaking of bones as they moved would probably be quite gross.

“Ah, my apologies. I opened the door to my cruel past, which should never have been touched. If any doors should have been opened, I’d pick one leading to a warmer season — right, Momonga, what did you want to discuss with me. Does it have anything to do with the NPC mercenaries?”

“Mm. How many can I trust you to command?”

“Yes, I should be able to handle three with no problems.”

“Thank you very much. I might not need to give you that many, depending on the number of door sentries. Then, I’ll be counting on you.”

Momonga left Punitto Moe, and after making the same request of Touch Me, he returned to the center of the room and shouted, “Sorry for repeating myself! Everyone, please listen to me!”

Just like before, Momonga felt the attention of everyone focused on him.

Yet, although expressions did not change in this game, he could pick up their mood, which surprised him. According to Touch Me, when in battle, one could instantly sense an opponent's intentions, thus evading his attacks. Something similar seemed to be happening here. However, Momonga was not that sensitive. Perhaps only a warrior class could do that.

"I intend to assign the parties. As usual, they'll be grouped into physical attackers, magical attackers, defenders, healers, and others. I also need to assign the scouts—"

Momonga paused briefly.

"Let's assign door sentries as well. Does anyone object?"

This was something that he, the Guildmaster, had decided based on the suggestion of a guild member. Mentioning his name did not seem right.

Everyone shook their heads. Although Momonga made eye contact with Punitto Moe for an instant, the latter merely shrugged and smiled bitterly.

"If that's the case... well, we can carry on as normal."

"—No objections."

"—That's fine."

Several people approved, and nobody seemed to object.

"Then, we'll decide the door sentries next... How many will we need?"

"I'll be happy to stay behind."

The first person to raise his hand was the alchemist Amanomahitotsu. After that, two more people raised their hands. They were members of crafting classes as well.

The clan had never really focused on dungeon clearing and PKing. There were many people who played the game with the spirit of adventure within them. They were filled with the desire to set foot on unknown lands and discover unknown things. Naturally, even members of crafting classes did not spend all day in their workshops, and took levels in basic combat classes so they could handle any problems, to a certain extent.

That said, since their builds contained crafting classes, they felt that they were a burden during dungeon assaults.

Momonga knew fully well why they would rise when faced with this proposal. It was because he knew that he felt bad about it. Still, Momonga lowered his head to the three of them.

“I’m sorry, but can we leave this to you?”

“Don’t be like that, Momonga-san. Please raise your head. We’re the ones chatting idly while everyone else is fighting.”

“I want to try making a new weapon too. I just discovered a rare metal processing technique, so I want to try it out.”

“We’re just bringing our tasks to the dungeon entrance. Don’t worry about it.”

After Amanomahitotsu spoke, the other two rapidly followed suit.

Still, Momonga nodded to them again.

“Then, Nishiki-san, I’d like you to share your map with the rest of us. You don’t mind, right?”

“Naturally. Ah, then, I just finished collecting information on the monsters that appear in the swamp. Nobody’ll mind if I share it, right?”

There was no reason to object.

Nishiki Enrai produced a number of scrolls — one for everyone — out of thin air and began working on it.

A flash of light leapt from the scrolls.

Everyone present reached out a hand to take a scroll. Momonga did the same.

Once the scroll opened, letters reading “New Information Obtained” appeared.

Momonga ignored the scroll which had vanished into light and touched those letters. Immediately, line after line of text appeared.

The first piece of information pertained to the terrain.

There was an X in the exact center of the sprawling swamp. A man had written in not very presentable letters “Dungeon Here”. Beside it were three symbols marked “Frog Base”. Then, there were other icons labelled “Lots of Slippery Things”, “Poison Gas”, “Boss Level” and so on. In addition, there were lines labelled “Probable Patrol Routes”.

I see, Momonga mused as he digested the information. Then, he touched the characters corresponding to the next set of information.

Next was the monster data.

There were blurry pictures of monsters, with their name, level and other data.

Lv64 Grenbera Devil Lich

Lv74 Grenbera Purple Worm

Lv78 Grenberan Swarmlord

Lv80 Mad Eater

Lv80 Swamp Naga

Lv80 Grenbera Tuveg

Lv83 Grenbera Tuveg Fighter

Lv83 Grenbera Tuveg Priest

Lv84 Grenbera Tuveg Knight

Lv85 Grenbera Tuveg Warlord

“And then—”

Nishiki’s words made Momonga stop halfway through his study of the monsters, and he turned to look at him.

“—These are the guys I met. I visually confirmed them, but there might be monsters I have not encountered yet, so be careful. Also, I saw some stronger guys in the distance, but they were near the labelled bases, so I didn’t close in to check.”

“Hm. Level 80ish means the highest levelled monsters in the depths of the dungeon will be 90 or so. That should also be the ideal level.”

Most of Ainz Ooal Gown’s members were around level 90 or so. He felt like they could clear the dungeon without a problem.

“Take-yan. Carelessness is forbidden. It’s common knowledge that dungeons are more difficult than their surrounding areas.”

Of course, the opposite case could also be true, but they had never heard of such examples before.

“Still, luck is going to be a big factor. Clearing a level 90 dungeon in one shot isn’t completely impossible. If that’s the case, then let’s go in all guns blazing. Now’s the time to burn up our cash items.”

“If we do that, it’ll be a pretty amazing sight.”

The idea that they might be able to do it filled the room, and Momonga felt his stomach cramping up.

If they felt it was impossible, they could comfort themselves when they failed by saying “It was as expected”. But if they thought it was possible and failed, the impact would be much greater.

Momonga regretted his foolish announcement.

Trying to temper their excitement with a caution was the thinking of a loser. However, that caution might help matters.

However, he could not say that, as the organizer of the event.

Just then, a savior appeared.

“—Everyone, you’re being too overconfident. Do you know how low the odds are of one-shotting an unknown dungeon? The effective level of a dungeon goes up several times when you try it for the first time.”

The speaker was Ulbert.

Granted, those words were rain on their parade, but because of that, everyone calmed down.

At the same time, a ringing reached Momonga’s ear. It was a magical ‘Message’, and it was from Punitto Moe.

『—Good luck, Momonga-san.』

Momonga signed onto the dedicated ‘Message’ channel, and cast his spell. This way, his voice would only reach the recipient of his ‘Message’.

“Thank you.”

『Don’t worry about it, but do keep in mind that panic is the seed of defeat, so you must keep calm and think logically. Remain calm, look beyond your surroundings, and don’t waste your effort on unnecessary details, Momonga-san. Carelessness is your greatest enemy. However, I’m also planning to clear this in one go. So, all the best!』

After saying what he wanted to say, the ‘Message’ ended.

“All right! Then, everyone, we’ll set out for our objective in 30 minutes’ time. Please get yourselves ready!”

To be continued——



お買い上げ

ありがとうございます
ございます

So-bin

黑洛黑洛

Heteromorphic Race

Herohero

Ancient Black Slime



| personal character |

An attacker with levels in monk-type classes. However, his offensive power was poor because slime-type monsters have low strength. That said, his true ability could be seen in PVP and PK battles. His class levels strengthened his corrosive abilities to the point where they could break through immunities, allowing him to dissolve the equipment worn by enemy players. In this way, he traumatized his foes.

